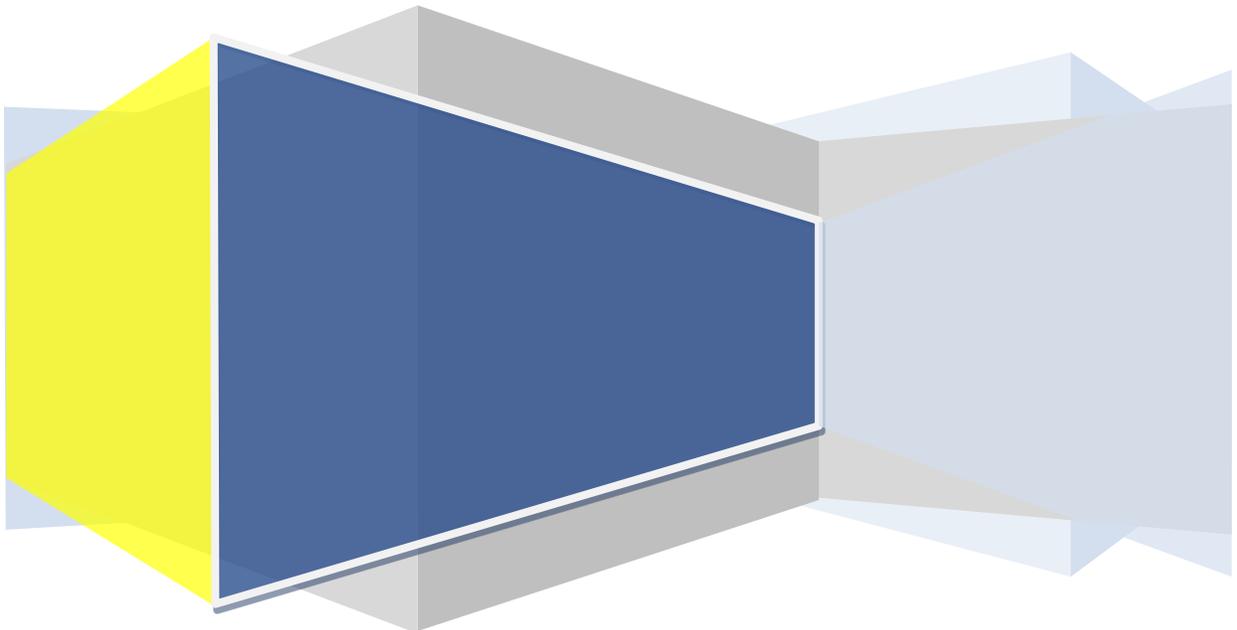


# Town of Winthrop

## 2024 Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by Kennebec Valley Council of Governments



This Comprehensive Plan was developed by the Winthrop Comprehensive Plan Committee, made up of the following members:

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The Committee was assisted by Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) in compiling and creating the document.

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## **The Comprehensive Plan and Winthrop's Future**

### **Why create a Comprehensive Plan?**

At their most basic level, Comprehensive Plans are completed by communities to help them prepare for the future. A comprehensive review of a community and its current statistical data, issues, and policies promotes discussion among neighbors, and can help communities avoid problems that sometimes occur when community decisions are made in a piecemeal fashion.

A Comprehensive Plan is a guide to a town's future. It is not an ordinance or a set of rules and regulations, but a guide for town government to use to ensure it is moving in a path determined by the public and municipal officials. It provides a "snapshot in time" of the town, a roadmap with a direction the town wants to take over the next 10 years, and guidance on how to proceed.

Good planning makes good communities. A good Comprehensive Plan should enable a community such as Winthrop to:

- Encourage thoughtful and orderly growth and development in appropriate areas.
- Protect the town's rural character and enhance its vibrant village center.
- Strive to reduce the cost of public services by directing growth to areas that are already developed.
- Preserve a healthy landscape and a walkable community.
- Promote and encourage appropriate economic development.
- Identify future housing needs and how to best address these needs.
- Balance economic prosperity with quality of life.
- Develop a discussion among neighbors.
- Develop a basis for sound decisions in town management.

