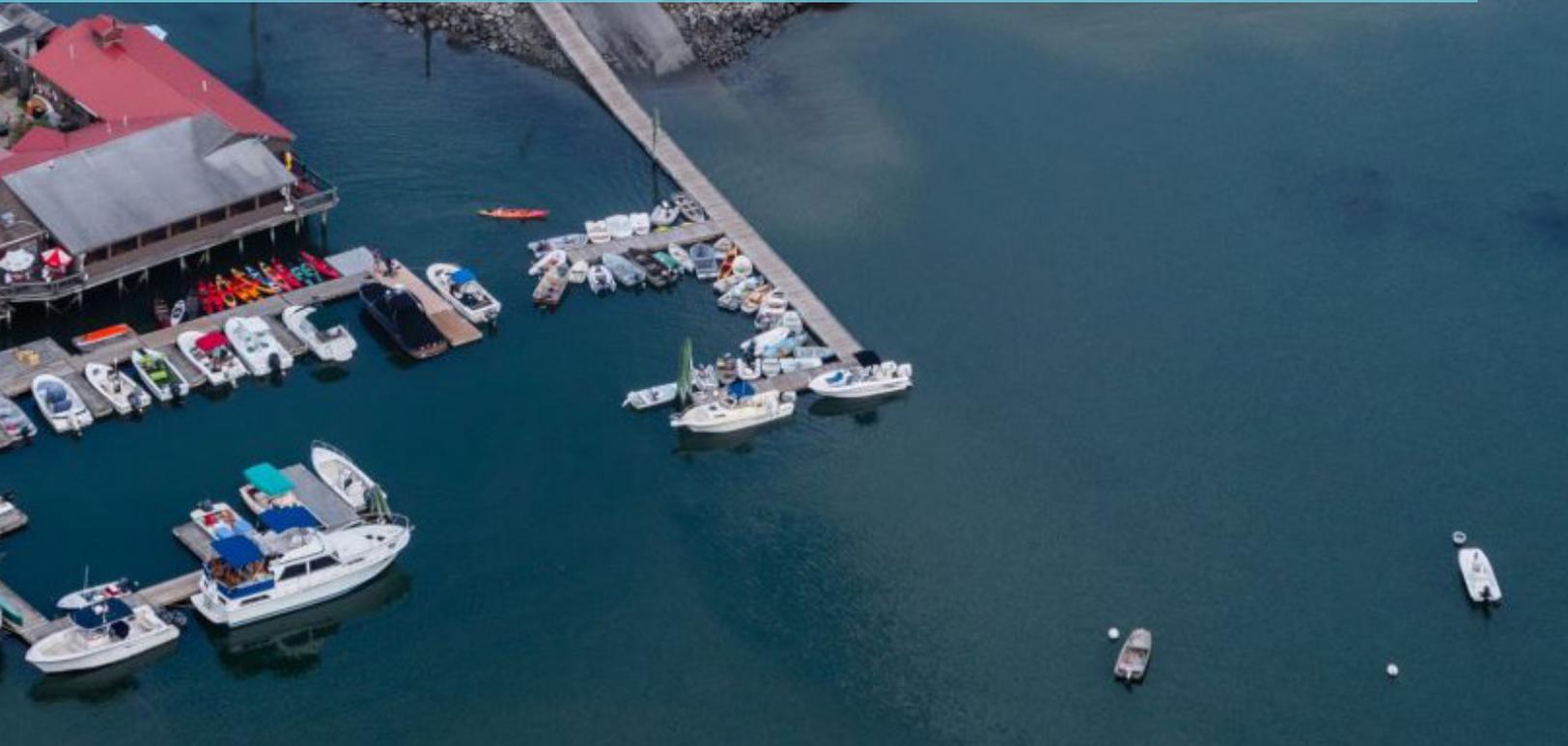




DAMARISCOTTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2024



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Special thanks go out to the following individuals who contributed to the development of this plan, especially to members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee who lent their unique expertise throughout the multi-year planning process.

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Damariscotta is a thriving community in Lincoln County with just over 2,200 residents. Situated on the Damariscotta River and graced with a quaint, historic downtown, Damariscotta is a popular tourist destination served by U.S. Route 1 and Route 129.

Damariscotta's most recent Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2014, and much has changed since then. The ultimate goal of this updated plan is to provide a new, shared vision for the community and produce a record memorializing the decisions made and actions committed to during the planning process. The Comprehensive Plan Committee hopes that this plan will serve as the foundation for public policy and land use decisions in the future and that it will provide an ongoing framework for both public investment and private development.

How to Use This Plan

This plan addresses several topic areas that are of particular relevance to the community. These are:

- Population & Demographics
- Historic & Archeological Resources
- Agriculture & Forestry
- Arts & Culture
- Economy
- Housing
- Natural Resources
- Water Resources
- Marine Resources
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Public Facilities & Services
- Land Use
- Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investment

Within each chapter are analyses and additional data related to each topic. Following the data analyses, readers will find various Goals, Policies, and Strategies, many of which were derived from state guidelines. Goals are overarching, broad goals related to the values of the community as identified through public engagement. Under each policy are a variety of implementation strategies. These are intended to be **SMART** (an acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) strategies that, if implemented, will allow the town to fulfill its identified goals. In addition, this plan recommends that an implementation committee comprised of Town staff and residents be appointed by the Selectboard in order to review progress of the plan and do a formal progress presentation at the annual town meeting.



Specific

The goal is concrete and tangible - everyone knows what it looks like.



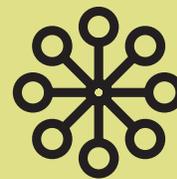
Measurable

The goal has an objective measure of success that everyone can understand.



Attainable

The goal is challenging, but achievable with the resources available.



Relevant

The goal meaningfully contributes to larger objectives and missions.



Timely

The goal has a deadline or a timeline of progress milestones.

COMMUNITY VISION

The Comprehensive Plan is guided by a community vision and a set of guiding values. The community vision was developed following the first wave of public engagement, including the April 2023 kick-off meeting, a community survey, and an online interactive mapping activity. The guiding values reflect the aspirations of residents as the town continues to grow and evolve.

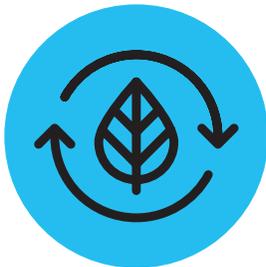
Vision Statement

This vision statement is intended to summarize the community's desired character throughout the plan's lifetime. It is an aspirational statement that we hope that we will live up to by the year 2035.

“ Damariscotta is the cultural and economic hub of central Lincoln County. While some level of development is necessary to meet the needs of our community, we are committed to growing in a way that celebrates our defining assets: our historic downtown, our unique natural habitats, and our commitment to being a welcoming, healthy, and diverse community. We are moving toward increased sustainability, liveability, and vibrancy in all of our decisions. ”

Guiding Values

In addition to the Vision Statement, the following Guiding Values were chosen as part of the development of this Plan. These are intended to be over-arching lenses to be applied to all future decision-making in Damariscotta.



Sustainability

For our purposes, this means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (across environmental, economic, and social outcomes). This includes climate resiliency.



Livability

This includes a range of outcomes that impact the well-being of individuals and communities as a whole, including:

- Housing
- Walkable and bikeable to amenities, including infrastructure
- Environment and health (drinking water quality metrics, access to passive and active exercise opportunities, access to nature)



Vibrancy

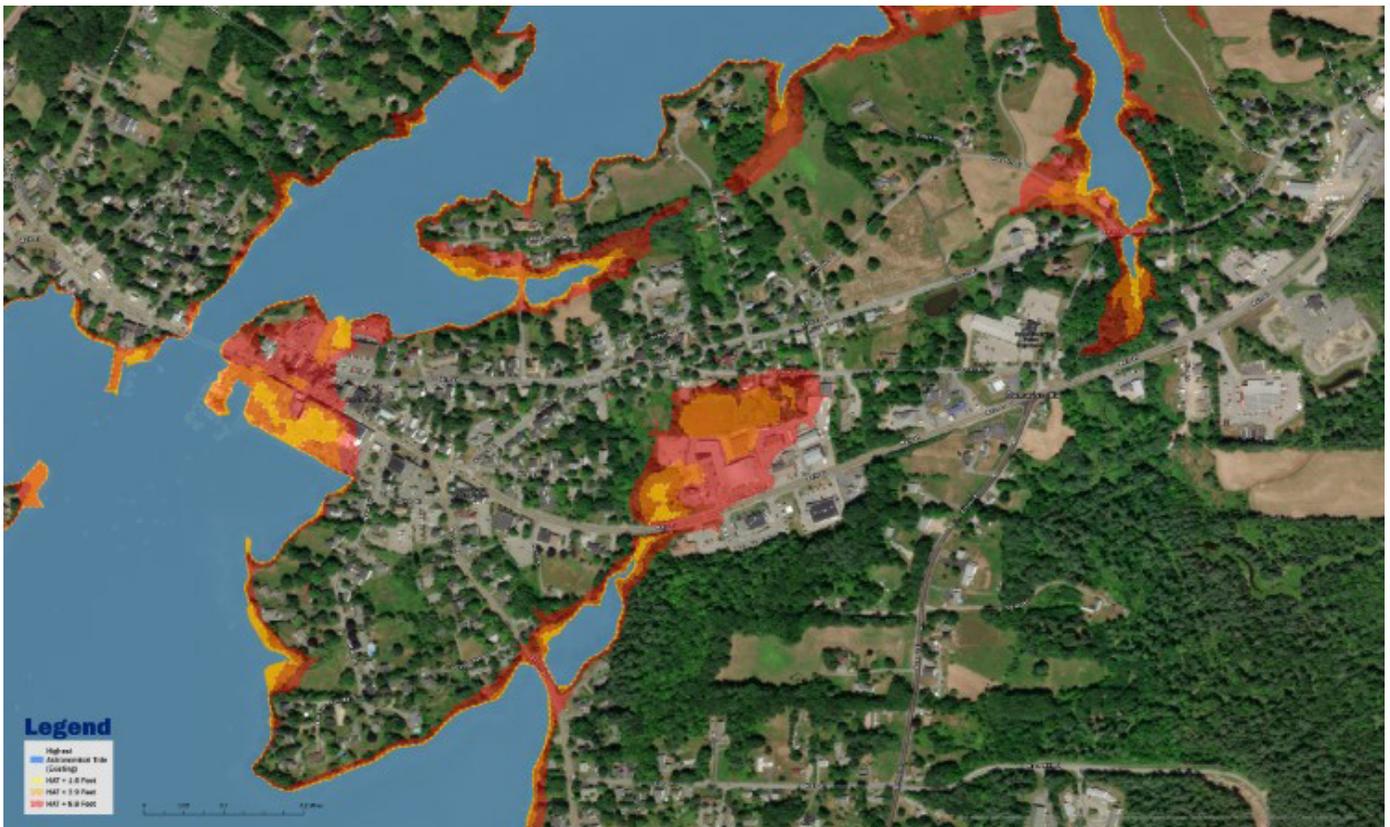
Broadly defined as being full of energy or life. With regard to this Plan, this means maintaining a sense of place and opportunities to connect with others.

COMMUNITY VISION

Sustainability, Livability & Vibrancy

These Guiding Values were chosen to encapsulate broad themes that emerged throughout public engagement efforts held as part of the development of this Plan, including:

- The impact of climate change and the need for increased climate resiliency
- Housing, including lack of affordable housing, lack of availability of any residential units, and a lack of a diverse range of housing options (e.g. apartments generally, workforce housing (income restricted), smaller “starter homes,” smaller places for seniors to downsize to)
- The lack of active transportation infrastructure (namely, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure)
- A desire to enhance existing recreation areas and create new recreational amenities within the community (including both active recreation, like creating parks, pickleball courts, and fields, but also passive recreation, like acquiring or protecting existing open spaces and natural resource areas)
- Downtown is the lifeblood of the community, including the need for streetscape improvements, a desire to protect small businesses, protecting the historic building stock from the effects of





PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive Plan Committee

A Comprehensive Plan Committee was formed in 2022, with members appointed by the Selectboard, to guide the planning process. The Committee met monthly (or more often, as needed) throughout the development of this Plan. These meetings were posted on the Town's website and were open to the public, with occasional members of the public directly participating.

Additionally, subcommittees composed of appointed Committee members devoted to each topic area met to discuss data and policy recommendations specifically related to their areas of expertise. The subcommittees were: Economy, Population & Housing; Natural Resources (including Agricultural & Forest Resources, Water & Marine Resources); Historic & Archeological Resources/Arts & Culture; and Recreation/Transportation. Subcommittees met between four and ten times throughout the planning process.

Overview of Public Engagement

As part of the development of this plan, a robust public engagement process occurred. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and the Town's subsequent pivot to virtual public meetings and engagement strategies taught us that the most effective engagement is a combination of intimate, face-to-face community conversations and online engagement tools that allow those who are unable to attend meetings to still participate and stay informed. To that end, a hybrid engagement process was employed throughout the development of this Plan to gather public input.

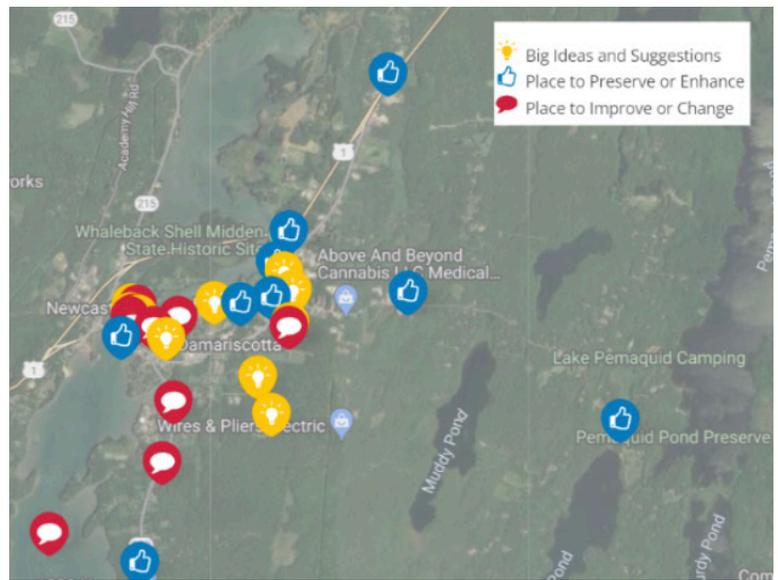
Regular updates regarding the process were also provided to the Town's Planning Board and Selectboard during their regular meetings.



PLANNING PROCESS

Virtual/Written Strategies

At the outset of the planning process, a SocialPinpoint website was developed to serve as a hub for information about the project. It included various documents and resources for stakeholders to peruse (including notes from in-person public engagement events), as well as an interactive map and online survey. The SocialPinpoint site had 839 unique users (unique IP addresses captured), 278 unique stakeholders (who either left a map comment, took the survey, or both), 266 survey responses, and 33 map comments.



Common themes from the interactive map included the following:

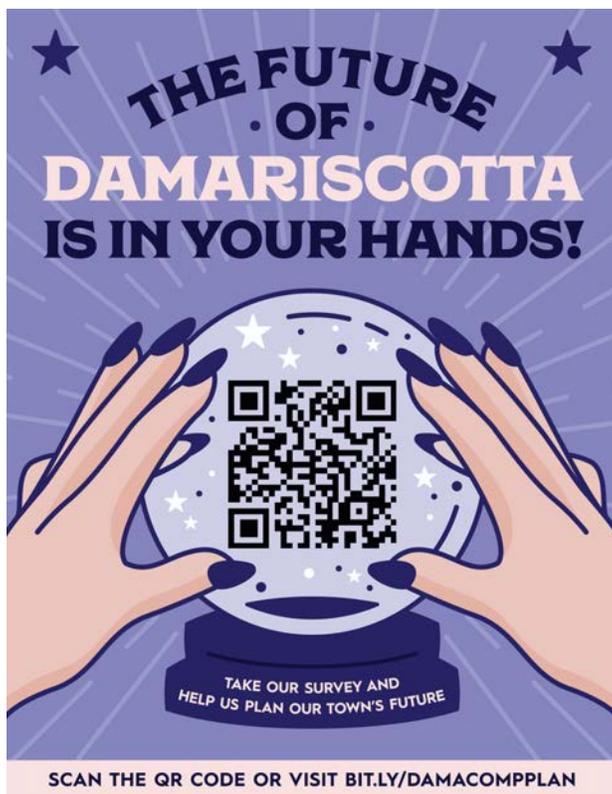
- Sidewalks and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure (many comments noted existing sidewalk network is inadequate or in disrepair, noted lack of shoulders)
- Recreation (create a downtown park, enhance Biscay Beach, enhance existing trailheads)
- Downtown streetscape improvements (undergrounding utilities, pedestrian bump-outs, brick sidewalks)
- Preserve existing natural areas, seek to preserve more natural area

Additional map comments (and their reactions) and full responses to the online survey are included in the Appendix. Data collected from these applications informed the development of much of this Plan.

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee also wrote a biweekly column for the Lincoln County News. These columns were focused on communicating the work of the Committee throughout the process and helped to drive traffic to the online survey and to promote the in-person public engagement events.

Comprehensive Plan Committee member Adam Jeffers designed and printed a poster asking people to contribute to the future of Damariscotta by taking the online survey. These posters were posted in the Town Office and throughout the town. Finally, a postcard was mailed to every address in Damariscotta (including businesses and residential addresses) using the USPS Every Door Direct Mail service. The postcard both promoted the April 2023 kick-off event (described further below) and included a link to the online survey encouraging people to take it. The postcard mailing was considered effective and so was utilized again in January of 2024 to promote the Future Land Use Workshops.

PLANNING PROCESS



Face-to-Face Strategies

In April 2023, a public kick-off event was held at the Town Office. The Committee's hired planning consultant provided an overview of Comprehensive Plans generally and what is required to be included in the plan, and had high-level discussions with the community regarding three big ideas: What do you love about Damariscotta and want to keep? What about Damariscotta do you want to change? What do you hope that the Plan addresses? Approximately 40 members of the community were in attendance. A similar meeting was facilitated by Comprehensive Plan Committee members at Schooner Cove, an independent living retirement community, in May of 2023.

Throughout the Spring and Summer of 2023, the Comprehensive Plan Committee members went out into the community to table at the Skidompha Library and popular local businesses. At these events, staff and Committee members met people where they tend to congregate and made them aware of the ongoing planning process, invited them to upcoming meetings, and had printed versions of our online survey available. More than 255 written comments were received on posters available at these tabling events, similarly focused on what people love about Damariscotta, what they want to change, and what they hope that the Plan addresses. These comments ranged from the need for childcare to the desire to promote small businesses and limit "big box" stores, to increasing walkability and bikeability, to ways to promote a more affordable workforce and/or year-round rental housing, to ideas for new kinds of recreational programs. The full list of comments is included in the Appendix.

PLANNING PROCESS

Additionally, members from the Housing, Economy, and Population Subcommittee coordinated ten meetings with the owners or executives at major employers and popular local businesses, including LincolnHealth, Hannaford, Chasse Marine, Fernald's Country Store, King Eider's Pub, Reny's, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, the YMCA, Rising Tide Co-op, and First National Bank. These meetings provided more specific information about how the business community views Damariscotta, including detailing struggles with attracting and retaining employees at all levels and potential plans for these businesses. Notes from the interviews are included in the Appendix of this Plan.

In October of 2023, the Town Planner and the hired planning consultant visited 5th and 6th graders at Great Salt Bay Community School and presented an interactive activity where students brainstormed what they wanted to see in Damariscotta in the next 10 years and then drew on maps of the downtown and surrounding village area to illustrate where their ideas might go. Ideas included a variety of different business types that students want to see, areas where more sidewalks or improved sidewalks might be needed, trails and multi-use paths, different kinds of recreational amenities (the desire for a pool, a skate park, a running track, more designated swimming areas, a basketball court, sports fields, another playground or an improved playground, an ice-skating rink). The main comment heard was that kids were looking for more places where they could hang out, as well as safer ways to get around the community without driving.



PLANNING PROCESS

Several big ideas kept recurring in both the virtual and face-to-face engagement strategies. These included maintaining a thriving village; ensuring housing opportunities; and promoting and/or developing active recreation and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across the community. A series of more in-depth topic exploration meetings were held in October and November of 2023 to hear feedback from the public related to these big ideas.

The first meeting, focusing on the downtown and surrounding village area, was attended by 26 people and was held downtown at Skidompha Library. The Town's hired planning consultant set the stage by discussing post-pandemic changes to downtowns (and how those changes and trends might be positive for Damariscotta), key components to a thriving downtown, and by providing information about Damariscotta's downtown as it is currently. Then, the group split into small group discussions where they focused on brainstorming **shared** priorities of those in their group.

Ideas to Stimulate Housing Production (While Preserving Community Character)

shared by attendees of the 10/25/2023 Housing Meeting

- Reclaim commercial zones or allow for/incentivize mixed-use buildings in these areas
- Increase height restrictions where appropriate
- Consider a regional approach to housing production
- Expand sewer and water utilities to priority areas
- Consider purchasing or directing private investment to existing large buildings for sale, for the purpose of creating housing (Downeaster Inn as a particular example)
- Explore creative funding solutions
- Amend the minimum lot size where sewer and water exists
- Invite local businesses, finance professionals, and nonprofits into conversations about stimulating housing production
- Consider tiny house communities
- Facilitate home share programs
- Increase density to allow for conversion of existing buildings into multi-family housing
- Ensure that new housing is connected to existing walkable areas
- Increase customer service and communication around new development (clarify process, understand what incentives may be available)
- Adopt good design standards that require traditional New England aesthetic, especially in the downtown and surrounding village area
- Require mixed-use development along major corridors (such as Route 1B)
- Increase/clarify planting and landscaping requirements for new developments
- Build closer to the road to reduce traffic speeds
- Incentivize accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Require seasonal rentals to register with the Town
- Consider shared septic systems in areas where appropriate
- Encourage cooperative housing models

Downtown & Village Priorities

shared by attendees of the 10/17/2023 Village Meeting

- Prioritize walkability (housing should be walkable to everyday needs)
- More community events (including doing more to activate the waterfront); promote more community cohesion
- More green space and open spaces for people to gather
- Promote biking and the use of e-bikes
- Give incentives to developers to build housing in this area
- Extend water + sewer up Biscay and Bristol Road
- Encourage creative housing options to create more affordable housing
- Support entrepreneurship to create higher paying jobs
- Create infrastructure for the future: proactively prepare for flooding, road maintenance
- Address childcare needs

PLANNING PROCESS

The second meeting, focusing on housing issues and opportunities, was attended by 31 people and was held at the Town Office. During this meeting, the Town's hired planning consultant presented information on the state of housing in Damariscotta today and how population projections will likely exacerbate the existing lack of housing. The group discussed what makes a successful housing strategy, and then broke off into small group discussions where discussion occurred surrounding how to allow for population growth while preserving existing community character as well as potential ways to provide for a variety of housing options (see graphic on prior page).

The third meeting, focusing on active recreation as well as bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, was held at Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust and was attended by 25 people. Information was provided on existing recreational amenities as well as identified transportation issues in Damariscotta (as identified by the community in either the online survey or in past planning documents, such as the 2015 Damariscotta-Newcastle Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan). Then, the group broke off into small group discussions where they were asked to prioritize transportation improvements (namely bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure) using limited "Damariscotta Dollars" and discuss what recreational amenities might be missing or in need of improvement in the community. Priority infrastructure projects, as ranked by the meeting attendants, were the following:

1. Widen Bristol Road to create 5' shoulders
2. Sidewalks on Route 1B from Rising Tide to Biscay Road
3. Route 1B alternative (off-road) path from Mobius to School Street
4. Bristol Road, School Street, Main Street sidewalk loop (from existing points)

Recreation Amenities Missing or In Need of Improvement

shared by attendees of the 11/9/2023 Active Transportation Meeting

- Pool (missing)
- Communication about available recreation in the region (in need of improvement)
- Play areas for younger children (missing)
- Seasonal pass to area beaches for residents (missing)
- Public access points to water (many missing or in need of improvement)
- Dog park (missing)
- Town playground (missing)
- Longer trails/walking loops (in need of improvement)
- Signage at preserves (in need of improvement)
- Crosswalk/sidewalk connectivity to trails (in need of improvement)
- ADA access at existing trails (in need of improvement)
- Parking at existing trails (in need of improvement)
- Off-road biking trails (missing)
- Public park/downtown common area (missing)
- Pickleball courts (missing)
- Biscay Beach swimming area (in need of improvement)

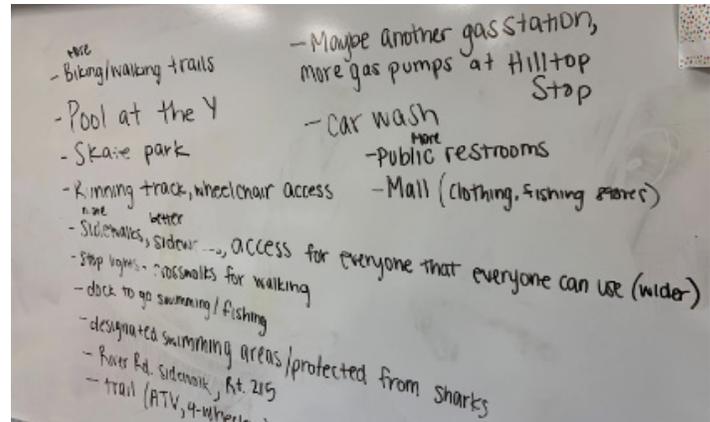
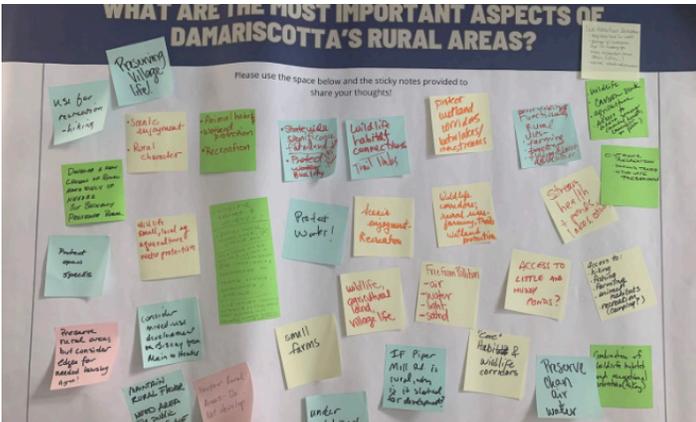
PLANNING PROCESS

In December of 2023, the Town held a Community Conversation on Climate Change as part of its enrollment in the statewide Community Resilience Partnership. The Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust discussed known climate issues and areas that our community should focus on to become more resilient.

Finally, the Comprehensive Plan Committee hosted two Future Land Use Workshops on the morning of Saturday, January 20th, and the evening of Tuesday, January 23rd. Both workshops were well-attended, with between 20-25 members of the public at each date (about 45 total attendees across both workshops).

At each Focus Station, there was a major question asked that was specific to that area. For example, in the downtown area, a major question that was continually raised throughout the planning process was, “Should we direct public and private investment to this area given projected flooding scenarios?” While many people expressed that the downtown is something that they love about Damariscotta, overwhelmingly the response was to build a sea wall or allow for adaptations to existing buildings. However, in terms of private investment, there was consensus that the policy should be to enhance what is currently there and allow for infill development that enhances the area.

Concerning residential areas (essentially those neighborhoods immediately outside of downtown and off of Upper Main Street), the major question was focused on what types of new residential development would enhance these areas. In general, answers were clustered on moderately sized (2-10 unit) apartment buildings, connected townhouses, and especially with the conversion of existing historic buildings into multi-family housing. In addition, many respondents noted that tiny-house communities would enhance this area.



PLANNING PROCESS

Within the community's rural areas, the aim was to try to ascertain what is important to protect within these areas. Respondents indicated that wildlife habitats, preserving open space (for recreation and trail connectivity and the protection of wildlife and habitat corridors and water quality), and small farms and agricultural areas were all important facets of rural life.

WHAT WOULD MOST ENHANCE THE ROUTE 1B CORRIDOR?

Residential Development  	Bicycle Lanes  
Infill Development <small>New buildings within existing large parking lots</small>  	Traffic Calming Measures <small>Street redesign to encourage slower traffic</small>  
Increased Landscaping or Street Trees  	Increased Pedestrian Infrastructure <small>Sidewalks, streetlights, crosswalks</small>  
Benches & More Green Space  	Public Transit  
Increased Commercial Development  	Public Art or Murals  

Handwritten notes on sticky paper:

- Residential Development: "Let's see what we can do with existing buildings - development"
- Infill Development: "Economic Development" (written vertically)
- Traffic Calming Measures: "Speed limit traffic calming south of High St", "Concern that we don't drive at business hours", "more trash receptacles", "Less economic infrastructure, more pedestrian friendly"
- Public Transit: "Free Trolley from Portland to Grafton", "Loop in downtown - important"
- Public Art or Murals: "Found 'Growth' area to make road out of town at Enoch's TIF zone"

Finally, on Upper Main Street/the Route 1B corridor, the major question focused on what would most enhance users' experience of the area. Throughout the planning process, this area had been described as a "sacrifice zone," where intense and potentially incompatible commercial development had been occurring. Overwhelmingly, workshop participants indicated that they did not think that additional/increased commercial development would enhance this area. Instead, increased pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle lanes, and more benches and green space were the top priorities (with residential development, infill development in existing large parking lots, traffic calming measures, and public transit as additional secondary priorities).

TAKING ACTION



TAKING ACTION

Priority Goals

The following section describes the priority goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the policies and strategies needed to achieve them. These were derived from public input heard throughout the development of this plan. The accompanying policies and strategies will provide the roadmap for future decision-making and implementation. The implementation strategies contained within this plan are intended to be **SMART** (an acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based) strategies that, if implemented, will allow the town to fulfill the identified policy goals.

The topics covered in these goals are **interrelated** and will greatly influence one another. Decisions in areas like housing or economic development have impacts on other areas like transportation, natural resources, and municipal costs of providing service. Thinking holistically and working collaboratively across disciplines will be critical to advance the goals in this plan.

The goals provided are ambitions for how our community will be in 10 years. As such, they are provided as aspirational statements.

Goal Icon Key



Sustainability



Livability



Vibrancy

The icons above are used throughout this document to illustrate how each goal connects to the Guiding Values chosen as part of the development of this plan. All goals connect back to at least one Guiding Value, with many of the goals connecting to two or even all three of the Guiding Values of this plan.



Goal: Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.

Policy #8.1: Encourage and promote workforce housing in strategic locations to support economic development of the community and region.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Designate a location(s) in Growth Areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).
- b. See Strategy #8.3.c.

Policy #8.2: Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Participate in and support the efforts of a regional affordable housing coalition (such as that beginning to emerge from LCRPC).
- b. Advocate for the creation and use of home-sharing or room-renting programs to connect those with extra space to those looking for housing within Damariscotta.

Policy #8.3: Aim for at least 30% of all new residential development in the next decade to be subsidized/regulated affordable or workforce housing.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow for higher density development when certain types of priority projects are proposed (e.g. density bonuses beyond what might be required by LD2003).
- b. Proactively reach out to known regional affordable housing providers to communicate available incentives for affordable housing development.
- c. Amend the Town's Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as necessary to increase density or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing in designated Growth Areas.

Policy #8.4: Work with current affordable housing property owners to maintain existing affordable housing in the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Identify the expiration date of existing affordability covenants in Damariscotta.
- b. Educate property owners on incentives available for keeping property affordable.

TAKING ACTION: PRIORITY



Goal: Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.

Policy #8.5: Ensure that land use controls allow for the kinds of residential development that the community desires and needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Reduce the burden of residential development in designated Growth Areas by removing regulatory barriers and permitting “by-right” (without Planning Board review) the residential developments that the community desires.
- b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.
- c. Decrease minimum lot size per dwelling unit in areas with existing public water and sewer to allow for smaller lots conducive to ‘starter’ home construction.
- d. Amend the Town’s Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for “back-lot” development within the Growth Area.

Policy #8.6: Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.
- b. Amend the Town’s Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing “soft costs” of development.
- c. Create a Housing Trust Fund that will set aside money to be granted to priority housing projects, with priorities and funding levels established annually by the Selectboard.
- d. Encourage the construction of ADUs within or on the same lot as existing residences.

Policy #8.7: Understand the short-term rental situation in Damariscotta.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a Short-Term Rental Ordinance requiring all short-term rentals (being rented for less than 4 months out of the year) to register with the Town on a regular basis, including payment of a nominal fee, in order to get an accurate count of the number of short-term rentals in Damariscotta.
- b. Take steps to manage short-term rentals as necessary.

TAKING ACTION: PRIORITY



Goal: The impacts of flooding on downtown historic buildings are mitigated.

Policy #2.1: Assess the impacts of weather events and what types of adaptation measures are appropriate for historic properties.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Provide educational resources to property owners regarding adapting their historic buildings in light of flood risk.
- b. Implement the in-progress plan for a deployable flood wall in the downtown.
- c. Develop a plan for long-term adaptation strategies to mitigate downtown flood risk.
- d. Implement the plan for long-term flood mitigation referenced in #2.1.c above.



Goal: Land use and development patterns complement transportation networks and promote mobility.

Policy #10.6: Address transportation planning and land use planning together as two parts of the same issue.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); state access management regulations under 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and state traffic permitting regulations for large developments under 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.
- b. Amend the Town's Subdivision Ordinance to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.
- c. Amend the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Ordinances to include sidewalk design requirements including minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.
- d. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require sidewalks along the frontage of new development located within the Growth Area as defined by this Plan.

TAKING ACTION: PRIORITY



Goal: Transportation investments and policies support a more sustainable community.

Policy #10.7: Increase sustainable mobility by investing in active transportation (bicycling and pedestrian) infrastructure improvements.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Conduct a walking audit of existing sidewalk locations and all streets and intersections within the Growth Area identified as part of this Plan, to better understand where pedestrian improvements may be necessary.
- b. Revise the Town’s policy related to the maintenance of road surface markings (namely crosswalks) to require that they are repainted at least twice per year or research a more resilient paint option to ensure crosswalks are visible year-round.
- c. Require that sidewalks are maintained in winter weather at or about at the same rate as roadways.
- d. Identify the location of potentially public rights-of-way in the community that could be upgraded to expand bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity.
- e. Refer to and comply with the PSAC Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility especially when MDOT is planning for roadway improvements to priority corridors (as identified in the resolution).

Policy #10.8: Accommodate the switch to electric vehicles.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Work with CMP to identify any upgrades needed to support more robust EV charging and solar power infrastructure.
- b. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that certain development projects are “EV-ready” (e.g. that conduit is installed for EV charging stations).

Policy #10.9: Minimize local vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town’s transportation network.
- b. Publicize existing ride-providing services (such as Lincoln County FISH) and ride-sharing networks (such as GO MAINE).

TAKING ACTION: PRIORITY



Goal: Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation.

Policy #9.3: Preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a Recreation & Open Space Plan that identifies: (1) Priority sites that may be appropriate for recreation/conservation uses or trail network connectivity (through a clearly defined evaluation process); (2) Strategies to preserve land, including funding sources as applicable; and (3) How the land will be managed in the future (e.g. how it will be used or developed for either conservation or recreation purposes).

Policy #9.4: Comply with the US Access Board’s minimum accessibility guidelines in all new construction to ensure that all Damariscotta residents, regardless of age or ability, have access to both active and passive recreational amenities (including water access).

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a park within the Growth Area identified in this Plan in order to create an open and attractive space for community members to gather. Considerations may include performance space, a skate park, a place for people to gather, a playground for young children, and other desires driven by the community and budgetary constraints.
- b. See Strategy #9.3.a.



Goal: Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.

Policy #7.14: Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.
- b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.

Policy #7.15: Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.
- b. See Strategy #8.6.a and #8.6.b.

TAKING ACTION: PRIORITY



Goal: The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to: wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well protected and healthy.

Policy #4.1: The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to: wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well protected and healthy.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Work with local and regional partners to document the occurrence of invasive species.
- b. Provide signage and/or educational materials at appropriate locations (e.g. municipal boat landing, Biscay Beach) regarding aquatic invasive species.
- c. Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.
- d. Work with local land trusts to create an inventory of rare species in Oyster Creek's salt marsh.

Policy #4.2: Ensure local ordinances include up-to-date methods and best practices for wetland protection.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require applicants 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.
- b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to consider as part of the review process pertinent habitat maps and information regarding critical natural resources.
- c. Work with a qualified professional engineer (or Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District) to amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review Ordinances to incorporate low-impact development standards for stormwater management.
- d. Ensure continued compliance with the Maine DEP Chapter 1000 standards for Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.

Policy #4.2: Protect and restore local wildlife habitats.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Distribute information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.
- b. Develop and provide educational information to property owners near areas such as Castner Creek, Salt Bay, and Oyster Creek about working with local land trusts to permanently protect undeveloped areas, such as through conservation easements or similar.
- c. Implement a GIS mapping process, including information from the US Fish & Wildlife Service Wetlands Inventory to assist Town staff, the Planning Board, and property owners with understanding clearly where wetlands are located.
- d. Promptly update the Town's GIS wetland maps by incorporating peer-reviewed wetland delineations submitted by applicants of proposed development projects.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The matrix on the following pages assigns a responsible party to implement the identified strategies. The Comprehensive Plan will be implemented over the next ten years, but some strategies or policies have been identified as higher priorities or are required to be undertaken before other policies can be implemented. For this reason, the matrix also recommends a timeframe or “due date” to begin implementation.

Finally, some policies and their associated implementation strategies are larger, multi-step undertakings. For these policies, a checklist of recommended actions is referenced within the matrix and is included in the relevant chapter.

Who – identifies a lead entity (or entities) responsible for carrying out the policy or strategy. Typically, this is a Town department supported by one or more other departments, though it may also be a Town Board or Committee.

Suggested Start Date- The year where it might be appropriate to start undertaking the Strategy or to start earmarking funds to complete the Strategy, as appropriate. Timelines may shift based on funding availability, staff capacity, or other municipal impacts.

Estimated Time Commitment - How long the Strategy might take to implement once begun.

Cost- Reflected as a dollar amount where \$ = <\$10,000; \$\$ = \$10,000 - \$50,000; \$\$\$ = \$50,000-\$100,000, and; \$\$\$\$ = >\$100,000.

Partners and Resources – evaluates needed resources such as costs, time, or materials to implement the policy or strategy and identifies potential non-profit partners, other Town departments, or state agencies that may help in implementation. Also suggests resources like already available model ordinances, as appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION: HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The impacts of flooding on downtown historic buildings are mitigated.										
		2.1	Assess the impacts of weather events and what types of adaptation measures are appropriate for historic properties.								
				a. Provide educational resources to property owners regarding adapting their historic buildings in light of flood risk.	Phase 1	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 3	12 months	\$ (suggested funding source: MHPC grant opportunities)	Planning Department, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Damariscotta Historical Society(suggested funding source: MHPC grant opportunities)	
				b. Implement the in-progress plan for a deployable flood wall in the downtown.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 1		\$\$-\$\$\$	Administration, Public Works Department, U.S. EDA	
				c. Develop a plan for long-term adaptation strategies to mitigate downtown flood risk.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	18 months	\$\$	UMaine, Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	
			d. Implement the plan for long-term flood mitigation referenced in #2.1.c above.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 7	Ongoing		Adminstration, Comprehensive Plan Implement		

IMPLEMENTATION: HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Historic and archaeological resources in the community are preserved.										
		2.2	Protect identified historic and archaeological resources in the community, through regulation when necessary.								
				a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require that applicants for Planning Board projects are explicitly required to protect known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archaeology through modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	
				b. Amend Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission	
		2.3	Update the existing inventory and investigate potentially overlooked historic and archeological resources in the community.								
				a. Become a Certified Local Government through the State Historic Preservation Office in order to gain access to grants for planning and survey work.	Phase 2	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 4		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				b. Earmark matching funds to conduct a comprehensive architectural survey of Damariscotta's above-ground historic resources, beginning with the Bristol Road Historic District.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 4	8 months	\$	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	
		2.4	Actively preserve, protect, and complement the historic features of the Main Street Historic District.								
				a. Revisit and revise as needed the permitted and conditional uses within the C-1 zone (or equivalent) as well as the density requirements to ensure that they are promoting a vibrant downtown and adaptive reuse of historic structures.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	

IMPLEMENTATION: HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	Connections with and awareness of local history are promoted.									
		2.5		Collaborate with local institutions, clubs, and enthusiasts to develop educational and entertainment programs.						
				a. Complete a brochure or other guide explaining the importance of historic preservation to the community and resources for those seeking to undertake renovations.	Phase 2	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 2			Damariscotta Historical Society
				b. Partner with the Lincoln County News to inventory and archive Calvin Dodge articles related to local history.	Phase 2	Damariscotta Historical Society	Year 1			Historic Preservation Review Commission
			c. Create a Museum in the Streets walking tour.	Phase 2	Damariscotta Historical Society	Year 5	12 months	\$\$		Historic Preservation Review Commission, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce; Damariscotta Historical Society

IMPLEMENTATION: AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Damariscotta's agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.										
	5.1	Encourage the active use of local farms, gardens, and agricultural lands.									
				a. See Strategy #5.3.b and #5.3.e.							
	5.2	Protect the rural, forested, and natural scenic character found within Damariscotta.									
				a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department	
				b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.	Phase 3	Planning Board	Year 6	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
	5.3	Conserve prime farmland, especially areas capable of supporting commercial agriculture.									
				a. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that commercial developments in the Rural Areas (as designated in the Future Land Use Section of this Plan) to maintain areas with prime farmland soils (as mapped) as undeveloped open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Amend the Town's Land Use Ordinance to expressly permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, (e.g. roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, feed milling, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations) as expressly allowed operations in the Rural Zoning District (not subject to Planning Board review if within existing buildings on-site or if the new proposed building would not otherwise trigger the applicability requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. As required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869, consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				d. Consult with Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				e. Adopt a "right to farm" provision within the Town's Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 4	6 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
	5.4	Encourage tree planting to assist in climate resiliency.									
			a. Develop a plan to identify and replace dead or damaged street trees in the village.	Phase 2	Public Works Committee	Year 4			Public Works, Administration, Selectboard		

IMPLEMENTATION: AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Local farming and agriculture is economically viable, ecologically sustainable, and socially responsible.									
		5.5		Support the economic viability of local agriculture and forestry through education, outreach, and economic development initiatives.						
				a. Develop a community farm survey to gather information on what products are grown, what challenges farmers face, and why they operate in Damariscotta.	Phase 3	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 7	6 months	Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration
				b. Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Year 7	Ongoing		Administration, Midcoast Council of Governments, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission
		5.6		Publicize what incentives are available for farming and forestry in Damariscotta.						
				a. Educate owners of productive farm and forest land in available incentives (such as the current use taxation programs).	Phase 1	Assessing	Year 2		Staff-time	
			b. Determine whether or not moveable greenhouses without a permanent foundation can be taxed as business equipment rather than property and, if so, how this would impact revenue.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 4		Staff-time	Assessing	

IMPLEMENTATION: AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Small-scale agriculture and community garden spaces are allowed and encouraged.										
		5.7	Include community garden spaces in recreation and open space planning efforts.								
				a. Work with local land trusts to identify opportunities, if any, for timber harvesting, farming or gardening (including community gardens) on their conserved land in Damariscotta (especially on conserved open space that is identified as prime farmland).	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 5		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
		5.8	Review and revise local ordinances as needed to protect and encourage small-scale agriculture.								
				a. Create a Small Farm Animal Keeping Ordinance to allow for the safekeeping of a small number of farm animals on residential lots in order to encourage small-scale agriculture in appropriate areas.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 5	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
			b. Amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Ordinances to require that certain kinds of multi-family residential or multi-lot subdivisions include designated space set aside for community gardens for the enjoyment of the residents of the proposed developments.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 5	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department		

IMPLEMENTATION: ARTS & CULTURE

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Arts and cultural amenities in the community are robust, active, and accessible.										
		1.1	Develop and support public arts and cultural programs to increase Damariscotta's vibrancy and community ties.								
				a. Create an Arts and Culture Committee to promote the arts as a means of improving the local economy, enriching cultural and intellectual life, promoting lifelong learning, and protecting Damariscotta's rich cultural heritage.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 2		Staff-time		
				b. Create a collective and comprehensive calendar of events related to arts and culture in Damariscotta.	Phase 3	Arts & Culture Committee	Year 3		Volunteer time	Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce; Administration	
				c. Create a directory of local artists and craftsmen in the community in order to celebrate and recognize that piece of the local culture.	Phase 3	Arts & Culture Committee	Year 3		Volunteer time		
				d. Create opportunities for volunteer-led, inexpensive, short-term community art projects or demonstrations that demonstrate the impacts of public art in a visible way.	Phase 2	Arts & Culture Committee	Year 3	Ongoing			
				e. Allocate funding to the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to coordinate community events and public art initiatives that strengthen ties between the Newcastle & Damariscotta historic downtown areas, such as Art Walks, music/concerts, or an Annual Maker's Fair.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 4		\$	Arts & Culture Committee, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce	
				f. Adopt a "1% for Art" policy for all capital improvement projects, requiring 1% of the total cost of the project to be set aside to incorporate public art that enables public places to reflect current values and ideas, draw on the evolving energy and ideas of Damariscotta's thriving arts community, and promote interaction among neighbors.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 7		Project dependent	Arts & Culture Committee	
			g. See Strategy #9.5.a.								

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Damariscotta's economic climate increases job growth in designated sectors.										
		7.1	Coordinate with regional partners as necessary to support economic development.								
				a. Collaborate with the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to better understand employer needs for workforce, physical space, supply chains, etc. Partner with major employers to develop initiatives to address biggest gaps or concerns.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 6	18 months	Staff-time	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers	
				b. Participate in regional economic development efforts.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Planning Department	
		7.2	Coordinate with neighboring towns to support small and locally-owned businesses.								
				a. Continue to build relationships with appropriate staff in neighboring communities to discuss and coordinate economic development initiatives.	Phase 2	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
		7.3	Support local entrepreneurs, home businesses, and cottage industry.								
				a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow low-impact home occupations to be reviewed administratively by Town staff.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Work to attract business incubator/start-up spaces where small businesses can collaborate and learn from each other.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration	

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Local infrastructure supports the ability to walk or bicycle to local businesses.									
		7.4		Financially support needed alternative transportation improvements that will support economic development.						
				a. Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and/or require infrastructure that supports walking, biking and car-pooling through land use regulations so that workers have options of how to get to work.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration
			See Policy #7.2.							

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Civic and social amenities are supported and robust.									
		7.5		Continue to collaborate with non-profit partners to provide civic and social amenities within the community.						
				a. Continue to invest in the Skidompha Library, the CLC YMCA, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, and other service providers through annual budget requests/appropriations as recognition of the value that these service providers bring to Damariscotta residents.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Ongoing		\$- \$\$	Administration

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
  	Utility capacity will support economic development.										
		7.6	Provide the latest high speed broadband and universal wireless telecommunication.								
				a. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 2	3 years	\$\$	Administration, ConnectME Authority, Maine Broadband Coalition	
		7.7	Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to invest in sewer and water infrastructure.								
				a. See Strategy #11.2.a.							
		7.8	Improve energy resilience to prevent frequent power outages.								
				a. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to adopt solar-ready requirements in new developments.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Advocate to regional and state partners to reinforce transmission lines and improve substation resilience to withstand extreme weather conditions and other disruptions.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration, Central Maine Power, Maine Public Utilities Commission, Maine Climate Council	
				c. Investigate the feasibility of local microgrid development, especially for community areas such as the hospital, municipal buildings, and similar.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4				
				d. Review and revise the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for energy storage systems (such as, for example, battery storage facilities) to locate in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.										
		7.9	Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.								
				a. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, Planning Department	
				b. See Strategy #2.1.a.							
		See Policy #7.8.									

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Damariscotta's role as a small-town service center benefits the community.									
	7.10	Strengthen and/or support the expansion of existing infrastructure and systems that support quality of life for a growing regional workforce, including housing, childcare, education, transportation, and broadband.								
			a. Assess common barriers to employment (childcare needs, transportation needs, education/skill gaps, etc.).	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 4	12 months	Staff-time / project dependent	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers	
			b. Develop initiatives to mitigate or overcome identified barriers.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 5	Ongoing	Staff-time / project dependent	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers	
			c. See Strategy #7.6.a.							
	7.11	Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.								
			a. Continue to utilize tax increment financing (TIFs) to shelter revenue for priority economic development projects.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration	
			b. During the annual budget cycle, examine and carefully consider Departmental budget requests to ensure that the municipal budget reflects the priorities of the community and voters.	Phase 1	Selectboard, Budget Committee, Town Meeting Voters	Ongoing			Administration	
	7.12	Encourage tax base growth in order to maintain the town's service center benefits: historic, cultural, medical, conservation assets.								
			a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration	
	7.13	Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.								

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.										
		7.14	Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.								
			a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
			b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
		7.15	Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.								
			a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage mixed-use development in nodes identified in the Future Land Use Plan.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
		b. See Strategy #8.6.a and #8.6.b.									

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.										
		8.1	Encourage and promote workforce housing in strategic locations to support economic development of the community and region.								
			a. Designate a location(s) in Growth Areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee		
			b. See Strategy #8.3.c.								
		8.2	Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.								
			a. Participate in and support the efforts of a regional affordable housing coalition (such as that beginning to emerge from LCRPC).	Phase 1	Administration, Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	YMCA Community Navigator, Senior Spectrum, Stepping Stone Housing		
			b. Advocate for the creation and use of home-sharing or room-renting programs to connect those with extra space to those looking for housing within Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Administration, Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff and volunteer time	YMCA Community Navigator, Senior Spectrum, Stepping Stone Housing		
		8.3	Aim for at least 30% of all new residential development in the next decade to be subsidized/regulated affordable or workforce housing.								
			a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow for higher density development when certain types of priority projects are proposed (e.g. density bonuses beyond what might be required by LD2003).	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
			b. Proactively reach out to known regional affordable housing providers to communicate available incentives for affordable housing development.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing			Administration		
			c. Amend the Town's Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as necessary to increase density or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing in designated Growth Areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
		8.4	Work with current affordable housing property owners to maintain existing affordable housing in the community.								
			a. Identify the expiration date of existing affordability covenants in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	4 months	\$(utilizing summer intern)	Administration		
			b. Educate property owners on incentives available for keeping property affordable.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department		

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.										
		8.5	Ensure that land use controls allow for the kinds of residential development that the community desires and needs.								
				a. Reduce the burden of residential development in designated Growth Areas by removing regulatory barriers and permitting "by-right" (without Planning Board review) the residential developments that the community desires.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration	
				c. Decrease minimum lot size per dwelling unit in areas with existing public water and sewer to allow for smaller lots conducive to 'starter' home construction.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				d. Amend the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for "back-lot" development within the Growth Area.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
		8.6	Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.								
				a. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Planning Board, Selectboard, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission	
				b. Amend the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing "soft costs" of development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 2	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. Create a Housing Trust Fund that will set aside money to be granted to priority housing projects, with priorities and funding levels established annually by the Selectboard.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	6 months	Suggested funding sources: private donations; awards/grants; creation of an Affordable Housing TIF district; percentage of funds from other TIF districts; CDBG; annual budget allocations; Inclusionary Zoning Fee-In-Lieu; short-term rental registration fees	Administration	
				d. Encourage the construction of ADUs within or on the same lot as existing residences.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	6 months	Potentially by providing grants or loans through Housing Trust Fund	Administration, Planning Department	

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.									
		8.7		Understand the short-term rental situation in Damariscotta.						
				a. Create a Short-Term Rental Ordinance requiring all short-term rentals (being rented for less than 4 months out of the year) to register with the Town on a regular basis, including payment of a nominal fee, in order to get an accurate count of the number of short-term rentals in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	12 months	Staff-time	Planning Department
			b. Take steps to manage short-term rentals as necessary.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	Ongoing	Staff-time	Administration, Planning Department, Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing in the community is safe and secure.										
		8.8	Ensure that existing housing units in Damariscotta meet safety standards.								
			a. Require that the Code Enforcement Officer conducts inspections of all short-term rentals to ensure basic Life Safety requirements are being met.	Phase 2	Planning Department	Year 4		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration		
		b. Promote available state and federal financial assistance programs for homeowners of older homes to complete maintenance/repairs.	Phase 2	Assessing	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration			

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	New housing is located near existing services.									
		8.9		Protect rural areas and natural settings without existing infrastructure by encouraging new housing development at greater densities in Growth Areas already served by public infrastructure (sewer, water, sidewalks and roadways, broadband internet, three-phase power).						
				a. See Strategy #11.2.b.						
				b. See Strategy #8.5.b.						
				See Policy #7.2.						

IMPLEMENTATION: NATURAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to: wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well protected and healthy.										
		4.1	Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.								
			a. Work with local and regional partners to document the occurrence of invasive species.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing					Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust
			b. Provide signage and/or educational materials at appropriate locations (e.g. municipal boat landing, Biscay Beach) regarding aquatic invasive species.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin ear-marking funds Year 4			\$		Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust
			c. Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing					Planning Department
			d. Work with local land trusts to create an inventory of possible rare species in Oyster Creek's salt marsh.	Phase 2	Administration	Year 3					Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust
		4.2	Ensure local ordinances include up-to-date methods and best practices for wetland protection.								
			a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require applicants 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.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months		\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)		Planning Department
			b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to consider as part of the review process pertinent habitat maps and information regarding critical natural resources.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months		\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)		Planning Department
			c. Work with a qualified professional engineer (or Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District) to amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review Ordinances to incorporate low-impact development standards for stormwater management.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months		\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)		Planning Department, Maine DEP, Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District
			d. Ensure continued compliance with the Maine DEP Chapter 1000 standards for Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing			Staff-time		Planning Department

IMPLEMENTATION: NATURAL RESOURCES

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to: wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well protected and healthy.										
		4.3	Protect and restore local wildlife habitats.								
				a. Distribute information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.	Phase 1	Assessing	Year 2		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Develop and provide educational information to property owners near areas such as Castner Creek, Salt Bay, and Oyster Creek about working with local land trusts to permanently protect undeveloped areas, such as through conservation easements or similar.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 2		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				c. Implement a GIS mapping process, including information from the US Fish & Wildlife Service Wetlands Inventory to assist Town staff, the Planning Board, and property owners with understanding clearly where wetlands are located.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Year 3		\$	GIS Contractor	
			d. Promptly update the Town's GIS wetland maps by incorporating peer-reviewed wetland delineations submitted by applicants of proposed development projects.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		\$	GIS Contractor		

IMPLEMENTATION: WATER RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.										
		3.1	Protect current and potential drinking water sources.								
				a. Work with LincolnHealth and the Pines Mobile Home Park on acquiring land surrounding their wellheads, or adopt strict wellhead protection standards in these areas.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 3		Staff-time	LincolnHealth, Pines Mobile Home Park, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
		3.2	Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to ensure high water quality of the Town's drinking supply.								
				a. Improve signage on the access trail from Biscay Road to notify the public that Little Pond is a source of drinking water and outline what recreational activities are not allowed.	Phase 2	Great Salt Bay Sanitary District	Year 4		\$	Selectboard	
				b. Adopt an Ordinance that prohibits landing seaplanes on Little Pond.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 3	6 months	Staff-time	Administration, Great Salt Bay Sanitary District	
				c. See Strategy #3.3.a.							
		3.3	Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.								
				a. Provide staff support to assist the Sanitary District in applying for grants which will improve water quality and/or upgrade existing sewer systems (especially moving vulnerable pump stations out of flood hazard areas).	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing			Administration, Planning Department	
		3.4	Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.								
				a. Work with local partners to implement the LakeSmart Program (which organizes landowners to volunteer to not use fertilizers and pesticides on their land).	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 6			Planning Department, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	

IMPLEMENTATION: WATER RESOURCES

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.										
			3.5	Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.							
				a. Establish a relationship with a qualified third-party engineering peer reviewer who can review projects slated for Planning Board review for compliance with stormwater standards and who can suggest modifications to encourage more low-impact development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1		\$		Planning Department
				b. Communicate with contractors regarding the Town's erosion and sediment control policies.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		Staff-time		Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District
				c. Ensure enforcement of the Town's erosion and sediment control policies during construction.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		Staff-time		Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District
				d. See Strategy #4.2.c and #4.2.d.							
			3.6	Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.							
				a. Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		
				b. Provide contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine in order to encourage landowners to protect water quality.	Phase 2	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		
				c. Collaborate with the Maine DEP and local conservation organizations to understand the impact projected increases in annual precipitation will have on stormwater runoff to help minimize future contamination of waterways.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust

IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The Town supports thriving local fishing, aquaculture, shellfishing, and marine resource activities.										
		6.1		Include existing, potential, and historic working waterfronts and harbors in local planning efforts.							
				a. See Strategy #6.3.a.							
		6.2		Give preference to water-dependent land uses over other uses and protect working waterfronts from residential or non-water dependent development pressures.							
				a. Review and revise as necessary the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that water-dependent land uses are allowed in waterfront areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations are not prioritizing non-water dependent land uses over water-dependent ones in waterfront areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
			c. See Strategy #6.3.a.								

IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.										
		6.3		Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.							
				a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6	18 months	\$\$ (professional consultant costs)	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Darling Marine Center, Planning Department	
				b. Work with local property owners and land trusts to protect identified points of physical access to coastal waters	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Ongoing		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Administration	
		6.4		Protect and expand visual access points (scenic views) of the community's marine resources.							
				a. See Strategy #5.2.a and #5.2.b.							
		6.5		Promote public access to the shoreline.							
				a. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.	Phase 2	Assessing	Year 5		Staff-time		
		6.6		Balance water-dependent land uses with other complementary land uses, including opportunities for outdoor recreation.							
				a. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department	
		6.7		Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.							
				a. See Strategy #6.3.a, 6.5.a, and 6.6.a.							

IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The Salt Bay is a protected and well-managed ecosystem.										
		6.8	Accommodate changes in estuarine environment resulting from sea-level rise, including (but not limited to) enabling salt marsh migration.								
			a. Encourage the purchase or permanent conservation of uplands adjacent to salt (tidal) marshes to allow marshes to migrate inland as sea level rises.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Ongoing		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust		

IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.										
	6.9	Keep up-to-date with changes in FEMA’s flood mapping.									
				a. Update the Floodplain Management Ordinance accordingly as new FIRM maps become available from FEMA.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
	6.10	Limit new construction in areas that will be impacted by a tide five feet higher than the highest astronomical tide.									
				a. Revise the Shoreland Zoning Map around the Damariscotta River to incorporate highest astronomical tide + 5 feet projections, limiting construction within these areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
	6.11	Preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats.									
				a. Collaborate with the Darling Marine Center and local land trusts to research reasons for shellfish population declines and continually monitor populations; refine the Town’s shellfish management program accordingly.	Phase 2	Shellfish Committee	Ongoing		Volunteer time	Harbormaster	
	6.12	Expand our understanding of the productivity of coastal waters and the Damariscotta River.									
				a. Promote events, education opportunities, and school programs that connect people to Damariscotta’s working waterfront.	Phase 3	Harbor-master	Ongoing		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
	6.13	Promote the economic value of the community’s renewable marine resources.									
				a. Ensure that marine-based businesses are included in economic development programs and incentives.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Administration	
				b. Promote the Aquaculture Pioneers and Maine Aquaculture Apprenticeship Program.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing			Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce	
	6.14	Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance, even in areas where development may occur.									
				a. Educate shorefront property owners on the importance of protecting and enhancing vegetative buffers along the shorefront through existing “ShoreSmart” programs.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	

IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources		
	The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.											
		6.15		Improve air quality to protect the health of all people.								
				a. Sweep streets early in the spring to minimize dust particles in the air.	Phase 2	Public Works Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration		
				b. See Strategies #10.7.a-e, 10.8.a-b, and 10.9.a-b.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 8		\$			
		6.16		Protect and improve marine habitat and water quality.								
				a. Provide staff support to Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to apply for grants to replace existing overboard discharges.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, Maine DEP		
				b. Provide information to owners of marine businesses and industries about participation in the Maine Clean Boatyards and Marinas Program.	Phase 3	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Ongoing			Administration, Planning Department		
		6.17		Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.								
				a. Develop alternatives to municipal riverside snow dump in an effort to reduce hydrocarbon pollution to the river waters.	Phase 2	Public Works	Ongoing			Maine DEP; Maine DMR; Aquaculture companies		
				b. Advocate for Maine Department of Marine Resources to limit introduction of invasive species by prohibiting gear transfer to the river from other growing areas without precautions.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration; Maine DMR		

IMPLEMENTATION: RECREATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Outdoor recreation opportunities, especially access to surface waters, are protected.										
		9.1	Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.								
				a. Develop a plan to improve Biscay Beach as a usable site, specifically addressing known conflicts between boats and beach-goers as well as known parking issues.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	
				b. Implement the above referenced plan to improve Biscay Beach.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 5		Project dependent	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee; Public Works Department	
		9.2	Seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to all major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.								
				a. Create a formalized water access plan to water bodies where access is not currently available.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Selectboard, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Provide educational materials to private property owners about the benefits of available state programs and/or conservation easements in order to encourage permanent public access to our woods and waters.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6			Assessing	
				c. Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A, and MDIFW's Outdoor Partners Program.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6			Assessing	
				d. See Strategy #9.4.a.							

IMPLEMENTATION: RECREATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation.										
		9.3		Preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.							
				a. Create a Recreation & Open Space Plan that identifies: (1) Priority sites that may be appropriate for recreation/conservation uses or trail network connectivity (through a clearly defined evaluation process); (2) Strategies to preserve land, including funding sources as applicable; and (3) How the land will be managed in the future (e.g. how it will be used or developed for either conservation or recreation purposes).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	2 years	\$\$	Planning Department, Selectboard, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
		9.4	Comply with the US Access Board's minimum accessibility guidelines in all new construction to ensure that all Damariscotta residents, regardless of age or ability, have access to both active and passive recreational amenities (including water access).								
				a. Create an accessible water access point for individuals with disabilities.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin ear-marking funds Year 5		\$\$-\$\$\$ (Suggested funding sources: AARP Community Challenge grant)	Administration, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Require that projects where recreational amenities intended for use by the general public (e.g. commercial marinas and docks) comply with the US Access Board's minimum accessibility guidelines .	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 5	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
		9.5	Identify and acquire open space within the Growth Area for recreational purposes.								
			a. Create a park within the Growth Area identified in this Plan in order to create an open and attractive space for community members to gather. Considerations may include performance space, a skate park, a place for people to gather, a playground for young children, and other desires driven by the community and budgetary constraints.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin ear-marking funds Year 5	5-7 years	\$\$\$ (Suggested funding sources: Annual Reserves)	Administration, Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee		
			b. See Strategy #9.3.a.								

IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Transportation infrastructure efficiently accommodates the Town's growth and economic development.										
		10.1	Maximize the functionality and efficiency of state and state-aid roads.								
				a. Participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including continuing to advocate for funding for priority MDOT roadway improvement projects, including active transportation improvements as well as improving the safety for all users of the School Street/ Route 1B intersection, possibly including roundabout solutions.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing				Administration
				b. Create a pull-off area for the Concord Coachlines bus that will minimize vehicular traffic backup and unsafe conditions on Main Street. This pull-off area should be located within the Growth Area designated as part of this Plan, be connected by sidewalks and bicycle connections, and include a proper bus shelter for those waiting to be picked up.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds for feasibility assessment Year 1		\$\$\$\$ (Suggested funding source: MDOT PPI grants for feasibility)		Public Works Department, Administration
		10.2	Advocate for the return of rail travel to the region.								
				a. Along with the Town of Newcastle, continue to advocate to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to bring rail travel to the region.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Ongoing				Town of Newcastle, Administration, NNEPRA, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission
		10.3	Project potential costs of capital investments, maintenance, and operations of the local transportation network beyond one fiscal year for policy-making and planning purposes.								
				a. Develop a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network (beginning with the prioritized improvements identified in this Plan).	Phase 1	Public Works Committee	Year 1	12 months			Public Works Department, Administration, Selectboard
				b. Adequately fund reserves to allow for the implementation of the prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan referenced above.	Phase 1	Budget Committee, Selectboard	Ongoing				Public Works Department, Administration
				c. See Strategy #11.1.a.							

IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Transportation systems meet local and regional needs safely and efficiently.										
		10.4	Balance the needs of all users regardless of mode (pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles) or ability, by providing a safe and efficient transportation network.								
			a. Identify funding to explore the feasibility of "context-sensitive" traffic calming measures and the installation of bicycle lanes along Route 1B from School Street to Biscay Road.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds for feasibility assessment Year 1			\$\$\$\$ (Suggested funding source: MDOT PPI grants for feasibility)	Public Works Department, Administration	
			b. Refine the assessment criteria for rating roads and prioritizing improvements utilized by the Public Works Committee to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks and road shoulders).	Phase 1	Public Works Committee	Year 2			Staff-time	Public Works Department, Selectboard	
			c. Become a designated Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 8			Staff-time	Administration, PSAC	
			d. Become a designated Age-Friendly Community by AARP.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 5			Staff-time	Administration, PSAC	
			e. Adopt a sidewalk design policy to include a minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2			Staff-time	Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
			f. Advocate at the state-level for MDOT's customer service ratings to include "Complete Streets" criteria, especially within village areas.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Staff-time	PSAC	
			g. Advocate at the state-level for continued implementation of MDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Staff-time	PSAC	
		10.5	Balance the needs of all users regardless of mode (pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles) or ability, by providing a safe and efficient transportation network.								
			a. Conduct a parking study of the downtown and surrounding streets, including the identification of public parking areas, the demand for parking during both peak season (summer) and off-season (winter) and recommendations for efficient use of parking for both employees and visitors, and the identification of any known issues.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	12 months		\$\$ (professional consultant cost)	Planning Department, Public Works Department	
			b. Implement results of the parking study noted above.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 5	12 months		Staff-time	Administration, Public Works Department	
			c. Review and revise minimum parking requirements included in the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to ensure that these regulations support community goals.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months		\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	

IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Land use and development patterns complement transportation networks and promote mobility.										
		10.6	Address transportation planning and land use planning together as two parts of the same issue.								
				a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); state access management regulations under 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and state traffic permitting regulations for large developments under 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Amend the Town's Subdivision Ordinance to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. Amend the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Ordinances to include sidewalk design requirements including minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
			d. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require sidewalks along the frontage of new development located within the Growth Area as defined by this Plan.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		

IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Transportation investments and policies support a more sustainable community.										
		10.7	Increase sustainable mobility by investing in active transportation (bicycling and pedestrian) infrastructure improvements.								
				a. Conduct a walking audit of existing sidewalk locations and all streets and intersections within the Growth Area identified as part of this Plan, to better understand where pedestrian improvements may be necessary.	Phase 1	Public Safety & Accessibility Collaborative (PSAC)	Year 2	8 months	Volunteer time	Public Works Committee	
				b. Revise the Town's policy related to the maintenance of road surface markings (namely crosswalks) to require that they are repainted at least twice per year or research a more resilient paint option to ensure crosswalks are visible year-round.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 1	4 months	Staff-time	Public Works Committee, Public Works Department	
				c. Require that sidewalks are maintained in winter weather at or about at the same rate as roadways.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	4 months	Staff-time	Plowing contractor	
				d. Identify the location of potentially public rights-of-way in the community that could be upgraded to expand bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 3	6 months	\$ (utilizing summer intern)		
				e. Refer to and comply with the PSAC Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility especially when MDOT is planning for roadway improvements to priority corridors (as identified in the resolution).	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent	Administration, Public Works Department	
		10.8	Accommodate the switch to electric vehicles.								
				a. Work with CMP to identify any upgrades needed to support more robust EV charging and solar power infrastructure.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4		Staff-time	Administration	
				b. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that certain development projects are "EV-ready" (e.g. that conduit is installed for EV charging stations).	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 4	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department; See SMPDC's Municipal EV Readiness Toolkit (2021)	
		10.9	Minimize local vehicle miles traveled (VMT).								
				a. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town's transportation network	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 7 / as needed		Staff-time	Public Works Department	
				b. Publicize existing ride-providing services (such as Lincoln County FISH) and ride-sharing networks (such as GO MAINE).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	3 months	Staff and volunteer time (as part of website updates)	Town Clerk, Administration	

IMPLEMENTATION: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	Public facilities and services efficiently accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.									
		11.1		Identify public service needs and develop efficient, actionable strategies to meet them.						
				a. Continue to explore options for regional delivery of local services.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration
		11.2		Provide public facilities and services that promote and support development in identified Growth Areas.						
				a. Strengthen our collaboration with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to better direct the desired development pattern of the community (e.g. ensure that sewer infrastructure is available throughout the Growth Area designated in this Plan).	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department
				b. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Administration
		11.3		Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.						
				a. See Strategy #10.3.a.						
		11.4		Continue to explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital and maintenance investments within the community.						
		11.5		Reduce Damariscotta's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.						
			See Policy #7.12							

IMPLEMENTATION: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The Town considers the impacts of a changing climate in its capital investment planning.										
		11.6	Plan and implement strategies to create a more resilient community.								
			a. Maintain enrollment in the State's Community Resilience Partnership program and other programs that offer municipal assistance for climate resiliency efforts.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing				Administration, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Planning Department	
			b. Use the most current flood risk standards when planning for major capital investments to elevate roads and bridges, improve road surfaces, and increase culvert sizes to make them more flood-proof.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
			c. When making capital budget decisions, conduct a long-term cost benefit analysis of implementing more resilient designs.	Phase 1	Selectboard, Budget Committee	Ongoing		Project dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
			d. Through the Capital Improvement Plan, plan to transition the municipal vehicle fleet to electric or alternative-fuel vehicles as existing vehicles reach the end of their useful lifespan.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	Ongoing	Vehicle dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
		e. Continue to pursue energy retrofits to municipal buildings.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee		

IMPLEMENTATION: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Communication between the Town government and Damariscotta citizens is proactive and transparent.										
		11.7		Ensure ongoing and regular maintenance of the Town's established communication channels.							
				a. Pursue a comprehensive update to the Town's website to make it more user-friendly.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	6 months	\$\$	Selectboard	
				b. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the posting of meeting agendas, packets, and minutes to the Town website that all Boards and Committees will adhere to.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	Ongoing	Staff-time		
			c. Develop and implement consistent communication strategies for public outreach.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	Ongoing	Staff-time			

FUTURE LAND USE

Overview

The Future Land Use section outlines the long-term vision for how our town should grow and change over the next decade and beyond. It guides Town staff, elected officials, consultants, and residents in updating town policies and ordinances.

It is important to note that a Comprehensive Plan is a visioning document, not a set of regulations. Therefore, it should be used to guide, limit, or encourage development that aligns with community interests as defined in the Plan. One major way municipalities influence new development is through the expenditure of public funds on public infrastructure. Public utilities and services like construction and maintenance of streets, sewers, and water networks can enable or limit the development certain land areas can practically accommodate. Thus, one crucial function of this Plan will be to guide the Town as it considers how or if to spend money on infrastructure maintenance, replacement, or expansion. These capital investments will be incorporated into the Town's Capital Improvement Plan, which should align the related spending with Town policies and community priorities.

In addition, this section of the Plan can be used to evaluate current zoning regulations and other land use policies and proposed amendments or revisions to align these tools with this section. However, any new land use ordinances (or amendments to existing ordinances) will require additional community input and careful consideration.

Planning History

While zoning and land use regulations began to be implemented in some parts of the country just after the turn of the 20th century, it was not until the 1970s that the State of Maine mandated the local adoption of shoreland zoning provisions and also provided a mechanism and regulations for local governments to review proposed subdivisions. In 1988, the State of Maine enacted its Growth Management Act (Title 30-A MRSA § 4312 - 4350), directing local governments to regulate the type, amount, location, quality, and rate of land use development. While the State does not require comprehensive planning, any municipality seeking to enact zoning regulations must base them on a town-adopted Comprehensive Plan that has been approved by the State (in accordance with the Growth Management Act).

Damariscotta's Local Planning History

- 1961-2: First **Comprehensive Plan** developed and adopted by the Town.
- 1972: Town enacted state-mandated **Shoreland Zoning** and formed the **Planning Board** to administer.
- 1985: **Comprehensive Plan** developed and adopted by the Town, upon which the first Land Use Ordinance would be based.
- 1985: First **Public Vending Ordinance** adopted by the Town
- 1986: **Land Use Ordinance** adopted in the Spring of 1986 but repealed that Fall.
- 1989: Town enacted its first **Subdivision Review Ordinance**.
- 1992: Updated Comprehensive Plan developed but did not receive State approval.
- 1994: First **Site Plan Review Ordinance** adopted by the Town.
- 1997: A **Land Use Ordinance** adopted by the Town, upon which today's Land Use Ordinance is still based.
- 2000: **2000 Comprehensive Plan** adopted by the Town and approved by the State.
- 2002: Land Use Ordinance amended to include Wireless Communication District.
- 2003: **Downtown Plan** developed with strategies to preserve and enhance the downtown village area.
- 2005: Land Use Ordinance amended to limit the size of retail stores to no more than 35,000 sq. feet of floor area.
- 2008: Standards for Large Scale Development added to the Site Plan Review Ordinance.
- 2008: Damariscotta **Sidewalk-Bicycle Plan** developed by the Town.
- 2008-10: **Heart & Soul Community Planning Project** undertaken by the Town with an eye toward an updated vision for the community and form-based land use standards.
- 2010: **Shore and Harbor Master Plan** developed by the Town.
- 2011: Updates to the **Comprehensive Plan** and adoption of a **form-based code** rejected by Town voters.
- 2012: A proposed expansion of the C-2 commercial district to include Piper Mill Rd rejected by Town voters.
- 2014: **2014 Comprehensive Plan** approved by the State and adopted by the Town.
- 2015: **Newcastle-Damariscotta Bike-Ped Plan** developed jointly by the two Towns.
- 2015: **Floodplain Management Ordinance** adopted by the Town.
- 2016: **Sign Ordinance** adopted by the Town.
- 2019: **Adult Use Marijuana Licensing Ordinance** adopted by the Town.
- 2020: **Historic Preservation Ordinance** adopted by the Town.
- 2021: **Solar Energy Systems Ordinance** adopted by the Town.

FUTURE LAND USE

Process of Defining the Future Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is based on feedback from online and in-person public engagement held throughout the planning process, described in further detail in the Planning Process section. The Future Land Use section specifically draws on feedback received at two Future Land Use Workshops held in January 2024. Additionally, this Future Land Use section incorporates a variety of other inputs, including:

- Existing land uses
- Historic development patterns of the community
- Existing sewer and water networks
- The availability of three-phase power
- Transportation infrastructure
- Natural landscapes, including wetlands, waterbodies, and flood hazard areas
- Protected open space areas

Relation to Vision Statement and Guiding Values

This Plan is grounded in the Vision Statement and corresponding Guiding Values identified by the community during this planning process. The Vision summarizes the community’s desired character and is an aspirational statement to guide us in our planning through 2035.

