

# Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2012



# Town of Fort Kent



# Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Fort Kent

Adopted by the Residents on: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) certify that this comprehensive plan was prepared with the intent of complying with the Growth Management Act (30 M.R.S.A §§ 4312 – 4350.), that it includes all of the applicable required elements of the Maine Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule (07 – 105 CMR 208), and that it is true and accurate.

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# Town of Fort Kent Comprehensive Plan

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## **Fort Kent Community Vision Statement rDRAFT 5/10/12**

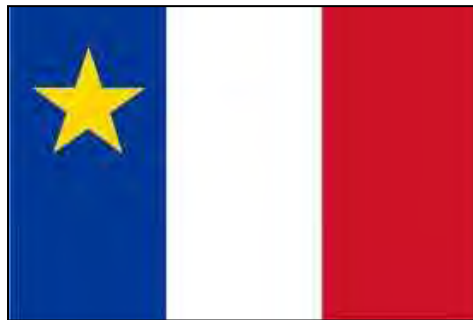
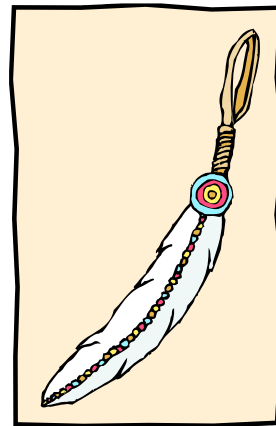
The vision statement expresses the desired future character of the community in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation system, land use patterns and the town's place and importance in the region.

### **A Vision of Fort Kent 2021**

Fort Kent remains a desirable place to live with diverse job opportunities and a gradually growing population. The town is a vital service center for the surrounding smaller communities and is a destination for persons seeking natural and cultural based travel experiences. This creates a sense of vibrancy and prosperity for the community. Our quality of life is firmly based in a blend of access to recreation, scenic beauty, diverse housing opportunities, convenient access to services, personal safety, cultural experiences and resources and overall affordability of living. The rural farm areas remain devoted primarily to agriculture, forest production and recreation with residences owned by families with a land or natural resource based heritage.



# HISTORICAL, CULTURAL & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES



**draft HISTORICAL, CULTURAL & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 7/17/12

### **Introduction**

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) and the State Planning Office provided Fort Kent with a set of data on its historic and archeological resources used in this inventory and analysis. No information was included on the presence of local cultures. Though not required in the comprehensive planning guidelines, the strong presence of Acadian and Québécois culture and the developing presence of the native Wesget Sipu culture in the community created a desire to include culture in the discussion of issues related to historic and archeological resources.

Native culture predates all other local cultures and is represented by the native people of the St John River Valley who have hunted, fished and lived here from the beginning. The Wesget Sipu people who live here today are dedicated to preserving their native culture and traditions. This is accomplished through practice, sharing the knowledge of elders, teaching of their youth and sharing with the community. The Wesget Sipu are presently funded by a multi-year grant from the Administration for Native Americans. They are in the process of gathering examples of their culture through stories and artifacts and collaborate with the Archives Acadiennes in support of this effort. The phrase Wesget Sipu is Mi'kmaq which translates to Fish River. The Fish River is a recurring theme in local cultures.

Fort Kent's cultural origins, as a French-speaking region, pre-date by 50 or more years the construction of the Block House and the Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842) and well after the presence of the native culture. The confluence of the Fish River with the St. John River, is part of the Madawaska Territory, known as "La Grande Décharge" where settlement began around 1785. The Acadians and the Québécois comprised the French population during the years before a Border existed in this region. In many ways the region is understood today to be as one. The Town's French cultural distinction is still very apparent in many ways including language and strength of faith and family. The Maine Acadian Archives/Archives Acadiennes, is located in the community and serves to study, document, preserve and educate about the Acadian and Franco-American heritage in the St. John Valley and elsewhere in the United States. These archives are located on the UMFK campus and serve as Fort Kent's cultural center. Their website is located at [www.umfk.edu/archives/](http://www.umfk.edu/archives/)

While the arrival of the Americans, Scots and Irish in the 1820's did little to dilute the dominant local French culture, the Scot/Irish presence is very distinct in the communities upriver from Fort Kent. Many persons of Scot/Irish decent also live and work in Fort Kent. This cultural blend with a Native presence and French distinction will continue to prove its value as a tool to enhance the local economy and the Town's quality of life.

## Conditions and Trends

The Town's "showcase" historic resources include the Block House, originally Fort Jarvis (1839), a State Historic Site, a National Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Fort Kent Railroad Station (1902), also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most recently, the Daigle-Dube House (1839), near the railroad station, has been acquired and protected by the Fort Kent Historical Society (FKHS) and is similar in construction to the Block House. Local knowledge of other valuable sites abounds and several of these may someday prove eligible for listing. An extensive list of these sites appears at the end of this section.

The Block House: Constructed in 1839, this is the only extant fortification of the Aroostook "War" (1838-1839), the conflict that climaxed the Northeast border disputes with Great Britain following the War of 1812. The controversy over the border began with the Treaty of Paris (1783) and was finally resolved by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, signed in Washington in 1842. With the boundary settled, the fort was abandoned and later became a State of Maine Historic Site. The roof has been restored but there may still be some moderately significant timber-framing issues to address. The restored roof included reconstruction of new the dormers (missing since the 1920s). New stairs were installed to alleviate water damage issues. Private property adjacent to the Block House site limits access to the State owned Fish River Island immediately to the north. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

Fort Kent Railroad Station: This former railroad station opened in 1902 as the northern terminus of the Fish River Railroad and was later used by the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad. The arrival of the railroad in Fort Kent provided the area with passenger and freight service. It marked the beginning of significant growth in the farming, lumbering, and business sectors of the community. Potatoes, hay, grain, shingles, pulpwood, and game were shipped over the railroad. The station, now the Fort Kent Historical Society Museum, is a one-story, frame building. Its gable-on-hip roof and wide overhanging eaves are typical features of other Bangor & Aroostook railroad stations. Five gardens surround the property. This building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989, is owned by the FKHS who is undertaking restoration of the building as funds permit. The building and grounds are well maintained and open to the public a few days per week during summer. The museum focuses on the history of the railroad in relation to Fort Kent, Maine.

The Daigle-Dube House: This historic building was built around 1839 and first served as a chapel at the St. Louis Cemetery. It is similar to the large timber construction of the Block House. The building was later moved to its present location near the railroad station. Acquired by the FKHS around 2007, the Jean-Baptiste Daigle House is believed to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This is a goal of the FKHS who is actively pursuing registration and restoration of the house and barn. Restorations in 2011 included

work in the parlor and the attic granary. A pegboard was installed to display tools and shingles for the barn were also acquired. Barn restoration work will continue in 2012. The house will serve as an interpretive center for early Franco lifestyle in the community. The FKHS continues to need volunteers, donations and other funding to continue their valuable work preserving the community's historic resources.

Fish River Falls: This site is well known for its outstanding natural features but is not well known for its historical value. The Fish River, like the St. John, was used for log drives and the falls were a dangerous obstruction to the drives that required men to risk their lives freeing log jams. Six of these river drivers were killed at this site and their names; (all English) are inscribed on a ledge at the falls. A local private collection includes a photograph of the inscription taken to preserve this part of Fort Kent's early logging history. The site also includes the remnants of a stone sluice that was a functional part of early log drives to the mills located below the falls.

The only identified historic archeological site in Fort Kent is the area around the Fort Kent Block House. This American military site has had substantial alteration in the form of earth fill that was added over a period of decades to depths of 20-30 feet. The area north of the site to Fish River Island and the St. John River appears to be in a more natural state. Local knowledge suggests that there were once tunnels from the Block House to Fish River Island, but no formal documentation exists. Little is known about other potential historic archeological sites that are believed to exist in the community. It has also been suggested that a site of early Acadian occupation exists near the Daigle farmstead on US Rt. 1 which is known to be the oldest farm in the region.

A single site of known prehistoric archeological significance is located along the Fish River around the Bradbury siding area. Little information is available on the nature of this site. Extensive areas along both the St. John and Fish Rivers are considered sensitive for prehistoric archeology. A recent excavation for residential construction in St. John Plantation, near the Fort Kent town line, is rumored to have unearthed pre-historic remains, but was not reported. These sensitive areas are frequently associated with confluences of brooks with the rivers and the broad flats that are characteristic at upriver and downriver ends of Fort Kent. It is possible that many archeological sites have already been excavated and that artifacts from this region exist in State and Federal collections. This should be verified before any further survey of potential archeological sites is done. A map of areas sensitive for prehistoric archeology, prepared by the MHPC, dated March 2010 is available at the planning office.

Community History: The Town of Fort Kent located at the confluence of the Fish River with the St. John River, is part of the larger international Madawaska Territory, known as "La Grande Décharge". Early settlement began around 1785 but the earliest records indicate that Jean-Baptiste Daigle was among the first to settle in 1819 in what is now Fort Kent. Other early

settlers included Sigfroy and José Nadeau, 1821 who settled a point of land west of the Fish River's confluence with the St. John. Daniel Savage came to the area and built a home and sawmill on the Fish River about one to two miles upriver of the St. John in 1827 under the employ of the New Brunswick Company, Peters and Wilmot. A second mill was built ½ mile downriver by Nathaniel Bartell in 1827. This settlement along the Fish and St. John Rivers began the early pattern of development that still characterizes Fort Kent today.

The name, Fort Kent, came about as a result of the boundary dispute between the U.S. and Canada and the block house style fort that was constructed at the confluence of the Fish River with the St. John River. A militia headed by Captain Stover Rines was assigned the task of constructing the fort, guarding the forest and strengthening and extending the boom on the St. John River to intercept stolen timber. Rines served under Colonel Charles Jarvis, then Acting Land Agent for Maine, when he was given his Aroostook assignment and the fort was originally called Fort Jarvis when it was built in 1839. Shortly thereafter the fort renamed to Fort Kent in 1840 with the election of Edward Kent as Governor of Maine. The "Aroostook War" 1841 brought the boundary dispute to a head and led to the signing of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842 which finally settled the boundary location.

Fort Kent's settlement has been substantially influenced by the location of the rivers and its early defensive position on the St. John River. Many of the more prominent homes that remain in the community were built and owned by early business persons associated with trade in timber and other goods. Other prominent homes near the town center were owned by clergy. The central business district today exists along the major streets that parallel the rivers and residential neighborhoods connect directly to these commercial areas. There is still an active sawmill on the Fish River near the original sites of earlier mills. This part of Town is still known as Fort Kent Mills.

Farming began as one of the principal occupations of the Upper St. John Valley since its early settlement as far back as 1797. The clearing and cultivation of the flats along the river was the primary focus during the first decades of settlement. The primary crops were potatoes, buckwheat and other small grains. As population grew, more land was cleared for agriculture further from the river. This gave rise to the second and third rows of farm lots that became known as the "back settlements". Many of these areas are still actively farmed today, some by descendants of the original settlers. The pattern of long narrow farm lots extending from the river back into the hills is still present today.

Threats to Historic and Prehistoric Resources: The threats to these resources are primarily centered on the harsh northern Maine climate, lack of financial resources and a lack of broad public awareness and appreciation for the value of historic/prehistoric resources. All of Fort Kent's historic buildings are wood frame structures that require constant maintenance. The FKHS is a very strong organization with approximately 300 members and several thousand



dollars per year in revenue. They do not receive an annual tax appropriation; however, \$3,100 is raised each year for Block House administration to match \$1,200 received from the State. Funding for the Block House has been flat for several years. The local Boy Scout troop and many other volunteers contribute to the operation and maintenance of the Town's historic sites. The FKHS also undertakes various fundraising activities that further help support their mission.

Prehistoric resources are threatened by all land use activity in sensitive areas especially when excavation is involved. Permitting for many activities does not require a review or determination of the presence or absence of these archeological resources. Public awareness of these resources is limited. Some sensitive areas are subject to severe stream bank erosion that may be exposing or degrading prehistoric sites.

### **Analyses**

Historic settlement patterns are still apparent in Fort Kent as evidenced by the village area near the St. John and Fish Rivers and the farm lots that extend outward from the rivers. These patterns were generally described in the previous section. Many of the town's "back settlements", the location of numerous small subsistence farms went through a period of abandonment during the 1950's and 1960's. During their active period many of these farm families had winter homes near the town center and local government paid them to move in to town during the winter. Today, all of these settlements have been re-occupied by year-round residential uses though not all are associated with active farms.

Current shoreland zoning and subdivision ordinances include provisions that are designed to protect historic and archeological resources. No provisions for this exist in the town-wide zoning ordinance. The language in the shoreland zoning ordinance applies only to structural development and soil disturbance that are on or adjacent to sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Only one of these sites is located within the shoreland zone in Fort Kent. This provision does nothing to protect the other listed or eligible sites, numerous areas identified as sensitive for prehistoric resources and the one site of known prehistoric significance. The language in the Town's subdivision ordinance is non-specific as to what measures are appropriate for the protection of historic and prehistoric resources. The ordinance implies that consultation with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission should occur during the subdivision review process, but it does not specifically instruct whose responsibility it is to inquire. Neither does the ordinance suggest that other local organizations like the FKHS, Acadian Archives or Wesget Sipu be consulted. Local ordinances do not require applicants to survey their proposed development site for historic and prehistoric resources. The current measures in local ordinances could be improved to clarify responsibility and extend protection to sensitive areas by requiring a more detailed review during the permitting process.

None of Fort Kent's known significant historic resources have fallen into disrepair. This is a credit to the many dedicated persons who donate time and money to the efforts of several local organizations that are there to help identify and protect these resources. Private owners of properties that have historic significance that has yet to be verified have also done well with the upkeep of their property. The FKHS may wish to prioritize the list of potential sites and initiate a dialog with property owners. The historical society may also be able to provide a tax exemption incentive or the option of a preservation easement. In their continuing work to increase local awareness, the FKHS may wish to prepare a series news releases that feature the historic sites in the community. Other incentives for protecting historic properties are included in the Policies and Strategies.

The Fort Kent (Jarvis) Block House has limited space on the grounds for display of artifacts and interpretive displays that communicate the history of the Aroostook War. Adjacent property should be acquired in the future by title or easement and access to Fish River Island, integral to the Fort's operation, otherwise provided. This would greatly enhance visitor experience at the site. Additional interpretation (such as a walking tour brochure) is needed to improve the visitor experience and provide information on the history and national significance of this historic site.

Much work remains to be done with regard to the Town's prehistoric archeological resources. New sites could be identified, mapped and protected. Any efforts, however, should be directed by the Wesget Sipu, whose ancestors used these sites for thousands of years and who now have a growing presence in the community. Work should include collaboration with the Acadian Archives as may be appropriate. Effort should be directed to determining the extent to which sensitive areas may have been disturbed or excavated in the past. If collections from this region are identified then effort should be directed to returning artifacts to the Wesget Sipu and Acadian Archives.

Fort Kent's cultural distinction will continue to prove its value as a means to enhance the local economy. Tourism is one of the Town's economic engines and many people do travel specifically to experience culture. Other visitors to the community may find that the cultural presence expressed through language, traditions and events enhances their experience of being here. Fort Kent should continue to direct attention to the organizations that develop and sponsor cultural events. The 2014 Congres Mondial Acadiennes, World Acadian Congress is a unique and timely opportunity to stimulate the local economy and create new enterprises. A lasting impression of the region as a travel destination can be made to a large audience and this could have long term benefit to the community. Fort Kent's creative use of its unique cultural assets, including native, Acadian and Scot/Irish, is an essential part its economic future. The policies and strategies at the end of this section and those found in the local economy section intend to support and strengthen the Town's cultural identity.

## **PARTIAL LIST OF HCA RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

1. Daigle Farm House
2. Dan Paradis House
3. Robert Marquis House
4. Dr. Toussaint House (UMFK President's)
5. Gil Caron House
6. Michigan Settlement Pelletier Grave Site
7. Emile LeBoeuf House
8. Randy Pinkham House
9. Lizotte House (former Post Office)
10. Aroostook School
11. Blake Library Bell
12. St. Louis Church and Convent
13. Philippe Roy Block
14. George Emile (Sue) Roy House
15. Philip Bouchard House
16. A.D. Soucy House and Supply Building
17. Alberie Pelletier Potato House/Lew Rioux Building
18. Martin House (bugus)
19. Don Lozier - Mill
20. Federation Building
21. Fish River Falls
22. Fish River Island
23. Daigle Island
24. River islands and shores near confluences

# **rDRAFT HISTORICAL, CULTURAL & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

## **Policies & Strategies** 7/17/12

### **State Goal**

Preserve the State's Historic and Archeological Resources and to further identify these resources and ensure that their value is recognized and protected.

### **Local Goal**

Improve local awareness and understanding of these resources and their value. Identify, recognize and protect new resources that have merit.

### **Summary**

The Town's "showcase" historic resources include the Block House, originally Fort Jarvis (1839), a National Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Fort Kent Railroad Station (1910), also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most recently, the Daigle-Dube House (1839), near the railroad station, has been acquired and protected by the Fort Kent Historical Society and is similar in construction to the Block House. Local knowledge of other valuable sites abounds and several of these may someday prove eligible for listing. Much work remains to be done and support for these efforts is needed. The "Market Street Historic District" is a concept spawned by comprehensive planning process and based on local knowledge of the collective historic value of several sites in proximity to the Railroad Station. There is much potential to expand our "showcase" of historic resources.

A single site of known pre-historic archeological significance is located along the Fish River around the Bradbury siding area. Little information is available on the nature of this site. Extensive areas along both the St. John and Fish Rivers are considered sensitive for prehistoric archeology. Archeological survey of these sites would support the knowledge base and understanding of the regions native culture. It is possible that many archeological sites have already been excavated and that artifacts from this region exist in State and Federal collections. This should be verified before any survey of potential archeological sites is done. Effort should be directed to returning artifacts to this region.

### **POLICY 1**

Improve awareness and understanding of the significance of Fort Kent's historic, cultural and archeological resources. (HCA)

### **Strategies**

- a. Request additional funding from National Park Service and Maine Department of Conservation for an extended operating season at the Block House.

- b. Establish a “Block House Day” that presents and interprets the sites importance and includes reenactment of events (W-A Treaty signing) and a native culture element (Order of the Arrow Ceremony).
- c. Research the 1839 period for military costume and plan an accurate reenactment of the W-A Treaty signing for the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in conjunction with Congress Mondial Acadiennes
- d. Expand the use of the Block House and other historic sites as staging areas for social/educational events that build support for local historic resources and further international collaboration as “Acadia of the Lands and Forests”.
- e. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and Historical Society to encourage entrepreneurs to develop historic/cultural tours of Fort Kent.
- f. Enhance the Municipal website (fortkent.org) to include a link to information and museums that exhibit the community’s historic, cultural and archeological resources.
- g. Improve and update the public signage and literature that directs people to the HCA resources of Fort Kent. Include bilingual signage/literature.
- h. Encourage the development of a local and native history course for SAD #27 and UMFK.
- i. Develop documentation, interpretation and displays that communicate the importance of Churches, farming and logging in local history.

## **POLICY 2**

Improve the protection of known and potentially valuable HCA resources of the community.

### **Strategies**

- a. Amend Shoreland and Town-wide Zoning Ordinances to include standards that help identify and protect HCA resources.
- b. Amend the building permit application and review process to include identification of potential impacts on HCA resources.
- c. Sponsor a forum at the Senior Citizen Center to extract local knowledge on the location of farmsteads, settlements, foundations and artifacts that depict local HCA resources.
- d. Incorporate the use of social media like Facebook to help identify and locate HCA resources.
- e. Seek funding to develop and implement an historic preservation master plan that includes a comprehensive list of potential sites and a study of the Market Street Commercial Historic District.
- f. Make a formal written inquiry to U.S. Federal and State Agencies and Canadian Provincial Agencies regarding their knowledge, possession and location of artifact collections from Fort Kent.
- g. Elicit the support of the UMFK Senior College program to conduct outreach for strategy f.



- h. Start a dialog with the owner on the acquisition/relocation of the lumber yard to enhance the Block House setting and facilitate access to Fish River Island.

### **POLICY 3**

Have all eligible sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places and locally recognize and display these sites.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Encourage and support the local historical society's effort to produce a comprehensive list and evaluation of potential sites.
- b. Establish a dialogue with owners on the potential historic value of their property.
- c. Request the participation of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in the nomination of potential sites for listing.

### **POLICY 4**

Recognize and support the identification, interpretation and display of HCA resources as a means to enhance the local economy and quality of life.

#### **Strategies (Note: certain strategies above also speak to policy 4)**

- a. Continue to support local, regional and international festivals and events that include culturally based activities and international cooperation in the "Madawaska Territory" and broad audiences.
- b. Encourage and support the development of new activities and events including February "Carnival" ending in Mardi Gras.
- c. Suggest a university short course in the cultural/historic basis of "Carnival" that culminates in a trip to the Quebec City Winter Carnival.
- d. The other strategies that support this policy include 1. a, b, c, d and 2. e.

#### **Implementation Partners/Timeline**

FKHS, NPS, DOC, BS, PB, AA, WS, CofC, UMFK, SAD #27, LG, TC, HPO, MHPC

**Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, **Policy 2** w/ 10yr, **Policy 3** w/ 10yr, **Policy 4** Mid-term

# WATER RESOURCES



draft **WATER RESOURCES**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 7/17/12

## **Introduction**

Fort Kent is rich in water resources that contribute greatly to quality of life and the local economy. The only thing the town doesn't have when it comes to water is a "major" lake within its municipal boundaries. Part of the watershed for Cross Lake and other lakes in the Fish River Chain extends to the Town. Great ponds of 10 or more acres include, Basil Lake, Black Lake and Marcum Pond. All of these water bodies have adjacent wetland areas. Throughout the Town is also a multitude of wetlands, streams and riparian habitats that serve as valuable brook trout fisheries and nesting habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. The entire St. John River is a focus area of statewide ecological significance and the Fish River is identified as a high value brook trout fishery. The Water Resources Map at the end of this section identifies the location and characteristics of these resources. All water resources are valuable to the local population, whether sportsman or recreationist. Many traditional outdoor activities center on these resources which create a calling card for visitors to Fort Kent.

## **Water Resources Conditions and Trends**

Rivers, streams, great ponds, aquifers and wetlands are all considered water resources. Public and private wells that serve as public drinking water supplies are also the focus of the Town's water resources inventory. Individual water resources were examined for ecological value, threats to quality or quantity and any documented issues related to water quality or invasive species. The Water Resources Map at the end of this section identifies the location of these resources in Fort Kent.

As a 2011 there were 9 sites registered with the Maine Source Water Assessment Program as public water systems. A public water system is any water supply that serves 25 or more people a day or has 15 or more service connections, for 60 or more days out of the year. There are different types of public water systems based on the type of population served, i.e. residential versus commercial. A Final Source Assessment Report was prepared for each of these sites in Fort Kent. This information is summarized in the table below. The evaluation criteria is based on well type and site geology, existing and future risk of acute contamination and existing and future risk of chronic contamination. Acute contamination means risk of contamination from pathogens and nitrate/nitrites, the distance the source is from risks, like septic systems and the ownership or control of the land where risks are located. Chronic contamination means risk of contamination from any four of 89 chemicals like gasoline additives or pesticides, the presence of contamination sources within the wellhead area and the ownership, control or regulation of land in the wellhead area.

### Drinking Water Source Assessment Summary

ID #	Owner	Type/Site Risk	Acute Risk	Chronic Risk
94739	10 <sup>th</sup> Mountain	Low	High/Low	Not assessed
94779	Senior Center	Low	Low/High	Not Assessed
95140	Forest Hill Manor	Low	High/High	Mod/High
10887	Golf Club	Low	High/Low	unknown
90560*	Town	Moderate	Low	Moderate
06954	Mt. View Trailer Park	Moderate	Mod/High	Mod/High
92283	Rosewood Estates	Moderate	High/High	Low/High
94852	Hideaway	Moderate	High/Low	Not Assessed

\*Two wells

Split rating existing/future risk level.

Additional information at Maine Drinking Water Program website.

Two of Fort Kent's three great ponds are completely undeveloped and are in a nearly pristine natural state. The only development is on Black Lake. There is a remnant structure from earlier occupation near Basil Lake. These great ponds do not appear on the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's list of watersheds most at risk from development. Developments occurring in watersheds that are on the list require additional standards for storm water runoff and site development. Keeping phosphorus laden sediments out of the ponds is the major objective of additional standards. The present level of development activity in the respective watersheds has not reached the point of damaging water quality in these ponds. Each pond is described below based on a survey conducted by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

#### Basil Lake

Also known as Basil Pond, this 26 acre water body has a maximum depth of 7 feet, but local knowledge sets the depth at 10-12 feet. Lake temperature is not seasonally stratified and reaches a high of 70° F at all depths. The lake is bounded on the north by floating heath bog, on the east and west by forested wetland and on the south by upland. There are several floating heath bog islands on the lake. The lakes outlet is the North Branch of Perley Brook. The lake and surrounding wetlands are classified as moderate to high value wading bird and waterfowl nesting habitat. The associated wetlands are also considered significant wildlife habitat. The American Bittern is known to nest extensively in the meadows in proximity to the lake. The fishery is comprised of Brook Trout, Blacknose Dace, Redbelly Dace, Creek Chub and Hornpout. There are spring holes that provide refuge for trout during the warmest water period and also serve as limited spawning areas trout. The lake is accessible via a public road and is approximately six miles from the center of town. There is an unimproved boat landing on private property at the west end of the lake suitable for small boats, canoes and kayaks. The lake and the surrounding 288 acre parcel of land are wholly owned by an absentee owner. Basil Lake is an outstanding natural recreation area.

### Black Lake

This water body comprises 48 acres and has a maximum depth of 15 feet. Lake temperature is minimally stratified and reaches a high of 67° F by late summer. The lake is bounded on the north by a steep slope and uplands and on the south by uplands and South Perley Brook Road. The forested wetland to the west is identified as significant wildlife habitat. The lakes outlet on the east is Dickey Brook which includes areas of forested wetland. The fishery is comprised of Brook Trout, Pearl Dace, Redbelly Dace and Banded Killfish. Cool spring seeps provide refuge for brook trout when water temperatures peak. The only development is along the south shore and includes 4 year round residences and about the same number of seasonal camps. The north shore of the lake is either very steep or wet and cannot be developed within 500-1000 feet. The lake is accessible via South Perley Brook Rd and is approximately 8 miles from town. There is an improved public boat landing with parking and picnic area that is maintained by the town. The concrete plank landing is suitable for small boats, canoes and kayaks. The shoreland of Black Lake is in multiple ownerships. Black Lake is a popular recreation area with important scenic and natural values.

### Marcum Pond

Marcum Pond is a pristine remote water body with unimproved access over an old tote road. The pond is wholly owned by an absentee owner. The entire area surrounding the pond is an extensive forested wetland classified as having multiple functions including flood flow alteration, sedimentation control, finfish habitat and plant/animal habitat. Access to the pond is via a primitive trail over private property and is suitable for small canoes and kayaks. The pond comprises about 10 acres. Marcum Pond was not included as part of the Maine Lakes study (1982) so there is little known about its water quality. Local knowledge identifies it as a shallow, spring fed pond of about 4 feet in depth, which, along with its extensive perimeter of forested wetland, forms the headwaters of Camel Brook. The watershed breaks in this wetland and also drains to a branch of Pinette Brook. The Marcum Pond fishery includes native brook trout.

Based on a search of the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) database on invasive species, there are no known occurrences of invasive aquatic species in any of Fort Kent's lakes and none in Aroostook County. An invasive plant is defined as a plant that is not native to a particular ecosystem, whose introduction either does, or is likely to, cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Two invasive species of mil foil have been found in other lakes in Maine. The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program can offer support and materials for citizens to establish an invasive aquatic plant monitoring program in their town. Information on all invasive species in Maine can be found on the MNAP website. One invasive species of concern is the Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) which is known to invade wetlands, stream banks and river and lake shores. This species has been found in the Valley.



There are two rivers that flow through Fort Kent and both of them have outstanding ecological and cultural significance. The Fish River flows north from the Town of Wallagrass, through Fort Kent for a distance of 5.75 miles to its confluence with the St. John River. The St. John River forms the Town's northern border and the border between the US and Canada. The St. John flows west to east through Fort Kent for a distance of nearly 14 miles. Land uses along both rivers are subject to local shoreland zoning but the land uses vary considerably between the two. The Fish is less developed and more pristine. The St. John has more residential development and agriculture along its shores. The Rivers share a common historical, cultural and archeological significance that relates to regions early native occupation, settlement by the French and English and logging history.

### Fish River

The Fish River from its headwaters to its confluence with the St. John River can be characterized by its outstanding hydrologic, scenic and recreation qualities. The river has a regionally unique combination of undeveloped free-flowing river and 5 large naturally occurring lakes known as the Fish River Chain of Lakes. The system includes a wide variety and diversity of views related to the steep topography, diversity of channel pattern and lake configurations. The Fish River includes two segments of Class 4 rapids and is afforded special protection under Maine law as an Outstanding River Segment. In Fort Kent, this includes from the old bridge (now removed) at Mill Street upstream to the Wallagrass town line. This segment includes the Fish River Falls which is a registered Maine Critical Area and a site of local historic significance dating back to the Town's early log drives and milling of lumber. The Falls site has long been a candidate for acquisition under the Land for Maine's Future program. The river's ecological significance within Fort Kent includes the occurrence 4 plants listed as rare in Maine. Additionally, the Fish River and its tributaries include a native brook trout fishery identified as one of the highest quality in Maine. This river fishery is also recognized as one of Maine's priority fishing resources. The rivers water quality classification is Class B from the old bridge to the St. John River and Class A from the old bridge upstream to the Wallagrass town line. Public access to the Fish River in Fort Kent is limited for boats and includes locations at the Block House and Riverside Park on the St. John. Canoe and kayak access is available at Jalbert Park, also public, but the run is less than 1 mile. Public access at Soldier Pond provides a 10 mile run to Fort Kent requiring a carry at the Fish River Falls. Numerous private access points exist.

### St. John River

From its headwaters to the dam at Grand Falls, New Brunswick, the St. John River is the longest stretch of free-flowing river in the northeastern U.S., covering 192 miles. One of the rivers most unique characteristics is its annual ice flows, flooding and shoreline scouring, the result of the northerly flow of the river and its southern limits thawing more quickly. This, in combination with the calcareous rocks and river seeps along its shores has created an ideal

habitat for more than 30 species of rare plants; more rare plants than anywhere in Maine, except for Mt. Katahdin. One plant, the Furbish's Lousewort, (*Pedicularis furbishiae*) is found nowhere else in the world as a result of the very specific environmental conditions that occur on the shores of the St. John River. Ninety-five percent of the known populations of lousewort occur above Fort Kent. However, part of the St. John River focus area of statewide ecological significance does occur in Fort Kent. This portion is located upriver from an un-named tributary at Dempsey Curve to the mouth of Camel Brook, a distance of 1.2 miles. The St. John River is Fort Kent's most outstanding natural feature. Additional information is available in the Beginning with Habitat manual located in Fort Kent's planning office.

The physical features along the shores of the river in Fort Kent includes, floodplains, sand and gravel aquifers, riverine wetlands, steep banks and ledge outcrops. There is a 3,250 levee, built in 1978, that parallels the river along West Main Street and "protects" the downtown from flooding. At least six tributary streams enter the river and there are 14 wetlands with all 5 classes represented along its shore. Development along the river is sparse and primarily residential. Active agricultural fields are prevalent along the river from below Audibert Brook to the Frenchville town line. Severe bank erosion is occurring adjacent to agricultural fields near the town line. Land adjacent to the river is also divided by the Maine Northern Railway from Market Street to Daigle Brook. The river shoreline is very diverse.

The fisheries resource of the St. John River in Fort Kent may also be characterized as diverse and is certainly dynamic. All of the tributaries are productive for native brook trout. Trout along with landlocked salmon are still occasionally caught in the river. There are dozens of fish species found in the St. John River. The most significant change in the fishery occurred over the past 20 years with the growth of the muskellunge and the small mouth bass fishery. These species have substantially displaced the trout and salmon, but are, nonetheless, outstanding sport fish. The change has been embraced with some reluctance by residents. Fort Kent's status as a destination for world class musky and bass fishing will undoubtedly grow.

Overall, the water quality of the St. John River in Fort Kent is very good. The water is classified as Class B from the sewage treatment plant outfall pipe at the international bridge, downstream to the Frenchville town line. Fort Kent's treatment plant is relatively new and was relicensed in 2011. Discharges do not impair water quality and allow for continued occurrence of indigenous aquatic species. Above the outfall pipe the river water quality is Class A which means water in a natural quality state and with naturally occurring aquatic life. The St. John River is international waters and environmental laws and enforcement in Canada may be less stringent than Maine. There are other treatment plant outfall pipes in New Brunswick and a poultry production and processing industry. These are likely threats to the river's water quality. Threats in Fort Kent are limited to erosion and phosphorus runoff from residential

development, road building and agriculture, all of which are regulated by local ordinances. No invasive species problems were identified.

Public access to the St. John River is available at Riverside Park in Fort Kent. Larger boats can be launched here. There are numerous other private access opportunities in upper and lower Fort Kent that can accommodate small boats, canoes and kayaks.

Tributary Streams

These streams are tributaries of either the St. John River or Fish River and are all rated Class AA for water quality. The AA rating indicates that they are natural, free-flowing waters where the direct discharge of pollutants is prohibited under Maine Title 38, law. There are 10 named and six un-named streams in Fort Kent. Segments of all named streams are subject to the local shoreland zoning ordinance downstream of the first tributary branch. This is the minimum required Mandatory Shoreland Zoning law. Streams and wetlands protected by shoreland zoning are described in the table below.

**List of Named Streams & DEP Numbered Wetlands**

	<b>Shoreland Zoning</b>	<b>Un-zoned Segments</b>	<b>Adjacent Wetlands</b>	<b>Mapped Riparian Connector</b>
Audibert Brook	X		X	
Camel Brook	X		X	X
Daigle Brook	X	X	X	
Dickey Brook (W)		X	X	
North Perley Brook	X	X	X	X
South Perley Brook	X	X	X	X
Perley Brook (Main)	X	X	X	
Pinette Brook	X	X	X	X
Regiest Daigle Brook	X	X	X	
Spaulding Brook	X		X	
1, 24, 29, 30, 31 (RP)	X			
23, 26, 27 (LR)	X			
3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 21, 22, 25*, 28 (LR)	X			

\*Split zone Resource Protected (RP) and Limited Residential (LR)

There are also miles of small, un-named streams that are afforded protection under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). The ecological value of all streams and their associated riparian habitats is well documented. Of particular importance in Fort Kent is the contribution these streams make to native brook trout production by supplying cold, well oxygenated water and spawning habitat. These, so called, “lesser” streams are actually extremely important. The riparian habitats associated with these streams are important for many wildlife species favored by local hunters, including moose, deer and grouse. Riparian areas are vital habitat for furbearers and many amphibians and reptiles. They also provide connectors between large habitat blocks and are important for the movement of wildlife. Most of Fort Kent’s streams have wetlands associated with them that further provide locally important trout habitat as well as

wading bird and waterfowl nesting habitat. Water quality threats are primarily associated with improperly installed and/or maintained road or driveway crossings and culvert plugging by beaver. Severe summer rain events have caused erosion problems on some farm and logging roads. The extent of this issue is not documented.

### Aquifers

Fort Kent has extensive sand and gravel aquifer resources that are identified on the map at the end of this section. These resources tend to follow the major rivers and two of their tributaries and extend up to 3,250 feet from the rivers. Most of the aquifers are classified as 10-50 gallon per hour recharge capacity and there is one area along the St. John River with a 50 or greater gallon per hour recharge capacity. Since the center of Town is developed adjacent to both rivers there are multiple threats of contamination to the aquifers from existing development. However, much of this area is also served by public water and sewer which helps to mitigate the threat to private drinking water supplies.

Fort Kent's public drinking water supply has had no incidents of contamination and has consistently tested as safe and exceeding the State's drinking water quality standards. The municipal wells and some private wells are located within aquifers with known threats of contamination. This issue is identified and discussed in the Hazard Mitigation and other sections of the plan. Part of the existing industrial park is located within the public wellhead protection zone and the Town does not own or control all land within the zone. The threats identified include pesticide and liquid fuel/lubricant storage and the rail and truck transport of fuels and industrial chemicals through the public wellhead protection zone. Similar threats exist in the residential and commercial zones that are above aquifers in the center of town. There are numerous private wells that are subjected to the same threats as well as threats from failing septic systems and residential fuel tanks and storage of household chemicals. High arsenic levels in private wells have been documented in one residential subdivision and at some individual residences on the St. John Rd. Very little is known about the quality of private wells.

### Wetlands

The Beginning with Habitat (BWH) database based on the National Wetlands Inventory identifies 115 mapped wetlands in Fort Kent. These extensive wetland resources represent five classes and four functions. Wetland classes present include Floating or Submerged Vegetation, Emergent or Emergent/Forested Mix, Forested or Forested/Shrub-scrub, Shrub-scrub and Rocky-unconsolidated. Wetland functions include Runoff / Floodflow Control and/or Erosion Control / Sediment Retention, Finfish Habitat, Plant / Animal Habitat and Cultural / Educational which may include wetlands with other values and functions. These wetlands are distributed throughout the Town and provide multiple benefits to the community.

The ecological value of some of the Towns wetlands is documented in the BWH database as high value plant and animal habitats. Many of these habitats are also independent of wetlands. The Basil Lake, Marcum Pond, Spaulding Brook, North Perley Brook and Daigle Brook wetlands are noteworthy as having potential habitat value for priority trust species. Local research is needed to confirm this. Many of the Towns wetlands are considered Significant Wildlife Habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. These freshwater habitats provide breeding and migration/staging areas for waterfowl and breeding, feeding, loafing, migration, or roosting habitat for inland wading birds. These special ecological values are one of the cornerstones of Fort Kent's sustainability.

Fort Kent has made progress in several areas of water quality protection over the years and continues to engage in practices that help mitigate sources of pollution. The town built a new wastewater treatment facility in 2001 and has completed all storm water and sewer separation projects. The town's effort to address storm water system problems is ongoing and several projects are identified in the current capital investment program. Fort Kent has participated in the DEP small community grant program for replacement of septic systems for many years. As a result, most, if not all, sewer discharges to waters and road ditches have been eliminated. The Town continues to apply for DEP funds when they are available. The Town also supports the Northern Aroostook Wells and Septic Program (NAWSP), a regional effort that helps eliminate failed septic systems and contaminated private wells. The town is a party to regional applications for Community Development Block Grant funds that periodically support NAWSP. Efforts at monitoring lake water quality in Fort Kent have been sporadic over the past three decades and no data could be accessed.

Water protection efforts are included in four of Fort Kent's land use ordinances including Shoreland Zoning, Townwide Zoning, Road Construction and Subdivision. Section 15, Land Use Standards, paragraph S of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance speaks directly to water quality and applies to all activities. Paragraph S prohibits the deposition on the ground or discharge to waters any pollutant that will impair the use of water or the water classification of any waters. The ordinance also includes provisions regarding erosion/sedimentation control and clearing and removal of vegetation and storm water runoff. The Town's Zoning Ordinance, site design review standards also include detailed erosion/sedimentation control, storm water management requirements and provisions for sewage disposal. Paragraph I under the standards specifies that all development shall provide a safe and adequate source for all uses, not cause depletion of local water resources and will be consistent with the service plans of the Water Department. Fort Kent's road construction ordinance, section 15, specifies erosion control measures and the use of MDOT Best Management Practices. The Subdivision Ordinance, section 8 has extensive design guidelines that pertain to water quality protection. Guidelines require that runoff be treated to remove nutrients when the development is in a lake watershed. In addition, section 8, paragraph 10 deals directly with water quality issues related



to development in a lake watershed. This paragraph requires the developer to determine water quality impact, consider the capacity of the lake to assimilate nutrients and plan for minimizing phosphorus export. With local enforcement, these measures are sufficient to protect the Town's water resources.

### **Analyses**

The Town's water resources are being well protected from point sources of pollution. One outfall pipe in the community located on the St. John River is a licensed discharge from the wastewater treatment plant that is in full compliance with Maine law. Many years of participating in the DEP small community and NAWSP programs has reduced point source impacts of sewage from 20 in 1997 to one or two per year in 2011. The Town maintains a waiting list to assist eligible property owners when funds are available. Other point source discharges exist from municipal and State highway storm water systems. These include two pipes that discharge to the Fish River from Maine Rt. 11 & 161 and one pipe that is part of the levee system that collects storm water from the State maintained US Rt. 1 system and the municipal system that serves the downtown area. Pre-treatment of storm water is not presently required, but the Town would be responsive to treatment if funding were available.

There are several non-point sources of water pollution that have been identified in Fort Kent. These include lot development by homeowners, agricultural uses including tillage and livestock and some logging operations by land owners or small independent contractors. The extent of the issue is not documented; however, the character of these issues is pertinent to how the Town responds. Whether or not a permit is required, many homeowners do not use erosion/sedimentation control for their projects. Education would help. Issues with agriculture erosion and runoff are largely related to topography and major rain events that overwhelm conservation practices. Most often, conservation practices are in place on farms. There are a few instances of unrestricted crossing of streams by livestock. USDA programs exist to help with these issues. Non-point sources from small logging operations often relate to major rain events. The use of best management practices is sporadic and presently not required in the zoning ordinance. When a permit or site design review are not required for a particular land use there is no assurance that non-point sources will be mitigated. It is noteworthy that even given these issues there are no urban impaired waters or at risk great ponds in Fort Kent. This is according to DEP and DHHS data. The community is fortunate to have a USDA-NRCS office and a Soil and Water Conservation District office. Their resources are available to property owners that request help. Requests must be direct from a land owner and not the Town. (See Policies and Strategies section on steps the Town can take to address this.)

About half of Fort Kent's non-municipally owned drinking water supplies are not well protected from contamination risks. This is primarily because the owners do not control the land use activities within their respective well head protection areas of 300 feet. These sources are

inspected by the Maine Drinking Water Program periodically and owners are required to test annually. The municipally owned wells are “protected” by local zoning through provisions for a wellhead protection district (WPD) and aquifer overlay district. The WPD includes the land area within 2500 feet of the Water Department’s wells. The Town should attempt to acquire as much land as feasible within its WPD. New or expanded underground and below ground storage of fuels, (except household heating), chemicals, toxic or hazardous materials is prohibited. All construction activities must be carried out under Best Management Practices (BMP). The Aquifer Overlay District establishes a 250 foot buffer around all aquifers in the community. The buffer area is 500 feet for animal agriculture activities. BMP’s must also be used. Other provisions are included in Section 3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Fort Kent Public Works (PW) does its part in the protection of water quality in most of its operations. The PW Director is trained and certified by the Maine DEP in erosion control and extends this training to the PW staff. The department does not own a hay mulching machine but does use loose hay to stabilize newly disturbed areas. On larger jobs a machine is rented but one should be owned. The PW garage is a 10 year old facility. Floor drains were designed with an oil separation tank including absorption socks. The system is maintained on a frequent basis.

Partnering with regional advocacy groups in the area of water quality protection is possible. The St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (SJVSWCD) office is located in Fort Kent. The District Coordinator can certify that local contractors have complied with BMP’s for sedimentation and erosion control. The office also sponsors educational workshops that may include helping homeowners understand and implement BMP’s. The SJVSWCD can also seek grants for special water quality improvement projects and water quality monitoring. The University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK) has carried out water quality monitoring in the Fish River Chain of Lakes. They might be willing to include the local lakes in future projects, especially if grant support is made available. A third possibility is cooperation with the Upper St. John River Organization that represents the entire St. John River watershed on both sides of the border. USJRO may offer water quality monitoring that is geographic information system based. Excellent options exist for local efforts in the protection of water resources.

# **DRAFT WATER RESOURCES**

## **Policies & Strategies** 7/17/12

### **State Goal for Water/Critical Natural Resources**

Protect the quantity and manage the quality of the States water resources and to protect the State's other critical natural resources including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitats, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. (Local policies and ordinances must be consistent with and may be more stringent than applicable state laws.)

### **Local Goal for Water/Critical Natural Resources**

To protect water and critical natural resources in manner consistent with the minimum requirements of state law while continuing to evaluate and understand unique local conditions that may require higher standards for protection.

### **Summary**

About the only thing that Fort Kent doesn't have when it comes to water and critical natural resources is a "major" lake within its municipal boundaries. The town does include part of the watershed for Cross Lake and other lakes in the Fish River chain. Great ponds of 10 or more acres include, Basil, Black and Marcum Ponds. There are a multitude of wetlands, streams and riparian habitats that serve as valuable brook trout fisheries. The Fish River is identified as a high value brook trout fishery. All of these resources are valuable to the entire local population, whether sportsman or recreationist. They are also important to the local economy.

### **POLICY 1**

Protect the Town owned "public" drinking water supplies from the threat of contamination by land-uses within the well-head protection overlay zone.

### **Strategies**

- a. Pursue the development of a new industrial park away from water supplies and aquifer recharge areas.
- b. Acquire all land within the wellhead protection zone when feasible.
- c. Amend the zoning of the existing industrial park to transition the uses to "clean" manufacturing, service businesses, professional offices, and other uses that don't create a risk of groundwater contamination.
- d. Amend the Site Design Review section of the local zoning ordinance to include standards related to location, storage and use of hazardous substances and materials for existing and new commercial/industrial uses.
- e. Use the building permit process to identify potential hazards associated with new commercial and industrial development at the industrial park.
- f. Request 3-year updates of risks in the well-head protection zone by DHHS.

## **POLICY 2**

Protect privately owned “public” drinking water supplies from the threat of contamination from land uses within a 1000 ft. well head protection zone.

### **Strategies**

- a. Revise the building permit application process to include identification of potential hazardous substances on sites within 1000 feet of a well head.
- b. Adopt standards in the Zoning Ordinance for the location, use and storage of hazardous materials for all uses within private well-head protection zones.

## **POLICY 3**

Help residents protect their private wells from contamination from faulty sewers and fuel tanks.

### **Strategies**

- a. Include a reminder about septic tank pumping at 3-year intervals with tax bills.
- b. Amend zoning to require proof of septic system maintenance in the land-use permit application process.
- c. Explore a property tax incentive for persons who demonstrate septic system maintenance. (Small reduction for a receipt from pumper)
- d. Modify the land-use (building) permit application process to include information on the age and condition of fuel tanks.

## **POLICY 4**

Protect the water quality of our three Great Ponds (GP) from non-point source pollution from all land uses that generate erosion, sedimentation and/or phosphorus transport.

### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to update the local shoreland zoning ordinance to keep it current with the State minimum guidelines. (2009 updated)
- b. Enforce the land use standards for all activities within the shoreland zone.
- c. Monitor and annually report land use permit activities within the three GP water sheds and assess the need to apply sedimentation and erosion control and storm water runoff standards to activities that are not presently covered by site design review. (residential and other types)
- d. Enforce these standards for those activities where required by the site design review process and state law.
- e. Request that UMFK-Environmental Studies Program establish an on-going lake water quality monitoring program for Fort Kent’s great ponds.
- f. Provide educational seminars and literature for property owners who do their own site development work.

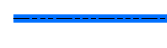



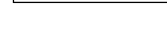





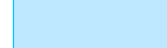
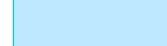

- g. Display educational literature at the municipal center on invasive aquatic and wetland species to better inform the public.

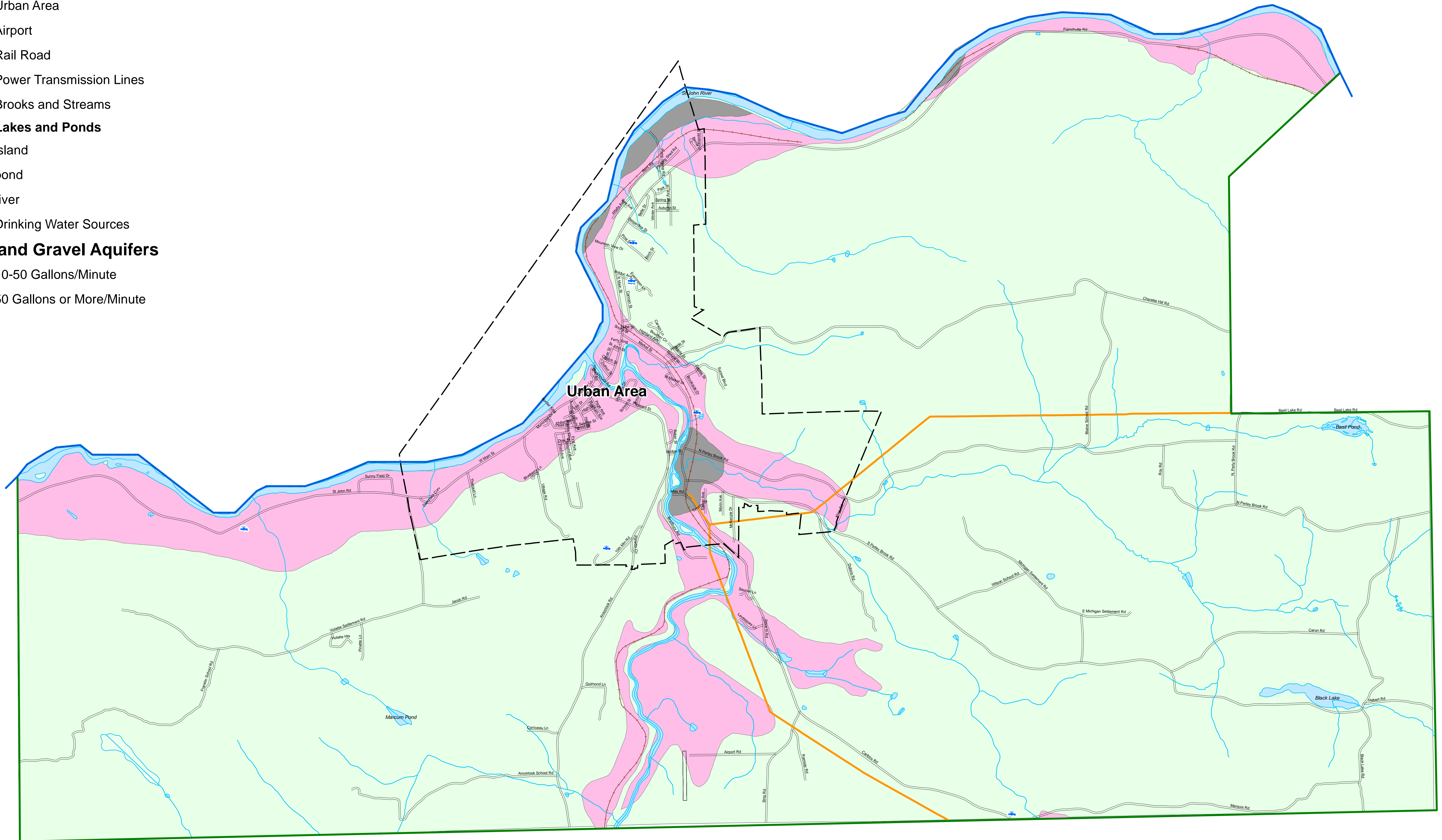
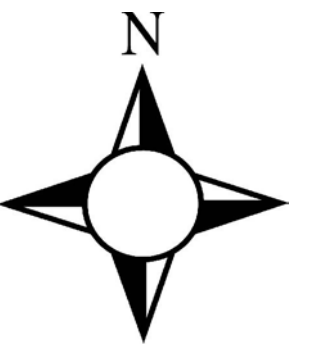
**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

FKW&WW, LG, PB, PDO, FKPW, UMFK, PC, SJVSWCD

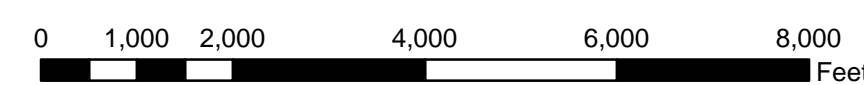
**Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, **Policy 2** Short-term, **Policy 3** Mid-term, **Policy 4** w/ 10yr

**Legend**

-  International Boundaries
  -  Township Boundaries
  -  Urban Area
  -  Airport
  -  Rail Road
  -  Power Transmission Lines
  -  Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
-  island
  -  pond
  -  river
  -  Drinking Water Sources
- Sand and Gravel Aquifers**
-  10-50 Gallons/Minute
  -  50 Gallons or More/Minute

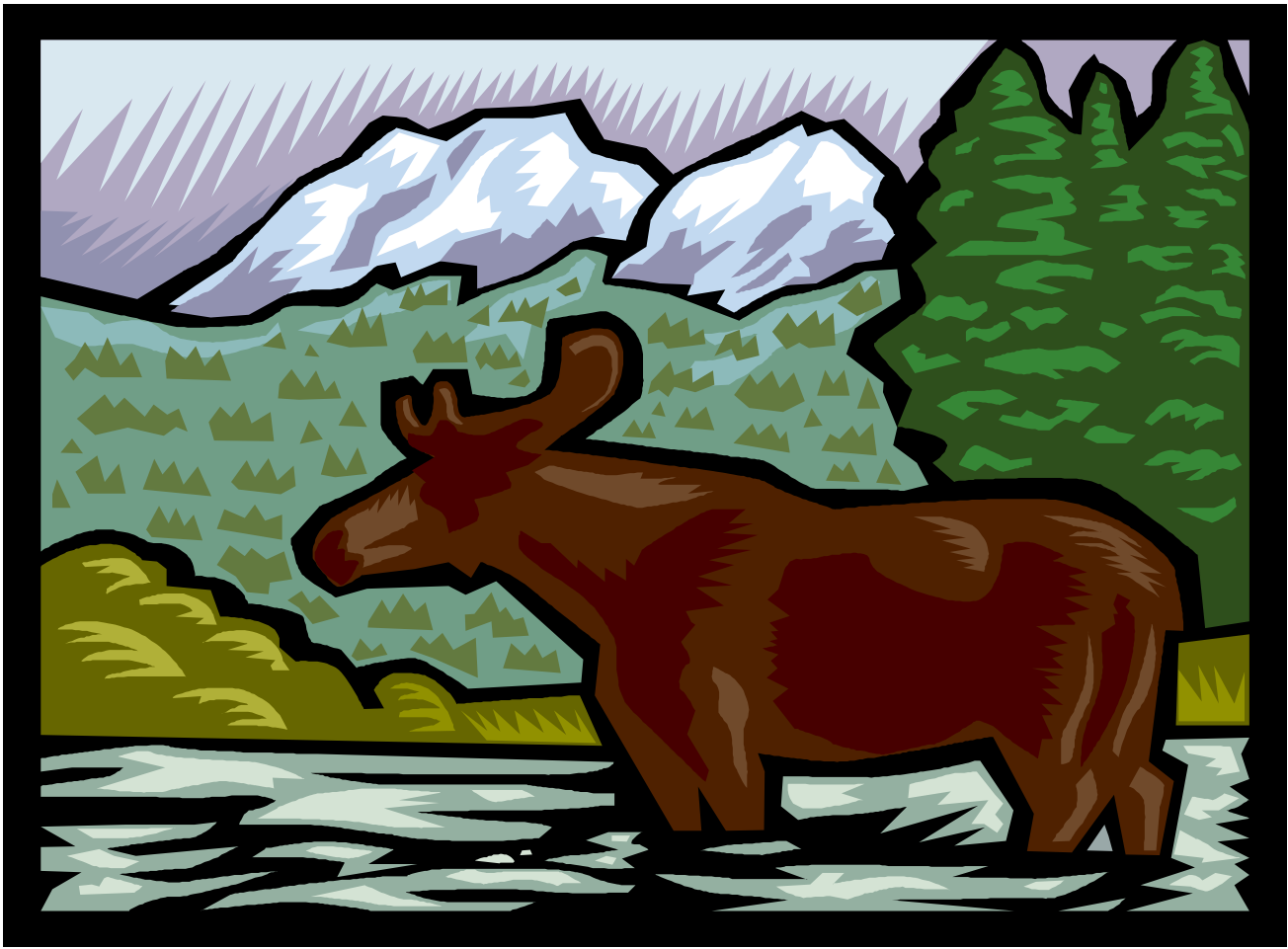


1 inch = 2,000 feet





# CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES



**draft CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**Inventory & Analysis**<sup>7/17/12</sup>

## **Introduction**

Fort Kent's critical natural resources (CNR) are frequently associated with its water resources. Some were identified in the previous section. These include a focus area of statewide ecological significance along the St. John River west of town, several rare plant locations and habitats, including the Fish River Falls location and moderate to high value waterfowl and wading bird habitat. Maine's Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department's Beginning with Habitat Program (BwH) provided the database for identifying Fort Kent's CNR.