In summary, a Comprehensive Plan encourages orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community, while protecting the town's rural character and natural resources. It ensures efficient use of public services and works toward preventing development sprawl.

### **The Importance of Community Involvement**

Any good Comprehensive Plan requires a bold planning process that engages the public in a meaningful way to garner input. Without a strong public participation component, there is a risk of developing a plan that lacks broad community support, or a plan that elicits little debate, resulting in a plan that is so cautious it is essentially ineffective.

Communities should always work toward a significant level of public participation and outreach. Many communities, however, struggle with sustaining public interest over the time it takes to develop the plan. Despite efforts to be inclusionary, Comprehensive Plan committees often encounter poorly attended meetings and decreased interest of

committee members. Often, it is not until the public votes on the plan that a large segment of the town's residents voices their views in support of – or in opposition to – the document.

No simple formula exists for increasing the level of public participation in plan updates. Often, encouraging involvement and engaging citizens gets more challenging as time goes by. The public participation process should include creativity, persistence, and a strategic focus to combat declining public interest.

Strong public participation is a must to create “buy-in” to the plan. People will rarely embrace change unless they think there is a problem in the first place. Committees may be stymied in their efforts to address important local and state goals unless a strong case is made for why these goals are pertinent to the community – and important for the town to pursue. Public “buy-in” is necessary before the community can focus on remedying problems with a sense of common purpose.

A sense of public ownership for goals and planning concepts must be fostered to discredit the belief that the plan is a response only to state requirements. Lack of real support for the plan can lead to poor implementation, blunting its effectiveness. Ideally, there should be a long-term process of building awareness of planning and how it addresses specific goals that ultimately benefit the community.

Creating public ownership of the plan and its related goals, policies and strategies is essential in its effectiveness. A community should strive to avoid the plan simply becoming a response to state requirements rather than to the community's own needs.

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### Note about Data:

**Even at the time of completion there is still limited data available from the full 2020 Census; therefore, this plan uses the most up to date information at the time of writing.**

## I. THE PLANNING PROCESS

### **History of the Comprehensive Plan**

Maine enacted the Growth Management Act in 1988, which specifies the format and goals for local comprehensive planning. Subsequent revisions to the Act require local Comprehensive Plans to undergo a new State review for consistency every 12 years, incorporating new data and findings into the planning process, as well as designating land areas earmarked for future growth and locations to be maintained as rural.

While comprehensive planning is not a state mandate, towns that adopt this guiding document are provided a level of legal protection and qualify for state-based grants to improve growth-related public facilities. Requirements of the Comprehensive Plan include goals and guidelines identified by the State that encourage a thoughtful planning approach for the community's future and support any necessary land use regulations.

Winthrop has enjoyed the benefits of comprehensive planning for decades. This document is an update to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, which was an update to a plan written in 1996. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan became obsolete in both real terms and the eyes of the State as of 2022, resulting in the town beginning the process of a Comprehensive Plan update using the new State guidelines.

### **The Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Winthrop's Town Council appointed the six-member Comprehensive Plan Committee in 2022. The committee was assisted by the Town Manager and a planning consultant from the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG).

Since the Comprehensive Plan sets future direction for the local government, the Comprehensive Plan Committee collaborated with town administration, leading to a focused approach to the plan update, narrowing the priorities.

In addition to town administration, the Comprehensive Plan Committee solicited input throughout the planning process from Winthrop's local committees, boards, commissions, other organizations, town staff, and individuals in constituencies such as real estate and business, and individuals with unique knowledge of the community. Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings were held regularly at the Town Office, and generally attracted a half-dozen to a dozen members of the public.

### **Community Involvement**

The first step in the comprehensive planning process was to reach out to the community seeking input and gathering information on the priorities of Winthrop's residents. Short questionnaires were made available at locations around town such as the Town Office, the America Legion Hall, the Bailey Library, the Winthrop Maine History Center, and other community groups such as the Rotary Club. Additionally, the questionnaires were

available on the town's website and in the local newspaper, the Community Advertiser. An email account was established so that responses to the questionnaire could be emailed as well as dropped off at any of the above locations.