“Damariscotta is the cultural and economic hub of central Lincoln County. While some level of development is necessary to meet the needs of our community, we are committed to growing in a way that celebrates our defining assets: our historic downtown, our unique natural habitats, and our commitment to being a welcoming, healthy, and diverse community. We are moving toward increased sustainability, liveability, and vibrancy in all of our decisions.”

The following Guiding Values are intended to be over-arching lenses to be applied to all future decision-making in Damariscotta, including decisions related to land use.



Sustainability

For our purposes, this means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (across environmental, economic, and social outcomes)



Livability

This includes a range of outcomes that impact the well-being of individuals and communities as a whole, including:

- Housing
- Walkable and bikeable to amenities, including infrastructure
- Environment and health (drinking water quality metrics, access to passive and active exercise opportunities, access to nature)



Vibrancy

Broadly defined as being full of energy or life. With regard to this Plan, this means maintaining a sense of place and opportunities to connect with others.

FUTURE LAND USE

Relation to Priority Goals

Throughout the planning process, community members identified their top priorities.

Creating new housing was identified as a significant need, with small- to moderately-sized buildings (2-10 units) seen as the most appropriate housing type to locate in existing residential areas near the downtown village. In addition, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), conversions of existing houses to accommodate additional units, and the construction of townhomes and tiny house communities were also seen as ways to enhance existing residential areas.

The community identified the historic downtown area as an essential feature of Damariscotta that should be preserved and enhanced. Recommended strategies include addressing the realities of flooding, allowing for appropriate infill development, and improving pedestrian infrastructure and amenities.

Mobility was identified as a significant concern in the areas adjacent to Main Street and the Biscay Road intersection, with improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, traffic calming, and public transportation seen as top priorities. This area also has a high potential to accommodate new residential infill development to complement the existing businesses and services.

Finally, the community identified preserving open and natural space as a top priority, especially in more rural areas. The reasons for limited development and conserving certain areas of town included protecting wildlife habitat and water quality, utilizing areas for recreation, and maintaining agricultural activities.

Based on the Vision Statement, Guiding Values, community priority goals, and other feedback received during the planning process, the Comprehensive Plan Committee developed the following priority Goals for this Plan. These Goals and their accompanying Policies and Strategies are described in further detail in the Taking Action section of this Plan.

- » ***Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.***
- » ***Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.***
- » ***The impacts of flooding on downtown historic buildings are mitigated.***
- » ***Land use and development patterns complement transportation networks and promote mobility.***
- » ***Transportation investments and policies support a more sustainable community.***
- » ***Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation.***
- » ***The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to wetlands, wildlife, fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well-protected and healthy.***
- » ***Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.***

These Goals will primarily need to be met through land use and related decisions made in the community. To that end, this section provides a framework to ensure that future land use decisions align with the Vision, Guiding Values, and Priority Goals.

FUTURE LAND USE

Framework & Context

Growth Areas & Rural Areas

Identification of Growth Areas and Rural Areas is a requirement for State approval of any Comprehensive Plan.

A **Growth Area** is the part(s) of Town where the community wishes to direct the majority of new growth and land development. The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes growth over the next ten years (the prescribed life of this Plan), with long-term (multi-decade) planning for Growth Areas also considered. Growth in these areas can include residential, commercial, industrial, or any other land use the community desires. **Growth Areas are not simply areas where new development and growth may happen but rather where the community feels that growth *should* happen and would be willing to invest to support such growth.** Growth Areas are intended to be well-served by public infrastructure and are proactively planned to accommodate a wide range of uses.

For the purposes of comprehensive planning, a **Rural Area** is any area of town outside of the defined Growth Area. New development and growth may still occur in a Rural Area, but for various reasons, development in a Rural Area is typically less intense. Rural Areas tend to have less infrastructure and may include areas identified for agricultural uses, low-density housing, conservation, or other purposes. While Rural Areas will not receive the same amount of public investment into infrastructure as Growth Areas, private property owners are still free to invest in their property. As such, new growth may occur in designated Rural Areas, just without the express encouragement of the municipality. While the municipality may not be encouraging growth, it may still be desirable for the municipality to coordinate, guide, and generally plan for growth and development in these areas to help protect and maintain the qualities that residents value. Growth and Rural Areas can both have multiple sub-areas with more specific purposes or intended uses (e.g., medical, industrial, or recreational).

State Standards for Growth Areas

The State notes that land areas designated as Growth Areas must include: (1) already built-out areas that require maintenance or additional capital investment to support existing or limited infill development; (2) located adjacent to existing densely populated areas, to the extent practical; (3) be designed to encourage compact, efficient development patterns (including mixed-uses) and discourage development sprawl; and (4) promote nodes or clusters of development along roads.¹

¹ Maine Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, as amended through August 2011. <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/07/105/105c208.doc>

FUTURE LAND USE

Further, the State expects communities to undertake the following actions to plan for and regulate land development within their identified Growth Areas:

1. Establish development standards;
2. Establish timely permitting standards;
3. Prevent inappropriate development in natural hazard areas or critical natural areas;
4. Ensure that needed public services are available; and
5. Direct a minimum of 75% of municipal “growth-related capital investments” during the life of the Comprehensive Plan (which are specific funds to improve or expand infrastructure and services that support new development, not funds used on existing infrastructure or public services).

Municipalities can address the first three items through local land use regulations, including establishing basic standards and a review process for proposed construction projects. Actions 4 and 5 require both financial investment and active implementation by the Town and, therefore, require ongoing public support and engagement.

Hubs and Corridors

The Growth Areas identified in this Plan are centered around “Hubs” and “Corridors.” These provide a structure for planning the community’s land use activities.

Hubs are anchor points or centers around which people, businesses, and activities tend to cluster, such as a church, town hall, train station, or natural feature like a river crossing. They anchor people’s “mental maps” (their understanding of the physical layout of their community). The most successful Hubs balance access and connectivity with the needs and functions of the uses and activities within and around them.

Corridors are the pathways and connections between the important places (or Hubs) in a community. Most major corridors follow roadways, like Main Street, but they can also be footpaths, utility lines, or other forms of connection. The most efficient corridors accommodate several uses (i.e., walkways, roads, and utility lines) and intersect with other corridors.

The most important Hubs are often located at the intersection of several Corridors, which can be highly valuable and extremely functional, but are often complex and must try to balance several competing needs.

5-min / ¼ mile walk

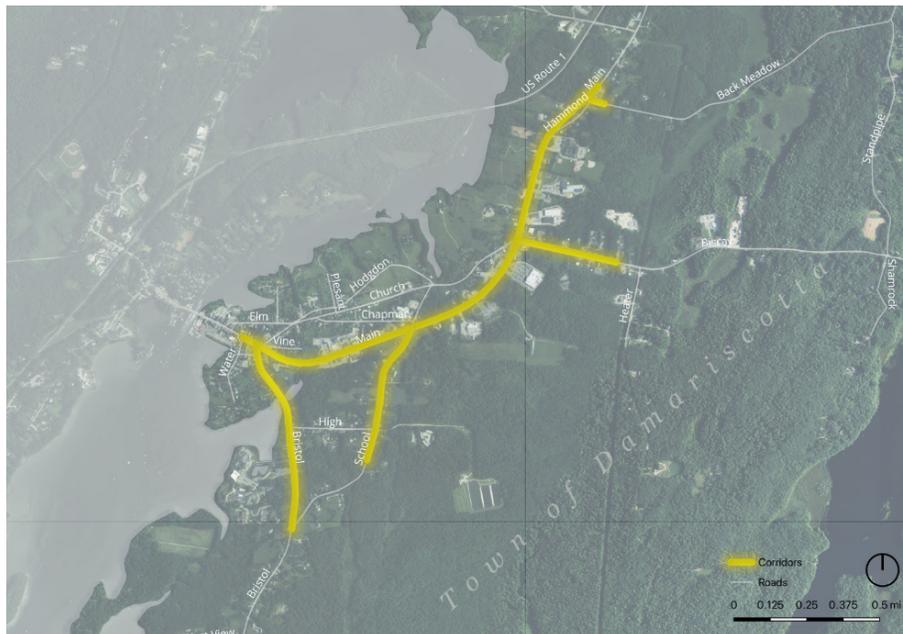
A 5-minute walk is approximately the distance people are willing to walk before seeking an alternative, such as biking or driving. At an average walking pace, a 5-minute walk can cover approximately ¼ miles.

FUTURE LAND USE



This Plan identifies two Major Hubs: the **Historic Downtown Hub** and the **Biscay Road Hub**. Additionally, several Minor Hubs have been identified, including the areas near Hammond Road, School Street, Rising Tide Co-op, and Miles Street/High Street.

The most important Corridors identified in this plan are: (1) Main Street, from the bridge over Damariscotta River to approximately Back Meadow Road; 2) Bristol Road, north of School Street; and 3) School Street, stretching approximately ½ mile south from Main Street.



These identified hubs, corridors, and the areas around and between them capture a significant portion of existing development within the Town and are near several important development opportunities. These areas also face several challenges, including flooding, insufficient public infrastructure, or inhospitable existing development. More details and specifics on individual areas are provided in the sections below.

Traditional New England Development Pattern

Historical development patterns are still evident in Damariscotta, especially in and around the downtown area. However, Damariscotta's growth as a regional service center has caused retail and service sectors to sprawl beyond the compact downtown village area and along Route 1B (Upper Main Street). As Damariscotta considers future potential growth and development patterns, considering traditional New England characteristics (such as those still showcased within the downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods) can provide valuable guidance for the community.

Early and traditional New England towns and villages shared several defining features that many people find attractive for the vibrant, livable, and sustainable places they create.

- » Villages were often of a **medium density**, between the high density of cities and the low density of rural or even suburban areas. This allowed for the sustainable provision of municipal services within the village area while retaining convenient access to natural and rural areas.
- » Villages were often **compact** and of a size and scale that sustained vibrant communities and strong local economies. The buildings, streets, and open spaces were constructed at a **human scale** (or a size and form that was usable and comfortable for most people). Buildings were not too tall (though they were often multiple stories), and streets were not too wide (though today they can still usually accommodate modern automobiles that did not exist when the streets were laid out).
- » Residences came in a range of building types, including medium-scale housing or '**missing-middle housing**' that contained several units but was compatible with single-unit houses, shops, or mixed-use buildings.
- » Parcels of land and buildings were laid out based on the most basic form of human transportation: walking. Even as the modes of transportation evolved, the **walkable** nature of these villages continued to keep them functional and attractive places to live and do business.
- » Before zoning was common practice, villages were naturally **mixed-use** and contained a variety of functions within both neighborhoods and individual buildings that served people's daily needs. This allowed for convenient access to services, diversified, resilient local economies, and communities centered on a vibrant downtown.
- » Traditional New England villages commonly contained a **downtown** or main street that was the functional center of the community. Downtowns were often anchored by a town 'green' or 'common,' a **public open space** that served many purposes ranging from animal grazing to community gathering. Public space in traditional villages also came in various forms, from a particularly wide section of sidewalk at a prominent corner, to a town green, to a large park or cemetery, to a conserved natural area and wild habitat.
- » The benefits of traditional villages spread beyond the downtown area. They were **well-connected**, which allowed residential neighborhoods easy access to the services they needed on a daily basis.
- » While storefronts were uncommon in residential areas, home businesses and other local services were reasonably common.
- » Community spaces where people could gather were particularly important in traditional villages, as they allowed people to gather when they were not at home or work. These '**third places**' could be coffee shops, general stores, post offices, bars, parks, libraries, gyms, or any other place people can go and communities can form.

FUTURE LAND USE



While traditional New England villages developed out of necessity, their vibrant, livable, and sustainable character continues to be desirable and attainable today. Space was used efficiently, with buildings located near the street and lots utilizing minimal side yard setbacks, allowing public open space to be consolidated and more functional. Streets were designed to accommodate typical expected uses rather than infrequent extreme cases. Despite having limited available resources, traditional villages were able to meet the needs of residents.

While the traditional New England development pattern provides many valuable lessons, it was by no means perfect or without room for improvement. Technology, materials, or contemporary perspectives require modern approaches. Towns and villages were often laid out disregarding environmental considerations such as natural habitats, wetlands, and drainage. While diverse uses brought many benefits, incompatible or polluting uses could also be commingled with harmful consequences. Services that many people expect or require, such as fire protection, electricity, or modern-day communication infrastructure, were unavailable (or, if they were available, would be considered insufficient for modern needs).

In this plan, the Comprehensive Plan Committee recommends the features identified in Traditional New England Development should be preserved where they exist, like in the historic downtown, and fostered or encouraged in areas where they lack, like the area around the intersection of Main Street and Biscay Road.

FUTURE LAND USE

Incremental Growth

Incremental growth allows new development to naturally fit with what exists, to meet people's changing needs and is sensitive to the existing neighborhood context. Incremental development is characterized by smaller-scale individual projects of new building, rehabilitation or remodeling, and additions to existing structures, rather than a single large, consolidated project. These projects, with buildings of varying sizes, ages, unit counts, and bedroom counts are easier to adjust which helps accommodate ever-changing local needs. Incremental development better accommodates the needs of businesses or residents and can better adapt to sudden or unexpected changes, making the community more resilient. This kind of development lends itself well to targeted infill but also brings significant value to the development of new areas or neighborhoods.

“Missing Middle” Housing

“Missing middle” are multi-family or compact residential building types compatible in scale with single-unit houses. They are considered “missing” because the vast majority of housing developed in North America since the 1950s has either been single-unit houses or larger multi-unit buildings (10+ units).

These housing types provide compact, healthy, walkable neighborhoods and meet the need for housing at varying price points. Because of their scale, it is possible to integrate missing middle housing into existing neighborhoods composed primarily of single-unit detached homes without significant conflicts. Many neighborhoods built before the 1940s, that people perceive as primarily single-family detached homes, are actually made up of a mix of these missing middle housing types.



Missing Middle Housing Types (image credit: Opticos Design)

FUTURE LAND USE

By accommodating additional units and higher housing densities, missing middle housing allows more people to live near the services and amenities they need without requiring the addition or expansion of infrastructure. When regulating these housing types, the focus should be on the size and scale of the building rather than unit counts.

The major characteristics of missing middle housing types include:

- Located in a walkable context
- Lower perceived density, but enough to support services and amenities
- Small building footprints
- Smaller but very livable homes
- Live like a single-family home
- Rental or for-sale homes
- Thoughtful approach to parking
- Relatively simple construction
- Focus on a strong sense of community

This Plan recommends developing missing middle housing to address the documented housing crisis in the community and region. These housing types will help accommodate new units near existing services and amenities within the Growth Area.



Multiplex Housing



Townhouse Housing



Triplex/Triple Decker



Live/Work Units

FUTURE LAND USE

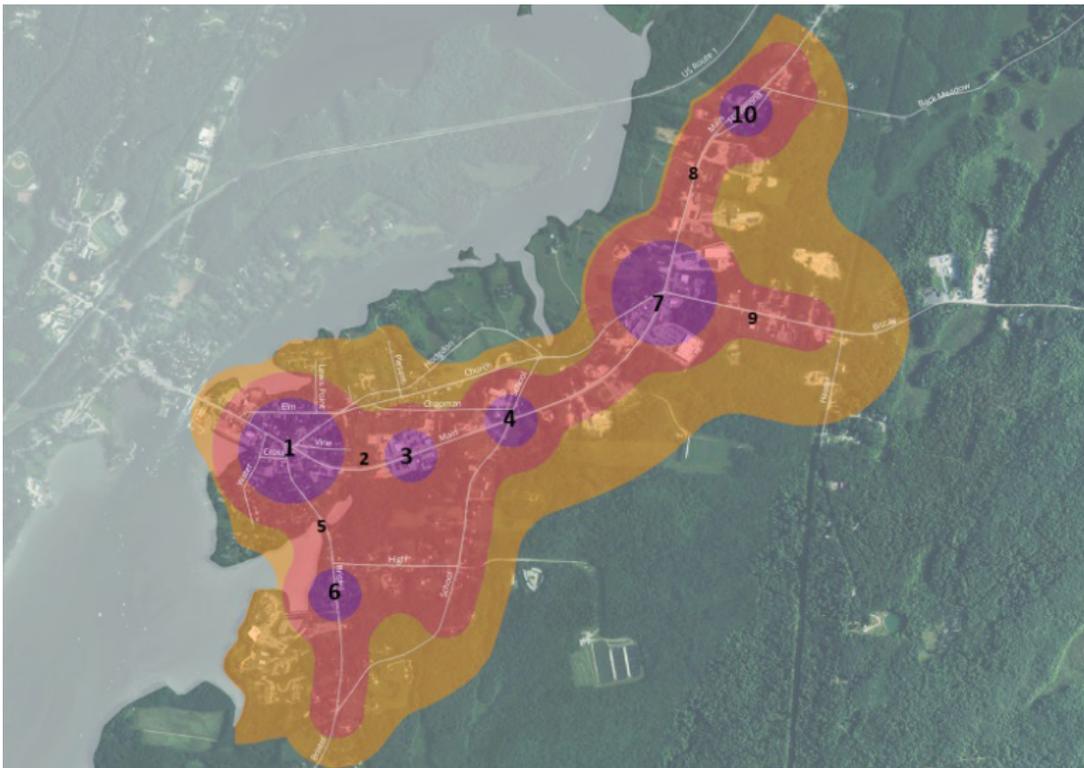
Growth Areas

This Plan identifies a Growth Area based on two Major Hubs, several Minor Hubs, and the Corridors that tie these areas together. While the entire Growth Area is intended to receive investment and accommodate the improvement and redevelopment of existing sites and new development, the areas directly adjacent to the Hubs and priority Corridors are considered the priority areas for new growth.

The Hubs (purple circles) are approximately ¼-mile (Major) and ⅛-mile (Minor) in diameter. An additional ⅛-mile beyond the identified Hubs and prioritized Corridors (red) are still considered Priority Areas well-suited for new growth. These Areas are generally no more than a five-minute walk from the center of one of the Hubs. Finally, the full extent of the Growth Area (inclusive of orange) ranges from approximately ⅛-mile to ¼-mile from the identified priority corridors and includes areas within 200 feet of the existing sewer network.

Not only are the areas at the center of the identified Major and Minor Hubs prioritized for new growth and public investment, but active, coordinated planning (such as neighborhood master plans or similar) should focus on these areas. To align implementation with the community's vision, specific outreach and community engagement should focus on working with neighborhood residents in and around these priority areas.

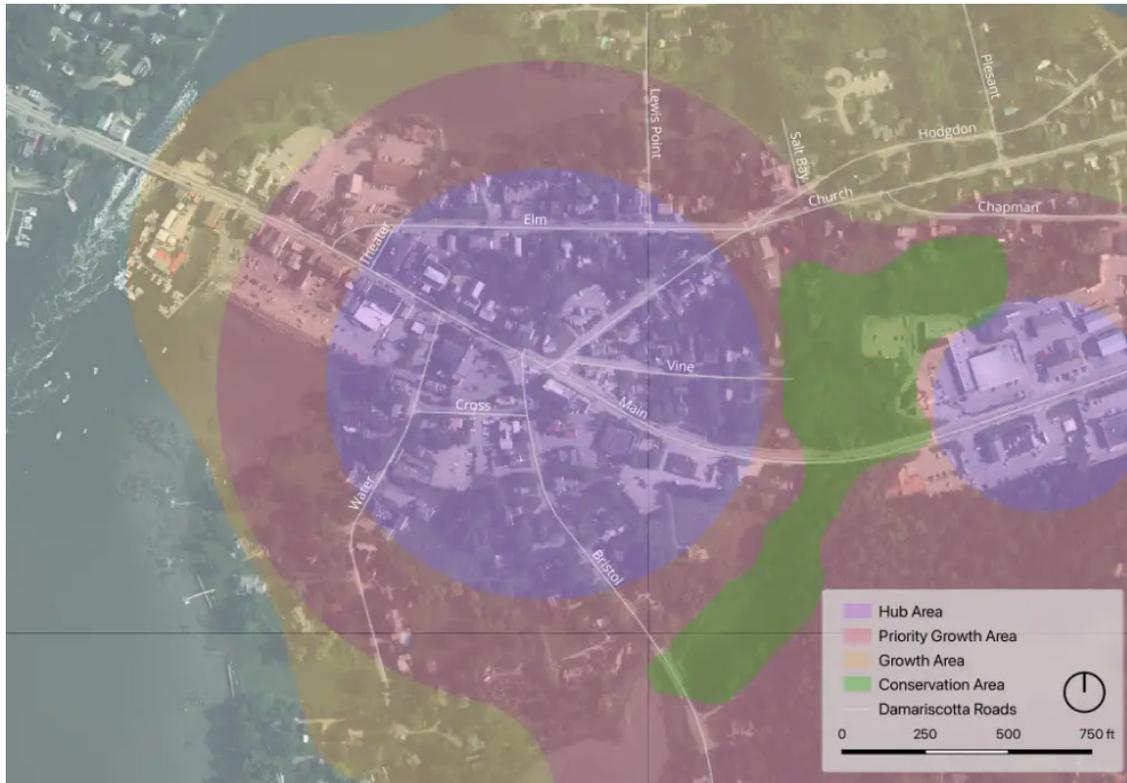
Growth Area Showing Hubs And Priority Development Areas



The Hubs and Corridors identified by this plan are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Historic Downtown Hub (Major) | 6. Miles Street/High Street Hub (Minor) |
| 2. Main Street Corridor (South of School Street) | 7. Biscay Road Hub (Major) |
| 3. Rising Tide Co-op Hub (Minor) | 8. Main Street Corridor (North of School Street) |
| 4. School Street Hub (Minor) | 9. Biscay Road Corridor |
| 5. Bristol Road Corridor | 10. Hammond Road Hub (Minor) |

Historic Downtown Hub Map



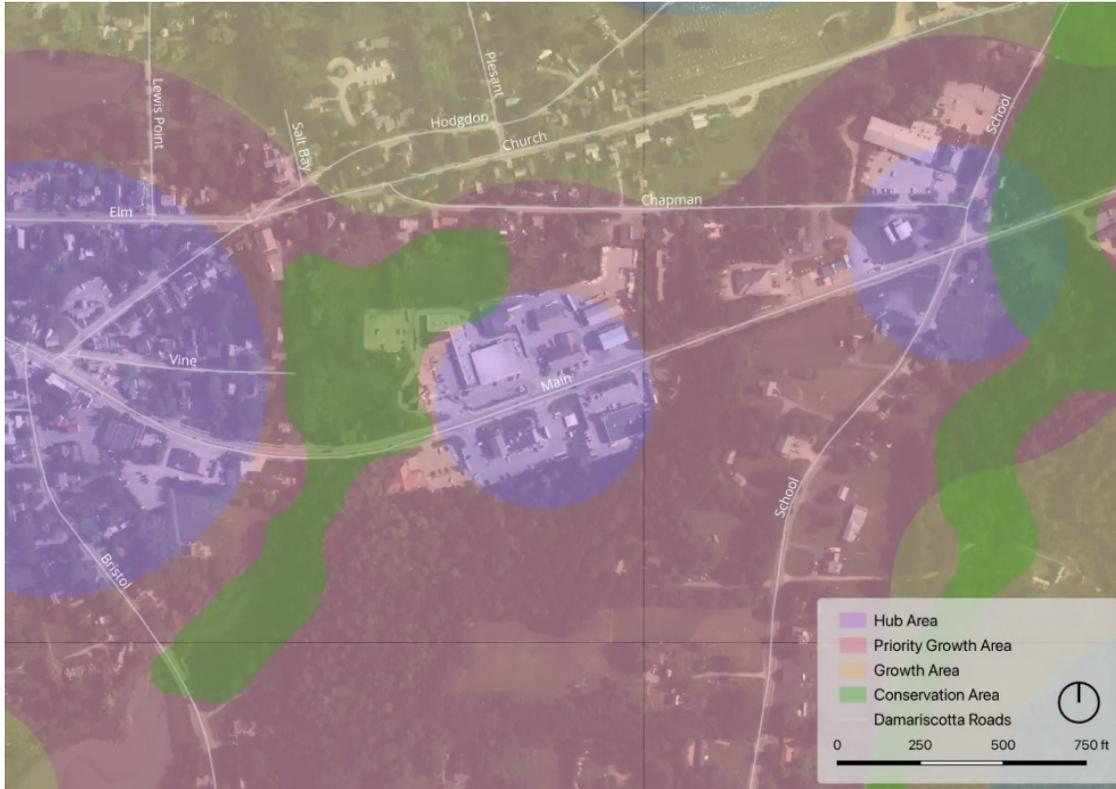
Historic Downtown Hub (Major)

Damariscotta's historic downtown is the community's most vibrant and valuable area, but it also faces several challenges, including significant flooding, congestion, and aging buildings and infrastructure. Accounting for these and other challenges, this area and the nearby sections of the Growth Area should continue receiving investment to maintain, protect, and grow appropriately.

The center of this Hub was deliberately located at the top of the hill where the Damariscotta Baptist Church currently sits to encourage investment and growth to migrate away from the lower-lying areas impacted by flooding. The assets that make the current downtown attractive and functional (a dense, coordinated mix of uses in human-scale buildings served by shared infrastructure like sidewalks and sewer) should serve as a model for other parts of town, with appropriate adjustments.

Developing a plan specifically for the historic downtown area should be a priority for the Town to address impacts from rising water, congestion, and other issues and encourage new investment in the area, including development or redevelopment of underutilized properties. A Downtown TIF with its required Downtown Master Plan could be a valuable tool and should be considered, incorporating input from residents.

Main Street Corridor Map



Main Street Corridor (south of School Street)

The vibrancy and functionality of the historic downtown should be extended beyond the Main Street storefronts. Expanding the walkable development pattern to accommodate a mix of uses in new compact, human-scale buildings can build on the downtown's current success. This development pattern should be extended up Main Street beyond the Damariscotta Baptist Church. Parts of Water Street, Bristol Road, and other adjacent areas may also benefit from this type of new growth once environmental, historical, and other considerations are assessed.

Private parking lots should not be located along Main Street or other major thoroughfares but should be consolidated behind buildings and actively managed. The space in front of buildings should be prioritized for people, daily life, and the community.

Downtown Residential Neighborhoods

The residential areas adjacent to the historic downtown and the Main Street Corridor (including the Rising Tide Co-op Hub (Minor), School Street Hub (Minor), the Miles Street/High Street Hub (Minor), as well as the Bristol Road Corridor) are some of the most favored areas in town. These areas should be further studied so local regulations can protect their character and encourage compatible infill development. These neighborhoods' scale, layout, diversity, density, and other characteristics may also serve as models for new development in other parts of the Town.

Rising Tide Co-op Hub Map



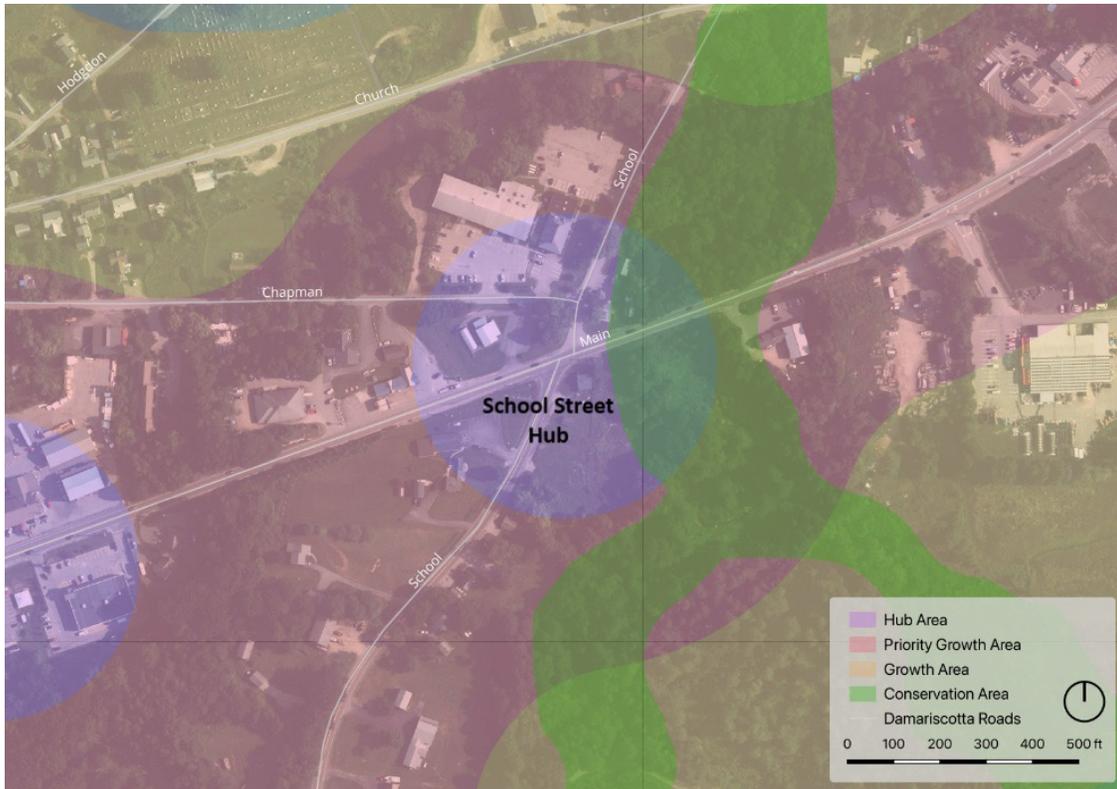
Rising Tide Co-op Hub (Minor)

This section of the Main Street corridor lacks many features that make the downtown vital and functional. Though this Hub covers approximately the same amount of land area, there are significantly fewer businesses than in the downtown and no residences.

A more efficient land use pattern could accommodate new businesses, add housing, and create a more pleasant environment. The excessive setbacks from the road, overprovision of individual parking, lack of sidewalks, and minimal connections to adjacent areas within this Hub should all be remedied. With collaboration between the Town and the existing businesses and land owners, the area can transform into a mixed-use, well-connected, and sustainable hub to serve surrounding neighborhoods.

Existing buildings within this area are deteriorating due to unstable ground conditions and intermittent flooding. Restoration of the wetlands, which cross Main Street and drain into Day's Cove, could provide an opportunity to establish a natural corridor with pedestrian connections from Chapman Street to Bristol Road. Additional connections with surrounding undeveloped land could accommodate new housing and access to open space. Any new buildings will need to have elevated ground floors. Local ordinances should be reviewed and revised to ensure that people and property are protected from flooding.

School Street Hub Map



School Street Hub (Minor)

The intersection of School Street with Main Street is notoriously dangerous and problematic (see the Transportation section of this Plan for additional detail). The physical layout of the streets results in high vehicle speeds, difficult turning movements with limited visibility, regular traffic congestion, vehicle accidents, and general frustration. There are no sidewalks to accommodate walkers and the roads are not wide enough for cyclists to safely share with drivers. These issues significantly impact those traveling through and create an unpleasant environment for the surrounding properties. In addition, this is a critical access point for people trying to cross traffic from the north onto School Street and for those trying to access Main Street from areas in the southern part of town. No accommodations for users other than those driving in automobiles are provided.

This area includes the town municipal offices and police station in the former Castner School building. It has the potential to be an important hub for the community. Much of the land around the intersection is cleared and well-drained, making it suitable for new development. New businesses can be located along Main Street, while new residences can be placed behind and along School and/or Chapman Streets. A particularly attractive asset in the area is the corridor carved by Castner Creek. Part of the solution to fixing the dangerous intersection and the unwelcoming area around it should include pedestrian crossings, improved engineering for vehicle turning movements, and more coordinated building placement.

FUTURE LAND USE

Downtown Conservation Opportunity: Days Cove

The watercourse, which includes the wetlands adjacent to Dollar Tree, the stream draining under Main Street, and the tidal pond that connects to Day's Cove under Bristol Road, is a valuable natural asset, especially so close to the downtown. The protection of this corridor could have environmental and social benefits as green space in and near the downtown area is currently extremely limited. The corridor could also provide a pedestrian path connecting Bristol Road with Main Street and even onto Chapman Street via an informal path that connects to the Damariscotta Historical Society (formerly Mobius) property.



Downtown Conservation Opportunity: Castner Creek
The corridor created by Castner Creek, especially as it crosses Main Street and Church Street, is a significant natural feature in the Growth Area. This freshwater creek drains into the Damariscotta River to the north. It is part of an undeveloped freshwater wetland system that extends south into Bristol, creating an extensive natural wildlife corridor. Protecting and utilizing this natural corridor could bring significant benefits to the area.

Downtown Conservation Opportunity: Miles Creek

The natural geography around Miles Street is particularly interesting as it serves as a causeway connecting the Miles Campus with Bristol Road, separating Day's Cove and a small tidal pond, which is also fed by a freshwater stream. The stream's path crosses Bristol Road and School Street, connecting to a long, narrow wetland that appears to be the origin of the water course. Streams, especially ones surrounded by development, are particularly sensitive to disturbance and degradation, but when protected, they can serve as a hugely valuable natural asset. As new development comes to this area, a protected corridor along this creek can provide an essential natural break.



FUTURE LAND USE

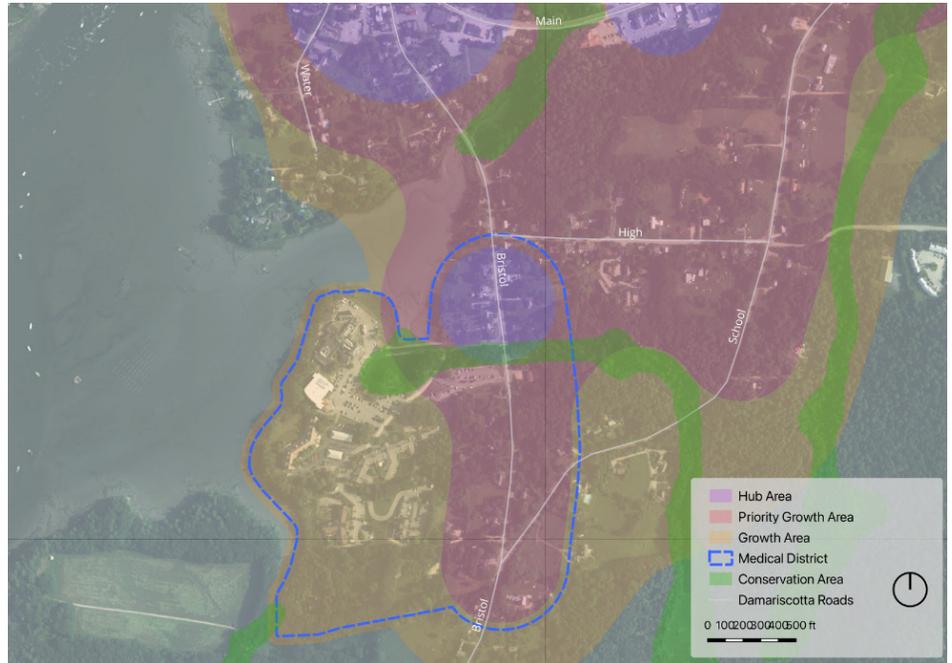
Bristol Road Corridor

Bristol Road is the primary roadway connecting Damariscotta to the Pemaquid Peninsula. The importance of moving a large volume of automobiles through this area should be balanced with the needs of adjacent properties and the opportunity to expand and create vibrant, livable, and sustainable neighborhoods along the Corridor. Additionally, Bristol Road provides access to the Miles Campus of LincolnHealth/MaineHealth, a major employer within the region and an essential service.

The areas along Bristol Road that fall within the Growth Area contain a mix of residential and non-residential uses, with increasing commercial makeup closer to Main Street. Near the intersection of Bristol Road and Main Street, the area accommodates several professional offices in buildings originally constructed as homes. The existing scale of this area should be retained, but new mixed-use and residential infill development can be accommodated in buildings that complement the scale of the area.

The recent construction of a sidewalk connection from Main Street to Miles Street and the Hospital was a valuable improvement for the neighborhood. Further expansion of the pedestrian network should be considered, especially along High Street and the Day's Cove wetlands.

Bristol Road Corridor Map



Northern Bristol Road: Historic Preservation Opportunity

Most existing buildings along the northern stretch of Bristol Road were initially constructed as residences and designed in the Federal and Greek Revival styles. These former homes illustrate the village's history in the early 1800s and its expansion along the road to Bristol. Protecting the historic character of this part of Bristol Road will need to be balanced with the area's ability to accommodate needed new housing and development. The area is well served by sewer, water, and the growing pedestrian network, which will allow sensible new infill development to complement and enhance the valued nature of the existing neighborhood. Implementing new standards for development in this area, including consistent and compatible setbacks, scale, and massing, will help maintain the historic fabric while allowing new growth and taking advantage of existing public facilities.

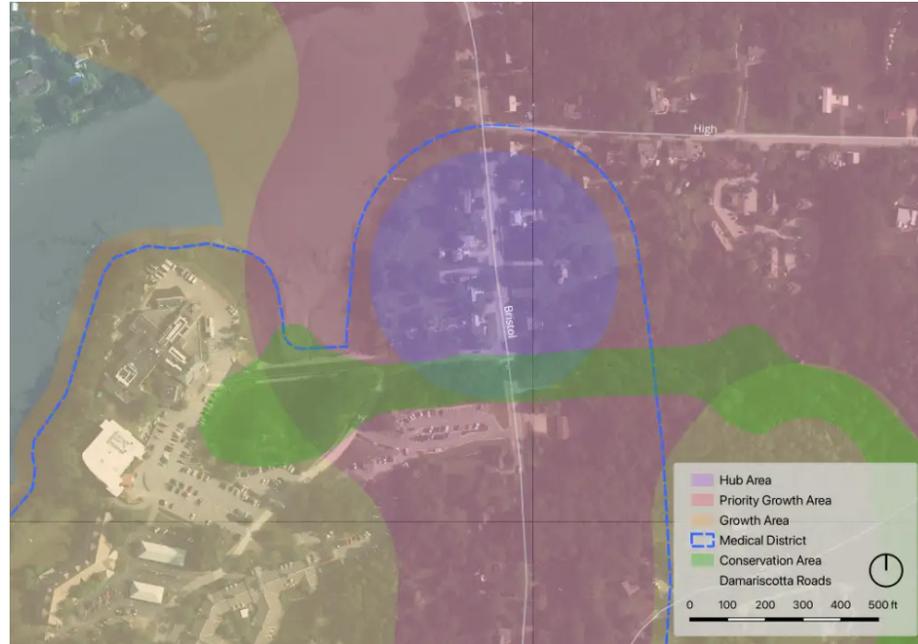
FUTURE LAND USE

Miles Street/High Street Hub Map

Miles Street/High Street Hub (Minor)

The area of Bristol Road near Miles Street and High Street has retained much of the historic development pattern, including building architecture and road setbacks. The volume and speed of traffic through the area are challenges, but the natural geography, available utilities, and proximity to Main Street and the Hospital make this area a priority for both historic preservation and appropriate infill development.

The intersection of Miles Street and Bristol Road should continue to receive investment to improve the pedestrian infrastructure. This intersection must consider Bristol Road's historic character and the hospital's needs, including housing availability, access to and from the Miles Campus, open space, and neighborhood services. (See Special Focus Area: Medical District for further details.)



Special Focus Area: Medical District

The Miles campus of the LincolnHealth / MaineHealth hospital network is an essential part of the Damariscotta community with its close proximity to downtown and the valuable services it provides.

The Hospital's growth and evolution will benefit the Town and the region, but working together to address a wide range of shared issues, including transportation, housing, and environmental concerns, will open more options and allow for mutually beneficial solutions.

The Town's current Medical District makes some accommodations for the medical institution's needs and realities, but updates should be considered for the Land Use Ordinance and Site Plan Review Ordinance to allow for the hospital and its related uses.

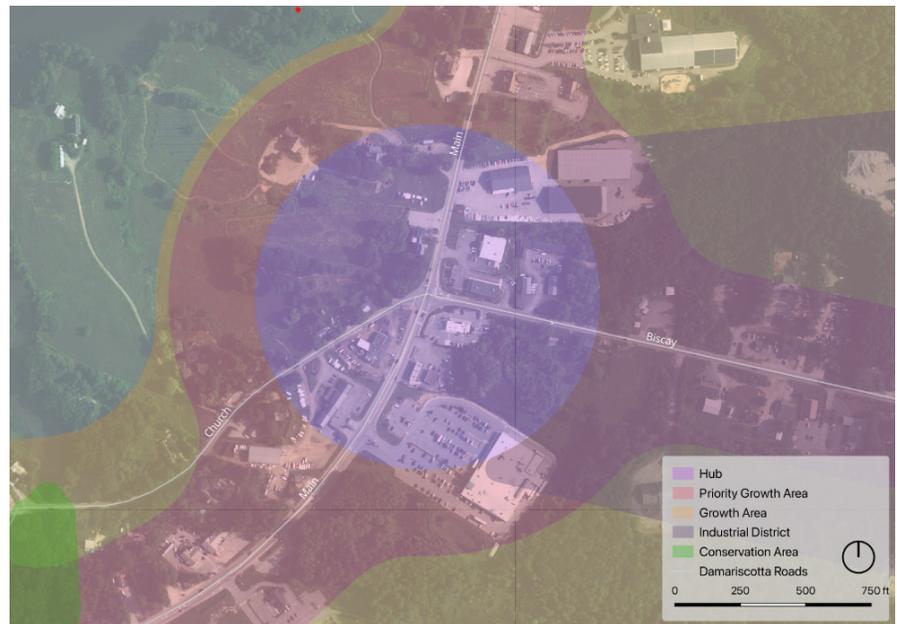


FUTURE LAND USE

Biscay Road Hub (Major)

The value of this Hub at the intersection of Biscay Road and Main Street should not be overlooked, but the development around this Hub lacks a cohesive layout. While many small and local businesses operate here, and several key businesses (and employers) for the region are located here, the current sprawling development pattern and lack of a pedestrian infrastructure requires people to use cars for travel between businesses that are a walkable distance from each other. It also occupies vast amounts of land with relatively few accessible improvements.

Biscay Road Hub Map

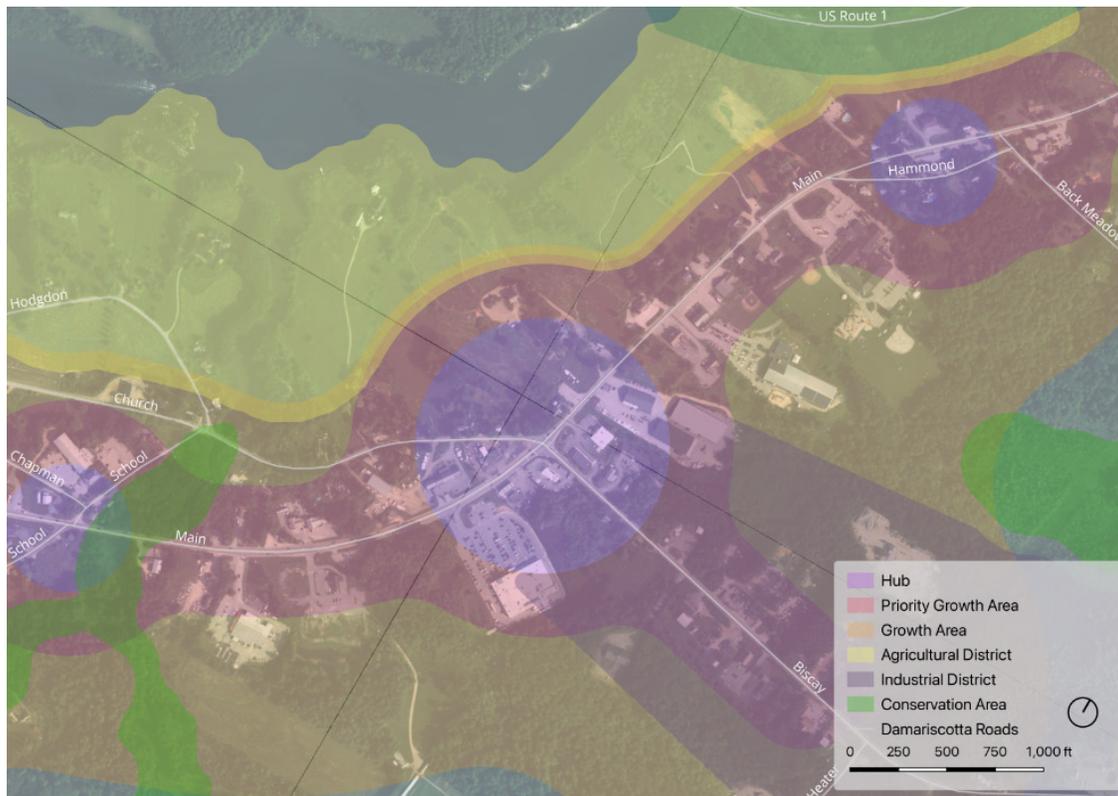


A reimagining of this area will be necessary to help accommodate new growth, support the existing businesses, and address the need for additional housing. Requiring and encouraging a return to more traditional development patterns will benefit property owners, the Town, taxpayers and developers. Traditional New England development is more efficient and includes multi-use structures, which make these areas functional and enjoyable places in which to live and spend time. In addition, locating new developments in this often-overlooked area, rather than pushing outwards into undisturbed areas of town, will conserve the natural and rural landscapes that give Damariscotta its identity.

One solution, sometimes called ‘sprawl repair,’ uses new infill development to build on the valuable existing businesses and services to transform an area into a more walkable, inviting, and beneficial district. New buildings in this area should be located near the roadway, with a pedestrian infrastructure and efficient circulation pattern for all users, not only those in automobiles. Parking should be located behind buildings and connected or shared between neighboring users.

Private developers usually absorb the initial costs of developing in this way, with maintenance and replacement of the utilities that serve the area managed by the municipality and public utility providers. A more compact development pattern eliminates the long distances that utility networks must stretch between buildings resulting in a more profitable project for a developer, and the maintenance and replacement costs of an efficient public utility network puts less of a burden on the local government and taxpayers.

Main Street Corridor Map



Main Street Corridor (north of School Street)

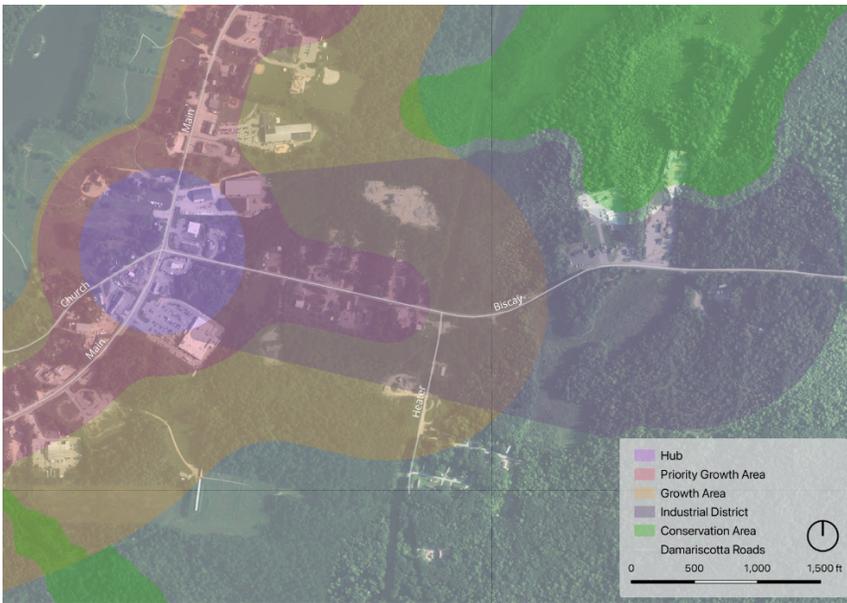
Navigating the stretch of Main Street from Castner Creek to Hammond Road (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile) is difficult for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and business owners. There are only ~200 feet of sidewalk and a single crosswalk adjacent to the GSB School. Excessive curb cuts along this stretch of Main Street, and unmanaged traffic speed and flow, make it difficult to enter and exit driveways. This corridor's use by students and young people, many of whom do not have an alternative, makes it especially important to get right.

The current plan to build a multi-modal path between Biscay Road and the GSB School is a critical link in the proposed pedestrian connection between Lincoln Academy and the GSB School which connects the two Major Hubs (the Historic Downtown Hub and the Biscay Road Hub) with other Minor Hubs along the way.

The proximity to the GSB School (a critical employer and significant traffic generator) makes new housing in the area attractive for families with children, teachers, or other school employees. The ability to avoid the school drop-off line or to safely walk to work is not an insignificant benefit.

FUTURE LAND USE

Biscay Road Corridor Map



Biscay Road Corridor

The existing development along Biscay Road includes several small local and regional businesses and residences, including a small affordable housing development.

The businesses include auto repair shops, a dialysis center, doctors' offices, a flooring business, a heavy construction outfit, and other owner-operated small businesses, which provide some of the community's most valuable services and jobs. Providing space for new and growing businesses to "incubate" provides important benefits to the community in both the new services they offer and the opportunity they provide to new entrepreneurs.

The benefits of current and potential new commercial uses must be balanced with the community's desires and growth. Addressing specific impacts from commercial and industrial users while allowing and encouraging businesses to grow and thrive will require significant community conversations and refined regulations and standards.

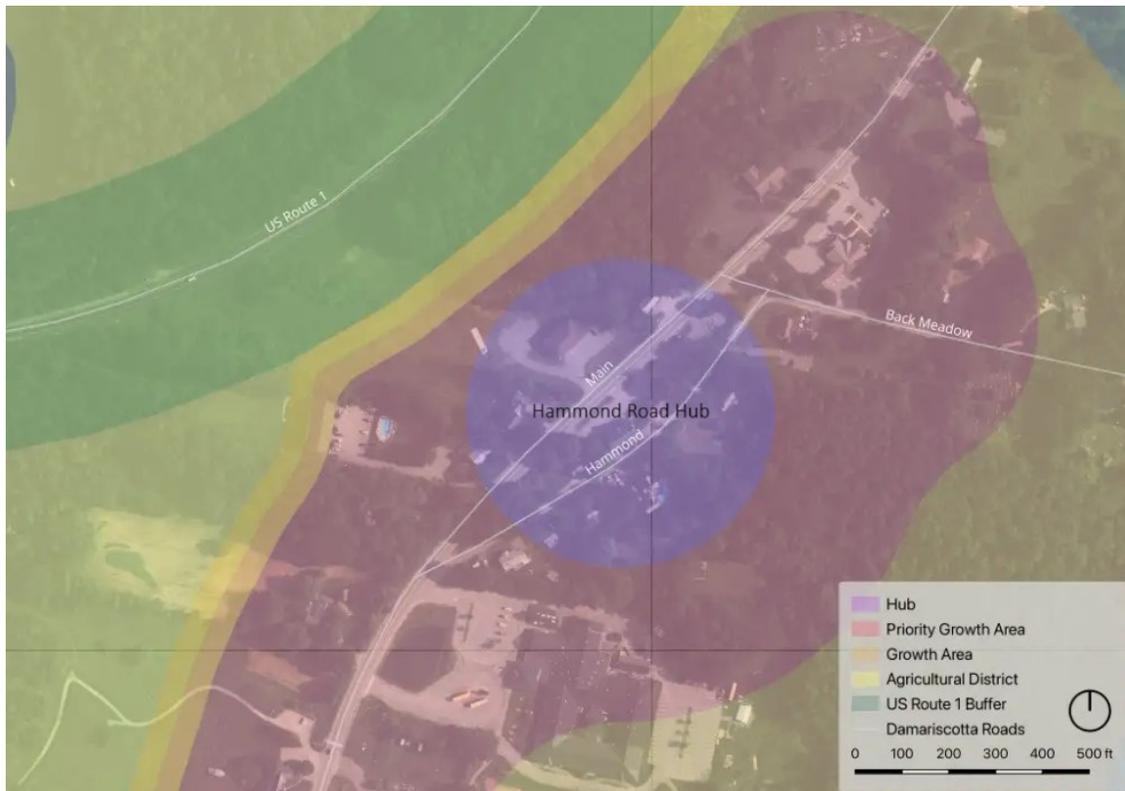
This corridor should continue to allow flexibility and broad latitude for businesses to experiment and meet their own needs, with coordination and organization for the area accommodating additional new users. The availability of sewer, water, and 3-phase power make the area attractive to the kind of commercial and industrial uses already here with minimal need for significant expansion for additional users.

Church Street

The development along Church Street, across Main Street from Biscay Road, dramatically differs from what is along Biscay Road. This section of Church Street retains much of the residential character and rural qualities that exists further west along Church Street and Hodgdon Street.

Even where properties front both Main Street and Church Street, the character of both streets should be reflected in any new or redeveloped properties. Businesses along Main Street should be adjacent to the street, with access and pedestrian amenities in front to make the business seem more inviting and any parking behind. Residential units are very appropriate along Church Street, but parking should, again, be located away from the street. Interventions that discourage using Church Street as a cut-through or alternative to Main Street should be explored and implemented.

Hammond Road Hub Map



Hammond Road Hub (Minor)

The Hammond Road Hub includes several businesses, but it lacks a cohesive layout. While Hammond Road has little vehicle traffic, a lack of sidewalks and the high traffic speed along Main Street reduce its attractiveness for homes or businesses. Even so, the low traffic on Hammond Road, its connection point to Back Meadow Road and Main Street, and the existing businesses provide the area with the potential to develop into a functional hub.

The water network currently runs up Main Street, but the existing public sewer network stops just south of Hammond Road (though several buildings to the north are connected to the network through a private connection). Any significant additional development in this area will require extending the sewer system. However, a minor extension to Back Meadow Road could create substantial new housing opportunities behind Hammond Street, off Back Meadow Road, and along Main Street.

Developing this hub, through a redesign of Main Street that accommodates all users and improves access to properties, will attract new residents and customers, bringing significant additional value to property owners, businesses, and the Town's tax rolls.

FUTURE LAND USE

Rural Areas

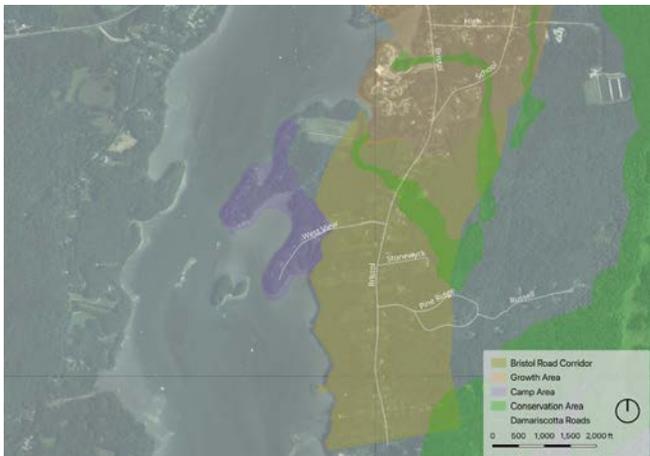
The parts of the Town identified in this Plan as Rural Areas are essentially any areas that are less built up and outside the identified Growth Area. While it is mainly agricultural or forested in nature, the Rural Area does include some commercial, residential, and other development, which is more intense than what is recommended in this Plan. Parts of the Rural Area identified by the community as priorities include natural conservation, potential agricultural development, and relatively light rural residential development.

This Plan discourages significant or impactful development in most parts of the Rural Area, although it is expected that some development may take place. Per State guidelines, public funds should generally be used to accommodate new development within the Town's identified Growth Area. However, parts of the Rural Area that may develop should be managed in ways that are appropriate to maintain and improve rural character.

There is currently limited public water, sewers, sidewalks, and other public infrastructure in the Rural Area. This makes the Rural Area more sensitive to inappropriate or ill-considered development and we must recognize that, left unregulated, these areas are susceptible to inefficient, sprawling development patterns common in suburban areas. To maintain the character and function of the Rural Area, development should be directed toward the Growth Area where existing infrastructure can accommodate new growth and provide the necessary infrastructure.

The areas identified on the following pages will warrant additional conversation and careful planning by the Town to guide development. These areas were identified because of unique development patterns (in comparison to the remaining Rural Areas).

Bristol Road Corridor Map

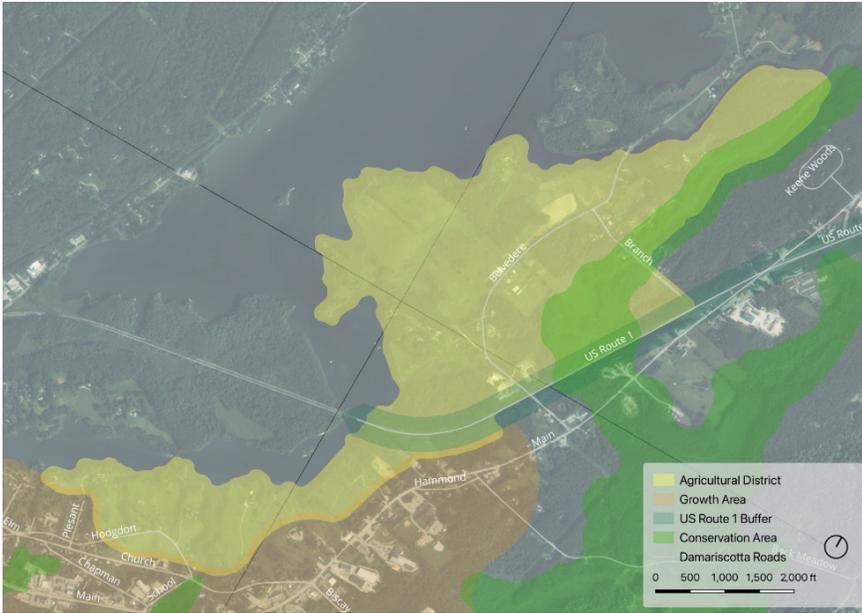


Bristol Road Corridor (south of School Street)

Bristol Road (south of School Street) is part of the gateway to the Pemaquid Peninsula and faces unique challenges from other Growth or Rural areas identified in this Plan. While it has developed considerably over the past several decades, there is limited infrastructure, and there is significant traffic volume beyond the town's borders. As new development occurs in this area and down the Peninsula, the Town will need to make efforts to address and accommodate both local and regional impacts on this corridor. This will likely require interventions and standards unique to the rest of the Town.

FUTURE LAND USE

Agricultural Areas Map



Agricultural Areas

While Damariscotta's agricultural history may be less prominent than many of its neighbors, it is no less valuable to the community, as outlined in the Agricultural & Forest Resources section of this Plan. Much of the town's existing agricultural uses are located along the eastern shore of the Damariscotta River and Salt Bay, north of Lewis Point. This Plan identifies and recommends protections for farms and agricultural activities in the areas below to retain and encourage agricultural uses, natural preservation, and low-impact recreation.

1. Salt Bay Area

This area, physically separated from town by US Route 1 sits along a particularly scenic stretch of the Salt Bay. Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) owns and manages large portions of this area, and thus, CRCT should be an essential partner in guiding the area's future. Belvedere Road, which is a dangerous intersection as it crosses US Route 1, provides the only access to the area from within Damariscotta. An opportunity to improve access for this area is the former connection of Branch Road and Main Street. The public rights-of-way appear to still exist and, with additional title research, could serve as a path into the area from an improved US Route 1, Main Street, Branch Road intersection.

2. Round Top Area

This area, characterized by open and agricultural land along the Damariscotta River, is south of US Route 1 to Castner Brook. Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust is a significant landholder, along with the State of Maine, and both should be partners in guiding the area's future. The historic Round Top Farm and the Whaleback Shell Midden site are significant assets for the Town and should be protected and leveraged for the benefit of the community. The area should continue evolving into a destination for low-impact recreation, agriculture, and natural beauty.

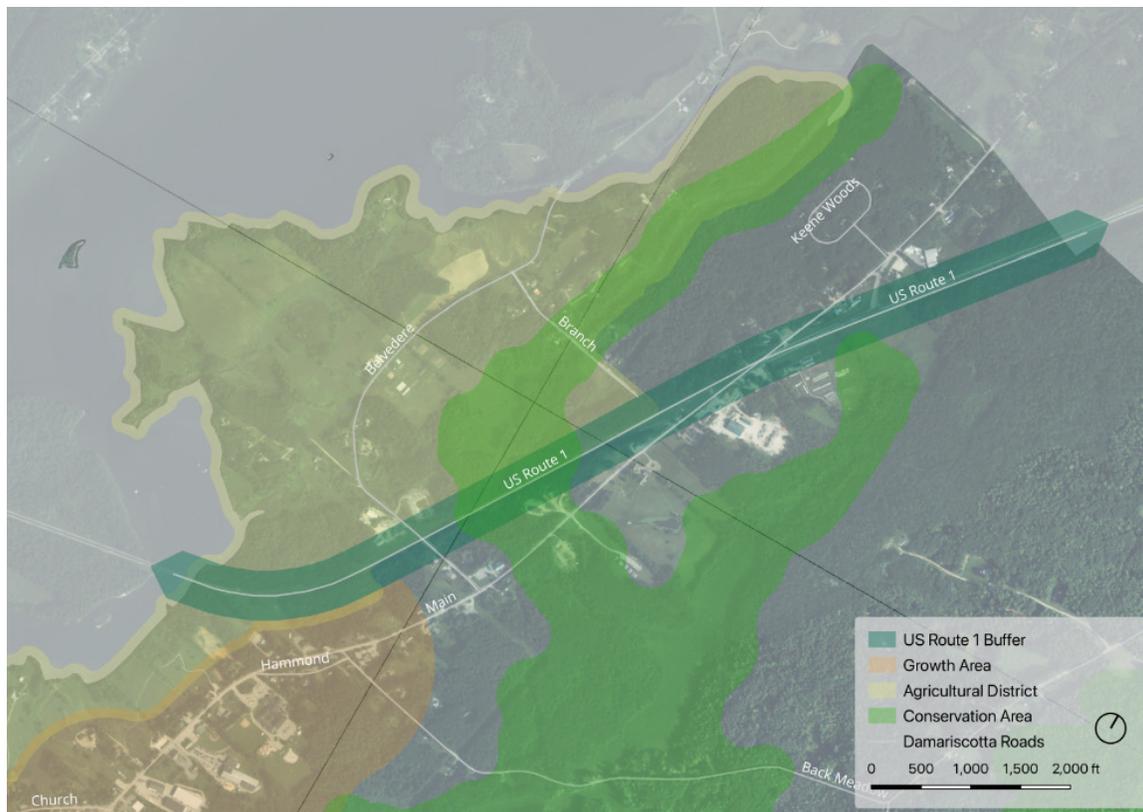
The significant potential for development along Upper Main Street should be balanced with the desire and need to protect and preserve the area's agricultural and natural landscape. New development should include significant physical and visual connections between Main Street and the open landscape along the Damariscotta River. Front setbacks should be limited.

3. West of Castner Brook

The areas along the Damariscotta River west of Castner Brook, and along both sides of Hodgdon Street, provide significant scenic and cultural value to the community. The open landscape and limited development in these areas are located relatively close to both Major Hubs identified in this Plan but are not served by the existing utility networks. This Plan recommends not extending public utilities into these areas to help retain the agricultural and relatively undeveloped land use pattern.

FUTURE LAND USE

US Route 1 Corridor Buffer Map



US Route 1 Corridor Buffer

US Route 1 is a significant and important feature of the town, separating the Salt Bay and Belvedere Road area from the rest of Damariscotta. The connection this highway provides both north and south is essential to the town's functioning, but it also comes with liabilities that should be recognized. The Maine DOT has recognized this intersection of US Route 1 and Belvedere Road as dangerous enough to warrant a conversion into a roundabout planned for 2025 to minimize traffic accidents.

There are currently few points of access onto US Route 1 within Damariscotta. This condition should be maintained to keep traffic moving along the highway safely and to discourage strip development. The Town should consider ordinances that require new development along Midcoast Road, Central Street, Belvedere, and the northern section of Main Street to be significantly set back from the US Route 1 roadway and prohibited from connecting directly to the highway. This will maintain the rural, forested nature of the area, prevent the worsening of road congestion, and encourage new businesses to focus on the local community rather than on traffic "just passing through."

FUTURE LAND USE

Pond & Riverfront Camps

Waterfront properties in Damariscotta have been some of the most attractive locations for housing development throughout the town's history. While many were established as seasonal camps, many of these properties are being converted into year-round housing. These areas can make beautiful locations for homes as well as camps, but several areas along these shores contain dense development on small and undersized lots. The State's mandatory Shoreland Zoning regulations are intended to maintain the integrity of these waters and shorelines and protect against septic systems and wells being too close together or too close to the water; however, tailored approaches that are more flexible than those for other parts of town may be needed in these areas. The areas that most face issues are along the west shores of Biscay Pond, Muddy Pond, Pemaquid Pond, and at Cottage Point.

Pond & Riverfront Camps Maps



FUTURE LAND USE

Critical Rural Areas

Critical Rural Areas require additional planning or protection due to high natural, cultural, or scenic value. Compared to the Rural Areas identified above, which are not actively targeted for either growth or conservation, the identified Critical Rural Areas are intended to be actively conserved or preserved. Municipalities have limited tools to conserve privately owned land fully, so the approach to protect these areas will require site-specific strategies and meaningful partnerships with conservation groups and private property owners. While specific strategies are not defined in this Plan, the desire of the community to protect and conserve these critical areas is recognized along with the recommendation for further conversation and consideration.

In addition to the areas identified for conservation within the Growth Area (Day's Cove, Castner Creek, and the Miles Creek Conservation Area), the areas identified below are intended to preserve Damariscotta's significant natural features that make the Town a livable, scenic, and enjoyable place to live and work.

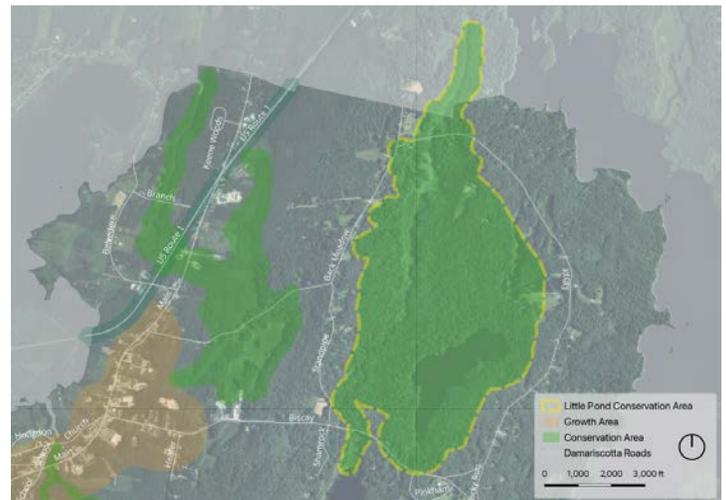
1. Little Pond Conservation Area

As the sole source of all drinking water the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District (GSBSD) provides, Little Pond is a critically important area to protect. While the GSBSD owns significant land surrounding Little Pond, the Town does not currently have any ordinances or regulations to protect the water supply. In addition to the drinking water supply, the area around Little Pond and the adjacent Back Meadow Stream and wetlands are valuable natural areas that warrant protection.

2. Castner Creek Conservation Corridor

This natural corridor runs the length of the Town, connecting the Halfmoon Pond Preserve and the wetlands and natural areas in Bristol with Castner Creek Community Forest in the north and onto the Damariscotta River. This stretch of relatively undisturbed nature has the potential to provide a vital connection for wildlife up and down the peninsula.

Little Pond Conservation Area Map

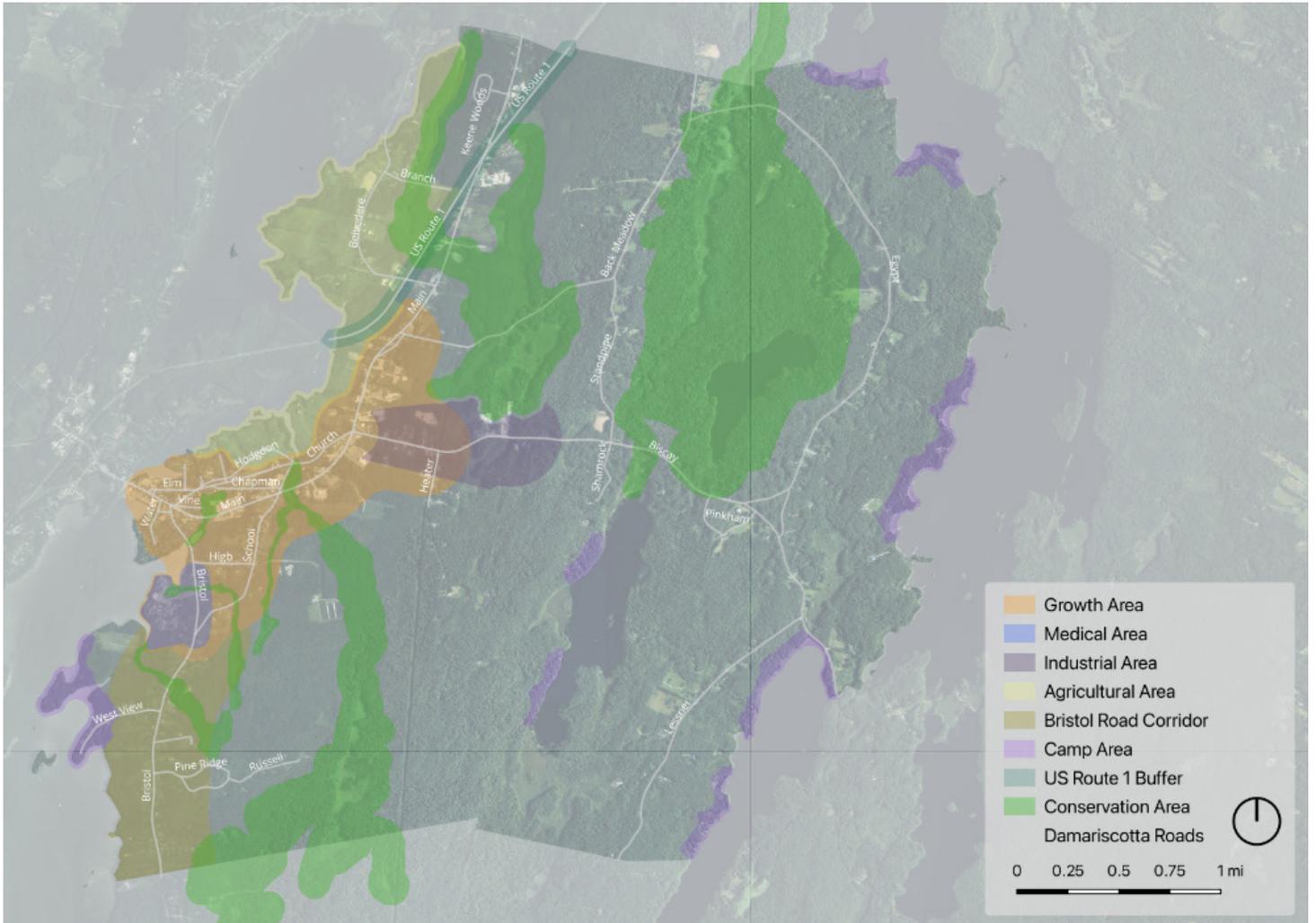


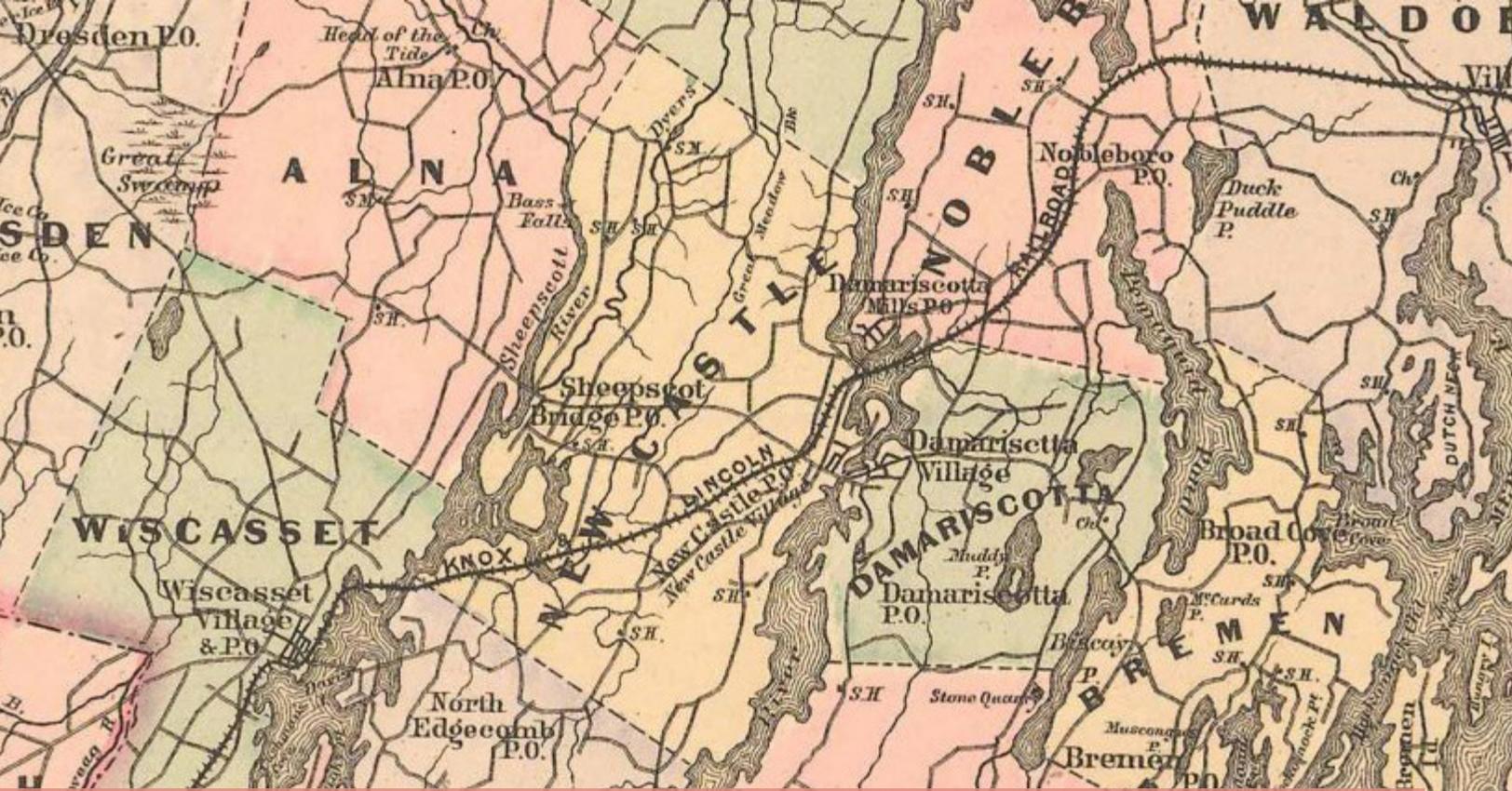
Castner Creek Conservation Corridor Map



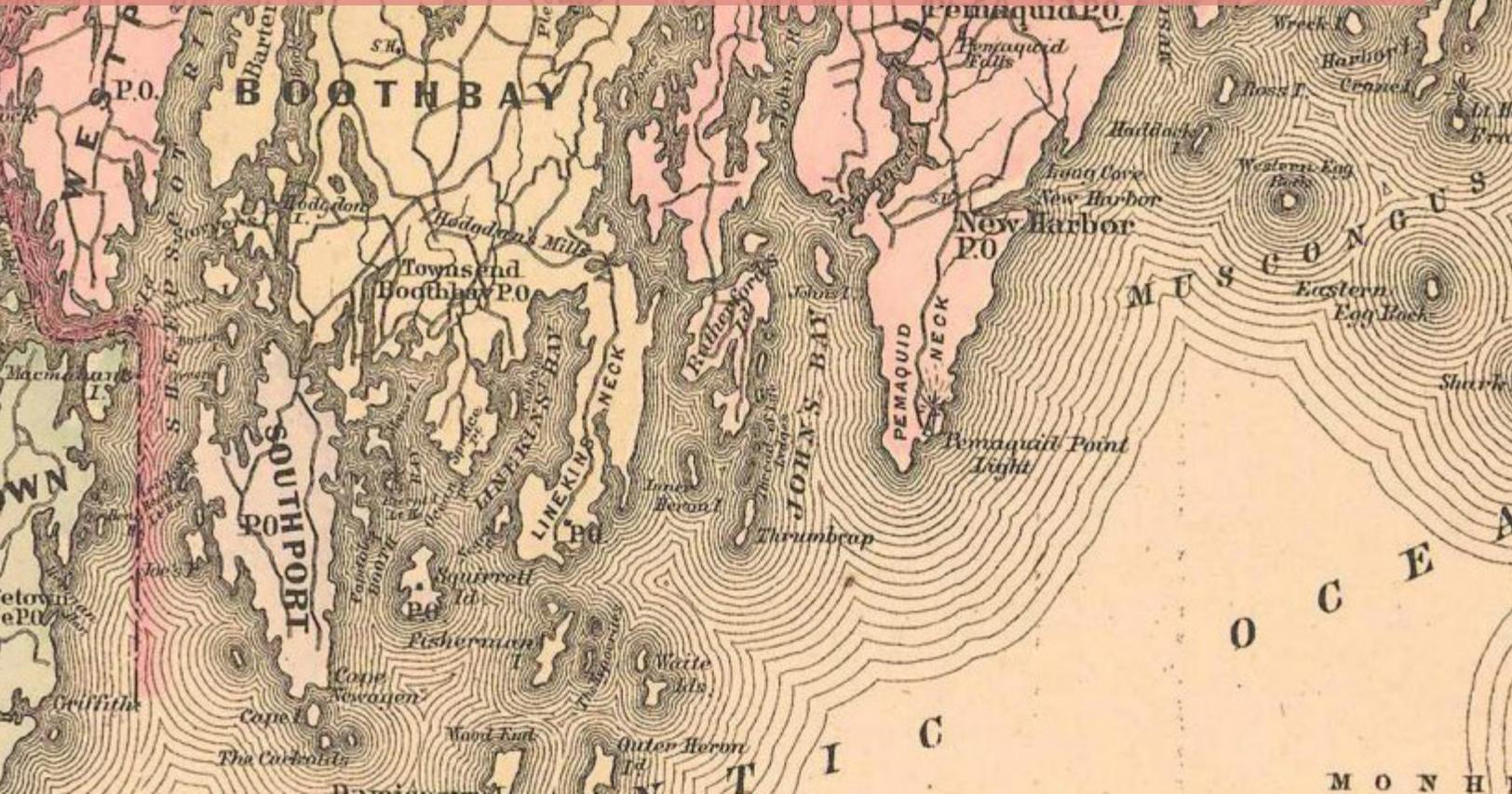
FUTURE LAND USE

Future Land Use Map





REGIONAL COORDINATION



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Many of the issues addressed in this plan will require a collaborative approach with neighboring communities and regional organizations. A regional approach is especially important in smaller communities such as Damariscotta, where limited resources constrain the ability of the Town alone to provide enhancements over and above the current level of service without careful planning. Furthermore, issues like housing affordability, economic development, transportation systems, and the environment cross municipal boundaries. While the Town can certainly make some progress on its own, combined efforts to tackle larger issues will yield better, more sustainable results.