The BwH database also includes high value habitat for priority trust species as designated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas are not considered among Fort Kent's critical natural resources because the database is of limited reliability in the Town. There are approximately 45 locations with potential as high value habitat for these species. Priority trust species include 91 species of animals and plants that regularly occur in Maine and are listed or candidate species for Federally Endangered/Threatened status or are migratory birds that are showing significant and persistent declining population trends. These species may also have State Endangered or Threatened Status. Further local study is needed to verify habitat value for priority trust species.

Also included are scenic resources, vistas and waterfalls, identified as having local importance. Like water resources, critical natural resources also contribute to quality of life and to some extent the local economy. These resources are considered to be of statewide and, in some cases, national significance. The location and distribution of these resources are identified on the Critical Resources Map at the end of this section. More detailed information is available from the BwH Manual available at the Fort Kent Office of Planning and Development.

## **Conditions and Trends**

### St. John River Focus Area

Known as one of the most ecologically significant areas in Maine, the St. John River Focus Area covers the main stem of the River from west of St. John Plantation to T14R 14 WELS, as well as a 1.2 mile stretch in Fort Kent. This stretch is located upriver from an un-named tributary at Dempsey Curve to the mouth of Camel Brook. A detailed description of this Focus Area including a list of rare animals, rare plants, exemplary natural communities, significant wildlife habitats and opportunities for conservation is included at the end of this section. The St. John River is one of Fort Kent's most outstanding natural features. One residential subdivision and several other individual lots have been developed along this stretch of river.



### Rare Plant Habitats and Occurrences

Rare plant habitats and the occurrence of individual rare plants have been identified at specific locations in Fort Kent. There are five rare plant habitat locations which include the Focus Area on the St. John River described above (11 species), both sides of the Fish River Falls (7 species and the exemplary River Shore Outcrop natural community), an area southwest of Marcum Pond (2 species), an area on both sides of the Fort Kent – St. John Plantation municipal boundary (1 species), and an area upriver of the Daigle Brook confluence with the St. John River (3 species and the exemplary Laurentian River Beach natural community). Four of these habitats in Fort Kent are either associated with a river or wetland. Individual occurrences of rare plants have been identified in six locations all along the St. John River and include eight species. In addition, two locations of exemplary natural community types including Laurentian River Beach and Riverside Seep are identified. These species and natural community types occur on the St. John between the Fish River and Daigle Brook. This is one of the least developed segments along the St. John in Fort Kent.

### Significant Wildlife Habitats

These significant wildlife habitats in Fort Kent include freshwater wetland habitats that provide breeding and migration/staging areas for waterfowl and breeding, feeding, loafing, migration, or roosting habitat for inland wading birds. There are 16 areas located throughout the Town that are classified for these specific values. Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection is intended to prevent further degradation of these habitats. Most of these habitats are fairly remote and have not been affected by development. Timber harvesting, farming and recreational activities and associated trails and roads are the most common activities near these habitats. Some development has occurred near the headwaters of Regiest Daigle Brook and Black Lake. The moderate and high value waterfowl and wading bird habitats are covered under local shoreland zoning which helps to monitor activity near these resources. The BwH database did not indicate any deer wintering areas or significant vernal pools for Fort Kent. These areas are also classified as significant wildlife habitats. They undoubtedly exist in Town and have yet to be identified and mapped.

A list of all important plants, animal and habitats found in Fort Kent is included at the end of this section. This information is based on known occurrences of these species.

### Scenic Resources and Water Falls

Fort Kent's scenic resources are identified on the Critical Resources Map at the end of this section. Scenic locations of local value were identified on Charette Hill Rd, Klein Hill, Strip Road, South Perley Brook Road and Aroostook Road. Maine Routes 11 and 161 are also designated as Scenic Byways as is US Rt. 1. These are now of State significance. The 2009 Viewshed Study assigns visibility ratings to all of the Towns land area and further identifies

local scenic areas. The privately owned Fish River Falls is the premier natural feature of the Town. There is other, smaller and lesser known water falls on the North Branch of Perley Brook and other tributary streams. These are beautiful scenic resources also in private ownership.

### **Analyses**

While development pressure on Fort Kent's critical natural resources may be minimal, the lack of awareness of these resources and the lack of aggressive code enforcement keeps them under constant threat. Wetland areas classified as waterfowl and wading bird habitat have been subject to local shoreland zoning for decades. As such, they are probably the least threatened of the critical resources. The land use permitting process creates the mechanism for monitoring activities that may harm these resources. The placement of fill along the edge of wetlands is not uncommon in association with agricultural activity and road building. These activities are not closely monitored. Other critical natural resources including the St. John River Focus Area, Rare Plant Locations and Essential Wildlife Habitats are at greater risk because awareness has been lacking among the general public and local regulators including the planning board and code enforcement. Some opportunity to better protect these areas during the permitting process has been overlooked. Now that the BwH database is in place and the locations and importance of these areas has been identified it will be possible to include their consideration in the permit review process. The Town should take steps to more closely monitor land use activity that may affect its critical natural resources.

Fort Kent's shoreland zoning standards are consistent with the revised minimum state guidelines. The ordinance was updated and approved by the Town on June 22, 2009. It is interesting to note that there are no areas designated as resource protection along the St. John River. Yet, it appears that there are several areas that would meet the purposes of the resource protection district and be consistent with existing uses or the lack thereof, within the 250 foot shoreland zone. The Town may wish to review the existing zoning districts in light of the critical natural resource data. This could help extend greater protection to these resources and 100 year floodplains. Local shoreland zoning standards were not found to be consistent with those of the neighboring communities in the context of the designated districts. St. John Plantation is regulated by the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) and their zoning protocol for the unorganized territory. The St. John River is zoned Protection Shoreland 1 with a 75 ft. setback in St. John Plantation and General Development with a 25 foot setback just over the town line in Fort Kent. On the opposite end of Town (down river) the shoreland zone in Fort Kent is Limited Commercial. Immediately over the town line in Frenchville, the zone is Resource Protection which appears consistent with the resource value of this river segment. Fort Kent shares several water resources with the neighboring Town of Wallagrass. Shoreland Zoning is only consistent along the Fish River and Pinette Brook. However, Spaulding Brook in Wallagrass is zoned Resource Protection and subject to a 250 setback requirement and is not subject to shoreland zoning in Fort Kent. A joint review between planning boards of

shoreland zoning districts near municipal boundaries might help identify the basis and agreement for more consistent zoning.

Shoreland Zoning, Townwide Zoning and the Town Subdivision Ordinance all include regulatory measures designed to protect critical natural resources. Unfortunately, permit reviews by the code enforcement officer and planning board have not applied these measures to very many, if any, development proposals. The reasons for this were stated above and relate substantially to awareness of the resources and the boards understanding of their authority to protect these resources. It is unfortunate that some conservation opportunity was previously overlooked. Fortunately, the community has made significant non-regulatory efforts related to its critical natural resources at the Fish River Falls. The Town has been supportive of the Upper St. John Land Trust's (USJLT) periodic effort to acquire this area. Application was made to the Land for Maine's Future Program many years ago. It seems unlikely that there will ever be an agreement on the purchase price. However, private fundraising for the acquisition could help overcome this pervasive obstacle. The USJLT is also available and willing to accept land and/or easements to protect Fort Kent's outstanding natural resources. This should be encouraged.

Fort Kent has a few, very meaningful, opportunities to cooperate in the conservation of shared critical natural resources. The most important of these resources includes the St. John and Fish Rivers. The BwH project has provided the planning tools necessary for implementing the measures that already exist in Fort Kent's land use regulations. The Town should collaborate with neighboring communities along the rivers to ensure consistency with shoreland conservation. A recently developed program called the Maine Deer Habitat Partnership will create the opportunity to identify deer wintering areas in Fort Kent where previously none have been identified. Deer wintering areas are classified as significant wildlife habitat. This valuable information can be included in the critical natural resources database and be considered in the permit review process. Helping rebuild the local deer population can have a positive economic impact on the community. The Town may also wish to cooperate with the Upper St. John River Organization, a regional, non-profit that can assist by developing and implementing management plans for municipal properties that have critical resource values.

# **CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES**

## **Policies & Strategies**

### **Summary**

The Town has five known locations of rare plant communities and six other locations of rare plant occurrences, many scenic vistas and thousands of acres that comprise large habitat blocks that serve priority trust species identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The entire St. John River is a focus area of statewide ecological significance and nesting habitat for waterfowl and wading birds is located throughout the Town.

### **Critical Natural Resources Policies & Strategies**

#### **POLICY 1**

Identify, monitor and conserve the community's significant natural resources including rare plant populations, moderate to high value nesting habitat for water fowl and wading birds, Fish River and tributary trout fisheries and waterfalls.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to maintain land use standards that are consistent with the State minimums for local shoreland zoning.
- b. Amend town wide and shoreland zoning ordinances to require site inspection to identify resource concerns prior to issuance of a land use permit.
- c. Include the identification of significant natural resources on land use permit application forms and verify the accuracy through site inspection, use of GPS and review of database.
- d. Develop land use standards to conserve significant natural resources that are not presently protected by the minimum requirements of state laws.
- e. Support and encourage local conservation organizations to participate in the protection of significant natural resources by acquiring land and easements and education property owners on resource conservation practices. Fish River Falls is a priority site.

#### **POLICY 2**

Coordinate with the Town of Wallagrass, other neighboring communities and interested conservation organizations to conserve significant natural resources of shared interest.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Work with the Wallagrass Planning Board to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Spaulding Ponds watershed.
- b. Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest like the Fish River.

- c. Implement the strategies identified in the Regional Coordination Section.

### **Focus Habitats Conservation Policies & Strategies**

Focus habitats, identified through the Beginning with Habitats Program, include riparian areas, high value plant and animal habitats, large habitat blocks and riparian and undeveloped habitat connections.

#### **POLICY 1**

Maintain and improve water quality, brook trout fisheries, wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity through the conservation of all riparian habitats.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Conduct Planning Board focus sessions (educational meetings) on the resource value of riparian habitats.
- b. Consider the need for amending Shoreland and Town wide zoning to extend applicability and land use standards to specific activities within all riparian habitats.

#### **POLICY 2**

Monitor and annually report land use (building) and subdivision activity occurring within large habitat blocks and habitats for priority trust species.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Revise the land use permit application form to identify when new building construction is within a designated habitat block using GPS coordinates.
- b. Identify through the building permit review process when any development occurs within a habitat connector.
- c. Cooperate with State agencies to provide property owners with guidelines to voluntarily minimize impacts on habitat connectors.
- d. Support local research and encourage landowner cooperation with research on priority trust species.

### **Scenic Resource Conservation Policy & Strategies**

#### **POLICY 1**

Protect the scenic qualities of the community as a means to promote tourism and encourage investment through monitoring potential adverse impacts.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Implement existing provisions of the site design review process that pertain to designated scenic vistas and apply to areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- b. Amend site design review standards to include specific provisions for the size and reclamation of gravel pits.

- c. Include data from the Fort Kent View Shed Study in the site design review process.
- d. Study the implementation of a local “view tax” on new (and existing) development occurring on “high visibility” sites and designated scenic vistas.










**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

PB, USJLT, PDO, MDIF&W, NC, SJVSWCD,


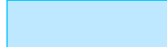

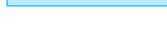



**Critical Natural Resources Policy 1** Mid-term, **Policy 2** w/ 10yr, **Focus Habitats Policy 1** w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short-term, **Scenic Resources Policy 1** Mid-term

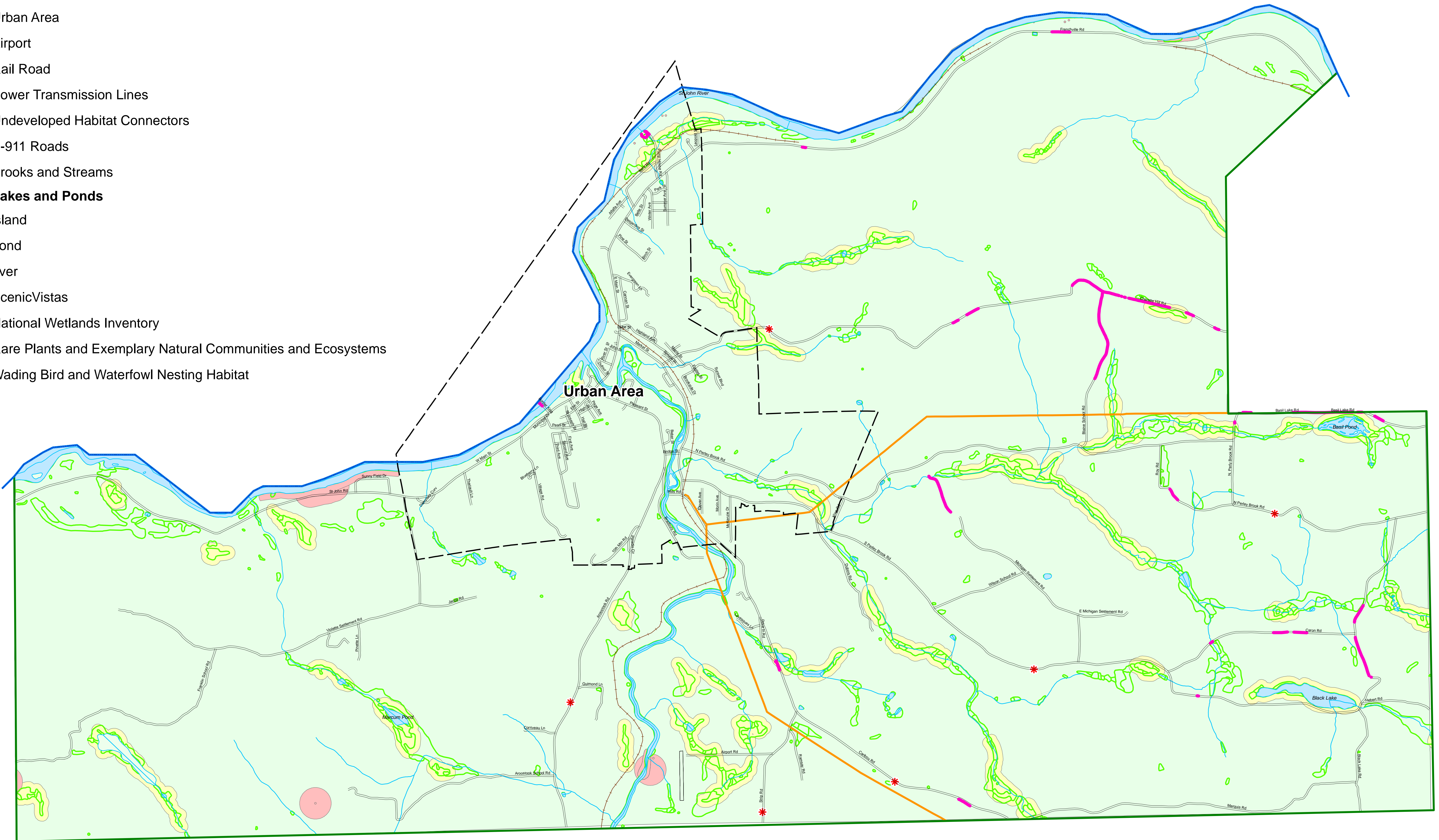
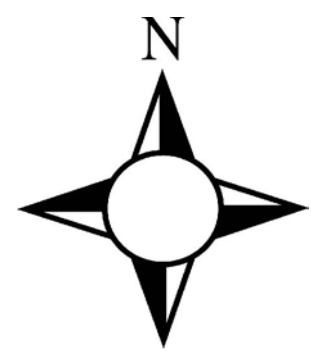


**Legend**

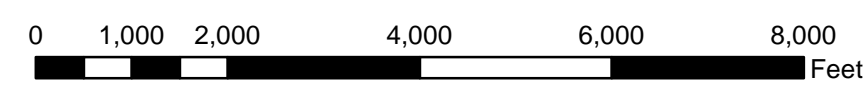
-  International Boundaries
-  Township Boundaries
-  Urban Area
-  Airport
-  Rail Road
-  Power Transmission Lines
-  Undeveloped Habitat Connectors
-  E-911 Roads
-  Brooks and Streams

**Rivers Lakes and Ponds**

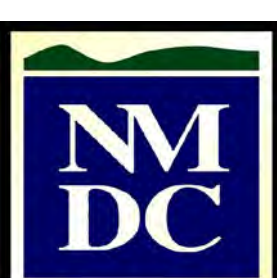
-  island
-  pond
-  river
-  ScenicVistas
-  National Wetlands Inventory
-  Rare Plants and Exemplary Natural Communities and Ecosystems
-  Wading Bird and Waterfowl Nesting Habitat



1 inch = 2,000 feet



Town of Fort Kent, Maine  
Comprehensive Plan  
Critical Natural Resources Map



Date: 06/28/12

# AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES





**draft AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 7/17/12

### **Introduction**

Fort Kent's diversified economy means that relatively few people are actively engaged or employed in agriculture and forestry. Forestry has a stronger position economically in the community even though there is minimal forestland owned by large companies. As a result, issues regarding timber harvesting tend to be more regional or focused on a specific act of an individual landowner or independent logger. Both agriculture and forestry are a part of Fort Kent's heritage. This legacy is still apparent in the landscape and to a degree in the urban areas of town. There are still potato houses and a rail siding that move raw material on Market Street and Fort Kent Mills still has one active lumber mill. Some of the older homes in town and even some elder residents also embody this heritage. Tourism and recreation rely significantly on the access to these land resources and the wildlife and scenic qualities they create. While the number of farm families has declined, many familiar names are still actively engaged in farming and provide employment and economic activity. Fort Kent has several soil types considered prime farmland/forestland soils that are of statewide importance. Fort Kent has hosted a farmer's market for three decades and is in the process of establishing year round access to local foods. Farming's economic and cultural value to the community is not widely known and may be under appreciated among some residents. The protection of valuable farmland and active farms can help control rising property taxes and the cost of municipal services.

Fort Kent has a clear image as a logging community. The economic activity generated by the forest industry is very significant in Fort Kent and includes excise taxes, personal property taxes, fuel, truck and equipment dealerships and multiple trucking and harvesting companies. The local University has an accredited forestry program that serves the regional industry. Interestingly, most of Fort Kent's woodlands are in small private ownerships of less than 1000 acres but surrounding Towns and unorganized territory all have commercial forestland owned by large companies. There are about 30 active timber harvest notifications submitted to the State annually that account for 500-1000 acres harvested. The Town also owns forest land with potential to be managed for many values to the community including water quality, wildlife and recreation. Many trees are also present in Fort Kent's "urban" landscape and enhance quality of life and the beauty of the downtown area.

### **Overview of Topography and Soils**

Topography and soils contributed significantly to the development of agriculture and to the quality of forests in the community. The description of topography and soils below was excerpted from the 1996 Comprehensive Plan. Acreage figures were updated to 2012.

Topography: The Town of Fort Kent consists of approximately 33,593 acres or 52.49 square miles. The Town's location at latitude 47 degrees north is the most northern extremity of the continental United States, east of the Mississippi River. There are steep slopes throughout the Town with flatter areas located in the south central area and the northwest. The St. John River forms the northern boundary of the Town and the Fish River runs through the center of Town. Bossie Mountain and Pinette Hill are located in the west and Klein Hill is just south of the Fort Kent downtown area. Most of the land in Fort Kent is between 500 and 900 feet above sea level, yet many of the larger hills exceed 1,000 feet in elevation.

Fort Kent is in a topographic zone characterized as the "Allagash-St. John sub-region" of the "Northern Forest Region" (The Natural Regions of Maine, Paul R. Adamus, 1978). This region is noted principally by its hilly and dissected relief and elevation, by prevalence of the Spruce-Fir-Northern Hardwoods Forest Zone and by its extensive acreage of fresh water wetlands. Topography has influenced the Town's settlement patterns and agricultural uses. Most development has taken place along the St. John River and Fish River. Development has generally been in the flatter areas of Town extending from the downtown area. About two-thirds of the Town is covered by forest. Hardwood trees predominate on the ridges while spruce and fir are found in lower areas and in slight depressions on the sides of ridges. Many old fields and pastures have grown to early succession mixed wood stands that are characteristic of the Acadian forest. About 20% of the land area is presently used for agriculture. In 2012, the major crops are potatoes, small grain (oats, barley, buckwheat) and beef cattle.

Soils: Knowledge of the types of soils which exist in a community helps in planning land use activities. The various characteristics of soil types present different limitations for development, some of which can be overcome through special planning, design and/or construction. Soil types also affect agricultural practices and influence timber rates of growth.

A composite soils map has been prepared for the Town based on information from Soil Survey Aroostook County, Maine, Northeast Part published by the United States Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service. This publication is available at the local Planning and Development Office. A list of prime agricultural and forestland soils appears below. Many soil types are considered prime for both agricultural and forest production uses.

## Farmland/Woodland Productivity Rating for Aroostook County, Northeastern Part

Map Symbol	Soil Map Unit Name	Farmland Classification	Forest Production Rating
AgA	ALLAGASH FINE SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
AgB	ALLAGASH FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
AgC	ALLAGASH FINE SANDY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	VERY HIGH
AgD	ALLAGASH FINE SANDY LOAM, 15 TO 35% SLOPES		VERY HIGH
BeB	BENSON SILT LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	LOW
BeC	BENSON SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		LOW
BeD	BENSON SILT LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		LOW
CdB	CANANDAIGUA SILT LOAM, THIN SOLUM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		MEDIUM
CgA	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
CgB	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
CgC	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	VERY HIGH
CgC2	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES, ERODED		VERY HIGH
CgD	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		VERY HIGH
CgD2	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES, ERODED		VERY HIGH
CgE	CARIBOU GRAVELLY LOAM, 25 TO 45% SLOPES		VERY HIGH
CoA	CONANT SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	VERY HIGH
CoB	CONANT SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	VERY HIGH
CoC	CONANT SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	VERY HIGH
DaA	DAIGLE SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM
DaB	DAIGLE SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM
DaC	DAIGLE SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM
EaA	EASTON & WASHBURN SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES		MEDIUM
EaB	EASTON & WASHBURN SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES		MEDIUM
EsB	EASTON & WASHBURN STONY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		MEDIUM
FhA	FREDON & HALSEY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES		MEDIUM
FhB	FREDON & HALSEY SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES		MEDIUM
HaA	HADLEY SILT LOAM, LEVEL	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
HaB	HADLEY SILT LOAM, UNDULATING	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
HoA	HOWLAND GRAVELLY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
HoB	HOWLAND GRAVELLY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
HoC	HOWLAND GRAVELLY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
HvB	HOWLAND VERY STONY LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
HvC	HOWLAND VERY STONY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		HIGH
MaA	MACHAIS GRAVELLY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
MaB	MACHAIS GRAVELLY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
MaC	MACHAIS GRAVELLY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
MbA	MADAWASKA FINE SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
MbB	MADAWASKA FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
MbC	MADAWASKA FINE SANDY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
MhB	MAPLETON SHALY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	MEDIUM
MhC	MAPLETON SHALY SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM
MhC2	MAPLETON SHALY SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES, ERODED		MEDIUM
MhD	MAPLETON SHALY SILT LOAM, 15 TO 35% SLOPES		MEDIUM
MmC	MAPLETON VERY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 15% SLOPES		MEDIUM
MmD	MAPLETON VERY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 15 TO 35% SLOPES		MEDIUM
MoA	MONARDA & BURNHAM SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES		HIGH
MoB	MONARDA & BURNHAM SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
MrB	MONARDA & BURNHAM VERY STONY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
NcA	NICHOLVILLE SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH
NcB	NICHOLVILLE SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	VERY HIGH
PeA	PERHAM GRAVELLY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
PeB	PERHAM GRAVELLY SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
PeC	PERHAM GRAVELLY SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
PeD	PERHAM GRAVELLY SILT LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		HIGH
PgA	PLAISTED GRAVELLY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
PgB	PLAISTED GRAVELLY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
PgC	PLAISTED GRAVELLY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
PgD	PLAISTED GRAVELLY LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		HIGH
PgE	PLAISTED GRAVELLY LOAM, 25 TO 45% SLOPES		HIGH
PrB	PLAISTED VERY STONY LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
PrC	PLAISTED VERY STONY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		HIGH
PrD	PLAISTED VERY STONY LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		HIGH

PrE	PLAISTED VERY STONY LOAM, 25 TO 45% SLOPES		HIGH
PvB	PLAISTED & HOWLAND VERY STONY LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
PvC	PLAISTED & HOWLAND VERY STONY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		HIGH
RaA	RED HOOK & ATHERTON SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES		HIGH
RaB	RED HOOK & ATHERTON SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
SaA	SALMON SILT LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
SaB	SALMON SILT LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
SaC	SALMON SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		HIGH
SgA	STETSON GRAVELLY LOAM, 0 TO 2% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
SgB	STETSON GRAVELLY LOAM, 2 TO 8% SLOPES	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	HIGH
SgC	STETSON GRAVELLY LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
SgD	STETSON GRAVELLY LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		HIGH
SgE	STETSON GRAVELLY LOAM, 25 TO 45% SLOPES		HIGH
ThB	THORNDIKE SHALY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
ThC	THORNDIKE SHALY SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES	FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE	HIGH
ThD	THORNDIKE SHALY SILT LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		HIGH
ThE	THORNDIKE SHALY SILT LOAM, 25 TO 45% SLOPES		HIGH
TkB	THORNDIKE VERY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
TkC	THORNDIKE VERY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		HIGH
TkD	THORNDIKE VERY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 15 TO 25% SLOPES		HIGH
TkE	THORNDIKE VERY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 25 TO 45% SLOPES		HIGH
TrE	THORNDIKE EXTREMELY ROCKY SILT LOAM, 15 TO 45% SLOPES		HIGH
TsB	THORNDIKE & HOWLAND SOILS, 0 TO 8% SLOPES		HIGH
TsC	THORNDIKE & HOWLAND SOILS, 8 TO 15% SLOPES		HIGH
Wn	WINOOSKI SILT LOAM	ALL AREAS ARE PRIME FARMLAND	VERY HIGH

Map units that are very rocky or extremely rocky phases may include a high percentage of very shallow soils that rate considerably lower for woodland productivity.

Source: USDA, Northeast Aroostook County, Maine, 1/06.

All of the soils in Fort Kent are part of the Thorndike-Howland Association. These soils are irregularly sloping soils on till derived chiefly from acid rocks. In general, the soils occur on knolls and hills and have shallow depth to bedrock. The thin layer of glacial till in which the soils have formed conforms in shape to the underlying folded, angular and ribbed shale. Thorndike soils, which account for the majority of soils in Fort Kent, are found mostly on irregularly rolling hills. The shaly Thorndike soils are more common and most of them have slopes of less than fifteen percent. The very rocky Thorndike soils generally have very rough relief and most of the slopes are steeper than fifteen percent. These very rocky soils are not extensive in this association. Moderately wet depressions and seepage areas consist of Howland soils. These soils are deeper than the other soils of this association and have smooth relief. They generally occur as long narrow bands between areas of soils that have shallow depth to bedrock.

The areas of this association are slightly difficult to farm because of the irregular slopes and scattered outcrops of bedrock. In many places the land slopes in several directions which restricts contour farming and increases the hazard of erosion when row crops are grown. Trees grow faster on the soils of this association than on soils that have shallow depth to granitic bedrock. Tree roots enter cracks in the shale bedrock, become more firmly anchored and gain access to a larger supply of water. Much of Fort Kent's land area is productive forestland.

## Conditions and Trends

Fort Kent's Farms and Farmland: Farming is an important part of the Town's complex identity and economic sustainability. The working landscape is imbedded in Fort Kent's character and embodied by the active farms that are present on almost every road. The one or two roads that no longer have active farming still show the sign of the Town's agricultural past. Most of the active farms and farmland are located between the Caribou Road (ME Rt. 161) and south of North Perley Brook Road in the central and southeastern areas of Fort Kent. Other active farmland exists along Strip Road, Aroostook Road, Charette Hill Road and US Rt.1.

Residential development in Rural Farm Zones has been part of the local trend toward fewer farms along ME Rte 161 North, Violette Settlement Road and part of US Rt. 1 closer to the Town Center. The Table below shows the 2007 Census of Agriculture summary for Aroostook County. Potatoes, small grain (primarily oats) and beef cattle are the major products on local farms. The production export from these commercial farms identifies agriculture as a local and regional economic engine.

### Aroostook County Agricultural Data

	2007	2002	% Change
Number of Farms	1,246	1,084	+15
Land in Farms	375,568 acres	391,675 acres	-4
Average Size of Farm	301 acres	361 acres	-17
Market Value of Products Sold	\$146,516,000	\$121,158,000	+21
Average/Farm Reporting Sales	\$117,589	\$111,770	+5
Government Payments	\$2,779,000	\$2,333,000	+19
Average/Farm Receiving Payments	\$3,941	\$4,312	-9

Source: USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture Summary Report

The United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Services Agency (USDA-FSA) places the number of active "farms" in Fort Kent at 186. In this case a farm is any land and owner that is eligible for and actively participating in USDA programs. Many of these "farms" may actually be woodlots and part-time farms that produce for local markets. The number of farms in Fort Kent that actually produce for and sell into the commodity market is approximately fourteen. Several of these farms may be considered a "Century Farm", having been in the same family for more than 100 years. All of Fort Kent's farming operations, irrespective of acreage and production levels contribute to the local economy, tax base and help support conservation and recreation in the community.

Fort Kent's Forestland: Approximately two-thirds of Fort Kent's land area is forested. This comprises about 21,000 acres in all forest cover types including softwood, hardwood and mix wood. Private forestland ownerships range from 10 acres to over 1000 acres. Many forested parcels are part of existing farms. There are no large "corporate" ownerships of forestland in Fort Kent. Based on the number of parcels enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program which requires forest management plans about 3000 forestland acres are being managed. Both the

State of Maine and the USDA-NRCS have offered cost incentive programs for private landowners to have forest management plans developed for their property. More acreage is likely being managed than is presently enrolled in Tree Growth. At least two forests are part of the American Tree Farm System and are certified as "Tree Farms". All of the forestland in town is surrounded and accessible by existing public and private roads. The two largest forested blocks include the land area between Charette Hill Road and US Rt. 1 which comprises 7,700 acres and the land area west of Rt. 11 to the St. John and Wallagrass town lines which comprises 8,400 acres. Private forestland is used extensively in Fort Kent for snowmobile and ATV trails as well as hunting and fishing. Relatively few acres are posted. As such, Fort Kent's forested acres provide a broad public benefit. The trend in residential growth in rural areas has created a substantial forestland/residential interface. The Fort Kent Fire Department is trained and equipped to fight wildfire and are available to assist the State of Maine with protection of the forest resource.

### Farm and Forest Acreages

According to the USDA-Farm Services Agency, Fort Kent land in agricultural production (cropland acres including row crops, hay and pasture) today totals 6,950 acres of which 844 acres are enrolled in the conservation reserve program (CRP). CRP is a set aside program for farmland that is taken out of row crop production and seeded to a forage cover to protect the soil. The land can be returned to row crop or hay and pasture production at some future date. Historical information on the actual acreage in production 10 years ago at the local level is neither readily available nor reliable. The previous comprehensive plan did not include an accurate farm acreage estimate. Local knowledge suggests that there are a considerable number of former agricultural acres that are idle and not included in the USDA figure. This is land that is maintained as open and with potential to be farmed again. This acreage could total 1000-3000 acres. Other, former agricultural land has reverted to forest or been developed for residential or commercial use. There is no acreage in Fort Kent that is enrolled in Maine's Farm or Open Space Taxation Programs.

There are hundreds of forested parcels in town that comprise the roughly 21,000 acres of forest land. The Maine Tree Growth Tax Program requires that enrolled land be managed. Timber harvesting is occurring each year and includes both tree growth and non-tree growth classified woodlands. Tax records in 2011 indicate that 49 parcels totaling 3000 acres are enrolled in the Maine Tree Growth Taxation Program. This number has increased slightly since the 2008 townwide property revaluation. In 2002 the number of parcels in tree growth totaled 45 and these parcels comprised 2,873 acres. The table below identifies timber harvesting activity in Fort Kent since 2001. On average 30 timber harvest notifications are filed each year in town and comprise about 869 acres. The acres harvested vary substantially from year to year. According to Maine Department of Conservation records, 50 acres of forestland in Fort Kent has been converted to other uses since 2001.

### Timber Harvest Information (Fort Kent)

Year	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total harvest, acres	Change in land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
2001	409	-	-	409	7	32
2002	953	268	-	1,221	-	28
2003	58	281	-	339	-	30
2004	967	12	-	979	3	31
2005	815	314	20	1,149	4	39
2006	173	-	-	173	14	24
2007	197	225	-	422	2	25
2008	933	50	-	983	5	30
2009	1561	86		1647	2	26
2010	1112	256	4.5	1372.5	13	32
2011						15*
<b>Total</b>	7178	1492	24.5	8694.5	50	312

\* From local code enforcement records; complete data not available

Source: Department of Conservation Maine Forest Service/Fort Kent Town Report

### Community Farming and Forestry Activities

The Town of Fort Kent and the St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District are supporting community farming projects. The District is presently engaged in a project to develop a local producer cooperative and to create better access to locally grown foods in the community. The Fort Kent Farmer's Market has waned in recent years for lack of leadership and management. Interest among residents, in the market and local foods, has been present for decades. The project has potential to re-energize community agriculture by securing commitments from several producers and establishing the Farmers Market in a new location on Market Street at the former A.D. Soucy Building. This historic site was once a grocery distribution facility and in later years was a farm supply store. The redevelopment of the site may allow local producers year round access to the local market and resident's year round access to local foods and other products. The feasibility of this is presently being studied by the District under grants from the Maine Community Foundation and Coastal Enterprises Inc. In 2012 the Fort Kent Lions Club raised thousands in funds for creation of a huge mural on the side of the building that will depict the region's agricultural heritage. The Town has contributed the Farmer's Market sign and banners to the project. These efforts support awareness of agriculture's contribution to the local economy and access to fresh, healthy and locally grown foods.

Other projects are occurring that compliment community agricultural efforts. A USDA program to fund "High Tunnels" has resulted in the construction of several of these greenhouses in the community that are used to extend the vegetable growing season. One local market producer is participating in the Maine Department of Agriculture's Senior Farm Share Program which helps low income elderly residents gain access to fresh, locally grown produce. A site has been offered for a "Community Garden" project. This effort needs some additional organization before it can be developed.

Community forestry activities have been developing for several years in Fort Kent. In 2007-2008, the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and National Science Foundation's Experimental Program in Support of Cooperative Research (EPSCOR) program provided funds for a community forest project in several communities including Fort Kent. The local project evaluated six parcels that comprise 228 acres. Included in the study were stand type and age, yield projections, wildlife habitat value and value for education and recreation. The research was conducted by the consulting firm One World Artisans. The project provided the detailed information necessary to begin management of these community owned forest parcels. To date, the Town has not commenced managing its community owned forest parcels, but the opportunity remains. In addition, tax acquired forested parcels are often sold without an evaluation of their potential for long term public benefit beyond the annual tax revenue they generate. The University of Maine at Fort Kent also owns a 14 acre tract of forestland in Fort Kent known as the Biological Park. This parcel is used for education purposes by the University and SAD #27. Management activities are carried out periodically. The park is an excellent forestry demonstration area and is open to the public.

## **Analyses**

Agriculture/Forestry Importance: Agricultural and forest resources have substantial economic and cultural importance in Fort Kent. These resources provide economic activity, employment and recreational space for use by residents and support for tourism. The Local Economy section discusses this in detail in terms of location quotient analysis. It is clear that farming and forestry employment are more important in the local economy than in the state economy. Locally there is estimated to be 100-125 jobs in logging alone while others are employed in paper and wood products mills and the forestry equipment business. Agricultural products in Aroostook had a market value of \$146.5 million in 2007. Based on cropland acres in Fort Kent, the market value of Fort Kent's agricultural products is estimated to be \$4.47 million annually. According to a 2007 report by the North East State Foresters Association, the value of forest-based manufacturing shipments in Maine equals \$301 per forested acre. Forest based manufacturing includes harvesting and trucking, primary manufacturing including lumber, veneer, pulp and paper and energy and secondary manufacturing which includes furniture and other consumer products. Based on forested acres in Fort Kent, the market value of forest-based manufacturing shipments from the local resource base is estimated to be \$6.32 million annually.

Overall, the agricultural and forest resource base is stable in Fort Kent meaning that there is relatively little acreage that is being converted to other uses. Based on the Aroostook County figures from the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Fort Kent probably has 280 less acres in agricultural use today than it did ten years ago. Only 50 forested acres were converted since 2001. Not all of the agricultural acreage was converted to other uses like residential and commercial. There is still substantial acreage that could be returned to agriculture; 844 acres in Conservation Reserve Program alone. This suggests that there is potential for growth in



terms of the number of farms and persons employed in farming. The number of persons engaged in forest-based manufacturing activities is substantially higher locally than would be estimated using State average based on 1.2 jobs per 1000 forested acres. This indicates that forestry activities are strong and growing in Fort Kent. The rate of timber harvest in Fort Kent should be sustainable. The average annual acres harvested are 869 acres of which 5 acres are clearcut. At this rate the entire forested acreage in Fort Kent may be harvested in 24 years. Annual growth and harvest volume estimates were not available. Based on the rule-of-thumb of one cord growth per acre per year it is very likely that more wood is growing annually on 21,000 acres than is harvested from 869 acres. Monitoring and research is needed to better understand changes in local forest resources.

Protection of Resources: The Town is not presently engaged in any regulatory or non-regulatory actions specifically designed to protect active farmland and productive forestland. Fort Kent does have an extensive regulatory framework that creates a basis for protecting agricultural and forest resources, but specific amendments would be necessary. The general belief is that existing State and local regulations are sufficient for protecting these resources and threat to these resources is limited. There is concern among some in the community regarding the impact of logging on the scenic or visual qualities of the community. This is based on a single occurrence of a highly visible timber harvest on land zoned as residential. Fort Kent is a community of hills with numerous, highly visible, locations but there does not appear to be any broad based concern regarding any land use activities that impact scenic quality. In 2009 the Town repealed the timber harvesting standards contained in its Shoreland Zoning Ordinance as allowed by amendments to the State Minimum Shoreland Zoning Law. The Town Zoning Ordinance requires a permit for timber harvesting and new commercial agriculture, but there is no basis for this, as there are no standards for these land uses. In addition, timber harvesting does not affect property valuation. The Town does own 228 acres of land in six parcels which include both agricultural and forest resources. This publicly owned resource base is below the 1% State average for local government ownership of forest land.

There has been some activity among local and regional private trusts to protect forest and agricultural resources in Fort Kent. The Upper St. John Land Trust owns and has permanently protected an outstanding area of floodplain forest along the Fish River and continues to advocate for acquisition of the Fish River Falls and the adjacent forested site. The Maine Farmland Trust recently attempted to protect an 800 acre farm on the Fort Kent town line from being divided and sold. This farm in the neighboring Town of Wallagrass had been idle (likely in CRP) for over a decade. The acquisition could not be completed and the farm was divided into four large lots, two of which have been sold. These efforts represent a meaningful beginning to recognizing the economic and cultural importance of Fort Kent's farms and forests. Land acquisition is only one among several options that the community can use to protect these resources. The use of conservation easements and current use taxation programs are well suited to the small, private ownerships characteristic of Fort Kent.

Participation by Fort Kent's farm and forest land owners in any of Maine's current use tax programs is minimal. The Tree Growth Program is the most widely used accounting for about 14% of the Town's forested acres. The use of the Farm or Open Space Taxation Programs is nearly non-existent. One longstanding local farmer pointed out how damaging the State's Homestead Exemption Tax Program has been to owners of agricultural and forest resources by shifting that tax burden to these resource based properties. Unfortunately, this burden can only be offset by the property owner's participation in one of the current use programs. More education and awareness of these programs may help stimulate broader participation and long-term protection of these resources.

The trend toward increased residential uses in the rural farm areas is identified in the Land Use section. This trend, however, does not appear to have affected the conduct of agricultural or logging operations in the community. The planning sub-committee on agriculture and forestry discussed this in some detail and concluded that there are relatively minor issues between residential users and resource based users. There are two major reasons for this. Many residential users still have connection to someone that works in logging or farming and many also use these resource lands for their recreation. Examples of issues on both sides include mud on public roads from trucks entering, damage to farmland and private roads from 4x4's, isolated cases of runoff onto abutting property and recently some concern regarding visual impacts. Odor would likely become an issue if the practice of animal agriculture became larger and more widespread. Otherwise, the practice of farming and logging is widely accepted in the community and there have been few complaints.

Ownership Transfer of Large Farm and Forest Parcels: There is no industrial forestland in Fort Kent of over 1000 acres that is owned by a single corporation that manages for timber production. However, there has been acquisition of multiple forest and farm tracts by relatively small investors that have harvested or leased the resource and may ultimately begin to sell property for development or develop it themselves. No large tracts have recently been sold. These private landholdings comprise about 4,100 acres throughout the Town. The owner/investors have the right to develop or sell their landholdings within the limits of State law and local zoning and subdivision regulations. In some cases, depending on the location and intensity, development or change in ownership may remove the availability of this woodland for commercial production and harvest. Access for recreation may change. Development of this property may lead to requests for road acceptance and the provision of public services that may prove costly to the Town. The Town is not anticipating any major new development of forest or farm land that may affect public facilities or services; however there are three large farms in the community that total several hundred acres each. The farmers may choose development as an option at some time in the future. The only current change with regard to agricultural land was covered in the previous section.

Community Forests and Farms: Fort Kent has a long history of supporting the local Farmer's Market, dating back to the late 1970's. Support from the population and local government for the market has never faltered, but the market management and organization has struggled. The ongoing efforts of the Soil and Water Conservation District may help overcome this difficulty. This will allow small-scale local agriculture and the community as a whole will benefit. A feasibility study of local producer capacity and consumer interest should be completed to verify the viability of this enterprise. The District should continue its educational programs in the areas of local foods and private woodlot management. The concepts of community gardens, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprises and Community Forests are relatively new to Fort Kent but the community is starting to show some interest.

Most of the Town's forestland is in small, private ownerships of fewer than 1000 acres. Small woodlots produce fuel for personal use and local consumption and help supply raw material for regional forest-based manufacturing which in turn supports economic activity and jobs. At least 14% of this forestland is being managed, but much more could be. This requires continued encouragement of the landowners to participate in current use tax programs or just to be better informed on the many benefits of forest management. The Town could be setting an example for small woodlot owners by actively managing its publically owned forested parcels. The community forest project of 2008 created the basis for multi-use management of public forests for long term public benefit. The project report including maps and stand specific data is available at the Fort Kent Planning and Development Office.

# **AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES**

## **Policies & Strategies** (DRAFT 8/10/12)

### **State Goal**

To ensure the protection of agricultural and forest resources and to discourage new incompatible development that may threaten those resources.

### **Local Goal**

Increase the economic contributions of agricultural and forest resources to the community and increase the public's awareness of those contributions.

### **POLICY 1**

Safeguard our agricultural resources by supporting practices and programs that ensure profitability, sustainability and the transfer of ownership for continued agricultural use.

### **Strategies**

- a. Initiate periodic communication with active farmers, either directly, or through the USDA-NRCS-ACS to determine their solvency and intentions for continued production.
- b. Evaluate active farms for participation in various taxation programs, including Farm, Open Space and Tree Growth Programs that may reduce their tax liability. Report findings to farm owners.
- c. Research the farmland property tax structure in Vermont and New Hampshire to determine its feasibility and benefit to local agriculture. Omission of school assessment is used in Vermont.
- d. Schedule public gravel road maintenance to coincide with planting and harvest.
- e. Seek grant/loan opportunities that support local and regional needs of individual farms, farm in areas such as farm diversification, valued-added processing, biomass production, potato packing, grain milling, farm product marketing and transportation and access to and consumption of locally raised foods.
- f. Continue to support and maintain a site for the Fort Kent Farmer's Market and support emerging options for all-season access to local farm products.
- g. Support, through membership, the Maine Farmland Trust's efforts to raise funds to keep farms active and acknowledge that local grassroots support helps attract philanthropic contributions.
- h. Provide a list of farm and forest resource agencies to new landowners of 10 or more acres in the town triggered by the receipt of transfer tax reports as a gesture to encourage management.
- i. Encourage farms to participate in local events and to support the Chamber of Commerce to help increase public awareness of agriculture in the community.

- j. Amend the Site Design Review process to identify prime agricultural and forestland soils proposed for development. Monitor and report conversion of farmland to other uses to the Town Council.
- k. Encourage a local chapter of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and support for local agricultural education through the SAD and University.
- l. Encourage participation in “Open Farm Days” and/or a local version coordinated with the Scarecrow or other festivals to help educate the general public about farming.
- m. Support local interest in Cooperative Extension’s 4-H and other agricultural programs.

## **POLICY 2**

Safeguard our forest resources by supporting practices and programs that ensure profitability and sustainability.

### **Strategies**

- a. Research, support and initiate with university and industry participation, a vocational/technical program in forestry and forestry equipment operation.
- b. Evaluate woodland parcels for participation in taxation programs, including Farm, Open Space and Tree Growth Programs that may reduce their tax liability. Report findings to woodlot owners.
- c. Seek grant/loan opportunities that support the needs of woodlot owners, logging contractors, lumber mills and woodworking shops related to management, job creation and market access and development.
- d. Support emerging opportunities to develop regional and community scale biomass facilities for heating and electrical generation.
- e. Work with local Conservation District, landowners, the University and private Foresters to seek SARE – Sustainable Community funds to help identify the higher value forest parcels based on soils, available resource data and site inspections and encourage owners to manage their forest.
- f. Amend the zoning ordinance to require minimum standards for driveways, construction material standards, water quality and wildlife habitat standards for residential structures built in forested areas.
- g. Encourage the University to manage and showcase the Biological Park tract as a community demonstration forest.
- h. Research “equal responsibility” laws pertaining to boundary line maintenance and consider amendment(s) to the zoning ordinance that may require a boundary survey.

## **POLICY 3**

Discourage redundancy in the local regulation of agricultural and timber harvesting practices by allowing existing State Forest Practices Law and Best Management Practices to operate at the local level.

## **Strategies**

- a. Cooperate with Department of Conservation Forest Service in the enforcement of State timber harvesting regulations.
- b. Refer local complaints to the Maine Forest Service for investigation and carry out follow-up contact with complaining property owner on the outcome.
- c. Erosion and/or water quality issue should be reported to the USDA-NRCS by the CEO or Town Manager who should also request that the landowner seek NRCS assistance.
- d. Continue to support the St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District through membership and cooperation.

## **POLICY 4**

Maintain a minimum base of publically owned land for the long term potential to benefit the community for multiple uses.

## **Strategies**

- a. Prior to offering for sale any undeveloped tract of tax acquired property, the Town shall hire a Licensed Forester to evaluate its agricultural and timber value and other potential uses, i.e. gravel source, open space, recreation, etc.
- b. Set an example for other landowners by managing well, the town's community forest lands.
- c. Consider creating a reserve account, funded through tax acquired sales and timber sales, for acquisition of land with well defined public value.
- d. Seek Land for Maine's Future funding for parcels with exceptional local/State value.

## **POLICY 5**

Protect, manage and expand trees in the urban landscape to enhance community awareness of their values and benefits, and to enhance community aesthetics and quality of life.

## **Strategies**

- a. Request that the St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District coordinate an educational program on the planting and care of urban trees.
- b. Encourage the University Forestry or Environmental Program to inventory urban trees and develop a management plan and schedule to monitor the health and maintenance of urban trees.
- c. Seek funds for interpretive signage on tree species, vernal pools and other natural features along the Town's urban trails including Riverside North and South trails and the Jalbert Park Arboretum.

**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

PDO, LG, TC, SJVSWCD, USDA-NRCS, PC, MFT, USJLT, CofC, SAD #27, UMCE, UMFK, DOC-MFS

**Policy 1** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Mid-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 3** Short-term **Policy 4** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 5** Mid-term

# POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS





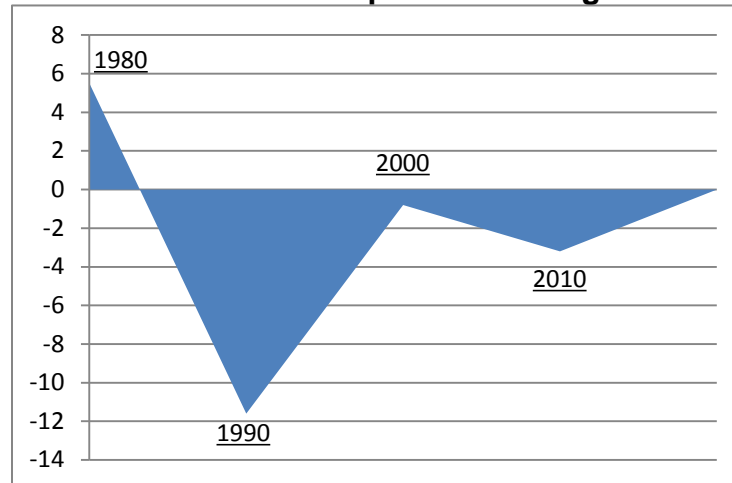
# DRAFT POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

## Inventory & Analysis 7/17/12

### Introduction

The Maine State Planning Office (SPO) provides the population and demographic data discussed in this section. Population projections for Fort Kent are based on a methodology that uses Aroostook County level projections derived from more detailed information than is available at the local level. Town projections are calculated using recent growth or decline in the town's share of the County's population and the County level population projections. The local, town level, population projections are based on assumptions and past trends that may or may not hold into the future. It is interesting to note that earlier (1990) population projections for Fort Kent show that rate of decline is slowing from 7.5% in 1990 – 2000 to 3.5% 2000 – 2010 as shown in graph below.