Several public sessions were held in 2022, and starting in 2023, monthly public meetings were held to gather more ideas, suggestions, concerns and general feedback and input from Winthrop residents. Attendees were asked to identify big issues in town and suggest some solutions and priorities. Ideas and concerns ranged from downtown development and renewal to concerns about public recreational areas and the need for waterfront improvements. Housing, including diversity of housing choices and affordability, were also featured prominently. Other issues raised focused on utilizing natural resources to bolster recreational development, improving public communications, and maintaining a high-quality education.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee also sought specific input from the town's business community. A second questionnaire was crafted, unique to retailers, entertainment and commercial entities, and service providers. Winthrop has well over 120 such businesses. Keeping to those brick-and-mortar businesses along Main Street and on Old Western Avenue (Route 133), over 60 questionnaires were hand-delivered, and conversations were had with all those business owners/proprietors who were available at the time.

The vitality of Winthrop was perhaps the key concern for all who have contributed via questionnaire responses, email, and in public meeting attendance. Attracting young families to town, improving public access to lakes, resuscitating and improving the downtown commercial district, adding more entertainment and dining opportunities, job creation, more sustainable development, and achieving a balance between development and open space all factored into the big picture of a thriving town.

Four main priorities were established as key areas of focus for the future of Winthrop: the revitalization and economic development of the downtown district, an increase in affordable and available housing, town recreational facilities and the planned Norcross Point renovations, and municipal staffing in both the Town's administrative offices and in the public school system. Other priorities have surfaced, as well, including general communication through and around the community.

As the development of the plan update progressed, the Comprehensive Plan Committee used the town's website to disseminate information to the public, such as posting meeting minutes, reports, and posting recommendations. Additionally, the most popular vehicle for town announcements, the Advertiser, was used throughout the process.

Finally, once a chapter was considered to be in its final stages of draft, it was made available on the Town's website, posted on the Town's Facebook page, and often announced in the Advertiser to solicit public input and feedback. This process was repeated with the goals, policies, and strategies for each chapter.

Any of the suggestions and feedback garnered from the documents was considered by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, the Town Manager, and the consulting KVCOG planner. Whenever possible and appropriate, feedback was incorporated into the document.

Winthrop's vision statement was a collaboration between the Comprehensive Plan Committee, volunteers, and town staff. A vision statement that is straightforward and succinct was the result:

***Winthrop is a vibrant, inviting town with a rich history and diverse population which strives to support its local businesses, schools, housing and recreation while preserving its culture, natural resources and history – a wonderful place to live, work and play.***

## **Implementation**

Nearly every chapter of this updated plan resulted in policies and strategies along with specific recommendations for who should implement them and in what timeframe. The key to the plan's success is how well the recommendations can be put into action. This requires an implementation plan and a standard by which to measure results.

The responsibility for implementation almost always falls on the leadership of the town and is often delegated to appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and town staff. Throughout the process of this update, it has been frequently discussed that few of the policies and strategies in Winthrop's previous 2010 Comprehensive Plan were pursued and implemented. This is an area of concern the current administration and numerous volunteers are striving to amend.

Though assembled by the Comprehensive Plan Committee in coordination with KVCOG and town staff, this plan contains ideas and contributions from elected officials, committees, outside organizations, individual residents, and others. These constituents all have one thing in common: They are stakeholders in the future of Winthrop. It is their civic duty to see that the recommendations of the plan are carried forward.

While the plan's implementation is assigned to individual members of the town staff, and to boards, committees and organizations, a mechanism to monitor progress and resolve impediments is necessary. This plan recommends the following implementation and evaluation strategies:

- The Town Council should establish a standing Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to evaluate implementation of the plan's recommendations and report annually to the Town Council. Doing so would ensure that town staff, committees and elected officials are held accountable for their designated roles in implementing the plan. The Council will appoint the committee, which will consist of seven resident volunteers, who will meet monthly to consult with town staff, committee members and others responsible for implementation.