Housing

A number of the responses to the community survey conducted as part of this planning effort came from residents of surrounding communities on the Pemaquid Peninsula, including Bristol, South Bristol, neighboring Newcastle, and as far as Edgecomb and Boothbay. Many of these “outside” respondents noted that they felt compelled to respond to the survey because Damariscotta is where they work, shop, or volunteer (or in a few cases, all three) even though they reside elsewhere. That said, addressing known housing issues to allow those within the broader region who already work or volunteer here could help in reducing the individual transportation costs of those who already work and play here, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic leading to and from surrounding communities.

Further, a regional approach to addressing housing needs provides opportunities for municipalities to coordinate strategies and share resources. Further, some municipalities are simply better equipped to take on a greater share of regional housing production goals due to utility constraints (or lack of utilities) in other communities. Damariscotta is well-suited to be a leader in this regard.

Economy

As a service center and the economic hub of central Lincoln County, businesses choose to locate here because of the affluent summer visitors and the regional draw, allowing them to capture customers from surrounding communities as well. Collectively strengthening the region’s economy would help neighboring communities as well, whose residents are employed in Damariscotta.

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Transportation

Route 1B serves as Damariscotta's Main Street as well as the primary access point to the Pemaquid Peninsula, leading to conflicts by multiple uses of this road as both a major state route and a local service road within a pedestrian-oriented downtown. In addition, responses to the community survey held as part of this planning effort found public transit options lacking or severely lacking. Similar responses were also given for access to regional transportation (railway); access to taxis or other rideshare; and accessibility for people with disabilities. Additionally, respondents felt bicycle facilities were severely lacking or lacking.

Damariscotta will need to continue to work with the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) on ongoing transportation planning initiatives and infrastructure improvements. In addition, working with neighboring municipalities as well as Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust to connect trail systems and advocate for public transportation will be important in ensuring regional connectivity and will be mutually beneficial to surrounding communities.



Natural Resource Protection

Within the next ten years, the expected rise of sea level, temperature fluctuations, and increased frequency and severity of rain and snow events as a result of climate trends will have a profound effect on the town's natural resources. While the situation of global climate change is a complex and overwhelming issue, local actions by the Damariscotta town government and its residents may improve the ability of our shared natural resources to adapt to these changes. Similarly, development and other human interferences in the environment are not limited by municipal boundaries, thus, coordinating efforts with surrounding communities to protect critical habitats and address water quality will be necessary for the Town to reach any of its goals related to natural resource protection.

Public Facilities

The Town collaborates with other neighboring communities to share services, such as its agreement with Newcastle to share the cost of the Town Planner position. In addition, the Town relies on regional service providers and non-profit organizations to deliver more cost-effective public services to residents than the Town could do working on its own. The Town will continue to explore ways to collaborate even further with neighboring communities and service providers.



POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Overview

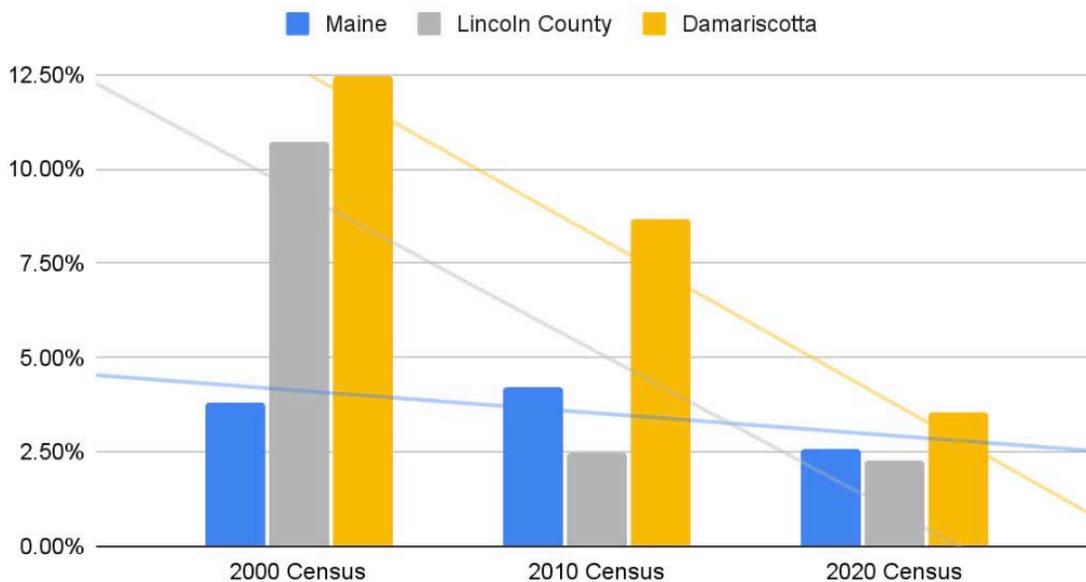
Predicting future population and demographic trends is essential to comprehensive planning since these trends impact all facets of the community, including housing, the economy, transportation patterns, education, and fiscal capacity. A sustainable, demographically diverse population (particularly in age makeup) is essential to support a community's long-term well-being.

Projected Population & Demographic Changes

Damariscotta's population as of the 2020 census was 2,297 residents. Between 1990 and 2000 the population grew by 12.45%, but since the 2000 Decennial Census, the rate of population growth has slowed down. Between 2000 and 2010, the population grew by 8.67%. Between 2010 and 2020, the population still grew but at a rate of only 3.56%. This tends to mirror the whole of Lincoln County, in which the population exploded between 1990 and 2000, but the rate of growth has since slowed down.

While the general slowdown in population growth over the past three decades in Maine, Lincoln County, and Damariscotta are similar (as shown on the chart to the right), growth in Damariscotta has been greater proportionally than in Maine or Lincoln County in all three decades. This means that even in times of population slowdown, Damariscotta is still growing faster than surrounding communities in the region and across the State.

Population Rate of Change from Previous Decades



POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Population slowdown between 2010 and 2020 could be explained by a slowdown in housing production in Damariscotta during this period. For context, between 2000 and 2010, Damariscotta’s housing stock grew by approximately 16%. Between 2010 and 2020, however, the Town lost 1.5% of its overall housing stock. This trend is discussed further in the Housing section of this Plan.

Migration into the community has tended to make up the bulk of Damariscotta’s population growth. Deaths in the community have been rising alongside population growth since 1990, and the birth rate has slowed down in the same time frame, as illustrated below.

	1990	<i>Impact on Population</i>	2000	<i>Impact on Population</i>	2010	<i>Impact on Population</i>
<i>Beginning Population</i>	1815		2041		2218	
<i>Births (during decade)</i>	199	+11%	165	+8%	135	+6%
<i>Deaths (during decade)</i>	300	(-17%)	378	(-19%)	407	(-18%)
<i>Natural Change (Births-Deaths)</i>	(-101)	(-6%)	(-213)	(-10%)	(-272)	(-12%)
<i>Net Migration*</i>	327	+18%	390	+19%	351	+16%
<small>*Net Migration is made up of people moving into the community during the decade. This number is calculated by using the end population (e.g. the population at the start of the next decade, per the US Census Bureau) and subtracting natural change data. Source: US Census Bureau (for population numbers); Town Reports on Vital Statistics (for birth and death data)</small>						

Since 1990, the population of the community has risen by an average of 8.2% per decade. This increase is primarily made up of net in-migration into the community. More than 50% of the population in 2020 is made up of folks who migrated into the community during the past 3 decades.

While numbers for Damariscotta itself are not available, data from the U.S. Census Bureau notes that the population of Lincoln County as a whole grew by 1,244 individuals (or 3.5%) between April 2020 and July 2023.¹ In this timeframe, the death rate outpaced the birth rate by almost 2:1 (there were 552 births in the county and 1,061 deaths within the same period). Thus, the increase in population in those years is made up of net migration into the county.

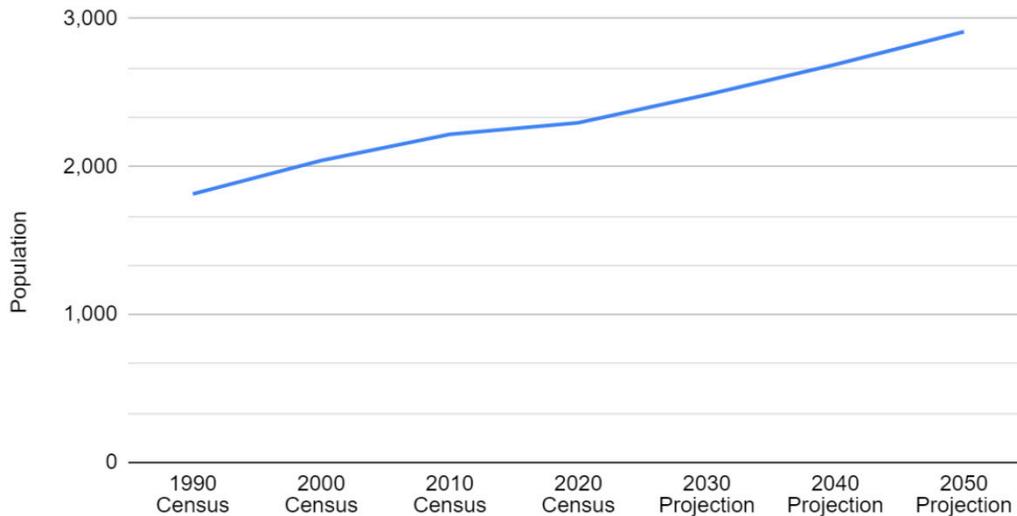
It should be noted that, as of the 2020 Census, Damariscotta was 94.04%. People identifying as any other race (including those identifying as two or more races) made up about 6% of the overall community. This number has not drastically changed since the 2010 Census.

¹ US Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023 (CO-EST2023-POP).

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

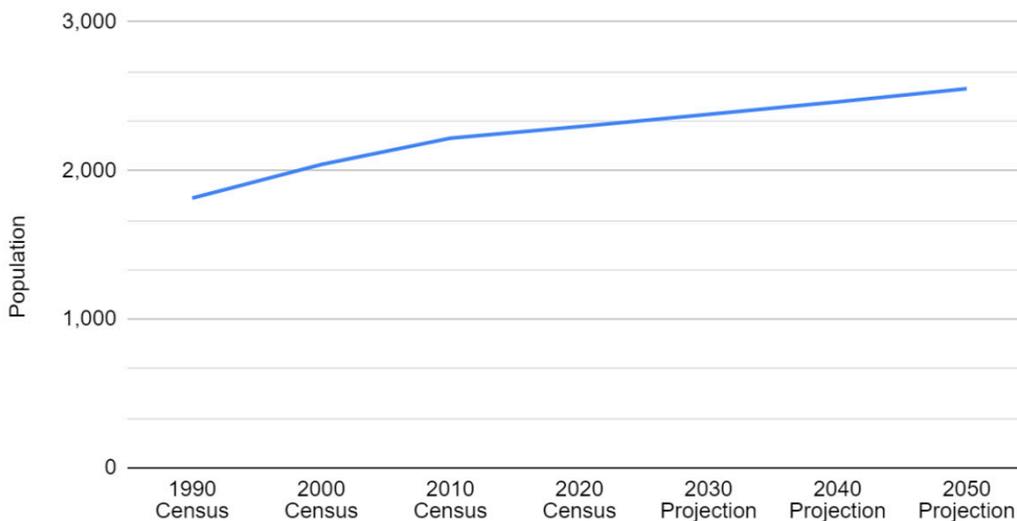
As shown in the previous chart, the death rate has far outpaced births occurring in Damariscotta specifically decade over decade. If net in-migration trends continue, Damariscotta could see a population of almost 3,000 by the 2050 census, which will predominantly be made up of people who have moved into town from elsewhere. This population project is shown on the Average Projected Scenario chart, below.

Average Projected Scenario (based on average rate of growth between 1990 and 2020)



Alternatively, conservative estimates (using the lowest rate of growth since 1990) would put the population of Damariscotta at approximately 2,500 by the 2050 census (as shown on the Conservative Projected Scenario chart, below).

Conservative Projected Scenario (based on lowest rate of growth between 1990 and 2020)



In either case, the demographics of Damariscotta (particularly in age distribution) are anticipated to change due to continued in-migration, as explained further below.

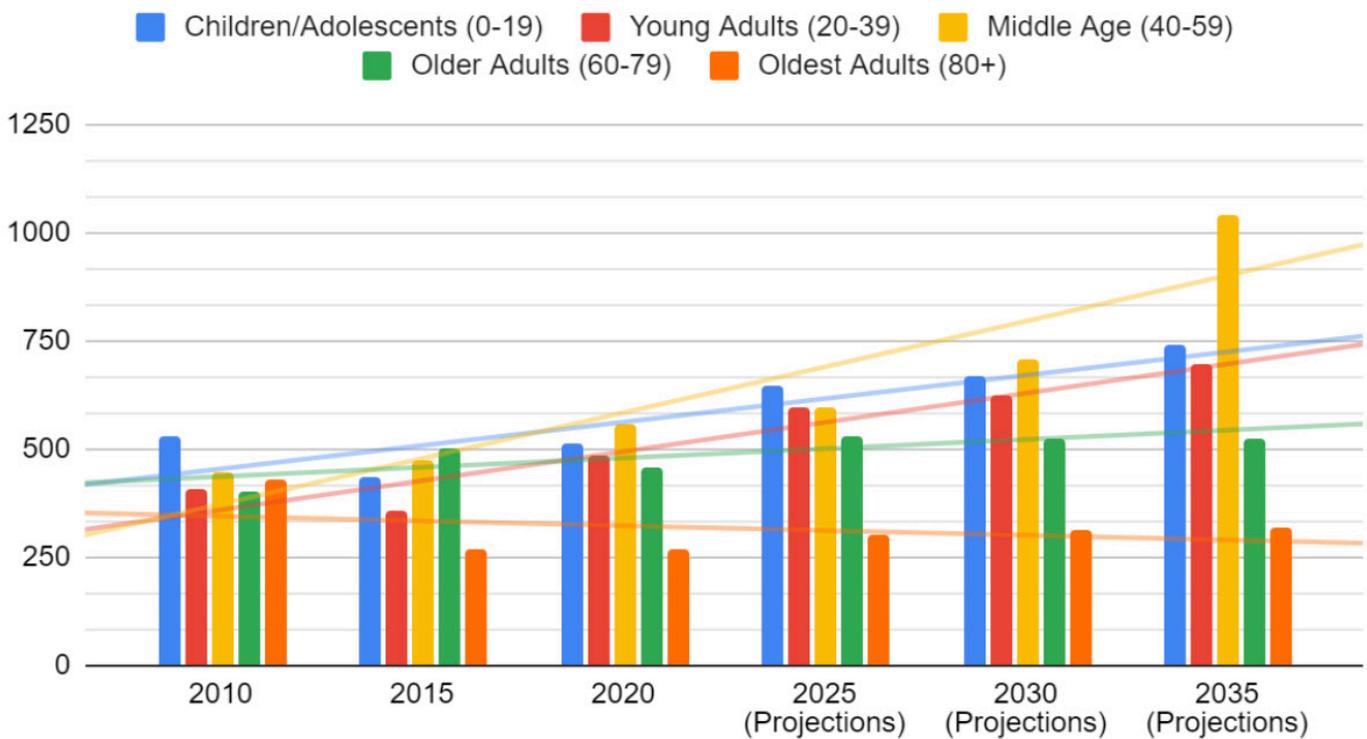
POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

A Place for Families

According to American Community Survey data from 2020, approximately 26.4% of the population is between the ages of 25 and 44. The median age of Damariscotta residents is 41.6, meaning that residents of the town tend to be younger than the whole of Lincoln County, where the median age is 51.2. Additionally, about 14.6% of Damariscotta's population is school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old.



Age Distribution by Cohort Projections



Source: American Community Survey data from 2010, 2015 and 2020. Projects based on the average birth rate from 2010-2020 and the average rate of growth for the remaining groups.

While there is still a large subset of the population that is aging (approximately 26.2% are older than 65) and will require resources geared towards older adults, the increase of adults of prime child-rearing age (those between the ages of 25 and 44) and school-aged children (between the ages of 5 and 14 years old) in the past 10 years suggest that the area may slowly be becoming more popular with families (either those moving to the area or parents who grew up here and decided to stay). This trend has also been seen in the neighboring Town of Newcastle. This suggestion is corroborated by the net in-migration data shown on the previous page and is projected to continue into the future. As shown in the chart above, population projections suggest that the number of children is anticipated to continue to rise into 2025 and 2030.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

While the 2014 Comprehensive Plan indicated that net in-migration was likely a result of an increase in retirees locating to the community, the net in-migration data coupled with the increase (between 2015 and 2020) in school-aged children and parent-aged adults as shares of the total population data tell a different story: one of adults who are either staying in the area or families who are relocating to the area. One likely factor is the reputation of Great Salt Bay Community School (the local K-8 school) and Lincoln Academy, the semi-private high school that residents of Damariscotta can attend for free. Other factors may be the impact of work-from-home trends due to technology changes, the COVID-19 pandemic making living and working in less densely populated areas more attractive, and climate change refugees moving to New England from other places in the country considered to be less safe (because of wildfire and other natural disasters).

Demand for Services Expected to Increase

As the demographics of the community begin to change, the increase in adults of child-bearing age and the increase in children will result in increased demands on the existing school system. Furthermore, family-friendly planning will be essential.

Some critical components of family-friendly planning are the provision of accessible green spaces and recreation areas, a diverse range of housing options, and the provision of communal outdoor space in both the rental and owner-occupied housing sectors.



The YMCA plays an integral role with regional childcare

In addition, it will become increasingly important to understand the areas of the community where childcare uses are allowed, including home-based childcare uses, to allow for the families who have chosen to locate here to continue living here.

Finally, as children age, it is important to provide recreational opportunities. Currently, the YMCA has a playground for school-aged children and there are basketball courts at Great Salt Bay School, but the Town does not have a Parks & Recreation Department nor its own public playgrounds for toddlers or younger children, ball fields, basketball courts, or other sporting facilities.

More details on the above are further described in the Housing, Economy, and Recreation sections of this Plan.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

It should be noted that, as a service center community, Damariscotta is disproportionately impacted by growth in surrounding communities (namely Newcastle, Jefferson, Bremen, Nobleboro, Bristol, South Bristol, and perhaps others). These communities take advantage of healthcare, social services, retail opportunities, and employment opportunities in Damariscotta. Bristol, for example, is expected to grow at a rate that far surpasses Damariscotta (according to projections from their recent Comprehensive Plan update). However, Bristol does not have a large grocery store or major commercial retailers; residents primarily come to Damariscotta to grocery shop or to go to work. Planning for growth in surrounding communities by, for example, working on alleviating traffic concerns on major regional thoroughfares (e.g. Bristol Road, School Street, Biscay Road, portions of Route 1) will be of the utmost importance during the life of this Plan.

Seasonal Population

There were 271 seasonal properties in Damariscotta in 2020, according to US Census data, with likely capacities of 2 to 8 persons or more per property. This yields a potential range of somewhere between 300 to 1500 seasonal residents. If during the middle of the summer, it is assumed that about 90% of the vacation houses are occupied, and each with an average of between 4 and 6 persons, then there would be about 1,084 seasonal residents or overnight tourists on any given summer day. Overnight tourists are noted here as some of these seasonal properties may be being used as Airbnb or short-term rentals, not occupied by their owner. (According to data from AirDNA.co, a website that provides vacation rental data analytics to potential hosts or investors, the average occupancy rate for short-term rentals listed on Airbnb or VRBO in Damariscotta in August is 98%.)



POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

The number of seasonal properties (271) is up about 46% from the number of seasonal properties captured in the 2010 census (186). This could be a result of the proliferation of sites like Airbnb or VRBO, which make marketing short-term rentals easier or could simply be explained by an increase in the number of owned seasonal properties that are only being utilized by their owners for a portion of the year.

In addition to seasonal residents or overnight tourists, there are also day-trip tourists in town and daytime employees and shoppers from the Damariscotta Service Area. Seasonal residents, overnight tourists, and day-trip tourists are considered to be an integral part of the economic fabric of Damariscotta (this is discussed further in the Economy section of this Plan).

The chart below shows a large seasonal spike in regional lodging sales as well as restaurant sales during the summer months. This indicates that these sectors in particular are reliant on seasonal traffic.

Taxable Sales by Month, 2019-2022
Damariscotta Economic Summary Area (ESA)*



*The Economic Summary Area includes Damariscotta as well as Alna, Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Bremen, Bristol, Edgecomb, Jefferson, Monhegan, Newcastle, Nobleboro, South Bristol, Southport, Waldoboro, Walpole, Westport, and Wiscasset.
 Source: Maine Revenue Services

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Service Center Implications

Damariscotta's location along coastal Route 1 enables it to provide both employment and shopping opportunities to the adjoining Pemaquid Peninsula communities and the adjoining inland Great Salt Bay/Damariscotta Lake towns. The largest employer, LincolnHealth's Miles Hospital complex (located just outside of Damariscotta's downtown) alone can bring more than 1,100 individual employees into town on any given workday, summer or winter, plus about 160 out-patients and additional visitors and 137 elderly residents of the associated residential complex. Most employees of LincolnHealth are commuting by car to Damariscotta from elsewhere in the region.

In addition to existing residents (2,297 as of 2020), seasonal residents or overnight tourists (1,084 as noted above), and the number of people associated with Miles Hospital (almost 1,400), there are also shoppers and day-trip tourists in Damariscotta on any given day during the summer. Throughout the average July day, there may be more than 1,455 shoppers and day-trip tourists in and around downtown.²

In the summer or winter, there is clearly a daytime population served by Damariscotta amenities that is far higher than the resident population, especially clustered within the downtown area. Needs of daytime employees are detailed further in the Economy section of this Plan but include the need for additional local childcare options for staff, lack of adequate parking in certain areas at certain times of day, and a myriad of traffic issues along regional thoroughfares.

Damariscotta's position as a service center brings unique challenges. The Town has the second-lowest median household income of all of the communities in Lincoln County (\$48,241 in 2020, according to American Community Survey Estimates). Damariscotta also has the largest percentage of renter-occupied housing units in Lincoln County (40.9% of occupied units are occupied by renters, with 59.1% being owner-occupied, per American Community Survey estimates from 2021).



² Shoppers estimated from Reny's average July day customers - doubled to account for other downtown businesses; day-trip tourists based on 133 harbor parking lot spaces at a rate of turn-over 4 times per day and an average of 2.5 persons per car.

A photograph of a historic white building, likely a church or government building, featuring a prominent clock tower with a black clock face and Roman numerals. The building has classical architectural elements, including a portico with white columns and a pedimented entrance. The sky is clear blue, and some green foliage is visible on the right side.

HISTORIC & ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

History of Damariscotta

The area that would become Damariscotta was once inhabited by the Wawenock (or Walinakiak, meaning “People of the Bays”) Abenaki people, who left behind 2,500-year-old oyster shell middens along the banks of the Damariscotta River. The Whaleback Shell Midden is now an individually listed state historic site.

The land that comprises Damariscotta was originally part of the Pemaquid Patent, granted by the Plymouth Council in 1631 to Robert Aldsworth and Gyles Elbridge, who were merchants from Bristol, England. At Pemaquid (now the Town of Bristol, Maine), they built a fort and trading post.

The first attempts at settlement in the area that would become Damariscotta occurred in approximately 1640. However, the area was under near-constant strain during the French and Indian Wars (1676-1763). According to the Lincoln County Historical Association, “villages and homes were deserted and often burned out during these years of conflict.”³ In 1748, the settlement of the villages of Damariscotta and Newcastle began in earnest.



It has been recorded that the first permanent settler in Damariscotta was Anthony Chapman, a surveyor from Ipswich, Massachusetts who arrived in 1749. Legend says that he convinced his half-brother Nathaniel to join him by noting that the people returning to the area after the upheaval of the wars would be interested in replacing their crude log structures with more permanent housing. Nathaniel built what is now the Chapman-Hall House for his family when he arrived in 1754. He subsequently built several other houses in the surrounding area and once owned nearly all of what is now Damariscotta’s Main Street, until a fire destroyed many of the original buildings in 1845.^{4,5} Damariscotta was incorporated as a separate municipality on March 15, 1848, officially separating from parts of Bristol and Nobleboro.⁶

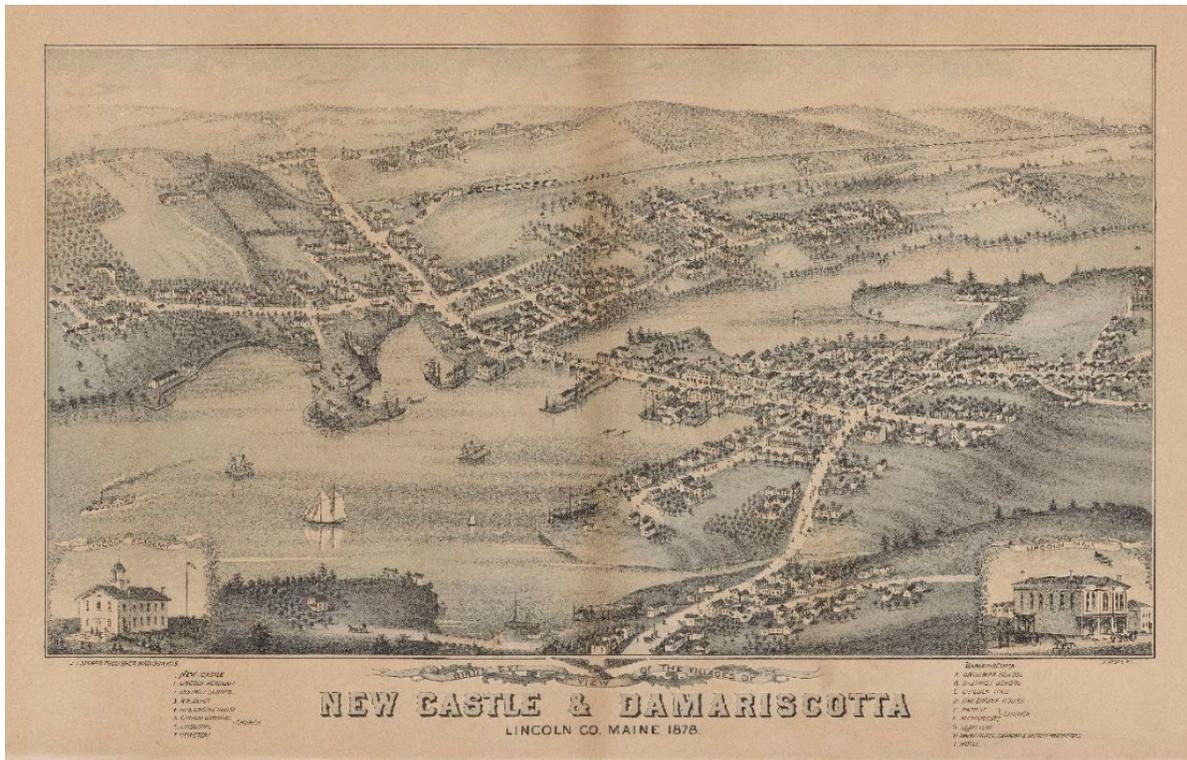
³ <https://www.lincolncountyhistory.org/visit/museums/chapman-hall-house/early-history/>

⁴ <https://www.lincolncountyhistory.org/visit/museums/chapman-hall-house/early-history/>

⁵ Historic District Nomination, 1979.

⁶ Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums (1970). Doris A. Isaacson (ed.). *Maine: A Guide ‘Down East’*. Rockland, Me: Courier-Gazette, Inc. p. 258.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES



The early industries of the area included two sawmills, a match factory, and a tannery. Additionally, several brickyards were established along the Damariscotta River.⁷ Though situated too far from the ocean to be an important seaport, Damariscotta was ideally suited for shipbuilding.⁸ It was shipbuilding in particular that brought Damariscotta wealth in the 19th century, when clipper ships were launched at the town's shipyards. During that time, many examples of Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate style architecture were built in and around Damariscotta's downtown village, including the rebuilding of what is now Main Street, using bricks from the brickyards. By 1875, almost all of the buildings on Lower Main Street were constructed essentially as we know them today (with the exception of three more modern structures).

Surrounding the downtown village area are two unique residential areas consisting mainly of one- and two-story residential buildings and smaller lot sizes. Historic patterns of development are still evident in and around the village. However, Damariscotta's growth as a service center in the region has caused retail and service sectors to sprawl beyond the compact Downtown Village up Route 1B. Outside of these areas, Damariscotta is still quite rural.

⁷ Varney, George J. (1886). "Damariscotta". Gazetteer of the State of Maine. Boston: Russell.

⁸ Historic District Nomination, 1979.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Inventory of Known Historic Buildings/Sites

The below Inventory of Historic Buildings/Sites includes those that are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register, created as a result of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, is considered the “official” list of places throughout the United States deemed worthy of preservation by the federal government. Individual sites and buildings are added to the National Register when they meet the National Register Criteria for Listing on their own. In addition, the Town has recognized the Main Street Historic District (including the Boundary Expansion) as a Local Historic Preservation District, regulated by a Historic Preservation Ordinance. This is described further and is mapped in the Protective Measures section below.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Listing

Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- That reflect in an outstanding manner the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Address	Name/Description	Tax Map & Lot	Condition	Use
270 Main St	Chapman-Hall House	006-084	Excellent	Non-profit museum (owned by Lincoln County Historical Assoc.)
60 Main St	Matthew Cottril House	006-026	Good	Single-family home
220 Bristol Rd	Huston House	001-028-001	Good	Hotel/inn (currently for sale at the time of plan drafting)
4 Bristol Rd	Damariscotta Baptist Church	006-120	Good	Church
170 Main St	Stephen Coffin House	006-077	Good	Office space
Accessible via a path across from Great Salt Bay School	Damariscotta Oyster Shell Heaps	003-001-007	Fair*	Open space (maintained by Coastal Rivers and Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands)

* The shells were processed for chicken feed in the late 1800s, leaving behind a fraction of the original mounds until being protected as a State Historic Site

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The following sites, not listed on the National Register nor regulated through the Town’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, have been identified locally as sites or buildings important to the overall history of the community.

Address	Name/Description	Tax Map & Lot	Condition	Use
72 Courtyard St	D.H. Northey Carriage and Sleigh Manufacturer	066-037	Excellent	Retail
49 Main St	Metcalf House: Home of Metcalf Livery Stable	006-020	Good	Retail/Restaurant
115 Elm St	Howe House: Former hotel and tavern (President Polk stayed there), Home of Mary Howe (of local ghost story), and was the first hospital in Damariscotta	006-072	Good	Multi-family residential
16 Bristol Rd	Day House: Home of artist Jake Day	006-123	Good	Offices
223 Main St	Fiske House: Prestigious Hotel and Company C of the 181st Infantry, 16th Yankee Division stationed there	006-137	Burned (now the site of a new bank)	Bank/Offices



The Fiske House, courtesy Calvin Dodge collection

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Inventory of Historic Districts

The following historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic districts are added to the National Register when taken together, structures contribute to the National Register Criteria for Listing. Structures within a historic district may also individually meet the Criteria, but, more likely, the overall architectural integrity and feeling of the district is what tells the story of the history of development in the area. This is an important note, since changes to one property that do not contribute to the overall architectural or historic integrity of the district may have an adverse impact on all of the surrounding properties.

Address	Name/Description	Tax Map & Lot	Condition	Use	
Main Street (see map below)	Main Street Historic District	006-026, 006-027, 006-029, 006-031, 006-032, 006-034, 006-035, 006-036, 006-075, 006-076, 006-008, 006-009,	006-010, 006-011, 006-012, 006-013, 006-014, 006-014-001, 006-015, 006-016-001, 006-016, 006-017, 006-018, 006-019	In general, the overall character of the district is Fair. In recent years, especially before the adoption of the local Historic Preservation Ordinance, signage not consistent with a historical development pattern (such as LED signage) has been added to buildings.	Primarily commercial and mixed-use spaces consistent with the village pattern of development (except for single-family homes called out in the table above)
Main Street (see map below)	Main Street Historic District – Boundary Expansion	006-077, 006-078, 006-079, 006-080, 006-081, 006-082, 006-083, 006-084, 006-136, 006-120		Primarily commercial and mixed-use spaces consistent with the village pattern of development (except for the church and museum called out in the table above)	
Accessible via a path across from Great Salt Bay School	Damariscotta Shell Midden Historic District	003-001-007	Fair	Significant for its ties to prehistoric and indigenous cultures in Maine, the Shell Midden Historic District captures both the Whaleback Shell Midden State Historic Site and the middens at Salt Bay Preserve in Newcastle.	

In general, the condition of many known historic resources within Damariscotta is considered “good” or better.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

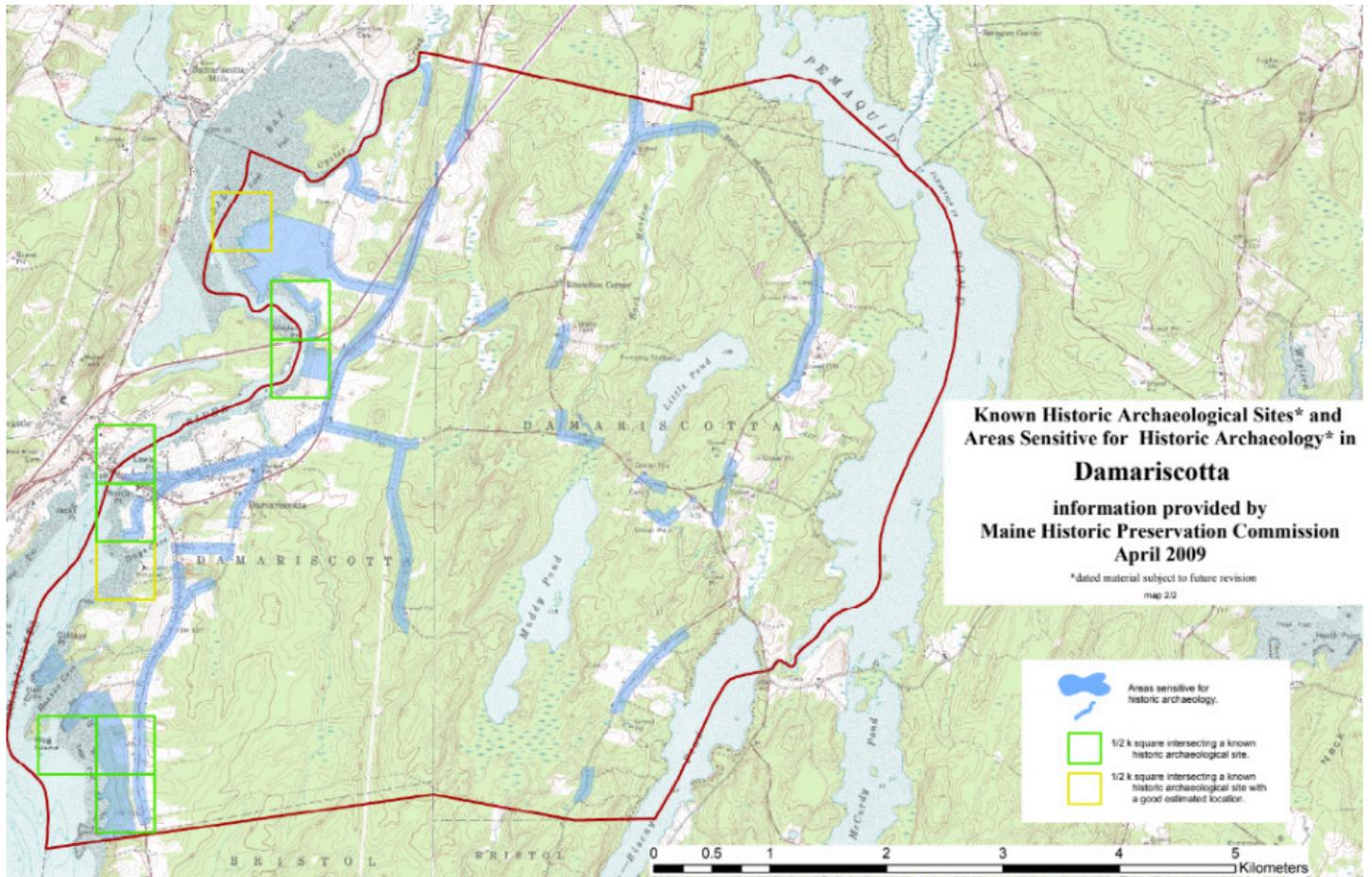
Inventory of Historic Archeological Sites

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

Name/Description	Site Number (MHPC)	Site Type	Period of Significance (if known)
Brown’s Farmstead	ME 115-001	Farmstead	1620 - 1675
Vaughan’s Fort (military fort)	ME 115-002	Military, fort	c. 1745
Jedediah Preble House and Mill	ME 115-003	Domestic and mill	By 1742
Erie (shipwreck)	ME 115-004	Shipwreck, schooner	November 14, 1890
Florida (shipwreck)	ME 115-005	Shipwreck, vessel	1838
James G. Huston Brickyard	ME 115-006	Brickyard	
Huston Brickyard	ME 115-007	Brickyard	
West View Acres Brickyard	ME 115-008	Brickyard	19th Century
Lois M. Candage (shipwreck)	ME 115-009	Shipwreck, schooner	
Norris/Metcalf Shipyard	ME 115-010	Shipyard	
Pier	ME 115-011	Wharf	
Holmes Shell and Fertilizer Co.	ME 115-012	Industrial, shell processing	1886-1891
Georgianna (shipwreck)	ME 115-013	Wreck, gas screw	

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

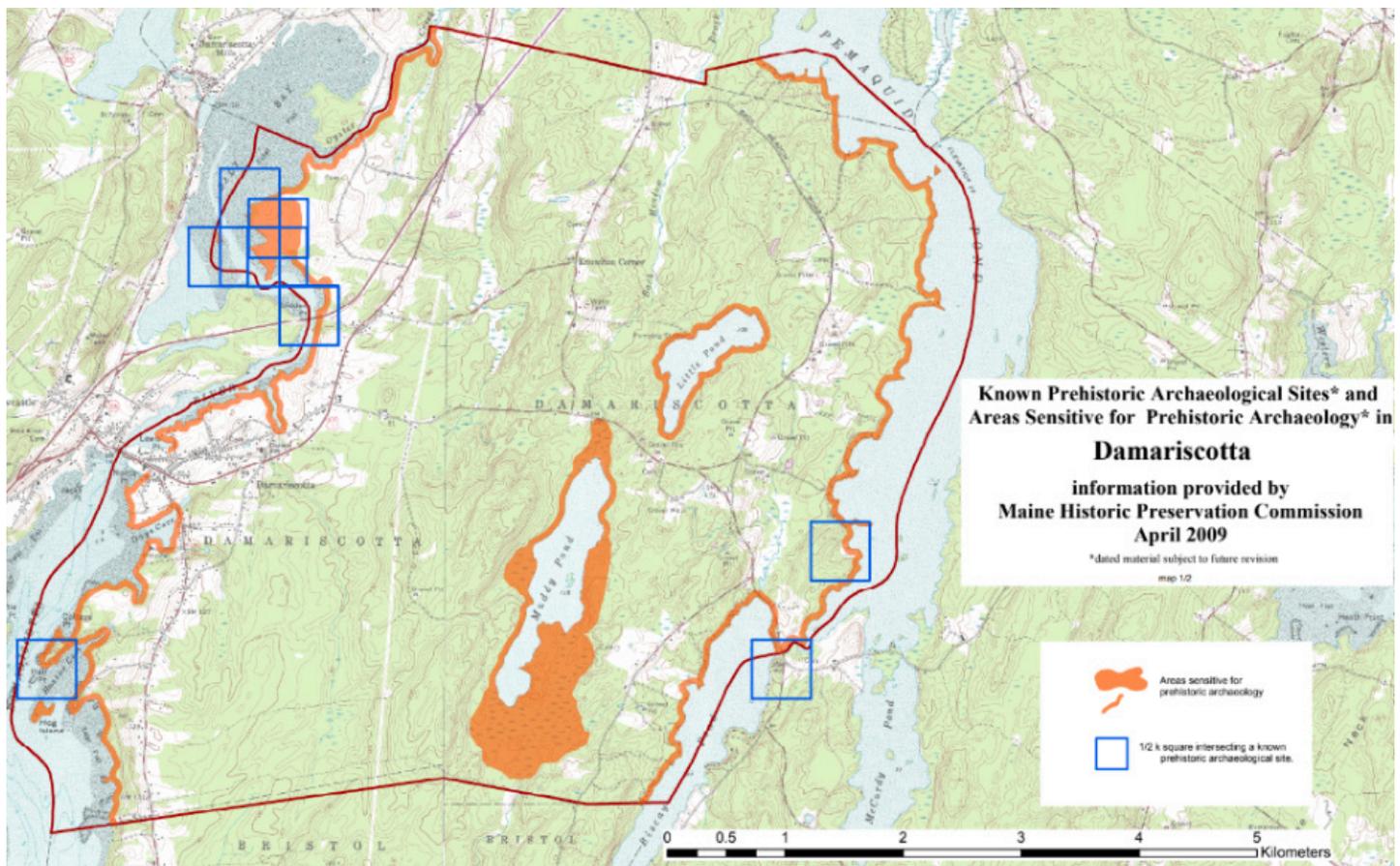
A map of documented historic archeological sites, courtesy of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, is included below.



HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Map of Prehistoric Archeological Sites

A map of documented prehistoric archeological sites, courtesy of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, is included below. Per the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, “Prehistoric sites in Maine may include campsites or village locations, rock quarries and workshops (from making stone tools), and petroglyphs or rock carvings. Prehistoric archaeological site sensitivity maps are based on the current understanding of Native American settlement patterns (known site locations and professionally surveyed areas) within the portion of the state where the municipality is located. Most commonly, prehistoric archaeological sites are located within 50 meters of canoe-navigable water, on relatively well-drained, level landforms. Some of the most ancient sites (>10,000 years old) are located on sandy soils within 200 meters of small (not canoe-navigable) streams.”



HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Cemeteries

Cemeteries are important areas linking present-day Damariscotta to its storied past. One of the cemeteries in town has a pre-revolutionary war veteran's grave, which flies a Union Jack flag because the soldier passed before the United States became a nation.

There are 5 cemeteries owned and maintained by the Town of Damariscotta and overseen by the Cemetery Trustees. These are:

- Bethlehem, on Back Meadow Road
- Chapman-McCallister, off of Standpipe Road
- Hillside, between Hodgdon Street on the North & Church Street on the South
- Knowlton-Russ, off of Route 1
- Walpole-Huston-Woodward, on Bristol Road near Stonewyck Lane

The Cemetery Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance of 18 privately owned historic burial grounds that the Town is required to maintain by law.⁹



Hillside Cemetery

Protective Measures: Local Ordinances

There are multiple Town ordinances and policies that require preservation efforts or documentation by applicants proposing new development or alterations to existing historic structures.

In March 2020, the Town adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance (subsequently amended in June of 2021) which requires the alteration, demolition, or replacement of buildings within the Town's Main Street Historic District (see map below), or the construction of new buildings within the same, to be reviewed by the local Historic Preservation Review Committee.

⁹ Descriptions and location maps of the cemeteries and burial grounds are available on the Town's website [here](#).

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Subdivision Ordinance, amended through February of 2023, also requires documentation be submitted by the applicant from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission regarding the documented presence of any historical or archeological resources on the subject property, and the Planning Board must make a finding that the proposed subdivision “will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, [or] significant wildlife habitat ...” (Subdivision Ordinance, Section 103.2.I).

Additionally, the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance, amended through February 2023, requires that applications for new development (any commercial project, any multi-family development, or the addition of more than 5,000 s.f. or more of impervious surface) document the presence of any identified historic or archaeological sites or areas sensitive to prehistoric archaeology and take steps to protect them through modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation (Site Plan Review Ordinance, Section 102.6.P).

Local Historic Preservation District



HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Issues & Opportunities

The biggest threat to known historic and archeological resources in Damariscotta comes from climate change and its associated impacts, such as sea-level rise and storm-surge scenarios. The Main Street Historic District is situated along the Damariscotta River, which is a tidal river. The map below includes data that approximates the potential inland extent of inundation from the intermediate (1.6 feet) and intermediate high (3.9 feet) sea level rise or storm surge along the Maine coastline on top of the Highest Astronomical Tide currently recorded.

Weathering Maine: Mapping Threats to Maine's Historic and Cultural Resources



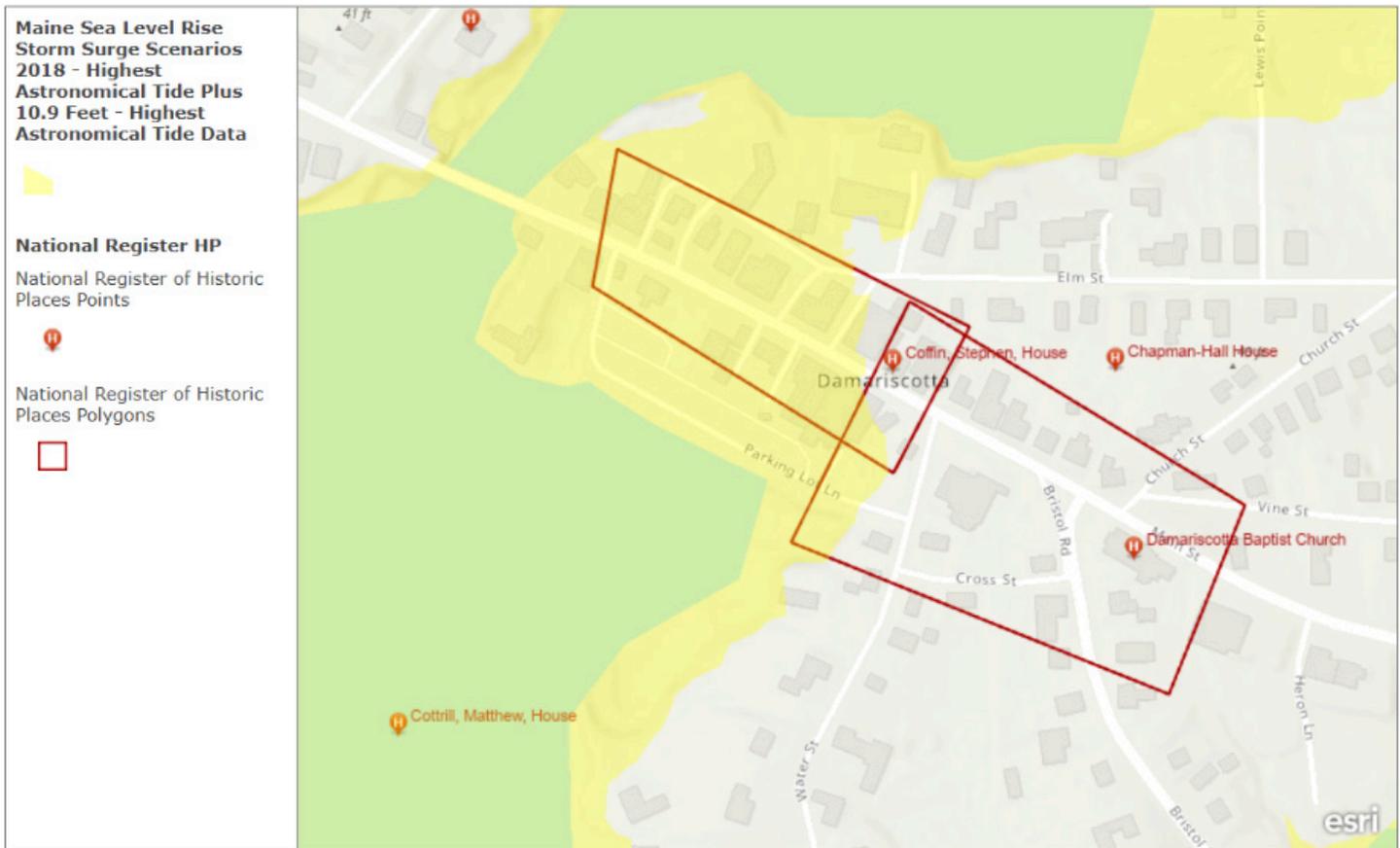
Locations of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or museums/archives with layers depicting potential threats to these properties including flood, fire, sea-level rise, storm surge. Map also has NOAA hazards and watches.

Esri Community Maps Contributors, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA | NOAA/NOS/OCS nowCOAST and NOAA/NWS/SRH | NOAA/NOS/OCS nowCOAST and NOAA/NWS/CRH | Matt Stutts, Cultural Resources GIS, National Park Service | National Historic Landmarks Program, National Register of Historic Places, Interior Region 1 GIS Program

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The map below indicates the approximated highest extent of inland inundation (10.9 feet) sea level rise or storm surge on top of the Highest Astronomical Tide.

Weathering Maine: Mapping Threats to Maine's Historic and Cultural Resources



Locations of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or museums/archives with layers depicting potential threats to these properties including flood, fire, sea-level rise, storm surge. Map also has NOAA hazards and watches.

Esri Community Maps Contributors, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA | National Historic Landmarks Program, National Register of Historic Places, Interior Region 1 GIS Program | Matt Stutts, Cultural Resources GIS, National Park Service

Even in the intermediate predicted storm surge scenarios shown on the above maps, historic structures adjacent to the municipal parking lot would be underwater. The Town is working, thanks in part to a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, to add a flood wall adjacent to the municipal parking lot that could be deployed in heavy storm events to protect the downtown historic buildings. The Town should also consider providing guidance to owners of downtown buildings in flood-proofing their properties and making this information readily available on the Town's website. Generic guidance is available in the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (2021).

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

An additional threat includes future development in the areas of the town determined to be eligible for historic district designation but not yet locally regulated via existing mechanisms (such as the Historic Preservation Ordinance) would be another major threat. It is a common misconception that simply being listed on the National Register of Historic Places means that a property is protected from demolition or change. In actuality, unless a building owner is utilizing either federal or state historic preservation tax credits, no review of changes to National Register properties takes place.¹⁰ Local regulation is often considered one of the most important ways to guarantee that no changes take place to historic properties because changes will require review and must meet local standards.

In Damariscotta, a variety of buildings have been identified as eligible for National Register of Historic Places or local designation, but have not been designated at the time of the drafting of this chapter. Specifically, a Bristol Road Historic District (encapsulating the properties fronting Bristol Road between Cross Street and Miles Street) has been determined by Maine's State Historic Preservation Office to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to the concentration of Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Craftsman styles in the area, illustrating the initial expansion of the residential part of the community along the road to Bristol in the first half of the 19th century. It was also noted that later styles represented continued development. The character-defining features of the district are shared design, massing, scale, materials, common road setbacks, as well as the presence of carriage houses, retaining walls, and stone curbing/steps. The district's period of significance is from about 1800 to approximately 1930. The Town may wish to consider designating another local historic district to protect these properties from demolition or changes that would impact the overall character of this historic neighborhood.



Flooding in downtown Damariscotta after a storm surge

¹¹ It may still be helpful for property owners to have the district or subject property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic preservation tax credits, available at both the state and federal level in Maine, allow income-generating properties (including rentals) listed on the National Register to receive significant credits for the rehabilitation of listed properties. At the time of drafting of this Plan, the federal income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic structures consists of a 20% credit. In Maine, tax credits are available in addition to the federal credit and consists of a 25% credit. There are also additional credits available for the qualified rehabilitation of structures to be used as affordable housing.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Concerns about the impact of modern lighting and signage within the existing Main Street Historic District have been voiced by residents. In addition, there is a desire to regulate new construction within the residential neighborhoods outside of the established Main Street Historic District (which includes the potential Bristol Road Historic District) to ensure that new construction and changes to existing buildings are in keeping with the historic character of the village.

Finally, a threat to historic and archeological resources is simply a lack of data or concrete information on the location of said resources. The Town has never undertaken a full survey of archeological or historic resources and relies on the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and State Historic Preservation Office for data. Protection of unknown resources is clearly not feasible, which means that resources may be lost without anyone being aware of it. No professional surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Damariscotta. Future archaeological surveys could focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's maritime, agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 17th and 18th centuries. Similarly, architectural surveys to date have been limited to the areas in and around Damariscotta's village downtown. Future architectural surveys could focus on the more rural areas of town to identify historic farmhouse or barn properties.

Issues



Sea-level rise and storm surge impacts



Development in areas not currently locally protected



Lack of data and information on location of archeological resources

Opportunities



Working to protect identified historic districts



Provide guidance to historic property owners on adapting their historic buildings to floods

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The impacts of flooding on downtown historic buildings are mitigated.										
		2.1	Assess the impacts of weather events and what types of adaptation measures are appropriate for historic properties.								
				a. Provide educational resources to property owners regarding adapting their historic buildings in light of flood risk.	Phase 1	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 3	12 months	\$ (suggested funding source: MHPC grant opportunities)	Planning Department, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Damariscotta Historical Society(suggested funding source: MHPC grant opportunities)	
				b. Implement the in-progress plan for a deployable flood wall in the downtown.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 1		\$\$-\$\$\$	Administration, Public Works Department, U.S. EDA	
				c. Develop a plan for long-term adaptation strategies to mitigate downtown flood risk.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	18 months	\$\$	UMaine, Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	
			d. Implement the plan for long-term flood mitigation referenced in #2.1.c above.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 7	Ongoing		Adminstration, Comprehensive Plan Implement		

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Historic and archaeological resources in the community are preserved.										
		2.2	Protect identified historic and archaeological resources in the community, through regulation when necessary.								
				a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require that applicants for Planning Board projects are explicitly required to protect known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archaeology through modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	
				b. Amend Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission	
		2.3	Update the existing inventory and investigate potentially overlooked historic and archeological resources in the community.								
				a. Become a Certified Local Government through the State Historic Preservation Office in order to gain access to grants for planning and survey work.	Phase 2	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 4		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				b. Earmark matching funds to conduct a comprehensive architectural survey of Damariscotta's above-ground historic resources, beginning with the Bristol Road Historic District.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 4	8 months	\$	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	
		2.4	Actively preserve, protect, and complement the historic features of the Main Street Historic District.								
				a. Revisit and revise as needed the permitted and conditional uses within the C-1 zone (or equivalent) as well as the density requirements to ensure that they are promoting a vibrant downtown and adaptive reuse of historic structures.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	Connections with and awareness of local history are promoted.									
		2.5		Collaborate with local institutions, clubs, and enthusiasts to develop educational and entertainment programs.						
				a. Complete a brochure or other guide explaining the importance of historic preservation to the community and resources for those seeking to undertake renovations.	Phase 2	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 2			Damariscotta Historical Society
				b. Partner with the Lincoln County News to inventory and archive Calvin Dodge articles related to local history.	Phase 2	Damariscotta Historical Society	Year 1			Historic Preservation Review Commission
			c. Create a Museum in the Streets walking tour.	Phase 2	Damariscotta Historical Society	Year 5	12 months	\$\$		Historic Preservation Review Commission, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce; Damariscotta Historical Society



AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES



AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Overview

Although there are only a few large commercial agricultural enterprises in Damariscotta, many other agricultural activities in town reflect the community's commitment to local food production. Great Salt Bay School maintains a large greenhouse and several grades include a horticulture curriculum and tend gardens at the Foodbank Farm. At the Central Lincoln County YMCA, the FARMS program (Focus on Agriculture in Rural Maine Schools) works to develop connections between local farms and area schools and teach children how to grow and eat nutritious food. Raised beds at the YMCA are used by FARMS program participants to grow food. Twin Foodbank Farms has 25 adult community volunteers and works with about 250 schoolchildren each year. Healthy Lincoln County, a local nonprofit dedicated to improving health, sponsors Lincoln County Gleaners, which collects food from farmers' fields after commercial harvest and shares it at tables at various locations year-round throughout the community.

Locally grown food has a well-developed market in Damariscotta. Most restaurants in town feature locally sourced foods. A farmstand for Clarks Farm in Nobleboro is located along Business Route 1 in the village area. The local food cooperative, Rising Tide, provides yet another market for local growers. Residents of Damariscotta and surrounding towns support the Damariscotta Farmers Market held weekly at Round Top Farm from May to October.



The family behind Morning Dew Farm

Historically, the community supported numerous farms along the river north of the village and around Salt Bay. After World War 1, New York businessman Edward Freeman began to acquire large parcels of land in Damariscotta, including five farms and other properties along the river from Pleasant Street to Oyster Creek at the northern border of the town. Most of these historic farmlands and orchards are now in conservation ownership or are large parcels with residences. Much of the field acreage is used for hay production. Along Business Route 1, north of the village area to the intersection with US Route 1 bypass, a string of historic farm properties retain farmhouses, fields, and barns characteristic of the traditional rural New England landscape. These old farm properties are used as residences and home-based businesses and are not in active agricultural production.

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Existing Conditions & Trends

Agriculture

The 2017 Census of Agriculture for Lincoln County reports 309 farms, with about half generating less than \$5,000 in agricultural sales annually. In Damariscotta, the former Chapman Farm at the northeastern end of Business Route 1 is owned by Inn Along the Way and provides accommodations for the general public and caregivers. One of the Chapman fields that borders the Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) property on Belvedere Road was acquired by CRCT and is used by Twin Village Foodbank Farm for vegetable production, growing more than 45,000 pounds of produce on three acres (as of 2023) for families distributed through the local food bank. This property has a large agricultural easement to ensure that the former saltwater farm stays in agricultural use in perpetuity. Adjacent to the CRCT property, Townley Farm conserves 29 acres used at present for hay production. Townley Farm is the only property in Town currently utilizing the farmland tax use exemption.

On Upper Main Street (Business Route 1/Route 1B), CRCT also owns and manages Round Top Farm. This was a major dairy operation until 1968, but the property now supports extensive hayfields, a small orchard, a restored dairy barn available for rentals, a restored farmhouse used as headquarters for CRCT, and a field that hosts weekly farmers markets in the summer and an ice skating rink when weather permits.



Round Top Farm

At the junction of Business Route 1 and the Route 1 Bypass is Morning Dew Farm, a 60-acre parcel in intensive crop production. This property, part of the old Philips Farm, was once considered for development by Wal-Mart, but Damariscotta voters passed a size cap for commercial buildings in 2006 and discouraged the developers. A former nursery, just off Route 1, still retains several greenhouses used by Morning Dew Farm and contributes to the town's agricultural infrastructure. Other greenhouses support retail sales of plants at local businesses.

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Biscay Orchards (across from Biscay Pond on Biscay Road) includes about 500 trees on 6 acres and specializes in retail and pick-your-own apples as well as cider production.

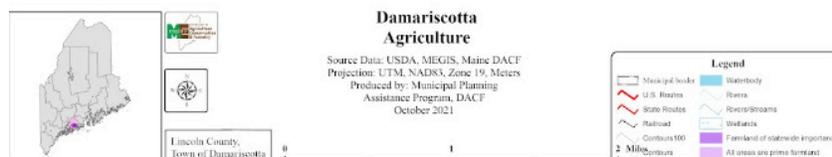
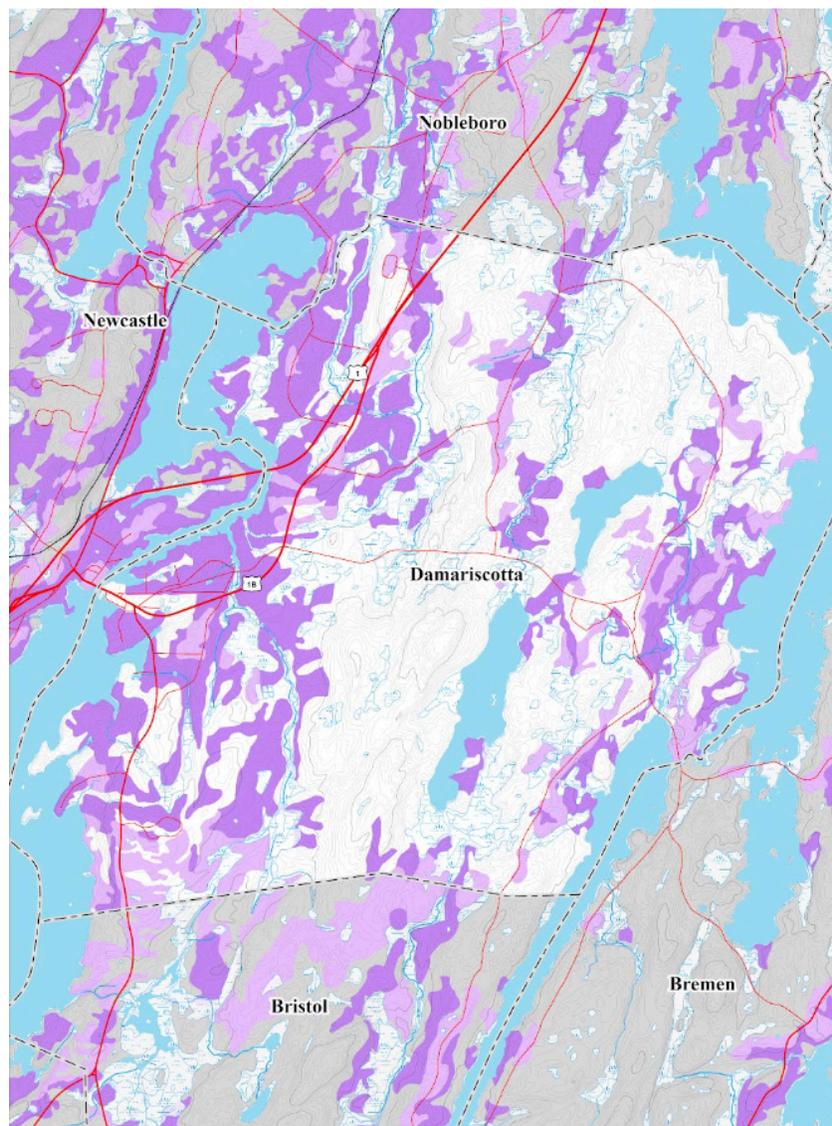
Throughout the town, residents raise poultry for egg and meat production and tend bees for honey. Midcoast Microgreens, a recent business since the pandemic, grows microgreens, a high-value product requiring a modest amount of growing space. Another high-value, intensively cultivated crop, marijuana, has not taken off in Damariscotta despite the availability (since 2019) of nine local licenses for marijuana cultivation facilities and three for nurseries. As of December 2023, no such licenses have been issued.



Buzz Pinkham (left) and Jim Peterson of Midcoast Microgreens

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Prime farmland (the area shown in light purple on the map below) is land with the best soils suited for agriculture. This map shows that the land most suitable for farming runs along the river and village area, along upper Main Street (Business Route 1) (the site of historic farm properties) and patches in dense woodlands near Castner Creek, along Oyster Creek, adjacent to Pemaquid Lake, and along sections of Standpipe Road and Back Meadow Road. Some of the prime farmlands are in heavily wooded areas bisected by freshwater wetland systems, but many of the high-value soils are still available for agriculture in the open fields along the river and bay north of the village and to the east of Upper Main Street. Future agricultural enterprises in Damariscotta will likely follow the national trend of focusing on high-value specialty products that require less land but more intensive effort.



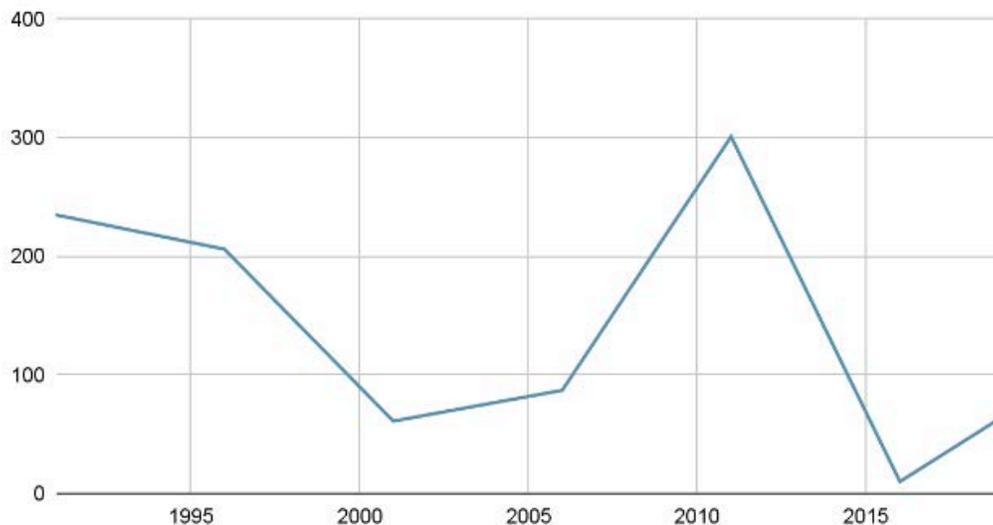
AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Timber Harvesting & Forestry

Timber harvesting was an important part of the town's economy in the early 1900s when sawmills were located on Castner and Deer Meadow Brooks and thick pine and oak forests covered much of the interior of town. Initially, the forest was cut to feed the brick kilns along the river, to clear land for farming, and for logs to build homes and ships. Viewed from above, Damariscotta still is a land dominated by woodlands. In recent decades the scale of logging has diminished although twenty landowners in town (approximately 1,200 acres) are currently enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Exemption Program. Timber harvesting in Damariscotta has fluctuated greatly in the past thirty years but has been steadily trending upward since reaching a thirty-year low (10 acres harvested) in 2016.¹²

The most recently available data is for 2019, at 64 acres harvested. Many town residents continue to make their living cutting wood for firewood, growing Christmas trees on a small scale, cutting brush and making wreaths, and trimming and cutting trees. It should also be noted that these statistics do not reflect the acreage of woodlots cut for residential development.

Total Acres Harvested, 1991-2019



Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service. Timber harvesting includes selection harvest and shelterwood harvesting. No acreage was permitted for clear-cutting in the timespan above.

¹² Per data from the Town Assessor's Office.

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Village Trees

Trees function in the village area to help define the rural character, provide habitat for wildlife, moderate temperature fluctuations, provide screening for development, absorb excess rain, and break up the visual impact of commercial development. Many of the larger trees in the town cemeteries and roadsides are stressed because of age and disease. The trees die and are cut and are rarely replaced. The Town does not have a formal street tree program or a regular maintenance schedule in place for street trees.

Efforts to Support Agriculture and Forestry

There have been some efforts to conserve farmland in Damariscotta, such as Coastal Rivers' and Maine Farmland Trust's work to permanently protect agricultural land in northern Damariscotta for Morning Dew Farm (in 2017). In addition, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust provides agricultural land for Twin Villages Foodbank Farm. There are no Town-wide policies or committees directly working to specifically support agriculture or woodlot management. However, the Town has recently required that developers identify "significant trees," trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) over 30 inches) on projects requiring the Site Plan review so that these trees may be protected.

Castner Creek Community Forest is an approximately 85-acre woodland along Castner Creek owned by Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust. Selective harvesting is used to enhance recreation, wildlife habitat, and forest health. Additional analysis is required to determine if additional lands would benefit from forest management.

Farmers and woodlot owners in Damariscotta may apply to the State's Farmland and Tree Growth Tax Exemption programs for property tax relief. Farmers can reduce their tax burden by applying to the program, which requires only 5 contiguous acres of farmland that produce an annual gross income of at least \$2,000 per year. The Tree Growth Tax Use Program requires a forest management and harvesting plan and requires at least 10 acres be used for commercial harvesting.¹² The parcel may be used for multiple uses, as long as the parcel remains primarily used for the growth of trees used to produce forest products that have commercial value.¹³

¹³ "Maine Land Use Program," Maine Revenue Services, (Department of Administrative and Financial Services, 2020)

<https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs/property-tax-relief-programs/land-use-programs>

¹⁴ "Maine Tree Growth Tax Law, Bulletin 19," Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division, (Department of Administrative and Financial Services, December 19, 2022). <https://www.maine.gov/revenue/sites/maine.gov.revenue/files/inline-files/bull19.pdf>

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Threats to Farms and Forest Resources

Competing Interests

Residential and commercial sprawl threatens to disrupt current and potential agriculture and forest management areas. Most land east of Route 1 is currently in the Town's Rural Zoning District, the only zone where agriculture and timber harvesting is expressly permitted.¹⁴ In the Rural zone, one- and two-family dwelling units are also expressly permitted, as well as a variety of commercial and industrial uses. Residential and commercial sprawl has been occurring in these areas for the past 10 years. Sprawl, including commercial sprawl up Route 1 and residential sprawl into rural areas, is an issue in this case because many farm and forestry operations need substantial uninterrupted acreage to be viable. Even large, multi-acre residential lots can disrupt manageable farm or forestry units.¹⁵

Farming and timber harvesting is a conditional use (subject to Planning Board review) within the commercial (C-1 & C-2) districts in Town, but unlikely to occur in these areas for the reasons stated. Not only would new farming or tree growth operations hamper development in the faster-growing areas of town, but any substantial residential and commercial development occurring would also make agricultural and forestry uses less feasible.

The Town's Solar Energy System Ordinance, adopted in 2021, limits the installation of ground-mounted solar energy systems exceeding 1-acre in panel area to the Rural and C-2 Zoning Districts.¹⁶ Because the land most suitable for solar farms usually overlaps with prime agricultural land, future commercial solar developments may directly compete with farming interests for the most optimal land.¹⁷



Damariscotta's town solar array

¹⁵ See the Town's Land Use Ordinance for more information.

¹⁶ State Planning Office, *Comprehensive Planning: A Manual for Maine's Communities*, 2005. pp. 83-95.

¹⁷ See the Town's Solar Energy Systems Ordinance.

¹⁸ Kate Cough, "Maine's Prime Farmland Is Being Lost to Solar. Is 'Dual Use' the Answer?," *The Maine Monitor*, January 16, 2022, <https://www.themainemonitor.org/maines-prime-farmland-is-being-lost-to-solar-is-dual-use-the-answer/>

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

As noted in the Water Resources section of this Plan, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates most uses that may contaminate waterways and wetlands. This includes agriculture, as farmland can contaminate nearby ecosystems with runoff fertilizers, pesticides, and tilled soils. Under the Ordinance, manure stockpiles, livestock grazing, and tillage are restricted within 100 feet of a great pond (or river flowing to a great pond) or within 75 feet of other water bodies, tributary streams, or wetlands. Any soil tillage of 40,000 square feet or more within Shoreland Zoning districts requires a conservation plan to ensure minimal contamination of waterways and wetlands.¹⁸ State policy, as reflected in the Chapter 1000 Guidelines that the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is based upon, that prioritizes protecting natural resources may be inadvertently creating obstacles to future farming operations.

