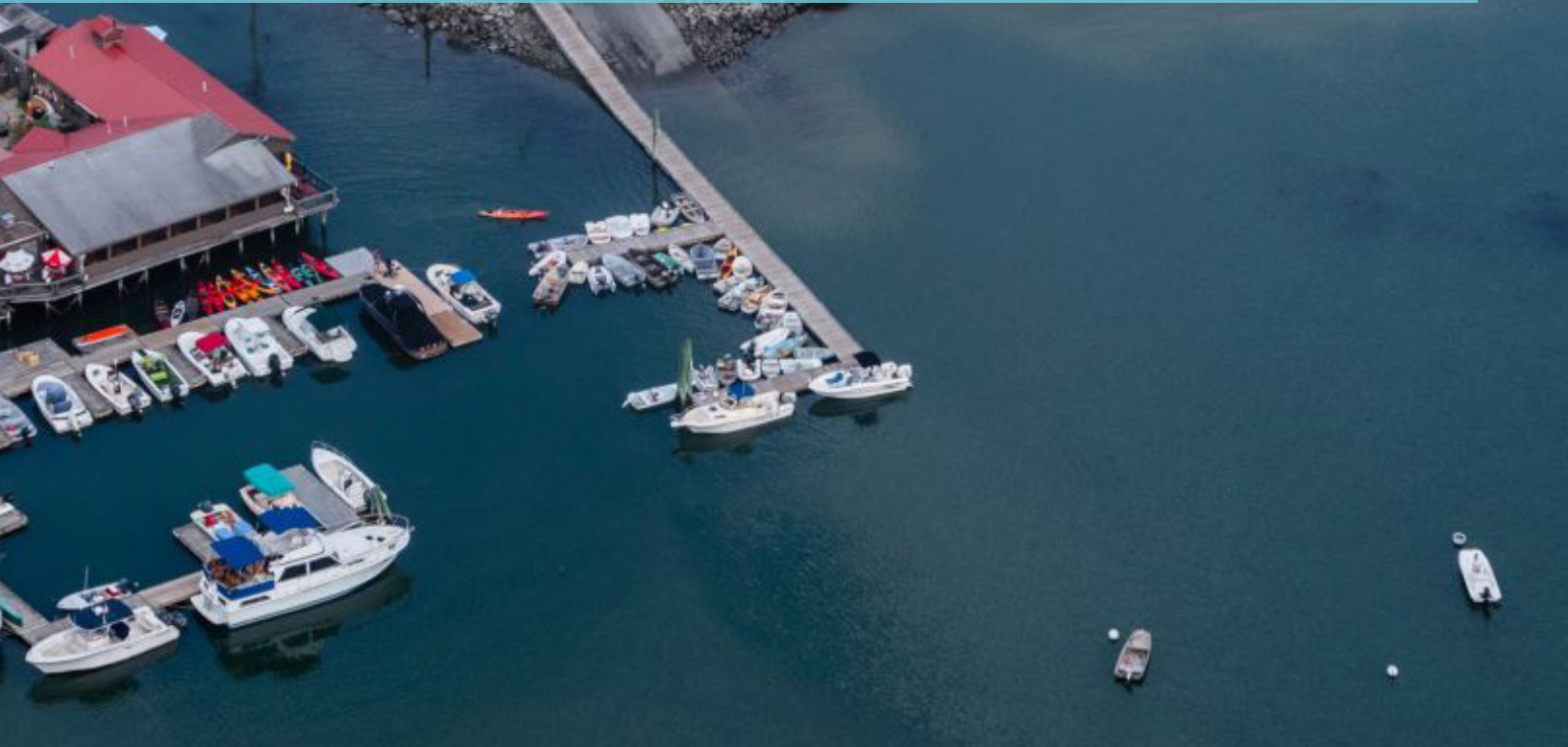




DAMARISCOTTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - 2025



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

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Damariscotta is a thriving community in Lincoln County with a quaint, historic downtown and just over 2,200 year-round permanent residents. Situated on the Damariscotta River and served by U.S. Routes 1, 1B and 129, Damariscotta is a popular tourist destination and the cultural and economic hub for central Lincoln County.

Much has changed since Damariscotta's last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2014. This updated plan provides a new, shared vision for the community through 2035 and produces a record memorializing the decisions made and actions committed to during the planning process. The Comprehensive Plan Committee hopes this plan will serve as the foundation for future public policy and land use decisions and that it will provide an ongoing framework for both public investment and private development.

This plan includes the Community Vision and Guiding Values created with input and feedback from residents of Damariscotta. A narrative of the robust public engagement and planning process over the past two years describes the many opportunities residents had to participate in the development of the plan. The Future Land Use section outlines the long-term vision for town growth and change over the next decade and beyond, and is a guide for Town staff, elected officials, consultants, and residents in updating town policies and ordinances. A list of priority goals identifies the areas in which the community would like to see more immediate action.

The topic area inventory chapters address the areas of particular relevance to the community. Each topic-specific chapter gives an overview of the topic, existing conditions and trends, an analysis of its impact to the town, issues to be addressed, and opportunities for improvement or growth. Each chapter also includes the topic-specific SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) goals, policies, and strategies along with the goal's corresponding guiding value(s).



Specific

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



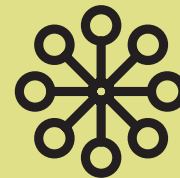
Measurable

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



Attainable

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



Relevant

The goal meaningfully contributes to larger objectives and missions.



Timely

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

INTRODUCTION

The topics addressed in this plan are:

1. Population & Demographics
2. Historic & Archeological Resources
3. Agriculture & Forestry
4. Arts & Culture
5. Economy
6. Housing
7. Natural Resources
8. Water Resources
9. Marine Resources
10. Recreation
11. Transportation
12. Public Facilities & Services
13. Existing Land Use
14. Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investment

In the Implementation and Evaluation section is the overall Implementation Matrix for every Goal that includes its Policies, Strategies, Person(s) Responsible, anticipated timeline, estimated cost, and additional partners and resources. This plan also recommends the appointment of an implementation committee charged with providing regular status reports to the Selectboard and presenting an update to town members at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Appendix includes a list of the Goals sorted by the three Guiding Values of sustainability, livability, and vibrancy (Appendix A). Additionally, the Appendix includes the responses to surveys and on-line public engagement tools, notes from in-person forums and events, and the data reports reviewed by the comprehensive plan committee in the development of this plan.

COMMUNITY VISION

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

Vision Statement

This vision statement is an aspirational statement of the community's desired character throughout the plan's lifetime.

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

Guiding Values

The following Guiding Values were chosen to be the overarching lenses applied to all future decision-making in Damariscotta.



Sustainability

Meeting our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.



Livability

Having positive outcomes that impact the well-being of individuals and communities, including:

- Housing options
- Walkable and bikeable
- Safe and healthy environment
- Access to nature and recreation



Vibrancy

Being full of energy or life by maintaining a sense of place and opportunities to connect with others.



The guiding value icons are used throughout the plan to illustrate how each goal connects to the values, with many goals connecting to multiple values.

COMMUNITY VISION

Sustainability, Livability & Vibrancy

These Guiding Values capture the broad themes that emerged during the public engagements held as part of the development of this Plan, including:

- The impact of **climate change** and the need for climate resiliency
- The lack of affordable **housing** and housing that meets the diverse range of needs (e.g., apartments, workforce housing, “starter homes,” homes in which older adults can downsize, etc.)
- The lack of an **active transportation** system that includes bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- The desire to enhance existing and/or create new **recreational amenities**, including creating public parks and athletic courts and acquiring or protecting existing open spaces and natural resource areas
- The need to maintain **Downtown as the lifeblood of the community** by improving the streetscape, protecting small businesses, promoting the arts and cultural amenities, and protecting the historic building stock from the effects of flooding





PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive Plan Committee

In January 2022, a Comprehensive Plan Committee was appointed by the Damariscotta Selectboard to guide the planning process. The Committee, comprised of community members and supported by a paid consultant and town staff, met at least monthly throughout the development of this Plan. Four subcommittees also met to review data, engage topic-specific experts, and discuss goal and policy recommendations. The subcommittees were: Housing, Economy and Population; Natural Resources/ Agricultural & Forest Resources/Water & Marine Resources; Historic & Archeological Resources/Arts & Culture; and Recreation/Transportation. Subcommittees met between four and ten times throughout the planning process. Committee and subcommittee meetings, open to the public, were posted on the Town's website.

Overview of Public Engagement

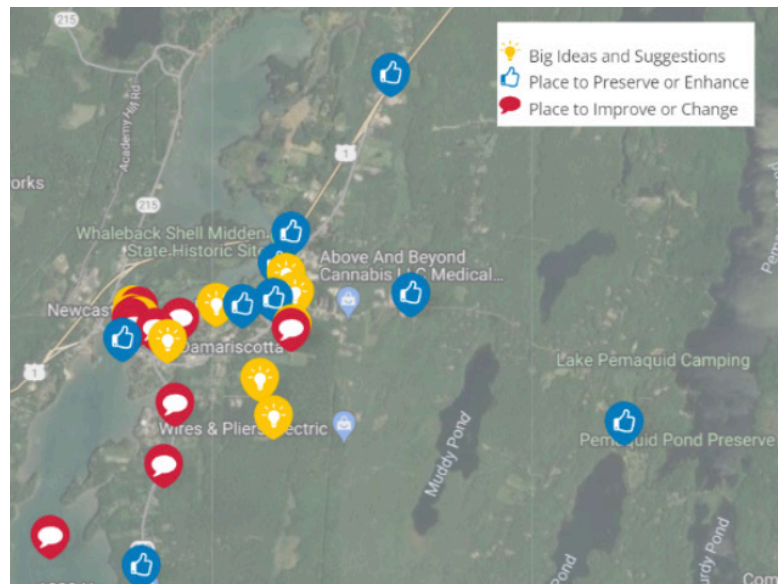
As part of the development of this plan, a robust public engagement process occurred. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and the Town's subsequent pivot to virtual public meetings and engagement strategies taught us that the most effective engagement is a combination of intimate, face-to-face community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



PLANNING PROCESS

Electronic/Visual Engagement

A SocialPinpoint website was developed at the start of the planning process to serve as a hub for information about the project. It included documents and resources for stakeholders to review, including notes from in-person public engagement events, as well as an interactive map and online survey. The SocialPinpoint site had 839 unique users (unique IP addresses captured), with 278 unique stakeholders who either left a map comment and/or took the survey. Common themes from the interactive map were:



- Repair and increase sidewalks and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure throughout the town
- Develop or improve recreation areas by creating public parks, maintaining Biscay Beach, and enhancing existing trailheads.
- Improve the downtown streetscape with undergrounding utilities, pedestrian bump-outs, and brick sidewalks
- Preserve existing natural areas and seek to preserve more natural area

Additional map comments are in Appendix B and full responses to the online survey are included in Appendix C.

Data collected from these applications informed the development of much of this Plan. A bi-monthly column for the Lincoln County News was published focused on communicating the progress of the Committee, driving traffic to the online survey, and promoting the in-person public engagement events. Posters asking people to contribute to the future of Damariscotta by taking the online survey were displayed in the Town Office, Post Office, Library, book store and many other businesses throughout town. Additionally, a postcard was mailed to every residential and business address in Damariscotta using the USPS Every Door Direct Mail service. The postcard both promoted the April 2023 kick-off event and included a link to the online survey. The postcard mailing was considered effective and was done again in January 2024 to promote the Future Land Use Workshops.



PLANNING PROCESS

In-Person/Hybrid Engagement

In April 2023, a public kick-off event, attended by over 40 people, was held at the Town Office. The Committee's planning consultant provided an overview of Comprehensive Plans, discussed what is required to be included in the plan, and facilitated discussions regarding three big ideas:

1. What do you love about Damariscotta and want to keep?
2. What about Damariscotta do you want to change?
3. What do you hope that the Plan addresses?

In May 2023, a similar meeting was facilitated by Comprehensive Plan Committee members at Schooner Cove, an independent living retirement community.

Throughout Spring and Summer 2023, Comprehensive Plan Committee members set up information tables with comment posters at the Skidompha Library and popular local businesses. At these events, Committee members met people where they tend to congregate to make them aware of the ongoing planning process, invite them to upcoming meetings, and distribute printed versions of the online survey. The posters garnered more than 255 written comments focused on what people love about Damariscotta, what they want to change, and what they hope the Plan addresses. The comments ranged from the need for childcare to the desire to promote small businesses and limit "big box" stores, from increasing walkability and bike-ability to ideas for new kinds of recreational programs, and ways to promote a more affordable workforce and/or year-round rental housing. Appendix D includes the full list of poster comments.

Members from the Housing, Economy, and Population Subcommittee coordinated ten meetings with the owners or executives of major employers and popular local businesses and nonprofits, including LincolnHealth, Hannaford, Chasse Marine, Fernald's Country Store, King Eider's Pub, Reny's, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, the YMCA, Rising Tide Co-op, and First National Bank. These meetings provided specific information about the business community perspective of Damariscotta, including their struggles with attracting and retaining employees at all levels and their potential future plans and needs. Appendix E includes the notes from the interviews.

In October 2023, the Town Planner and planning consultant visited 5th and 6th graders at Great Salt Bay Community School to engage in an interactive activity where students brainstormed what they want to see in Damariscotta in the next 10 years. They drew on maps of the downtown and surrounding village area to illustrate where their ideas might go. Ideas include the different business types students want to see, areas where more or improved sidewalks, trails and multi-use paths might be needed, and different kinds of recreational amenities including the desire for a pool, a skate park, a running track, more designated swimming areas, a basketball court, sports fields, another playground or an improved playground, and an ice-skating rink. The main themes identified by students were more places to hang out, and safer ways to get around the community without driving. Notes from this meeting are in Appendix F.

PLANNING PROCESS

Major Themes Exploration Meetings

Major themes kept recurring in the virtual and face-to-face engagement strategies. These included: maintaining a thriving village; ensuring housing opportunities; promoting and/or developing active recreation areas; and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. In October and November 2023, three in-depth topic exploration meetings were held to hear feedback from the public related to these big ideas.

The first meeting, focused on the downtown and surrounding village area, was held at Skidompha Library and attended by 26 people. The planning consultant set the stage by discussing post-pandemic changes to downtowns (and how those changes and trends might be positive for Damariscotta), presenting the key components of a thriving downtown, and providing information about Damariscotta's downtown current status. The group split into small groups where committee members facilitated discussions on the shared priorities of those in their group.

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



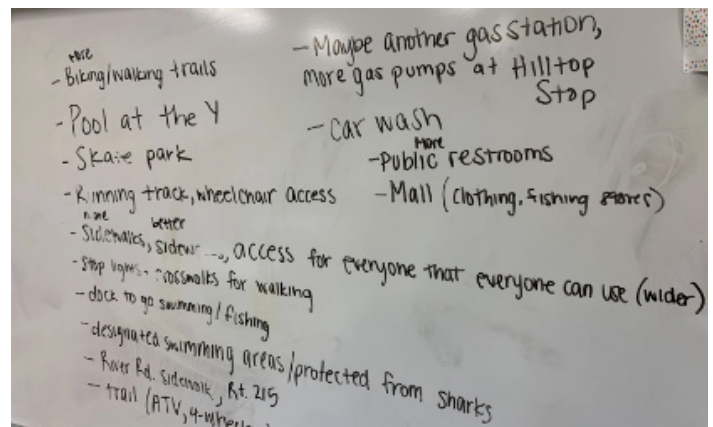
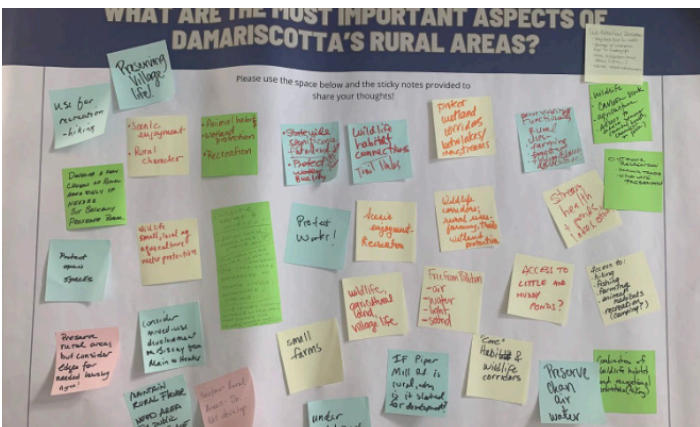
PLANNING PROCESS

The third meeting, focused on active recreation and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, was hosted by Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust and attended by 25 people. The planning consultant made a presentation on existing recreational amenities, as well as identified transportation issues in Damariscotta as identified by the community in the online survey or past planning documents such as the 2015 Damariscotta-Newcastle Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The group broke into small group discussions where they were asked to prioritize transportation improvements using limited “Damariscotta Dollars”, and to discuss what recreational amenities might be missing or in need of improvement in the community. Priority infrastructure projects, as ranked by the meeting attendants, were:

1. Widen Bristol Road to create 5’ shoulders
2. Create sidewalks on Route 1B from Rising Tide to Biscay Road
3. Create a Route 1B alternative off-road path from Mobius to School Street
4. Create a Bristol Road, School Street, Main Street sidewalk loop

Complete notes from the community meetings are in Appendix G.

Additionally, the planning committee incorporated information discussed during the December 2023 Community Conversation on Climate Change, hosted by the Town as part of its enrollment in the statewide Community Resilience Partnership. At this meeting, the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust presented known climate issues and areas on which the community should focus to become more resilient.



PLANNING PROCESS

Future Land Use Workshops

The Comprehensive Plan Committee hosted two Future Land Use Workshops in January 2024. Workshops were well-attended with between 20-25 people at each for about 45 total attendees. Stations were set up for distinct areas of town with corresponding questions consistently raised throughout the planning process. Below are the areas discussed, primary question, and community response.

Downtown:

“Should we direct public and private investment to this area given projected flooding scenarios?” Many people expressed the downtown as something that they love about Damariscotta, but, overwhelmingly, respondents wanted to build a sea wall or allow for adaptations to existing buildings. In terms of private investment, there was consensus that the plan should be to enhance what is currently there and allow for infill development that enhances the area.

Residential Areas (immediately outside of Downtown and abutting Upper Main Street):

“What types of new residential development would enhance these areas?”

In general, answers were clustered on moderately sized (2- 10 unit) apartment buildings, connected townhouses, and the conversion of existing historic buildings into multi-family housing. Additionally, many respondents noted that tiny house communities would enhance this area.

Upper Main Street/Route 1B Corridor:

“What would most enhance users’ experience of this area?”

Throughout the planning process, this area was described as a “sacrifice zone,” with intense and potentially incompatible commercial development. Overwhelmingly, workshop participants indicated they did not think additional/increased commercial development would enhance this area. Instead, increased pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle lanes, and more benches and green space were the top priorities, with residential development, infill development in existing large parking lots, traffic calming measures, and public transit as secondary priorities.

Rural Areas

“What is important to protect within these areas?”

Participants indicated that wildlife habitats, preserving open space for recreation and trail connectivity, the protection of wildlife and habitat corridors, water quality, and small farms and agricultural areas were all important facets of rural life.

Additional notes from the Future Land Use Workshops are included in Appendix H.



FUTURE LAND USE



Overview

This Future Land Use Plan section outlines the long-term vision for how our town should grow and change over the next decade and beyond. It guides Town staff, elected officials, residents, and consultants in updating town policies and ordinances. It is important to note that a Comprehensive Plan is a visioning document, not a set of regulations. Therefore, this section should be used to guide, limit, or encourage development that aligns with community interests and values as defined in the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Municipalities influence new development through the expenditure of public funds on public infrastructure such as utilities, and services like construction and maintenance of streets, sewers, and water networks. These expenditures enable or limit development within certain land areas. Thus, one crucial function of this section is to guide the Town as it considers how to fund its Capital Improvement Plan for infrastructure maintenance, replacement, or expansion to ensure it aligns spending with Town policies and community priorities.

Additionally, the Future Land Use Plan can be used to evaluate and align current zoning regulations and other land use policies and proposed amendments or revisions to the Comprehensive Plan. However, any new land use ordinances, or amendments to existing ordinances, will require additional community input and careful consideration.



Planning History

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

Damariscotta's Local Planning History

Year	Accomplishment
1961-1962	First Comprehensive Plan developed and adopted by the Town.
1972	Town enacted state-mandated Shoreland Zoning and formed the Planning Board to administer.
1985	Comprehensive Plan developed and adopted by the Town, upon which the first Land Use Ordinance would be based.
1985	First Public Vending Ordinance adopted by the Town.
1986	Land Use Ordinance adopted in the Spring of 1986 but repealed that Fall.
1989	Town enacted its first Subdivision Review Ordinance .
1992	Updated Comprehensive Plan developed but did not receive State approval.
1994	First Site Plan Review Ordinance adopted by the Town.
1997	A Land Use Ordinance adopted by the Town, upon which today's Land Use Ordinance is still based.
2000	2000 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town and approved by the State.
2002	Land Use Ordinance amended to include Wireless Communication District.
2003	Downtown Plan developed with strategies to preserve and enhance the downtown village area.
2005	Land Use Ordinance amended to limit the size of retail stores to no more than 35,000 sq. feet of floor area.
2008	Standards for Large Scale Development added to the Site Plan Review Ordinance.
2008	Damariscotta Sidewalk-Bicycle Plan developed by the Town.
2008-2010	Heart & Soul Community Planning Project undertaken by the Town with an eye toward an updated vision for the community and form-based land use standards.
2010	Shore and Harbor Master Plan developed by the Town.
2011	Updates to the Comprehensive Plan and adoption of a form-based code rejected by Town voters.
2012	A proposed expansion of the C-2 commercial district to include Piper Mill Rd rejected by Town voters.
2014	2014 Comprehensive Plan approved by the State and adopted by the Town.
2015	Newcastle-Damariscotta Bike-Ped Plan developed by the Town.
2015	Floodplain Management Ordinance adopted by the Town.
2016	Sign Ordinance adopted by the Town.
2019	Adult Use Marijuana Licensing Ordinance adopted by the Town.
2020	Historic Preservation Ordinance adopted by the Town.
2022	Solar Energy Systems Ordinance adopted by the Town.

Process of Defining the Future Land Use Plan

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

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

Relation to Vision Statement and Guiding Values

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

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

The following Guiding Values are the overarching lenses to be applied to all future decision-making in Damariscotta, including decisions related to land use:



Sustainability

Meeting our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.



Livability

Having positive outcomes that impact the well-being of individuals and communities, including:

- Housing options
- Walkable and bikeable
- Safe and healthy environment
- Access to nature and recreation



Vibrancy

Being full of energy or life by maintaining a sense of place and opportunities to connect with others.

Relation to Priority Goals

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

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

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

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

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

FUTURE LAND USE

Priority Goals

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



Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.



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



The impacts of flooding on downtown historic buildings are mitigated.



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



Transportation investments and policies support a more sustainable community.



Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation.



Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.



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

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

Framework, Context and Definitions

Growth Areas & Rural Areas

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

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

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

State Standards for Growth Areas

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

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

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

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

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

FUTURE LAND USE

Hubs and Corridors

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

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

5

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

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

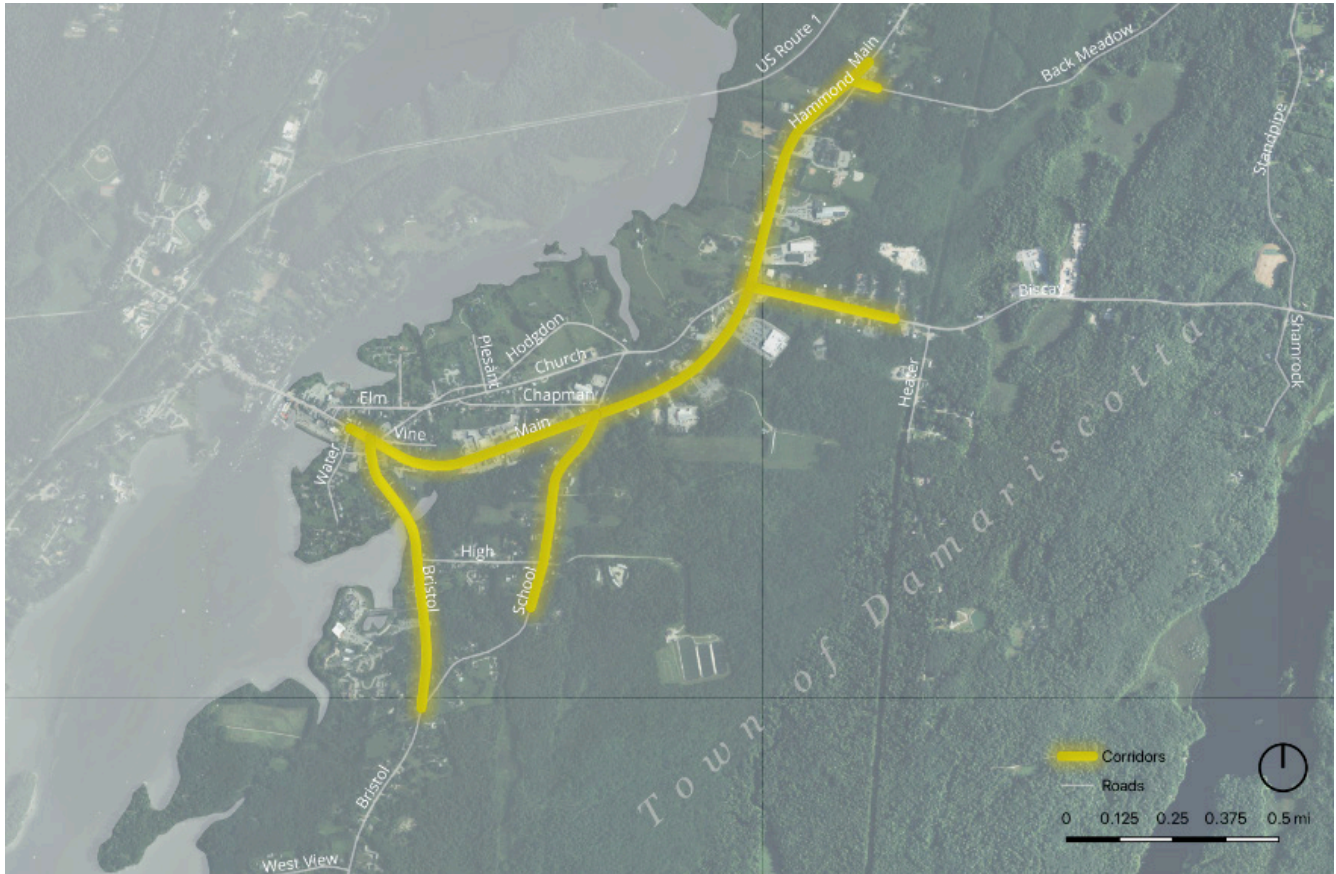
The most important Hubs are often located at the intersection of several Corridors, which can be highly valuable and extremely functional, but are often complex and must balance several competing needs.



This Plan identifies two Major Hubs, the Historic Downtown Hub and the Biscay Road Hub, and four Minor Hubs including the areas near Hammond Road, School Street, Rising Tide Co-op, and Miles Street/High Street.

FUTURE LAND USE

The three primary Corridors identified in this plan are: Main Street, from the bridge over Damariscotta River to approximately Back Meadow Road; Bristol Road, north of School Street; and School Street, stretching approximately ½ mile south from Main Street.



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

Traditional New England Development Pattern

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

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

Villages were often **medium density**, between the high density of cities and the low density of rural or suburban areas. This allowed for the sustainable provision of municipal services within the village area while retaining convenient access to natural and rural areas.

Villages were often **compact** and of a size and scale that sustained vibrant communities and strong local economies. The buildings, streets, and open spaces were constructed at a **human scale** (a size and form that was usable and comfortable for most people). Buildings were not too tall and streets were not too wide (though today they can usually accommodate modern automobiles that did not exist when the streets were laid out).

Residences came in a range of building types, including medium-scale housing or '**missing-middle housing**' that contained several units but was compatible with single-unit houses, shops, or mixed-use buildings.

Parcels of land and buildings were laid out based on the most basic form of human transportation: walking. Even as the modes of transportation evolved, the **walkable** nature of these villages continued to keep them functional and attractive places to live and do business.

Before zoning was common practice, villages were naturally **mixed-use** and contained a variety of functions within both neighborhoods and individual buildings that served people's daily needs. This allowed for convenient access to services, diversified, resilient local economies, and communities centered on a vibrant downtown.

Traditional New England villages commonly contained a **downtown** or main street that was the functional center of the community and was often anchored by a public **open space** such as a wide section of sidewalk at a prominent corner, a town green, a large park or cemetery, a conserved natural area, or a wild habitat. These spaces served many purposes ranging from animal grazing to community gathering to enjoyable green space.

The benefits of traditional villages spread beyond the downtown area. They were **well-connected**, allowing residential neighborhoods easy access to the services they needed on a daily basis. While storefronts were uncommon in residential areas, home businesses and other local services were reasonably common.

Community spaces where people could gather were particularly important in traditional villages, as they allowed people to gather when they were not at home or work. These '**third places**' could be coffee shops, general stores, post offices, bars, parks, libraries, gyms, or any other place people can go and communities can form.

FUTURE LAND USE

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

Traditional New England development pattern provides many valuable lessons, but there is room for improvement. Technology, materials, or contemporary perspectives require modern approaches. Towns and villages were often laid out disregarding environmental considerations such as natural habitats, wetlands, and drainage. While diverse uses brought many benefits, incompatible or polluting uses could also create harmful consequences. Services that many people expect or require, such as fire protection, electricity, or modern-day communication infrastructure, were unavailable or, if they were available, would be considered insufficient for modern needs.

In this plan, the Comprehensive Plan Committee recommends the features identified in Traditional New England Development be preserved where they exist, like in the historic downtown, and fostered or encouraged in other areas such as the Biscay Road Hub.

Incremental Growth

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



FUTURE LAND USE

“Missing Middle Housing”

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

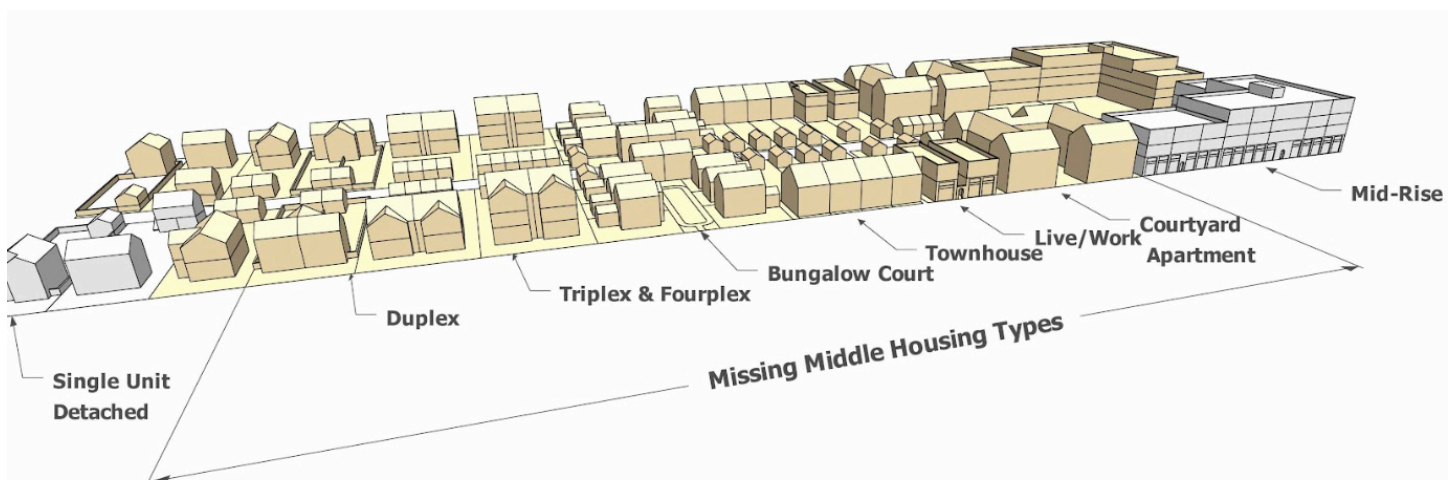
These housing types help provide compact, healthy, walkable neighborhoods and meet the need for housing at varying price points. Because of their scale, it is possible to integrate missing middle housing into existing neighborhoods composed primarily of single-unit detached homes without significant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

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

The major characteristics of missing middle housing types include:

- Walkable to services and amenities
- Lower perceived density
- Small building footprints with a single-home appearance
- Smaller but very livable units
- Availability for rental or purchase
- Thoughtful approach to parking
- Focus on a strong sense of community

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

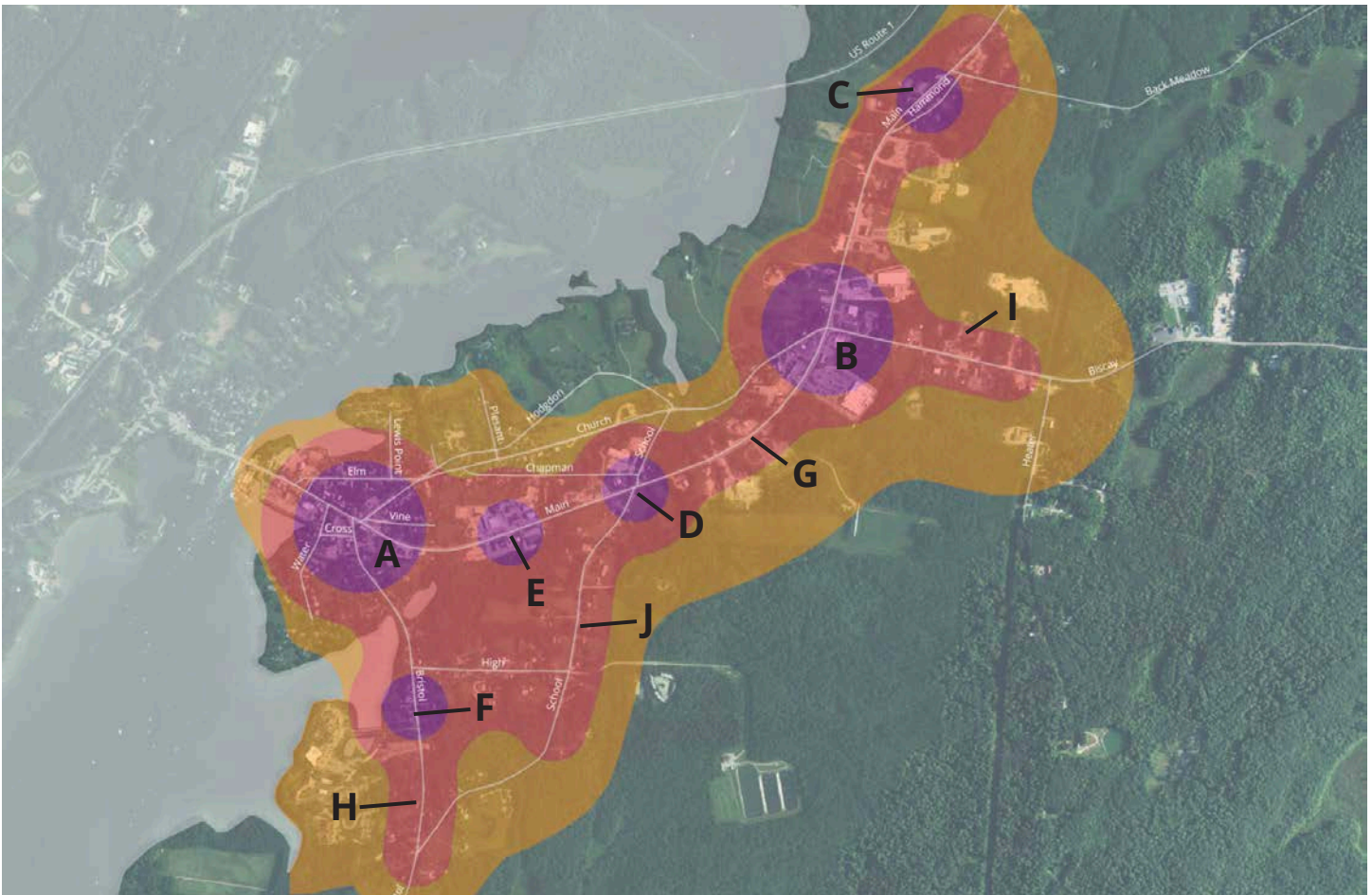


Growth Area

This Plan identifies a Growth Area based on two Major Hubs, four Minor Hubs, and the three Corridors that tie these areas together. The Growth Area, including the areas directly adjacent to the Hubs and priority Corridors, is intended to receive investment to accommodate the improvement and redevelopment of existing sites and new development.

The Hubs are approximately ¼-mile (Major) and ⅛-mile (Minor) in diameter. An additional ⅛-mile beyond the identified Hubs and prioritized Corridors are also well-suited for new growth and are approximately a five-minute walk from the center of one of the Hubs. The full Growth Area (inclusive of orange) ranges from approximately ⅛-mile to ¼-mile from the identified priority corridors and includes areas within 200 feet of the existing sewer network.

Not only are the areas at the center of the identified Major and Minor Hubs prioritized for new growth and public investment, but active, coordinated planning with community engagement should focus on these areas.



The Hubs and Corridors identified by this plan are:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| A. Historic Downtown Hub (Major) | G. Main Street Corridor |
| B. Biscay Road Hub (Major) | H. Bristol Road Corridor |
| C. Hammond Road Hub (Minor) | I. Biscay Road Corridor |
| D. School Street Hub (Minor) | J. School Street Corridor |
| E. Rising Tide Co-op Hub (Minor) | |
| F. Miles Street/High Street Hub (Minor) | |

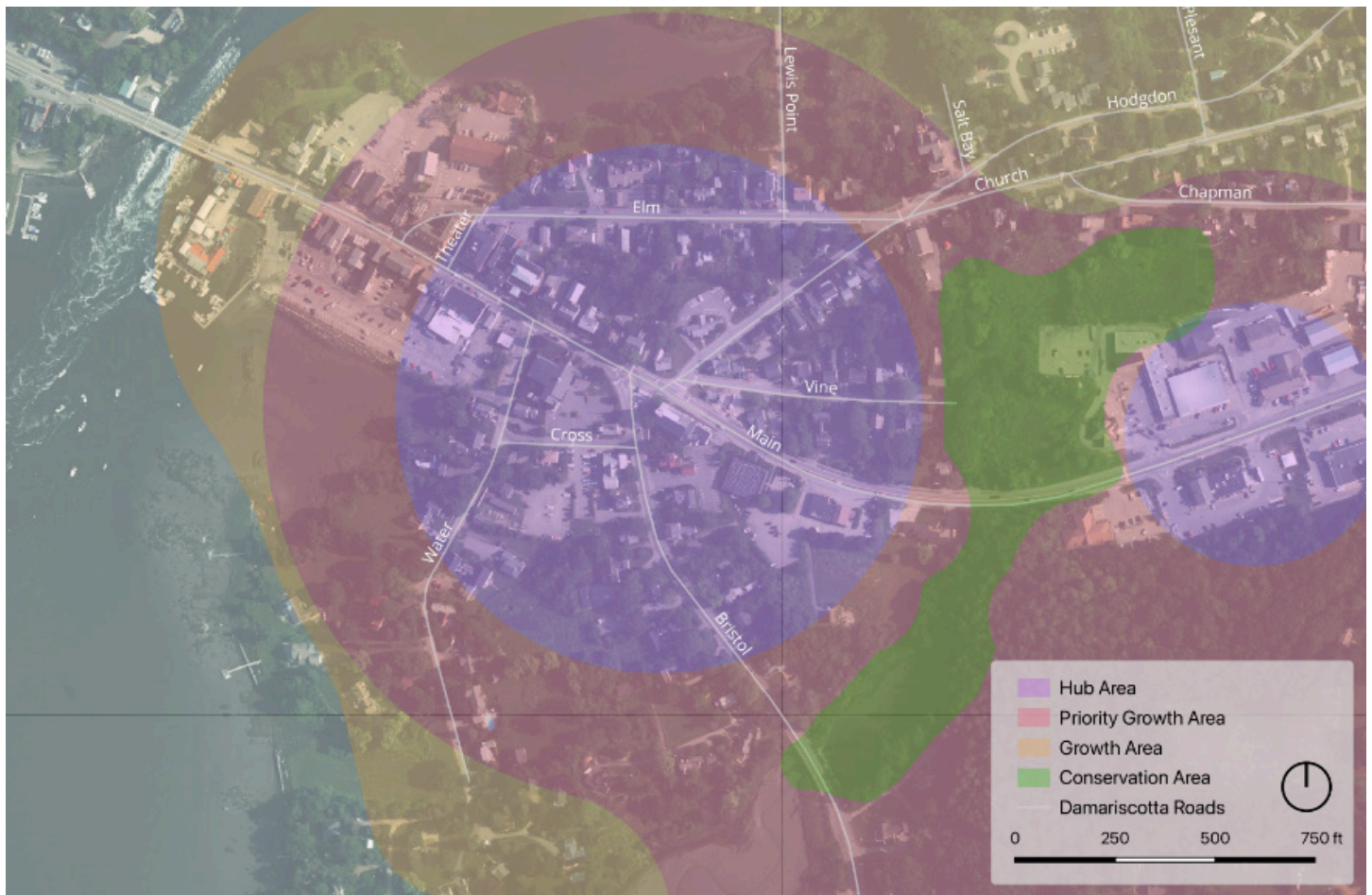
FUTURE LAND USE

A. Historic Downtown Hub (Major)

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

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

Developing a plan specific to the historic downtown area should be a priority in order to address impacts from rising water, congestion, and other issues, and to encourage new investment in the area, including development or redevelopment of underutilized properties. The town should consider a Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) project, with its required Downtown Master Plan, that incorporates input from residents.



FUTURE LAND USE

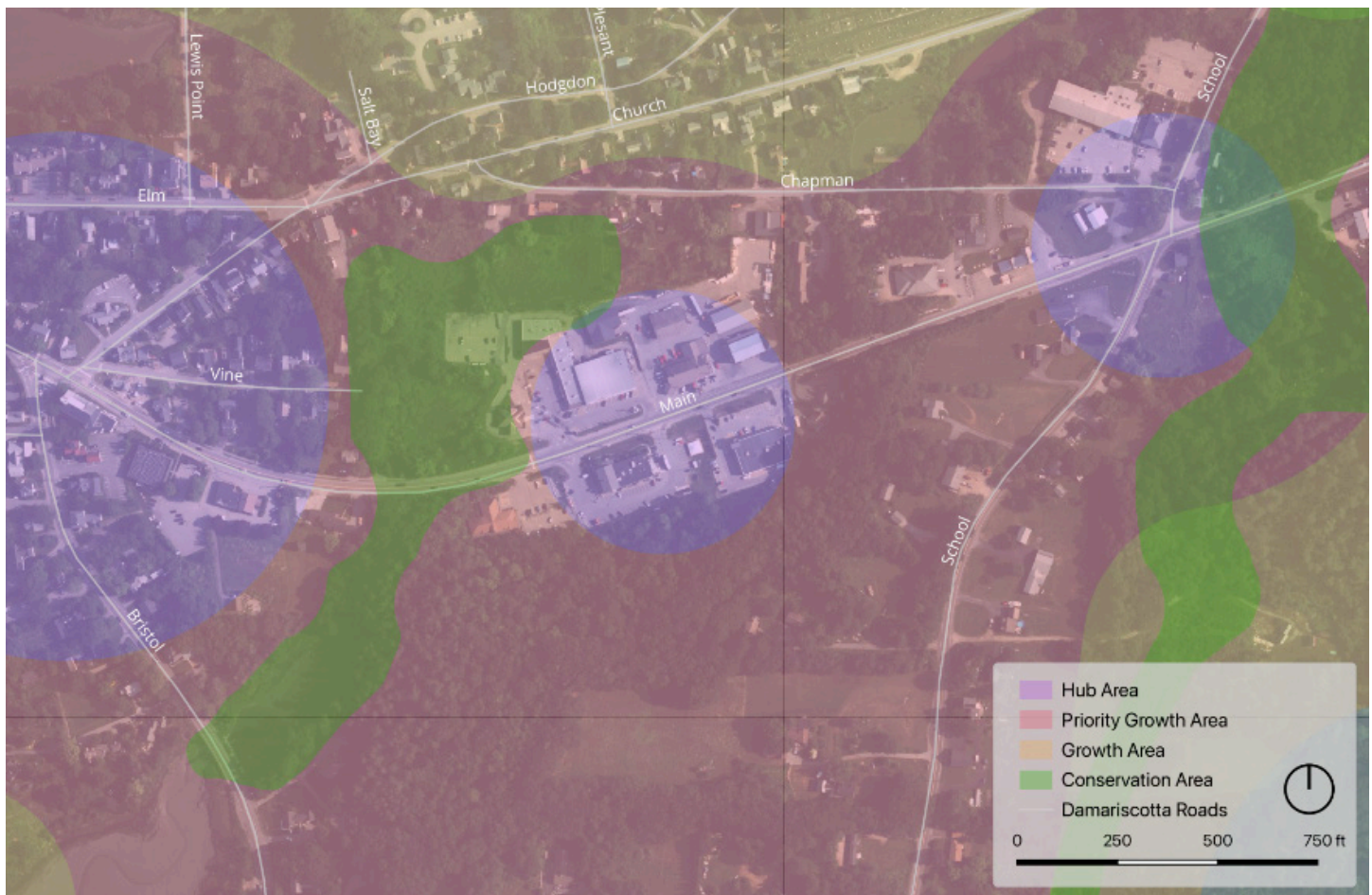
G. Main Street Corridor (south of School Street)

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

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

Downtown Residential Neighborhoods

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



FUTURE LAND USE

E. Rising Tide Co-op Hub (Minor)

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

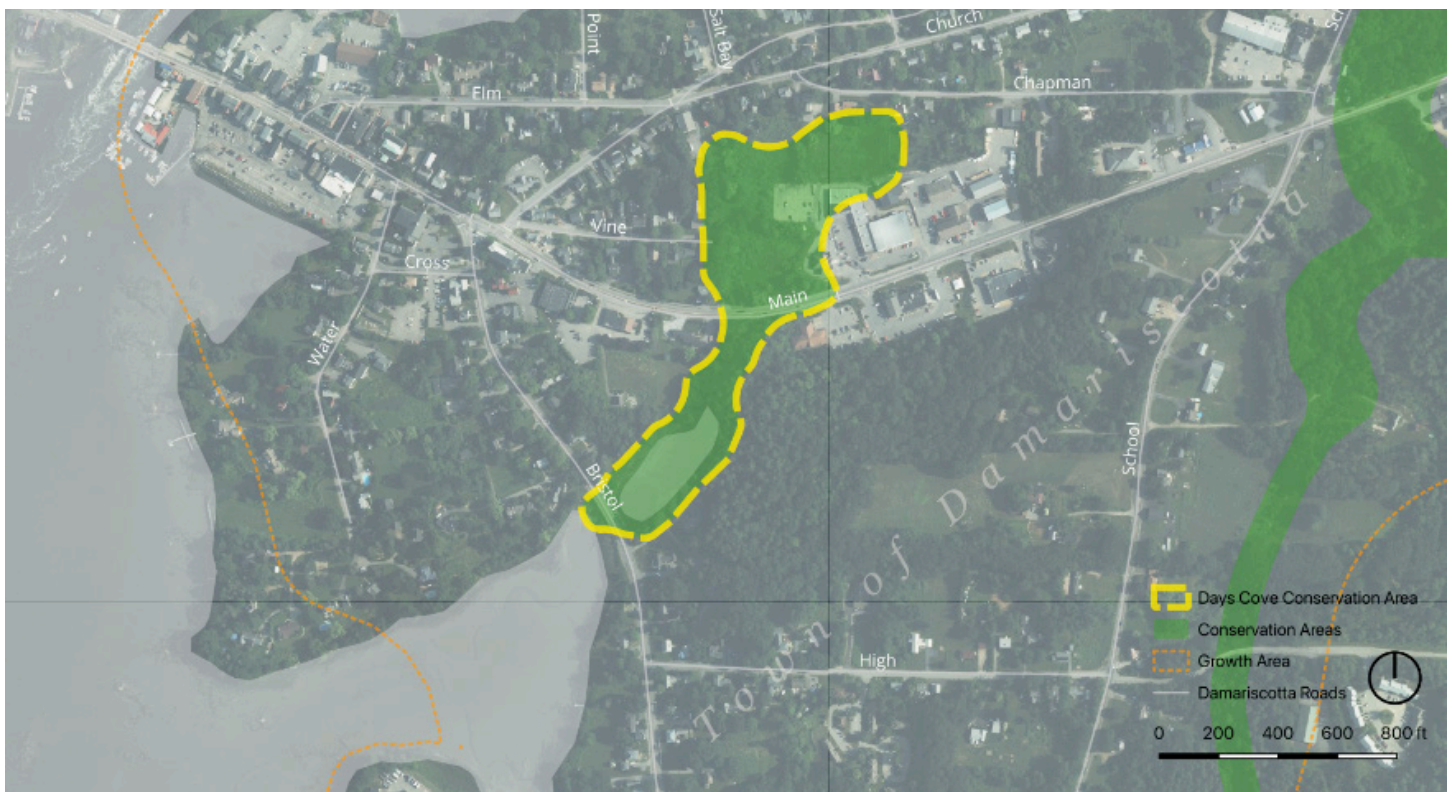
A more efficient land use pattern could accommodate new businesses, add housing, and create a more pleasant environment. The excessive setbacks from the road, overprovision of individual parking, lack of sidewalks, and minimal connections to adjacent areas within this Hub should all be remedied. With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

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



Downtown Conservation Opportunity: Days Cove

The watercourse, which includes the wetlands adjacent to Dollar Tree, the stream draining under Main Street, and the tidal pond under Bristol Road connecting to Days Cove, is a valuable natural asset, due to its proximity to downtown. The protection of this area has environmental and social benefits because green space in and near the downtown area is extremely limited. This area could also provide a pedestrian path connecting Bristol Road with Main Street and possibly extend to Chapman Street with a path to the Damariscotta Historical Society (formerly Mobius) property.



FUTURE LAND USE

D. School Street Hub (Minor)

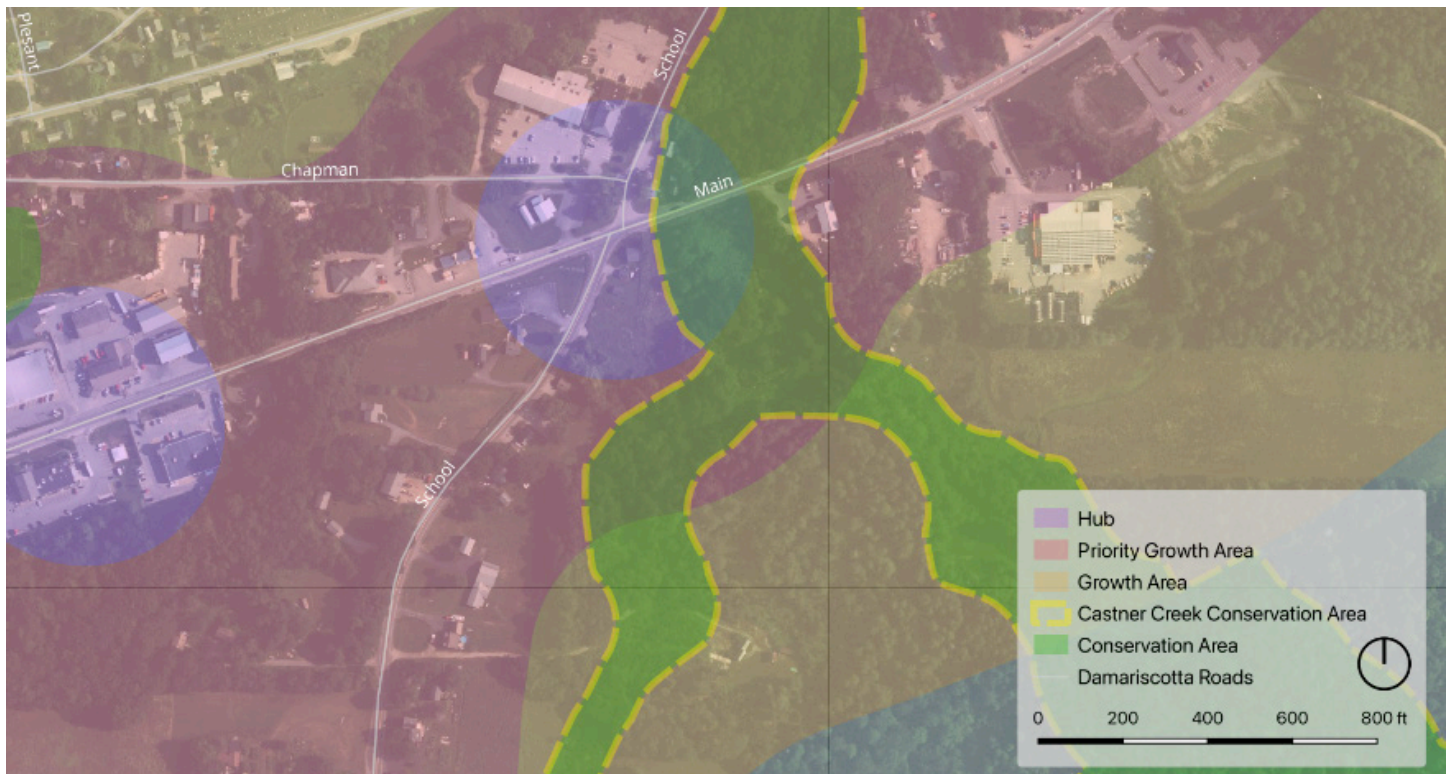
The intersection of School Street with Main Street is notoriously dangerous and problematic, as described in the Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The physical layout of the streets results in high vehicle speeds, difficult turning movements with limited visibility, regular traffic congestion, vehicle accidents, and general frustration. There are no sidewalks to accommodate walkers and the roads are not wide enough for cyclists to safely share with drivers. These issues significantly impact those traveling through and create an unpleasant environment for the surrounding properties. In addition, this is a critical access point for people trying to cross traffic from the north onto School Street and for those trying to access Main Street from areas in the southern part of town. It's also a major cut-through for people coming from the peninsula to access Hannaford and other businesses to the north, so especially problematic in the summer. No accommodations for users other than those driving in automobiles are provided.

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



Downtown Conservation Opportunity: Castner Creek

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



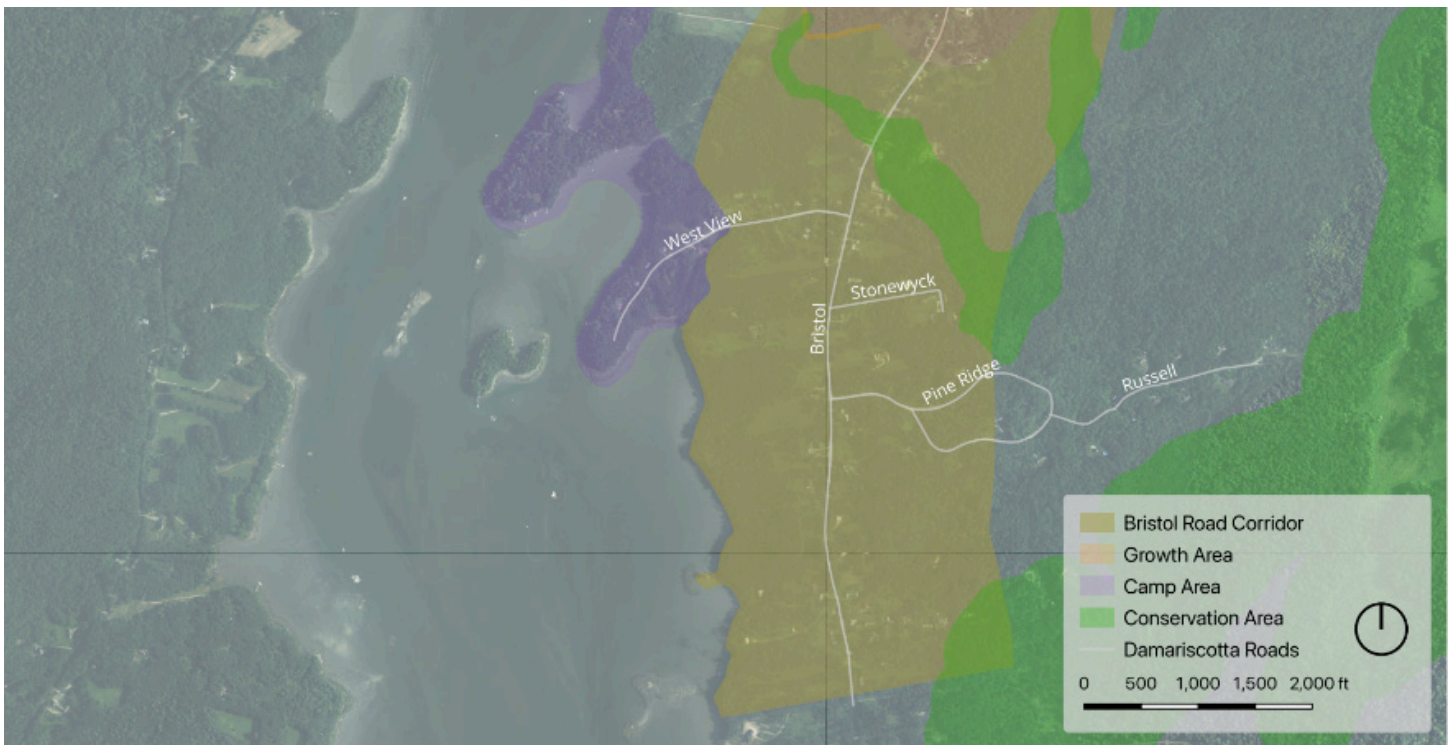
FUTURE LAND USE

H. Bristol Road Corridor

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

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

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



Historic Preservation Opportunity: Northern Bristol Road

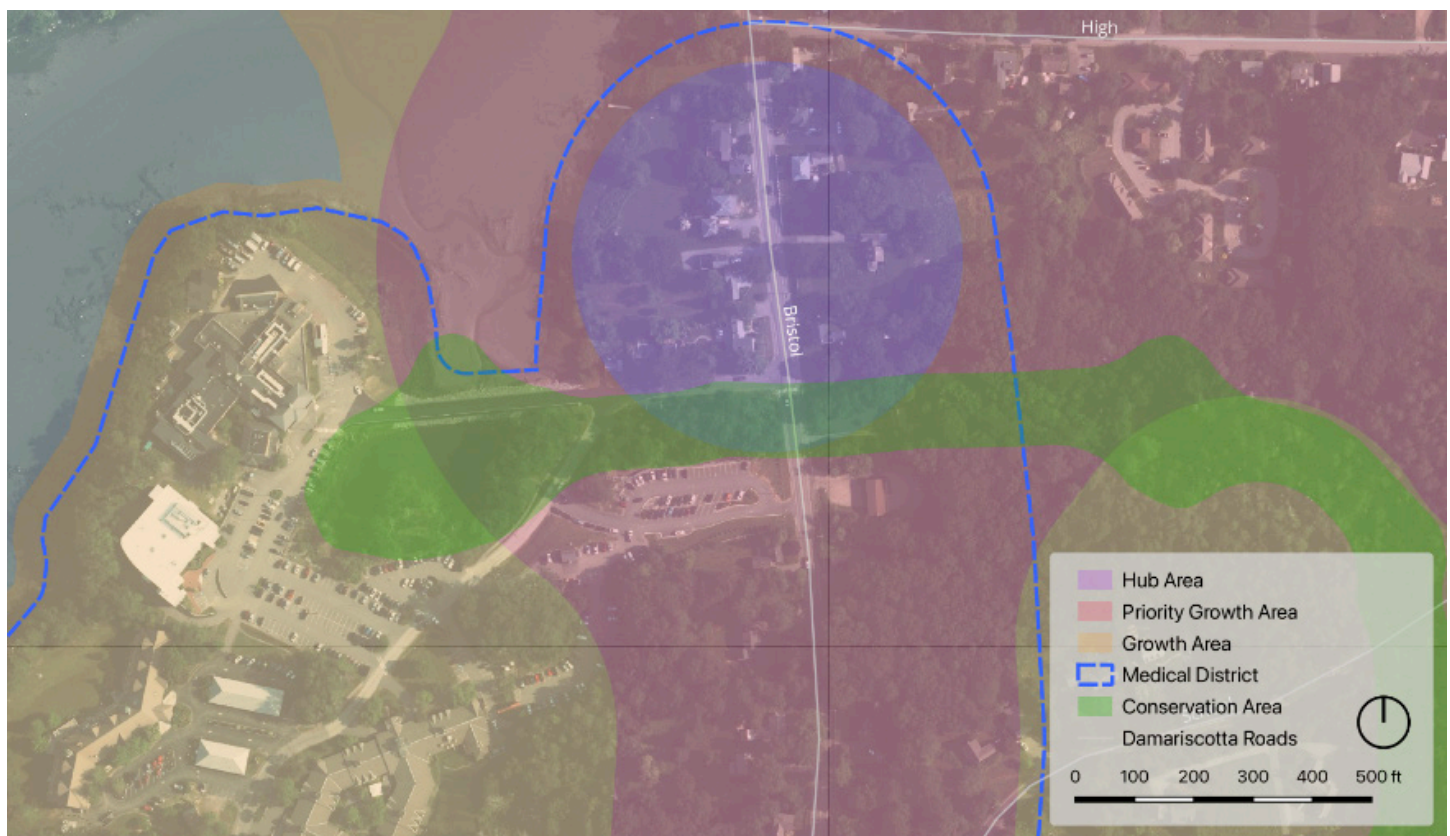
Most existing buildings along the northern stretch of Bristol Road were constructed as residences and designed in the Federal and Greek Revival styles. These former homes illustrate the village’s early 1800s history and its expansion along the road to Bristol. Protecting this historic character needs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

FUTURE LAND USE

F. Miles Street/High Street Hub (Minor)

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

The intersection of Miles Street and Bristol Road should continue to receive investment to improve the pedestrian infrastructure. This intersection must consider Bristol Road's historic character and the hospital's needs, including housing availability, access to and from the Miles Campus, open space, and neighborhood services.