- During committee meetings, progress will be reviewed and impediments to carrying out the recommendations identified. This process can easily be managed with a spreadsheet that includes each chapter's recommendations, noting whether implementation has begun, whether it is in progress (and to what degree) or has been completed.
- Each January, the Implementation Committee will issue a written report to be presented to the Town Council, reporting its evaluation of progress made in realizing the plan, its recommendations for foci for the coming year, and suggested changes to strategies based on obstacles encountered. The committee's findings will be published in the town's annual report, posted on the committee's page on the town website, and otherwise communicated to the public via as many channels as possible.
- Because the Town Council is the body ultimately responsible for the implementation of the plan, the Council will establish an annual review workshop so findings can coincide with delivery of the annual report and budget development, allowing for needs to be accounted for in the coming year's budget. The workshop will review activities over the prior year and determine priorities for activities in the upcoming year. The workshop may also be the source for recommendations for informally updating or amending the Comprehensive Plan.
- In December each year, outgoing Town Council members will be invited to that month's meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to discuss progress on the plan and the councilors' thoughts. When the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee meets with the Council in January, the committee will engage in a review question-and-answer session with the new Council; this review would incorporate input provided by outgoing Town Council members.

This process should provide adequate oversight and feedback to ensure this plan is not ignored or forgotten. The process should also indicate when or if the plan needs revision, new timeline details or is nearing completion and will require updating. The next scheduled update to this plan will begin in 2034.

**Town of Winthrop's Vision Statement:**

***Winthrop is a vibrant, inviting town with a rich history and diverse population which strives to support its local businesses, schools, housing and recreation while preserving its culture, natural resources and history – a wonderful place to live, work and play.***

## II. COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

One:	Historic and Archaeological Resources
Two:	Community Profile
Three:	Local Economy
Four:	Housing Profile
Five:	Public Facilities, Services and Fiscal Capacity
Six:	Transportation
Seven:	Recreation and Culture
Eight:	Agriculture and Forestry
Nine:	Natural Resources
Ten:	Existing Land Use

**All statistical data presented in this plan must be viewed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed many aspects of daily life. At this time, it is not possible to predict the long-term impacts and implications of the virus on the town, but by planning for a range of possibilities, the town can be well prepared. The statistics and data presented in this plan are based primarily on information from early in 2020, and as such will not reflect the sudden, and in some cases, drastic changes brought on by COVID-19; however, this data should be used as a baseline for Winthrop.**

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER ONE: HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### **Historical Overview:**

Within Winthrop's borders, there are a dozen lakes and ponds with as many streams of varying size extending from and in some cases connecting these waterbodies. Early settlers found this area ideal for permanent and temporary living sites and the development of industries, as the waterways provided convenient transportation and power. According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), all the shoreline surrounding Winthrop's lakes has archeological potential.

The first European settlement in Winthrop is recorded as being founded in 1765, with the first water-powered industry (a sawmill) built at the site of the current village. Winthrop was originally known as Scots Town and Pond(s) Town. Upon incorporation in 1771, the name "Winthrop" was selected by the Kennebec Proprietors or the General Court in honor of a former Massachusetts governor. Readfield split off from Winthrop in 1791, and Manchester did the same in 1850.

Originally, Winthrop's industrial base was fed by waterpower and included a cotton mill, grist mill, cheese factory, floor coverings, leather products, and more. Mercantile businesses grew up around the factories, forming Winthrop Village. Winthrop's other villages, East Winthrop and Winthrop Center, grew around the establishment of churches. U.S. Route 202, connecting Augusta to Lewiston, drew additional commercial attention, particularly after it was relocated to bypass the downtown area.

Winthrop's historic settlement pattern is still evident today. Waterpower fueled the development of Winthrop village. The rural areas were dominated by large farms, and the lakeshores by seasonal settlement.

### **Protecting Winthrop's Historical Resources:**

Winthrop recognizes the value of local history, specifically that the connection to the past explains and defines Winthrop's citizens and culture. This connection need not be limited to the protection of historic buildings. The town has identified a greater need in protecting artifacts and documents that are currently stored in less-than-ideal conditions in locations around town.