**Fort Kent Decennial Population Change on % Basis**



Source: US Census 2010

The Economics and Demographics Team at the SPO acknowledge that they do not know the details of Fort Kent's plans for the future. Their estimates provide a starting point for assessing community needs based on projected change in population and demographics. Fort Kent has made extraordinary efforts over the past 10 years in maintaining quality of life for its residents, attracting visitors and in distinguishing itself as a travel destination. It is exactly these types of efforts that often defy projections and that help underpin community sustainability.

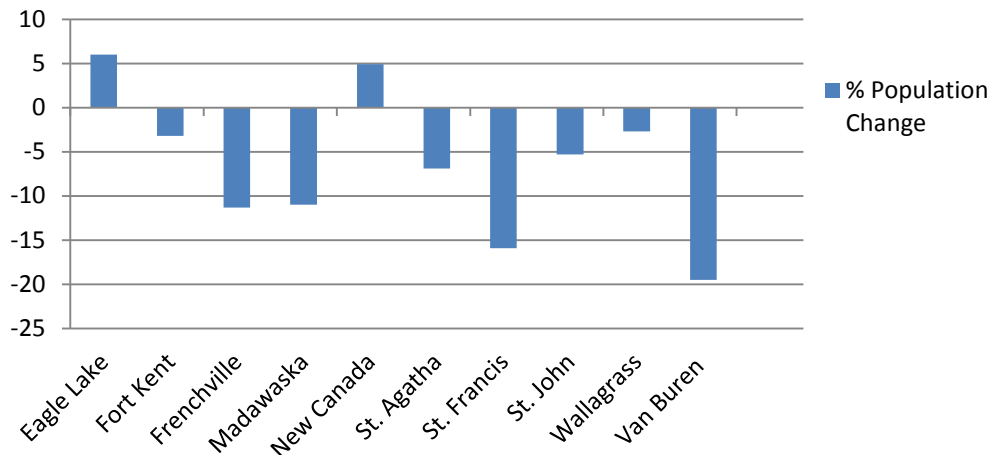
### Analysis and Issues

#### Rate of Change

The graph above shows Fort Kent's decennial population change on a percentage basis from 1980 – 2010. The data suggest a declining rate of population loss. Over a 30 year period or 3 U.S. Census periods starting in 1990, the town lost 11.6%, 7.5%, and 3.2%, respectively. The graph below compares percent population change for selected St. John Valley communities.

Among the eight towns that lost population between 2000 and 2011, Fort Kent showed much less decline than the others with the exception of Wallagrass which showed slightly less. This could mean Fort Kent is approaching a point of equilibrium between economic sustainability and population stability.

**% Population change for select St. John Valley Communities 2000-2011**



Source: US Census 2010

Projections prepared by SPO shown in the table below actually show a population increase from 2010 – 2013 (not likely) and then only a slight change in the rate of population loss from 2013-2023. In actual numbers of persons, population loss is under 100 persons for this period. This implies that Fort Kent should continue to provide public services at present levels.

**Fort Kent Population Projections 2013 – 2023**

	2013	2018	2023
<b>Fort Kent</b>	4,136	4,086	4,016

Source: Maine State Planning Office Economics & Demographic Team, April 12, 2010

**Demographic Shifts**

The evaluation of demographic shifts is based on the numbers of persons in each age group over a period of two decades 1990 – 2010. Population changes in these age groups in Fort Kent are described in the table below. During this period the “working age” groups (45-64 years) and the “retirement age” groups (65+) showed increases while the pre-school age (-5 years), school age (5-24) and child bearing age (25-44) groups showed declines. However, the “college” age group (18-24) showed an increase of 46 persons between 1990 and 2010. This increase creates some potential for growth if job creations help retain this segment of the population. In 2010, 47% of Fort Kent’s population was over 45 years of age. In 1990 the figure was 32%. In contrast, in 2010, the pre-school and school age population in Fort Kent was 32% of the total population. In 1990 the figure was nearly 38%. The child bearing age

group in 2010 made up 21% of the total population, while in 1990 the figure was 30%. In 2010, the town’s median age was 42.7 years in contrast to 1990 when the median age was 32.9 years.

**Fort Kent Population by Age**

<b>Age Category</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1990</b>
Under 5 years	204	225	272
5 to 17 years	610	718	880
<b>18 to 24 years</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>455</b>
25 to 34 years	379	482	671
35 to 44 years	473	655	623
45 to 54 years	671	613	426
55 to 64 years	538	405	364
65 to 74 years	353	331	335
75 to 84 years	260	239	181
85 years and over	108	88	61
Total	4,097	4,233	4,268

Source: US Census 2010

**Impact of Demographic Shifts**

Change in the size and age distribution of Fort Kent’s population has been occurring with similar trends for at least 30 years. An aging population and declining numbers of school age and child bearing age persons has been monitored by local government through the planning process, the school administrative district (SAD) and the local housing development community. The slow, steady pace of these changes has allowed the community time to plan and take a proactive approach in response and this should continue for the foreseeable future.

SAD #27 operates five schools in four communities that are spread across 30 miles. This is the second largest bussing district in the State. They have responded to declining enrollment in several ways. Administrative offices have been relocated into an existing facility. Administrative responsibilities have been consolidated and professional and support staffs have been reduced by 7 and 16 positions, respectively. School District policy limits the time and distance that certain aged children can be bussed. This makes school closure a challenge well beyond the emotional impact and resistance at the local level. The consolidation of two or more elementary grade schools and the transfer of ownership of the closed schools may need to be considered in the future. It may be possible to avoid this through continued cost saving measures. The SAD has invested in numerous energy savings improvements at their facilities and will participate in the development of a new, multi-building biomass heating system facility with the University of Maine at Fort Kent. Ultimately, the construction of new, smaller and more energy efficient schools may be the most favorable. For the present time, cost control efforts in facility management, bussing, staffing and program reductions will allow the district to keep it schools open with modest budget increases.

Municipal services have not been reduced or changed to any degree in response to a declining population and demographic shifts. However, there has been pressure exerted by citizens during the annual budgetary and Town Meeting process to reduce tax obligation. Notable areas that have been targeted include recreation, public works and support for the regional airport. The relatively slow pace of the shifts and conservative financial management leadership from the Town Manager and Town Council has allowed services to be maintained. The Town uses several techniques that, in combination with annual valuation increases from new development, allow it to maintain services as population declines and operation and maintenance costs rise. Techniques include flat funding for all municipal departments, not filling vacancies in some departments, low debt service and the aggressive procurement of grants. The SAD, the University and the Senior Center continue to provide programs for seniors that enrich their lives and support their needs. Despite the demographic shift, the municipal recreation department maintains solid participation in its summer and winter programs and fulfills a service to a segment of the school age population that is not offered through the SAD. There does not appear to be a need to change the type or availability of municipal services presently offered. If the population trend continues, the town may need to reduce some services in response to taxpayer demand. Many options are included in the policies and strategies related to Public Facilities and Services and Fiscal Capacity.

Fort Kent's housing characteristics and development patterns are described in more detail in the Housing and Land Use Sections of the plan. Housing developers have been responding to the shift in demographics for several years. The Cross Winds Assisted Living Complex is one of the best examples. Originally developed as 23 units in 2007, the facility has increased in size by 13 units in the past five years. In 2012, the Fort Kent Housing Corporation – Village Apartments will open six new units of subsidized senior housing in conjunction with 18 units that were reconstructed outside of the floodplain after the flood of 2008. Fort Kent is among the most favorable locations for senior housing given that it is a service center community. Vacancies at senior housing still exist in some neighboring communities. Local realtors have indicated that there is a shortage of quality, first floor apartments in Fort Kent that would be most favorable to seniors. The town should consider seeking grant funds to complete a housing needs assessment. This should be followed by a program that supports the rehabilitation of existing rental units to better accommodate seniors.

### **Service Center and Seasonal Population**

Fort Kent has always been a service center community and continues to have several of the region's major employers in the areas of health care, education, social services and manufacturing. Over time, the community has fully assimilated this increase in activity into its day to day services. This impacts administrative services available at the municipal center and police, fire and emergency response and others. Traffic control during school start/end hours and business shift changes are a routine response. These and other responses are addressed

under the Transportation, Public Facilities and Service and Recreation sections of the plan. As the region's overall population continues to slowly decline it will not likely that any significant change in the Town's response will be necessary.

Seasonal population increases occur in association with the University's 9 month academic year and summer visitors. Total student population exceeds 1000 of which 205 live on campus. Most of the remaining several hundred students are either from Aroostook or other Maine Counties. This additional population impacts primarily police, fire and emergency services that the town provides.

### **Natural Rate of Change**

Information on birth and death rates specific to the Fort Kent population is not readily available. Maine's birth rate is 10.2 births per 1000 women. The Maine death rate for the top 10 causes is 7.47 deaths per 1000 population. The number of births and deaths occurring each year in Fort Kent are tracked by the Town Clerk. However, records are not based on residency. As a service center community Fort Kent serves the health care needs of a larger population. Some residents choose to give birth in Caribou, Presque Isle or other municipalities and residents of neighboring towns may choose to give birth in Fort Kent. The number of births and deaths occurring annually in Fort Kent are the total number irrespective of residency. For the years 2005 through 2010 the number of births has consistently exceeded the number of deaths. On average there are 10.2 more births per year than deaths. This does not in any way reflect the natural rate of change in Fort Kent's population. To determine this, basic research of the data would need to be done. The average rate of population change in Fort Kent, for all factors, over the past four decades is -2.5%.

### **Context for Growth**

An analysis of local fiscal capacity clearly shows that Fort Kent remains in solid fiscal health. Among the key parameters for determining fiscal capacity is growth in net valuation of property. The Town's net valuation is calculated every year and is trending upward. Fort Kent is developing or growing from within. Substantial private investment is occurring despite a declining overall population. As a result, there has been steady growth in valuation. This suggests that Fort Kent will be able to continue providing services at existing levels for some time. If this trend should reverse the Town may be forced to reduce services and prioritize services to an aging population.

Fort Kent's growth in net valuation may also be linked to its growth in population in the 45-64 and 65+ age groups. These age groups may have higher incomes and spending habits that are favorable to the local economy. They have or are near finished raising their families, have paid or are near completing their mortgages and are more likely to invest in property

improvements and new homes. These age groups are important drivers of the local economy and their spending patterns help the community sustain services.

Fort Kent is also a service center and border community that attracts spending by neighbors on both sides of the St. John River. Non-resident spending in the local economy helps support investment by local business owners and employees. In 2011, the Canadian economy was stronger than the US. Spending by Canadians was more important than ever in the local economy. Non-resident spending helps contribute to the investments that lead to growth in valuation and support for local services. No studies have been done on the impact of Canadian spending on the economies of Maine's border communities. Economic information of this type could be an important tool for local economic development.

# LOCAL ECONOMY



draft **LOCAL ECONOMY**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 8/10/12

**An Overview of Local Economy**

Fort Kent has a diversified economy and proven sustainability. In 1993, the sustainability of communities in the St. John Valley was studied with support from the Quebec Labrador Foundation's, Atlantic Center for the Environment. The study identified four key characteristics of sustainable communities; quality of life, economic security (a diversified economy), empowerment and responsibility (local action and support) and ecological integrity (keeping natural systems healthy and functioning). Fort Kent still has all of these characteristics and they remain important to its future. However, despite significant public and private investment Fort Kent still has struggled to create jobs and grow population. The reality is that the community is still part of a regional, state and national economy.

The local economy subcommittee was influenced by the present cyclical economic conditions but attempted to overcome this influence when they developed the local economy policies and strategies. The process was certainly colored by the present economic recession. Eventually, this will end and positive change in the form of jobs and investment will increase in the community.

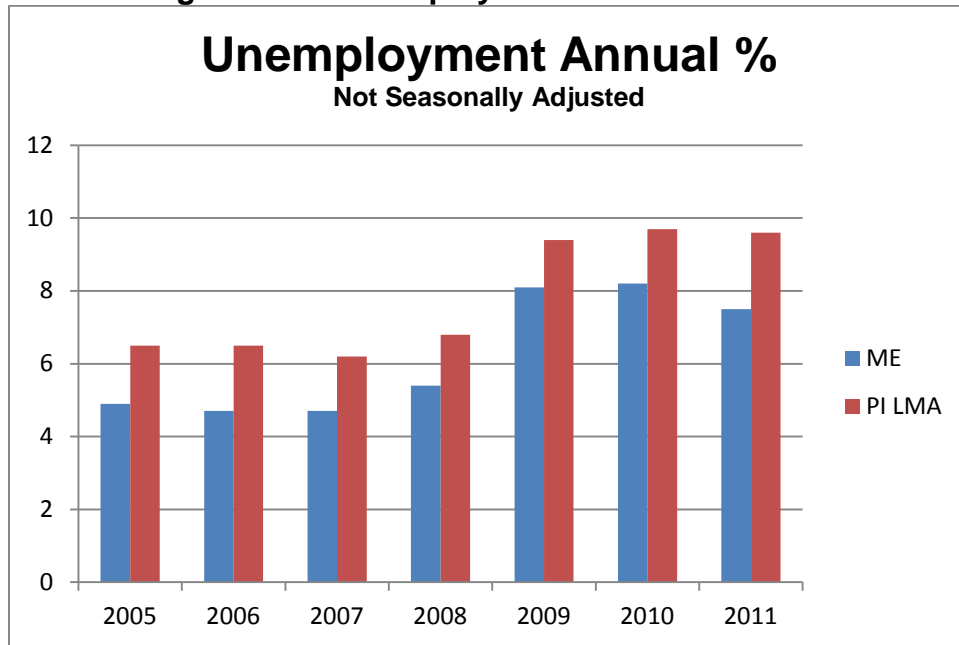
**Conditions and Trends**

Even under present economic conditions, substantial public and private investment is continuing in the form of highways, the international bridge reconstruction, rail system upgrades, the redevelopment of the Norsun Food Processing Plant, the Lion's Pavilion at Riverside Park, business occupancy at the industrial park and building improvements in the downtown. These are all positive contributors that help support the local economy. Fort Kent has a solid record of economic sustainability because of a diversified economic structure. Local policies and strategies focus on an understanding of the structural components of the regional and local economy, long-term trends and how the community can strengthen its existing economic structure and develop or attract new structural components.

The table below shows the ten year trend in average annual unemployment for the Presque Isle Labor Market Area (LMA) that includes Fort Kent. Percent unemployment increased from 4.4% in 2001 to 9.5% in 2011. Fort Kent's annual average in 2011 was 9.9% or slightly above the LMA average. The greatest increase in unemployment occurred from 2008 to 2009 when the national recession hit Aroostook County.



## LMA Average Annual Unemployment



Source: Maine Department of Labor 2012

The graph above compares seven years of annual average unemployment for Maine and the Presque Isle Labor Market Area (LMA). The trend shows that the LMA has an unemployment rate near or above the State's average. Most recently, the State's average unemployment rate has been improving while the LMA's has improved little; a sign of a weak regional economy. Economic activity is divided into "export" and "service" activities. Export activities bring dollars into the community through the sale of goods and services to the outside, i.e. the next town or the world. Service activities provide goods and services locally that re-circulate money that is already here. Some services, like retail sales, overlap as export and local activities. Employment sectors help identify which activities are important exports in the local economy. Economic growth is driven by export activities which are also referred to as economic engines. Their importance cannot be overstated.

The table below shows the major employment sectors in Fort Kent and their relative importance in the local economy as compared to the State. The location quotients help to show which sectors are most important in the Town's economy. They illustrate the ratio between the percentages employed in a given sector locally and at the State level. Location quotients significantly above 1 indicate that the sector is disproportionately important to the local economy.

### Fort Kent Employment – Occupation/Location Quotient 2010

Employment Sectors	Fort Kent		Maine		Location Quotient
	Total	% Employed	Total	% Employed	
Management, professional & related occupations	738	35.6	224,966	34.2	1.04
Service occupations	346	16.7	115,271	17.5	0.95
Sales & office occupations	443	21.3	160,970	24.5	0.87
Farming, fishing, forestry	78	3.8	10,367	1.6	2.4
Construction, extraction, maintenance	150	7.2	66,058	10.0	0.72
Production, transport, material moving	308	14.8	79,924	12.1	1.2
Totals	2,075		657,556		

Source: Maine State Planning Office

If the Town is more dependent on one sector as compared to the State then, in theory, it must be exporting some of these goods or services outside the region. Our “export” industries create the engines that power the local economy and its potential for growth. These are the structural components of the local economy.

The leading areas of employment or occupations fall into four broad categories. The highest number includes management and professional occupations as might be expected at the University, hospital, banks, financial and insurance businesses. This dominant occupation category is also reflected in Fort Kent’s median household income (MHI) which, in 2010, was \$39,345. However, local MHI is still lower than the State average of \$46,541. Next are sales and office occupations represented by the retail sector and other businesses. The third highest includes service occupations that relate to health care assistants, building/grounds maintenance, personal care and protection types of occupations. The final category is production, transportation and materials movement occupations found in local manufacturing and trucking companies.

Based on location quotient analyses farming and forestry employment are more important in the local economy than in the state economy. In 2000, Aroostook County employment in the forest sectors of logging, manufactured products and paper totaled 3,500 jobs and \$714 million in sales. Locally there is estimated to be 100-125 jobs in logging alone while others are employed in paper and wood products mills and the forestry equipment business. Agricultural products in Aroostook had a market value of \$146.5 million in 2007. Based on cropland acres in Fort Kent, the market value of Fort Kent’s agricultural products is estimated to be \$4.47 million. The local economic impact is great and agriculture and forestry is almost entirely a product and raw material export industry.

It is remarkable how Fort Kent’s economic diversity affects its sense of identity. “Fort Kent is a logging town.” “Fort Kent is a tourist town.” “Fort Kent is a college town.” “Fort Kent is a farming town.” (historically) “Fort Kent is a manufacturing town.” “Fort Kent is a service center town.” Fort Kent is all of these things and these and other sectors are the local economic engines. Other sectors include transportation, health care, construction, power grid maintenance, clothing manufacturing, information technology and financial and insurance services all of which make a significant economic contribution locally.

One of Fort Kent’s greatest economic strengths is its geographically well defined downtown or central business district. This includes West and East Main Streets and Market Street. The downtown is the retail center for goods and services that serves several surrounding communities. As such, it is an important and viable economic sector that depends on the jobs and wages generated by the town’s economic engines. Even in the present economy, substantial investments are being made in Fort Kent’s downtown. Activities and events are being centered in the downtown. This is a great example of local empowerment and responsibility that supports this important sector and community sustainability. Local civic organizations and clubs also make vital contributions to this element of sustainability.

The table below indicates the economic fortitude of Fort Kent’s retail sector. The trend for the past three years clearly shows that sales are increasing. Prior to that (2006-2008) sales vacillated. Consumer retail sales made up the largest part of total retail sales. These represent sales directly to consumers not, businesses, contractors or wholesalers. Business Operation sales showed the greatest increase of all types from 2010-2011.

**Fort Kent Taxable Retail Sales (\$1,000s)**

<b>Taxable Retail Sales</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Retail Sales	71,817	70,632	72,516	70,243	73,706	77,184
Consumer Retail Sales	53,957	54,575	55,437	53,099	56,258	57,220
Business Operation	17,859	16,057	17,080	17,144	17,448	19,964
Building Supplies	10,078	9,604	10,776	9,352	9,182	9,036
Food Stores	5,501	5,967	6,506	7,060	7,114	6,785
General Merchandise	5,915	5,628	5,374	5,268	5,728	5,596
Other	4,327	4,944	5,674	4,656	4,548	5,356
Automobile & Transportation	19,268	19,102	18,097	18,041	20,833	21,036
Restaurant	7,360	7,733	7,621	7,426	7,500	8,120
Lodging	1,509	1,597	1,389	1,296	1,351	1,290

Source: Maine State Planning Office, 2012

There are several historical factors that influenced how and why Fort Kent's current economy developed and has been sustained over many decades. These factors include agriculture, logging, milling, higher education, health care and tourism.

Farming began as the principal occupation of the Upper St. John Valley since its early settlement as far back as 1797. The clearing and cultivation of the flats along the river was the primary focus during the first decades of settlement. The primary crops were potatoes, buckwheat and other small grains. As population grew, more land was cleared for agriculture further from the river. This gave rise to the second and third rows of farm lots that became known as the "back settlements". Many of these areas are still actively farmed today, some by descendants of the original settlers.

The first logging in the Valley began in the early 1800's to support the British shipbuilding industry's need of a tremendous number tall pine trees. This influence lasted roughly 50 years until the pine was depleted. For the next century and a half the forest transitioned from hardwoods to spruce-fir and mixed wood areas known today as the Acadian forest. The forest products industry remains one of the economic pillars of the region, though the focus has changed primarily to the harvest of pulp for the two remaining paper mills in Madawaska and Millinocket and most recently to biomass for a growing number of heating and power production facilities. Logging remains a significant economic sector in Fort Kent's economy.

With agriculture and logging came the need for milling of grain and lumber. This economic activity dates back to as early as 1817. There were numerous sawmills in the region all through the 1800's and 1900's and several remain today though most are in nearby New Brunswick and Quebec. Fraser Paper Ltd., now Twin Rivers, exercised a great influence on the local economy since it purchased the James Murchie & Sons mill in 1916. The Murchie mill, began operations in 1888 and was one of the large sawmills operating on the Upper St. John River. Today, Twin Rivers remains one of the region's largest employers. The Fraser Timberlands LLC (Levesque) lumber mill is still operating today in Masardis. One of the oldest, small, individually owned and operated sawmills is the Tardif mill in Fort Kent Mills which has operated continuously by this family since 1960 and was originally build in the early 1940's. While grain milling has ceased, the milling of lumber remains important in the local economy.

Fort Kent's historic link to higher education and its economic importance is striking. On February 21, 1878, Maine Governor Selden Connor approved and signed an act which would establish a training school for teachers in the Madawaska territory known as the Madawaska Training School. In the early years of the school's history, the location for the training of teachers alternated between Fort Kent and Van Buren. In 1886, issues of overcrowding in the Fort Kent location were addressed when the State Superintendent of Common Schools recommended that the school be permanently located in Fort Kent and that suitable

accommodations be made for the school in the construction of facilities. The money was appropriated for building permanent facilities for the school in Fort Kent, and the school finally had a permanent location and facility by the 1888-1889 school year. Throughout its years as the Madawaska Training School, there were multiple expansions, curriculum additions, and a total of three principals. After a fire and period of declining enrollment the school was threatened with closure. The Alumni Association, in response to the threat, rallied to increase the enrollment at the school and was ultimately successful in keeping the school off of the chopping block. The name of the school was changed to Fort Kent State Normal School and under its new name, saw its fourth and final principal, Joseph "Joe" Fox, who served the school from 1956 to 1971. Though originally the fourth principal of the school, he served long enough to see the school become a four-year college and change names three times; first to Fort Kent State Teacher's College in 1961, then to Fort Kent State College and finally to the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK) in 1970. Today, UMFK remains as a vital economic engine in the community.

The most significant historical economic influences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Fort Kent were in the areas of health care and tourism. When Monsignor Aime Giguere arrived in Fort Kent in 1934, his plans for a hospital began modestly as he hoped to build a twenty bed maternity hospital at the corner of Main and Pleasant Streets. However, by the time of ground breaking on September 11, 1950, there was to be a modern 66 bed acute care hospital. On September 21, 1952, Peoples Benevolent Hospital opened its doors. For the next twenty three years the hospital was run by Les Petites Franciscaine de Marie, a Catholic order of nuns with special skills in hospital management. In 1975, Peoples Benevolent Hospital became a public community hospital and changed its name to Northern Maine Medical Center. For over forty years, Northern Maine Medical Center has provided high quality medical care to the citizens of the St. John Valley. NMMC, through a tradition of community outreach and excellence in health care, has fulfilled Monsignor Giguere's commitment. The hospital has continued to expand its programs and services over the years and makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

Fort Kent's history as a place of traditional outdoor recreation is as old as the profession of the Maine Guide and the traditional sporting camp as a base for such activities. The Maine legislature passed a bill requiring hunting guides to register with the state on March 19, 1897. Among the most noteworthy historic guides of the region were Sam and Willard Jalbert who were based in Fort Kent but maintained sporting camps on the Allagash River in the 1930's. Generations of Jalberts and other families continue this guiding and outfitting tradition. Sporting camps were operated by several families on Eagle, Long and Square Lakes in the early 1900's. The Allagash River has been a State protected wilderness river since 1966 and part of the National Wild and Scenic River System since 1970. Most visitors that canoe the Allagash River trip will stop for goods and services in Fort Kent at the end of their trip. Tourism

continues to be an important contributor to the local economy that has diversified with recreational trends.

\*Historical economic influences above excerpted from the following sources:

*Historical information referenced from "UMFK: A Century of Progress" by Roger Grindle.*

*UMFK Acadian Archives Website*

"Pine, Potatoes, and People", Helen Hamlin, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1948.

"Aroostook: A Century of Logging in Northern Maine", Richard W. Judd, University of Maine Press, Orono, Maine, 1989.

### **Regional Economic Development Plans**

The Northern Maine Tourism Action Plan, April 2012 is the only regional economic development plan prepared within the last five years. The plan was developed by Northern Maine Development Commission-Aroostook County Tourism and is presently being implemented.

The Aroostook County Economic Cluster Report, Parts 1 & 2, September 2003, is among the most recent studies that look at the analysis and marketing of five industry clusters including forest products, agricultural and food products, tourism, information technology and precision manufacturing. The plan was developed by Northern Maine Development Commission and Planning Decisions, Inc.

The table below suggests employment location based on travel time to work. This is assumed to be vehicular travel and that those traveling under 15 minutes to work reside in the community. Based on this, 84% of residents that are employed work in Fort Kent. The remainder of employed persons work outside the community and within an hour and a half travel time from Fort Kent.

#### **Transportation – Travel Time to Work 2010**

Workers over 16 who did not work at home	1,937
Less than 5 minutes	412
5 to 9 minutes	755
10 to 14 minutes	456
15 to 19 minutes	6
20 to 24 minutes	82
25 to 29 minutes	37
30 to 34 minutes	93
35 to 39 minutes	0
40 to 44 minutes	0
45 to 59 minutes	61
60 to 89 minutes	11

Source: MSPO

### Major Employers in Fort Kent 2012

Northern Maine Medical Center	514
Crosswinds Residential Care	65
University of Maine at Fort Kent	115
MSAD #27	221
Creative Apparel	100
TNT Road Company	40
Irving Woodlands	57
Northern Timber	30
Other Logging Contractors	93
Frank Martin & Sons	24
Commercial Farms (15)	30
Paradis Shop & Save	100
John's Surfine Market	27
Daigle Oil Company	39
Valley Auto	20
State of Maine DHHS	23
Acadia Federal Credit Union	20
<b>Other Regional Employers</b>	
Twin Rivers Paper Company (Madawaska)	635
RF Chamberland Trucking (St. Agatha)	91
Fraser Timberlands, LLC	
Maine Woods Company	60

Source:

### Economic Development Incentives

Fort Kent presently has two Tax Increment Financing Districts. These include Village Road that has helped to finance infrastructure improvements to serve expansion of an assisted living care facility and new senior housing and East Main Street that has funded revitalization activities in this commercial zone. The town has also received and continues to apply for CDBG-Business Assistance Grants. Focus growth areas and related incentives are discussed in the Future Land Use Section of the plan.

### **Analyses**

Fort Kent is not experiencing any significant fundamental changes in its economic structure. Rather, it is experiencing an adjustment to the present, cyclical economic downturn in the form of higher unemployment (9.9% in 2011) and a modest decline in population of 3.2%. The Town has not lost or gained any economic engines but most of the existing major employers have restructured in ways that have helped them adjust to the present economic conditions. Taxable retail sales grew steadily during the three years 2009-2011. Fort Kent's economy remains diversified and relatively stable. The Town should be wary of large retail development proposals that may disrupt the existing retail structure and sustainability.

Municipal tax base continues to grow as a result of private investment some of which has been spurred by public infrastructure investments. Public grant and loan programs have also supported energy efficiency projects for private tax-exempt organizations and public institutions. Investment in real property by tax exempt and public entities is expected to exceed \$8 million in 2012. These biomass energy projects, though tax exempt, will provide other economic benefits described below. Energy development and energy efficiency upgrades at private businesses have significant potential to add to the local tax base. The most recent townwide revaluation occurred in 2008. This is the base year for comparing growth in net valuation. Net valuation does not include tax exempt real property and personal property values. From 2008-2011 the municipal tax base grew by nearly \$14 million and in 2011 this tax base growth generated \$230,300 in tax revenue. Much of this revenue has been absorbed by reductions in Maine Revenue Sharing and, to a lesser extent, rising costs in the operation and maintenance of municipal departments. Tax base growth continues to underpin Fort Kent's economic sustainability.

The Town is aware of two possible changes on the horizon with the potential to significantly enhance the local economy. Energy development in the form of wind and biomass facilities and the development of a metals mine are likely to occur during the planning period. Wind power generation potential has been studied for several years in Fort Kent. There are presently two companies, EDP Renewable and Iberdrola, with three met towers operating to collect wind data in the town. A single commercial wind turbine costs an estimated \$1.25 million to construct, creates taxable real property and both construction and technical maintenance jobs. The commercial interest in wind energy spurred the Town to adopt a basic Commercial Wind Energy Facility Ordinance in 2010. This ordinance sought to provide for the development and operation of these facilities subject to reasonable standards necessary to alleviate public concern regarding location, light flicker, noise and overall public health and safety. The Town-wide Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include these and other energy facilities in the list of regulated land uses that are subject to site design review.

In May 2011, the University received a \$500,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation, using federal stimulus funds, to convert its largest residence hall, The Lodge, and its athletics complex to a wood-to-energy heating system. That system will provide heat for 1.75 acres of floor space and is expected to save the campus nearly \$1 million in the next decade. The annual cost of heating both buildings currently is \$140,591. Following the conversion to the biomass boiler, UMFK expects to burn approximately 270 tons of wood pellets annually. At a cost of \$190 per ton, the University will spend \$51,110 to heat the two facilities, resulting in an annual savings of \$89,481. The new heating plant will be multi-fuel and capable of burning various biomass products depending on price and availability. The environmental benefit associated with the anticipated decrease of 37,292 gallons of heating oil would be a carbon dioxide emission reduction of approximately 378 metric tons per year. The



University anticipates contracting with Northeast Pellets, LLC, in Ashland, Maine, as its wood pellet supplier. One-hundred percent of the fuel supply will come from certified sources, including wood certified under Maine Tree Farm, Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council.

In 2012, the University of Maine at Fort Kent and the Maine School Administrative District 27 received a \$2.6 million U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to construct a biomass heating system to heat 11 buildings on the UMFK and Fort Kent Community High School campuses. The shared heating plant system is comprised of a multi fuel boiler and distribution lines. The total project cost is \$3,000,724. The grant provided \$2,617,560 from the USDA's Rural Development High Energy Cost Grant Program. The institutions will provide a total match of \$383,164. The project is expected to save the two institutions more than \$4 million in energy costs during the next 10 years and will help support northern Maine's growing biomass fuel businesses by consuming over 1,300 tons of wood biomass annually valued at an estimated \$54,600. By replacing imported non-renewable oil with a local renewable fuel the project will retain dollars and wealth in the community. The new heating plant will lower fuel costs by up to 80 percent (compared with #2 fuel oil), stimulate the local economy, enhance environmental sustainability and reduce maintenance costs by displacing eight, oil-fired boilers, with a single state-of-the-art boiler. The affected facilities will enable UMFK and M.S.A.D. 27 to save \$282,389 in the first year alone. The five-year savings would be nearly \$1.8 million, assuming that oil prices increase 10 percent each year. The biomass boiler will also support the local economy by supporting natural resources based workers and by stabilizing the heating portion of the institutions' budgets thereby helping to retain jobs through costs savings and creating new jobs.

In 2011-12 Northern Maine Medical Center (NMMC) received a \$3.6 million USDA-Rural Development loan, coupled with a \$750,000 grant from the Maine Forest Service, for construction, purchase and installation of a state-of-the art biomass furnace at the hospital. The new furnace replaces three antiquated boilers and, according to hospital officials, will result in \$200,000 in heating cost savings annually over the next two decades. In addition to providing the hospital with a less expensive and renewable source of heat, the biomass project will provide 30 full-time jobs during construction and will support natural resource based jobs by providing a viable local market for wood chips. The new biomass system will cleanly burn about 1,800 tons of wood chips a year valued at an estimated \$75,600. Smoke and steam emissions from the project are expected to be negligible.

The development of mining at the Bald Mountain site approximately 40 miles from Fort Kent would represent a new economic engine for the region. This natural resource based project is estimated to create 300 jobs directly and support an additional 400 jobs indirectly. The duration of the project is expected to be 30 years including 5 years of construction and 5 years

of closure. The lifetime economic impact is estimated at \$600 million and \$120 million in State and local tax revenue. Construction could begin in 2015. The electrical energy demand for the mine may also help ensure the continued operation of the Boralax Biomass Energy Plant in Ashland. This will have a positive indirect impact on Fort Kent's forest resource based economic engine. The job creation and economic activity associated with the Bald Mountain project will provide substantial support to many of Fort Kent's goals during the planning period. The Town should implement economic development strategies that allow it to maximize the benefits of this development.

Priorities for economic development in Fort Kent identify natural resource based businesses as vital economic engines with the greatest potential to create jobs and enhance the local economy. One area of focus is on agricultural and forest resources and supports for businesses that produce, harvest and add value to these resources. Another priority is ensuring that the community can help provide the infrastructure, facilities, services and capital needed by natural resource based businesses of all scales. The final priority is to support and maintain existing economic diversification to ensure long-term economic sustainability. Higher education, health care and tourism are vital components. The town's economic development priorities are detailed in the policies and strategies section that follows. These priorities are also reflected and detailed in the regional economic clusters report and tourism action plan.

Fort Kent's traditional downtown has a history of overcoming adversity and continues to receive significant private and public investment. In early spring 2012, the downtown was impacted by a catastrophic fire that leveled three buildings and displaced commercial and residential occupants. The community responded by raising tens of thousands of dollars privately in support of those affected. Local government is attempting to establish a special Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to encourage redevelopment in the downtown and support continued investment. While businesses may not be thriving under the present economic conditions the downtown is very well maintained and continues to function as a vital service center. Some services, like grocery retail, constitute an economic engine. Fort Kent showed a 4.7% increase in total retail sales from 2010 to 2011; higher than the state total for the period. Across the different categories, "Other Retail" had the largest percentage increase, while "Restaurant" also showed a substantial increase. "Other" is a catchall category for a whole variety of stores, so it's hard to say what might be driving the increase. "Restaurant" was actually higher in 2011 than at any point since 2006 and this may be attributable to increased Canadian trade in the local economy and activity associated with the Biathlon World Cup. Planned public investments in the downtown are detailed in the Transportation, Public Facilities and Services and other sections of the plan.

Tourism is an important part of the local economy and the community has made extraordinary efforts to build its image and create itself as a destination. The community supports, through a

\$10,000 tax appropriation, the Greater Fort Kent Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is the local point of contact for all inquiries regarding visitation to Fort Kent. The Chamber also sponsors and supports local festivals and events that are centered in the downtown. Chamber members are represented on the regional tourism board, Aroostook County Tourism and participated in the 2012 Tourism Action Plan. The town capitalizes on its many natural resource based tourism assets as well as its cultural distinction. These are discussed in more detail in the sections on Recreation and History and Culture.

The most notable efforts to capitalize on the town's unique assets involve local clubs and several other local organizations that sponsor major events and generate extensive media attention. These include the Can Am Crown Sled Dog Races, the International Muskie Derby (fishing) and the World Cup Biathlon Races. The economic impact of these events requires further study to understand their significance to the local economy. Snowmobiling has been a major calling card in the region for 25 years and trails are highly rated thanks to club efforts. ATV riding and trail network development is expected to grow significantly during the planning period and may surpass snowmobiling in economic impact. Fort Kent's tourism engine is well established and is an important part of the local economy with growth potential.

Home occupations contribute to the local economy and provide many needed services and advantages to residents and business owners. Residents have convenient access to products and services and owners are allowed affordable space to try new enterprises. Fort Kent's Zoning Ordinance, Section 7.7 contains supplemental regulations pertaining to home occupations. While home occupations most often involve services, the sale and display of products is also allowed. Regulations designed to protect neighborhood character and address traffic concerns have worked well.

There are several areas in the community that are appropriate for continued commercial and industrial development. Fort Kent's existing industrial zone is full and includes a clothing manufacturer with 100 employees, several general contractors, two natural resource based users and several smaller businesses. The comprehensive planning committee worked extensively to review and select candidate sites for new industrial growth. While no site was perfect, two sites were finally selected as potential future industrial sites and the town is willing to work with private developers. Site design review standards within the zoning ordinance help assure that development is compatible with surrounding uses. This is covered in detail in the Future Land Use Section of the plan.

The Town expects economic activity and new development to be sustained at the same level that has occurred over the past 6 years. However, several factors could improve this outlook and local economic development efforts focus on this. Growth in natural resource based businesses, including energy development and mining, growth at the University, growth in new

entrepreneurial enterprises and growth in tourism could enhance economic activity during the planning period. Fort Kent's public facilities, communications and power infrastructure can support modest growth and are being improved. There are no issues with accommodating the level of growth that will likely occur through 2021.

Staffing of the local planning and development office should continue. Tax payers first appropriated funds for the operation of a planning and development office in 1989. The office has broad responsibility and function that includes code enforcement, planning, grants procurement and administration and business assistance/economic development. From 2009-2010, the office managed nearly \$4.5 million in grant and loan funds related to infrastructure, recreation, business assistance, public safety and energy efficiency. As a conduit for State and Federal funds, the planning and development office provides a vital service that supports the local economy and keeps local government as an active partner with businesses in community betterment.

The future land use section policies and strategies detail some of the local incentives that are proposed for encouraging economic development in Commercial and Industrial growth areas. These include planned infrastructure upgrades, the establishment of new TIF districts, economic development infrastructure grants, business assistance grants and streamlined permitting. Regional incentives are continually changing so it's up to the local economic development office to monitor the availability of incentives that may be directed to Fort Kent's designated growth areas.

Fort Kent clearly does use all of its unique assets in ways that help sustain the local economy. This is a recurring theme throughout the comprehensive plan and is detailed in many sections but most notably under recreation, natural resources, farming and forestry and history and culture. Opportunities and approaches to enhance the use of these assets are identified. Examples include the Fish River Greenbelt and Market Street Compact Historic District that bring together unique assets into a cohesive approach to enhance economic activity in a commercial growth area. Fort Kent's position on the US/Canada Border is another unique asset that requires more attention and understanding. Strategies to enhance the local economy propose increased attention to Canadian business growth and transportation systems that may help attract new businesses to Fort Kent. The 2014 Congres Mondial Acadiennes, World Acadian Congress is a unique and timely opportunity to stimulate the local economy and create new enterprises. A lasting impression of the region as a travel destination can be made to a large audience. Fort Kent's creative use of its unique assets is essential to its economic future.

Given Fort Kent's and the region's long-term trend of population decline it seems practical that local economic development efforts focus on creating modest job and population growth by

balancing attention and support in all economic export sectors. This should be done in a manner that protects and enhances community sustainability and the quality of life component of community sustainability. It is important to remember that economic growth can influence change in the community that is not always popular or favorable. Local economic development policy should be based on an understanding of local issues. The persons that are directly involved in the types of business that drive Fort Kent's economy should be engaged in implementing policy. The State Goal for Comprehensive Planning, as it pertains to local economy, is to promote an economic climate that increases job opportunity and overall economic well-being while keeping public facilities/services and housing affordable and while maintaining environmental quality. A balanced approach should work well in Fort Kent.

## **LOCAL ECONOMY**

### **Policies & Strategies** DRAFT 8/10/12

#### **State Goal**

To promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

#### **Local Goal**

To foster economic growth and increase population through the creation of natural resource based jobs.

#### **Summary**

There are broad political and social issues that influence the local economic climate and job creation. How much we can actually do locally to improve these broad influences is open for much discussion and may well be the greatest challenge for improving the local economy. State and Federal policies that may intend to promote a favorable climate for job growth in northern Maine are not yielding results in the eyes of some of Fort Kent's most experienced business people. Maine's regulatory structure is a burden to businesses of all sizes and available social services do more to encourage people, especially young people, to not work rather than work. Some businesses actually close because they cannot find or keep good help. The Town has a strong desire to overcome the obstacles to job creation, population growth and a stronger economy. An understanding of this is reflected in these policies and strategies for improving the local economy.

Despite the loss of jobs over the past decade, natural resource based businesses still represent the greatest potential to create jobs and improve the economy. Half of our agricultural land base is idle and our most valuable forest raw material, spruce and hardwood saw logs, is sent to Canada or elsewhere for milling and manufacturing. Our resource base is within a day's drive of the largest markets in the country. To improve the economic potential of these resources we must add value here before they are transported to markets. Natural resource based businesses are our most vital economic engine and have the greatest potential to create jobs and improve the local economy.

Fortunately for Fort Kent, education, health care and tourism help to underpin the economy and keep it alive. These are also economic engines that attract outside people and spending to the community and help sustain an important retail sector. The University helps to create and foster an entrepreneurial spirit that may well prove to be of significant economic value in the decade ahead.

## **POLICY 1**

Encourage, create and attract companies that produce, harvest, utilize and add value to agricultural and forest related resources to remain or locate in Fort Kent.

### **Strategies**

- a. Establish business contacts and dialog with economic development counterparts in Quebec and New Brunswick.
- b. Analyze the economic advantages for Canadian natural resource based (and other) companies to expand in Maine and locate in Fort Kent.
- c. Determine the regulatory, licensure and other requirements for local companies and prospective companies to access port facilities on the St. Lawrence.
- d. Seek State/Federal grant and loan funding and identify job creation and capital equipment related tax incentives that may benefit existing businesses and communicate with business owners.
- e. Identify medium sized, natural resource based, Maine companies and implement an on-going business outreach/attraction program that targets their expansion.
- f. Identify businesses that supply materials and products to large manufacturers and processors and focus effort to attract local expansion of these companies.
- g. Continue to explore and support opportunities for biomass utilization and other alternatives for heating and electrical generation.
- h. Evaluate the interest of local farmers in the establishment of a packing/shipping and grain milling facility.

## **POLICY 2**

Focus local economic development efforts on procurement of funding for the infrastructure, facilities, services and capital needed to support natural resource based businesses of all scales.

### **Strategies**

- a. Study the feasibility of a new industrial park development at locations identified in the future land-use plan.
- b. Study the feasibility of extending infrastructure to prospective industrial sites and seek funding for the development of infrastructure improvements.
- c. Research, support and initiate with industry participation, a private or public vocational/technical program in forestry and forestry equipment operation.
- d. Work with local, regional, State and Federal organizations to develop and maintain two or more incentive packages for business expansions and start-ups.
- e. Contact existing natural resource based businesses to determine their interest in expansion or diversification and provide assistance.
- f. Participate and support regional business development/attraction initiatives.

- g. Research and identify available St. John Valley labor force skills and expatriated labor force skills and use in business attraction.
- h. On an on-going basis, advocate for changes in State and Federal policy that are favorable to business.

### **POLICY 3**

Support continued economic diversification to ensure the long term sustainability of the local economy. Seek funding to initiate new programs.

### **Strategies**

- a. Establish a local business investment trust (LBIT) to provide capital for business start-up and purchases by working with all potential sources including local banks, private interests, local government, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and other State and Federal institutions.
- b. Support the needs of existing businesses by applying for business assistance, energy efficiency and other grants that address specific needs.
- c. Consider amending the site design review standards of the local zoning ordinance to require economic benefit analysis for large retail development proposals pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. c. 187 sub-c. 3A §4365.
- d. Seek support to establish a special downtown Tax Increment Financing District.
- e. Form a collaborative effort between Community High School and UMFK to develop an entrepreneurial program that allows students to convert their business ideas into an operating business.
- f. Continue to follow-up with NMDC on the reuse or reopening the call center facility.
- g. Support on-going effort and investment in telecommunication system redundancy to facilitate internet based businesses.
- h. Continue to fund the Chamber of Commerce for their efforts to promote tourism, organize festivals and events and support the needs and interests of retail businesses.
- i. Maintain a dialog with the University, Northern Maine Medical Center and other major employers to understand their need for local support. Encourage education and job creation in health care areas that serve an aging population.
- j. Obtain funding and work with the University to conduct one or more IMPLAN economic study to determine the actual economic impact of local festivals and events. IMPLAN is economic modeling software that does input/output analysis of local events or business activity.
- k. Continue to partner with Fort Kent's civic organizations and clubs on projects that provide a broad benefit to community members and visitors.
- l. Continue to obtain Micro-Enterprise Grants to assist small, home-based businesses with needs for capital improvements, market access and other challenges.



- m. Update the Zoning standards to ensure that home occupations do not create nuisance issues, impact neighborhood safety or property values.
- n. Participate in and support regional efforts to improve telecommunications infrastructure needed to support hi-tech, information based companies.
- o. Participate in and support efforts to develop State policies and rules that encourage the development of metals mining at Bald Mountain.

**POLICY 4**

Encourage and provide for the development of commercial wind, biomass and other alternative energy projects in appropriate areas of the community.

**Strategies**

- a. Amend the Town-wide Zoning Ordinance to include commercial wind, biomass and other energy facilities in the list of regulated land uses that are subject to site design review. Developed standards address local concerns and that are consistent with State minimums.
- b. Work with local, regional, State and Federal organizations to develop and maintain two or more incentive packages for the expansion and start-up of energy related businesses.
- c. On an on-going basis, advocate for changes in State and Federal policy that are favorable to wind and biomass energy development.

**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

PDO, LG, TC, CofC, LB, SAD #27, UMFK, DECD, NMDC, NMMC, FKCO

**Policy 1** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 3** Short-term & w/ 10yr

**Energy Related Policies and Strategies:** Energy development was covered in this section on the local economy and to a lesser extent in the section on agriculture and forest resources. Energy use and conservation is addressed in the Public Facilities and Services section as well as Transportation. A summary of all energy related policies and strategies found in the plan follows.

# ENERGY



**draft** **SUMMARY ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**Policies & Strategies** 8/09/12

**Public Facilities and Services**

**POLICY 1**

Maintain facilities and facility systems in top condition to protect vehicles and equipment and control operating costs.

**Strategies**

- a. Continue to budget for annual expenses related to building maintenance.
- b. Designate and train a staff member as a certified facility manager to conduct annual facility inspections and develop the maintenance budget.
- c. Seek State/Federal grant funding for energy efficiency upgrades and use maintenance budgets as leverage.

**POLICY 2**

Continue to maintain the Town Garage Facility to provide service space and protection for vehicles, equipment and materials and safety required by the Department.

**Strategies**

- a. Evaluate through a professional energy audit the opportunities to lower building operating costs related to energy efficiency for heating and lighting.
- b. Include recommended energy efficiency upgrades, including overhead doors, in the town's 5-year updated Capital Improvement Plan.
- c. Complete a feasibility study of a biomass boiler to heat public works and sewage treatment facilities at the site.

**POLICY 3**

Continue to maintain the Municipal Center Facility to provide a modern, energy efficient and professional setting from which to provide the services.

**Strategies**

- a. Continue to budget for annual expenses related to building maintenance.
- b. Develop a Community Energy Plan (CEP) that includes an inventory of energy use and emissions for all facilities, targets for annual energy savings, cost-benefit estimates for investments in energy saving measures, a prioritized list of energy efficiency projects, an outline of funding and incentives available to help support energy efficiency upgrades and a program to educate residents on energy conservation.

- c. Publicize the Town's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Ordinance that encourages owners of qualifying property to access financing for energy saving improvements to their properties.
- d. Evaluate opportunities to lower building operating costs related to energy efficiency by completing an energy audit.
- e. Include recommended energy efficiency upgrades in the town's 5-year update of its Capital Improvement Plan.
- f. Replace the existing boiler system with a modern, efficient multi-fuel system.

## **Transportation**

### **POLICY**

Maintain and broaden local options for transportation alternatives and parking.

### **Strategies**

- a. Study the feasibility and cost benefit of having 6-9 alternative powered municipal vehicles based on scheduled replacement.
- b. Support and encourage the availability of alternative fuels in town including hydrogen, E-85 and bio-diesel.

## **Agricultural and Forest Resources**

### **POLICY 1**

Safeguard our agricultural resources by supporting practices and programs that ensure profitability, sustainability and the transfer of ownership for continued agricultural use.

### **Strategies**

Seek grant/loan opportunities that support local and regional needs of individual farms in such areas as farm diversification, valued-added processing, biomass production, potato packing, grain milling, farm product marketing and transportation and access to and consumption of locally raised foods.

### **POLICY 2**

Encourage, create and attract companies that produce, harvest, utilize and add value to agricultural and forest related resources to remain or locate in Fort Kent.

### **Strategies**

Continue to explore and support opportunities for biomass utilization and other alternatives for heating and electrical generation.

### **POLICY 3**

Safeguard our forest resources by supporting practices and programs that ensure profitability and sustainability.

#### **Strategies**

Support emerging opportunities to develop regional and community scale biomass facilities for heating and electrical generation.

### **Local Economy**

### **POLICY 1**

Support continued economic diversification to ensure the long term sustainability of the local economy. Seek funding to initiate new programs.

#### **Strategies**

Support the needs of existing businesses by applying for business assistance, energy efficiency and other grants that address specific needs.

### **POLICY 2**

Encourage and provide for the development of commercial wind and biomass energy projects in appropriate areas of the community.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Amend the Town-wide Zoning Ordinance to include commercial wind, biomass and other energy facilities in the list of regulated land uses that are subject to site design review. Developed standards address local concerns and that are consistent with State minimums.
- b. Work with local, regional, State and Federal organizations to develop and maintain two or more incentive packages for the expansion and start-up of energy related businesses.
- c. On an on-going basis, advocate for changes in State and Federal policy that are favorable to wind and biomass energy development.

#### **Implementation Partners/Timeline**

Refer to the plan sections where the policies are first mentioned.

# HOUSING



## DRAFT HOUSING Inventory & Analysis 7/18/12

### Introduction

In the area of housing, Fort Kent has focused on the need for new units based on population/demographic shifts, affordability and the provision of safe, decent housing for all of its residents. The data below supports the community's progress in these areas. The fact that population has been declining has not deterred the development of new, single family homes and other housing. Fort Kent significantly led other "major" towns in Aroostook County in the development of new homes in 2011.

### New Homes in Aroostook 2011

Town	Stick Built	Modular	Mobile	Total
Caribou	1	2	2	5
Castle Hill	0	0	0	0
Caswell	0	0	0	0
Chapman	0	1	1	2
Easton	1	0	0	1
Fort Fairfield	0	0	2	2
<b>Fort Kent</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>
Houlton	0	2	0	2
Limestone	0	0	0	0
Madawaska	4	0	0	4
Mapleton	1	1	1	3
Portage	2	0	0	2
Presque Isle	0	0	1	1
Van Buren	0	0	0	0
Washburn	1	0	0	1
Woodland	2	0	0	2

Source: Aroostook Association of CEO's

An upward trend in the size of working and retirement age groups clearly has coincided with the development of new homes, senior housing and residential care housing. Affordability is defined as a housing cost that does not exceed 30% of the household income. Affordability is addressed for very low and low income households, the elderly on fixed incomes and should include first-time home buyers. The selling price of homes and the cost of renting are examined. Limited information was available on the cost of new construction. Housing quality will soon be mandated by the new State of Maine Minimum Building Code that applies to communities, like Fort Kent, with populations over 2000. The implications of this on local code enforcement are still being evaluated and will likely result in higher permit fees. Fort Kent has not operated a low income housing rehabilitation program in more than 25 years and the presence of substandard housing and dangerous and abandoned buildings is apparent in the community. Conditions, trends and issues related to these housing parameters are discussed below.