Pollution and climate change

The prevalence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in existing agricultural land and waters is under evaluation across Maine. The State of Maine banned the use of septic and sewage sludge as a fertilizer source in 2022 because of the potential to contaminate groundwater with PFAS from the waste.¹⁹ Several septage spreading sites permitted by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in the 1980s and 1990s have been identified within Damariscotta. Most of the sites and nearby wells were tested for groundwater contamination in 2023 and treatment systems are being provided where needed. The next step is for the DEP to determine where additional information is needed to adequately evaluate the fate and transport of PFAS in the environment. DEP staff will review each site's results to determine where additional sampling is necessary.²⁰ More information is available in the Water Resources section of this Plan.



¹⁹ See the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

²⁰ Tom Perkins, "Maine Bans Use of Sewage Sludge on Farms to Reduce Risk of PFAS Poisoning," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, May 12, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/12/maine-bans-sewage-sludge-fertilizer-farms-pfas-poisoning>.

²¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/maine-pfas.html>

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Climate change threatens to disrupt the economic well-being of farms and timber harvesters across the state. In November 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) revised the Plant Hardiness Zone Map, which is used by growers to determine which crops can thrive in a certain location. Damariscotta and most of coastal Maine shifted to the next warmer half zone (6a), reflecting the trend in the northeast United States toward warmer winters. This will likely influence the types of crops grown by the farmers in Damariscotta, the length of the growing season, and the presence of associated pests.

As referenced in the Natural Resources chapter, the warmer winters have encouraged the spread of tree pests and diseases as well as the spread of invasive plant species, all of which may influence the health of Damariscotta woodlands and village trees. Once common only to southern areas of the state, outbreaks of Brown Tail and Winter Moths are now common in Damariscotta and have affected tree and resident health.



A hemlock tree diseased with woolly adelgid

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Issues & Opportunities

As noted previously, trends toward the production of high-value specialty products that require less land but more intensive effort may help to increase agricultural output in Damariscotta. Policy protections will be needed to protect working farms from nuisance complaints, especially when they are sited on smaller lots. However, this can also be looked at as an opportunity: these kinds of products require less land, and may even be able to be completed on residential lots or in backyard areas.

Further research or study may be needed to understand what products are currently being grown in Damariscotta, what challenges farmers face, and why they have chosen to operate in Damariscotta. The inclusion of farmers in economic development initiatives and plans in the future will be imperative to protect this industry into the future.

Increased collaboration with land trusts and other stakeholders will be necessary to support small woodlot owners and increase agriculture and forestry in the community. The Town has already been taking steps to protect significant trees, but additional tree inventory work should be undertaken and a plan should be in place for their ongoing maintenance, especially in the downtown and village areas where trees are vital as both character-defining features of the community and for shade and cooling properties in the summer.

Issues



Competing land interests



Pollution & climate change

Opportunities



Farming trends that require less land but more intensive effort



Research into what might be being grown in Damariscotta



Inclusion of farmers into economic development initiatives



Increased collaboration with land trusts

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Damariscotta's agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.									
	5.1	Encourage the active use of local farms, gardens, and agricultural lands.								
				a. See Strategy #5.3.b and #5.3.e.						
	5.2	Protect the rural, forested, and natural scenic character found within Damariscotta.								
				a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department
				b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.	Phase 3	Planning Board	Year 6	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department
	5.3	Conserve prime farmland, especially areas capable of supporting commercial agriculture.								
				a. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that commercial developments in the Rural Areas (as designated in the Future Land Use Section of this Plan) to maintain areas with prime farmland soils (as mapped) as undeveloped open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department
				b. Amend the Town's Land Use Ordinance to expressly permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, (e.g. roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, feed milling, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations) as expressly allowed operations in the Rural Zoning District (not subject to Planning Board review if within existing buildings on-site or if the new proposed building would not otherwise trigger the applicability requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department
				c. As required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869, consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department
				d. Consult with Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department
				e. Adopt a "right to farm" provision within the Town's Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 4	6 months	Staff-time	Planning Department
5.4	Encourage tree planting to assist in climate resiliency.									
			a. Develop a plan to identify and replace dead or damaged street trees in the village.	Phase 2	Public Works Committee	Year 4			Public Works, Administration, Selectboard	

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Local farming and agriculture is economically viable, ecologically sustainable, and socially responsible.										
		5.5		Support the economic viability of local agriculture and forestry through education, outreach, and economic development initiatives.							
				a. Develop a community farm survey to gather information on what products are grown, what challenges farmers face, and why they operate in Damariscotta.	Phase 3	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 7	6 months	Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration	
				b. Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Year 7	Ongoing		Administration, Midcoast Council of Governments, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission	
		5.6		Publicize what incentives are available for farming and forestry in Damariscotta.							
				a. Educate owners of productive farm and forest land in available incentives (such as the current use taxation programs).	Phase 1	Assessing	Year 2		Staff-time		
			b. Determine whether or not moveable greenhouses without a permanent foundation can be taxed as business equipment rather than property and, if so, how this would impact revenue.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 4		Staff-time	Assessing		

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Small-scale agriculture and community garden spaces are allowed and encouraged.										
		5.7	Include community garden spaces in recreation and open space planning efforts.								
			a. Work with local land trusts to identify opportunities, if any, for timber harvesting, farming or gardening (including community gardens) on their conserved land in Damariscotta (especially on conserved open space that is identified as prime farmland).	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 5		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust		
		5.8	Review and revise local ordinances as needed to protect and encourage small-scale agriculture.								
			a. Create a Small Farm Animal Keeping Ordinance to allow for the safekeeping of a small number of farm animals on residential lots in order to encourage small-scale agriculture in appropriate areas.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 5	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department		
		b. Amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Ordinances to require that certain kinds of multi-family residential or multi-lot subdivisions include designated space set aside for community gardens for the enjoyment of the residents of the proposed developments.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 5	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department			

A close-up photograph of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a black baseball cap and glasses, focused on carving a jack-o'-lantern. He is using a carving tool to create a design on the pumpkin's surface. The pumpkin is partially carved, revealing the white flesh and red seeds. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting with a paved area and some greenery. A yellow semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the image, containing the text "ARTS & CULTURE".

ARTS & CULTURE

ARTS & CULTURE

Overview

A vital component of a vibrant community, especially in the downtown area, is ensuring that local arts and culture have a living, tangible presence. This chapter focuses on the links between Damariscotta and the community’s creative culture and how even more connections might be made to the benefit of both. The community survey conducted as part of this Plan highlighted residents’ pride in their downtown, indicating that residents like what is happening in this regard and want to ensure that similar arts and cultural events continue.

Existing Arts and Cultural amenities in Damariscotta include the following:

Name	Primary Location	Offerings
Skidompha Library	184 Main St	Per their website, the stated mission is: “to support and enrich our community by fostering literacy, providing ready access to information and resources, encouraging lifelong learning, and promoting cultural and social interactions.”
Heartwood Theater	Either the Skidompha Library or the Parker B. Poe Theater at Lincoln Academy	The education of the region’s youth and adults in theater arts, and an annual performance schedule that is open to the public
Lincoln Theater	2 Theater St	Year-round entertainment venue whose stated mission is to “present diverse, high-quality programs that provide entertaining, artistic, educational and social experiences that enrich our community” (per their website)
River Arts	36 Elm St	Art gallery promoting the work of area artists
The Peace Gallery	112 Main St	A mixed-use community resource space that boasts a gallery for veterans to sell their work, an open space for movement and creation, and an event space for lectures, classes, presentations, and community gatherings. In all they do, veterans are featured, prioritized, and encouraged to engage in creatively based healing practices.
Salt Bay Chamberfest	All over Lincoln County throughout the summer, primarily at Lincoln Theatre	Per their website, “The mission of Salt Bay Chamberfest is to enrich the cultural life of Midcoast Maine by producing musical concerts of the highest artistic level. Salt Bay Chamberfest advances the vitality of chamber music by featuring standard chamber music literature as well as new and existing works of living composers performed by today’s finest musicians.”
River Company	All over the Midcoast; theater in residence at the Skidompha Library	Community theater group
CLC YMCA	525 Main St	Arts-related camps and programming for kids, teens, and adults (with membership)

ARTS & CULTURE

In addition to the above, Damariscotta is home to a wide variety of private art galleries and craftsperson studios housing a thriving arts community. Throughout the summer, restaurants also play host to music performances and similar cultural events that enhance the vibrancy of the community.

Community Events Highlight the Arts

An important facet of economic vitality and a vibrant downtown is ensuring that the local arts scene is marketed well and has a tangible presence in the community. The Chamber of Commerce does just that with marketing materials available on their website and in brochures.

In addition, the Chamber brings together artists, downtown businesses, and the community as a whole with its signature community event, the annual Pumpkinfest and Regatta. This event, which began in 2007 to bring people into the downtown and entice visitors to patronize downtown businesses during the off-season, was named Best Fall Festival in Maine by Travel and Leisure magazine in 2017. Additional events put on or co-sponsored by the Chamber include the Pemaquid Oyster Festival, held in late September at Schooner Landing restaurant, and the Villages of Light, which lights up downtown Damariscotta and the neighboring town of Newcastle with lights to kick off the holiday season. What these events have in common is that they make Damariscotta a year-round destination for artists and draw tourists to the community.



Culture

Food, especially food produced locally and prepared by local chefs, has become an important addition to the arts and cultural scene in Maine. In Damariscotta, the local farmer's markets contribute to the overall fabric of the community, allowing farmers and other local artisans the opportunity to interact with the public and sell their wares. Additionally, Damariscotta's downtown is home to a variety of restaurants, cafes, and pubs, providing farm-to-table, Thai food, pizza, and other dining options. Because of its existing year-round population and destination as a service center for surrounding communities, Damariscotta has the capacity to accommodate more local restaurants in and around its downtown.

Issues & Opportunities

There are strong connections to be made between arts/culture, a community's downtown, and its pedestrians, bicyclists and even motorists. When vehicular traffic is calmed, pedestrians and bicyclists feel more comfortable and are more likely to use the sidewalks and roads. When people get out of their cars and walk, they are more likely to explore and duck into a shop or visit a restaurant they haven't been to before. When a community's downtown features art and culture, both in the public and private realms, people tend to slow down, linger, and explore.

One way to enhance the existing downtown would be to create a public arts program and invest in community murals, art installations and similar that invite people to linger in the downtown and see what else it has to offer.

Along the same vein, creating an attractive open space in the downtown for people to gather, host music performances, story-telling, reunions, and/or get togethers adds to a downtown's sense of vitality simply by letting people know that those spaces exist purely for them, their friends, and their families to enjoy.

While Damariscotta has a pleasant and walkable downtown (something that many other communities envy), there are few public open spaces in which to gather. Currently, the only public area is the small strip of land adjacent to the downtown parking lot.

A challenge identified by Damariscotta residents as part of the community survey conducted in the development of this plan is that it is difficult to find a place that serves food past 8:00 or 9:00 pm. Attending a performance at the Lincoln Theater or an art show and being able to grab a bite afterward is a common desire that is hard to accommodate in Damariscotta because of this. Some communities have recognized that people also like to shop after going out to dinner and have shops that stay open late, especially on weekend nights.

Further, there is a desire for more "third spaces." A third space is a location that facilitates social interaction outside of where a person lives or works. Examples of third spaces include coffee shops, restaurants, and indoor recreation areas where one encounters other "regulars" to connect with.

If more people lived in and around the downtown area, Damariscotta would likely look more attractive to restaurateurs looking to open restaurants, to other business people looking to start small performing arts venues, or even to existing business owners thinking about expanding their hours to meet a burgeoning need. With more people in and around the downtown, it would be easier to engage the "feet on the street" and keep them visiting downtown amenities and spending money locally.

Issues



Lack of restaurants open past
8PM



Few public open spaces



Lack of “third spaces”

Opportunities



More “feet on the street”
exploring downtown



Public arts program



Open space to gather

ARTS & CULTURE

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Arts and cultural amenities in the community are robust, active, and accessible.										
		1.1	Develop and support public arts and cultural programs to increase Damariscotta's vibrancy and community ties.								
				a. Create an Arts and Culture Committee to promote the arts as a means of improving the local economy, enriching cultural and intellectual life, promoting lifelong learning, and protecting Damariscotta's rich cultural heritage.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 2		Staff-time		
				b. Create a collective and comprehensive calendar of events related to arts and culture in Damariscotta.	Phase 3	Arts & Culture Committee	Year 3		Volunteer time	Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce; Administration	
				c. Create a directory of local artists and craftsmen in the community in order to celebrate and recognize that piece of the local culture.	Phase 3	Arts & Culture Committee	Year 3		Volunteer time		
				d. Create opportunities for volunteer-led, inexpensive, short-term community art projects or demonstrations that demonstrate the impacts of public art in a visible way.	Phase 2	Arts & Culture Committee	Year 3	Ongoing			
				e. Allocate funding to the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to coordinate community events and public art initiatives that strengthen ties between the Newcastle & Damariscotta historic downtown areas, such as Art Walks, music/concerts, or an Annual Maker's Fair.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 4		\$	Arts & Culture Committee, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce	
				f. Adopt a "1% for Art" policy for all capital improvement projects, requiring 1% of the total cost of the project to be set aside to incorporate public art that enables public places to reflect current values and ideas, draw on the evolving energy and ideas of Damariscotta's thriving arts community, and promote interaction among neighbors.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 7		Project dependent	Arts & Culture Committee	
			g. See Strategy #9.5.a.								



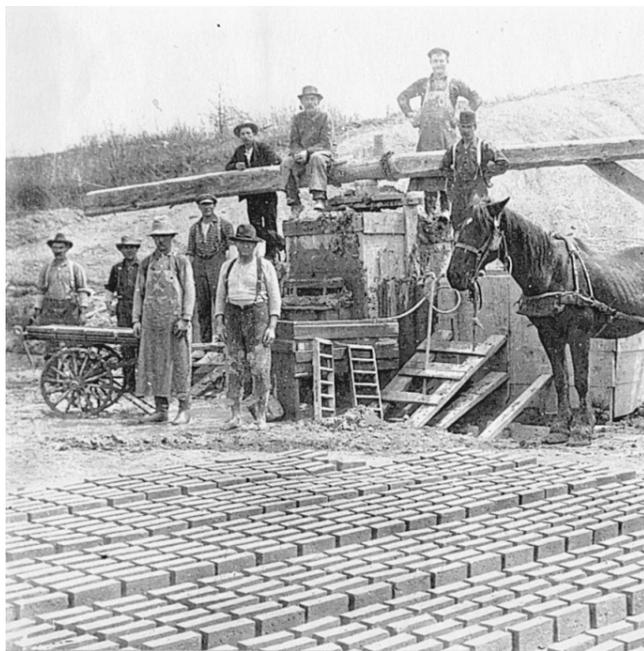
ECONOMY



Overview

Even though Damariscotta is small geographically, its strategic location at the head of flatwater navigation of the Damariscotta River has, nevertheless, made it the historic trade center of the Pemaquid Peninsula and the inland communities of the Damariscotta Lake region. In 2002, the State Planning Office designated Damariscotta a regional service center due to the level of retail sales, the jobs-to-workers ratio, the amount of federally assisted housing, and the volume of service sector jobs in the community. Its designation as a service center allows Damariscotta to be eligible for priority consideration in certain State capital investments under Maine's Growth Management Law (30-A MRSA, Section 4349-A).

The historic downtown hosts the headquarters store of the Reny's Department store chain. A local theater and bookstore anchors other locally owned gift shops and restaurants within the downtown area. Within a short walk up Rt. 1B are two local grocery stores (Main Street Grocery and Rising Tide Co-op), a pharmacy, and other retail and service businesses. Automobile-oriented retailers including a McDonald's drive-thru, a Hannaford supermarket, hardware, and lumber/building supply stores are located on Upper Main Street further outside the village center. LincolnHealth Miles Hospital, the largest local employer, is located just south of the downtown village. During the summer, Damariscotta businesses play host to the many summer home occupants and tourists to the Pemaquid Peninsula and surrounding Damariscotta Lake region.



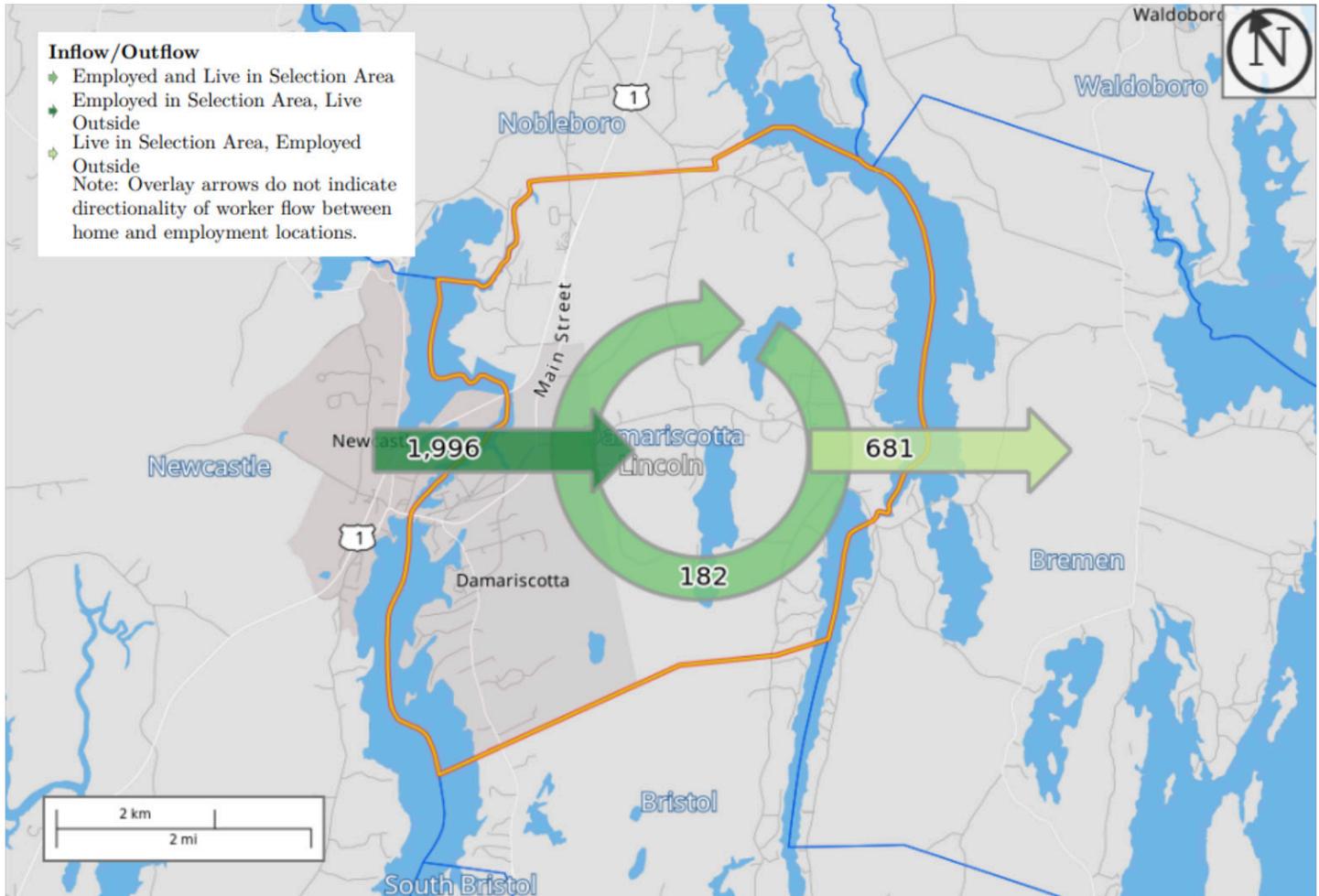
Economy Then & Now

Following the incorporation of the Town in 1848, economic activities included sawmills and brickyards.²² Wooden boat building, including several clipper ships, were major local products before the advent of steam-powered steel-clad boat manufacturing elsewhere on the Maine coast. Fishing has always been a principal activity on the Damariscotta River and estuary and, until the 1970's, land-based agricultural farming was also important economically. (Culturally, it may still be important given the prevalence of backyard farms and community farms in the community.) Today, the biggest export is oysters farmed from the Damariscotta River. The Damariscotta River hosts a thriving seed oyster industry as well.

²² Varney, George J. (1886). "Damariscotta". [Gazetteer of the State of Maine](#). Boston: Russell.

Commuting Characteristics

In 2020, 182 workers both live and work in Damariscotta, and 681 workers who live in Damariscotta commute outside of it to go to work. However, almost three times as many people who live outside of Damariscotta (1,996) commute into the community for work.



Of those who commute into Damariscotta for work, 33.7% are commuting from surrounding communities (less than 10 miles), 30.3% are commuting 10 to 24 miles, 18.3% are commuting between 25 and 50 miles, and 17.7% are commuting more than 50 miles to come work in Damariscotta.²³

Of those living in Damariscotta but commuting outside for work, the top locations are Portland (6.3%), Augusta (4.5%), Bath (3.8%), Newcastle (3.8%), and Rockland (2.5%). There is also a large swath of people who likely are working remotely for out-of-state companies based in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and further flung places.

²³ <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

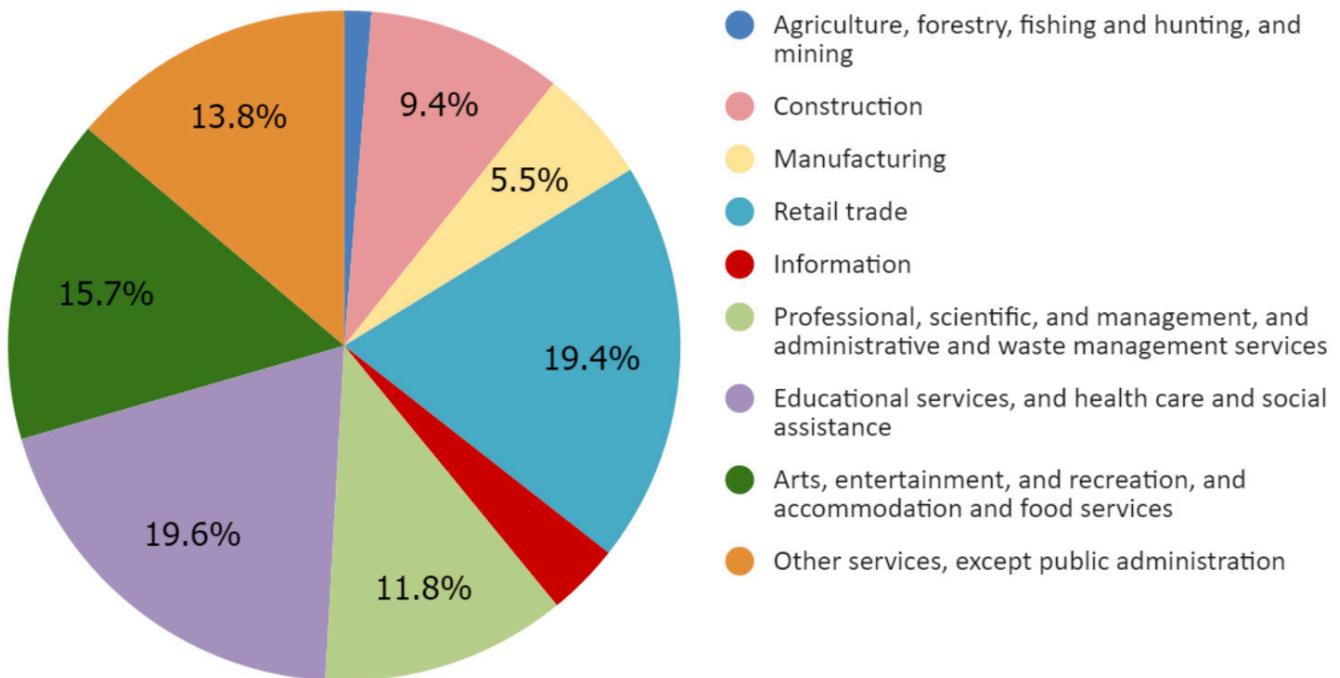
ECONOMY

9.4% of Damariscotta residents are self-employed in their own business. This is a bit less than Lincoln County as a whole, where 13.32% of residents are self-employed, but is higher than the rest of the State of Maine, where about 7.9% of residents are self-employed.²⁴

39% of Damariscotta residents work in either educational or social services, including healthcare (19.6%) or retail trade (19.4%). An additional 15.7% of the population works in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, or food services.²⁵

Damariscotta Residents: Employment by Industry

Civilian employed population 16 years and over



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, 2020

²⁴ Per American Community Survey estimates from 2022, ACS DP1Y2022.

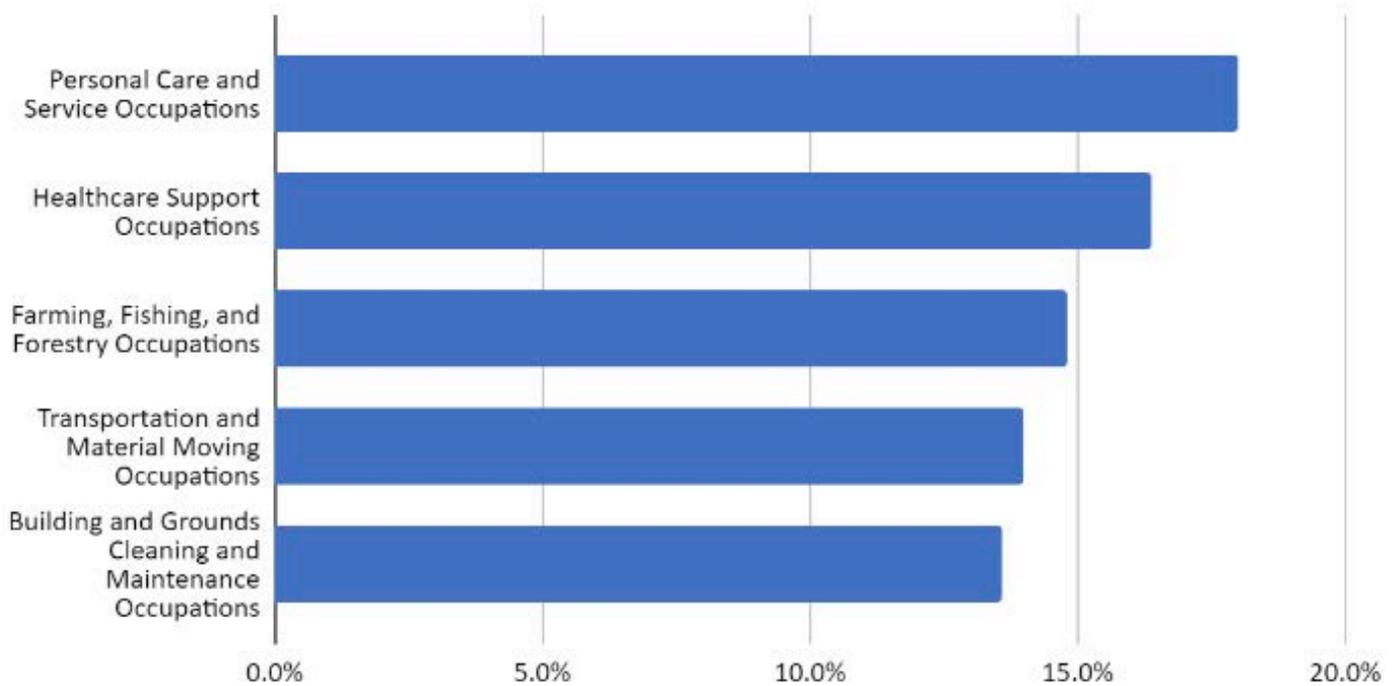
²⁵ Per American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2020.

ECONOMY

The majority of projected job openings through 2031 in the Coastal Counties Region of Maine (which includes Lincoln County) are in personal care and service occupations, healthcare support occupations, and farming, fishing, and forestry. These are largely occupations that are lower paying and do not require a post-secondary degree.

Maine Regional Employment Projections to 2031

Highest Growth Sectors - Coastal Counties Region



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

The Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information produces estimates of the number of employees at the largest employers across the state. The largest employer in Damariscotta is LincolnHealth Miles Hospital, with 1,100 full- and part-time employees. This is followed by the Central Lincoln County YMCA, with between 50-99 employees, Great Salt Bay Community School, with between 50-99 employees, Mobius Inc., with between 50-99 employees, and Main Street Grocery, with between 50-99 employees (depending on the season). The largest employees are primarily retail businesses, service-based non-profits, or schools serving not just Damariscotta but the whole region.

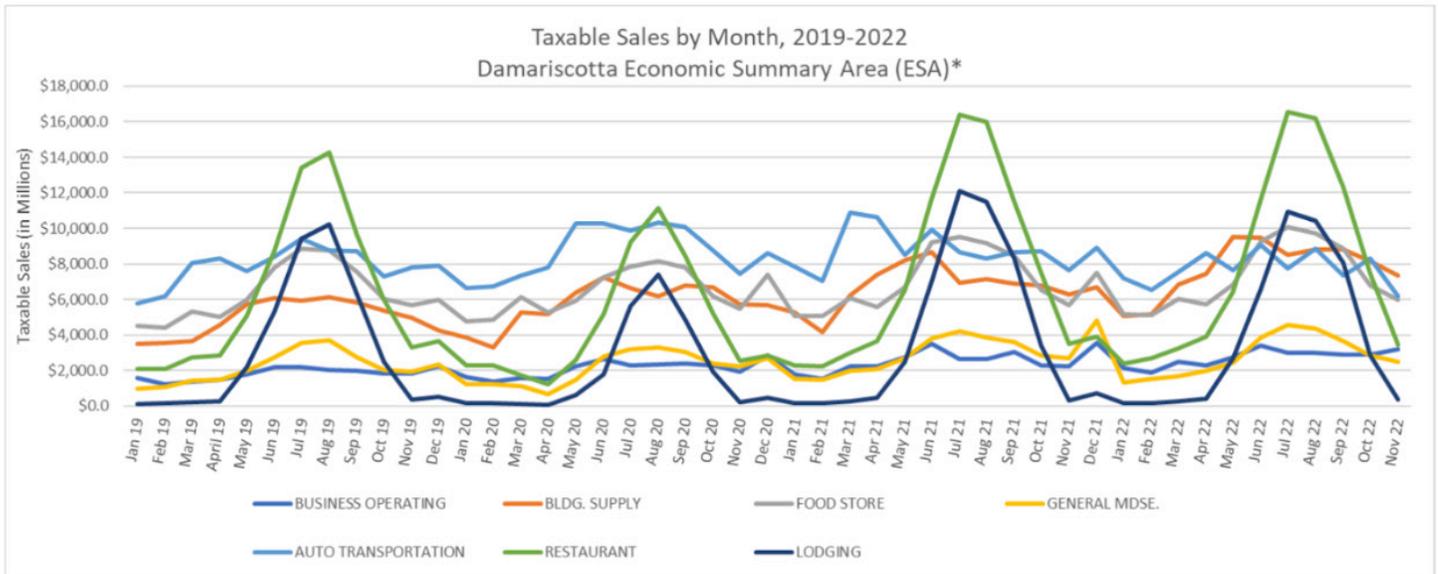
Tourism

Seasonal residents, overnight tourists, and day-trip tourists are considered to be an integral part of the economic fabric of Damariscotta. The Population & Demographics section of this Plan provides greater detail regarding the number of tourists visiting on any given peak season day.

Restaurant, lodging, and retail-based establishments in the community are more reliant on tourism and more vulnerable to changing economic times. As the graph below shows, the COVID-19 pandemic had an outsized impact on restaurant, lodging, and retail-based establishments in the Damariscotta Economic Summary Area. However, it also shows a rebound in almost every sector to above pre-pandemic levels in the summers of 2021 and 2022.

The graph also confirms what Damariscotta residents know to be true, which is that the economy of the community tends to slow down in January, February, and March, with some businesses closing down completely or taking breaks during this time.

The Town has supported tourists through capital investments in the downtown parking lot, including adding seasonal restrooms for the use of shoppers visiting the downtown.



*The Economic Summary Area includes Damariscotta as well as Alna, Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Bremen, Bristol, Edgecomb, Jefferson, Monhegan, Newcastle, Nobleboro, South Bristol, Southport, Waldoboro, Walpole, Westport, and Wiscasset.

Source: Maine Revenue Services

Future of Downtown

Damariscotta is a traditional downtown village located on the banks of the Damariscotta River. Existing downtown businesses provide a mix of retail, office, restaurant, and non-profit uses with some housing located on the upper floors of historic buildings. Surrounding the downtown core are higher-density residential uses. It is a small but successful area; when storefronts become vacant, new commercial uses are quick to fill them.

During the public engagement process for this plan, downtown was identified as a significant part of Damariscotta's local identity and one area that residents are most proud of. A thriving, inviting downtown village contributes to the quality of life and community character. It helps attract workers looking for an interesting place to live and supports environmental and transportation goals by encouraging people to walk or bike between nearby destinations and reducing vehicular traffic. Damariscotta's downtown showcases the community's living history in the buildings that have been reused or repurposed for generations.

Damariscotta's downtown serves not only residents of Damariscotta but also residents of surrounding communities as well as seasonal tourists.



Home Occupations

There is not currently an accurate count of the amount of home occupations within the community. However, known home occupations include things like cottage industry uses (soap-making, crafting, or similar) as well as home-based daycares and professional offices. Per the Town's Land Use Ordinance, home occupations are conditional uses in the zoning districts in which they are allowed. The conditional use provisions outlined in the Town's Land Use Ordinance require that anyone seeking to establish a home occupation must undergo Site Plan Review by the Planning Board, regardless of the zoning district in which they wish to locate. In addition, additional parking must be provided on the lot where the home occupation is to be located, and the use of on-street parking related to the home occupation is not allowed (unlike in a typical business venture where the Planning Board can allow some of the required parking spaces for uses to be met using on-street or public parking). This policy likely has the impact of limiting home occupations to larger lots where additional parking spaces for employees and patrons can be accommodated.

While it makes sense to review potential impacts associated with home occupations, the cost associated with Planning Board review (including application fees, fees associated with noticing the project, and also so-called “soft costs” associated with developing an application for the Planning Board such as getting a site plan drawn and renderings created - both of which are requirements of the review process per Sec. 102.5.E of the Site Plan Review Ordinance) might deter would-be business owners from establishing home occupations.

Regional Economic Development Initiatives

Several local and regional agencies assist the Town in promoting the local and regional economies. The Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce promotes the regional economy by building upon the character of Damariscotta Village. The Chamber’s role is collaborative in bringing regional businesses together to mutual benefit; distributing pamphlet guides to the Pemaquid Peninsula; promoting Damariscotta as the gateway to the Peninsula and generally advertising the Town and Region as “the perfect place in Midcoast Maine to visit, live and work.”²⁶ The Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) is available to assist Lincoln County towns in single or joint planning ventures. The LCRPC pursues regional planning that benefits Damariscotta such as regional transportation planning and housing studies. In addition, Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) administers technical economic development assistance to the Midcoast, including Damariscotta, assisting communities with grants, administration of tax increment financing districts, and similar initiatives.

Local Economic Development Initiatives

During a Special Town Meeting on February 19, 2020, voters approved the designation of a Main Street Tax Increment Financing District and associated Development Program, the boundaries of which are located in the Town’s existing Growth Area. The adopted financial plan captured 100% of the increased value over the 30-year life of the TIF (which would end in FY2049) and sheltered those funds to be used for identified Town priorities. At the time of plan drafting, the Town is considering amending the boundaries of the TIF district to capture additional properties that may be ripe for new development.

²⁶ See damariscottaregion.com for more information.

Using our Unique Assets

In Damariscotta, it is easy to emphasize the historic character and assets of downtown, the many arts-related assets, and coastal, environmental, and aesthetic assets to be built upon to enhance the economy. The Chamber of Commerce does just that with marketing materials available on their website and in brochures. A signature community event, the annual Pumpkinfest and Regatta, was originally begun to bring people into the downtown and entice visitors to patronize downtown businesses during the off-season. Additional events put on or co-sponsored by the Chamber include the Villages of Light, which lights up downtown Damariscotta and Newcastle with lights to kick off the holiday season. What these events have in common is that they make Damariscotta a year-round destination.

Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust also hosts community events and markets the region's unique environmental assets (such as the Damariscotta River and Salt Bay, which produced more than 34% of Maine's annual American Oyster harvest in 2022²⁷) through their website, educational events, and similar. While this is not specifically to entice economic growth, it does have the effect of showcasing Damariscotta's resources to those who may otherwise be unfamiliar, drawing people to Damariscotta both as a tourist destination but also as a year-round community destination. Damariscotta's Marine Resources are also discussed in greater detail in that section of this Plan.



²⁷ Maine Department of Marine Resources Landings Data Portal, https://mainedmr.shinyapps.io/Landings_Portal/

Issues & Opportunities

The same characteristics that make Damariscotta the economic hub of central Lincoln County also bring unique challenges. Interviews conducted with local businesses as part of the development of this Plan found that businesses chose to locate here because of the affluent summer visitors and the regional draw, allowing them to capture customers from surrounding communities as well. On the other hand, Damariscotta also has the second-lowest median household income of all of the communities in Lincoln County (\$48,241 in 2020, according to American Community Survey Estimates). Additionally, 3.3% of individuals in Damariscotta are living at or below 50% of the federal poverty level.²⁸

Business interviews also indicated that the lack of affordable housing in the immediate area remains a recruiting challenge for lower-wage workers. Further, the lack of housing availability in general poses a recruiting challenge for even highly compensated staff (such as doctors at the hospital or pharmacists at area pharmacies). Housing availability and affordability were identified as perhaps the largest issues in finding and keeping workers of all wage levels. Many low-wage employees also lack adequate transportation to work and end up walking. The location of some businesses, especially those on upper Main Street not served by sidewalks, makes this difficult. Thus, the economy of Damariscotta is at a critical juncture: without additional housing located in the vicinity of existing businesses, businesses that cannot find employees may be forced to close or relocate to other communities.

Private investment around the downtown is needed to add housing that will allow people to walk or bike to work without adding additional vehicular traffic. A desire identified by residents during the community engagement process was for restaurants to be open later. More people living within a 10 to 15-minute walk of Main Street will help support local businesses and bring more life and vibrancy to downtown streets throughout the day and week.

Interviews also indicated anecdotal challenges with parking in and around the downtown area. The Town may wish to consider funding a downtown parking study to research the cause of these challenges and suggest alternatives to address them, such as facilitating shared parking agreements with downtown property owners or creating a shuttle service from a parking lot located outside of the downtown to major employers in and around the downtown area.

²⁸ Per ACS 5-year estimates, 2015-2020.

ECONOMY

In terms of opportunities, Damariscotta's historic buildings and adjacent residential neighborhoods, walkable scale, and proximity to the river are assets to continue building from. Downtown is a place that can continue to improve and evolve. The Town's role should largely be to continue to maintain Damariscotta's reputation as a community with an entrepreneurial spirit that is friendly towards small businesses. The Town can accomplish this through strategic capital investment and ensuring that regulations allow for the type of growth desired. Further, creating shared public spaces for gathering will build community and provide more reasons for people to visit and spend time. Integrating public art, local culture, and the city's history in creative ways throughout the downtown village will add to its character and appeal. Facilitating shared parking between businesses and providing safe, interesting, well-lit walking routes between parking areas and businesses will support existing businesses and encourage new private investment while minimizing the need for more parking.

Based on the responses to the survey conducted as part of this planning effort, the community is proud of its local economy. Given the low start-up costs for home occupations and the need for more in-home daycares with the projected population trends (explained in greater detail in the Population & Demographics section), it might make sense to allow home occupations to be reviewed differently. The planning philosophy behind making something a conditional use is that it is of such impact to the community that you would want to limit it; that is clearly not the case here. Thus, it would be prudent to consider amending the review process for home occupations and consider allowing these types of start-ups to be reviewed administratively by the Code Enforcement Officer or Town Planner. This would assure that potential adverse impacts will still be reviewed and minimized but that the soft costs associated with developing Planning Board applications, as well as the time necessary to go through Planning Board review, would be limited.

Issues



Lack of housing availability



Parking issues in and around downtown



Lack of affordable housing



Lack of transportation infrastructure to allow people to walk to work

Opportunities



Regional draw



Walkable scale



Summer tourists



Proximity to the Damariscotta River



Historic buildings



Creating more public spaces to gather

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Damariscotta's economic climate increases job growth in designated sectors.										
	7.1	Coordinate with regional partners as necessary to support economic development.									
				a. Collaborate with the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to better understand employer needs for workforce, physical space, supply chains, etc. Partner with major employers to develop initiatives to address biggest gaps or concerns.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 6	18 months	Staff-time	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers	
				b. Participate in regional economic development efforts.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Planning Department	
	7.2	Coordinate with neighboring towns to support small and locally-owned businesses.									
				a. Continue to build relationships with appropriate staff in neighboring communities to discuss and coordinate economic development initiatives.	Phase 2	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
	7.3	Support local entrepreneurs, home businesses, and cottage industry.									
				a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow low-impact home occupations to be reviewed administratively by Town staff.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Work to attract business incubator/start-up spaces where small businesses can collaborate and learn from each other.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration	

ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Local infrastructure supports the ability to walk or bicycle to local businesses.									
		7.4		Financially support needed alternative transportation improvements that will support economic development.						
				a. Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and/or require infrastructure that supports walking, biking and car-pooling through land use regulations so that workers have options of how to get to work.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration
			See Policy #7.2.							

ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	Civic and social amenities are supported and robust.									
		7.5		Continue to collaborate with non-profit partners to provide civic and social amenities within the community.						
				a. Continue to invest in the Skidompha Library, the CLC YMCA, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, and other service providers through annual budget requests/appropriations as recognition of the value that these service providers bring to Damariscotta residents.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Ongoing		\$- \$\$	Administration

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
  	Utility capacity will support economic development.										
	7.6	Provide the latest high speed broadband and universal wireless telecommunication.									
				a. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 2	3 years	\$\$	Administration, ConnectME Authority, Maine Broadband Coalition	
	7.7	Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to invest in sewer and water infrastructure.									
				a. See Strategy #11.2.a.							
	7.8	Improve energy resilience to prevent frequent power outages.									
				a. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to adopt solar-ready requirements in new developments.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Advocate to regional and state partners to reinforce transmission lines and improve substation resilience to withstand extreme weather conditions and other disruptions.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration, Central Maine Power, Maine Public Utilities Commission, Maine Climate Council	
				c. Investigate the feasibility of local microgrid development, especially for community areas such as the hospital, municipal buildings, and similar.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4				
				d. Review and revise the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for energy storage systems (such as, for example, battery storage facilities) to locate in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	

ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
  	Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.										
		7.9	Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.								
				a. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, Planning Department	
				b. See Strategy #2.1.a.							
		See Policy #7.8.									

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Damariscotta's role as a small-town service center benefits the community.										
	7.10	Strengthen and/or support the expansion of existing infrastructure and systems that support quality of life for a growing regional workforce, including housing, childcare, education, transportation, and broadband.									
			a. Assess common barriers to employment (childcare needs, transportation needs, education/skill gaps, etc.).	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 4	12 months	Staff-time / project dependent	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers		
			b. Develop initiatives to mitigate or overcome identified barriers.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 5	Ongoing	Staff-time / project dependent	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers		
			c. See Strategy #7.6.a.								
	7.11	Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.									
			a. Continue to utilize tax increment financing (TIFs) to shelter revenue for priority economic development projects.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration		
			b. During the annual budget cycle, examine and carefully consider Departmental budget requests to ensure that the municipal budget reflects the priorities of the community and voters.	Phase 1	Selectboard, Budget Committee, Town Meeting Voters	Ongoing			Administration		
	7.12	Encourage tax base growth in order to maintain the town's service center benefits: historic, cultural, medical, conservation assets.									
			a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration		
	7.13	Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.									

ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.										
		7.14	Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.								
			a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
			b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
		7.15	Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.								
			a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage mixed-use development in nodes identified in the Future Land Use Plan.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
		b. See Strategy #8.6.a and #8.6.b.									



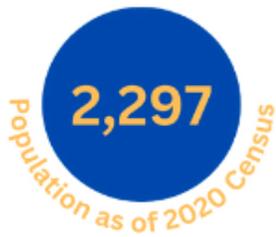
HOUSING



Projected Housing Demand

As noted in the Population & Demographics section, Damariscotta’s population as of the 2020 census was 2,297 residents. The population has been steadily rising at an average of about 8.24% per decade since 1990. Migration into the community has made up the bulk of Damariscotta’s population growth as birth rates have been declining since 1990.

In addition, the demographics of Damariscotta are shifting. According to American Community Survey data from 2020, approximately 26.4% of the population is between the ages of 25 and 44. Additionally, about 14.6% of Damariscotta’s population is school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. The median age of Damariscotta residents is 41.6, meaning that residents of the town tend to be younger on average than the whole of Lincoln County, where the median age is 51.2. Damariscotta residents have also been getting steadily younger since the 2010 Census when the median age was 50.7.



While there is still a large subset of the population that is aging (approximately 26.2% are older than 65) and will require resources geared towards older adults, the increase of parent-aged adults (those between the ages of 25 and 44) and school-aged children (between the ages of 5 and 14 years old) in the past 10 years suggests that the area may slowly be becoming more popular with families (either those moving to the area or parents who grew up here and decided to stay to raise their families). This is likely due to the reputation of Great Salt Bay Community School, the local K-8 school, and Lincoln Academy, the semi-private high school located in Newcastle that residents of Damariscotta get to attend for free.

There were 1,338 total housing units in Damariscotta according to 2020 Census data. Of these, 1,067 are noted as occupied (year-round) and 271 of these are noted as vacant. Of the 271 vacant properties, 162 are noted as vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or short-term use. Short-term rentals and seasonal use of dwelling units are discussed in greater detail below. Of the 1,067 occupied housing units, 221 (or 20.7%) are households with one or more individuals under 18 years old living there, and 515 (or 48.3%) are households with one or more individuals over 65 living there.²⁹

Terms Defined:

Affordable Housing

In general, housing is considered affordable when no more than 30% of a household's income is devoted to housing-related costs (including utilities). Affordable Housing is typically geared to those making between 60% and 80% of an Area's Median Income. This number is dependent on household size and is set by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

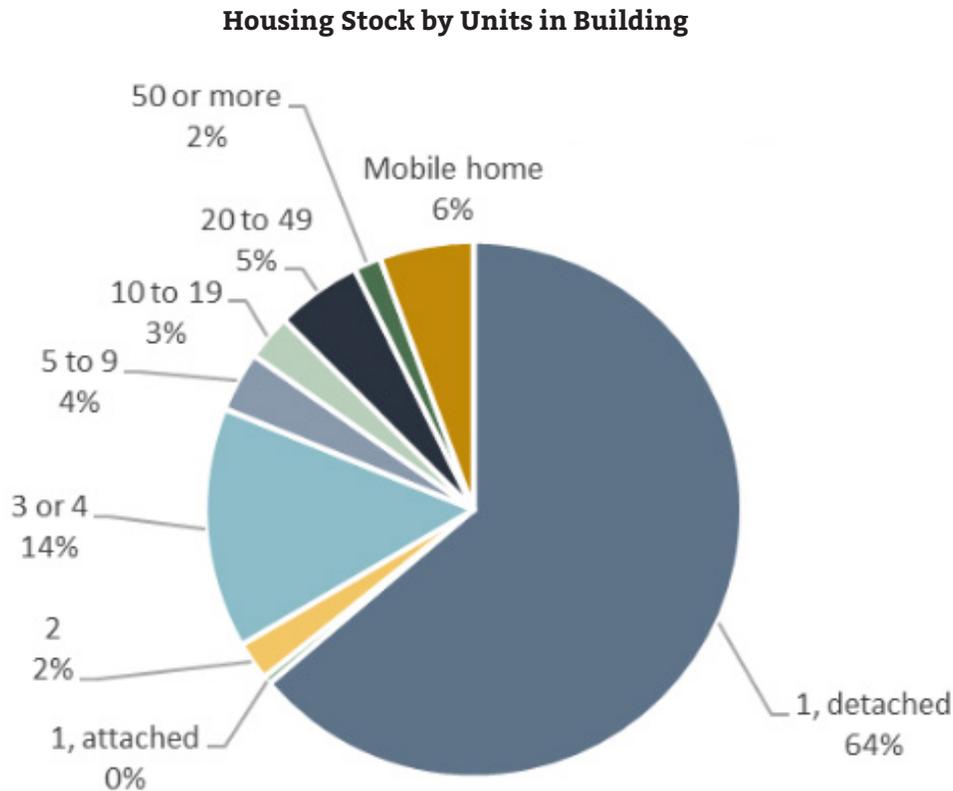
Workforce Housing

Housing that is affordable (that requires the household to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs) to those making between 80% and 120% of an Area's Median Income. This number is dependent on household size and is set by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

²⁹ 2020 Decennial Census: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, Table DP1.

HOUSING

The majority (65%) of the Town's existing housing stock is detached, single-family units. The next largest share is buildings made up of 3- and 4-units (at 14% of the Town's housing stock).



Source: MaineHousing data (2021)

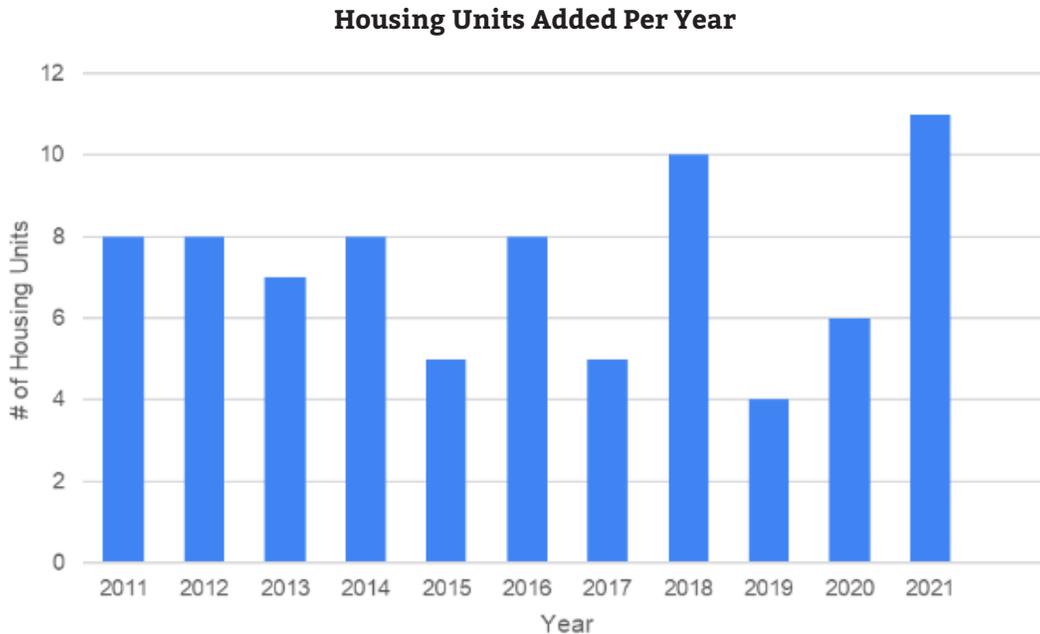
In 2021, the renter vacancy rate was 0%. Put differently, every rental unit on the market was rented at the time the data was taken. The same year, 8.3% of owner-occupied properties were not occupied. 12% of these were for sale and 4.3% were recently sold but not yet occupied, but 67% were only being used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use (some of these were potentially seasonal rentals, but many are also likely second homes that are occupied by the owner but only for part of the year). Seasonal properties are discussed in greater detail in the Seasonal Conversions section, below.

In planning for the future, allowing for a diversity of housing options will be imperative: for families seeking to move to the area for work or school opportunities, for older adults aging out of their homes and looking to downsize, and to ensure sufficient housing for our workforce into the future.

Damariscotta added a total of 80 housing units from 2011-2021, according to building permits obtained through the Code Enforcement Officer. The average number of units added annually during that time is about 7.

HOUSING

It should be noted, however, that during the same period, the Town actually lost approximately 1.5% of its overall housing stock, meaning that the 80 housing units added between 2011 and 2021 did not increase the overall housing stock in Damariscotta. This is a stark change from the 2000-2010 period when the community increased its overall housing stock by approximately 16%.³⁰ The decline in the 2010-2020 period could be due to demolition, neglect, or the conversion of multi-family buildings to single-family homes. Unfortunately, the Town did not require demolition permits or paperwork to document the conversions for the record, so it is difficult to understand the true source of the loss.



Source: Damariscotta Code Enforcement Building Permit data

As detailed further in the Population & Demographics section of this Plan, the average projected scenario (based on the average rate of growth per decade between 1990 and 2020) projects Damariscotta’s 2040 population as approximately 2,700 people. Damariscotta’s average household size in 2021 was 2.25 people.³¹ In order to accommodate the projected increase in population (assuming that average household size holds), Damariscotta would need to add at least **176 year-round housing units between now and 2040 (either rental or ownership)**.

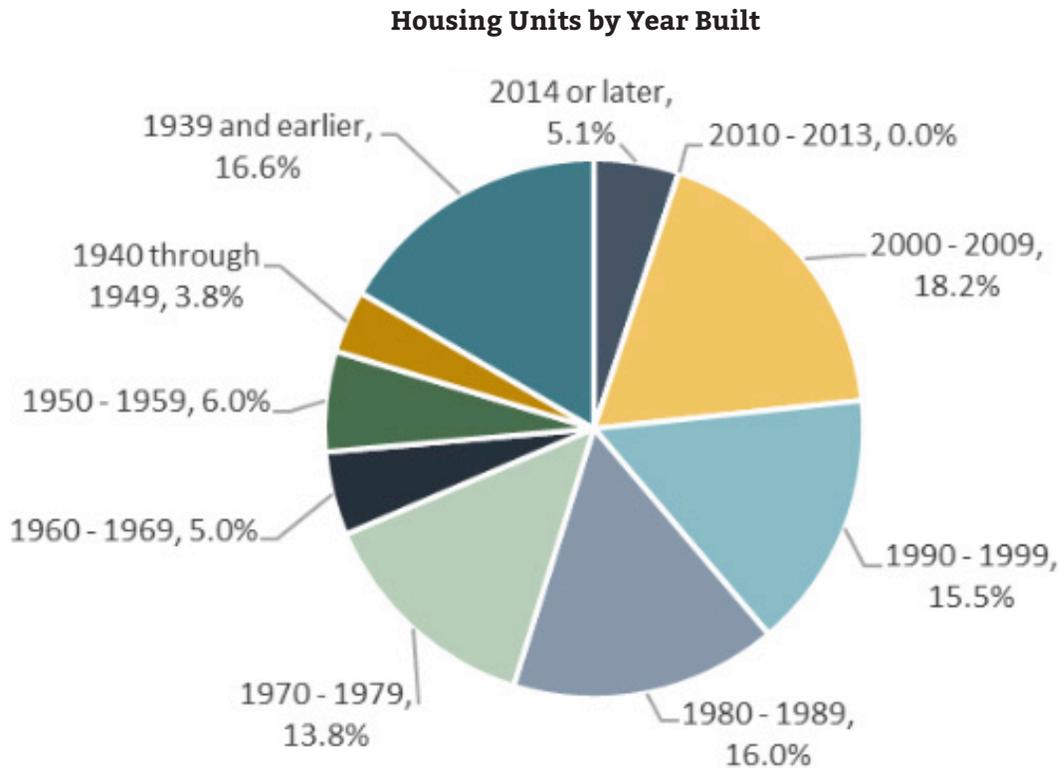


³⁰ It should be noted that the production of housing in Lincoln County also slowed down in this same time period, from adding 12.7% between 2000-2010 to only adding 0.5% from 2010-2020, so the slow in housing production was also following wider trends for this area as the region rebounded from the 2008-2009 recession.

³¹ Per American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021.

HOUSING

If the average number of 7 new housing units per year persists, there would be a **projected shortfall of 64 housing units in 2040**, forcing people who would prefer to live in Damariscotta for work, school, or otherwise to locate elsewhere. This assumes that no housing units are removed from the Town's housing stock in that time, an unlikely scenario given the age of Damariscotta's year-round housing stock (where approximately 25% of all units were built prior to 1960) and the uptick in conversions to seasonal housing since 2010 (discussed in greater detail below).



Source: MaineHousing data (2021)

Under the average projected scenario, the situation will be even more bleak by 2050. The projected population of Damariscotta at that time is approximately 3,000 people. Again, assuming that the average household size holds, a total of 274 new housing units would need to be built between now and 2050 to accommodate that population. If the average number of new housing units per year holds at the current number (7 new units annually), **by 2050 we would be experiencing a shortfall of 91 units**. Again, this shortfall assumes that no housing units are removed during that time for any reason, which is unlikely.

Specialized Housing Needs

The Town has a variety of assisted living facilities outlined in the table below. In addition, there are some additional assisted living facilities throughout the region. As such, further assisted living facilities are not anticipated to be needed to serve the needs of the community during the next 10 years.

Assisted Living Facilities	
Facility Name	Number of Rooms/Units
Hodgdon Green	16
Chase Point (including Riverside at Chase Point)	42
Schooner Cove	47

The Town's existing or recently approved (as of November 2023) affordable housing units are provided in the table below.

Affordable Housing Developments					
Project/Address	Units	Age-restricted (55+) or for those with disabilities	Family	Income-based	Rent-restricted
High Meadow (Meadow Court)	17 1-BR 6 2-BR		X	X	
Ledgewood Court	24 2 and 3-BR		X		X
Pond Circle (Pond Circle & Lessner Road)	9 3-BR 5 2-BR		X	X	
Salt Bay Apartments (off Hodgdon Street)	16 1-BR 8 2-BR	X		X	
Biscay Road Residence (Jackie's Trail)	6 1-BR	X		X	
Stepping Stones (Hodgdon Street)	3 2-BR 3 1-BR				
Stepping Stones (Biscay Road)	4 units			X	
Mobius (off Chapman Street)	6-8 units	X			
Ledgewood Court Expansion** (behind existing Ledgewood Court off Piper Mill Road)	32 units	X			X

**Recently approved by the Town's Planning Board, not yet under construction at the time of plan drafting.

HOUSING

Additional senior housing units (age-restricted to those over 65 who can live alone without skilled nursing care) could be beneficial to provide for housing across the lifespan and allow for existing, larger units to be occupied by others, as discussed further below. While some affordable housing options of this type exist within Damariscotta, as noted in the table above, additional market-rate housing units of this type are needed.

In May of 2023, the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission released the results of a county-wide housing needs assessment and strategy report. The report indicated that, across Lincoln County, a total of 900 affordable-rate units will be needed to accommodate working families and older residents of limited means. The report indicated that the most critical need will be for workforce housing (affordable to working households earning between 80% and 120% AMI) and for age-restricted affordable housing (designed for households age 55+ with income up to 50% AMI). From the report: “Creating new age-restricted 55+ housing will enable existing cost-burdened older resident households to downsize into more manageable units while allowing their current residences to be backfilled by worker households.”

The report recommends a distribution of approximately 250 owner-occupied workforce units, 250 renter-occupied workforce units, and 400 affordable older adult rentals. As noted, this number is to be distributed across the entirety of Lincoln County. However, the report also designated certain communities within the county as being potential growth areas due to the availability of public water and sewer (which is not available in the majority of the municipalities in the county). For that reason, **the study recommends that Damariscotta pursue a goal of adding at least 83 affordable (limited to those making less than 80% AMI) units over the next 10 years.** Following the LCRPC report’s recommended distribution, Damariscotta should aim to create at least 23 owner-occupied workforce units, 23 renter-occupied workforce units, and 37 affordable older-adult rentals.³² These affordable units would be in addition to the market-rate shortfalls identified above.



³² Note: at the time of the drafting of this Plan, the Planning Board had recently approved a 32-unit age-restricted apartment building limited to those 55+ making 60% AMI. However, it was not yet under construction and was not factored into these recommended totals.

Housing Affordability

According to Maine Housing data from 2022, the median home price in Damariscotta was \$525,000. For the same year, the median household income of homeowners was \$63,800. Housing is generally considered affordable if the household does not need to spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing-related costs (mortgage, home insurance, utilities, etc.). By this metric, to afford a \$525,000 house, the household would need to be making \$167,563 a year. This means that 89.7% of households in Damariscotta would be unable to afford the median home price.

According to American Community Survey estimates from 2021, the median gross rent in Damariscotta was \$871 (more than 20% of renters are paying more than \$1,000, however, and 3% are paying \$3,000 or more). The median is about on par with the rest of Lincoln County, where the median rent was \$855 in 2020. However, it should be noted that the median income is lower in Damariscotta than in the rest of the county, and 58.5% of renters in Damariscotta are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of their monthly income on rent). Damariscotta's role as a service center also means that the community has a larger share of subsidized, affordable housing with caps on the price of rent than surrounding communities. The median cost figures indicated would include both subsidized and unsubsidized housing. A lack of market-rent apartments means that those that are available are more expensive, simply due to basic principles of supply and demand.

Clearly, housing (both ownership and rental) in Damariscotta is unaffordable to those making the median income and especially to those making lower than the median income. On a regional level, the above-referenced Housing Needs Assessment offered several implementation strategies that the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission's staff should undertake in the next five years to stimulate housing production in the region. This includes things such as convening municipal leaders to set local housing production goals and lead on educating the public, encouraging the removal of regulatory barriers to housing production, enlisting large employers or Maine-based affordable housing developers to assist with housing creation, and similar. They also recognize that increased capacity will be necessary to assist area towns in ordinance amendments pursuant to these strategies.

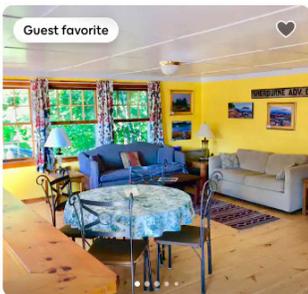
HOUSING

Seasonal Properties

There were about 162 seasonal use properties in Damariscotta in 2020³³. This is down slightly from the number of seasonal use properties captured in the 2010 census (186).³⁴ According to data from AirDNA, which captures properties listed on Airbnb, VRBO, and similar sites, there were 52 active rentals in Damariscotta in 2022.³⁴

It should also be noted that this likely does not capture the actual number of seasonal rentals or residences within the town, however. The Town of Damariscotta does not currently require the registration of short-term rentals operating within the boundaries of the town and thus is missing crucial data in understanding how many potential dwelling units are being rented out on a seasonal basis at any given time.

The use of what otherwise could be permanent year-round housing as temporary or seasonal housing has a far-reaching impact on the community. As noted above, Damariscotta is already projected to be experiencing a housing shortfall by the year 2030 if the current conditions hold. The projected shortfall of 14 housing units does not even consider the conversion of existing year-round housing to seasonal housing. If even one or two units are removed from the year-round housing stock, the projected shortfall is exacerbated.



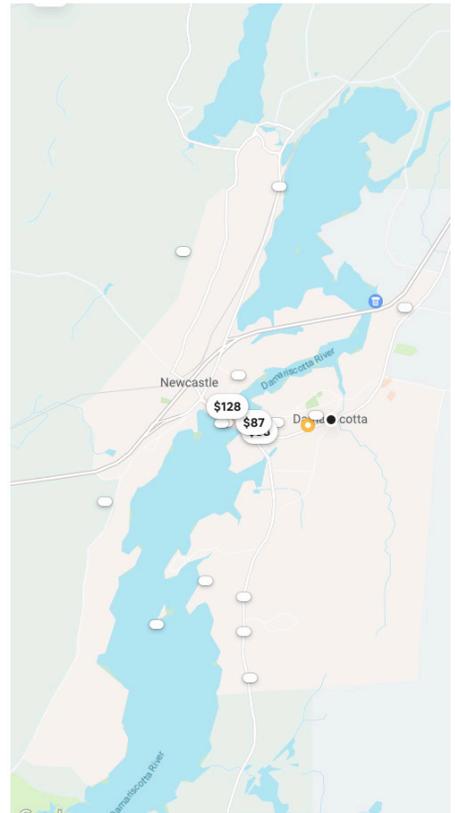
Apartment in Damariscotta ★ 4.92 (252)
Fernald's Backside
2 beds
\$150 \$128 night · \$1,075 total



Home in Damariscotta ★ 5.0 (5)
Bestview Acres
Waterfront
\$450 \$405 night · \$3,458 total



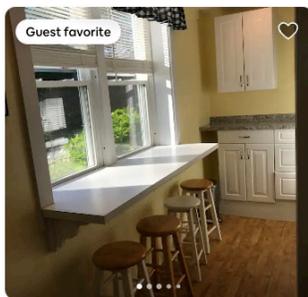
Home in Damariscotta ★ 4.86 (7)
Green Acres
4 beds
\$240 \$216 night · \$1,811 total



Apartment in Damariscotta ★ 4.78 (36)
Eugene Clark Bungalow, downtown Damariscotta
1 king bed
\$97 \$87 night · \$759 total



Home in Damariscotta ★ 4.84 (45)
Home Overlooking Damariscotta River
5 beds
\$375 night · \$3,053 total



Condo in Damariscotta ★ 4.87 (143)
River Escape - Studio Apt. with River Access
2 beds
\$152 night · \$1,278 total

³³ 2020 Decennial Census: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, Table DP1.

³⁴ 2010 Decennial Census: Vacancy Status, Table H5.

³⁵ Lincoln County Housing Needs Assessment Short-Term Rental Data, page 48. https://www.lcrpc.org/uploads/visual_edit/report-housing-needs-assessment-lincoln-county-me.pdf

Multi-family dwellings (three or more units either as three separate buildings on a lot or within one building) are only allowed in the C-1, C-2, and Rural zoning districts and are reviewed as conditional uses by the Planning Board. Until 2017, Maine's subdivision statutes required that multi-family dwellings, as defined, were reviewed as subdivision applications by the Planning Board. In 2017 an exemption was passed indicating that multi-family dwellings could be reviewed under the municipal site plan review ordinance so long as the Planning Board found that the site plan review ordinance was "at least as strict" as the subdivision statutes. In time, the state may continue to revise this requirement but as it stands, requiring multi-family dwellings to be reviewed by the Planning Board is often an expensive and timely endeavor that dissuades applicants from constructing this type of housing. Expenses associated with Planning Board review include application fees, fees associated with noticing the project, as well as so-called "soft costs" associated with developing an application, such as getting a site plan drawn and renderings created (both of which are requirements of the review process per Sec. 102.5.E of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).

As noted above, multi-family dwellings are only allowed in the C-1, C-2, and Rural zoning districts (as shown on the Zoning Map). The C-1 zoning district is essentially the downtown, which could allow for the conversion of existing single-family homes or duplexes into larger multi-family dwellings. However, in the C-2 and the Rural zoning districts, the existing development pattern is primarily either vacant land, commercial structures, or single-family homes, meaning that if a multi-family dwelling is proposed it would either require the developer to construct an entirely new structure or might garner intense pushback from the existing, surrounding neighborhoods unless carefully designed to match the existing pattern of development. Interestingly, multi-family dwellings are not allowed at all within the General Residential zoning district, which is directly adjacent to Damariscotta's downtown where the prevailing development pattern is densely packed single-family homes or even grandfathered, non-conforming multi-family dwellings. This has created a sprawl effect where multi-family dwellings must be constructed in the more automobile-dependent areas of the community, effectively limiting the ability of residents of these buildings to walk or bike into the downtown or to the area's major employers.

An additional potential limiting factor to the construction of multi-family dwellings is Section 101.6.F of the Land Use Ordinance, which notes that no single building may contain more than 32 dwelling units, except housing for the elderly associated with extended care facilities which may have up to 45 dwelling units. As noted above, the Land Use Ordinance has limited the conversion of existing, densely packed buildings around the downtown area (General Residential zoning district). This has recently led applicants to construct new buildings and associated parking outside of that area in the Rural zoning district. Based on the economy of scale, this requires applicants to build more units to make projects financially feasible. This maximum cap on units may have the effect of making it more difficult for developers of multi-family dwellings to make their projects feasible without subsidies in the areas of town where these kinds of projects are allowed.

HOUSING

Mixed-use structures (defined in the Town’s Land Use Ordinance as buildings containing one or more dwelling units as well as nonresidential space) are only allowed as conditional uses within the C-2 zoning district (along Route 1B outside of the downtown). Again, conditional uses must be reviewed by the Planning Board, which can be an expensive and timely endeavor that may have the effect of dissuading applicants from constructing this type of housing. In addition, limiting this type of structure to the C-2 zoning district means that the Town has essentially outlawed the creation of new mixed-use buildings in the downtown. This may be an unintended consequence, as residents continually expressed their love for mixed-use buildings during public engagement efforts held as part of the development of this Plan.

The Town’s adopted Site Plan Review Ordinance requires two parking spaces per dwelling unit, regardless of zoning district (except for senior citizen multi-family dwellings, where one parking space per dwelling unit may be allowed). The cost of building just one parking space is considerable, and revising these policies to reduce the required parking spaces in areas where existing public parking is already available and/or encouraging shared parking with compatible uses (such as offices and residential units, where parking spaces used by the office workers would be filled during the day and the residential units would primarily be used overnight) could reduce the overall cost of the development (thereby passing on those cost savings to potential renters or owners).



A mixed-use structure in Damariscotta, with commercial space on the first floor and residential space on the second floor

Issues & Opportunities

A number of responses to the community survey conducted as part of this Plan came from residents of surrounding communities on the Pemaquid Peninsula, including Bristol, South Bristol, neighboring Newcastle, and as far as Edgecomb and Boothbay. Many of these “outside” respondents noted that they felt compelled to respond to the survey because Damariscotta is where they work, shop, or volunteer (or in a few cases, all three) even though they reside elsewhere. That said, those who work, shop, and volunteer here cannot find housing or cannot afford housing that would allow them to also live here. The creation of new housing units would help in alleviating this problem and could reduce the individual transportation costs of those who already work and play here, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic leading to and from surrounding communities.

Some standards in the Town’s existing land use regulations may have the effect of decreasing housing production within the community, especially of multi-family dwelling units. Amending these regulations to encourage housing production (especially multi-family housing) in designated Growth Areas would help the Town in meeting its housing goals.

Finally, as noted above, the Town does not currently require the registration of short-term rentals operating within Damariscotta and thus is missing crucial data in understanding how many potential dwelling units are being rented out on a seasonal basis at any given time.

Issues



Lack of affordable housing



General housing availability



Lack of rental housing

Opportunities



Amending land use regulations to spur housing production



Better understanding short-term rentals



More housing would reduce GHG emissions

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.										
	8.1	Encourage and promote workforce housing in strategic locations to support economic development of the community and region.									
				a. Designate a location(s) in Growth Areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	
				b. See Strategy #8.3.c.							
	8.2	Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.									
				a. Participate in and support the efforts of a regional affordable housing coalition (such as that beginning to emerge from LCRPC).	Phase 1	Administration, Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	YMCA Community Navigator, Senior Spectrum, Stepping Stone Housing	
				b. Advocate for the creation and use of home-sharing or room-renting programs to connect those with extra space to those looking for housing within Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Administration, Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff and volunteer time	YMCA Community Navigator, Senior Spectrum, Stepping Stone Housing	
	8.3	Aim for at least 30% of all new residential development in the next decade to be subsidized/regulated affordable or workforce housing.									
				a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow for higher density development when certain types of priority projects are proposed (e.g. density bonuses beyond what might be required by LD2003).	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Proactively reach out to known regional affordable housing providers to communicate available incentives for affordable housing development.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing			Administration	
				c. Amend the Town's Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as necessary to increase density or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing in designated Growth Areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
	8.4	Work with current affordable housing property owners to maintain existing affordable housing in the community.									
				a. Identify the expiration date of existing affordability covenants in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	4 months	\$(utilizing summer intern)	Administration	
				b. Educate property owners on incentives available for keeping property affordable.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.										
		8.5	Ensure that land use controls allow for the kinds of residential development that the community desires and needs.								
				a. Reduce the burden of residential development in designated Growth Areas by removing regulatory barriers and permitting "by-right" (without Planning Board review) the residential developments that the community desires.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration	
				c. Decrease minimum lot size per dwelling unit in areas with existing public water and sewer to allow for smaller lots conducive to 'starter' home construction.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				d. Amend the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for "back-lot" development within the Growth Area.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
		8.6	Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.								
				a. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Planning Board, Selectboard, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission	
				b. Amend the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing "soft costs" of development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 2	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. Create a Housing Trust Fund that will set aside money to be granted to priority housing projects, with priorities and funding levels established annually by the Selectboard.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	6 months	Suggested funding sources: private donations; awards/grants; creation of an Affordable Housing TIF district; percentage of funds from other TIF districts; CDBG; annual budget allocations; Inclusionary Zoning Fee-In-Lieu; short-term rental registration fees	Administration	
				d. Encourage the construction of ADUs within or on the same lot as existing residences.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	6 months	Potentially by providing grants or loans through Housing Trust Fund	Administration, Planning Department	

HOUSING

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.									
		8.7		Understand the short-term rental situation in Damariscotta.						
				a. Create a Short-Term Rental Ordinance requiring all short-term rentals (being rented for less than 4 months out of the year) to register with the Town on a regular basis, including payment of a nominal fee, in order to get an accurate count of the number of short-term rentals in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	12 months	Staff-time	Planning Department
			b. Take steps to manage short-term rentals as necessary.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	Ongoing	Staff-time	Administration, Planning Department, Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	

HOUSING

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing in the community is safe and secure.										
		8.8	Ensure that existing housing units in Damariscotta meet safety standards.								
			a. Require that the Code Enforcement Officer conducts inspections of all short-term rentals to ensure basic Life Safety requirements are being met.	Phase 2	Planning Department	Year 4		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration		
		b. Promote available state and federal financial assistance programs for homeowners of older homes to complete maintenance/repairs.	Phase 2	Assessing	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration			

HOUSING

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	New housing is located near existing services.									
		8.9		Protect rural areas and natural settings without existing infrastructure by encouraging new housing development at greater densities in Growth Areas already served by public infrastructure (sewer, water, sidewalks and roadways, broadband internet, three-phase power).						
				a. See Strategy #11.2.b.						
				b. See Strategy #8.5.b.						
				See Policy #7.2.						



NATURAL RESOURCES



NATURAL RESOURCES

Overview

For thousands of years, the Wabenaki people enjoyed the abundance of the Damariscotta River estuary and nearby ponds and forests. Dense beds of oysters and quahogs were harvested in the Salt Bay and upper Damariscotta as well as shad, smelt, alewives, and other migratory fish that traveled upriver each spring. White oaks, valued for their tasty acorns, thrived in the area around the Bay and were not found further north or east. Deer and other wildlife were plentiful and the ponds, creeks, and lakes were filled with fish and waterfowl. The Whaleback and Glidden oyster middens along the river shores at the entrance to the Salt Bay remind us that the natural resources of the Damariscotta area have attracted gatherings of people for centuries.

The natural resources found within the Town of Damariscotta are still abundant and valued by its residents, visitors, and those who depend on the natural environment to make a living. Bounded to the west by the Damariscotta River estuary, and to the east by the connected Pemaquid and Biscay Ponds, Damariscotta is a land striated by freshwater wetland systems that run roughly south to north, and with plentiful springs that are the source of Little Pond, pocket wetlands, forested wetlands and seeps throughout the town. Of the Town area of 14.71 square miles, 12.42 sq. miles is land (84.4%) and 2.29 sq. miles (15.6%) is water (US Census). Of what is categorized as land, 1.77 sq. miles is freshwater forested/shrub wetland (National Wetlands Inventory).