Special Focus Area: Medical District

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

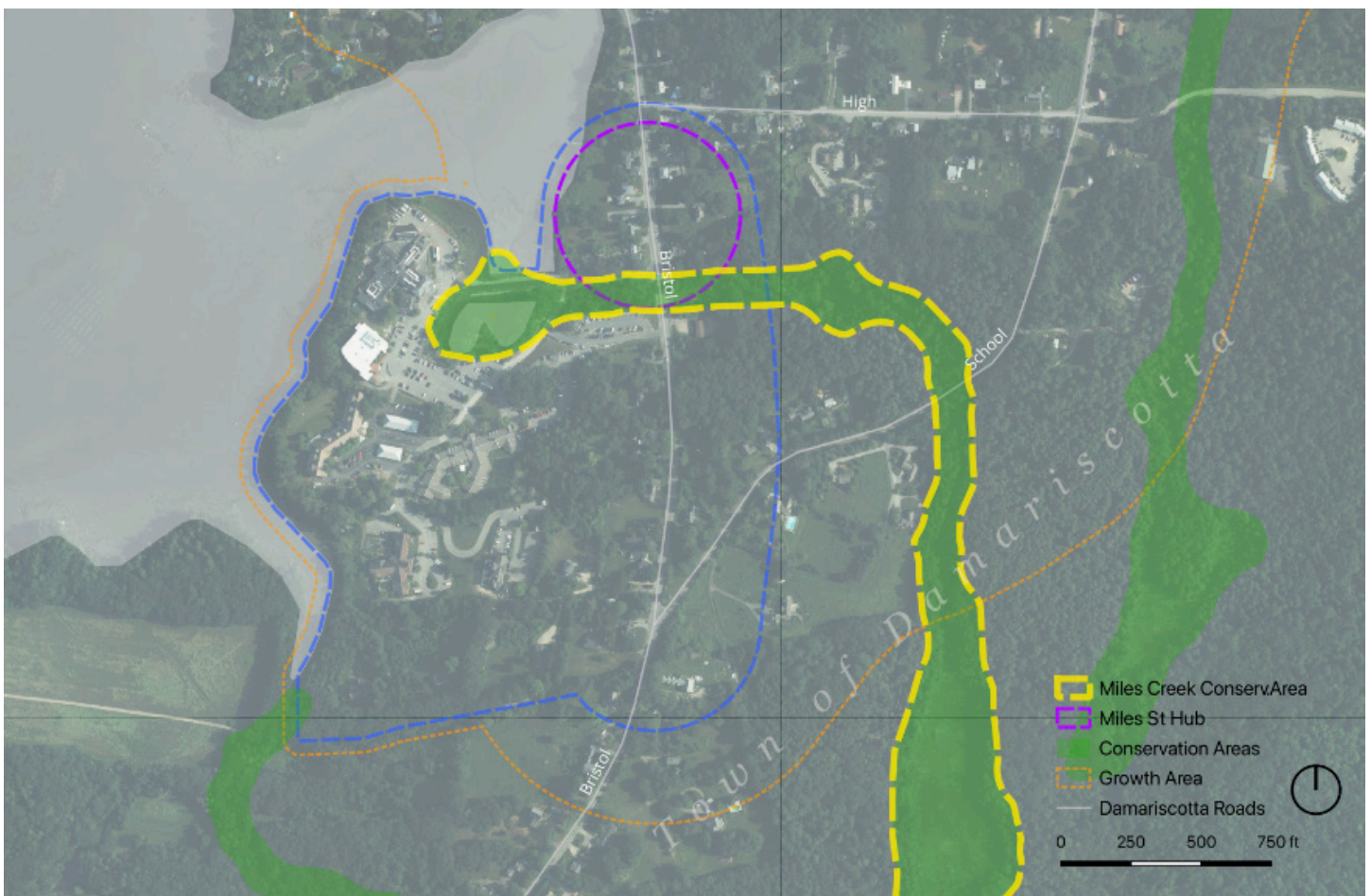
The Hospital's growth and evolution will benefit the Town and the region, and working together to address a wide range of shared issues, including transportation, housing, and environmental concerns, will allow for mutually beneficial solutions.

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



Downtown Conservation Opportunity: Miles Creek

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



FUTURE LAND USE

G. Main Street Corridor (north of School Street)

Navigating the stretch of Main Street from Castner Creek to Hammond Road (approximately ¾ of a mile) is difficult for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and business owners. There is only ~200 feet of sidewalk and a single crosswalk adjacent to the Great Salt Bay Community School (GSBCS). Excessive curb cuts along this stretch of Main Street, and unmanaged traffic speed and flow, make it difficult to enter and exit driveways. This corridor's use by students and young people, many of whom do not have an alternative, makes it especially important to correct.

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

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

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



FUTURE LAND USE

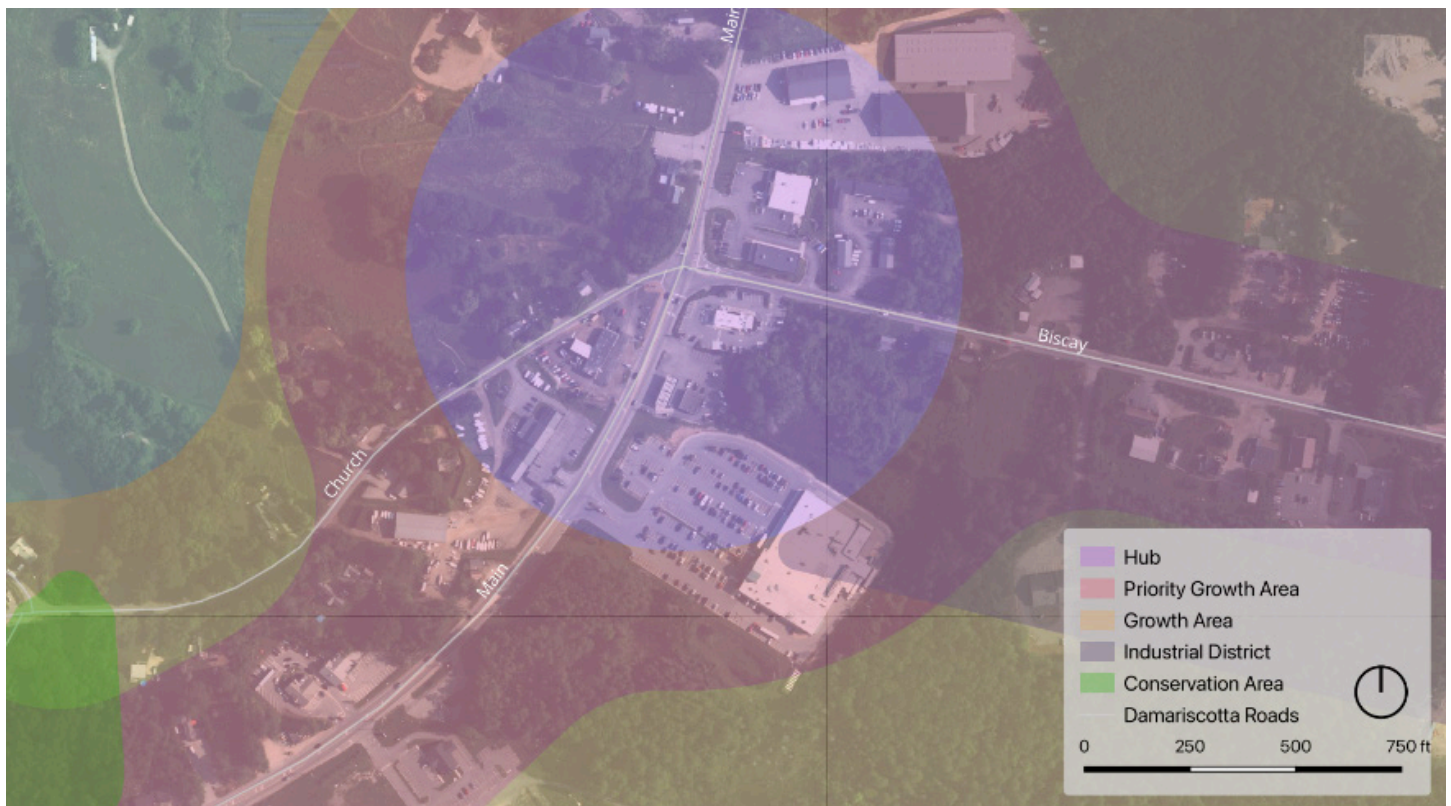
B. Biscay Road Hub (Major)

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

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

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

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



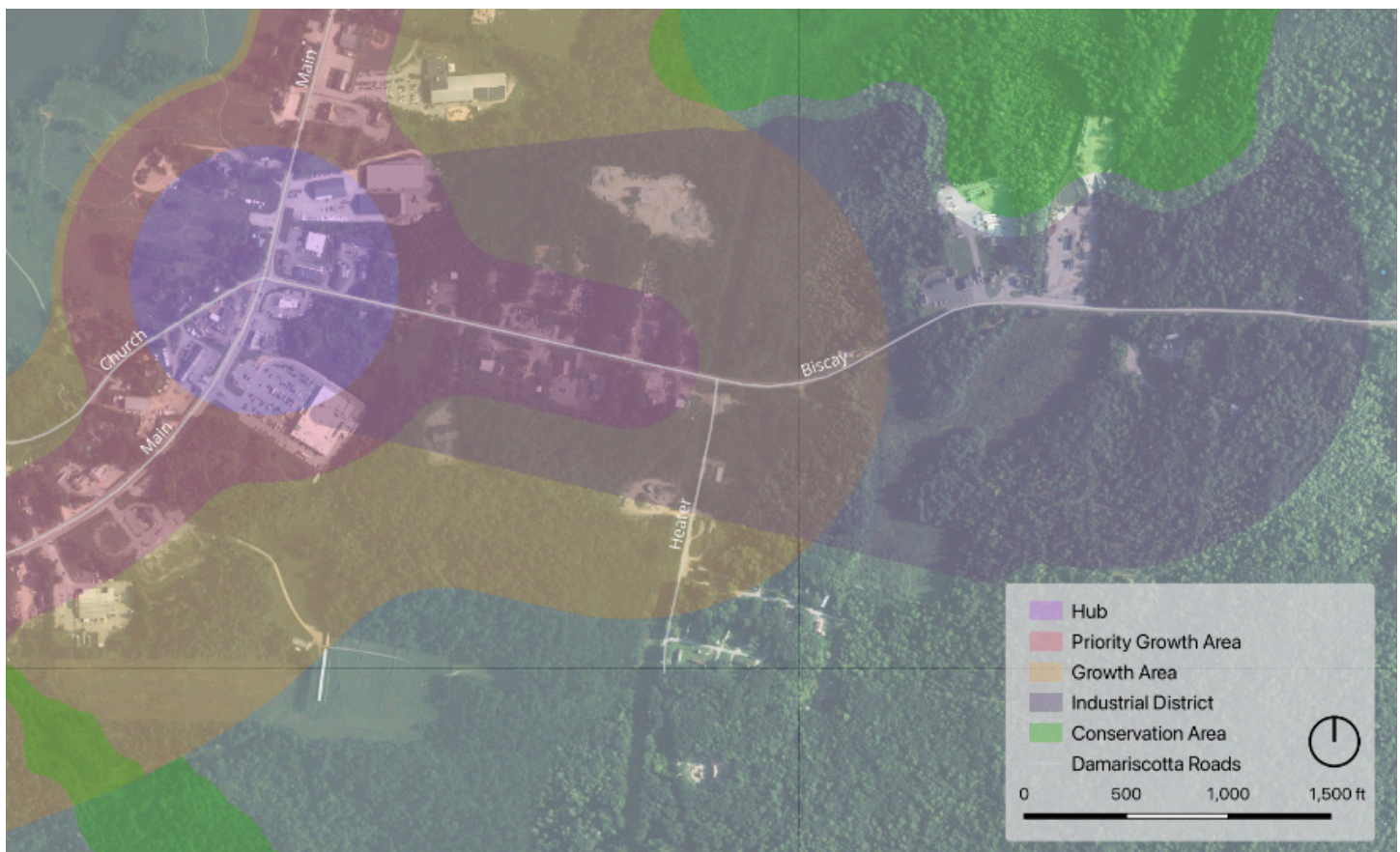
FUTURE LAND USE

I. Biscay Road Corridor

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

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

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

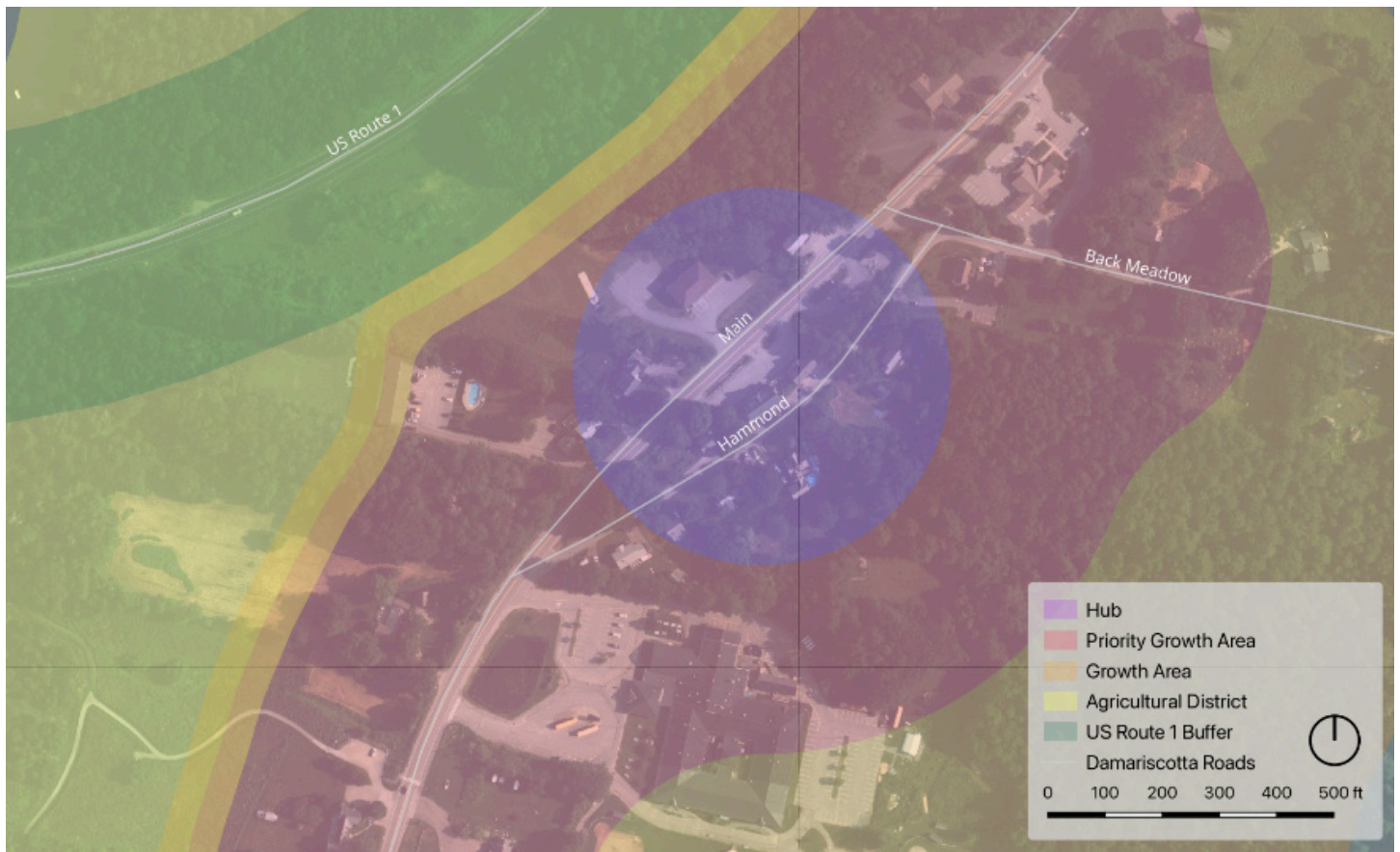


FUTURE LAND USE

C. Hammond Road Hub (Minor)

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

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



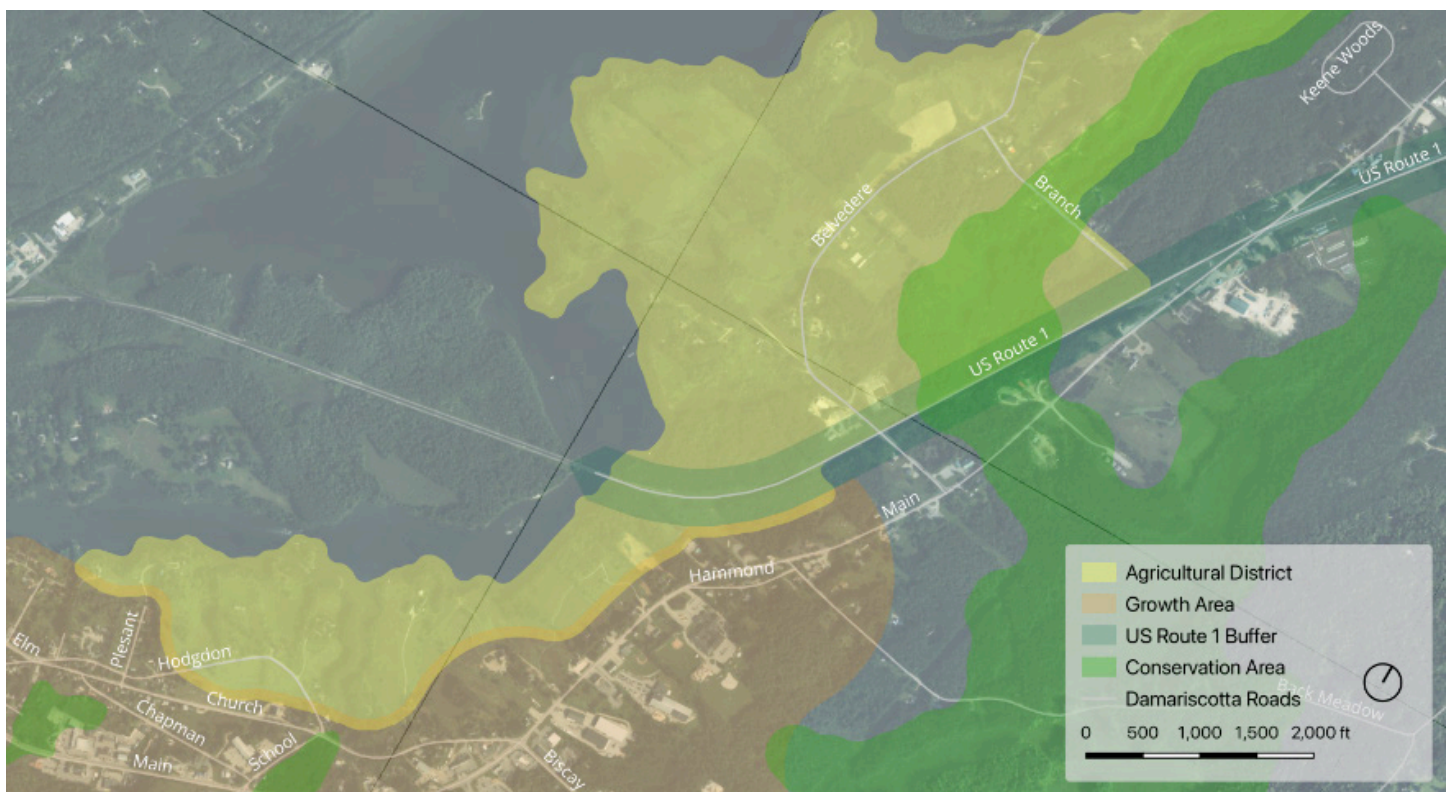
Rural Area

Rural Areas are any sections of Town that are less built up and outside the identified Growth Area. While mainly agricultural or forested in nature, the Rural Area includes some commercial, residential, and other development, which is more intense than what is recommended in this Plan. The community's priorities for the Rural Area include natural conservation, potential agricultural development, and relatively light rural residential development.

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

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

The specific areas below require additional discussion and careful planning by the Town to guide any development because of their unique characteristics compared to the remaining Rural Area.



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

FUTURE LAND USE

Salt Bay

Physically separated from town by US Route 1, this is a particularly scenic stretch of the Salt Bay. Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) owns and manages large portions of this area, and thus, CRCT should be an essential partner in determining the area's future. Belvedere Road, which is a dangerous intersection as it crosses US Route 1, provides the only access to the area from within Damariscotta.

An opportunity to improve access to this area is the former connection of Branch Road and Main Street. The public rights-of-way appear to still exist and, with additional title research, could serve as a path into the area from an improved US Route 1, Main Street, Branch Road intersection.

Round Top Farm

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

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

West of Castner Brook

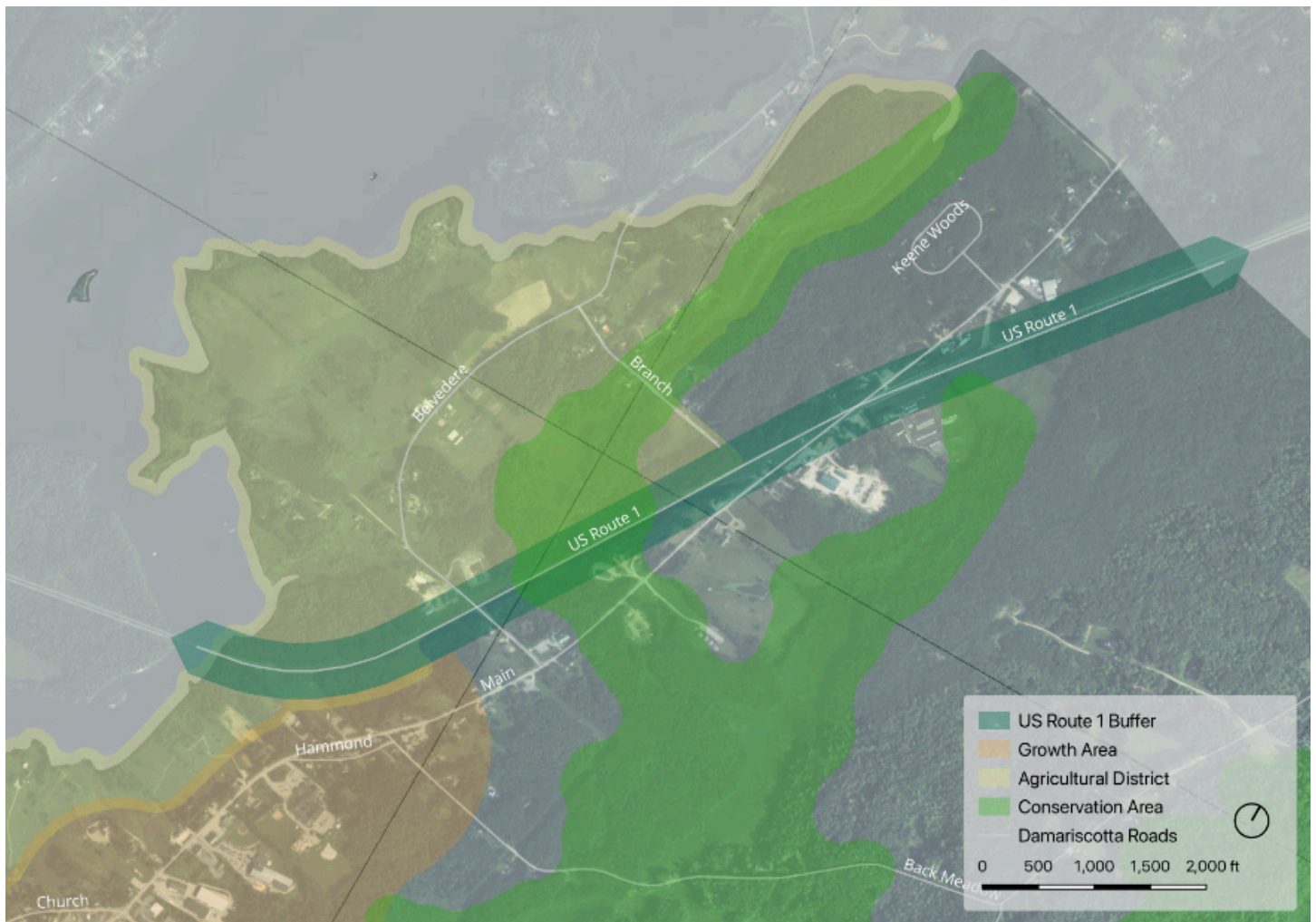
The areas along the Damariscotta River west of Castner Brook and along both sides of Hodgdon Street provide significant scenic and cultural value to the community. The open landscape and limited development in these areas are relatively close to both Major Hubs identified in this Plan but are not served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

FUTURE LAND USE

US Route 1 Buffer Area

US Route 1 is a significant and important feature of the town, separating Salt Bay and Belvedere Road from the rest of Damariscotta. The north/south connection this highway provides is essential to the town's functioning, but it also has liabilities. The Maine DOT has identified the intersection of US Route 1 and Belvedere Road as dangerous enough to warrant a conversion into a roundabout (planned for 2025).

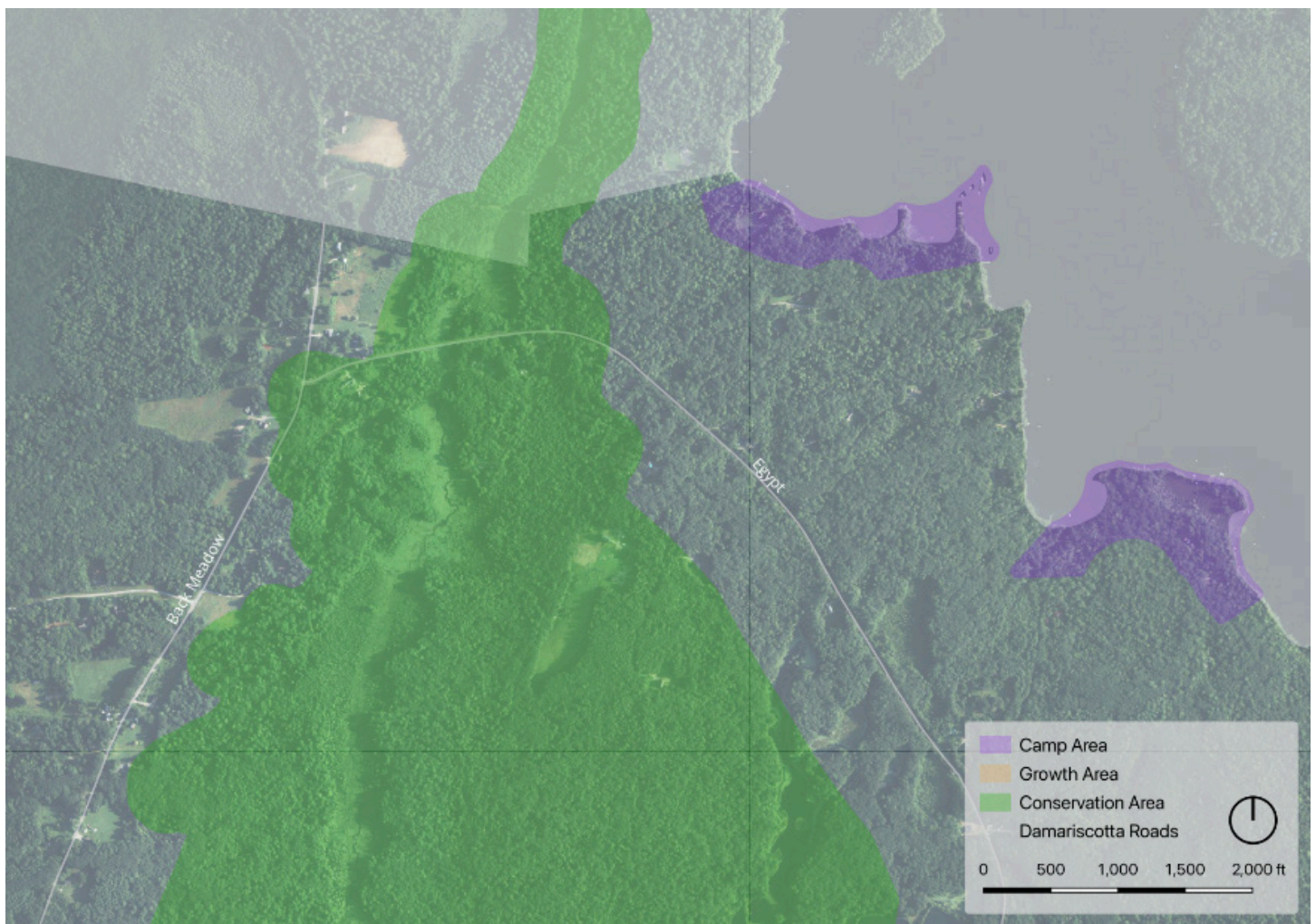
There are currently few points of access onto US Route 1 within Damariscotta. This limit should be maintained to keep traffic moving along the highway safely and to discourage strip development. The Town should consider ordinances that require new development along Midcoast Road, Central Street, Belvedere,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



FUTURE LAND USE

Pond and Riverfront Camps

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



FUTURE LAND USE

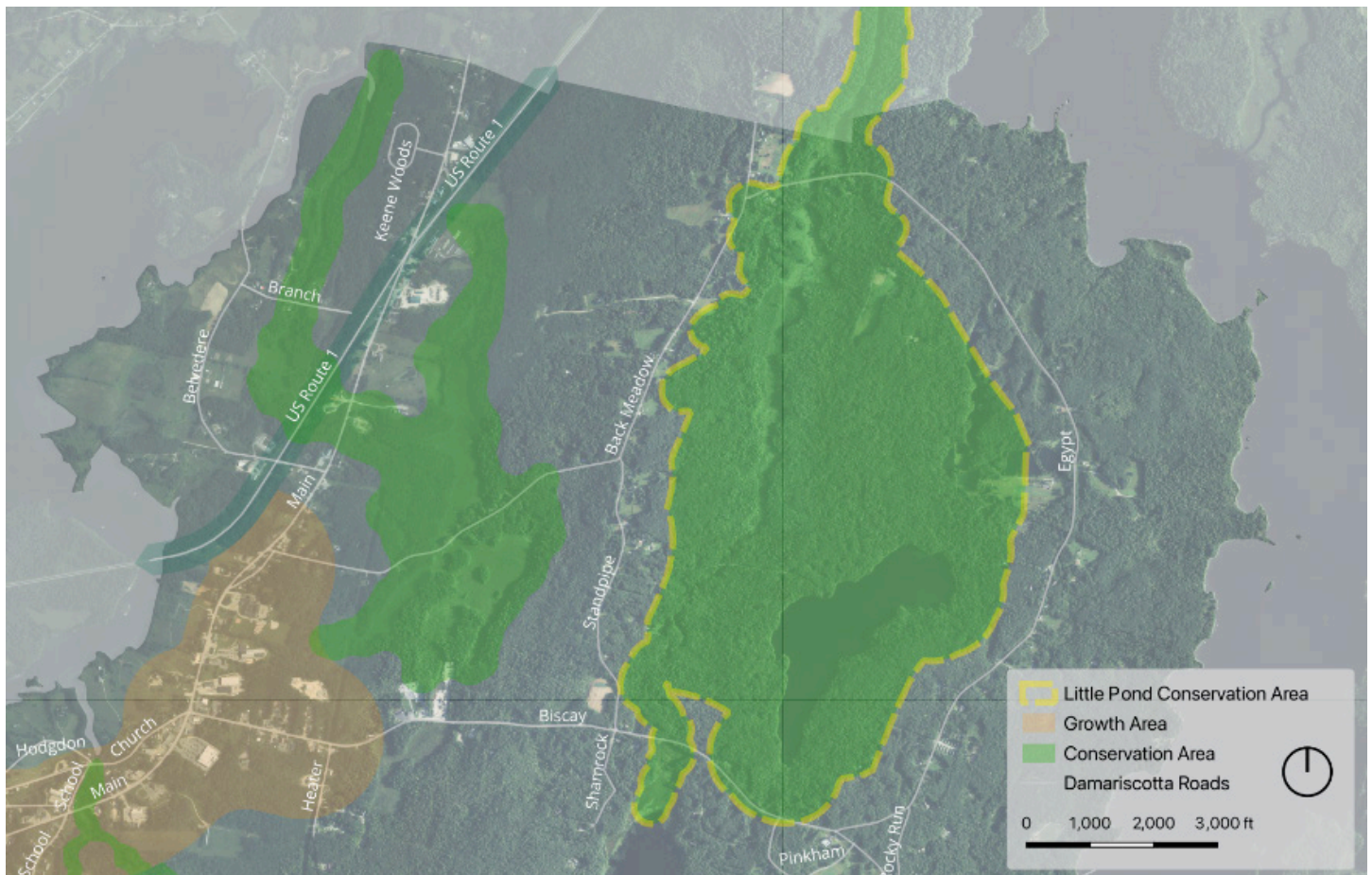
Critical Rural Areas

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

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

Little Pond Conservation Area

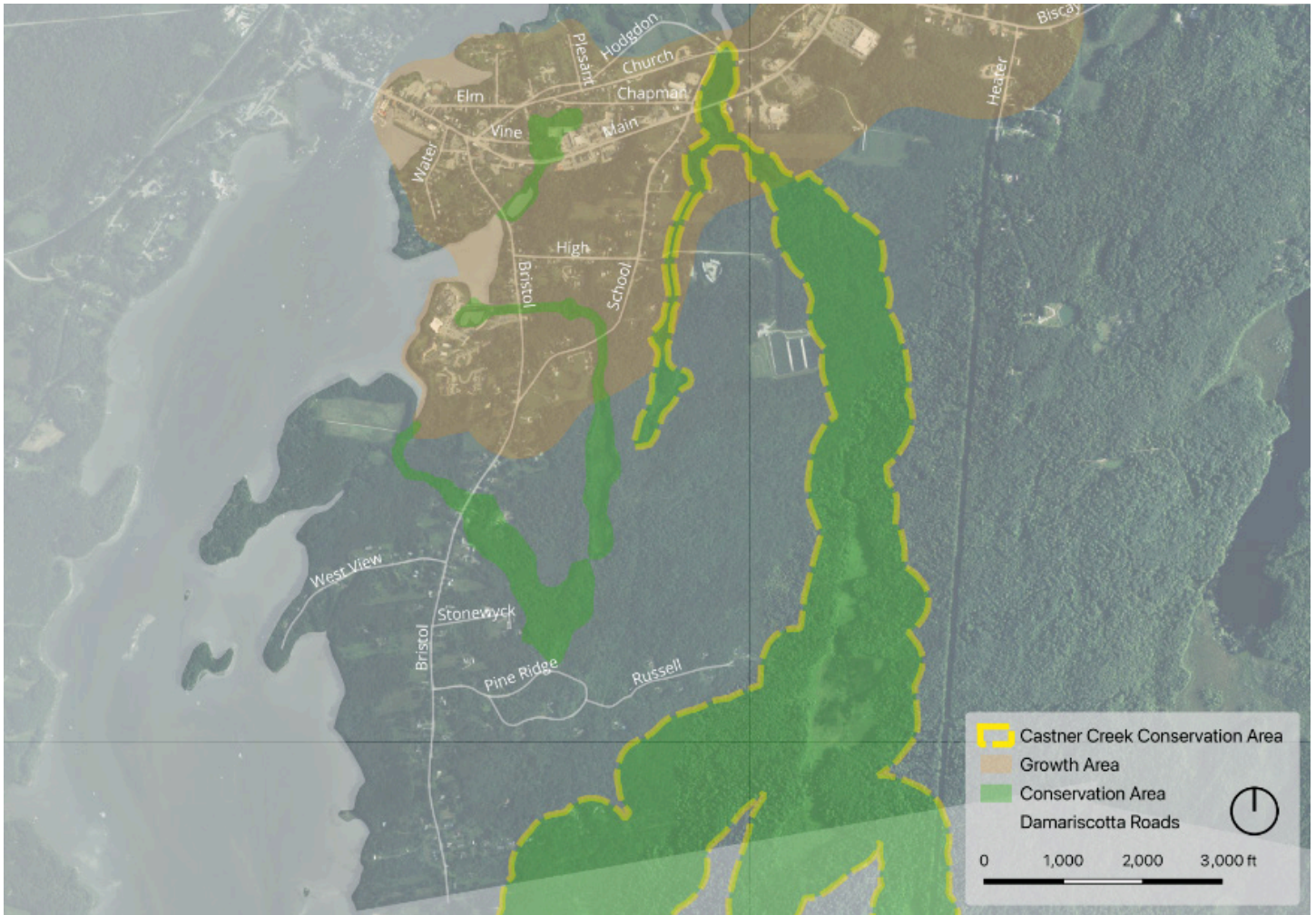
As the sole source of the drinking water the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District (GSBSD) provides, Little Pond is a critical area to protect. While the GSBSD owns significant land surrounding Little Pond, the Town does not currently have any ordinances or regulations to protect the water supply. In addition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



FUTURE LAND USE

Castner Creek Conservation Corridor

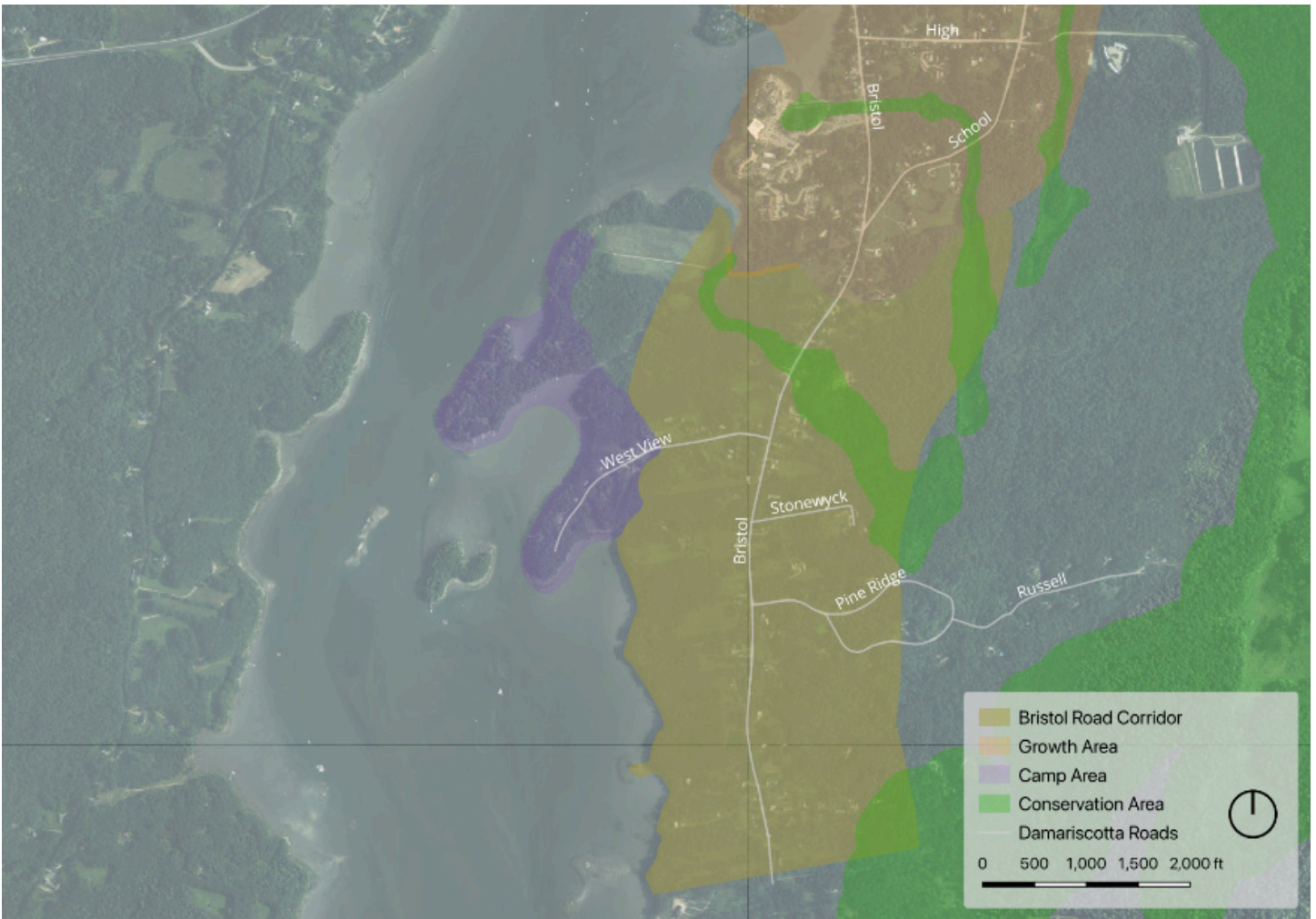
This natural corridor runs the length of Town, connecting the Halfmoon Pond Preserve and the wetlands and natural areas in Bristol with the Castner Creek Community Forest in the north and the Damariscotta River. This stretch of relatively undisturbed nature has the potential to provide a vital connection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



FUTURE LAND USE

H. Bristol Road (south of School Street)

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



TAKING ACTION

















TAKING ACTION: GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

Priority Goals

Based on public input and feedback throughout the development of the plan, the Comprehensive Planning Committee identified eight priority goals from the 38 goals included within the plan. Goals are the overarching targets as identified through public engagement. Every goal has corresponding SMART policies (aka objectives) and recommended action strategies found in the topic-specific inventory chapters, which provide the roadmap for future decision-making and implementation.

The goals throughout the plan are interrelated and greatly influence one another. Decisions in areas like housing or economic development have impacts on other areas like transportation, natural resources, and the costs of providing municipal services. Thinking holistically and working collaboratively will be critical to advance the goals in this plan that will impact Damariscotta over the next ten years and beyond.

While all the goals contained in the plan are important to the future of Damariscotta, the following priorities present the most urgency:

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

Implementation

There is an Implementation Matrix in the Implementation and Evaluation section that outlines who is responsible for the implementation of each goal, the estimated timelines for the initiation and completion of action strategies, the anticipated cost, and any additional resources or partners needed to accomplish the goal. Because many of the goals are multi-faceted, dependent on the completion of other policies or actions, have an associated cost, or require coordination and cooperation among multiple entities, the matrix is a proposed blueprint for tracking progress that may shift over time based on funding availability, human capacity, or other municipal impacts.

TAKING ACTION: REGIONAL COORDINATION

Many of the issues addressed in this plan require a collaborative approach with neighboring communities and regional organizations. A regional approach is especially important in smaller communities such as Damariscotta, where limited resources constrain the ability of the Town alone to provide enhancements over and above the current level of service. Furthermore, issues like housing affordability, economic development, transportation systems, and the environment cross municipal boundaries. While the Town can certainly make some progress on its own, combined efforts to tackle larger issues will yield better, more sustainable results.



Housing

A regional approach to addressing housing needs provides opportunities for municipalities to coordinate strategies and share resources. Residents of surrounding communities from the Pemaquid Peninsula and Newcastle, and as far away as Edgecomb and Boothbay also responded to the community survey conducted as part of this planning effort. Many of these “outside” respondents felt compelled to respond to the survey because they work, shop and/or volunteer in Damariscotta. Addressing known housing issues allows those within the broader region to potentially relocate to Damariscotta and reduce individual transportation costs. An added benefit is the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and traffic leading to and from surrounding communities. Further, some municipalities are simply better equipped to take on a greater share of regional housing production goals due to infrastructure constraints in other communities. Damariscotta is well-suited to be a leader in this regard.

Economy

Strengthening a town’s economy can help all communities within the region. Businesses choose to locate within Damariscotta because we are the service center and economic hub of central Lincoln County, and a tourist destination due to our natural resources and recreational opportunities. With the influx of seasonal visitors and residents from neighboring towns who work, shop, recreate and receive services here, our local businesses thrive. Maintaining our economic strength is vital to the economic health of the region.

Transportation

Coordinated transportation solutions ensure regional connectivity. Route 1B, which runs through Damariscotta's pedestrian-oriented downtown, serves as both a major state route and a local service road, as well as the primary access point to the Pemaquid Peninsula and neighboring towns. In the community surveys, public transit options were found to be lacking or severely lacking with similar responses given for access to regional transportation (railway), taxis or other rideshare, and accessibility for people with disabilities. Respondents also felt bicycle facilities were severely lacking or lacking.

Damariscotta will need to continue to work with the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and neighboring towns on ongoing transportation planning initiatives, infrastructure improvements and advocacy for public transportation. Additionally, Damariscotta should collaborate with Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust to connect trail systems for pedestrians.



Natural Resource Protection

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

Public Facilities

Damariscotta relies on regional service providers and nonprofit organizations to deliver cost-effective public services to residents. The Town collaborates with neighboring communities to share public services, such as waste management at the Nobleboro-Jefferson Transfer Station in Nobleboro, library services at Skidompha Library located in Damariscotta, and elementary school administration with AOS93/Central Lincoln County School System. Additionally, Damariscotta high schoolers can attend Lincoln Academy, an independent secondary school in Newcastle or other secondary schools in Maine. Damariscotta also shares a town staff position with Newcastle. The Town should continue to explore collaborations with neighboring communities and service providers to reduce costs for town residents.



POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Overview

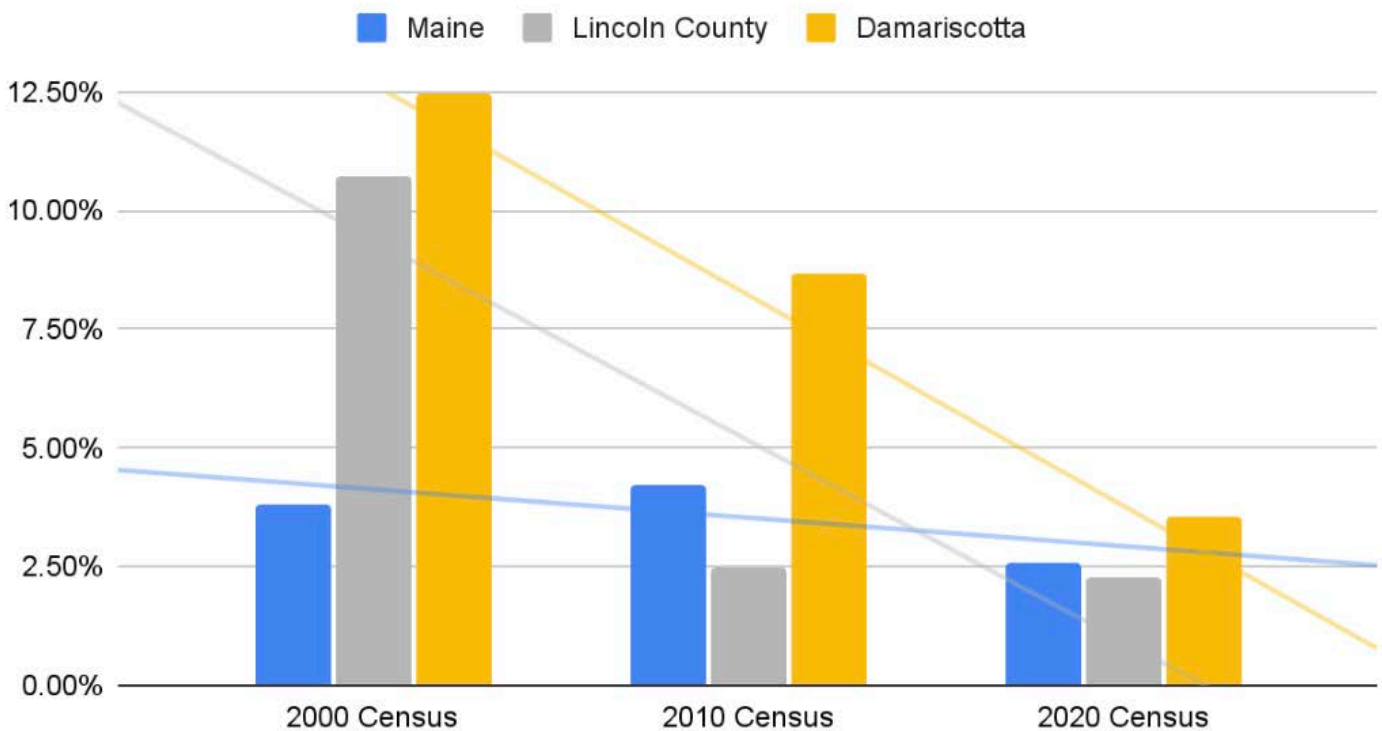
Predicting future population and demographic trends is essential to comprehensive planning: these trends impact all facets of the community, including housing, the economy, transportation patterns, education, and fiscal capacity. A sustainable, demographically diverse population is essential to support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

Projected Population & Demographic Changes

Damariscotta's 2020 population was 2,297 residents. Between 1990 and 2000 the population grew by 12.45%, but the rate of population growth decreased to 8.67% between 2000 and 2010, and 3.56% between 2010 and 2020 for an average of 8.2% per decade. This mirrors the rate of growth for Lincoln County where the population exploded between 1990 and 2000, but has since slowed down.

While the general slowdown in population growth over the past three decades is similar for the state of Maine, Lincoln County, and Damariscotta (see chart below), growth in Damariscotta has been greater proportionally than the State or County; even in times of population slowdown, Damariscotta is still growing faster than surrounding communities in the region and across the State.

Population Rate of Change from Previous Decades



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

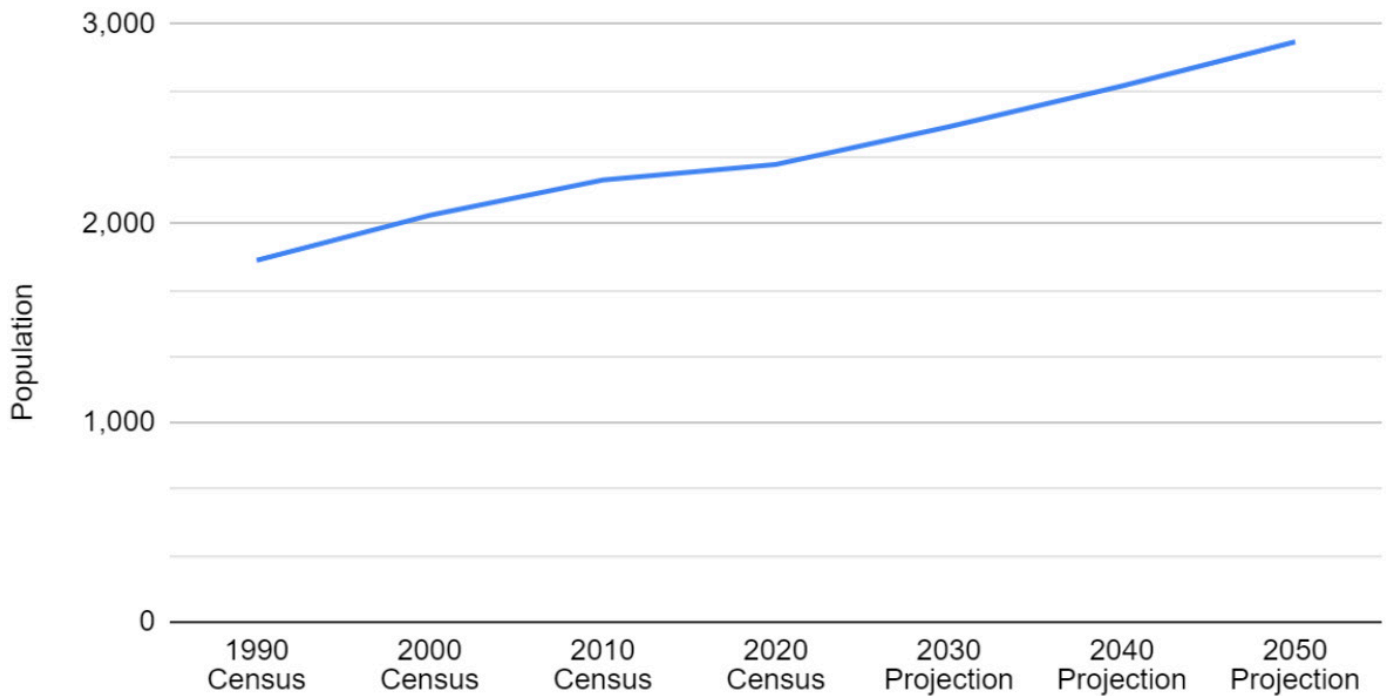
POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

In-Migration

Net in-migration (movement) into the community makes up the majority of Damariscotta’s population growth; more than 50% of the population in 2020 are people who migrated into the community during the past three decades. While specific numbers for Damariscotta are not available, data from the U.S. Census Bureau notes that the population of Lincoln County grew by 1,244 individuals (or 3.5%) between April 2020 and July 2023.²

If net in-migration trends continue, Damariscotta could see a population of almost 3,000 by the 2050 census, predominantly made up of people who have moved into town from elsewhere. This population projection is shown on the Average Projected Scenario chart below.

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

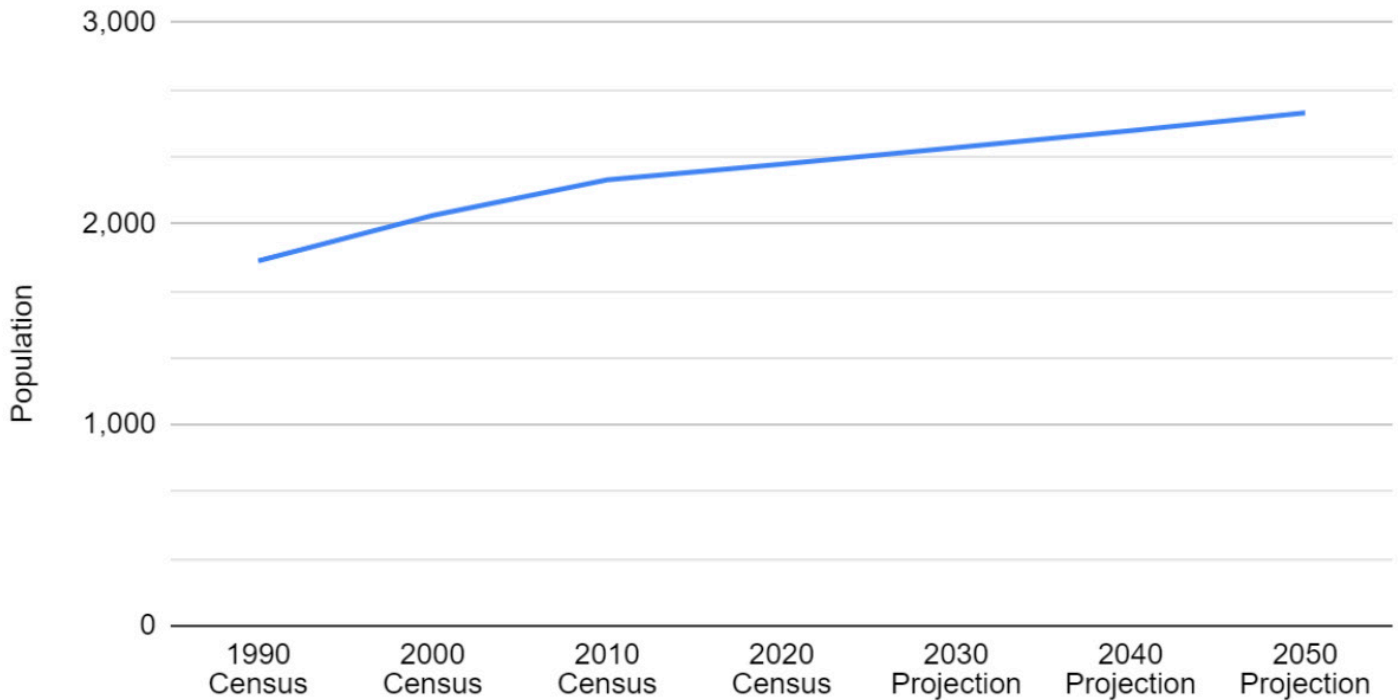


² US Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023 (CO-EST2023-POP).

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

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

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



In either scenario, the demographics of Damariscotta (particularly in age distribution) are anticipated to change due to continued in-migration.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Additionally, the death rate has far outpaced births in Damariscotta decade over decade. As illustrated below, deaths in the community rose since 1990 but the birth rate has slowed down.

	1990	Impact on Population	2000	Impact on Population	2010	Impact on Population
Beginning Population	1815		2041		2218	
Births (during decade)	199	+11%	165	+8%	135	+6%
Deaths (during decade)	300	(-17%)	378	(-19%)	407	(-18%)
Natural Change (Births-Deaths)	(-101)	(-6%)	(-213)	(-10%)	(-272)	(-12%)
Net Migration*	327	+18%	390	+19%	351	+16%

*Net Migration is made up of people moving into the community during the decade. This number is calculated by using the end population (e.g. the population at the start of the next decade, per the US Census Bureau) and subtracting natural change data.
 Source: US Census Bureau (for population numbers); Town Reports on Vital Statistics (for birth and death data)

Again, specific data is not available for Damariscotta but the County saw the death rate outpace the birth rate by almost 2:1 (1,061 deaths, 552 births) between 2020 and 2023. Thus, the increase in population in those years continues to be net migration into the county.

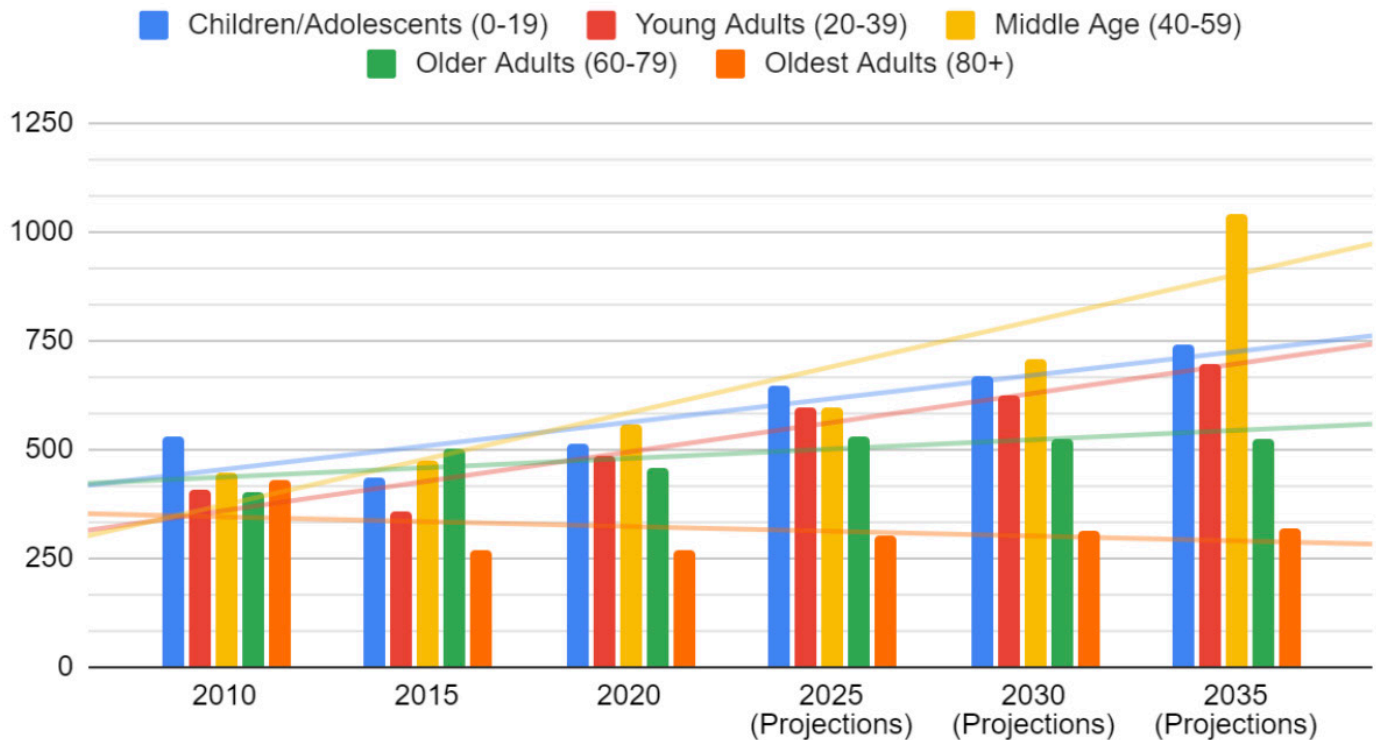
Family Population

According to the 2020 American Community Survey, approximately 26.4% of Damariscotta’s population is between the ages of 25 and 44 with a median age of 41.6, which is younger than the median age of 51.2 for Lincoln County. Additionally, about 14.6% of Damariscotta’s population is between the ages of 5 and 14 years old.



POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Distribution by Cohort Projections



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

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan indicated that net in-migration was likely a result of an increase in retirees locating to the community, but recent net in-migration data coupled with the increase (between 2015 and 2020) in school-aged children and parent-aged adults as shares of the total population data tell a different story: one of adults who are staying in the area or families who are relocating to the area. While there is still a large subset of the population that is older than 65 (approximately 26.2%) the increase of adults of prime child-rearing age (between the ages of 25 and 44) and school-aged children (between the ages of 5 and 14) suggests that the area is becoming more popular with families. This trend, also seen in the neighboring Town of Newcastle, is supported by the net in-migration data shown above and is projected to continue into the future.