## Housing Need

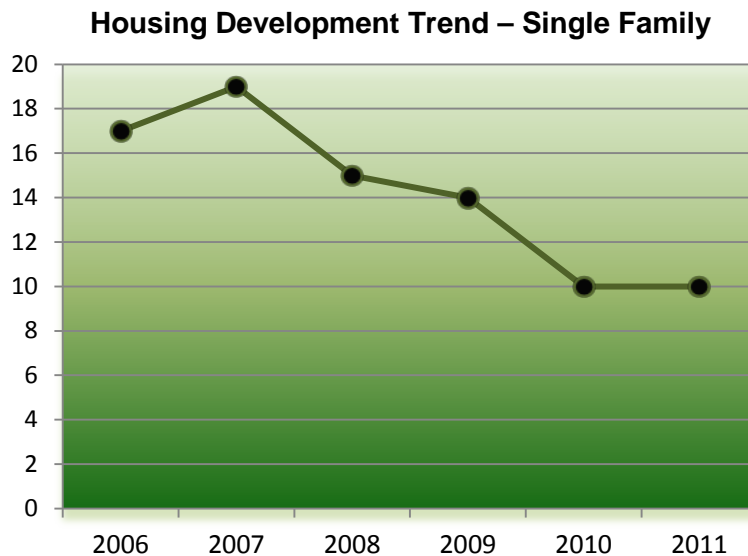
According to 2010 US Census data shown in the table below, the town has a total of 1,922 housing units in all categories including single and multi-family, owner and rental occupied and seasonal/recreational. The table compares data for Aroostook County and Fort Kent. The data indicate that the Town has lower vacancy rates for owner and rental housing than the County. The total vacancy rate in Fort Kent is 9.1% leaving 175 units in all categories available for occupancy. This is well below the County total vacancy rate of 21.7%. This means that Fort Kent has available housing to accommodate the creation of jobs and population growth. The Town should encourage housing occupancy by publicizing information on housing availability and contact information on the Town Website. The suitability of existing housing for occupancy is discussed under affordability and quality. Even in the midst of a significant number of vacant homes, new housing is being developed each year.

### Housing Occupancy Comparison

	Aroostook County		Fort Kent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	71870		4097	
Total Housing Units	39529	100	1922	100
Occupied Housing Units	30961	78.3	1747	90.9
Total Vacant Housing Units	8568	21.7	175	9.1
Homeowner Vacancy Rate		2.7		1.5
Rental Vacancy Rate		8.6		5.3

Source: US Census Data, 2010

The six year development trend for single family homes including “stick” built, modular and mobile homes is indicated below.



Source: Annual Fort Kent Town Reports



The peak year was 2007 with 19 new homes being developed. The six year average is 14 homes per year. A clear downward trend is indicated after the economic collapse of 2008. The trend may become more apparent beginning in 2010 and should be monitored for the next several years to see if it continues or if the community is able to maintain the existing rate of new single family home construction through 2016.

### **New Multi-Family Development**

Housing developers have been building new multi-family projects for several years in response to the shifting demographics and demand. Investment has been well into the millions of dollars. At least 10 projects were constructed since 2002 and include new construction and renovation of existing structures. Projects include condominiums, assisted living and both subsidized and unsubsidized apartments. Originally developed as 23 units in 2007, the assisted living facility has increased in size by 13 units in the past five years. New modern private apartments with garage and condo units total 42 units in the last 10 years. In 2012, the Fort Kent Housing Corporation – Village Apartments will open six new units of subsidized senior housing in conjunction with 18 units that were reconstructed after the flood of 2008. These projects have created high quality housing for the community and support the needs of locally employed professionals, retired persons and seniors with health support and rental assistance needs.

### **Housing Affordability**

According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Fort Kent's median household income is \$39,385. The margin of error is \$8,135. A single person household earning fewer than 80% of the median or \$31,508 is considered "low income". A two person household income of \$34,869 is low income. Housing affordability is based on 30% of the household income. If a rent level or mortgage payment exceeds the 30% threshold, affordability is questionable.

Rental unit affordability information is available from several sources. The 2012 Fair Market Rent (FMR) calculated by the Office of Management and Budget for a one bedroom unit in Fort Kent is \$487 per month and \$584 per month for a 2-bed room unit. A one bed room unit is affordable to both low and very low income, single and 2-person households. A two bedroom unit is close to (+\$38) affordable to a very low income, two-person household at FMR. Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) data for 2006 indicate that the average 2-bedroom rent with utilities in Fort Kent is \$451 per month. This indicates that a 2-bedroom unit is affordable to low/very low one and two person households. However, 2009 data from MSHA for the Presque Isle Labor Market Area which includes Fort Kent shows that the average 2-bedroom rent level of \$668 per month is unaffordable. The total number of rental units in town is 464 (2008) of which 188 units or 40.5% are subsidized. Fort Kent does not appear to have an affordability issue in the area of rent levels but local affordability may be fragile and should be monitored.

Information on the selling prices of homes in Fort Kent was made available with the help of a local property appraisal service. Home sales data originated from property transfer tax records available from the Town for the years 2007-2009. Since data was not available on income levels by age groups, affordability analysis is based on 80% of the median income and the average selling price for single family and mobile homes in the community during the 3-year period. The average selling price for a single family home was \$97,180. The average selling price for a mobile home was \$48,274. Affordability was based a mortgage structure of 10% down for a term of 25 years for single family and 15 years for mobile homes at an interest rate of 4%. The average selling price of a home in Fort Kent is affordable to persons earning 80% of the median household income. In some cases affordability can be exceeded in households with higher income levels.

The Growth Management Act directs the town to ensure that at least 10% of the new housing units created in the next 10 years be affordable. Based on the six year average this equals 14 units in Fort Kent. The number of new mobile homes added in Fort Kent during this period total 14 units or 16.9 % of the total number of single family homes. This implies a level of affordability in new residential construction that exceeds 10% of all units sited or built within a ten year period. Two mobile home parks were eliminated since the last Comprehensive Plan was approved because of public health and safety issues. There presently are three parks, with one new park established within the past 10 years. The development of a new mobile home park in conjunction with a housing assistance program and regional support through Aroostook County Action Program would help eliminate substandard housing and create housing affordable to low income persons.

A review of the Town's Land Use Ordinances including Zoning, Sub-Division and Road Design, Construction and Acceptance Ordinances revealed that existing regulations both encourage and in some cases may discourage the development of affordable housing. Section 7.10 of the Zoning Ordinance allows mobile home parks to have smaller dimensional requirements for lots that are served with public sewer than lots that are created outside of a mobile home park. Private roads in mobile home parks are not required to be constructed to the same standards as roads that are proposed for acceptance as a public road. These zoning and subdivision provisions help contribute to affordability. Existing construction standards for roads that are proposed for acceptance as a public road are uniform for all uses, traffic levels and road lengths. Some standards like paved surface width and shoulder width may not be necessary or appropriate for all residential neighborhoods. This contributes to construction cost and may in some case affected affordability of house lots. The Planning Board should consider reviewing information sources on residential street designs and determine if flexibility with some requirements might be appropriate and help support affordability. Changes would require amendments to local ordinances.

## **Housing Quality**

In the area of housing quality the goal is to ensure safe and decent housing for all residents of the community. Housing quality factors include, age and quality of existing homes, the number of dangerous/abandoned homes and the need for standards for new units. It has been well over 20 years since Fort Kent has operated a publically funded, single or multi-family residential rehabilitation program. The number of occupied, substandard homes has not been determined. All housing is a community resource and quality housing encourages people to live in Fort Kent. This, in turn, helps establish a local labor force for business and economic growth.

Fort Kent has made strides in eliminating vacant, deteriorated housing through the acquisition/demolition of homes in floodplains and through enforcement of the law pertaining to dangerous buildings. Owners of abandoned homes were contacted by code enforcement within the past five years and encouraged to demolish homes. The cost of demolition is more expensive than ever and may range from \$15,000 - \$25,000. This often deters owners from dealing with the problem. A 2011 evaluation of dangerous residential structures identified 10 homes that should be removed. The Town Council has the final authority to take action under the dangerous buildings law.

Housing age is generally an indicator of housing quality and is not always a reliable. Many older homes in Fort Kent are better maintained than some newer homes. The American Community Survey 5-year update for 2010 reports owner occupied housing for Fort Kent by housing tenure (age). This data includes homes built before 2004. The Town reports were the source of data for homes built between 2005 and 2011. The number of new homes built/placed during this period was 96. The number of homes built/placed since 1970, or homes of less than 42 years, is 817. This represents 61% of Fort Kent's owner occupied housing stock and suggests that this housing is of modern quality and construction. The number of homes built/placed before 1970 is 594 or 39% and 297 of these homes were built before 1939. In total, 22% of the Town's owner occupied housing stock was built before 1939. The presence of substandard single and multi-family homes is apparent in Fort Kent. The town should complete a town-wide housing quality assessment to determine the extent of substandard homes. After this, a housing assistance program could help them address this issue.

Fort Kent is required to enforce the new Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) beginning July 1, 2012. The State law that created MUBEC became effective December 1, 2010 and consists of residential and commercial building, existing building and energy conservation codes developed by the International Code Council and adapted to Maine. In addition, MUBEC includes standards related to ventilation for indoor air quality, energy efficiency and radon control options. The new law will help the Town improve housing quality over time though most new construction probably meets these codes and may meet some of

the standards. While the law states that the cost of training for the municipal code enforcement officer (CEO) will be paid by the State, local enforcement will come at an unknown cost to the Town. The Town may need to hire a third party inspector until the local CEO has been recertified. The Town should determine the cost for these services and plan accordingly. Multiple inspections may be required during the building process to ensure code compliance. This will undoubtedly add significantly to the cost of building permits. The town is presently revising its permit fee structure to account for this fact. The new permit fee structure will be in place beginning in 2013.

# **rDRAFT HOUSING**

## **Policies & Strategies** 7/17/12

### **State Goal**

Encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens

### **Local Goal**

Ensure an adequate supply of affordable, safe and decent housing for all ages and income levels in the community.

### **Summary**

Based on the 2010 Census, there are 1,922 housing units in Fort Kent in all categories including single and multi-family, owner and rental occupied and seasonal/recreational. For the past 5 years, there has been an average of 15 new, residential units added to the Town's housing stock each year. Of these, roughly 9 units are mobile or manufactured homes. This implies a level of affordability in new residential construction that exceeds 10% of all units sited or built within a ten year period. Income averages across age groups must be compared with the cost of these units to help verify affordability. Two mobile home parks, Stadig and Freeman have been eliminated since the last Comprehensive Plan was approved. There presently are three parks, with one new park established within the past 10 years. There are presently 175 vacant housing units in Fort Kent that are a resource for meeting affordability and labor needs of the community.

### **POLICY 1**

Monitor new residential development, sale of single family homes and vacancy rates for indications that affordability is at risk.

### **Strategies**

- a. PB/CEO annual review of residential building permits to understand the percentage breakdown of mobile and manufactured homes being placed.
- b. PDO prepares annual summary of home sale prices and comparison with incomes by age group.
- c. Annually contact Aroostook County Action Program for information on the availability of rental voucher/assistance and monitor trends.
- d. Encourage developers of multi-family units to dedicate a minimum of one and up to 10% of units as affordable by providing a 5 year tax deferral on affordable units.
- e. Notify local Realtors and Banks regarding the availability of CDBG-Housing Assistance funds for development of multi-family units.
- f. Create a Housing Tax Incentive Financing District when affordability monitoring indicates the need.

- g. Amend the local zoning ordinance to require mobile home parks be served by public sewer.

## **POLICY 2**

Encourage the maintenance, sale and occupancy of vacant housing units.

### **Strategies**

- a. PDO to continue business support efforts to retain and create jobs.
- b. Apply for a CDBG-Planning Grant to complete a local housing assessment that identifies unsafe homes for possible demolition and targets others for rehabilitation investment.
- c. Apply for CDBG-Housing Assistance funds as indicated by the housing assessment.
- d. Develop a local housing assistance program to benefit low/moderate income homeowners.

## **POLICY 3**

Eliminate all abandoned/dangerous residential structures from community.

### **Strategies**

- a. Use the local housing assessment to create a target list of owners.
- b. Have code enforcement rate the risk of each structure to public safety.
- c. Send annual notices to property owners when properties violate dangerous building law. Take legal action when justified by risk level.

### **Implementation Partners/Timeline**

PDO, PB, ACAP, LHD, DECD-OCD, MSHA, USDA-RD, LG, TC, REA, LL

**Policy 1** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short-term, **Policy 3** Mid-term

# RECREATION & OPEN SPACE



**draft RECREATION & OPEN SPACE**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 6/29/12

**Introduction**

Trying to imagine Fort Kent without recreation facilities, programs and opportunities is like trying to imagine a community without schools, police and fire protection, a hospital or public water and sewer. Decades of investment and development in Fort Kent's recreation capacity has completely and securely woven recreation into the community's social and economic fabric. Municipal effort to build its recreation system has brought together public and private interests in a way that would rival many Maine communities. These partnerships have created a better community and quality of life for residents and have helped support the tourism-based economic engine.

In planning for municipal recreation facilities and programs the key is to understand and balance the needs of the community with availability of recreation opportunities and programs. The Fort Kent Recreation Department strives to compliment and not compete with other public and private programs and facilities. The "Rec" Department is there to fill gaps in community recreation needs. The local recreation partnerships include Fort Kent Recreation and Parks, MSAD #27, UMFK and a diverse group of private interests including Maine Winter Sports-10<sup>th</sup> Mountain. Ski Club, Lonesome Pine Ski Club, Fort Kent Golf Club, local ATV, snowmobile and x-country ski clubs, Elder Social Action Council, County Physical Therapy, Power of Prevention, many Registered Maine Guides and Outfitters and many others. These diverse recreation interests collectively support the facility and program needs of the community.

The 2010 Census indicates that Fort Kent has a slowly declining population, an increasing demographic in the 45-64 year old age group and a declining trend in the child bearing age group of 25-44. Given how diverse and highly developed the town's facilities and programs are, one area of focus is on the 10 year needs for facility modernization and programs that meet changing demographics and recreation preferences. For example, the "newly retired" tend to be more health conscience and desire year round activity. However, efforts to create jobs and attract population are also part of this 10 year picture so interim review of recreation needs is critical. If growth begins to occur priorities may need to shift.

Municipal recreation facilities are public facilities and as such, the Town needs to plan for needed investments and upgrades over time. Some of these upgrades are mandated by State and Federal laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act. These facilities are public assets that should be maintained for the long-term benefit of the community. Capital recreation projects are included in the 10-year capital investment plan found in the section on Fiscal Capacity.



## **Conditions and Trends**

Public and Private Programs: Public recreation programming in Fort Kent is extensive, creative and diverse and is conducted by Recreation and Parks, MSAD #27 Athletic Department and the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK) Athletics. Recreation facilities are often shared among the program providers, especially the Town and MSAD #27 to allow broad access and participation in programs for all ages. Town Recreation and Parks programming focuses on grades pre-kindergarten through grade 8 and runs year-round; MSAD #27 programming covers grades K-12 and adults through their adult education program and runs during the school year and UMFK programming is available to adults 18 and older with special programs for younger ages. Fees are required for some public programs.

Private “active” recreation programs are generally associated with clubs or businesses that offer activities that are beyond those covered by public programs. Some private facilities are used in support of public programs like the Community High School Ski Teams. Private recreation facilities and activities available in Fort Kent include X-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, biathlon, mountain biking, golf, canoeing, kayaking, camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, weight training, karate, spinning, yoga and dance. These are the activities for which a fee or membership is required in most cases. A fine example of a private program is the Jalbert Youth Ski and Biathlon Program that cooperates with the 10<sup>th</sup> Mt. Ski Club to provide free summer and fall youth training programs for ages 5-14. All programs, whether public or private, are important to maintaining health and fitness in the community. A Physical Activity Resource Guide supported by A Healthy Maine Partnership’s coalition with the Power of Prevention and Healthy Aroostook is available at [powerofprevention.org](http://powerofprevention.org). This is an extensive guide to physical activity sites available in the region.

Recreation and Parks provides a summer guide to its recreation programs and makes public announcements of fall and winter programs. Summer programming includes, but is not limited to, swimming lessons, tennis, basketball, soccer, T-ball, wiffleball, kickball, arts and crafts, science, learning skills, word games, rope skipping, camping and many special events like fishing and biking days. Fall programs include girls’ and boys’ basketball and soccer and the winter program centers on skating. Programs during fall and winter also include a variety of enrichment workshops and holiday focused craft making.

The MSAD #27 school year programming is comprised primarily of team sports for girls and boys. The sports included are soccer, baseball, basketball, wrestling, Nordic and alpine skiing, track and tennis. Other programming includes intramural volley ball, x-country running, golf and dance club. Adult education offers health and fitness programs that meet diverse community interests and that support an aging population. Examples include exercise for adults and seniors, yoga, spinning and kick boxing. The school district has increased its

allocation for adult education in response to growing enrollment which grew from 1,303 in 1999 to 3,726 in 2010. This growth also included literacy and adult high school program enrollments.

The UMFK athletics program offers women’s and men’s basketball and soccer and women’s volleyball as team sports. The UMFK Sports Center also provides racket ball courts and weight training, specialized cardio-fitness and exercise rooms. Two classrooms provide space for sports education programs. The facility is equipped with locker/shower rooms. Periodically the program will offer a special co-ed training camp for youth in soccer and basketball and programs in zumba and cardio kick-boxing. Special programs are offered on a fee basis. The community user fee is a modest \$5/day and a 1 year membership is \$110. UMFK also offer a theater arts program to students and community members.

Local Facilities and Areas: Fort Kent has seven publically owned and 11 privately owned recreation facilities/areas that support a broad range of activities for all seasons. It would be much shorter to list the recreation activities that are not available but some of these are addressed in the paragraphs on unmet needs. Snowmobile and ATV trails are also discussed separately. Recreation activities and programming that has been described are supported by public and private areas and facilities summarized in the tables that follow.

#### Local Public Recreation Facilities/Areas

Name	Parking	Restrooms	Activity
Jalbert Park	X	X	SK, TC, AF
Riverside Park	X	X	BL, WT, S, P, F, RV, PG, BT, BB
Swimming Pool	X	X	SW
Black Lake Boat Landing	X		P, F
Fort Kent Block House	X	X	P, F, BL
Heritage Trail	X		MU, P
Fort Kent Elementary School	X		PG

Symbols Key: SK – Skating, BL – Boat Landing, WT – Walking Trails, S – Soccer, P – Picnic, F – Fishing, H – Hunting, AF – Athletic Field, PG – Playground, BT – Bike Trail, BB – Basketball, TC – Tennis Court, RV – RV Park, HT – Hiking Trails, SW – Swimming, G – Golf, DH – Downhill Skiing, XC – Cross Country Skiing, C – Camping, CK – Canoe/Kayak, MB – Mountain Biking, MU – Multi-use, PV - Privy

#### Local Private Recreation Facilities/ Areas

Name	Parking	Restroom	Activity
Fish River Falls	X		F, HT, P
Basil Pond	X		F, H, CK
Marcum Pond			F, H
Fort Kent Mills	X		F, SW
Fort Kent Golf Club	X	X	G
10 <sup>th</sup> Mountain Center	X	X	XC, MB, HT
Lonesome Pine Ski Club	X	X	DH, XC

Symbols Key: SK – Skating, BL – Boat Landing, WT – Walking Trails, S – Soccer, P – Picnic, F – Fishing, H – Hunting, AF – Athletic Field, PG – Playground, BT – Bike Trail, BB – Basketball, TC – Tennis Court, RV – RV Park, HT – Hiking Trails, SW – Swimming, G – Golf, DH – Downhill Skiing, CK – Canoe/Kayak, XC – Cross Country Skiing, C – Camping, MB – Mountain Biking, MU – Multi-use, PV - Privy

Other private facilities in Fort Kent that support health and fitness in the community include Northern Maine Medical Center – Physical Therapy, County Physical Therapy, two Karate Schools, and one school of dance. An indoor swimming and physical therapy facility, Northern Aquatics, is available 12 miles away in Eagle Lake.

### Popular Indoor Facilities

**Jalbert Park:** Located off Pleasant Street adjacent to the Fort Kent Elementary School on the banks of the Fish River. This facility consists of a multipurpose building with restrooms, snack bar and meeting area. Also located here is an outdoor ice skating rink with lights, two lighted tennis courts, arboretum and a lighted multi-use athletic field. Ice skates and snowshoes are also available for public use.

**Community High School (CHS):** Regulation basketball court.

**UMFK Sports Center:** Described above.

**Fort Kent Senior Club:** The club is an incorporated non-profit organized for the benefits of Fort Kent's senior population. The facility located on Pine Street was built in 2003 and is open year round to seniors in the community. There is an annual membership fee of \$10. The club offers daily meals 5 days per week, special dinner and dances twice per month and various games like cribbage, Charlemagne and bingo on a monthly schedule. Enrichment classes and exercise classes are also held at the center through the SAD #27 Adult Education Program.

### Popular Open Space Areas

**Riverside Park:** Located off East Main Street on the banks of the outstanding St. John River in the center of Town. The Park consists of approximately 7.2 acres. This recreation park features a boat landing, bike/walking trail, picnic area, 8 RV camping sites, public restrooms, outdoor basketball court, children's playground, soccer field, gazebo, spectacular pavilion with picnic tables and pristine open space.

**Black Lake:** The Lake is accessible via South Perley Brook Rd and is approximately 8 miles from town. There is an improved public boat landing with parking and picnic area that is maintained by the town. The concrete plank landing is suitable for small boats, canoes and kayaks. The shoreland of Black Lake is in multiple ownerships. Black Lake is a popular recreation area with important scenic and natural values.

**Fish River:** Public access to the Fish River in Fort Kent is limited for boats and includes locations at the Block House and Riverside Park on the St. John. Canoe and kayak access is available at Jalbert Park, for a short run on the river of less than 1 mile. Public access at Soldier Pond provides a 10 mile run to Fort Kent requiring a carry at the Falls. Numerous private access points exist and transportation service is available.

Fish River Falls: The privately owned Falls is accessible via a developed trail with a trail head and parking located on public land adjacent to the Airport Road. The area is used primarily for hiking, swimming, primitive camping and fishing. There is a privately owner campground on the West shore that is open to the public and accessed via the Aroostook Road. Fish River Falls is an outstanding natural recreation area.

St. John River: Public access to the St. John River is available at Riverside Park in Fort Kent where parking, picnic tables and restrooms are available. Access from the Fish River is available at the Block House where there is also parking and picnic tables. Larger boats can be launched at Riverside. There are numerous other private access opportunities in upper and lower Fort Kent that can accommodate small boats, canoes and kayaks. The entire St. John River is an outstanding natural recreation area.

Basil Lake: The Lake is accessible via a public road and is approximately six miles from the center of town. There is an unimproved boat landing on private property at the west end of the lake suitable for small boats, canoes and kayaks. The lake and the surrounding 288 acre parcel of land are wholly owned by an absentee owner. Basil Lake is an outstanding natural recreation area.

#### Regional Opportunities

The St. John Valley region is fortunate to also have Maine Public Lands nearby at Deboullie Mountain, T16 R6 (Eagle Lake), Allagash including the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the Dickwood Lake Wildlife Management Area. Extensive access to private wildlands for recreation also exists through the North Maine Woods Association (NMW). Access points within 40 miles of Fort Kent include checkpoint gates at St. Francis, Allagash River, Little Black and Dickey. Hedge Hog Mountain Rest Area on Maine Rt.11 25 miles south of Fort Kent is managed by the Maine Department of Transportation. Many regional recreation opportunities are also available in nearby New Brunswick. Facilities important to Fort Kent residents include Glazier Lake; the St. Francois Ice Hockey Arena and indoor tennis courts in Edmunston. These regional resources provide opportunities for the full array of recreation activities for Fort Kent residents. See the Table below for a summary of regional facilities and areas.

## Regional Public Recreation Facilities/Areas

Name	Parking	Restrooms	Activity
Allagash Public Lands	X		F, H, HT, CK, C, P
Deboullie Mountain Public Lands	X	PV	F, H, HT, CK, C, P
Eagle Lake Public Lands	X		F, H, HT, CK, C, P
Hedgehog Mountain Rest Area	X	PV	HT, P
Allagash Wilderness Waterway	X	PV	HT, CK, F, H, C, P
North Maine Woods	X		HT, CK, F, H, C, P
Dickwood Lake WMA	X		F, H
Daigle Pond	X		F
Glazier Lake	X		F, RV, P, CK
Soldier Pond Boat Landing	X		F, BL, P
Frenchville Boat Landing	X		BL
Eagle Lake Boat Landing	X		BL, P

Symbols Key: SK – Skating, BL – Boat Landing, WT – Walking Trails, S – Soccer, P – Picnic, F – Fishing, H – Hunting, AF – Athletic Field, PG – Playground, BT – Bike Trail, BB – Basketball, TC – Tennis Court, RV – RV Park, HT – Hiking Trails, SW – Swimming, G – Golf, DH – Downhill Skiing, XC – Cross Country Skiing, C – Camping, CK – Canoe/Kayak, MB – Mountain Biking, MU – Multi-use, PV - Privy

### Key Regional Facilities and Areas

**Eagle Lake Public Lands:** The Eagle Lake lands are a 23,000-acre area including most of Eagle Lake in northern Maine. The area abuts Square Lake to the east with a thoroughfare connecting the two lakes. This State of Maine recreation and timber production area comprises parts of T16 R6 and T16 R 5 WELS. Access is gained off the Sly Brook Road, connecting with Route 11 at Soldier Pond (Wallagrass) or by boat from the launch in the town of Eagle Lake. Campsites are only accessible by water. All outdoor recreation opportunities are available.

**Dickwood Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA):** Located in the Town of Eagle Lake this area comprises 3,860 acres with an additional 500 acres owned by the Town. The parcel includes the 90 acre Dickwood Lake, popular for brook trout fishing. Hunting opportunities exist for upland game and waterfowl. Access is off of Maine Rt. 11 on the Devoe Brook Road.

**Deboullie Mountain:** The 21,871-acre Deboullie Public Lands offer remote campsites on crystal-clear trout ponds surrounded by low rugged mountains. These lands, encompass 17 ponds ranging in size from 8 to 341 acres. Facilities include 29 primitive single-party campsites with privies (23 of which are drive-to) on or near Togue, Denny, Perch, Upper, Pushineer, Deboullie and Gardner Ponds. A single “group” campsite is available on Perch Pond. This recreation area includes 12 miles of hiking trails (including pond destinations and Deboullie Mountain), four boat launches suitable for boat trailers (on Togue, Perch, Pushineer and Deboullie Ponds) and one hand-carry boat launch on Sixth Pelletier Brook Lake. This area is part of the North Maine Woods association and fees are charged for day and overnight use.

Allagash Wilderness Waterway: The Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW) was established by the Maine Legislature in 1966 to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural beauty, character, and habitat of this unique area. It is a magnificent, 92-mile-long ribbon of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams winding through the heart of northern Maine's vast commercial forests. In 1970 the Waterway was named the first state-administered component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. The AWW is accessible to Fort Kent residents via the North Maine Woods Allagash checkpoint. Most outdoor recreation opportunities are available.

The North Maine Woods (NMW): The NMW is a Multiple Ownership - Multiple Use Management Area. The NMW organization is a non-profit corporation contracted to manage the public recreational use of 3.5 million acres of mostly private and some public commercial forest. NMW provides visitors with valuable information on forest resource management and recreational use that is designed to help them have a safe and pleasant trip in the working forest. Fees are charged for day use and overnight camping and seasons passes are available. Access is available at four checkpoint gates less than one hour from Fort Kent off Maine Rt.161 north and in Winterville off of Maine Rt. 11 south. Gates are both staffed and automated 24/7 for most of the year.

Addressing unmet needs in recreation programming and facilities requires a financial commitment, a keen sense of community priorities and an understanding of the benefit-cost relationship. The latter is strongly influenced by the longevity of the program or facility. Fort Kent's focus on traditional and family oriented recreation activities has resulted in many long-standing programs and facilities that have served the Town well for decades. Recreation programming and facility needs identified during the planning process are listed below and detailed in the analyses section.

#### Public Recreation Programming Needs

1. Special programs for "at risk" teens that do not participate in sports or existing extra-curricular programs.
2. Enhanced safety training for young ATV riders to improve Heritage Trail and overall trail safety.
3. Establish on-going walk and bike to school program following a Safe Routes to School evaluation.
4. Expand athletic and sports programs for grades 7-12 to improve access and participation beyond what is offered by junior high and high school teams.
5. New programming and choices for 17-21 year old and older adults through the adult education program.
6. Create a new, full time position for Recreation and Parks, dedicated to developing and implementing new programs.

### Public Recreation Facility Needs (See Capital Investment Plan)

1. Swimming pool compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. Improved boat ramp at Riverside Park.
3. East side neighborhoods playground project for safe and convenient access to a recreation facility and Elementary School and Riverside Park replacements.
4. Two additional tennis courts and upgrade of existing courts at Jalbert Park.
5. Dedicated pedestrian/bike trail using the Fish River Green Belt concept or other suitable locations.
6. Archery range.
7. Reactivation of the former Armory Indoor Shooting Range.
8. New trailhead access points for snowmobilers and ATV riders.
9. New St. John River boat landings in upper and lower Fort Kent and Basil Lake.
10. Open sided building to cover the skating rink at Jalbert Park.
11. Improved Fish River canoe and kayak access at Jalbert Park.

### Private Recreation Opportunities

1. Development of a Community and/or Teen Center and events programming. (This may also be done publically or in partnership)
2. Establishment of a Fish and Game Club.
3. Development of a bowling alley.
4. Development of a miniature golf course.
5. Development, mapping and promotion of Mt. Bike trail system.

### Water bodies requiring improved access

1. St. John River: 14 miles in Fort Kent with one public boat landing; extensive public use; access above the international bridge impeded during low water; access in lower Fort Kent via unimproved private carry.
2. Basil Pond: moderate public use; private unimproved access has erosion and parking issues; outstanding recreational characteristics.

### Local and Regional Trail Systems

Aroostook County has an extensive network of mapped trails and access points for land and water based recreation during all seasons. Snowmobile and ATV trail information and maps are readily available from the Association of Aroostook Chambers of Commerce, [visitaroostook.com](http://visitaroostook.com) and at any Chamber of Commerce office. The 2,200 mile snowmobile trail system is maintained by about 40 local clubs and the 1,200 mile ATV trail system is maintained by about 28 local clubs. Hiking, mountain biking and canoe/kayak trails are available throughout the region and include Aroostook State Park, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, North Maine Woods, Maine Public Reserve Lands and others. There are 31 mapped water trails in the region that comprise about 250 miles for paddling. Trails and trail information is supported by many public and private entities. Detailed information is available

on-line at several locations including GoAroostookOutdoors.com and the North Maine Woods and Maine DOC websites.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail is a long-distance paddling trail connecting the major watersheds across the Adirondacks and Northern New England. The 740-mile water trail traverses across New York, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire, and Maine. The trail was brought to life in the 1990's when Mike Krepner, Ron Canter, and Randy Mardres of Native Trails, Inc. researched the traditional east-west water routes used by Native Americans and early settlers in the Northern Forest Region. Maine water routes represent 347 miles of this historic trail which includes the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the St John River in Northern Aroostook County. The St. John River at Fort Kent is the eastern terminus of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

The local trail networks are summarized in the table below.

**Fort Kent Trails Detail**

<b>Fort Kent Trails</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Uses</b>
10 <sup>th</sup> Mountain Center	12	X-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, mt. biking
Heritage Trail	5.75	Multiuse
Riverside North	1.2	Pedestrian, bike
Riverside South	.65	Pedestrian, bike, snowmobile
ATV	24.4	ATV
Snowmobile	33	Snowmobile
The Mills loop	2.7	Pedestrian, bike
Fish River – Soldier Pond to Ft. Kent	10	Canoe, Kayak
St. John River – Allagash to Ft. Kent	26	Canoe, Kayak
Northern Forest Canoe Trail Terminus	5.5	Canoe, Kayak
Fish River Falls	.40	Hiking, snowshoeing

Source: Town of Fort Kent, Northern Maine Water Trail Map 7 Guide, Northern Forest Canoe Trail website, ATV/Snowmobile Clubs, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Center

**Local Trail Management**

Snowmobile

Fort Kent SnoRiders (FKSR) is a longstanding club that started before 1974 when they formally incorporated. This all volunteer club is affiliated with the Maine Snowmobile Association (MSA) and sends a percentage of their dues to MSA for support and representation on snowmobiling issues. The club dues are more expensive than other local, non-affiliated clubs and this has recently affected membership numbers. FKSR is the primary local club that receives funding for trail grooming and equipment from the Maine Department of Conservation (MDOC). The club owns and operates two groomers, maintains the Maine Interconnecting Trail System (ITS) and helps other clubs with grooming projects as needed. Funding to the club passes through municipal government. The club does private fund raising that allows it to sponsor special projects and social events.



Valley Snobirds is also a longstanding club having been established around 1973. This club maintains a clubhouse in St. John Plantation on land owned by the State of Maine. The clubhouse facility, located on ITS 85 is an important rest stop for trail users. The club makes a lease payment to the State and pays property taxes on the building to the Town. Trail maintenance for this club is done by the SnoRider's Club.

Twin Lakes Snowmobile Club has existed since the mid-1990's and maintains a local club trail network in the southeast part of town. They operate an older groomer in need of replacement. The club receives funding from the MDOC for grooming at a rate for non-ITS trails.

#### All-Terrain-Vehicle

Valley ATV Riders is an incorporated non-profit formed in 1995. The club maintains approximately 25 miles of local trails, mostly on private land. They receive funding through membership dues and the Department of Conservation (DOC) for trail maintenance and trailside rest stops. They do not presently own or operate a club house but have installed a trailside Adirondack shelter at the Ledges Siding off of the Heritage Trail. While membership numbers have been very strong in the past, the recent economic conditions have resulted in a below average number of members. Membership averages about 180 persons and dues ranges from \$25 to \$45 depending on the number of ATV's in the household. The club applies to DOC every year for expense reimbursement for trail projects.

#### Ski, Hike and Bike

10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Ski Club was incorporated as a non-profit in 2000 and is affiliated with the Maine Winter Sports-World Cup Biathlon organization. The club boasts 118 members with a recommended donation level for use of their trail network and lodge. Many more persons in the community use the network. The club maintains a total of 12 miles of trails for x-country, snowshoe and hiking. The trails include access points at the Ski Center, Village Road, Lonesome Pine Trails and Violette Settlement Road. Two rest stops are equipped with picnic tables. Snowshoeing is designated on 4.8 miles of the network. Trails are supported by cooperating private landowners and many volunteers who do maintenance. In 2012 the club began construction of mountain bike trails with the goal of an 8 mile system in the future.

Fort Kent Recreation and Parks (FKRP) has been funded since 1951 and has been a department of local government since 1975. The department has a full time Director, one full time maintenance person and many volunteers. FKRP is responsible for trail maintenance on the approximately 2 miles of Riverside North and South trails. Planned extensions include the east side of the Fish River from the South trail parking area to the Rt. 1 bridge. This extension would be part of the proposed Fish River Green Belt as described in the Future Land Use Plan.

Lonesome Pine Ski Club is the longest standing trail organization in the community. Lonesome Pine was incorporated as a not-for-profit in 1964 and is governed by a nine member board of directors. They have a paid trail and lodge staff of up to 9 persons that varies in number seasonally but also receives significant volunteer support. The organization owns, operates and maintains a small, family oriented downhill ski area with snow making, 7 trails, two lifts and a lodge. They also own and maintain a network of x-country ski and snowshoe trails that link with 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Ski Center.

## **Analyses**

Fort Kent has a slowly declining population and a demographic shift toward an increasing number of persons in the 45-64 year old age group. The child bearing age group of 25-44 is declining in the community. Based on these facts, recreation facilities and programs available locally and in the region would meet community needs. However, local insight suggests that there are unmet program and facility needs based on the existing population and age of facilities. Overall participation remains strong in the youth programs that are offered and a segment remains under served. Participation in adult education programming offer through MSAD #27 is steadily increasing. The Recreation Department's budget has been constrained for several years which limit its capacity to raise matching funds for capital projects that could be partially or substantially funded by grants. The swimming pool, tennis courts and playground equipment at Riverside Park has reached its useful life expectancy. In Fort Kent, population and demographic changes don't tell the whole story when it comes to recreation needs.

Recreation services should be expanded to focus on areas that increase overall participation by all age groups and that foster a healthier community. This will require a new, full-time staff position that is primarily dedicated to programming but that also supports supervisory and other functions within Recreation and Parks. To better accommodate the "newly retired", ages 58 – 70, new programs that encourage physical and social activity during all seasons would be most beneficial. Examples include everything from chess, travel and dinner clubs to field trips. These may need to involve the use of regional indoor facilities available in neighboring communities. Youth programming should be expanded in at least four areas. For youth that do not participate in sports and existing extra-curricular programs, new programs in such areas as outdoor clubs, field trip and current trends should be offered. For the youth segment in grades 7-12, "you made the team" sports programs in soccer, basketball, baseball and other sports should be developed so that all youth can play the sport they love. To address pedestrian and bike safety issues on multi-use trails, expanded safety training for young ATV riders, should be developed and required. Following a community-wide bikeability and walkability evaluation, a new "safe routes to school" program should be implemented. There may need to be some community education regarding these programs in order to establish public support for implementation.

Fort Kent has three facilities, the swimming pool, tennis courts and elementary school playground that have essentially met their life expectancy. The town is faced with making significant investments in old facilities, constructing new facilities or closing facilities. These will be tough decisions. The ADA laws will eventually force the issue with the swimming pool. The two existing tennis courts require complete reconstruction and while they are still used, the use would likely increase with new courts. The demand for court time would be alleviated by the addition of two new tennis courts. Four courts would better serve the community. The elementary school playground should be replaced. This would improve safety and use of this area. If closure of recreation facilities is considered, Fort Kent should realize that it may find itself at a crossroads between saving funds in the near term but putting at risk the community's quality of life and desirability as a healthy place to live; attributes which took the community decades to build.

The creation of new recreation based facilities may seem out of context in the present economy. Nonetheless there are new facilities that would meet identified needs and that may support the community's goals of job creation and economic and population growth. These facilities were listed in Recreation Conditions and Trends – Public Recreation Facility Needs. Residential neighborhoods on the east side of town should have a playground that is conveniently and readily accessible provided there are sufficient numbers of youth to justify the investment. While the skating rink was “officially” eliminated from the 2012 budget, a covered rink could revitalize the local hockey program and increase participation in recreational skating. Traditional, family oriented activities have always worked in Fort Kent and clearly support the concept of a healthy community. Many of the other facilities listed directly support tourism which represents a well established economic engine for Fort Kent. When it comes to planning for facility investment, cost/benefit and the need to shift priorities should be considered.

Most of open space within the urban area that is popular for recreational uses is either publically owned or otherwise in a form of permanent conservation for recreational use. These areas have been described in the conditions and trends section under local facilities and areas. The private recreation areas like Lonesome Pine and 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain are considered to be dedicated for long-term recreational use. The Upper St. John Land Trust also owns important open space within the urban area. The State of Maine owns the underutilized Fish River Island, a place a natural magnificence also within the urban area. Fort Kent recognizes the importance of these open spaces and their potential for expanded use as the community grows.

Popular local open space outside of the urban area is primarily in private ownership. These areas, like Fish River Falls and Basil Lake, are not under any great threat of development that may eliminate the landowners permitted use by the public. However, there is no assurance of long term public use of these popular areas. The Town, perhaps working with the local land

trust or other conservation interests should maintain good relations with these landowners and encourage long term protection. Fort Kent does not have a formal mechanism for acquiring open space or access to waters or a protocol for evaluating tax acquired open space. Tax acquired property is most often sold with little, if any, evaluation of its potential for long term public benefit. The Town has cooperated with the local Land Trust on public use for recreation and should continue to do so. There are no conservation easements in use in the community, but this should be considered a viable option for securing public use of open space. This process should start with a willing landowner.

Access to each of the community's significant water bodies is available to the public. The condition and status of this access has been described under the section called popular open space areas. The access issues identified with each of these water bodies are addressed under policies and strategies.

Recreational trails in the community are well maintained because of a distinct combination of public and private efforts. Financial support including staff time comes from the Recreation and Parks and Public Works Departments at the local level and the Maine Department of Conservation at the State level. Cooperating landowners and an unmatched spirit of volunteerism, a hallmark of Fort Kent, ensures that the work gets done. The three snowmobile clubs may find it necessary to consolidate in the future if State funding for trail maintenance tightens any further. This would be a sensible move and may even help improve maintenance of the local club trails. The ATV club has relied on the extensive use of public roads to access trails on private land and in neighboring communities. This helps alleviate the trail maintenance responsibility. The hiking and walking trails could have greater maintenance, but this is limited by staff and budget limits and priorities with the use of volunteers. Generally, the Town and respective clubs are doing a good job with trail upkeep.

Heritage Trail is the major multi-use trail in Fort Kent. The use conflicts on this trail centers on pedestrian safety and the speed of motorized use. Pedestrian use includes walking, biking, skiing and some horseback riding. The Recreation Department reports very little use of the trail by pedestrians as a result of substantial use by motorized users. However, most pedestrian use occurs in the early morning hours when there is less motorized traffic. Some parents are hesitant to allow younger children to walk or bike on the trail unsupervised because of the speed of motorized use. Citations by local law enforcement are not uncommon and helps deter reckless speed by motorized users.

Traditional access to private lands for recreation is still extensive in Fort Kent. Most land is not posted and some landowners support access by permission only. As a result, there is little pressure to use public funds to acquire land for public use. Some land has been closed off as a result of ownership changes, residential development in rural areas and abuses by users.

So far there is still ample opportunity for all forms of outdoor recreation on private lands. Monitoring of changes in access opportunity to private land may be necessary during the planning period.

## **rDRAFT RECREATION & OPEN SPACE**

### **Policies & Strategies** 7/17/12

#### **State Goal**

Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities including access to surface waters.

#### **Local Goal**

Improve existing recreation facilities and expand opportunities for all forms of recreation to benefit residents and as a tool to attract visitors, new residents and to enhance the local economy.

#### **Summary**

Fort Kent's public recreation facilities and parks were developed over a period of decades to meet the needs and interests of residents. Extensive progress has been made over the past 10-15 years. The Recreation Department has two full-time staff including a Director and maintenance person and 30 seasonal staff that work during multiple 8 week program periods. A small army of volunteers also lends support. Three-quarters of the department's annual budget goes toward staffing and related expenses including insurances and Federal and State taxes. The local population and surrounding communities are well served by the Town's facilities and programs.

Open space and trail networks are everywhere in and around Fort Kent. Responsibility for local trail maintenance and upgrades is shared between the Recreation Department, ATV, snowmobile and X-country ski clubs and the Can Am Crown Sled Dog Race organization. The Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) provides annual grant support to many clubs for trail improvements and maintenance. The Farm and Forest and Natural Resources sections of the comprehensive plan discusses the Town's public open space and identifies policy and strategies for using and expanding publically owned open space presently comprising 228 acres in six parcels. The suitability of existing open space should be evaluated for this use. Amendments to local zoning and subdivision ordinances could help create more open space to address identified needs.

Public access to waters is limited in Fort Kent but again, private landowners have been supportive of the use of their property for access. The public boat landings at Black Lake and St. John-Riverside Park are well used and extremely valuable. The Fort Kent Muskie Derby has been experiencing steady growth and would benefit from increased access to the St. John. Access to the St. John and Fish Rivers is underserved given the 10 + miles of each river that flows through Town. Greater access for canoeists and kayakers would be most appropriate for the Fish River. There is potential for improved access to several water bodies and landowners may be willing to discuss an easement or sale.

## **POLICY 1**

Maintain and upgrade existing recreational facilities and Parks as necessary to meet present and future needs.

### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to budget for building repairs and maintenance and transfer budgetary surplus to recreation reserve for capital improvements.
- b. Create one new recreation staff position with a focus in new programming.
- c. Expand the Park and public trail “adoption” program to the local scouting organizations, University environmental clubs, and all other clubs, groups and civic organizations to support maintenance and beautification of these assets.
- d. Continue to request capital improvement funds in the annual recreation budget to be used as matching funds for capital improvement grants.
- e. Include the following projects in the Capital Investment Plan and future grant requests; Exterior lighting replacement at all facilities, expanded/improved parking, East Side playground project; tennis court expansion, athletic field development, SAD #27 playground, pool reconstruction and filtering system.
- f. Support and seek grant funding for feasibility studies of a teen center, skating rink cover and hosting of sporting events and share results with private business interests and civic groups.
- g. Seek the input and support of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain organization in the development of new sporting events.
- h. Facilitate the reestablishment of the old armory shooting range and the local fish and game clubs by cooperating with UMFK, local law enforcement and sporting enthusiasts.

## **POLICY 2**

Implement recreation programming that fills service gaps and that is complimentary and collaborative with MSAD#27 and UMFK.

### **Strategies**

- a. Maintain recreational programming to meet present interests and needs of pre-K through grade six.
- b. Create one new recreation staff position with a focus on new programming.
- c. Support athletic and sports programs that create greater opportunity for participation in grades 7-12.
- d. Continue to seek public/private grant funds for programs that support the needs and interests of all youth.
- e. Form partnerships that help develop programs for teens that do not presently participate and that help deter risky, inappropriate or unproductive behavior.
- f. Continue to develop programming to meet the 17-21 year old age group and older adults through the adult education program.

### **POLICY 3**

Maintain, expand and improve walking and recreational trail systems and open space as an asset to the community and in support of economic development, private businesses and recreation organizations.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to seek grant funding and to raise private matching funds for parking including trailers and service facilities at trailheads.
- b. Study feasibility of ATV trailer parking and trail access at High School.
- c. Raise funds through grants, club fundraisers and private donations for the development of shelters that serve all trail systems.
- d. Participate in the new Maine ATV interconnecting trail system (MATS) and support its growth.
- e. Continue to contact landowners at least once annually for appreciation and recognition.
- f. Continue to be responsive to trail neighbor and owner concerns regarding noise, dust and other issues.
- g. Through the local clubs, implement an annual landowner awareness program to educate existing and prospective trail landowners on tax incentives and insurance benefits available to them.
- h. Research and plan the Fish River Green Belt as a linear park/trail network for pedestrians and biking.
- i. Support the expansion and mapping of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain, Mt. Bike trail system.
- j. Study proposed amendments to local zoning and subdivision ordinances that require and establish standards for open space.
- k. See also Agriculture/Forest Resources Policy/Strategies 4. a, b, c.

### **POLICY 4**

Maintain, expand and improve recreational access to waters as an asset to the community and in support of economic development.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to budget for maintenance and apply for grants for capital improvements at the Riverside Park Boat Landing.
- b. Work with interested groups, landowners and the University to map all known access points to waters including public (secure) and private (unsecure) locations utilizing SJV Partnerships GPS data.
- c. Develop a collaborative effort on access to waters involving local clubs, civic organizations, the Upper St. John Land Trust, Dept. of Conservation, US Fish and Wildlife Service and local government.

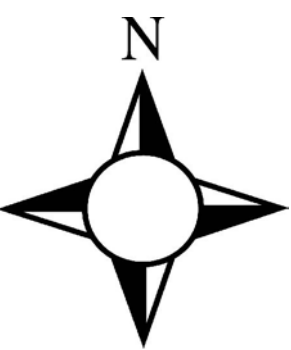


- d. Seek to develop two new boat landings on the St. John River in upper and lower Fort Kent by identifying potential sites, soliciting landowner interest and identifying potential funding sources.
- e. Target river segments along the St. John for clean-up to enhance aesthetic quality and implement clean-up effort.
- f. Seek AmeriCorps, USDA, EPA and other funding for the development of a youth program that focuses on activities to enhance local environmental quality.
- g. Initiate a dialog with landowners at Basil Pond to determine their support for an easement or acquisition of land for a boat landing. Seek funding if support exists.
- h. Improve canoe/kayak access to the Fish River at Jalbert Park and support an easement or fee acquisition for access at the Fish River Falls.
- i. Support access to Marcum Pond as a private, unimproved access with landowner consent based on its wild nature and habitat values.




#### **Implementation Partners/Timeline**

FKRP, LG, UMFK, SAD #27, Ent, USJLT, LC, GS, 10<sup>th</sup> Mt, MWS, MDOT, FKPW, LCO, DOC-BPL, USFWS, USDA, EPA, AM, DECD-OCD, SJVP

**Policy 1** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short-term & Mid-term, **Policy 3** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 4** Mid-term & w/ 10yr









**Legend**

-  International Boundaries
-  Township Boundaries
-  Urban Area




**Recreation Facilities**

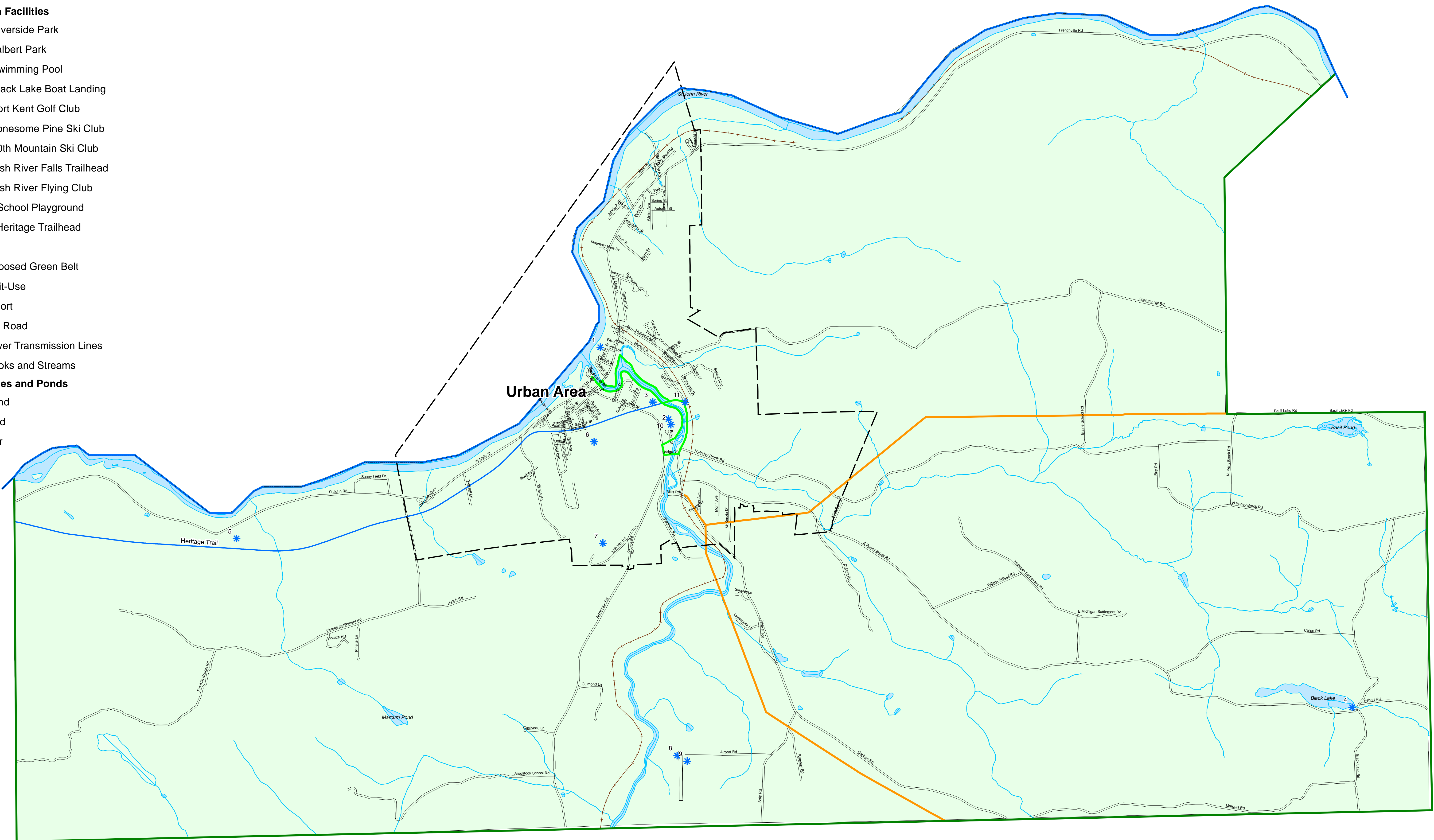
-  1 Riverside Park
-  2 Jalbert Park
-  3 Swimming Pool
-  4 Black Lake Boat Landing
-  5 Fort Kent Golf Club
-  6 Lonesome Pine Ski Club
-  7 10th Mountain Ski Club
-  8 Fish River Falls Trailhead
-  9 Fish River Flying Club
-  10 School Playground
-  11 Heritage Trailhead

**Trails**

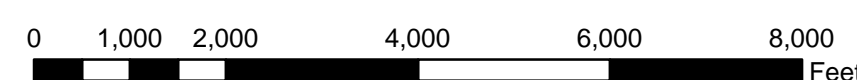
-  Proposed Green Belt
-  Multi-Use
-  Airport
-  Rail Road
-  Power Transmission Lines
-  Brooks and Streams

**Rivers Lakes and Ponds**

-  island
-  pond
-  river



1 inch = 2,000 feet



Town of Fort Kent, Maine  
 Comprehensive Plan  
 Recreation Areas Map



Date: 08/16/12

# TRANSPORTATION



draft **TRANSPORTATION**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 7/17/12

**Introduction**

In the land use planning process, community transportation issues can be complex and challenging. Transportation weighs heavily in planning for local fiscal capacity and future land uses. It's important to stay focused on safety, efficiency of movement, energy efficiency and conservation, cost effectiveness and the local need and interest in different modes of travel. Fort Kent has a lot of experience with these types of issues and has made progress in several important areas. Advancements include subdivision regulations and a road construction ordinance, and improvements to parking, sidewalks and trails. Several transportation related problems and issues have been identified and are explained here. The locally acceptable approaches for avoiding problems and meeting the future transportation demands of Fort Kent are identified in the policies/strategies section.