Significantly, Damariscotta and the surrounding towns occupy a transition area between northern downeast and southern Maine ecosystems. This means that the area supports a high species diversity including many at the limit of their northern range, for example, quahog, horseshoe crab, and white oak. This high biodiversity increases the resilience (or ability to adapt) of the forests and wetlands to climate change.

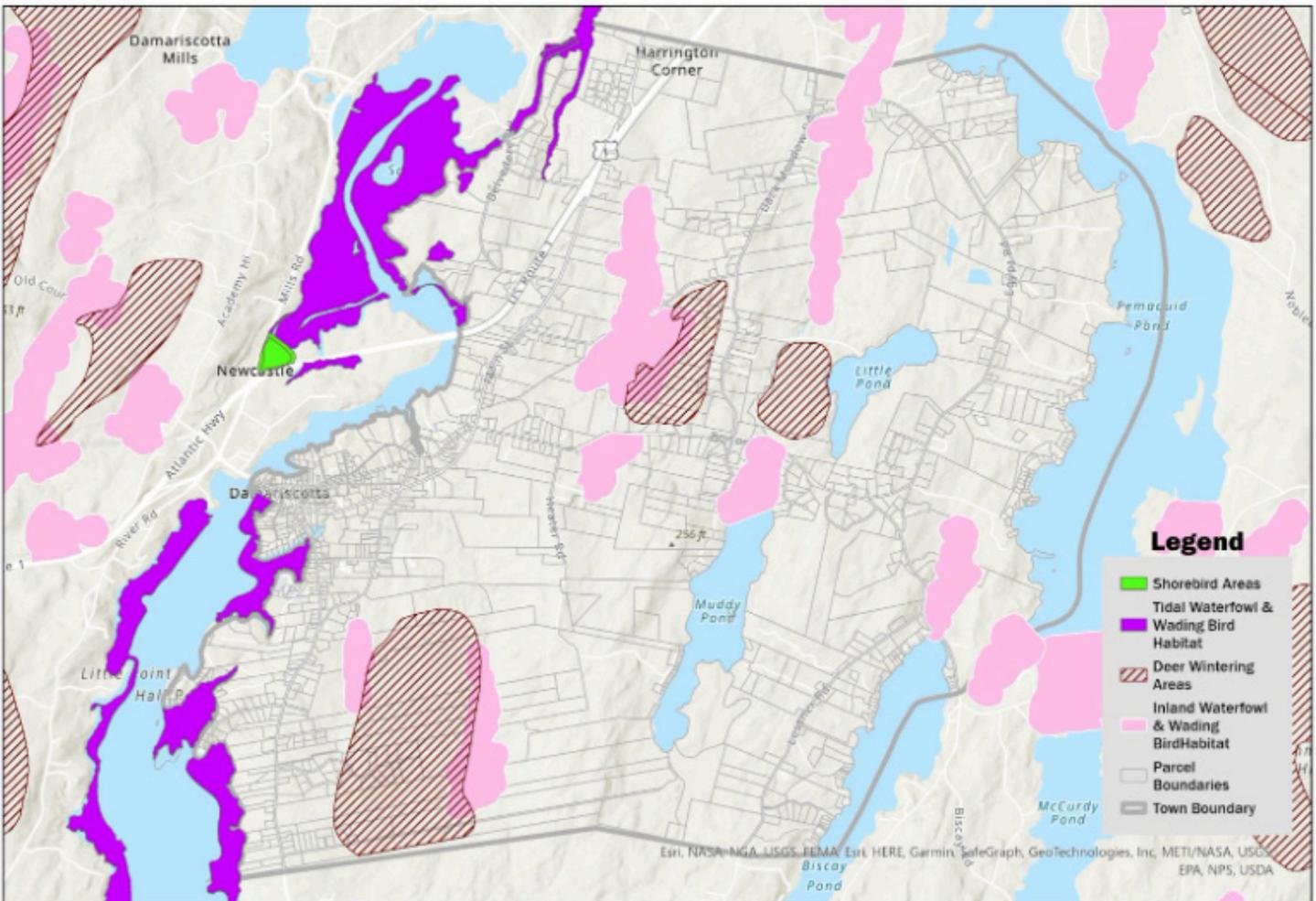
Within the boundaries of Damariscotta are three major freshwater wetlands systems with meandering low-velocity streams: Castner Creek, Little Oyster Creek/Lily Brook, and Back Meadow Brook. These streams support a diversity of aquatic and riparian (river bank dwelling) species and are largely intact ecosystems that provide wildlife and aquatic corridors connecting the Damariscotta River to inland wetlands. In addition to habitat values, freshwater wetlands provide flood control during heavy precipitation events by absorbing and storing excess water and filtering sediments and pollutants.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Castner Creek

Castner Creek originates just south of the Bristol town line and wends north, winding through extensive freshwater wetlands, behind the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District sewage lagoons, through the Castner Creek Community Forest, into an old ice pond behind Damariscotta Hardware, and out through the tumbled stone dam to meet another small tributary (that drains an area parallel to School Street and crosses Piper Mill Road). Finally, Castner Creek passes through culverts under upper Main Street and Church Street to empty into the Damariscotta River. The lands around Castner Creek are minimally developed and the riparian areas are largely intact. The watershed is part of a 3,877-acre habitat block that stretches from the Castner Creek Community Forest south into the town of Bristol.³⁶ Areas along the creek south of the Community Forest have been identified as Inland Waterfowl/Wading Bird Habitats, essential habitats that are regulated by the state under the Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA). These and other animal habitats are shown on the map below.

Animal Habitats in the Region



Source: Maine Geolibrary/Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.

³⁶ Beginning with Habitat Primary Map 3: Undeveloped Habitat Blocks & Connectors and Conserved Lands.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Little Oyster Creek/Lily Brook

The town boundary with Nobleboro runs down the middle of the widest part of Oyster Creek, a tidal tributary to the Damariscotta River at the northern end of Salt Bay. Oyster Creek drains Nobleboro lands to the north. Little Oyster Creek joins Oyster Creek as the Damariscotta town boundary veers east off Oyster Creek. The Little Oyster Creek drainage originates in large marshes south of Biscay Road. The drainage flows north, under Biscay Road west of the former town dump, under Back Meadow Road and eventually forming the stream called Lily Brook (which flows under Business Route 1 and then US Route 1, eventually merging into Little Oyster Creek). Little Oyster Creek is lined with freshwater marshes until it flows through the culvert under Branch Road. Downstream of Branch Road, the waters are tidal and flow among a mixed saltmarsh, a relatively rare wetland habitat.³⁷ Little Oyster Creek meets Oyster Creek north of Belvedere Road. The marshes along Lily Brook west of Business Route 1 are designated Inland Waterfowl/Wading Bird Habitat by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) and are part of a 529-acre undeveloped habitat block. The Little Oyster Creek/Lily Brook wetland system is the most affected of the three major wetlands in Damariscotta by road crossings, as described above. Improperly installed culverts at road crossings may have the potential to disrupt the natural flow of water in wetland systems and impede the migration of anadromous species such as smelt and salmon.



Back Meadow Brook

Back Meadow Brook originates in wetlands at the outlet of Paradise/Muddy Pond and flows north bordered by marshes, under Biscay Road east of Standpipe and Back Meadow Roads to cross Egypt Road and eventually empty into Pemaquid Pond in Nobleboro. Most of the freshwater wetlands bordering the brook from Muddy Pond to the outlet in Pemaquid Pond are designated Inland Waterfowl/Wading Bird Habitats by IF&W, as shown on the map above. These wetlands and adjacent uplands form a 760-acre undeveloped habitat block that includes land around Little Pond.

³⁷ Mixed saltmarshes are an S3 ranking per the Maine Natural Areas Program, which means there are between 20 and 100 occurrences of this kind of habitat across the entirety of the State.

Other Habitats

In addition to the three major freshwater systems described above, there are several other mapped streams with riparian wetlands and associated Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat sites, as well as sizable Deer Wintering Areas in Damariscotta. These are shown on the map above.

Damariscotta Lake is the primary freshwater source for the Damariscotta River estuary. Waters from the Mill Pond at the lake outlet tumble down about fifty feet to enter the west side of Salt Bay in Damariscotta Mills. Some of the waters are diverted through hydroelectric turbines and other outfall spills down large natural falls or fill a fish ladder made of stone and concrete pools that form the border between Nobleboro and Newcastle.

The fish ladder enables the annual migration of nearly a million alewives from the Salt Bay to the lake.³⁸ Historically, the Damariscotta River alewife fishery was the largest in the state and recent improvements to the fish ladder have enhanced the upstream migration of this species. The spring alewife run attracts a variety of bird species that prey on the fish, including osprey and bald eagles.³⁹

The Damariscotta River estuary is very productive, in part because of the huge tidal flow that washes in and out twice a day bringing in offshore nutrients and mixing with the warmer waters of the Salt Bay. The river supports wild soft-shell clam and oyster fisheries as well as 38 aquaculture lease areas, primarily growing American Oyster but also kelp and other shellfish species.⁴⁰ The Salt Bay and Damariscotta River is characterized as a Focus Area of State Wide Ecological Significance by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W). The bay area includes significant wildlife habitats for Tidal Wading Bird and Waterfowl and is designated as the Great Salt Bay Marine Shellfish Preserve.⁴¹

Eelgrass beds are abundant and extensive in the Salt Bay on either side of the main channel. Small areas documented by the Maine Department of Marine Resources in 1997 were found in the section of the river above the village area and limited coves along the river. By 2010, the lower river sites had almost disappeared, but the Salt Bay beds have continued to flourish.⁴²

³⁷ Annie Sherman, "The Centuries-Old Fish Ladder That Feeds Maine's Lobster Industry," (Atlas Obscura, April 26, 2022), <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/fish-ladder-maine-lobster-industry>.

³⁸ "Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance: Salt Bay," (Beginning With Habitat).

³⁹ William Devoe, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases (Maine Department of Marine Resources, March 21, 2019), <https://maine.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a0b3c775cfc243a2b92df328ad85c642/explore?filters=eyJDSVRZljbIkRhbWFyaXNjb3ROYSJdfQ%3D%3D&location=44.013991%2C-69.514457%2C12.91>.

⁴⁰ Under M.R.S.A. Title 12, §6961.

⁴¹ Maine DMR Historical Eelgrass Coverage Viewer: <https://dmr-maine.opendata.arcgis.com/apps/mainedmr-historical-eelgrass-coverage-viewer/explore>

NATURAL RESOURCES

Eelgrass meadows provide protected nursery areas for juvenile fish and invertebrates and are often sites for the settlement of shellfish larvae. In addition, the presence of eelgrass (which reduces current and wave action) may stabilize sediments and the adjacent shoreline. The Salt Bay is a spawning area for horseshoe crabs. The population has fluctuated in recent years due to overharvesting of the crabs for eel bait and biomedical purposes. In 2003, the state ended horseshoe crab harvests in Maine. The State of Maine's Wildlife Action Plan (2015) lists horseshoe crabs as a Priority 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, the highest priority in the Plan. For more than ten years, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) has organized annual spring horseshoe crabs counts in the bay.

Fringing pockets of saltmarsh are found along the shore of the estuary and more extensive marshes thrive in the intertidal areas of Oyster and Little Oyster Creeks, as well as Castner Brook below the culvert at Church Street. These intertidal areas are rainbow-smelt spawning sites. The flats and waters adjacent to the estuary shore in Damariscotta from the Nobleboro town line at Oyster Creek to the Bristol town line (except for a stretch between the US Route 1 bridge to the Main Street bridge) are considered significant Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat by IF&W, as shown on the map above.

The river, salt marshes, freshwater ponds, and wetlands in Damariscotta provide corridors for the movement of wildlife and migration of fish as well as habitat for birds and diverse interconnected communities of plants, turtles, frogs, and other species. White-tailed deer, moose, coyote, fishers, bobcats, beavers, porcupines, raccoons, and smaller mammals are found throughout the town and coexist with commercial and residential development. In recent years the white-tailed deer population has grown in Damariscotta despite steady hunting pressure. Deer regularly wander down the village streets in the early morning and take refuge in the fields and forests along the river during the day.

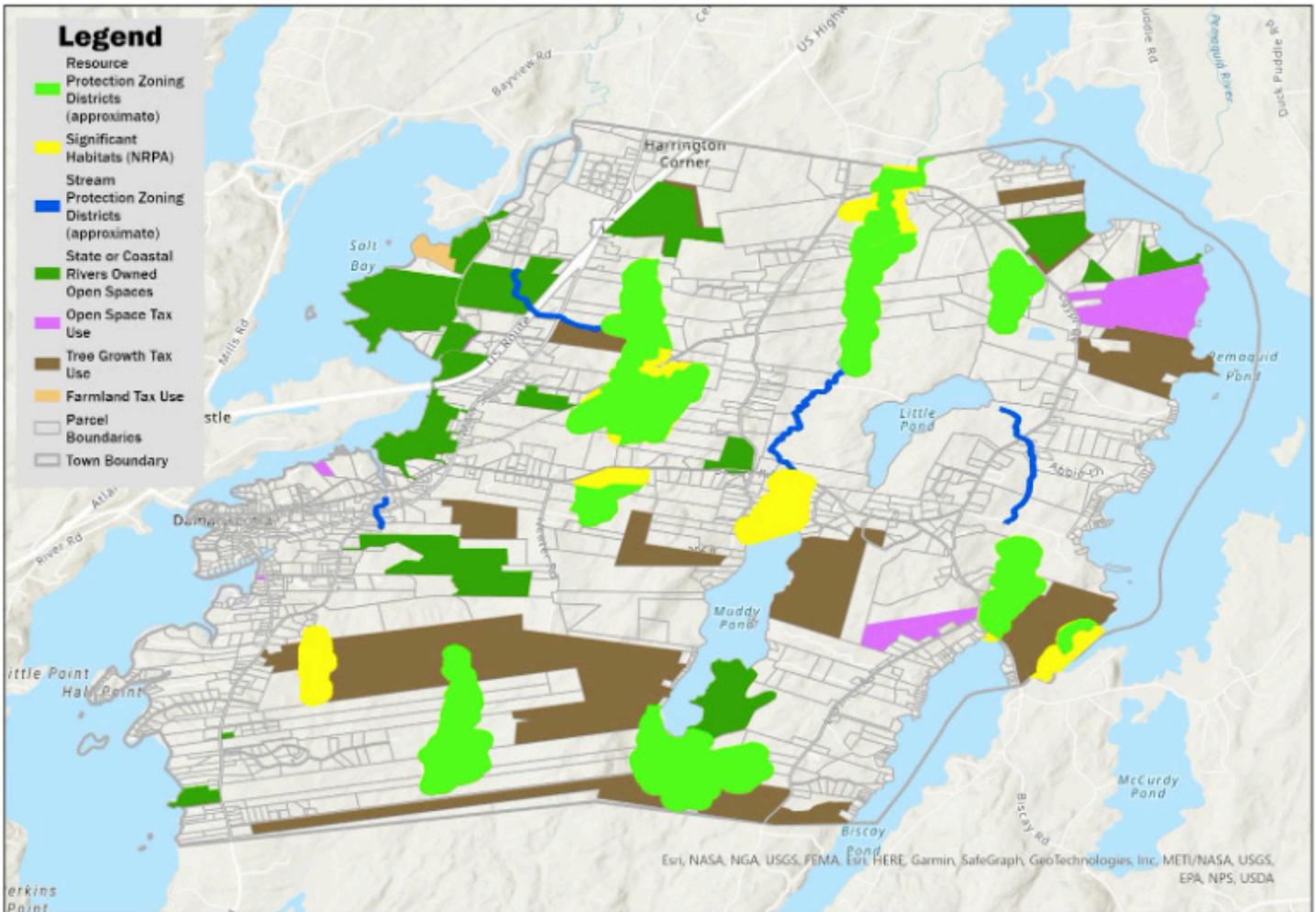
State documented Deer Wintering Areas provide white-tailed deer refuge from harsh weather and deep snow. The Town's largest deer wintering area is south of Castner Creek Community Forest. Other documented wintering areas are located adjacent to Little Pond on water district lands and wetlands near Biscay Road.



An eelgrass meadow

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resource Area



Source: Resource Protection Zoning Districts and Stream Protection Zoning Districts data from the Town's Shoreland Zoning Map (revised through 9/2019); Significant Habitats, Parcel Boundaries, Town Boundary data from the Maine Geolibrary; State or Coastal Rives Owned Open Spaces, Open Space Tax Use, Tree Growth Tax Use, and Farmland Tax Use data from the Town's FY2023 tax records.

Scenic Views

In 2019 and 2020, the Town's now-disbanded Land Use Advisory Committee compiled a list of scenic views in the Town of Damariscotta, as well as the threats posed to them. This is included in the Appendix of this Plan as Table 8. The most common threats identified come from the development of residential or recreational areas and climate change.

Existing Protective Measures

Damariscotta and neighboring Newcastle administer a joint Shellfish Committee and Shellfish Ordinance to protect the health of their shared intertidal resources from overfishing and pollution. (For more information on shellfish conservation efforts, reference the Marine Resources section of this Plan.)

The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance requires a stormwater management plan and an erosion and sediment control plan for new construction subject to the Ordinance.⁴³ This is meant to minimize the risk of contamination to nearby water sources. Damariscotta also implemented a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance,⁴⁴ which established all land within 75 feet of a high water line as a Stream Protection District, and all land within 250 feet of a coastal or freshwater wetland ecosystem as a Resource Protection District. This Ordinance regulates areas where development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or quality of scenic views. Any new construction in these sensitive areas must partially re-establish trees and local vegetation removed during construction to ensure the retention of natural stormwater buffers.

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, adopted to be consistent with the State's Chapter 1000 guidelines, limits commercial land uses to prevent contamination from fertilizers, petrol products, chemicals, heavy metals, or other industrial pollutants. Any construction or natural resource harvesting must provide an erosion and sediment control plan to ensure minimal threat of runoff. Minimizing threats to water quality protects the health of nearby wetland ecosystems and the species relying on them.

Regional Coordination

Most conserved land in Damariscotta is managed by Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT), including:

- Doyle Preserve on Pemaquid Pond (1,200 ft of shoreline and a small island)
- Huston Landing on the Damariscotta River (10 acres with 500 ft of river frontage)
- A parcel on Paradise/Muddy Pond
- Castner Creek Community Forest on Castner Creek (87.8 acres)
- Round Top Farm (12 acres along the river on upper Main Street)
- Salt Bay Farm (146 acres on the Salt Bay)

CRCT also manages the Whaleback Shell Midden Historic Site with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (11 acres adjacent to the Round Top Farm).

⁴³ See the Town's adopted Site Plan Review Ordinance.

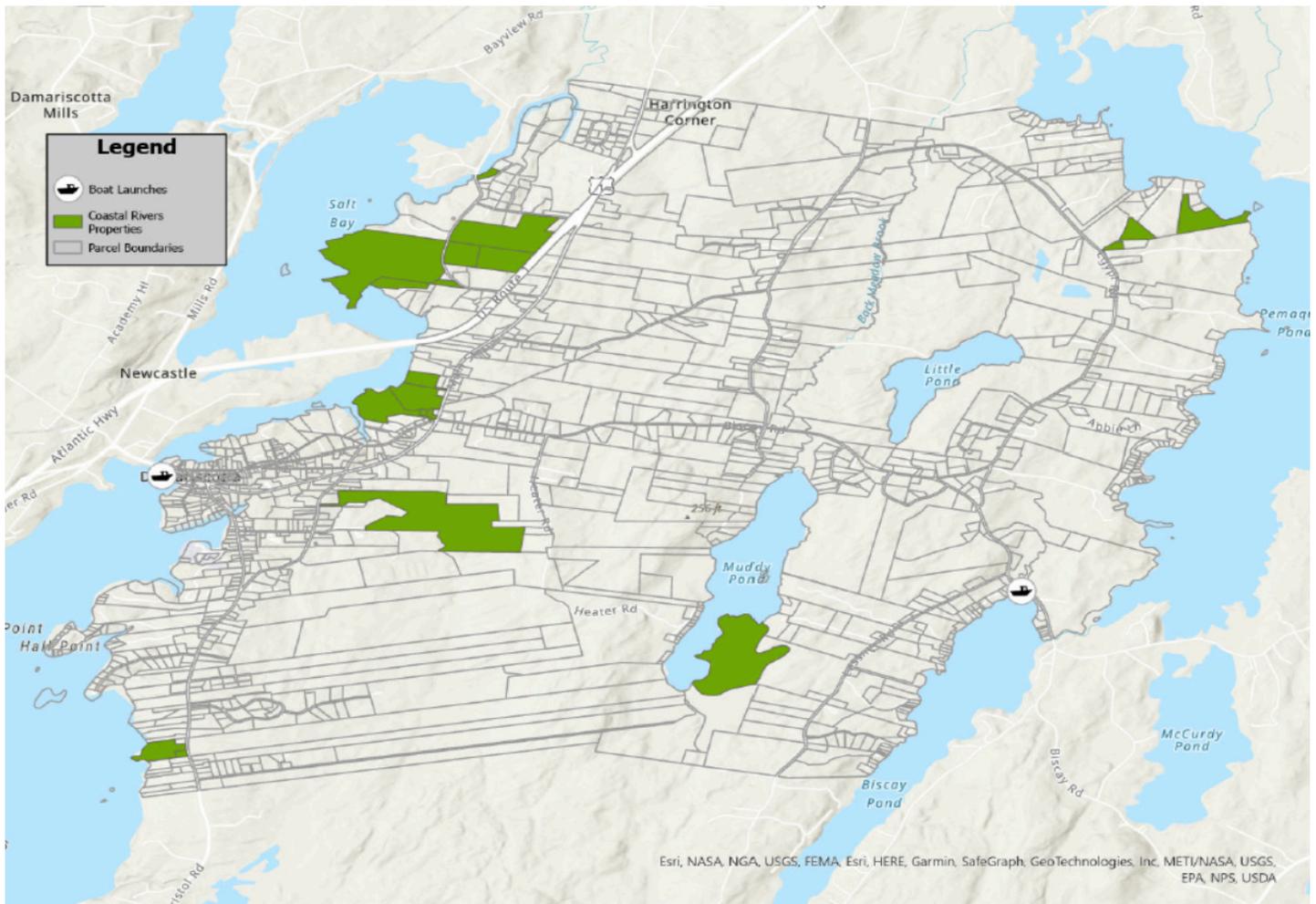
⁴⁴ See the Town's adopted Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Town of Damariscotta works closely with Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust to maintain the health of Damariscotta's habitats and wildlife. In addition to conserving land, Coastal Rivers also restores ecosystem health where possible, one example being the restoration of wetlands on the shores of Salt Bay Farm in 1997.

The Town supports the efforts of the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to limit development in the Little Pond watershed, the community's primary source of public drinking water. The district owns most of the watershed of Little Pond, over 500 acres, and works with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to minimize the risk of bacterial contamination in Little Pond during the annual stocking of Brook Trout.

At the time of plan drafting, the Town of Damariscotta, in coordination with Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, is working to establish priorities concerning climate resilience planning under the State's Community Resilience Partnership.



Data Sources: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Town Tax Records

Issues & Opportunities

Challenges to Ecosystem Health

Within the next ten years, the expected rise of sea level, temperature fluctuations, and increased frequency and severity of rain and snow events as a result of climate trends will have a profound effect on the town's natural resources. While the situation of global climate change is a complex and overwhelming issue, local actions by the Damariscotta town government and its residents may improve the ability of our shared natural resources to adapt to these changes.

For example, the Town has worked to prioritize ecosystem health through the adoption of ordinances meant to limit the pollution caused by development and protect buffers in and around wetlands and in shoreline areas, described in further detail above. Local nonprofits such as Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) conserve land for passive recreation as well as to protect certain natural areas and resources.

Development adjacent to wetlands can fragment and degrade wildlife habitat by increasing noise and light, and can adversely impact water quality from increased stormwater runoff associated with an increase in impervious surfaces. With swings in precipitation, freshwater wetlands and associated streams and ponds will shift in size and nearby development (road building, residential and commercial construction) will affect the ability of the natural ecosystems to shift and adapt. As annual precipitation events become more frequent and severe, runoff from streets, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces will overwhelm roadside ditches and current stormwater systems, especially within the village area. This stormwater runoff contains sediments and pollutants that contribute to the observed increasing acidity and nitrification of the estuarine and lake waters.

The wetlands and mud flats around downtown Damariscotta are vulnerable to runoff pollution and disruption from human activity, as referenced in the Marine Resources section of this Plan. The Town of Damariscotta is permitted by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Waste Snow Dump Permit #ME0102768, approved in May 2007) to dump snow into the river at the bridge and the edge of the municipal parking lot, thus potentially releasing sand, salt, chemicals, and oil into the river.

As the coastal waters warm, scientists expect to see new species of phytoplanktons with biotoxins that may affect human health.⁴⁵

Endangered and Threatened Species

No endangered or threatened plant or animal species have been documented within Damariscotta. Bald Eagles (considered an endangered species in Maine until 2009) nest and feed along the River and are still a species of concern protected by the federal Bald Eagle-Golden Eagle Act of 1963.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Susanne K Meidel, "2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Appendices https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/305b/2022/25-May-2022_2018-22_ME_IntegratedRpt-LIST.pdf.

⁴⁶ "Forest Management Recommendations for Bald Eagles," (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife).

NATURAL RESOURCES

Invasive Species

Varieties of invasive species are found in Damariscotta, including Asiatic Bittersweet, Japanese Barberry, Purple Loosestrife, Japanese Knotweed, and Buckthorn. Mile-a-minute weed, a fast-growing vine native to Asia, was recently discovered in nearby Boothbay Harbor on nursery stock and is of concern. This weed and other invasives threaten to out-compete native species and disrupt the local ecology. Roadside erosion-control plantings, construction, nursery plantings, and even vehicles, trailers, and boats traveling from outside areas can all inadvertently introduce invasive species to uplands, lakes, and freshwater wetlands. Recent surveys of the freshwater ponds within the town indicate that aquatic invasives such as Variable Leaf Milfoil, Curly Leaf Pondweed, and Hydrilla are not present (though they were previously found in nearby Damariscotta Lake). Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has been documented in hemlock along the river and is presumed to be present within town boundaries. White Pine Weevil is endemic in the area but Emerald Ash Borer has not been reported in Lincoln County.

Road Construction, Maintenance & Stream Crossings

The building of roads and improperly installed culverts have the potential to disrupt the natural flow of water in wetland systems and impede the migration of anadromous species such as smelt and salmon. The Maine IF&W Stream Habitat Viewer, available online, has identified and mapped all the problematic stream crossings in Damariscotta and can help in planning for roadway improvements.⁴⁷

Town roads are a major source of nonpoint source pollution as stormwater washes off sediments, road salt, and heavy metals directly into adjacent ecosystems. Roads fragment habitats and create hazardous barriers to animal movement. Some deer wintering areas such as the large area south of Castner Creek are impacted by residential and road development. Preventing road development in habitat areas in the future would provide a variety of benefits to habitat and water quality in the community.

Shoreland Erosion

In addition to threatening the integrity of shoreline structures, slumping and erosion of the banks along the Damariscotta River estuary threaten to damage shoreline habitats and release large amounts of sediment and pollutants to coastal waters. In 2001, the Maine Geological Survey mapped out the erosion potential of the shoreline along the Damariscotta River, finding land at risk of potential bank slumping south of Days Cove and along Cottage Point in Damariscotta.⁴⁸ Additionally, one stretch of coastal bluff near the southern border of town along the Damariscotta River was found to be highly unstable.⁴⁹ While no shoreline was found at significant risk of erosion, that may have changed in the years since the last available study in 2001.

Fluctuations in lake water levels and storm events cause erosion on freshwater lake shores in Damariscotta and potentially endanger structures built within the shoreland zone. Actions by individual residents to harden the shoreline of their property with riprap to reduce erosion (which is allowed with permits under existing state and local laws) may adversely affect adjacent natural areas.

⁴⁷ <https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/MaineStreamViewer/#>

⁴⁸ Stephen M Dickson, Coastal landslide hazards in the Damariscotta quadrangle, Maine, Maine Geological Survey, Open-File Map 01-514, map, scale 1:24,000, 2001 https://digitalmaine.com/mgs_maps/266/

⁴⁹ Thomas et. al., Coastal bluffs in the Damariscotta quadrangle, Maine, Maine Geological Survey, Open-File Map 02-185, map, scale 1:24,000, 2002, https://digitalmaine.com/mgs_maps/513/

NATURAL RESOURCES

Issues



Climate change impacts



Development adjacent to wetlands



Stormwater runoff

Opportunities



Adoption of ordinances meant to limit pollution



Collaboration with CRCT

NATURAL RESOURCES

Terms Defined:

Critical Natural Resources

- Resource Protection Areas
- Wetlands of special significance
- Significant vernal pools
- Endangered & threatened species wildlife habitat (including both plant and animal species)
- High & moderate value deer wintering areas
- Shorebird nesting areas
- High & moderate value wading bird habitat
- Significant freshwater fisheries spawning habitat
- Critically imperiled (S1), imperiled (S2), or rare (S3) natural communities, as defined by the Maine Natural Areas Program

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to: wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well protected and healthy.										
		4.1	Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.								
			a. Work with local and regional partners to document the occurrence of invasive species.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing				Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
			b. Provide signage and/or educational materials at appropriate locations (e.g. municipal boat landing, Biscay Beach) regarding aquatic invasive species.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin ear-marking funds Year 4		\$		Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
			c. Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing				Planning Department	
		d. Work with local land trusts to create an inventory of possible rare species in Oyster Creek's salt marsh.	Phase 2	Administration	Year 3				Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust		

NATURAL RESOURCES

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The community's critical natural resources (including but not limited to: wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas) are well protected and healthy.										
		4.2	Ensure local ordinances include up-to-date methods and best practices for wetland protection.								
				a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require applicants 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.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to consider as part of the review process pertinent habitat maps and information regarding critical natural resources.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. Work with a qualified professional engineer (or Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District) to amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review Ordinances to incorporate low-impact development standards for stormwater management.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Maine DEP, Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
				d. Ensure continued compliance with the Maine DEP Chapter 1000 standards for Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
		4.3	Protect and restore local wildlife habitats.								
				a. Distribute information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.	Phase 1	Assessing	Year 2		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Develop and provide educational information to property owners near areas such as Castner Creek, Salt Bay, and Oyster Creek about working with local land trusts to permanently protect undeveloped areas, such as through conservation easements or similar.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 2		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				c. Implement a GIS mapping process, including information from the US Fish & Wildlife Service Wetlands Inventory to assist Town staff, the Planning Board, and property owners with understanding clearly where wetlands are located.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Year 3		\$	GIS Contractor	
				d. Promptly update the Town's GIS wetland maps by incorporating peer-reviewed wetland delineations submitted by applicants of proposed development projects.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		\$	GIS Contractor	



WATER RESOURCES



WATER RESOURCES

Overview

Water is the defining feature of the landscape of Damariscotta. The Town is bounded on two sides by water: the tidal Damariscotta River and Salt Bay to the west, and Pemaquid and Biscay Ponds to the east. Wholly within the boundary of Damariscotta are Little Pond and Paradise (or Muddy) Pond, and just north of the Town (in neighboring Nobleboro) is Damariscotta Lake. In addition to serving as habitats for a variety of plant and animal species, the Town's waterways are used for a variety of economic and recreational activities (described in greater detail in the Marine Resources and Recreation sections of this Plan).

The Town attempts to minimize contamination of water bodies through the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, which regulates new construction and commercial use of land surrounding all bodies of water in town, in accordance with the State's Chapter 1000 standards. In addition, the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance requires the Planning Board to evaluate plans to minimize erosion of soil and includes standards for stormwater management on all sites within the community where new development is proposed. Developers are required to evaluate the impact of phosphorus runoff by any proposed operation in cases where this would be a concern.



Major Bodies of Water

Damariscotta River Estuary

The Damariscotta River is an estuary that extends from the Salt Bay and empties into the Atlantic Ocean nineteen miles to the southwest. The river is bordered by seven towns, including Damariscotta. The major freshwater source of the estuary is the outlet stream of Damariscotta Lake which spills down fifty-foot falls into the Salt Bay. Most of the river is oceanic, dominated by the changing of the tides until Glidden Ledge, a natural bedrock sill across the river south of the town of Damariscotta. Above the bridge connecting the downtowns of Damariscotta and Newcastle is a reversing falls at the head of navigation. Upriver of the bridge (south of Castner Creek) boulders and a bedrock sill form the Johnny Orr rapids. Ancient shell heaps line the River below the US Route 1 bridge before the river opens up past another sill at the indraft into Salt Bay. The shallow Salt Bay has extensive eelgrass beds and tidal flats and is a Marine Protected Area designated by the State. Little Oyster and Oyster Creeks empty into the Salt Bay at the northern border of Damariscotta, and Castner Creek joins the upper Damariscotta River in the village area.

WATER RESOURCES

Ponds

Both Little Pond and Muddy (Paradise) Pond lie wholly within the town of Damariscotta. Biscay Pond and Pemaquid Pond are larger freshwater lakes shared by neighboring towns. All four are classified as Great Ponds (water bodies with a surface area in excess of 10 acres held in trust by the state for use by the public) under Maine Statute. These ponds (along with McCurdy Pond in Bremen and Duckpuddle Pond in Nobleboro) form a network of connected lakes in the Pemaquid River Watershed.

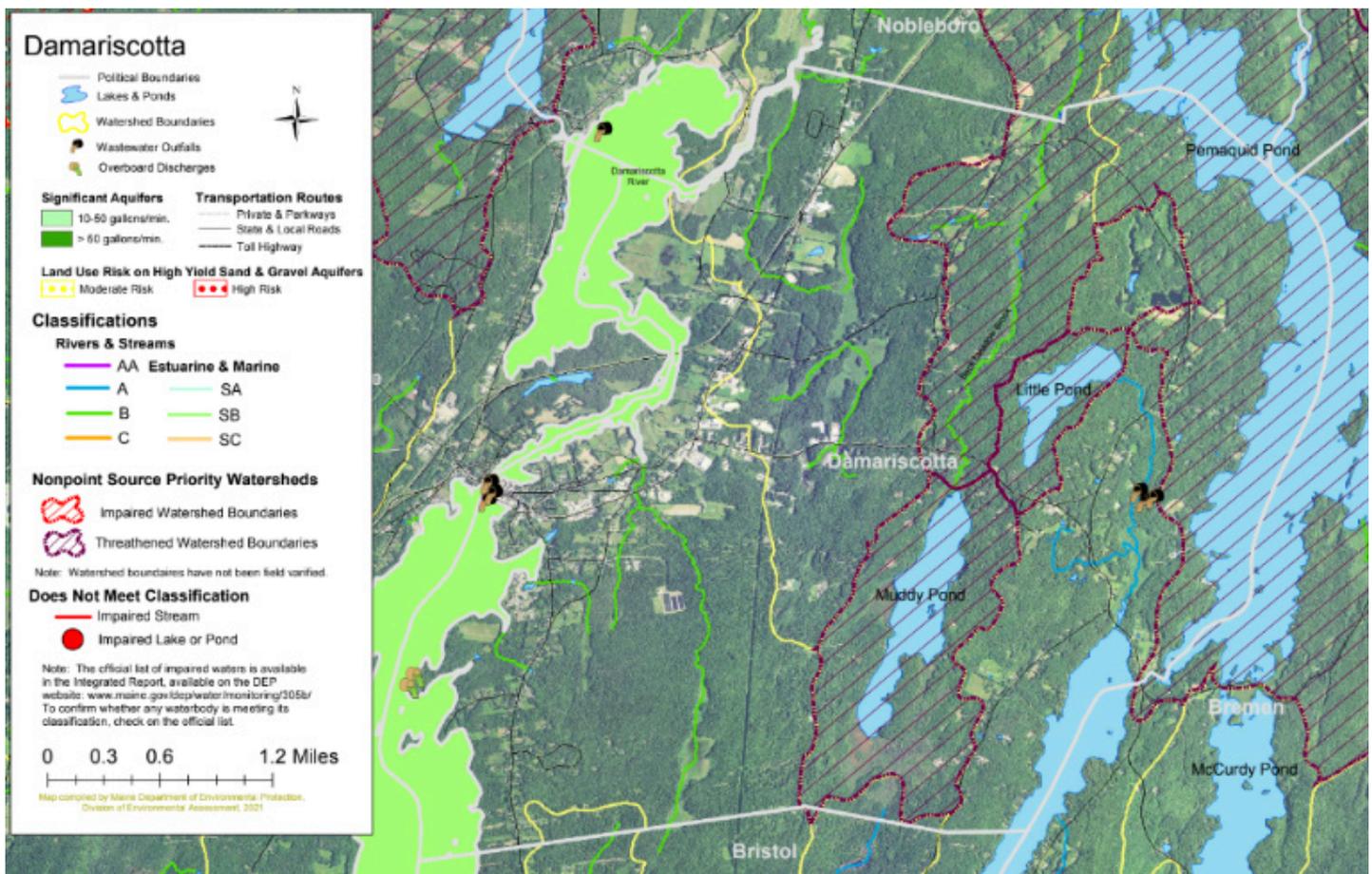
According to a 2004 watershed survey, Biscay Pond has the most developed subwatershed of these lakes with a high rate of new residential development and an increase in conversions of seasonal to year-round residences. Erosion along shorelines and roads was cited as a potential source of nonpoint source pollution, contributing nutrients and sediment to the ponds.⁵⁰

Little Pond, a cold-water spring-fed pond, is the public drinking water source for the Town of Damariscotta and is protected and managed by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District. The Sanitary District owns a vast majority of the land within the watershed of the pond. The District disinfects water taken from Little Pond with an ultraviolet light system and has received a waiver from filtration requirements because of the pond's high water quality. To receive the waiver, the District demonstrated that water from Little Pond has low turbidity and coliform counts and that potential sources of contamination are managed to minimize risk. The Town and District work together to establish policy and management practices to prevent contamination of Little Pond from point and nonpoint pollution sources to maintain current drinking water quality. If the waiver were to be lost, a filtering plant would have to be built costing more than \$20 million in construction costs.



⁴⁹ Maine Department of Environmental Protection (2006) "Nonpoint Source Management Program 2005 Annual Report," Document# DEPLW0758.

WATER RESOURCES



Source: Maine Department of Environmental Protection (2021)

The State has four classes for freshwater rivers and streams (AA, A, B, C), three classes for marine and estuarine waters (SA, SB, SC), and one class for lakes and ponds (GPA). Classes AA, GPA, and SA describe waters with low risk from ecosystem degradation or pollution since activities such as waste discharge and impoundment are expressly prohibited in these resources. Class A waters allow impoundments and very restricted discharges, so the risk of degradation, while quite small, does exist. Classes B and SB have fewer restrictions on activities but still maintain high water quality criteria. Finally, Classes C and SC have the least restrictions on use and the lowest water quality criteria. Classes C and SC waters are still of good quality, but significant degradation might occur in these waters in the event of an additional environmental or human-made stress being introduced (such as a spill or a drought).⁵¹

⁵¹ For more information about the classification of waterbodies, see M.R.S.A. Title 38, §465.

WATER RESOURCES

Ponds					
Body ⁵²	Ecological ⁵³ Value	Water Body Classification	Watershed threatened or impaired	Threats to water quality	Documented threats or invasive species
Little Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coldwater fishery (brook trout) • Pemaquid River watershed • Wetland/ riparian habitats 	Class GPA	Yes ⁵⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment runoff • Contamination from MDIFW brook trout stocking • Seaplane landings • Erosion of historic dams from gravel pits 	No
Paradise (Muddy) Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm water fishery • Pemaquid River watershed • Wetland/ Riparian Habitats 	Class GPA	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment runoff • Residential development • Negative water clarity trends 	No
Pemaquid Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coldwater fishery • Warm water fishery • Pemaquid River watershed • Wetland/ Riparian habitats 	Class GPA	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater discharge in adjacent water body • Nearby septic contamination • Sediment runoff • Development 	No
Biscay Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coldwater fishery • Warm water fishery • Pemaquid River watershed • Wetland/ Riparian habitats 	Class GPA	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater discharge in adjacent water body • Sediment runoff 	No

⁵² Thompson, Woodrow B., "Surficial geology of the Damariscotta quadrangle, Maine, Maine Geological Survey, Open-File Map 09-6, map, scale 1:24,000, (Maine Geological Survey Maps, 2009), http://digitalmaine.com/mgs_maps/1838

⁵³ "Your Lake - Search Results, Damariscotta, Maine," Lakes of Maine (Lake Stewards of Maine, 2023), <http://www.lakesofmaine.org/search-results.html?DoWhat=8l=8t=damariscotta&c=8z=8m=>.

⁵⁴ Note: Little Pond, which has excellent water quality, is on the list because it is a surface water source for a public water system.

WATER RESOURCES

Rivers, Streams & Bays					
Body	Ecological Value	Water Body Classification	Watershed threatened or impaired	Threats to water quality	Documented threats or invasive species
Damariscotta River Estuary (including Salt Bay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shellfish growing area • Horseshoe crab breeding area & Anadromous fish runs • Wetland/ Riparian habitats 	Class B	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment runoff • Development • Wastewater discharge site 	No
Oyster Creek & Little Oyster Creek/Lilly Brook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland/ Riparian habitats • Mixed saltmarsh habitats present (listed as an “exemplary natural community”) • Damariscotta River watershed 	Class B	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment runoff • Wastewater discharge in adjacent water body • Development 	No
Back Meadow Brook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland/ Riparian habitats present • 75-foot riparian buffer zone 	Class B	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment runoff • Nearby septic contamination 	No
Stream draining from Little Pond to Biscay Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75-foot riparian buffer zone • Wetland habitats present 	Class A	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment runoff • Direct Wastewater discharge 	No
Castner Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland/ Riparian habitats 	Class SB ⁵⁵	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonpoint source pollution 	No

Aquifers

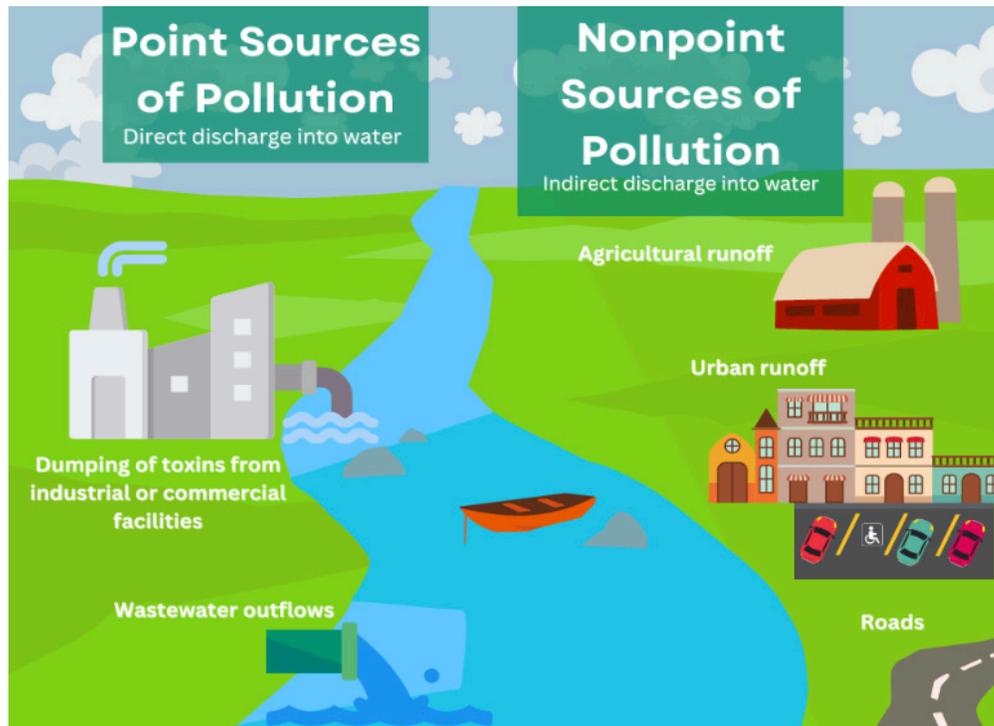
An aquifer is a water-bearing geological formation capable of yielding a usable amount of groundwater to a well. In Maine, there are two types of aquifers; loose soil materials (such as sand, gravel, and other sediments) and fractured bedrock. A sand and gravel deposit is considered a significant aquifer when a well in that deposit is capable of being continuously pumped at a rate of 10 gallons per minute (GPM) or more. There are no significant aquifers, so defined, mapped in Damariscotta.⁵⁶ Despite the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District (which supplies 614 residential and commercial customers), the majority of Damariscotta residents rely on groundwater from drilled fractured bedrock wells for drinking water.

⁵⁵ “Your Lake - Search Results, Damariscotta, Maine,” Lakes of Maine (Lake Stewards of Maine, 2023), <http://www.lakesofmaine.org/search-results.html?DoWhat=&l=&t=damariscotta&c=&z=&m=>.

⁵⁶ <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/explore/water/facts/aquifer.htm>

Threats to Water Quality

The majority of Damariscotta’s surface waters are classified at B or higher quality, as noted on the chart above. The major threats to water quality come from nonpoint sources of pollution, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus from stormwater runoff, as well as increased soil erosion due to development.



Point Sources (Direct Discharges) of Pollution

There are multiple wastewater outfalls in and around Damariscotta’s downtown, and overboard discharges on Hall Point, all of which release wastewater into the Damariscotta River.⁵⁷ Wastewater from the public sewer provider, the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, is discharged into the Damariscotta River near the municipal parking lot after being treated through a series of aerated lagoon systems. Additionally, a seasonally operated treatment plant that handles sewage from Pemaquid Lake Campground, releases effluent onto a field near an unnamed stream draining from Little Pond to Biscay Pond.

Maine Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) water tests indicate that levels of coliform bacteria fluctuate in the Damariscotta River, especially after storm events. The Damariscotta River is currently rated Class SB, suitable for harvesting shellfish by DMR.⁵⁸ Refer to the Marine Resources section of this Plan for further information on the impacts of pollution on marine resources in Damariscotta.

⁵⁷ Map of Damariscotta Watersheds, Maine Department of Environmental Protection (2021).

⁵⁸ Susanne K Meidel, “2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Appendices, https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/305b/2022/25-May-2022_2018-22_ME_IntegratedRpt-LIST.pdf.

Nonpoint Sources of Pollution

Marine Waters

The water quality of the Damariscotta River estuary is threatened by excess nutrients that wash into the river following rain and snow events. The nutrients come from fertilizers applied to fields and lawns, goose manure from the large year-round flocks that live along the upper river, stormwater runoff from roads and parking lots, and other diverse sources that pollute the waters of the lakes, streams, and creeks feeding into the Damariscotta River. These sources may contribute to excessive algal blooms including toxic marine phytoplankton blooms and bacterial pollution as well.

Coastal acidification (changes in water chemistry as a result of excess runoff) is another major issue of concern, especially for the shellfish growers and harvesters on the river. The acidification of Gulf of Maine waters reflects the rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels globally since carbon dioxide readily dissolves into water creating carbonic acid. Land-based point and nonpoint sources of pollution contribute excess nutrients which cause algal blooms that also contribute to acidification, along with acid rain from fossil fuel use. As seawater acidity increases, less calcium carbonate is available to shellfish and other marine life to build shells and skeletons.

Surface (Fresh) Waters

As noted on the chart above, the watersheds around Little, Muddy (Paradise), and Pemaquid Pond, as well as Back Meadow Brook, are all considered impaired. The inclusion of Little Pond on this list is because it is a public drinking water source. The remaining ponds are polluted from sediment runoff and erosion due to nearby development around the watershed areas. Phosphorus from runoff, fertilizers, and sewage is a primary factor causing eutrophication, a process in which waters become so nutrient-rich that algae and plant species deplete the supply of dissolved oxygen in the water and kill off other aquatic species.

In the 1970s, Little Pond experienced several algae blooms and was classified as eutrophic, the highest category of algae productivity. Water quality has improved since the 1990s and continues to be high enough to support a filtration waiver. Little Pond's historic contamination was caused by significant runoff from a gravel mining operation northeast of its watershed, which increased the turbidity of the drinking water. The gravel mining operation has ceased, and the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District now owns the remaining pits and has been managing runoff through a series of dams meant to impede sediment runoff and revegetation efforts to ensure permanent soil retention of the former work site.

The most recent report prepared for the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), from 2003, cites concerns from Sanitary District staff regarding the integrity of the dams, and the substantial influx of turbid water that could contaminate the pond if the dams failed to prevent the runoff.

Drinking Water

Great Salt Bay Sanitary District

Due to the Town's existing land use controls and the management practices of the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, threats from contamination of the Town's drinking water are currently considered low. Conservation and management of Little Pond is managed by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, a quasi-municipal entity that serves approximately 700 residential and commercial customers in Damariscotta. More than 95% of the 424-acre watershed is undeveloped. The Great Salt Bay Sanitary District owns a vast majority of the land within the watershed, and development within the watershed has been limited due to District management and Town regulations intended to prevent shoreline erosion or any new sources of pollution.⁵⁹ Other than the water intake station, the only structures in the vicinity of Little Pond are low-density residential developments built around the periphery of the watershed.

According to data included in the most recent Source Water Assessment Program Report for Great Salt Bay Sanitary District: Little Pond Watershed (from 2003), soil along the shoreline of Little Pond has low to moderate erodibility and the Sanitary District has not observed areas of significant erosion along the shoreline. There are no commercial facilities in the watershed that use petroleum or other materials that could pose a threat to the water quality of the pond. Commercial land uses within the watershed are limited to periodic timber harvesting, all of which is managed by a forest manager to ensure safe harvesting practices that do not pose a threat to drinking water.



Access to Little Pond is limited to a gravel drive to the water intake station (which the District keeps locked, along with the posting of “No Trespassing” signs) and a foot trail from Biscay Road at the south end of the pond to facilitate limited recreational canoeing and fishing. Fishing is permitted only in the summer months, and the use of live bait or motorized water vehicles is prohibited. Fish stocks are replenished by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W). Because of the high water quality of Little Pond, it is now recognized as one of the best brook trout water bodies in the state, per GSBSD staff.

⁵⁹ Maine Public Drinking Water Source Water Assessment Program Report for Great Salt Bay Sanitary District: Little Pond Watershed (March 2003).

WATER RESOURCES

Contamination Threats to Other Drinking Water Sources

The chart below shows public water systems that are outside the management of the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District. A system may still be considered a “public” water system (even if the system of pipes is completely privately owned) if it has at least 15 service connections or serves more than 25 individuals per day for at least 60 days out of the year.⁶⁰ The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Source Water Assessment Program monitors these supplies and identifies potential threats to assist with local regulatory decisions.⁶¹

Information obtained from the most recent reports of the Source Water Assessment Program (shown in the chart below) found no current contamination in any of the water supplies but did find varying levels of risk of current and future contamination for each. The major sources posing a risk to future contamination came from the water supply’s proximity to private septic systems or a lack of ownership of the land surrounding the wellhead. The findings were unable to determine significant risks of chronic contamination due to a lack of data on the distance of wellheads from potential chemical contaminants.

Supply Owner	Risk of geologic contamination	Risk of acute contamination	Risk of chronic contamination
Pines Mobile Home Park	Low	Moderate Future: Moderate	Low Future: High
Miles Health Water System	Moderate	Low Future: High	Moderate Future: High
Lake Pemaquid Campground	Low	Moderate Future: Moderate	N/A
Reunion Station Restaurant	Low	Moderate Future: Low	N/A

In the list above, risk assessment of contamination is organized by contamination type. The risk of geologic contamination is based on the type of well and thickness of the well walls. The risk of acute contamination is based on the proximity of septic and waste systems to wellheads. The risk of future acute contamination is based on the radius of land around the well owned by the well owner. The risk of chronic contamination is based on the presence of potential sources of chemical contaminants, such as PFAS chemicals or the storage of hazardous materials at nearby properties. The risk of future chronic contamination is based on ownership or control of the entire wellhead protection area.

⁶⁰ For more information, see the State’s Public Water Systems page, available online here: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/whataPWS.shtml>

⁶¹ PWS Data provided by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Drinking Water Program, Fall 2021.

WATER RESOURCES

Protective Measures: Local Ordinances

Town policy intended to prevent degradation of Damariscotta’s water resources includes the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance, which requires an erosion and sediment control plan to mitigate the risk of erosion and sediment contamination during construction, a stormwater management plan, and a report on the phosphorus impact of any new construction or alteration (if located within the watershed of a great pond, as defined in Title 38 M.R.S.A. §436-A). This type of planning is meant to minimize the risk of contamination as much as possible to nearby water sources. In addition, for development projects to be approved, the Town’s Planning Board must ensure that the quantity and quality of groundwater is not unduly affected by the proposal.⁶²

The Town has also implemented a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, which establishes land within 75 feet of a normal high water line of a stream as a Stream Protection District, and land within 250 feet of coastal or freshwater wetlands as a Resource Protection District.⁶³ This Ordinance regulates all new construction or alterations within this buffer zone and expressly prohibits any new construction within 25 feet of a water body or wetland. It also regulates the maximum size for new structures based on their distance from the water body boundary and requires pre-existing structures to obtain a permit for any new alterations. Any new construction must partially re-establish trees and local vegetation removed to build a new structure and ensure the retention of natural stormwater buffers in the area whenever possible.

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance also limits commercial use to prevent contamination from fertilizers, petrol products, chemicals, heavy metals, or other industrial pollutants. Any agriculture, mineral extraction, or natural resource harvesting near a body of water is regulated, and any operation (whether natural resource gathering or construction) must provide an erosion and sedimentation control plan to ensure minimal threat of runoff.



⁶² See Sec. 102.6 of the Site Plan Review Ordinance and Sec. 103.6 of the Subdivision Ordinance, respectively.

⁶³ See the Town’s adopted Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Issues & Opportunities

As noted above, water quality in Little Pond used to be severely impeded by a gravel mining operation in proximity to the Pond. Great Salt Bay Sanitary District maintains a series of dams meant to impede sediment runoff. The dams were not built to account for the increased severity and frequency of precipitation events due to climate change, meaning the risk of a substantial release of contaminated water could be more severe than previously accounted for.

The prevalence of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in existing agricultural land and waterways is still being evaluated across the state but could pose a threat to Damariscotta's bodies of water. The State of Maine's decision to ban the use of treated sewage sludge as a fertilizer source in 2022 implies any farmland in Damariscotta could potentially have been a nonpoint source of PFAS to nearby waterways.⁶⁴ PFAS tests of well water from wells near historic septage spreading sites in town have revealed instances of low levels of contamination. An investigation is ongoing by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Threats from invasive species, nonpoint pollution, and erosion may also become more severe in the future due to climate change. These are discussed in detail in the Marine Resources and Natural Resources sections of this Plan.

Issues



Increased precipitation



PFAS



Erosion



Invasive species

Opportunities



Further collaboration with GSBSD



PFAS testing from Maine DEP

⁶⁴ Tom Perkins, "Maine Bans Use of Sewage Sludge on Farms to Reduce Risk of PFAS Poisoning," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, May 12, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/12/maine-bans-sewage-sludge-fertilizer-farms-pfas-poisoning>.

WATER RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.										
		3.1	Protect current and potential drinking water sources.								
				a. Work with LincolnHealth and the Pines Mobile Home Park on acquiring land surrounding their wellheads, or adopt strict wellhead protection standards in these areas.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 3		Staff-time	LincolnHealth, Pines Mobile Home Park, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
		3.2	Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to ensure high water quality of the Town's drinking supply.								
				a. Improve signage on the access trail from Biscay Road to notify the public that Little Pond is a source of drinking water and outline what recreational activities are not allowed.	Phase 2	Great Salt Bay Sanitary District	Year 4		\$	Selectboard	
				b. Adopt an Ordinance that prohibits landing seaplanes on Little Pond.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 3	6 months	Staff-time	Administration, Great Salt Bay Sanitary District	
				c. See Strategy #3.3.a.							
		3.3	Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.								
				a. Provide staff support to assist the Sanitary District in applying for grants which will improve water quality and/or upgrade existing sewer systems (especially moving vulnerable pump stations out of flood hazard areas).	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing			Administration, Planning Department	
		3.4	Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.								
				a. Work with local partners to implement the LakeSmart Program (which organizes landowners to volunteer to not use fertilizers and pesticides on their land).	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 6			Planning Department, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	

WATER RESOURCES

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.										
		3.5	Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.								
				a. Establish a relationship with a qualified third-party engineering peer reviewer who can review projects slated for Planning Board review for compliance with stormwater standards and who can suggest modifications to encourage more low-impact development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1		\$	Planning Department	
				b. Communicate with contractors regarding the Town's erosion and sediment control policies.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
				c. Ensure enforcement of the Town's erosion and sediment control policies during construction.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
				d. See Strategy #4.2.c and #4.2.d.							
		3.6	Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.								
				a. Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		
				b. Provide contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine in order to encourage landowners to protect water quality.	Phase 2	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		
				c. Collaborate with the Maine DEP and local conservation organizations to understand the impact projected increases in annual precipitation will have on stormwater runoff to help minimize future contamination of waterways.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	



MARINE RESOURCES



MARINE RESOURCES

Overview

The Town of Damariscotta benefits from the blue economy of the Damariscotta River estuary. The Damariscotta River is the major oyster aquaculture growing area in Maine. In 2022, 34% of Maine’s annual American Oyster harvest was grown in or wild harvested from the river.⁶⁵ The estuary’s unique ecosystem supports a variety of shellfish, including soft shell clams, quahogs, razor clams, blue mussels, scallops, and American oysters. The Salt Bay, at the head of the river, is a state-designated Marine Shellfish Preserve and horseshoe crab breeding area. The Bay is carpeted with eelgrass beds that provide juvenile fish nursery habitat and nutrients to the river ecosystem. Anadromous fish (including alewife, blueback herring, eel, rainbow smelt, and sea-run brown trout) travel the river from salt water to fresh and back. Striped bass move up the river seasonally, supporting a local recreational fishery.

Since 2012, harvests of marine resources (including American/Eastern oysters, quahogs, soft-shelled clams, and razor clams) in Damariscotta and Newcastle have resulted in more than \$30,600,000 of economic value.⁶⁵

Species	Total Weight (lbs)	Total Value (\$)	Total Harvesters
Clam Razor Atlantic	1,098	\$4,151	16
Clam Northern Quahog / Hard	23,272	\$24,285	48
Clam Soft	1,003,877	\$1,786,985	559
Oyster American / Eastern	10,904,391	\$23,797,290	215

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2012-2022. Note: There may be significant overlap in the number of harvesters, as some harvest more than one species. In those instances, Maine DMR counts them twice (once for each species).



Use of the river’s resources to accommodate a thriving aquaculture industry, a restored migratory alewife run approaching historic levels, traditional soft-shelled clam and wild oyster harvests, a vibrant downtown restaurant scene featuring Damariscotta oysters, river-based employment, tourism, and recreation combine to create a thriving regional economy centered in the Town of Damariscotta.

⁶⁵ [Maine Department of Marine Resources Landings Data Portal, https://mainedmr.shinyapps.io/Landings_Portal/](https://mainedmr.shinyapps.io/Landings_Portal/)

⁶⁶ [Maine Department of Marine Resources Landings Data Portal, https://mainedmr.shinyapps.io/Landings_Portal/](https://mainedmr.shinyapps.io/Landings_Portal/)

Marine Infrastructure

A Harbor Master and Deputy Harbor Master oversee permits for moorings for both Damariscotta and Newcastle and assist in the review of applications for floats, pilings, and wharves in the Inner Harbor of the Damariscotta River. As of 2023, there were 149 moorings in the harbor. There is also a town dock consisting of a concrete ramp and fourteen 16-ft floats that remain in the river from April to November. Dinghies 12 feet in length or less are permitted to dock with a sticker. A canoe/kayak rack near the dock accommodates up to sixteen boats. The adjacent town parking lot has six designated boat/trailer parking spaces and eight boater parking spaces reserved by permit. Both Damariscotta and Newcastle share responsibility for the maintenance of a sewage pump-out station for boats in the inner harbor. The pump station for the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District harbor outfall is located adjacent to the town boat ramp.

Both towns have also adopted an Interlocal Agreement and Harbor Management Ordinance to ensure public safety and balance commercial, recreational, and natural interests on the Damariscotta River.⁶⁷ The Ordinance establishes 5 harbor districts (see map below) and forms a committee of members from both towns to work with the shared Harbormaster to designate mooring districts, anchorage areas, and public boat launch areas for both communities.

The Harbor Ordinance divides the waters shared between Damariscotta and Newcastle into five districts:

- Inner Harbor, on the Damariscotta River from the westernmost point of Lewis Point downstream to the Southernmost edge of Walker's Point, defined by a line across the Damariscotta River to the southernmost edge of Belknap's Point.
- Lower Harbor, on the river from the southern boundary of Inner Harbor downstream to a line connecting the southernmost points of the two town's boundaries.
- Upper Harbor, on the Damariscotta River from the westernmost point of Lewis Point upstream into Salt Bay to the Marine Protected Area.
- Great Salt Bay, on the water body, beginning at the southerly boundary of the Marine Protected Area northerly to the Newcastle Town line.
- Sheepscot River, the body of water within the corporate limits of Newcastle that includes the Sheepscot River and its tidal tributaries, including the tidal portion of the Marsh River.

The Inner Harbor is considered a special boater and public safety area and requires an application to the applicable Selectboard to install a wharf, pier, ramp, pilings, or floats in this district specifically. In all other districts, the Harbormaster may permit the installation of floats (not to exceed 6 by 18 feet) on moorings.

⁶⁷ See the Town's Harbor Ordinance.

MARINE RESOURCES

Water skiing and tubing are also prohibited in the Inner Harbor, and the Harbor Management Ordinance prohibits abandoning water or fishing craft, as well as the discharge of fuel, sewage, or trash from motorcraft into the river.

Next to the town dock across a small gulch (Misery Gulch) is a seasonal marina and restaurant, Schooner Landing. About 25 seasonal rental slips are available. The marina is the base for local fisherman guides and the River Tripper, a commercial tour boat, which regularly gives tours of the river from May to October. Midcoast Kayak also offers tours and rentals from the marina docks. A few

of the marina floats near the fast water that flows under the bridge remain ice-free in winter and are kept in the water year-round.

Damariscotta also has a Town Landing Ordinance to ensure safe and timely operation of the town boat landing area, setting a time limit for public use of the float as well as associated fees or penalties for misuse.⁶⁸ Swimming and recreational fishing are allowed at the Town landing.



Wild Shellfish Harvest & Aquaculture Regulation

The Salt Bay, at the top of the estuary, is designated by state statute as the Great Salt Bay Marine Shellfish Preserve. All activities involving bottom disturbance, including the harvesting of any shellfish species are prohibited, except for approved research activities.

South of the Salt Bay, American oyster aquaculture dominates Damariscotta's marine resource economy. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) lists 38 aquaculture leases and 53 limited-purpose aquaculture sites in the estuary below the bay in waters shared by Damariscotta and Newcastle.⁶⁹ Fourteen of these operate solely in waters designated within Damariscotta's municipal borders, and an additional three leases are located in both Damariscotta and Newcastle waters.

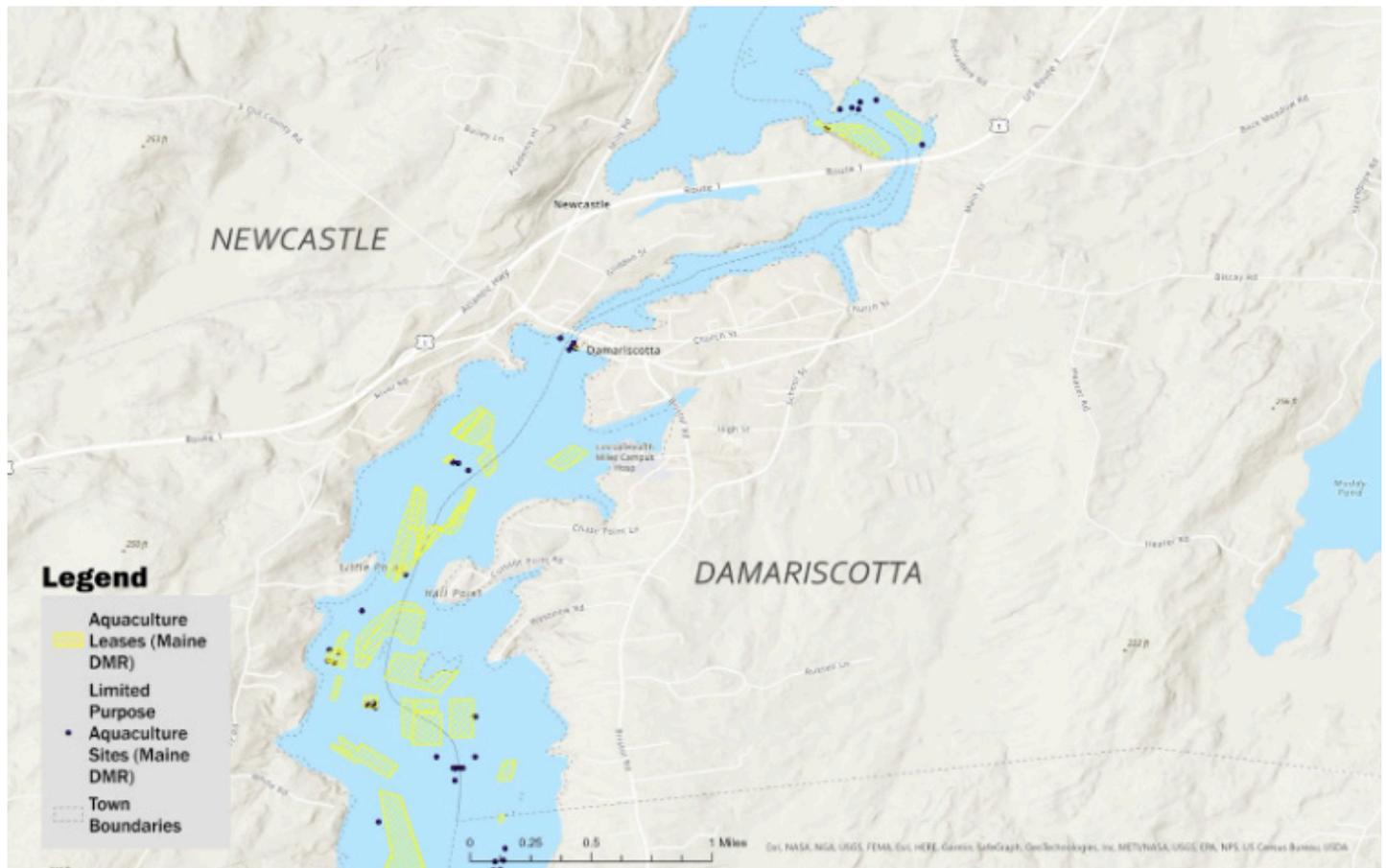
The Department of Marine Resources (with input from local authorities and nearby landowners) offers limited-purpose aquaculture sites, shown on the below map. A Limited Purpose Aquaculture license permits the licensee up to 400 square feet of area for one calendar year for the culture of specific shellfish species and marine algae using certain types of gear. It is typically used as a tool for trying new areas or nursery sites or for small operations.

⁶⁸ See the Town's Town Landing Ordinance.

⁶⁹ William Devoe, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases (Maine Department of Marine Resources, March 21, 2019), <https://maine.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a0b3c775cfc243a2b92df328ad85c642/explore?filters=eyJDSVRZljbIkRhbfWFyaXNjb3R0YSJdfQ%3D%3D&location=44.013991%2C-69.514457%2C12.91>.

MARINE RESOURCES

Map of Aquaculture Leases (Damariscotta River and Salt Bay)



The Newcastle-Damariscotta Joint Shellfish Committee annually establishes the number of shellfish harvesting licenses to be issued based on available information about the size, distribution, and abundance of these resources. Four different types of licenses are available: Commercial Shellfish License (for residents); Commercial Shellfish License (for non-residents); Recreational Shellfish License (for residents); and Recreational Shellfish License (for non-residents). The number of licenses issued annually must be approved by the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR).⁷⁰

⁷⁰ For more information, see the Town's Shellfish Conservation Ordinance, available online here: <https://www.damariscottame.com/home/pages/town-ordinances>

MARINE RESOURCES

From 2018-2022, the shellfish harvesting licenses were allocated as follows:

- Commercial Resident License: 18 available
- Commercial Nonresident License: 14 available
- Recreational Resident License: 35 available
- Recreational Nonresident License: 10 available

In 2023, the approved number for Resident Licenses decreased from 18 Commercial Licenses to 16 and from 35 Recreational to 25. The number of Nonresident Licenses remained the same in both categories.

As there is a limited number of licenses available and applicants frequently outnumber the amount of licenses available, the administering Town holds a lottery for licenses each year. For Commercial Licenses, those who received a license from the lottery in the previous year are eligible to apply for early renewal the next year.⁷¹ The Towns' Joint Shellfish Committee also sets the fees for licenses and annually establishes the conservation measures required to be implemented by commercial harvesters for them to receive a license.

Local Zoning & Land Uses

Overview of Local Zoning

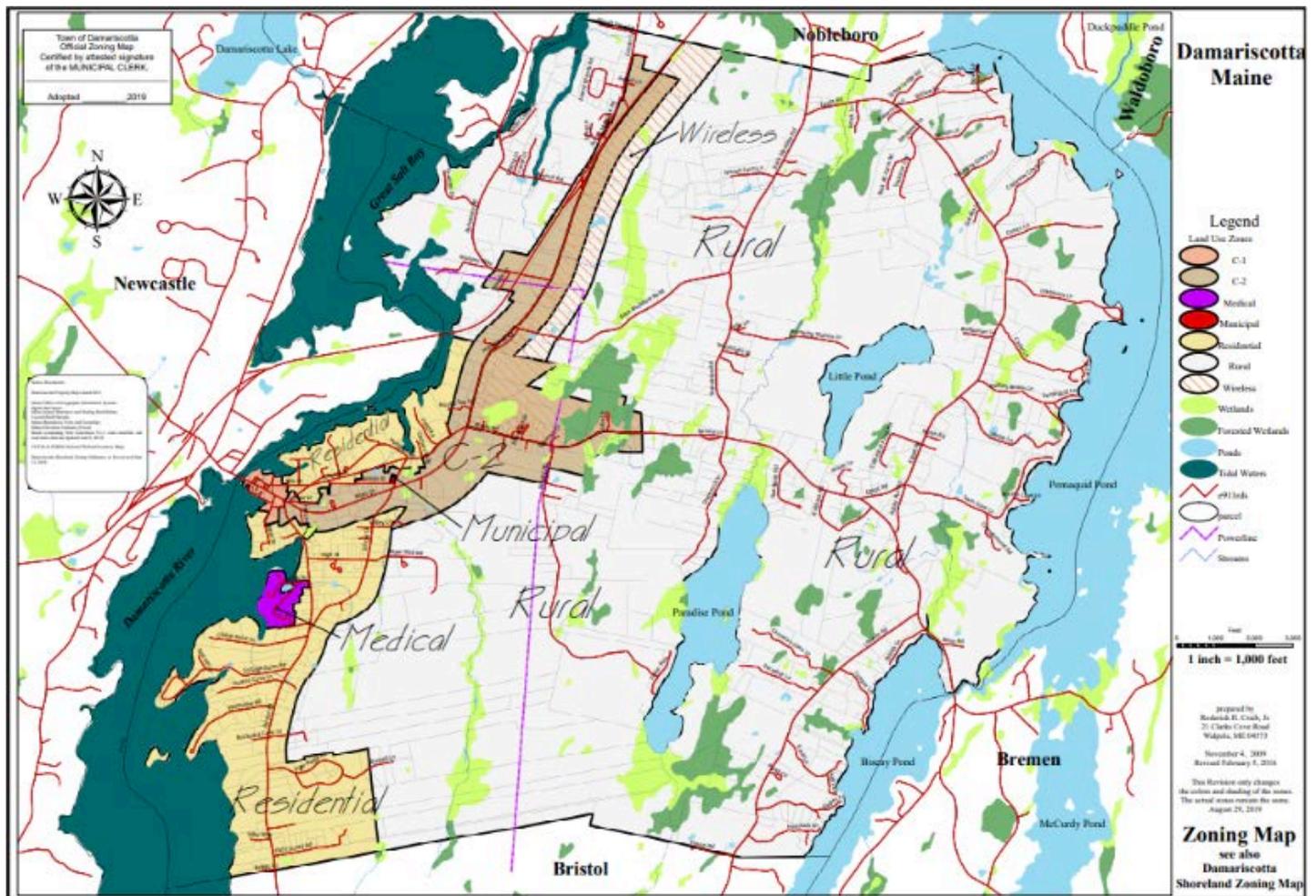
The majority of properties abutting the Damariscotta River or Salt Bay are either in the Town's Rural Zoning District (for properties located north of Route 1) or in the Residential Zoning District (for properties south of Route 1). A limited number of properties directly abutting the Damariscotta River are in either the C-1 or Medical Zoning Districts, as shown below on the Town's existing zoning map (in effect at the time of plan drafting).

The stated purpose of the Rural Zoning District is to "allow for a diversity of uses, while still maintaining the essential rural character of this area." The stated purpose of the Residential Zoning District is "to preserve the physical, aesthetic, and social quality of Damariscotta's developed residential areas and to provide for areas within the Town for residential growth." The C-1 (Downtown) Zoning District was created to "provide general retail sales, service, and business space within the Town of Damariscotta in locations capable of conveniently servicing community-wide and/or regional trade areas."⁷² The Medical District lacks a stated purpose but is generally the area occupied by the Lincoln Health campus.

⁷¹ <https://www.damariscottame.com/shellfish-committee>

⁷² Purposes of each Zoning District from the Town of Damariscotta Land Use Ordinance, Sec. 101.5.A.

MARINE RESOURCES



Factors Affecting Traditional Water-Dependent Land Uses

Regulations (coupled with increased land costs) in these zones prohibit many “working waterfront” or harbor-related uses, which may have led to an increase in residential development located on prime tidal water frontage.

Land Uses Typically Associated with “Working Waterfronts”

- Commercial and recreational fishing and boating facilities (excluding recreational boat storage buildings)
- Finfish and shellfish processing
- Fish storage and retail and wholesale fish marketing facilities
- Waterfront dock and port facilities
- Shipyards and boat building facilities
- Marinas

“Outdoor recreational facilities associated with boating and kayaking classes and rentals” (as defined in the Land Use Ordinance) are allowed, with prior conditional use approval by the Planning Board, in the C-2 and Rural Zoning Districts. Boat building facilities are similarly allowed, with prior approval by the Planning Board, in the C-2 Zoning District. Retail fish markets may be allowed with conditional use approval by the Planning Board under the definition of a retail store in the C-2 Zoning District. Marinas, finfish or shellfish processing areas, commercial fishing or boating facilities, and the like are not allowed anywhere in the community (though some, such as Chasse Marine, exist as non-conforming uses).

