
Public Works Department Analysis



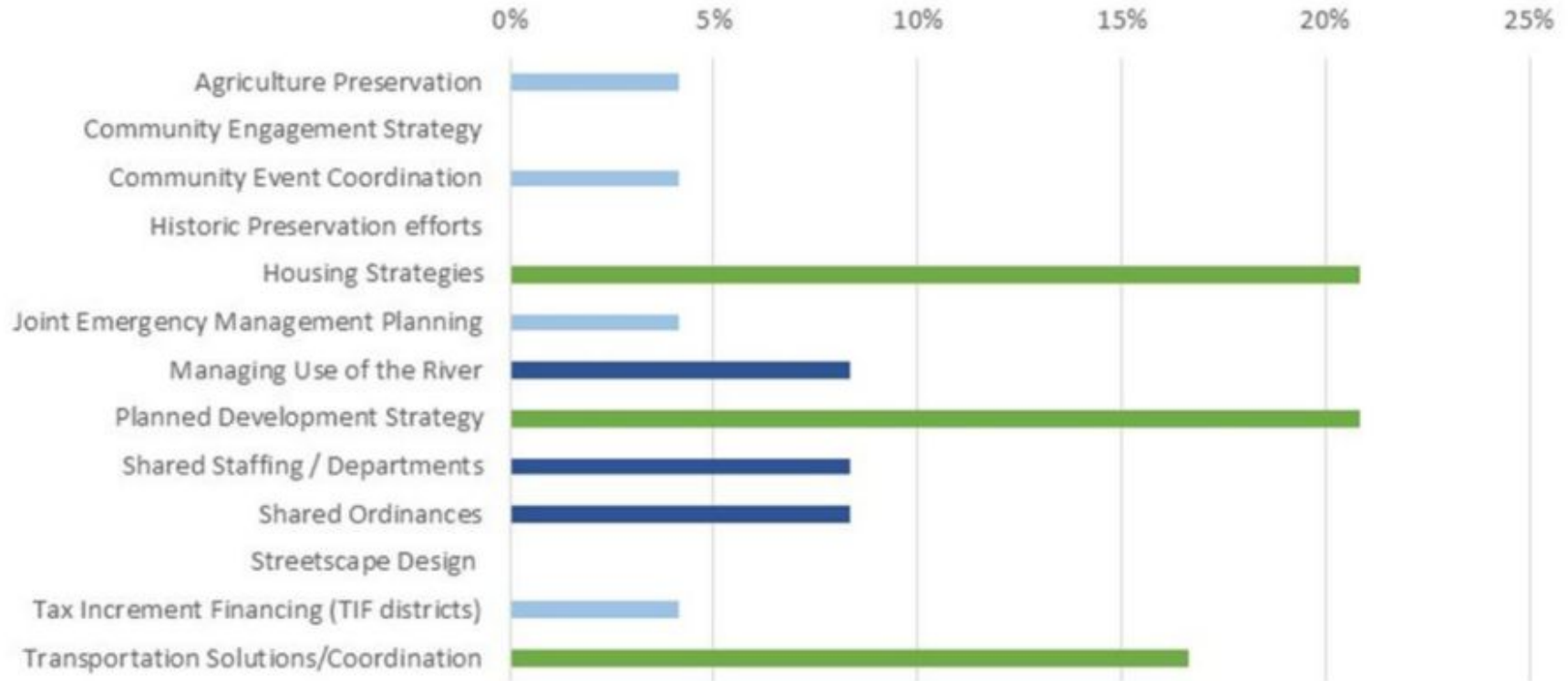
Damariscotta ~ Newcastle
April 2025



Agenda

- Review and Update on Joint-Board Priorities
- PW Departmental Overview
- Board Input - Public Works Service Levels
- Proposed Process

Joint-Board Priority Review



Joint Priority Goals

- Addressing Housing Needs
- Coordinating our Future Land Use Development
- Finding Solutions to Transportation Challenges

Joint Board Priority Update - Addressing Housing Needs

November 2024 - Lincoln County Affordable Housing ARPA Grant (Newcastle)

(Assist in the acquisition of an in-town lot for future town needs as well as preliminary design and site planning)

November 2024 - Lincoln County Affordable Housing ARPA Grant (Damariscotta)

Preliminary Design & Concept Workforce Housing project with the goal of advancing the development of affordable housing.