One likely factor is the reputation of Great Salt Bay Community School (the local K-8 school) and Lincoln Academy, the semi-private high school children of Damariscotta can attend for free. Other factors may be the impact of work-from-home trends due to technology changes, the COVID-19 pandemic making living and working in less densely populated areas more attractive, and climate change with people moving to New England from other places in the country considered to be less safe due to wildfires and other natural disasters.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

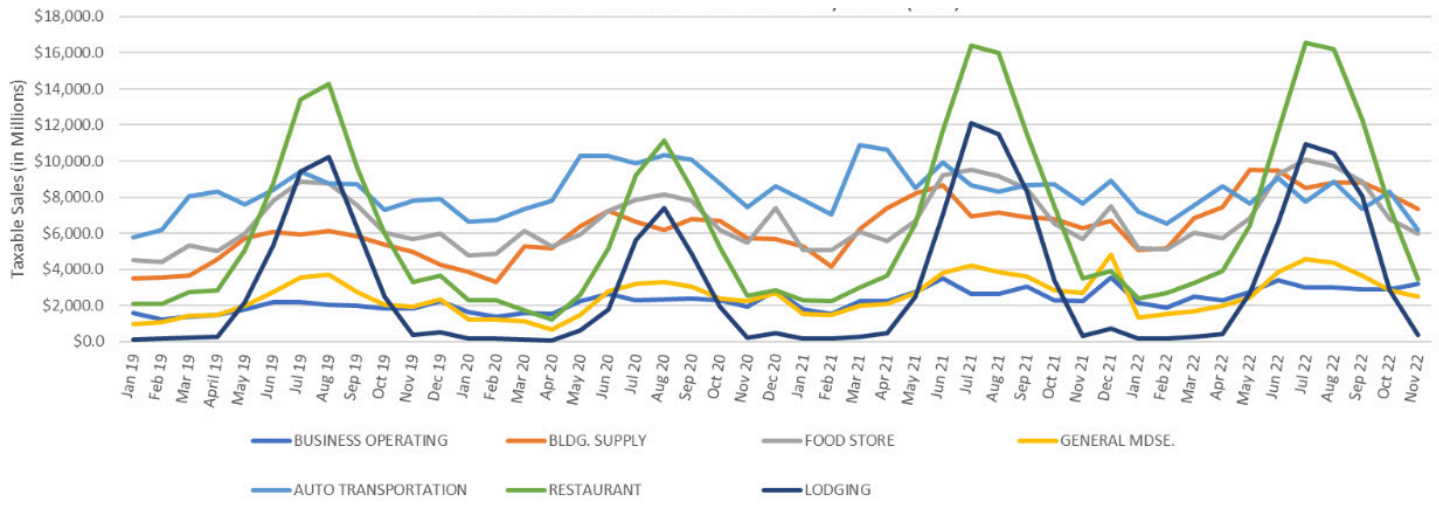
Seasonal Population

According to US Census data, there were 271 seasonal properties (with capacity of 2 – 8+ people) in Damariscotta in 2020, an increase of 46% from 186 properties in 2010. This yields a range of 300 to 1500 seasonal residents. If, during the middle of the summer, it is assumed that 90% of the seasonal houses are occupied, with an average of 4 to 6 persons, there would be about 1,084 seasonal residents or overnight tourists* on any given summer day. This may be a result of the proliferation of sites like Airbnb or VRBO, which make marketing short-term rentals easier, or an increase in the number of seasonal properties used by their owners for only a portion of the year.

*Overnight tourists include Airbnb or short-term rentals. According to data from AirDNA.co, a website that provides vacation rental data analytics, the average occupancy rate for short-term rentals listed on Airbnb or VRBO in Damariscotta in August is 98%.

Seasonal residents, overnight tourists, and day-trip tourists are considered to be an integral part of the economic fabric of Damariscotta, as discussed further in the Economy chapter. The chart below shows a large seasonal spike in regional lodging sales and restaurant sales during the summer months which indicates these sectors in particular are reliant on seasonal traffic.

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



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

In addition to seasonal residents, overnight tourists, and day-trip tourists to town, there are daytime employees, shoppers, and essential service users.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Service Center Implications

Damariscotta's location along Coastal Route 1 allows it to provide a myriad of services to the adjoining Pemaquid Peninsula communities and the adjoining inland Great Salt Bay/Damariscotta Lake towns. As a service center community, Damariscotta is disproportionately impacted by growth in the surrounding communities of Newcastle, Jefferson, Bremen, Nobleboro, Bristol, South Bristol, and others. These communities benefit from healthcare, social service, retail, and employment opportunities in Damariscotta. Bristol, for example, is expected to grow at a rate that far surpasses Damariscotta (according to projections in their recent Comprehensive Plan update). However, Bristol does not have a large grocer or major commercial retailers so residents primarily come to Damariscotta to shop or work. Planning for growth in surrounding communities (for example, working on alleviating traffic concerns on major regional thoroughfares such as Bristol Road, School Street, Biscay Road, and portions of Route 1B) will be of the utmost importance during the life of this Plan.

The largest area employer, MaineHealth LincolnHealth/Miles Campus Hospital complex, including a residential complex for 137 older adults, brings more than 1,100 employees into town on any given workday, summer or winter, plus about 160 out-patient and additional visitors. Most employees of the hospital are commuting by car to Damariscotta from elsewhere in the region.

Damariscotta's position as a service center brings unique challenges. In addition to full-time residents, seasonal residents and overnight tourists, and people associated with Miles Hospital, there are shoppers and day-trip tourists in Damariscotta. On an average July day, there may be more than 1,455 shoppers and day-trip tourists in and around downtown.³

In any season, there is a daytime population served by Damariscotta amenities that is far higher than the resident population, especially clustered within the downtown and medical area.

Issues affecting daytime employees are detailed further in the Economy chapter but include the need for local childcare options, lack of adequate parking, and a myriad of traffic issues along regional thoroughfares.



³ Shoppers estimated from Reny's average July day customers - doubled to account for other downtown businesses; day-trip tourists based on 133 harbor parking lot spaces at a rate of turn-over 4 times per day and an average of 2.5 persons per car.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Increased Demand for Services


As the demographics of the community begin to change, the increase in adults of child-bearing age and children will result in increased demands on the existing school system. Hence, family-friendly planning will be essential. Some critical components of family-friendly planning include accessible green spaces and recreation areas, a diverse range of housing options in both the rental and owner-occupied housing sectors, and available childcare. As children age, it is important to provide recreational opportunities. Currently, the YMCA provides a playground for school-aged children and Great Salt Bay School has basketball courts, but the Town does not have a Parks & Recreation Department nor its own public playgrounds for toddlers or younger children, ball fields, courts, or other sporting facilities. More discussion on anticipated demands is described in the Housing, Economy, and Recreation chapters.



Demographics

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

According to the American Community Survey estimates, Damariscotta has the second-lowest median household income in Lincoln County (\$48,241 in 2020), and the largest percentage of renter-occupied housing units (40.9%) in the county.

A photograph of a historic white building, likely a church or government building, featuring a prominent clock tower and classical architectural elements. The clock tower is white with a black clock face and Roman numerals. The building has a portico supported by white columns and a large arched window with stained glass. The sky is clear blue.

HISTORIC & ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

History of Damariscotta

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

Damariscotta is on land that was originally part of the Pemaquid Patent, granted by the Plymouth Council in 1631 to Robert Aldsworth and Gyles Elbridge, merchants from Bristol, England. At Pemaquid (now the Town of Bristol, Maine), they built a fort and trading post. On March 15, 1848, Damariscotta incorporated as a separate municipality, officially separating from Bristol and Nobleboro.⁴

The first attempts at settlement in what would become Damariscotta occurred in approximately 1640. However, the area was under near-constant strain during the French and Indian Wars (1676-1763). According to the Lincoln County Historical Association, “villages and homes were deserted and often burned out during these years of conflict.”⁵ In 1748, the settlement of the villages of Damariscotta and Newcastle began in earnest.



Records show the first permanent settler in Damariscotta was Anthony Chapman, a surveyor from Ipswich, Massachusetts who arrived in 1749. In 1754 he convinced his half-brother Nathaniel to join him by noting that the people returning to the area after the upheaval of the wars would be interested in replacing their crude log structures with more permanent housing. Nathaniel built what is now the Chapman-Hall House for his family upon his arrival. He subsequently built several houses in the surrounding area and once owned nearly all of what is now Damariscotta’s Main Street, until a fire destroyed many of the original buildings in 1845.⁶⁷

⁴ Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums (1970). Doris A. Isaacson (ed.). *Maine: A Guide ‘Down East’*. Rockland, Me: Courier-Gazette, Inc. p. 258.

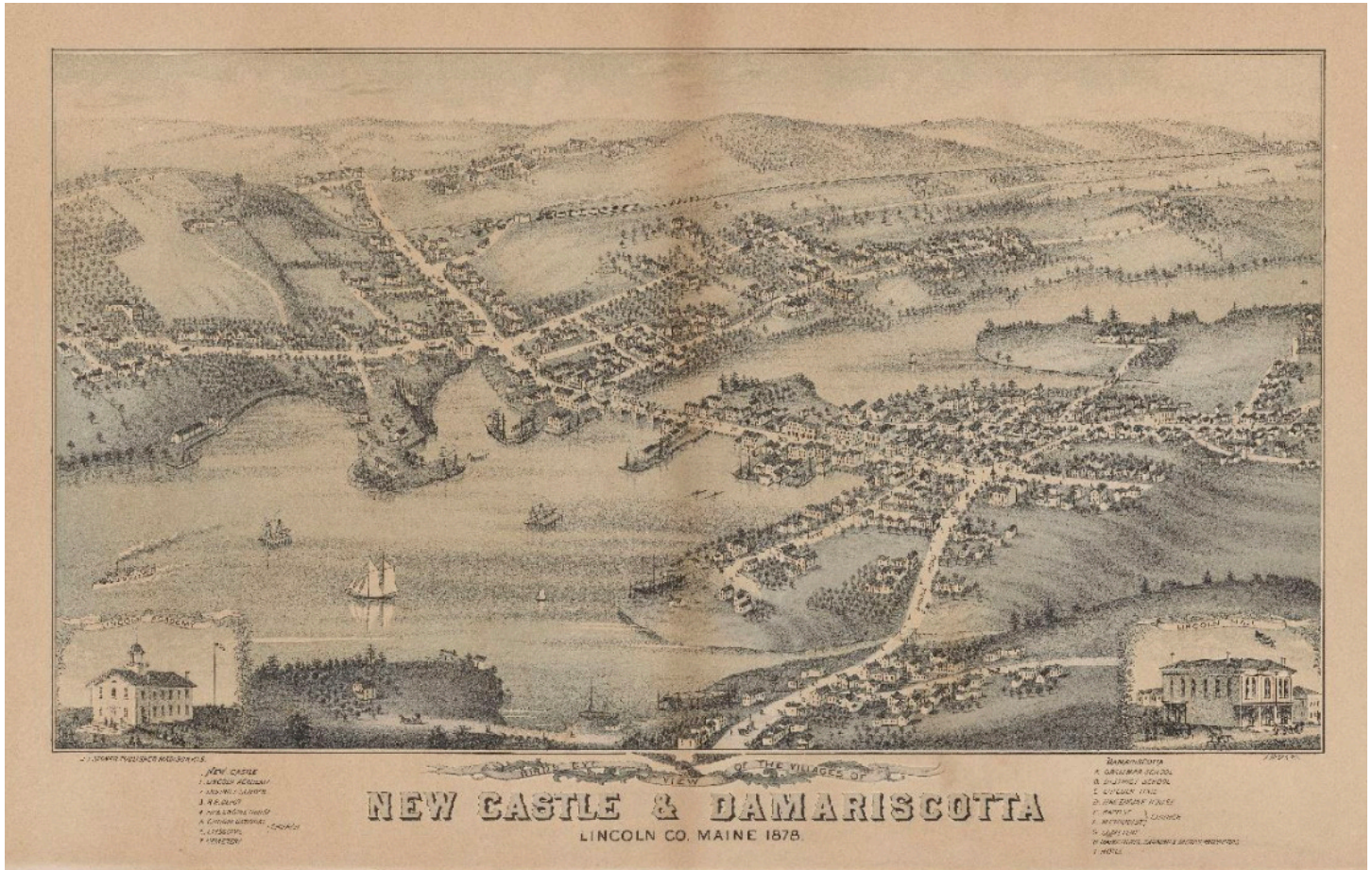
⁵ <https://www.lincolncountyhistory.org/visit/museums/chapman-hall-house/early-history/>

⁶ <https://www.lincolncountyhistory.org/visit/museums/chapman-hall-house/early-history/>

⁷ Damariscotta Historic District Nomination, 1979.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The early industries of the area included two sawmills, a match factory, and a tannery. Additionally, several brickyards were established along the Damariscotta River.⁸ Though situated too far from the ocean to be an important seaport, Damariscotta was ideally suited for shipbuilding,⁹ and generated much wealth in the 19th century launching clipper ships from the town's shipyards. During this time, many buildings of Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate style architecture were built in and around Damariscotta's downtown village. Main Street was also rebuilt using bricks from the brickyards; by 1875, almost all buildings on Lower Main Street were constructed as we know them today.



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

⁸ Varney, George J. (1886). "Damariscotta". Gazetteer of the State of Maine. Boston: Russell.

⁹ Damariscotta Historic District Nomination, 1979.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Known Historic Buildings/Sites

The Inventory of Historic Buildings/Sites includes sites currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places which was created as a result of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It is the official list of places throughout the United States deemed worthy of preservation by the federal government. Individual sites and buildings are added to the National Register when they meet the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Listing on their own (see call-out box). Damariscotta has also recognized the Main Street Historic District (including the Boundary Expansion) as a Local Historic Preservation District, regulated by a Historic Preservation Ordinance which is described further in the Protective Measures section below.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Listing

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

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

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

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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

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



The Fiske House, courtesy Calvin Dodge collection

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Historic Districts

When structures, taken together, tell the story of the development of an area and meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, they are listed as an historic district. Structures within an Historic District may also individually meet the criteria, but, more likely, the overall architectural integrity and feeling of the district is what tells the story. This is important because changes to one property that do not contribute to the overall architectural or historic integrity of the district may have an adverse impact on all of the surrounding properties.

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

Generally, the condition of many historic resources within Damariscotta is considered in “good” or better condition.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archeological Sites

Preservation of archeological sites strengthens the cultural and economic vitality of communities.

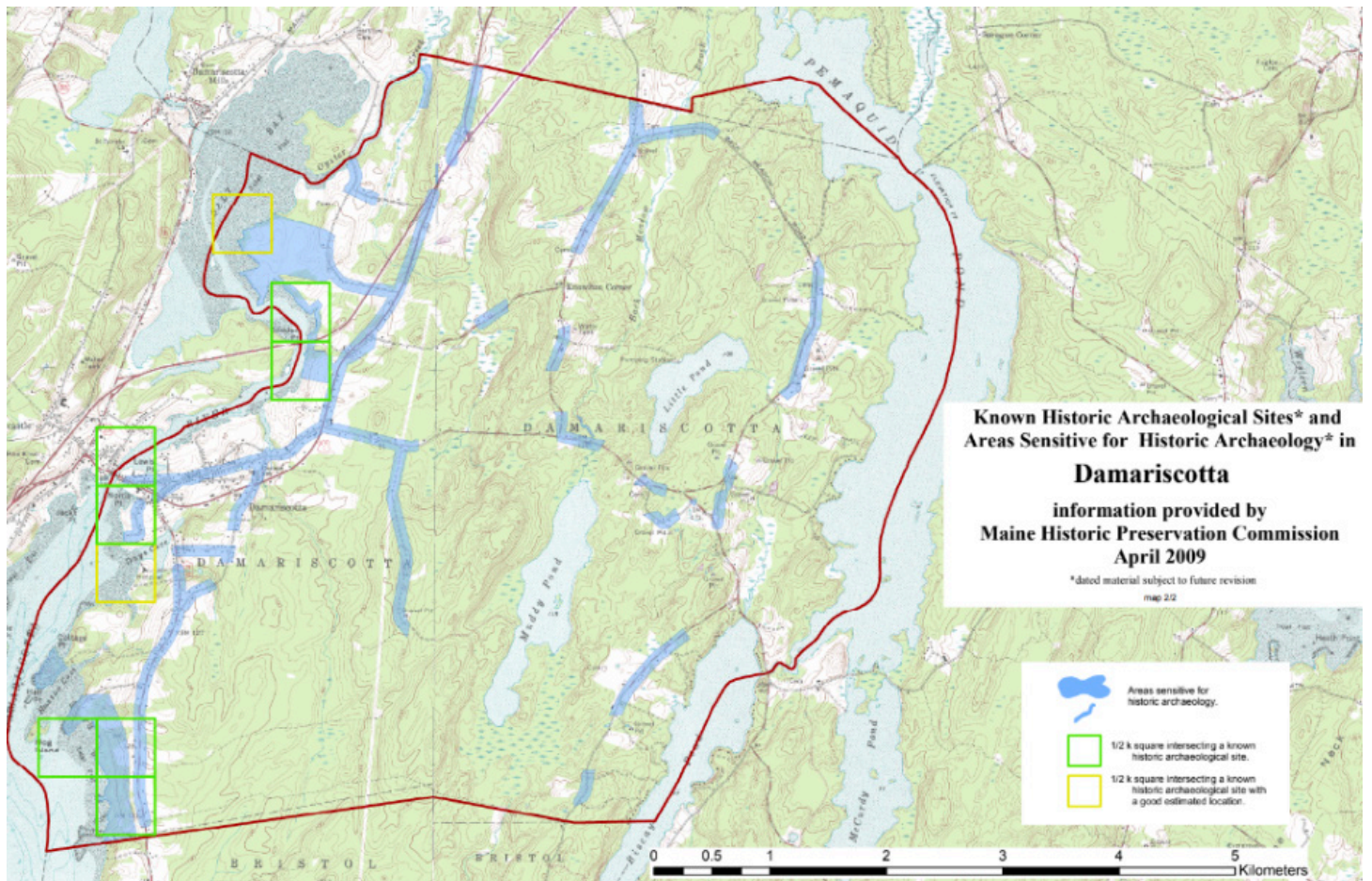
“Historic archaeological sites may include cellar holes from houses, foundations for farm buildings, mills, wharves and boat yards, and near-shore shipwrecks. Historic archaeological sites can be predicted most often by a review of historic records, maps, and deeds. Settlement often focused on transportation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

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

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

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

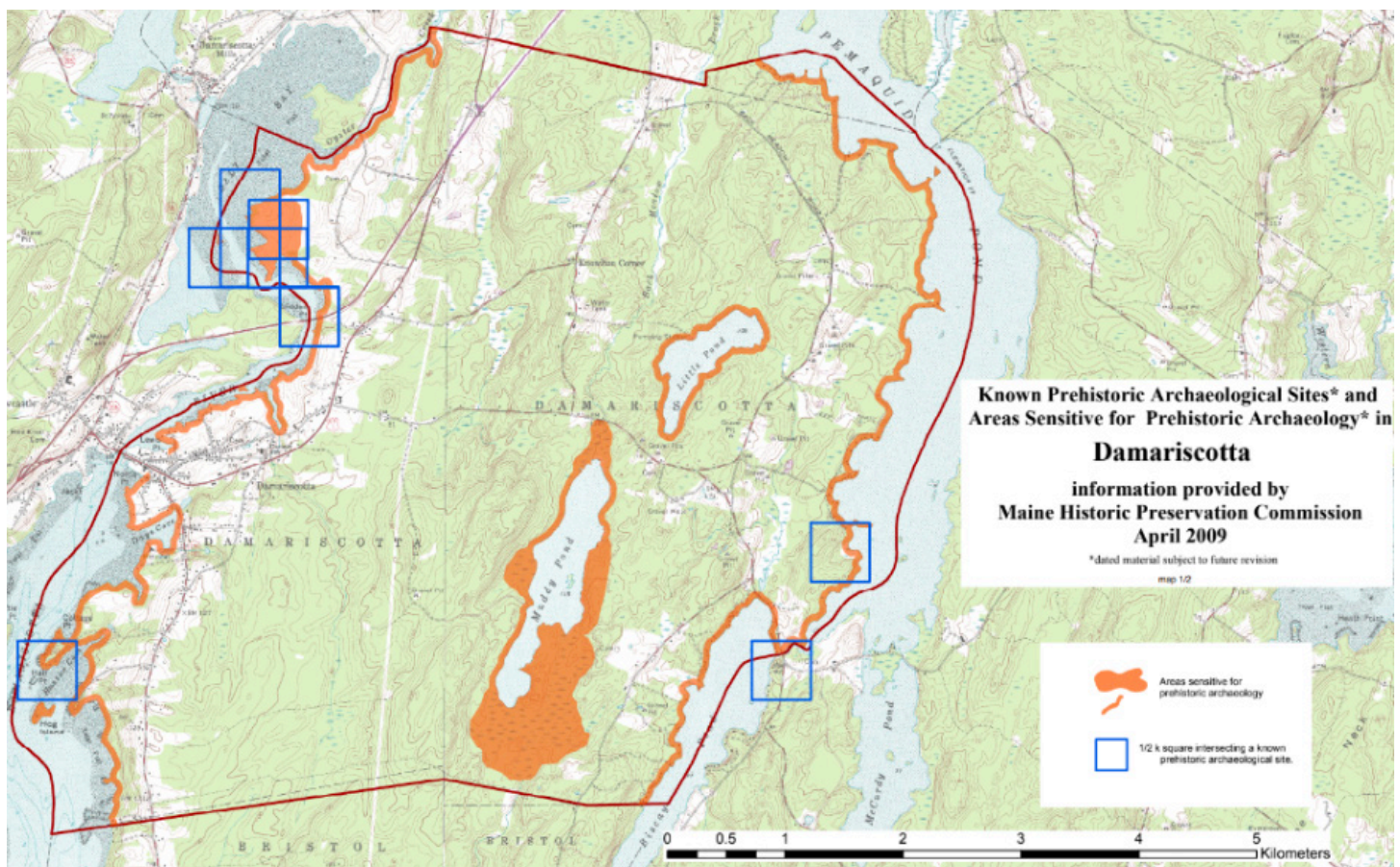
A map of documented historic archeological sites, courtesy of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, is included below.



HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Map of Prehistoric Archeological Sites

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



HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

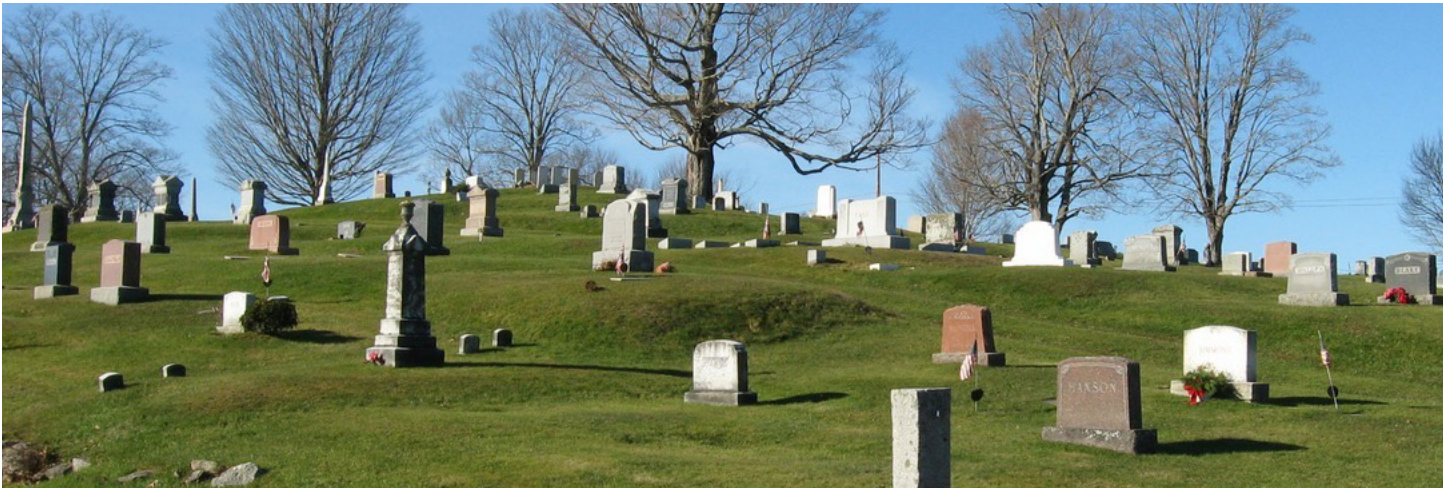
Cemeteries

The five cemeteries owned and maintained by the Town of Damariscotta and overseen the by the Cemetery Trust link present-day Damariscotta to its storied past. One of these cemeteries even has a pre-revolutionary war veteran's grave, which flies a Union Jack flag because the soldier passed before the United States became a nation.

The five cemeteries are:

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

The Cemetery Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance of 18 privately owned historic burial grounds the Town is mandated by law to maintain.¹⁰



Hillside Cemetery

Protective Measures: Local Ordinances

Damariscotta has a number of Town ordinances and policies that require preservation efforts or documentation by applicants proposing new development or alterations to existing historic structures.

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

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Local Historic Preservation District



The Subdivision Ordinance, adopted in 1989, amended in 2014, revised and replaced in 2019, and further amended in February 2023, requires an applicant to submit documentation regarding the presence of any known historical or archeological resources on the property. The Planning Board now must make a finding that the proposed subdivision “will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, [or] significant wildlife habitat ...” (Subdivision Ordinance, Section 103.2.I).

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

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Issues & Opportunities

The most significant threat to known historic and archeological resources in Damariscotta is climate change and its associated impacts, such as sea-level rise and storm-surge. The Main Street Historic District is situated along the Damariscotta River, which is a tidal river. The map below illustrates potential inland flooding from intermediate (1.6 feet) and intermediate high (3.9 feet) sea level rise or storm surges on top of the Highest Astronomical Tide currently recorded as of 2018.

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



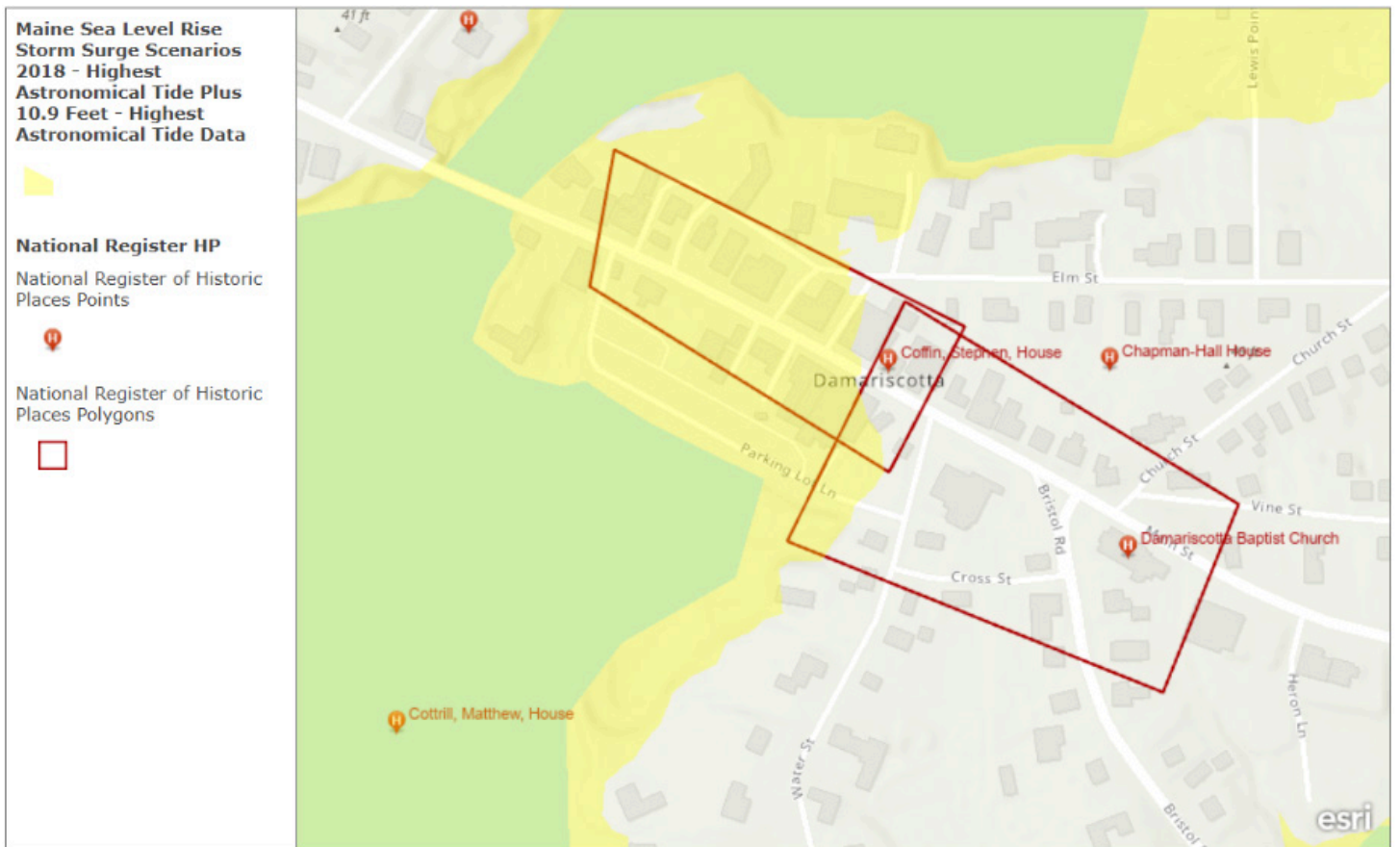
Locations of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or museums/archives with layers depicting potential threats to these properties including flood, fire, sea-level rise, storm surge. Map also has NOAA hazards and watches.

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

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The map below illustrates the potential extent of inland flooding from high (10.9 feet) sea level rise or storm surge on top of the Highest Astronomical Tide.

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



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

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

Even in the intermediate predicted storm surge scenarios shown on the above maps, historic structures adjacent to the municipal parking lot would be underwater. The Town is working, thanks in part to a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, to purchase a deployable flood wall that could be utilized in heavy storm events to protect the downtown historic buildings. The Town should also provide guidance to owners of downtown buildings in flood-proofing their properties and make this information readily available on the Town's website.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES



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

In Damariscotta, there are buildings identified as eligible for National Register of Historic Places or local designation, but they have not yet been designated as of publication of this plan. Specifically, a Bristol Road Historic District (capturing the properties fronting Bristol Road between Cross Street and Miles Street) has been deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by Maine's State Historic Preservation Office. The concentration of Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Craftsman styles in the area illustrate the initial residential expansion of the community along the road to Bristol in the first half of the 19th century. The character-defining features of the district are shared design, massing, scale, materials, common road setbacks, as well as the presence of carriage houses, retaining walls, and stone curbing/steps. The district's period of significance is from about 1800 to approximately 1930. The Town should consider designating an additional historic district to protect these properties from demolition or changes that would impact the overall character of this historic neighborhood.

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

¹⁰ Historic preservation tax credits, available at state and federal levels, allow income-generating properties listed on the National Register to receive credits for the rehabilitation of listed properties. At the time of drafting of this Plan, the federal income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic structures was 20% and the Maine tax credits was 25%. There are additional credits available for the qualified rehabilitation of structures used as affordable housing.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Additionally, a threat to historic and archeological resources is the lack of data on the location of resources. Damariscotta has not had a professional survey for historic or archaeological sites; the Town relies on the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and State Historic Preservation Office for data. Protection of unknown resources is clearly not feasible, which means resources may be lost without awareness. Any future archaeological surveys should focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's maritime, agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of town in the 17th and 18th centuries. Similarly, architectural surveys have been limited to the areas in and around Damariscotta's village downtown so future architectural surveys should focus on more rural areas of town to identify historic farmhouse or barn properties.

Issues



Sea-level rise and storm surge impacts



Development in areas not currently locally protected



Lack of data and information on location of archeological resources

Opportunities



Working to protect identified historic districts



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

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goal, Policy and Strategies regarding Historic and Archeological Resources to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



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

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

Strategies:

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



Goal: Historic and archaeological resources in the community are preserved.

Policy 2.2 Protect identified historic and archaeological resources in the community, through regulation when necessary.

Strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require that applicants for Planning Board projects are explicitly required to protect known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archaeology through modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation.
- b. Amend Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.

Policy 2.3 Update the existing inventory and investigate potentially overlooked historic and archeological resources in the community.

Strategies:

- a. Become a Certified Local Government through the State Historic Preservation Office in order to gain access to grants for planning and survey work.
- b. Earmark matching funds to conduct a comprehensive architectural survey of Damariscotta's above-ground historic resources, beginning with the Bristol Road Historic District.

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Policy 2.4 Actively preserve, protect, and complement the historic features of the Main Street Historic District.

Strategies:

- a. Revisit and revise as needed the permitted and conditional uses within the C-1 zone (or equivalent) as well as the density requirements to ensure that they are promoting a vibrant downtown and adaptive reuse of historic structures.



Goal: Connections with and awareness of local history are promoted.

Policy 2.5 Collaborate with local institutions, clubs, and enthusiasts to develop educational and entertainment programs.

Strategies:

- a. Complete a brochure or other guide explaining the importance of historic preservation to the community and resources for those seeking to undertake renovations.
- b. Partner with the Lincoln County News to inventory and archive Calvin Dodge articles related to local history.
- c. Create a Museum in the Streets walking tour.

Further information about implementation of the Historic and Archeological Resources Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 2).



AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES



AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Overview

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

Locally grown food has a well-developed market in Damariscotta. Most restaurants in town feature locally sourced foods. A farmstand for Clarks Farm in Nobleboro is located along Business Route 1 in the School Street Hub. The local food cooperative, Rising Tide, provides a storefront market space for local growers and a weekly outdoor farmers' market. The Damariscotta Farmers' Market is also held weekly at Round Top Farm from May to October.



The family behind Morning Dew Farm

Historically, the community supported numerous farms along the river north of the village, around Salt Bay, and along Business Route 1. After World War 1, a businessman acquired large parcels of land including five farms and other properties along the river from Pleasant Street to Oyster Creek at the northern border of the town. Most of these historic farmlands and orchards now are either in conservation ownership or large parcels with residences. with much of the field acreage used for hay production. Along Business Route 1, north of the village to the intersection with US Route 1 bypass, historic farm properties used as residences and home-based business retain farmhouses, fields, and barns characteristic of traditional rural New England landscape.

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Existing Conditions & Trends

Agriculture

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

On Upper Main Street, CRCT also owns and manages Round Top Farm. Until 1968 this was a major dairy operation but now has extensive hayfields, a small orchard, a restored dairy barn available for rentals, a restored farmhouse used as offices for CRCT, and an open field for weekly farmers markets in the summer and an ice-skating rink when weather permits.



Round Top Farm

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

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Biscay Orchards (across from Biscay Pond on Biscay Road) includes about 500 apple trees on six acres and specializes in seasonal retail, 'pick-your-own' apples, and cider production.

Midcoast Microgreens, a new business since the pandemic, grows microgreens, a high-value product requiring a modest amount of growing space. And, throughout town, residents raise poultry for egg and meat production and tend bees for honey.

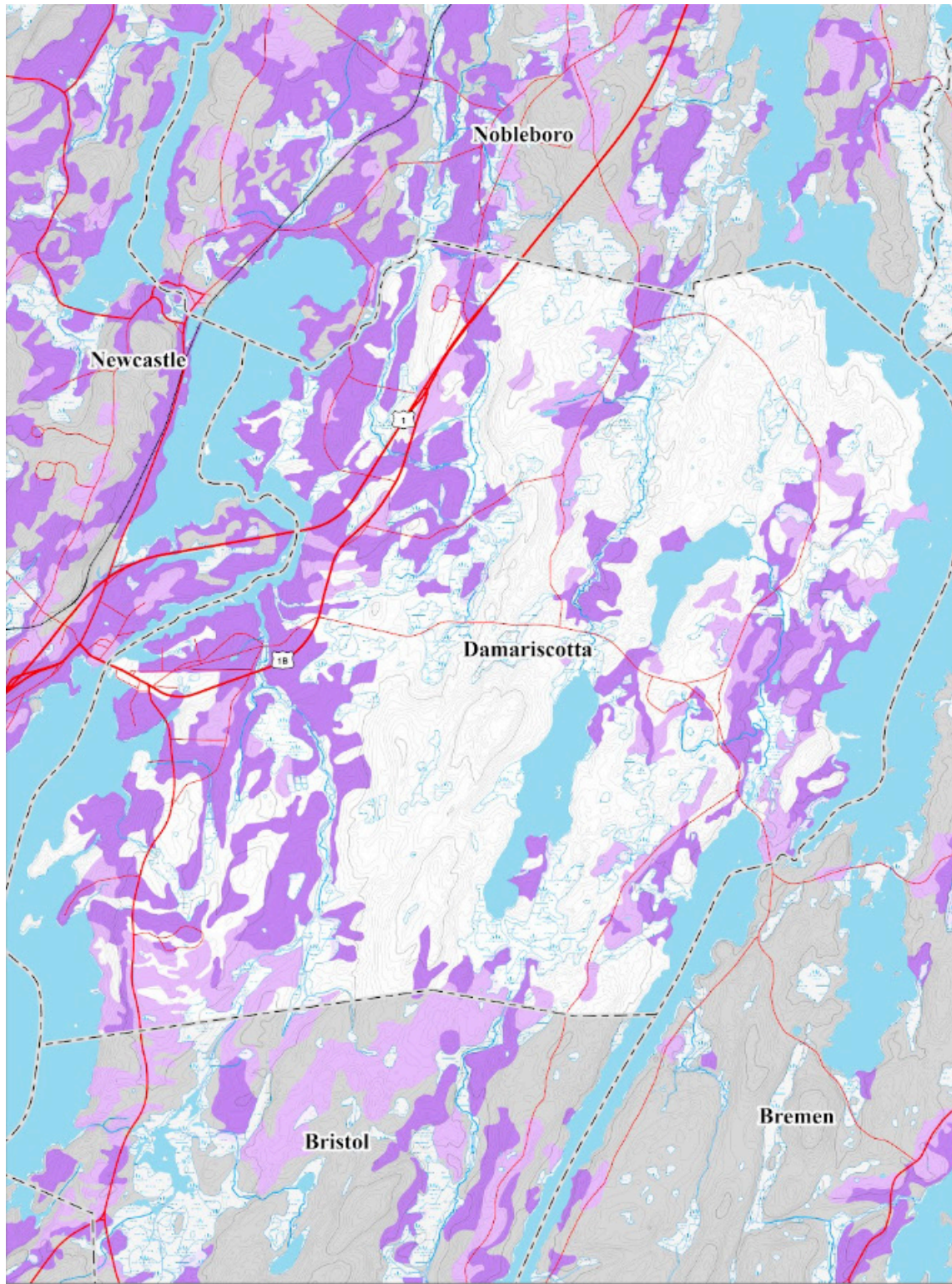
Another high-value, intensively cultivated crop, marijuana, has not taken off in Damariscotta. Since 2019, nine licenses for marijuana cultivation facilities and three for nurseries have been available but, as of December 2023, no licenses have been issued.



Buzz Pinkham (left) and Jim Peterson of Midcoast Microgreens

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

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES



Lincoln County,
Town of Damariscotta

Damariscotta Agriculture

Source Data: USDA, MEGIS, Maine DACF
Projection: UTM, NAD83, Zone 19, Meters
Produced by: Municipal Planning
Assistance Program, DACF
October 2021

Legend	
	Municipal borders
	U.S. Routes
	State Routes
	Railroad
	Contours 100
	Contours
	Waterbody
	Rivers
	Rivers/Streams
	Wetlands
	Farmland of statewide importance
	All areas are prime farmland

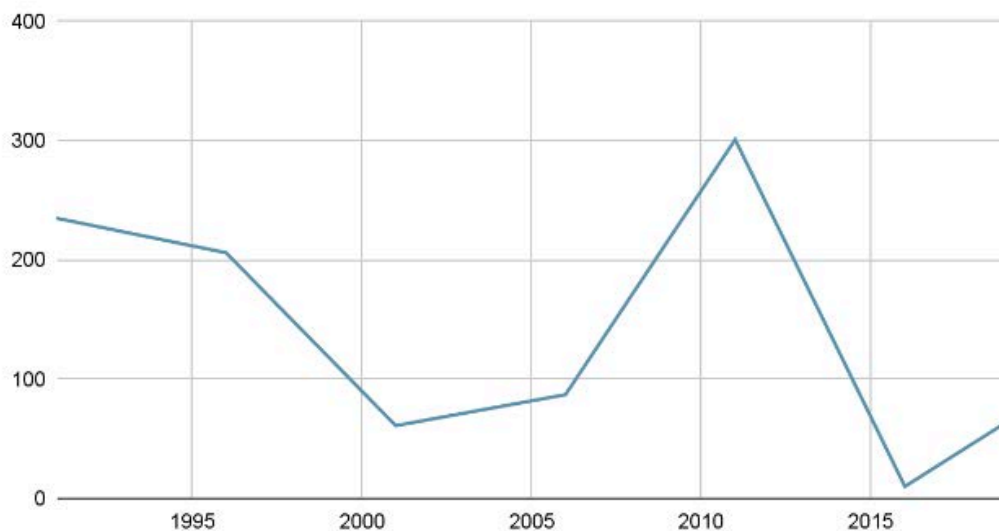


AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Timber Harvesting & Forestry

Timber harvesting was an important part of the town's economy in the early 1900s. Sawmills were located on Castner and Deer Meadow Brooks and thick pine and oak forests covered much of the interior of town. Initially, the forest was cut to feed the brick kilns along the river, to clear land for farming, and for logs to build homes and ships. Damariscotta still is a land dominated by woodlands. In recent decades timber harvesting in Damariscotta has fluctuated greatly but has been steadily trending upward since reaching a thirty-year low (10 acres harvested) in 2016.¹¹ Although the overall scale of logging has lessened, twenty landowners with approximately 1,200 acres are currently enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Exemption Program. The most recently available data is for 2019, which does not reflect acreage cleared for residential development, cites 64 acres harvested. Many residents continue to cut wood for firewood, grow Christmas trees on a small scale, and cut brush to make wreaths for their livelihood.

Total Acres Harvested, 1991-2019



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

Village Trees

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

¹¹ Damariscotta Town Assessor's Office

Efforts to Support Agriculture and Forestry

There have been some efforts to conserve farmland in Damariscotta. In 2017 CRCT and Maine Farmland Trust worked together to permanently protect agricultural land in northern Damariscotta for Morning Dew Farm. Additionally, CRCT provides agricultural land for Twin Villages Foodbank Farm. While there are no Town policies or committees specifically in place to support agriculture or woodlot management, the Town has recently required that developers identify “significant trees” (trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) over 30 inches) on projects requiring Site Plan review in order for these trees to be protected.

CRCT also owns Castner Creek Community Forest, an approximately 85-acre woodland along Castner Creek. Through forest management, selective harvesting is done to enhance recreation, wildlife habitat, and forest health. Additional analysis is required to determine if more lands would benefit from forest management.

Farmers and woodlot owners can reduce their tax burden by applying to the State’s Farmland and Tree Growth Tax Exemption programs for property tax relief. The Farmland program requires only five contiguous acres of farmland that produce an annual gross income of at least \$2,000 per year. The Tree Growth Tax Use Program requires a forest management and harvesting plan and at least 10 acres be used for commercial harvesting.¹² While the parcel may have multiple uses, the primary use must be for growing trees used for forest products that have commercial value.¹³

Threats to Farms and Forest Resources

Competing Interests

Residential and commercial sprawl threatens to disrupt current and potential agriculture and forest management areas. Many farm and forestry operations need substantial uninterrupted acreage to be viable. Most land east of Route 1 is currently in the Town’s Rural Zoning District, the only zone where agriculture and timber harvesting is expressly permitted. In the Rural zone, one- and two-family dwelling units, as well as a variety of commercial and industrial uses, are also expressly permitted.¹⁴ For the past ten years, residential and commercial sprawl has been occurring up Route 1 and into rural areas.

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

¹² “Maine Land Use Program,” Maine Revenue Services, (Department of Administrative and Financial Services, 2020)

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

¹³ “Maine Tree Growth Tax Law, Bulletin 19,” Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division, (Department of Administrative and Financial Services, December 19, 2022).

<https://www.maine.gov/revenue/sites/maine.gov.revenue/files/inline-files/bull19.pdf>

¹⁴ Damariscotta Land Use Ordinance

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

The Town's Solar Energy System Ordinance, adopted in 2021, limits the installation of ground-mounted solar energy systems exceeding 1-acre in panel area to the Rural and C-2 Zoning Districts.¹⁵ Because the land most suitable for solar farms usually overlaps with prime agricultural land, future commercial solar developments may directly compete with farming interests for the most optimal land.¹⁶

As noted in the Water Resources chapter of this Plan, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates most uses that may contaminate waterways and wetlands. This includes agriculture as farmland can contaminate nearby ecosystems with runoff fertilizers, pesticides, and tilled soils. Under the Ordinance, manure stockpiles, livestock grazing, and tillage are restricted within 100 feet of a great pond or river flowing to a great pond, or within 75 feet of other water bodies, tributary streams, or wetlands. Any soil tillage of 40,000 square feet or more within Shoreland Zoning districts requires a conservation plan to ensure minimal contamination of waterways and wetlands.¹⁷ State policy, and the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, which prioritizes natural resources protections may inadvertently create obstacles to future farming operations.



Damariscotta's town solar array

¹⁵ Damariscotta Solar Energy Systems Ordinance

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

¹⁷ Damariscotta Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Pollution and climate change

The prevalence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in existing agricultural land and waters is under evaluation across Maine. In 2022 the State of Maine banned the use of septic and sewage sludge as a fertilizer source due to potential groundwater contamination from PFAS in the waste.¹⁸ There are several septage spreading sites, permitted by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in the 1980s and 1990s, within Damariscotta. In 2023, most of the sites and nearby wells were tested for groundwater contamination and treatment systems are being provided where needed. The DEP will determine where additional information is needed to adequately evaluate the fate and transport of PFAS in the environment, and DEP staff will review each site's results to determine where additional sampling is necessary.¹⁹ This is discussed further in the Water Resources chapter of this Plan.

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

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



A hemlock tree diseased with woolly adelgid

¹⁸ Tom Perkins, "Maine Bans Use of Sewage Sludge on Farms to Reduce Risk of PFAS Poisoning," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, May 12, 2022),

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/12/maine-bans-sewage-sludge-fertilizer-farms-pfas-poisoning>.

¹⁹ Maine Department of Environmental Protection, <https://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/maine-pfas.html>

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Issues & Opportunities

As noted previously, trends toward the production of high-value specialty products that require less land but more intensive effort may help increase agricultural output in Damariscotta. Because these kinds of products require less land, residential lots or backyard areas may be used for production. But these smaller operations can cause more complaints from neighbors, usually related to noise and odors. Policies will be needed to protect working farms from nuisance complaints, especially when they are sited on smaller lots.

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

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

Issues



Competing land interests



Pollution & climate change

Opportunities



Farming trends that require less land but more intensive effort



Research into what might be being grown in Damariscotta



Inclusion of farmers into economic development initiatives



Increased collaboration with land trusts

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies related to Agricultural and Forest Resources to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: Damariscotta's agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.

Policy 3.1 Encourage the active use of local farms, gardens, and agricultural lands.

Strategies:

- a. Amend the Town's Land Use Ordinance to expressly permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, (e.g. roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, feed milling, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations) as expressly allowed operations in the Rural Zoning District (not subject to Planning Board review if within existing buildings on-site or if the new proposed building would not otherwise trigger the applicability requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).
- b. Adopt a "right to farm" provision within the Town's Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Policy 3.2 Protect the rural, forested, and natural scenic character found within Damariscotta.

Strategies:

- a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.
- b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.

Policy 3.3 Conserve prime farmland, especially areas capable of supporting commercial agriculture.

Strategies:

- a. Amend the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that commercial developments in the Rural Areas (as designated in the Future Land Use Section of this Plan) to maintain areas with prime farmland soils (as mapped) as undeveloped open space to the greatest extent practicable.
- b. Amend the Town's Land Use Ordinance to expressly permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, (e.g. roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, feed milling, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations) as expressly allowed operations in the Rural Zoning District (not subject to Planning Board review if within existing buildings on-site or if the new proposed building would not otherwise trigger the applicability requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance).
- c. As required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869, consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices.
- d. Consult with Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.
- e. Adopt a "right to farm" provision within the Town's Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Policy 3.4 Encourage tree planting to assist in climate resiliency.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a plan to identify and replace dead or damaged street trees in the village.

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES



Goal: Local Farming and agriculture is economically viable, ecological sustainable, and socially responsible.

Policy 3.5 Support the economic viability of local agriculture and forestry through education, outreach, and economic development initiatives.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a community farm survey to gather information on what products are grown, what challenges farmers face, and why they operate in Damariscotta.
- b. Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.

Policy 3.6 Publicize what incentives are available for farming and forestry in Damariscotta.

Strategies:

- a. Educate owners of productive farm and forest land in available incentives (such as the current use taxation programs).
- b. Determine whether or not moveable greenhouses without a permanent foundation can be taxed as business equipment rather than property and, if so, how this would impact revenue.



Goal: Damariscotta's agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.

Policy 3.7 Include community garden spaces in recreation and open space planning efforts.

Strategies:

- a. Work with local land trusts to identify opportunities, if any, for timber harvesting, farming or gardening (including community gardens) on their conserved land in Damariscotta (especially on conserved open space that is identified as prime farmland).

Policy 3.8 Review and revise local ordinances as needed to protect and encourage small-scale agriculture.

Strategies:

- a. Create a Small Farm Animal Keeping Ordinance to allow for the safekeeping of a small number of farm animals on residential lots in order to encourage small-scale agriculture in appropriate areas.
- b. Amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Ordinances to require that certain kinds of multi-family residential or multi-lot subdivisions include designated space set aside for community gardens for the enjoyment of the residents of the proposed developments.

Further information about implementation of the Agricultural and Forest Resources Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 5).

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

ARTS & CULTURE

ARTS & CULTURE

Overview

A vital component of a vibrant community, especially in the downtown area, is having a local arts and culture with a vibrant, tangible presence. There are strong connections to be made between arts/culture, a community's downtown, and its pedestrians, bicyclists, and even motorists. The community survey conducted as part of this Plan highlighted residents' pride in their downtown, indicating that residents like what is happening in here and the desire to ensure that similar arts and cultural events continue.

Damariscotta is home to a variety of arts and cultural amenities. These include the library that is shared with neighboring towns, multiple theaters, music venues and galleries. The primary venues include:

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

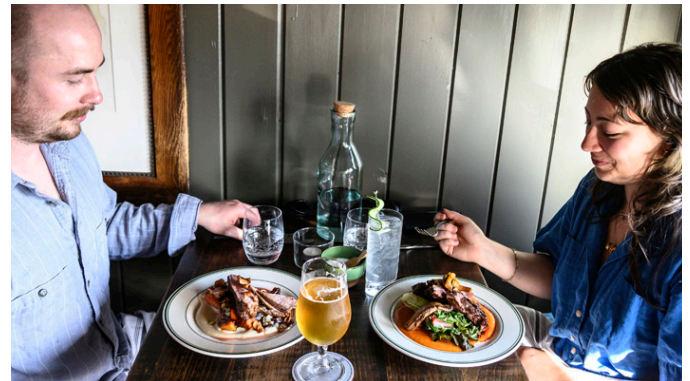
In addition to the above, Damariscotta has a wide variety of private art galleries and craftsperson studios creating a thriving arts community. Throughout the summer, restaurants also host music performances and similar cultural events that enhance the vibrancy of the community.

ARTS & CULTURE

Community Events Highlight the Arts

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

Additionally, the Chamber brings together artists, downtown businesses, and the community as a whole with its signature community event, the annual Pumpkinfest and Regatta, named Best Fall Festival in Maine by Travel and Leisure magazine in 2017. This event, which began in 2007, brings people into downtown and entices visitors to patronize businesses during the off-season. Other events put on or co-sponsored by the Chamber include the Villages of Light with neighboring town of Newcastle with storefront lights to kick off the holiday season. These events make Damariscotta a year-round destination for artists and draw tourists to the community.



Culinary Arts

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

Issues & Opportunities

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

One way to enhance the existing downtown would be to create a public arts program and invest in community murals or art installations that invite people to linger in the downtown and see what else it has to offer. Additionally, creating an attractive open space in the downtown for people to gather and host music performances, story-telling, reunions, and get-togethers adds to a downtown's sense of vitality simply by letting people know that those spaces exist purely for them, their friends, and their families to enjoy. While Damariscotta has an enviable pleasant and walkable downtown, there are few public open spaces in which to gather. Currently, the only public area is the small strip of land adjacent to the downtown parking lot.

A challenge identified by Damariscotta residents in the community survey conducted in the development of this plan is the difficulty finding a place that serves food past 8:00 or 9:00 pm. Because of this, attending a performance or an art show and then being able to grab a bite or shop afterward is hard to do. Other communities have recognized that people also like to shop after dinner out and have shops that stay open later, especially on weekend nights.

Further, there is a desire for more "third spaces", locations that facilitates social interaction in a place other than where a person lives or works. Examples of third spaces include coffee shops, restaurants, and indoor recreation areas where one encounters other "regulars" for connection and communing.

Damariscotta would likely look more attractive to restaurateurs looking to open or expand their hours, to people looking to start small performing or visual arts venues, or to existing business owners thinking about expanding their hours if more people lived and socialized downtown. With more people in and around the downtown, there would be an increased need for more amenities with longer hours, and it would be easier to engage the "feet on the street" to keep people visiting downtown and spending money locally.

Issues



Lack of restaurants open past 8PM



Few public open spaces



Lack of “third spaces”

Opportunities



More “feet on the street” exploring downtown



Public arts program



Open space to gather

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goal, Policy and Strategies related to Arts and Culture to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: Arts and cultural amenities in the community are robust, active, and accessible.

Policy 4.1 Develop and support public arts and cultural programs to increase Damariscotta's vibrancy and community ties.

Strategies:

- a. Create an Arts and Culture Committee to promote the arts as a means of improving the local economy, enriching cultural and intellectual life, promoting lifelong learning, protecting Damariscotta's rich cultural heritage, and advising the Selectboard on art expenditures..
- b. Create a collective and comprehensive calendar of events related to arts and culture in Damariscotta.
- c. Create a directory of local artists and craftsmen in the community in order to celebrate and recognize that piece of the local culture.
- d. Create opportunities for volunteer-led, inexpensive, short-term community art projects or demonstrations that demonstrate the impacts of public art in a visible way
- e. Allocate funding to the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to coordinate community events and public art initiatives that strengthen ties between the Newcastle & Damariscotta historic downtown areas, such as Art Walks, music/concerts, or an Annual Maker's Fair.
- f. Adopt a "1% for Art" policy for all capital improvement projects, requiring 1% of the total cost of the project to be set aside to incorporate public art that enables public places to reflect current values and ideas, draw on the evolving energy and ideas of Damariscotta's thriving arts community, and promote interaction among neighbors.
- g. Create a park within the Growth Area identified in this Plan in order to create an open and attractive space for community members to gather. Considerations may include performance space, a skate park, a place for people to gather, a playground for young children, and other desires driven by the community and budgetary constraints.

Further information about implementation of the Arts and Culture Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 10).



ECONOMY



Overview

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

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



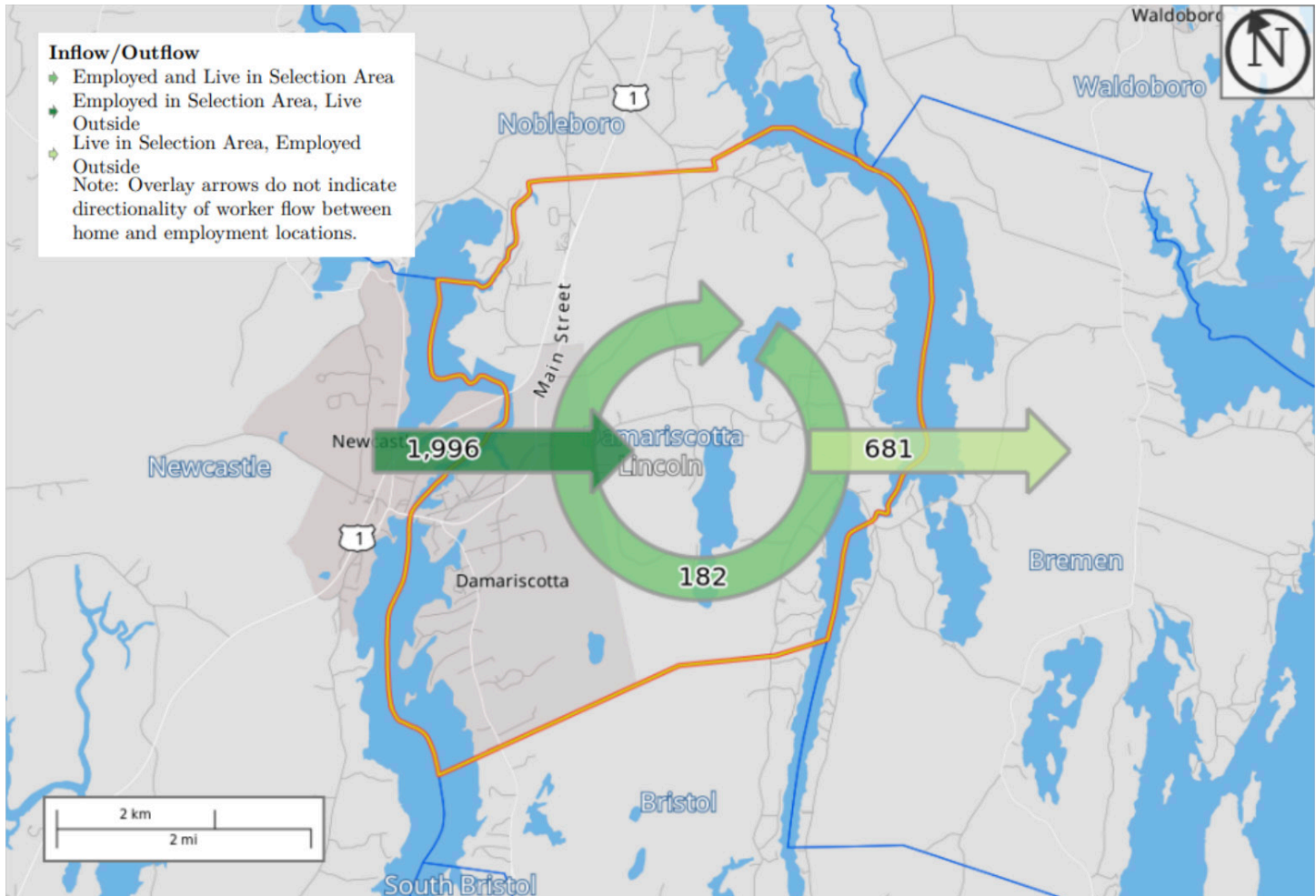
Economy Then & Now

Following incorporation of Damariscotta in 1848, the local economy was driven by sawmills, boat-building, brickyards, and fishing.²⁰ A major local product was wooden boats, including several clipper ships, before the advent of steam-powered steel-clad boat manufacturing moved to elsewhere on the Maine coast. Until the 1970's, land-based agricultural farming was also important economically, and, culturally, it may still be important given the prevalence of backyard and community farms in the community. Today, the largest industry is oyster farming in the Damariscotta River which also supports a thriving seed oyster industry.

²⁰ Varney, George J. (1886). "Damariscotta". [Gazetteer of the State of Maine](#). Boston: Russell.

Commuting Characteristics

In 2020, 182 workers both lived and worked in Damariscotta while 681 Damariscotta residents commuted outside of it to go to work. However, almost 1,996 people who lived outside of Damariscotta commuted into the community for work.



Of those who commute into Damariscotta for work, 33.7% are commuting less than 10 miles from surrounding communities, 30.3% are commuting 10 to 24 miles, 18.3% are commuting between 25 and 50 miles, and 17.7% are commuting more than 50 miles.²¹

For people living in Damariscotta but commuting outside for work, the top locations are Portland (6.3%), Augusta (4.5%), Bath (3.8%), Newcastle (3.8%), and Rockland (2.5%). Since the pandemic there are also many residents working remotely for companies based in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and beyond.