Beginning around 2010, the Winthrop Maine Historic Society (WMHS) re-established itself. Today, the WMHS Board of Directors meets monthly, excluding the month of December. There are currently slightly more than 200 active Society members, with 12 Board members. The Society is an active entity in the community, with monthly fundraising efforts such as the spring plant sale and the December cookie walk. The Society has also hosted several historic walking tours of the town as well as cemetery

tours, with future plans to expand these to all the local cemetery sites in Winthrop -- Main Street, East Winthrop, Metcalf Road and Glenside on Turkey Lane. Additionally, the WMHS holds a monthly lecture series nine months out of the year on topics related to Winthrop's history.

In 2021, the WMHS purchased the former Key Bank building, located at 107 Main Street, for the storage and display of the town's historical artifacts. In 2022, the Society was approved as an official repository for the town's records by the Maine State Museum Board. In the summer of 2021, after renovations and ADA upgrades, the building was opened to the public as the new Winthrop History and Heritage Center (the Center).

Not only can displays of historic artifacts be found at the Center, but it also provides multiple storage areas, a gift shop, and accommodations for meetings, speakers series gatherings, as well as tourists and visitors. There is also a collection area in the basement and a work area for inventorying and cataloging efforts.

Numerous non-inventoried historical documents and materials have been donated to the town and are stored in trunks, cabinets, vaults, safes and filing cabinets at various municipal locations in Winthrop. In October 2022, the Society was approved for a repository for the town records through the Maine State Museum Board to accommodate these items. The WMHS is working with town administration and Town Council to move forward with documenting, digitizing, and organizing these valuable materials and documents, including historical documents currently stored in the town offices. Volunteers are available to inventory and catalogue these materials and documents; however, this will be an ongoing project, expected to take five to 10 years.

A top priority in this project is locating the original town charter, signed by John Hancock. As the WMHS gathers and reclaims numerous historical documents and begins to inventory and catalog them in the Center, it is their hope that the charter will be recovered.

### **Maine Historic Preservation Commission Data:**

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), there are three types of historic and archaeological resources that should be considered in comprehensive planning. They are:

- Prehistoric Archaeological (Native American, before European arrival)
- Historic Archaeological (mostly European-American, after written historic records)
- Historic Buildings/Structures/Objects (buildings and other above-ground structures and objects)

Archaeological resources are those found underground and are locations where there have been prior signs for the existence of human beings including structures, artifacts, terrain features, graphics or remains of plants and animals associated with human habitation. Prehistoric archaeological resources are those associated with Native

Americans and generally date prior to the 1600s. Historic archaeological resources are those associated with the earliest European settlers.

### **Prehistoric Archaeological Sites:**

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, no professional archaeological surveys have been done in Winthrop, as of September 2022. The non-professional-level surveys conducted identified three sites known as #37.11, 37.12, and 37.1. Site 37.11, the John Lund site on Cobbosseecontee Lake, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Of the other two known prehistoric archaeological sites, one is on the Lower Narrows Pond and the other is on Ladies Delight Island in Cobbosseecontee Lake and is privately owned. The site on Ladies Delight Island has occupation evidence dating back at least 7,000 years.

According to the MHPC, most prehistoric archaeological resources, particularly habitation/workshop sites, are located adjacent to canoe-navigable water bodies. For this reason, MHPC stated that all the lake shoreline in Winthrop needs professional archaeological survey in advance of development. They have also identified a need for professional surveys, inventory, and analysis of these locations.

### **Historic Archaeological Sites:**

As of October 2022, no Historic Archeological Sites have been identified. To date, no professional historic archaeological surveys have been conducted in Winthrop. The MHPC suggests a future archaeological survey be conducted and focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Winthrop's Historic Buildings/Structures/Objects:**

The traditional, recognized standard for what makes a historic or archaeological resource worthy of preservation is normally eligibility for, or listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register, administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of Interior, is a listing of those buildings, districts, structures, objects, and sites deemed worthy of preservation for their historic, cultural, or archaeological significance. The National Register is intended to accommodate buildings and sites of national, state, and local significance.

One benefit of a National Register listing is that certain buildings may qualify for a 20-percent investment tax credit. To qualify, the building must be income-producing, depreciable, and a "certified" historic structure. To obtain this certification, the historic or archeological resource must meet criteria mandated by The National Register Criteria for Evaluation, by the National Parks Service. Additionally, the National Parks Service developed criteria for the recognition of nationally significant properties, which are designated National Historic Landmarks and prehistoric and historic units of the National

Park System. Both sets of criteria were developed to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, which are uniform, national standards for preservation activities.