Most residents probably take for granted that Fort Kent is a significant regional transportation hub. The Town has an active rail terminal and system serving the forest industry. The Town is the northern terminus of US Rt. 1 and Maine Rt. 11. Maine Rt. 161 leads to Fort Kent and the last 30-mile segment, Fort Kent to Allagash, was recently designated as a Maine scenic byway as are other arterial segments leading to Fort Kent. Eventually, these stretches of highway may become part of the national scenic byway system which may invite additional investment. These highway segments are vital corridors for commerce and tourism. The slow, steady development along these routes is a threat to safety and transportation efficiency. Bypasses are costly in dollars and on the environment. They impact existing land uses and owners. It would be difficult for any single bypass to serve the three arterial routes in town. Better planning and policy implementation are cost effective ways to keep commercial transportation routes operating safe, smooth and efficient.

Local roads, collectors and arterials also serve the needs of residents to access services and employment. The Town is responsible for maintaining 53.57 miles of road of which 9.7 miles is closed to winter maintenance. There is little difference in the miles of road maintained today than 20 years ago. Town roads can be abandoned and the ownership transferred to abutting owners. Several subdivisions have been approved over the past 5 years and have added 1.53 miles to municipally maintained roads. Subdivision roads are built at the developer's expense and must be constructed to the road standards identified in the local road ordinance. If roads are to be accepted by the town for ownership and maintenance, they must also meet a threshold criteria based on Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count before local voters are ask to approve acceptance. Henceforth the cost to maintain them becomes a taxpayer expense.

Other, equally important, transportation related topics include alternative modes of transportation and parking. Fort Kent has many alternative transportation assets and over the years, has made a lot of progress in these areas. Beyond the need to provide safe, convenient access for pedestrians to businesses and schools, there is significant overlap of tourism and recreation when we discuss modes of transportation. Pedestrian, snowmobile and ATV access to businesses and services have significant economic value. Fort Kent offers a system that is safe, well maintained, cost effective and diverse.

**2011 Fort Kent Street & Trail Miles**

Fort Kent Streets	Miles	Fort Kent Trails	Miles	Use
Town Paved	28.613	Heritage Trail	5.75	Multi
Town Gravel	25.15	Riverside North	1.2	Pedestrian/bike
Closed in Winter	9.69	Riverside South	.65	Pedestrian/bike/snowmobile
State Aid	11.559	ATV	24.4	ATV
State	10.172	Snowmobile	33	Snowmobile
Total Town Street	53.573	The Mills loop	2.7	Pedestrian/bike

Source: Town of Fort Kent/Clubs

Because the transportation system is a “shared asset” with neighboring communities, we also looked at regional issues relating to transportation. The three key issues are rail viability, the I-95 extension to the Valley and the Northern Aroostook Regional Airport. The local decisions and positions regarding these regional issues are stated in the policies and strategies section.

**Safety and Efficiency**

The Maine Department of Transportation-Traffic Engineering and local Police and Highway Department staff have identified several dangerous locations along local roads. These may include curves, blind hills or driveways, unprotected embankments, solar glare, shaded areas and other hazards. There are two designated “high crash locations” including the intersections of E. Main, Market and Soucy Streets and one location along the Frenchville Road (US Highway 1) where the road is shaded in winter by a steep slope along the South edge of the highway. Four local road segments were identified as lacking guardrails where the road shoulder drop off is severe and other design characteristics create a notable safety concern. The Klein Road bridge/culvert, two bridge/culvert locations on North Perley Brook Road including one East of the Blaine School Road intersection and one Northeast of the T-intersection and the curve West of the Klein Road on South Perley Brook Road all require guardrails to improve safety. Another safety concern is the site distance/visibility at the intersection of Armory Road and Pleasant Street near community high school where vegetation should be removed.

Pedestrian safety issues were also identified. Speeding in the school zone on Pleasant Street has been an issue. While enforcement has been stepped up, the zone lacks the proper



signage to indicate the school zone limits. Pedestrians and bicyclists using the multi-use Heritage Trail may be at risk from motorized traffic depending on time of day (light conditions) and speed. The South Perley Brook Road biathlon training route poses a safety concern because of speed and lack of road shoulder and signage.

Local transportation efficiency was discussed in the context of traffic flow and the need for maintaining the road system. Several key issues were identified and are also addressed under Public Facilities and Services. The road improvement projects identified are listed in Table 1. US RT. 1 and Maine Route 161 are two major arterial routes that are coextensive with Fort Kent's Main Street. Maine Rt. 11 also ends at the intersection of Main Street. Since Main Street also serves the central business district, commercial through traffic is required to slow down and often stop to accommodate pedestrians and on-street parking. Efficiency is affected for logging trucks, fuel and freight haulers. The feasibility and cost/benefit of a bypass could be studied but there does not appear to be a single location that could efficiently serve the three arterial routes, especially for Rt. 1 South. A bypass would, however, support Hazard Mitigation by creating an alternative route for traffic that may be affected by flooding or other disasters that may occur in the central business district.

Traffic flow issues through the central business district were identified for Pleasant St during school day start/end hours; West Main Street left turn to Pleasant St and West Main St/Market St at Station Hill during winter storms. The railroad crossing at the base of Station Hill complicates safety and efficiency and will only intensify with increased rail traffic. Proper signage should redirect traffic to Market Street during hours at the start and end of the school day. The turn signal at the intersection of W. Main and Pleasant should be equipped with a left turn arrow. During winter storms, Rt. 1 South truck traffic should be directed to W. Main St. via Pleasant St. instead of Market St. The traffic light at the base of Station Hill could be equipped with a transmitter that allows southbound trucks to switch the signal. North bound trucks on Rt. 1 should also have a signal change warning light at the top of Station Hill. The feasibility of lowering the Station Hill grade should also be studied because of the numerous issues at this location including the fact that it is also a MDOT high crash location.

Other important safety/efficiency issues were also identified. School bus and snowplow turn around areas are a problem on both the East Michigan Settlement and Jacob Roads. These areas should be redesigned and constructed. The construction of private driveways and the associated installation of culverts where they join town roads frequently create drainage issues including ice flow in the roadway during winter. The Town requires a permit for driveway and culvert installation and provides basic design standards under its Road Design, Construction and Acceptance Ordinance. Improper installation should be eliminated by requiring the Highway Department to complete the work at the owners' expense. The potential to improve the fuel efficiency of town vehicles was discussed. It was determined that 6-9 municipal

vehicles could be electric or hybrid fuel vehicles. This should be evaluated as vehicles come up for scheduled replacement. The Town also lacks bilingual traffic signage.

### Proposed Transportation Projects

Location	Type	Priority Level
W. Main Street	Traffic light (left turn)	High
W/E Main Streets	Signage (time of day)	Necessary
W/E Main Streets	Drainage/resurface	High
E. Main Street (light)	Signal Transmitter	Deferrable
Klein Road Bridge	Guardrail	Desirable
S. Perley Brook Road	Guardrail	Desirable
N. Perley Brook Road Bridge	Guardrail/drainage	Desirable
N. Perley Brook Road Bridge #2*	Guardrail	Desirable
Blaine School Road	Street light	Necessary
Hall Street	Traffic flow	Necessary
Armory Road	Site distance	High
Station Hill	Signal change warning	Deferrable
Market Street	Signage (Rte 1 S)	Necessary
Pleasant Street	"School Zone End" signage	High
E. Michigan Settlement Road	Plow turn around	Necessary
Bradbury Road	Reconstruction	High

Note: \* multiple location fish passage; drainage & surface improvements  
 Priority ratings include: High being within 1-3 years; Necessary being within 3-5 years; Desirable being within the 10 year plan; Deferrable being potentially beyond 10 years.

### Quality and Investment

Fort Kent's transportation system including highways, local roads, the Aroostook Lines railway, the Northern Aroostook Regional Airport Authority (NARAA) and the recreational trail system have all received substantial investment within the past 3-5 years. These systems require ongoing investment to maintain quality, safety and efficiency. The types of investments for each major component of the system are described below.

Most notable in 2012 will be the replacement of the International Bridge connecting Fort Kent to Clair, New Brunswick and the completion of the drainage and resurfacing of US Rt. 1 through the central business district. Within the last 5 years at NARAA, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has invested millions of dollars with the most recent investment related to surface water mitigation. The FAA funds 95% of the investments with the balance shared between the State and the five Owner Towns. The 2012-2016 NARAA Capital Improvement Plan includes an estimated \$975,000 projects involving hangars, taxiway construction and update of the Airport Master Plan. Fort Kent's share of these projects is a nominal \$10,260. The 2012 operations and capital account obligation for the town is estimated at \$25,826. Fort Kent's ownership share of the asset has a conservative estimated value of \$2.4 million.

With Maine's 2011 acquisition of 233 miles of the former Maine, Maritime, Atlantic Railway in Aroostook County significant investment is anticipated during the next 10 years. The MDOT

was notified by the US Department of Transportation that it has been awarded \$10,546,436 in TIGER II grant funds for upgrades to the rail system during the next few years. Information on specific projects in Fort Kent is not presently available.

Issues related to quality and investments were identified for many existing roads and primarily include surface and drainage maintenance, fish passage and some reconstruction. Fort Kent presently has debt service related to two road improvement bonds totaling \$2 million through the Maine Municipal Bond Bank. These debts will retire in 2012 and 2016 respectively. The town should continue to seek bonds for road improvement projects identified in Table 1. The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) provides annual funding under the URIP program for local road investments. These funds are disbursed through the public works department on road maintenance projects and totaled over \$84,000 in 2010. There has been a declining trend in URIP funding; a reflection of recent economic conditions. These funds, however, are vital to the town's road investment program and the URIP program should receive continued support. Fort Kent regularly provides input to the MDOT in support of the Biennial Transportation Investment Program and projects vital to the region's economic sustainability continue to be funded. Under the present 2013-2014 request, highway projects include a remaining segment of US Rt. 1 North from the town line 7 miles to the project completed in 2009; Maine Rt. 161 North from the town office to Dempsey Curve and South from the railroad crossing approximately 1 mile to reconstruct the road and straighten curves. These project requests should continue to be made until funded.

The local Road Design, Construction and Acceptance Ordinance establishes standards of quality for new roads in subdivisions and/or those that will be proposed for public ownership. Visual or aesthetic quality of roadways was discussed during the planning process and concluded that some residents value this more than others. Scenic vistas are identified and addressed in the Natural Resources section. The local subdivision ordinance may include standards for buffers that enhance the scenic value of roadways.

### **Alternatives and Amenities**

Transportation alternatives and amenities include everything from alternative fuels to bike paths and parking. Fort Kent residents have diverse interests when it comes to transportation and the town provides many options. Pedestrian, bicycle, ATV and snowmobile and bus service access are available. The central business district is well served by these alternatives. The multi-use Heritage Trail starts at Market Street and links many residential and commercial areas to services, schools and recreation as it extends to the town line with St. John and beyond. The town receives \$12,000, on average, annually from the Maine Department of Conservation for maintenance of the 16.2 miles of trail from Fort Kent to St. Francis. In 2010, the town received a \$37,771 grant for trail restoration and stabilization for a segment in St.



John plantation. The trail is discussed under the Hazard Mitigation section as an alternative access route for emergency vehicles. Trail issues are also identified in the Recreation section.

Pedestrians are served by a 5.8 mile network of sidewalks located in the more densely developed parts of town and 7.6 miles of trails. Recent sidewalk maintenance costs were approximately \$15,000. Continued maintenance is necessary and reconstruction should occur on up to 25% of the network. To encourage bicycle use the town and schools provide bike racks at several locations. The trail network available for bike use includes the 7.6 miles available for pedestrian use. In addition, suggested bike routes over local roads are mapped and information is available from the Greater Fort Kent Area Chamber of Commerce. The town should continue encouraging more bike use and complete a walkability/bikeability evaluation.

One taxi service and the Aroostook Regional Transportation Service (ARTS) bus serve community residents. One bus is based in the Town and annual funding is requested through the MDOT-URIP process. The town typically receives 20-30% of its \$10,000 request to support ARTS and should continue to request these funds. Local service and transportation to other communities should continue as long as these funds are available. Regional bus service from the St. John Valley to Presque Isle and points south has not been proven sustainable despite significant effort. This service was discontinued as of April 2011. The Maine Department of Transportation will again attempt to establish service when it goes out to bid for intercity routes including Bangor to Fort Kent, in September 2012. The high price of gasoline for personal transportation may make the regional bus more attractive to local travelers. The town should continue, as in the past, to support and participate in the regional bus service initiative.

Parking is regulated by the zoning ordinance which specifies off-street parking standards for private buildings. Every permitted use in every zoning district requires a minimum number of parking spaces as described in the Ordinance. Additional requirements related to safety, design and construction standards exist for parking that serves commercial and industrial uses. Standards are included for space dimension and number, parking access, paving, visibility and setbacks. As a result, practically every business has some off-street parking. In the downtown area, off-street parking is further augmented by on-street parking.

No inventory of parking spaces was completed for the community. Parking availability is a transient issue during certain hours and days of the week and during festivals and events that are focused in the downtown. Generally, spectators find parking within a reasonable distance. The use of private, off-street parking is acceptable to 80% of the owners. The prevailing issue with parking downtown is a matter of equity or fairness and to some extent cost. Historically, the Town provided a tax deferment type of lease for 4-5 parking lots located behind or adjacent to W. Main St. businesses. Snow removal was also provided. In 2011 the Town Council

refused to renew parking lot leases as a cost saving method. Many other downtown businesses with off-street parking were never granted similar arrangements and it would be a financial burden to the town to do so. Hence, all businesses now take care of their own parking lots.

There is potential for growth in the area available for parking and other techniques can be used to alleviate parking concerns. This would require a concerted effort between businesses and town government. There are three municipally owned parking lots. The Municipal Center, Riverside Park and Jalbert Park provide parking. Land areas in the downtown off of W. Main, Hall and Pearl Streets could be developed for public parking. Employees of businesses could carpool, park and ride or bike to work and parking is available in several areas to accommodate such an approach. Solutions do exist.

The Town would like to see alternative fuels available in the area, but acknowledges that this is largely a function of market demand. Fuel alternatives include E-85, bio-diesel and hydrogen. Fuel is presently very expensive in Northern Maine and everyone would welcome alternatives that may improve the cost of transportation. The town would favor the facilities, distribution and private investment needed to make alternative fuels and vehicles available.

Fort Kent has a site for a municipal airport complete with a 2000 foot gravel runway that last operated in the 1970's. There are no hangers, tie downs or other security at the site. In 2012 the Town gave permission to the Fish River Flying Club to use the site for private fly-ins and other events. The club is a duly formed domestic business corporation under Maine law. They have graded the air strip and mowed the clear zones and are planning other improvements. The site could be important for guides and outfitters in the region and several local private pilots are presently using the site. If interest in the site continues to grow, the Town may consider seeking grant funding to help with improvements.

### **Regional Issues**

The coordination of regional transportation issues is directed by the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC). NMDC staff includes a transportation planner. The NMDC sponsors informational meetings, outreach and other valuable support that brings communities together to discuss regional transportation issues and to build understanding. Fort Kent participates in this process and should continue to do so.

The Aroostook Lines: Purchased in 2011 by the State of Maine, the Aroostook Lines is a 233 mile, North-South railway linking Madawaska to Millinocket with freight rail service. The railway serves the region's lumber and paper making industry and enables the shipment of forest raw materials and products. The potential for other heavy industry in the region is tied to a viable railway. The logging industry based in Fort Kent and the surrounding towns, including in New

Brunswick, benefits from the railway. Fort Kent has 12.75 miles of active railway and two active sidings; one at the industrial park and one at a private brokerage on Market Street. U.S. and Canadian timber harvesting and trucking companies load raw material at the Market St. railway siding. The siding presently has capacity for 16 railcars per day and is underserved. The siding could be expanded to 22 cars per day. The economic value of forest raw materials leaving this siding exceeds \$2.4 million annually. Siding improvements are needed and would benefit the industries it serves. A major fuel company has also operated a bulk propane storage facility at this siding for decades. The hazard mitigation section makes reference to this storage location. There is an also 5.75 miles of abandoned line that is now the Heritage Trail.

The Aroostook Lines is operated by Maine Northern Railway (MNR) a subsidiary of J.D. Irving, Limited. MNR is responsible for the operation and maintenance costs of Aroostook Lines. Over \$10 million in Federal and State funds will be invested in railway improvements over the next several years. Fort Kent should support continued public and private investment in the railway and the expansion of railway use as part of its economic development strategy. Future industrial growth should be directed to areas with railway access.

The Interstate-95 Extension: The I-95 extension project has made considerable progress over the past ten years in the areas of planning and environmental review. Up to date information is available on the MDOT website under the Aroostook County Transportation Study prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., (VHB) the project consultants. Details of the projects economic and transportation objectives are available on-line and are integral to many of Fort Kent's local transportation and other Comprehensive Plan strategies. These include objectives related to population and jobs expansion, improved traffic flow and access management along arterial routes. The extension project will certainly benefit Fort Kent's long-term potential to create jobs and rebuild population.

The construction phase of the project will be progressing over the next ten years and perhaps, beyond as funding becomes available. As is indicated in recent information available from MDOT, the study identified four refined north-south corridors but did not identify an overall preferred corridor. The corridors are divided into 11 segments that meet the Federal Highway Administrations (FHWA's) segmentation criteria. The segments can be developed independently over time because each segment has a terminus, independent usefulness and does not restrict consideration of alternatives for other segments. Information on segment location is available in map form in the Final Environmental Impact Statement Corridor Segment. Construction of Segment 4 (Caribou Bypass) began in 2011 and will be completed in 2012 and construction of Segment 7 (Presque Isle Bypass) will begin in 2012.

The segment that is closest to Fort Kent is Segment 3. This segment approximately follows Maine Rt. 161 to a location just south of Daigle (New Canada) before it heads northeastward between Frenchville and St. Agatha and then to U.S. Rt. 1 south of Madawaska. This segment would bring the project within 5-6 miles of Fort Kent and would provide the closest access to the Trans-Canada Highway 20. The extension project will provide broad regional service and benefit. Fort Kent will benefit from the project and will benefit from continued upgrades to existing highways well into the future.

Northern Aroostook Regional Airport Authority (NARAA): The NARAA is located on 533 acres in Frenchville, Maine owned by the Northern Aroostook Regional Airport Authority. The airport is approximately 15 miles from the center of Fort Kent. Airport elevation above mean sea level is 988 feet. Runway length totals 4,601 feet with asphalt surface and direction is designated at 14/32. The airport does not presently offer commercial or charter service. Scenic flights are available from the facility. The facility is used primarily for medical, private business and government service and these operations are significant. The facility also provides fueling for Medivac service to Northern Maine Medical Center. In 2011, total flight operations totaled 1765. Flight operations have been stable over the past five years.

The NARAA, like small regional airports all over the country, struggles to maintain their viability. The availability of an airport service is fundamental to economic development, business activity and investment, medical support and government services. While the loss of airport service would create isolation detrimental to the region's social and economic fabric, the fundamental issue is one of benefit and cost. The airport ownership by five communities helps make the facility as affordable as possible and allows it to benefit the greatest number of persons. If the airport asset is to continue to be maintained then the population served must understand the benefit and continue to be willing to pay. Approaches to this are identified under transportation policies/strategies.

The NARAA is important to Fort Kent by supporting its medical services and efforts to establish the region as a travel destination. The airport serves the needs and interest of residents in these and other areas and the facility should continue to receive local tax revenue funding.

# **rDRAFT TRANSPORTATION**

## **Policies & Strategies** 8/10/12

### **State Goal**

Plan, finance and develop an efficient transportation system to accommodate growth and economic development.

### **Local Goal**

Maintain and develop a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the broad interests and needs of the community and fosters economic prosperity.

### **Summary**

Fort Kent's transportation issues are challenging given present economic conditions and the need to reverse population decline. Transportation weighs heavily in planning for local fiscal capacity, economic development and future land uses. Our policies and strategies are focused on safety, efficiency of movement, energy efficiency and conservation, cost effectiveness and the local need and interest in different modes of travel. Fort Kent's experience with these types of issues has led to progress in several important areas including subdivision regulations, road standards, parking, sidewalks and trails. Transportation sub-committee members helped to identify transportation related problems and issues and develop locally acceptable policies and strategies for meeting the future transportation demands of Fort Kent.

Maine Department of Transportation Crash data classify two areas in Fort Kent as "High Crash Areas". One area with 13 crashes within a 3 year period is located on Frenchville Road and a second location with 9 crashes within a 3 year period is at the E. Main/Market St/Soucy St. intersection. Collision details may indicate issues such as inadequate signage/signals, black ice and or wildlife crossings. The MDOT may be consulted to determine the best solution to the crash area issues that may include a higher level of winter maintenance and moose crossing signage.

The need for on-going investment in existing town roads and a definition of road quality was apparent from our discussion of transportation issues. The location and types of investment appear below in Table 1 in a proposed order of priority. This is certainly open for more discussion. Issues of roadway quality cover construction, environmental and aesthetic quality. Fort Kent may consider a concept of "level of service" public roads where the Town is not obligated to remove snow, control dust or provide for school bus service and persons are notified of this through the building permit process. Environmental quality relates to numerous fish passage issues due to culvert design and installation issues and erosion of ditches that impact water quality. Aesthetic quality of our roadways relates to both natural (scenic) and

artistic (cultural/historic sites, murals, etc.) features along roads. More discussion of this is included in the Natural Resources section of the plan.

Fort Kent has many alternative transportation assets and amenities, including parking, and has made significant progress over the years. Beyond the need to provide safe, convenient access for pedestrians to businesses and schools, there is overlapping benefits to tourism and recreation through alternative modes of transportation. Pedestrian, snowmobile and ATV access to businesses and services have significant economic value. Generally, Fort Kent's assets and amenities systems are safe, well maintained, cost effective and diverse. The closure of the St. John's View, MDOT Rest Area for budgetary reasons is a loss that should be corrected when economic conditions improve. Our planning process identified many opportunities for amenity enhancements to our transportation system during periods of improving economic conditions. Several segments of roadways were recently designated as a Maine Scenic Byway as are other arterial segments leading to Fort Kent. Eventually, these stretches of highway may become part of the national scenic byway system which may invite additional investment.

The NARAA has received substantial investment within the past 3 years through grants from the Federal Aviation Administration. The facility performs an important and, in some cases, vital function for the region. Fort Kent owns a 38% interest in NARAA which is one of its most valuable assets valued at \$6 million. The facility provides an essential option for regional accessibility that supports health care, higher education, commerce and quality of life.

## **POLICY 1**

Improve the safety and efficiency of traffic flow through the central business district including East and West Main Streets, Pleasant Street and Market Street and arterial routes into Fort Kent.

### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to require proof of MDOT highway entry permit with local building permit application. Check with MDOT on compliance with required standards.
- b. Limit to one, the access points for residential subdivision roads fewer than 1500 feet in length and two for over 1500 feet and 15 or more dwelling units.
- c. Amend local zoning to limit driveway entries on to arterial routes.
- d. Study the feasibility of a truck route (by-pass) to reduce the thru-traffic of trucks in the central business district. Seek transportation planning funds
- e. Install signage to redirect thru-traffic to Market Street during school hours of 7:20 am to 08:20 am and 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm per DOT recommendations.
- f. Install signage on Market Street that directs truck traffic for Rt. 1 south via Pleasant Street during snow storms.

- g. Install a warning signal at the top of Station Hill (E. Main) that traffic light is about to change.
- h. Install an RF transmitter (or signal switch) at the NAPA traffic light on East Main Street that allows trucks to switch light to flashing yellow during winter for approach to Station Hill.
- i. Install “End of School Zone” signage on Pleasant Street to resume speed limit. Propose as a civic project.
- j. Install a left turn signal on West Main Street to serve traffic turning to Pleasant Street.
- k. Install bilingual traffic signage at least in the central business district and scenic byways within the compact urban area.

## **POLICY 2**

Maintain and improve the safety, construction, environmental and aesthetic quality of existing roadways.

### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to obtain road improvement bonds and URIP funds to keep up with maintenance and upgrades of existing town roads. Target activities are described in Table 1.
- b. Enforce, without exception, the construction standards outlined in the local road ordinance for subdivision roads and roads proposed for public acceptance.
- c. Amend the Road Ordinance to require a second exit/entry for roads greater than 1500 feet and not solely on 15 or more units.
- d. Continue to invest in road surface and drainage improvements on all roads.
- e. Inventory the need for drop ramps at culverts that obstruct fish passage and require/inspect proper installation of new and replacement culverts. Include an assessment of downstream fish access obstruction.
- f. Develop/distribute educational guidelines for driveway construction and upgrades with building permit applications.
- g. Construct scenic turn-out area at undetermined location between the hospital and Station Hill. (Lagasse House)
- h. Encourage the re-opening of the St. John’s View Rest Area through a letter to MDOT and support from local civic organizations.

## **POLICY 3**

Maintain and broaden local options for transportation alternatives and parking.

### **Strategies**

- a. Study the feasibility and cost benefit of having 6-9 alternative powered municipal vehicles based on scheduled replacement.

- b. Support and encourage the availability of alternative fuels in town including hydrogen, E-85 and bio-diesel.
- c. Continue to fund Aroostook Regional Transportation bus for the elderly.
- d. Improve signage and mapping of the Heritage Trail to slow down motorized uses and improve pedestrian and bike safety. Advocate for local speed limit authority.
- e. Seek grant funds and civic involvement for installation of bike stands at locations in the town center and signage for Biathlon training routes.
- f. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and safety education through the Recreational Trail Program and SCORP.
- g. Implement a carpooling effort by working with property owners for designated parking at Historical Society lot, Knights of Columbus, Riverside Park, Irving and other locations. Provide education through local businesses.
- h. Develop mapping and literature to support rural bike routes and mountain biking.
- i. Complete a walkability/bikeability evaluation of the community and respond to recommendations.
- j. Encourage the downtown merchants to cooperate for a resolution to parking lot safety and maintenance. Transition out of public leasing of private lots.
- k. Encourage a civic campaign to help create a “culture” of bike use to alleviate parking limitations.
- l. Study the feasibility and design of a parking lot between the former Roger’s Sport Center and Century Theater and behind the former Ouellette Building Supply.

#### **POLICY 4**

Maintain and strengthen regionally essential transportation systems including Maine Northern Railway, Northern Aroostook Regional Airport Authority and Interstate-95.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Devote substantial economic development effort to the forest product and other industries that require rail.
- b. Support and encourage the use of rail off-load facilities by local companies.
- c. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MDOT’s Biennial Transportation Improvement Program, National Scenic By-way Initiative and NMDC’s regional transportation efforts.
- d. Use NARAA as part of on-going economic development/business attraction efforts by making Fort Kent more accessible to prospective companies.
- e. Coordinate and fund, with the NARAA major stakeholders, an on-going public relations/awareness initiative on the benefits and importance of the facility.
- f. Request that our local media periodically feature a NARAA story and create a quarterly column.



- g. Encourage Chambers of Commerce to promote NARAA to local outfitters, lodging and travel/tourism businesses. Include NARAA brochure as a standard component in response packets related to tourism and commerce.
- h. Work with local travel agents and conduct local market research on the use of NARAA as a service link to Bangor and Manchester Airports for destination (vacation) travel.
- i. Support NARAA use as an international port-of-entry through outreach to Congressional delegation.
- j. Present NARAA as the designated airport for the World Acadian Congress.

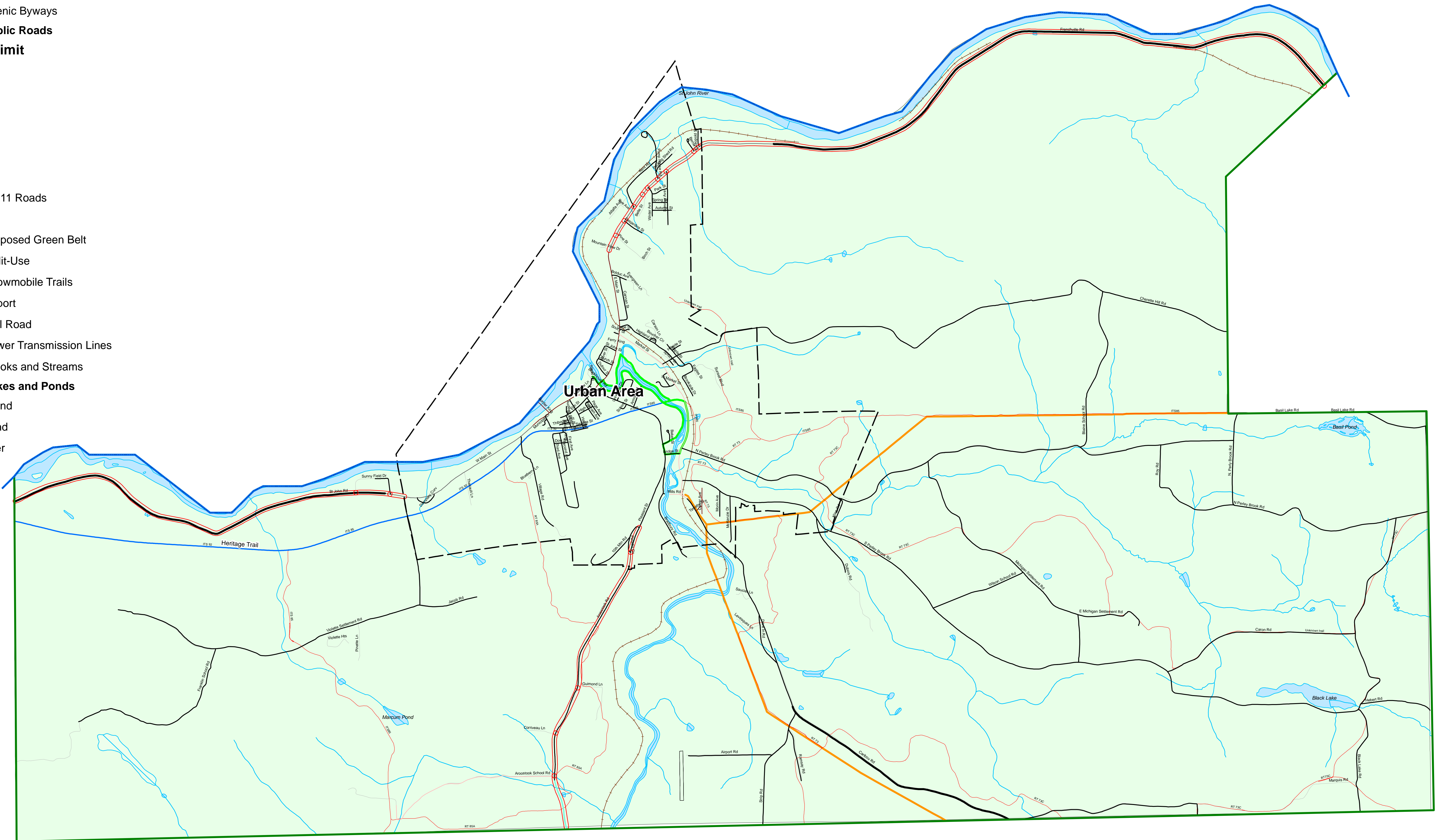
**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

FKPW, LG, TC, MDOT, PB, LCO, PDO, MDIFW, DOC-BPL, LB, NARAA, MNR, NMDC, CofC, WAC

**Policy 1** Short-term, Mid-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short-term, Mid-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 3** Short-term, Mid-term & w/ 10yr, **Policy 4** Short-term, Mid-term

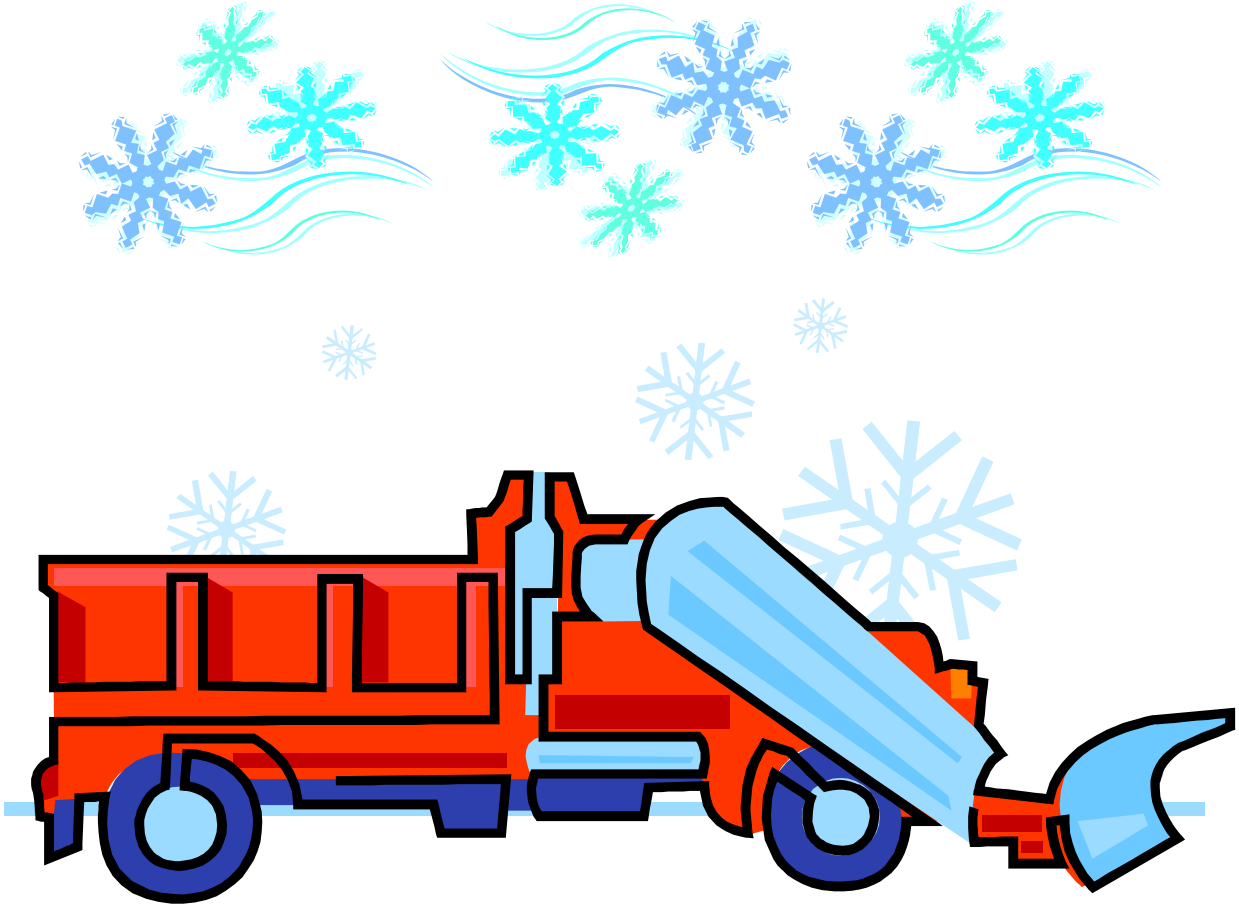
**Legend**

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Scenic Byways
- MDOT Public Roads**
- Speed Limit**
  - 25
  - 30
  - 35
  - 40
  - 45
  - 50
- E-911 Roads
- Trails**
  - Proposed Green Belt
  - Multit-Use
  - Snowmobile Trails
- Airport
- Rail Road
- Power Transmission Lines
- Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
  - island
  - pond
  - river



1 inch = 2,000 feet  
0 1,000 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 Feet

# PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES



**draft PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 8/10/12

**Conditions and Trends**

Overall, Fort Kent’s public facilities and services are very good, well maintained and meet the present needs of the community. They should continue to do so for the next ten years. Only two services were suggested as lacking in the community, a youth center and a second taxi service. Both of these could be privately developed and would help secure tax base and employment. The challenges faced by the community in maintaining and improving its services relate substantially to declining State revenue sharing, rising costs of operation and maintenance and demands from new tax- exempt development at the University and hospital. In the case of water and sewer, a declining user base has also had an impact. The lack of population growth has created a situation where fewer taxpayers must help cover rising costs of other facilities/services. An aging demographic and a higher percentage of persons on fixed incomes creates pressure on local government to reduce taxes. The Town Council and department heads understand the relationship between an efficient system of public facilities/services and the town’s long term sustainability and potential for growth. Policies and strategies reflect this.

**Fort Kent’s Public Facilities Summary**

Facility	Location	Staffing	Physical Condition	Capacity Demand	Ownership -Management	Cost Estimates of Improvements
Municipal Center	416 W. Main	14	Very Good*	Adequate Stable	Town of Fort Kent Admin, Police, CD, Rec Dept	
Waste Water Treatment Plant	542 W. Main	2	Excellent	Adequate Stable	Town of Fort Kent Wastewater Dept.	\$ 378,000
Public Works Garage/Equip	542 W. Main	5	Excellent-Fair	Adequate Stable	Town of Fort Kent Public Works Dept	\$1,157,000
Flood Control Levee	West Main St	0	Good**	Adequate Stable	Town of Fort Kent Public Works Dept	
Water Supply Distr. Facility	Pump House Rd	2	Good-Fair	Upgrade Stable	Town of Fort Kent Water Dept	\$ 992,000
Fire Station	16 Dufour St	33 (volunteer)	Very Good	Adequate Stable	Town of Fort Kent	
Jalbert Park	Baker St	0	Good***	Upgrade/stable	Recreation Dept	
Riverside Park	River St	0	Very Good	Adequate Stable	Recreation Dept	
Public Library	W. Main St	3	Very Good	Adequate Stable	Library Dept	
Elementary School	Pleasant St	66	Good	Adequate Declining	Maine School Admin. District 27	
Community High School	Pleasant St	50	Good	Adequate Declining	Maine School Admin. District 27	
N. Aroostook Regional Airport	Airport Rd Frenchville	2	Good	Adequate Stable	Five Towns Airport Authority	\$ 500,000
Valley Recycling Facility	Airport Rd Frenchville	4	Good	Adequate Stable	Four Towns VRF Directors	

\*Municipal Center; Administration, Police, Community Development, Recreation Department

\*\*Recertification study underway in 2012

\*\*\* Facility includes rec. building, pool, tennis courts

Note: Staffing reflects department, not facility: ie. Flood Control Levee is managed by Public Works staff; Parks are managed by the Recreation Department staff.

During the eight year period 2004-2011 the water and wastewater systems have had a net decline in number of customers of two accounts each. During the same period, approximately 112 new residences were built in the community indicating that most were on private wells and sewage disposal systems. A declining user base during a period of rising operation and maintenance cost creates additional burden on individual users. The facilities have ample capacity to accommodate growth but a key issue is the need to reverse a declining user base. Population outmigration and new residential growth outside of its service area contributes to slower user base growth. The number of households served with public sewer totals 46.3%. The number of households served with public water totals 30.4%

**Fort Kent Water/Wastewater Dept. User Type & Number**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Water Meter</b>	<b>Sewer Meter</b>
Residential	531	809
Commercial	130	131
Industrial	1	1
Public Authority	58	54
Public Fire Protection	1	0
Private Fire Protection	0	0
<b>Total Count</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>995</b>

Source: Ft. Kent Planning Office; 1747 total households = 30.4% water & 46.3% sewer

The annual volume of solid waste sent to Valley Recycling Facility has been measured for each town beginning in 2009. Scales were installed at the facility in July 2008. From that point communities were assessed a tonnage fee for household and other waste disposed of at the facility. Fort Kent delivered 3,247 tons in 2009, 3,252 tons in 2010 and 3,257 tons in 2011 of household waste. Valley Recycling Facility as a whole processed 886 tons of recycled material in 2007; 838 tons in 2008; 829 tons in 2009; and 741 tons in 2010. The trend clearly shows a steady decline in the tons of materials recycled through the facility.

Stormwater management facilities are in place in the urban parts of the community. Many facilities have been upgraded and all sewer and stormwater separation projects have been completed. The community is in compliance with all requirements of Municipal Separate Stormwater Systems rules.

The power and communications systems available in the community are adequate to serve the present needs. Three-phase power is available on all arterial routes that lead to and enter the town center. Many local businesses utilize 3-phase and availability can serve new development in existing commercial zones and future industrial sites. Two companies are presently studying the Town's potential for commercial wind energy development. This type of development would require improvement to existing power transmission infrastructure. Cable is available throughout the urban area and along arterial routes and major collector routes. Local rural roads are not served with cable. There are several options for internet access including Time Warner Cable and Fair Point Communications. Broadband internet access



service is available to nearly all geographic areas of Fort Kent through US Cellular, Pioneer Wireless Network and local access providers such as GEIPC, Inc.

Fort Kent’s emergency response system includes police, fire, public works, water/wastewater and ambulance. All emergency response is dispatched through the Police Department. They dispatch police for local calls, fire for all local calls, including St. John Plantation and the towns of St. Francis, Wallagrass and New Canada and ambulance for 16 towns including surrounding unorganized territories. The average response time for Police is nine minutes. The average response time for Emergency/Rescue is 6 minutes. The Fire Department does not track response time. Ambulance calls and 911 calls for ambulance, police and fire totaled 7,375 in 2009; 6,058 in 2010 and 5,883 in 2011, trending downward. Vehicle accident responses totaled 168 in 2009; 125 in 2010 and 100 in 2011, again, trending downward.

The school system in Fort Kent and four surrounding communities is managed by MSAD #27. There are five schools in the district, two of which are located in Fort Kent. These include the Elementary School which houses Valley Rivers Middle School grades 7-8 and Community High School (CHS). Local enrollment for the 2011/2012 school year is 522 students for the Elementary School and 298 students for CHS. Generally, local enrollment has been trending downward, but school reorganization at St. Francis Elementary resulted in an increase in 2011/2012. Projected enrollment for the next three years is presented below.

**Projected School Enrollment MSAD 27**

School Year	Ft. Kent Elementary School* (PreK – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Valley Rivers Middle School** (6 – 8 grade)	Ft. Kent Community High School** (9 – 12 grade)
2012-2013	283	225	296
2013-2014	280	198	307
2014-2015	264	203	297

\*Student enrollment projections based on Fort Kent residency only  
 \*\*Student enrollment projections include outlying communities within the District  
 Source: MSAD 27

**Analysis/Key Issues**

The process of identifying the issues facing the town’s facilities/services over the next ten years involved participation from all department heads, except for recreation, which is addressed separately in the recreation section. Department heads have direct knowledge of the day to day workings and challenges of managing their facilities. This allowed many significant issues related to capacity, maintenance, energy use, staffing and training to be identified. They agreed that the burden of cost needs to be distributed fairly among the beneficiaries including residents, developers, tax-exempt organizations and neighboring communities. One key issue not faced by many communities is the maintenance of the flood control levee and the need to replace an aging levee pump station. Water and Wastewater Departments are faced with a similar issue with some pump stations requiring replacement within the 10 year scope of this plan and capital investment schedule. Another issue is training

for police officers, firefighters and paramedics from the standpoint of cost and the financial capacity to compensate volunteer members. The location and type of development impacts most departments in some way. However, the regulation of this must be done in a way that does not deter growth. The policies and strategies below address these and other issues.

Determining public facility and service investment priority is always difficult and is even more so in a down economy and with declining population. Every facility/service requires investment but some may be prioritized based on cost benefit. Investments should help improve efficiency, control long term operation and maintenance costs particularly related to energy use, attract new residential, commercial or industrial development and create tax or customer base. These considerations help establish priority. The Town should develop a Community Energy Plan (CEP) that takes a comprehensive look at energy use at all facilities and charts a path for investments that reduce energy use and carbon dioxide emissions. Other types of investments are obligatory to comply with laws and regulations and the service life of the facility, component or equipment. In these cases, investment can only be delayed so long before disruption of service or operating cost creates bigger problems. Roads, public safety and recreation were all identified as priority areas for investment. The future land use plan helps shape the character of the community looking ahead 10 years. Specific areas of town are designated for growth and some investment priorities direct growth to these areas.

Fort Kent partners with neighboring communities in several ways that help reduce costs and improve services for all parties. The primary areas of cooperation include solid waste disposal/recycling, fire protection, ambulance service, septic waste disposal, recreation and public works related joint purchasing. Neighboring communities are also discussing cooperation in tax assessment and revaluation services. Fort Kent is a member of Valley Recycling Facility with three other communities that provides solid waste transfer/disposal and recycling services. The fire department has several automatic and mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities that helps improve fire protection service and controls cost. The Town of St. Francis also pays Fort Kent for fire dispatch services. Ambulance services are provided by a quasi-municipal organization representing 16 towns with dispatch services through the Fort Kent Police Department. The local recreation department serves many children from surrounding communities with year-round programming. Revenues generated from participating towns are a substantial part of the recreation department's budget and help offset operation and maintenance costs. The public works department participates in a joint purchasing program for road salt that is coordinated by the Northern Maine Development Commission. In combination, these partnerships are important to the Town's efforts to control costs and provide quality services.

The Fort Kent Water and Wastewater Departments have been involved in the development of the comprehensive plan in several ways. The department head cooperated by providing the

Water System Master Plan and the schedule of wastewater system upgrades that are referenced in the plan. By participating in focus meetings, the department head also helped to identify several system issues that are documented in the plan.

The departments presently have no policy for service extensions. This is addressed in the future land use plan. The future land use plan and related zoning amendments can help direct various types of growth and investment to areas where delivering these services is more cost effective and helps expand the user base. This is a critical issue as a result of rising operation and maintenance costs. The departments need to evaluate their user fees and revenues and be allowed to raise fee to help build reserves for capital improvements. This has been a struggle under present economic conditions. Reserve funds provide an essential source of funds to leverage grant funding that is available for system upgrades. These upgrades are identified in the capital investment plan and may be used to help encourage growth in specific parts of the community.

Fort Kent's water system has an additional issue related to its supply location and associated well-head protection zone. There are a number of uses within the zone that may be creating a risk to the drinking water supply. Uses are not being monitored for adherence to the performance standards for the zone as described in the Zoning Ordinance. The Town should be prepared to acquire additional land within its well-head protection zone when it is economically feasible. This issue is addressed in policies and strategies for Hazard Mitigation, Water Resources and Public Facilities/Services.

The urban stormwater facilities are well maintained but there are some capacity issues during spring runoff and major rain events. Storm drain issues exist on Highland Avenue, Meadow Lane, Belone Hill and the lower end of Village Rd. The Highland Avenue system is very old and "make-shift" and is comprised of above and below surface components. The entire system requires engineering design and replacement. Meadow Lane requires removal of the existing drywell and a connection to existing systems at both ends of the street. Belone Hill and the Village Road have capacity issues that require a combination of runoff removal and capacity upgrade. Future development along Village Road should direct runoff away from the existing road ditches. The extensive 50+/- miles of rural roads creates a continuing maintenance challenge. Substantial upgrades were completed within the past 10 years as a result of a road improvement bond. Road ditch maintenance and culvert replacements are carried out as the Public Works budget allows. This issue is also addressed in the strategies for water resources and agriculture and forest resources.

Septic tank waste is managed by the Fish River Septage Board made up of Fort Kent and New Canada. Waste from Fort Kent is transported by private, licensed haulers and can be land spread at licensed sites in New Canada or Frenchville or hauled to a winter storage facility in



Fort Kent. The licensing requirements for the storage and land spreading sites have made the current arrangements expensive. As a result, the 2011 renewal of Fort Kent Wastewater Department's license included a provision to allow the treatment plant to accept 2,100 gallons per day of septic system waste. This is expected to help lower costs.

There are no major school construction or expansion projects anticipated during the planning period. The population and demographics section explains the impact of declining enrollments at the 5 schools that comprise SAD #27. The district is in a period of fiscal austerity. The SAD announced that 10 staff positions would be cut in 2012. The consolidation of two or more elementary grade schools and the transfer of ownership of the closed schools may need to be considered within 10 years. This may be avoided through continued cost saving measures. The SAD has invested in many energy savings improvements within recent years and has partnered with the University of Maine at Fort Kent in the development of a new, multi-building biomass heating system facility. Significant savings are expected. Ultimately, the construction of new, smaller and more energy efficient schools will be most favorable.

The Fort Kent schools serve many residential neighborhoods within one half mile. There is ample opportunity for new residential development within one mile of the schools. The future land use plan identifies several residential focus growth areas and proposes the Fish River Greenbelt that support easy access to schools. The Heritage Trail and a system of sidewalks also help make the schools accessible to new residential development. These facilities need to be evaluated for safety and use ability. The town is proposing to conduct a walkability/bikeability evaluation within one mile of the schools over the next two years and may seek grant funding for needed improvements. This strategy is identified in the Recreation section of the plan.

Fort Kent has an experienced, responsible and well equipped emergency response system that includes police, fire, public works, water/wastewater and ambulance. The system is well coordinated with the Aroostook Emergency Management Agency and the town participates in the county hazard mitigation planning process. Continued improvements in communication and response protocol are needed and are discussed in more detail in the Hazard Mitigation section. Designation of a local Hazard Mitigation Coordinator (Officer) with an annual stipend as compensation and on-going responsibility is an identified need. Funding for this was requested but not approved in 2012. This and other specific needs and projects are identified in HM section.

The solid waste management system is operated by Valley Recycling Facility and private haulers and is meeting the needs of its four member communities. The facility still accepts mixed household waste, but provides for voluntary separation of cardboard/paper, plastics, metal, electronics and batteries. Recycling bins are available in each community for some of the recyclables and all are accepted at the facility. The recycling rate is presently under 50%.

Fort Kent would support a system and fee structure that would encourage greater recycling, but support for this has not been expressed by the other members. Destination disposal costs are rising and the facility responded in 2012 by increasing its fees for disposal of demolition debris and tires. Fees have also increased for businesses that recycle computer/television monitors, electronics, lamps, ballasts, batteries and other mercury containing devices. Based on a declining population, the demand for disposal services is not expected to increase.

Improvements in telecommunications and energy infrastructure are ongoing in the region and in Fort Kent. The primary systems are owned and managed by Fair Point Communications, US Cellular, Pioneer Wireless Network, Time Warner Cable, Maine Public Broadcasting, WAGM-TV and local access Channel 4, for telecommunications and Maine Public Service Company for electrical energy.

Maine Public Service is a regulated electric transmission and distribution utility serving approximately 36,000 electricity customers in Northern Maine. Corporate headquarters are located in Presque Isle, Maine. MPS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Emera, Inc. The corporate website is [www.mainepublicservice.com](http://www.mainepublicservice.com). In 2012 Maine Public Service Company will complete construction of a new substation on Market Street that will improve operations efficiency and system reliability. This will replace the present functions of the 50-60 year old substation on Caribou Rd. System upgrades are also planned on West Main Street from the Town Office to the Fish River Bridge that will enable local crews to service this part of the system. Other upgrades and investments will likely occur during the next ten years.

### **Social Services Supported by Fort Kent (2012)**

Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.: ACAP is a private, non-profit corporation that provides extensive services and resources that help individuals and families achieve greater economic independence. Program areas include Child & Family Services including Head Start, child care and other programs; Employment and Training providing assistance to job seekers and employers seeking trained workers; Health Services including family planning, community health, nutrition and others; Energy & Housing including rental assistance, energy audits and residential rehabilitation programs; and Community Services including case management and other support to access services of other agencies. Office is located at 40 Alfalfa Avenue in Fort Kent.