January 2025 - ME DECD Housing Opportunity Grant (Damariscotta/Newcastle)

Perform a detailed site analysis to determine the potential of multiple properties to create a housing complex of affordable units to be utilized by first responders. This includes identifying multiple sites, engaging a licensed land surveyor to survey the properties, and working with a licensed architect to prepare concept site plans and renderings for proposed affordable first responder housing.

Joint Board Priority Update - Transportation

ME DOT VPI (Newcastle) 2024-2025

- Academy Hill/Mills Rd/Main St and River Rd/Main St

Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant - April 2025

- East Old County Road

ME DOT PPI (Damariscotta) 2025-2026

- 1B/Main Street Improvements
- Bike/Pedestrian Improvements
- Traffic/Access Improvements

Why we're here

Public Works Department Improvements

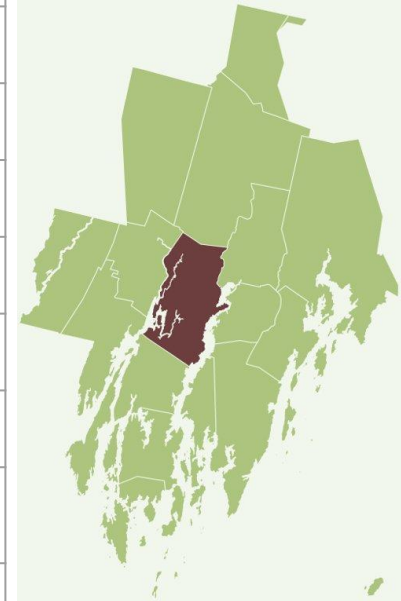
- Both Boards have expressed a desire to explore the future of their Public Works Departments and how to deliver services
- Both managers have met with Maine Local Road Center staff, colleagues, and consultants
- Determine next steps

PW Departmental Overview



Damariscotta

	Damariscotta	Newcastle
Road Miles	26.53	49.18
Summer	15.58	24.33
Winter	21.93	42.62
State-owned	4.6	6.56
Staff	RC (Currently TM)	RC (No stipend)
	2 FTE	
Equipment	F550, trailers	N/A
	WL28, 1025R, attachments	
Facilities	Garage, Shed, Sand Shed, Salt Storage	Salt Storage, storage shed



Newcastle

Damariscotta Garage and Equipment



Damariscotta Garage and equipment



- 10-ton beavertail trailer
- 7-ton tilt-deck trailer
- Attachments
 - Sweeper
 - Broom
 - Boom
 - Snowblower
 - Forks
 - Man-lift
- Hand tools
- Hot water pressure washer
- Shop tools/equipment

Newcastle Storage



Departmental Overview (cont..)

	Damariscotta	Newcastle
Budget (FY 25)	\$1,005,168	\$1,895,485
Operating (Summer)	\$410,168	\$205,200
Operating (Winter)	\$445,000	\$722,750
Capital	\$150,000	\$967,535

BREAKOUT #1 - Separate Board Discussion

1. What do you currently have/provide for services?
2. What challenges currently exist?
3. What do you want to see for services? And at what level?
4. Do you want to explore a two town operation?

REPORT OUT

	Damariscotta	Newcastle
What do you currently have for services?	Equipment (front loader with brooms, forks, etc.) - need to understand capabilities of what we have; paint machine; 2 staff people; outhouse with key; winter plowing contract.	Mowing contract for cemeteries and municipal facilities; downtown plowing contract; all other roads plowing contract; annual maintenance contract (grading, material for dirt roads; ditching and culverts [maintenance], storm cleanup [hourly fee], roadside mowing, signs, sweeping, and striping); specific capital projects with agreed upon price (3-4 projects for upcoming FY)

REPORT OUT

	Damariscotta	Newcastle
What challenges currently exist?	Staffing and keeping that staff at a skilled level; cost of everything right now; cost to rent vs. cost to purchase; lack of equipment (rental of excavator);	No staff for facilities maintenance (handled by Town Manager); cemetery maintenance (no cemetery committee); trash on side of road; lack of facilities, and location is not appropriate for salt/sand shed.