²¹ US Census Bureau, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

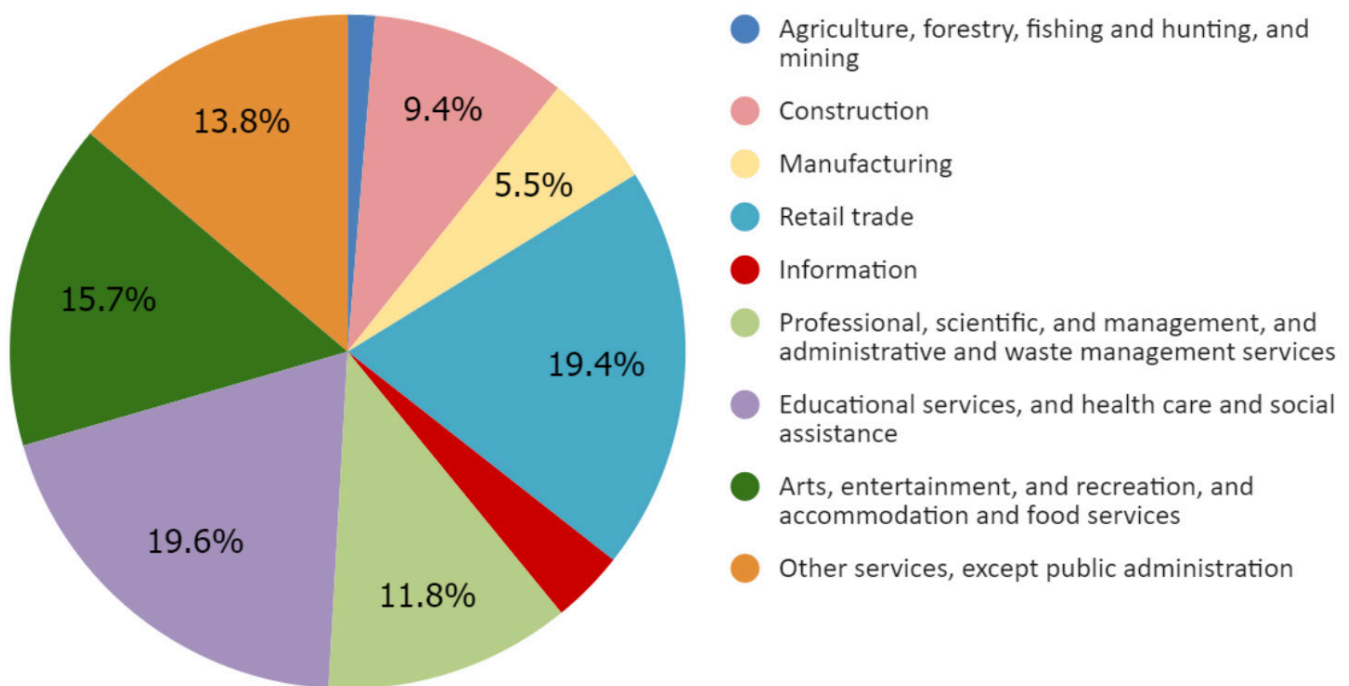
ECONOMY

In Damariscotta 9.4% of residents are self-employed. This is fewer than the 13.32% of residents in Lincoln County who are self-employed, but is higher than the State of Maine, where about 7.9% of residents are self-employed.²²

Of the industries in which Damariscotta residents work, 19.6% are educational services, healthcare or social services, 19.4% are retail trade, and 15.7% are arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, or food services.²³

Damariscotta Residents: Employment by Industry

Civilian employed population 16 years and over



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, 2020

²² American Community Survey estimates, 2022

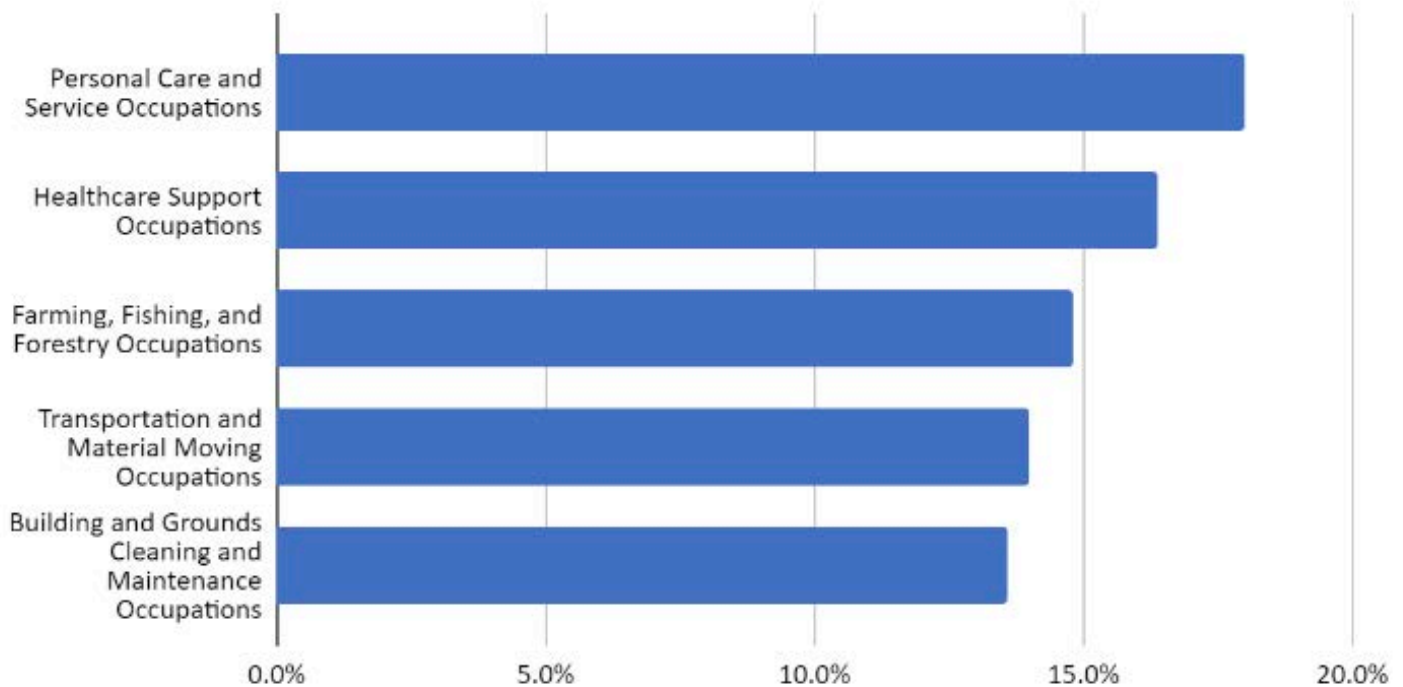
²³ American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2020

ECONOMY

The majority of job openings through 2031 in the Coastal Counties Region of Maine (which includes Lincoln County) are projected to be in personal care and services, healthcare supports, and farming, fishing, and forestry.²⁴ These are primarily lower paying occupations that do not require a post-secondary degree.

Maine Regional Employment Projections to 2031

Highest Growth Sectors - Coastal Counties Region



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

The largest employer in Damariscotta is MaineHealth's LincolnHealth/Miles Campus Hospital, with 1,100 employees. Central Lincoln County YMCA, Great Salt Bay Community School, Mobius Inc., and Main Street Grocery, all employ between 50-99 employees (depending on the season).²⁵ Besides the hospital, the largest employers are primarily retail businesses, service-based nonprofits, or schools serving not just Damariscotta but the entire region.

²⁴ Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

²⁵ Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

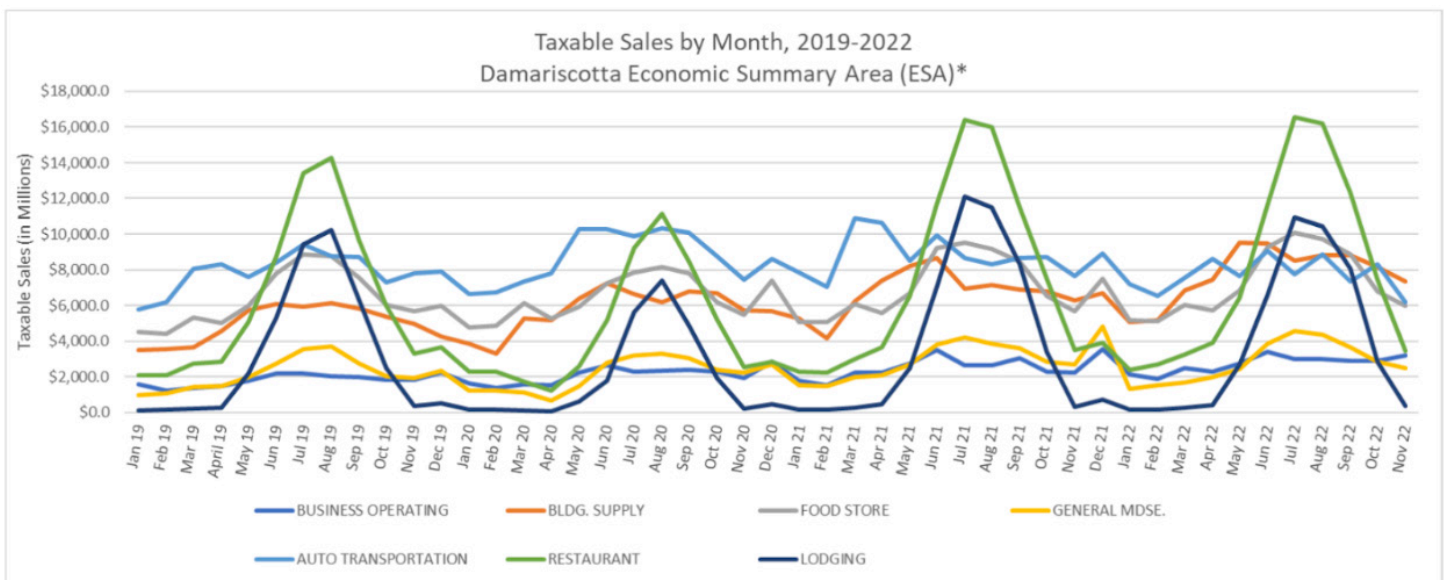
ECONOMY

Tourism

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

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

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



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

Source: Maine Revenue Services

The Town supports tourism through capital investments in the downtown parking lot, including adding seasonal restrooms for people visiting the downtown.

Downtown

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

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

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



Home Occupations

There is no accurate count of the number of home occupations within Damariscotta. However, known home occupations include cottage industry uses (soap-making, crafting, or similar) as well as home-based daycares and professional offices. Per the Town's Land Use Ordinance, home occupations are conditional uses in the zoning districts in which they are allowed. The conditional use provisions require that anyone seeking to establish a home occupation undergo Site Plan Review by the Planning Board, regardless of the zoning district in which they wish to locate. Additional parking must be provided on the lot where the home occupation is to be located, and the use of on-street parking related to the home occupation is not allowed (unlike a typical business venture where the Planning Board can allow some of the required parking spaces for uses to be met by using on-street or public parking). This policy likely limits home occupations to larger lots where additional parking requirements can be accommodated.

While review of potential impacts associated with home occupations is necessary, the cost associated with Planning Board review (including application fees, public notice fees, and "soft costs" associated with meeting the requirements of an application such as drawn site plans and renderings) might deter would-be entrepreneurs from establishing home occupations.

Regional Economic Development Initiatives

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

Local Economic Development Initiatives

On February 19, 2020, Damariscotta voters approved the designation of a Main Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and an associated Development Program. The TIF, within the boundaries of the Town's existing Growth Area, and the financial plan captured 100% of the increased value over the 30-year life of the TIF (which ends in FY2049) and sheltered those funds for future Town priorities. At the time of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town passed amending the boundaries of the TIF district to capture additional properties that may be suitable for new development and are awaiting state approval.

²⁶ Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, damariscottaregion.com

Damariscotta's Unique Assets

In Damariscotta, it is easy to emphasize the many assets of the town -- its historic character of downtown, its many arts-related activities, its coastal, environmental, and aesthetic appeal -- to be built upon to enhance the economy. The Chamber of Commerce promotes our assets with brochures and other marketing materials available on their website. A signature community event, the annual Pumpkinfest and Regatta, originally began in 2007 to bring people into the downtown and entice visitors to patronize downtown businesses during the off-season and is now a nationally recognized event. Another event co-sponsored by the Chamber includes the Villages of Light. With neighboring Newcastle, storefronts decorate trees along Main Street to kick off the holiday season. These events make Damariscotta a year-round destination.

Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust also hosts community events and markets the region's unique environmental assets. They promote the Damariscotta River and Great Salt Bay (which produced more than 34% of Maine's annual American Oyster harvest in 2022)²⁷ through their website, and educational and social events. While this may not specifically trigger economic growth, it does showcase Damariscotta's marine resources to those unfamiliar with the area and draws people to Damariscotta both as a seasonal and a year-round community destination. Marine Resources are further discussed in the Marine Resources chapter.



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

Issues & Opportunities

The same characteristics that make Damariscotta the economic hub of central Lincoln County also bring unique challenges. Interviews conducted with local businesses as part of the development of this Plan found that businesses chose to locate here because of the affluent summer visitors. Conversely, Damariscotta has the second-lowest median household income in Lincoln County (\$48,241²⁸). Additionally, 3.3% of individuals in Damariscotta are living at or below 50% of the federal poverty level.²⁹ Businesses also cite the regional draw, allowing them to capture customers from more affluent surrounding communities.

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

Private investment around the downtown is needed to add housing that allows people to walk or bike to work and to meet the desire for restaurants and shops to stay open later. More people living within a 10- to 15-minute walk of Main Street will help support local businesses and bring more life and vibrancy to downtown streets throughout the day and week.

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

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

²⁸ American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates, 2020

²⁹ ACS 5-year estimates, 2015-2020.

ECONOMY

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

Issues



Lack of housing availability



Parking issues in and around
downtown



Lack of affordable housing



Lack of transportation
infrastructure to allow people
to walk to work

Opportunities



Regional draw



Walkable scale



Summer tourists



Proximity to the
Damariscotta River



Historic buildings



Creating more public
spaces to gather

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies related to Economy to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Policy 5.1 Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.

Strategies:

- a. Provide educational resources to property owners regarding adapting their historic buildings in light of flood risk.
- b. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.



Goal: Damariscotta's economic climate increases job growth in designated sectors.

Policy 5.2 Coordinate with regional partners as necessary to support economic development.

Strategies:

- a. Collaborate with the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce to better understand employer needs for workforce, physical space, supply chains, etc. Partner with major employers to develop initiatives to address biggest gaps or concerns.
- b. Participate in regional economic development efforts.

Policy 5.3 Coordinate with neighboring towns to support small and locally-owned businesses.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to build relationships with appropriate staff in neighboring communities to discuss and coordinate economic development initiatives.

Policy 5.4 Support local entrepreneurs, home businesses, and cottage industry.

Policy 5.4 Support local entrepreneurs, home businesses, and cottage industry.

Strategies:

- a. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to allow low-impact home occupations to be reviewed administratively by Town staff.
- b. Work to attract business incubator/start-up spaces where small businesses can collaborate and learn from each other.

ECONOMY



Goal: Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.

Policy 5.5 Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.

Strategies:

- a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.
- b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.
- c. Amend the Town’s Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing “soft costs” of development.

Policy 5.6 Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.

Strategies:

- a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage mixed-use development in nodes identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
- b. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.



Goal: Local infrastructure supports the ability to walk or bicycle to local businesses.

Policy 5.7 Financially support needed alternative transportation improvements that will support economic development.

Strategies:

- a. Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and/or require infrastructure that supports walking, biking and car-pooling through land use regulations so that workers have options of how to get to work.



Goal: Civic and social amenities are supported and robust.

Policy 5.8 Continue to collaborate with non-profit partners to provide civic and social amenities within the community.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to invest in the Skidompha Library, the CLC YMCA, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, and other service providers through annual budget requests/appropriations as recognition of the value that these service providers bring to Damariscotta residents.

ECONOMY



Goal: Utility capacity will support economic development.

Policy 5.9 Provide the latest high-speed broadband and universal wireless telecommunication.

Strategies:

- a. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.

Policy 5.10 Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to invest in sewer and water infrastructure.

Strategies:

- a. Strengthen our collaboration with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to better direct the desired development pattern of the community (e.g. ensure that sewer infrastructure is available throughout the Growth Area designated in this Plan).

Policy 5.11 Improve energy resilience to prevent frequent power outages.

Strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to adopt solar-ready requirements in new developments.
- b. Advocate to regional and state partners to reinforce transmission lines and improve substation resilience to withstand extreme weather conditions and other disruptions.
- c. Investigate the feasibility of local microgrid development, especially for community areas such as the hospital, municipal buildings, and similar.
- d. Review and revise the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for energy storage systems (such as, for example, battery storage facilities) to locate in Damariscotta.



Goal: Damariscotta's role as a small-town service center benefits the community.

Policy 5.12 Strengthen and/or support the expansion of existing infrastructure and systems that support quality of life for a growing regional workforce, including housing, childcare, education, transportation, and broadband.

Strategies:

- a. Assess common barriers to employment (childcare needs, transportation needs, education/skill gaps, etc.).
- b. Develop initiatives to mitigate or overcome identified barriers.
- c. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.

Policy 5.13 Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to utilize tax increment financing (TIFs) to shelter revenue for priority economic development projects.
- b. During the annual budget cycle, examine and carefully consider Departmental budget requests to ensure that the municipal budget reflects the priorities of the community and voters.
- c. Continue to seek alternative funding sources such as grants whenever possible.

Policy 5.14 Encourage tax base growth in order to maintain the town's service center benefits: historic, cultural, medical, conservation assets.

Strategies:

- a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.

Further information about implementation of the Economy Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 12).



HOUSING



Housing Demand

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

In addition, the demographics of Damariscotta are shifting. According to American Community Survey data from 2020, approximately 26.4% of the population is between 25 and 44 years old and 14.6% of the population is between 5 and 14 years old. The median age of Damariscotta residents is 41.6, younger than the 50.7 median age in 2010 and younger than the 51.2 median age of Lincoln County.



While there is still a large subset of the population that is aging (26.2% are older than 65) who will require resources geared towards older adults, the increase of parent-aged adults (between 25 and 44 years old) and school-aged children (between 5 and 14 years old) in the past 10 years suggests the area is becoming more popular with families. This is likely due to the reputation of Great Salt Bay Community School, the local K-8 school, and Lincoln Academy, the independent high school in Newcastle that students of Damariscotta attend for free.



According to 2020 Census data, there were 1,338 total housing units in Damariscotta with 1,067 listed as occupied (year-round) and 271 listed as vacant. Of the 271 vacant properties, 162 are seasonal, recreational, or short-term use. Short-term rentals and seasonal use is discussed in greater detail below. Of the 1,067 occupied housing units, the average household size in 2021 was 2.25 people,³⁰ with 221 (20.7%) households with one or more occupants under 18 years old, and 515 (48.3%) households with one or more occupants over age 65.³¹

Terms Defined:

Affordable Housing

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

Workforce Housing

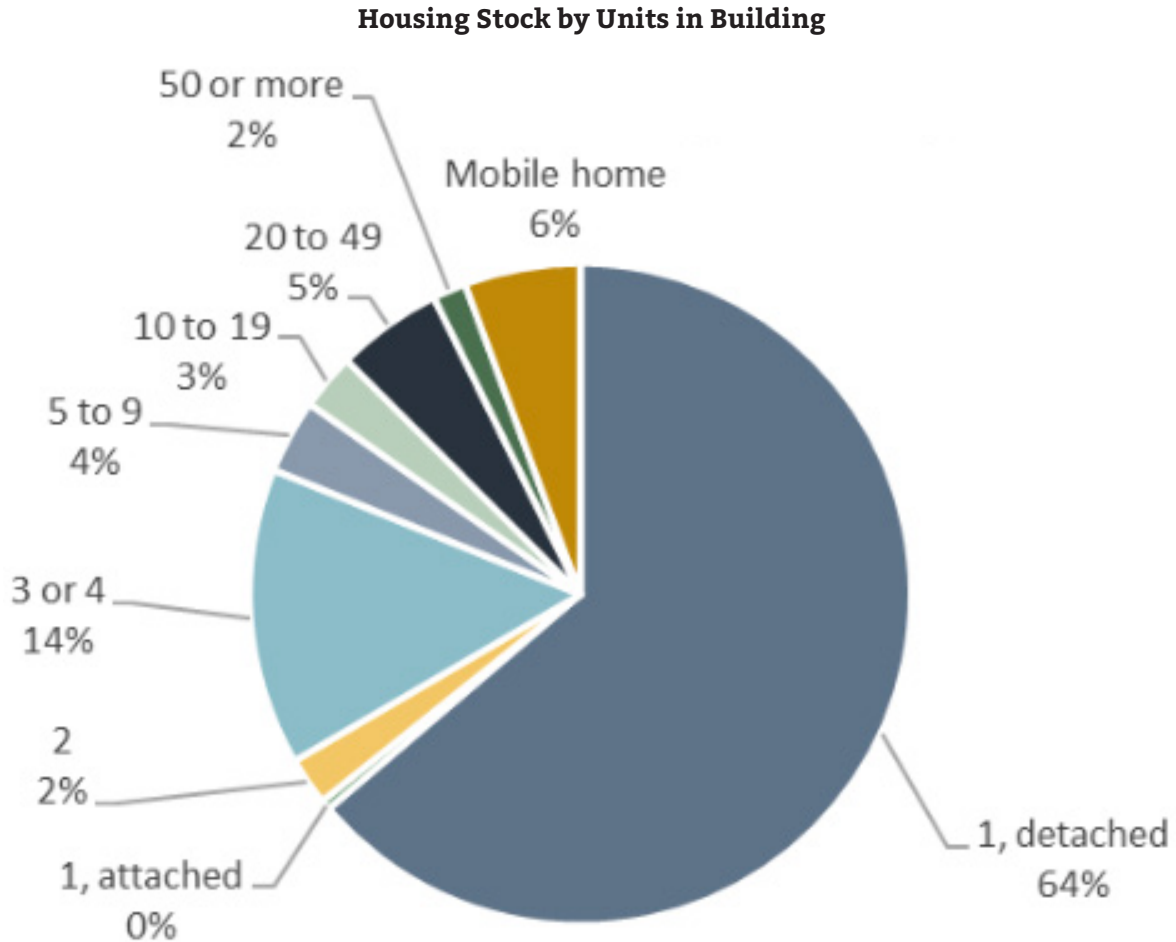
Housing that is affordable (that requires the household to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs) to those making between 80% and 120% of an Area's Median Income. This number is dependent on household size and is set by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

³⁰ American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021

³¹ 2020 Decennial Census: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, Table DP1

HOUSING

The majority (65%) of the Town's existing housing stock is detached, single-family units followed by buildings made up of 3- and 4-units (14%). See graph below for housing stock by units.



Source: MaineHousing data (2021)

In 2021, the renter vacancy rate was 0% with every rental unit on the market rented out at the time the data was taken. The same year, 8.3% of owner-occupied properties were not occupied: of these, 12% were for sale, 4.3% were recently sold but not yet occupied, and 67% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Seasonal properties are discussed in greater detail in the Seasonal Conversions section, below.

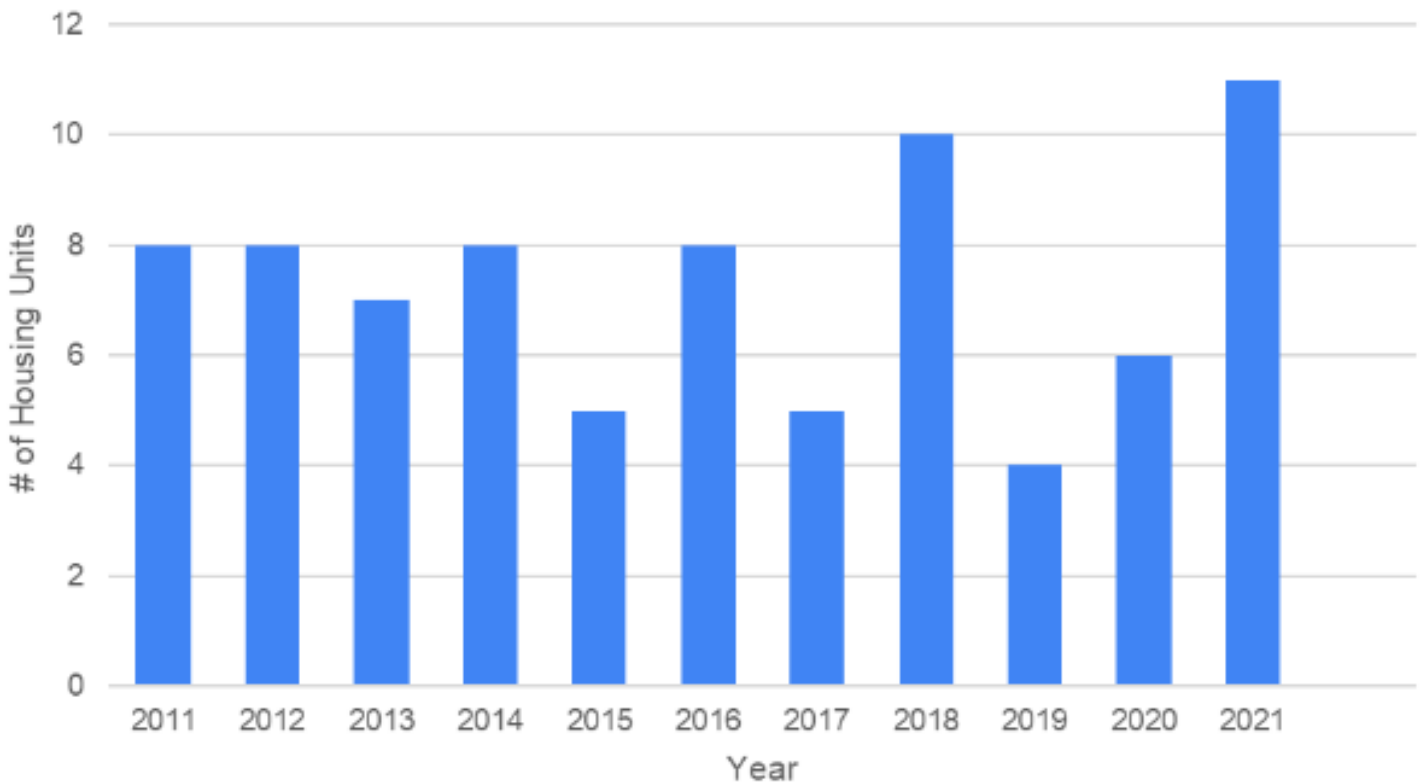
It will be important to allow for a diversity of housing options in the future for families seeking to move to the area for work or school opportunities, for older adults aging out of their homes and looking to downsize, and to ensure sufficient housing for our workforce.

Damariscotta added 80 housing units from 2011-2021, according to building permits obtained through the Code Enforcement Officer, with an annual average of 7 units.

HOUSING

It should be noted, however, that during the same period, the Town actually lost approximately 1.5% of its overall housing stock; the 80 units added between 2011 and 2021 did not increase the overall housing stock in Damariscotta. This is a stark change from 2000-2010 when the community increased its overall housing stock by approximately 16%.³² The decline in the 2010-2020 period could be due to demolition, neglect, or the conversion of multi-family buildings to single-family homes. Unfortunately, the Town did not require demolition permits or conversion paperwork for the record, so it is difficult to understand the true source of the loss.

Housing Units Added Per Year



Source: Damariscotta Code Enforcement Building Permit data



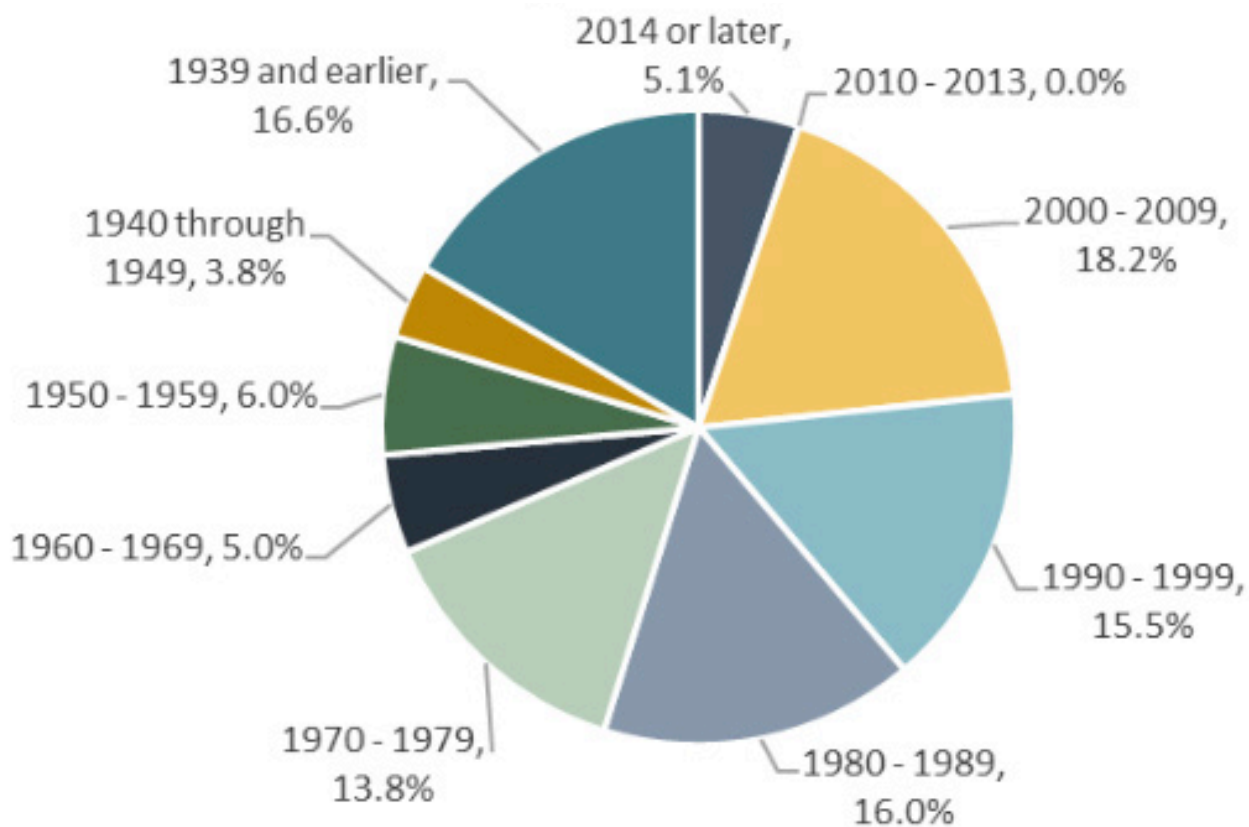
As detailed further in the Population & Demographics chapter of this Plan, the average projected rate of growth puts Damariscotta's 2040 population at approximately 2,700 people. In order to accommodate the projected increase in population, and assuming that average household size of 2.25 people holds, Damariscotta would need to add **at least 176 year-round housing units between now and 2040.**

³² Housing production in Lincoln County slowed in this same time period, adding 12.7% between 2000-2010 and only 0.5% from 2010-2020; the slowdown in housing production follows wider trends in the area as the region rebounded from the 2008-2009 recession.

HOUSING

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

Housing Units by Year Built



Source: MaineHousing data (2021)

Under the average projected scenario, the situation will be even worse by 2050. With a projected population of approximately 3,000 people, and again, assuming the average household size of 2.25 holds, Damariscotta would need 274 additional new housing units. If the average annual number of new housing units holds at 7, **Damariscotta will have a shortfall of 91 housing units in 2050**. Again, this shortfall assumes that no current housing units are removed during that time, which is unlikely.

Specialized Housing Needs

Assisted Living

Damariscotta has a variety of assisted living facilities, as listed in the table below. With the additional assisted living facilities throughout the region, further assisted living facilities are not anticipated to be needed to serve the needs of the community during the next 10 years.

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

Affordable Housing

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

The Town's existing or recently approved (as of November 2023) affordable housing units are:

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

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

HOUSING

Workforce Housing

In May 2023, the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) released the results of a county-wide housing needs assessment and strategy report. While the report indicated that, across Lincoln County, 900 affordable-rate units will be needed to accommodate working families and older residents of limited means, the most critical needs will be for workforce housing for households earning between 80% and 120% AMI. The report suggests, “creating new age-restricted 55+ housing will enable existing cost-burdened older resident households to downsize into more manageable units while allowing their current residences to be backfilled by worker households.” Additional older adult housing units (age-restricted to over 65) might allow for existing, larger units to be occupied by workforce families and provide housing options across the lifespan. While some affordable housing options for older adults exist in Damariscotta, as noted in the table above, additional market-rate housing units of this type are needed.

The report recommends a countywide distribution of approximately 250 owner-occupied workforce units, 250 renter-occupied workforce units, and 400 affordable older adult rentals. However, the report identified specific communities within the county as being potential growth areas due to the availability of public water and sewer (which is not available in the majority of the municipalities in the county) and recommends **Damariscotta pursue a goal of adding at least 83 affordable units over the next 10 years**. Following the LCRPC report’s recommended distribution, Damariscotta should aim to create at least 23 owner-occupied workforce units, 23 renter-occupied workforce units, and 37 affordable older-adult rentals,³³ which would be in addition to the market-rate shortfalls identified above.



³³ At the time of the drafting of this Plan, the Planning Board had approved a 32-unit apartment building. However, it was not yet under construction and was not factored into these recommended totals.

Housing Costs

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

According to 2021 American Community Survey estimates, the median gross rent in Damariscotta was \$871, including subsidized and unsubsidized housing, with more than 20% of renters paying > \$1,000, and 3% paying >\$3,000. This is equivalent to the \$855 median rent for Lincoln County. However, it should be noted that the median income is lower in Damariscotta than in the rest of the county, and 58.5% of renters in Damariscotta are cost-burdened (spending >30% of their monthly income on rent). As a service center, Damariscotta has a larger share of subsidized, affordable housing than surrounding communities with caps on rent prices. A lack of market-rent apartments drives up prices due to the principles of supply and demand.

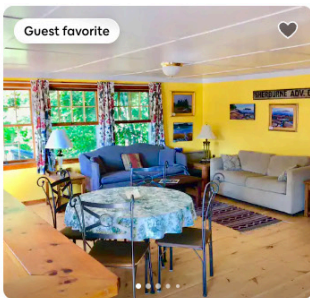
Clearly, housing in Damariscotta is unaffordable to those making the median income and especially to those making less than the median income. On a regional level, the above-referenced Housing Needs Assessment offers several implementation strategies for Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission staff to undertake in the next five years to stimulate housing production. This includes convening municipal leaders to set local housing production goals, educating the public, encouraging the removal of regulatory barriers to housing production, enlisting large employers or Maine-based affordable housing developers to assist with housing creation, and similar. It also recognizes that increased capacity will be necessary to assist area towns in drafting ordinance amendments pursuant to these strategies.

Seasonal Properties

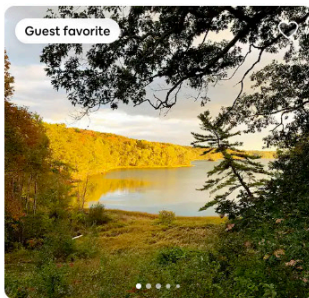
In 2020 there were about 162 seasonal use properties in Damariscotta.³⁴ This is a slight decrease from the 186 seasonal properties in the 2010 census.³⁵

According to data from AirDNA, which captures properties listed on Airbnb, VRBO, and similar sites, there were 52 active seasonal rentals in Damariscotta in 2022.³⁶ It should be noted that this does not capture the actual number of seasonal rentals or residences within the town. Damariscotta does not currently require the registration of short-term rentals and thus is missing crucial data in understanding how many potential units are seasonal rentals at any given time.

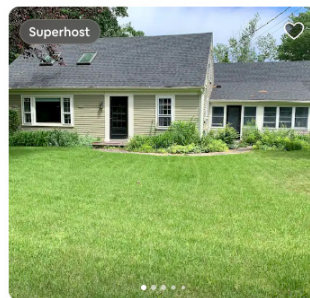
The use of what otherwise could be permanent year-round housing as temporary or seasonal housing has a far-reaching impact on the community. As noted above, Damariscotta is already projected to be experiencing a housing shortfall by the year 2030 if current conditions hold. The projected shortfall does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



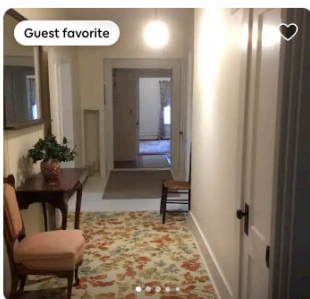
Apartment in Damariscotta ★ 4.92 (252)
Fernald's Backside
2 beds
\$150 \$128 night · \$1,075 total



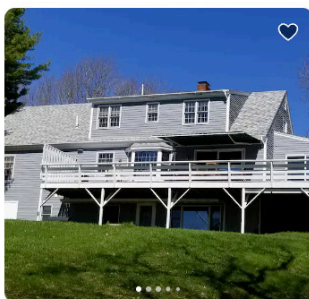
Home in Damariscotta ★ 5.0 (5)
Bestview Acres
Waterfront
\$450 \$405 night · \$3,458 total



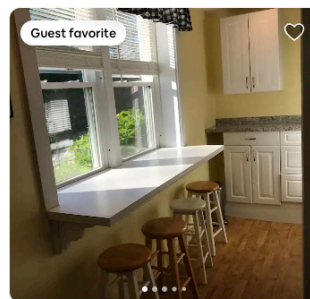
Home in Damariscotta ★ 4.86 (7)
Green Acres
4 beds
\$240 \$216 night · \$1,811 total



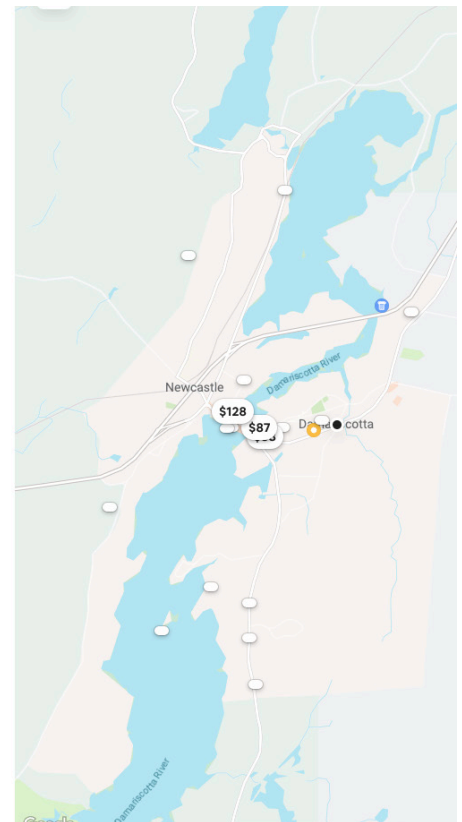
Apartment in Damariscotta ★ 4.78 (36)
Eugene Clark Bungalow, downtown Damariscotta
1 king bed
\$97 \$87 night · \$759 total



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



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



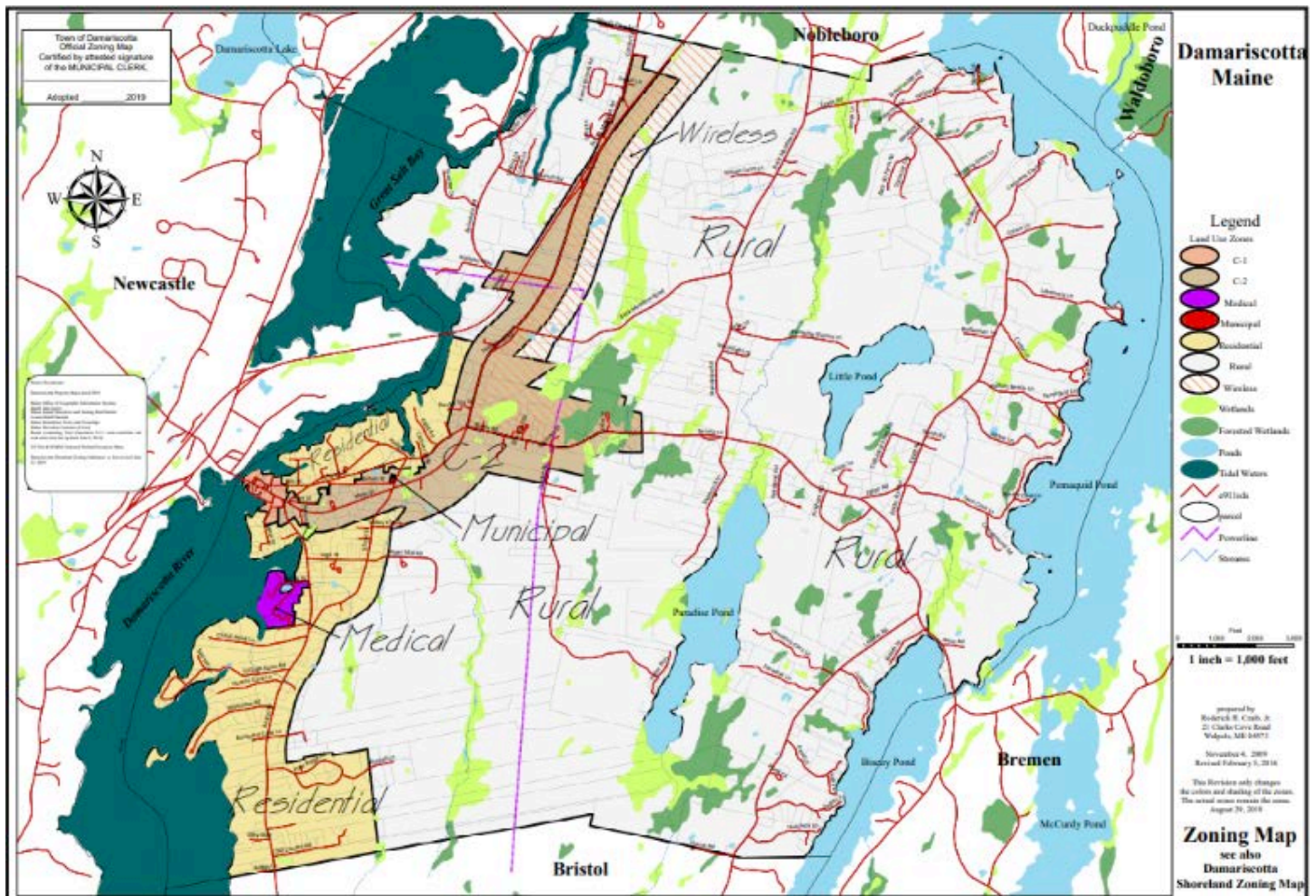
³⁴ 2020 Decennial Census: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, Table DP1.

³⁵ 2010 Decennial Census: Vacancy Status, Table H5.

³⁶ Lincoln County Housing Needs Assessment Short-Term Rental Data, page 48. https://www.lcrpc.org/uploads/visual_edit/report-housing-needs-assessment-lincoln-county-me.pdf

Local Regulations & Housing Impact

Single-family detached dwellings, mobile homes on individual lots, and two-family dwellings (duplexes) are expressly allowed in the General Residential, C-1, C-2, and Rural zoning districts (Official Zoning Map, below), and only require a administratively reviewed building permit from the Code Enforcement Office. In the past 10 years, these are the predominant housing types constructed within the community.



Accessory dwelling units (ADUs or “in-law apartments”) smaller than 650 sq. ft or 40% of the heated area of the main house, are allowed anywhere that single-family homes are allowed and are similarly permitted through the Code Enforcement Office. These cannot have more than two bedrooms, and require that the owner of the property live in either the main house or the ADU.



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

As noted above, multi-family dwellings are only allowed in the C-1, C-2, and Rural zoning districts (see Zoning Map). The C-1 zoning district covers the downtown, which could allow for the conversion of existing single-family homes or duplexes into larger multi-family dwellings. However, in the C-2 and the Rural zoning districts, there are currently vacant lands, commercial structures, or single-family homes; if a multi-family dwelling is proposed it would either require construction of a new structure or might create pushback from the existing, surrounding neighborhoods. Interestingly, multi-family dwellings are not allowed within the General Residential zoning district, which is directly adjacent to Damariscotta’s downtown where the prevailing development pattern is densely packed single-family homes or grandfathered, non-conforming multi-family dwellings. This has created a sprawl effect where multi-family dwellings must be constructed in the more automobile-dependent areas of the community, effectively limiting the ability of residents to walk or bike into the downtown or to the area’s major employers.

An additional limiting factor to the construction of multi-family dwellings is Section 101.6.F of the Land Use Ordinance, which notes that a single building cannot have more than 32 units, except for extended care facilities for older adults which may have up to 45 dwelling units. Due to the Land Use Ordinance limitations on the conversion of existing, densely packed buildings in the General Residential zoning district, developers of new multi-family dwellings need to move into the Rural zoning district. Applicants also need more than 32 units to make their projects financially feasible without subsidies in the areas of town where these kinds of projects are allowed.

HOUSING

Mixed-use structures (buildings containing one or more dwelling units as well as nonresidential space) are only allowed as conditional uses within the C-2 zoning district which runs along Route 1B outside of the downtown. Conditional uses must be reviewed by the Planning Board, which can be an expensive and timely endeavor and may have the effect of dissuading applicants from constructing this type of housing. Additionally, limiting this type of structure to the C-2 zoning district means the Town has essentially outlawed the creation of new mixed-use buildings in the downtown, which may have an unintended consequence; during this plan's public engagement activities, residents continually expressed their desire for mixed-use buildings.

Another barrier is in the Site Plan Review Ordinance which requires two parking spaces per dwelling unit regardless of zoning district, except for older adult multi-family dwellings where one parking space per dwelling unit is allowed. The cost of building one parking space is considerable, and revising these policies to reduce the required parking spaces could reduce the overall cost of development which could be a passed savings to residents. The Town should consider revisions for areas where public parking is already available, and/or encourage shared parking with compatible uses, i.e., parking spaces used by the day workers could be used by residential units overnight).



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

Issues & Opportunities

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

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

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

Issues



Lack of affordable housing



General housing availability



Lack of rental housing

Opportunities



Amending land use regulations to spur housing production



Better understanding short-term rentals



More housing would reduce GHG emissions

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies related to Housing to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



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

Policy 6.1 Encourage and promote workforce housing in strategic locations to support economic development of the community and region.

Strategies:

- a. Designate a location(s) in Growth Areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3) (M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).
- b. Amend the Town's Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances as necessary to increase density or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing in designated Growth Areas.

Policy 6.2 Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

Strategies:

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

Policy 6.3 Aim for at least 30% of all new residential development in the next decade to be subsidized/regulated affordable or workforce housing.

Strategies:

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

Policy 6.4 Work with current affordable housing property owners to maintain existing affordable housing in the community.

Strategies:

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



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

Policy 6.5 Ensure that land use controls allow for the kinds of residential development that the community desires and needs.

Strategies:

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

Policy 6.6 Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.

Strategies:

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

Policy 6.7 Understand the short-term rental situation in Damariscotta.

Strategies:

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



Goal: Housing in the community is safe and secure.

Policy 6.8 Ensure that existing housing units in Damariscotta meet safety standards.

Strategies:

- a. Require that the Code Enforcement Officer conducts inspections of all short-term rentals to ensure basic Life Safety requirements are being met.
- b. Promote available state and federal financial assistance programs for homeowners of older homes to complete maintenance/repairs.

Policy 6.9 Protect rural areas and natural settings without existing infrastructure by encouraging new housing development at greater densities in Growth Areas already served by public infrastructure (sewer, water, sidewalks and roadways, broadband internet, three-phase power).

Strategies:

- a. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas
- b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.

Further information about implementation of the Housing Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 18).



NATURAL RESOURCES



NATURAL RESOURCES

Overview

For thousands of years, Wabenaki people enjoyed the abundance of the Damariscotta River estuary and nearby ponds and forests. They harvested dense beds of oysters and quahogs in the Salt Bay and upper Damariscotta River as well as shad, smelt, alewives, and other migratory fish. In addition to ponds, creeks, and lakes filled with fish and waterfowl, deer and other wildlife were plentiful. The Whaleback and Glidden oyster middens at the entrance to the Salt Bay remind us that the natural resources of the Damariscotta area have attracted gatherings of people for millennia. Today, the Salt Bay area, which includes significant wildlife habitats for Tidal Wading Bird and Waterfowl, is designated as the Great Salt Bay Marine Shellfish Preserve.³⁷

The natural resources found within the Town of Damariscotta are still abundant and valued by its residents, visitors, and those who depend on the natural environment to make a living. Damariscotta's boundaries are the Damariscotta River estuary to the west, the connected Pemaquid and Biscay Ponds to the east, and the boundary with Nobleboro through the widest part of Oyster Creek to the north. Damariscotta has freshwater wetland systems including pocket and forested wetlands with plentiful natural springs that run roughly south to north. Of the Town's 14.71 square miles, 12.42 sq. miles (84.4%) is land (of which 1.77 sq. miles is freshwater forested/shrub wetland)³⁸ and 2.29 sq. miles (15.6%) is covered by water.³⁹

Significantly, Damariscotta and surrounding towns occupy the Central Interior and Midcoast Maine Ecoregion, a transition area between Southern and Downeast Ecoregions. This area supports high species diversity including many at the limit of their northern range, for example, quahog, horseshoe crab, and white oak. This high biodiversity may increase the resilience (or ability to adapt) of the forests and wetlands to climate change.

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

In addition to the three major freshwater systems Map X (above) shows several other streams with riparian wetlands and associated Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat sites, as well as sizable Deer Wintering Areas in Damariscotta.

Terms Defined:

Critical Natural Resources

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

³⁷ Under M.R.S.A. Title 12, §6961

³⁸ National Wetlands Inventory

³⁹ National Wetlands Inventory

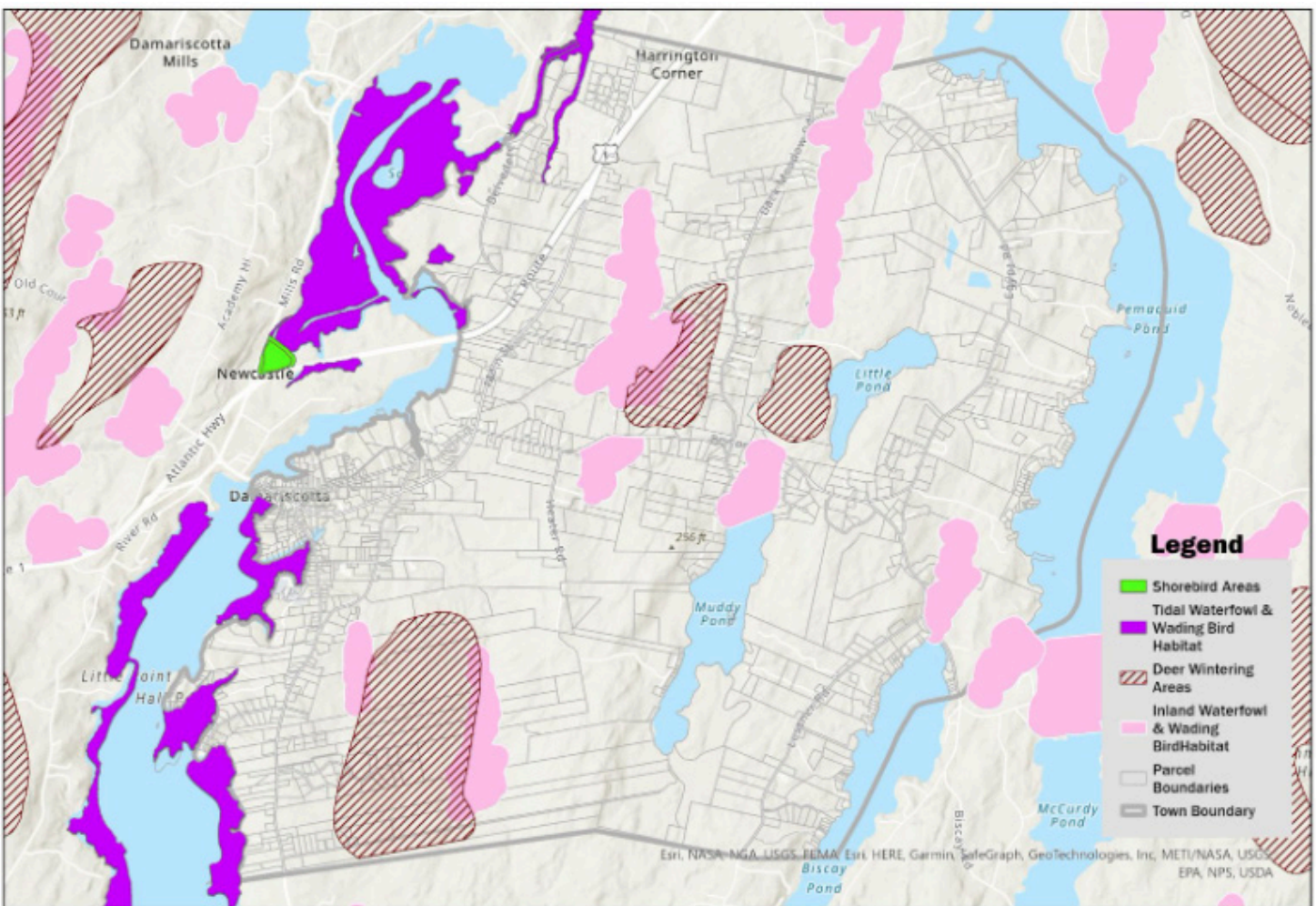
NATURAL RESOURCES

Freshwater Wetlands

Castner Creek

Castner Creek originates in Bristol and wends north through extensive freshwater wetlands, behind the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District sewage lagoons, through the Castner Creek Community Forest, into an old ice pond behind Damariscotta Hardware, and out through the tumbled stone dam where it meets a small tributary that drains an area running parallel to School Street. Finally, Castner Creek passes through culverts under upper Main Street and Church Street to empty into the Damariscotta River. The lands around Castner Creek are minimally developed and the riparian areas are largely intact. The watershed is part of a 3,877-acre habitat block that stretches from the Castner Creek Community Forest south into the town of Bristol.⁴⁰ Areas along the creek south of the Community Forest have been identified as essential Inland Waterfowl/Wading Bird Habitats regulated by the state under the Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA). These and other animal habitats are shown on the map below.

Animal Habitats in the Region



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

⁴⁰ Mixed salt marshes have a Maine Natural Areas Program S3 ranking; Maine has between 20 and 100 occurrences of this type of habitat.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Little Oyster Creek/Lily Brook

Lily Brook (freshwater)/Little Oyster Creek (tidal) originates in wetlands south of Biscay Road and along Back Meadow Road. Drainage from these wetlands forms Lily Brook which flows under Business Route 1 (Upper Main Street) to a culvert across Branch Road. After this culvert, the stream is tidal and becomes Little Oyster Creek, a tidal stream bordered by an uncommon mixed salt marsh habitat. Little Oyster Creek joins with the tidal Oyster Creek north of Belvedere Road at the northern end of the Salt Bay.⁴²

The marshes along Lily Brook west of Business Route 1 are designated Inland Waterfowl/Wading Bird Habitat by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) and are part of a 529-acre undeveloped habitat block. The Little Oyster Creek/Lily Brook wetland system is the most affected of the three major wetlands in Damariscotta by road crossings. Improperly installed culverts at road crossings have the potential to disrupt the natural flow of water in wetland systems and impede the migration of anadromous species such as smelt and salmon.



Back Meadow Brook

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

Other Habitats

Salt Bay

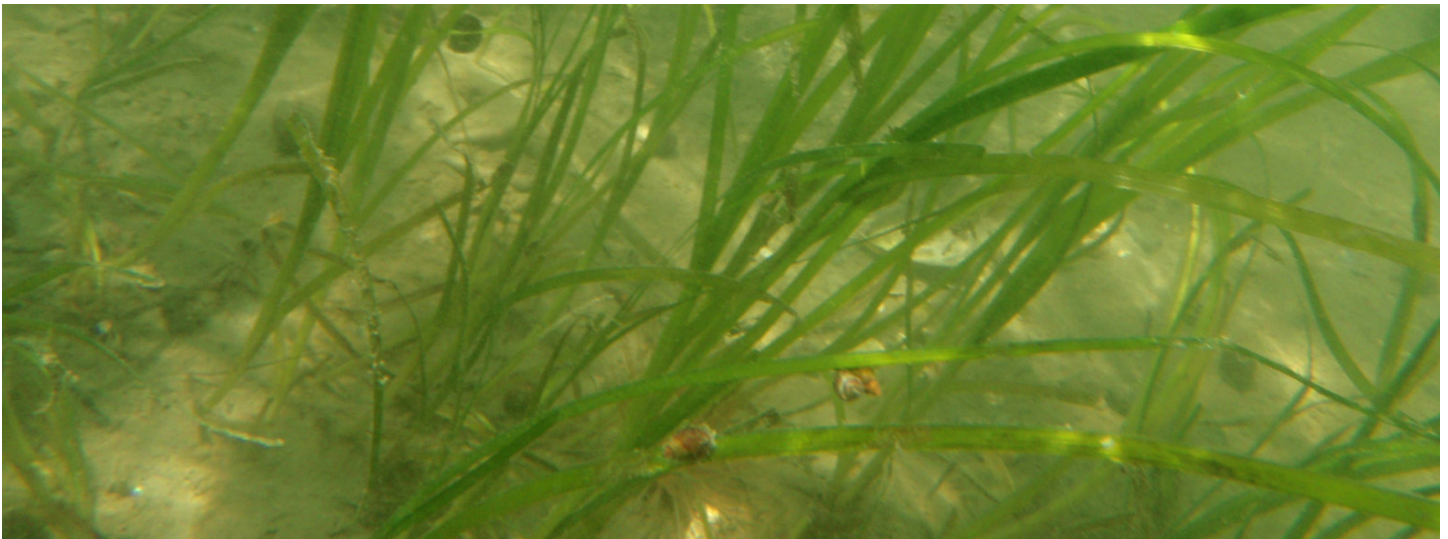
The Salt Bay is a spawning area for horseshoe crabs whose population has fluctuated in recent years due to overharvesting for eel bait and biomedical purposes. In 2003, the state ended horseshoe crab harvests in Maine and the State of Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan lists horseshoe crabs as a Priority 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. For over ten years, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) has organized annual spring horseshoe crabs counts in the bay.

Damariscotta River

The Damariscotta River estuary supports wild soft-shell clam and oyster fisheries as well as 38 aquaculture lease areas, primarily growing American Oyster but also kelp and other shellfish species.⁴¹ The huge twice-daily tidal flow brings in offshore nutrients and mixes with the warmer waters of the Salt Bay. The Damariscotta River is characterized as a Focus Area of State Wide Ecological Significance by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W).

Eelgrass Beds

Eelgrass beds are abundant and extensive in the Salt Bay on either side of the main channel. In 1997 the Maine Department of Marine Resources found small areas of eelgrass in the river above the village area and in limited coves along the river. By 2010, the lower river sites had been diminished, but the Salt Bay beds continue to flourish.⁴² Eelgrass meadows provide protected nursery areas for juvenile fish and invertebrates and are often sites for the settlement of shellfish larvae. Additionally, eelgrass reduces river current and wave action which may stabilize sediments and the adjacent shoreline.



An eelgrass meadow

⁴¹ William Devoe, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases (Maine Department of Marine Resources, March 21, 2019), <https://maine.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a0b3c775cfc243a2b92df328ad85c642/explore?filters=eyJDSVRZljbIkRhbfWFyaXNjb3R0YSJdfQ%3D%3D&map:location=44.013991%2C-69.514457%2C12.91>.

⁴² Maine DMR Historical Eelgrass Coverage Viewer: <https://dmr-maine.opendata.arcgis.com/apps/mainedmr-historical-eelgrass-coverage-viewer/explore>

NATURAL RESOURCES

Intertidal Areas

Intertidal areas along Oyster Creek, Little Oyster Creek, and Castner Brook are rainbow-smelt spawning sites. Saltmarshes also thrive along these shores. Additionally, the flats and waters adjacent to the estuary shore in Damariscotta, from the Nobleboro town line at Oyster Creek to the Bristol town line --except for a stretch between the US Route 1 bridge to the Main Street bridge-- are considered significant Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat by IF&W.

Animal Habitat

The river, salt marshes, freshwater ponds, and wetlands in Damariscotta provide corridors for the movement of wildlife and migration of fish as well as habitat for birds and diverse interconnected communities of turtles, frogs, and other species. White-tailed deer, moose, coyote, fishers, bobcats, beavers, porcupines, raccoons, and smaller mammals are found throughout the town and coexist with commercial and residential development. In recent years the white-tailed deer population has grown in Damariscotta despite steady hunting pressure. Deer regularly wander down the village streets in the early morning and take refuge in the fields and forests along the river during the day. The Town's largest deer wintering area is south of Castner Creek Community Forest with other wintering areas located adjacent to Little Pond on water district lands and wetlands near Biscay Road.

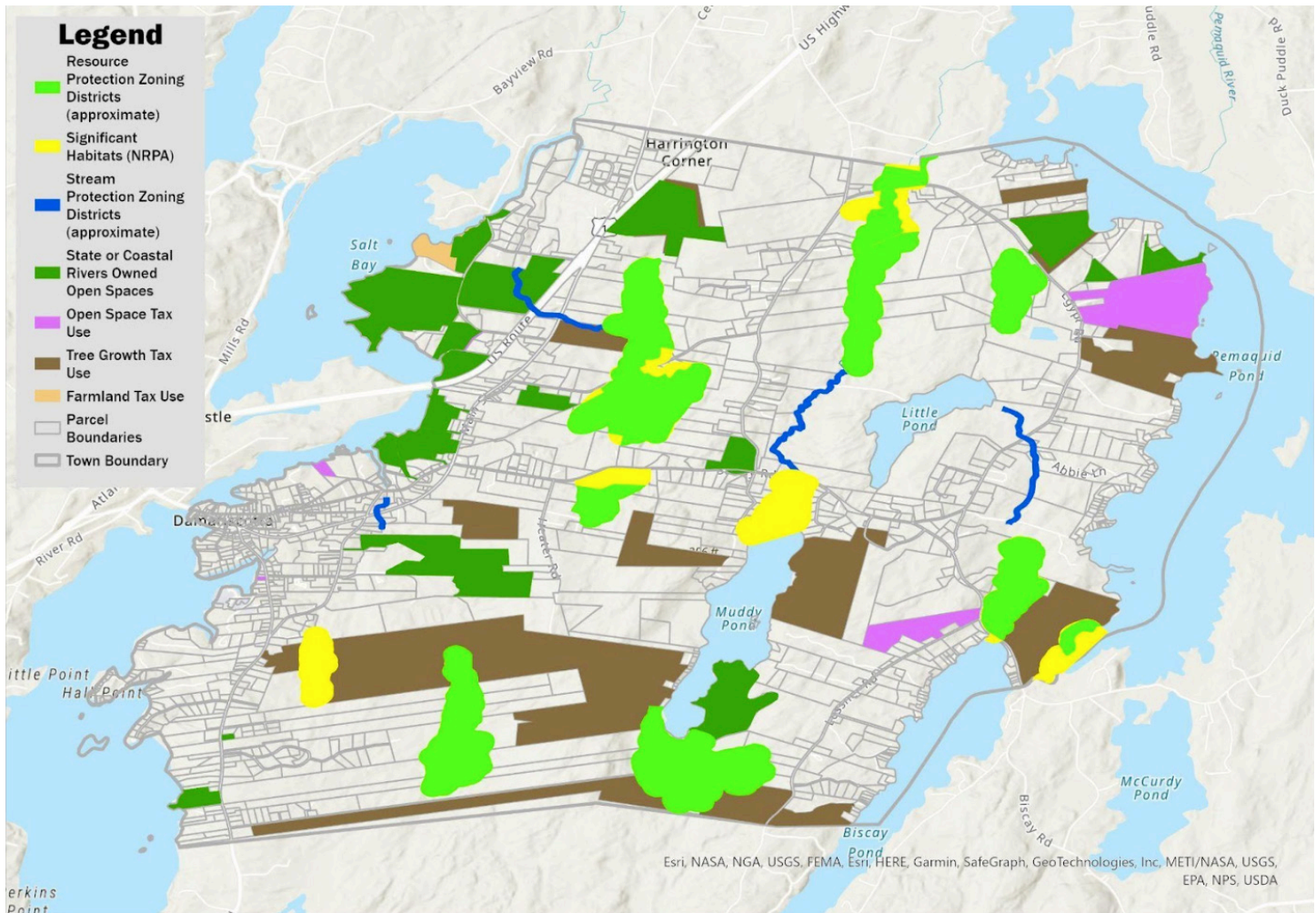
Endangered and Threatened Species

No endangered or threatened plant or animal species have been documented within Damariscotta. Bald Eagles, once considered an endangered species in Maine, nest and feed along the Damariscotta River and local ponds. Even so, they are still protected by the federal Bald Eagle-Golden Eagle Act of 1963.⁴³

⁴³ "Forest Management Recommendations for Bald Eagles," (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife).