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging: The Agency on Aging provides services on a county-wide basis in program areas which include Elder Care that provides personal, housekeeping and companionship support; Nutrition that provides meals at the dining center in Fort Kent at the Senior Citizen Center on Pine Street and delivered to homebound seniors; Outreach that provides access help to other programs and assistance with Medicare Part D, heating and rental tax-refund programs; Options Counseling that offers guidance on long term care;

RSVP, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, that helps identify and place persons in volunteer service opportunities; and Caregiver that provides support and training for older adults with caregiver responsibilities and caregivers of Alzheimer's and dementia patients. The mission of the Aroostook Agency on Aging is improving the quality of life, maximizing the independence and promoting the well-being of older people in northern Maine.

American Red Cross: Named the Pine Tree Chapter in Northern Maine, American Red Cross maintains offices in Bangor, and Caribou, with a staff and volunteers that serve 296 communities. The Pine Tree Chapter fulfills the Red Cross mission of helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. They operate with a network of volunteers throughout their chapter communities to spread messages of preparedness and ensure that Red Cross services are available. Their work includes training in lifesaving skills such as first aid, CPR, and defibrillator use; training in how to protect families from fires, winter storms, and other disasters; and training in lifeguarding and swimming instruction, and babysitting skills. Emergency Disaster Services and Armed Forces Emergency Services are also provided. The Caribou office is located at 7 Hatch Drive, Suite #250.

### **State Social Services Available**

Social services are available in Fort Kent in several program areas offered by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These program areas include:

- Child & Family
- Elder & Adult
- Family Independence
- Public Health Nurse
- Nursing Home

Maine DHHS is located at 137 Market St. in Fort Kent.

### **Health Care Services in Fort Kent**

Northern Maine Medical Center: NMMC is a family oriented multifaceted health care organization committed to coordinating and providing a continuum of health care services to residents and visitors of Northern Maine and the Upper St. John Valley. NMMC includes a 49-bed hospital and the Forest Hill Rehab & Skilled Nursing Center, a 45-bed skilled nursing and rehab facility, and 7 health centers strategically located throughout their service area.

Accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), they offer a full range of clinical services, including numerous innovative programs generally found in larger urban hospitals.

Fish River Rural Health: FRRH is a private, nonprofit organization, which has been providing health care since 1990. They provide a full range of primary care services including medical care, dental care and other services. Staff includes doctors, dentist, physician assistants,

nurses/medical assistants, health educator, family health workers, dental hygienist, and dental assistant and support staff. FRRH serves all persons in need but especially those with limited resources and works with health and human service organizations at the local, state, and federal levels. FRRH physicians admit patients to the local hospital, Northern Maine Medical Center (Fort Kent), and provide after-hours call coverage. FRRH is a participant in the National [Health Disparities Collaborative \(HDC\)](#) focusing on chronic diseases. FRRH has optimally managed two chronic conditions, diabetes and heart disease.

Aroostook Home Health Services: aka, Valley Home Health Services is a non-profit, home-based program that works in conjunction with the private payer, private insurance, and state funded and locally funded agencies to provide services. Program areas include high tech skilled nursing, psychiatric nursing, home health aides, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology and social services. Programs for children are also home-based and include services to children who have mental health or developmental delays. They also provide Behavioral Health Professionals who work with persons with mental retardation or autism and who also address sensory motor and psychological needs of those served. AHHS is located at 345 Market St in Fort Kent.

Aroostook Mental Health Center: AMHC is a private, non-profit mental health care organization based in Northern Maine. Incorporated in 1964, AMHC has evolved into a community health organization offering a wide variety of outpatient and residential services including: Community Support, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Emergency Services, Employee & Student Assistance, Psychological Testing, and Assessment and Consultation and Education. Office in Fort Kent located at 139 Market St, Suite #109.

There are no municipally owned cemeteries in Fort Kent however the town owns land that may be suitable for cemetery use. There are three cemeteries in town with two owned by St. John Vianney Catholic Parish and the other by the Christ Congregational Church. The St. John Vianney Parish is in need of land for cemetery expansion.

Trees are located on public and private property throughout Fort Kent's Urban Area. Street trees maintained by the town are primarily located on West and East Main Streets and in the parks. A small arboretum was established at the former public works site near the Fish River and adjacent to Jalbert Park. Annual tree maintenance is the responsibility of the Public Works Department. Urban trees are discussed in Agriculture and Forestry section. The policy is to protect, manage and expand trees in the urban landscape to enhance community awareness of their values and benefits, and to enhance community aesthetics and quality of life. The Town might wish to sponsor a public tree inventory utilizing UMFK students.

# **rDRAFT PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES**

## **Policies & Strategies** 8/10/12

### **State Goal**

Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate growth and economic development.

### **Local Goal**

Maintain and improve our system of facilities and services in a manner that is cost effective and efficient and that helps support job creation and population growth.

### **Introduction**

Overall, the condition of Fort Kent's public facilities and services is very good. They meet the present needs of the community and should continue to do so for the next ten years. This is the result of substantial investment from taxpayers, the leveraging of State and Federal grant opportunities over the past 10-15 years and good management. There were only two services suggested as lacking in the community, first, a youth center and second a taxi service. Both of these could be privately developed and would help secure tax base and employment. The challenges faced by the community in maintaining and improving its systems are largely related to rising costs of operation and maintenance and demands from new tax- exempt development at the University and hospital. In the case of water and sewer, a shrinking user base has also had an impact. The lack of population growth has created a situation where fewer taxpayers must help cover rising costs of other facilities/services. Fortunately, Fort Kent understands the link between an efficient system of public facilities/services and its long term sustainability and potential for growth.

### **Public Safety/Police and Fire Policies & Strategies**

When it comes to first responders, there is little room for compromise in the areas of equipment, staffing and training. Facilities are presently adequate. Future regulatory changes may create a need for unanticipated investment. Refer to the Hazard Mitigation section for some of the issues related to public safety and strategies that address these issues. Cost of training is one of the most significant burdens for Police and Fire Departments.

### **POLICY 1**

Maintain and, when justified, improve department capacity in the areas of communication, equipment, staffing and training.

### **Strategies**

- a. Replace vehicles and equipment according to the schedule outlined in the town's Capital Investment Plan.

- b. Continue to raise funds through the use of incremental contributions to reserve accounts and application to Homeland Security and other Federal and State grant programs.
- c. Focus police officer recruitment efforts on trained and experience personnel and develop an incentives package based on a percentage of the cost of training. Recruit new officers nationally.
- d. Participate in a regional firefighter training and recruitment program with automatic/mutual aid departments and seek funding under FEMA-Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and other sources.
- e. Modify the building permit application process to include identification of the use of manufactured laminate, trusses, beams and joist and create a Fire Department response code for these structures.
- f. Gradually increase/expend funds for stipends, wages and training in department budgets.
- g. Continue to control costs by utilizing access to State/Federal grant programs and surplus sites for some purchases.

## **POLICY 2**

Maintain facilities and facility systems in top condition to protect vehicles and equipment and control operating costs.

### **Strategies**

- d. Continue to budget for annual expenses related to building maintenance.
- e. Designate and train a staff member as a certified facility manager to conduct annual facility inspections and develop the maintenance budget.
- f. Seek State/Federal grant funding for energy efficiency upgrades and use maintenance budgets as leverage.
- g. Study the cost benefit of a cruiser garage in the operation and maintenance of the department and vehicles.

### **Water and Wastewater Policy & Strategies**

Complicated, specialized and critical to public health and quality of life in the community, this public facility/service cannot fail without major implications. This can only be avoided through careful monitoring and routine replacement of system components before the end of their service life. There are always some unanticipated repair expenses. These facilities have ample capacity to accommodate growth and they need to reverse a stagnant user base. The 2011 sewage treatment plant relicensing will result in a reduction in pounds of discharge and may adversely impact future growth potential. The future land use plan and related zoning amendments can help direct various types of growth and investment to areas where delivering

these services is more cost effective while expanding the user base. The Hazard Mitigation section also addresses strategies related to Water and Wastewater Facilities.

## **POLICY 1**

Maintain water and wastewater facilities and staffing at adequate levels to protect the health of users, water quality, control operating and maintenance cost and support community growth and economic development.

### **Strategies**

- a. Replace/upgrade pumps, equipment and other system components according to the schedule outlined in the town's 10-year Capital Investment Plan.
- b. Install dry hydrants on the St. John and Fish Rivers to back-up water volume demand during firefighting.
- c. Research fee schedules of other Maine communities to identify revenue opportunities. Update fee schedule to generate revenue to help address grant leverage and staffing needs. Maintain hook-up and other fees comparable to other Aroostook communities.
- d. Research and report opportunities to expand the water/sewer to existing development with a focus on gravity operation and public health protection.
- e. Apply for USDA and CDBG- economic development infrastructure funds to provide water/wastewater service and pre-treatment facilities to new businesses as opportunities emerge.
- f. Work with the Town Council and the public to maintain reserve funds to be used as grant leverage funds.
- g. Periodically compare user rates with other Aroostook communities as a basis for rate adjustments and report to Town Council.
- h. Propose and adopt a policy on abatement requests that limits the number of requests by a user and/or escrows user funds until the owner repairs problems that cause them higher bills.

### **Public Works Garage, Roads and Levee Policies & Strategies**

The public works department has broad maintenance responsibilities in the community that go well beyond just roads and include the Heritage Trail and parks. As a result, they are one of the largest departments of the town from both a staffing and budgetary standpoint. They operate and maintain equipment, vehicles and some construction equipment and require a maintenance garage to accomplish their mission. The flood control levee is a unique responsibility of Public Works that creates an ongoing demand. The Town is presently awaiting revised floodplain maps from FEMA in order to implement the Levee Recertification Study. The study will determine any needed areas of investment in the levee system. Multiple recreation facilities, sidewalks and streetlights on Main Street are also part of the responsibilities of this department. Both the Transportation and Hazard Mitigation sections addresses strategies related to Public Works.

## **POLICY 1**

Continue to maintain the Levee system to perform to its design capacity and protect the downtown businesses and community.

### **Strategies**

- a. When completed, implement the recommendations of the levee recertification study and include in an updated 5- year Capital Improvement Plan.
- b. Determine the need and cost to replace both obsolete pumps and any building modifications at the levee pump station and include in the schedule outlined in the town's 10-year Capital Investment Plan.
- c. Research options, design and cost for remote inspection/observation of the levee pumps and building and include in an updated 5- year Capital Improvement Plan.
- d. Develop a design and cost estimate to increase the levee protection height using 800 feet of concrete barriers beginning at the Block House to allow for a 32 foot flood level with free board and include in the town's 10-year Capital Investment Plan. Seek Army Corp approval of the method.

## **POLICY 2**

Continue to maintain the Town Garage Facility to provide service space and protection for vehicles, equipment and materials and safety required by the Department.

### **Strategies**

- a. Continue to budget for annual expenses related to building maintenance.
- b. Evaluate through a professional energy audit the opportunities to lower building operating costs related to energy efficiency for heating and lighting.
- c. Include recommended energy efficiency upgrades, including overhead doors, in the town's 5-year updated Capital Improvement Plan.
- d. Complete a feasibility study of a biomass boiler to heat public works and sewage treatment facilities at the site.
- e. Research types and costs for a fire alarm system at the facility and include in an updated 5- year Capital Improvement Plan.
- f. Have equipment evaluated by Maine Military Authority for refurbishing or replacement to help decide either to upgrade or extend the life of the equipment.

## **POLICY 3**

Improve the efficiency of operations and control the costs for services delivered by the Department.



## **Strategies**

- a. Amend the local road construction ordinance to include a sliding impact fee schedule for road designs/locations that result in higher maintenance costs.
- b. Encourage the privatization of new roads by allowing road maintenance associations in new subdivisions and property tax incentives for developers/lot owners.
- c. Create incentives for new development in designated growth areas in close proximity to services that may include a waiver of permit and other fees.
- d. On a case by case basis, evaluate the total cost of reopening a closed road before deciding on a request. Amend road ordinance to reflect this process.
- e. Research opportunities to discontinue ownership or maintenance of existing rural roads with few residences and propose modest property tax rebates for owners.
- f. Continue existing joint purchasing with the MDOT and NMDC on culverts and road salt.
- g. Create new regional opportunities for joint purchasing with other departments, municipalities and private companies in such areas as fuel, lubricants, tires, parts and other.
- h. Research the design and cost of a salt/sand storage building and fuel depot and include in the updated 5- year Capital Improvement Plan.
- i. Evaluate options for acquiring sand from alluvial deposits.

## **General Municipal Facility/Services Policies & Strategies**

Like all of Fort Kent's departments, Administration Services and the Town Office Facility are meeting the present needs of the community and will likely continue to do so within the scope of this plan. The facility has been well maintained. Residents receive an excellent level of general government services. General government services include everything from tax collection to dog licenses. Among many important functions of Administration is the orchestrating of the Town departments management systems and their fiscal capacity. Planning, economic development and code enforcement functions are also based at the Municipal Center. This department compliments municipal administration by tracking tax base changes and procuring funds for community improvements. Planning and Economic Development are also discussed in the section on Local Economy. Administration's overall perspective of town operations allows it to see opportunities to improve efficiency and growth and avoid liabilities. Their challenge is to balance these complex responsibilities.

## **POLICY 1**

Improve efficiency, cost for services and revenue generated by all Departments to minimize property tax burden and promote community growth.

## **Strategies**

- a. Develop the Town's information database and technology to include the following on-line services; vehicle registrations, hunting/fishing licensing, electronic funds transfer for

property tax, water, sewer and other fee payments, submission of building (land use) permit applications, real estate assessment data and expand over the next 10 years.

- b. Continue to update computer systems and software every 3-5 years to improve speed and reliability.
- c. Develop a new building permit fee structure that considers costs associated with State minimum building code compliance.
- d. Research the opportunities and limitations of a service fee schedule for property tax-exempt organizations that request services beyond a stated minimum.

## **POLICY 2**

Continue to maintain the Municipal Center Facility to provide a modern, energy efficient and professional setting from which to provide the services.

### **Strategies**

- g. Continue to budget for annual expenses related to building maintenance.
- h. Develop a Community Energy Plan (CEP) that includes an inventory of energy use and emissions for all facilities, targets for annual energy savings, cost-benefit estimates for investments in energy saving measures, a prioritized list of energy efficiency projects, an outline of funding and incentives available to help support energy efficiency upgrades and a program to educate residents on energy conservation.
- i. Publicize the Town's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Ordinance that encourages owners of qualifying property to access financing for energy saving improvements to their properties.
- j. Evaluate opportunities to lower building operating costs related to energy efficiency by completing an energy audit.
- k. Include recommended energy efficiency upgrades in the town's 5-year update of its Capital Improvement Plan.
- l. Replace the existing boiler system with a modern multi-fuel system as recommended.
- m. Replace the existing roofing as may be required and include in the town's 5-year update of its Capital Improvement Plan.

## **New Community Services Policy & Strategies**

### **POLICY 1**

Encourage non-profits and entrepreneurs to provide new community services, when appropriate, as a means of creating jobs and serving local needs.

### **Strategies**

- a. Publicize the need for new local services through the Planning and Development Office and Chamber of Commerce websites.
- b. Continue to seek and provide CDBG-Micro-Business and other grants for non-profits and new service businesses.

**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

FKPD, FKFD, FKPW, LG, TC, AKEMA, MEMA, FEMA, DHS, FKW&WW, USDA-RD, DECD-OCD, ACE, NMDC LB, PLO, PB, CofC, Ent

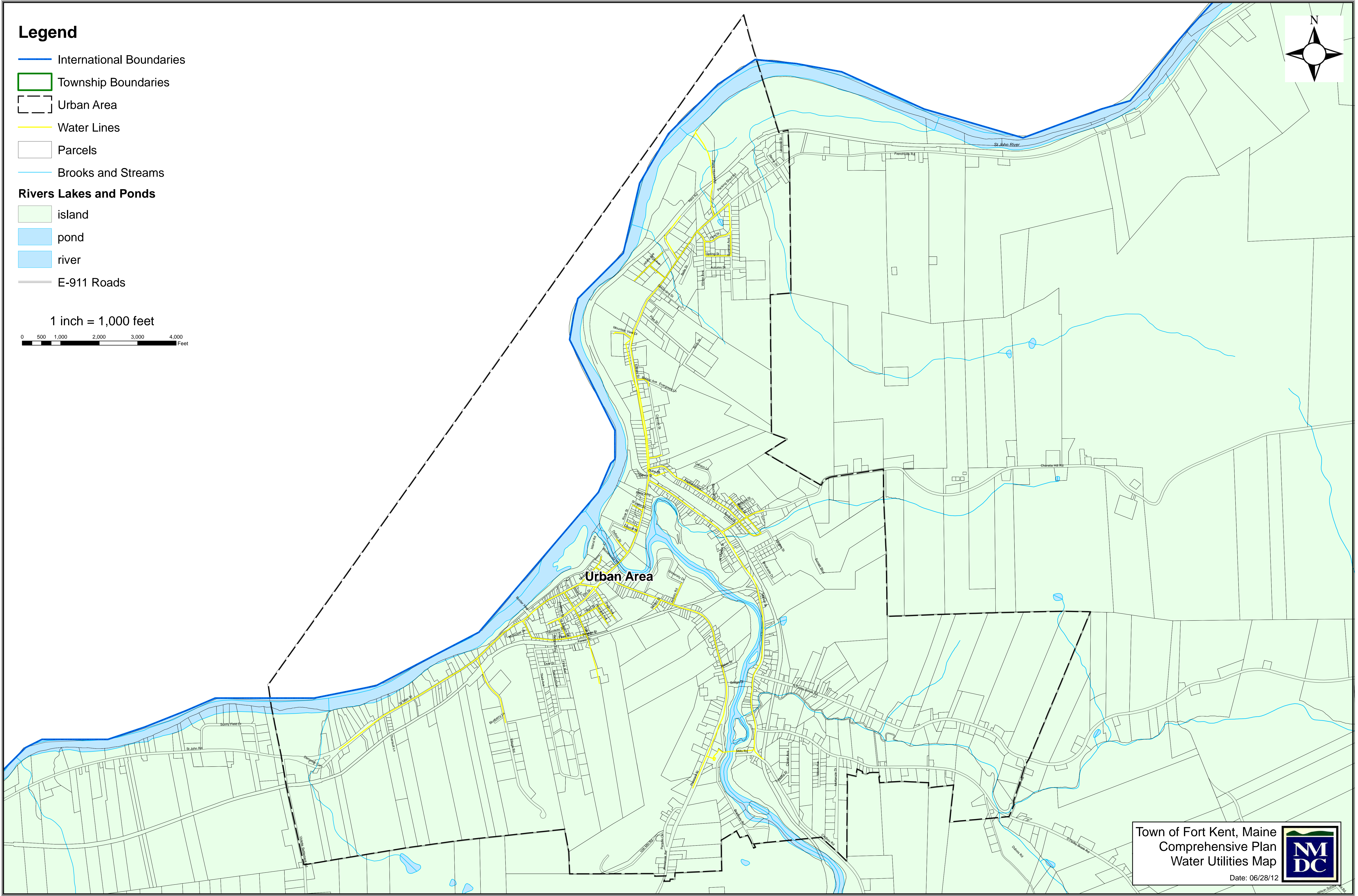
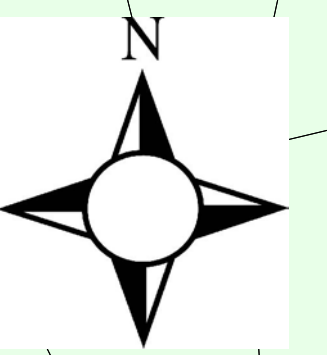
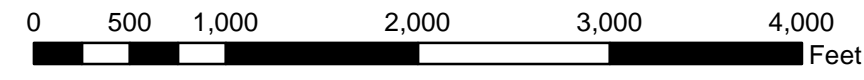
**Public Safety Policy 1 & 2** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **Water/Wastewater Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **Public Works Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, **Policy 2** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **Policy 3** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **Administrative Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, **Policy 2** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **New Services Policy 1** Short & Mid-term



# Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Water Lines
- Parcels
- Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
- island
- pond
- river
- E-911 Roads

1 inch = 1,000 feet

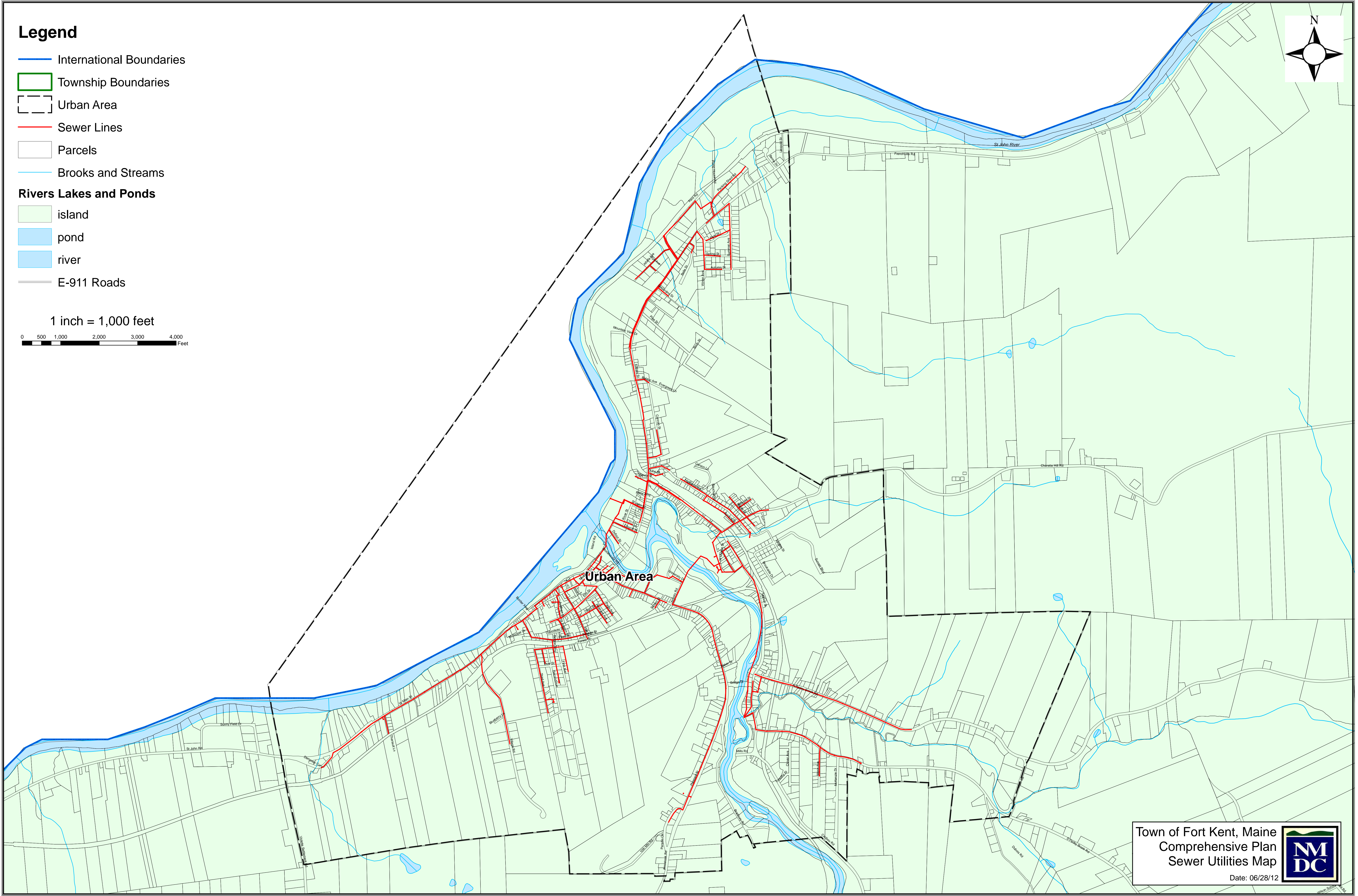
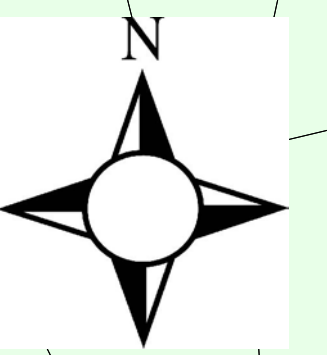
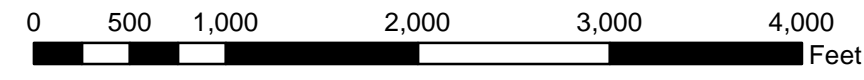




# Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Sewer Lines
- Parcels
- Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
- island
- pond
- river
- E-911 Roads

1 inch = 1,000 feet





# FISCAL CAPACITY & CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN



**draft FISCAL CAPACITY & CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**  
**Inventory & Analysis** 5/14/12

**Introduction**

Fiscally, Fort Kent has managed well considering the lack of growth in state revenue sharing, excise tax collections and miscellaneous fees since 2008. Today the amount of local tax revenues that are allocated to non-municipal uses like County tax, debt service and education is 30% higher than in 1994. This, along with rising operation and maintenance costs, a slowly declining population and the trend in residential development being spread out along rural roads has created substantial fiscal challenges for the Town. It is well documented that the cost of delivering services like road maintenance, police, fire and emergency protection, water and sewer and school busing all increase substantially as development spreads further away from the community center. This Comprehensive Plan update encourages development where services can be provided in a cost effective manner and attempts to alleviate the impact of declines in revenue sharing. This approach helps protect and maintain the Town’s fiscal capacity and is explained further in the future land use section of the plan.

**Conditions and Trends**

Trends in community revenues for the five year period 2008-2011 are described in the table below. Fort Kent primarily has six revenue sources including state revenue sharing, local administrative, police, recreation & parks, un-appropriated surplus (fund balance) and tax increment financing (TIF). Overall revenues have been declining in the past four years.

**Fort Kent 5-year Revenue Summary**

<b>Revenue Source</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
State Revenue Sharing	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Administration	75,000	83,188	80,000	79,750	81,050
Police	20,900	21,300	25,350	24,336	25,236
Recreation & Parks	16,700	20,000	18,500	18,500	19,000
Fund Balance	1,472,671	1,548,339	1,443,626	1,195,839	1,219,933
Tax Incremental Financing	0	54,170	35,013	40,000	17,000
<b>Total \$</b>	<b>1,685,271</b>	<b>1,826,997</b>	<b>1,702,488</b>	<b>1,458,425</b>	<b>1,589,212</b>

Source: Annual Fort Kent Town Reports

Trends in community expenditures for the five year period 2008-2011 by municipal department, solid waste and other combined categories are summarized in the next table. Eight categories were examined separately for trends. Miscellaneous expenditures are a combination of over 30 organizations or areas where funds are requested and expended annually. Miscellaneous includes such things as County tax, debt service, airport, chamber of commerce and many others. The average annual percent change for the five year period indicates the trend in each expenditure category. MSAD #27 and the Police Department have

had the greatest increase during the period. The greatest decline in expenditures was in Miscellaneous and Fire Department.

**Fort Kent 5-year Expenditure History**

Expenditures by Department	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average 5 yr % Change
Administration	318,232	332,101	340,403	347,228	355,632	+ 2.74%
Public Works	661,348	684,507	701,619	696,513	680,876	+ 0.71%
Police	430,433	452,453	463,423	503,489	509,971	+ 4.13%
Fire	70,157	58,795	60,264	59,342	60,960	- 3.17%
Recreation & Parks	209,245	209,481	214,718	207,483	201,570	- 0.93%
Planning & Development	113,929	116,435	119,345	122,802	88,186	+ 2.47%
Solid Waste	357,871	337,318	375,000	325,441	351,883	- 0.36%
SAD #27	1,515,802	1,603,125	1,798,758	1,948,358	2,014,776	+ 6.8%
Misc (Cty Tax, Debt Service, Airport, C of Commerce, etc)	1,006,368	999,805	706,648	768,312	815,333	- 4.0%

Source: Fort Kent Planning and Development Office

Fort Kent utilizes many options for the funding of capital improvements and purchases necessary to maintain and upgrade its facilities and services. Capital items funded over the past decade or more include the fire station, town garage, road improvements and equipment for the Fire Department and Public Works Department. For road and facility projects the town has borrowed from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and presently has a balance of \$1,267,664 at interest rates between 3% and 6%. For equipment capital purchases the Town has an excellent working relationship with a local bank and presently has a balance of \$155,225 and an interest rate between 3% and 5%. On certain capital equipment for municipal services that Town has used manufacturers leasing programs that are generally interest free. For infrastructure expansion and upgrades associated with housing and business development the Town has used Tax Increment Financing (TIF). There are currently TIF districts that include Village Road and East Main Street. In addition, most municipal departments with a budget surplus at the end of the year will transfer funds to their respective reserve accounts for equipment. These effective methods have enabled the Town maintain fiscal capacity while funding needed improvements with a manageable impact on annual tax obligation and local taxpayers.

The Town has extensive experience using various grant and loan sources to help fund capital investments and business assistance. Since 2008, (the year of the flood) the town has utilized twenty different sources to fund projects related to public infrastructure, recreation facilities and trails, business assistance, private sewage disposal systems and office equipment. Millions in grant funding followed the flood event from such sources as Housing and Urban Development-Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Federal Emergency Management Agency and Maine Emergency Management Agency. Other CDBG programs have been used for ongoing



community betterment activities including riverfront enhancement and community enterprise projects. The USDA-Rural Development grant/loan programs have been used for upgrades to the water and wastewater systems. The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) has awarded funds to Fort Kent for loans to provide credit to small businesses in the community. The Maine Department of Conservation/National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund has been used extensively for recreation projects and most recently in 2011-2012 for the youth soccer field. These are a few of the many examples of outside funding sources for capital improvements used by Fort Kent.

The Town underwent a tax base revaluation process that became effective in 2008. The table below shows the comparison between the State's full valuation and the Town's valuation for taxation purposes. The town mil rate or the amount of tax levy per \$1000 of valuation is also given for each year.

#### 5-Year State & Local Valuation Comparison

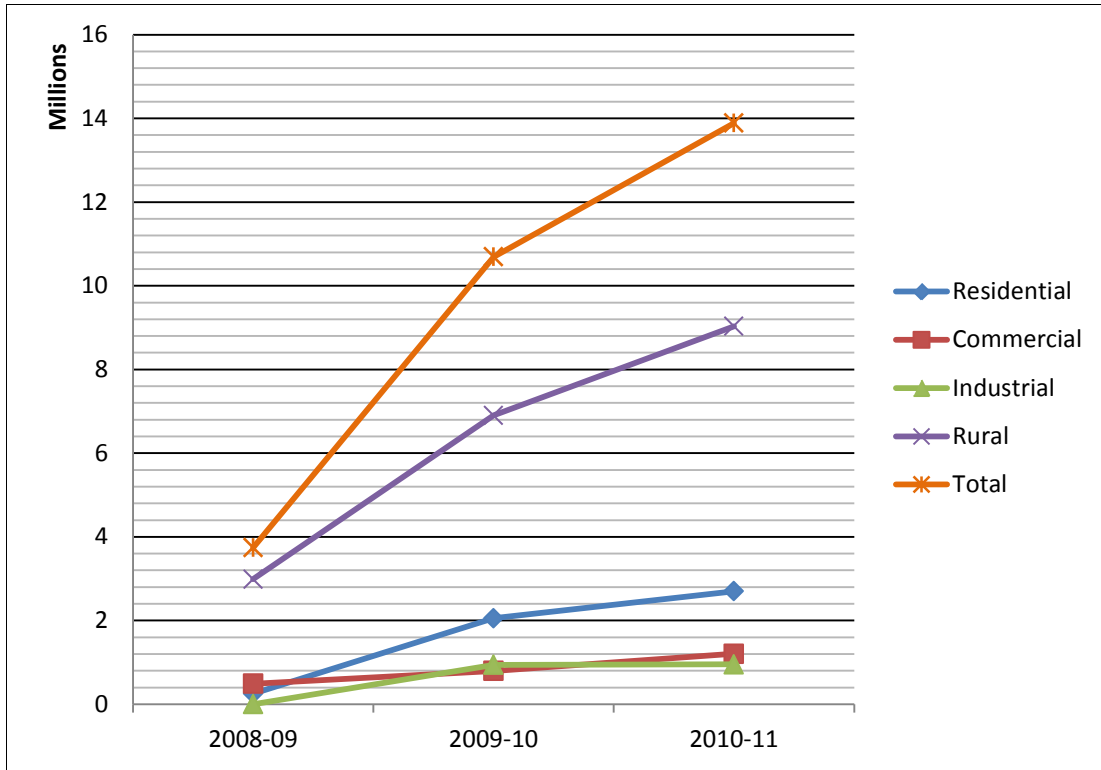
	2008	2009	2010	2011
State Valuation (full)	206,100,000	217,000,000	225,300,000	*
Local Valuation (net)	192,214,011	195,956,849	202,905,087	206,102,484
Local Valuation as % of State	93%	90%	90%	
Local Mil Rate	14.00	14.35	16.35	16.45

Source: Fort Kent Planning and Development Office

\*Data not available

Each year the Town looks at growth in property valuation as a result of building permit activity (private investment) in the community. Development activity and the associated valuation increase are divided into the Town's residential, commercial, industrial and rural zoning districts. The annual net increase in property valuation by zoning district is described in the graph below as well as the annual total for years 2008-2011. Net valuation increase is the value of new development that has occurred in a given year not counting tax exempt real property and personal property. This new development creates the tax base for revenue growth that allows the town to maintain facilities and services. Unfortunately, under the present economic conditions much of this revenue has been absorbed by the lack of growth in Maine Revenue Sharing and the actual rising costs in the operation and maintenance of municipal departments. Tax base growth is a critical component of Fort Kent's fiscal capacity and overall economic sustainability.

## Fort Kent Valuation Growth 2008-2011



Source: Annual Fort Kent Town Reports

Municipal debt is the amount of money the town presently has borrowed to cover the cost of large capital investments for equipment, facilities and infrastructure. Some of this investment was related to maintenance. The town may also be responsible for a respective share of County debt. As of 2011, outstanding municipal debt from all sources totaled \$1,514, 226. This amount is .67% of the State's full valuation of Fort Kent. MRSA Title 30-A sets the legal limit for municipal debt at 15%, but 5% is considered responsible. In Fort Kent Water and Wastewater Department debt is separate from municipal debt and is funded completely from department revenues. The total Water and Wastewater Department debt is \$2,849,951. Funds were provided by the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and the USDA-Rural Development. Fort Kent's debts are well within acceptable limits.

### Analyses

The Town's fiscal capacity was measured using four parameters; assessed value, operating expenditures and revenues, borrowing capacity and alternative revenue sources. Analysis of these factors indicates that Fort Kent has fiscal strength in its net valuation growth and borrowing capacity and opportunity to address revenue declines through new sources and changes in fee structure. This will enable the town to fund future capital investments by a combination of loans, grants and reserve funds from tax revenues. The Capital Investment Plan at the end of this section identifies the capital projects, funding sources and priority level of projects the Town may implement over the next ten years.

One measure of how aggressively the town is taxing property owners is based on what percentage that the town's valuation is to the State calculated full valuation of the town. Eighty percent of full valuation is the minimum that Maine Revenue Services likes to see for municipal valuations. The town's average net valuation from 2008-2010 was 91% of the State's full valuation. This is fair and acceptable figure on which to base local tax assessment. The public's perception may be different, but Fort Kent could be valuing property at a level closer to the State's full valuation.

Local net valuation is calculated every year and is trending upward. From 2008-2011 the municipal tax base grew by nearly \$14 million. Most of the tax base growth (\$9 million) occurred in the rural farm district where the cost of providing services is typically higher. Some of the rural farm areas are close to the Town center while others are miles away. Tax base growth in residential areas totaled \$2.7 million during this period. At the 2011 mil rate of \$16.45 per thousand, the \$14 million in tax base growth, generated \$230,300 in tax revenue. Encouraging growth and investment in housing, business and industry that is closer to the Town center will help net more tax revenue to support existing facilities and services. Maintaining a variety of housing options near places of employment also makes Fort Kent a desirable place to live and locate a business. This is covered in the Future Land Use Section.

The town presently has borrowing capacity that would allow it to carry additional debt. Current long-term debt is .67% of the State's full valuation; well below the 5% that is considered fiscally prudent. Per capita debt is 2.5% of the per capita income of \$19,250. Well within the recommended limit of 4%-5%. These positives signs of borrowing capacity mean that Fort Kent should be able to access the capital it needs to implement the projects identified in its Capital Investment Plan over the next ten years. Much of the Town's existing debt will be retired during the planning period through 2021. Even maintaining existing debt levels will enable the town to move forward with some projects.

During the period 2008-2011, municipal department operating expenditures increased by an average of less than 1%. In some respects this is a huge accomplishment considering that real operating cost increases since 2005 are more in the order of 20-30%. Expenditures declined in Fire, Recreation and Parks, Solid Waste and Miscellaneous. However, this fiscal conservatism also comes with a price in terms of maintenance and services reductions. Maintenance reductions will always catch up with the operator and usually become a greater expense than if completed on an ongoing basis. Reductions in services may find Fort Kent at a crossroads between saving funds in the near term but putting at risk the community's quality of life and desirability as a place to live. These are attributes which took the community decades to build. Fort Kent needs to be vigilant of the risks and aggressive in pursuing opportunities to create jobs, build population and generate new revenues. This is also covered in the section on Local Economy.

Basic department revenues indicate little change from 2007 to 2011. It is difficult to raise municipal fees on a public that is already stretched by higher costs everywhere else. All existing fee structures need to be evaluated based on existing costs and compared to similar towns in the region. However, the time to raise fees lies beyond the present economic downturn.

Fort Kent would benefit from a thoughtful approach to alternative revenues as there is considerable potential for growth. The trend indicates little progress in reducing dependence on property taxes by shifting some of the burden. The town is not likely to adopt impact fees to lower the significant impacts certain development has on facilities and services. This tool is typically used in larger communities. However, the building (land use) permit fee is a low flat fee that is completely obsolete and does little to defray the actual cost of permit reviews and code enforcement. In fact, all existing permit fees should be evaluated and adjusted to reflect current costs. The policies and strategies section that follows suggests that all departments explore and suggest new opportunities to generate revenues from user based fees.

Fort Kent has a track record of sharing capital investments with neighboring communities when it makes sense to do so. The best examples are the airport, solid waste disposal/recycling and septage handling where the facility ownership and operating cost are shared with other towns. Most of the activities identified in the current Capital Investment Plan have direct applicability to Fort Kent and lack regional benefit. However, there are some activities that arguably provide a regional benefit. These include activities related to firefighting capacity, recreation, job creation and some municipal services. The Town should select specific capital investments in each category that have a clear impact on neighboring communities. The Town should then develop an approach to requesting financial support from Towns that receive a direct or indirect benefit from the investment. One approach might be to develop a per capita investment formula that extends to the total population served by the improvement. Fort Kent is a service center community for surrounding Towns and the residents of all benefitting towns should pay a fair share.

## Draft Capital Investment Plan December 2011

Typically a capital investment plan identifies the public facilities/services necessary to accommodate projected growth. Since population growth is not being projected for Fort Kent the investment plan focuses on facilities and services needed to **1.** direct new development to specific areas of the community, **2.** attract businesses or create jobs, **3.** support changing needs and **4.** maintain existing facilities/infrastructure. The projects identified are given priority ratings as follows: High being within 1-3 years; Necessary being within 3-5 years; Desirable being within the 10 year plan; Deferrable being potentially beyond 10 years. Some cost estimates are provided and additional ones should be obtained for all high priority projects. The capital investment plan forms the basis for developing a capital improvements plan (CIP). The CIP is more detailed plan that provides current cost estimates, a project timeline and grants/loans that are being applied for as funding. The CIP is updated annually and is used in the annual budget committee process. The Town Council should start prioritizing planned investments in 2012.

### Draft Capital Investment Plan (5/14/12)

Project	Priority Level	Potential Funding	Cost Estimate
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>			
Police Garage	Desirable	Homeland Security Grant, MMBB, Reserve Funds	
Fire Dept. TOG/SCBA	High	Homeland Security Grant, Reserve Funds	
Fire Station Roofing	Desirable	Funds, MMBB	
Fire Station Int. Renovations	Desirable	Reserve Funds	
Fire Station Generator	Necessary	Homeland Security Grant, CDBG, Reserve Funds	\$20,000
<b>RECREATION</b>			
Recreation Facility Lights	High	LWCF Grant, US-DOE Grant Reserve Funds	
Playground/Equipment	High	LWCF Grant, Reserve Fund, Private Donations	
Pool Filter System	High	LWCF Grant, Reserve Fund, Private Donations	
Skating Rink Roof	Necessary	LWCF Grant, Reserve Fund, Private Donations	
Tennis Courts	Desirable	LWCF Grant, Reserve Fund, Private Donations	
Pool Reconstruction/ADA	Desirable	LWCF Grant, Reserve Fund, Private Donations	
Trail Connector/Greenbelt	Desirable	DOC-RTP Grant, DOT-TE Grant, Reserve Fund	
Community Center	Desirable	Tax Appropriation, MMBB, other grant	
<b>PUBLIC WORKS</b>			
Levee Barriers	High	FEMA, MEMA, Reserve Funds	\$35,000
Bradbury Rd Reconstruction	Necessary	MMBB, FEMA, MEMA	
Storage Bldg. O.H. Doors	Necessary	Reserve Funds	
Road Repairs	Desirable	MMBB, Reserve Funds, FEMA	
Highway Equipment	Desirable	Private Loans, MMBB, Reserve Funds	\$1,157,004
Biomass Boiler	Desirable	DOE/EMT Grants, MMBB, Tax Appropriation	
Highland Ave storm drainage	Desirable	CDBG-PI grant, MMBB, Reserve Funds, USDA-RD	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES</b>			
Town Office Roof	Desirable	MMBB, Reserve Funds	
Town Office Boiler	High	US-DOE, EMT, Reserve Funds	
Industrial Park	Desirable		

<b>WATER &amp; WASTEWATER</b>			
Water Distribution System	High	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	\$992,000
Water Main upgrades	Desirable	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Sewer System Maps	Necessary	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Line Spec. Sheets	High	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Septage Station	High	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Meter Replacements	Necessary	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Highland Ave. Line	Necessary	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Equipment Needs*	Necessary	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	\$378,000
Service Extensions*	Desirable	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	
Camera Line Inspection	Desirable	User Fees, Govn't Grants/Loans, Reserve Funds	

\*See details in Wastewater Department Report 2011

# **DRAFT FISCAL CAPACITY & CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

## **Policies & Strategies** 7/18/12

**State Goal:** Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate growth and economic development.

**Local Goal:** Maintain and improve our fiscal capacity in a manner that allows us to make cost effective and efficient investments in the facilities and services required to support job creation and population growth.

**Summary:** Fiscally, Fort Kent has managed well considering rising operation and maintenance costs, a slowly declining population and the trend in residential development being spread out along rural roads. It is well documented that the cost of delivering services like road maintenance, police, fire and emergency protection, water and sewer and school busing all increase substantially as development spreads further away from the community center. The 2011 Comprehensive Plan update encourages development where services can be provided in a cost effective manner. This approach helps protect and maintain the community's fiscal capacity and is explained further in the future land use section of the plan.

The policies and strategies outlined below are based on the parameters that measure fiscal capacity. They are designed to maintain the town's positive fiscal characteristics. The capital investment plan, is the overriding strategy that directs where investment in facilities and services should be made, what the priorities are and identifies potential funding sources. This forms the basis for the annual capital improvements plan that includes details on funding sources, projected costs and timeline for specific projects.

### **Policy 1**

Maintain a reasonable property tax obligation by continuing to stay below the limits established in LD#1.

### **Strategies:**

- a. Advocate for required fiscal impact analysis of all State incentive programs that result in revenue losses to municipalities.
- b. Continue to manage for a local net assessed valuation of 80% or above the State's full valuation.
- c. Complete an eligibility review of property uses for properties owned by tax exempt organizations and study options for payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT).
- d. Research the methods used by other States to fairly assess fees to tax exempt organizations.
- e. Establish and make annual contributions to a reserve fund for a 2017-2018 town wide revaluation.
- f. Continue to assess new construction according to the revaluation base year.

**Policy 2**

Control the operating expenditures/revenues for all departments by a cost/benefit approach to the availability and level of services.

**Strategies:**

- a. Initiate public communication on efforts and methods used by municipal departments to control operating expenditures.
- b. Complete a comprehensive review of existing fee structures for all departments, review periodically and adjust fees as necessary.
- c. Research opportunities to discontinue ownership or maintenance of existing rural roads with limited use based on traffic counts. Propose modest property tax reductions for owners affected by road abandonment.
- d. Review fee formulas for service agreements with neighboring communities and adjust as necessary to cover administrative and capital costs.
- e. Continue to maintain the annual fund balance level to minimize tax anticipation note/interest expense to meet tax obligation.
- f. Participate in regional initiatives in solid waste, transportation, and joint purchasing and tax assessment/revaluation services that improve efficiency and control operating costs.
- g. See specific strategies under public facilities/services.

**Policy 3**

Continue to manage the town's long-term debt below 5% of the State's full valuation for the community.

**Strategies:**

- a. Continue to raise funds for certain capital improvements through annual contributions to reserve accounts. (vehicle and some equipment replacement, building systems, grants leverage, etc.)
- b. Use tax rate and user fee increases to fund quality of life and job creation capital improvements based on strong public communication and justification.
- c. Continue to borrow as necessary to protect infrastructure/facilities that meet the present needs of the community.
- d. Implement an integrated funding approach to capital improvements that create jobs or expand services, utilizing grants, loans and tax revenues.
- e. Maintain reserve fund balances for all Departments by developing a reasonable minimum base level for each.

**Policy 4**

Study local options for alternative revenues and annually review and adjust all department fee schedules.



**Strategies:**

- a. Complete a comprehensive review of existing fee schedules for all municipal departments, review periodically and adjust fees as necessary.
- b. Evaluate opportunities to establish new fees for services presently provided and new services requested.
- c. Amend the (Zoning Ordinance) Building/Land Use permit fee structure to reflect the cost of permit review and code enforcement under the new state minimum building code.
- d. Amend other ordinance fees including, but not limited to, fees for roads, subdivisions and windmills as necessary to defray review costs and/or increase revenues.
- e. Study the use of impact fees in accordance with the SPO guide “Financing Infrastructure Improvements through Impact Fees” and implement as necessary.

**Policy 5**

Direct substantial capital investment to areas designated in the future land use plan and capital improvements plan.

**Strategies:**

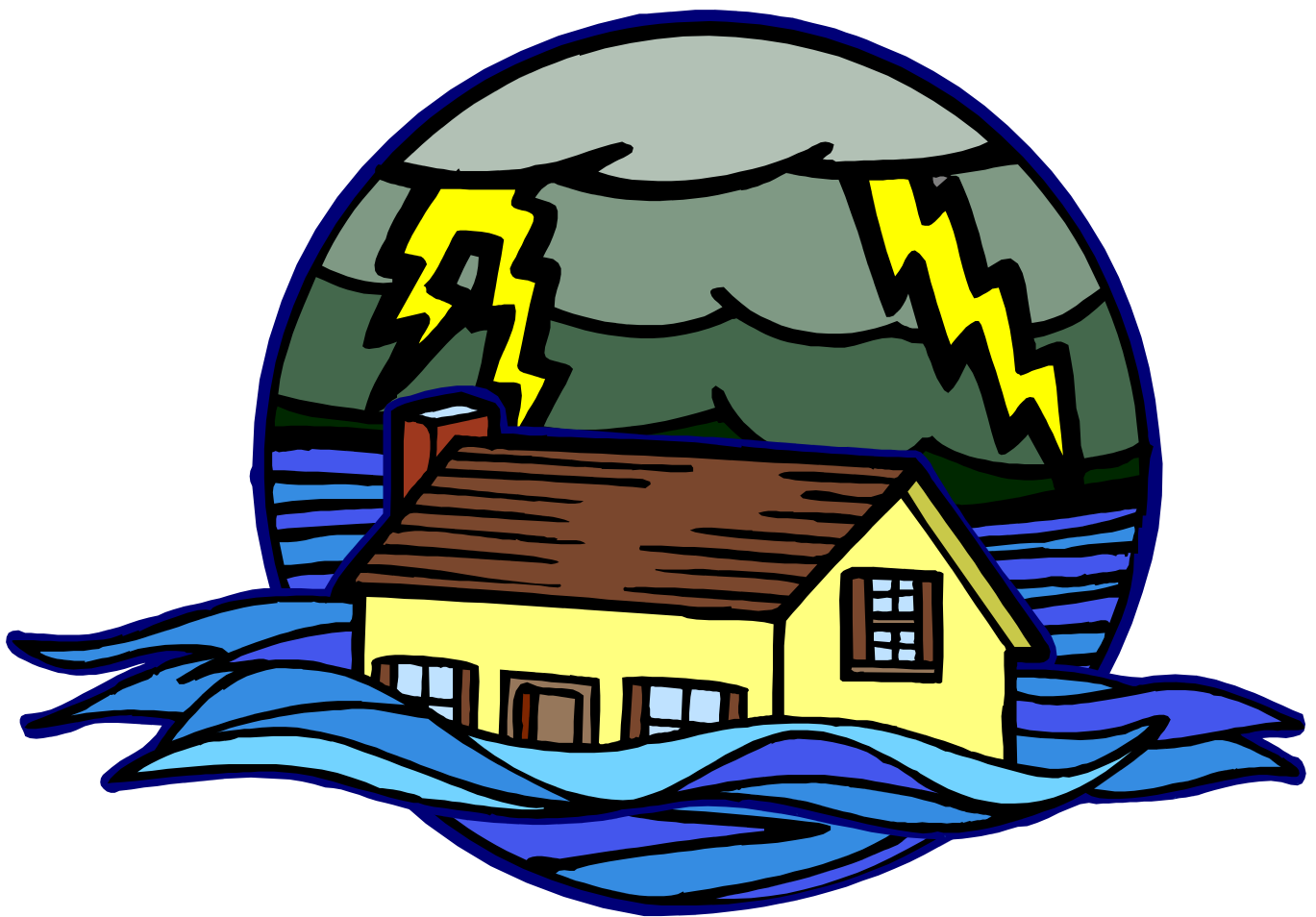
- a. Develop a private investment incentives program based on tax rate, fees, services and grant/loan access for development in designated “growth” areas.
- b. Amend development standards and permit fee structures in all ordinances to categorize development based on the future land use plans; desirability of location and cost efficiency in the delivery of public facilities/services criteria.

**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

LG, TC, PDO, NMDC, VRF, NC, MBB, LL, PB, DECD-OCD,

**Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, **Policy 2** Short-term, **Policy 3** Mid-term, **Policy 4** Short-term, **Policy 5** Short-term & w/ 10yr

# HAZARD MITIGATION



## **Analyses**

Fort Kent is a “river town” and, as such, flooding is the predominant threat that must be planned for and managed on an annual basis. The town has decades of experience in understanding the risks associated with its development along the St. John and Fish Rivers. This experience is reflected in the many projects and the millions of dollars the local, State and Federal governments have invested to reduce the risks and losses from flooding. The town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, administers and updates a Floodplain Management Ordinance as well as town-wide and shoreland zoning ordinances. Flood control structures have been constructed along the St. John River and Regiest Daigle Brook and dozens of homes have been removed from the 100-year floodplain. Still, the preeminent force of nature has reminded the community that the risk is dynamic and continuous.

In 2008 the levee along the St. John River came within 6 inches of being over-topped and the flooding on the east end of town caused millions in damage, displacement of households and disruption of community services. This event set in motion a comprehensive review of Fort Kent’s preparedness in dealing with a disaster of the magnitude that would occur if the levee failed. The local response to this event with support from Aroostook County Emergency Management and other State and Federal agencies illustrates the amazing resiliency and determination of the local government and citizenry. In their report “Living Behind the Levee”, FEMA, reminds us that a changing climate and land use practices will keep nature as unpredictable as ever and hence the local efforts in hazard mitigation planning and preparedness must never cease. Recognizing this fact is well timed with this comprehensive land use plan update.

While flooding may always be the risk that requires the greatest attention, the community faces several other risks that must be understood and addressed. Fort Kent is also a northern border community of forests and farms and development is occurring in these areas. Ice storms and the ensuing power outages, wildfire and severe winds are all risks to the community that are part of the town’s hazard mitigation planning. Propane and fuel storage and the transport of chemicals through populated areas also require some discussion. The expertise of the committee members allowed our policy/strategy process to reflect an understanding of what the risks are to the community and an understanding of the responses that are necessary to minimize the impacts of natural and man-made disasters. Some strategies are regulatory in nature in advance of a disaster or identify emergency responses that must occur immediately before, during and after a disaster event. They are intended to address the damage to private and public property including facilities and infrastructure and the disruption of essential services. Our policies and strategies also address the disruption of the local economy and, in severe cases, the social fabric of the community occurring after a

disaster. They reflect the realization that not everything that may be at risk can escape damage in a disaster event and therefore address recovery. Getting things functioning, repaired and back to normal as quickly as possible is essential to a town's viability after a disaster.