REPORT OUT

	Damariscotta	Newcastle
What do you want to see for services? And at what level?	Quicker turn-around on tasks; culverts (replace our own);	Comprehensive solutions for all of these things we already contract for (might outsource striping, paving, and road rebuild), standard needs to be as good as current level of service; waste management (challenges with current provider, don't have seat at the table with current provider to participate in decision-making)

REPORT OUT

	Damariscotta	Newcastle
Do you want to explore a two town operation?	Yes, Board is interested - what would it take, what would it cost	Yes, want to achieve economies of scale by working together. Should we explore other communities in proximity to us as we discuss this? Is it bigger than 2 towns.

Shared Interests

BREAKOUT #2 - Further considerations

8 question handout to help frame further conversations.

REPORT OUT - Further considerations

Scope of Services:

1. Won't do road paving (contract out); service management; sweeping (own street sweeper?); street lights (LED conversion maintenance); cemeteries (mowing and debris removal); storm drains (still contract out); plowing will be core service of the dept. (Do in tiers? Take on the downtown and still contract out for other roads?); road paving.
 - a. Let Andy and Kevin figure out the nuts and bolts and the Selectboard should consider the politics of it to see how we don't 'blow it up' in the future. Look at good models and replicate.
 - b. Don't need to reinvent the wheel. If we're going to do this it should be a long-term, 30-year minimum commitment. Should be really hard to terminate this agreement so we should be very thoughtful about whether we want to enter into this and what it would look like.
2. Staffing and Skills: equipment maintenance; routine maintenance performed by crew, more challenging can be sent out; daily maintenance vs. annual servicing (tech would look at equipment annually, for example?), with snow removal frequent breakdowns would require immediate repair how do you do that in-house?
3. Town docks, waste management, general facilities maintenance (gutter cleaning, painting, pressure washing, door replacement)

REPORT OUT - Further considerations

Staffing and Skills:

1. Lead foreman, operator, 2 laborers in each core; need several cores before you need engineer and mechanic. Having mechanically-inclined laborers would be useful. Cost-savings bringing in staff rather than sending out? Administrative staff - work orders managed and tracked? Possible need for an administrative person to facilitate this. Should perform risk assessment to determine if we can staff this and make it feasible.
2. Consider response times and housing as an issue if someone lives 40 min away. Provide crews quarters or housing for this position to be on-call during storm events (for example). Additional people on a call list for an hourly rate who are already trained (tree guys, plowers, list of local people who could fill in when necessary).

REPORT OUT - Further considerations

Maintenance and Operations:

1. Asset inventory to know which town owns which equipment, what's shared.
2. Administrative policies
3. Quality standards for maintenance; administrative policies will be useful.

Goals of a process

1. Review each town's public works annual scope of work
2. Identify optimal work plan for public works department(s)
3. Forecast various cost models to deliver that work plan
4. Explore if a joint public works department is an option
5. Determine next steps to inform FY 27 budget planning

Proposed Process/Timeline

Concept/Planning (Dec - April) (now 5/5)

- Maine Local Roads Concept Mtg
- Consultant Speculation
- Board Review/Check-in

Operational Strategy (May - July)

- Form workgroup
- Workgroup Meeting
- Review Policies
- Draft Operational Concepts
- Board Check-in

Draft Plan (August - Sept)

- Board/Public Input
- Draft Budget
- Draft Policy List
- Draft Operational Plan
- Draft Site Plan
- Initial Draft

Final Plan/Approval (Oct - Dec)

- Community Presentation
- Final Draft
- Final Board Approval
- Meeting Warrant
- Public Hearing
- Town Vote

Questions

- Is the proposed process an agreeable approach with the board?
- Does the proposed timeline, given current workloads, seem feasible?
- Are we missing anything that you want included?
- Are there assumptions we need to know/have going into this process?
- How will we gather input from residents regarding this process?

Next Steps

(filled in based on input during the meeting)

Create a 6-person working group (2 board members from each municipality [total of 4] and 2 town managers)

Use content experts (professionals or locals) as needed when specific questions arise.

Engage consultant (Paul Brown) to assist with development of scope, staffing needs, operations, etc.