MARINE RESOURCES

The Pemaquid Oyster Company is the only business in Town boundaries currently utilizing the working waterfront tax use exemption.⁷³ They also maintain an oyster upweller, a system used to grow shellfish, on the Schooner Landing dock.

Protective Measures

The Town has adopted policies intended to prevent the degradation of Damariscotta's water bodies and associated ecosystems. This includes the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance, which requires an erosion and sediment control plan, a stormwater management plan, and a report on the phosphorus impact of any new construction or alteration if located within the watershed of a Great Pond (as defined in Title 38 M.R.S.A. §436-A).⁷⁴ Damariscotta has a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance which establishes land within 75 feet of a normal high water line of a stream as a Stream Protection District and land within 250 feet of coastal or freshwater wetlands as a Resource Protection District.⁷⁵ This Ordinance regulates all new construction or alterations within this buffer zone and expressly prohibits any new construction within 25 feet of a water body or wetland.⁷⁶ See the Protective Measures section in the Water Resources chapter for additional details.

The Town works collaboratively with the neighboring Town of Newcastle to maintain the health of the river and to promote sustainable harvesting of wild shellfish with shared Harbor and Shellfish Ordinances. The Damariscotta/Newcastle Shellfish Conservation Committee administers the Shellfish Conservation Ordinance to protect and sustain wild harvests. The Committee works with the Darling Marine Center, Maine Department of Marine Resources, and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust to evaluate the health of shellfish habitats to plan conservation measures. The Darling Marine Center monitors the ecological trends in the Damariscotta River estuary. The Maine Department of Marine Resources and Coastal River's staff train volunteers for Coastal River's Tidewatch Program, which monitors dissolved oxygen, salinity, total nitrogen, transparency, and temperature of the estuary.

Scenic Views

A draft list of scenic views and important points of visual access was initiated by the Town's Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) in 2019 and 2020. The list was never formally adopted but is included in the Appendix as Table 8 for reference.

⁷³ Damariscotta Working Waterfront Tax Use Properties, FY2023 (data courtesy of the Damariscotta Assessor's Office). This program was enacted to encourage the preservation of Maine's working waterfront and is intended to support commercial fishing activities. To qualify, a landowner must have a parcel of land abutting tidal waters and must use the land primarily (more than 50%) for commercial fishing activities.

⁷⁴ See the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance.

⁷⁵ See the Town's adopted Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

⁷⁶ See the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

MARINE RESOURCES

The Planning Board is required to find, during its review of Site Plan or Subdivision applications, that the proposed project will not have an undue effect on rare or irreplaceable natural or scenic areas.⁷⁷ In making this determination, the Planning Board has the authority to limit the extent of tree-clearing and minimize the view of development from adjacent roads. Outside of this requirement, there are limited protections for these identified scenic resources. In particular, the view across the Harbor and river from the US Route One ramp and the views from downtown parking lots and the Main Street bridge up and down the river are central to defining the Town of Damariscotta's sense of place.



Issues & Threats Related to Marine Resources

Limited Public Access

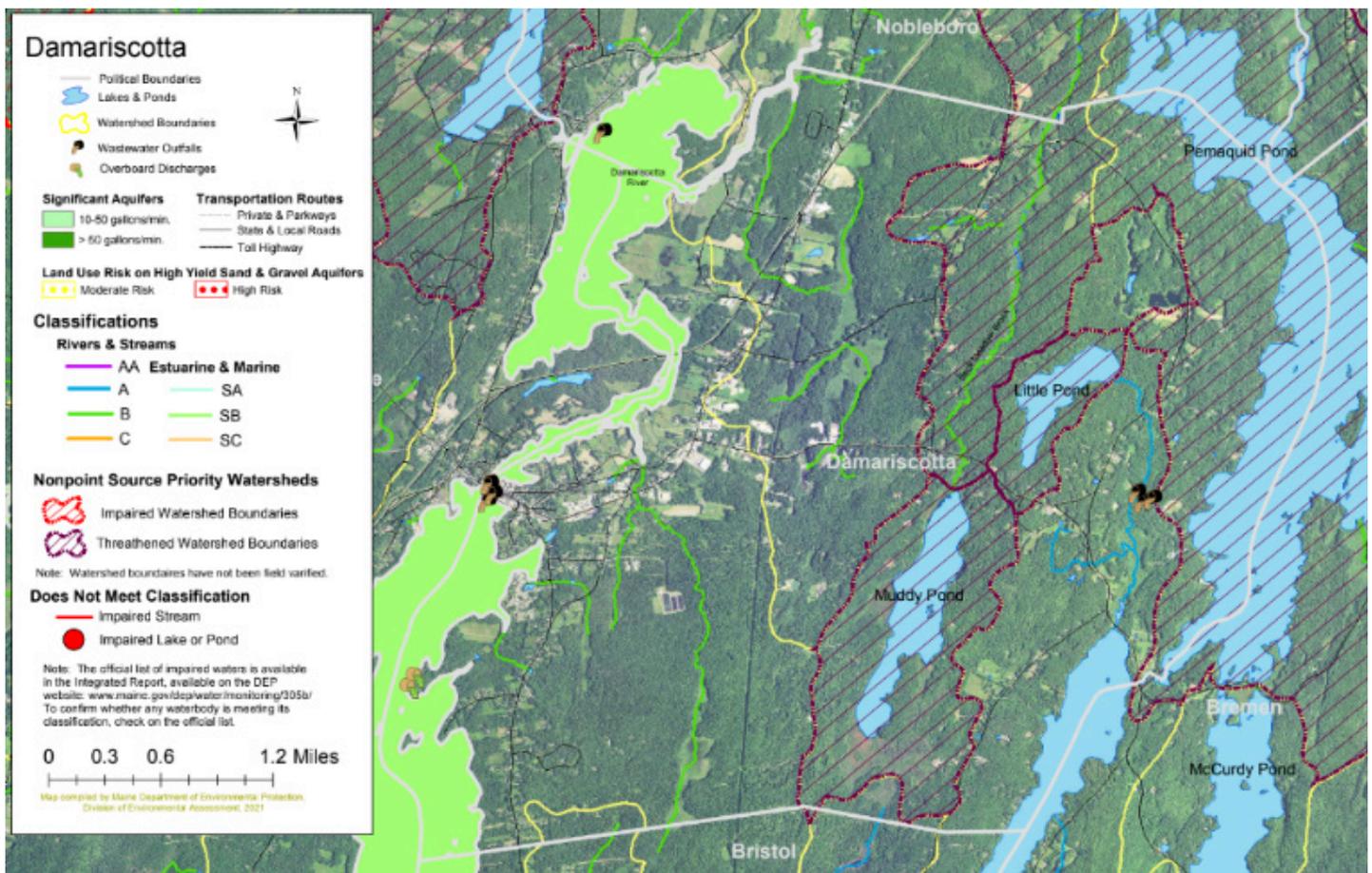
Paths across shorefront properties have long provided access to the flats for clammers and wormers. As these properties change ownership, often traditionally-used access paths are closed. The Town Landing in the municipal parking lot is Damariscotta's only public access on the river for both recreational and commercial motorized boats. Possible competing interests between recreational and commercial access at this facility were identified during the planning process. Hoists, ice, and trucking facilities are available at commercial docks along the river.

Pollution Sources & Shellfish Closures

Both point and nonpoint sources of pollution impair the water quality of the Damariscotta River. The point source discharges are licensed by permit. Wastewater from the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District is discharged into the inner harbor of the Damariscotta River after being treated through a series of aerated lagoons and chlorinated. The Sanitary District also maintains an outfall from the sand filter system which services Damariscotta Mills on the Nobleboro side of the Salt Bay. Three overboard discharges are licensed in the area of Cottage Point. Because of the licensed outfalls and discharges, the upper river above town (except for a small section north of the Route 1 bridge), and the inner harbor area from Jack's Point in Newcastle to Cottage Point in Damariscotta are closed to shellfish harvesting. The area of Days Cove along the hospital property is conditionally restricted. The Huston Cove area is conditionally approved with a seasonal closure from June through October.

⁷⁷ See Sec. 102.6 of the Site Plan Review Ordinance and Sec. 103.6 of the Subdivision Ordinance.

MARINE RESOURCES



Map compiled by Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Environmental Assessment (2021)

Nonpoint sources of pollution refer to the run-off of pollutants, nutrients, and sediment from lands that drain into the river. These pollutants and their impacts are discussed in the Water Resources section of this Plan. The parking lots along the waterfront on both sides of Main Street are a concentrated source of nonpoint pollution as storm and flood waters wash sediment, road salt, and contaminants into the river. Heavy rain events often result in the closure of the river due to the taking of shellfish because of bacterial pollution that follows increased runoff of freshwater to the river.

Marine Invasive Species

At least 64 marine invasive species have been reported in the Gulf of Maine,⁷⁸ but only a few of these are of major concern in the Damariscotta River. Green crabs, originally brought to the East Coast in the 1800s in ship ballast, are present in the Damariscotta River and feed on soft-shell clams and mussels. Green crabs also damage eelgrass beds and salt marsh vegetation. Studies in southern Maine estuaries indicate that the increase in green crab populations is a major reason for declining softshell clam stocks. European Oysters were released intentionally by researchers more than forty years ago and are now found wild in certain areas.

⁷⁸ Pappal, Adrienne. Marine Invasive Species. State of the Gulf of Maine Report, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (June 2010).

MARINE RESOURCES

Although found in southern New England waters for decades, MSX, a protozoan parasite that only affects American (and Pacific) oysters, has now been established in Damariscotta River estuary waters. In 2010, MSX caused significant oyster mortalities in the river. MSX is not a human health concern and the state restricts the transfer of oysters from the Damariscotta (and Sheepscot) to other waters in an effort to limit the spread of MSX and protect oyster-growing areas.⁷⁹

Climate Change & Sea Level Rise

Climate changes that result in warmer winter water temperatures could assist in the spread of marine invasive species as well as change the timing of larval recruitment and survival of wild species. Increased carbon dioxide levels in the air increase the uptake of carbon dioxide into seawater. As carbon dioxide is absorbed, the acidity of marine water increases. This ocean acidification threatens the health of marine life and, significantly for the Damariscotta, may dissolve the calcium carbonate of oyster shells and other species.

Increased water temperatures can also cause closures of marine areas due to vibrios. Vibrios are naturally occurring bacteria found in oysters and hard-shell clams in marine waters. Illnesses from vibrio infections are often associated with the consumption of raw or undercooked seafood, including oysters and other shellfish. Vibrio growth is managed by maintaining harvested shellfish at temperatures below 50 degrees. Several factors can affect the growth of vibrios, with water temperature having the largest impact. Because of this, DMR has special regulations that reduce the risk of vibrio infections caused by the consumption of oysters or hard clams. These regulations are in effect from June 1st to October 15th (the warmest months of the year) and impact the Damariscotta River north of Montgomery Point in Boothbay (including Damariscotta and Newcastle).⁸⁰

Climate change promises to worsen the threats that storms and flooding already pose to the Town's only public access to the Damariscotta River. The increasing frequency and intensity of severe storms will make access more difficult and threaten to significantly damage harbor infrastructure. The landing and surrounding parking area frequently flood during significant rain events, which impairs the safety of recreational and commercial boats using it, inhibits access, and threatens to damage any structures nearby.⁸¹ Eventually, the low-lying municipal parking lot could remain underwater for hours of the day as sea level rise increases the average high tides for coastal and inland systems.

More frequent coastal flooding also increases the rate of erosion and the risk of landslides along vulnerable spots of the estuary riverbank, especially where natural vegetation has been cleared for residential development. This is described in further detail in the Natural Resources chapter of this Plan.

⁷⁹ Pappal, Adrienne. Marine Invasive Species. State of the Gulf of Maine Report, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (June 2010).

⁸⁰ Maine Department of Marine Resources, Chapter 115: Vibrio parahaemolyticus CONTROL PLAN, April 26, 2022, https://www.maine.gov/dmr/sites/maine.gov.dmr/files/inline-files/Chapter115_04262022.pdf

⁸¹ Jessica Picard, "Damariscotta Parking Lot Floods for Second Time in Two Months," The Lincoln County News, March 6, 2018, <https://lcnews.com/currentnews/damariscotta-parking-lot-floods-second-time-two-months/>.



Decline of Soft-Shelled Clams

The shellfish beds around downtown Damariscotta and Newcastle and the Lincoln Health Hospital campus are particularly vulnerable to sediment and other pollutants washing into the river from paved roads and parking lots, pollutants from the licensed discharges including the town's sanitary district outfall, and disturbances from harbor maintenance activities and boat traffic.

A 2019 study by the Darling Marine Center documented a decline in softshell clams in the Damariscotta River. The study interviewed local shellfish harvesters, all of whom noticed changes in the estuary and shellfish populations over the previous twenty years. The changes described included an increase in wild oyster and quahog populations and a decline in softshell clam populations. Harvesters responded to these changes by switching harvest species, harvesting less, looking for licenses in other areas, and depending more on income from other work.⁸² The harvesters reported that the changes they observed in shellfish populations in the Damariscotta River estuary could be due to many factors such as aquaculture operations, over- and under-harvesting of the soft shell clam beds, predation from green crabs and sand worms, and sediment disturbance caused by dragging the river bottom to harvest oysters off leases.

The 2019 study suggested continued monitoring of wild shellfish populations in the Damariscotta River estuary to provide information to inform license allocation and other local management decisions. Studies by the Darling Marine Center each year since the initial 2019 study provide findings to Damariscotta and Newcastle.⁸³

⁸² Kara Pellowe and Heather Lesllie, Current and Historical Trends in the Shellfish Resources of the Upper Damariscotta River Estuary (University of Maine, December 20, 2019), https://umaine.edu/leslie-lab/wp-content/uploads/sites/151/2020/01/2019-Final-Report_Damariscotta-Newcastle-Shellfish-Resilience-Project.pdf.

⁸³ Findings are available for public viewing on the Town's website here: <https://www.damariscottame.com/shellfish-committee/pages/maine-shellfish-restoration-and-resilience-project-damariscottanewcastle>

Issues & Opportunities

Sustainable aquaculture activities may have beneficial effects on the river ecology. The cultivated oysters and other shellfish grown in the aquaculture leases clean the water of the Damariscotta River by filtering water while feeding. Each mature oyster can filter between 30 to 50 gallons of water a day. Because of the enormous tidal flows and significant phytoplankton blooms, the river sustains both wild and cultured fisheries. The shells of the millions of oysters may have a small buffering effect on the acidification of the estuarine waters. Aquaculture gear—ropes, cages, floats, and moorings—provides habitat for a variety of marine organisms which improves the biodiversity and resilience of the river ecosystem. Shellfish aquaculture relies on clean water and the shellfish farmers collectively have a vested interest in keeping the river ecology healthy.

To further protect scenic areas, the existing protections within the Site Plan Review Ordinance could be strengthened by delineating the extent of scenic resources on the Town's Zoning Map, and specifically not allowing development within these limited, high-value areas. This would be comparable to the way that neighboring Newcastle regulates its scenic areas.

At the time of plan drafting, concerns about the impact of aquaculture activities on wild clam harvests and access to water recreation have led to a local moratorium on new aquaculture leases in the nearby Town of South Bristol and efforts to enact a moratorium in the Town of Waldoboro.⁸⁴ As the Department of Marine Resources has exclusive jurisdiction to lease and license coastal waters,⁸⁵ it is unclear whether these moratoriums will prove to be legally binding. Still, it should be noted that across the state there are concerns with the size of aquaculture leases within Maine's coastal waters and the length of time of these leases. Municipalities, including Damariscotta, will likely continue to grapple with the impacts of large aquaculture leases and their benefits and drawbacks for the community.

In 1995, the Damariscotta River Estuary: A Management Plan was published at the end of a two-year effort by officials and residents of the towns along the river. Though the report is more than 25 years old, the issues documented along the river are surprisingly relevant today. Given the identified conflicts between recreational and commercial uses of the Damariscotta River, the continued concern around the overharvesting of shellfish, and the desire to protect the unique natural resources surrounding the Damariscotta River and Salt Bay, an updated management plan that further explores these areas may be necessary. The management plan would inventory existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings and would suggest goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources (this could potentially include suggested updates to the Harbor Management Ordinance).

⁸³ Elizabeth Walztoni, "Waldoboro Residents to Consider Aquaculture Moratorium at Annual Town Meeting," The Lincoln County News, April 4, 2023, <https://lnme.com/currentnews/waldoboro-residents-to-consider-aquaculture-moratorium-at-annual-town-meeting/>.

⁸⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/municipal-participation-in-aquaculture>

Issues



Concerns re: aquaculture impact on recreation and wild clam harvesting



Harbor management practices

Opportunities



Economic & ecological benefits of aquaculture



Strengthen regulations to protect scenic views

MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The Town supports thriving local fishing, aquaculture, shellfishing, and marine resource activities.										
	6.1	Include existing, potential, and historic working waterfronts and harbors in local planning efforts.									
			a. See Strategy #6.3.a.								
	6.2	Give preference to water-dependent land uses over other uses and protect working waterfronts from residential or non-water dependent development pressures.									
			a. Review and revise as necessary the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that water-dependent land uses are allowed in waterfront areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
			b. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations are not prioritizing non-water dependent land uses over water-dependent ones in waterfront areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		
		c. See Strategy #6.3.a.									

MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
 	The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.									
	6.3	Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.								
				a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6	18 months	\$\$ (professional consultant costs)	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Darling Marine Center, Planning Department
				b. Work with local property owners and land trusts to protect identified points of physical access to coastal waters	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Ongoing		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Administration
	6.4	Protect and expand visual access points (scenic views) of the community's marine resources.								
				a. See Strategy #5.2.a and #5.2.b.						
	6.5	Promote public access to the shoreline.								
				a. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.	Phase 2	Assessing	Year 5		Staff-time	
	6.6	Balance water-dependent land uses with other complementary land uses, including opportunities for outdoor recreation.								
				a. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department
6.7	Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.									
			a. See Strategy #6.3.a, 6.5.a, and 6.6.a.							

MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The Salt Bay is a protected and well-managed ecosystem.										
		6.8	Accommodate changes in estuarine environment resulting from sea-level rise, including (but not limited to) enabling salt marsh migration.								
			a. Encourage the purchase or permanent conservation of uplands adjacent to salt (tidal) marshes to allow marshes to migrate inland as sea level rises.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Ongoing		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust		

MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.										
	6.9	Keep up-to-date with changes in FEMA’s flood mapping.									
				a. Update the Floodplain Management Ordinance accordingly as new FIRM maps become available from FEMA.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
	6.10	Limit new construction in areas that will be impacted by a tide five feet higher than the highest astronomical tide.									
				a. Revise the Shoreland Zoning Map around the Damariscotta River to incorporate highest astronomical tide + 5 feet projections, limiting construction within these areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
	6.11	Preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats.									
				a. Collaborate with the Darling Marine Center and local land trusts to research reasons for shellfish population declines and continually monitor populations; refine the Town’s shellfish management program accordingly.	Phase 2	Shellfish Committee	Ongoing		Volunteer time	Harbormaster	
	6.12	Expand our understanding of the productivity of coastal waters and the Damariscotta River.									
				a. Promote events, education opportunities, and school programs that connect people to Damariscotta’s working waterfront.	Phase 3	Harbor-master	Ongoing		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
	6.13	Promote the economic value of the community’s renewable marine resources.									
				a. Ensure that marine-based businesses are included in economic development programs and incentives.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Administration	
				b. Promote the Aquaculture Pioneers and Maine Aquaculture Apprenticeship Program.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing			Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce	
	6.14	Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance, even in areas where development may occur.									
				a. Educate shorefront property owners on the importance of protecting and enhancing vegetative buffers along the shorefront through existing “ShoreSmart” programs.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	

MARINE RESOURCES

Continued Goal from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources		
	The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.											
		6.15		Improve air quality to protect the health of all people.								
				a. Sweep streets early in the spring to minimize dust particles in the air.	Phase 2	Public Works Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration		
				b. See Strategies #10.7.a-e, 10.8.a-b, and 10.9.a-b.	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 8		\$			
		6.16		Protect and improve marine habitat and water quality.								
				a. Provide staff support to Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to apply for grants to replace existing overboard discharges.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, Maine DEP		
				b. Provide information to owners of marine businesses and industries about participation in the Maine Clean Boatyards and Marinas Program.	Phase 3	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Ongoing			Administration, Planning Department		
		6.17		Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.								
				a. Develop alternatives to municipal riverside snow dump in an effort to reduce hydrocarbon pollution to the river waters.	Phase 2	Public Works	Ongoing			Maine DEP; Maine DMR; Aquaculture companies		
				b. Advocate for Maine Department of Marine Resources to limit introduction of invasive species by prohibiting gear transfer to the river from other growing areas without precautions.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration; Maine DMR		

A photograph of a kayak rental shop. Three kayakers are lined up on a rack: an orange and yellow one on the left, a bright green one in the middle, and a red one on the right. To the right of the kayakers, several paddles are hanging on a rack. The building has a red metal roof and a sign that reads "KAYAKING • ACTIVITIES". In the foreground, there are green plants and purple flowers.

KAYAKING • ACTIVITIES

RECREATION

Overview

Communities with a strong culture of sport and recreation are generally happier and healthier. Recreation and physical activity are associated with a reduced risk of chronic diseases, and studies have shown that recreation has positive impacts on mental health (due to both physical reasons but also because recreation promotes connection with others).⁸⁶ In addition, recreational amenities within a community can be a driver of tourism and economic development. The Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, a division of the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development, “leverages Maine’s assets and outdoor recreation heritage to grow the outdoor recreation economy and build Maine’s outdoor recreation brand.”⁸⁷

In Damariscotta, easy access to local outdoor recreation opportunities is cherished by residents. Traditionally, residents have hunted deer and other game on private lands and canoed and fished in the river and lakes. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife stocks Little, Biscay, and Pemaquid Ponds to support recreational fisheries. Residents boat and kayak on the river and fish for stripers and other marine fish. Salt Bay supports a winter ice smelt fishery and tidal streams are fished for smelt in the spring.



⁸⁶ The Health and Social Benefits of Outdoor Recreation, California State Parks: Planning Division (March 2005).

⁸⁷ For more information, see <https://www.maine.gov/decd/programs/maine-office-of-outdoor-recreation>

RECREATION

In general, Damariscotta relies on schools and local nonprofit organizations to provide indoor and outdoor recreation amenities:

- The Central Lincoln County YMCA has indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, including indoor basketball, pickleball, and tennis courts, outdoor baseball and soccer fields, the Lorna Bunting playground, fitness classes, and other programs for its members. Youth soccer, softball, baseball, and basketball programs are offered seasonally. The YMCA offers reduced-rate memberships and scholarships for those who cannot afford the price of a monthly membership. As of December 2023, 743 individuals in 353 households in Damariscotta had CLC YMCA memberships.
- Great Salt Bay Community School has two outdoor playing fields, a playground, and a well-developed trail system behind the school, all of which are available for public use when not in use by the school. The fields are used year-round by DamFast, a local Ultimate Frisbee group.
- Lincoln Academy, located in Newcastle, less than ½ mile from downtown Damariscotta, has outdoor tennis courts, a track field, and a baseball field available for public use when not in student use. The Academy maintains an extensive network of trails used for running and cross-country skiing that are accessible to the public.
- Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) maintains five trails and conserves more than 300 acres of publicly accessible open space in Damariscotta as well as trails and properties in surrounding towns. When the weather allows, CRCT volunteers install and keep up an outdoor ice skating rink in the farmers market field in front of Round Top Farm. The Salt Bay Farm trails are used by cross-country skiers and snowshoers in winter. A popular sledding hill is also located at Round Top Farm.
- Snowmobile clubs in Lincoln County maintain interconnecting seasonal trails through private woodlands in Damariscotta and surrounding towns for use by snowmobilers. The groomed trail network is accessible to cross-country skiers. One trail, dubbed Route 66, stretches from the woods at Business Route 1 south of Hannaford, through woodlands, follows powerline easements, and crosses frozen wetlands and waters down into the Pemaquid peninsula.
- The Lincoln County Rifle Club, off Upper Main Street (Business Route 1), has outdoor rifle and pistol ranges and an indoor heated range.
- Other private organizations provide important spaces for recreation and spaces to build community. Damariscotta is also home to a plethora of artistic and cultural amenities, discussed in greater detail in the Arts & Culture area of this plan.

The Town maintains few of its own recreation facilities. The Damariscotta Measured Mile, a one-mile loop along low-traffic streets in the village area of town, was designated in 2020 after advocacy by the Public Safety and Accessibility Collaborative. The Measured Mile includes signage to identify this popular walking route and is heavily used by residents (though it should be noted that sidewalks are not available on this route).

The Town also owns and maintains boat dock floats and one canoe/kayak rack at the Damariscotta River boat launch in the municipal parking lot. Several parking places are reserved for boaters. A boat launch, picnic, and swimming area at Biscay Pond is owned and maintained by the Town. The Town also owns open space at the old town dump (now a capped landfill). The Town, in cooperation with the Maine Department of Transportation, builds and maintains a network of sidewalks throughout the community, discussed in detail in the Transportation section of this plan.

RECREATION

In general, important tracts of open space commonly used for passive recreation are owned or otherwise conserved thanks to the stewardship of Coastal Rivers. There has been some active recreation infrastructure identified as missing within the community. Demographic shifts could make the lack of this infrastructure feel more pronounced in the future.

Projected Demographic Changes & Potential Recreation Impacts

As noted in the Population & Demographics section of this plan, approximately 26% of Damariscotta’s population is between the ages of 25 and 44 (American Community Survey data from 2020). Additionally, about 14% of Damariscotta’s population is school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. The average age of Damariscotta residents is 41.6, meaning that residents of the town are almost 10 years younger on average than the whole of Lincoln County, where the median age is 51.2. These demographic shifts are expected to continue according to population projections. As the demographics of the community change, the increase in adults of child-bearing age and the increase in school-aged children will result in increased demands for family-friendly planning.

Some critical components of family-friendly planning relevant to this section are the provision of accessible green spaces and recreation areas. Additionally, as children age, it is important to provide active recreational opportunities. Active (developed) recreation areas in the community are severely lacking in Damariscotta. Currently, the YMCA has a playground appropriate for school-aged children and there are basketball courts at Great Salt Bay School, but the Town does not have a Parks & Recreation Department nor its own public playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts, or other sporting facilities. In addition, there are no public play areas for toddlers or preschoolers.

Near the outset of this planning process, 8th grade students at the Great Salt Bay Community School participated in the sixth annual “GSB Students Investigate” by writing news stories, some of which were published in the January 5, 2023 edition of the Lincoln County News. Two students focused their articles on the benefits of active recreation areas to Damariscotta and its citizens. As student James Hanley noted, “There are basketball courts at the YMCA, but people who want to go play need a YMCA membership. Some people may not want to pay each month but still want to play sports and be active. There is no alternative to the YMCA that doesn’t cost money, and everyone wants a place to play and hang out, especially if they love being active.”

Terms Defined:

Active Recreation

Recreational activities that require specialized fields, courts, or other developed areas. Examples include but are not limited to pickleball or tennis, baseball or softball, football or soccer, playing at a playground, skateboarding, and other similar activities.

Passive Recreation

Low-impact, non-motorized outdoor recreational activities or uses that do not require developed facilities and can be accommodated with minimal change to an area and its topography. Examples include but are not limited to walking or hiking, cross-country skiing, bird-watching, snowshoeing, hunting, fishing, and other similar activities.

RECREATION

Forty-nine percent of responses to the online survey put out as part of the Comprehensive Plan effort indicated that Damariscotta's recreational amenities are only somewhat adequate for respondents' family needs; 18% said that existing recreational amenities are not at all adequate. In terms of outdoor recreational amenities, survey respondents indicated that walking or hiking trails (52 respondents) and swimming areas (44 respondents) were the most important to them. These were followed closely by open grassy spaces (26 respondents), benches or places to sit and rest (26 respondents), and playgrounds (24 respondents). Informal polls conducted by GSB student George Siegel for his article in the Lincoln County News found that, of 41 eighth-graders polled, about 75% of them would like to have an outdoor recreation area (namely a basketball court or other outdoor sporting facility) in Damariscotta.

Selected Quotes from Community Engagement Events

- Add playground/park for toddlers and preschoolers
- Add a public park, add a dog park
- Skate park
- More bike trails
- Need parking at Biscay Pond
- More public docking and better parking spaces
- Movies in the Town parking lot! More activities for seniors and children in town!
- Pool in local YMCA
- More "Third" places for community gatherings - art, music, cultural opportunities

Open Space Conservation & Accessibility

The Town relies primarily on Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, a local nonprofit whose stated mission is to "care for the lands and waters of the Damariscotta-Pemaquid Region by conserving special places, protecting water quality, creating trails and public access, and deepening connections to nature," to conserve land for open space and passive recreational use.

In the surrounding communities, Coastal Rivers maintains more than 30 trails totaling more than 51 miles (and counting!). Five of these trails are in Damariscotta. All of Coastal Rivers' trailheads in Damariscotta are kept plowed throughout the winter for year-round access. One trail in Damariscotta, the Rhoda and Leon Cohen River Trail, which connects Round Top Farm to Whaleback Shell Midden State Historic Site is specifically designed for accessibility. The trail is 8' wide with very little slope and a firm, smooth surface. Both trailheads are accessible for vans. There are no known use conflicts on these trails.

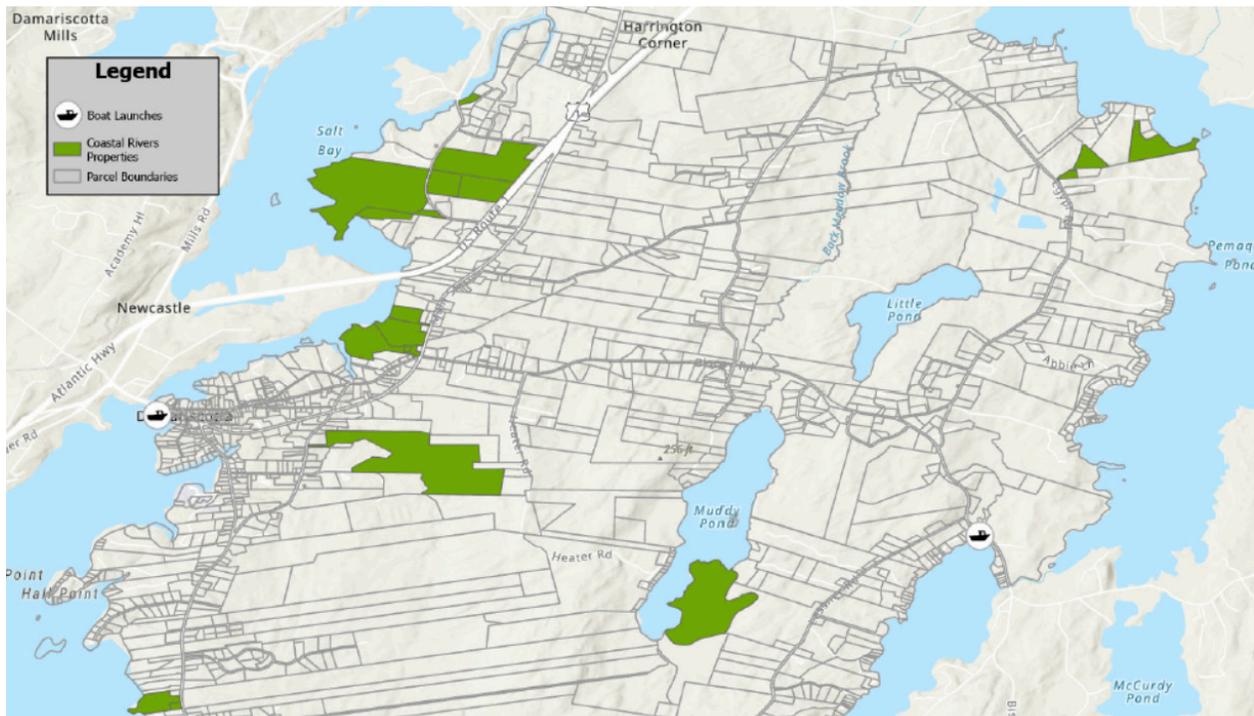


RECREATION

Trail Name	Parking available?	Sidewalk connection?	Toilet facilities available?	Hunting allowed?	Dogs allowed?
Doyle Preserve (Coastal Rivers)	Yes	No	No	With permission	On leash
Huston Landing (Coastal Rivers)	Yes (1-2 spaces)	No	No	No	On leash
Round Top Farm (Coastal Rivers)	Yes	No	Seasonally	No	On leash
Salt Bay Farm (Coastal Rivers)	Yes	No	No	No	On leash
Whaleback Shell Midden State Historic Site (Maine DACF)	Yes	No	Seasonally (on Round Top Farm side)	No	On leash

Source: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust

The Town does not currently have a mechanism (such as an open space fund or similar) to conserve land. The community relies on Coastal Rivers to permanently conserve open space that is of high recreational or ecological value to the community and occasionally appropriates funds to Coastal Rivers through the annual budget process (however, this has not occurred since 2020). Within the Damariscotta-Pemaquid Region, Coastal Rivers owns 60 properties, holds 58 conservation easements, and co-manages an additional 11 properties, which together total nearly 4,000 acres. For properties in Damariscotta specifically, see the map below.



Data Sources: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Town Tax Records



The Town owns a narrow strip of land maintained as a waterfront park along the edge of the Damariscotta River. There is year-round parking available in the abutting downtown parking lot, as well as a public kayak storage rack and restrooms available seasonally from May to October. This area also includes the Town boat launch, which is accessible to the public along with parking spots set aside for boat launch users.

Access to Water Bodies

Water bodies in Damariscotta include the Damariscotta River and Salt Bay, Pemaquid Pond, Biscay Pond, Muddy/Paradise Pond, and Little Pond. The public has access to some of these water bodies (Damariscotta River, Salt Bay, Pemaquid Pond, and Biscay Pond). Access may be only visual, or full boating access as described further below. Muddy/Paradise Pond has no public access. Little Pond has limited public access by design as it is the Town's public water supply.

Preserves maintained by Coastal Rivers allow passive outdoor recreation alongside the Damariscotta River (accessed via either Round Top Farm or Huston Landing), Salt Bay (accessed via Salt Bay Farm), and Pemaquid Pond (accessed via Doyle Preserve). All trails allow pedestrians water views, but there are no formal swimming or kayaking locations at any of the above. The Town does put out a canoe/kayak rack near the town landing that is available to the public during the spring and summer months for storage and easy access to the Damariscotta River. However, this is one of the few areas along the Damariscotta River in Damariscotta that is publicly owned. There is limited public access to the river otherwise.

A boat launch maintained by the Town is located at the northernmost end of Biscay Pond (off Biscay Road). This site is very shallow with a sand bottom, which limits the size of watercraft that can be launched here; however, this limitation is important for the protection of swimmers as well as natural resources within the pond, such as loon nesting areas. The survey conducted as part of this planning process identified potential conflicts between swimmers and boaters at this location. Muddy/Paradise Pond has no public access. A portion of the southern end is owned by Coastal Rivers, but no trails or access is available through that property.

Little Pond only has a public access foot trail to the water through an easement from the property owner, the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District utility company, with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. Limiting public access to Little Pond is by design since it is the Town's water supply. In order to protect the water supply, no motorcraft of any kind, including boats and snowmobiles, are allowed on Little Pond. Ice fishing, swimming, and live bait are also banned. However, fishermen are allowed to use the foot trail and to store canoes on the property, which also protects the water supply by encouraging users not to use the canoes on other ponds and potentially bring back invasive species. Fishermen are also asked to register their canoes with the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District.

Impediments to Accessing Recreational Lands

Perhaps the largest threat that may impede traditional access to private lands in the future is development and a changing culture around public recreational access on private property. Large swaths of forest are required for hunting activities as it is unlawful to discharge a firearm within 300 feet of a building. Development pressure in more rural areas of Damariscotta threatens to break up existing forest blocks and limit hunting. However, Coastal Rivers is continually receiving donations of or purchasing new land, which typically includes increased access for the public.

Respondents to the survey conducted as part of this planning effort indicated that easements or increased public ownership would be the top improvement that would allow increased access to water bodies in Damariscotta (21.4% of respondents). This was followed closely by sidewalks (21.1% of respondents), increased maintenance at existing areas (16.9% of respondents), and bike lanes (14.7% of respondents).

Top improvements that would allow respondents increased access to trails, managed preserves, and wildlife areas were similar. Sidewalks and increased easements or public ownership were tied for the top improvement, at 24.3% of respondents. This was followed by bike lanes (19.1% of respondents), and parking (16.9% of respondents).



Issues & Opportunities

What has been identified as missing from the community is active recreation infrastructure such as playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts, pickleball courts, and similar that are open to all. As demographics in the community continue to shift younger (based on projections outlined), this disparity in recreational amenities will likely become much more pronounced.

It is also important to note that there is currently no access to water for those with disabilities. AARP produces a biannual policy book that outlines policies that governments at all levels should aim to undertake in creating livable communities. One of the principles of livable communities is the ability for people of all abilities and ages to be able to enjoy community services and features that meet their needs.⁸⁸ Without ADA-accessible access to the water, some members of Damariscotta's community are unable to enjoy this precious resource. In 2002, the United States Access Board, an independent federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards, released the minimum accessibility guidelines for recreational facilities, including boating facilities and fishing piers and platforms.⁸⁹ Any future changes to water access in Damariscotta will be required to follow these guidelines.

There is also limited parking at Biscay Beach for hand-carry boat launch users and swimmers. The available parking is quite informal and leads to users parking on adjacent, private property if the beach is busy.

Issues



Lack of active recreation infrastructure



No water access for those with disabilities



Limited parking at Biscay Beach

Opportunities



Adoption of US Access Board policies for water access

⁸⁸ AARP Policy Book 2023-2024, available online here: <https://policybook.aarp.org/policy-book/livable-communities/aarp-livable-communities-principles>

⁸⁹ The ADA Accessibility Guidelines provide requirements around locations, number of accessible boat slips required, minimum widths, maximum slopes, changes in level, doors, surfaces, and more, which must be followed when a new boating facility or fishing pier is created or when an existing boating facility or fishing pier is substantially renovated. For additional information, visit: <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/#ada-1003>

RECREATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Outdoor recreation opportunities, especially access to surface waters, are protected.										
		9.1		Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.							
				a. Develop a plan to improve Biscay Beach as a usable site, specifically addressing known conflicts between boats and beach-goers as well as known parking issues.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	
				b. Implement the above referenced plan to improve Biscay Beach.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 5		Project dependent	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee; Public Works Department	
		9.2		Seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to all major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.							
				a. Create a formalized water access plan to water bodies where access is not currently available.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Selectboard, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Provide educational materials to private property owners about the benefits of available state programs and/or conservation easements in order to encourage permanent public access to our woods and waters.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6			Assessing	
				c. Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A, and MDIFW's Outdoor Partners Program.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6			Assessing	
				d. See Strategy #9.4.a.							

RECREATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation.										
		9.3	Preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.								
				a. Create a Recreation & Open Space Plan that identifies: (1) Priority sites that may be appropriate for recreation/conservation uses or trail network connectivity (through a clearly defined evaluation process); (2) Strategies to preserve land, including funding sources as applicable; and (3) How the land will be managed in the future (e.g. how it will be used or developed for either conservation or recreation purposes).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	2 years	\$\$	Planning Department, Selectboard, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
		9.4	Comply with the US Access Board's minimum accessibility guidelines in all new construction to ensure that all Damariscotta residents, regardless of age or ability, have access to both active and passive recreational amenities (including water access).								
				a. Create an accessible water access point for individuals with disabilities.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin ear-marking funds Year 5		\$\$-\$\$\$ (Suggested funding sources: AARP Community Challenge grant)	Administration, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
				b. Require that projects where recreational amenities intended for use by the general public (e.g. commercial marinas and docks) comply with the US Access Board's minimum accessibility guidelines .	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 5	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
		9.5	Identify and acquire open space within the Growth Area for recreational purposes.								
				a. Create a park within the Growth Area identified in this Plan in order to create an open and attractive space for community members to gather. Considerations may include performance space, a skate park, a place for people to gather, a playground for young children, and other desires driven by the community and budgetary constraints.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin ear-marking funds Year 5	5-7 years	\$\$\$ (Suggested funding sources: Annual Reserves)	Administration, Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	
				b. See Strategy #9.3.a.							

TRANSPORTATION



Overview

Infrastructure such as bridges, established evacuation routes, sidewalks, cycling routes, parking lots, and more are essential for ensuring safe and effective vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle movement throughout the community. While the primary mode of transportation in Damariscotta is currently vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility is also important to the Town for both transportation and recreation purposes. Finding the balance between the mobility of vehicles along the Town's road network and the safety and availability of pedestrian and cycling amenities has long been an objective of the community, documented in planning documents dating back to the 2008 Damariscotta Sidewalk-Bicycle Plan.

Enhancing walkability and bike-ability are key components of our Town's values of liveability, vibrancy, and sustainability. Biking and walking instead of driving reduces greenhouse gas emissions, allows people to be more connected to their community, and can reduce identified traffic congestion issues – but choosing to walk or bike requires infrastructure to make those trips both safe and appealing. Biking and walking are also primary modes of transportation for people who do not own cars, as public transportation within Damariscotta is essentially nonexistent.

This chapter analyzes the transportation system including roads, traffic impacts, pedestrian links, cycling infrastructure, bridges, railroads, and public transit. Understanding these issues and planning for solutions are important steps in meeting the Town's future priorities and needs. Consideration of impacts from natural hazard events will also be crucial as we continue to plan for the future of transportation infrastructure.

Existing Infrastructure & Maintenance

Road System Infrastructure

Damariscotta has 37.9 miles (200,491 linear feet) of public roadways, which vary in function and condition. The Town is served by one arterial road – Route 1. The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) defines an arterial road as serving countywide, statewide, or interstate travel, linking cities and large towns to an integrated highway network. There are also collector roads, which link villages, neighborhoods, and major facilities to the arterial network.⁹⁰ Major collector roads in Damariscotta are Route 1B (Main St) and Route 129 (Bristol Road). Minor collectors are School Street south of Route 1B and Biscay Road. The State maintains both arterial and collector roads scheduled according to a 3-Year Work Plan, which is updated and revised on an annual basis.⁹¹ Maintenance includes road resurfacing, repaving sidewalks, drainage work (ditching, replacing culverts, and replacing catch basins), pavement markings, pothole repair, winter snow and ice control, signage installation, and complete road reconstruction. Table 2 in the Appendix summarizes the work MDOT performed in 2022 in Damariscotta.

⁹⁰ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/docs/roadwayinfo/RoadClassification.pdf>

⁹¹ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Damariscotta.pdf>

TRANSPORTATION

Local roads in Damariscotta are paved and maintained by the Town's Public Works Department. Of the 37.9 miles of public roads in Damariscotta, about 22.1 miles are maintained by the Town. These include Belvedere Road, Church Street, Hodgdon Street, Pinkham Road, and Vine Street, to name a few. The Town annually appropriates funding for normal road maintenance and repair, including contracting out winter maintenance (plowing and salting). Larger-scale projects such as road resurfacing (needed about every 10 years), complete road reconstruction (needed about every 30 years), and replacement of certain kinds of culverts, for example, are typically proposed as capital improvement projects. Table 3 in the Appendix provides more details on these projects. At the 2023 Annual Town Meeting residents approved \$125,000 for FY24 for the Paving Reserve account, which is reserved for larger-scale projects like road resurfacing (milling and overlay) or full road reconstruction, as needed.

The 25.4 miles of private roads in Damariscotta are maintained by the property owners served by the roadway. When a private road is created as part of a subdivision, §103.7(C)(2.10) of the Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance requires that the private roads be maintained by the developer or lot owners until they meet all municipal street design and construction standards (described in further detail below) and are approved by the voters of the Town at a Town Meeting.



TRANSPORTATION

The Damariscotta: Public & Private Roads map, below, shows the public and private road network in the community.

Damariscotta: Public & Private Roads



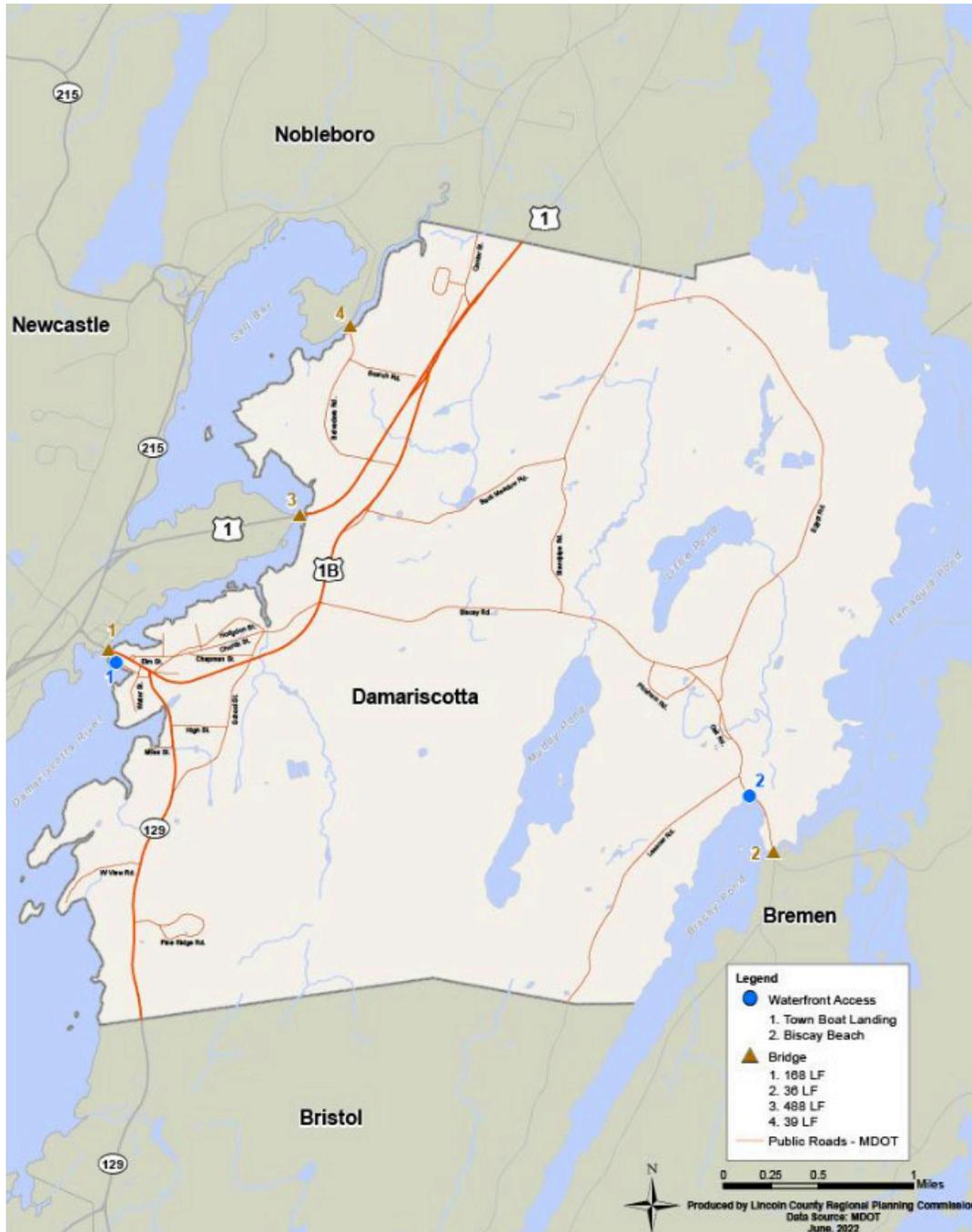
Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Bridge Infrastructure

All four bridges in Damariscotta are owned and maintained by the State and no bridge improvements are being proposed by MDOT at this time. Table 5 in the Appendix shows details on their condition. The map below shows the locations of bridges in Damariscotta, the length of each bridge (in linear feet), as well as the locations of waterfront access – the Town Boat Landing and Biscay Beach.

Damariscotta: Bridges & Waterfront Access



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Parking Infrastructure

There is one public (town-owned) parking lot for automobiles in downtown Damariscotta as well as two bicycle racks. Within this parking lot, there are several spots reserved for boat trailers. Winter maintenance of the downtown parking lot is currently contracted out with a local company through 2024. The municipal lot has recently been improved with an electric vehicle (EV) charging pedestal for public use. Access to downtown Damariscotta in the summer also frequently occurs by boat. Parking for watercraft is discussed in greater detail in the Marine Resources section of this Plan.



Other available public parking in Damariscotta includes marked on-street spaces on Main Street, Elm Street, Theater Street, and Water Street, and parking lots at the Town Office, fire station, and elementary school.

Damariscotta adopted a Traffic and Parking Ordinance in 1998, last revised in 2015.⁹² The Ordinance describes parking limits in the municipal lot downtown. The entire lot has a three-hour parking limit between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM (except for the parking spots along the water's edge, which have an eight-hour parking limit). The Ordinance also sets forth one-hour parking on Main Street between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM daily, as well as winter parking bans.

Plans for a waterfront project downtown, which includes improvements to the municipal parking lot, are in the final design phase with an RFP for construction anticipated to be awarded in Winter 2023/24. Construction could start as early as Spring 2024 with a completion date expected by April 2025.

⁹² https://www.damariscottame.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf4311/f/uploads/traffic_parking_ord_07-15-15.pdf

TRANSPORTATION

Parking Standards' Impact on Development

The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance provides minimum parking requirements. Sec. 102.6(H) (2) of the Ordinance allows the Planning Board to waive the minimum number of required on-site parking spaces to zero in the downtown area (the current C-1 zoning district) for good reason, such as when shared parking scenarios or adequate on-street parking exists within 500 feet of the proposed development. Given this, minimum parking requirements are not believed to be discouraging development in downtown Damariscotta. However, minimum parking standards may need to be addressed through an Ordinance amendment rather than anticipating that the Planning Board will waive them in the downtown area, which can lead to controversy during project review.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The map below shows the locations of about 12,700 linear feet of existing sidewalks in Damariscotta (further described in the Appendix, Table 6), including whether they meet ADA compliance. The majority of sidewalks are considered non-compliant mostly due to curb ramp issues including slope or lack of detectable curb warnings.

Damariscotta: Downtown ADA Compliance



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

The sidewalk network in the downtown area is fairly built out, but there is a desire from residents to connect more of the surrounding residential neighborhoods to the downtown. In addition, sidewalks do not currently connect the elementary school to surrounding neighborhoods nor do they provide access to the businesses through the length of Business Route 1/Upper Main Street.

In 2021 the Public Safety and Accessibility Collaborative (PSAC) created the Twin Villages Walking Map. The PSAC is a volunteer community group, composed primarily of Damariscotta residents, dedicated to promoting safe pedestrian and bicycle initiatives and infrastructure. Their walking map shows the locations of sidewalks and trails in both Damariscotta and neighboring Newcastle, as well as the location of the Damariscotta Measured Mile – an easily accessible one-mile walking loop adjacent to the downtown area involving Hodgdon Street, School Street, and Chapman Street. These streets have less vehicular traffic making the Measured Mile a pedestrian destination for safe walking (though it should be noted that these streets do not have sidewalks currently).

Cycling Infrastructure

The map below shows the locations of road cycling routes as designated by the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.⁹³ MDOT also has Damariscotta and Pemaquid area bike routes available on their website.⁹⁴ However, all of these routes require cyclists to share the road with vehicular traffic and in some cases to cycle on narrow shoulders, some of which need repair. Lack of paved shoulders was identified as a concern through the online survey and public engagement events held as part of this planning process.

In addition to typical road bikes, e-bikes, and other motorized mobility devices are becoming more popular nationwide.

In terms of regional cycling amenities, a portion of the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile walking and biking route with connections from Maine to Florida, runs along roadways in neighboring Newcastle.

In 2015, the Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee, along with Robert Faunce, Lincoln County Planner, prepared the Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan.⁹⁵ Goals and objectives to increase safety included signage and traffic-calming measures, embracing Maine Safe Routes to Schools programs, and creating routes to key destinations.

⁹³ <https://www.bikemaine.org/where-to-ride/>

⁹⁴ <https://www.exploremaine.org/bike/midcoast/damariscotta.shtml>

⁹⁵ https://www.damariscottame.com/sites/g/files/vyhlif4311/f/uploads/2015_newcastle-dama_bicycle-pedestrian_plan.pdf

TRANSPORTATION

Damariscotta: Road Cycling Routes



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

In 2021, the PSAC developed and circulated a Bike Rider Survey to Damariscotta residents and seasonal visitors to better understand cycling habits, needs, and current infrastructure gaps. 136 respondents provided valuable feedback on desired cycling routes, concerns about existing cycling infrastructure issues, and biking facilities that could be provided by the Town (such as public bike racks or bicycle parking). Respondents also underscored the need for regional coordination in bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility

- Incorporate engineering and funding to install paved shoulders on the following priority roadways in order to make cycling safer and more enjoyable: Bristol Road (HCP Level 3), Business Route 1 north of McDonald's (mostly HCP Level 2), and Biscay Road (HCP Level 4) to Egypt Road, School Street to High Street/Piper Mill Road.
- Set aside funds in a Capital Improvement Fund to construct shoulder improvements when MDOT is repaving or reconstruction to improve our roadways.
- Support community/PSAC efforts in establishing and implementing a Bike Rack Initiative – an effort to consistently install the same model of bike racks at strategic locations in Damariscotta – via funding considerations, use of town property, and installation support.
- Develop plans and supporting actions to construct a family/all ages route, or routes, for cycling through and around town. Examples of formalized, safe and enjoyable on-road and off-road cycling to consider include: enhancement to roadways, bike pathways, multi-use paths and trails, and emerging off-road development.
- Use the "Town of Damariscotta Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility Checklist" to ensure that bicycle safety and accessibility is being considered in roadway, transportation, and recreation planning.

Following the survey, the PSAC developed a Cycling Subcommittee to analyze the response data and begin prioritization of recommendations and implementation measures. So far the Subcommittee, with support from the full PSAC, identified suitable locations for bike racks, assessed current conditions of existing cycling routes, and created a Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility (see inset) that was recently approved by the Damariscotta Selectboard.

The Resolution ensures the Selectboard will consider these safe cycling priorities, along with improvements for pedestrians when planning for and/or modifying existing roadways, transportation, and recreation infrastructure.

Public Transportation Infrastructure

From improved community health to affordability, public transportation systems create the foundation on which communities can become more livable and prosperous. Public transportation can include trains, ferries, or buses. In more rural areas like Damariscotta, small buses or vans may be the primary mode of public transit. Benefits of public transportation in a community can range from improved public health outcomes (encouraging more walking or bicycling from the home to the nearest bus stop), to positive environmental outcomes (allowing the use of less fuel to move more people), to lessening traffic congestion and improving community mobility. More than 68% of survey respondents indicated that public transportation in Damariscotta is either lacking or severely lacking, indicating that respondents are not able to experience the benefits of public transportation in the community.

Bus Service

Concord Coach Lines has a bus stop on Main Street. Passengers can purchase tickets online for once-daily service each for north- and south-bound rides. As the coach bus cannot pull off-street properly, traffic backups on Main Street occur when the bus picks up and drops off passengers.

TRANSPORTATION

There is currently no local bus service in Damariscotta. However, Midcoast Public Transportation through Waldo Community Action Partners (CAP) coordinates a few rides in Damariscotta through MaineCare to get riders to medical appointments. They are interested in expanding their public transit services in Damariscotta and the community is actively considering how to pay for this service. In addition, F.I.S.H. (Friends in Service Helping), a volunteer-run organization, offers rides at no charge to people across Lincoln County, including Damariscotta.⁹⁶

Railroad Service & Infrastructure

Damariscotta is located in proximity to the Rockland Branch, which connects Brunswick with Rockland via railway. The line was owned by the Maine Department of Transportation and operated by Canadian Pacific Railway from 2019 to 2022.⁹⁷ In 2022, Midcoast Railservice became lessee-operator of the 57-mile Rockland Branch of the rail corridor. The line provides freight transportation to industrial customers in 23 states and two provinces, including 40 marine and inland ports, per the Midcoast Railservice website.

In 2014 a twice-daily excursion route between Rockland and Brunswick (with trains stopping occasionally in Newcastle at the train stop off of Depot Street) was piloted. Expansion of this route has been discussed and attempted previously. The desire for alternative transportation, as well as economic development brought by increased visitors through rail lines, are frequently considered as organizations try to make the passenger rail line financially viable.

In the summer of 2023, Coastliner Excursions (a part of Midcoast Railservice) resumed scenic passenger operations by piloting trips between Bath and Wiscasset, as well as in the Rockland area, which included a stop in Newcastle (in walking proximity to Damariscotta's downtown). Trips utilize 76-passenger, self-propelled railcars. Initial public response to the trial excursion route has been positive.



⁹⁶ <https://lincolncountyfish.com/>

⁹⁷ https://knox.villagesoup.com/news/canadian-pacific-to-buy-rail-company-that-runs-rockland-branch/article_498b37a5-4e99-52fb-8277-3be0ffb5df5.html

TRANSPORTATION

Ferry Services and Water Access

Currently, Damariscotta does not have a ferry service or water taxi, although public access to the Damariscotta River is available downtown, as discussed further in the Recreation chapter of this Plan. A survey question about the desire for this kind of service was posed during this planning process, and the majority of the community has not expressed any strong interest in further exploring waterside transportation facilities.

Airports

The closest airport serving Damariscotta is the Wiscasset Airport. Wiscasset's airport is located at such a distance that activities in Damariscotta have no impact on its airspace. The closest airports providing commercial service are Portland International Jetport, Maine State Airport in Augusta, and Bangor International Airport. Other airports in the greater region include Brunswick Executive Airport and the Knox County Regional Airport in Owls Head.

Road Design Standards

The design of highways, streets, and roads is highly important for user safety and the maneuverability of vehicles. Quality roadway design directly impacts the user experience, and roads themselves are a key contributor to the development and growth of the local economy. It is important for roads to allow the creation of a network of interconnected streets, rather than many cul-de-sacs off of one central roadway. Road design can support alternative transportation (such as biking or walking) – but only if they are thoughtfully designed with all users in mind.

In Damariscotta, new roads are typically only proposed as part of private subdivisions (both residential and commercial subdivisions). The Town is primarily focused on maintaining its existing roads. Thus, the road design standards included in the Town's Subdivision Ordinance are critical, as they dictate the Town's expectations for the creation of new roads, which are primarily constructed by private developers

Subdivisions

There have not been any new subdivisions constructed since the prior (2014) Comprehensive Plan. A recent subdivision, approved but then not built, was required to install sidewalks at the expense of the subdivider per the regulations outlined below. However, as the subdivision will not be built, the sidewalks will not be built.

Concerning street layout, certain kinds of subdivisions (single-family subdivisions containing less than 14 lots, multi-family subdivisions containing more than 4 units but less than 25 units, or commercial subdivisions) may have one dead-end street that may be up to 1,000 feet in length, with turnaround connecting with existing public streets on an approved subdivision plan for which a bond has been filed. Single-family subdivisions with 15 or more lots proposed or multi-family subdivisions containing more than 25 dwelling units shall have at least two street connections with existing public streets on an approved subdivision plan. More detailed road design standards are shown in Table 4, within the Appendix.

TRANSPORTATION

For dead-end roads, in addition to the design standards detailed above, the Road Commissioner must approve the design of the turn-around for those roads that are proposed as public ways. The current language reads that the Planning Board may require the reservation of a 20-foot easement in line with the road to provide continuation of pedestrian traffic or utilities to the next road. The Board may also require the reservation of a 50-foot easement in line with the road to provide continuation of the road where future subdivision is possible.⁹⁸

The Subdivision Ordinance requires that subdivisions be designed to provide access to individual lots only by interior subdivision roads. This effectively prohibits ‘piano key’ subdivisions along public roads, instead requiring developments to extend perpendicularly from the road. This is especially important in rural areas where piano key lots create a suburban appearance even though overall densities may be low, and they effectively preclude much future development to the rear. It also minimizes the number of curb cuts, thereby reducing potential traffic conflicts and improving traffic flow.⁹⁹

The Planning Board may require, under the same Road Design Standards (Sec. 103.7(E) of the Ordinance), that sidewalks or pedestrian paths are installed at the expense of the subdivider between the existing sidewalk and the subdivision if a public sidewalk is located within 200’ of where the subdivision abuts or fronts onto a public major street. In addition, if significant pedestrian traffic is expected to be generated by the proposed subdivision (in the determination of the Planning Board), then the Board can require the installation of sidewalks adjacent to the project site. There are no specific requirements under the subdivision ordinance to install bicycle racks or bicycle infrastructure, though the Site Plan Review Ordinance does give the authority to the Planning Board to require bicycle racks for certain large-scale developments being reviewed under that Ordinance (per Sec. 102.7(D)).

Traffic Management & Safety

Traffic Generators

Damariscotta has several destinations that attract residents and visitors alike which play a role in the traffic counts provided on the map below. Damariscotta’s Main Street (Business Route 1) is home to a variety of shops, restaurants, and grocery stores. Great Salt Bay Community School (GSBCS) is located on Route 1B and serves between 350-400 students in grades K-8. Adjacent to GSBCS is the Central Lincoln County YMCA, a significant community resource offering childcare, summer camps, wellness classes, exercise facilities, etc.

Additionally, the town hosts various community events, including the annual Damariscotta Pumpkin Festival (in October 2022, there were approximately 50,000 attendees) Bristol Road (Route 129) is the access point for residents and visitors to the neighboring communities of Bristol and South Bristol, the Pemaquid Peninsula as a whole, and LincolnHealth - Miles Campus, the Town’s largest employer and the medical service center for the area. Traffic counts have remained relatively stable between 2016 and 2019, with Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts ranging from $\pm 4,300$ to $\pm 7,200$ including heavy truck traffic and between $\pm 1,000$ to $\pm 1,500$ trips to Miles.

⁹⁸ See §103.7(H)(5) for additional information.

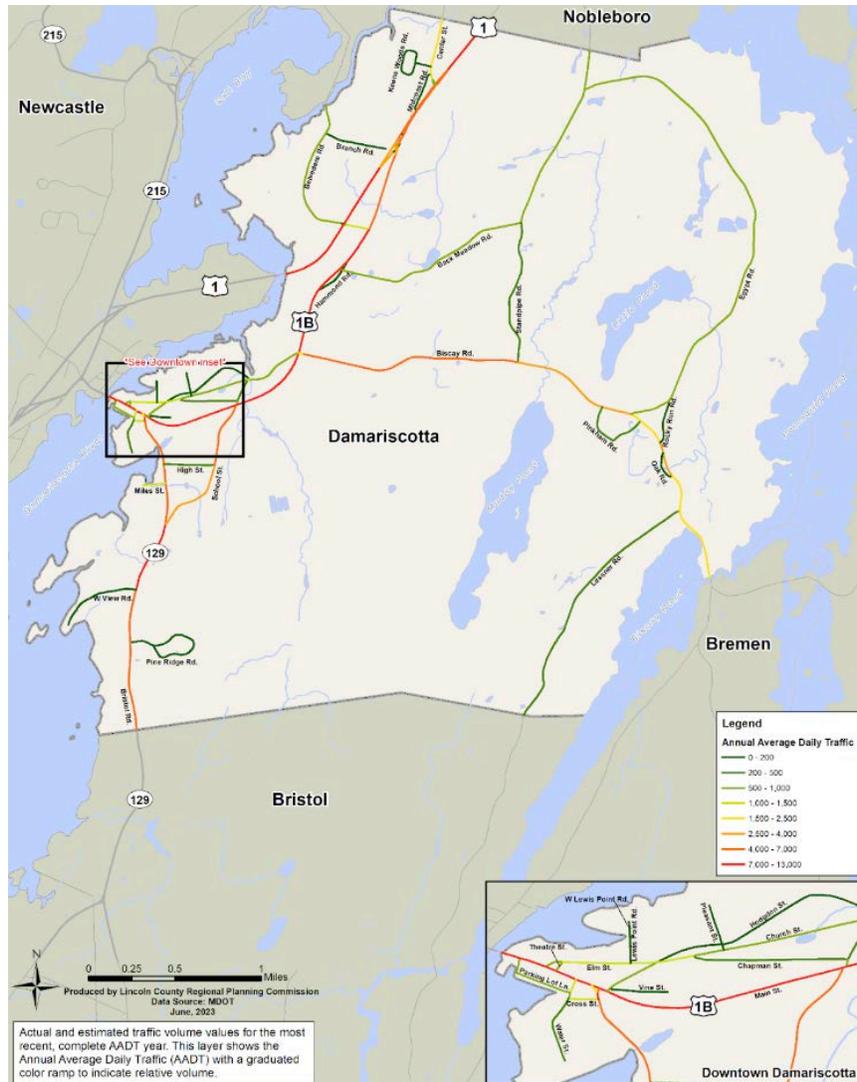
⁹⁹ See note on Page 32 of Chapter 103, Subdivision.

TRANSPORTATION

Traffic Count Information

The map below visually shows the daily traffic volumes on Damariscotta roads. This information comes from the MDOT short-duration counts (SDC) and continuous count sites (CCS) that provided estimated and actual traffic volume values for the 2022 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Report. Table 7 in the Appendix provides the full AADT for all roads wholly or partially within Damariscotta.

Damariscotta: Annual Average Daily Traffic



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Accident Occurrence

MDOT identifies high accident locations, which are intersections or road segments that are sites of a high number of accidents. These are also provided on the map below.

For 2017 to 2019 data, MDOT identified the road segment from the intersection of Elm and Main to the intersection of Main Street and Parking Lot Lane as being a high accident location with ten (10) crashes occurring. 2022 data indicates the segment from the intersection of Main Street and Water Street to the intersection of Main Street and Theatre Street as a high crash section with eight (8) accidents occurring resulting in 4 injuries.

The intersection of Route 1B and School Street is also problematic with travelers using School Street as a cut-through. This intersection was the site of a fatal accident in 2019. It has been discussed extensively by MDOT and Town officials, but a safe solution to minimize crashes at this location has not yet been implemented.

The intersection of Belvedere Road and Route 1 has been described as one of the “most dangerous rural intersections in Maine.”¹⁰⁰ MDOT has added the construction of a roundabout at this location to their work plan for 2025.¹⁰¹ Accident occurrences are analyzed further in the Appendix of this Plan.

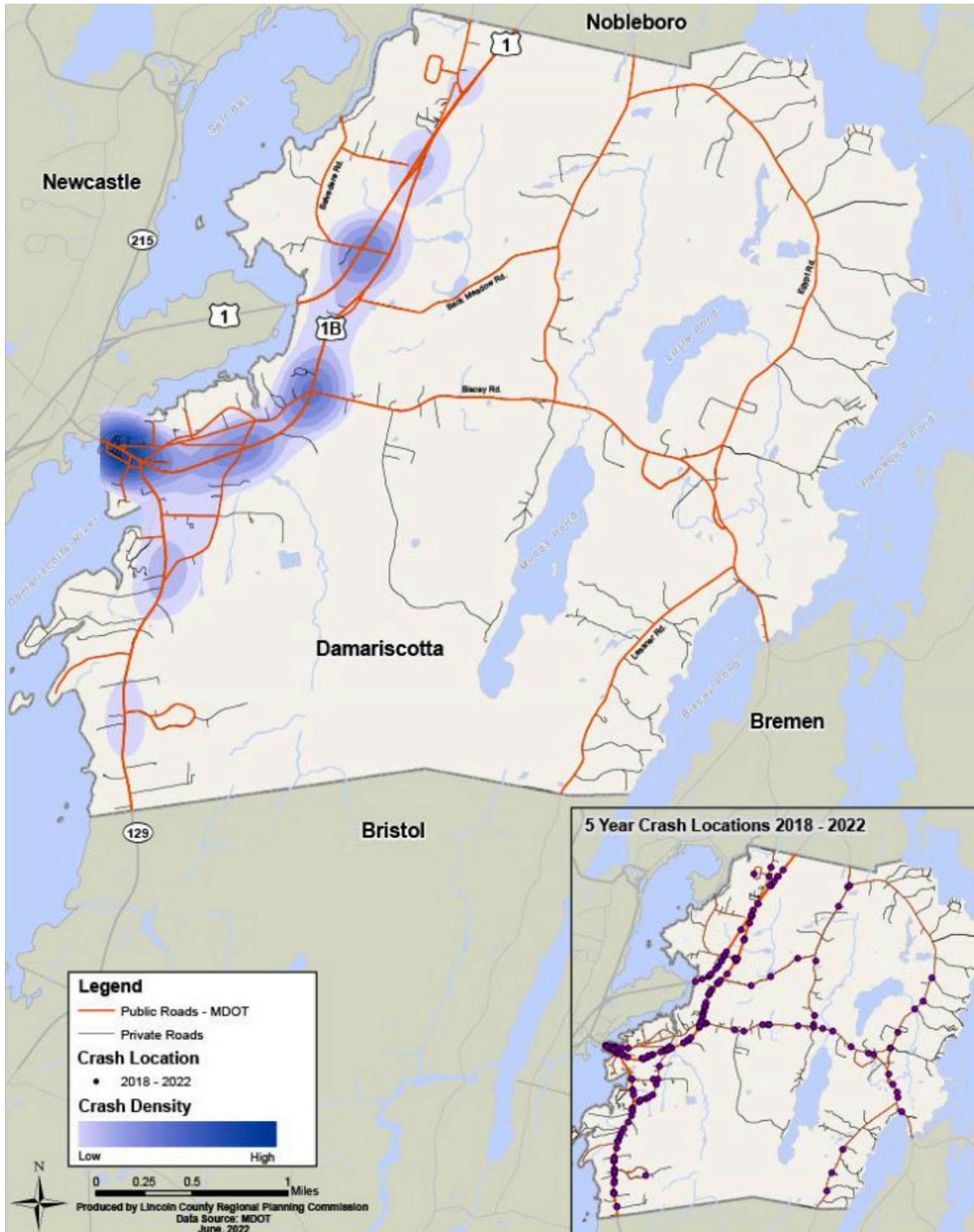


Intersection of Belvedere Road and Route 1

¹⁰⁰ <https://lcme.com/currentnews/dot-planning-for-belvedere-road-roundabout-in-2024/>

¹⁰¹ https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/docs/2024/2024_Work_Plan_Final.pdf

Damariscotta: 10 Year Crash Density 2012-2022



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Access Management

Damariscotta has adopted local regulations to ensure the safe use of and access to roadways, including minimum sight distance requirements, drainage improvements, and width standards. Such standards are described in the Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 103) and the Driveway and Driveway Entrance Ordinance (Chapter 802). Neither ordinance addresses the proximity of new driveways to existing driveways or intersecting roads unless a project requires Site Plan Review by the Planning Board.

Route 1, as an arterial road, is access controlled so new development is prohibited from having direct access to the highway. A permit for a driveway or entrance being proposed on a major or minor collector road (state-aid road) is required from MDOT. In Damariscotta, these roadways are Route 1B, Route 129, part of School Street, and Biscay Road.

Regional Plans

Transportation planning at the local, county, regional, and state levels has occurred since the last Comprehensive Plan update. Below is a list of plans that are relevant to Damariscotta and should be incorporated into Town vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and alternative transportation planning in the future. Also noted is a summary of what has been done (related to transportation improvements) since the adoption of these Plans, where applicable.

- The Damariscotta/Newcastle Sidewalk and Bicycle Plan (2008): Sidewalks were installed on Elm Street, Church Street, and Bristol Road, and were implemented on a section of Route 1B from Biscay Road to Great Salt Bay School. Some traffic-calming measures were introduced.
- Damariscotta Heart & Soul (2010): Some improvements to the Municipal Parking Lot and some sidewalk extensions have been installed.
- Midcoast Route 1 Corridor Management Plan (2014): Some high crash locations have been addressed. A trolley service was piloted in 2014. Some sidewalk plans were introduced.
- Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas – Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities (EPA) (2015)
- Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan (April 2015)
- PSAC Bike Rider Survey (2021)
- Maine Department of Transportation Family of Plans (2022): This includes the State’s Active Transportation Plan.

Issues & Opportunities

Identified Community Concerns

Results from the survey conducted as part of this planning effort show that transportation infrastructure is important for improving the quality of life in Damariscotta. Specifically, “improve pedestrian infrastructure” was ranked 2nd out of 16 possible strategies, “enhance public transportation in Damariscotta and the region” was ranked 4th of 16, and “improve bicycle infrastructure” was ranked 10th of 16. When asked what Damariscotta needs more of, 17% of respondents mentioned ‘sidewalks or pedestrian infrastructure’. At the November 9, 2023 Active Transportation Workshop (held as part of this Plan), attendees ranked the list of active transportation projects at right (listed in order of importance).



TRANSPORTATION

Notably, survey results related to parking in the community were inconclusive, as some answers mentioned increasing and others mentioned decreasing parking (especially within the Main Street/downtown area). Anecdotally, there is a perceived parking problem in the downtown area (as shown through some of the answers to the online survey and interactive mapping activity hosted as part of this planning effort), especially during large events and during the peak tourist season where public lots may be of insufficient size to accommodate an influx of visitors. Timed parking limits in the municipal parking lot have been identified as a potential issue for employees of downtown businesses because there are few other public parking areas within proximity to their employer.

It should also be noted that the only municipal parking lot is within a FEMA flood zone, and while a deployable flood wall may be available as soon as 2025, it may be prudent to consider finding new parking areas for long-term use. A parking study may be necessary to understand if parking issues are actually due to a lack of parking spaces or from a problem of parking management. The facilitation of shared parking agreements with private parking lot owners (especially during large community events) has been identified as a way to manage parking in the community.

When considering the overall transportation system in Damariscotta, survey respondents found public transit options lacking or severely lacking. Similar responses were also given for access to regional transportation (railway); access to taxis or other rideshare; and accessibility for people with disabilities. Additionally, respondents felt bicycle facilities were severely lacking or lacking.

A common theme from responses to the interactive mapping activity hosted on the project website was bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Many commenters said they felt the existing sidewalk network was inadequate or in disrepair and noted the lack of shoulders on roadways. A few comments advocated for an increased number of safe sidewalks for “healthy walking activities for our aging population as well as young families.” Suggestions for improvement included sidewalks to enhance safety, introducing raised crosswalks and bump-outs to calm traffic and increase pedestrian visibility and safety and creation of a multi-use path for pedestrians and bikes. One respondent in the mapping exercise noted that paved shoulders on Bristol Road would allow for safe biking as well as better pedestrian safety.

Survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Damariscotta’s downtown is safe to drive in and safe to walk in, while also noting that it is often congested. This is because Route 1B serves as Damariscotta’s Main Street, as well as the primary access point to the Pemaquid Peninsula, leading to conflicts by multiple uses of this road as both a major state route and a local service road with a pedestrian-oriented downtown.