**rDRAFT HAZARD MITIGATION  
Policies & Strategies** 7/18/12

**State Goal**

Discourage development in natural hazard areas. Municipalities shall prevent inappropriate development in these areas including floodplains and high erosion areas.

**Local Goal**

Reduce losses to public and private property caused by inappropriate development through effective planning, preparedness, response and regulation.

**Prevention and Property Protection through Hazard Mitigation Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Regulation and Storm Water and Drainage System Maintenance Policies & Strategies**

Hazard mitigation planning is developed and coordinated at the County level by Aroostook Emergency Management Agency (AKEMA). The Aroostook County Hazard Mitigation Plan update received final FEMA approval in 2011. The plan is revised every 5 years; a copy of the most recent one is available at <http://www.arostookema.com/akema/>. Fort Kent submitted the required materials that identify specific local issues that require mitigation and has approved their participation in the County plan.

**POLICY 1**

Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process at the County level and implement local strategies to enhance preparedness, response and reduce risks to persons and property.

**Strategies**

- a. Designate a local person as Hazard Mitigation Coordinator (Officer) with on-going responsibility and create an annual stipend as compensation and to reflect the level of importance of their responsibilities:
  1. Annual update of local sections of County HM Plan
  2. Keep plan active by implementing specific tasks in the plan.
  3. Maintain on-going communication with Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and with local Police, Fire, Ambulance, Border Patrol and other government services.
  4. Coordinate the annual flood preparedness meetings, training and public education with AKEMA and other agencies.
  5. Address tasks related to long term recovery planning formula.
  
- b. Seek grant funding through Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Hazard Mitigation Program, Maine Office of Community Development- CDBG

Program, Maine Department of Transportation –Rural Roads Initiative and other sources to undertake the projects identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- c. Request that the USGS install another gauge on the St. John River between the levee and the present gauge to provide earlier indication of flood stage in the Town center due to ice jamming locations between Town center and present gauge.
- d. Initiate a dialog with the business community regarding a long term transition to a new central business “downtown” area and to encourage investment outside the area “protected” by the levee.
- e. Cooperate with Lonesome Pine, NMDC and businesses to create a plan to relocate police and government services in the event of a levee failure (over-topping).
- f. Study the Heritage Trail to determine the minimum upgrades needed to accommodate its use as an alternate emergency route to upriver communities.
- g. Maintain and build reserve funds as match for Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant funds for large capital projects and apply for these funds.
- h. Continue to fund upgrades to town roads targeted in Hazard Mitigation Plan as existing road improvement bonds are paid. Keep scope of work manageable.
- i. Continue to invest in drainage improvements on all roads to mitigate damage caused by runoff.
- j. Invest in concrete barriers that can be used to deflect flood waters and close-off and control access points during emergencies.
- k. Coordinate traffic control with the US Border Patrol, Customs and the Maine State Police to restrict outside traffic during disaster events.
- l. Install an alarm system for the waste water treatment plant lagoon to detect level.
- m. Maintain Charette Hill communications tower including tree removal and clear zone.
- n. Study the feasibility of an alternative public water supply on the West side of Town.

## **POLICY 2**

Ensure that new development and improvement to existing properties does not create or contribute to the risk of property damage, personal injury or loss of life.

### **Strategies**

- a. Revise the local town-wide zoning ordinance to incorporate all land use regulations into a single document that includes Floodplain Management, Shoreland Zoning, Road Construction and Town wide Zoning. Review these ordinances annually and keep floodplain and shoreland zoning provisions current with State and Federal standards.
- b. Enforce, without exception, the construction standards outlined in the Floodplain Management section and local road standards for subdivision roads and roads proposed for public acceptance.

- c. Amend the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances to include storm water runoff standards and enforce without exception.
- d. Communicate with Maine DEP on storm water management issues and cooperate on enforcement.
- e. Use the building permit review process to educate all floodplain property owners on methods of flood proofing their buildings.
- f. Continue to seek funds for property acquisition and residential/business relocation in floodplain areas.

### **The Natural Resources That Supports Hazard Mitigation Policies & Strategies**

The community recognizes that it has many natural resources that help reduce the intensity of flooding and protect water quality. The protection of these natural features, specifically wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas is the least expensive way to mitigate the effects of runoff, erosion and flooding. Standards are already in place in local ordinances that address protection of the resources.

#### **POLICY 1**

Ensure the protection of wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas from activities that reduce their capacity to control flooding and erosion.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Strictly enforce floodplain management and shoreland zoning standards that pertain to filling, earth moving and clearing activities.

#### **POLICY 2**

Protect the capacity of roadside drainage and storm drainage systems to handle runoff.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Strictly enforce the standards found in the Zoning Site Design Review and Subdivision Ordinances that pertain to sedimentation and erosion control.
- b. Annually identify erosion and runoff problems associated with agriculture and request that landowners contact the USDA-NRCS and the Soil and Water Conservation District for assistance.

### **An All-Hazards Approach to Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Education Policies & Strategies**

Fort Kent acknowledges that there are other serious natural and man-made hazards that require planning, preparation and public education to ensure the safety of its citizens. Most of these are identified in the County Hazard Mitigation Plan and include severe winter storms with high wind and ice and severe summer storms with high wind and flash flooding. Associated,

long duration, power outages are of particular concern. The town is also vulnerable to forest fire, especially during periods of drought, given the extent of its urban/wild land interface and increased residential construction in forested areas. There is a risk of multiple structure fires. Several man-made hazards were identified that include above ground propane and liquid fuel storage near residential and commercial uses and the rail and truck transport of fuels and industrial chemicals through these same areas. The neighboring community of Clair, New Brunswick also has these risks that could impact Fort Kent. Clair, NB also has a commercial fertilizer plant within 2000 feet of some of Fort Kent's most densely developed areas.

## **POLICY 1**

Build community capacity to withstand long duration power outages to protect public services, shelter areas and private residences.

### **Strategies**

- a. Hire an electrician or facilities manager to determine the size of generator needed to power each public facility and designated shelter areas.
- b. Develop a priority list of facilities that require back-up power and seek Federal and State grant funding for the purchase of generators.
- c. Design and implement a community survey that determines the capacity of local households to cope with power outages and report results to County and local emergency response.
- d. Publicly post emergency preparedness information that directs citizens to County, State and Federal emergency management websites and other educational resources.
- e. Encourage all local fuel companies to have auxiliary power that enables them to supply gasoline, diesel and propane during outages.
- f. Develop a municipal fuel depot with generator set-up to enhance preparedness.
- g. Create/initiate a tornado notification protocol with the National Weather Service, Caribou and local emergency responders for advance warning.

## **POLICY 2**

Enhance Fire Department and community capacity to respond to forest fire.

### **Strategies**

- a. Develop a database on the ownership, location and accessibility of ponds using Maine GIS or other mapping database. Focus areas include Violette Settlement, Belone Hill, South Perley Brook Road and Eagle Lake Road.
- b. Seek cooperative agreements with private pond owners on the use of water for firefighting, installation of dry hydrants and access for pumper/tanker.
- c. Apply for grant monies through FEMA- Assistance to Firefighters and Maine Forest Service for additional equipment and gear required to fight forest fires.



- d. Explore changes in zoning and building standards that better protect structures from forest fires by requiring fire resistant materials, clear areas and other methods.

### **POLICY 3**

Prevent the establishment of new man-made hazards near densely developed areas and research existing hazards and the potential for relocation.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Develop a new industrial park at the location identified in the future land use plan and revise zoning standards for industrial uses.
- b. Use the building permit process to identify potential hazards involving the use and storage of hazardous materials associated with commercial and industrial development.
- c. Amend the Site Design Review section of the local zoning ordinance to include standards related to location, storage and use of hazardous substances and materials for existing and new commercial/industrial uses.
- d. Conduct an annual safety inspection of facilities that contain, store and use hazardous materials/substances.
- e. Convene a working group of first responders, County emergency management experts and hazard owners to clarify the level of risk and preparedness. Report to the Town Manager/Council.
- f. Create a memorandum of understanding or inter-local agreement with Clair, New Brunswick and/or Provincial emergency responders regarding communication and response training and cooperation in the event of hazardous material disaster/fire.
- g. Annually contact MDOT to request a list of hazardous materials being transported by rail and to encourage that railroad sidings be sited outside of town.
- h. Revise municipal lease language to include strict control of hazardous materials.

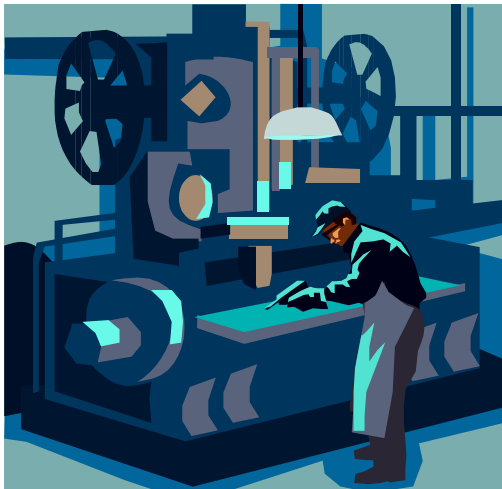
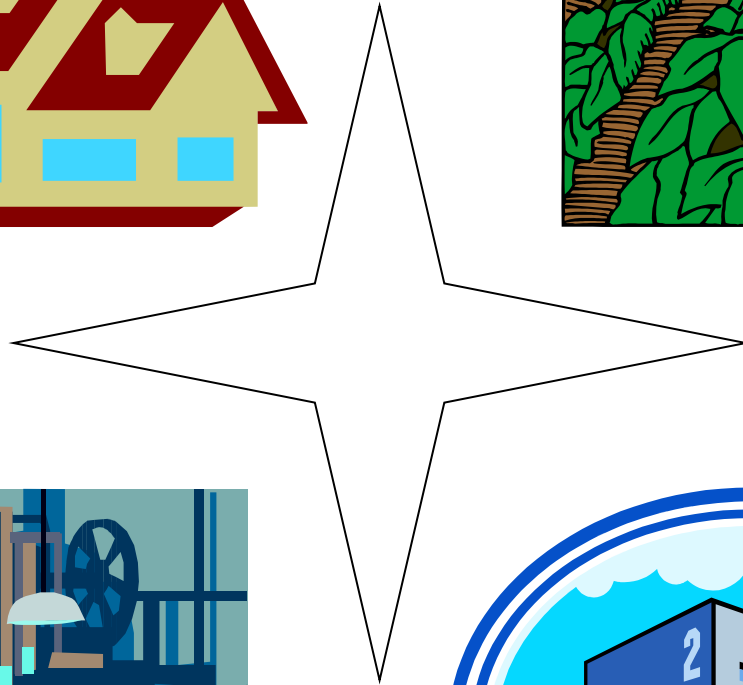
#### **Implementation Partners/Timeline**

FKPD, FKFD, LG, TC, PDO, AKEMA, MEMA, FEMA, DHS, USBP, MDOT, DECD-OCD, USGS, NMDC, LB, MSP, PB, MDEP, USDA-NRCS, SJVSWCD, NWS, PLO, NC

**Prevention/Protection Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short & Mid-term,

**Natural Resources Policy 1** Short-term, **Policy 2** Short-term & w/ 10yr, **All Hazards Policy 1** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Mid-term, **Policy 3** Short & Mid-term, w/ 10yr

# EXISTING LAND USE



## **Draft EXISTING LAND USE Inventory & Analysis** 3/07/12

### **Introduction**

The Land Use section includes an evaluation of where and what type of development has been occurring in the community during the recent past. An analysis of building permit data suggests that most new residential development in the last 6 years has occurred in the Rural Farm Zone. Some of this was associated with an owner providing land to a family member for a home site; a traditional practice in the rural areas. The detail of the growth data is limited because building permits are not filed by year but rather by map/lot number. As a result, it was not possible to look at all forms of development like storage buildings, residential garages and some commercial structures. Trends were established with the help of plumbing permit data. If no plumbing was involved then it was not possible to track other development, but fortunately, any significant project included some plumbing. The data also includes development in new residential subdivisions and on existing and newly created parcels.

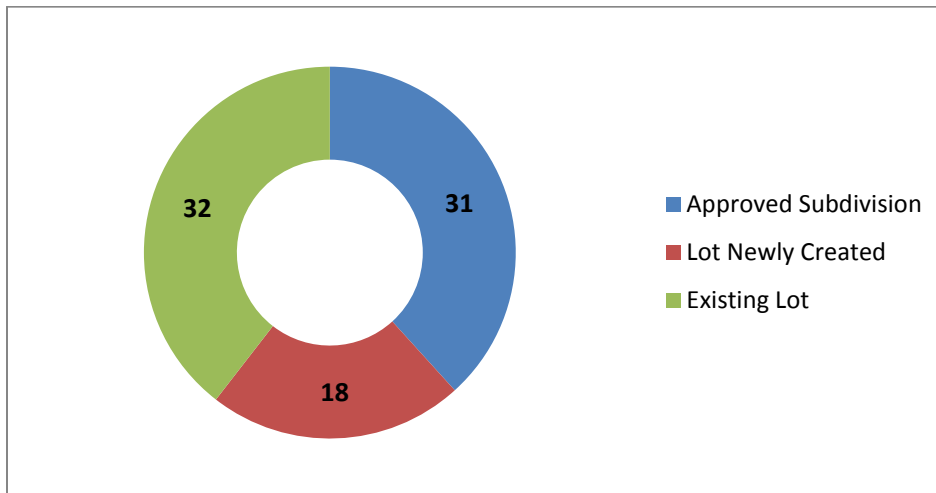
This section also evaluates how existing land use regulations help promote or inhibit development in appropriate areas. Residential growth should occur in a manner that maintains the Town's village-like and neighborhood character. From a safety and efficiency standpoint, it is important that traditional neighborhoods and new residential growth allows kids safe and convenient access to schools and recreation facilities. As energy costs rise it will become increasingly important for regulations to allow options for households to locate closer to employment and services. Residents should have convenient access to employment. Opportunity for residential growth near work places should be created. Regulations that encourage development of mobile home parks in suitable areas can help the Town achieve planned growth. Fort Kent's well defined and established central business district also has potential to grow. Commercial growth potential is also supported by a recently approved, fully serviced, subdivision near the existing industrial park and established neighborhoods. While existing regulations may support commercial growth, non-regulatory measures may also be needed encourage investment in specific parts of town. The Fort Kent Industrial Park is full and a new site or site(s) will support employment and economic growth. The land use section evaluates how much and what type of growth will occur over the next 10 years. The future land use section will address "where" this growth should occur.

Fort Kent has had shoreland and town-wide zoning for nearly 40 years and over time has built and maintained administrative capacity to manage its land use program. The town has an all-volunteer Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals and a part-time Code Enforcement Officer. There is substantial demand on local boards to administer provisions of several ordinances totaling 320 pages. The new Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code will add demand for code enforcement. How this capacity may be maintained and improved is discussed below.

## Analysis/Key Issues

The following diagram illustrates how new residential development has occurred from 2006-2011. Residential development is occurring on lots in approved subdivisions about as often as on existing lots. New single lots created from existing lots are created at about half the rate. This often happens when an owner deeds a lot to a family member. This is a traditional practice in Fort Kent and in many rural communities where family members like to locate near one another. Most residential development is occurring in the Rural Farm Zone. This is discussed in more detail below.

## Residential Growth



Source: Fort Kent Planning and Development Office

Fort Kent's downtown is protected by a flood control levee. Long term planning will address this vulnerability and issues related to this are discussed in the Hazard Mitigation section. The data suggest that most new commercial investment is occurring on existing lots in commercial zones and some in the rural farm zone. Substantial commercial investment has occurred in the central business district of West and East Main Street and much of it recently in the Market Street commercial zone. Continued development of Market Street is addressed further in the Future Land Use section.

The present 12.6 acre industrial park is full to capacity and is located within the well-head protection zone of the municipal water supply. Under current zoning, the only opportunity for new industrial growth would be in the rural farm zone. The Planning Board evaluated 12 potential sites for future industrial growth and ultimately selected two sites to designate as potential future industrial sites. Access to active railway, 3-phase power and highways were key criteria considered by the Board. Proposed sites are discussed under future land use. Recent development in Fort Kent is consistent with what has occurred in the past and is generally acceptable as the community's vision of continued growth.

Fort Kent is a rural town with a very well defined urban area comprised of traditional neighborhoods located near the schools, health care, retail businesses and places of worship. The University of Maine at Fort Kent contributes to a special sense of place as a “college” town and cultural center. The urban area is a service center for 8 surrounding communities including 2 in New Brunswick. The rural character of Fort Kent is defined by its rolling countryside with active farmland and forested hillsides dotted with homes. There are approximately 15 active farms and a dozen or more logging companies established in Fort Kent. The back settlements or “concessions”, in French, once thrived with small subsistence farms and small school houses. After 3 decades of abandonment ending in the mid-1970’s many of these areas of town have been resettled and contribute to its rural character. Other back settlements and rural collector roads have been more densely developed for residential use. Abundant open space, scenic vistas and exceptional recreational opportunities further define Fort Kent’s special rural character. Recreational opportunities are fully integrated into the community setting and local lifestyles. Recreational access is everywhere and opportunities are diverse.

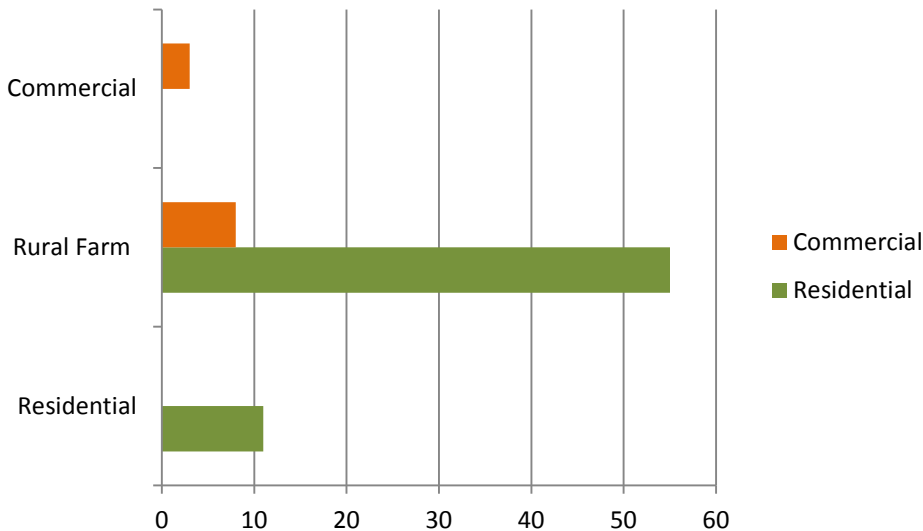
Development during the period 2006-2011 has occurred within and adjacent to the more densely developed urban area and has expanded into the rural areas. Some of the rural expansion has been in a build out progression within a mile and a half of the downtown along arterial routes. Most has occurred on former agricultural land as this tends to be the least expensive to develop. There has been only one residential subdivision located in a more distant rural farm area located 3.2 miles from the village center. Demand for the minimum 1 acre lots was substantial and many were sold and developed within a 2-3 year period. This may have been because of the lack of options in the community. This “concession” has also been the focus of much resettlement that has occurred on existing and newly created lots over the past two decades. The town is fully obligated to provide basic services to this area. However, it may be challenged to afford the cost of public water and sewer at any time in the future should it become necessary.

The development of mobile home parks in environmentally suitable areas is encouraged under the existing regulations. Mobile Home Parks are permitted in all residential and rural farm zones within 1,500 feet of the public sewer system. These areas are part of the present and future designated growth areas. Hook-up to the municipal sewer system is required. If hook-up to the public sewer system is not feasible, the Planning Board may allow individual or centralized subsurface wastewater disposal systems to be used. Minimum lot area, frontage, building setback, road design and administrative requirements are in place for mobile home parks.

As the graph below indicates, single-family residential growth in rural farm zones is out pacing residential zones by five to one. The graph does not include data on multi-family homes. Since 2002 there have been 84 multi-family units built including assisted living, senior and family

apartments and condominiums. All of this development has occurred in residential zones near the town center. New commercial growth in the rural farm zone has been less than three to one compared to the commercial zone. Commercial growth in rural areas has been related to natural resource uses like logging and recreation. Development in the commercial zones has been service-related businesses. This trend should continue.

### Residential/Commercial Development Trends by Permits and Zone



Source: Fort Kent Planning and Development Office

Existing Land Use Regulations both support and inhibit development in appropriate areas. Fort Kent presently has 320 pages of land use regulations encompassed in seven ordinances. Presently, there are no non-regulatory measures in place to direct growth to specific areas of the community. Shoreland, floodplain management and subdivision ordinances are all based on minimum standards established in State law. The Subdivision Ordinance also includes non-compulsory design standards. Given the relatively slow pace of development, these ordinances contain all of the provisions necessary to protect natural resources and property uses. The local sentiment is that the ordinances have worked sufficiently.

The Town Zoning Ordinance identifies four basic zoning districts with a stated purpose. These include Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Rural Farm. In a minimal way these zoning districts help to direct certain types of growth to specific areas of the community. Each district has a stated purpose that helps clarify the types of activities that should be occurring. Zoning standards related to lot sizes, building setbacks, parking and mobile home parks certainly support residential growth in residential districts. In the Rural Farm District the minimum lot size and frontage requirements allow for relatively high density development to occur along rural roads. This is potentially a problem especially along arterial routes. The lot size, setback and frontage standards for Commercial and Industrial Districts appropriately direct this type of development to these zones.

The Zoning and other ordinances are based on models that are widely used in Maine and that have been modified for community size, local attitudes and administrative capacity. The Zoning Ordinance includes a Site Design Review process and review criteria. The ordinance allows the Planning Board to waive the required review criteria that it believes is not applicable to the proposal or that is unnecessary to carry out the intent of the ordinance. It would be helpful and appropriate for all of Fort Kent's land use ordinances to be reviewed by the Maine Municipal Association-Legal Services to ensure the language is legally sound. Annually, the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer should review how the ordinances have worked and determine if any amendments would improve clarity and administrative function. The Planning Board has been working on improving the definitions used in the ordinances.

Under current zoning the Rural Farm District is the most permissive zone, i.e. all potential uses are allowed in this district. However, directing development to the Rural Farm District or rezoning land to Rural Farm based solely on zoning permissiveness is inappropriate and should be avoided. The intended use of the land must be consistent with the purpose of the district as stated in the Zoning Ordinance. Both the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances include design standards that are presently optional or routinely waived. These include standards for cluster development and site design review. The Town should review these standards and consider making some of them compulsory in the interest of maintaining rural character and natural resources.

Fort Kent's Road Construction and Design Ordinance include uniform standards for all uses, traffic levels and road lengths. These standards tend to inhibit development that is in keeping with the Town's village and close neighborhood character. The quality of construction should not be compromised however, dimensional standards like paved surface width, shoulder width and maximum grade may not be necessary or appropriate for all residential neighborhoods. Because much of the vacant land area near the village center is on hillsides, these standards direct development to flatter areas along arterial routes, rural areas and farmland. The Planning Board should consider reviewing information sources on residential street designs and determine if flexibility with some requirements might help direct more growth closer to the village center.

During the 10 year planning period through year 2021, using existing trends and under the present regulatory framework, most growth in Fort Kent will occur in the Rural Farm areas within 3-4 miles of the center of town. Of the estimated 140 single family residences that will be built, only 28 will be built within existing residential zones. Commercial growth, from 100 buildings/permits, will continue to occur in both the existing Commercial Zone and in Rural Farm Zones. Continued investment in the Market Street district is expected and should be encouraged. Industrial development may occur in the Rural Farm Zone and in one of the new potential future industrial sites identified in the future land use plan. Institutional development

will most likely occur within existing residential zones near the schools, the university, hospital and existing State facilities and may include up to 30 new buildings.

Fort Kent has some capacity to administer its land use regulation program. On average, the Town reviews and issues 138 permits per year in all categories. The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) is available 8 hours per week. The CEO has extensive expertise in the construction trades and multiple certifications related to code enforcement. The new Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code will increase the demand on local code enforcement. Additional hours and funding should be made available to meet this increased demand. The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals are unpaid, appointed members. Each Board has specific authority to review certain land uses. All parties, including code enforcement, typically take a very liberal and permissive approach to permit reviews. The purpose and intent of the land use ordinances should be understood and always upheld. Land use permit decisions tend to be made in favor of the applicant. The permitting authority should give greater weight to the broader public interest and potential impacts on abutting property owners and public facilities and services. The Board of Appeals is called upon several times a year to issue permits or review decisions. The Board has rarely denied an appeal or variance request. Administrative capacity could be enhanced by more training. The Code Enforcement Officer and Boards would benefit from training in proper legal administrative procedures for land use ordinances and the limits to their interpretive and other authority. Training is available through the Maine Municipal Association and the Northern Maine Development Commission.

**Conditions and Trends**

Most conditions and trends were identified above in the land use analysis and key issues narrative. The existing land use map at the end of this section depicts key areas where specific types of land uses are in place. The map identifies residential, commercial, mixed-use, institutional and industrial uses. Areas of public land, municipal parks and recreation, active agriculture and forests are identified. The location of lots created within the past ten years is also identified. The table below summarizes the Town’s current lot dimensional standards which affect the amount of land needed to accommodate development through 2021.

**Lot Dimensional Standards**

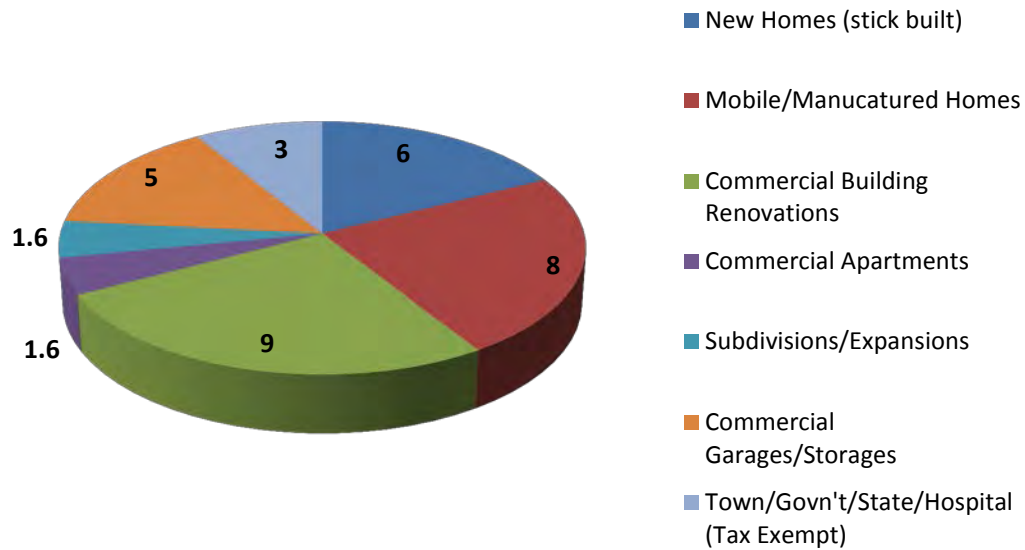
	<b>Area (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Width (ft.)</b>
Rural Farm Lots	40,000	150
Residential with Public Sewer	10,000	100
Residential with Private Sewer	20,000	100
Mobile Home Park with Public Sewer	6,500	50
Mobile Home Park with Individual Private	20,000	100
Mobile Home Park with Centralized Sewer	12,000	75
Commercial	No Minimum	30
Industrial	No Minimum	50

Source: Fort Kent Zoning Ordinance



The estimated land area required to accommodate development for the next ten years is based on the current dimensional standards for lots and the trends in land use permit activity. The average annual permit activity by selected categories is described in the diagram below. Residential growth will require 124–138 acres. New commercial development including the reuse of existing lots will require 46 acres. Institutional development will use approximately 14 acres. The potential future industrial site will encompass about 20 acres. In total, about 220 acres will be needed in Fort Kent to accommodate new development through year 2021.

### Average Annual Permits for Selected Activities

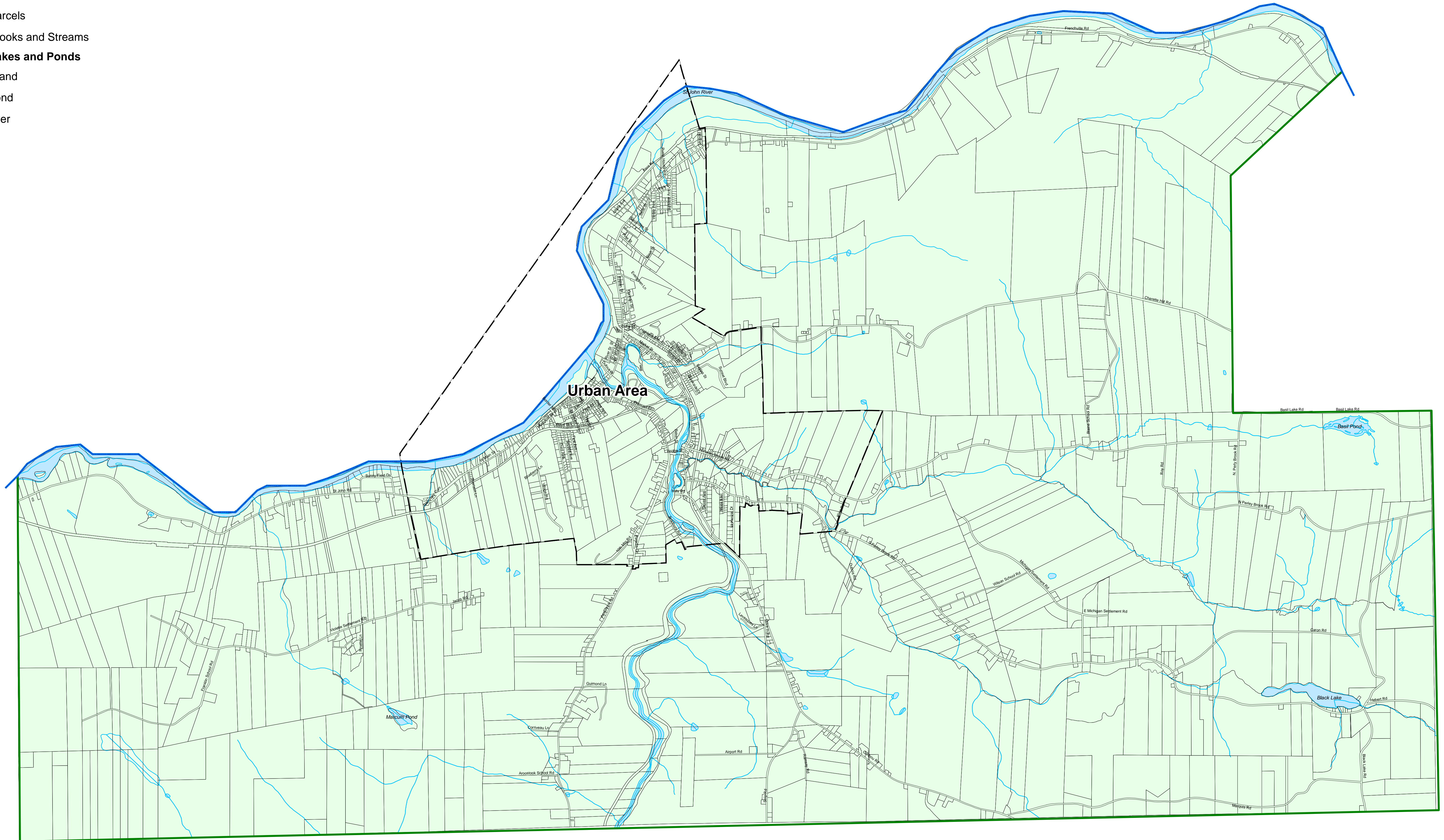


Source: Fort Kent Planning and Development Office

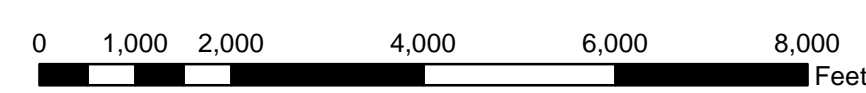


**Legend**

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Parcels
- Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
- island
- pond
- river



1 inch = 2,000 feet



Town of Fort Kent, Maine  
Comprehensive Plan  
Parcels Base Map



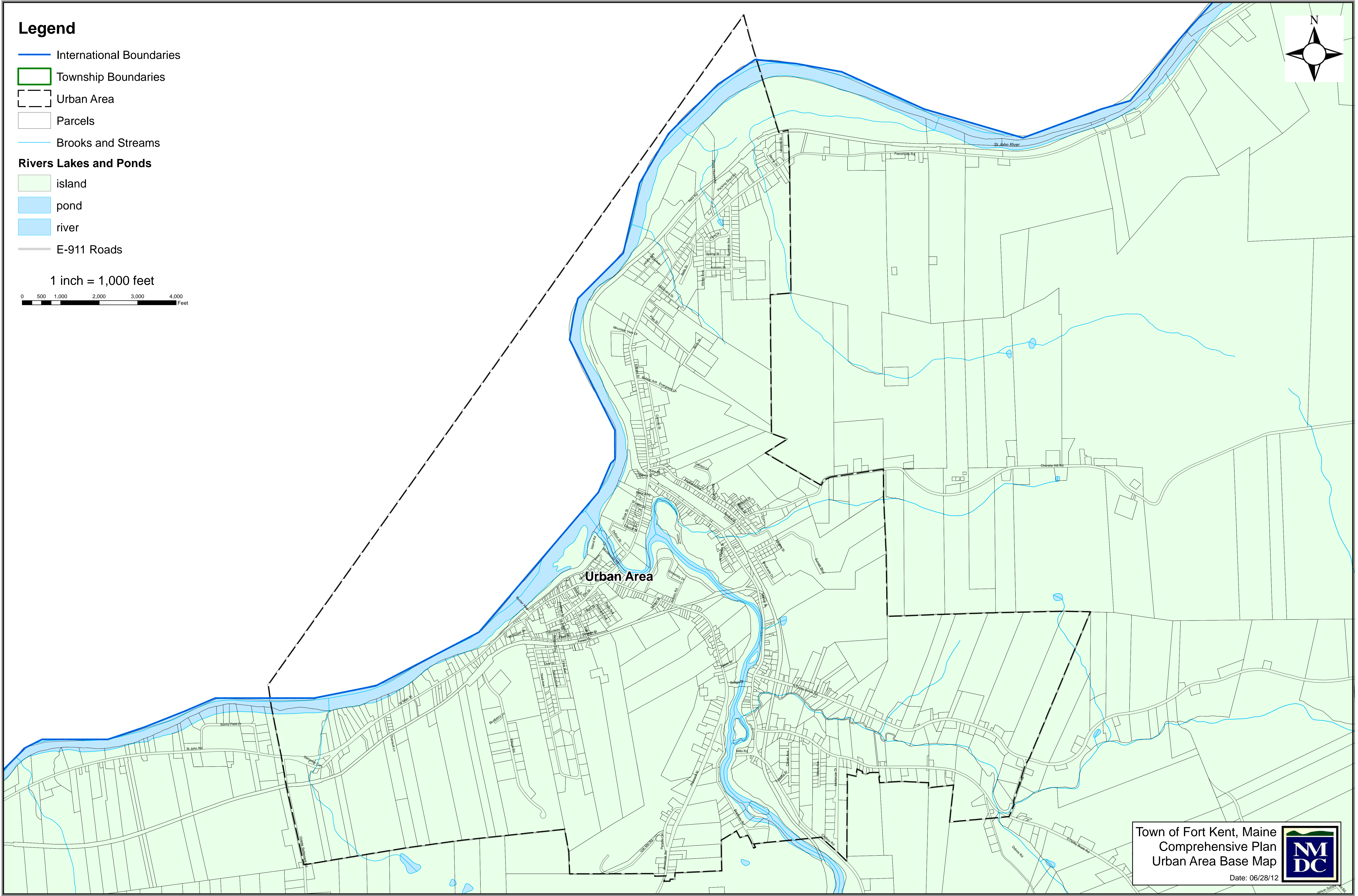
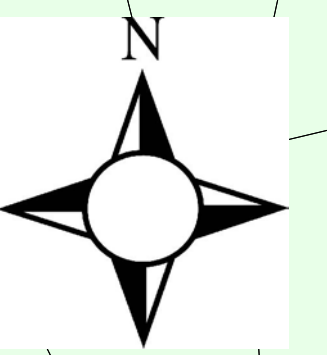
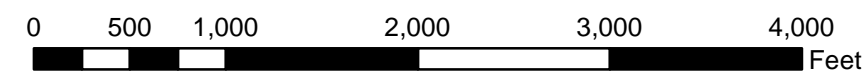
Date: 06/28/12



# Legend

- International Boundaries
- ▭ Township Boundaries
- - - Urban Area
- ▭ Parcels
- Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
- ▭ island
- ▭ pond
- ▭ river
- E-911 Roads

1 inch = 1,000 feet





**Legend**

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Parcels
- Brooks and Streams

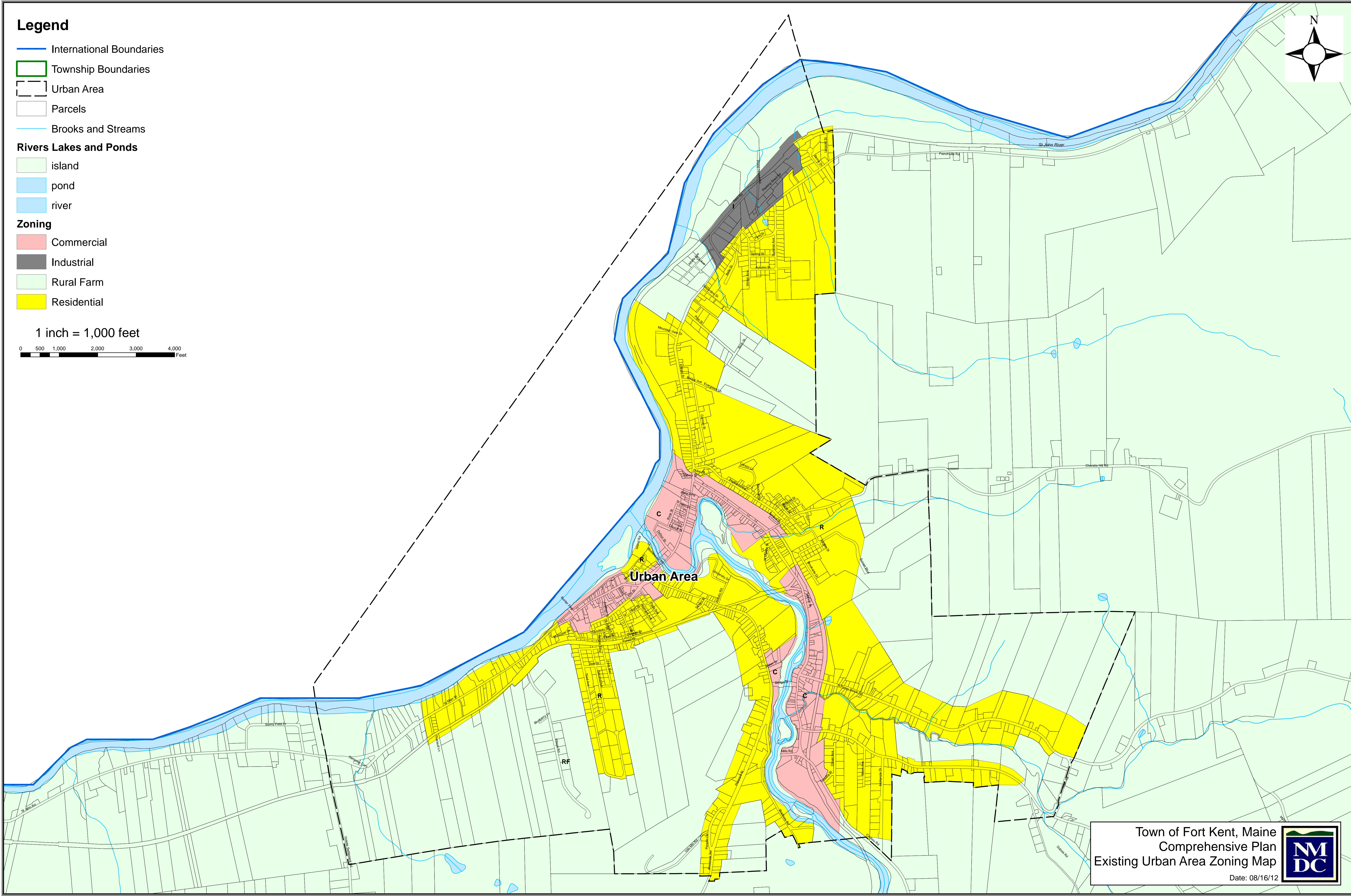
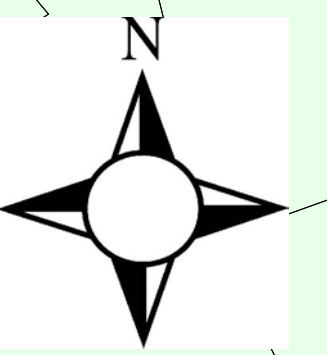
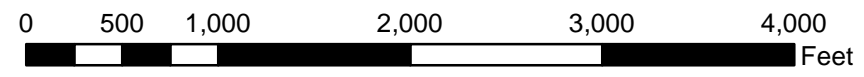
**Rivers Lakes and Ponds**

- island
- pond
- river

**Zoning**

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Rural Farm
- Residential

1 inch = 1,000 feet



# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN





## **Introduction**

The future land use plan is the most important section of the comprehensive plan. It pulls together many of the other section's policies and strategies into a representation that helps direct private development and public investment over the next 10 years. Based on the analysis of land use issues, the plan for the future includes three areas of focus; where most residential growth should occur, commercial growth outside of the floodplain and potential future industrial sites. The Policies and Strategies section helps identify how to direct development to areas where public services and facilities can be efficiently and cost effectively provided. New development should also occur in ways that help conserve energy, natural resources and that maintains quality of life. Fort Kent has commercial growth potential in existing commercial zones outside of the floodplain. In addition, a recently approved, fully serviced, commercial subdivision near established residential neighborhoods and the existing industrial park creates an entirely new opportunity to support commercial growth. The Fort Kent Industrial Park is full and a new site will support employment and economic growth. The Planning Board evaluated 9 potential sites for future industrial growth and ultimately selected two sites to designate as potential future industrial sites. Access to active railway, 3-phase power and highways were key criteria considered by the Board. Proposed sites are discussed.

The Future Land Use Plan should also try to direct development away from natural resources that serve a broad public benefit, i.e. food and fiber production, flood mitigation, rare plant and animal habitats, water resources, etc. However, the plan must also acknowledge that traditional land uses and development patterns like downtown areas and back settlements (concessions) are a valuable part of the community's character. The owners of natural resource based land uses must be allowed other options when the profitability and viability of existing land uses are exhausted. Local regulation and economic development programs can include methods that create incentives for new development in areas where no harm will come to natural resources and help reach the goals of job creation and population growth.

**Analysis and Key Issues:** Fort Kent's vision as a desirable place to live with diverse job opportunities, a gradually growing population and a quality of life based on convenience, safety, affordability, recreation and scenic beauty is in harmony with its future land use plan. Specifically, the plan identifies areas for new commercial and industrial investment that will support employment and economic growth. Public services are available nearby and the potential labor force has housing opportunities within a convenient distance. A compact historic district that includes a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and other candidate sites is a key element of one commercial growth area. Another issue is that ample land area available in existing residential zones has gone undeveloped while land adjacent to or distant from these zones has been developed. Some conflicts have arisen when properties are divided by zoning boundaries. A reconfiguration of the residential zones based on current

primary use may alleviate this and bring better protection to other adjacent residential land uses. The focus areas for residential growth are located near public services and facilities, schools, health care, businesses and recreational facilities and trails. The future land use plan proposes an urban area greenbelt or linear park that links several existing parks and trail segments. The greenbelt is adjacent to traditional residential neighborhoods, schools and businesses and will help support quality of life. The two sites selected as potential future industrial sites support the community's vision of having diverse job opportunity and a labor force that can live in close proximity to employment. The overall plan is well balanced with the vision of Fort Kent's future.

The future land use plan does not conflict in any way with the community's vision when it also identifies the existing urban area and only a small area west of the urban area as overall growth area. All of the growth area is close to public services. While land use trends show substantial growth in the rural farm zone, rising energy costs will make it more expensive to live further from services and should help slow this change. There is a basis, however, for this rural growth trend that reflects local attitudes and interests and traditional development patterns. Three key factors were identified in the trend toward residential development in rural farm areas. First is the influence of the traditional back settlement or "concession". In Fort Kent, the back settlements are a part of its agrarian history. Many local families have roots in the back settlements and many people, especially family members, are inclined to live there. The second is the influence of the Heritage Trail (HT), i.e. the former railway that was established as a major multi-use trail. Outdoor recreation is an integral part of local lifestyles and people want to live near the trail. The HT creates an extensive access opportunity. The third influence is a regulatory standard for road construction that limits grade to 10%. As stated in the land use section, because much of the vacant land area near the village center is on hillsides, this standard tends to direct development to the limited flatter areas along arterial routes, rural areas and farmland. As a result, the plan includes strategies that address the rate of development in rural areas but do not prevent the Town from designating new growth areas.

The configuration of the overall growth area includes areas of natural opportunities, like gradual slope and minimal natural constraints like floodplains and wetlands. Existing land use ordinances already restrict development in areas like floodplains, shoreland and wetlands. The Future Land Use Plan supports the more positive trends in growth that have occurred over the past ten years by creating "focus growth areas". The focus growth areas include locations with only minimal natural constraints to development and are either serviced by or close to existing public facilities and services. As an example, residential focus areas are not located directly on arterial transportation routes. This is consistent with the regional transportation plan and sensible transportation goals. The nearby Rural Farm Zones that are targeted for growth include areas adjacent to the Heritage Trail that are part of the build-out trend that has been occurring. These areas are also proposed for rezoning to Residential Zone. The commercial

growth area includes an existing commercial zone where substantial private commercial investment has recently occurred. Over the 10 year planning period, the town expects demand for commercial land will replace some residential uses in this zone. Residential growth areas include three approved residential subdivisions with vacant lots and abutting land, land adjacent to assisted living and senior housing and other locations in close proximity to public services, schools and businesses. The two sites identified for potential future industrial growth meet the approval of the current property owners. The proposed sites are adjacent to US Rt. 1 south and Market Street and comprise a minimum of 20 acres each. Both sites are near public services and would require rezoning for industrial use. Aquifers could not be completely avoided in the selection process. The town would prefer that these sites be privately developed and marketed for industrial use. Growth areas are identified on the Future Land Use Map.

Fort Kent's future land use plan compliments several regional/state plans including the Biennial Transportation Investment Plan, Maine's Five-Year Consolidated Plan for Housing, Aroostook County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Northern Maine Tourism Action Plan and the Maine's Game Plan for Deer. The transportation system is not affected by future land use plans. The town's residential growth areas are off of arterial routes and the commercial and industrial growth areas are along arterial routes within the urban area where traffic already slows. None of the growth areas affect the Rt. 161 corridor that will serve access to the proposed I-95 extension. Bicycle and pedestrian use is encouraged. Residential growth areas will also support housing affordability by allowing a variety of housing types at higher densities near the village center and served by public water and sewer. The plan supports tourism growth and economic diversification by encouraging trail access from within the commercial districts and extensive recreational use in the rural farm areas. The plan also envisions the primary uses of farming and forest production in rural farm areas and residential uses at lower density. The Natural Resource strategies include monitoring of development activities that affect habitat connectors and riparian areas. These provisions support wildlife conservation and traditional recreational uses.

The future land use plan speaks directly to the recent trends identified in the Land Use section. The overall growth area and focus growth areas include the parts of town where most development has occurred within the past several years. This can be characterized as a build-out from the village center as most existing lots have already been developed. The rural farm zone areas closest to the town center and adjacent to residential zones have received most of the residential growth. The Heritage Trail has influenced and will continue to influence residential growth in the rural areas west of town. The closest rural farm areas and existing approved subdivisions are suggested as residential focus growth areas to reflect recent trends. The Market Street commercial focus growth area was designated to support the existing trend in commercial investment and the opportunity for continued development in this commercial zone. The areas designated as potential future industrial sites relate to the occupancy trend



that filled the existing site and the renewed investment in the rail road system that will help support natural resource based industries and job creation. The future land use plan is a response to these important trends.

Most municipal capital investments during the last planning period were made in designated growth areas. These areas were the existing commercial and residential zones. Many investments were infrastructure projects like storm water/sewer separation, waterline upgrades and street and sidewalk reconstruction. Investments in public facilities included a new sewage treatment plant, public works garage, fire station, parks and trails. While these types of investments serve the entire population, they were primarily located within the urban area. By necessity, the town secured two road improvement bonds (2002 and 2006). Some of these capital investments were for rural roads outside of growth areas. Some of the funding came from State and Federal grant sources. These types of infrastructure investments should continue in Fort Kent.

Capital investments as recently as 2009-10 have been made in one of the new residential focus growth areas along the Village Road. This was the result of the 2008 flooding that required the relocation of 20 senior housing units outside of the floodplain. These investments in public water and sewer were very sound given the location adjacent to established residential neighborhoods. Though the investments were more reactive than proactive, they have helped to create opportunity for new residential development in an appropriate area. This is one of the best examples of “good” development in Fort Kent. Again, State and Federal grant sources contributed to the project.

Similar to the last planning period the need for continued capital investments is not driven by population growth. The rate of population loss is declining and there is hope that the community will stabilize and reverse the trend. The types of projects identified in the current Capital Investment Plan are specifically intended to maintain existing facilities, services and infrastructure and ultimately the quality of life in the community. These public investments help encourage continued private investments by maintaining the community as a desirable place to live. As indicated in the Fiscal Capacity section, growth in net valuation from private investment is trending upward. New tax base is being added every year and this private investment is a cornerstone of Fort Kent’s fiscal strength. Fort Kent can continue to make planned capital investments in these areas as long as trends in private investment and a declining rate of population loss continue.

The future of capital investments directed toward areas designated for growth is dependent on improving economic conditions. The present, cyclical, economic downturn is having a great influence on local attitudes regarding government spending. This was reflected in the 2012 budget process that resulted in lower department budgets and a reduction in services for the

first time. This follows several years of relatively flat funding for all departments. The rising costs to operate and maintain facilities and services will constrain the funds available for capital investments in the immediate future. However, Fort Kent clearly has fiscal strength and the capacity to invest if it so chooses. The community is at a crossroad. Fewer services and deteriorating facilities and infrastructure could make Fort Kent a less desirable place to live and may stifle private investment. The community's vision and a recurring theme of this plan speak to job creation and population growth. This is covered in the Local Economy section. The Town cannot fulfill its vision without public capital investment and the private investment it stimulates.

The Town's effort to create new development in designated growth areas gives strong consideration to the presence of critical natural resources that provide a broad public benefit. Critical natural resources are defined as those having local and statewide importance. They include floodplains, aquifers, certain wetlands, rare plant and animal habitats and riparian areas or shoreland. These areas contribute to Fort Kent's character and quality of life and the town has many regulations in place designed to protect them. The town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance meets the current minimum requirements of Title-38, sections 435-449 and was amended March 23, 2010. The town-wide Zoning Ordinance, last amended January 24, 2011, includes an aquifer overlay district with buffer requirements and use restrictions for handling of hazardous chemicals. The Zoning Ordinance specifies site design review criteria and standards for natural areas, storm water management, erosion and sedimentation control and phosphorus export. Except for potential future industrial sites discussed below, the focus growth areas are away from critical natural resources. Enforcement of existing regulations will help protect these resources. The careful monitoring and reporting of development activities in or near identified resources will help determine if more regulations are needed. The Natural and Water Resources and Agriculture and Forest Resources sections identify policies and strategies the town will implement to prevent damage to these areas from future development throughout the Town.

**Plan Components:** The Future Land Use Map at the end of this section depicts the overall growth area and the respective focus areas for residential, commercial and industrial growth. It also shows the smaller subdistricts for historic preservation and the urban green belt and the large rural farm area. Critical Resources are shown on a separate map(s) for Natural and Water Resources.

The Land Use Areas include Residential, Commercial, Industrial and their respective focus growth areas and Rural Farm.

Rural Farm Areas: This is the largest area of the community where the principle use of the land is for agriculture, forestry, rural type residences and customary associated uses. The community's vision includes these uses and further suggests that outdoor recreation is also

dependant on the rural farm areas. The vision also suggests that the residential uses have a purposeful connection to the primary natural resource based uses. An example might be a home built on a lot created from a larger family owned parcel where the owner works on a farm or operates in the logging industry.