Structures on the National Register are also provided a limited amount of protection from alterations or demolition where federal funding is utilized. Winthrop has four properties currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. They are:

- ✓ Cobbossee Lighthouse on Ladies Delight Island
- ✓ Moses Bailey House on Route 135 in Winthrop Center
- ✓ Charles M. Bailey Library on Bowdoin Street
- ✓ Winthrop Mills Company, 149-151 Main Street

All four of Winthrop's buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are functionally used, in good condition and maintained by their present owners.

*Photo Above: Cobbossee Lighthouse on Ladies Delight Island*



*Photo: The Charles M. Bailey Library*

The Charles M. Bailey Public Library is not only on the National Register of Historic Sites, but also a critical and vital resource for Winthrop's residents. The town has an amazingly active community resource in its library that is enjoyed by residents of all ages. It is a beautiful historic site, with an addition to create the adult wing, and other tasteful renovations. The children's wing is like no other, from the playroom to the computer resources -- it is unparalleled. The activities and events for children and adults alike are plentiful. The access to both online and library resources provided by the Charles M. Bailey Public Library is beyond comparison to any other library. Continuing to support this valued and amazing resource through public funding is just so important to Winthrop.

### **Properties Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places:**

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission also notes buildings or sites eligible for listing. These include the old Winthrop Town Hall (now the police department), the Civil War Memorial next to the old Town Hall, a commercial and residential building at 134 Main Street, the Winthrop United Methodist Church, and a residential structure at 67 Main Street.

The former Winthrop Town Hall was built in 1855-56, originally as a combination town office and high school. It was renovated beginning in 2008 to house the police department, who moved in in June 2009.

Several of the original architectural elements of the former Masonic Hall (torn down to accommodate the Bailey Library addition) were salvaged and several are housed at the Winthrop History and Heritage Center. The Morrill House has also been mentioned as worthy of protection.

There are other sites and buildings throughout town whose eligibility for listing has yet to be determined, and other historical buildings are scattered throughout town. Further, there are other non-eligible properties that are still of historical note, mostly along Main Street and Western Avenue. The *Historic and Archeological Resources Map* shows the buildings and their locations.

### **Cemeteries:**

Cemeteries are a critical link to our heritage. The town has an obligation to protect and maintain some cemeteries, while others are private or family cemeteries. The following is a list of known cemeteries in Winthrop, which can also be seen on the *Historic and Archeological Resources Map*:

East Winthrop Cemetery  
Glenside Cemetery  
Lakeview Cemetery

Metcalf Cemetery  
Maple Cemetery

### **Threats to Local Historic/Archeological/Cultural Resources:**

Nearly all the residential historic buildings in Winthrop are privately owned. None of the historic buildings are in a traditional “historic district,” although most of the buildings are in the village area of town.

The primary threat to most of these buildings is the desire of their owners, present and future, to alter them in ways that destroy their architectural integrity and character. The buildings’ survival in their present form will likely depend largely on the willingness of the individual owners to conserve the historic heritage, of which these buildings are an irreplaceable part.

Unfortunately, some historic resources in town have fallen into disrepair over the years. The town is working to address this in several ways. The Winthrop Maine Historical Society is involved and dedicated to educating residents about the town’s history.

Winthrop has a Cemetery Committee that works with a landscaping crew to remove trees that are jeopardizing treasured headstones. After exploring options for restoring and cleaning headstones of historical importance, the Cemetery Committee has begun restoration efforts. There are limitations on this endeavor, as the town does not own these headstones.

As the WMHS becomes aware of historic resources, it evaluates, claims and restores them, as necessary. One example is a historic church building, the Friends Church, that was recently sold. The pulpit, a sofa and a picture have been collected by the WMHS from the church. Each item will undergo review and evaluation for the feasibility of retention in the Center. There is no guarantee that these items will be retained, but it is the effort and intent of the ongoing discovery and evaluation that is the important work of WMHS.