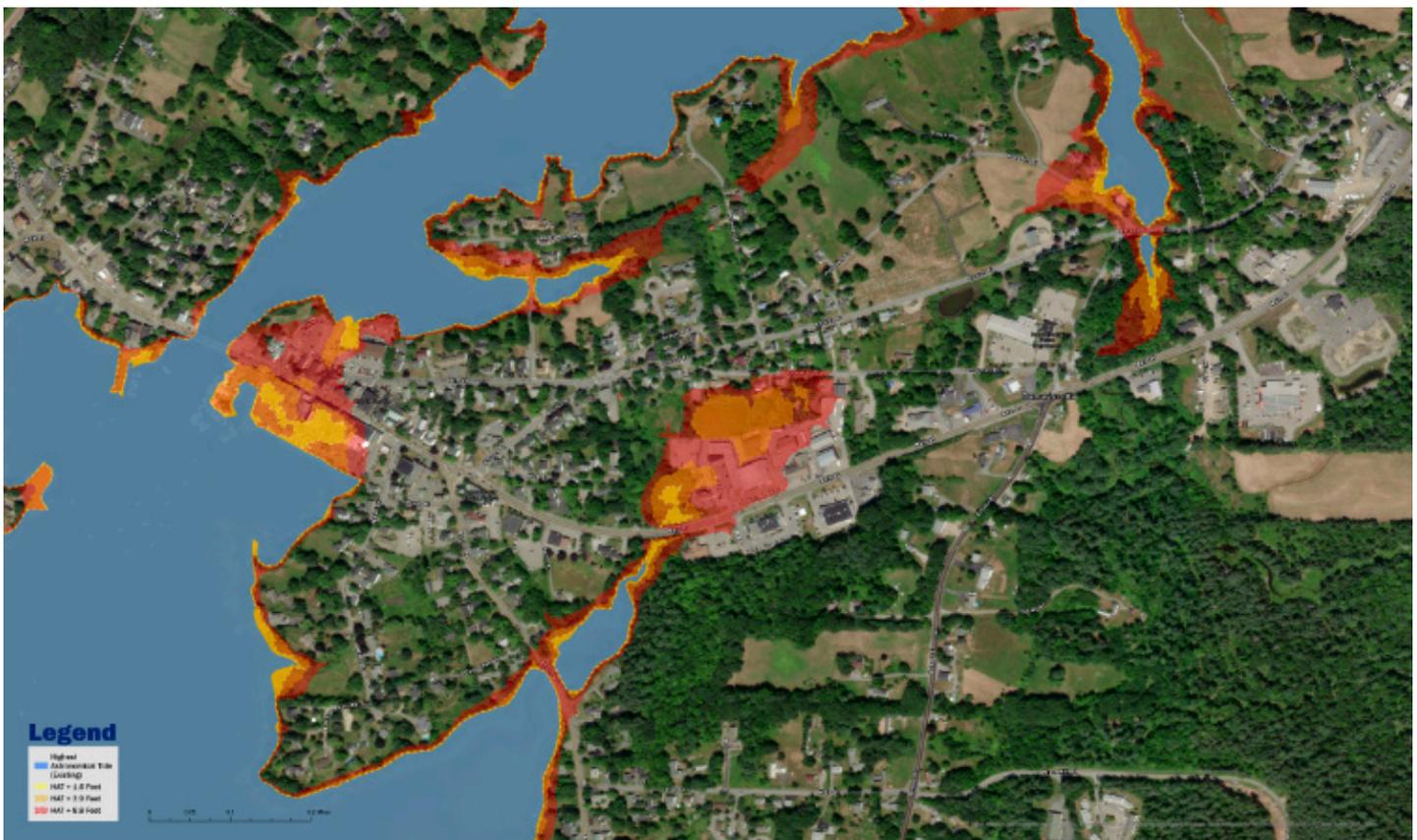
In addition, 88% of respondents noted the ability of roadways and intersections to handle traffic was either only adequate or lacking. A similar response was noted for the condition of roadways.

TRANSPORTATION

Considerations for the Impacts of Natural Hazards & Changing Climate

In 2021, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in collaboration with federal and state agencies and the Town of Damariscotta, began the development of a dynamic model to simulate flood conditions under different sea level rise projections. These models project future risk based on a combination of sea level rise and storm recurrence intervals identified by the Maine Climate Council and hydrologic analysis, respectively. Preliminary results suggest that sea level rise will contribute to substantial flooding in downtown Damariscotta during major rainfall or storm surge events. The image below shows the possible future inundation risk to the Damariscotta's downtown.

Sea Level Rise & Storm Surge Scenarios



In January 2024, Damariscotta experienced about 3.3 feet of storm surge, flooding the municipal parking lot and downtown businesses. Rising sea levels and flooding events in the future will also lead to inundation of roadways, preventing access to homes and businesses. Maine Won't Wait, the State's 4-year plan for climate action, recommended committing to managing 1.5 feet of sea-level rise by the year 2050 (yellow areas on above map) and 3.9 feet of sea-level rise by the year 2100 (orange areas on above map) and preparing to manage up to 3 feet of sea-level rise by the year 2050 and up to 8.8 feet by the year 2100 (red areas on above map). Under these scenarios, many roads would be inaccessible to emergency responders. The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Risk Explorer includes estimates of the cost to upgrade or fix roads that would be inundated at \$180,000 at 1.5 feet of sea-level rise, \$530,000 at 3.9 feet of sea-level rise, and about \$1.5 million at 8.8 feet of sea-level rise.

TRANSPORTATION

As part of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan update in 2021, Damariscotta identified several road and culvert mitigation actions, which will be crucial for reducing long-term risk to coastal and riverine flood hazards. A full list of projects and their current status is included in the Appendix of this Plan as Table 3.

Emissions Reduction

In addition to increasing resilience to storm events, a reduction in vehicle emissions can help mitigate climate change.

Transportation is responsible for 54% of Maine’s annual greenhouse gas emissions. When analyzed by vehicle type, 59% of Maine’s transportation-related emissions are from light-duty passenger cars and trucks; 27% are from medium- and heavy-duty trucks; and the remaining 14% come from rail, marine, aviation, and utility equipment vehicles.

While we don’t have specific data for Damariscotta, we operate under the assumption that our data would be similar to the statewide transportation emissions trends.

In 2020, the Governor’s Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future completed *Maine Won’t Wait: a Four-Year Plan for Climate Action*. The Plan has identified statewide goals for improving the reliability of the State’s transportation network while reducing emissions.

“
Maine’s rural character and relatively low emissions from other sectors – like electricity generation – make our transportation emissions disproportionately high compared to other states. The average Maine vehicle travels approximately 12,000 miles per year. An analysis of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Maine found that 65% of our driving occurs on rural roads, with 35% in urban and suburban areas. Most of these miles are driven in the southern half of Maine.
”

-Maine Won’t Wait, Page 39

To embrace the future of transportation, the State has three goals: accelerate Maine’s transition to electric vehicles, increase fuel efficiency and alternative fuels, and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Damariscotta can play a role in this effort, especially the strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled. At the state level, strategies to meet this goal include:

- Increasing public transportation funding to the national median of \$5 per capita by 2024;
- Relaunching GoMaine to significantly increase shared public community options by 2022, and;
- by 2024, establish state coordination, strengthen land-use policies, and use state grant programs to encourage development that supports the reduction of VMT.

Issues



Lack of bicycle infrastructure



Desire for more pedestrian infrastructure



Downtown parking lot in flood zone



Lack of public transit

Opportunities



Better parking management downtown



Waterfront plan to assist with parking lot flooding

TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Transportation infrastructure efficiently accommodates the Town's growth and economic development.										
		10.1	Maximize the functionality and efficiency of state and state-aid roads.								
				a. Participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including continuing to advocate for funding for priority MDOT roadway improvement projects, including active transportation improvements as well as improving the safety for all users of the School Street/ Route 1B intersection, possibly including roundabout solutions.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing				Administration
				b. Create a pull-off area for the Concord Coachlines bus that will minimize vehicular traffic backup and unsafe conditions on Main Street. This pull-off area should be located within the Growth Area designated as part of this Plan, be connected by sidewalks and bicycle connections, and include a proper bus shelter for those waiting to be picked up.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds for feasibility assessment Year 1		\$\$\$\$ (Suggested funding source: MDOT PPI grants for feasibility)		Public Works Department, Administration
		10.2	Advocate for the return of rail travel to the region.								
				a. Along with the Town of Newcastle, continue to advocate to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to bring rail travel to the region.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Ongoing				Town of Newcastle, Administration, NNEPRA, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission
		10.3	Project potential costs of capital investments, maintenance, and operations of the local transportation network beyond one fiscal year for policy-making and planning purposes.								
				a. Develop a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network (beginning with the prioritized improvements identified in this Plan).	Phase 1	Public Works Committee	Year 1	12 months			Public Works Department, Administration, Selectboard
				b. Adequately fund reserves to allow for the implementation of the prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan referenced above.	Phase 1	Budget Committee, Selectboard	Ongoing				Public Works Department, Administration
				c. See Strategy #11.1.a.							

TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Transportation systems meet local and regional needs safely and efficiently.										
		10.4	Balance the needs of all users regardless of mode (pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles) or ability, by providing a safe and efficient transportation network.								
			a. Identify funding to explore the feasibility of "context-sensitive" traffic calming measures and the installation of bicycle lanes along Route 1B from School Street to Biscay Road.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds for feasibility assessment	Year 1		\$\$\$\$ (Suggested funding source: MDOT PPI grants for feasibility)	Public Works Department, Administration	
			b. Refine the assessment criteria for rating roads and prioritizing improvements utilized by the Public Works Committee to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks and road shoulders).	Phase 1	Public Works Committee		Year 2		Staff-time	Public Works Department, Selectboard	
			c. Become a designated Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists.	Phase 3	Selectboard		Year 8		Staff-time	Administration, PSAC	
			d. Become a designated Age-Friendly Community by AARP.	Phase 2	Selectboard		Year 5		Staff-time	Administration, PSAC	
			e. Adopt a sidewalk design policy to include a minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.	Phase 1	Selectboard		Year 2		Staff-time	Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
			f. Advocate at the state-level for MDOT's customer service ratings to include "Complete Streets" criteria, especially within village areas.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Staff-time	PSAC	
			g. Advocate at the state-level for continued implementation of MDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Staff-time	PSAC	
		10.5	Balance the needs of all users regardless of mode (pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles) or ability, by providing a safe and efficient transportation network.								
			a. Conduct a parking study of the downtown and surrounding streets, including the identification of public parking areas, the demand for parking during both peak season (summer) and off-season (winter) and recommendations for efficient use of parking for both employees and visitors, and the identification of any known issues.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	12 months		\$\$ (professional consultant cost)	Planning Department, Public Works Department	
			b. Implement results of the parking study noted above.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 5	12 months		Staff-time	Administration, Public Works Department	
			c. Review and revise minimum parking requirements included in the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to ensure that these regulations support community goals.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months		\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	

TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Land use and development patterns complement transportation networks and promote mobility.										
		10.6	Address transportation planning and land use planning together as two parts of the same issue.								
				a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); state access management regulations under 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and state traffic permitting regulations for large developments under 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Amend the Town's Subdivision Ordinance to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. Amend the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Ordinances to include sidewalk design requirements including minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
			d. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require sidewalks along the frontage of new development located within the Growth Area as defined by this Plan.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		

TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Transportation investments and policies support a more sustainable community.										
		10.7	Increase sustainable mobility by investing in active transportation (bicycling and pedestrian) infrastructure improvements.								
				a. Conduct a walking audit of existing sidewalk locations and all streets and intersections within the Growth Area identified as part of this Plan, to better understand where pedestrian improvements may be necessary.	Phase 1	Public Safety & Accessibility Collaborative (PSAC)	Year 2	8 months	Volunteer time	Public Works Committee	
				b. Revise the Town's policy related to the maintenance of road surface markings (namely crosswalks) to require that they are repainted at least twice per year or research a more resilient paint option to ensure crosswalks are visible year-round.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 1	4 months	Staff-time	Public Works Committee, Public Works Department	
				c. Require that sidewalks are maintained in winter weather at or about at the same rate as roadways.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	4 months	Staff-time	Plowing contractor	
				d. Identify the location of potentially public rights-of-way in the community that could be upgraded to expand bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 3	6 months	\$ (utilizing summer intern)		
				e. Refer to and comply with the PSAC Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility especially when MDOT is planning for roadway improvements to priority corridors (as identified in the resolution).	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent	Administration, Public Works Department	
		10.8	Accommodate the switch to electric vehicles.								
				a. Work with CMP to identify any upgrades needed to support more robust EV charging and solar power infrastructure.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4		Staff-time	Administration	
				b. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that certain development projects are "EV-ready" (e.g. that conduit is installed for EV charging stations).	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 4	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department; See SMPDC's Municipal EV Readiness Toolkit (2021)	
		10.9	Minimize local vehicle miles traveled (VMT).								
				a. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town's transportation network	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 7 / as needed		Staff-time	Public Works Department	
				b. Publicize existing ride-providing services (such as Lincoln County FISH) and ride-sharing networks (such as GO MAINE).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	3 months	Staff and volunteer time (as part of website updates)	Town Clerk, Administration	

The image shows the exterior of the Skidompha Public Library, a two-story brick building with a green roof. A semi-transparent yellow banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES". Below the banner, the entrance to the library is visible, featuring a brick archway with the name "SKIDOMPHA PUBLIC LIBRARY" inscribed in gold letters above it. A set of stone steps with metal handrails leads up to the entrance. To the left of the entrance, there are green bushes with yellow flowers. The sky is clear and blue.

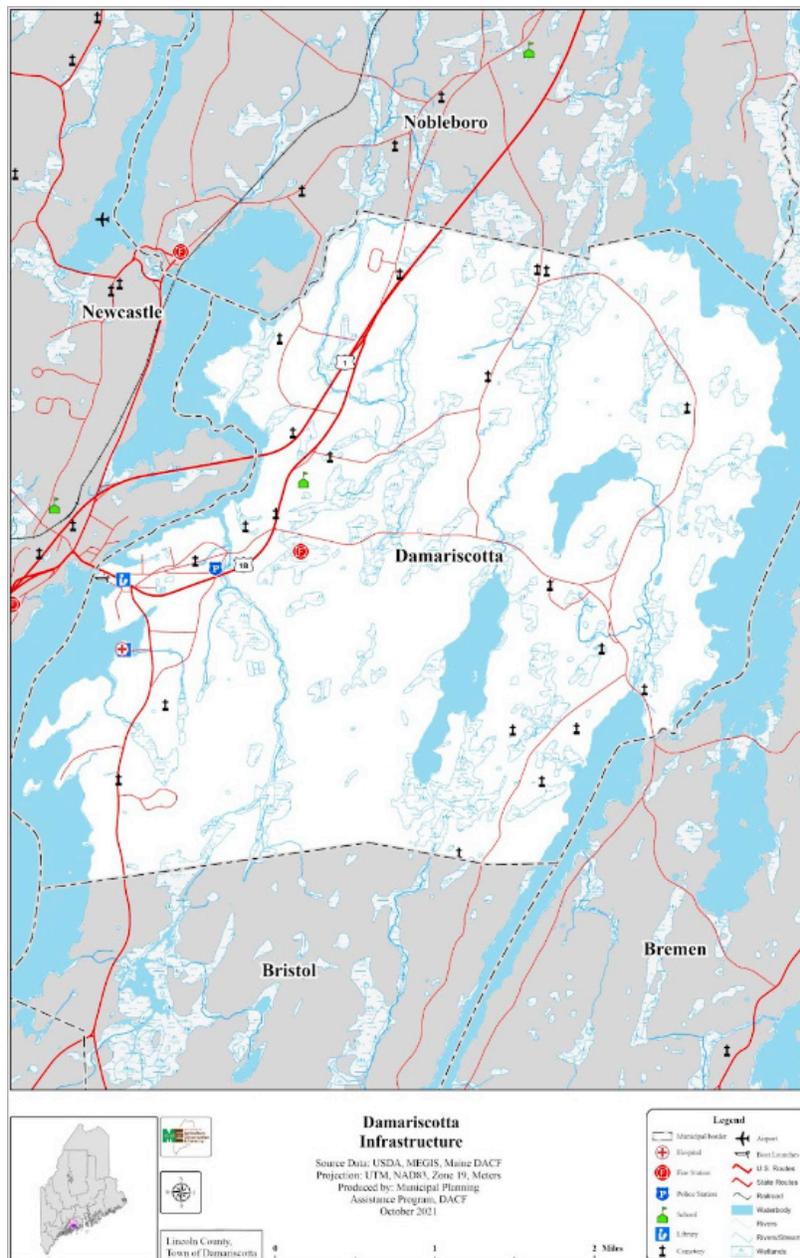
PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

SKIDOMPHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Overview

Damariscotta has a traditional Town Meeting-Selectboard-Town Manager form of government. The Selectboard oversees the Town Manager, who in turn oversees the day-to-day operations of the Town's government, including all staffed Departments. The Town's Departments include General Administration (the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Treasurer/HR Officer, Tax Collector, Town Assessor, and any deputies), Planning & Development (which includes the Town Planner and the Code Enforcement Officer), Public Works, Law Enforcement, and Public Safety: the Massasoit Engine Company and Central Lincoln County Ambulance Company, which are technically separate entities. (This distinction is discussed in greater detail below.) The Town also has a Harbormaster, shared with the Town of Newcastle.



Projected Population Change + Demand on Municipal Services

As noted in the Population and Demographics section of this Plan, estimates put Damariscotta's population in the year 2050 between 2,500 (conservative scenario) and 3,000 people (average projected scenario). This increase will likely be made up of in-migration into the community, which follows the typical trend of Damariscotta in the past.

In addition, the demographics of the community (particularly in age distribution) are projected to shift during the lifespan of this Comprehensive Plan. At the time of plan drafting in 2023, about 14.6% of Damariscotta's population is children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old and about 26.4% of the population is between the ages of 25 and 44. These percentages have generally been rising since the 2010 census and this group of school-aged children and parent-aged adults is expected to make up an even larger share of the community in 2035. As the demographics of the community begin to change, the increase in adults of child-bearing age and the increase in children will result in increased demands on the existing school system. Furthermore, family-friendly planning will be essential. Some critical components of family-friendly planning are the provision of accessible outdoor spaces and recreation areas, promoting a diversity of housing options, and ensuring that childcare uses are available and allowed throughout the community.

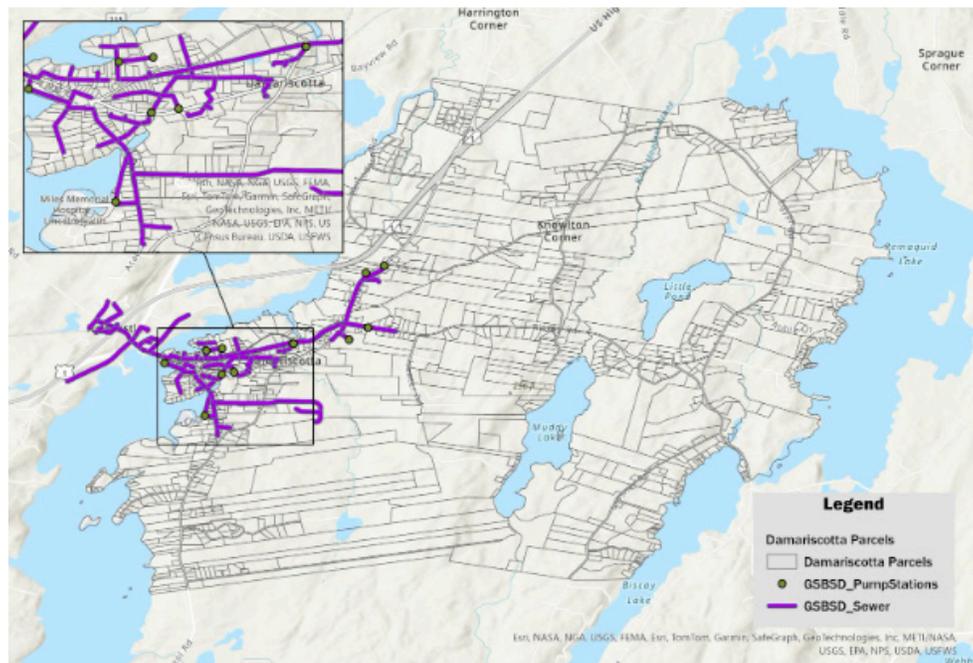
Further, depending on where new development to serve this population increase is located, demand for the expansion or increased maintenance of local and state roads may increase. In 1997, the Maine State Planning Office published a report titled *The Cost of Sprawl*, which analyzed (among other things) the fiscal impact on taxpayers in spreading out into the countryside from established village areas. The report noted, "It just costs more, on a per-unit basis, to serve families who are widely dispersed than it does to serve families who live in traditional neighborhoods" (page 7). A major cost of sprawl is roads. "Although Maine's population increased less than 10% during the 1980's, total miles driven went up 57%, or over 40 million miles a year. Not surprisingly, total highway expenditures for local and state governments rose by about a third during that same period (in equalized dollars), or about \$200 per household" (page 8). The best way to contain this cost is to locate development in or immediately adjacent to existing developed areas. This also has the long-term effect of decreasing vehicle miles traveled (when coupled with investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, which is cheaper than overall roadway expansion) as it allows residents to walk or bike to adjacent retail or employment opportunities.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Public Sewer + Water

Public water and sewer service is available in and around Damariscotta's downtown through the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, a publicly owned, quasi-municipal entity. The District currently has 614 water customers and 377 wastewater users in Damariscotta specifically.¹⁰² A map of Damariscotta properties currently served by public sewer is available below. The Sanitary District treats wastewater through a series of three aerated lagoons before the treated wastewater is pumped to an outfall in the Damariscotta River (near the downtown parking lot). The aerated lagoons have a capacity of approximately 8 million gallons.¹⁰³ A land disposal site for disposal of septage sludge is located adjacent to the treatment plant.

Sewer Line Locations



The Sanitary District's drinking water is supplied from Little Pond. Water is disinfected using an ultraviolet light system, but the District has received a waiver from further filtration requirements due to the pond's high water quality. To receive the waiver, the District demonstrated that water from Little Pond has low turbidity and coliform counts and that potential sources of contamination are managed to minimize risk.¹⁰⁴

In 1994, the Trustees of the Sanitary District voted to no longer fund water line extensions. In addition, the general policy of the Board of Trustees is not to fund sewer and water line extensions so as not to impact their existing ratepayers. However, the District does encourage developers to undertake the cost of sewer and water line extensions and the District has previously expressed a willingness to take over future maintenance of those lines if built to the District's standards.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² <https://gsbsd.org/about/>

¹⁰³ <https://gsbsd.org/wastewater/>

¹⁰⁴ Susanne K Meidel, "2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Appendices, https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/305b/2022/25-May-2022_2018-22_ME_IntegratedRpt-LIST.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ Water and Wastewater Policies of the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, as revised through October 2021. Available online here: https://gsbsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WW_policies-Oct-2021.pdf

Septic Systems

Damariscotta's private septic system rules follow the State of Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and the State Plumbing Code. Septic systems must receive a permit through the Local Plumbing Inspector (currently also the Code Enforcement Officer). Domestic septic tank waste is removed by private haulers at the sole cost of the property owner. Additional information on septic systems, including the location of overboard discharges in the community, is provided in the Water Resources section of this Plan.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater in Damariscotta is typically managed by the roadway crown directing water to vegetated ditches adjacent to the roadway, where the ditches will then convey water to a downstream outlet. Storm drains are only available near the downtown where the existing sewer system is (generally in the footprint of the properties served by the Sanitary District, shown on the map above). Otherwise, stormwater is conveyed directly to waterways and streams.

The impacts of future development on the stormwater system primarily depend on where future growth occurs in the community. Redevelopment of existing, in-town sites can reduce impervious surface coverage and integrate new green infrastructure and low-impact development features. These design strategies can mitigate runoff from buildings and parking lots and improve water quality. Greenfield development of undeveloped or rural sites will increase local runoff and decrease water quality, even if green infrastructure and low-impact development strategies are employed.



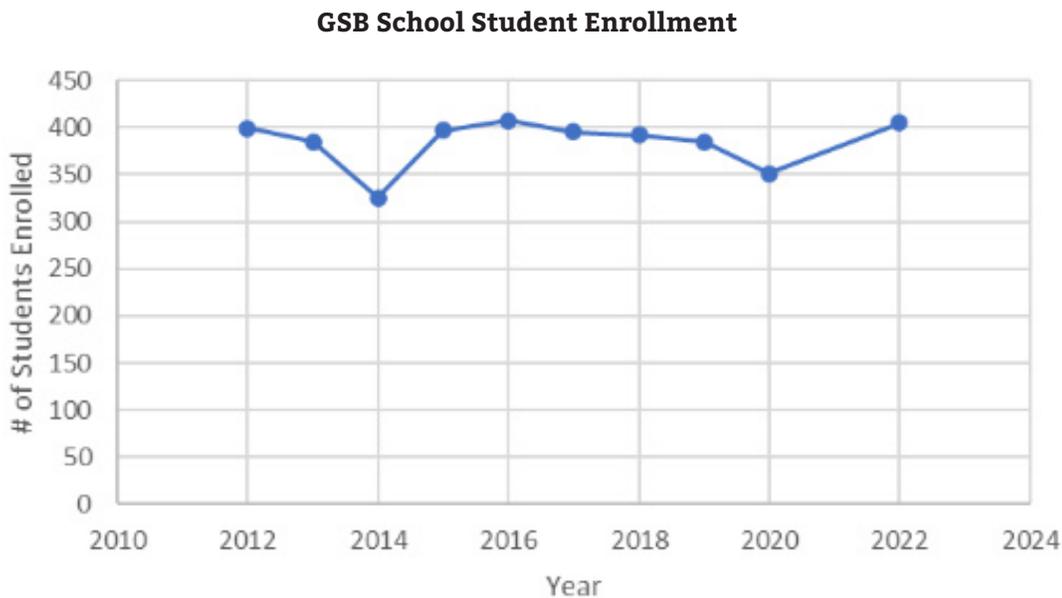
*View of the flooded seating area adjacent to the downtown parking lot in 2018.
Photo c/o Jessica Picard of the Lincoln County News.*

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Schools

In April of 2023, the Central Lincoln County School System (AOS93) began exploring a Strategic Plan to restructure the existing School System into a smaller number of school districts to address a variety of inefficiencies, redundancies, and inconsistencies with the current organizational model. Some of these inefficiencies include a lack of workforce to fill available jobs across five schools, as well as general accounting and space inefficiencies.¹⁰⁶ At the time of the drafting of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, a plan for the consolidation of districts had not yet been decided. There are currently five K-8 schools within AOS93. Students in grades 9-12 attend Lincoln Academy in Newcastle.

The local AOS93 school, Great Salt Bay Community School, had 405 students enrolled in the 2022-2023 school year. This is the highest number since 2016 when student enrollment peaked at 407.



Enrollment data obtained from Great Salt Bay Community School.

Prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year, the Great Salt Bay Community School installed a portable unit (with two classrooms) to accommodate additional students. Per information obtained from the school, space considerations and needs continue to be under discussion and will likely be a major point of discussion in their strategic plan mentioned above. In the past, there was interest in exploring the possibility of a regional middle school that would address concerns such as lack of space at the schools, and the K-8 age structure, and could provide increased opportunities for students in grades 6-8. However, no formal discussion or planning has begun in this regard.

¹⁰⁶ For more information, visit the Strategic Plan 2025 page on AOS93’s website, available at this link: <https://www.aos93.org/page/strategic-vision-2025>

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

The Great Salt Bay Community School is located on Route 1B and is not connected to any existing sidewalk or pedestrian network (although the Maine Department of Transportation has funded a sidewalk and multi-use path along Route 1B from the intersection with Biscay Road to the school entrance in their 2024/2025 Work Plan). Housing in Damariscotta tends to be focused where there is existing public sewer and water on the west side of the town. Both public water and sewer are available from approximately the downtown area north on Route 1B to Back Meadow Road, and from the downtown area south on Bristol Road to approximately Powell Lane. Thus, there is an opportunity to encourage additional residential development to locate near to-be-built sidewalks that would connect the school to these areas of the community. A map of the current location of sidewalks is included in the Transportation section of this Plan.

Police Protection & Emergency Response

In 2022, Damariscotta’s Police Department (which consists of a Chief, a Sergeant, three Patrol Officers, a Reserve Officer, an Administrative Assistant, and a seasonal Parking Enforcement Officer) answered a total of 7,648 calls for service with 2,995 emergency calls for service (calls to 911) and 4,653 “self-initiated” calls for service. The Police Department works according to the principles of community policing and is active in the community, participating in a variety of events with the goal of maintaining positive relationships with residents.¹⁰⁷

Also in 2022, the Massasoit Engine Company (the volunteer Fire Department of Damariscotta) responded to 175 calls and expended about 1,150 hours. This was the highest number of calls that the Company has responded to in a single year.¹⁰⁸ The call breakdown was:

- 16 structure fires (including chimney fires)
- 14 fires of other types
- 5 cooking-related fire calls
- 29 vehicle crashes with injury
- 38 fire alarms
- 6 rescue calls
- 16 propane/propane odor calls
- 2 carbon monoxide calls
- 17 Tree/wire in road calls
- 32 mutual aid calls to other towns (9 to Bristol, 9 to Nobleboro, 5 to Bremen, 4 to Newcastle, 3 to Waldoboro, 1 each to South Bristol and Boothbay Harbor)



¹⁰⁷ Per the report of the Police Chief included in the Town’s 2022 Annual Report, page 50.

¹⁰⁸ Per the report of the Fire Chief included in the Town’s 2022 Annual Report, 52.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

The Engine Company is a non-profit entity, partially funded through taxpayers of the Town as well as fundraising efforts by the Company's members. Donated funds are used to enhance firefighting capabilities, purchase needed equipment, and help reduce the tax burden that firefighting equipment and activities place on the Town. Members receive minimal benefits and worker's compensation coverage through the Town and the Town of Damariscotta owns the facility.

The Town is also served by the Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service. The Ambulance Service is a joint governance arrangement, represented by the 6 founding towns (Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and South Bristol). At times, other additional surrounding communities may contract for the ambulance service. In 2022, the Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service responded to 2,322 calls, with 1,685 being emergency calls for service. As part of the community survey conducted during this planning effort, approximately 80% of the respondents indicated that the emergency response system in Damariscotta is either adequate or more than adequate. Issues cited by the Service Chief include a lack of workforce. Attempts to remedy this have included hosting additional EMS courses locally, however, additional paramedics and EMTs (including volunteers or employees) continue to be needed.¹⁰⁹

Public Works

The Public Works Department is staffed by a Road Foreman and a Laborer/Driver and is overseen by a Road Commissioner (currently the Town Manager). The facility currently consists of a two-bay car garage with an office, a sand and salt shed, a utility shed, an outhouse, and a shipping container. The Department is co-located with the Fire Department (though on opposite ends of the parcel).

The Department has two primary vehicles, an F-550 Dump Truck and a WL32 Wacker Nuesen wheeled loader. The truck is equipped with a snow plow and sander for winter maintenance and is utilized daily. The wheeled loader maximizes its functionality with numerous attachments/implements like a brush hog, sweeper, snowblower, man lift, and others to satisfy the Department's maintenance requirements.

The Public Works Department's daily and seasonal duties include trash collection of the on-street trash bins downtown area, maintenance of the public restroom, property maintenance for town parcels, snow plowing and snow removal of the sidewalks, routine road surface and marking repairs, routine drainage improvements, tree work or removal (as needed – the Town does not have a formal street tree program), repairing or replacing street signs (as needed basis), as well as other citizen-driven concerns related to these tasks. Winter maintenance/snow removal is largely managed through a contract and represents approximately 50% of the Department's operating budget.

¹⁰⁹ Per the report of the CLC Ambulance Service Chief included in the Town's 2022 Annual Report, page 48.

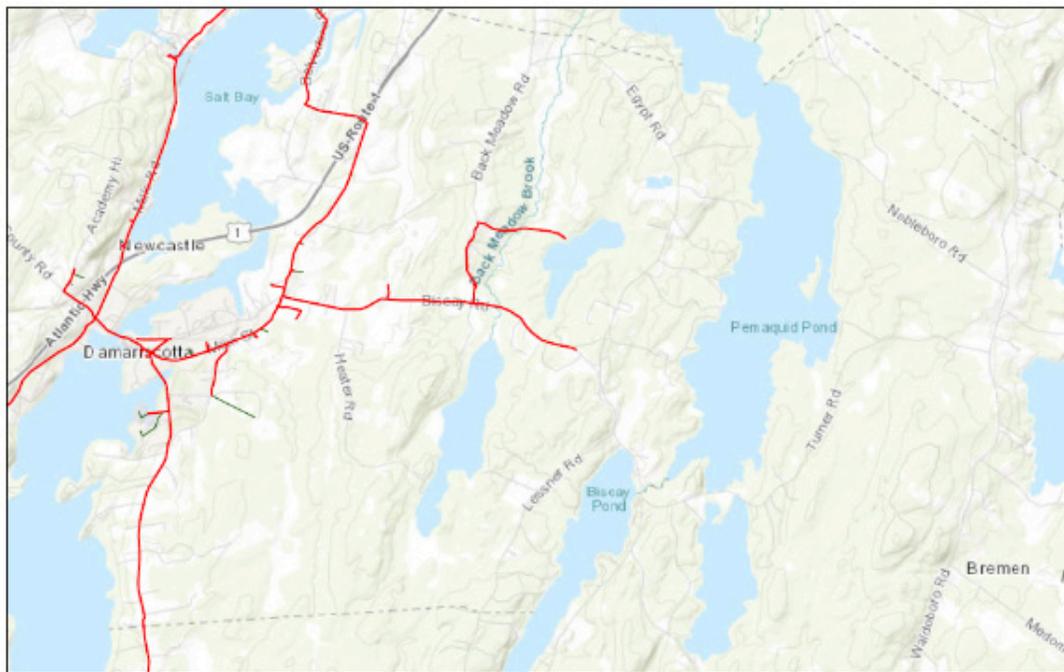
PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Telecommunications + Energy Infrastructure

The Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) definition of “broadband,” and how access to it is determined, is antiquated. The FCC considers a household to be served by broadband if the minimum data download speed is 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and the minimum upload speed is 3 Mbps. At a time when many households require 100 Mbps service to support multiple devices streaming simultaneously (such as if two family members are both on remote video calls), it seems this might be a more fitting definition of minimum high speed broadband. Moreover, the pace of technological advances demonstrates a growing need for much faster speeds than even this.

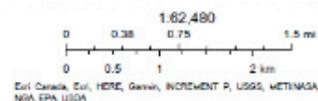
In deciding where commercial areas should be located in the community, a powerful driver is the availability of three-phase power. In electricity, the phase refers to the distribution of a load (either across one or three wires). One key difference between single-phase vs. three-phase is that a three-phase power supply better accommodates higher loads. Single-phase power supplies are most commonly used in residential homes (when typical loads are lighting or heating), and three-phase power is better for commercial and industrial facilities that require more electricity. One other important difference between three-phase power versus single-phase power is the consistency of the delivery of electricity. Because of the peaks and dips in voltage, a single-phase power supply simply does not offer the same consistency as a three-phase power supply. A three-phase power supply delivers power at a consistent rate.

That said, three-phase power supply is currently available along the entirety of Main Street and Bristol Road, for most of Biscay Road (until about the intersection with Egypt Road), on Standpipe Road, on School Street from the intersection with Main Street to the intersection with Piper Mill Road, and on the entirety of Branch and Belvedere Roads.



10/5/2023

- CMP - 3 Phase Circuits
- CMP - 3 Phase Circuits Underground



Solid Waste

All residents in Damariscotta dispose of their solid waste and recycling at the Nobleboro/ Jefferson Transfer Station. The Transfer Station is jointly owned by the two Towns that contract with Damariscotta, Bremen, and Newcastle for use of the facility. Costs for the five Towns are based primarily on population. At the time of Plan drafting, the Transfer Station's household waste, construction, demolition, and bulky waste is being transported to Waste Management in Norridgewock, Maine. The Transfer Station also uses the services of Lincoln County Recycling to recycle cardboard, newspaper, plastic, and many other products. In addition, there are special programs for recycling paint, universal hazardous waste, electronics, metals, and food waste.

The promotion of recycling is an important effort, since every ton of recycled material is disposed of with no cost to any of the Towns (whereas trash costs, at the time of Plan drafting, \$100/ton or about \$12,700 a month in calendar year 2023 billed to the Town of Damariscotta). Promoting the reduction of food waste and providing convenient places to drop it off could be another opportunity for Damariscotta to save money and reduce waste since nearly a third of household waste consists of food scraps (on average). Rather than going down an in-sink garbage disposal and into the wastewater system or being sent to a landfill, this food waste can be converted to compost or be sent to an anaerobic digester to produce sustainable electricity.

Healthcare & Social Services

Damariscotta is home to MaineHealth/LincolnHealth - Miles Campus and Hospital; Lincoln Medical Partners, a multi-specialty physician practice; Cove's Edge, a skilled nursing and long-term care facility; and Chase Point, an assisted living facility which includes Riverside, a residence for people living with Alzheimer's and related dementia. The Miles campus is also home to Schooner Cove, an independent retirement community. However, the MaineHealth system is actively seeking ways to curb financial losses associated with Cove's Edge (as well as St. Andrews Village, located about 16 miles away in Boothbay Harbor). They recently sought to enlist help from specialized businesses to fulfill skilled nursing care needs in the region, but this was ultimately not a viable option for the business. MaineHealth administrators have noted that the expansion of memory care is a need in the region as well.¹¹⁰ As such, additional long-term care facilities may be required during the planning period and the Town will need to proactively work with MaineHealth to decide where these facilities should be located.

As a service center community, Damariscotta is home to a variety of social service providers that serve not only Damariscotta residents but residents of the greater Pemaquid Peninsula as well. These include Spectrum Generations, Healthy Lincoln County, Healthy Kids!, New Hope Midcoast, Mobius, Inc., Stepping Stone Housing, Eldercare Network of Lincoln County, the Central Lincoln County YMCA, and others. To assist agencies in providing residents with their services, the Town of Damariscotta annually appropriates contributions to various non-profit and social service agencies based upon their requests, if approved at the annual Town Meeting.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.pressherald.com/2022/12/12/nursing-home-services-may-be-consolidated-at-new-45-million-facility-in-damariscotta/>

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Other Public Facilities

As of 2023, the existing Town Office space is at maximum capacity for hiring new staff because of space constraints. However, the need for additional staff is not necessarily anticipated during the lifetime of this Plan. There are currently four part-time positions (the Town Assessor, Town Planner, Code Enforcement Officer/Plumbing Inspector, and a front desk agent) that could be made full-time, if warranted, without requiring additional space. The only exception to this would be if compliance with the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) was required to be enforced by the Town, in which case it is likely that the Town would need to add additional Code Enforcement staff.¹¹¹

The Skidompha Library is a non-profit 501(c)(3) library funded through donations and taxpayer appropriations through the budgets of the communities it serves (Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and the greater Pemaquid Peninsula). As a nonprofit, the governance and financial oversight of Skidompha Public Library is the responsibility of a Board of Directors. Per responses to the community survey conducted as part of this planning effort, 95% of respondents noted that the library was adequate or more than adequate for their needs.

There are 5 cemeteries owned and maintained by the Town of Damariscotta and overseen by the Cemetery Trustees. The Cemetery Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance of 17 privately owned historic burial grounds that the Town is required to maintain by law.¹¹²



¹¹¹ At the time of plan drafting, enforcement of MUBEC is based on population or local action for communities under 4,000 residents as outlined in Chapter 1 of the MUBEC Rules and Laws. For additional information, visit: <https://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/building-codes/mubec-rules>

¹¹² Descriptions and location maps of the cemeteries and burial grounds are available on the Town's website [here](#).

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Regional Coordination

Damariscotta frequently collaborates with neighboring communities to reduce the cost of shared services. Currently, the Town splits the cost and hours of a Town Planner with neighboring Newcastle. Newcastle and Damariscotta also share a Harbormaster. As noted above, the Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service is a joint governance arrangement, represented by the six founding towns (Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and South Bristol). At times, other additional surrounding communities may contract for the ambulance service. Similarly, a variety of nonprofit organizations provide scientific, educational, cultural, and recreational services to residents of Damariscotta and the surrounding region and are typically funded through annual appropriations from the Town's budget. These include the Skidompha Library, Lincoln County Television (LCTV), the Damariscotta Historical Society, and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (though Coastal Rivers has not received funding from the Town since 2020).

Many other regional coordination efforts are utilized in the Town and are referenced throughout this Plan in the applicable Topic Area chapters.

Planned Capital Improvements

As of the FY2025 draft budget, the Town has begun planning for capital improvements (including municipal facilities, municipal vehicle purchases, infrastructure maintenance such as paving, drainage, and maintenance, as well as longer-term administrative purposes such as technology replacement, consultant costs, and major assessing endeavors) five years out. An inventory for roads and sidewalks is being created which will further help the Town in planning for major roadwork and repairs. Road resurfacing typically needs to occur every 10 years (approximately), with major road reconstructions occurring every 30 years (approximately). Concrete paved sidewalks typically need to be replaced every 20 years, while asphalt sidewalks need to be replaced every 10 years. The Town has various reserve funds that are contributed to on an annual basis, but these have historically not been funded at the levels needed to accomplish needed maintenance.

Cost estimates for capital improvements required as a direct result of recommendations included in this plan are included in the Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investment Plan section.



Issues & Opportunities

The location and availability of public services is an important factor influencing the location of new development. While the private sector and private property owners often produce new development, public utilities and services like construction and maintenance of streets, sewers, and water networks can enable or limit the development certain land areas can accommodate practically. Therefore, one important function of this Plan will be to guide the Town as it considers significant capital investments like infrastructure maintenance, replacement, or expansion. These capital investments will be incorporated into the Town's Capital Improvement Plan which should align the related spending with Town policies and community priorities.

To illustrate this point further, the policy of the Sanitary District (as discussed above) not to fund water and sewer line extensions may be a major limiting factor for expanded housing and other kinds of development outside of the existing downtown and its immediate surrounding areas. The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance requires developments anticipated to produce less than 500 gallons per day (GPD) to tie into the public sewer system if the development is within 200 feet of existing lines and, for developments anticipated to produce more than 500 GPD, to tie in if within 300 feet of existing lines (unless waived by the Planning Board for good cause).¹¹³ Outside of this defined area, the Town currently does not have the authority to require sewer expansion of developers.

In Damariscotta, the downtown area is fairly well served by faster Internet connections, as described in the Telecommunications + Energy Infrastructure section above, but the area around Muddy Pond as well as the area adjacent to Salt Bay are extremely underserved (if Internet connection exists, it is less than 25 Mbps download speed – making it nearly impossible for two people to use the Internet for work at one time). Similarly, properties off of Bristol Road adjacent to the Damariscotta River are underserved, mainly for their upload speeds (less than 100 Mbps).¹¹⁴

Regarding emergency response, a lack of housing that would be affordable to EMTs or paramedics has been anecdotally cited as an additional reason for the workforce shortage. Housing, and specifically workforce housing, is discussed in greater detail in the Housing section of this Plan.

¹¹³ See the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance, Sec. 102.6.

¹¹⁴ Per Maine Connectivity Authority's Internet Service Map, available online here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d69e1e96cc5b44e0bcb8691b96a3e24c/page/Page/?views=Internet-Service%20Call-Connections>

Issues



Sanitary District policy not to fund water and sewer extensions



Lack of broadband internet in certain areas



Lack of affordable housing

Opportunities



Use of public infrastructure locations to guide development

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources
	Public facilities and services efficiently accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.									
		11.1		Identify public service needs and develop efficient, actionable strategies to meet them.						
				a. Continue to explore options for regional delivery of local services.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration
		11.2		Provide public facilities and services that promote and support development in identified Growth Areas.						
				a. Strengthen our collaboration with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to better direct the desired development pattern of the community (e.g. ensure that sewer infrastructure is available throughout the Growth Area designated in this Plan).	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department
				b. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Administration
		11.3		Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.						
				a. See Strategy #10.3.a.						
		11.4		Continue to explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital and maintenance investments within the community.						
		11.5		Reduce Damariscotta's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.						
			See Policy #7.12							

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The Town considers the impacts of a changing climate in its capital investment planning.										
		11.6	Plan and implement strategies to create a more resilient community.								
			a. Maintain enrollment in the State's Community Resilience Partnership program and other programs that offer municipal assistance for climate resiliency efforts.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing				Administration, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Planning Department	
			b. Use the most current flood risk standards when planning for major capital investments to elevate roads and bridges, improve road surfaces, and increase culvert sizes to make them more flood-proof.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
			c. When making capital budget decisions, conduct a long-term cost benefit analysis of implementing more resilient designs.	Phase 1	Selectboard, Budget Committee	Ongoing		Project dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
			d. Through the Capital Improvement Plan, plan to transition the municipal vehicle fleet to electric or alternative-fuel vehicles as existing vehicles reach the end of their useful lifespan.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	Ongoing	Vehicle dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee	
		e. Continue to pursue energy retrofits to municipal buildings.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent		Administration, Public Works Department, Public Works Committee		

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Communication between the Town government and Damariscotta citizens is proactive and transparent.										
		11.7		Ensure ongoing and regular maintenance of the Town's established communication channels.							
				a. Pursue a comprehensive update to the Town's website to make it more user-friendly.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	6 months	\$\$	Selectboard	
				b. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the posting of meeting agendas, packets, and minutes to the Town website that all Boards and Committees will adhere to.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	Ongoing	Staff-time		
			c. Develop and implement consistent communication strategies for public outreach.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	Ongoing	Staff-time			



EXISTING LAND USE



EXISTING LAND USE

Overview

The term “land use” is used to describe the human use of land, representing the economic and cultural activities (e.g., agricultural, residential, industrial, mining, and recreational uses) that are practiced at a given place. Land use policy is the collection of regulations that directly or indirectly impact land use.

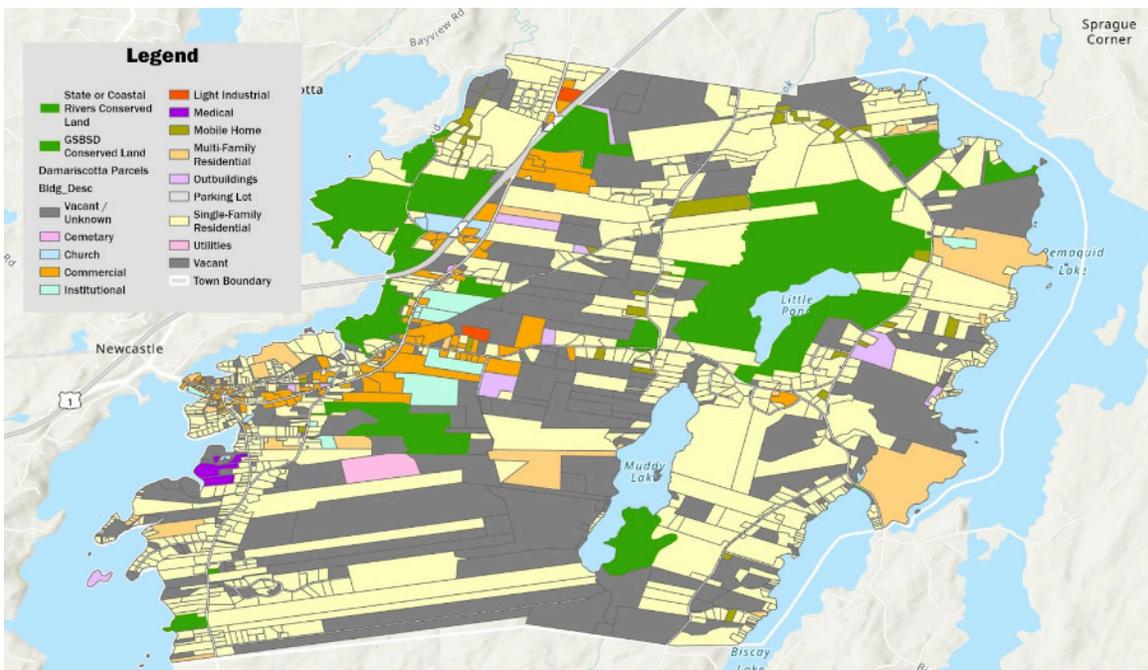
Studying land use in a community is important because changes in land use can have cumulative impacts on the economy, air and water quality, watershed function, waste generation, extent and quality of wildlife habitat, climate, and human health. This chapter provides an overview of recent developments that have occurred within Damariscotta and the regulations that impact development within the community.

Damariscotta Land Uses by Parcel

As shown on the map below, Damariscotta’s land uses are primarily residential, with about 3,350 acres (822 parcels) being single-family residential, about 343 acres (30 parcels) being multi-family residential, and 83 acres (26 parcels) hosting mobile homes. Commercial parcels comprise about 263 acres (129 total parcels) and are primarily clustered along Main Street and Biscay Road.

It should also be noted that more than 13% of Damariscotta’s total land area (7,948 acres) is currently conserved. Of the approximately 1,093 conserved acres, about 420 acres are owned by the State of Maine or Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, about 521 acres are owned by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, and about 151 acres are properties under a conservation easement.

Map of Existing Conditions



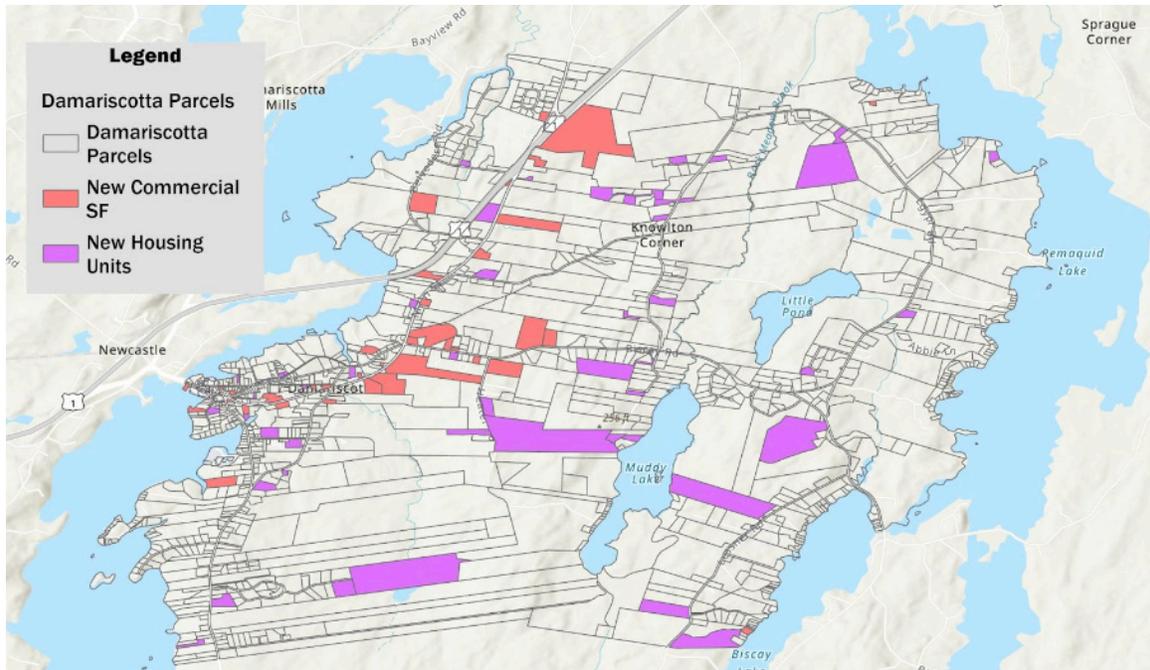
Source: Town of Damariscotta Assessing Records

EXISTING LAND USE

Recent Development

In the past 10 years (from 2013 through February 2023), development has primarily been occurring on a lot-by-lot basis. There were 73 new housing units and about 98,000 square footage of commercial space added during that time.¹¹⁵ The map below shows where development in the past 10 years has occurred.

Recent Development Locations



Source: Building Permits pulled from Damariscotta Code Enforcement (2013-2023)

Existing Land Use Regulations

Development in Damariscotta is regulated through a variety of different Ordinances depending on the specifics of the project being proposed. The Town utilizes traditional Euclidean zoning to separate land uses from one another. This is clearly described in the Town's Land Use Ordinance. The subdivision of land into three or more smaller lots (or condominium areas) is regulated by the Town's Subdivision Ordinance, in accordance with State Statute. Certain kinds of development are also regulated by the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance, requiring review by the Planning Board. In the floodplain or shoreland areas, development is also subject to the Floodplain Management Ordinance and/or the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Certain kinds of development (marijuana businesses, small wind energy systems, and commercial solar energy systems) are also subject to ordinances that set forth specific performance standards for these kinds of uses.

¹¹⁵ According to building permits approved by the Code Enforcement Office.

EXISTING LAND USE

Since the adoption of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, a number of changes to the Town's land use and related regulations have been adopted. Several new or revised definitions were added to the Land Use Ordinance in an effort to modernize allowed uses within the community and allow uses that could not have been envisioned when the Town's Land Use Ordinance was adopted in 1997. These also reflected allowances for marijuana-related businesses in certain zones. Changes were also made to the Planned Unit Development (PUC) provisions, which are intended to allow for new concepts of housing development. The change included a density bonus and revising the minimum land area of lots where PUC could occur to further incentivize the use of these provisions. At the time of plan drafting, the Town has yet to see any proposal take advantage of the Planned Unit Development provisions.

In 2020, the Town also adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance which regulates changes to the exterior of buildings located within the Main Street Historic District.

Land Use Ordinance

The Town's Land Use Ordinance, adopted in 1998 and amended through February 2023, establishes five zoning districts as well as a Wireless Communications Overlay (all wireless communication facilities, so defined, are limited to this area). The Land Use Ordinance outlines dimensional standards for buildings as well as allowed uses in each of the zoning districts (and the Wireless Communications Overlay). The current dimensional standards for each district (except the Shoreland Zoning districts) are outlined in the Appendix as Table 9. The vast majority of land uses require the Planning Board to review and issue a Conditional Use Permit before the use can be established and a building permit can be issued by the Code Enforcement Officer. Review by the Planning Board requires a duly noticed public hearing. The premise behind requiring certain types of development to be reviewed by the Planning Board is to evaluate and allow the public to speak regarding potential impacts of proposed development that may be more impactful to the community than the projects reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer. Conditional Use Permits are subject to the reviewing standards outlined in the Site Plan Review Ordinance, described further below.

The Code Enforcement Officer is tasked with the enforcement of this Ordinance as well as the issuance of building permits as outlined in Section 101.8(F). In issuing a building permit, the Code Enforcement Officer must ensure that the proposed building complies with the Town's dimensional standards as outlined in Section 101.5(C)(2) (and included in the Appendix of this Plan).

The Town employs a part-time Code Enforcement Officer/Local Plumbing Inspector and a part-time Town Planner. The Town Planner is a shared position with the neighboring Town of Newcastle. With the volunteer Planning Board and the part-time staff, the community's administrative capacity to manage its land use regulation program is currently considered to be adequate. When needed, the Town turns to the assistance of outside consultants on a project-by-project basis.

EXISTING LAND USE

Site Plan Review Ordinance

The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance, adopted in 1994 and most recently revised in February 2023, requires that the Planning Board reviews the following projects for compliance with the review standards outlined in Sections 102.6 and 102.7, as applicable:

- Construction of non-residential buildings or structures and multifamily dwellings, including accessory buildings and structures.
- Enlargement of or significant change of use of nonresidential buildings or structures and multifamily dwellings, including accessory buildings and structures. Proposals for significant changes to the front facade, including but not limited to more than 20% of the facade surface area, of non-residential buildings in terms of design, materials, fenestration, porticos, or landscaping.
- Conversion of existing single and two-family residential structures to non-residential or multifamily dwelling uses including accessory buildings and structures.
- Creation of impervious surface of more than 5,000 square feet in the aggregate for non-residential or multifamily dwelling uses or as modification to previously approved plans resulting in 5,000 sq. ft. or more impervious surface.
- Movement, removal, or addition of more than 20,000 square feet in area in the aggregate.
- All construction and expansion of wireless telecommunication facilities except as provided in §102.3.B.
- Adult-use Marijuana cultivation facilities, medical marijuana cultivation facilities, marijuana products manufacturing facilities, medical marijuana manufacturing facilities, adult-use marijuana stores, registered caregiver retail stores, marijuana testing facilities, and medical marijuana testing facilities.

The Site Plan Review Ordinance sets forth standards for the design of buildings and sites, landscaping and buffering, erosion control, stormwater management, parking and driveway standards, and a variety of environmental quality considerations. For a development to be approved under this Ordinance, the Planning Board needs to make positive findings on each of the applicable standards.

Subdivision Ordinance

The Town's Subdivision Ordinance, adopted in 1989 and amended through February 2023, applies to the review of all subdivisions as defined in state statute: M.R.S.A. Title 30-A §4401.4 (as may be amended). The Subdivision Ordinance essentially follows the State's standards for subdivisions, with additional standards for roadway design and construction more specifically described in the Transportation section of this Plan.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

In 2015, the Town adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance in order to become a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program. The Ordinance regulates new construction within areas of special flood hazard (Zones A and AE on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps) and provides additional standards intended to both protect water quality and protect buildings from flooding. Conditional Uses, as identified through this Ordinance, are reviewed by the Planning Board for compliance with the standards of Article VII. Otherwise, permits are reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer and must meet the standards of Article VI.

EXISTING LAND USE

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

The Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (adopted in 1997 and amended through June 2019) regulates land areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, from the normal high-water line of any great pond, river, or upland edge of a coastal or freshwater wetland, as well as land areas within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream. The Ordinance also applies to any structure built on, over, or abutting a dock, wharf, pier, or other structure extending or located below the normal high-water line of a water body.

This Ordinance provides additional land use standards over and beyond what is required in the Town's other ordinances for the areas described above. These additional standards are intended to protect the environment and water quality of the Town's water bodies and include standards around erosion control, building setbacks, parking and driveway setbacks, stormwater management, septic waste, agriculture and timber harvesting, and the clearing and removal of vegetation more broadly.

The most recent amendment to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance was intended to comply with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Chapter 1000 Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinances (revised through 2015).

Projected Land Use Needs

The Housing section of this plan discusses needed housing units in greater detail. In brief, Damariscotta needs to produce at least 176 housing units by 2040 (either rental or ownership) in order to keep pace with projected population growth. Of these, 83 should be regulated affordable housing (with deed covenants to ensure long-term affordability).¹¹⁶ Much of this can likely be accommodated in multi-family housing, which requires less land overall to build than single-family housing (typically sited on separate lots).

New economic development will likely be focused in and around the existing downtown as well as in mixed-use "hubs" along Upper Main Street in order to align with the community's identified vision.

The amount of land needed to accommodate the projected development needs of the community will depend on what kinds of development are proposed and where that development is located. For example, a far greater amount of land will be required to accommodate needed residential development if that development is sited in the more rural areas of the community (where public sewer and water are not available) than if that development were sited on public sewer and water.

¹¹⁶ This number is in accordance with the May 2023 Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission county-wide housing needs assessment and strategy report, which designated certain communities within the county as being potential growth areas due to the availability of public water and sewer (which is not available in the majority of the municipalities in the county). Damariscotta was designated as one such growth community.

Issues & Opportunities

In the past 10 years, commercial development has been essentially confined to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan's established Growth Area, but residential development has occurred throughout the community, including in the rural areas where the community had indicated that they did not want extensive growth and development to occur. The Future Land Use section of this Plan discusses regulatory and non-regulatory measures that the Town can take to promote development that is consistent with the community's vision as outlined in this Plan.



FISCAL CAPACITY

FISCAL CAPACITY

Overview

Community facilities and services are primarily dependent on municipal revenues, usually collected through taxes or other fees. The quality of services depends on a town's capacity to support them monetarily. As costs increase because of inflation or the provision of higher service levels, revenues must go up accordingly. "Fiscal capacity" is our ability to do this without a serious impact on the tax base.

In Damariscotta, a significant majority of revenue comes from property taxes. In both FY2022 and FY2023, property tax accounted for nearly 81% of the Town's total revenues. In FY2024 (the fiscal year at the time of plan drafting), property taxes are estimated to account for about 83% of the Town's total revenues. This follows trends from previous years as well and is likely to continue into FY2025. Although property taxes will likely remain the primary source of revenue in the future, alternative sources (such as development review fees) are also growing steadily.

Expenses related to Administration (the operation of the town office and municipal governance) and the Police Department are the Town's largest expenses. Cost increases in products and materials due to inflation, supply chain disruption following the COVID-19 pandemic, and labor issues (including labor supply and wage demands) are likely to present challenges for town budgeting going forward.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Community Revenues & Expenditures

A municipality's budget includes its plans for spending and how it anticipates funding those plans. These plans are based on government-wide, departmental, programmatic, and community needs and goals. By putting money behind promises and commitments (or choosing not to do so!), adopted budgets reveal the priorities of the municipality.

As noted, property taxes accounted for approximately 83% of the total revenue for Damariscotta in FY2024. This is about on par with previous years as well. State reimbursements (such as for general assistance as well as reimbursements related to tax use exemptions) made up about 7%, with excise taxes making up the largest share of the remaining sources of revenue. The Other Revenue line increased in FY2023 to account for the reimbursement from the Town of Newcastle for the cost of sharing a Town Planner (per signed Interlocal Agreement). In addition, the Town stopped budgeting for payments in lieu of taxes in FY2024 because there is no specific requirement or policy requiring agencies not subject to property taxes to pay anything in lieu of taxes.

Municipal Revenue Sources				
	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Budgeted
Property Taxes (Real Estate & Personal Property)	\$5,456,193	\$5,462,670	\$5,772,084	\$6,378,613
Excise Taxes	\$512,332	\$490,633	\$520,215	\$503,500
Licenses, Permits, Fees (including Planning & Code Enforcement)	\$71,841	\$63,259	\$67,457	\$70,300
Charges for Services	\$22,983	\$21,794	\$21,975	\$20,000
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$8,870	\$5,690	\$5,923	\$0
State Reimbursements	\$424,865	\$565,556	\$548,826	\$534,500
Other Revenue	\$151,079	\$160,819	\$261,429 ¹¹⁷	\$181,800
Total Revenue	\$6,648,163	\$6,770,421	\$7,197,909	\$7,688,713

Source: Damariscotta Town Budgets, FY2021 through FY2024. Note: at the time of plan drafting, the FY2025 budget had not yet been adopted at the Annual Town Meeting, so numbers were not yet finalized.

¹¹⁷ Note: the jump in Other Revenue in FY2023 can primarily be accounted for through the use of Undesignated Fund Balance funds rather than actual increases in revenue in FY2023.

FISCAL CAPACITY

In terms of the municipal budget, General Government (which includes the following Departments: Administration, Planning & Development, Assessing, and the Town’s portion of the Transfer Station cost) is the highest expenditure, followed by the Police Department and then Public Works.

In general, the majority of the line items have remained steady since FY2021, with the exception of General Government which jumped to include the costs of hiring a full-time Town Planner. This position splits time between Damariscotta and neighboring Newcastle. This is offset by revenue from the Town of Newcastle per an interlocal cost-sharing agreement. In addition, the Debt Service expenditure jumped in FY2023 as the Town took on debt related to the installation of street lights and needed road repairs. The street light bond has now been paid off, but the road repair bond will continue to be paid through 2036 when the loan matures.

Municipal Expenditures					
	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Budgeted	FY2025 Budgeted
General Government	\$787,265	\$792,861	\$800,568	\$1,027,876	\$1,110,596
Police	\$513,823	\$628,684	\$669,098	\$797,562	\$808,685
Public Safety	\$341,192	\$380,713	\$465,326	\$430,801	\$443,692
Public Works	\$454,257	\$451,126	\$510,007	\$698,402	\$779,778
Community Services + Betterment	\$63,431	\$66,172	\$82,091	\$89,874	\$90,194
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$201,975	\$201,975	\$201,975
Reserves	\$426,000	\$467,525	\$424,100	\$515,000	\$515,000

Source: Damariscotta Town Budgets, FY2021 through FY2025.

The Town leverages its resources by participating in regional cooperation for better services. In addition to the interlocal agreement with Newcastle to share the services of a Town Planner, the Town also shares a Harbormaster with Newcastle. Further, the Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service is a joint governance arrangement, represented by the six founding towns (Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and South Bristol). At times, other additional surrounding communities may contract for the ambulance service. Finally, the Town contracts with Nobleboro and Jefferson for the use of their jointly-owned transfer station.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Revenue Capacity & Tax Rates

Since FY2020, the average property tax mill rates in Damariscotta have been hovering at about \$16.00. As shown in the chart below, there was a steady increase from FY2020 until FY2023, when the mill rate peaked at \$16.65. In FY2024, the mill rate fell to its lowest since 2013 (when the mill rate was \$15.10).

Municipal Expenditures					
	FY2020 (2019-2020)	FY2021 (2020-2021)	FY2022 (2020-2021)	FY2023 (2020-2021)	FY2022 (2020-2021)
State Valuation	\$356,400,000	\$357,850,000	\$371,350,000	\$403,050,000	\$537,100,000
Town Taxable Valuation	\$340,564,100	\$341,012,100	\$343,564,200	\$346,671,760	\$407,579,105
Mill Rate	\$16.10	\$16.00	\$15.90	\$16.65	\$15.65
Net Assess.	\$5,483,082	\$5,456,194	\$5,462,671	\$5,772,085	\$6,378,613

Source: Damariscotta Town Budgets, FY2021 through FY2025.

Debt Capacity & Capital Investments

In the past, Damariscotta has typically attempted to fund capital investments through cash reserves and grants rather than significant borrowing. The Town has various reserve funds that are contributed to annually, but these have historically not been funded at the levels needed to accomplish needed maintenance. Thus, the continued maintenance of existing capital investments (namely, roads and sidewalks) has been prioritized over the expansion of new capital investments in the past.

As of the FY2025 draft budget, the Town has begun planning for capital improvements (including municipal facilities, municipal vehicle purchases, infrastructure maintenance such as paving, drainage, and maintenance, as well as longer-term administrative purposes such as technology replacement, consultant costs, and major assessing endeavors) on a five-year cycle. In the future, most capital investments will likely continue to be funded with cash reserves, but judicious borrowing will also likely need to be employed in order to recognize the priority capital investments outlined in this plan. Damariscotta has significant borrowing capacity in relation to Maine's statutory limits on municipal borrowing, as shown in the chart below.

Outstanding Bond Amount	% State Assessed Value (\$537,100,000 as of 2024)	Allowable Amount ¹¹⁸	Margin
\$1,858,802 ¹¹⁹	0.35%	\$80,565,000	\$78,706,198

Grants and TIF funds will also continue to be an important component of capital funding into the future.

¹¹⁸ Per statutory limitations, the total allowable municipal debt as a percent of assessed value is 15%.

¹¹⁹ As of October 2024.

Main Street TIF

The Main Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District account is a special revenue fund that accounts for the revenues and expenditures related to economic development and sidewalk expansion along Upper Main Street (Route 1B). Approved in 2020, the Main Street TIF District boundaries encapsulate 33.31 acres. At the time of plan drafting in 2024, Damariscotta voters were also contemplating an addition of 68.89 acres to the district (for a total of 102.2 acres), as well as changes to the Development Program to allow for the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.¹²⁰

TIFs allow municipalities to collect funds for certain designated infrastructure and economic development projects. The Town captures as TIF revenues up to 50% of the increased assessed value (taxable real property and taxable personal property) over the original assessed value of the District. It retains the tax revenues generated by the captured assessed value for designated economic development purposes as outlined in the approved Development Program.

Issues & Opportunities

Sustaining the Town's fiscal health requires that there are adequate fiscal resources needed to provide services at a level consistent with community expectations. To that end, the Town must be persistent in pursuing new or enhanced revenue resources and continue to explore more efficient use of existing resources. This does not necessarily mean increases in property tax rates. Strategic growth and economic development can bolster the tax base without increasing the underlying tax rate.

Many municipalities seek to have a diverse mix of residential and commercial tax bases, with the underlying philosophy that commercial enterprises end up requiring less municipal services (namely, no impact on schools) while still paying their share of taxes. As of 2023, approximately 32% of the Town's real estate and personal property tax revenue came from commercial properties.¹²¹ Many municipalities aim for a 60/40 approach, with at least 40% of real estate revenue coming from commercial or mixed-use properties. Further, studies have shown that strategic growth that is colocated with existing community services has both less upfront costs for infrastructure and can save money on the delivery of emergency services in the long term (typically by reducing the distances that service vehicles, like ambulances, must drive) over more spread out development patterns.

In addition, the Town may wish to explore implementing a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) policy to recover some support for important and relevant municipal services (e.g. roads and public safety) that support the exempt tax base. Having this as a policy would allow the Town to count on receiving that money each budget cycle.

¹²⁰ The original Development Program also allowed for the use of funds for the creation of sidewalks and multi-modal paths both with and adjacent to the District, as well as the prorated costs of a new fire truck, which continue to be included in the amended Development Program.

¹²¹ *Amended and Restated Main Street Damariscotta Omnibus Municipal Development & Tax Increment Financing Development Program*, March 20, 2024.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Finally, addressing deferred maintenance and the capital replacement needs of existing municipal facilities, including roads and sidewalks, requires a strategic approach. Planning for the maintenance of existing buildings and facilities can be targeted to support and encourage new investment and development in areas adjacent to those facilities. Strategic investment in capital improvements will provide the foundation for private investment and growth in certain areas of the community. Long-term planning will be crucial in maintaining the fiscal health of the community.

Issues



Deferred maintenance



Desire not to impact the tax base

Opportunities



Strategic economic development to bolster tax base



PILOT programs



APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Table 1: Damariscotta Public Roads Quality Assessment

Road Name	Condition	Road Length (Feet)	Road Name	Condition	Road Length (Feet)
Back Meadow Road	Fair to Good	16458	Main Street/ Route 1B	Fair to Good	19672
Belvedere Road	Fair <i>(Belvedere Extension: Good)</i>	7803	Midcoast Road	Good to Fair	1782
Biscay Road	Fair to Good	23293	Miles Street	Fair to Poor	949
Branch Road	Good	2665	Oak Road	Good	1263
Bristol Road/ Route 129	Good	14011	Parking Lot Lane	<i>Not rated</i>	1286
Center Street	<i>Not rated</i>	3213	Pine Ridge Road	Good	5313
Chapman Street	Fair to Good	2465	Pinkham Road	Fair	3267
Church Street	Fair to Good	7138	Pleasant Street	Poor	1004
Cross Street	Fair to Good	475	Rocky Run Road	Good	1854
Egypt Road	Fair to Good	21222	Route 1	<i>Not rated</i>	19687
Elm Street	Good	1785	School Street	Good	7408
Hammond Road	Good	1654	Stand Pipe Road	Good	6248
High Street	Good	2163	Theatre Street	Good	224
Hodgdon Street	Poor	4133	Vine Street	Good	923
Keen Woods Road	Fair to Good	3436	W Lewis Point Road	<i>Not rated</i>	279
Lessner Road	Good to Fair	11380	Water Street	Fair	1879
Lewis Point Road	Fair to Good	634	Westview Road	Good	3525
<i>Streets shown in bold above are State roads</i>					

Sources: MaineDOT Public Road Data (August 2019) & Damariscotta Public Works Dept. Survey of Roads (10/29/2020)

Table 3 Continued

● Cross Street	● \$142,433	● FY2025 app. & grants
● Hodgdon Street	● \$358,349	● FY2026 appropriations
● Keene Woods Road	● \$494,556	● FY2025 app. & grants
● Midcoast Road	● \$247,923	● FY2027 appropriations
● Parking Lot Lane	● \$1,749,187	● FY2025 app. & grants
● Pleasant Street	● \$201,921	● FY2026 appropriations
● Church Street	● \$271,625	● FY2026 appropriations
● High Street	● \$488,012	● FY2027 appropriations
● Miles Street	● \$169,661	● FY2025 app. & grants
● Pine Ridge Road	● \$433,102	● FY2026 appropriations
● Pinkham Road	● \$205,404	● FY2027 appropriations
● Vine Street	● \$35,491	● FY2027 appropriations
● Westview Road	● \$322,783	● FY2027 appropriations
● Belvedere Road	● \$43,693	● FY2028 appropriations
● Oak Road	● \$15,551	● FY2025 app. & grants
● School Street	● \$23,190	● FY2025 app. & grants

Source: Damariscotta Capital Improvement Plan (2025-2029)

Table 4: Road Design Standards for New Public and Private Roads

Description	Type of Road			
	Arterial	Major Road	Minor Road	Private Road ⁽¹⁾
Minimum Right-of way Width	80'	60'	50'	50'
Minimum Travel Way Width	44'	22'	20'	18'
Sidewalk Width	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minimum Grade	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%
Maximum Grade	5%	6%	8%	10%
Minimum Centerline Radius	500'	230'	150'	150'
Minimum Tangent between Curves of reverse alignment	200'	100'	50'	N/A
Roadway Crown	¼"/ft	¼"/ft	¼"/ft	¼"/ft
Minimum Angle of Road Intersections(2)	90°	90°	75°	75°
Maximum Grade within 75 ft. of Intersection 2%	2%	2%	2%	N/A
Minimum Curb Radii at Intersections	30'	20'	15'	15'
Minimum ROW Radii at Intersections	20'	10'	10'	10'
Minimum Width of Shoulders (each side)	5'	5'	5'	3'

(1) A private road which will serve fewer than 4 residences shall have a minimum travel way of 12 feet with two-2 foot shoulders and a maximum grade of 12%. A private road which will serve 4-10 residences will have a minimum travel way of 16 feet with two 3-foot shoulders and a maximum road grade of 12%.

(2) Road intersection angles shall be as close to 90° as feasible but no less than the listed angle.