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resource Area



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

Scenic Views

In 2019 and 2020, the Town's now-disbanded Land Use Advisory Committee compiled a list of scenic views in the Town of Damariscotta, as well as the threats posed to them, included in Appendix J, Table 1. The most common threats identified come from the development of residential or recreational areas and climate change.

Existing Protective Measures

Damariscotta and neighboring Newcastle administer a joint Shellfish Committee and Shellfish Ordinance to protect the health of their shared intertidal resources from overfishing and pollution. (More information on shellfish conservation efforts is discussed in the Marine Resources chapter.)

The Town's *Site Plan Review Ordinance* requires a stormwater management plan and an erosion and sediment control plan for new construction to minimize the risk of contamination to nearby water sources.⁴⁴

Damariscotta enforces a *Shoreland Zoning Ordinance*,⁴⁵ consistent with the State's Chapter 1000 guidelines, to minimize threats to water quality and protect the health of nearby wetland ecosystems and the species relying on them. It established all land within 75 feet of a high-water line as a Stream Protection District, and all land within 250 feet of a coastal or freshwater wetland ecosystem as a Resource Protection District, and regulates areas where development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or quality of scenic views. Any new construction in these sensitive areas must partially re-establish trees and local vegetation removed during construction to ensure the retention of natural stormwater buffers. This Ordinance also limits commercial land uses to prevent contamination from fertilizers, petrol products, chemicals, heavy metals, or other industrial pollutants. Any construction or natural resource harvesting must provide an erosion and sediment control plan to ensure minimal threat of runoff.

Regional Coordination

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

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

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

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

⁴⁴ Damariscotta Site Plan Review Ordinance

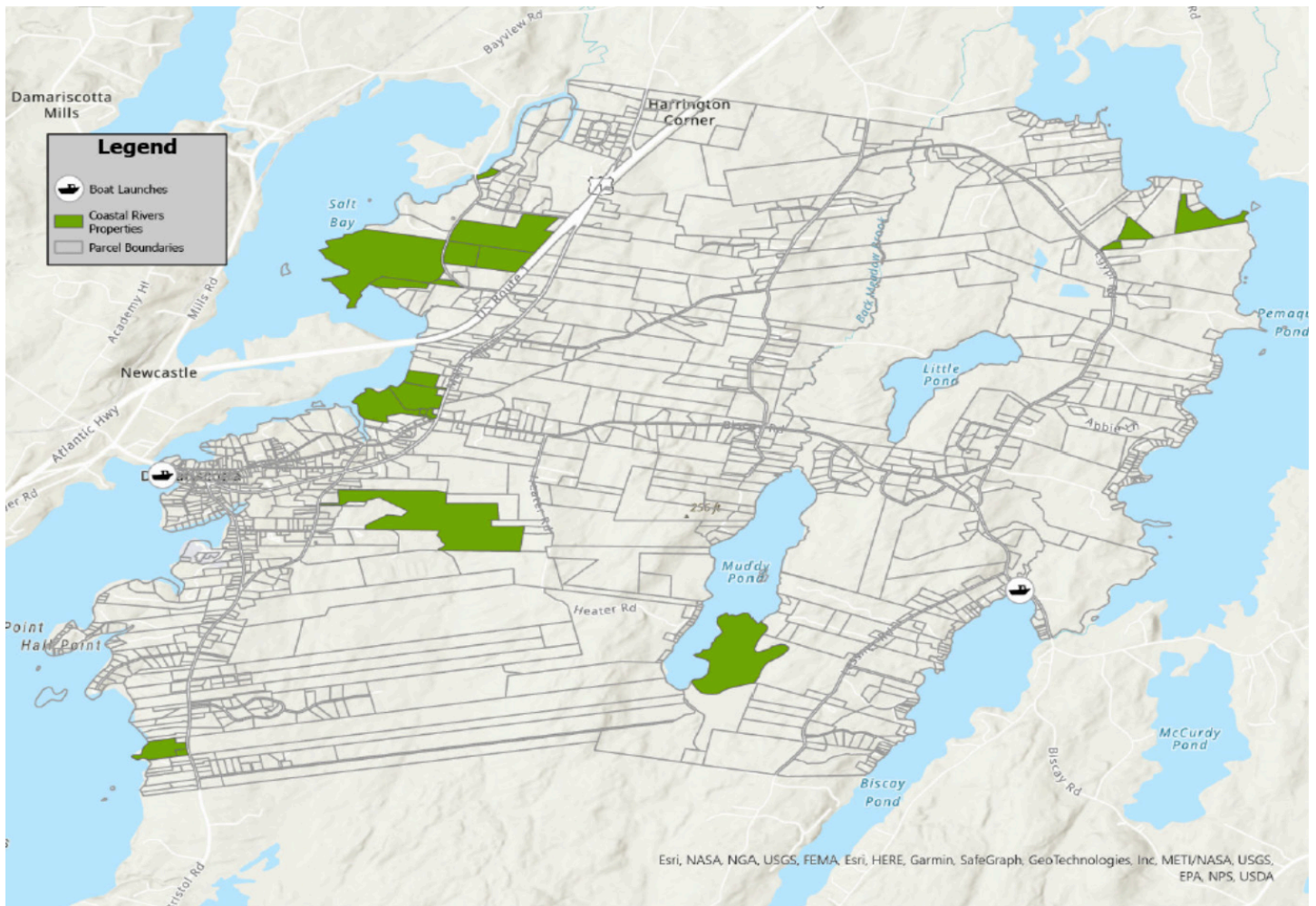
⁴⁵ Damariscotta Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Town of Damariscotta works closely with CRCT to maintain the health of Damariscotta's habitats and wildlife. In addition to conserving land, Coastal Rivers also restores ecosystem health where possible, i.e., restoring the wetlands on the shores of Salt Bay Farm in 1997.

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

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



Data Sources: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Town Tax Records

NATURAL RESOURCES

Issues & Opportunities

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

Development adjacent to wetlands fragments and degrades wildlife habitat by increasing noise and light, and adversely impacts water quality with increased stormwater runoff associated with an increase in impervious surfaces. Damariscotta has worked to prioritize ecosystem health by adopting ordinances to limit the pollution caused by development and protect buffers in and around wetlands and in shoreline areas. Local nonprofits such as Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) conserve land for passive recreation and to protect certain natural areas and resources.

Freshwater wetlands and associated streams and ponds will shift in size due to swings in precipitation, and nearby development (road building, residential and commercial construction) will affect the ability of the natural ecosystems to shift and adapt. As annual precipitation events become more frequent and severe, runoff from streets, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces that contain sediments and pollutants that contribute to the increasing acidity and nitrification of the estuarine and lake waters, will overwhelm roadside ditches and current stormwater systems, especially within the village area.

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

As the coastal waters warm, scientists also expect to see new species of phytoplanktons with biotoxins that may affect human health.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Susanne K Meidel, "2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Appendices https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/305b/2022/25-May-2022_2018-22_ME_IntegratedRpt-LIST.pdf.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Invasive Species

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

Road Construction, Maintenance & Stream Crossings

The building of roads and improperly installed culverts have the potential to disrupt the natural flow of water in wetland systems and impede the migration of migrating species such as smelt and salmon. The Maine IF&W Stream Habitat Viewer has identified and mapped all the problematic stream crossings in Damariscotta and can help in planning for roadway improvements.⁴⁷ Roads also fragment habitats and create hazardous barriers for animal movement. Some deer wintering areas, such as the large area south of Castner Creek, are impacted by residential and road development. Preventing road development in habitat areas would provide a variety of benefits to habitat and water quality in the community.

Shoreland Erosion

Erosion of the Damariscotta River estuary banks threatens to damage shoreline habitats, release large amounts of sediment and pollutants to coastal waters, and weaken the integrity of shoreline structures. In 2001, the Maine Geological Survey mapped out the erosion potential of the shoreline along the Damariscotta River, finding land at risk of potential bank slumping south of Days Cove and along Cottage Point in Damariscotta.⁴⁸ Additionally, one stretch of coastal bluff near the southern border of town along the Damariscotta River was found to be highly unstable.⁴⁹ While no shoreline was found at significant risk of erosion at that time, recent climate change impact and storm events may have changed that finding.

Fluctuations in lake water levels and storm events also cause erosion on freshwater lake shores and potentially endanger structures built within the shoreland zone. Additionally, the use of riprap by individual residents to harden their property shoreline --allowed with permits under existing state and local laws-- may adversely affect adjacent natural areas.

⁴⁷ Maine Stream Habitat Viewer, <https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/MaineStreamViewer/#>

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

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

NATURAL RESOURCES

Issues



Climate change impacts



Development adjacent to wetlands



Stormwater runoff

Opportunities



Adoption of ordinances meant to limit pollution



Collaboration with CRCT

NATURAL RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies related to Natural Resources to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



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

Policy 7.1 Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.

Strategies:

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

Policy 7.2 Ensure local ordinances include up-to-date methods and best practices for wetland protection.

Strategies:

- a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require applicants to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on-site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
- b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to consider as part of the review process pertinent habitat maps and information regarding critical natural resources.
- c. Work with a qualified professional engineer (or Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District) to amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review Ordinances to incorporate low-impact development standards for stormwater management.
- d. Ensure continued compliance with the Maine DEP Chapter 1000 standards for Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.

Policy 7.3 Protect and restore local wildlife habitats.

Strategies:

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

Further information about implementation of the Natural Resources Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 24).



WATER RESOURCES



WATER RESOURCES

Overview

Water is the defining feature of the landscape of Damariscotta. The Town is bounded on two sides by water: the tidal Damariscotta River, Salt Bay, and Oyster Creek to the west, and fresh, non-tidal Pemaquid Pond and Biscay Pond to the east. Little Pond and Paradise (or Muddy) Pond are within the town's boundaries and Damariscotta Lake is just north in neighboring Nobleboro. The Town's waterways serve as habitats for a variety of plant and animal species and a variety of economic and recreational activities (further discussed in the Marine Resources and Recreation chapters).

The Town has two ordinances that address possible contamination of water bodies and soil erosion. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the State's Chapter 1000 standards, regulates new construction and commercial use of land surrounding all bodies of water in town. The Site Plan Review Ordinance, which includes standards for stormwater management, requires the Planning Board to evaluate new development plans in which Developers are required to evaluate the impact of phosphorus runoff for any proposals where this would be a concern.



Major Bodies of Water

Damariscotta River Estuary (including Salt Bay)

The Damariscotta River is an estuary that extends from the Salt Bay and to the Atlantic Ocean nineteen miles to the southwest. The river is bordered by seven towns, including Damariscotta. The primary freshwater source of the estuary is the outlet stream of Damariscotta Lake which spills down fifty-foot falls into the Salt Bay. The ocean water is dominated by the changing tides until Glidden Ledge, a natural bedrock sill across the river south of the town of Damariscotta. North of the bridge connecting Damariscotta and Newcastle is a reversing falls and upriver of the bridge (south of Castner Creek) boulders and a bedrock sill form the Johnny Orr rapids. Ancient oyster shell piles line the River below the US Route 1 bridge before the river opens up past another sill at the indraft into Salt Bay.

The shallow Salt Bay, a Maine Marine Protected Area, has extensive eelgrass beds and tidal flats. Little Oyster and Oyster Creeks empty into the Salt Bay at the northern border of Damariscotta, and Castner Creek joins the upper Damariscotta River in the village area.

WATER RESOURCES

Ponds

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

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

Little Pond, a cold-water spring-fed pond, is the public drinking water source for 614 residential and commercial customers in Damariscotta and is protected and managed by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District (GSBS). The GSBS owns the vast majority of the land within the watershed of the pond. The GSBS disinfects water taken from Little Pond with an ultraviolet light system. GSBS has a waiver from filtration requirements because it demonstrated that water from Little Pond is high quality, has low turbidity and coliform counts, and that potential sources of contamination are managed to minimize risk.



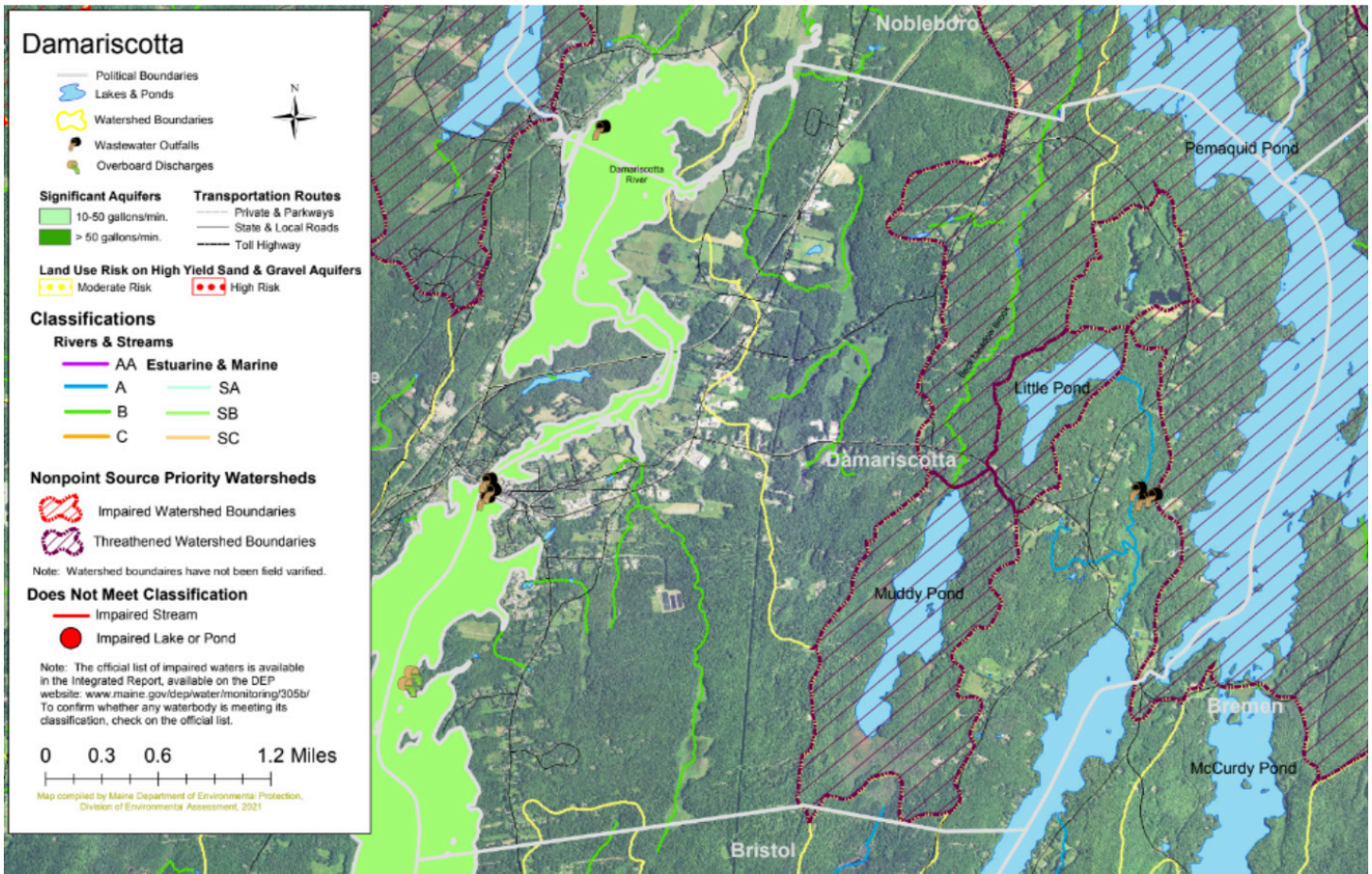
Aquifers

There are no significant aquifers mapped in Damariscotta.⁵¹ Despite the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, the majority of Damariscotta residents rely on groundwater from drilled fractured bedrock wells for drinking water.

⁵⁰ Maine Department of Environmental Protection (2006) "Nonpoint Source Management Program 2005 Annual Report," Document# DEPLW0758.

⁵¹ Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/explore/water/facts/aquifer.htm>

WATER RESOURCES



Source: Maine Department of Environmental Protection (2021)

Threats to Water Quality

The State has four classes for freshwater rivers and streams (AA, A, B, C), three classes for marine and estuarine waters (SA, SB, SC), and one class for lakes and ponds (GPA). The majority of Damariscotta’s surface waters are classified at B or higher, as noted on the chart below. The major threats to water quality come from nonpoint sources of pollution, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus from stormwater runoff, as well as increased soil erosion due to development.

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

⁵² Thompson, Woodrow B., “Surficial geology of the Damariscotta quadrangle,” Maine Geological Survey, 2009, http://digitalmaine.com/mgs_maps/1838

⁵³ Lake Stewards of Maine, 2023, <http://www.lakesofmaine.org/search-results.html?DoWhat=&l=&t=damariscotta&c=&z=&m=>

⁵⁴ Little Pond, which has excellent water quality, is designated “threatened” because it is the primary water source for a public water system.

WATER RESOURCES

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

*Classes AA, GPA, and SA describe waters with low risk from ecosystem degradation or pollution; waste discharge and impoundment are expressly prohibited in these resources. Class A waters have a small risk of degradation; impoundments and very restricted discharges are allowed.

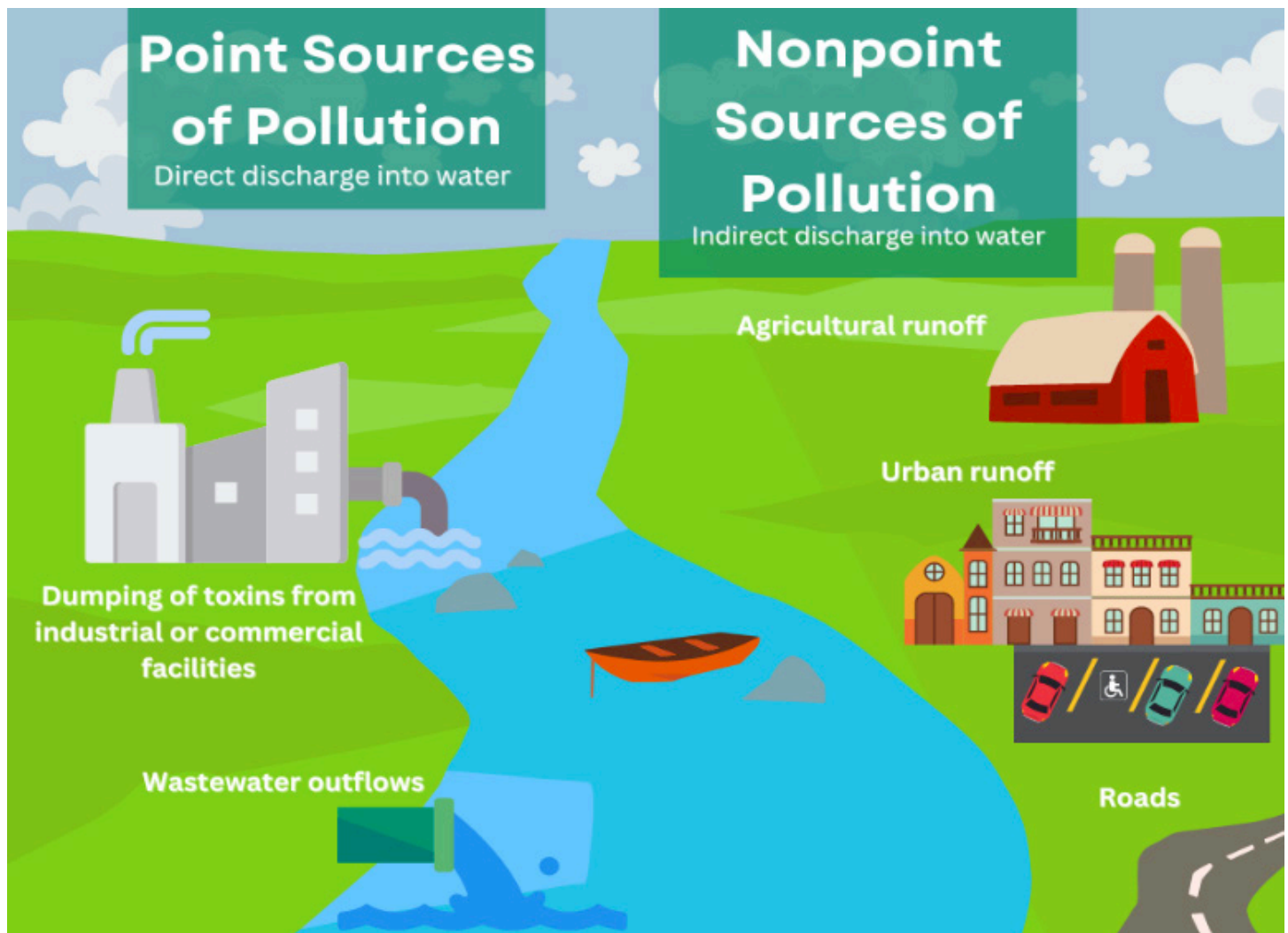
Classes B and SB have high water quality criteria with few restrictions on activities.

Classes C and SC have the lowest water quality criteria with the least restrictions on use. They are still good quality, but significant degradation might occur in these waters in the event of an additional environmental or human-made stress (such as a spill or a drought).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Lake Stewards of Maine, 2023, <http://www.lakesofmaine.org/search-results.html?DoWhat=&l=&t=damariscotta&c=&z=&m=>

⁵⁶ For more information about the classification of waterbodies, see M.R.S.A. Title 38, §465.

WATER RESOURCES



Point Sources (Direct Discharges) of Pollution

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

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

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

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

Nonpoint Sources of Pollution

Marine Waters

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

Coastal acidification (changes in water chemistry) is another major issue of concern, especially for the shellfish growers and harvesters on the river. The acidification of Gulf of Maine waters reflects the rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels globally; carbon dioxide readily dissolves into water creating carbonic acid. Algal blooms also contribute to acidification, along with acid rain from fossil fuel use. As seawater acidity increases, less calcium carbonate is available to shellfish and other marine life to build shells and skeletons.

Surface (Fresh) Waters

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

Although Little Pond was classified as eutrophic in the 1970's because of several algae blooms, water quality has improved since the 1990s and continues to be high enough to defend a filtration waiver. Little Pond's historic contamination was caused by significant runoff from a gravel mining operation northeast of its watershed, which increased the turbidity of the drinking water. The gravel mining operation has ceased, and the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District now owns the remaining pits where it manages runoff through a series of dams that impede sediment runoff and revegetation to ensure permanent soil retention of the former work site.

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

Drinking Water

Great Salt Bay Sanitary District

Conservation and management of Little Pond, the primary water source for approximately 700 residential and commercial customers in Damariscotta, is managed by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, a quasi-municipal entity. The Town's existing land use controls and the management practices of the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District minimize threats from contamination of the Town's drinking water which are currently considered low. The GSBS District owns the vast majority of the land within the watershed, and development within the watershed has been limited; more than 95% of the 424-acre watershed is undeveloped.⁵⁹ Other than the water intake station, the only structures in the vicinity of Little Pond are low-density residential developments built around the periphery of the watershed.

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



Access to Little Pond is limited to a gravel drive to the water intake station, kept locked with posted “No Trespassing” signs, and a foot trail from Biscay Road at the south end of the pond for limited recreational canoeing and fishing. Fishing is permitted only in the summer months, and the use of live bait or motorized water vehicles is prohibited. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) replenishes fish stocks, and, because of its high water quality rating, it is recognized as one of the best brook trout water bodies in the state.

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

WATER RESOURCES

Threats to Other Drinking Water Sources

A system is considered a “public” water system, even if the system of pipes is completely privately owned, if it has at least 15 service connections or serves more than 25 individuals per day for at least 60 days out of the year.⁶⁰ The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Source Water Assessment Program monitors these systems and identifies potential threats to assist with local regulatory decisions.⁶¹

The most recent report of the Source Water Assessment Program found no contamination in any of the water supplies outside the management of the GSBSD, but did find varying levels of risk of future contamination (see chart below). The major sources posing a risk to future contamination came from the water supply’s proximity to private septic systems, a lack of ownership of the land surrounding the wellhead, and insufficient data on the distance of wellheads from potential chemical contaminants.

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

* Based on the type of well and thickness of the well walls

** Based on the proximity of septic and waste systems to wellheads and the radius of land around the well owned by the well owner

***Based on the presence of potential sources of chemical contaminants, such as PFAS chemicals or the storage of hazardous materials at nearby properties.

⁶⁰ For more information about public water systems, go to ME DHHS, Division of Environment and Community Health: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/whataPWS.shtml>

⁶¹ Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Drinking Water Program, Fall 2021

WATER RESOURCES

Protective Measures: Local Ordinances

The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance requires an erosion and sediment control plan to mitigate the risk of erosion and sediment contamination during construction, a stormwater management plan, and a report on the phosphorus impact of any new construction or alteration (if located within the watershed of a great pond, as defined in Title 38 M.R.S.A. §436-A). This minimizes the risk of contamination to nearby water sources and prevents degradation of Damariscotta's water resources. Additionally, the Town's Planning Board must ensure that the quantity and quality of groundwater is not unduly affected by any development proposal.⁶²

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

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



⁶² Damariscotta Site Plan Review Ordinance, Sec. 102.6, and Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance, Sec. 103.6, respectively.

⁶³ Damariscotta Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

Issues & Opportunities

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

The Town and GSBSD work together to establish policy and management practices to prevent contamination of Little Pond from point and nonpoint pollution sources to maintain current drinking water quality and meet the criteria for a filtration waiver. If the waiver were to be lost, a filtering plant would have to be built costing more than \$20 million in construction costs.

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

Threats from invasive species, nonpoint pollution, and erosion may also become more severe in the future due to climate change, discussed in further detail in the Marine Resources and Natural Resources chapters.

Issues



Increased precipitation



PFAS



Erosion



Invasive species

Opportunities



Further collaboration with GSBSD



PFAS testing from Maine DEP

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

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies related to Water Resources to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.

Policy 8.1 Protect current and potential drinking water sources.

Strategies:

- a. Work with LincolnHealth and the Pines Mobile Home Park on acquiring land surrounding their wellheads, or adopt strict wellhead protection standards in these areas.

Policy 8.2 Collaborate with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to ensure high water quality of the Town's drinking supply.

Strategies:

- a. Improve signage on the access trail from Biscay Road to notify the public that Little Pond is a source of drinking water and outline what recreational activities are not allowed.
- b. Adopt an Ordinance that prohibits landing seaplanes on Little Pond.
- c. Provide staff support to assist the Sanitary District in applying for grants which will improve water quality and/or upgrade existing sewer systems (especially moving vulnerable pump stations out of flood hazard areas).

Policy 8.3 Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.

Strategies:

Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.

Policy 8.4 Protect significant surface water resources from point and nonpoint source pollution.

Strategies:

- a. Work with local partners to implement the LakeSmart Program (which organizes landowners to volunteer to not use fertilizers and pesticides on their land).
- b. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.

WATER RESOURCES

Policy 8.5 Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.

Strategies:

- a. Establish a relationship with a qualified third-party engineering peer reviewer who can review projects slated for Planning Board review for compliance with stormwater standards and who can suggest modifications to encourage more low-impact development.
- b. Communicate with contractors regarding the Town's erosion and sediment control policies.
- c. Ensure enforcement of the Town's erosion and sediment control policies during construction.
- d. Work with a qualified professional engineer (or Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District) to amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review Ordinances to incorporate low-impact development standards for stormwater management.
- e. Ensure continued compliance with the Maine DEP Chapter 1000 standards for Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.

Policy 8.6 Collaborate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

Strategies:

- a. Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.
- b. Provide contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine in order to encourage landowners to protect water quality.
- c. Collaborate with the Maine DEP and local conservation organizations to understand the impact projected increases in annual precipitation will have on stormwater runoff to help minimize future contamination of waterways.

Further information about implementation of the Water Resources Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 27).



MARINE RESOURCES



MARINE RESOURCES

Overview

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

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

Since 2012, harvests of American oysters, quahogs, soft-shelled clams, and razor clams in Damariscotta and Newcastle resulted in more than \$30,600,000 of economic value.⁶⁶

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

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



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

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

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

Marine Infrastructure

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

Damariscotta and Newcastle have an Interlocal Agreement and Harbor Management Ordinance to ensure public safety and balance commercial, recreational, and natural interests on the Damariscotta River. The Ordinance establishes five harbor districts, and a committee of members from both towns to work with the Harbormaster to designate mooring districts, anchorage areas, and public boat launch areas.

The five harbor districts include:

- Inner Harbor, on the Damariscotta River from the westernmost point of Lewis Point downstream to the Southernmost edge of Walker's Point;
- Lower Harbor, on the Damariscotta River from the southern boundary of Inner Harbor downstream to the southernmost points of the two town's boundaries;
- Upper Harbor, on the Damariscotta River from the westernmost point of Lewis Point upstream into Salt Bay;
- Great Salt Bay, beginning at the southern boundary of the Marine Protected Area north to the Newcastle Town line; and
- Sheepscot River, within the town of Newcastle that includes the Sheepscot River and its tidal tributaries, including the tidal portion of the Marsh River.

The Inner Harbor is considered a boater and public safety area and requires permit approval from the Selectboard to install a wharf, pier, ramp, pilings, or float. The Harbormaster may permit the installation of floats, not to exceed 6 x 18 feet, on moorings in the other districts.

Water skiing and tubing are prohibited in the Inner Harbor, and the Harbor Management Ordinance also prohibits abandoning watercraft or fishing boats, and the discharge of fuel, sewage, or trash into the river.

Damariscotta's Town Landing Ordinance ensures safe and timely operation of the town boat landing area, sets time limits for public use of the float, and establishes fees or penalties for misuse. Swimming and recreational fishing are allowed at the Town landing.

Next to the town dock, across the small Misery Gulch, is a seasonal marina, Schooner Landing. The Marina has about 25 seasonal rental slips available and is the base for local fisherman guides, the seasonal River Tripper that offers boat tours of the river from May to October, and Midcoast Kayak that also offers tours and rentals. A few of the marina floats, near the water under the bridge that remains ice-free in winter, are kept in the water year-round.



Wild Shellfish Harvest & Aquaculture Regulation

The Great Salt Bay Marine Shellfish Preserve, an area defined by state statute as extending north of a line 600 yards north of the U. S. Route 1 bridge over the river, prohibits any bottom disturbance, including the harvesting of any shellfish species, except for approved research activities. South of the Salt Bay, American oyster aquaculture dominates Damariscotta's marine resource economy. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) lists 38 aquaculture leases and 53 limited-purpose aquaculture sites in the estuary below the bay,⁶⁷ fourteen of these solely within Damariscotta's borders, and three in shared Damariscotta and Newcastle waters.

The DMR, with input from local authorities and nearby landowners, offers Limited-Purpose Aquaculture permits for up to 400 square feet of area for one calendar year for the culture of specific shellfish species and marine algae using specific types of gear (as seen on map below). The permits are typically used to test new areas or nursery sites, or for small aquaculture operations.

The Newcastle-Damariscotta Joint Shellfish Committee, established through the Shellfish Conservation Ordinance,⁶⁸ sets the fees for licenses, determines the number of shellfish harvesting licenses to be issued annually, and establishes the conservation measures to be implemented by commercial harvesters for them to receive a license. The number of licenses is based on the available information about the size, distribution, and abundance of the shellfish and must be approved by the DMR.

⁶⁷ Maine Department of Marine Resources, Aquaculture - AQ Leases, MaineDMR Aquaculture - AQ Leases, 2019, <https://maine.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a0b3c775cfc243a2b92df328ad85c642/explore?filters=eyJDSVRZljbIkRhbWFyaXNjb3R0YSJdfQ%3D%3D&location=44.013991%2C-69.514457%2C12.91>.

⁶⁸ Damariscotta/Newcastle Shellfish Conservation Ordinance: <https://www.damariscottame.com/home/pages/town-ordinances>

Local Zoning & Land Uses

Overview of Local Zoning

The majority of properties abutting the Damariscotta River or Salt Bay are in the Town’s Rural Zoning District (north of Route 1) or the Residential Zoning District (south of Route 1). A limited number of properties abutting the Damariscotta River are in the C-1 or Medical Zoning Districts, as seen on the Town’s existing zoning map below.

As stated in the Land Use Ordinance, the Rural Zoning District “allow(s) for a diversity of uses, while still maintaining the essential rural character of this area”; the Residential Zoning District “preserve(s) the physical, aesthetic, and social quality of Damariscotta’s developed residential areas to provide for areas within the Town for residential growth”; and the C-1 (Downtown) Zoning District was created to “provide general retail sales, service, and business space within the Town of Damariscotta in locations capable of conveniently servicing community-wide and/or regional trade areas.”⁷⁰ The Medical District lacks a stated purpose but is generally considered the area occupied by the MaineHealth - LincolnHealth campus.

Factors Affecting Water-Dependent Land Uses

Regulations, coupled with increased land costs, prohibit many “working waterfront” or harbor-related uses which may have led to the increase in residential development on prime tidal water frontage. The Land Use Ordinance allows “outdoor recreational facilities associated with boating and kayaking classes and rentals”, with prior conditional use approval by the Planning Board, in the C-2 and Rural Zoning Districts. Boat building facilities are also allowed, with Planning Board approval, in the C-2 Zoning District. Retail fish markets may be allowed with conditional use approval by the Planning Board under the definition of a retail store in the C-2 Zoning District. Marinas, finfish or shellfish processing areas, commercial fishing or boating facilities, are not allowed though some, such as Chasse Marine, operate under non-conforming uses.

Land Uses Typically Associated with “Working Waterfronts”

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

The Pemaquid Oyster Company, the only business in Town currently using the working waterfront tax use exemption,⁷¹ also maintains an oyster upweller to grow shellfish on the Schooner Landing dock.

⁷⁰ Town of Damariscotta Land Use Ordinance, Sec. 101.5.A.

⁷¹ Damariscotta Working Waterfront Tax Use Properties, FY2023 (Damariscotta Assessor’s Office). This program was enacted to encourage preservation of Maine’s working waterfront and support commercial fishing activities. To qualify, a landowner must have a parcel of land abutting tidal waters and must use the land primarily (more than 50%) for commercial fishing activities.

MARINE RESOURCES

Scenic Views

The Damariscotta Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) initiated a draft list of scenic views and important points of visual access in 2019 and 2020 (Appendix J, Table 1), but the list was never formally adopted. The views across the Harbor and Damariscotta River from the US Route 1 ramp, from the downtown parking lot, and along both sides of the Main Street bridge are deemed essential to defining Damariscotta's sense of place.

The Planning Board is required to determine, during its review of a Site Plan or Subdivision application, that a proposed project will not have an undue effect on rare or irreplaceable natural or scenic areas.⁷⁵ To make this determination, the Planning Board is authorized to limit tree-clearing and minimize the view of development from adjacent roads. Outside this requirement, there are limited protections for identified scenic resources.



⁷⁵ Damariscotta Site Plan Review Ordinance, Sec. 102.6 and Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance, Sec. 103.6

Issues & Threats Related to Marine Resources

Climate Change & Sea Level Rise

Warmer winter water temperatures, as a result of climate change, assist the spread of marine invasive species, and change the timing of larval recruitment and survival of wild species. Increased carbon dioxide levels in the air increase the uptake of carbon dioxide into seawater which increases the acidity of marine water. This acidification threatens the health of marine life and, significantly for the Damariscotta, may dissolve the calcium carbonate of oyster shells and other species.

Increased water temperatures also cause closures of marine areas due to Vibrios, a naturally occurring bacteria found in oysters and hard-shell clams. Illnesses from Vibrio infections are often associated with the consumption of raw or undercooked seafood and shellfish. Vibrio growth is managed by maintaining harvested shellfish at temperatures below 50 degrees. Because of this, DMR has regulations to reduce the risk of Vibrio infections caused by the consumption of oysters or hard clam in effect from June 1st to October 15th. These regulations impact the Damariscotta River north of Montgomery Point in Boothbay, including the river segment within the boundaries of Damariscotta.⁷⁶

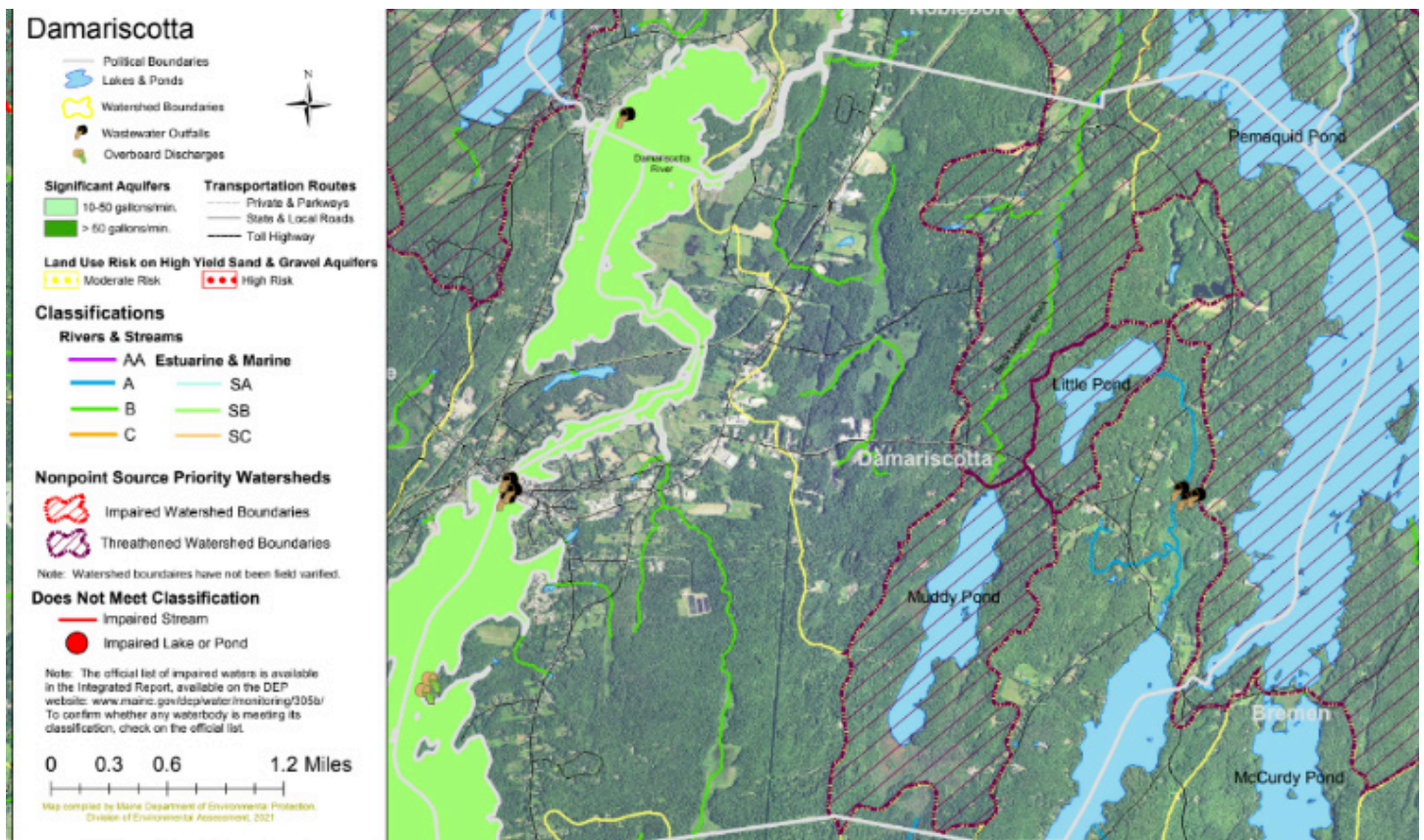
Climate change already threatens the Town's only public access to the Damariscotta River and increasing frequency and intensity of severe storms threatens to significantly damage harbor infrastructure. In January 2024, two storm events coincided with high astronomical tides and flooded the riverfront parking lots and several adjacent Main Street buildings. Rising sea levels in the Gulf of Maine and frequent and intense coastal storms, occurring because of climate change, will continue to flood and damage harbor infrastructure and the adjacent downtown business area unless significant measures for flood protection are undertaken. Under the Maine Climate Council's predicted 2100 sea level rise scenario, communities in Maine should prepare to manage tides which are 8.8 feet higher than those in 2000. Under this scenario low-lying areas, including the municipal parking lot, would be underwater on a regular basis as sea level rise increases the average high tides for coastal and inland systems. Frequent coastal flooding also increases the rate of erosion and the risk of landslides along vulnerable spots of the estuary riverbank, especially where natural vegetation has been cleared for residential development. This is discussed further in the Natural Resources chapter.

Limited Public Access

Paths across shorefront properties, that have long provided access to the flats for clammers and wormers, have been closed as these properties change ownership. Competing interests of recreational and commercial motorized boats at the Town Landing, Damariscotta's only public access to the river, were identified as an issue by community members during this planning process.

⁷⁶ Maine Department of Marine Resources, Chapter 115: Vibrio parahaemolyticus CONTROL PLAN, April 26, 2022, https://www.maine.gov/dmr/sites/maine.gov.dmr/files/inline-files/Chapter115_04262022.pdf

MARINE RESOURCES



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

Pollution Sources & Shellfish Closures

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

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

Nonpoint sources of pollution are run-off of pollutants, nutrients, and sediment from lands that drain into the river. These pollutants and their impacts are discussed in the Water Resources chapter. The parking lots along the waterfront are a concentrated source of nonpoint pollution as storm and flood waters wash sediment, road salt, and contaminants into the river. Heavy rains often result in river closures for shellfish harvesting because of increased bacterial pollution from contaminated freshwater flowing into the river.

MARINE RESOURCES

Marine Invasive Species

At least 64 marine invasive species have been reported in the Gulf of Maine,⁷⁷ but few of them are a major concern in the Damariscotta River. Green crabs, originally brought to the East Coast in the 1800s in ship ballast, are present in the Damariscotta River and feed on soft-shell clams and mussels. They also damage eelgrass beds and salt marsh vegetation. Studies in southern Maine estuaries show that increased green crab populations are a major reason for declining softshell clam stocks.

MSX, a protozoan parasite that affects American (and Pacific) oysters, has been in southern New England waters for decades and is now established in the Damariscotta River estuary. In 2010, MSX caused significant oyster mortalities in the river so the state restricts the transfer of oysters from the Damariscotta River to other waters in an effort to limit the spread of MSX and protect oyster-growing areas.⁷⁸ MSX is not a human health concern.



Decline of Soft-Shell Clams

A 2019 study by the Darling Marine Center documented a decline in soft-shell clams in the Damariscotta River. The study includes interviews with local shellfish harvesters who cited changes in the estuary, increases in wild oyster and quahog populations and declines in soft-shell clam populations over the previous twenty years. They report the changes they observe in shellfish populations could be due to over- and under-harvesting of the softshell clam beds, predation from green crabs and native sand worms, and sediment disturbance caused by dragging the river bottom to harvest oysters off leases.

Harvesters say they have adjusted to these changes by switching harvest species, harvesting less, looking for licenses in other areas, and depending more on income from other work.⁷⁹

The 2019 study also suggested continued monitoring of wild shellfish populations to provide information that informs license allocation and other local management decisions. Darling Marine Center findings from annual studies since 2019 are provided to Damariscotta and Newcastle.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Pappal, Adrienne. Marine Invasive Species. State of the Gulf of Maine Report, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (June 2010)

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

⁷⁹ Kara Pellowe and Heather Leslie, Current and Historical Trends in the Shellfish Resources of the Upper Damariscotta River Estuary (University of Maine, December 20, 2019), https://umaine.edu/leslie-lab/wp-content/uploads/sites/151/2020/01/2019-Final-Report_Damariscotta-Newcastle-Shellfish-Resilience-Project.pdf.

⁸⁰ Damariscotta Shellfish Committee, <https://www.damariscottame.com/shellfish-committee/pages/maine-shellfish-restoration-and-resilience-project-damariscottanewcastle>

Issues & Opportunities

The existing protections in the Site Plan Review Ordinance could be strengthened to further protect scenic areas. The Town's Zoning Map should delineate the scenic resources identified by the Land Use Advisory Committee and specifically not allow development within these limited, high-value areas. This would be comparable to how neighboring Newcastle regulates its scenic areas.

Recent concerns about the impact of aquaculture activities on wild clam harvests and access to water recreation led to a local moratorium on new aquaculture leases in nearby South Bristol, and there are efforts to enact a moratorium in the Town of Waldoboro north of Damariscotta.⁸¹ It is unclear whether these moratoriums will prove to be legally binding since the Department of Marine Resources has exclusive jurisdiction to lease and license coastal waters,⁸² but it is important to note the statewide concerns with the size and length of time of aquaculture leases within Maine's coastal waters. Like other municipalities, Damariscotta will likely continue to grapple with the impacts of large aquaculture leases.

In 1995, the Damariscotta River Estuary: A Management Plan was published. Though the report is more than 25 years old, the issues identified are still relevant today. Given the competing interests of recreational and commercial uses of the Damariscotta River, the continued concerns about the overharvesting of shellfish, and the desire to protect the unique natural resources surrounding the Damariscotta River and Salt Bay, an updated plan is needed for future planning around the estuary. The management plan should inventory existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings; suggest goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources; and recommend updates to the Harbor Management Ordinance.

Issues



Concerns re: aquaculture impact on recreation and wild clam harvesting



Harbor management practices

Opportunities



Economic & ecological benefits of aquaculture



Strengthen regulations to protect scenic views

⁸¹ Elizabeth Walztoni, "Waldoboro Residents to Consider Aquaculture Moratorium at Annual Town Meeting," The Lincoln County News, April 4, 2023, <https://lnme.com/currentnews/waldoboro-residents-to-consider-aquaculture-moratorium-at-annual-town-meeting/>

⁸² Maine Department of Marine Resources, <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/municipal-participation-in-aquaculture>

MARINE RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies related to Marine Resources to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: The Town supports thriving local fishing, aquaculture, shell fishing, and marine resource activities.

Policy 9.1 Include existing, potential, and historic working waterfronts and harbors in local planning efforts.

Strategies:

a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.

Policy 9.2 Give preference to water-dependent land uses over other uses and protect working waterfronts from residential or non-water dependent development pressures.

Strategies:

- a. Review and revise as necessary the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that water-dependent land uses are allowed in waterfront areas.
- b. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations are not prioritizing non-water dependent land uses over water-dependent ones in waterfront areas.
- c. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.



Goal: The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.

Policy 9.3 Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

Strategies:

- a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.
- b. Work with local property owners and land trusts to protect identified points of physical access to coastal waters

MARINE RESOURCES

Policy 9.4 Protect and expand visual access points (scenic views) of the community's marine resources.

Strategies:

- a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.
- b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.

Policy 9.5 Promote public access to the shoreline.

Strategies:

- a. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

Policy 9.6 Balance water-dependent land uses with other complementary land uses, including opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Strategies:

- a. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).

Policy 9.7 Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.

Strategies:

- a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.
- b. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.
- c. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).



Goal: The Salt Bay is a protected and well-managed ecosystem.

Policy 9.8 Accommodate changes in estuarine environment resulting from sea-level rise, including (but not limited to) enabling salt marsh migration.

Strategies:

- a. Encourage the purchase or permanent conservation of uplands adjacent to salt (tidal) marshes to allow marshes to migrate inland as sea level rises.
- The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.

MARINE RESOURCES

Policy 9.9 Keep up-to-date with changes in FEMA’s flood mapping.

Strategies:

- a. Update the Floodplain Management Ordinance accordingly as new FIRM maps become available from FEMA.

Policy 9.10 Limit new construction in areas that will be impacted by a tide five feet higher than the highest astronomical tide.

Strategies:

- a. Revise the Shoreland Zoning Map around the Damariscotta River to incorporate highest astronomical tide + 5 feet projections, limiting construction within these areas

Policy 9.11 Preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats.

Strategies:

- a. Collaborate with the Darling Marine Center and local land trusts to research reasons for shellfish population declines and continually monitor populations; refine the Town’s shellfish management program accordingly.

Policy 9.12 Expand our understanding of the productivity of coastal waters and the Damariscotta River.

Strategies:

- a. Promote events, education opportunities, and school programs that connect people to Damariscotta’s working waterfront.

Policy 9.13 Promote the economic value of the community’s renewable marine resources.

Strategies:

- a. Ensure that marine-based businesses are included in economic development programs and incentives.
- b. Promote the Aquaculture Pioneers and Maine Aquaculture Apprenticeship Program.

Policy 9.14 Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance, even in areas where development may occur.

Strategies:

- a. Educate shorefront property owners on the importance of protecting and enhancing vegetative buffers along the shorefront through existing “ShoreSmart” programs.

Policy 9.15 Improve air quality to protect the health of all people.

Strategies:

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

MARINE RESOURCES

- g. Work with CMP to identify any upgrades needed to support more robust EV charging and solar power infrastructure.
- h. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that certain development projects are “EV-ready” (e.g. that conduit is installed for EV charging stations).
- i. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town’s transportation network
- j. Publicize existing ride-providing services (such as Lincoln County FISH) and ride-sharing networks (such as GO MAINE).

Policy 9.16 Protect and improve marine habitat and water quality.

Strategies:

- a. Provide staff support to Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to apply for grants to replace existing overboard discharges.
- b. Provide information to owners of marine businesses and industries about participation in the Maine Clean Boatyards and Marinas Program.

Policy 9.17 Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.

Strategies:

- a. Develop alternatives to municipal riverside snow dump in an effort to reduce hydrocarbon pollution to the river waters.
- b. Advocate for Maine Department of Marine Resources to limit introduction of invasive species by prohibiting gear transfer to the river from other growing areas without precautions.

Further information about implementation of the Marine Resources Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 31).

A photograph showing three kayaks (orange, lime green, and red) hanging vertically on a red metal building. To the right, several paddles are also hanging. A sign above the kayaks reads "KAYAKING • ACTIVITIES".

KAYAKING • ACTIVITIES

RECREATION

Overview

Communities with a strong culture of sport and recreation are generally happier and healthier. Recreation and physical activity are associated with a reduced risk of chronic diseases and studies have shown that recreation has positive impacts on mental health, for both physical reasons but also because it promotes connection with others.⁸³ Additionally, recreational amenities can be a driver of tourism and economic development to a community. The Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, in the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development “leverages Maine’s assets and outdoor recreation heritage to grow the outdoor recreation economy and build Maine’s outdoor recreation brand.”⁸⁴

In Damariscotta, easy access to outdoor recreation opportunities is cherished by residents. Residents hunt deer and other game on private lands; canoe, kayak and boat in the river and lakes; and fish for stripers, trout, bass and other marine life. To support recreational fishing, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife stocks Little, Biscay, and Pemaquid Ponds while Salt Bay supports a winter ice smelt fishery and spring smelt fishing in the tidal streams.



⁸³ The Health and Social Benefits of Outdoor Recreation, California State Parks: Planning Division (March 2005).

⁸⁴ For more information, see <https://www.maine.gov/decd/programs/maine-office-of-outdoor-recreation>

Recreation Amenities & Trail Systems

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

- The Central Lincoln County YMCA has indoor basketball, pickleball, and tennis courts, outdoor baseball and soccer fields, the Lorna Bunting playground, fitness classes, and other programs for its members. Youth soccer, softball, baseball, and basketball programs are offered seasonally. The YMCA offers reduced-rate memberships and scholarships and, as of December 2023, 743 individuals in 353 households in Damariscotta had YMCA memberships.
- Great Salt Bay Community School has two outdoor playing fields, a playground, and a well-developed trail system behind the school; all are available for public use when not in student use. DamFast, a local Ultimate Frisbee group, uses the fields year-round.
- Lincoln Academy, located in Newcastle less than ½ mile from downtown Damariscotta, has outdoor tennis courts, a track field, and a baseball field available for public use when not in student use. The Academy maintains an extensive network of trails used for running and cross-country skiing that are also accessible to the public.
- Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) maintains five trails and conserves more than 300 acres of publicly accessible open space in Damariscotta, as well as trails and properties in surrounding towns. When weather allows, CRCT installs and maintains an outdoor ice-skating rink in the field in front of Round Top Farm. A popular sledding hill is also located at Round Top Farm. The Salt Bay Farm trails are used by cross-country skiers and snowshoers.
- Snowmobile clubs in Lincoln County maintain interconnecting seasonal trails through private woodlands in Damariscotta and surrounding towns. The groomed trail network is also accessible to cross-country skiers. One trail, dubbed Route 66, stretches from the woods at Business Route 1 south of Hannaford down into the Pemaquid peninsula.
- The Lincoln County Rifle Club, off Upper Main Street (Business Route 1), has outdoor rifle and pistol ranges and an indoor heated range.
- The Public Safety and Accessibility Collaborative (PSAC) is an active group of concerned citizens with a mission to promote walkability and bikeability in town. They created the Damariscotta Measured Mile, a one-mile loop along low-traffic streets, without sidewalks, in the village area of town.
- Damariscotta is also home to a plethora of artistic and cultural amenities, discussed in greater detail in the Arts & Culture chapter.

The Town maintains a few of its own recreation facilities; boat dock floats and one canoe/kayak rack at the Damariscotta River boat launch off the municipal parking lot, and a boat launch, picnic, and swimming area at Biscay Pond. The Town also owns open space at a capped landfill that was the old town dump. The Town, in cooperation with the Maine Department of Transportation, builds and maintains a network of sidewalks throughout the community, discussed further in the Transportation chapter.

Important tracts of open space commonly used for passive recreation are owned or otherwise conserved thanks to the stewardship of Coastal Rivers. A need for more active recreation infrastructure has been identified as missing within the community, and demographic shifts could make this need more pronounced in the future.

Potential Recreation Impacts

As noted in the Population & Demographics section of this plan, approximately 26% of Damariscotta’s population is between the ages of 25 and 44 with a median age of 41.6, which is younger than the median age of 51.2 for Lincoln County.⁸⁵ Additionally, about 14% of Damariscotta’s population is school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. These demographic shifts are expected to continue according to population projections. As the demographics of the community change, the increase in adults of child-bearing age and the increase in school-aged children will result in increased demands for family-friendly planning.

Accessible green spaces and recreation areas are critical components of family-friendly planning. As children age, it is important to provide active recreational opportunities.

Unfortunately, active (developed) recreation areas are lacking in Damariscotta. Currently, the YMCA has a playground appropriate for school-aged children and there are basketball courts at Great Salt Bay School, but there are no public play areas for toddlers or preschoolers.

The Town does not have a Parks & Recreation Department nor its own public playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts, or other sporting facilities.

As part of Great Salt Bay Community School sixth annual “GSB Students Investigate”, two students wrote articles about the benefits of active recreation areas to Damariscotta and its citizens, which were published in the January 5, 2023 edition of the Lincoln County News. As student James Hanley noted, “There are basketball courts at the YMCA, but people who want to go play need a YMCA membership. Some people may not want to pay each month but still want to play sports and be active. There is no alternative to the YMCA that doesn’t cost money, and everyone wants a place to play and hang out, especially if they love being active.”

Terms Defined:

Active Recreation

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

Passive Recreation

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

⁸⁵ American Community Survey data, 2020

RECREATION

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

Selected Quotes from Community Engagement Events

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

Open Space Conservation & Accessibility

The Town has a close working relationship with Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, a local nonprofit whose mission is to "care for the lands and waters of the Damariscotta-Pemaquid Region by conserving special places, protecting water quality, creating trails and public access, and deepening connections to nature." While no formal relationship exists, the town works collaboratively with CRCT to conserve land for open space and passive recreational use.

Within the Damariscotta-Pemaquid Region, Coastal Rivers owns 60 properties, holds 58 conservation easements, and co-manages an additional 11 properties, for a total of nearly 4,000 acres. They maintain more than 51 miles over 30 trails with five of these trails in Damariscotta (see chart and map below); the trailheads are plowed throughout the winter for year-round access. One trail in Damariscotta is specifically accessible, the Rhoda and Leon Cohen River Trail which connects Round Top Farm to Whaleback Shell Midden State Historic Site. This trail is 8' wide with very little slope and a firm, smooth surface. Both trailheads are accessible for vans. There are no known use conflicts on these trails.

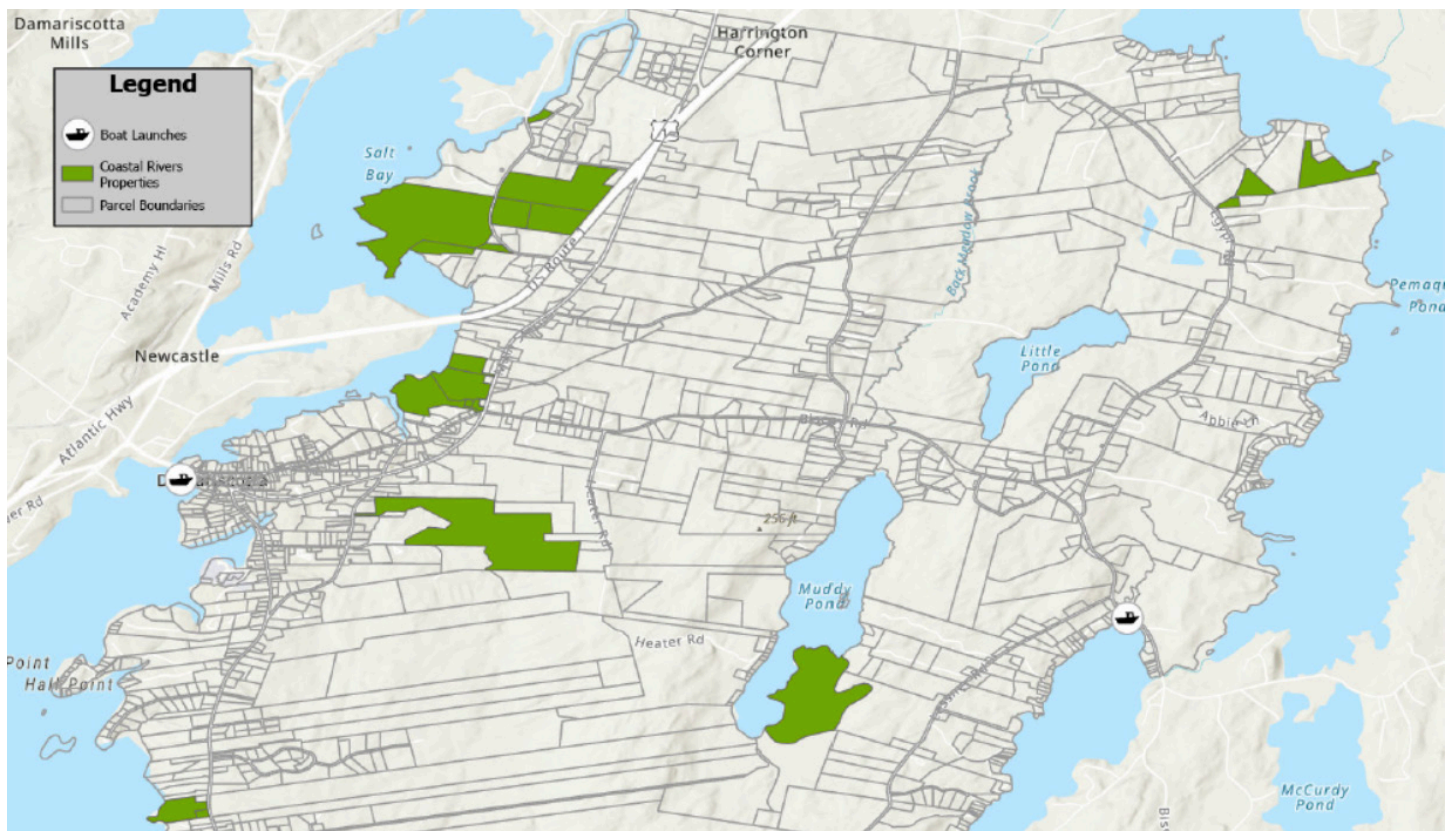
The Town does not currently have any mechanism, such as an open space fund, to conserve land. As noted above, the town relies on Coastal Rivers to permanently conserve open space that is of high recreational or ecological value to the community. Historically, Damariscotta has appropriated funds to Coastal Rivers through the annual budget process but this has not occurred since 2020.



RECREATION

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

Source: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust



Data Sources: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Town Tax Records

Access to Water Bodies

Damariscotta has many water bodies, as discussed in the Marine Resources Chapter. The water bodies include the Damariscotta River and Salt Bay, Pemaquid Pond, Biscay Pond, Paradise (Muddy) Pond, and Little Pond. The public has access to Damariscotta River, Salt Bay, Pemaquid Pond, and Biscay Pond which may be only visual or limited. Muddy/Paradise Pond has no public access and Little Pond has limited public access as it is the Town's public water supply.

CRCT maintains preserves that allow passive outdoor recreation alongside the Damariscotta River (accessed at Round Top Farm or Huston Landing), Salt Bay (accessed at Salt Bay Farm), and Pemaquid Pond (accessed at Doyle Preserve). These trails provide water views, but no formal swimming or canoe/kayak access. The Town installs a public canoe/kayak rack, for storage and easy access to the Damariscotta River, near the town landing during the spring and summer months. However, this is one of the few areas along the Damariscotta River in Damariscotta that is publicly owned; otherwise, public access is limited.

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

Little Pond has a public access foot trail to the water through an easement from the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. Access is limited by design since it is the Town's water supply. To protect the water supply, motor craft of any kind, including boats and snowmobiles, are prohibited on Little Pond as well as ice fishing, swimming, and live bait. Fishermen are allowed to store canoes/kayaks on the property, which they are asked to register with the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District. This protects the water supply by encouraging users not to use their canoes/kayaks on other ponds and potentially bring back invasive species.



Impediments to Accessing Recreational Lands

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

Survey responses to the question about improvements to allow increased access to water bodies indicated that easements or increased public ownership would be the top improvement (21.4% of respondents), followed closely by sidewalks (21.1%), increased maintenance at existing areas (16.9%), and bike lanes (14.7%).