Most of the shoreland zones and associated water resources, large blocks of wildlife habitat and recreational trails are located in the rural farm areas. The shoreland areas are more specifically defined under Fort Kent's shoreland zoning ordinance, last amended March 23, 2010, and include Resource Protection, Limited Residential, Limited Commercial, General Development I & II and Stream Protection. The Official Shoreland Zoning Map describes the location of these areas.

The rural farm areas have more natural opportunity for their intended land use than they do constraints. The natural opportunities consist primarily of soils and topography. Most of the soil types are classified as either prime agricultural or forestland soils. The land with the most suitable slopes is farmed and the remaining land is grassland (idle) or forested. Access to water for farmland irrigation, which is done on a limited basis, comes primarily from man-made ponds. The only constraint to agriculture in these areas is slope, floodplains and wetlands. The extensive, privately owned, natural resource base in the rural farm areas are well suited to the traditional forms of outdoor recreation. Issues related to recreation on private lands are covered under the sections on agriculture and forestry and recreation. Most rural residential development is adjacent to existing collectors and local roads. Soil types are suitable for private subsurface sewage disposal and ground water is available for private wells. Water quality of private wells is not known. The land uses in Rural Farm areas are occurring within the limits of natural opportunity and constraint.

The transportation network in the rural farm areas is comprised of public collector and local roads and extensive private farm roads. Some local roads connect directly to State maintained arterial routes while others are cross-over roads to other collector or local roads. All collector roads are paved for a distance and some may end with gravel segments. Local roads are primarily gravel surfaced though some are paved. There are 25.15 miles of gravel roads. Sections of many local roads are closed to winter maintenance. These sections total 9.69 miles. The Heritage Trail, closed local roads and private farm roads create miles of access for recreation. See the Transportation and Recreation sections.

The types and intensity of agriculture, forestry, and customary related uses is not expected to change dramatically during the planning period. However, the community will direct some effort to the creation of natural resource based jobs and public awareness of the economic contributions of agriculture and forestry. (See Local Economy section) This may lead to growth similar in type to what has been occurring, i.e. agricultural buildings, private garages for

commercial trucks. As stated in the Land Use section, residential growth in the rural farm areas has out-paced the residential zones. There presently is no range of lot sizes or density recommended for rural type residences. The minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet or just less than 1 acre.

The layout of zoning districts in Fort Kent is such that where residential areas end rural farm areas start. This means that portions of rural farm areas are presently served with public facilities and services. In other areas of town, public facilities and services are adjacent to or within a few hundred feet of rural farm areas. Distances then range from a few hundred feet to several miles. Expectedly, residential development has been building out to the closer rural farm areas. In fact, the closest area accessed by the Village Road was recently served with public water and sewer and is proposed as a residential focus growth area and should be zoned residential. There are no plans to serve other rural farm areas with public water and sewer. However, the potential for expanded public services does exist if local roads in residential zones are extended to rural farm areas.

The compatibility of uses in the rural farm areas was discussed during the process of developing Agriculture and Forestry Policies and Strategies. A few issues between natural resource users and residential users were identified and they are covered in the respective sections of the plan including Recreation and Natural Resources. As discussed in the Land Use section, Rural Farm is the most permissive zone and conflict among users appears to be minor. Examples of issues include mud in the road during potato harvest or logging, damage to agricultural land from "mud bogging" and trail users not staying on trails. The zoning ordinance includes site design review criteria and standards that address special development considerations. Standards exist for open space, buffering, identification of natural areas, scenic areas and vistas and design relationship to surrounding properties. The Town should consider whether the existing minimum lot size for residential uses is adequate to uphold the purpose of Rural Farm or if other methods would be helpful.

The most important municipal capital investments planned for rural farm areas include road repairs and upgrades. These improvements support existing and continued uses in rural areas of town. Town debt for two road improvement bonds will be retired during the planning period. When economic conditions improve, the Town may wish to use its borrowing capacity to continue improving rural roads for the benefit of the natural resource based uses and in support of their contributions to the local economy.

Residential Areas: These are the areas where the principle use of the land is for a variety of housing opportunity in attractive neighborhoods near public services and facilities, schools, health care, businesses and recreational facilities and trails. Mobile home parks may be developed in this zone, but individual mobile homes are not permitted. The 4-5 residential

focus growth areas speak directly to the community's vision of diverse housing opportunities located near facilities and services and recreational access. Each of the focus areas is within one quarter mile to 1.5 miles of the village center in Rural Farm Zones adjacent to existing Residential Zones. Three of the five areas have existing residential development. Existing housing in these areas include single family, assisted living and senior apartments and all housing types may be developed. Four are either serviced by or are within 500 feet of public water and sewer. There are no specific planned investments proposed for the focus growth areas that are not presently served. All of the proposed water and wastewater extensions and upgrades are in existing residential areas. Details for the water system are available in the June 2010 Water System Master Plan prepared by Wright-Pierce. Two focus areas have direct access to the Heritage Trail that provides alternative access to schools and businesses. All designated areas are appropriate for encouraging residential growth.

Development constraints and transportation issues are nearly absent from the areas selected for residential growth. The natural opportunities for residential development include favorable soils and topography and the absence of floodplains, wetlands and with one exception rare plant habitat. From Dempsey Curve to the west side of the Sunnyfield Drive subdivision is a residential focus growth area that includes the St. John River Ecological Focus Area. This Maine Natural Areas Program designation is for areas of statewide ecological significance. Future growth in this area should include measures that protect the unique natural values of this location. This is why attention is given here. All residential focus areas either are or can be served by local streets that connect to arterials. Their development will not contribute to transportation efficiency issues along arterial routes. Local road construction standards ensure the quality and safety of new streets. Growth area locations near the village center and the Heritage Trail also helps to encourage alternative modes like walking and biking. The areas selected for residential growth are well suited for this use.

The types of land uses allowed in Fort Kent's residential areas are outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 4 and are designed to appropriately support the primary residential uses. These include schools, library, churches, parks, day care, convenience stores and other uses. The minimum lot sizes and parking requirements are also appropriate for residential neighborhoods served by public water and sewer. One unit per 10,000 square feet with public services or 20,000 square feet without is allowed. These densities have been working well in residential areas for many years.

The proposed uses in all of the focus growth areas are compatible with the current uses in and around the areas. Site 4 is already an approved residential subdivision abutting an established neighborhood. Site 3 is open field that is no longer farmed. This site has abutting residential uses and is 1000 feet from the wastewater treatment facility. This may create a special development consideration. The Town should continue to maintain an existing forested buffer

that helps diffuse odor during the seasonal turnover of the lagoons. The odor duration is short and prevailing winds generally carry any odor away from residential uses. This was the only potential issue for any of the focus areas.

The proposed urban area greenbelt or linear park is identified here as a residential “sub-district’ though it is part of both residential and commercial zones. The project will assemble the final links between several existing parks and trail segments. The use will be primarily pedestrian and bicycle with seasonal snowmobile use. The greenbelt is adjacent to traditional neighborhoods, schools and businesses. It passes along both shores of the Fish River and has some outstanding natural features. The project will contribute to quality of life and the community’s vision when completed.

Commercial Areas: These are the areas in which the principle use of land is for business and commercial establishments to which the public requires frequent and convenient access. It is intended to provide a concentration of commercial development to the mutual benefit of the public and business owners. Fort Kent’s downtown is similar to many other towns in Maine in that it was developed along a major river or rivers and within the floodplain. The rivers represent the historic and cultural link to early commerce. A flood control levee was built in 1984 to provide a reasonable level of protection to Main Street. Fort Kent’s traditional Main Street is imbedded in the community’s character. The downtown, which includes West and East Main Streets, is a vital part of its vision as a prosperous service center, destination and a place with convenient access to services. Its location within the floodplain and the annual potential for disaster has long been the subject of discussion. The flood potential of this area is the most significant factor in the directing future growth.

The 2008 flood which inundated East Main Street and threatened West Main Street brought focus to the vulnerability of Fort Kent’s downtown and the overall functioning of community. The Federal Emergency Management Agency did an extensive study of the event which is covered in their report “Living Behind the Levee”, January, 2010. The future land use plan acknowledges this report in two key areas. First by supporting a logical redevelopment option that directs future commercial growth outside the floodplain. The Market Street and K&S Commercial Focus Growth Areas are discussed separately from other established commercial areas. Second, by starting with simple measures that invest in protecting the traditional downtown and in the growth of the Market Street commercial zone the future land use plan meets a key recommendation of the FEMA report. This “proactive pathway forward” is vitally important to the town’s long-term disaster recovery should the levee fail. It will allow Fort Kent to continue to function as a community when the inevitable occurs. (See Hazard Mitigation and Public Facilities/Services Sections)

The Town's existing commercial areas have been in place since zoning was introduced and have undergone numerous transitions and significant investment. They are all considered as areas for future growth. With the exception of Pleasant and Market Streets, the single greatest natural constraint is the floodplains of the St. John and Fish Rivers. All other natural features in these commercial zones make the areas conducive to continued development. In fact, the many natural features, including the floodplains have created the opportunity for the parks, trails and scenic vistas that amend the commercial areas. These features have helped make Fort Kent's downtown a desirable place to work and do business. During the current planning period through 2021 the Town will maintain its traditional downtown while encouraging a long-term transition.

The transportation network in the commercial areas is well established and is discussed extensively in the Transportation section of the plan. The entire length of West and East Main Streets was resurfaced in 2012 and storm drainage was improved in 2011. There is considerable through traffic along Main Street. Traffic flow issues through the central business district were identified for Pleasant St., West Main St. and Market St. at Station Hill during winter storms. The Heritage Trail and Levee Trail also provide alternative access to the downtown area. Better traffic flow, increased off-street parking and safer bicycle access is needed. The transportation policies and strategies are designed to address these issues during the next planning period.

Existing commercial areas are fully serviced by public water and sewer and all other services and facilities are conveniently available. Water mains were upgraded on West Main St. in 2010 providing the best rated available fire flow in the community. Water mains need to be upgraded in other parts of the commercial areas to improve water flow for fire protection. Parking facilities that serve commercial areas need to be expanded and upgraded. The Public Facilities/Services and Capital Investment sections discuss the future improvements needed in these areas.

The types and intensity of uses allowed in commercial areas is detailed in Fort Kent's Zoning Ordinance. The areas are very much comprised of mixed-use activities. Uses that would create visual, noise or odor issues are not allowed. The only residential uses allowed are multi-family structures and second floor apartments above commercial uses. Though heavy industrial uses are also prohibited, the presence of an active railway siding adjacent to Market Street creates a unique, natural resource based, commercial identity in this area. An intensive level of use is allowed in these commercial areas. There is no minimum lot size or lot coverage requirement for commercial uses. Off-street parking requirements are based on the type of commercial use, but generally are 1 space for every 150 square feet of floor space. The intensity of uses allowed in these areas supports continued commercial use and contributes to the value of commercial property in Fort Kent.

The mixed use character of these long standing commercial areas has minimized compatibility/incompatibility issues. The only use changes of any significance are in the two focus areas discussed below. Generally, Fort Kent and the surrounding population has been well served by these commercial areas. They are adjacent to open space and residential uses and provide a variety of services and options that meet local needs. Continued investment in these areas does not require any special development considerations that are not already covered by the Zoning Ordinance.

### Commercial Focus Growth Areas

The first focus area is the K&S Development adjacent to US Rt. 1 South. This location supports the community's vision by creating the opportunity for new jobs through commercial growth. The location is close to established residential neighborhoods that are more distant from the downtown than existing commercial zones. The potential businesses and services that could locate in this subdivision would help improve efficient access to service and improve affordability for residential uses. This also supports the community's vision.

The site is presently zoned Rural Farm and this zoning designation was questioned in the last comprehensive plan as a spot zoning issue. The intended use of the subdivision is not consistent with the purpose of the Rural Farm Zone. As an approved subdivision the site is ready for development that would benefit nearby residential uses and the Town's commercial growth interests. It would be an excellent location for professional and governmental offices, a neighborhood convenience store, a playground and several other commercial type uses.

Most importantly the site has minimal natural constraints to development and necessary infrastructure is in place. The site is outside of the St. John River floodplain, however, there is a small area of Zone B floodplain associated with an un-named stream. The slope and soils are favorable with only moderate limitations related to drainage. The local streets connect to a collector that provides access to US Rt. 1. The subdivision streets were built by the developer to the standards required by the road construction ordinance and was then adopted by the town. In the short term, no major municipal capital investment is required to support the continued development of this area. However, the demand on the sewer system is affected by the actual types of uses that are developed. This location is distant from the treatment facility and effluent must be handled by three pump stations including the main station. Upgrades may be required in the long term. The current and proposed uses of the site would be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance if the property were rezoned commercial and most customary types of commercial uses would not require planning board review. This commercial focus growth area is basically ready to develop.

The second commercial focus growth area is the existing Market Street commercial district. Encouraging continued commercial investment in this area relates to the community's vision of



diverse job opportunities, convenient access to services and overall affordability of living. Market St. adjoins established residential neighborhoods, recreation access and open space and these land uses would be well served by a diverse commercial area. As stated previously, this area is also vital to the town's long-term disaster recovery. It effectively could become a surrogate Main Street providing many of the same services. This would allow the community to continue functioning during and long after a flood disaster. The area's unique character and historic assets make it an exciting part of Fort Kent's future development.

As an established commercial district, Market Street has very few natural constraints to its continued development. The area does overlie an aquifer, but is also served by the public water supply. Most proposed uses would not create any risk to the aquifer. The zoning ordinance includes an aquifer overlay district with development standards. There are private wells in the area that are protected by these standards. The most significant natural attribute of this area is that most of it is outside of the floodplain. There is a confined area of Zone B floodplain for Regiest Daigle Brook some of which is served by a flood control structure. There is also a confined area of Zone A floodplain for Perley Brook. The West side of the street is within the shoreland zone of the Fish River and is zoned for general development. Both soils and topography are favorable for development. No wetlands are present. Overall development suitability is excellent.

The area's transportation system is in place to serve the types and intensity of uses that are proposed. Market Street provides access to three arterial routes 161, 11 and US 1. No additional road construction is required but short access spur streets could be developed. As described in the previous section, an intensive level of use is allowed in this commercial area. There is no minimum lot size or lot coverage requirement for commercial uses. Residential densities are based on service by public sewer. There can be one to several housing units per 10,000 square feet with public sewer or 20,000 square feet without public sewer. Off-street parking requirements also influence commercial and residential densities.

The area is fully served by all public facilities and services. Continued development would only require hook-ups and, in some cases, short extensions of public water/sewer lines. Additional investment in public infrastructure is needed in the Market Street commercial area to maintain and upgrade the existing systems. Some of these improvements are covered in the Capital Investment Plan and the Water System Master Plan. To compliment and encourage continued private investment, public infrastructure improvements might also include sidewalks, curbing, street lighting and parking. This would be similar to the downtown revitalization projects that benefitted West and East Main Streets.

The fact that Market Street is an established commercial and mixed residential area serves to mitigate issues of the compatibility of current and proposed land uses. Recent investments

have occurred in both types of uses requiring minimal adjustment. If the growth trend continues to favor commercial uses, special consideration should be given to West Market Street and the adjoining residential zone. The site design review standards found in Fort Kent's Zoning Ordinance should be implemented to address any issues that may arise.

There are several significant attributes that give Market Street its unique character and potential to thrive as a commercial center. At the North end of the street is the Fort Kent Railroad Station, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other candidate sites nearby include the Dube House, 1839, owned by the Fort Kent Historical Society, the Roy Block and the AD Soucy Building. Together this small collection of uses comprises a compact Historic District that could be used to attract visitors and commercial activity. The AD Soucy building is proposed as an outlet for local foods and other products and the site of a large scale mural to depict Fort Kent's agricultural heritage. The Historic, Cultural and Archeological Resources section discusses strategies related to this area. The entire length of Market Street to the West is bordered by the Fish River and a beautiful natural area owned by the Upper St. John Land Trust. This area and adjoining public and private land include the Riverside South Trail. This is one of the recreational resources that can be used to support an urban greenbelt or linear park that is identified in the Recreation policies and strategies section. The greenbelt will encourage pedestrian and bicycle access from residential neighborhoods to the Market Street Business District. The entire length of Market Street to the East is bordered by the Maine Northern Railway and active sidings that support the region's natural resource based industries. Both ATV and snowmobile trails run coextensive with and/or cross the railway. This creates another access option for businesses that front on Market Street and have railway in the rear. These diverse attributes support the designation as a commercial focus growth area.

#### Industrial District

The Fort Kent Industrial Park is full and many of its uses are located within the wellhead protection zone of the town's drinking water supply. The threat created by existing uses is addressed in the Hazard Mitigation section. Further growth is not possible at the industrial park as all sites have been developed. The need to eliminate contamination risks to the public water supply has lead to the recommendation that this area be transitioned to lighter uses such as a business park. Existing uses should be more carefully monitored. Of the 9 potential sites evaluated by the Planning Board for future industrial growth, two sites were ultimately selected for designation as potential future industrial sites. The Planning Board knew that no site would be absolutely perfect. Railway frontage, 3-phase power, highway access and several other criteria were used to select the final proposed sites. A new industrial site will support employment and economic growth.

### Industrial Focus Growth Areas

These two areas are described as potential future industrial sites because of the time consuming process required to actually rezone and develop the sites for industrial uses. Each site has its own set of limitations and issues that would need to be addressed. Site #1 is zoned Rural Farm and Site #2 is zoned Residential. Rezoning would be appropriate in both cases. The zoning designation at site #1 has long been questioned as spot zoning and was inconsistent with surrounding residential, institutional and industrial uses. Technically industrial uses that are allowed in the Rural Farm Zone should be natural resource based. This would limit the scope of industrial uses that might be possible at site #1. The Local Economy section identifies the importance and growth potential of natural resource based industry to the future of the community. Designating these areas is consistent with the vision of Fort Kent as a place with diverse job opportunities and residential areas with convenient access to employment.

The natural opportunities for industrial use at site #1 include favorable topography, lack of floodplain and some areas of suitable soils. The site has St. John River frontage which may support certain types of industries requiring a significant water source. The site is also within a designated buffer area of a large habitat block. Constraints include a natural intermittent drainage gully that crosses the site. Some of the soil types indicate a high water table though many uses can be designed around these limits. The North end of the site near the railway is above the same sand and gravel aquifer as the public water supply but it is not within the wellhead protection zone.

The Site #1 transportation system includes frontage on US Rt. 1 and the Maine Northern Railway. A rail siding and interior access road would need to be developed. This 36 acre site is presently proposed for the full range of industrial uses from heavy to light. At least 20 acres are developable. The zoning ordinance allows any size parcel to be developed with a 50% coverage threshold and setback and parking requirements. Public services exist along US Rt. 1 and on the abutting property accessed by Alfalfa Avenue and include water, sewer and 3-phase power. There are no public investments planned for this site and none are included in the capital investment plan. The Town would prefer to work with the site developer in determining the sites infrastructure needs.

The development of Site #1 has the potential for compatibility issues with current surrounding uses. This would substantially depend on the nature of the industry that might locate at the site. Industrial uses that create odor, noise, visual impacts, stray light and excessive traffic might create a legitimate nuisance or safety risk for nearby residential and institutional uses. Generally, Fort Kent's population is tolerant of neighboring uses when there is an important community benefit like jobs. Any development at this site would be subject to Planning Board review under the site design standards of the local zoning ordinance. The Planning Board

should require design standards to be upheld by developers as necessary to protect existing uses.

The natural opportunities for industrial use at site #2 include favorable topography, lack of floodplain and some areas of suitable soils. The site, however, is not in a pristine natural state as a result of many years of human activity. Some steep topographical areas exist at the site but many acres have workable topography. The site is also within a designated buffer area of a large habitat block. Within the first 125 feet from the railway the soil types are generally suitable for development. Beyond 125 feet there is a natural wet depression on the site that has received fill and debris. It may be possible to incorporate this into storm water runoff control if the site is developed. Many uses can be designed around the soil limitations. The entire site lies above a sand and gravel aquifer that supplies some private wells in the area. Some potential uses may create a risk to the aquifer because of the rapid infiltration characteristics of some of the soil types present. The Zoning Ordinance includes an Aquifer Protection Overlay District with standards that may limit the types of uses allowed and that help protect private wells.

The Site #2 transportation system includes frontage on the Maine Northern Railway and direct access to Maine Rt.161. Both US Rt. 1 and Maine Rt.11 are also easily accessible. An extensive rail siding is in place at the site. Interior access roads would need to be developed. If access exits to Market Street a rail crossing will be needed. Access may also exit to North Perley Brook Rd. This 128 acre site is presently proposed for the full range of industrial uses from heavy to light. About 20 acres would be needed for development. The zoning ordinance allows any size parcel to be developed with a 50% coverage threshold and setback and parking requirements. Public services exist along Market Street and on the abutting property to the North and South. Services include water, sewer and 3-phase power. There are no public investments planned for this specific site but investment in public infrastructure is needed along Market Street to maintain and upgrade the existing systems. This would benefit the sites future development. Infrastructure improvements are covered in the Capital Investment Plan and the Water System Master Plan. The Town would prefer to work with the site developer in determining the sites infrastructure needs.

The development of Site #2 has some challenging compatibility issues with current surrounding uses. The location is very much a "mixed use" area and even includes a substantial logging/trucking company. The current zoning is both commercial and residential. Some of the most developable areas of the site include an existing mobile home park located adjacent to the railway. The Town is not in any way advocating a forced displacement of these residential uses. The redevelopment of the site should occur in connection with a local housing assistance program. This is discussed in the Housing section of the plan. There is also ample land area to redevelop the park further from the railway and with a substantial

buffer between the uses. Buffers would also be need from other residential uses to the North of the site at Brookside Drive. The degree of compatibility issue would depend on the nature of the industry that might locate at the site. As mentioned for Site #1, development at this site would be subject to Planning Board review under the site design standards of the local zoning ordinance. The Planning Board should require design standards to be upheld by developers as necessary to protect existing uses.

## **DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES** 7/6/12 **Future Land Use Plan Implementation**

**State Goal:** To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.

**Local Goal:** Encourage development in a manner that allows the cost effective and efficient use of our system of facilities and services and that helps support job creation and population growth.

### **Policy 1**

Coordinate the implementation of the Town's future land use strategies with other local and regional planning efforts.

#### **Strategies**

- a. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MDOT's Biennial Transportation Improvement Program, National Scenic By-way Initiative and NMDC's regional transportation efforts.
- b. Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process at the county level and
- c. Implement local strategies described in the hazard mitigation section to enhance preparedness, response and reduce risks to persons and property.
- d. Work with the Town of Wallagrass to ensure consistent shoreland zoning standards for the protection of the Spaulding Ponds watershed.
- e. Work with the Towns of St. John Plantation and Frenchville to ensure consistent shoreland zoning standards for the protection of the St. John River.
- f. Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest like the outstanding river segment of the Fish River.
- g. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and safety education through the Department of Conservation's Recreational Trail Program and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

### **Policy 2**

Help direct new development to the designated overall growth area by facilitating the locations, types and scales of land uses in the Town.

*(The following strategies apply to areas zoned Rural Farm and may be accomplished by amendment to the zoning ordinance and require study by the Planning Board before specific amendments are proposed).*

## Strategies

- a. Increase minimum lot sizes to encourage lower density in rural areas.
- b. Implement development standards for designated scenic vistas, ridgelines, rural roads, wildlife habitat.
- c. Limit the number of driveway openings onto arterial routes by requiring common driveways.
- d. Encourage the donation of land or conservation easements to the local land trust to preserve open space.
- e. Implement higher permit fees for development.
- f. Develop standards for water sources for fire protection including ponds, dry hydrants and water access.
- g. Provide rural land owners with information on property tax incentive programs like open space and tree growth.
- h. Implement strategies identified in the Critical Natural Resources Section.

## Policy 3

Prioritize support for new development to the designated focus areas through financial investment in needed infrastructure.

*(The following strategies apply to all zoning districts that include designated “focus” growth areas and may be implemented by amendments to the zoning ordinance proposed by the Planning Board or administratively through the Town Manager and Town Council.)*

- a. Consider the waiver of permit application fees for specific projects and develop and implement a new permit fee structure.
- b. Streamline the permit process by creating a simplified revised permit checklist for growth areas.
- c. When possible, in accordance with the Capital Investment Plan, initiate public investment in water/sewer services and/or parking and/or road construction and acceptance, in combination with availability of grant funding.
- d. Create road dimensional requirements that are less costly than requirements in the existing road ordinance.
- e. Create new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts to fund facilities/infrastructure in support of development including a special downtown district designation.
- f. Direct at least 75% of new municipal \*growth-related capital investments into the designated overall growth area.
- g. Implement planned capital investments in focus growth areas.
- h. Allow accessory apartments on single family homes in residential zones.
- i. Provide density bonuses for affordable housing serviced by public water/sewer. Allow extra units or taller buildings in the same space.

- j. Continue needed public investment in downtown infrastructure in partnership with merchants to keep the business district attractive and viable.
- k. On a continuing basis, provide the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) with the tools, training and support necessary to enforce the local ordinances and the minimum building code and ensure that the CEO maintain current certification in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. § 4451.
- l. Evaluate implementation of the Plan every 3-5 years by a checklist of strategies implemented, location and value of public infrastructure investment, reporting of development trends and identification of measures that protected critical natural resources and scenic vistas.

\*Growth-related capital investment: means investment by the municipality in the projects listed below, even if privately owned, using municipal, county, state, federal or other public funds, in the form of a purchase, lease, grant, loan, loan guarantee, credit, tax credit, or other financial assistance:

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

These growth related capital investments do not include investment in the following: mobile equipment, the operation or maintenance of a municipal facility or program, maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure without significantly expanding capacity; or municipal revenue sharing.









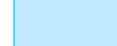
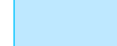

**Implementation Partners/Timeline**

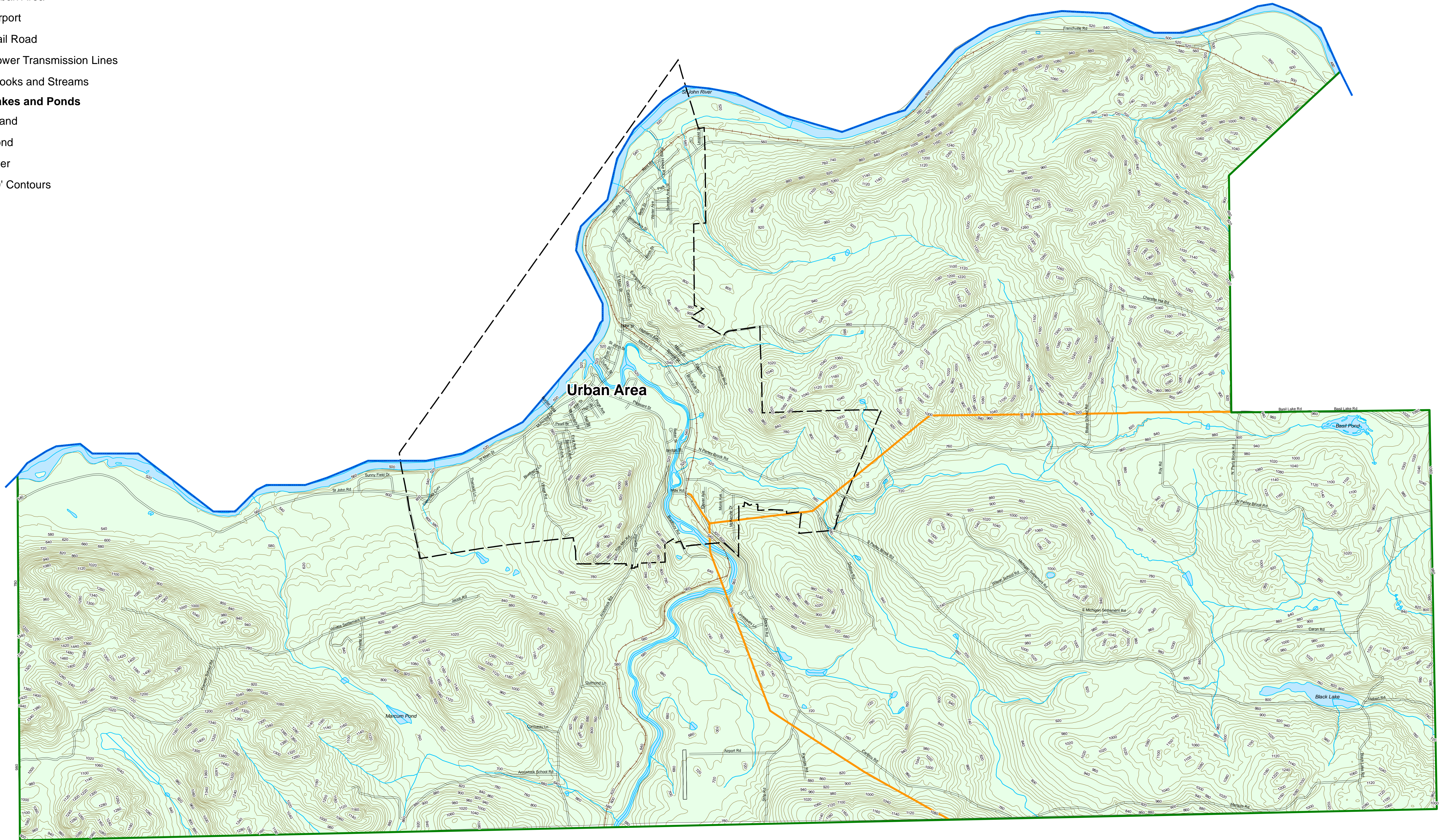
PDO, PB, TC, LG, MDOT, NMDC, NC, DOC, LC, LB

**Policy 1** w/ 10yr, **Policy 2** Short & Mid-term, **Policy 3** Short-term & w/ 10yr

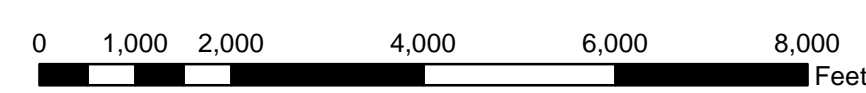


**Legend**

-  International Boundaries
-  Township Boundaries
-  Urban Area
-  Airport
-  Rail Road
-  Power Transmission Lines
-  Brooks and Streams
- Rivers Lakes and Ponds**
-  island
-  pond
-  river
-  20' Contours



1 inch = 2,000 feet






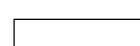



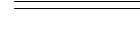
Town of Fort Kent, Maine  
Comprehensive Plan  
Topography Map



Date: 06/28/12

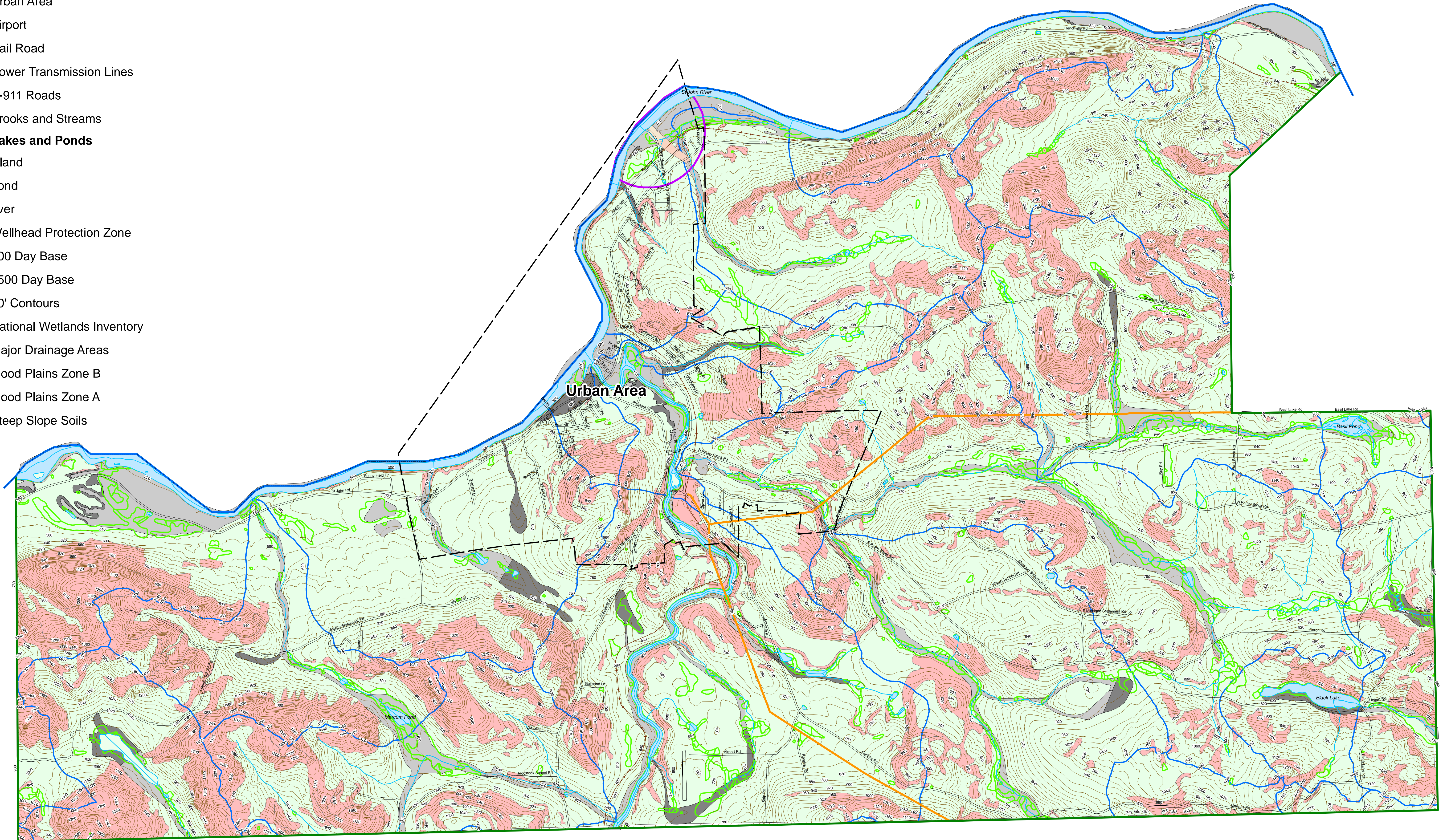


**Legend**

-  International Boundaries
-  Township Boundaries
-  Urban Area
-  Airport
-  Rail Road
-  Power Transmission Lines
-  E-911 Roads
-  Brooks and Streams

**Rivers Lakes and Ponds**

-  island
-  pond
-  river
-  Wellhead Protection Zone
-  200 Day Base
-  2500 Day Base
-  20' Contours
-  National Wetlands Inventory
-  Major Drainage Areas
-  Flood Plains Zone B
-  Flood Plains Zone A
-  Steep Slope Soils



1 inch = 2,000 feet  
 0 1,000 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 Feet





**Legend**

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Overall Growth Area (Includes Urban Area Boundary)

**Trails**

- Proposed Green Belt
- Multit-Use
- Parcels
- Brooks and Streams

**Historic District**

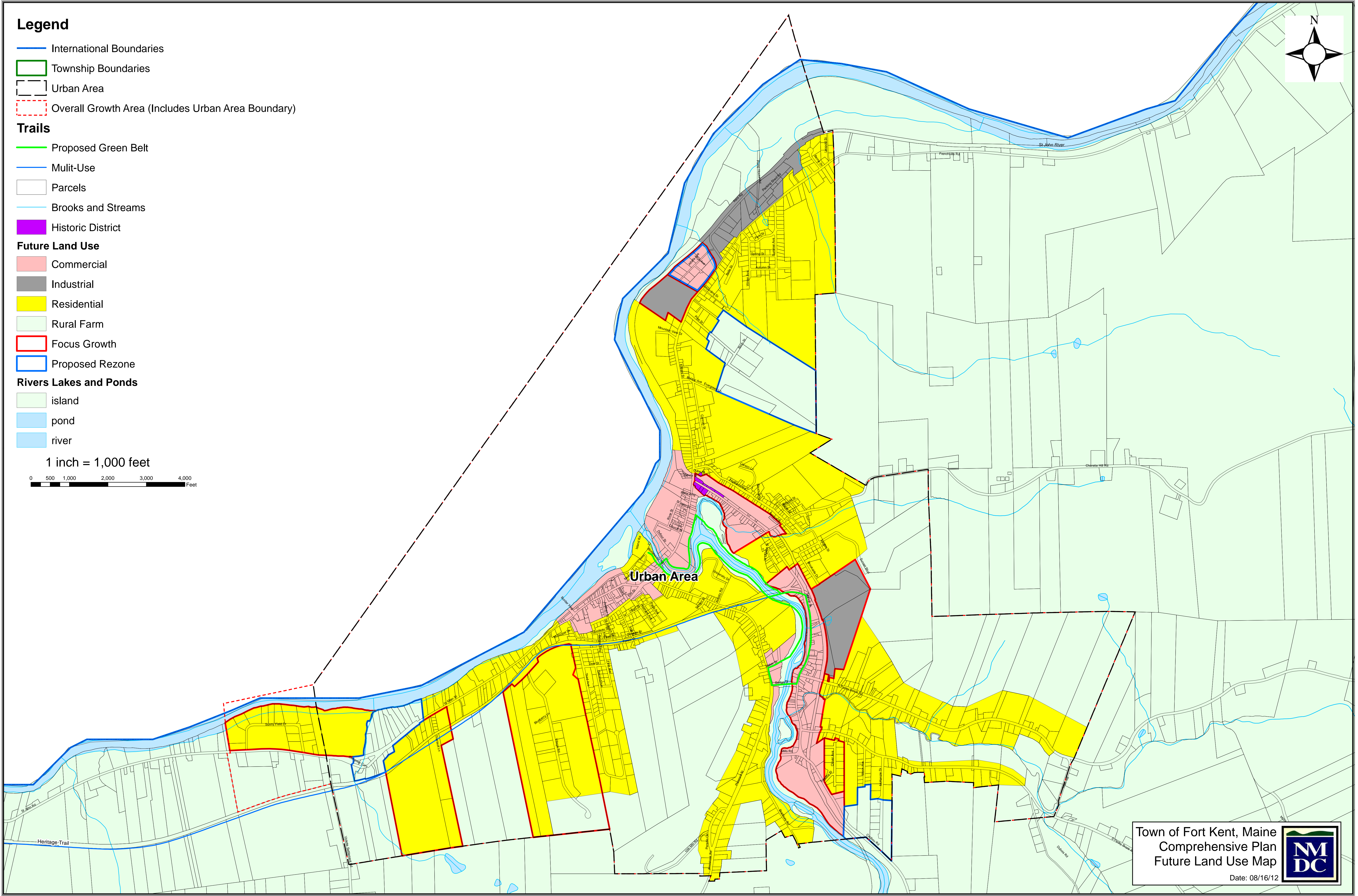
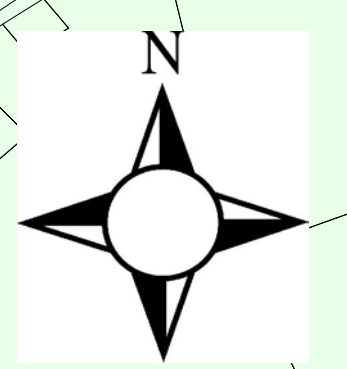
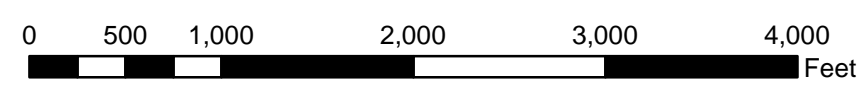
**Future Land Use**

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Residential
- Rural Farm
- Focus Growth
- Proposed Rezone

**Rivers Lakes and Ponds**

- island
- pond
- river

1 inch = 1,000 feet





# REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM



**Summary**

Fort Kent partners with neighboring communities in several ways that help reduce costs and improve services through the cooperative management of shared facilities. The primary areas of cooperation include transportation, solid waste disposal/recycling, fire protection, ambulance service, septic waste disposal, recreation and public works related joint purchasing. Neighboring communities are also discussing cooperation in tax assessment and revaluation services. Details of how this is accomplished are described in the inventory and analysis sections related to transportation, public facilities and services, local economy, recreation and future land use.

Fort Kent is a long-standing member community of the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) with representation on the NMDC executive board. This representation gives the Town a voice in the types of economic development programs NMDC offers. The Town also participates in county and state directed regional coordination efforts in such areas as transportation, housing, tourism and hazard mitigation. There is also considerable opportunity to cooperate in the protection of shared natural resources, primarily water related, by working toward consistency with zoning standards. The strategies describe under regional coordination efforts detail the actions needed for Fort Kent to continue and to improve upon its coordination with surrounding towns.

**Shared Facilities and Resources**

**List of Shared Facilities/Resources/Services**

<b>Facility/Resource</b>	<b># of Communities</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Status</b>
Valley Recycling Facility	4	Facility	Active
Northern Aroostook Regional Airport	5	Facility	Active
Fish River Septage Board (site)	2	Facility	Active
Aroostook Lines (rail)	7	Facility	Active
Highways/Scenic Byways	8	Facility	Active
Salt/sand purchase	*	Resource	Active
Road culvert purchase	**	Resource	Active
Fire/Police/Ambulance Dispatch	16	Services	Active
Firefighting Automatic/Mutual Aid	6	Services	Active

\* NMDC, \*\*MDOT

### List of Shared Natural Resources

Name	# of Communities	Status
Fish River	3	Not cooperatively managed
St. John River	5	Not cooperatively managed
Daigle Brook	2	Not cooperatively managed
Pinette Brook	2	Not cooperatively managed
South Perley Brook	2	Not cooperatively managed
Spaulding Brook	2	Not cooperatively managed
West Fork Dickey Brook	2	Not cooperatively managed
Basil Pond Watershed	2	Not cooperatively managed
Daigle Pond Watershed	2	Not cooperatively managed
Marcum Pond Watershed	2	Not cooperatively managed
Spaulding Pond Watershed	2	Not cooperatively managed
Rare Plant Occurrences/Habitats	2	Not cooperatively managed

### Conflicts with other Town's Policies/Strategies

The planning process identified inconsistencies among neighboring towns related to shoreland zoning but not specifically to policies and strategies found in existing comprehensive plans. With the exception of Wallagrass, all neighboring towns have plans that need to be updated. The current adoption dates and update schedule, where available, is listed below. Fort Kent proposes to provide these towns with a copy of its updated Comprehensive Plan. Specific policies and strategies in Fort Kent's plan include areas of cooperation with neighboring towns. They may use this information to consider ways to improve consistency with their policies and strategies.

Frenchville – Comprehensive Plan – adopted 1996; currently needs updating  
 New Canada – Comprehensive Plan – adopted 2002; currently being updated  
 St. John Plantation – Land Use Regulation Commission – Revised 2010  
 Wallagrass – Comprehensive Plan – updated July 2008

The Town of Wallagrass has the most current Comprehensive Plan. A review of their policies and strategies for the transportation and public facilities/services sections did not identify any conflicts.

Land use regulation in St. John Plantation is directed by the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Regulations prepared by LURC. Areas of St. John Plantation that abut Fort Kent are essentially zoned the same, i.e. management general (M-GN) and Rural Farm, respectively for forestry and agricultural activity. Policies are consistent for these zoning districts. Areas to improve consistency include shoreland zoning along the St. John River and protection of a rare plant community that occurs in both towns.

## **Summary of Regional Coordination Efforts**

### **Regional Water and Natural Resource Strategies:**

- a. Work with the Wallagrass Planning Board to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Spaulding Pond's watershed, Pinette Brook and the Fish River.
- b. Work with the New Canada Planning Board to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Daigle Pond watershed and the South Branch of Perley Brook.
- d. Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest like the Fish River.
- e. Work with the Towns of St. John Plantation (or LURC) and Frenchville to ensure consistent shoreland zoning standards for the protection of the St. John River and with Frenchville for the West Fork of Dickey Brook.
- f. Work with the Town of St. John Plantation (or LURC) to ensure consistent zoning standards for the protection of shared rare plant habitat.

### **Regional Transportation Strategies:**

- a. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MDOT's Biennial Transportation Improvement Program, National Scenic By-way Initiative and NMDC's regional transportation efforts.
- b. The town should continue to support and participate in the MDOT's regional bus service initiative.
- c. Continue annual request of funds through the MDOT-URIP process to support the Aroostook Regional Transportation Service (ARTS).
- d. Use Northern Aroostook Regional Airport as part of on-going economic development/business attraction efforts by making Fort Kent more accessible to prospective companies.
- e. Support the use of Northern Aroostook Regional Airport as an international port-of-entry through outreach to Congressional delegation.
- f. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and safety education through the Recreational Trail Program and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Regional Public Facility/Services Strategies:**

- a. Participate in a regional firefighter training and recruitment program with automatic/mutual aid departments and seek funding under FEMA-Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and other sources.
- b. Continue existing joint purchasing with the MDOT and NMDC on culverts and road salt.
- c. Create new regional opportunities for joint purchasing with other departments, municipalities, the Maine Municipal Association and private companies in such areas as fuel, lubricants, tires, parts and other.

**Regional Recreation Strategies:**

- a. Raise funds through grants, club fundraisers and private donations for the development of shelters that serve all trail systems.
- b. Participate in the new Maine ATV interconnecting trail system (MATS) and support its growth.
- c. Develop a collaborative effort on access to waters involving local clubs, civic organizations, the Upper St. John Land Trust, Dept. of Conservation, US Fish and Wildlife Service and local government.
- d. Seek to develop two new boat landings on the St. John River in upper and lower Fort Kent by identifying potential sites, soliciting landowner interest and identifying potential funding sources.

**Regional Hazard Mitigation Strategies:**

- a. Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process at the County level by submitting a list of projects (local mitigation issues), accepting responsibility for implementation and approving participation in the County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- b. Implement local strategies described in the hazard mitigation section to enhance preparedness, response and reduce risks to persons and property and that strengthen regional disaster response.
- c. Convene a working group of first responders, County emergency management experts and hazard owners to clarify the level of risk and preparedness. Report to the Town Manager/Council.
- d. Create a memorandum of understanding or inter-local agreement with Clair, New Brunswick and/or Provincial emergency responders regarding communication and response training and cooperation in the event of hazardous material disaster/fire.



## **draft**PERIODIC EVALUATION OUTLINE 7/13/12

Evaluation of Fort Kent's implementation of its Comprehensive Plan will be based on four factors including; degree to which future land use strategies are implemented, the percentage of capital investments made in the growth areas, monitoring of new development relative to growth areas and the areas of critical natural resources protected by various methods. Periodic evaluation is necessary to measure the success of the local growth management program in delivering broad public benefits.

- I. Implementation of twenty-six (26) Future Land Use Strategies
  - a. For Policy #1
    1. The responsibility for inter-local and regional coordination will be shared among the planning and development staff, including code enforcement and hazard mitigation officers, Town Manager, Town Council member designates and the planning board.
    2. Implementation will involve participation in regional planning sessions and sponsorship of inter-local (joint) meetings on shared resources.
    3. Implementation will start in 2012 and extend for 10 year planning period.
  - b. For Policy #2
    1. The responsibility for directing development to the overall growth area will be shared among the planning and development staff, including code enforcement officer and the planning board.
    2. Implementation will involve research on respective and appropriate zoning standards as described in the strategies and proposed amendments to town-wide and shoreland zoning ordinances, etc. Landowner outreach will also occur.
    3. Implementation research will start in 2012 and amendments proposed will be brought before the voters may extend over the 10 year planning period.
  - c. For Policy #3
    1. The responsibility for prioritizing financial support for development in growth areas will be shared among the Planning Board, Town Manager and Town Council.
    2. Implementation will involve the preparation of a 5-year capital improvements plan, amendment of road construction standards, creation of new TIF districts, etc.
    3. Implementation process will start in 2012 and specific strategies will be completed during the 10 year planning period.
    4. Evaluate implementation of the Plan every 3-5 years by a checklist of strategies implemented, location and value of public infrastructure investment, reporting of

development trends and identification of measures that protected critical natural resources and scenic vistas.

**II. Measurement of investments in growth areas**

- a. The responsibility for approving and tracking public investments made in growth areas from all funding sources will be by the Town Council and Town Manager, respectively. Procurement and administration of grants will be by planning and development office staff.
- b. The Town Manager will develop a summary reporting form on “growth area infrastructure investments” and review with Town Council at least once every 5 years and/or each year that investments are made.
- c. Measurement will start in 2013 and reporting will extend for 10 year planning period.

**III. Development tracking in designated growth areas and town-wide**

- a. The responsibility for tracking development made in growth areas and rural areas will be by the Code Enforcement Officer and planning and development office staff.
- b. The CEO will develop summary reporting forms on “building permits in growth areas” and “building permits in non-designated rural farm zones”.
- c. The planning and development staff will file duplicate copies of building permits by year for periodic analyses similar to that used in the Land Use Section of the plan and for use in plan updates.
- d. Review of the summary report(s) will be with the Planning Board, Town Council and Town Manager each year.
- e. Tracking will start in 2013 and reporting will extend for 10 year planning period.

**IV. Documentation of critical natural resources protected**

- a. The responsibility for documenting the areas of critical natural resources protected will be by the Planning Board as may be required by them through the subdivision and site design review permitting processes.
- b. Implementation will involve the preparation of a tracking report prepared and maintained by the planning and development office staff and will include a separate summary of resources protected by local private conservation groups.
- c. Implementation process will start in 2012 and will be ongoing during the 10 year planning period.

# APPENDIX

## Implementation Partners – Abbreviations & Timeline

10 <sup>th</sup> Mt	10 <sup>th</sup> Mountain Ski Club
AA	Acadian Archives
ACAP	Aroostook County Action Program
ACE	Army Corps of Engineers
AKEMA	Aroostook Emergency Management Agency
AM	AmeriCorps
BS	Boy Scouts
CofC	Chamber of Commerce
DECD	Dept. of Economic & Community Development
DECD-OCD	Dept. of Economic & Community Development – Office of Community Development
DHS	Dept. of Homeland Security
DOC	Dept. of Conservation
DOC – BPL	Dept. of Conservation – Bureau of Public Lands
DOC - MFS	Dept. of Conservation – Maine Forest Service
Ent	Entrepreneurs
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FKFD	Fort Kent Fire Dept.
FKHS	Fort Kent Historical Society
FKPD	Fort Kent Police Dept.
FKPW	Fort Kent Public Works
FKRP	Fort Kent Recreation & Parks
FKW&WW	Fort Kent Water & Waste Water
GS	Girl Scouts
HPO	Historic Property Owners
LB	Local Businesses
LC	Local Clubs
LCO	Local Civic Organizations
LG	Local Government
LHD	Local Housing Developers
LL	Local Lenders
MBB	Maine Bond Bank
MDEP	Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection
MDIF&W	Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
MDOT	Maine Dept. of Transportation
MEMA	Maine Emergency Management Agency
MHPC	Maine Historic Preservation Commission
MFT	Maine Farmland Trust
MNR	Maine Northern Railway
MSHA	Maine State Housing Authority
MSP	Maine State Police
MWS	Maine Winter Sports
NARAA	Northern Aroostook Regional Airport Authority
NC	Neighboring Communities
NMDC	Northern Maine Development Commission
NMMC	Northern Maine Medical Center
NPS	National Park Service
NWS	National Weather Service
PB	Planning Boarding

PC	Private Citizens
PDO	Planning/Development Office
PLO	Private Land Owners
REA	Real Estate Agents
SAD #27	School Administrative District #27
SJVP	St. John Valley Partnership
SJVSWCD	St. John Valley Soil & Water Conservation District
TC	Town Council
USBP	United States Border Patrol
UMCE	University of Maine Cooperative Extension
UMFK	University of Maine Fort Kent
USDA	United States Dept. of Agriculture
USDA-NRCS	United States Dept. of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA-RD	United States Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development
USFWS	United States Fish & Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USJLT	Upper St. John Land Trust
VRF	Valley Recycling Facility
WAC	World Acadian Congress
WS	Wesget Sipu

### Timeline Defined

Short-term – 1-3 years  
 Mid-term – 4-7 years  
 w/ 10yr – within 10 years

### List of Maps

	<u>Plan Section</u>
1. Water Resources	Water Resources
2. Critical Natural Resources	CNR
3. Recreation Areas	Recreation
4. Transportation	Transportation
5. Water Utilities	Public Facilities/Services
6. Sewer Utilities	Public Facilities/Services
7. Parcels Base Map	Land Use
8. Urban Area Base	Land Use
9. Existing Urban Zoning	Land Use
10. Topographic	Future Land Use
11. Development Constraints	Future Land Use
12. Future Land Use	Future Land Use