Source: Damariscotta Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 103, Subdivision

Table 5: Damariscotta Bridge Condition

Bridge Name	Location	Year Constructed	Deck Condition Rating	Superstructure & Substructure Condition Rating
Damariscotta - Newcastle Bridge	Route 1B crossing the Damariscotta River	1952	5 – Fair Condition	6 – Satisfactory
Narrows Bridge	Biscay Road crossing Pemaquid Pond	2008	8 – Very Good	8 – Very Good
Glidden Point Bridge	Route 1 crossing the Damariscotta River	1961	6 – Satisfactory	7 – Some Minor Problems
Salt Bay Bridge	Belvedere Road crossing Oyster Creek	2009	No active rating	No active rating

Source: MDOT

Table 6: Damariscotta Sidewalks Data

Damariscotta Sidewalks Data									
Count	Street	Segment		Side	Length (feet)	Type	Width (feet)	Condition	Comments
		From	To						
1	Vine Street	Church Street	End	N	640	Asphalt	3	P	Discontinuous
2	Church Street	Main Street	Elm Street	S	630	Asphalt	4	VG	
3	Church Street	Main Street	Bank Driveway	N	110	Asphalt	4	VG	
4	Church Street	Elm Street	Chapman Street	S	400	Asphalt	5	New	Need crosswalk at Chapman
5	Church Street	Elm Street	Pleasant Street	N	680	Asphalt	5	New	
6	Church Street	Church Street	Cottage Gardens	S	1000	Asphalt-Gravel	2 - 3	VP	Discontinuous
7	Chapman Street	Church Street	2nd Driveway	S	120	Asphalt	5	New	
8	Hodgdon Street	Church Street	Pleasant Street	W	450	Asphalt	3.5.5	F-New	Discontinuous
9	Elm Street	Main Street	Courtyard Street	E	130	Asphalt		P	
10	Elm Street	Theater Street	Church Street	N	950	Asphalt	2.5-5	P-New	Artifacts in Sidewalk
11	Theatre Street	Main Street	Elm Street	E	100	Asphalt	5 - 7		
12	Theatre Street	Main Street	Elm Street	W	90	Asphalt	5		
13	Courtyard Street	Main Street	Elm Street	E	80	Asphalt	3	F	
14	Main Street	Bridge	Coyrtyard Street	N	230	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
15	Main Street	Courtyard Street	Elm Street	N	250	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
16	Main Street	Elm Street	Theatre Street	N	90	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
17	Main Street	Theater Street	Church Street	N	600	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
18	Main Street	Church Street	Yellofront	N	1200	Asphalt	Varies	New	
19	Main Street	Bridge	Parking Lot Lane	S	190	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
20	Main Street	Parking Lot Lane	Taco Alley	S	180	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
21	Main Street	Taco Alley	Junes Alley	S	80	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
22	Main Street	Junes Alley	Water Street	S	360	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
23	Main Street	Water Street	Bristol Road	S	200	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
24	Water Street	Main Street	Cross Street	E	220	Asphalt	5'	VG	
25	Water Street	Cross Street	22 Water Street	E	840	Asphalt-Gravel	Varies	P	Discontinuous
26	Cross Street	Water Street	Bristol Road	S	230	Asphalt	2 - 3	P	
27	High Street	Bristol Road	22 High Street	S	520	Asphalt	2 - 3	P-VP	
28	Bristol Road	Main Street	Cross Street	E	130	Asphalt	5	VG	
29	Bristol Road	Cross Street	High Street	E	1330	Asphalt	5	2016	
30	Bristol Road	High Street	Miles Street	E	610	Asphalt	5	2016	
31	Pleasant Street	Church Street	Hodgdon Street	W	60	Asphalt	5	New	
Source: Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle Pedestrian Plan, April 2015					12700				

APPENDIX

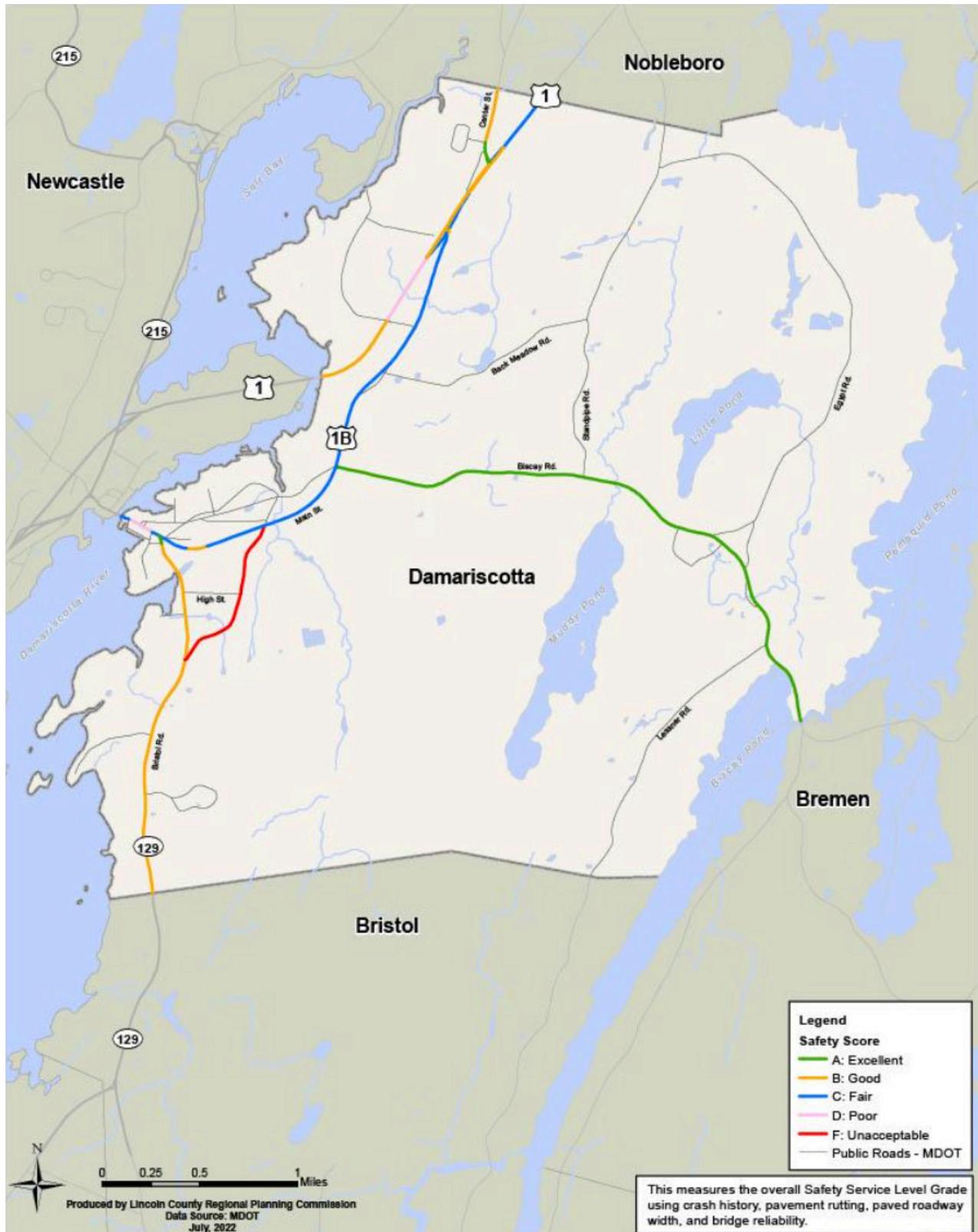
Table 7: Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts

The table below provides the count data for each traffic counter location for the years 2016, 2019, 2021, and 2022. The streets that are bolded in Table 8 have seen an increase in traffic volume when comparing the two most recent years against one another. Alternatively, a number of roadways have seen a reduction in traffic. Specifically, Belvedere Road west of US Route 1 has seen a continual drop in traffic, with 640 daily trips in 2022 versus 1110 daily trips in 2016. (a reduction of 470 trips).

BISCAY RD E/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	4520	5030	--	4910
BISCAY RD S/O ROCKY RUN RD	--	--	--	2600
CENTER ST N/O KEENE WOODS RD @ TL	1580	1510	--	1530
CHAPMAN ST W/O SCHOOL ST	260	300	480	240
CHURCH ST E/O HODGDON ST (W JCT)	--	1570	--	1050
CHURCH ST NE/O VINE ST	880	1030	--	660
CHURCH ST W/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	1450	1500	--	990
CROSS ST W/O SR 129 (BRISTOL RD)	--	1890	--	1360
EGYPT RD E/O BACK MEADOW RD	--	--	--	480
EGYPT RD E/O BISCAY RD	--	--	--	790
EGYPT RD N/O ROCKY RUN RD	--	--	--	510
ELM ST NE/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	--	--	600
ELM ST W/O CHURCH ST	--	1400	--	1170
HOSPITAL ENT W/O SR 129 (BRISTOL RD)	--	--	--	1250
PARKING LOT LN NW/O WATER ST	--	1380	--	990
POWELL LN W/O SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD)	--	--	--	50
RAMP TO SR129 SW/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	--	--	2060
SCHOOL ST NE/O SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD)	--	--	--	3220
SCHOOL ST SW/O CHURCH ST	--	--	450	270
SCHOOL ST SW/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	4230	4300	4370	4200
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) N/O SCHOOL ST	--	4320	--	--
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O CROSS ST	5890	6060	--	5940
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O OLD COUNTY RD	--	--	--	6630
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	--	--	6740
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O WESTVIEW RD	--	7110	--	6840
SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD) N/O POWELL LN	--	4320	--	4590
SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD) S/O SCHOOL ST	--	--	--	7230
THEATRE ST (OW) N/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	860	--	--	560
US 1B (NB) N/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	6930	7280	--	6800
US 1B (SB) N/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	6740	7310	--	6640
US 1 @ NOBLEBORO TL	12120	12580	--	11730
US 1 SW/O BELVEDERE RD	9650	9960	9580	9760
US 1 SW/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	8060	8820	8690	7960
US 1B (MAIN ST) @ NEWCASTLE TL @ BR2215	13100	13370	--	--
US 1B (MAIN ST) N/O BISCAY RD	9360	--	--	9440
US 1B (MAIN ST) NE/O SCHOOL ST	12740	12410	12010	--
US 1B (MAIN ST) S/O BISCAY RD	11870	12100	--	--
US 1B (MAIN ST) S/O US 1	6000	6190	--	6230
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O IR1177 (THEATRE)	--	10310	--	10140
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O VINE ST	10960	--	--	7650
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O WATER ST	10570	10250	--	10120
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O VINE ST	10960	--	--	7650
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O WATER ST	10570	10250	--	10120
US 1B (MAIN ST) SW/OO BELVEDERE RD	--	8080	--	7150
US 1B (MAIN ST) W/O SCHOOL ST	--	--	7690	--
WATER ST S/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	1670	1460	--	1280

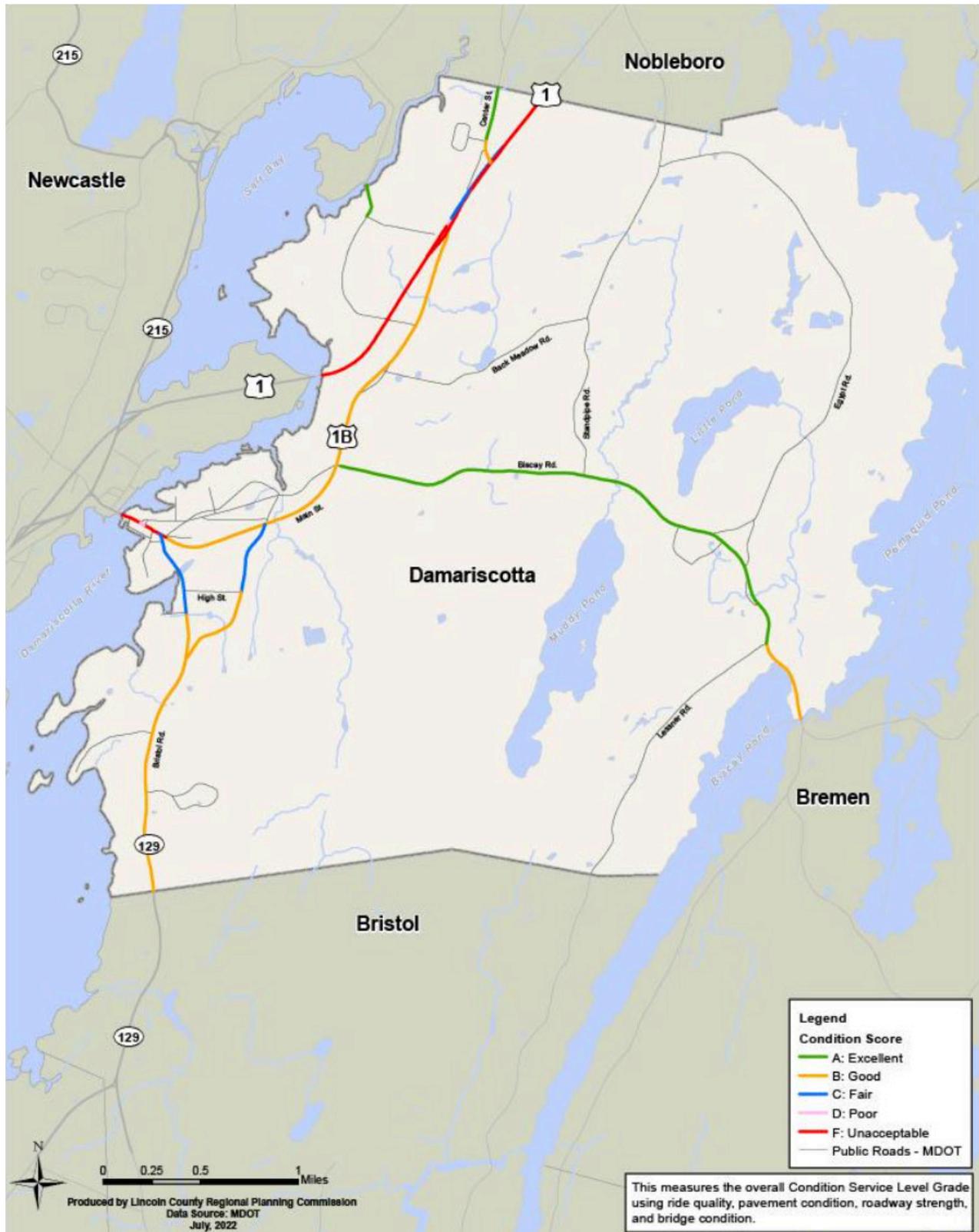
Source: MDOT Annual Daily Average Traffic Count

Map 1: Damariscotta Customer Service Levels – Safety Score



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Map 2: Damariscotta Customer Service Levels – Condition Score



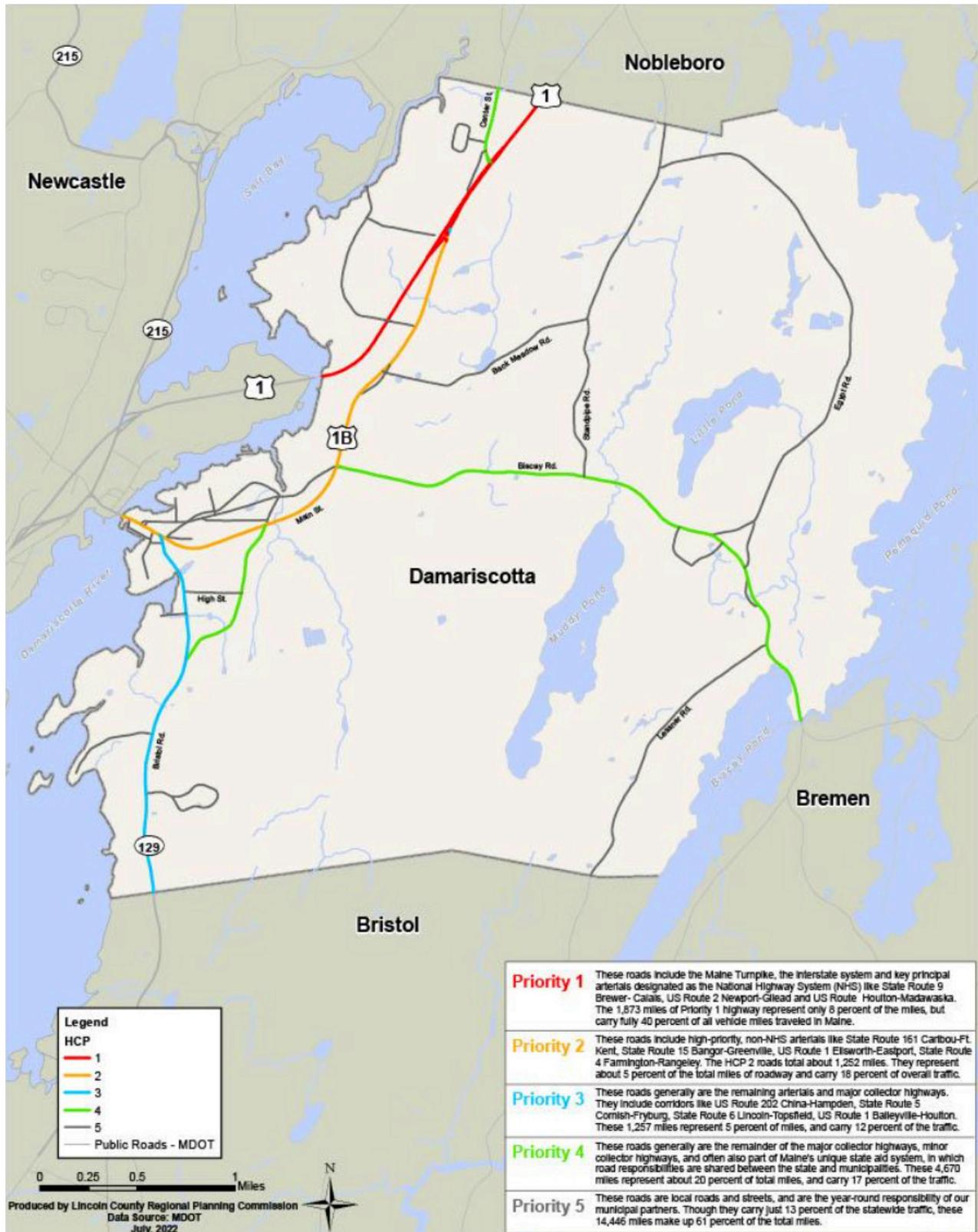
Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Map 3: Damariscotta Customer Service Levels – Service Score



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Map 3: Damariscotta Highway Corridor Priority (HCP)

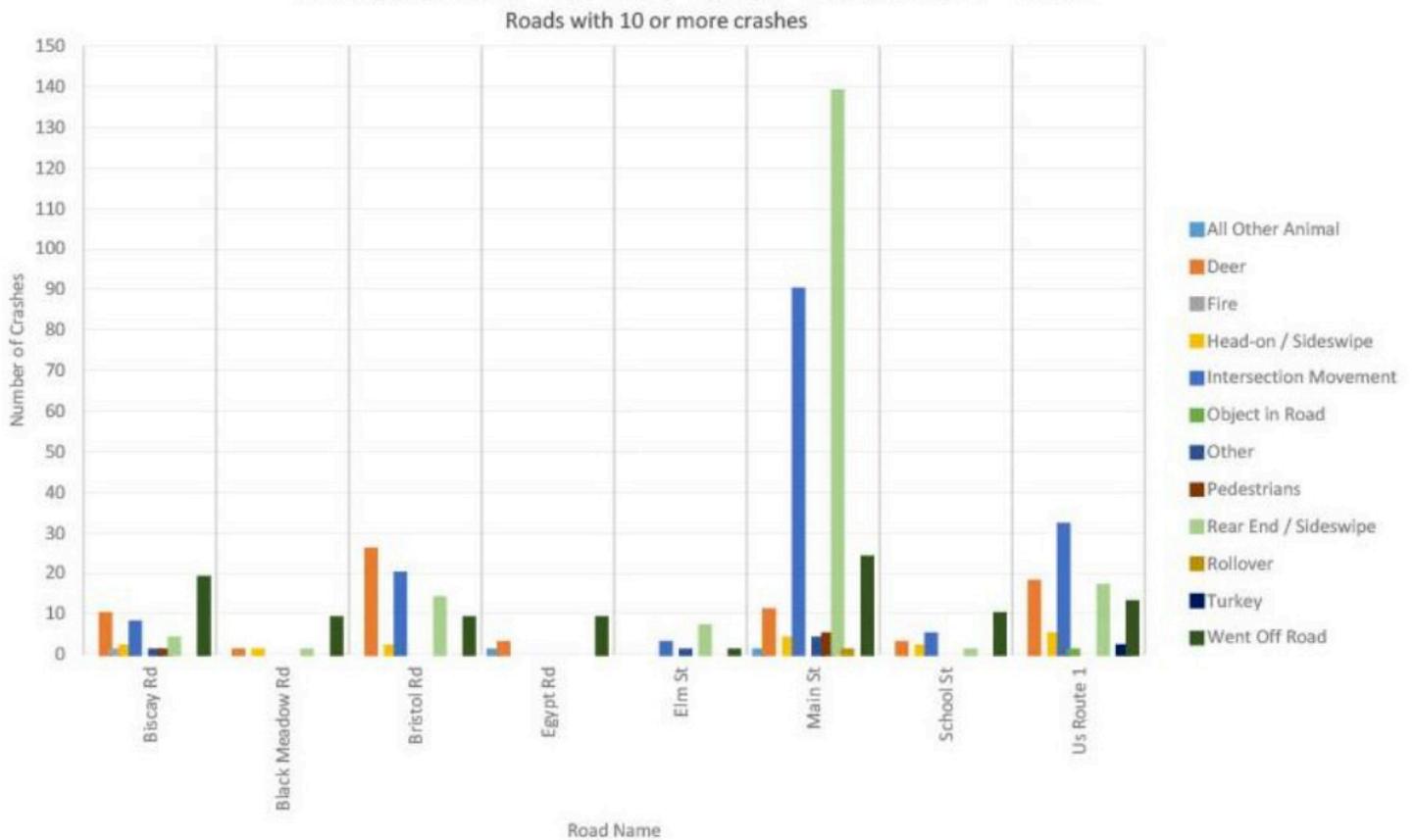


Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Accident Occurrences

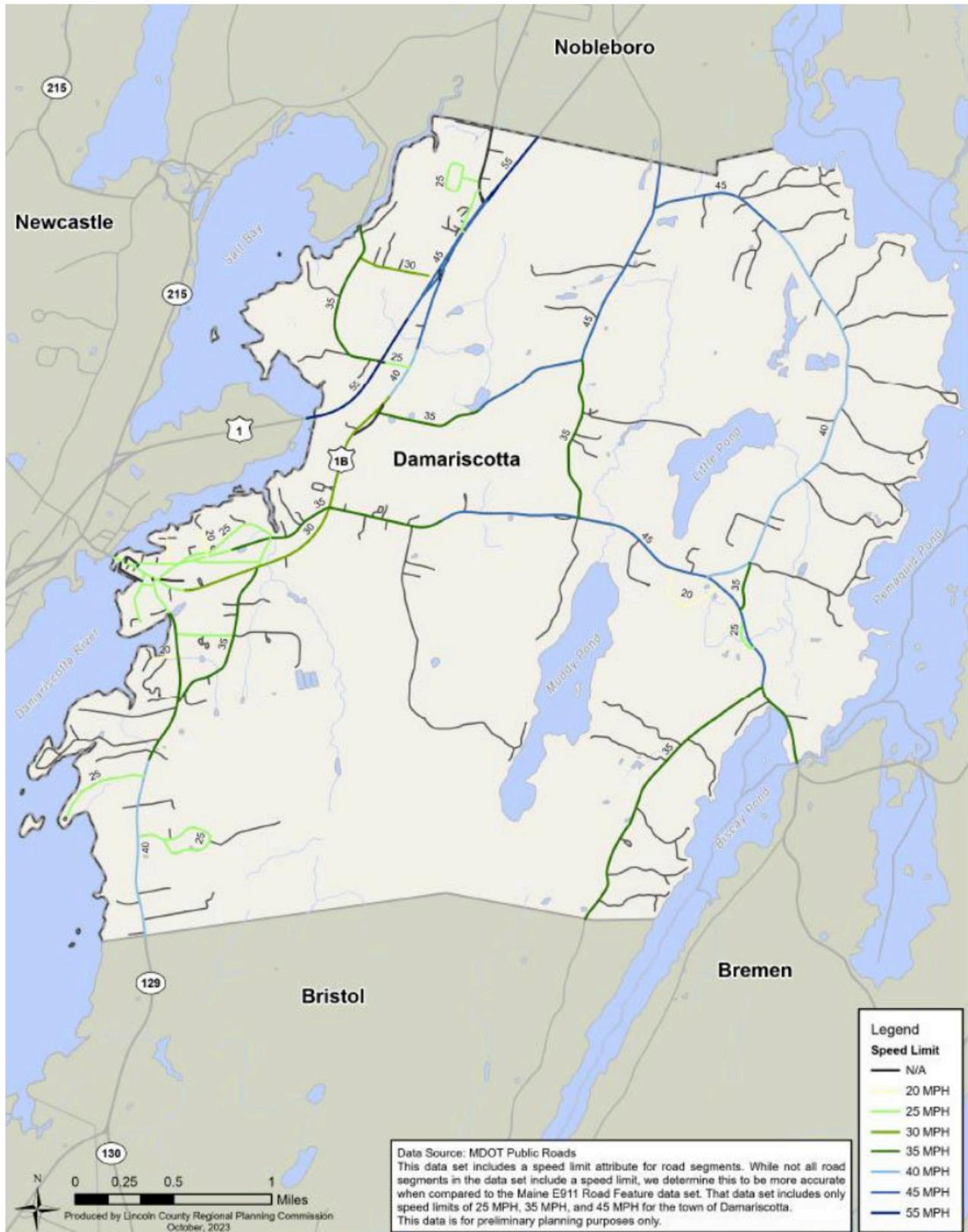
MDOT, as part of the Comprehensive Plan data set provided to Damariscotta, lists the locations and crash type over a 10-year period from 2009 to 2019. Graph 1: Damariscotta 10 Year Crash Data, below, shows the number of crashes and crash type on a sampling of Damariscotta’s roads using the data provided by MDOT. The Chart shows those roads that experienced ten (10) or more crashes over the 10-year timeframe. By far the most accidents were ‘rear-end/sideswipe’ occurring on Main Street.

Graph 1: Damariscotta 10 Year Crash Data (2009 – 2019)



Source: MDOT Crash Data

Map 5: Posted Speed Limits on Damariscotta Roadways

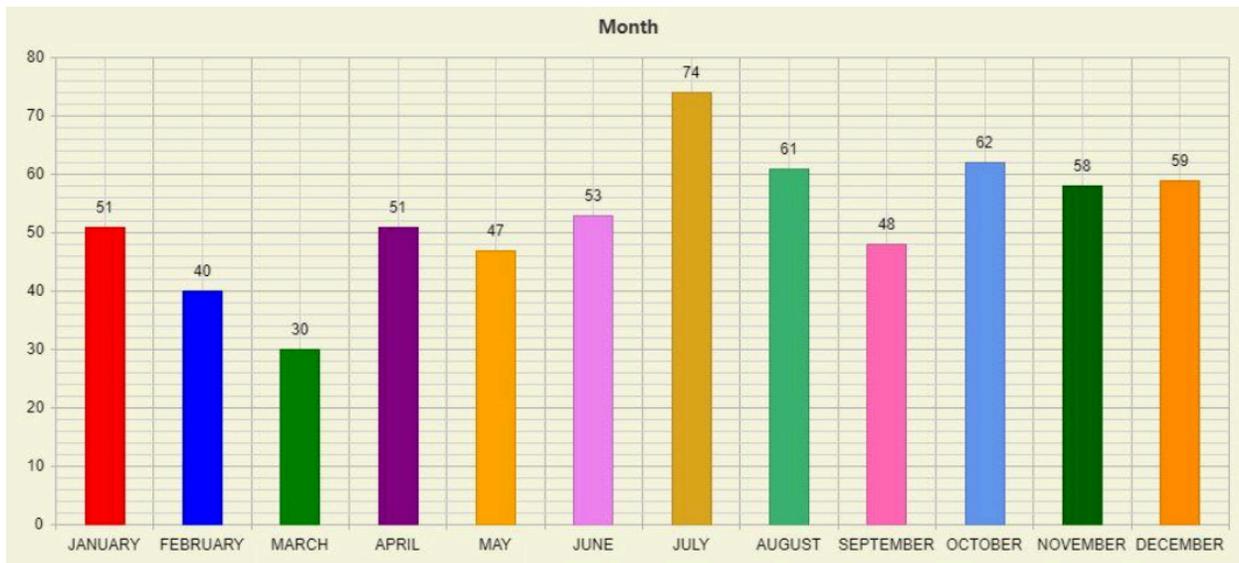


Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

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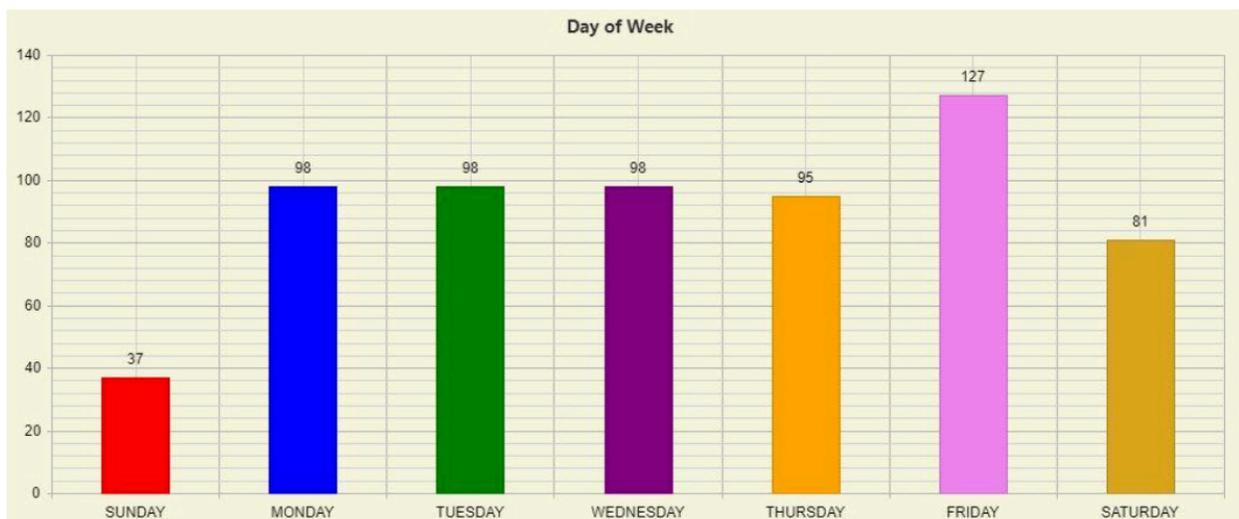
More recent crash data is available on MDOT's Crash Data Website. From 2012 to 2022 the Town saw 634 crashes, an increase of the total 578 crashes experienced from 2009 to 2019. Additionally, MDOT analyzes when accidents occurred by month (Graph 2, below), day of the week (Graph 3), and time of day (Graph 4). As shown in the Graphs, most accidents occurred during the second half of the year – July through December – with July seeing the most accidents at 71 occurrences. Fridays saw the most accidents, 127, with Monday through Thursday being almost evenly split. Sundays saw the least number of incidents at 37 over a 10-year period. More accidents occurred between 10AM and 5PM than during the evening and overnight hours.

Graph 2: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrences by Month



Source: MDOT Crash Data

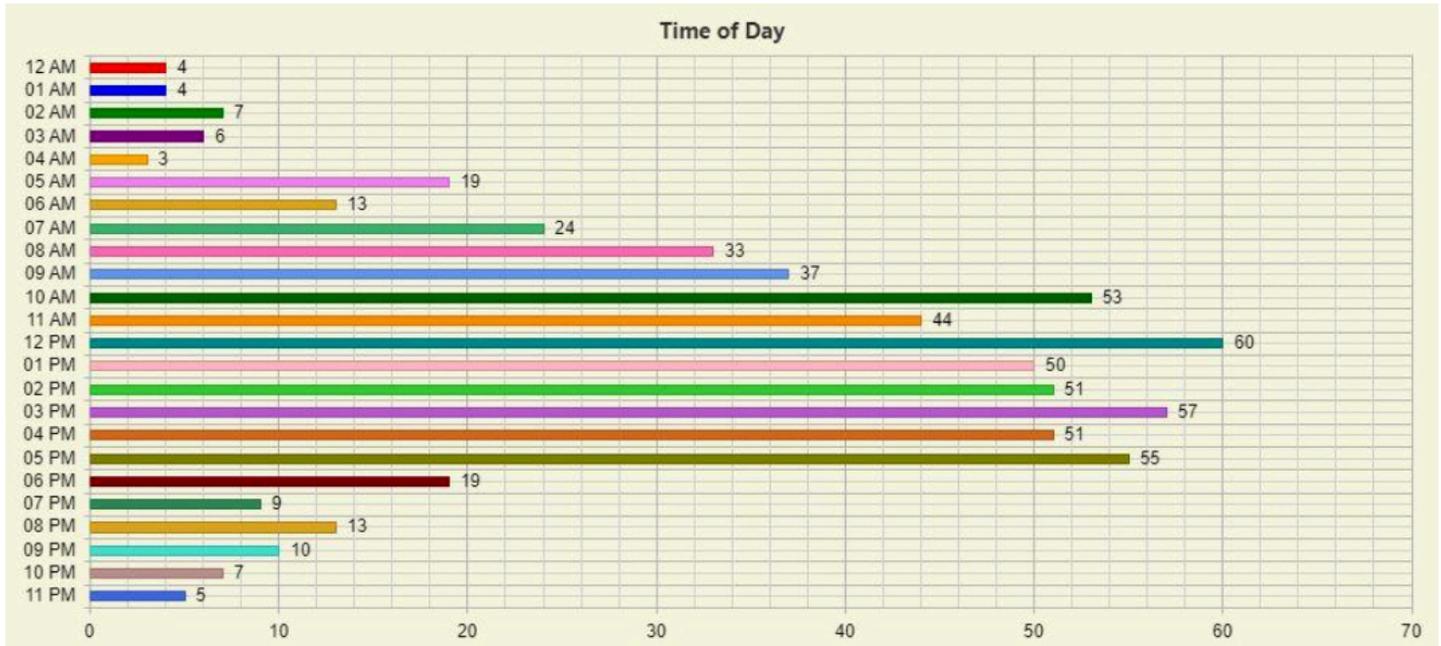
Graph 3: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrences by Day of Week



Source: MDOT Crash Data

APPENDIX

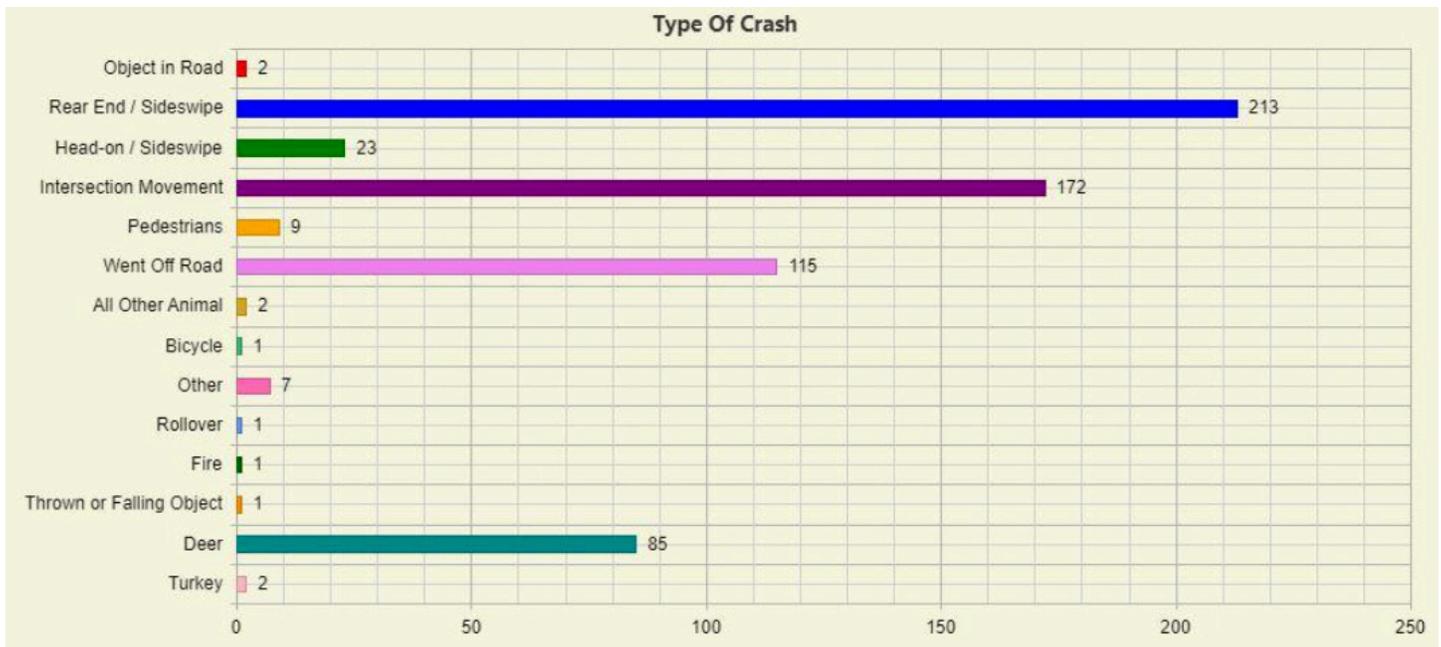
Graph 4: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrence by Time of Day



Source: MDOT Crash Data

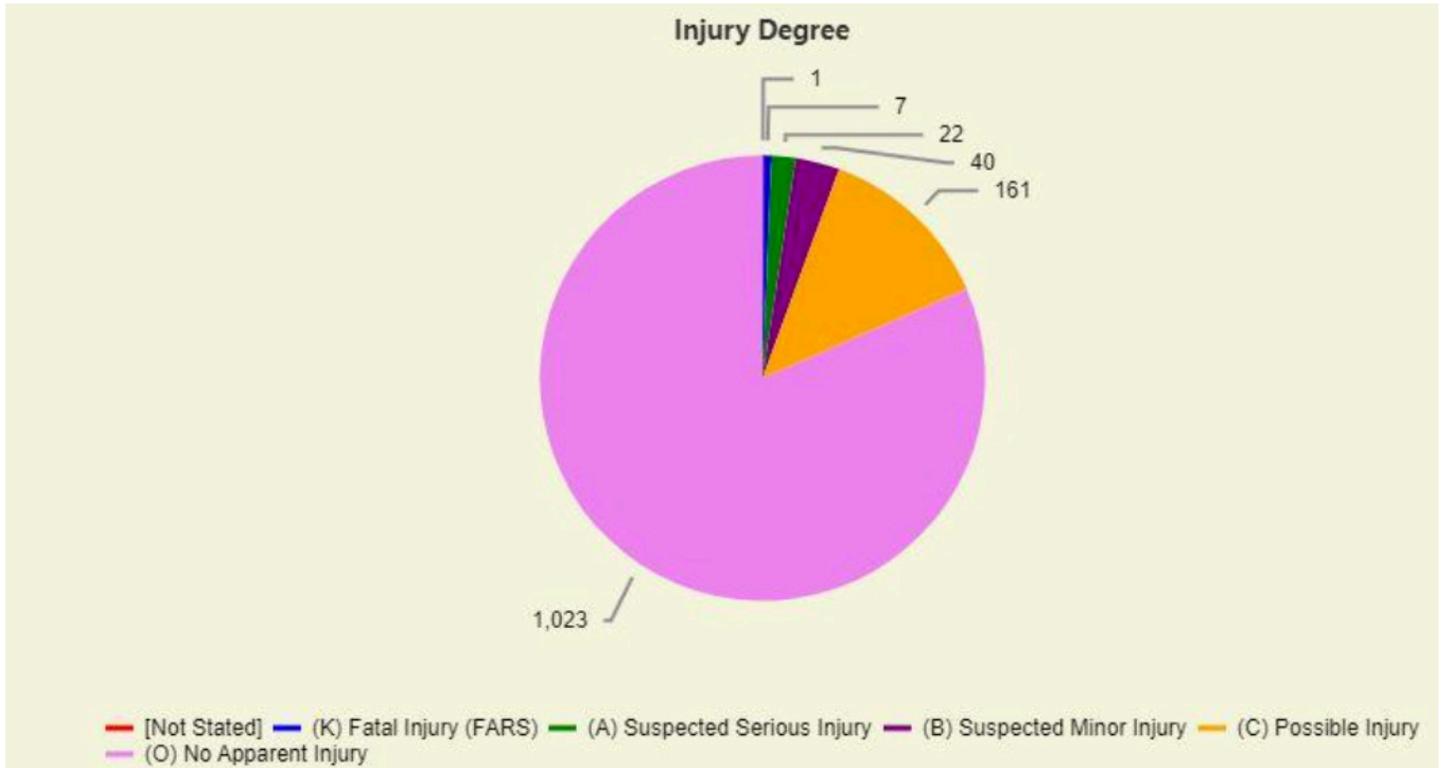
MDOT also evaluates the type of crash and injuries sustained from the crash. Graph 5, shows the accident by type and Graph 6, shows what, if any, injuries occurred.

Graph 5: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrence by Type



Source: MDOT Crash Data

Graph 6: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Injuries



Source: MDOT Crash Data; Note: Count includes all individuals involved

Table 8: LUAC Scenic Views List (2019-2020)

Scenic View	Description of view	Nearest access point	Threats to scenic view
Days Cove	View to mud flats and river	Route 129 at Days Cove	None
Salt Bay	View of fields and Salt Bay	Hard clam bed (Salt Bay)	Mid-and far-view building development
View along Belvedere Road 1,000 feet south of Branch Road	Undeveloped farmscape along rural road	Belvedere Road at Branch Road	Residences along road frontage
Biscay Pond	Morning mist on Biscay Pond from the road near the public beach	Biscay Road	Camp development
Paradise Pond	View across Paradise (Muddy) Pond	Shamrock Lane	Camp development
Misery Gulch	Looking across Misery Gulch to back of parking lot. The wreck of The Candage shows at low tide.	Schooner Landing parking lot	Climate change
Back view of Damariscotta	View of town from The River Tripper cruise	Damariscotta River	Climate change, development
DARA Pond	Looking across DARA Pond, a historic spot for ice skating	Church Street	Further development in the area
Damariscotta River	Tombolo landform, horseshoe crab spawning ground	Huston Landing Preserve	Climate change
Hilltop Cemetery	Historic Cemetery and trees	Hodgdon Street	None
River and Lewis Point	Looking up the river toward Lewis Point	Parking lot behind Weatherbird building	Further condo development
Whaleback Midden	Damariscotta River	Johnny Orr Rapids looking south	None
Cemetery and Old Oaks	Historic view of cemetery and old oak trees	Belvedere Road south of Branch Road	Development, farm buildings
Castner Creek	Castner Creek looking toward the Damariscotta River	Church Street	Development, storm surge, run-off
Castner Creek	Castner Creek looking toward upper Main Street	Church Street	Development, storm surge, run-off
Wetland area	Behind/adjacent to Main Street Grocery	Between Main Street and Chapman Street	Run-off
View up and down the bridge			

Table 9: Damariscotta Dimensional Standards Table (as of 2/15/2023)

Dimensional Standard ⁸	Key: DU = Dwelling Unit					
	District ⁹					
	GR	C1 ^{7,15}	C2 ^{7,14}	R	WC	M
Minimum land area, Sewered	10,000 sf per first principal building or DU, 6,000 sf thereafter	10,000 sf	10,000 sf per first principal building or DU, 6,000 sf thereafter	10,000 sf per first principal building or DU, 6,000 sf thereafter	See note 13	10,000 sf per principal building
Minimum land area, Non-sewered	40,000 sf per DU	N/A	40,000 sf per principal building or DU	80,000 sf per principal building or DU	See note 13	40,000 sf per principal building
Front Setback	20 feet ¹	See note 3.	20 feet ^{1, 12}	20 feet ¹²	See note 12	20 feet
Side Setbacks	15 feet	See note 4,5,6	15 feet ^{9, 12}	15 feet ¹²	See note 12	0 feet
Rear Setback	15 feet	See note 4,5,6	15 feet ^{9, 12}	15 feet ¹²	See note 12	0 feet
Minimum street frontage, Sewered	75 feet	None	100 feet	200 feet	See note 13	200 feet
Minimum street frontage, Non-sewered	100 feet	N/A	100 feet	200 feet	See note 13	200 feet
Maximum building height	35 feet	40 feet	40 feet ¹⁰	35 feet ^{10, 11}	See note 10	40 feet ¹⁰

Notes:

- 1 Or the average of existing setbacks on abutting properties
- 2 Or as required by the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance
- 3 For those lots with existing buildings, front yard setbacks shall be the same or greater than the setback of existing buildings on that lot. If a structure is removed as part of the project, the location of that structure may be considered as an existing building provided the permit for new construction remains valid. For those lots with no existing buildings, the setback shall be the average setback of buildings on abutting properties.
- 4 If walls adjacent to side lot lines on buildings on both the applicants and adjacent property are of noncombustible construction as defined in this ordinance, the setback from the property lines may be reduced to 0 feet.
- 5 If the conditions stated in note 4 are not met, then a minimum 10-foot buffer strip to the side or rear lot lines or a 20-foot separation distance to adjacent buildings shall be maintained.
- 6 Yards abutting other districts shall be at least 15 feet deep and have a landscaped buffer strip.
- 7 No single retail store whether located in a single building, a combination of buildings, single tenant space, and/or combination of tenant spaces shall exceed 35,000 gross square feet of floor area in the aggregate. This size restriction shall apply to new retail stores and expansion of existing retail stores, effective November 1, 2005.
- 8 Unless modified by the requirements of § 101.6.
- 9 Except abutting the Municipal District they shall be 0 feet
- 10 Maximum 190 feet for wireless communications facilities
- 11 Water supply standpipes for water supply utilities may be 100 feet above the ground

12 A new or expanded wireless telecommunications facility must comply with the setback requirements for the zoning district in which it is located, or be set back one hundred five percent (105%) of its height from all property lines, whichever is greater. The setback may be satisfied by including the areas outside the property boundaries if secured by an easement. The following exemptions apply: i. The setback may be reduced by the Planning Board upon a showing by the applicant that the facility is designed to collapse in a manner that will not harm other property. ii. An antenna is exempt from the setback requirement if it extends no more than five (5) feet horizontally from the edge of the structure to which it is attached, and it does not encroach upon an abutting property.

13 The standards of the underlying district (C2 or Rural) will apply.

14 See § 101.7 for additional performance standards for adult entertainment establishments

15 The parking standards of the Site Plan Review Ordinance as amended for this district shall apply.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.

Policy #3.1: Protect current and potential drinking water sources.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Work with LincolnHealth and the Pines Mobile Home Park on acquiring land surrounding their wellheads, or adopt strict wellhead protection standards in these areas.

Policy #3.2: Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to ensure high water quality of the Town's drinking supply.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Improve signage on the access trail from Biscay Road to notify the public that Little Pond is a source of drinking water and outline what recreational activities are not allowed.
- b. See Strategy #3.3.a.

Policy #3.3: Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Provide staff support to assist the Sanitary District in applying for grants which will improve water quality and/or upgrade existing sewer systems (especially moving vulnerable pump stations out of flood hazard areas).

Policy #3.4: Protect significant surface water resources from point and nonpoint source pollution.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Work with local land trusts to implement the LakeSmart Program (which organizes landowners to volunteer to not use fertilizers and pesticides on their land).
- b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.

Policy #3.5: Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Establish a relationship with a qualified third-party engineering peer reviewer who can review projects slated for Planning Board review for compliance with stormwater standards and who can suggest modifications to encourage more low-impact development.
- b. Communicate with contractors regarding the Town's erosion and sediment control policies.
- c. Ensure enforcement of the Town's erosion and sediment control policies during construction.
- d. See Strategy #4.2.c and #4.2.d.

Policy #3.6: Collaborate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.
- b. Provide contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine in order to encourage landowners to protect water quality.
- c. Collaborate with the Maine DEP and local conservation organizations to understand the impact projected increases in annual precipitation will have on stormwater runoff to help minimize future contamination of waterways.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: Damariscotta’s agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.

Policy #5.1: Encourage the active use of local farms, gardens, and agricultural lands.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #5.3.b and #5.3.e.

Policy #5.2: Protect the rural, forested, and natural scenic character found within Damariscotta.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.
- b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.

Policy #5.3: Conserve prime farmland, especially areas capable of supporting commercial agriculture.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that commercial developments in the Rural Areas (as designated in the Future Land Use Section of this Plan) to maintain areas with prime farmland soils (as mapped) as undeveloped open space to the greatest extent practicable.
- b. Amend the Town’s Land Use Ordinance to expressly permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, (e.g. roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, feed milling, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations) as expressly allowed operations in the Rural Zoning District (not subject to Planning Board review if within existing buildings on-site or if the new proposed building would not otherwise trigger the applicability requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).
- c. As required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869, consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices.
- d. Consult with Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.
- e. Adopt a “right to farm” provision within the Town’s Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Policy #5.2: Encourage tree planting to assist in climate resiliency.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop a plan to identify and replace dead or damaged street trees in the village.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: Local farming and agriculture is economically viable, ecologically sustainable, and socially responsible.

Policy #5.5: Support the economic viability of local agriculture and forestry through education, outreach, and economic development initiatives.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop a community farm survey to gather information on what products are grown, what challenges farmers face, and why they operate in Damariscotta.
- b. Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.

Policy #5.6: Publicize what incentives are available for farming and forestry in Damariscotta.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Educate owners of productive farm and forest land in available incentives (such as the current use taxation programs).
- b. Determine whether or not moveable greenhouses without a permanent foundation can be taxed as business equipment rather than property and, if so, how this would impact revenue.



Goal: Small-scale agriculture and community garden spaces are allowed and encouraged.

Policy #5.7: Include community garden spaces in recreation and open space planning efforts.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Work with local land trusts to identify opportunities, if any, for timber harvesting, farming or gardening (including community gardens) on their conserved land in Damariscotta (especially on conserved open space that is identified as prime farmland).

Policy #5.8: Review and revise local ordinances as needed to protect and encourage small-scale agriculture.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a Small Farm Animal Keeping Ordinance to allow for the safekeeping of a small number of farm animals on residential lots in order to encourage small-scale agriculture in appropriate areas.
- b. Amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Ordinances to require that certain kinds of multi-family residential or multi-lot subdivisions include designated space set aside for community gardens for the enjoyment of the residents of the proposed developments.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: The Town supports thriving local fishing, aquaculture, shellfishing, and marine resource activities.

Policy #6.1: Include existing, potential, and historic working waterfronts and harbors in local planning efforts.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #6.3.a.

Policy #6.2: Give preference to water-dependent land uses over other uses and protect working waterfronts from residential or non-water dependent development pressures.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise as necessary the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that water-dependent land uses are allowed in waterfront areas.
- b. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations are not prioritizing non-water dependent land uses over water-dependent ones in waterfront areas.
- c. See Strategy #6.3.a.



Goal: The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.

Policy #6.3: Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.
- b. Work with local property owners and land trusts to protect identified points of physical access to coastal waters.

Policy #6.4: Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #5.2.a and #5.2.b.

Policy #6.5: Promote public access to the shoreline.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

Policy #6.6: Balance water-dependent land uses with other complementary land uses, including opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).

Policy #6.7: Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #6.3.a, 6.5.a, and 6.6.a.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: The Salt Bay is a protected and well-managed ecosystem.

Policy #6.8: Accommodate changes in estuarine environment resulting from sea-level rise, including (but not limited to) enabling salt marsh migration.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Encourage the purchase or permanent conservation of uplands adjacent to salt (tidal) marshes to allow marshes to migrate inland as sea level rises.



Goal: The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.

Policy #6.9: Keep up-to-date with changes in FEMA’s flood mapping.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Update the Floodplain Management Ordinance accordingly as new FIRM maps become available from FEMA.

Policy #6.10: Limit new construction in areas that will be impacted by a tide five feet higher than the highest astronomical tide.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Revise the Shoreland Zoning Map around the Damariscotta River to incorporate highest astronomical tide + 5 feet projections, limiting construction within these areas.

Policy #6.11: Preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Collaborate with the Darling Marine Center and local land trusts to research reasons for shellfish population declines and continually monitor populations; refine the Town’s shellfish management program accordingly.

Policy #6.12: Expand our understanding of the productivity of coastal waters and the Damariscotta River.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Promote events, education opportunities, and school programs that connect people to Damariscotta’s working waterfront.

Policy #6.13: Promote the economic value of the community’s renewable marine resources.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Ensure that marine-based businesses are included in economic development programs and incentives.
- b. Promote the Aquaculture Pioneers and Maine Aquaculture Apprenticeship Program.

Policy #6.14: Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance, even in areas where development may occur.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Educate shorefront property owners on the importance of protecting and enhancing vegetative buffers along the shorefront through existing “ShoreSmart” programs.

Policy #6.15: Improve air quality to protect the health of all people.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Sweep streets early in the spring to minimize dust particles in the air.
- b. See Strategies #10.7.a-e, 10.8.a-b, and 10.9.a-b.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY

Continued from page 28...

Policy #6.16: Protect and improve marine habitat and water quality.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Provide staff support to Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to apply for grants to replace existing overboard discharges.
- b. Provide information to owners of marine businesses and industries about participation in the Maine Clean Boatyards and Marinas Program.

Policy #6.16: Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop alternatives to municipal riverside snow dump in an effort to reduce hydrocarbon pollution to the river waters.
- b. Advocate for Maine Department of Marine Resources to limit introduction of invasive species by prohibiting gear transfer to the river from other growing areas without precautions.



Goal: Utility capacity will support economic development.

Policy #7.6: Provide the latest high speed broadband and universal wireless telecommunication.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.

Policy #7.7: Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to invest in sewer and water infrastructure.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #11.2.a.

Policy #7.8: Improve energy resilience to prevent frequent power outages.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to adopt solar-ready requirements in new developments.
- b. Advocate to regional and state partners to reinforce transmission lines and improve substation resilience to withstand extreme weather conditions and other disruptions.
- c. Investigate the feasibility of local microgrid development, especially for community areas such as the hospital, municipal buildings, and similar.
- d. Review and revise the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for energy storage systems (such as, for example, battery storage facilities) to locate in Damariscotta.

TAKING ACTION: SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Policy #7.9: Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.
- b. See Strategy #2.1.a.

See also Policy #7.8.



Goal: The Town considers the impacts of a changing climate in its capital investment planning.

Policy #11.6: Plan and implement strategies to create a more resilient community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Maintain enrollment in the State's Community Resilience Partnership program and other programs that offer municipal assistance for climate resiliency efforts.
- b. Use the most current flood risk standards when planning for major capital investments to elevate roads and bridges, improve road surfaces, and increase culvert sizes to make them more flood-proof.
- c. When making capital budget decisions, conduct a long-term cost benefit analysis of implementing more resilient designs.
- d. Through the Capital Improvement Plan, plan to transition the municipal vehicle fleet to electric or alternative-fuel vehicles as existing vehicles reach the end of their useful lifespan.
- e. Continue to pursue energy retrofits to municipal buildings.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.

Policy #8.1: Encourage and promote workforce housing in strategic locations to support economic development of the community and region.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Designate a location(s) in Growth Areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).
- b. See Strategy #8.3.c.

Policy #8.2: Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Participate in and support the efforts of a regional affordable housing coalition (such as that beginning to emerge from LCRPC).
- b. Advocate for the creation and use of home-sharing or room-renting programs to connect those with extra space to those looking for housing within Damariscotta.

Policy #8.3: Aim for at least 30% of all new residential development in the next decade to be subsidized/regulated affordable or workforce housing.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow for higher density development when certain types of priority projects are proposed (e.g. density bonuses beyond what might be required by LD2003).
- b. Proactively reach out to known regional affordable housing providers to communicate available incentives for affordable housing development.
- c. Amend the Town's Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as necessary to increase density or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing in designated Growth Areas.

Policy #8.4: Work with current affordable housing property owners to maintain existing affordable housing in the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Identify the expiration date of existing affordability covenants in Damariscotta.
- b. Educate property owners on incentives available for keeping property affordable.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.

Policy #8.5: Ensure that land use controls allow for the kinds of residential development that the community desires and needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Reduce the burden of residential development in designated Growth Areas by removing regulatory barriers and permitting “by-right” (without Planning Board review) the residential developments that the community desires.
- b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.
- c. Decrease minimum lot size per dwelling unit in areas with existing public water and sewer to allow for smaller lots conducive to ‘starter’ home construction.
- d. Amend the Town’s Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for “back-lot” development within the Growth Area.

Policy #8.6: Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.
- b. Amend the Town’s Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing “soft costs” of development.
- c. Create a Housing Trust Fund that will set aside money to be granted to priority housing projects, with priorities and funding levels established annually by the Selectboard.
- d. Encourage the construction of ADUs within or on the same lot as existing residences.

Policy #8.7: Understand the short-term rental situation in Damariscotta.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a Short-Term Rental Ordinance requiring all short-term rentals (being rented for less than 4 months out of the year) to register with the Town on a regular basis, including payment of a nominal fee, in order to get an accurate count of the number of short-term rentals in Damariscotta.
- b. Take steps to manage short-term rentals as necessary.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Land use and development patterns complement transportation networks and promote mobility.

Policy #10.6: Address transportation planning and land use planning together as two parts of the same issue.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); state access management regulations under 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and state traffic permitting regulations for large developments under 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.
- b. Amend the Town's Subdivision Ordinance to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.
- c. Amend the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Ordinances to include sidewalk design requirements including minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.
- d. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require sidewalks along the frontage of new development located within the Growth Area as defined by this Plan.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Transportation investments and policies support a more sustainable community.

Policy #10.7: Increase sustainable mobility by investing in active transportation (bicycling and pedestrian) infrastructure improvements.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Conduct a walking audit of existing sidewalk locations and all streets and intersections within the Growth Area identified as part of this Plan, to better understand where pedestrian improvements may be necessary.
- b. Revise the Town’s policy related to the maintenance of road surface markings (namely crosswalks) to require that they are repainted at least twice per year or research a more resilient paint option to ensure crosswalks are visible year-round.
- c. Require that sidewalks are maintained in winter weather at or about at the same rate as roadways.
- d. Identify the location of potentially public rights-of-way in the community that could be upgraded to expand bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity.
- e. Refer to and comply with the PSAC Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility especially when MDOT is planning for roadway improvements to priority corridors (as identified in the resolution).

Policy #10.8: Accommodate the switch to electric vehicles.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Work with CMP to identify any upgrades needed to support more robust EV charging and solar power infrastructure.
- b. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that certain development projects are “EV-ready” (e.g. that conduit is installed for EV charging stations).

Policy #10.9: Minimize local vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town’s transportation network.
- b. Publicize existing ride-providing services (such as Lincoln County FISH) and ride-sharing networks (such as GO MAINE).

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation.

Policy #9.3: Preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a Recreation & Open Space Plan that identifies: (1) Priority sites that may be appropriate for recreation/conservation uses or trail network connectivity (through a clearly defined evaluation process); (2) Strategies to preserve land, including funding sources as applicable; and (3) How the land will be managed in the future (e.g. how it will be used or developed for either conservation or recreation purposes).

Policy #9.4: Comply with the US Access Board’s minimum accessibility guidelines in all new construction to ensure that all Damariscotta residents, regardless of age or ability, have access to both active and passive recreational amenities (including water access).

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a park within the Growth Area identified in this Plan in order to create an open and attractive space for community members to gather. Considerations may include performance space, a skate park, a place for people to gather, a playground for young children, and other desires driven by the community and budgetary constraints.
- b. See Strategy #9.3.a.



Goal: Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.

Policy #7.14: Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.
- b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.

Policy #7.15: Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.
- b. See Strategy #8.6.a and #8.6.b.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Damariscotta’s agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.

Policy #5.1: Encourage the active use of local farms, gardens, and agricultural lands.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #5.3.b and #5.3.e.

Policy #5.2: Protect the rural, forested, and natural scenic character found within Damariscotta.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.
- b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.

Policy #5.3: Conserve prime farmland, especially areas capable of supporting commercial agriculture.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that commercial developments in the Rural Areas (as designated in the Future Land Use Section of this Plan) to maintain areas with prime farmland soils (as mapped) as undeveloped open space to the greatest extent practicable.
- b. Amend the Town’s Land Use Ordinance to expressly permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, (e.g. roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, feed milling, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations) as expressly allowed operations in the Rural Zoning District (not subject to Planning Board review if within existing buildings on-site or if the new proposed building would not otherwise trigger the applicability requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).
- c. As required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869, consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices.
- d. Consult with Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.
- e. Adopt a “right to farm” provision within the Town’s Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Policy #5.2: Encourage tree planting to assist in climate resiliency.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop a plan to identify and replace dead or damaged street trees in the village.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Local farming and agriculture is economically viable, ecologically sustainable, and socially responsible.

Policy #5.5: Support the economic viability of local agriculture and forestry through education, outreach, and economic development initiatives.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop a community farm survey to gather information on what products are grown, what challenges farmers face, and why they operate in Damariscotta.
- b. Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.

Policy #5.6: Publicize what incentives are available for farming and forestry in Damariscotta.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Educate owners of productive farm and forest land in available incentives (such as the current use taxation programs).
- b. Determine whether or not moveable greenhouses without a permanent foundation can be taxed as business equipment rather than property and, if so, how this would impact revenue.



Goal: Damariscotta's economic climate increases job growth in designated sectors.

Policy #7.1: Coordinate with regional partners as necessary to support economic development.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Collaborate with the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to better understand employer needs for workforce, physical space, supply chains, etc. Partner with major employers to develop initiatives to address biggest gaps or concerns.
- b. Participate in regional economic development efforts.

Policy #7.2: Coordinate with neighboring towns to support small and locally-owned businesses.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to build relationships with appropriate staff in neighboring communities to discuss and coordinate economic development initiatives.

Policy #7.3: Support local entrepreneurs, home businesses, and cottage industry.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow low-impact home occupations to be reviewed administratively by Town staff.
- b. Work to attract business incubator/start-up spaces where small businesses can collaborate and learn from each other.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Local infrastructure supports the ability to walk or bicycle to local businesses.

Policy #7.4: Financially support needed alternative transportation improvements that will support economic development.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and/or require infrastructure that supports walking, biking and car-pooling through land use regulations so that workers have options of how to get to work.

See also Policy #7.2.



Goal: Civic and social amenities are supported and robust.

Policy #7.4: Continue to collaborate with non-profit partners to provide civic and social amenities within the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to invest in the Skidompha Library, the CLC YMCA, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, and other service providers through annual budget requests/appropriations as recognition of the value that these service providers bring to Damariscotta residents.



Goal: Utility capacity will support economic development.

Policy #7.6: Provide the latest high speed broadband and universal wireless telecommunication.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.

Policy #7.7: Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to invest in sewer and water infrastructure.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #11.2.a.

Policy #7.8: Improve energy resilience to prevent frequent power outages.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to adopt solar-ready requirements in new developments.
- b. Advocate to regional and state partners to reinforce transmission lines and improve substation resilience to withstand extreme weather conditions and other disruptions.
- c. Investigate the feasibility of local microgrid development, especially for community areas such as the hospital, municipal buildings, and similar.
- d. Review and revise the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for energy storage systems (such as, for example, battery storage facilities) to locate in Damariscotta.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Policy #7.9: Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.
- b. See Strategy #2.1.a.

See also Policy #7.8.



Goal: Damariscotta's role as a small-town service center benefits the community.

Policy #7.10: Strengthen and/or support the expansion of existing infrastructure and systems that support quality of life for a growing regional workforce, including housing, childcare, education, transportation, and broadband.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Assess common barriers to employment (childcare needs, transportation needs, education/skill gaps, etc.).
- b. Develop initiatives to mitigate or overcome identified barriers.
- c. See Strategy #7.6.a.

Policy #7.11: Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to utilize tax increment financing (TIFs) to shelter revenue for priority economic development projects.
- b. During the annual budget cycle, examine and carefully consider Departmental budget requests to ensure that the municipal budget reflects the priorities of the community and voters.

Policy #7.12: Encourage tax base growth in order to maintain the town's service center benefits: historic, cultural, medical, conservation assets.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.

See also Policy #10.5

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Housing in the community is safe and secure.

Policy #8.8: Ensure that existing housing units in Damariscotta meet safety standards.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Require that the Code Enforcement Officer conducts inspections of all short-term rentals to ensure basic Life Safety requirements are being met.
- b. Promote available state and federal financial assistance programs for homeowners of older homes to complete maintenance/repairs.



Goal: New housing is located near existing services.

Policy #8.9: Protect rural areas and natural settings without existing infrastructure by encouraging new housing development at greater densities in Growth Areas already served by public infrastructure (sewer, water, sidewalks and roadways, broadband internet, three-phase power).

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #8.5.b and #11.2.b.

See also Policy #7.2.



Goal: Outdoor recreation opportunities, especially access to surface waters, are protected.

Policy #9.1: Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop a plan to improve Biscay Beach as a usable site, specifically addressing known conflicts between boats and beach-goers as well as known parking issues.
- b. Implement the above referenced plan to improve Biscay Beach.

Policy #9.2: Seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to all major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create a formalized water access plan to water bodies where access is not currently available.
- b. Provide educational materials to private property owners about the benefits of available state programs and/or conservation easements in order to encourage permanent public access to our woods and waters.
- c. Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A, and MDIFW's Outdoor Partners Program.
- d. See Strategy #9.4.a.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Transportation infrastructure efficiently accommodates the Town's growth and economic development.

Policy #10.1: Maximize the functionality and efficiency of state and state-aid roads.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including continuing to advocate for funding for priority MDOT roadway improvement projects, including active transportation improvements as well as improving the safety for all users of the School Street/Route 1B intersection, possibly including roundabout solutions.
- b. Create a pull-off area for the Concord Coachlines bus that will minimize vehicular traffic backup and unsafe conditions on Main Street. This pull-off area should be located within the Growth Area designated as part of this Plan, be connected by sidewalks and bicycle connections, and include a proper bus shelter for those waiting to be picked up.

Policy #10.2: Advocate for the return of rail travel to the region.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Along with the Town of Newcastle, continue to to advocate to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to bring rail travel to the region.

Policy #10.3: Project potential costs of capital investments, maintenance, and operations of the local transportation network beyond one fiscal year for policy-making and planning purposes.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Develop a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network (beginning with the prioritized improvements identified in this Plan).
- b. Adequately fund reserves to allow for the implementation of the prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan referenced above.
- c. See Strategy #11.1.a.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Transportation systems meet local and regional needs safely and efficiently.

Policy #10.4: Balance the needs of all users regardless of mode (pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles) or ability, by providing a safe and efficient transportation network.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Identify funding to explore the feasibility of “context-sensitive” traffic calming measures and the installation of bicycle lanes along Route 1B from School Street to Biscay Road.
- b. Refine the assessment criteria for rating roads and prioritizing improvements utilized by the Public Works Committee to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks and road shoulders).
- c. Become a designated Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists.
- d. Become a designated Age-Friendly Community by AARP.
- e. Adopt a sidewalk design policy to include a minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.
- f. Advocate at the state-level for MDOT’s customer service ratings to include “Complete Streets” criteria, especially within village areas.
- g. Advocate at the state-level for continued implementation of MDOT’s Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Policy #10.5: Develop a coordinated parking strategy to maximize the function while minimizing the space of parking lots.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Conduct a parking study of the downtown and surrounding streets, including the identification of public parking areas, the demand for parking during both peak season (summer) and off-season (winter) and recommendations for efficient use of parking for both employees and visitors, and the identification of any known issues.
- b. Implement results of the parking study noted above.
- c. Review and revise minimum parking requirements included in the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance to ensure that these regulations support community goals.

TAKING ACTION: LIVABILITY



Goal: Public facilities and services efficiently accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Policy #11.1: Identify public service needs and develop efficient, actionable strategies to meet them.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to explore options for regional delivery of local services.

Policy #11.2: Provide public facilities and services that promote and support development in identified Growth Areas.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Strengthen our collaboration with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to better direct the desired development pattern of the community (e.g. ensure that sewer infrastructure is available throughout the Growth Area designated in this Plan).
- b. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas.

Policy #11.3: Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #10.3.a.

Policy #11.4: Continue to explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital and maintenance investments within the community.

Policy #11.5: Reduce Damariscotta's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.

See also Policy #7.12.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: The impacts of flooding on downtown historic buildings are mitigated.

Policy #2.1: Assess the impacts of weather events and what types of adaptation measures are appropriate for historic properties.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Provide educational resources to property owners regarding adapting their historic buildings in light of flood risk.
- b. Implement the in-progress plan for a deployable flood wall in the downtown.
- c. Develop a plan for long-term adaptation strategies to mitigate downtown flood risk.
- d. Implement the plan for long-term flood mitigation referenced in #2.1.c above.



Goal: Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.

Policy #7.1: Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.
- b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.

Policy #7.2: Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.
- b. See Strategy #8.6.a and #8.6.b.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: Arts and cultural amenities in the community are robust, active, and accessible.

Policy #1.1: Develop and support public arts and cultural programs to increase Damariscotta's vibrancy and community ties.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create an Arts and Culture Committee to promote the arts as a means of improving the local economy, enriching cultural and intellectual life, promoting lifelong learning, and protecting Damariscotta's rich cultural heritage.
- b. Create a collective and comprehensive calendar of events related to arts and culture in Damariscotta.
- c. Create a directory of local artists and craftsmen in the community in order to celebrate and recognize that piece of the local culture.
- d. Create opportunities for volunteer-led, inexpensive, short-term community art projects or demonstrations that demonstrate the impacts of public art in a visible way.
- e. Allocate funding to the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to coordinate community events and public art initiatives that strengthen ties between the Newcastle & Damariscotta historic downtown areas, such as Art Walks, music/concerts, or an Annual Maker's Fair.
- f. Adopt a "1% for Art" policy for all capital improvement projects, requiring 1% of the total cost of the project to be set aside to incorporate public art that enables public places to reflect current values and ideas, draw on the evolving energy and ideas of Damariscotta's thriving arts community, and promote interaction among neighbors.
- g. See Strategy #9.5.a.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: Historic and archaeological resources in the community are preserved.

Policy #2.2: Protect identified historic and archaeological resources in the community, through regulation when necessary.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require that applicants for Planning Board projects are explicitly required to protect known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archaeology through modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation.
- b. Amend Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.

Policy #2.3: Update the existing inventory [of historic and archeological resources] and investigate potentially overlooked historic and archeological resources in the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Become a Certified Local Government through the State Historic Preservation Office in order to gain access to grants for planning and survey work.
- b. Earmark matching funds to conduct a comprehensive architectural survey of Damariscotta's above-ground historic resources, beginning with the Bristol Road Historic District.

Policy #2.4: Actively preserve, protect, and complement the historic features of the Main Street Historic District.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Revisit and revise as needed the permitted and conditional uses within the C-1 zone (or equivalent) as well as the density requirements to ensure that they are promoting a vibrant downtown and adaptive reuse of historic structures.



Goal: Connections with and awareness of local history are promoted.

Policy #2.5: Collaborate with local institutions, clubs, and enthusiasts to develop educational and entertainment programs.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Complete a brochure or other guide explaining the importance of historic preservation to the community and resources for those seeking to undertake renovations.
- b. Partner with the Lincoln County News to inventory and archive Calvin Dodge articles related to local history.
- c. Create a Museum in the Streets walking tour.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: The Town supports thriving local fishing, aquaculture, shellfishing, and marine resource activities.

Policy #6.1: Include existing, potential, and historic working waterfronts and harbors in local planning efforts.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #6.3.a.

Policy #6.2: Give preference to water-dependent land uses over other uses and protect working waterfronts from residential or non-water dependent development pressures.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Review and revise as necessary the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that water-dependent land uses are allowed in waterfront areas.
- b. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations are not prioritizing non-water dependent land uses over water-dependent ones in waterfront areas.
- c. See Strategy #6.3.a.



Goal: The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.

Policy #6.3: Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.
- b. Work with local property owners and land trusts to protect identified points of physical access to coastal waters.

Policy #6.4: Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #5.2.a and #5.2.b.

Policy #6.5: Promote public access to the shoreline.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

Policy #6.6: Balance water-dependent land uses with other complementary land uses, including opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).

Policy #6.7: Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #6.3.a, 6.5.a, and 6.6.a.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: Damariscotta's economic climate increases job growth in designated sectors.

Policy #7.1: Coordinate with regional partners as necessary to support economic development.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Collaborate with the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to better understand employer needs for workforce, physical space, supply chains, etc. Partner with major employers to develop initiatives to address biggest gaps or concerns.
- b. Participate in regional economic development efforts.

Policy #7.2: Coordinate with neighboring towns to support small and locally-owned businesses.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to build relationships with appropriate staff in neighboring communities to discuss and coordinate economic development initiatives.

Policy #7.3: Support local entrepreneurs, home businesses, and cottage industry.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow low-impact home occupations to be reviewed administratively by Town staff.
- b. Work to attract business incubator/start-up spaces where small businesses can collaborate and learn from each other.



Goal: Local infrastructure supports the ability to walk or bicycle to local businesses.

Policy #7.4: Financially support needed alternative transportation improvements that will support economic development.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and/or require infrastructure that supports walking, biking and car-pooling through land use regulations so that workers have options of how to get to work.

See also Policy #7.2.



Goal: Civic and social amenities are supported and robust.

Policy #7.4: Continue to collaborate with non-profit partners to provide civic and social amenities within the community.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to invest in the Skidompha Library, the CLC YMCA, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, and other service providers through annual budget requests/appropriations as recognition of the value that these service providers bring to Damariscotta residents.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: Utility capacity will support economic development.

Policy #7.6: Provide the latest high speed broadband and universal wireless telecommunication.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.

Policy #7.7: Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to invest in sewer and water infrastructure.

Implementation strategies:

- a. See Strategy #11.2.a.

Policy #7.8: Improve energy resilience to prevent frequent power outages.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to adopt solar-ready requirements in new developments.
- b. Advocate to regional and state partners to reinforce transmission lines and improve substation resilience to withstand extreme weather conditions and other disruptions.
- c. Investigate the feasibility of local microgrid development, especially for community areas such as the hospital, municipal buildings, and similar.
- d. Review and revise the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for energy storage systems (such as, for example, battery storage facilities) to locate in Damariscotta.



Goal: Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Policy #7.9: Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.
- b. See Strategy #2.1.a.

See also Policy #7.8.

TAKING ACTION: VIBRANCY



Goal: Damariscotta's role as a small-town service center benefits the community.

Policy #7.10: Strengthen and/or support the expansion of existing infrastructure and systems that support quality of life for a growing regional workforce, including housing, childcare, education, transportation, and broadband.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Assess common barriers to employment (childcare needs, transportation needs, education/skill gaps, etc.).
- b. Develop initiatives to mitigate or overcome identified barriers.
- c. See Strategy #7.6.a.

Policy #7.11: Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Continue to utilize tax increment financing (TIFs) to shelter revenue for priority economic development projects.
- b. During the annual budget cycle, examine and carefully consider Departmental budget requests to ensure that the municipal budget reflects the priorities of the community and voters.

Policy #7.12: Encourage tax base growth in order to maintain the town's service center benefits: historic, cultural, medical, conservation assets.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.

See also Policy #10.5



Goal: Communication between the Town government and Damariscotta citizens is proactive and transparent.

Policy #11.7: Ensure ongoing and regular maintenance of the Town's established communication channels.

Implementation strategies:

- a. Pursue a comprehensive update to the Town's website to make it more user-friendly.
- b. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the posting of meeting agendas, packets, and minutes to the Town website that all Boards and Committees will adhere to.
- c. Develop and implement consistent communication strategies for public outreach.