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



Issues & Opportunities

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

One of the principles of livable communities is the ability for people of all abilities and ages to be able to enjoy community services and features that meet their needs.⁸⁶ It is important to note that there is currently no access to water in Damariscotta for those with disabilities. Without ADA-accessible access to the water, some members of Damariscotta's community are unable to enjoy this precious resource. AARP produces a biannual policy book that outlines policies that governments at all levels should aim to undertake in creating livable communities. In 2002, the United States Access Board, an independent federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards, released the minimum accessibility guidelines for recreational facilities, including boating facilities and fishing piers and platforms.⁸⁷ Any changes to water access in Damariscotta will be required to follow these guidelines.

There is limited parking at Biscay Beach for boat launch users and swimmers. The available parking is quite informal and users park on adjacent, private property when the beach is busy.

Issues



Lack of active recreation infrastructure



No water access for those with disabilities



Limited parking at Biscay Beach

Opportunities



Adoption of US Access Board policies for water access

⁸⁶ AARP Policy Book 2023-2024:

<https://policybook.aarp.org/policy-book/livable-communities/aarp-livable-communities-principles>

⁸⁷ The ADA Accessibility Guidelines: <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/#ada-1003>

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values related to Recreation as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: Outdoor recreation opportunities, especially access to surface waters, are protected.

Policy 10.1 Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a plan to improve Biscay Beach as a usable site, specifically addressing known conflicts between boats and beach-goers as well as known parking issues.
- b. Implement the above referenced plan to improve Biscay Beach.

Policy 10.2 Seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to all major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

Strategies:

- a. Create a formalized water access plan to water bodies where access is not currently available.
- b. Provide educational materials to private property owners about the benefits of available state programs and/or conservation easements in order to encourage permanent public access to our woods and waters.
- c. Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A, and MDIFW's Outdoor Partners Program.
- d. Create an accessible water access point for individuals with disabilities



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

Policy 10.3 Preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.

Strategies:

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

RECREATION

Policy 10.4 Comply with the US Access Board’s minimum accessibility guidelines in all new construction to ensure that all Damariscotta residents, regardless of age or ability, have access to both active and passive recreational amenities (including water access).

Strategies:

- a. Create an accessible water access point for individuals with disabilities.
- b. Require that projects where recreational amenities intended for use by the general public (e.g. commercial marinas and docks) comply with the US Access Board’s minimum accessibility guidelines.

Policy 10.5 Identify and acquire open space within the Growth Area for recreational purposes.

Strategies:

- a. Create a park within the Growth Area identified in this Plan in order to create an open and attractive space for community members to gather. Considerations may include performance space, a skate park, a place for people to gather, a playground for young children, and other desires driven by the community and budgetary constraints.
- b. Create a Recreation & Open Space Plan that identifies: (1) Priority sites that may be appropriate for recreation/conservation uses or trail network connectivity (through a clearly defined evaluation process); (2) Strategies to preserve land, including funding sources as applicable; and (3) How the land will be managed in the future (e.g. how it will be used or developed for either conservation or recreation purposes).

Further information about implementation of the Recreation Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 40).

TRANSPORTATION



Overview

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

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

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

Existing Infrastructure & Maintenance

Road System Infrastructure

Damariscotta has 37.9 miles (200,491 linear feet) of public roadways, which vary in function and condition. There is one arterial road, Route 1, two major collector roads, Route 1B (Main St) and Route 129 (Bristol Road), and two minor collector roads, School Street (south of Route 1B) and Biscay Road.⁸⁸

Arterial roads serve countywide, statewide, or interstate travel, linking cities and large towns to an integrated highway network. Collector roads link villages, neighborhoods, and major facilities to the arterial network.

The State maintains both arterial and collector roads according to a 3-Year Work Plan, which is updated and revised annually.⁸⁹ Maintenance includes road resurfacing, repaving sidewalks, drainage work (ditching, replacing culverts, and replacing catch basins), pavement markings, pothole repair, winter snow and ice control, signage installation, and complete road reconstruction. Appendix J, Table 2: MDOT 2022 Maintenance Accomplishments provides a complete list of work.

⁸⁸ Maine Department of Transportation, <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/docs/roadwayinfo/RoadClassification.pdf>

⁸⁹ Maine Department of Transportation, <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Damariscotta.pdf>

TRANSPORTATION

Of the 37.9 miles of public roads in Damariscotta, about 22.1 miles are maintained by the Town's Public Works Department. The Town annually appropriates funding for normal road maintenance and repair, such as paving, and contracts for winter maintenance such as plowing and salting. Larger-scale projects, i.e., road resurfacing (needed about every 10 years), complete road reconstruction (needed about every 30 years), and replacement of certain kinds of culverts, are typically proposed as capital improvement projects. At the 2024 Annual Town Meeting, residents approved \$0 for FY25 for the Paving Reserve Account for capital improvement projects bringing the total in the account to \$102,721. Table 3 in the Appendix provides details on current projects.

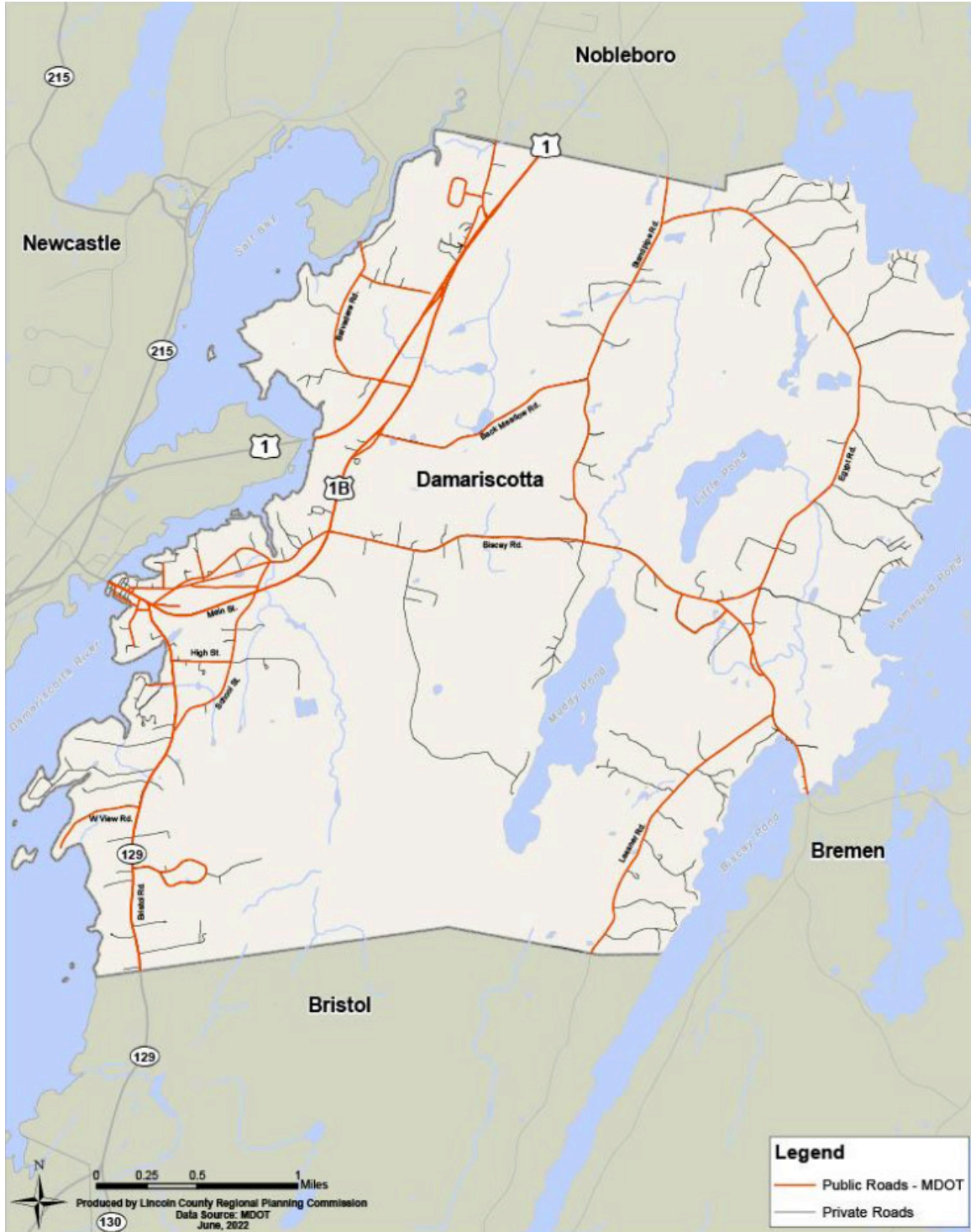
Damariscotta has 25.4 miles of private roads which are maintained by the property owners served by the roadway. When a private road is created as part of a subdivision, the Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance requires the road be maintained by the developer or lot owners until it meets all municipal street design and construction standards (described below) and is approved by voters of the Town at a Town Meeting.



TRANSPORTATION

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

Damariscotta: Public & Private Roads



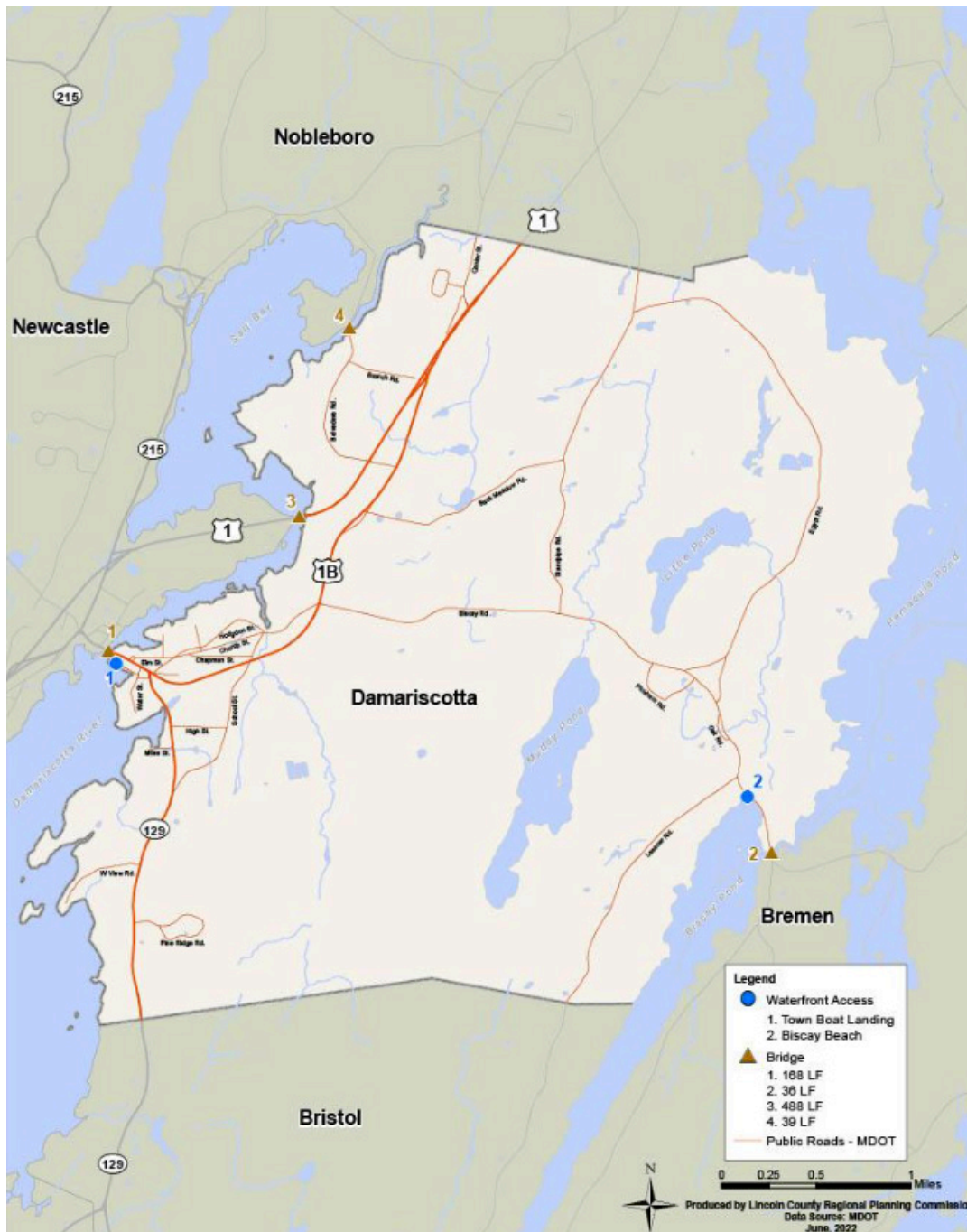
Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Bridge Infrastructure

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

Damariscotta: Bridges & Waterfront Access



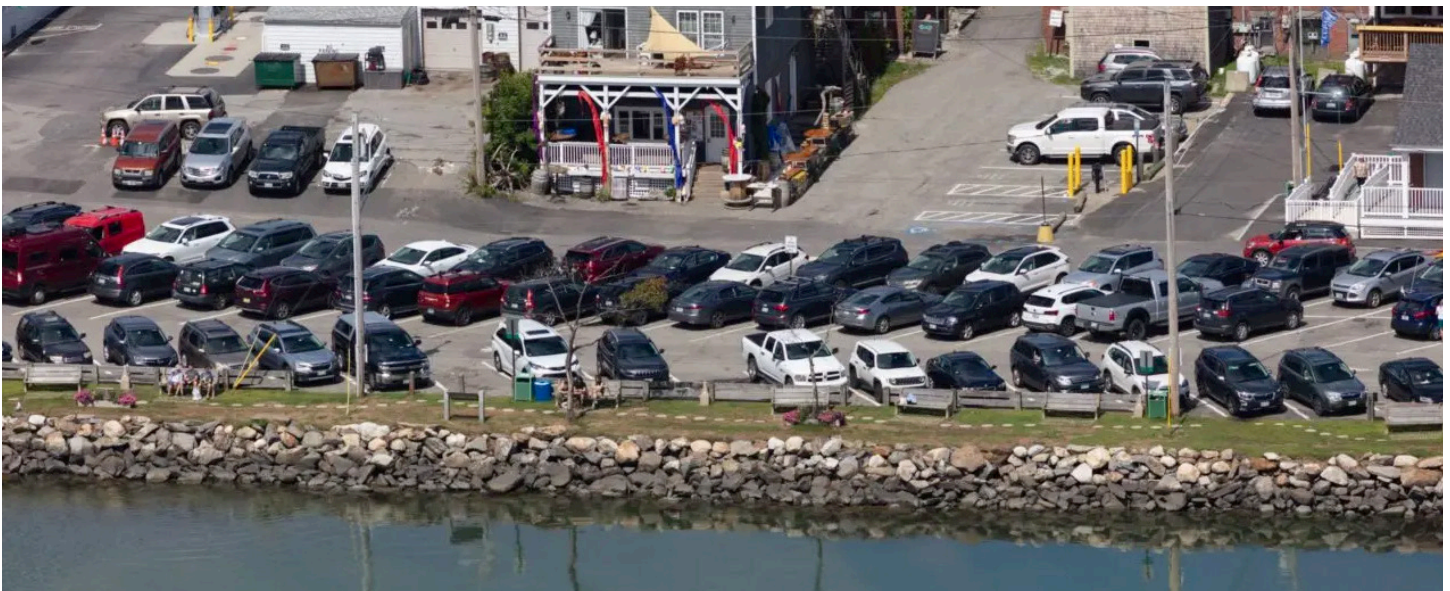
Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Parking Infrastructure

There is one public parking lot in downtown Damariscotta with XX spots as well as two bicycle racks. Within the parking lot XX spots are designated for specific business Parking for watercraft, a frequent mode of transportation in the summer, is discussed in the Marine Resources chapter. The municipal lot has recently been improved with an electric vehicle (EV) charging pedestal for public use, although they are frequently inoperable. Winter maintenance of the lot is currently contracted out through 2024 with a local company.

Plans for a downtown waterfront project includes improvements to the municipal parking lot, primarily to mitigate flood risk. A contract was awarded in spring of 2024 and construction will start in September 2024 with a completion date expected by April 2025.



Additional public parking in Damariscotta includes marked on-street spaces on Main Street, Elm Street, Theater Street, and Water Street, and parking lots at the Town Office, fire station, and elementary school. There is also a privately owned parking lot with public access at the Elm Street Plaza, with several of the spots are designated for businesses in the plaza.

In 1998, Damariscotta adopted a Traffic and Parking Ordinance, revised in 2015,⁹⁰ which defines parking limits in the municipal lot and parking spaces downtown. The lot has a three-hour parking limit between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM, except for the parking spots along the water's edge, which have an eight-hour parking limit. There is a one-hour parking limit on Main Street between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM daily, as well as winter snow removal parking bans.

⁹⁰ Damariscotta Traffic and Parking Ordinance, https://www.damariscottame.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf4311/f/uploads/traffic_parking_ord_07-15-15.pdf

Parking Standards' Impact on Development

The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance provides minimum parking requirements for on-site parking spaces for developers, but Sec. 102.6(H)(2) of the Ordinance allows the Planning Board to waive the minimum number to zero in the downtown area (the C-1 zoning district). Acceptable reasons for a waiver include shared parking spots or adequate on-street parking that exists within 500 feet of the proposed development. Given this, minimum parking requirements are not believed to be discouraging development in downtown Damariscotta, but an amendment to reduce parking standards may be needed so that downtown parking is not managed through Planning Board waivers.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Enhancing walkability and bike-ability are key components of the Town's values of livability, vibrancy, and sustainability. In 2015, the Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee, along with Robert Faunce, Lincoln County Planner, prepared the Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan.⁹¹ Goals and objectives to increase safety included signage and traffic-calming measures, embracing Maine Safe Routes to Schools programs, and creating routes to key destinations.

In 2021, the Public Safety and Accessibility Collaborative (PSAC), a volunteer community group composed primarily of Damariscotta residents dedicated to promoting safe pedestrian and bicycle initiatives and infrastructure, created the Twin Villages Walking Map. Their walking map shows the locations of sidewalks and trails in Damariscotta and neighboring Newcastle, including the Damariscotta Measured Mile, an easily accessible one-mile walking loop adjacent to the downtown area. The Measured Mile is along streets with less vehicular traffic, though it should be noted these streets do not have sidewalks.

They also developed and circulated a Damariscotta Bicycle Survey in 2021 to better understand cycling habits, needs, and current infrastructure gaps. The 136 respondents provided valuable feedback on desired cycling routes, concerns about cycling infrastructure issues, and additional biking facilities that could be provided by the Town, such as public bike racks or bicycle parking. Respondents also underscored the need for regional coordination in bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

⁹¹ Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, April 2015, https://www.damariscottame.com/sites/g/files/vyhlif4311/f/uploads/2015_newcastle-dama_bicycle-pedestrian_plan.pdf

TRANSPORTATION

The PSAC developed a Cycling Subcommittee to analyze the response data and prioritize recommendations and implementation measures. To date, the Subcommittee, with support from the full PSAC, identified suitable locations for bike racks, assessed current conditions of existing cycling routes, and created a Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility (see inset) that was approved by the Damariscotta Selectboard on October 18, 2023. The Resolution ensures the Selectboard considers these safe cycling priorities, along with improvements for pedestrians, when planning for and/or modifying existing roadways, transportation, and recreation infrastructure.

Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility

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

Currently, the Site Plan Review Ordinance gives authority to the Planning Board to require bicycle racks for certain large-scale developments being reviewed under this Ordinance, but the Town's Subdivision Ordinance has no specific requirement to install bicycle racks or bicycle infrastructure for developments being reviewed under that ordinance.

TRANSPORTATION

Sidewalks

There are 31 sidewalks totaling 12,700 linear feet in Damariscotta,⁹² with four considered in poor condition (see Table 6 in the Appendix). The map below shows the locations and ADA compliance of the sidewalks; the majority are considered non-compliant due to curb ramp issues including slope or lack of detectable curb warnings.

The sidewalk network in the downtown area is fairly robust, but there is a desire from residents to connect more of the surrounding residential neighborhoods to the downtown. Also, sidewalks do not connect the Great Salt Bay elementary school to surrounding neighborhoods, nor do they connect to the businesses along Business Route 1/Upper Main Street.

Damariscotta: Downtown ADA Compliance



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

⁹² Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, April 2015, https://www.damariscottame.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf4311/f/uploads/2015_newcastle-dama_bicycle-pedestrian_plan.pdf

Bike Routes

All cycling routes in Damariscotta require cyclists to share the road with vehicular traffic and, in some cases, to cycle on narrow shoulders, several of which need repair. Lack of safe, paved shoulders was identified as a concern through the online survey and public engagement events held as part of this planning process.

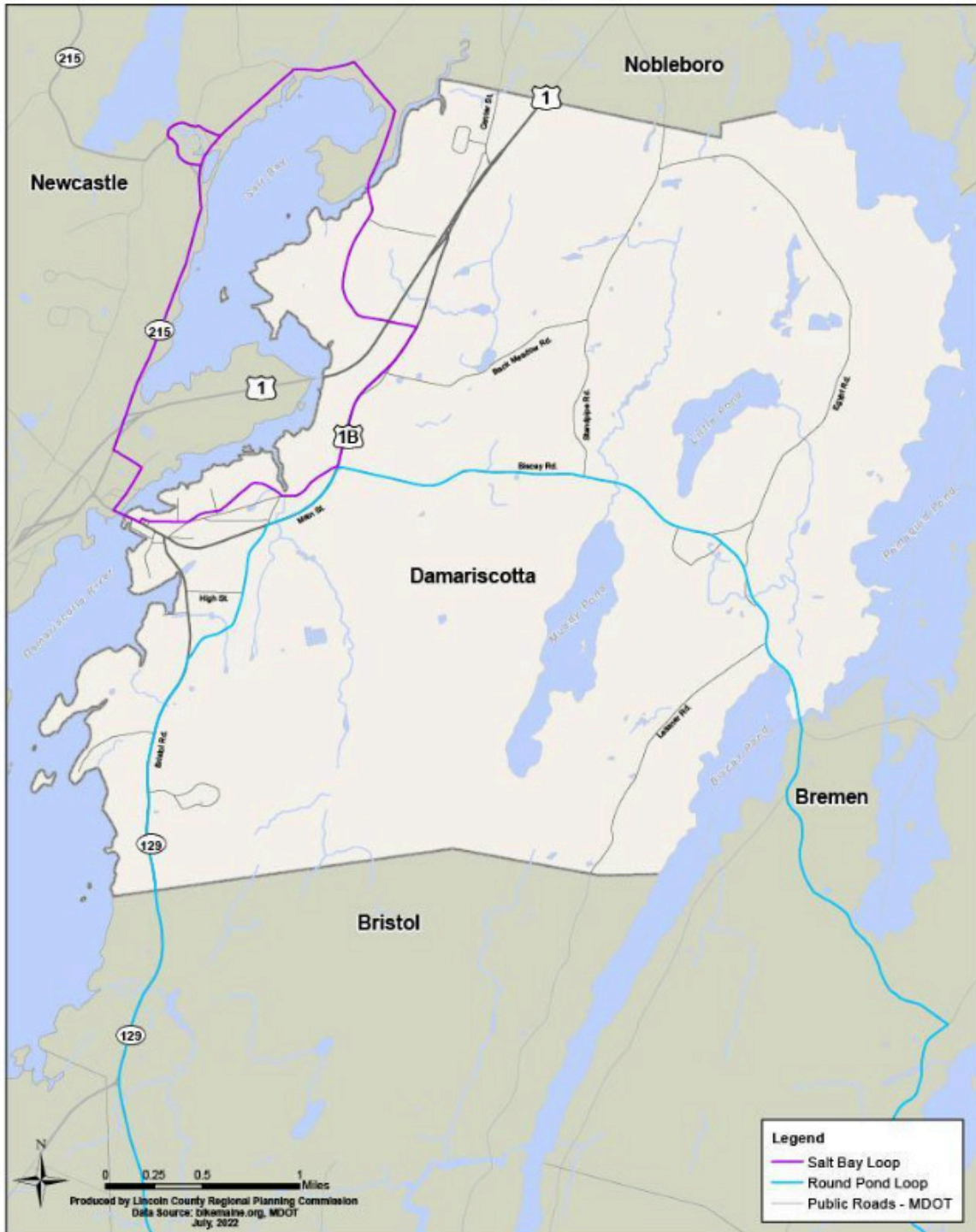
The map below shows the locations of road cycling routes as designated by the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.⁹³ MDOT also includes Damariscotta and Pemaquid area bike routes on their website.⁹⁴ Additionally, within the region, a portion of the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile walking and biking route from Maine to Florida, runs along roadways in neighboring Newcastle.

In addition to road bicycles, e-bikes, and other motorized mobility devices are becoming more popular nationwide and should be considered in any future planning.

⁹³ Bicycle Coalition of Maine, <https://www.bikemaine.org/where-to-ride/>

⁹⁴ Maine Department of Transportation, Explore Maine, <https://www.exploremaine.org/bike/midcoast/damariscotta.shtml>

Damariscotta: Road Cycling Routes



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Public Transportation Infrastructure

Public transportation systems, which include buses, trains, ferries, and airplanes create the foundation on which communities can become more livable and prosperous. In rural areas, like Damariscotta, small buses or vans may be the primary mode of public transit. Benefits of public transportation include: improved public health outcomes due to more walking or bicycling from the home to the nearest transit station; positive environmental outcomes due to less fuel use; lessening of traffic congestion with fewer vehicles on the roads; and improvement to community mobility. More than 68% of survey respondents indicated that public transportation in Damariscotta is either lacking or severely lacking, indicating that residents are not able to experience the full benefits of public transportation in the community.

Bus and Van Service

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

There is currently no local bus service in Damariscotta. However, Midcoast Public Transportation through Waldo Community Action Partners (CAP) coordinates rides in Damariscotta through MaineCare for medical appointments. They are interested in expanding their public transit services in Damariscotta and the community is actively considering how to pay for this service. In addition, F.I.S.H. (Friends in Service Helping), a volunteer-run organization, offers rides at no charge to people across Lincoln County, including Damariscotta.⁹⁵



⁹⁵ Lincoln County FISH, <https://lincolncountyfish.com/>

TRANSPORTATION

Rail Service

Damariscotta is close to the Midcoast Railservice's Rockland Branch, which connects Brunswick with Rockland via 57 miles of railway. Previously, the line was owned by the Maine Department of Transportation and operated by Canadian Pacific Railway,⁹⁹ but in 2022, Midcoast Railservice, which also provides freight service to industrial customers in 23 states and two provinces, became the lessee-operator.

A twice-daily excursion route between Rockland and Brunswick, with stops at the Train Depot in neighboring Newcastle, was piloted in 2014. Expansion of this route had been discussed and attempted with limited success until, in Summer 2023, Coastliner Excursions (a subsidiary of Midcoast Railservice) resumed scenic passenger operations by piloting trips between Bath, Wiscasset, and Rockland, including a stop in Newcastle. Trains used 76-passenger, self-propelled railcars. Initial public response to the trial excursion route has been positive and the desire for alternative transportation, as well as economic development brought by increased visitors through rail lines, are frequently considered as organizations try to make the passenger rail line financially viable.



Ferry Services and Water Access

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

TRANSPORTATION

Airports

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

Road Design Standards

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

Damariscotta town staff primarily focus on maintaining existing roads and not creating new roads, which are typically only proposed as part of private subdivision development (both residential and commercial). The Town's Subdivision Ordinance, which includes the Road Design Standards,⁹⁶ provides the requirements and standards to be met for approvals for roadway and sidewalk construction.

Subdivisions

No new subdivisions have been constructed since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2014. A recent subdivision was approved but not built.

The Road Design Standards allows for dead-end streets up to 1,000 feet for subdivisions with fewer than 14 single-family lots or fewer than 25 multi-family units, as long as there is a turnaround connecting to existing public streets. Larger subdivisions require at least two connections with existing public streets.

Dead-end roads proposed as public ways need Road Commissioner approval in addition to meeting the design standards above. Currently, the Planning Board may, but is not mandated to, require the reservation of a 20-foot easement in line with the road to provide continuation of pedestrian traffic or utilities to the next road. The Board may also, again not mandated to, require the reservation of a 50-foot easement in line with the road to provide continuation of the road where future subdivision is possible.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance, Sec. 103.7

⁹⁷ Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance Sec103.7(H)(5)

TRANSPORTATION

The Planning Board may also require that sidewalks or pedestrian paths are installed, at the expense of the developer, to connect to any existing public sidewalk located within 200' of the subdivision. If significant pedestrian traffic is expected to be generated by the proposed subdivision, by determination of the Planning Board, the Board may also require sidewalk installation adjacent to the project site.

The Subdivision Ordinance requires subdivisions be designed to provide access to individual lots only by interior subdivision roads. This effectively prohibits 'piano key' subdivisions along public roads, instead requiring developments to extend perpendicularly from the road. This is especially important in rural areas where piano key lots create a suburban appearance, even though overall densities may be low, and effectively preclude much future development beyond the subdivision. It also minimizes the number of curb cuts, thereby reducing potential traffic conflicts and improving traffic flow.⁹⁸

Additional specifics about Road Design Standards are in Appendix J, Table 6.

Traffic Management & Safety

Traffic Generators

Damariscotta has several destinations that bring residents and visitors into town. Damariscotta's Main Street (Business Route 1) has a variety of shops, restaurants, and grocery stores. Great Salt Bay Community School (GSBCS) is located on Upper Main Street and serves between 350-400 students in grades K-8. Adjacent to GSBCS is the Central Lincoln County YMCA, a significant community resource offering childcare, summer camps, wellness classes, exercise facilities, etc.

Bristol Road (Route 129) is the access point for residents and visitors to the neighboring communities of Bristol and South Bristol, the Pemaquid Peninsula, and for MaineHealth – LincolnHealth/Miles Campus, the Town's largest employer and medical service center for the area.

Additionally, the town hosts various community events, including the annual Damariscotta Pumpkin Festival which had approximately 50,000 attendees in October 2022.

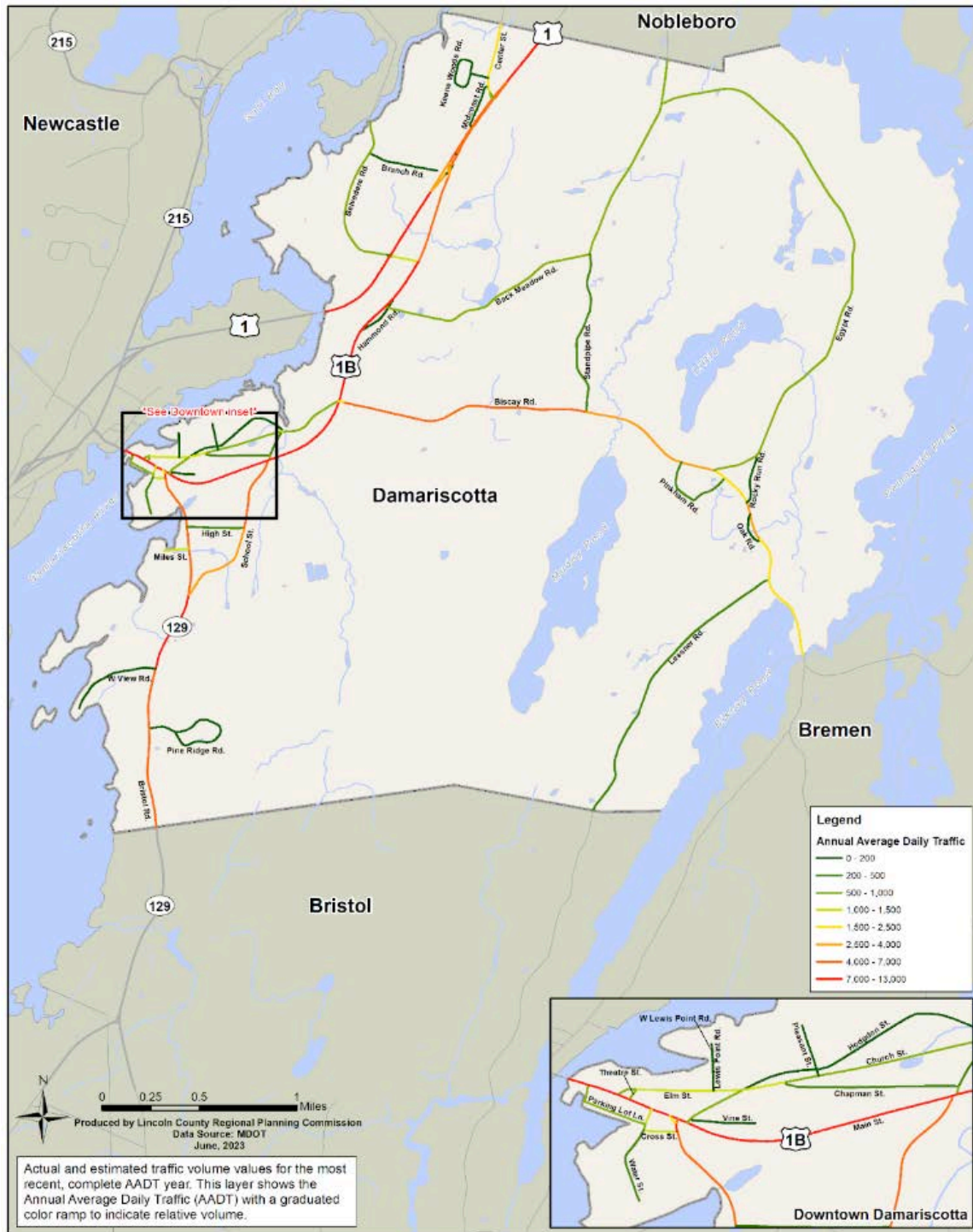
Traffic Count

Traffic counts have remained relatively stable between 2016 and 2019, with Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts ranging from $\pm 4,300$ to $\pm 7,200$, including heavy truck traffic and between $\pm 1,000$ to $\pm 1,500$ trips to Miles. See map below, prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission, for the average daily traffic volumes in Damariscotta. It captures short-duration counts (SDC) and continuous count sites (CCS) for the estimated and actual traffic volume values in the MDOT 2022 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Report. See Table 7 in the Appendix for the full Damariscotta AADT.

⁹⁸ Damariscotta Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 103

TRANSPORTATION

Damariscotta: Annual Average Daily Traffic



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Accident Occurrence

MDOT identifies intersections or road segments that are high accident locations (see map below). In Damariscotta, they identified four problematic areas: the road segment from the intersection of Elm and Main to the intersection of Main and Parking Lot Lane had 10 accidents between 2017 and 2019; the road segment from the intersection of Main Street and Water Street to the intersection of Main Street and Theatre Street had eight accidents with four injuries from 2020 and 2022; there was a fatal accident at the intersection of Main Street (Route 1B) and School Street in 2019; and the intersection of Route 1 and Belvedere Road has been described as one of the “most dangerous rural intersections in Maine.”⁹⁹ Graphs 1 through 6 in the Appendix provide further analysis on accident occurrences.

The intersection of Main Street (Route 1B) and School Street, the site of a fatal accident, has been discussed extensively by MDOT and Town officials, but a safe solution to minimize crashes has yet to be implemented. MDOT has added the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Belvedere Road and Route 1 to their work plan for 2025.¹⁰⁰

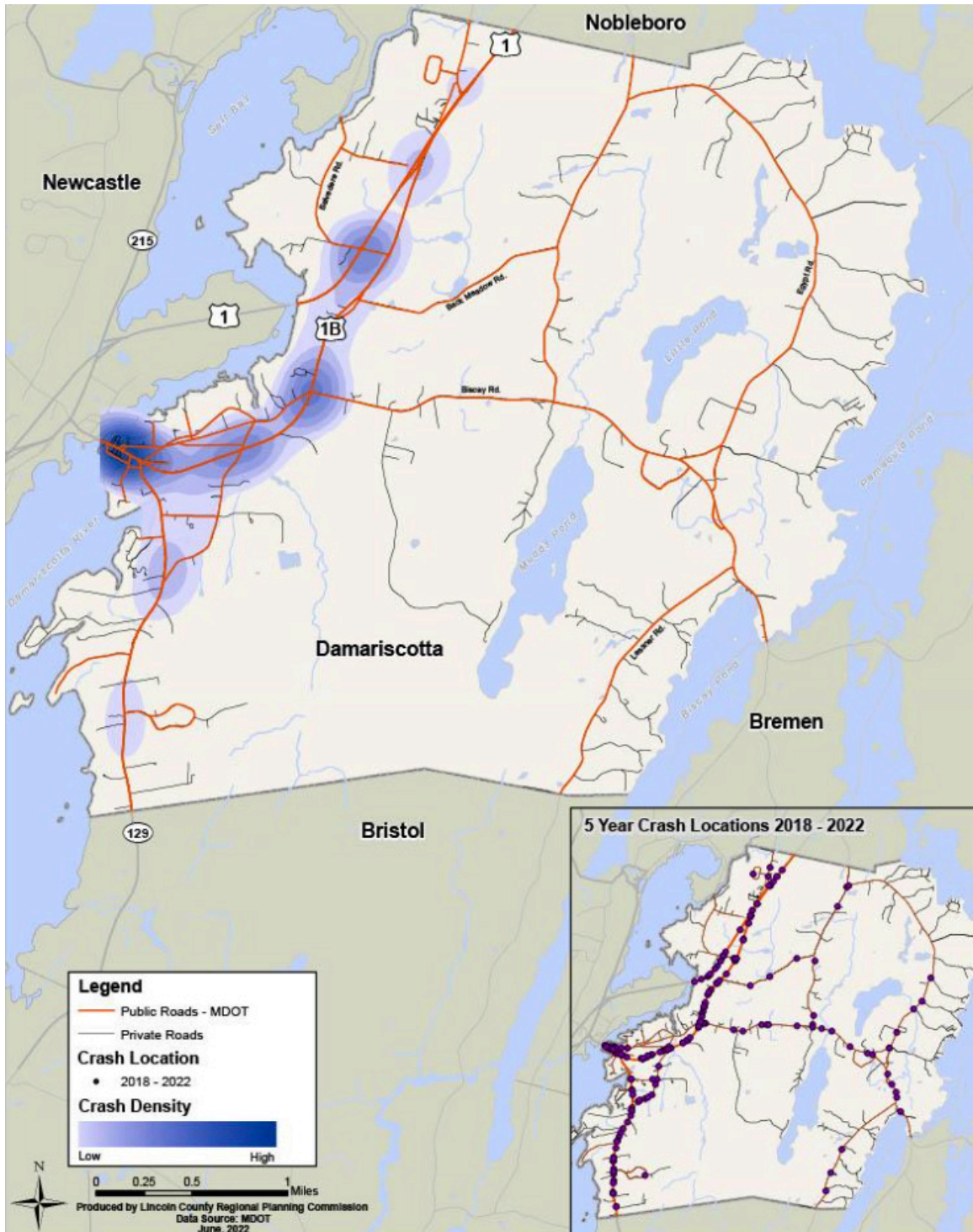


Intersection of Belvedere Road and Route 1

⁹⁹ Lincoln County News, “DOT Planning for Belvedere Road Roundabout in 2024”, November 24, 2021, <https://lcme.com/currentnews/dot-planning-for-belvedere-road-roundabout-in-2024/>

¹⁰⁰ Maine Department of Transportation, Three-Year Work Plan 2024 Edition, https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/docs/2024/2024_Work_Plan_Final.pdf

Damariscotta: 10 Year Crash Density 2012-2022



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

TRANSPORTATION

Access Management

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

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

Regional Plans

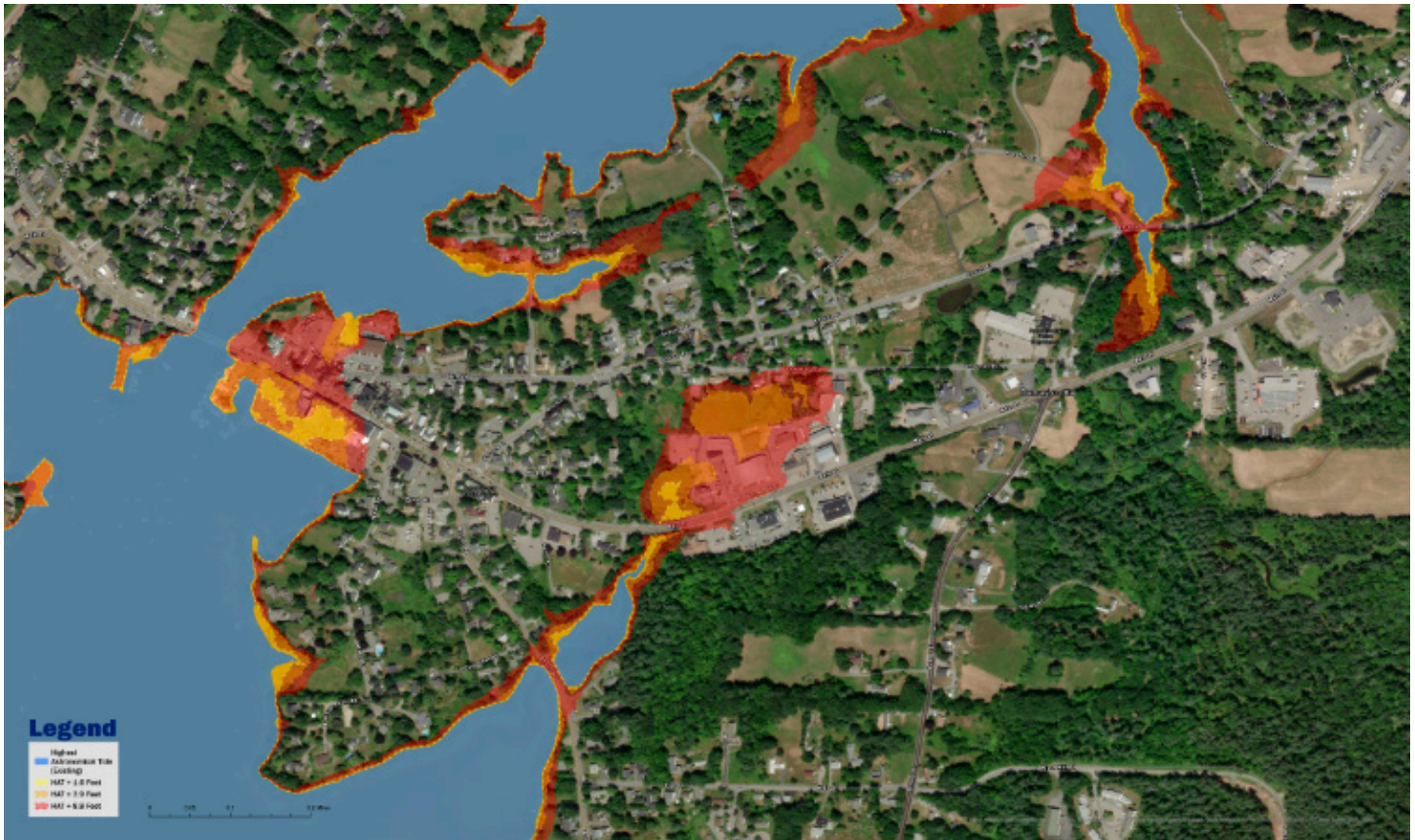
Since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2014, Damariscotta has engaged in transportation planning at the local, county, regional, and state levels. Below are the plans to be incorporated into the Town's vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and alternative transportation planning in the future. Also noted is a summary of any transportation improvements since the adoption of these Plans, where applicable.

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

Impacts of Natural Hazards & Climate Change

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

Sea Level Rise & Storm Surge Scenarios



In January 2024, Damariscotta experienced ~3.3 feet of storm surge, flooding the municipal parking lot and downtown businesses. Rising sea levels and flooding events in the future will also lead to flooding of roadways, preventing access to homes and businesses by emergency responders. In 2020, the Governor’s Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future completed *Maine Won’t Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action* which recommends towns commit to managing 1.5 feet of sea-level rise by the year 2050 and 3.9 feet of sea-level rise by the year 2100, while also preparing to manage up to 3 feet of sea-level rise by 2050 and up to 8.8 feet by 2100. The Nature Conservancy’s Coastal Risk Explorer estimates the cost to upgrade or fix inundated roads at \$180,000 at 1.5 feet of sea-level rise, \$530,000 at 3.9 feet of sea-level rise, and about \$1.5 million at 8.8 feet of sea-level rise.

As part of the 2021 County Hazard Mitigation Plan update, Damariscotta identified several road and culvert mitigation actions, which will be crucial for reducing long-term risk to coastal and riverine flood hazards. Please see Appendix Table 3: Planned Capital Improvements for a full list of projects.

TRANSPORTATION

Emissions Reduction

A reduction in vehicle emissions can increase resilience to storm events and help mitigate climate change. Transportation is responsible for 54% of Maine’s annual greenhouse gas emissions: of which 59% is from light-duty passenger cars and trucks; 27% from medium- and heavy-duty trucks; and the remaining 14% from rail, marine, aviation, and utility equipment vehicles. While we don’t have Damariscotta-specific data, we assume it would mirror statewide transportation emissions trends.

The Maine Won’t Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action identified three statewide goals for improving the reliability of the State’s transportation network while reducing emissions: accelerate Maine’s transition to electric vehicles, increase fuel efficiency and alternative fuels, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

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

-Maine Won’t Wait, Page 39

At the state level, strategies to meet the goal to reduce vehicle miles traveled include:

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

Damariscotta can play a role in reducing vehicle miles traveled by investing in active transportation (bicycling and pedestrian) infrastructure improvements.

Issues & Opportunities

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

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

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

When considering the overall transportation system in Damariscotta, survey respondents identified public transit options as lacking or severely lacking. Access to regional transportation (railway), taxis or other rideshare, and accessibility for people with disabilities got similar responses. Additionally, respondents felt bicycle facilities were severely lacking or lacking.

Many commenters to the interactive mapping activity, done as part of this planning process, identified the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as inadequate or in disrepair. They noted the lack of shoulders on roadways and a few comments advocated for an increased number of safe sidewalks for “healthy walking activities for our aging population as well as young families.” There were many suggestions for raised crosswalks and bump-outs to calm traffic, and increase pedestrian visibility and safety. There was also an interest in the creation of a multi-use path for pedestrians and bikes.

Survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Damariscotta’s downtown is safe for driving and walking, while also noting that it is often congested; 88% of respondents said the ability of roadways and intersections to handle traffic was either ‘only adequate’ or ‘lacking’. There are potential conflicts by the multiple users of Route 1B, both a major state route and the primary access point to the Pemaquid Peninsula, which runs through a pedestrian-oriented downtown.

Issues



Lack of bicycle infrastructure



Desire for more pedestrian infrastructure



Downtown parking lot in flood zone



Lack of public transit

Opportunities



Better parking management downtown



Waterfront plan to assist with parking lot flooding

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values related to Transportation as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: Transportation infrastructure efficiently accommodates the Town's growth and economic development.

Policy 11.1 Maximize the functionality and efficiency of state and state-aid roads.

Strategies:

- a. Participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including continuing to advocate for funding for priority MDOT roadway improvement projects, including active transportation improvements as well as improving the safety for all users of the School Street/Route 1B intersection, possibly including roundabout solutions.
- b. Create a pull-off area for the Concord Coachlines bus that will minimize vehicular traffic backup and unsafe conditions on Main Street. This pull-off area should be located within the Growth Area designated as part of this Plan, be connected by sidewalks and bicycle connections, and include a proper bus shelter for those waiting to be picked up.

Policy 11.2 Advocate for the return of rail travel to the region.

Strategies:

- a. Along with the Town of Newcastle, continue to advocate to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to bring rail travel to the region.

Policy 11.3 Project potential costs of capital investments, maintenance, and operations of the local transportation network beyond one fiscal year for policy-making and planning purposes.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network (beginning with the prioritized improvements identified in this Plan).
- b. Adequately fund reserves to allow for the implementation of the prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan referenced above.
- c. Participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including continuing to advocate for funding for priority MDOT roadway improvement projects, including active transportation improvements as well as improving the safety for all users of the School Street/Route 1B intersection, possibly including roundabout solutions.



Goal: Transportation systems meet local and regional needs safely and efficiently.

Policy 11.4 Balance the needs of all users regardless of mode (pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles) or ability, by providing a safe and efficient transportation network.

Strategies:

- a. Identify funding to explore the feasibility of “context-sensitive” traffic calming measures and the installation of bicycle lanes along Route 1B from School Street to Biscay Road.
- b. Refine the assessment criteria for rating roads and prioritizing improvements utilized by the Public Works Committee to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks and road shoulders).
- c. Become a designated Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists.
- d. Become a designated Age-Friendly Community by AARP.
- e. Adopt a sidewalk design policy to include a minimum width, curb types, and street tree requirement.
- f. Advocate at the state-level for MDOT’s customer service ratings to include “Complete Streets” criteria, especially within village areas.
- g. Advocate at the state-level for continued implementation of MDOT’s Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Policy 11.5 Develop a coordinated parking strategy to maximize the function while minimizing the space of parking lots.

Strategies:

- a. Conduct a parking study of the downtown and surrounding streets, including the identification of public parking areas, the demand for parking during both peak season (summer) and off-season (winter) and recommendations for efficient use of parking for both employees and visitors, and the identification of any known issues.
- b. Implement results of the parking study noted above.
- c. Review and revise minimum parking requirements included in the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance to ensure that these regulations support community goals.



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

Policy 11.6 Address transportation planning and land use planning together as two parts of the same issue.

Strategies:

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

TRANSPORTATION

d. Amend the Town’s Site Plan Review Ordinance to require sidewalks along the frontage of new development located within the Growth Area as defined by this Plan.



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

Policy 11.7 Increase sustainable mobility by investing in active transportation (bicycling and pedestrian) infrastructure improvements.

Strategies:

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

Policy 11.8 Accommodate the switch to electric vehicles.

Strategies:

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

Policy 11.9 Minimize local vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Strategies:

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

Further information about implementation of the Transportation Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 262).



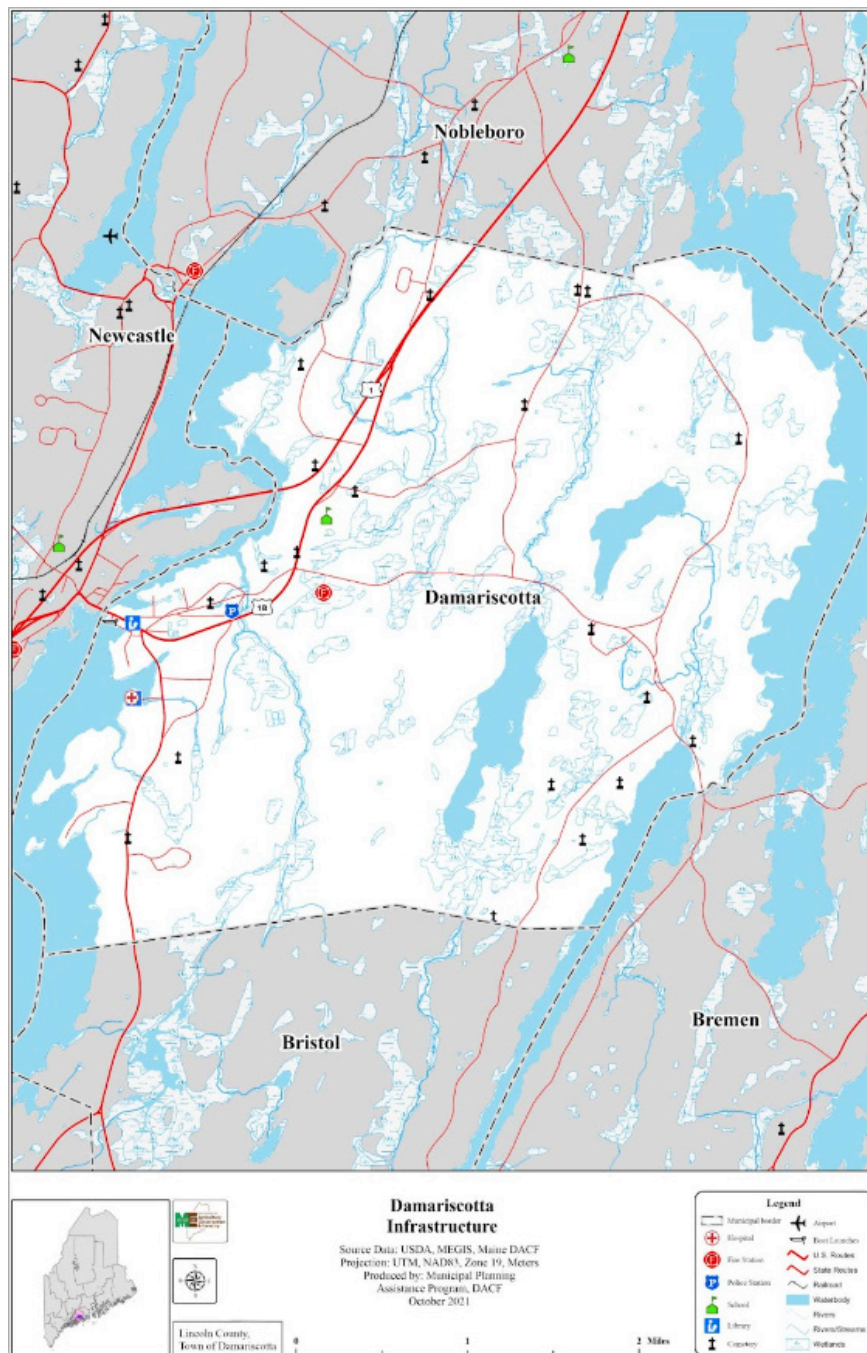
PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

SKIDOMPHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Overview

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



Population Change and Demand on Municipal Services

As noted in the Population and Demographics chapter, Damariscotta’s population in 2050 will be between 2,500 (conservative scenario) and 3,000 people (average projected scenario). This increase will likely be made up of in-migration into the community, following the typical past trends in Damariscotta.

Additionally, the demographics of the community, particularly in age distribution, are projected to shift during the lifespan of this Comprehensive Plan. In 2023, about 14.6% of Damariscotta’s population was children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old and about 26.4% of the population was between the ages of 25 and 44. These percentages have generally been rising since the 2010 census and this group of school-aged children and parent-aged adults is expected to make up an even larger share of the community in 2035. As the demographics of the community change, demands on the existing school system will increase. Furthermore, family-friendly planning that includes accessible outdoor spaces and recreation areas, diversity of housing options, and childcare options will be essential.

The locations of any new development to serve this population may also increase demand for the expansion or enhanced maintenance of local and state roads. In 1997, the Maine State Planning Office published “The Cost of Sprawl”, which included an analysis of the fiscal impact on taxpayers when there is sprawl into the countryside from established village areas. The report noted, “It just costs more, on a per-unit basis, to serve families who are widely dispersed than it does to serve families who live in traditional neighborhoods”.¹⁰¹ A major cost of sprawl is roads. “Although Maine’s population increased less than 10% during the 1980’s, total miles driven went up 57%, or over 40 million miles a year. Not surprisingly, total highway expenditures for local and state governments rose by about a third during that same period (in equalized dollars), or about \$200 per household”.¹⁰² The best way to contain costs is to locate development in or immediately adjacent to existing development. This also has the long-term effect of decreasing vehicle miles traveled, when coupled with investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, which is cheaper than overall roadway expansion.

Public Sewer + Water

Public water and sewer service to Damariscotta’s downtown is provided by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District (GSBSD), a publicly owned, quasi-municipal entity. GSBSD has 614 current water customers and 377 wastewater users in Damariscotta.¹⁰³ Both public water and sewer are available from approximately the downtown area north on Route 1B to Back Meadow Road, and from the downtown area south on Bristol Road to approximately Powell Lane. See map below for Damariscotta properties currently served by public sewer. The GSBSD treats wastewater through a series of three aerated lagoons, with a capacity of approximately 8 million gallons,¹⁰⁴ before the treated wastewater is pumped to an outfall in the Damariscotta River near the downtown parking lot. A land disposal site for disposal of septage sludge is located adjacent to the treatment plant.

¹⁰¹ Maine State Planning Office, The Cost of Sprawl, page 7

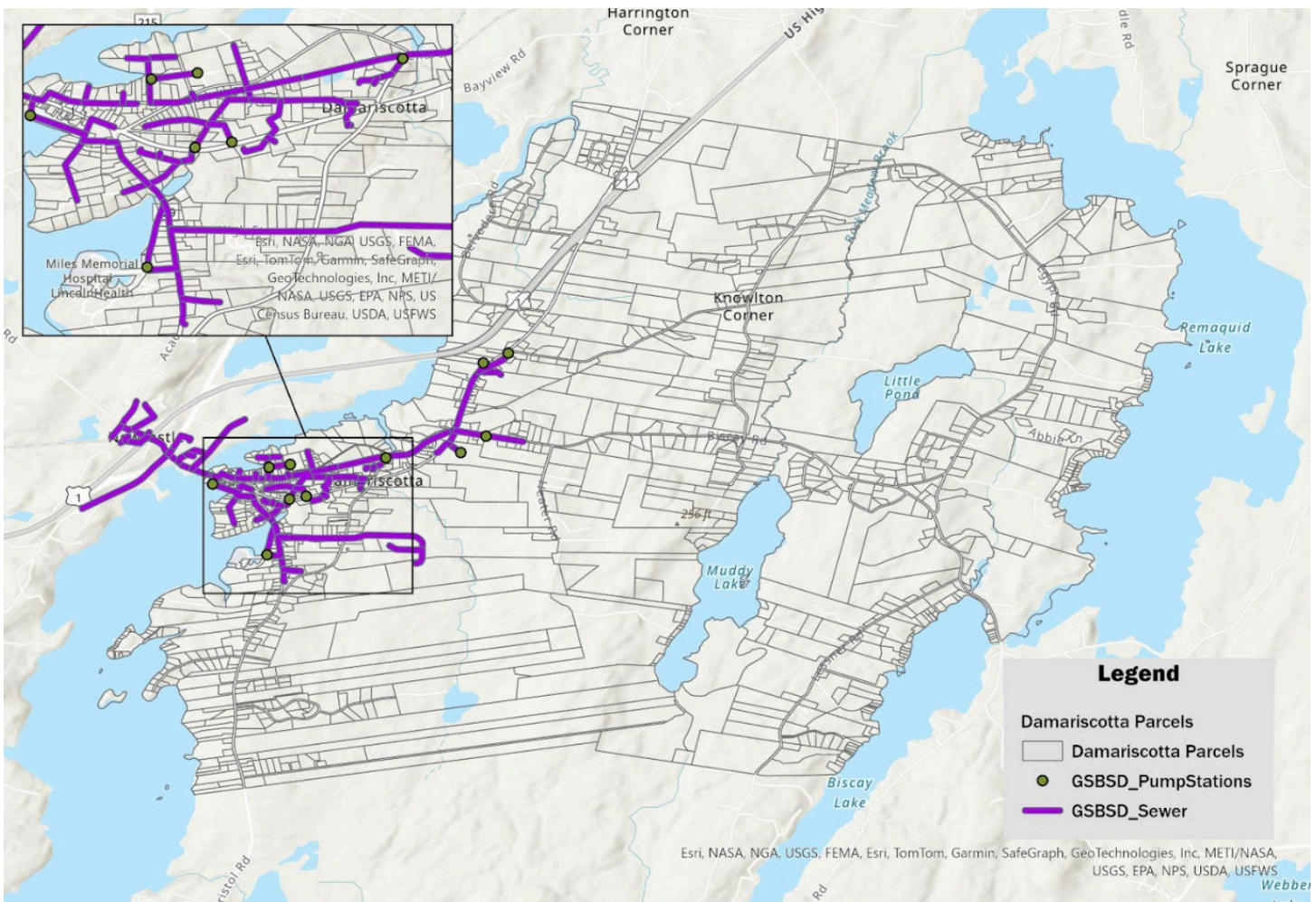
¹⁰² Maine State Planning Office, The Cost of Sprawl, page 8

¹⁰³ Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, <https://gsbsd.org/about/>

¹⁰⁴ Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, <https://gsbsd.org/wastewater/>

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Sewer Line Locations



The GSBSD's drinking water comes from Little Pond. Water is disinfected using an ultraviolet light system. Due to the pond's high water quality with low turbidity and coliform counts, the District has a waiver from further filtration requirements from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.¹⁰⁵

In 1994, the Trustees of the GSBSD voted to no longer fund sewer and water line extensions to minimize any cost impact to their existing ratepayers. However, GSBSD does encourage developers to build their own sewer and water line extensions, and has previously expressed a willingness to maintain those lines if built to their standards.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Susanne K Meidel, "2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Appendices, https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/305b/2022/25-May-2022_2018-22_ME_IntegratedRpt-LIST.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ Water and Wastewater Policies of the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, as revised through October 2021, https://gsbsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WW_policies-Oct-2021.pdf

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Septic Systems

Damariscotta uses the State of Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and the State Plumbing Code for private septic systems. Private landowners must receive a permit through the Local Plumbing Inspector (currently also the Code Enforcement Officer) for their septic system with domestic septic tank waste removed by private haulers at the sole cost of the property owner.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater in Damariscotta is typically managed by roadway crowns, or slopes, directing water to adjacent vegetated ditches, which then convey water to a downstream outlet. Storm drains are only available near downtown properties served by the GSBSD, shown on the map above. In other locations stormwater is conveyed directly to waterways and streams.

The impacts of future development on the stormwater system primarily depend on where future growth occurs. Integrating environmentally-friendly (green) infrastructure and low-impact development features to existing, in-town sites can reduce impervious surface coverage which can mitigate any runoff from buildings and parking lots and improve water quality. Conversely, development of undeveloped or rural sites will increase local runoff and decrease water quality, even if green infrastructure and low-impact development strategies are employed.

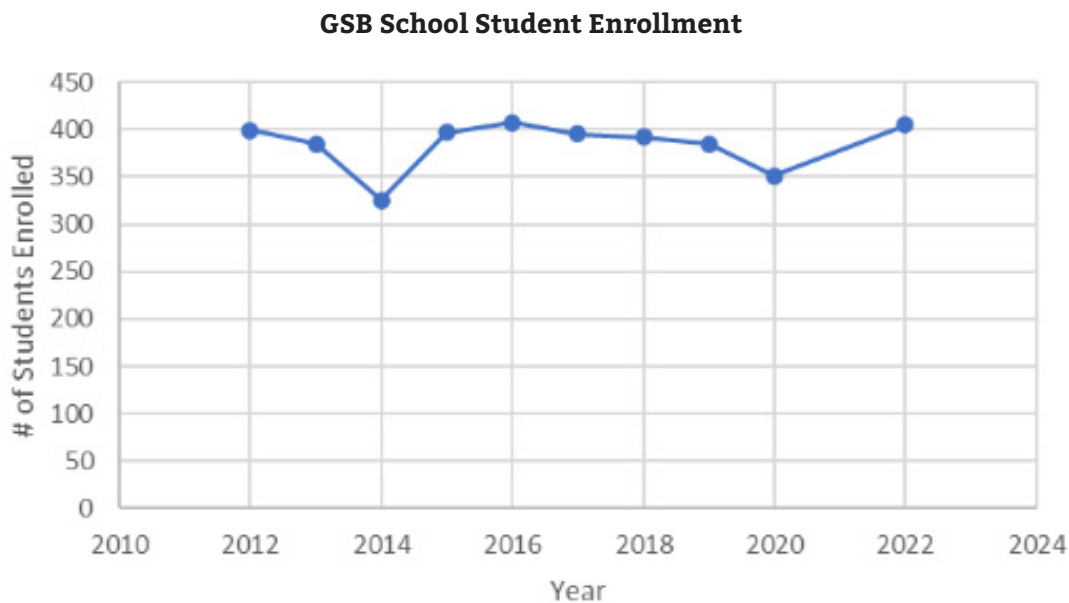


*View of the flooded seating area adjacent to the downtown parking lot in 2018.
Photo c/o Jessica Picard of the Lincoln County News.*

Schools

There are currently five K-8 schools within the Central Lincoln County School System (AOS93) and Damariscotta students in grades 9-12 attend Lincoln Academy, an independent secondary school in Newcastle. In April 2023, AOS93 began a Strategic Plan process to address a variety of inefficiencies, redundancies, and inconsistencies with the current organizational model, including an inability to fill available jobs across five schools as well as general accounting and space inefficiencies.¹⁰⁷ At the time of the drafting of Damariscotta’s Comprehensive Plan, the plan to restructure the existing School System had not yet been decided.

The local AOS93 school, Great Salt Bay Community School, had 405 students enrolled in the 2022-2023 school year, the highest number since 2016 when student enrollment peaked at 407.



Enrollment data obtained from Great Salt Bay Community School.

Prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year, the Great Salt Bay Community School installed a portable two-classroom unit to accommodate increased enrollment. Space considerations and needs will likely be a point of discussion in the strategic plan mentioned above. Previously, there was interest in exploring a regional middle school to address lack of space at the schools and the K-8 age structure, and to provide increased opportunities for students in grades 6-8. However, no formal discussion or planning has happened to date.

The Great Salt Bay Community School is located on Route 1B and is not connected to any existing sidewalk or pedestrian network. The Maine Department of Transportation has funded a sidewalk and multi-use path along Route 1B from the intersection with Biscay Road to the school entrance in their 2024/2025 Work Plan but work had not started by Summer 2024. With the addition of sidewalks and the available water and sewer in this area (discussed above), there is an opportunity to encourage residential development where students could safely walk to school.

¹⁰⁷ For more information: AOS93 Strategic Plan 2025, <https://www.aos93.org/page/strategic-vision-2025>

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Police Protection & Emergency Response

In 2022, Damariscotta’s Police Department of a Chief, a Sergeant, three Patrol Officers, a Reserve Officer, an Administrative Assistant, and a seasonal Parking Ambassadors (Enforcement Officers), answered a total of 7,648 calls with 2,995 emergency 911 calls and 4,653 “self-initiated” calls. The Police Department is active in the community and follows the principles of community policing with the goal of maintaining positive relationships with residents.¹⁰⁸

The Massasoit Engine Company, the volunteer Fire Department of Damariscotta, responded to 175 calls and expended about 1,150 hours in 2022, the highest number of calls in a single year.¹⁰⁹ The calls were for:

- 16 structure fires (including chimney fires)
- 14 fires of other types
- 5 cooking-related fire calls
- 29 vehicle crashes with injury
- 38 fire alarms
- 6 rescue calls
- 16 propane/propane odor calls
- 2 carbon monoxide calls
- 17 Tree/wire in road calls
- 32 mutual aid calls to other towns (9 to Bristol, 9 to Nobleboro, 5 to Bremen, 4 to Newcastle, 3 to Waldoboro, 1 each to South Bristol and Boothbay Harbor)



The Massasoit Engine Company, a nonprofit entity, is partially funded by taxpayers of Damariscotta as well as fundraising efforts by the Company’s members. They use donated funds to enhance firefighting capabilities, purchase needed equipment, and help reduce the tax burden that firefighting equipment and activities place on the Town. The Town of Damariscotta provides minimal benefits and worker’s compensation coverage to firefighters through the Town’s insurance plan, and owns the fire station.

In 2022, the Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service, which serves Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and South Bristol, responded to 2,322 calls; 1,685 were 911 emergency calls. The Ambulance Service has a joint governance arrangement, represented by the 6 towns, and, occasionally, surrounding communities also contract for the ambulance service. Approximately 80% of the respondents to the community survey said the emergency response system in Damariscotta is either ‘adequate’ or ‘more than adequate’. The Service faces a workforce shortage and is attempting to remedy this by hosting local EMS courses. However, additional paramedics and EMTs (including volunteers or employees) are needed.¹¹⁰ Emergency services workforce shortages may be due to a lack of affordable housing EMTs or paramedics. Housing, and specifically workforce housing, is discussed in greater detail in the Housing chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Damariscotta 2022 Annual Report, page 50

¹⁰⁹ Damariscotta 2022 Annual Report, page 52

¹¹⁰ Damariscotta 2022 Annual Report, page 48

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Public Works

The Public Works Department has a Road Foreman, a Laborer/Driver and a Road Commissioner (role currently filled by the Town Manager). The PWD is co-located on a parcel with the Fire Department and their separate facility has a two-bay car garage with an office, a sand and salt shed, a utility shed, an outhouse, and a shipping container.

The Department has two vehicles. An F-550 Dump Truck used daily, with a snow plow and sander; and a WL32 Wacker Nuesen wheeled loader with numerous attachments/implements, including a brush hog, sweeper, snowblower, man lift, and such to maximize its usefulness for the Department's maintenance requirements.

The Public Works Department's duties include trash collection in the downtown area, maintenance of the public restroom, property maintenance for town parcels, snow plowing for streets and sidewalks, routine road surface and marking repairs, routine drainage improvements, tree work or removal (although the Town does not have a formal street tree program), repairing or replacing street signs, and other citizen-driven concerns related to these tasks. Winter maintenance/snow removal is largely managed through a contract representing approximately 60% of the Department's operating budget.

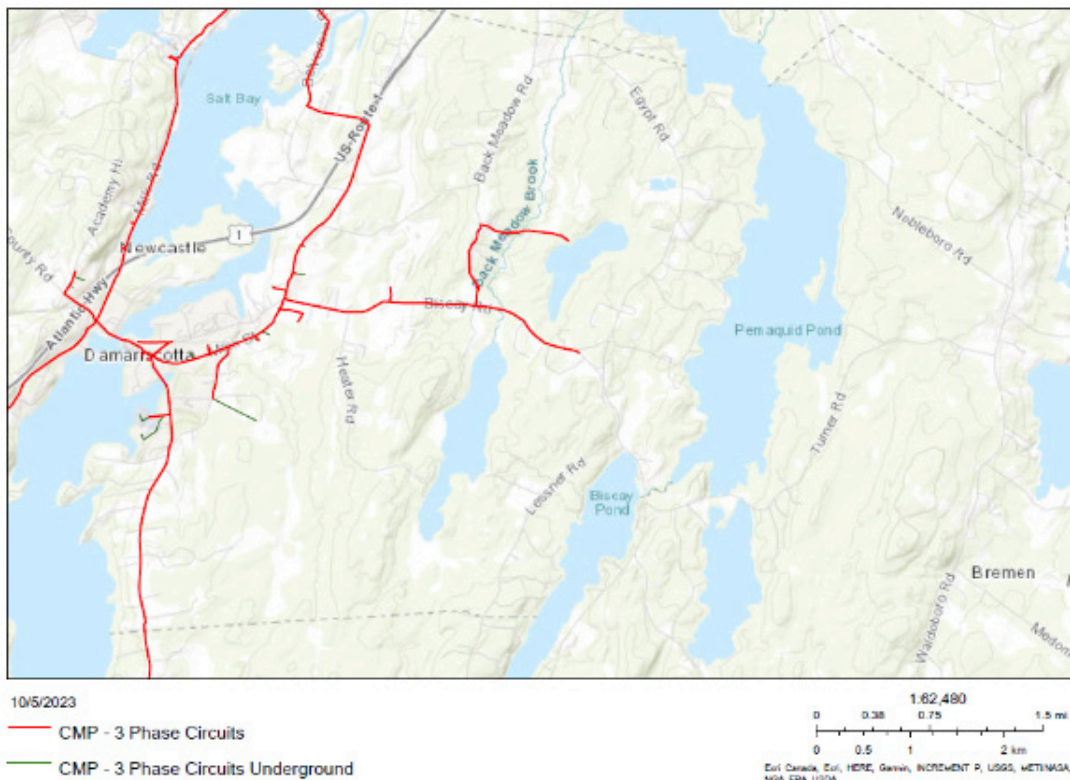
Telecommunications + Energy Infrastructure

The Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) definition of “broadband” and how it is accessed is antiquated and no longer recognizes the needs of current households. A household meets the FCC definition if the minimum data download speed is 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and the minimum upload speed is 3 Mbps, yet today many households require at least 100 Mbps service to support multiple devices streaming simultaneously, as seen during the Covid pandemic (i.e., two family members both on remote video calls). Damariscotta residents can purchase fiber optic broadband services from Tidewater Telecom or Spectrum but the costs can be prohibitive. With more people using technology, and the pace of technological advances demanding better and faster speeds, Damariscotta should make efforts to ensure affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service is available to residents.

(Map and/or data may be available [here](#).)

Central Maine Power provides electricity to Damariscotta with single-phase and three-phase electric power. Single-phase power is sufficient for most residential homes where the typical power needs are for lighting and heat. Three-phase power supply is currently available along the entireties of Main Street and Bristol Road, most of Biscay Road (to about the intersection with Egypt Road), Standpipe Road, School Street from the intersection with Main Street to the intersection with Piper Mill Road, and on the entirety of Branch and Belvedere Roads. The location of three-phase power is a deciding factor for commercial development because it accommodates the higher loads needed and provides more consistent power.

CMP 3 Phase Circuits (Damariscotta)



Source: Central Maine Power Public Access Data

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Solid Waste

Damariscotta, along with Bremen and Newcastle, contracts with the towns that jointly own the Nobleboro/Jefferson Transfer Station for solid waste disposal and recycling. The cost is based primarily on population with an assessment of \$100/ton for non-recycled trash; in 2023 Damariscotta paid \$12,500/month.

The Transfer Station transports non-recycled household waste, construction, demolition, and bulky waste to Waste Management in Norridgewock, Maine. Recyclable items such as cardboard, newspaper, plastic, and many other products go to Lincoln County Recycling. They also have special programs for recycling paint, universal hazardous waste, electronics, metals, and food waste.

Promoting recycling and composting efforts could save money on the trash assessment, reduce waste, or produce sustainable electricity. Nearly a third of a typical household's waste consists of food scraps; rather than going down an in-sink garbage disposal and into the wastewater system or being sent to a landfill, this food waste can be converted to compost or sent to an anaerobic digester to produce sustainable electricity.

Healthcare & Social Services

Damariscotta is home to MaineHealth/LincolnHealth - Miles Campus and Hospital; Lincoln Medical Partners, a multi-specialty physician practice; Cove's Edge, a skilled nursing and long-term care facility; and Chase Point, an assisted living facility which includes Riverside, a residence for people living with Alzheimer's and related dementia. The Miles campus is also home to Schooner Cove, an independent retirement community.

Recently, the MaineHealth system has been looking to curb financial losses at Cove's Edge (as well as St. Andrews Village, located about 16 miles away in Boothbay Harbor). They tried to enlist help from a skilled nursing care business to fulfill needs in the region, but this was ultimately not viable for that business. MaineHealth administrators noted there is also a need for expansion of memory care.¹¹¹ As such, additional long-term care facilities may be required in the near future and the Town will need to proactively work with MaineHealth to decide where these facilities should be located.

Damariscotta has many social service providers that serve not only Damariscotta residents but also residents of the greater Pemaquid Peninsula. The providers include Spectrum Generations, Healthy Lincoln County, Healthy Kids!, New Hope Midcoast, Mobius, Inc., Stepping Stone Housing, Eldercare Network of Lincoln County, the Central Lincoln County YMCA, and others. The Town of Damariscotta appropriates funds to various nonprofit and social service agencies based upon their requests during the annual town budget process and approval by voters at Town Meeting.

¹¹¹ Portland Press Herald, "Nursing home services may be consolidated at new, higher-cost facility in Damariscotta", December 12, 2022,

<https://www.pressherald.com/2022/12/12/nursing-home-services-may-be-consolidated-at-new-45-million-facility-in-damariscotta/>

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Other Public Facilities

As of 2024, the existing Town Office space has generally reached its capacity. Of the eight current workstations, four are occupied by full-time staff with the other four used by four positions currently held by four part-time employees. The currently part-time positions include an Administrative Assistant, the Assessor's Agent, the Town Planner, and the Code Enforcement Officer, who also serves at the Town's Plumbing Inspector. As demand grows for municipal services these part-time positions could be expanded into full-time roles, or additional personnel could be needed. One major potential impact to the Town's staff requirement would be a requirement for the Town to enforce the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) which would likely warrant additional code enforcement staff.¹¹²

The Skidompha Library is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) library funded through appropriations in the municipal budgets of Damariscotta, Newcastle, and Nobleboro as well as private memberships and donations. As a nonprofit, the governance and financial oversight of Skidompha Public Library is the responsibility of its Board of Directors. The library was deemed 'adequate' or 'more than adequate' by 95% of the community survey respondents.

There are 5 cemeteries owned and maintained by the Town of Damariscotta and overseen by the Cemetery Trustees. The Cemetery Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance of 17 privately owned historic burial grounds the Town is required to maintain by law. Descriptions and locations of cemeteries and burial sites are in Appendix I, and more information about the town's cemeteries is in the Historical and Archeological chapter.



¹¹² At the time of plan drafting, enforcement of MUBEC is based on population or local action for communities under 4,000 residents, Chapter 1 of the MUBEC Rules and Laws. <https://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/building-codes/mubec-rules>

Municipal Communications

Public engagement and awareness are essential for good government, especially with Damariscotta's direct-democracy Town Meeting form of self-governance. The complex scope of municipal communications ranges from informal, helpful updates, to statutorily required notices, to critical time-sensitive alerts, and all are necessary to ensure a well-informed and engaged populace. Effective methods of communication -- to both share information out from the municipality and to receive feedback and input back from residents -- also enhance all other efforts made by the community.

Like communities of all sizes, communications between Damariscotta town staff and the public are an ongoing challenge. While communication happens faster, more frequently, and in a wide variety of forms, it is still difficult to connect with all residents. Public notices in the local newspaper do not have the penetration they once did; postings at the Town Office or on the Town website are only seen by those actively looking; and the high volume of information people are inundated with on a daily basis can drown out the information they may actually want or need.

Regional Coordination

Damariscotta frequently collaborates with neighboring communities to reduce costs of shared services. Currently, the Town splits the cost and hours of a Town Planner with neighboring Newcastle. Newcastle and Damariscotta also share a Harbormaster. As noted above, the Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service is a joint governance arrangement, represented by the six founding towns (Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and South Bristol). Local nonprofit organizations provide scientific, educational, cultural, and recreational services to residents of Damariscotta and the surrounding region and are funded through annual appropriations from the Town's budget. These include the Skidompha Library, Lincoln County Television (LCTV), the Damariscotta Historical Society, and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (though Coastal Rivers has not received funding since 2020).

Additional regional coordination efforts are referenced throughout this Plan in the applicable Topic Area chapters.



Planned Capital Improvements

As of the FY2025 draft budget, the Town plans for capital improvements five years out. Projects include municipal facilities, municipal vehicle purchases, infrastructure maintenance such as paving, drainage, and maintenance, as well as longer-term administrative purposes such as technology replacement, consultant costs, and major assessing endeavors. Road and sidewalk inventories are being created which will further help the Town in planning major roadwork and repairs. Road resurfacing typically occurs about every 10 years, with major road reconstructions occurring about every 30 years. Concrete paved sidewalks typically need to be replaced every 20 years, while asphalt sidewalks need to be replaced every 10 years. The Town has reserve funds that receive annual budget contributions, but these have historically not received funding at the levels needed to accomplish needed maintenance.

Cost estimates for capital improvements recommended in this plan are included in the Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investment Plan chapter and the Implementation Matrix in the Appendix.

Issues & Opportunities

While the private sector and private property owners often produce any new development, they need efficient public utilities and services like internet, construction and maintenance of streets, sewers, and water networks to enable development in growth areas. One important function of this Plan is to guide the Town as it considers significant capital investments in infrastructure maintenance, replacement, or expansion. These capital investments should be incorporated into the Town's Capital Improvement Plan which aligns the capital spending with Town policies and community priorities.

Barriers to development include the policy of the Sanitary District not to fund water and sewer line extensions outside of the existing downtown and its immediate surrounding areas. The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance requires developments anticipated to produce less than 500 gallons per day (GPD) to tie into the public sewer system if the development is within 200 feet of existing lines and, for developments anticipated to produce more than 500 GPD, to tie in if within 300 feet of existing lines (unless waived by the Planning Board for good cause).¹¹³ Outside of this defined area, the Town does not have the authority to require developers to tie into the sewer system.

In Damariscotta, the downtown area is fairly well served by faster Internet connections, as described in the Telecommunications, Energy, and Power Infrastructure section above, but the area around Muddy Pond as well as the area adjacent to Salt Bay are extremely underserved; where Internet connection exists, it is less than 25 Mbps download speed – making it nearly impossible for two people to use the Internet at the same time. Similarly, properties off of Bristol Road adjacent to the Damariscotta River are underserved with upload speeds of less than 100 Mbps.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Damariscotta Site Plan Review Ordinance, Sec. 102.6.

¹¹⁴ Maine Connectivity Authority's Internet Service Map

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d69e1e96cc5b44e0bcb8691b96a3e24c/page/Page/?views=Internet-Service%2CALL-Connections>

Issues



Sanitary District policy not to fund water and sewer extensions



Lack of broadband internet in certain areas



Lack of affordable housing

Opportunities



Use of public infrastructure locations to guide development

Goals, Policies, & Strategies

Based on input and feedback from the community, and a review of existing conditions and trends, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends the following Goals, Policies, and Strategies to meet Damariscotta residents' vision and values related to Public Facilities and Services as the town continues to grow and evolve.



Goal: Public facilities and services efficiently accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Policy 12.1 Identify public service needs and develop efficient, actionable strategies to meet them.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to explore options for regional delivery of local services.
- b. Prioritize availability and reliability of communication networks, especially in the Downtown.

Policy 12.2 Provide public facilities and services that promote and support development in identified Growth Areas.

Strategies:

- a. Strengthen our collaboration with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to better direct the desired development pattern of the community (e.g. ensure that sewer infrastructure is available throughout the Growth Area designated in this Plan).
- b. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas.

Policy 12.3 Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network (beginning with the prioritized improvements identified in this Plan).

Policy 12.4 Continue to explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital and maintenance investments within the community.

Strategies:

There are no specific strategies for this Policy.

Policy 12.5 Reduce Damariscotta's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.

Strategies:

- a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES



Goal: The Town considers the impacts of climate change in its capital investment planning.

Policy 12.6 Plan and implement strategies to create a more resilient community.

Strategies:

- a. Maintain enrollment in the State's Community Resilience Partnership program and other programs that offer municipal assistance for climate resiliency efforts.
- b. Use the most current flood risk standards when planning for major capital investments to elevate roads and bridges, improve road surfaces, and increase culvert sizes to make them more flood-proof.
- c. When making capital budget decisions, conduct a long-term cost benefit analysis of implementing more resilient designs.
- d. Through the Capital Improvement Plan, plan to transition the municipal vehicle fleet to electric or alternative-fuel vehicles as existing vehicles reach the end of their useful lifespan.
- e. Continue to pursue energy retrofits to municipal buildings.



Goal: Communication between the Town government and Damariscotta citizens is proactive and transparent.

Policy 12.7 Have clear paths of communication for the town to share information and receive feedback and input from residents.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a municipal communications strategy to define and make consistent the process by which information goes from Town Office to residents and the public.
- b. Develop and implement consistent communication strategies for public outreach.

Policy 12.8 Ensure ongoing and regular maintenance of the Town's communication systems.

Strategies:

- a. Pursue a comprehensive update to the Town's website to make it more user-friendly.
- b. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the posting of meeting agendas, packets, and minutes to the Town website that all Boards and Committees follow.

Further information about implementation of the Public Facilities and Services Goals and Policies can be found in the Implementation Matrix (page 51).



EXISTING LAND USE



EXISTING LAND USE

Overview

“Land Use” describes the places where human economic or cultural activity occurs (e.g., housing, agriculture, industry, mining, recreation, etc.). Land Use Policy is the collection of regulations that directly or indirectly impact land use. Damariscotta addresses land use through its Land Use, Site Plan Review, Subdivision, Floodplain Management, and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.

Damariscotta has a total land area of 7,948 acres used for residential, commercial and conservation purposes. Studying land use is important because changes in land use can have cumulative impacts on the economy, air and water quality, watershed function, waste generation, extent and quality of wildlife habitat, climate, and human health. Since the adoption of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, a number of changes to the Town’s land use and related regulations have been adopted.

Damariscotta Land Uses by Parcel

Damariscotta’s land use is primarily residential: ~3,350 acres (822 parcels) have single-family houses; ~343 acres (30 parcels) have multi-family houses, and ~83 acres (26 parcels) have mobile homes. About 263 acres (129 parcels) are commercial or retail businesses clustered along Main Street and Biscay Road.

More than 13% of Damariscotta’s total land area is currently conserved (1,093 acres) with 420 acres owned by the State of Maine or Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, 521 acres owned by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, and about 151 acres under a conservation easement.

Minimum Lot Size

Minimum lot area varies by zoning district and availability of sanitary sewer service. In areas with sanitary sewer service, regardless of the zoning district, the smallest lot that can be created currently is 10,000 sq ft. Where sanitary sewer service is not available, the minimum lot size standard is 40,000 sq ft, except in the Rural zoning district where the minimum lot standard is 80,000 sq ft.

Minimum Street Frontage

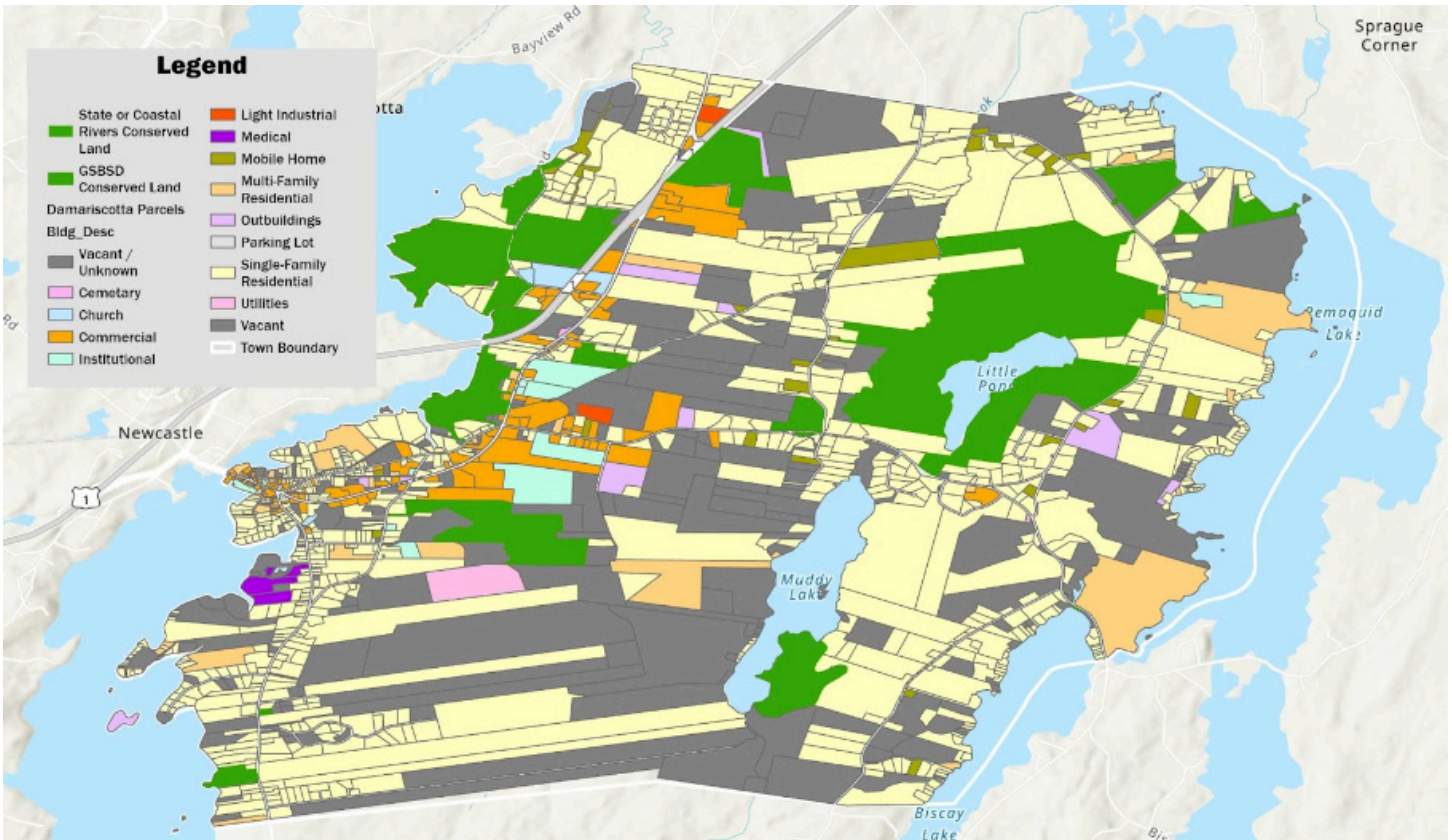
In addition to the minimum lot sizes, the Land Use Ordinance requires a minimum street frontage in all districts other than the C1 (downtown) zoning district. In the Residential zoning district, the minimum street frontage standard is 75 feet for sewered lots and 100 feet for non-sewered lots; in the C2 zoning district, the minimum street frontage standard is 100 feet for all lots; and in the Rural and Municipal zoning districts the minimum street frontage standard is 200 feet for all lots.

EXISTING LAND USE

Density Standards

Currently, the Land Use Ordinance combines minimum lot size standards and density standards. Except in the C1 zoning district—where no standards regarding density are defined—the minimum lot size requirement must be met for each additional dwelling unit or principal building. In all districts other than the C1 zoning district, areas with sanitary sewer service are limited to a density of approximately 6.5 dwelling units or principal buildings per acre. In the Residential, C2, and Municipal zoning districts areas without sanitary sewer service are limited to a density of approximately 1 dwelling unit or principal building per acre while in the Rural zoning district, areas without sanitary sewer service are limited to a density of approximately 1 dwelling unit or principal building per 2 acres.

Map of Existing Conditions



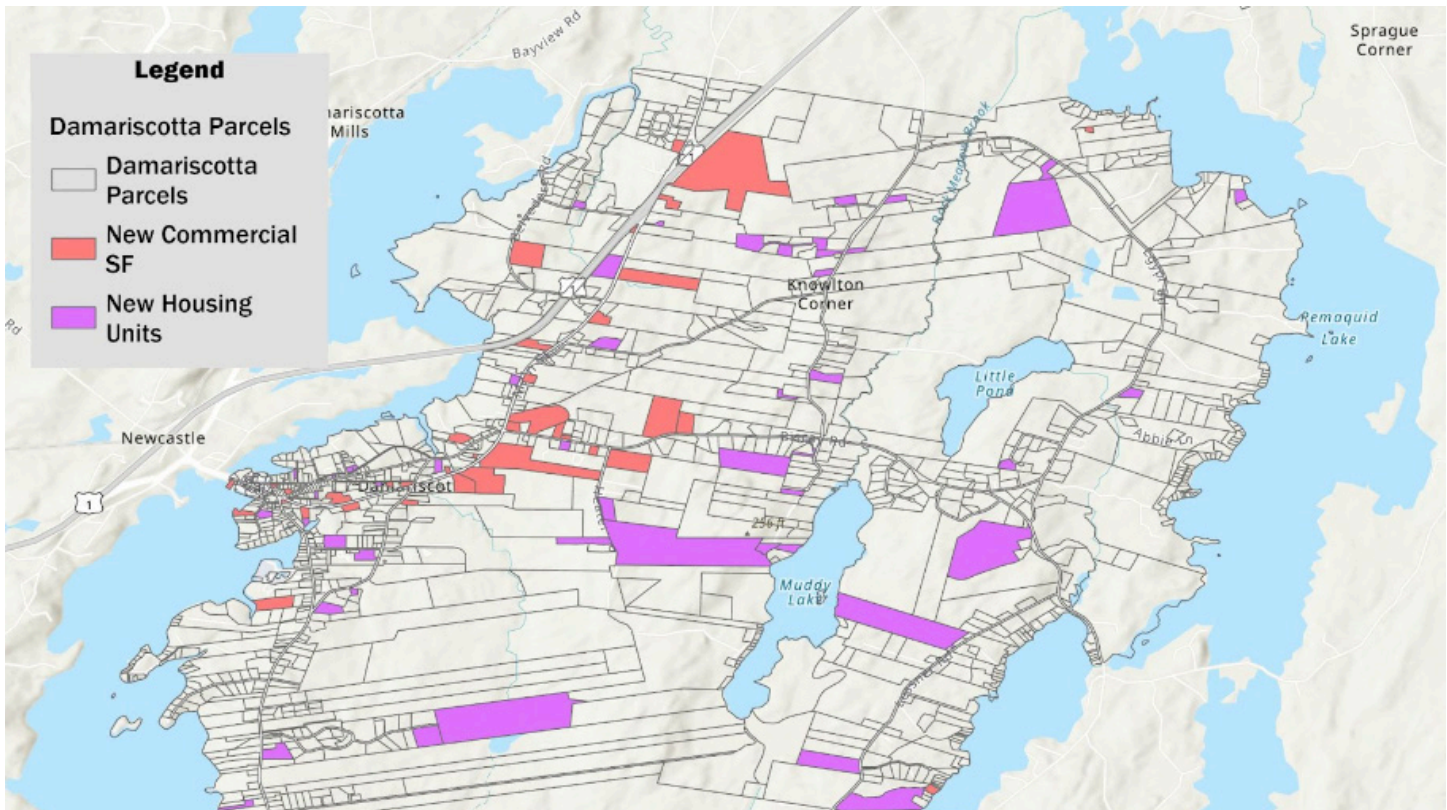
Source: Town of Damariscotta Assessing Records

EXISTING LAND USE

Recent Development

From 2013 through February 2023, development primarily occurred on a lot-by-lot basis with 73 new housing units and ~98,000 square feet of commercial space added.¹¹⁵ The map below shows where this development occurred.

Recent Development Locations



Source: Building Permits pulled from Damariscotta Code Enforcement (2013-2023)

Existing Land Use Regulations

Damariscotta regulates development through different Ordinances depending on the type of project being proposed. The Town uses traditional Euclidean zoning, which separates land use by type – residential, commercial, retail, industrial, agricultural – as described in the Land Use Ordinance.

In 2020, the Town adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance which regulates changes to the exterior of buildings located within the Main Street Historic District.

The Town employs a part-time Code Enforcement Officer/Local Plumbing Inspector and a Town Planner, shared with the neighboring Town of Newcastle. With the volunteer Planning Board and the part-time staff, the community's administrative capacity to enforce and manage its land use ordinances and regulations is currently considered to be adequate. When needed, the Town turns to outside consultants on a project-by-project basis.

¹¹⁵ Damariscotta Code Enforcement Office, Approved Building Permits, 2013-2023

EXISTING LAND USE

Land Use Ordinance

The Town's Land Use Ordinance, adopted in 1998 and amended through February 2023, establishes five zoning districts and a Wireless Communications Overlay (with all wireless communication facilities limited to the overlay area). The Land Use Ordinance outlines dimensional standards for buildings and allowable land uses in each of the zoning districts and the Wireless Communications Overlay.

The majority of proposed land uses require Planning Board review and Conditional Use Permitting before a building permit is issued by the Code Enforcement Officer. Planning Board review includes a duly noticed public hearing to allow the public to raise concerns about potential impacts of proposed development that may be more meaningful to the community than projects solely reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer.

Since 2014, several new or revised definitions were added to the Land Use Ordinance in an effort to update allowable uses within the community that could not have been envisioned when the Town's Land Use Ordinance was adopted in 1997 (e.g., marijuana businesses, small wind energy systems, and commercial solar energy systems). Changes were also made to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions which allow for new concepts in housing development. The changes include a density bonus and a revision to the minimum land area for PUC development to incentivize the use of these provisions; to date, no proposal takes advantage of the Planned Unit Development provisions.

Site Plan Review Ordinance

The Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance, adopted in 1994 and most recently revised in February 2023, sets forth standards for the design of buildings and sites, landscaping and buffering, erosion control, stormwater management, parking and driveway standards, and a variety of environmental quality considerations. It requires the Planning Board to review and make a positive finding of each of the applicable standards before a project is approved.

Subdivision Ordinance

The Town's Subdivision Ordinance, adopted in 1989 and amended through February 2023, regulates the division of land into three or more smaller lots (or condominium areas), in accordance with State Statute,¹¹⁶ with additional standards for roadway design and construction more specifically described in the Transportation chapter.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

In 2015, the Town adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance to become a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program. The Ordinance regulates new construction within areas of special flood hazard, identified as Zones A and AE on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This ordinance provides additional standards intended to protect water quality and to protect buildings from flooding. Permits are issued by the Code Enforcement Officer and must meet the standards of the ordinance. If the proposal is for a conditional use, it must also be reviewed and approved by the Planning Board before a permit is issued.

¹¹⁶ M.R.S.A. Title 30-A §4401.4 (as amended)

EXISTING LAND USE

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1997 and amended through June 2019 to comply with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection’s Chapter 1000 Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinances, regulates land areas within 250 feet (horizontal distance) from the normal high-water line of any great pond, river, or upland edge of a coastal or freshwater wetland, as well as land areas within 75 feet (horizontal distance) of the normal high-water line of a stream. The Ordinance also applies to any structure built on, over, or abutting a dock, wharf, pier, or other structure extending or located below the normal high-water line. This Ordinance provides additional land use standards, above what is required in the Town’s other ordinances, to protect the environment and water quality of the Town’s water bodies and include standards for erosion control, building setbacks, parking and driveway setbacks, stormwater management, septic waste, agriculture and timber harvesting, and the clearing and removal of vegetation.

Projected Land Use Needs

By 2040, Damariscotta needs to produce at least 176 rental or ownership housing units (to keep pace with projected population growth. Of these, 83 should be regulated affordable housing, with deed covenants to ensure long-term affordability.¹¹⁷ Much of this can likely be accommodated in multi-family housing, which requires less land than single-family housing (typically sited on separate lots). The Housing chapter discusses the need for additional housing in greater detail.

New economic development should focus in and around the existing downtown and the mixed-use “hubs” along Upper Main Street (discussed in the Future Land Use section), in order to align with the community’s identified vision.

The amount of land needed to accommodate the projected needs of the community depends on the type of development proposed and where it will be located. For example, more land is required for residential development sited in rural areas, where public sewer and water are not available, than if it is sited on current public sewer and water lines.

¹¹⁷ Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission, May 2023 County-wide Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy Report.

EXISTING LAND USE

Issues & Opportunities

Most commercial development since 2014 was confined to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan's established Growth Area, but residential development occurred throughout the community, including into rural areas where the community had indicated that they did not want extensive growth and development. The Future Land Use section of this 2024 Plan recommends regulatory and non-regulatory measures the Town can take that promotes development consistent with the community's vision as defined within this Comprehensive Plan.



FISCAL CAPACITY

FISCAL CAPACITY

Overview

Local services, including schools, county services, and municipal operations, are largely funded by revenue raised by the municipality. Because of this, their quality depends heavily on a town's capacity to support them monetarily. If costs increase because of inflation or demand for more or higher levels of service, the revenue a town raises must go up accordingly. "Fiscal capacity" is the town's ability to meet local funding needs without overburdening its tax base.

In Damariscotta, like most municipalities in the State, a major source of revenue are property taxes—both on real estate property and on personal property. For fiscal year 2025, Damariscotta taxpayers were assessed a \$7,546,851 property tax. Of this \$7,546,851 amount assessed, approximately 56% will go to the local school budget, 8% will go to the County budget, with the remaining 36% going towards Damariscotta's municipal budget. While property taxes are a significant part of the local fiscal capacity, only about 1/3 of that revenue is retained and directly controlled by the municipality, making forecasting and long term budgeting difficult.

In addition to property taxes, the Town—like the schools and county—also generate revenue through other means. Some of the most significant non-property tax revenue generators are excise taxes on automobiles, reimbursements from the State, and State Revenue Sharing. In total, the Town expects to take in over \$1,260,000 in 2025 from sources other than property taxes which should cover approximately 1/3 of the annual budget. For Damariscotta's FY 2025 \$3,990,800 municipal budget, approximately 68% or \$2,731,000 is expected to be covered by property taxes, with the remaining 32% or \$1,260,000 coming from other revenue sources. The share of the municipal budget being covered by property taxes has increased from about 54% in 2021, to its current high of 68% in 2025. Although property taxes will likely remain the primary source of revenue, alternative sources, such as excise taxes and development review fees, are growing.

Revenues & Expenditures

Damariscotta's annual budget includes its plans for spending and how it anticipates funding those plans. These plans are based on town-wide, departmental, programmatic, and community needs and goals. By putting money behind promises and commitments (or choosing not to do so), voter-approved budgets reveal the priorities of the community.

Revenue

As noted above, approximately 64% of Damariscotta's FY2025 budget is expected to be covered by property taxes. State reimbursements and revenue sharing will likely make up about 6%, with other local revenue sources making up the remaining 30%. In addition, the Town stopped budgeting for payments in lieu of taxes after FY2023 because there is currently no Town ordinance addressing payments in lieu of taxes for tax-exempt properties.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Annual Budgeted Municipal Revenue					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Administration	\$766,052.36	\$1,550,997	\$2,010,946	\$2,306,633	\$2,604,876
Planning & Development	\$46,746.87	\$37,936.94	\$51,200.00	\$122,700.00	\$100,700.00
Police Department	\$1,409.00	\$8,508.50	\$10,250.00	\$8,750.00	\$7,550.00
Fire Department	\$192.00	\$140.00	\$-	\$-	\$-
Cemetery	\$1,800.00	\$2,100.00	\$-	\$-	\$-
Local Revenue	\$816,200.23	\$740,195.72	\$884,850.00	\$740,750.00	\$732,100.00
State Reimbursements	\$424,865.20	\$565,556.22	\$541,275.00	\$540,000.00	\$527,214.00
Tax Revenue (retained by Town)	\$1,476,849.27	\$1,550,996.61	\$1,987,418.45	\$2,486,234.87	\$2,731,466.91
Total Local Revenue	\$2,717,914.70	\$2,856,748.55	\$3,413,543.45	\$3,766,984.87	\$3,990,780.91

Source: Damariscotta Town Budgets, FY2021 through FY2025

Expenditures

General Government (Administration, Planning & Development, Assessing, and the Town's allocation to the Transfer Station) is the highest expenditure, followed by the Police Department and Public Works.

The increase in General Government covers increased benefits to town staff and the costs of a full-time Town Planner. The Town Planner, split between Damariscotta and neighboring Newcastle, is paid by Damariscotta but the town receives offset revenue for half the expense from the Town of Newcastle per an interlocal cost-sharing agreement. The Debt Service expenditure jumped in FY2023 as the Town took on debt for the installation of street lights and needed road repairs. The street light bond has been paid off, but the road repair bond will continue to be paid through 2036 when the loan matures.

Annual Budgeted Municipal Expenditures					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
General Government	\$783,264.83	\$787,788.56	\$947,886.00	\$1,021,772.00	\$1,113,295.90
Police	\$535,383.60	\$632,980.65	\$725,019.00	\$802,317.00	\$823,140.00
Public Safety	\$338,856.60	\$342,754.59	\$484,794.42	\$425,165.87	\$439,592.01
Public Works	\$454,257.11	\$446,379.66	\$557,612.01	\$655,655.00	\$779,778.00
Community Services + Betterment	\$55,081.47	\$57,822.00	\$72,158.02	\$78,600.00	\$3,000.00
Debt Service	\$127,071.09	\$121,498.00	\$201,974.00	\$201,975.00	\$201,975.00
Operating Budget	\$2,293,914.70	\$2,389,223.55	\$2,989,443.45	\$3,185,484.87	\$3,360,780.91
Capital Reserve Request	\$424,000.00	\$467,525.00	\$424,100.00	\$581,500.00	\$630,000.00
Total Annual Budget	\$2,717,914.70	\$2,856,748.55	\$3,413,543.45	\$3,766,984.87	\$3,990,780.91

Source: Damariscotta Town Budgets, FY2021 through FY2025.

The Town leverages its resources by participating in regional agreements for services. In addition to the interlocal agreement with Newcastle to share costs of a Town Planner, the Town also shares a Harbormaster with them. The Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service is a joint governance arrangement with Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro, and South Bristol. Finally, the Town contracts with Nobleboro and Jefferson to use their jointly-owned transfer station.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Revenue Capacity & Tax Rates

Since FY2020, the average property tax mill rate in Damariscotta has been about \$16.00. As shown in the chart below, there was a peak in FY2023 to \$16.65 but then a decrease to \$15.65 in FY2024, the lowest since 2013 when it was \$15.10. In FY2025 the mill rate is \$18.50.

Valuation & Assessments						
	FY2020 (2019-2020)	FY2021 (2020-2021)	FY2022 (2021-2022)	FY2023 (2022-2023)	FY2024 (2023-2024)	FY2025 (2024-2025)
State Valuation	\$356,400,000	\$357,850,000	\$371,350,000	\$403,050,000	\$537,100,000	Avail. by Feb. 2025
Town Taxable Valuation	\$340,564,100	\$341,012,100	\$343,564,200	\$346,671,760	\$407,579,105	\$411,946,000
Mill Rate	\$16.10	\$16.00	\$15.90	\$16.65	\$15.65	\$18.32
Net Assess.	\$5,483,082	\$5,456,194	\$5,462,671	\$5,772,085	\$6,378,613	\$7,546,851

Source: Maine Revenue Services.

Debt Capacity & Capital Investments

In the past, Damariscotta funded capital investments through cash reserves and grants rather than significant borrowing. The Town has various reserve funds with annual contributions, but historically these have been inadequately funded to meet the town's needs. Thus, the maintenance of existing capital investments (i.e., roads and sidewalks) has been prioritized over the expansion of new capital investments.

As of the FY2025 budget, the Town has a five-year cycle plan for capital improvements. The budget includes capital improvement reserves for municipal facilities, municipal vehicle purchases, infrastructure maintenance (i.e., paving, drainage, and maintenance), and for longer-term administrative purposes such as technology replacement, consultant costs, and major assessing endeavors. Most capital investments will likely continue to be funded with cash reserves, but judicious borrowing will be used to fund the priority capital investments outlined in this plan. Damariscotta has significant borrowing capacity in relation to Maine's statutory limit of 15% on municipal borrowing, as shown in the chart below. The town will also pursue additional grants and TIF funds as an important component of capital funding.

Outstanding Bond Amount	% State Assessed Value (\$537,100,000 as of 2024)	Allowable Amount	Margin
\$1,858,802*	0.35%	\$80,565,000	\$78,706,198

*as of 2024

Main Street TIF

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows municipalities to collect funds from certain designated infrastructure and economic development districts. The Town captures TIF revenues -- up to 50% of the increased assessed value over the original assessed value of the District -- and uses these tax revenues for designated economic development purposes, as outlined in the approved Development Program.

The Main Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District accounts for revenues and expenditures related to economic development and sidewalk expansion along Upper Main Street (Route 1B). Approved in 2020, the Main Street TIF District includes 33.31 acres. In 2024, Damariscotta voters approved an amendment to the existing TIF program which expanded the district area by 68.89 acres (for a total of 102.2 acres), and will allow for the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.¹¹⁸

Issues & Opportunities

Sustaining the Town's fiscal health requires adequate fiscal resources to provide services at a level consistent with community expectations. To that end, the Town must be persistent in pursuing new or enhanced revenue resources and continue to explore more efficient use of existing resources. This does not necessarily mean increases in property tax rates; strategic growth and economic development can bolster the tax base without increasing the tax rate.

Many municipalities seek a diverse mix of residential and commercial tax bases, with the underlying philosophy that commercial enterprises require fewer municipal services (namely, no impact on schools) while still paying their share of taxes. As of 2023, approximately 32% of the Town's real estate and personal property tax revenue came from commercial properties¹¹⁹; many municipalities aim for at least 40% of real estate revenue coming from commercial or mixed-use properties. Studies show that strategic growth co-located with existing community services has advantages over more dispersed development pattern. There is less upfront cost for infrastructure and a reduction on the cost of emergency services -- typically by reducing the distances that service vehicles, like ambulances, must drive.

The Town may wish to formalize a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) policy to recover some of the costs for municipal services (e.g., roads and public safety) the exempt tax base uses. A policy would allow the Town to plan on this revenue during the budget process.

Finally, long-term strategic planning will be crucial in maintaining the fiscal health of the community. Strategic investment in capital improvements will provide the foundation for private investment and growth in targeted areas of the community. Addressing deferred maintenance and capital replacement needs of municipal facilities, roads and sidewalks, can be planned in a manner that supports and encourages new investment and development in areas adjacent to those facilities, roads and sidewalks.

¹¹⁸ The original Development Program also allowed for the use of funds for the creation of sidewalks and multi-modal paths both with and adjacent to the District, as well as the prorated costs of a new fire truck, which continue to be included in the amended Development Program.

¹¹⁹ Amended and Restated Main Street Damariscotta Omnibus Municipal Development & Tax Increment Financing Development Program, March 20, 2024.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Issues



Deferred maintenance



Desire not to impact the tax base

Opportunities



Strategic economic development to bolster tax base

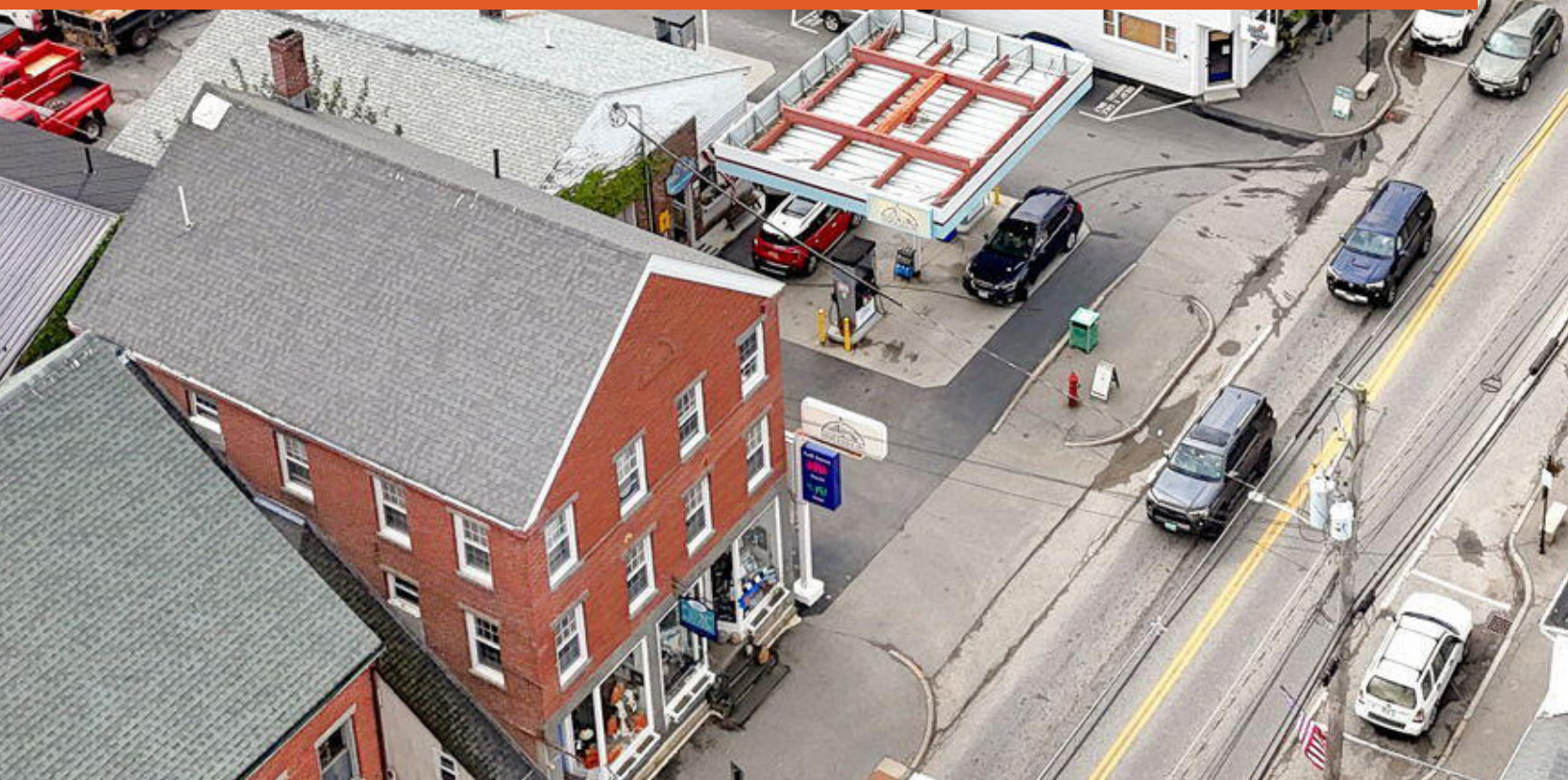


PILOT programs



IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

APPENDIX A



IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

Implementation

The 2024 Damariscotta Comprehensive Plan will be implemented over the next ten years. The Implementation Matrix is the “roadmap” for completing the policies and strategies needed to meet our goals. Some strategies or policies have been identified as higher priorities, some must be completed before other policies, and some are larger, multi-step undertakings.

This Implementation Matrix includes the Policies, Strategies, Person(s) Responsible, anticipated timeline, estimated cost, and additional partners and resources for every Goal.

Policy

What we need to do to achieve the desired goals set by the community.

Strategies

The actions we will take to help us accomplish our policies and goals. Some strategies are repeated because they are applicable in multiple sections.

Who

The lead entity (or entities) responsible for implementing the policy or strategy.

Suggested Start Date:

The suggested year to start undertaking the Strategy or start earmarking funds to address the Strategy. Timelines may shift based on funding availability, staff capacity, or other municipal impacts.

Estimated Time Commitment

An estimate on how long it may take to implement the Strategy.

Cost: An estimate on how much it will cost to implement the Strategy. The cost is reflected as a dollar amount where \$ = <\$10,000; \$\$ = \$10,000 - \$50,000; \$\$\$ = \$50,000-\$100,000, and; \$\$\$\$ = >\$100,000.

Partners & Resources

Identifies potential resources needed to implement the policy or strategy and potential nonprofit partners, Town departments, or state agencies that may help in implementation.

The Implementation Matrix below will be used by town officials, staff and residents to develop plans and monitor success of the 2024 Damariscotta Comprehensive Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

Evaluation

The Town Council will appoint a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee within one month of state acceptance of the 2024 Damariscotta Comprehensive Plan. The committee will include town residents and representatives from partner organizations and receive support from town staff. The committee will be charged with reviewing the town's success in implementing all components of the plan including:



- A. The degree to which future land use plan strategies have been implemented;
- B. Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas;
- C. Location and amount of new development in relation to community's designated growth areas, rural areas, and transition areas; and
- D. Amount of critical natural resource, critical rural, and critical waterfront areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

The Committee will provide bi-annual status reports to the Selectboard and present an update to town members at the Annual Town Meeting.


IMPLEMENTATION: POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

No goals or policies are required for this section.


IMPLEMENTATION: HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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



IMPLEMENTATION: HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Historic and archaeological resources in the community are preserved.										
		2.2	Protect identified historic and archaeological resources in the community, through regulation when necessary.								
				a. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require that applicants for Planning Board projects are explicitly required to protect known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archaeology through modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission; Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (2021).	
				b. Amend Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission	
		2.3	Update the existing inventory and investigate potentially overlooked historic and archeological resources in the community.								
				a. Become a Certified Local Government through the State Historic Preservation Office in order to gain access to grants for planning and survey work.	Phase 2	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 4		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				b. Earmark matching funds to conduct a comprehensive architectural survey of Damariscotta's above-ground historic resources, beginning with the Bristol Road Historic District.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Begin earmarking funds Year 4	8 months	\$	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	
		2.4	Actively preserve, protect, and complement the historic features of the Main Street Historic District.								
				a. Revisit and revise as needed the permitted and conditional uses within the C-1 zone (or equivalent) as well as the density requirements to ensure that they are promoting a vibrant downtown and adaptive reuse of historic structures.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Review Commission	

IMPLEMENTATION: HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES


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


IMPLEMENTATION: AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES

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


IMPLEMENTATION: AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES

Continued from previous page...


Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Damariscotta's agricultural and forest resources are protected and productive.										
		3.3	Conserve prime farmland, especially areas capable of supporting commercial agriculture.								
				d. Consult with Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				e. Adopt a "right to farm" provision within the Town's Land Use Ordinance expressly exempting farming operations from nuisance complaints (such as noise or odor complaints) as long as they are complying with applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Same as Strategy 3.1.b	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 4	6 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
		3.4	Encourage tree planting to assist in climate resiliency.								
				a. Develop a plan to identify and replace dead or damaged street trees in the village.	Phase 2	Public Works Committee	Year 4			Public Works, Administration, Selectboard	

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




IMPLEMENTATION: AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES



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

IMPLEMENTATION: ARTS & CULTURE



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



IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
  	Damariscotta's economy is resilient to the effects of climate change.										
		5.1	Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's economy.								
			a. Provide educational resources to property owners regarding adapting their historic buildings in light of flood risk.	Phase 1	Historic Preservation Review Commission	Year 3	12 months	\$ (suggested funding source: MHPC grant opportunities)	Planning Department, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Damariscotta Historical Society		
		b. Explore opportunities to promote a regional circular economy that matches waste products from one industry with inputs in another industry.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, Planning Department			



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




IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Growth maintains a traditional New England development pattern.										
		5.5	Limit “big-box” stores and focus on compatible scale with the existing development pattern.								
				a. Review and revise design standards related to new commercial development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Review and revise the Town’s Sign Ordinance to reduce sign clutter and sustain the scenic beauty of the town.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				c. Amend the Town’s Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing “soft costs” of development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 2	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
		5.6	Promote new mixed-use development in identified nodes located throughout the community.								
				a. Review and revise the Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage mixed-use development in nodes identified in the Future Land Use Plan.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Planning Board, Selectboard, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission	



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

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY


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

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

IMPLEMENTATION: ECONOMY


Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	Damariscotta's role as a small-town service center benefits the community.										
		5.12	Strengthen and/or support the expansion of existing infrastructure and systems that support quality of life for a growing regional workforce, including housing, childcare, education, transportation, and broadband.								
			a. Assess common barriers to employment (childcare needs, transportation needs, education/skill gaps, etc.).	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 4	12 months	Staff-time / project dependent	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers		
			b. Develop initiatives to mitigate or overcome identified barriers.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 5	Ongoing	Staff-time / project dependent	Administration, Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce, major employers		
			c. Seek to improve broadband communications in areas that have been identified as being underserved.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 2	3 years	\$\$	Administration, ConnectME Authority, Maine Broadband Coalition		
		5.13	Pursue opportunities that mitigate tax burden on residential property owners.								
			a. Continue to utilize tax increment financing (TIFs) to shelter revenue for priority economic development projects.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration		
			b. During the annual budget cycle, examine and carefully consider Departmental budget requests to ensure that the municipal budget reflects the priorities of the community and voters.	Phase 1	Selectboard, Budget Committee, Town Meeting Voters	Ongoing			Administration		
			c. Continue to seek alternative funding sources such as grants whenever possible.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		\$ (hired Grant Writer cost)	Administration, Hired Grant Writer		
		5.14	Encourage tax base growth in order to maintain the town's service center benefits: historic, cultural, medical, conservation assets.								
		a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration			


IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

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

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING


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Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.										
		6.4	Work with current affordable housing property owners to maintain existing affordable housing in the community.								
				a. Identify the expiration date of existing affordability covenants in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	4 months	\$ (utilizing summer intern)	Administration	
				b. Educate property owners on incentives available for keeping property affordable.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	


Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing options exist to accommodate a diverse range of households and lifestyles.										
		6.5	Ensure that land use controls allow for the kinds of residential development that the community desires and needs.								
				a. Reduce the burden of residential development in designated Growth Areas by removing regulatory barriers and permitting "by-right" (without Planning Board review) the residential developments that the community desires.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration	
				c. Decrease minimum lot size per dwelling unit in areas with existing public water and sewer to allow for smaller lots conducive to 'starter' home construction.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				d. Amend the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow for "back-lot" development within the Growth Area.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
		6.6	Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.								
				a. Utilize community input to compile a list of sites (either publicly or privately owned) that have large-scale housing development potential.	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Planning Board, Selectboard, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission	
			b. Amend the Town's Land Use and Site Plan Review Ordinances to expressly allow for the kinds of housing that the community wishes to see on the prioritized sites, thereby reducing "soft costs" of development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 2	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department		


IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

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Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Housing opportunities in Damariscotta are affordable for a range of incomes.										
		6.6	Make strategic investments in the kinds of housing that the community desires and needs.								
				c. Create a Housing Trust Fund that will set aside money to be granted to priority housing projects, with priorities and funding levels established annually by the Selectboard.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	6 months	Suggested funding sources: private donations; awards/grants; creation of an Affordable Housing TIF district; percentage of funds from other TIF districts; CDBG; annual budget allocations; Inclusionary Zoning Fee-In-Lieu; short-term rental registration fees	Administration	
				d. Encourage the construction of ADUs within or on the same lot as existing residences.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	6 months	Potentially by providing grants or loans through Housing Trust Fund	Administration, Planning Department	
		6.7	Understand the short-term rental situation in Damariscotta.								
				a. Create a Short-Term Rental Ordinance requiring all short-term rentals (being rented for less than 4 months out of the year) to register with the Town on a regular basis, including payment of a nominal fee, in order to get an accurate count of the number of short-term rentals in Damariscotta.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	12 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
			b. Take steps to manage short-term rentals as necessary.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4	Ongoing	Staff-time	Administration, Planning Department, Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee		

IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING

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


Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	New housing is located near existing services.										
		6.9	Protect rural areas and natural settings without existing infrastructure by encouraging new housing development at greater densities in Growth Areas already served by public infrastructure (sewer, water, sidewalks and roadways, broadband internet, three-phase power).								
			a. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Administration			
		b. Promote mixed-use redevelopment of aging retail sites within Growth Areas as their market viability declines.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department, Administration			

IMPLEMENTATION: NATURAL RESOURCES


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

IMPLEMENTATION: NATURAL RESOURCES

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

IMPLEMENTATION: WATER RESOURCES



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



IMPLEMENTATION: WATER RESOURCES

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Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The quality of water resources (including lakes, aquifers, ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas) is protected.										
		8.5	Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.								
				a. Establish a relationship with a qualified third-party engineering peer reviewer who can review projects slated for Planning Board review for compliance with stormwater standards and who can suggest modifications to encourage more low-impact development.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1		\$	Planning Department	
				b. Communicate with contractors regarding the Town's erosion and sediment control policies.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
				c. Ensure enforcement of the Town's erosion and sediment control policies during construction.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
				d. Work with a qualified professional engineer (or Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District) to amend the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review Ordinances to incorporate low-impact development standards for stormwater management.	Phase 1	Planning Department	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department, Maine DEP, Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
				e. Ensure continued compliance with the Maine DEP Chapter 1000 standards for Shoreland Zoning Ordinances.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Ongoing		Staff-time	Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	
		8.6	Protect water resources while accommodating development within Growth Areas.								
				a. Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		
				b. Provide contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine in order to encourage landowners to protect water quality.	Phase 2	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time		
				c. Collaborate with the Maine DEP and local conservation organizations to understand the impact projected increases in annual precipitation will have on stormwater runoff to help minimize future contamination of waterways.	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	



IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The Town supports thriving local fishing, aquaculture, shellfishing, and marine resource activities.										
		9.1		Include existing, potential, and historic working waterfronts and harbors in local planning efforts.							
				a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6	18 months	\$\$ (professional consultant costs)	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Darling Marine Center, Planning Department	
		9.2		Give preference to water-dependent land uses over other uses and protect working waterfronts from residential or non-water dependent development pressures.							
				a. Review and revise as necessary the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that water-dependent land uses are allowed in waterfront areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
				b. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations are not prioritizing non-water dependent land uses over water-dependent ones in waterfront areas.	Phase 1	Planning Board	Year 1	18 months	\$\$ (as part of a suite of Ordinance updates)	Planning Department	
			c. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6	18 months	\$\$ (professional consultant costs)	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Darling Marine Center, Planning Department		


Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.										
		9.3		Expand, maintain and improve physical public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.							
				a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6	18 months	\$\$ (professional consultant costs)	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Darling Marine Center, Planning Department	
			b. Work with local property owners and land trusts to protect identified points of physical access to coastal waters	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Ongoing		Staff-time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Administration		


IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

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Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
 	The shore and waters are accessible and available to commercial fishing and recreational uses.										
		9.4	Protect and expand visual access points (scenic views) of the community's marine resources.								
				a. Inventory areas of scenic importance throughout the community to determine areas to be prioritized for protection, including important small stands of trees and significant trees within the village area.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department	
				b. Amend the zoning map to protect areas of scenic importance from development.	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 6	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department	
		9.5	Promote public access to the shoreline.								
				a. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.	Phase 2	Assessing	Year 5		Staff-time		
		9.6	Balance water-dependent land uses with other complementary land uses, including opportunities for outdoor recreation.								
				a. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department	
		9.7	Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.								
				a. Create an updated Harbor Management Plan including an inventory of existing physical features, natural habitats, uses, access points, and moorings, as well as suggested goals and objectives to better balance shared uses and eliminate pollution sources.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6	18 months	\$\$ (professional consultant costs)	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Darling Marine Center, Planning Department	
				b. Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.	Phase 2	Assessing	Year 5		Staff-time		
				c. Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access to waters (including parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 3	18 months	\$\$ (as part of Open Space & Recreation Plan)	Planning Department	


IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

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

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


IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES

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Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.										
		9.14	Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance, even in areas where development may occur.								
				a. Educate shorefront property owners on the importance of protecting and enhancing vegetative buffers along the shorefront through existing "ShoreSmart" programs.	Phase 2	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 6		Volunteer time	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	
		9.15	Improve air quality to protect the health of all people.								
				a. Sweep streets early in the spring to minimize dust particles in the air.	Phase 2	Public Works Department	Ongoing		Staff-time	Selectboard, Administration	
				b. Conduct a walking audit of existing sidewalk locations and all streets and intersections within the Growth Area identified as part of this Plan, to better understand where pedestrian improvements may be necessary.	Phase 1	Public Safety & Accessibility Collaborative (PSAC)	Year 2	8 months	Volunteer time	Public Works Committee	
				c. Revise the Town's policy related to the maintenance of road surface markings (namely crosswalks) to require that they are repainted at least twice per year or research a more resilient paint option to ensure crosswalks are visible year-round.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 1	4 months	Staff-time	Public Works Committee, Public Works Department	
				d. Require that sidewalks are maintained in winter weather at or about at the same rate as roadways.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Year 2	4 months	Staff-time	Plowing contractor	
				e. Identify the location of potentially public rights-of-way in the community that could be upgraded to expand bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 3	6 months	\$ (utilizing summer intern)		
				f. Refer to and comply with the PSAC Resolution for Bicycle Safety and Accessibility especially when MDOT is planning for roadway improvements to priority corridors (as identified in the resolution).	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Project dependent	Administration, Public Works Department	
			g. Work with CMP to identify any upgrades needed to support more robust EV charging and solar power infrastructure.	Phase 2	Selectboard	Year 4		Staff-time	Administration		

IMPLEMENTATION: MARINE RESOURCES


Continued from previous page...

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	The marine environment—especially the Damariscotta River—and related resources are well managed and maintained.										
		9.15		Improve air quality to protect the health of all people.							
				h. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to require that certain development projects are “EV-ready” (e.g. that conduit is installed for EV charging stations). i. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town’s transportation network	Phase 2	Planning Board	Year 4	8 months	Staff-time	Planning Department; See SMPDC’s Municipal EV Readiness Toolkit (2021)	
				i. Develop regulations around the use of e-bicycles in the community in order to encourage the use of these unique vehicles while allowing for efficient and safe use of the Town’s transportation network	Phase 3	Selectboard	Year 7 / as needed		Staff-time	Public Works Department	
				j. Publicize existing ride-providing services (such as Lincoln County FISH) and ride-sharing networks (such as GO MAINE).	Phase 1	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Year 1	3 months	Staff and volunteer time (as part of website updates)	Town Clerk, Administration	
		9.16		Protect and improve marine habitat and water quality.							
				a. Provide staff support to Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to apply for grants to replace existing overboard discharges.	Phase 3	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, Maine DEP	
				b. Provide information to owners of marine businesses and industries about participation in the Maine Clean Boatyards and Marinas Program.	Phase 3	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee	Ongoing			Administration, Planning Department	
		9.17		Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.							
				a. Develop alternatives to municipal riverside snow dump in an effort to reduce hydrocarbon pollution to the river waters.	Phase 2	Public Works	Ongoing			Maine DEP; Maine DMR; Aquaculture companies	
				b. Advocate for Maine Department of Marine Resources to limit introduction of invasive species by prohibiting gear transfer to the river from other growing areas without precautions.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration; Maine DMR	


IMPLEMENTATION: RECREATION

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


IMPLEMENTATION: RECREATION

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


IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

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



IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

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


IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION

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


IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSPORTATION


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

IMPLEMENTATION: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Public facilities and services efficiently accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.										
		12.1		Identify public service needs and develop efficient, actionable strategies to meet them.							
				a. Continue to explore options for regional delivery of local services.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration	
				b. Prioritize availability and reliability of communication networks, especially in the Downtown	Phase 2						
		12.2		Provide public facilities and services that promote and support development in identified Growth Areas.							
				a. Strengthen our collaboration with Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to better direct the desired development pattern of the community (e.g. ensure that sewer infrastructure is available throughout the Growth Area designated in this Plan).	Phase 1	Administration	Ongoing		Staff-time	Planning Department	
				b. Locate at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated Growth Areas.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing			Administration	
		12.3		Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.							
				a. Develop a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network (beginning with the prioritized improvements identified in this Plan).	Phase 1	Public Works Committee	Year 1	12 months	Staff-time	Public Works Department, Administration, Selectboard	
		12.4		Continue to explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital and maintenance investments within the community.							
		12.5		Reduce Damariscotta's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.							
				a. Create additional economic development incentives (e.g. credit enhancement agreements or similar) to attract targeted business investment.	Phase 1	Selectboard	Ongoing		Staff-time	Administration	

IMPLEMENTATION: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

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

Guiding Value	Goal	ID	Policy	Strategy	Priority	Who	Suggested Start Date	Estimated Time Commitment	Cost	Potential Partners & Resources	
	Communication between the Town government and Damariscotta citizens is proactive and transparent.										
		12.7	Have clear paths of communication for the town to share information and receive feedback and input from residents.								
				a. Develop a municipal communications strategy to define and make consistent the process by which information goes from Town Office to residents and the public.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	Ongoing	Staff-time		
				b. Develop and implement consistent communication strategies for public outreach.							
		12.8	Ensure ongoing and regular maintenance of the Town's established communication channels.								
				a. Pursue a comprehensive update to the Town's website to make it more user-friendly.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	6 months	\$\$	Selectboard	
				b. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the posting of meeting agendas, packets, and minutes to the Town website that all Boards and Committees will adhere to.	Phase 1	Administration	Year 1	Ongoing	Staff-time		

IMPLEMENTATION: EXISTING LAND USE

No goals or policies are required for this section.

IMPLEMENTATION: FISCAL CAPACITY & CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

No goals or policies are required for this section.



APPENDIX J

APPENDIX J

Table 1: Damariscotta Public Roads Quality Assessment

Road Name	Condition	Road Length (Feet)	Road Name	Condition	Road Length (Feet)
Back Meadow Road	Fair to Good	16458	Main Street/ Route 1B	Fair to Good	19672
Belvedere Road	Fair (<i>Belvedere Extension: Good</i>)	7803	Midcoast Road	Good to Fair	1782
Biscay Road	Fair to Good	23293	Miles Street	Fair to Poor	949
Branch Road	Good	2665	Oak Road	Good	1263
Bristol Road/ Route 129	Good	14011	Parking Lot Lane	<i>Not rated</i>	1286
Center Street	<i>Not rated</i>	3213	Pine Ridge Road	Good	5313
Chapman Street	Fair to Good	2465	Pinkham Road	Fair	3267
Church Street	Fair to Good	7138	Pleasant Street	Poor	1004
Cross Street	Fair to Good	475	Rocky Run Road	Good	1854
Egypt Road	Fair to Good	21222	Route 1	<i>Not rated</i>	19687
Elm Street	Good	1785	School Street	Good	7408
Hammond Road	Good	1654	Stand Pipe Road	Good	6248
High Street	Good	2163	Theatre Street	Good	224
Hodgdon Street	Poor	4133	Vine Street	Good	923
Keen Woods Road	Fair to Good	3436	W Lewis Point Road	<i>Not rated</i>	279
Lessner Road	Good to Fair	11380	Water Street	Fair	1879
Lewis Point Road	Fair to Good	634	Westview Road	Good	3525
<i>Streets shown in bold above are State roads</i>					

Sources: MaineDOT Public Road Data (August 2019) & Damariscotta Public Works Dept. Survey of Roads (10/29/2020)

Table 2: Maine Department of Transportation 2022 Maintenance Accomplishments

Quantity	Type	Quantity	Type
2.00	Bridge(s) Washed	2.0	Drainage Structures Repaired
2.60	Ton(s) of Patch Applied	120.00	Linear Feet of Backhoe Ditching
22.50	Shoulder Miles of Mowing	70.00	Linear Feet of Shoulder Rebuilt
563.90	Ton(s) of Hot Mix Paving	1,158.00	Sq. Ft. of Pavement Legend Applied
5.00	Emergency Event Responses	1.00	Underwater Inspection(s) Performed
57.00	Miles of Striping Applied	34.20	Shoulder Miles of Herbicide Applied
1.50	Shoulder Miles of Sweeping	6.80	Mile(s) of Shoulder Prepared for LCP
21.00	Drainage Structures Cleaned	1.00	Drainage Structure Installed/Replaced

Source: MDOT Annual Municipal Transportation Work Plan Report (March 27, 2023)

Table 3: Public Works Suggested Capital Improvement Projects

Roadway	Proposed Project	Fiscal Year Allocation
Back Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend milling and overlay 	Request as major capital project in FY2022
Belvedere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend milling and overlay Shoulder work needed full length of road PWI Replace three culverts PWC 	Request as major capital project in FY22
Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brush cutting needed PWI 	Spring-Summer 2021
Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shim and overlay approx.. 100' from School Street RFP 	Request in FY2022 Capital Budget
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shim and overlay Hillside Lane to School Street RFP 	Request in FY2023 Capital Budget
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern most culvert-major capital project; ENG/RFP Brush cutting PWI 	Request reconstruction of northern section of road as major capital project in FY2022. Request northern culvert in FY2023 Capital Budget
Hodgdon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section east of Pleasant Street: obtain ROW to widen ENG/RFP Shim and overlay rest of road up to previously completed east section RFP 	Possible CDBG funded project ¹ ; currently waiting on G&D to do survey & engineering; construction in FY22
Keene Woods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulder/sidewalk maintenance required PWI Culverts maintenance required PWI Tree trimming required PWC 	Spring-Summer 2021
Lewis Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shim and overlay 	Request in FY2023 Capital Budget
Lessner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend milling and overlay Crack sealing maintenance required Ditching maintenance required PWI Replace 1 culvert PWI 	Request as major capital project in FY2022

APPENDIX J

Table 3 Continued

Midcoast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulder/sidewalk maintenance required PWI 	Spring-Summer 2019
Miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct sidewalk, rebuild road and retaining wall ENG/RFP 	Financing plan in place LCH and Town to pay 50/50 ² . Construction in 2022.
Pine Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ditching maintenance required PWI Replace two cross culverts; replace culvert at Russell Road 	<i>Not provided</i>
Pleasant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shim and overlay 1 to 1 ½" RFP 	Poor condition due to utility cuts. Combine with work on Hodgdon in Possible CDBG funded project ¹ ; request engineering in FY2020; construction in FY2021
Rocky Run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ditching maintenance required PWI 	<i>Not provided</i>
Standpipe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crack sealing maintenance required RFP 	<i>Not provided</i>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culvert: Poor drainage between #'s 42 and 38 	Drainage work at #42 to be completed in '21; Other drainage to be addressed with parking lot project in '22
Westview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crack sealing maintenance required RFP 	<i>Not provided</i>
Vine	<i>Not provided</i>	Drainage improvements between Water and Vine Streets to be completed in Spring 2021
<p>Key: ENG – Engineering Services required for design/cost projections RFP – Select contractors through RFP process PWC – Use contractor from public works services contract agreement PWI – Work to be accomplished by Public Works Staff YEAR – Fiscal Year(s) recommended to be accomplished WP – To be completed by Public Works staff or within Town’s operating budget funds CIP – Major project to be completed as part of five year capital improvement program</p> <p>1. The Town was successful in securing CDBG funding for this work. 2. Update on the Miles project per the Town Manager: ‘Only the portion from Schooner Drive to the Town/Hospital line was improved with increased drainage and sidewalks. The section between Schooner Drive and Bristol Road still needs to be completed. Additional funding will need to be secured to complete the second phase.’</p>		

Source: Damariscotta Public Works Survey of Road & Parking Lot Projects (10/29/2020)

Table 4: Road Design Standards for New Public and Private Roads

Description	Type of Road			
	Arterial	Major Road	Minor Road	Private Road ⁽¹⁾
Minimum Right-of way Width	80'	60'	50'	50'
Minimum Travel Way Width	44'	22'	20'	18'
Sidewalk Width	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minimum Grade	.5%	.5%	.5%	.5%
Maximum Grade	5%	6%	8%	10%
Minimum Centerline Radius	500'	230'	150'	150'
Minimum Tangent between Curves of reverse alignment	200'	100'	50'	N/A
Roadway Crown	¼"/ft	¼"/ft	¼"/ft	¼"/ft
Minimum Angle of Road Intersections(2)	90°	90°	75°	75°
Maximum Grade within 75 ft. of Intersection 2%	2%	2%	2%	N/A
Minimum Curb Radii at Intersections	30'	20'	15'	15'
Minimum ROW Radii at Intersections	20'	10'	10'	10'
Minimum Width of Shoulders (each side)	5'	5'	5'	3'

(1) A private road which will serve fewer than 4 residences shall have a minimum travel way of 12 feet with two-2 foot shoulders and a maximum grade of 12%. A private road which will serve 4-10 residences will have a minimum travel way of 16 feet with two 3-foot shoulders and a maximum road grade of 12%.

(2) Road intersection angles shall be as close to 90° as feasible but no less than the listed angle.

Source: Damariscotta Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 103, Subdivision

Table 5: Damariscotta Bridge Condition

Bridge Name	Location	Year Constructed	Deck Condition Rating	Superstructure & Substructure Condition Rating
Damariscotta - Newcastle Bridge	Route 1B crossing the Damariscotta River	1952	5 – Fair Condition	6 – Satisfactory
Narrows Bridge	Biscay Road crossing Pemaquid Pond	2008	8 – Very Good	8 – Very Good
Glidden Point Bridge	Route 1 crossing the Damariscotta River	1961	6 – Satisfactory	7 – Some Minor Problems
Salt Bay Bridge	Belvedere Road crossing Oyster Creek	2009	No active rating	No active rating

Source: MDOT

Table 6: Damariscotta Sidewalks Data

Damariscotta Sidewalks Data									
Count	Street	Segment		Side	Length (feet)	Type	Width (feet)	Condition	Comments
		From	To						
1	Vine Street	Church Street	End	N	640	Asphalt	3	P	Discontinuous
2	Church Street	Main Street	Elm Street	S	630	Asphalt	4	VG	
3	Church Street	Main Street	Bank Driveway	N	110	Asphalt	4	VG	
4	Church Street	Elm Street	Chapman Street	S	400	Asphalt	5	New	Need crosswalk at Chapman
5	Church Street	Elm Street	Pleasant Street	N	680	Asphalt	5	New	
6	Church Street	Church Street	Cottage Gardens	S	1000	Asphalt-Gravel	2 - 3	VP	Discontinuous
7	Chapman Street	Church Street	2nd Driveway	S	120	Asphalt	5	New	
8	Hodgdon Street	Church Street	Pleasant Street	W	450	Asphalt	3.5.5	F-New	Discontinuous
9	Elm Street	Main Street	Courtyard Street	E	130	Asphalt		P	
10	Elm Street	Theater Street	Church Street	N	950	Asphalt	2.5-5	P-New	Artifacts in Sidewalk
11	Theatre Street	Main Street	Elm Street	E	100	Asphalt	5 - 7		
12	Theatre Street	Main Street	Elm Street	W	90	Asphalt	5		
13	Courtyard Street	Main Street	Elm Street	E	80	Asphalt	3	F	
14	Main Street	Bridge	Courtyard Street	N	230	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
15	Main Street	Courtyard Street	Elm Street	N	250	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
16	Main Street	Elm Street	Theatre Street	N	90	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
17	Main Street	Theater Street	Church Street	N	600	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
18	Main Street	Church Street	Yellofront	N	1200	Asphalt	Varies	New	
19	Main Street	Bridge	Parking Lot Lane	S	190	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
20	Main Street	Parking Lot Lane	Taco Alley	S	180	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
21	Main Street	Taco Alley	Junes Alley	S	80	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
22	Main Street	Junes Alley	Water Street	S	360	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
23	Main Street	Water Street	Bristol Road	S	200	Asphalt	Varies	VG	
24	Water Street	Main Street	Cross Street	E	220	Asphalt	5'	VG	
25	Water Street	Cross Street	22 Water Street	E	840	Asphalt-Gravel	Varies	P	Discontinuous
26	Cross Street	Water Street	Bristol Road	S	230	Asphalt	2 - 3	P	
27	High Street	Bristol Road	22 High Street	S	520	Asphalt	2 - 3	P-VP	
28	Bristol Road	Main Street	Cross Street	E	130	Asphalt	5	VG	
29	Bristol Road	Cross Street	High Street	E	1330	Asphalt	5	2016	
30	Bristol Road	High Street	Miles Street	E	610	Asphalt	5	2016	
31	Pleasant Street	Church Street	Hodgdon Street	W	60	Asphalt	5	New	
Source: Newcastle-Damariscotta Bicycle Pedestrian Plan, April 2015					12700				

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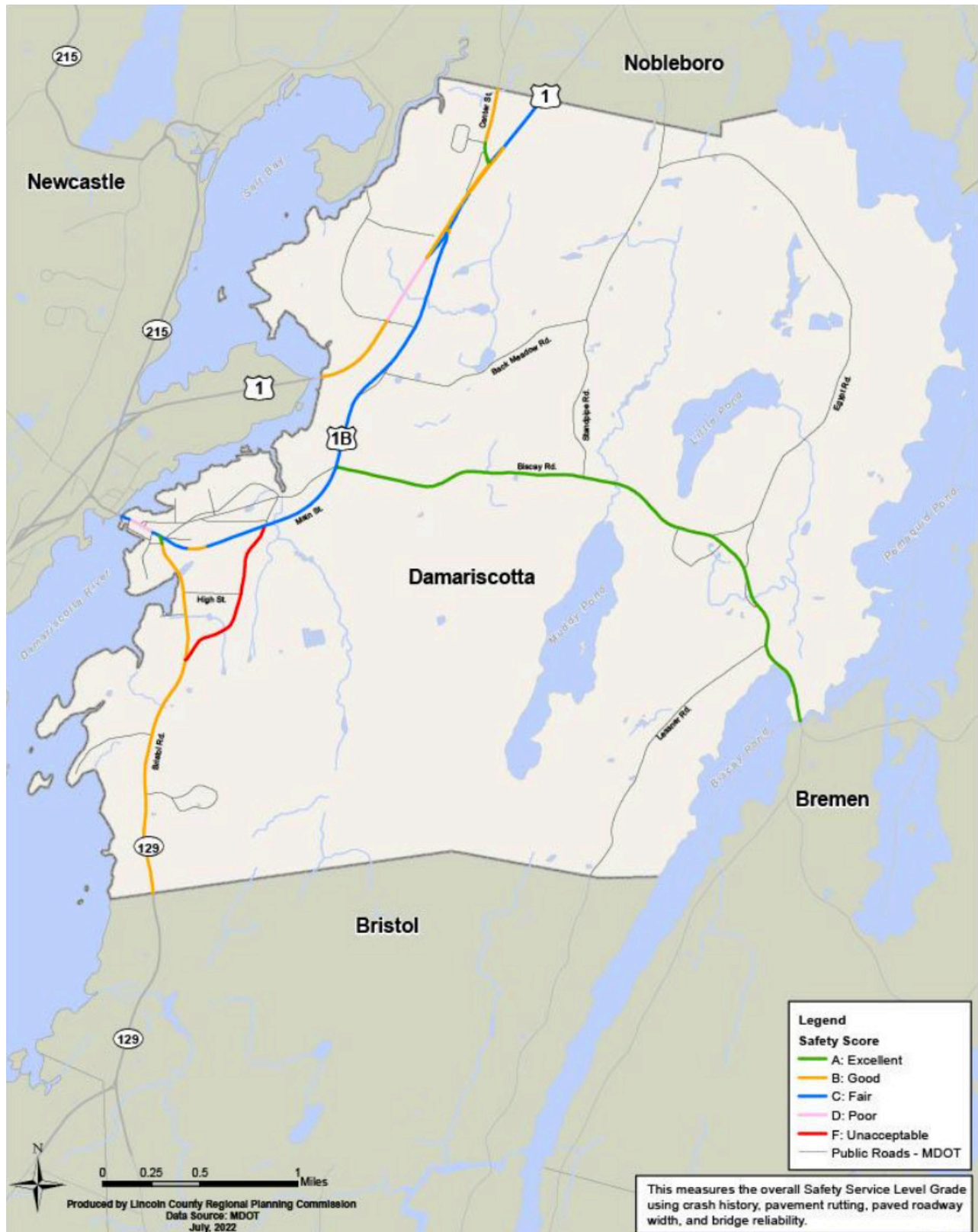
Table 7: Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts

The table below provides the count data for each traffic counter location for the years 2016, 2019, 2021, and 2022. The streets that are bolded in Table 8 have seen an increase in traffic volume when comparing the two most recent years against one another. Alternatively, a number of roadways have seen a reduction in traffic. Specifically, Belvedere Road west of US Route 1 has seen a continual drop in traffic, with 640 daily trips in 2022 versus 1110 daily trips in 2016. (a reduction of 470 trips).

Location	AADT16	AADT19	AADT21	AADT22
BELVEDERE RD W/O US 1	1110	860	700	640
BELVEDERE RD W/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	2040	1650	1470
BISCAY RD E/O STANDPIPE RD	--	3570	--	3360
BISCAY RD E/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	4520	5030	--	4910
BISCAY RD S/O ROCKY RUN RD	--	--	--	2600
CENTER ST N/O KEENE WOODS RD @ TL	1580	1510	--	1530
CHAPMAN ST W/O SCHOOL ST	260	300	480	240
CHURCH ST E/O HODGDON ST (W JCT)	--	1570	--	1050
CHURCH ST NE/O VINE ST	880	1030	--	660
CHURCH ST W/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	1450	1500	--	990
CROSS ST W/O SR 129 (BRISTOL RD)	--	1890	--	1360
EGYPT RD E/O BACK MEADOW RD	--	--	--	480
EGYPT RD E/O BISCAY RD	--	--	--	790
EGYPT RD N/O ROCKY RUN RD	--	--	--	510
ELM ST NE/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	--	--	600
ELM ST W/O CHURCH ST	--	1400	--	1170
HOSPITAL ENT W/O SR 129 (BRISTOL RD)	--	--	--	1250
PARKING LOT LN NW/O WATER ST	--	1380	--	990
POWELL LN W/O SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD)	--	--	--	50
RAMP TO SR129 SW/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	--	--	2060
SCHOOL ST NE/O SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD)	--	--	--	3220
SCHOOL ST SW/O CHURCH ST	--	--	450	270
SCHOOL ST SW/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	4230	4300	4370	4200
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) N/O SCHOOL ST	--	4320	--	--
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O CROSS ST	5890	6060	--	5940
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O OLD COUNTY RD	--	--	--	6630
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	--	--	--	6740
SR 129 (BRISTOL RD) S/O WESTVIEW RD	--	7110	--	6840
SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD) N/O POWELL LN	--	4320	--	4590
SR 129/130 (BRISTOL RD) S/O SCHOOL ST	--	--	--	7230
THEATRE ST (OW) N/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	860	--	--	560
US 1B (NB) N/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	6930	7280	--	6800
US 1B (SB) N/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	6740	7310	--	6640
US 1 @ NOBLEBORO TL	12120	12580	--	11730
US 1 SW/O BELVEDERE RD	9650	9960	9580	9760
US 1 SW/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	8060	8820	8690	7960
US 1B (MAIN ST) @ NEWCASTLE TL @ BR2215	13100	13370	--	--
US 1B (MAIN ST) N/O BISCAY RD	9360	--	--	9440
US 1B (MAIN ST) NE/O SCHOOL ST	12740	12410	12010	--
US 1B (MAIN ST) S/O BISCAY RD	11870	12100	--	--
US 1B (MAIN ST) S/O US 1	6000	6190	--	6230
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O IR1177 (THEATRE)	--	10310	--	10140
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O VINE ST	10960	--	--	7650
US 1B (MAIN ST) SE/O WATER ST	10570	10250	--	10120
US 1B (MAIN ST) SW/OO BELVEDERE RD	--	8080	--	7150
US 1B (MAIN ST) W/O SCHOOL ST	--	--	7690	--
WATER ST S/O US 1B (MAIN ST)	1670	1460	--	1280

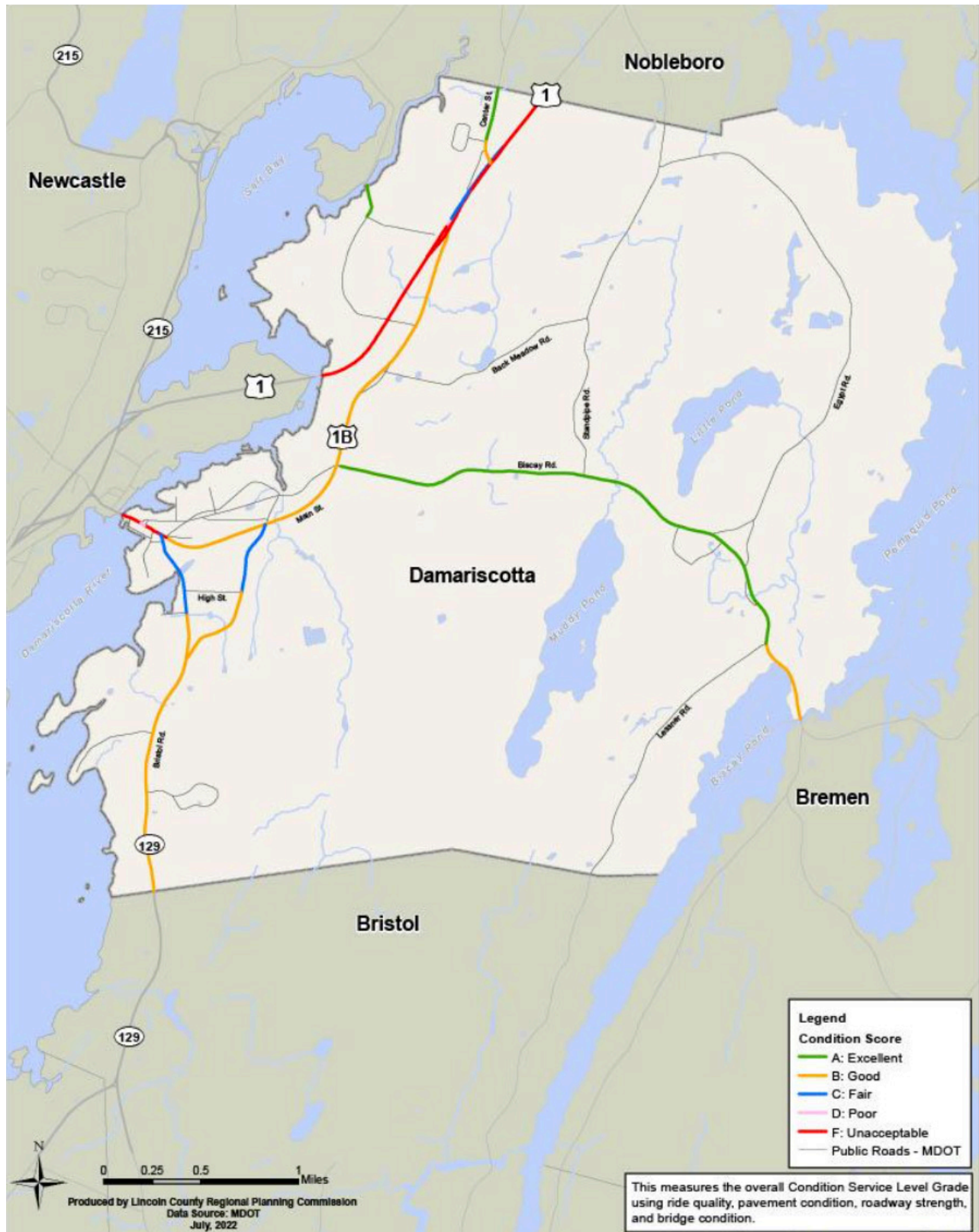
Source: MDOT Annual Daily Average Traffic Count

Map 1: Damariscotta Customer Service Levels – Safety Score



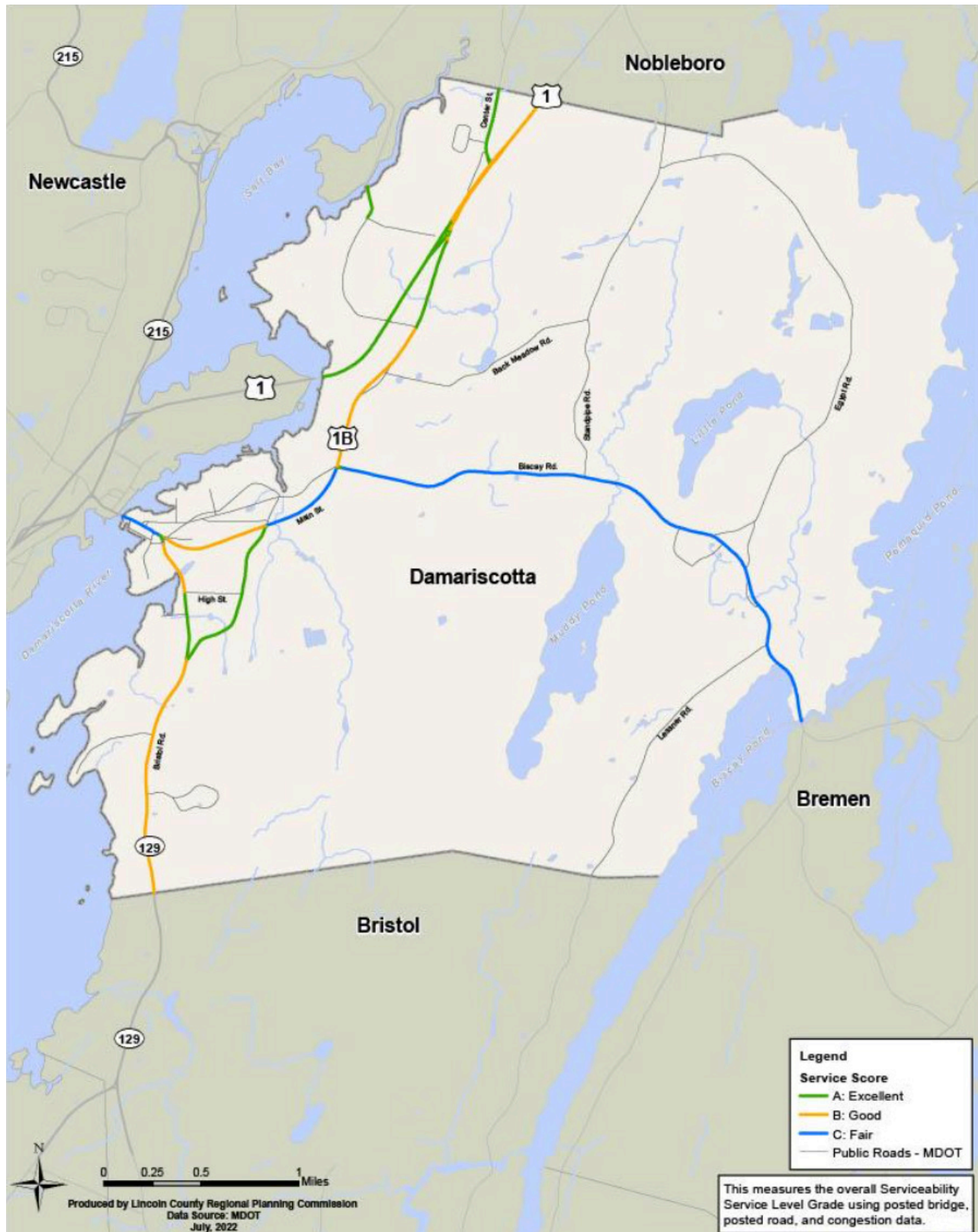
Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Map 2: Damariscotta Customer Service Levels – Condition Score



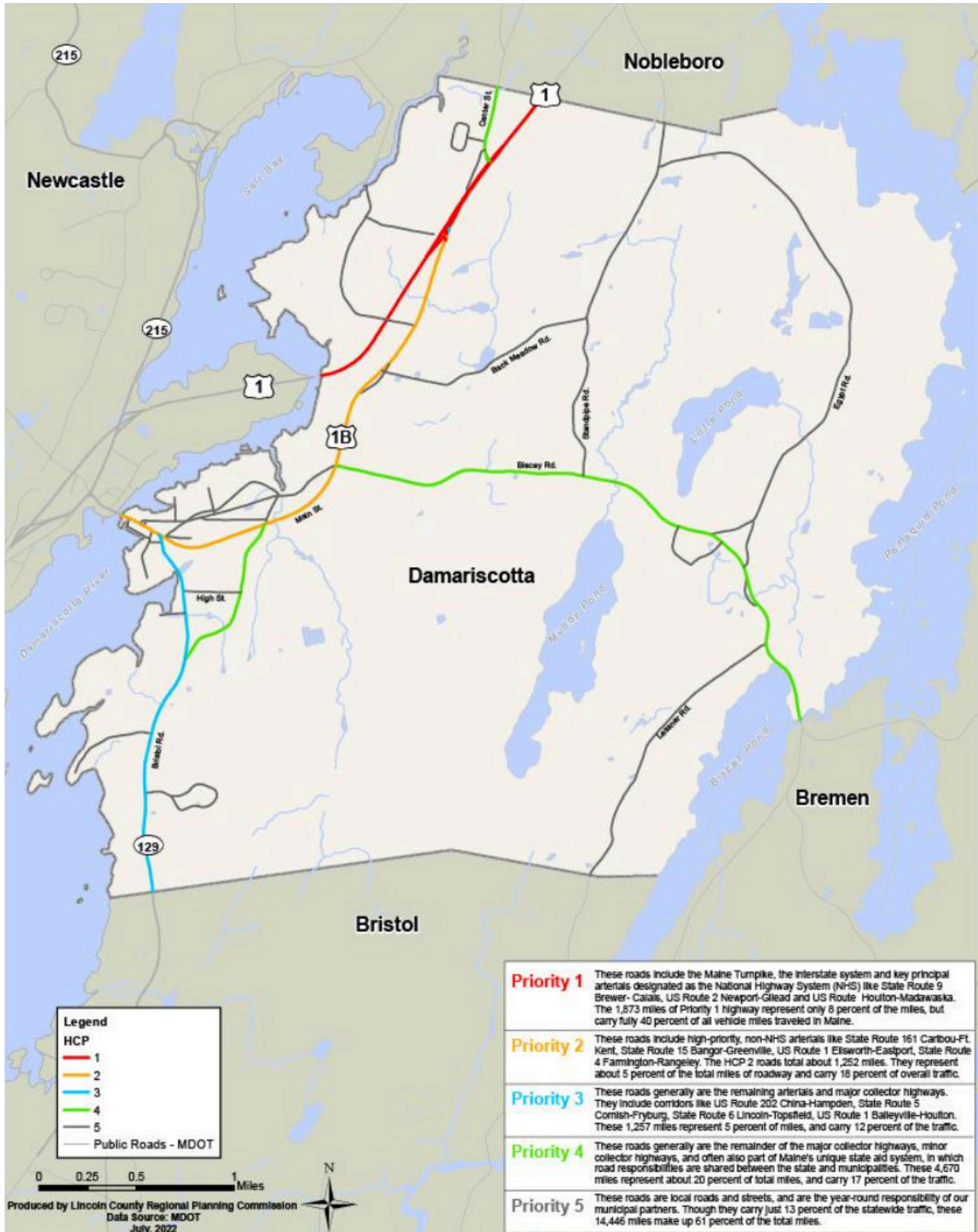
Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Map 3: Damariscotta Customer Service Levels – Service Score



Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Map 3: Damariscotta Highway Corridor Priority (HCP)

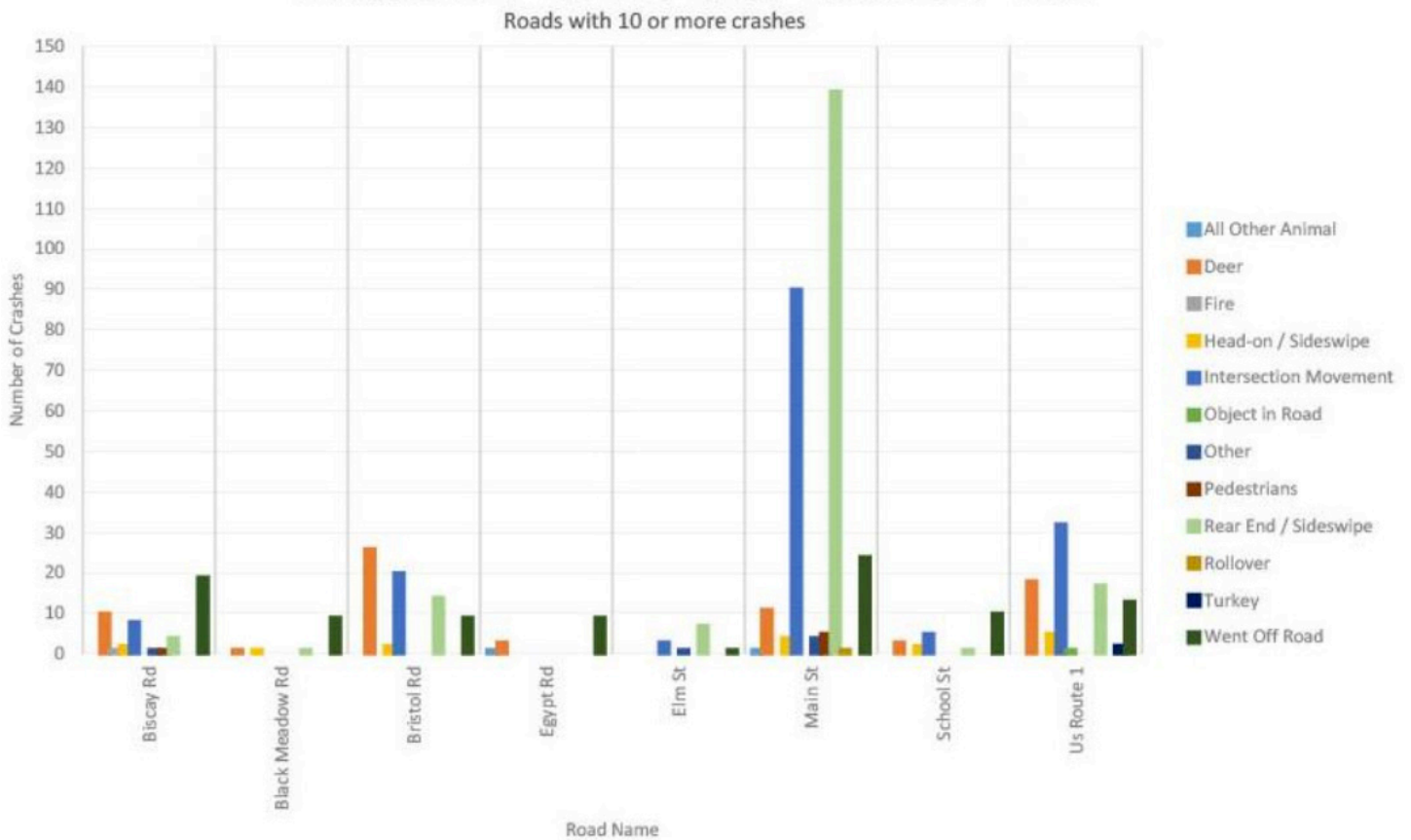


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Accident Occurrences

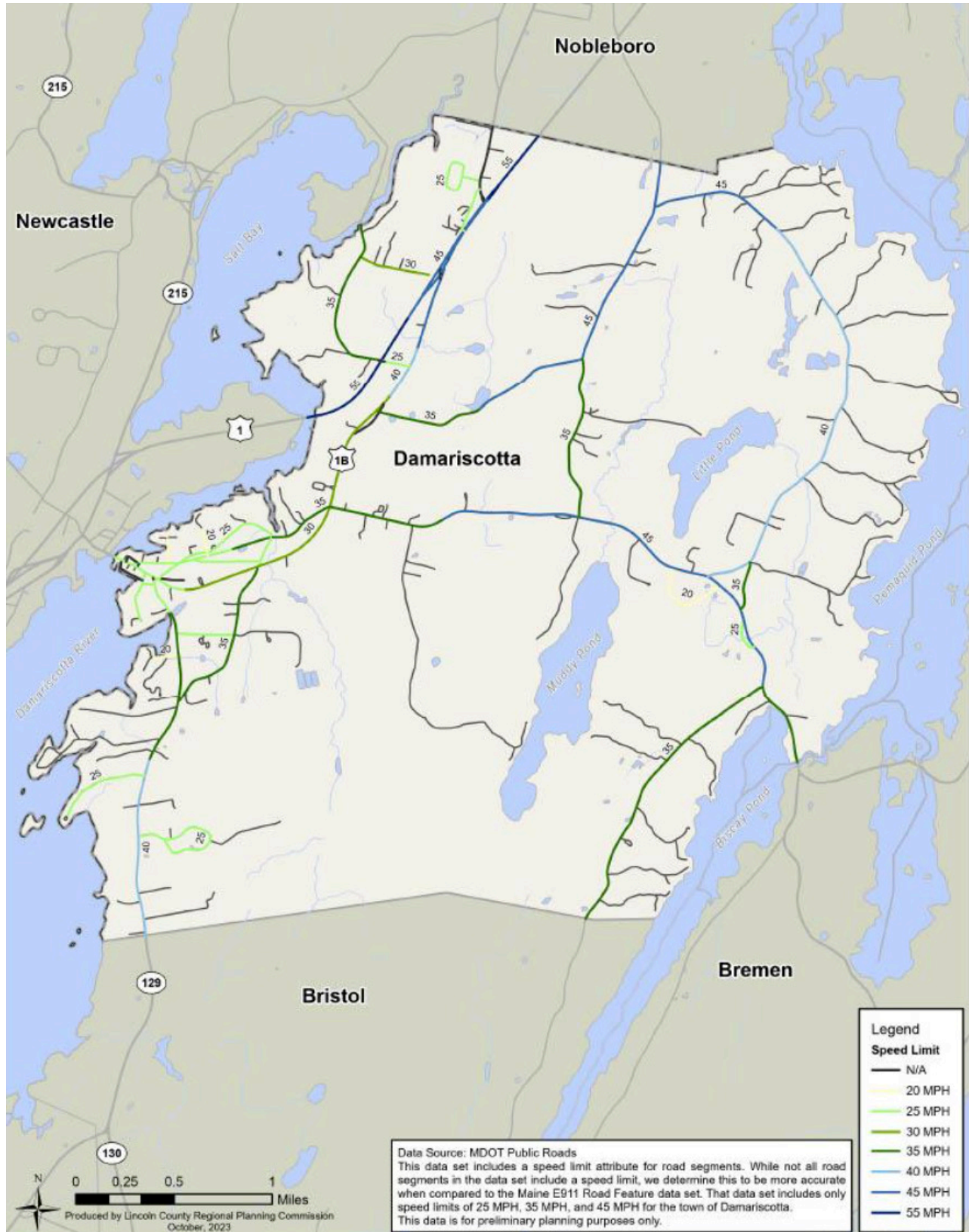
MDOT, as part of the Comprehensive Plan data set provided to Damariscotta, lists the locations and crash type over a 10-year period from 2009 to 2019. Graph 1: Damariscotta 10 Year Crash Data, below, shows the number of crashes and crash type on a sampling of Damariscotta’s roads using the data provided by MDOT. The Chart shows those roads that experienced ten (10) or more crashes over the 10-year timeframe. By far the most accidents were ‘rear-end/sideswipe’ occurring on Main Street.

Graph 1: Damariscotta 10 Year Crash Data (2009 – 2019)



Source: MDOT Crash Data

Map 5: Posted Speed Limits on Damariscotta Roadways

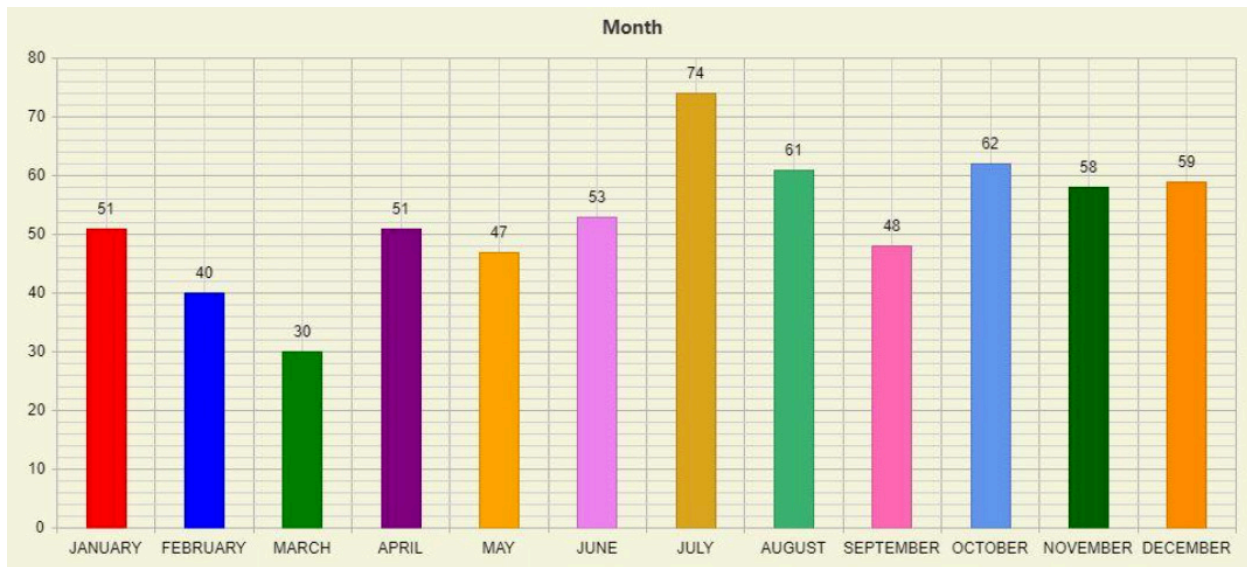


Map Prepared by Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

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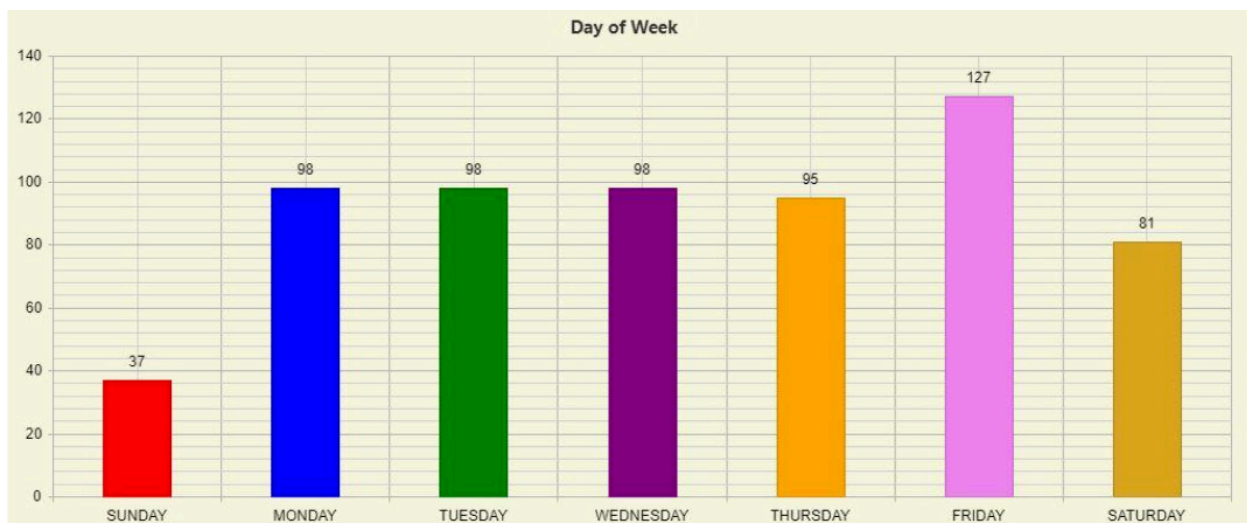
More recent crash data is available on MDOT’s Crash Data Website. From 2012 to 2022 the Town saw 634 crashes, an increase of the total 578 crashes experienced from 2009 to 2019. Additionally, MDOT analyzes when accidents occurred by month (Graph 2, below), day of the week (Graph 3), and time of day (Graph 4). As shown in the Graphs, most accidents occurred during the second half of the year – July through December – with July seeing the most accidents at 71 occurrences. Fridays saw the most accidents, 127, with Monday through Thursday being almost evenly split. Sundays saw the least number of incidents at 37 over a 10-year period. More accidents occurred between 10AM and 5PM than during the evening and overnight hours.

Graph 2: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrences by Month



Source: MDOT Crash Data

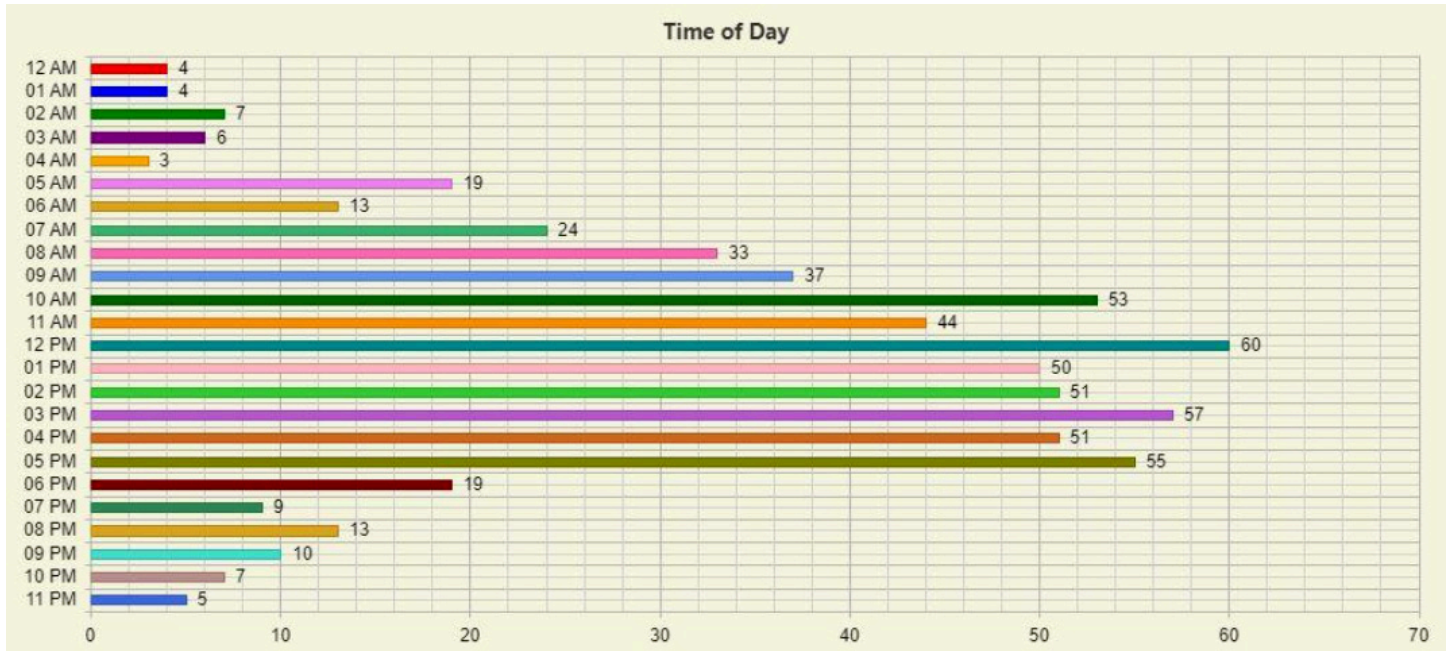
Graph 3: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrences by Day of Week



Source: MDOT Crash Data

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Graph 4: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrence by Time of Day



Source: MDOT Crash Data

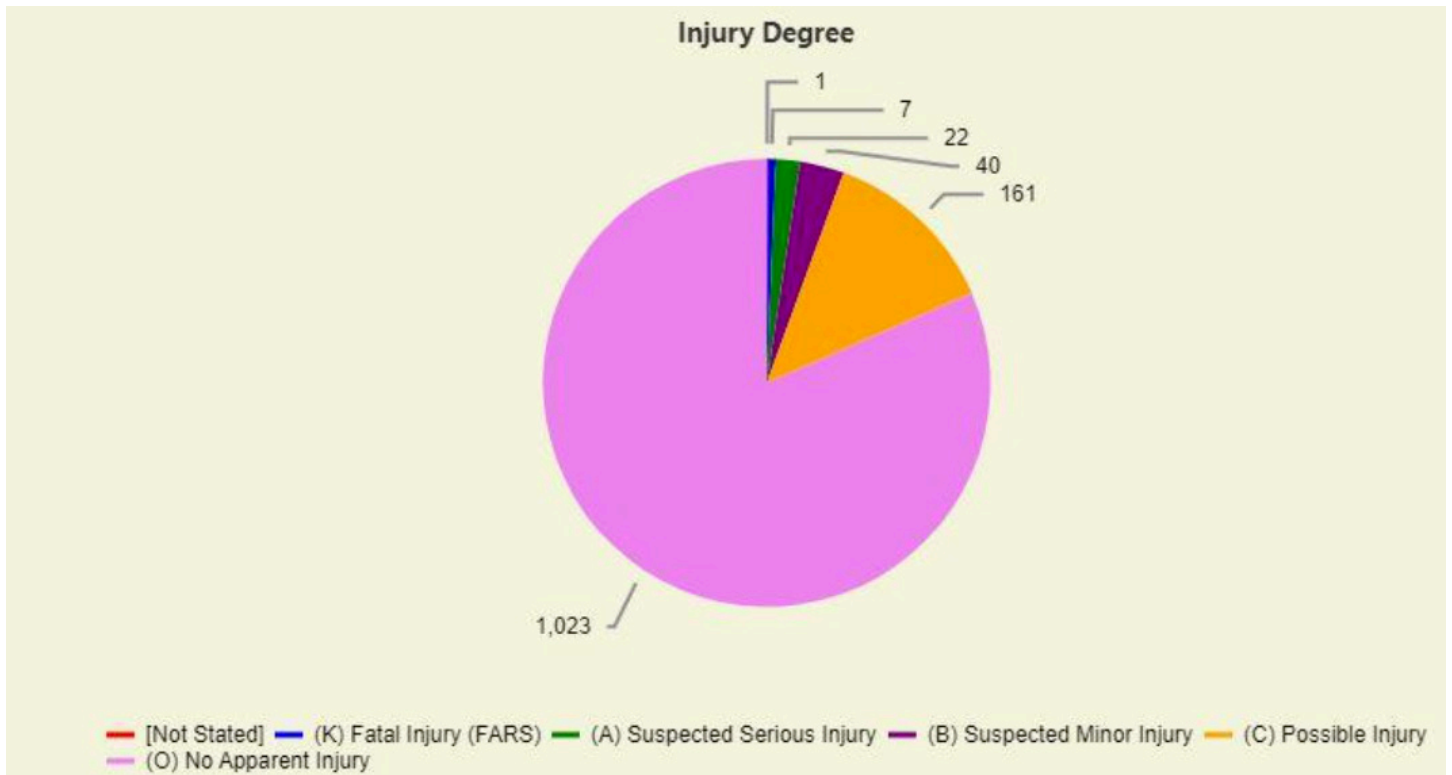
MDOT also evaluates the type of crash and injuries sustained from the crash. Graph 5, shows the accident by type and Graph 6, shows what, if any, injuries occurred.

Graph 5: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Occurrence by Type



Source: MDOT Crash Data

Graph 6: 2012 – 2022 Damariscotta Crash Injuries



Source: MDOT Crash Data; Note: Count includes all individuals involved

Table 8: LUAC Scenic Views List (2019-2020)

Scenic View	Description of view	Nearest access point	Threats to scenic view
Days Cove	View to mud flats and river	Route 129 at Days Cove	None
Salt Bay	View of fields and Salt Bay	Hard clam bed (Salt Bay)	Mid-and far-view building development
View along Belvedere Road 1,000 feet south of Branch Road	Undeveloped farmscape along rural road	Belvedere Road at Branch Road	Residences along road frontage
Biscay Pond	Morning mist on Biscay Pond from the road near the public beach	Biscay Road	Camp development
Paradise Pond	View across Paradise (Muddy) Pond	Shamrock Lane	Camp development
Misery Gulch	Looking across Misery Gulch to back of parking lot. The wreck of The Candage shows at low tide.	Schooner Landing parking lot	Climate change
Back view of Damariscotta	View of town from The River Tripper cruise	Damariscotta River	Climate change, development
DARA Pond	Looking across DARA Pond, a historic spot for ice skating	Church Street	Further development in the area
Damariscotta River	Tombolo landform, horseshoe crab spawning ground	Huston Landing Preserve	Climate change
Hilltop Cemetery	Historic Cemetery and trees	Hodgdon Street	None
River and Lewis Point	Looking up the river toward Lewis Point	Parking lot behind Weatherbird building	Further condo development
Whaleback Midden	Damariscotta River	Johnny Orr Rapids looking south	None
Cemetery and Old Oaks	Historic view of cemetery and old oak trees	Belvedere Road south of Branch Road	Development, farm buildings
Castner Creek	Castner Creek looking toward the Damariscotta River	Church Street	Development, storm surge, run-off
Castner Creek	Castner Creek looking toward upper Main Street	Church Street	Development, storm surge, run-off
Wetland area	Behind/adjacent to Main Street Grocery	Between Main Street and Chapman Street	Run-off
View up and down the bridge			

Table 9: Damariscotta Dimensional Standards Table (as of 2/15/2023)

Dimensional Standard ⁸	Key: DU = Dwelling Unit					
	District ⁹					
	GR	C1 ^{7,15}	C2 ^{7,14}	R	WC	M
Minimum land area, Sewered	10,000 sf per first principal building or DU, 6,000 sf thereafter	10,000 sf	10,000 sf per first principal building or DU, 6,000 sf thereafter	10,000 sf per first principal building or DU, 6,000 sf thereafter	See note 13	10,000 sf per principal building
Minimum land area, Non-sewered	40,000 sf per DU	N/A	40,000 sf per principal building or DU	80,000 sf per principal building or DU	See note 13	40,000 sf per principal building
Front Setback	20 feet ¹	See note 3.	20 feet ^{1, 12}	20 feet ¹²	See note 12	20 feet
Side Setbacks	15 feet	See note 4,5,6	15 feet ^{9, 12}	15 feet ¹²	See note 12	0 feet
Rear Setback	15 feet	See note 4,5,6	15 feet ^{9, 12}	15 feet ¹²	See note 12	0 feet
Minimum street frontage, Sewered	75 feet	None	100 feet	200 feet	See note 13	200 feet
Minimum street frontage, Non-sewered	100 feet	N/A	100 feet	200 feet	See note 13	200 feet
Maximum building height	35 feet	40 feet	40 feet ¹⁰	35 feet ^{10, 11}	See note 10	40 feet ¹⁰

Notes:

- 1 Or the average of existing setbacks on abutting properties
- 2 Or as required by the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance
- 3 For those lots with existing buildings, front yard setbacks shall be the same or greater than the setback of existing buildings on that lot. If a structure is removed as part of the project, the location of that structure may be considered as an existing building provided the permit for new construction remains valid. For those lots with no existing buildings, the setback shall be the average setback of buildings on abutting properties.
- 4 If walls adjacent to side lot lines on buildings on both the applicants and adjacent property are of noncombustible construction as defined in this ordinance, the setback from the property lines may be reduced to 0 feet.
- 5 If the conditions stated in note 4 are not met, then a minimum 10-foot buffer strip to the side or rear lot lines or a 20-foot separation distance to adjacent buildings shall be maintained.
- 6 Yards abutting other districts shall be at least 15 feet deep and have a landscaped buffer strip.
- 7 No single retail store whether located in a single building, a combination of buildings, single tenant space, and/or combination of tenant spaces shall exceed 35,000 gross square feet of floor area in the aggregate. This size restriction shall apply to new retail stores and expansion of existing retail stores, effective November 1, 2005.
- 8 Unless modified by the requirements of § 101.6.
- 9 Except abutting the Municipal District they shall be 0 feet
- 10 Maximum 190 feet for wireless communications facilities
- 11 Water supply standpipes for water supply utilities may be 100 feet above the ground

12 A new or expanded wireless telecommunications facility must comply with the setback requirements for the zoning district in which it is located, or be set back one hundred five percent (105%) of its height from all property lines, whichever is greater. The setback may be satisfied by including the areas outside the property boundaries if secured by an easement. The following exemptions apply: i. The setback may be reduced by the Planning Board upon a showing by the applicant that the facility is designed to collapse in a manner that will not harm other property. ii. An antenna is exempt from the setback requirement if it extends no more than five (5) feet horizontally from the edge of the structure to which it is attached, and it does not encroach upon an abutting property.

13 The standards of the underlying district (C2 or Rural) will apply.

14 See § 101.7 for additional performance standards for adult entertainment establishments

15 The parking standards of the Site Plan Review Ordinance as amended for this district shall apply.