## **Existing Land Use Protections:**

Due to the lack of traditional “Historic Districts,” the existing regulatory protection for historic and archaeological resources is primarily provided through the state subdivision and shoreland zoning statutes. Maine’s subdivision statute requires review of the impact on “historic sites,” which includes both National Register and eligible buildings and archaeological sites. The State Shoreland Zoning statute includes, as one of its purposes, “to protect archaeological and historic resources.” The town’s Zoning Ordinance contains the following provision intended to protect archeological sites:

*Any proposed land use activity involving structural development or soil disturbance on, or adjacent to sites listed on, or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by the permitting authority, shall be submitted by the applicant to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for review and comment, at least twenty (20) days prior to action being taken by the permitting authority. The permitting authority shall consider comments received from the Commission prior to rendering a decision on the application.*

This requirement, however, is only applicable to areas located in a shoreland zone. Any area outside of a shoreland zone does not require a survey or review for activities occurring on, or adjacent to sites listed, or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Therefore, the town does not currently have any specific incentives or regulations for protecting historic areas and/or buildings, or potential historic or archeological resources.

The WMHS provides that most effective protective measures within the town by making residents aware of the town’s history. Their walking tours, regular speaking series, and extensively preserved collection of historic items serve to protect and promote the preservation of Winthrop’s past by offering easy access to historical information that adds value to buildings, materials, and other historic resources.

## **Important Partners for Historic/Archaeological/Cultural Preservation:**

- Winthrop Maine Historical Society (WMHS)
- Town of Winthrop Cemetery Committee
- Maine Historic Preservation Commission
- National Register of Historic Places
- Maine Preservation

## **Future Consideration:**

- ❖ Consider introducing special policies and/or regulations to protect historic homes and buildings. Currently, Winthrop opts for voluntary preservation of homes without government intervention or restrictive zoning and builds on existing programs offered through the historical society.
- ❖ Is a site survey in areas of proposed development something to consider adding to the subdivision/land use ordinance?
- ❖ Does the town feel it is important/necessary to add protection for potential archeological sites to goals?
- ❖ Recommendations by Maine Historic Preservation Commission - have historic archaeological surveys conducted.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITY PROFILE

This is a statistical profile for the town of Winthrop and its people. It has a great deal of numerical information about the community. Data like this will often confirm intuitions about what is happening within the community. More importantly, it can show early signs of new patterns and trends before their impacts become apparent.

Demographic statistical data of a particular place, like Winthrop, are incredibly valuable and greatly affect future decisions on the municipal level. For example, the amount of tax revenue needed is affected by issues such as town services for senior citizens, the school system and expected future enrollment, waste management services, and the quantity of recreational amenities provided. The level of services the town needs to provide for senior citizens can be assumed using demographic data, just as the school system size will be affected by total family households in the area.

Winthrop is evolving, and innovative ideas and strategies will be needed to accommodate the growing and changing population. The information supplied in this chapter will be used throughout the plan and will provide insight into changes in the community as well as future changes. Growth projections will help in planning for housing and public service demands that are expected over the next couple of decades. This information is expounded upon further in this Chapter.

\*\*\*\*Note: You may notice that the population number varies between 6,121 and 6,005. This is because the 6,005 is from the American Community Survey (ACS) and is an estimate. It has been used in certain charts because the data was calculated based on this number from the ACS. To change the population and recalculate the data would render it inaccurate. Likewise, the 2020 U.S. Census data shows that Winthrop has 3,297 housing units, with 2,646 occupied, and 651 vacant. The ACS data shows Winthrop as having 2,556 occupied housing units and 722 vacant for a total of 3,278. Table 2 highlights these important differences.

It is important to understand this because it could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. These discrepancies have been annotated in several places.

**Historical Population Trends:**

“Population” is usually the principal criteria people use in measuring the size and vitality of a town. The current population is often used as a yardstick for the town’s role in the region, expected level of public services, and much more.

Over the course of its existence, Winthrop has experienced a rise and fall in population, representative of its neighbors and the State. Many economic and cultural factors have influenced population changes as displayed in Table 1 and depicted in Figure 1.

**TABLE 1: POPULATION CHANGE: 1850 TO 2020**

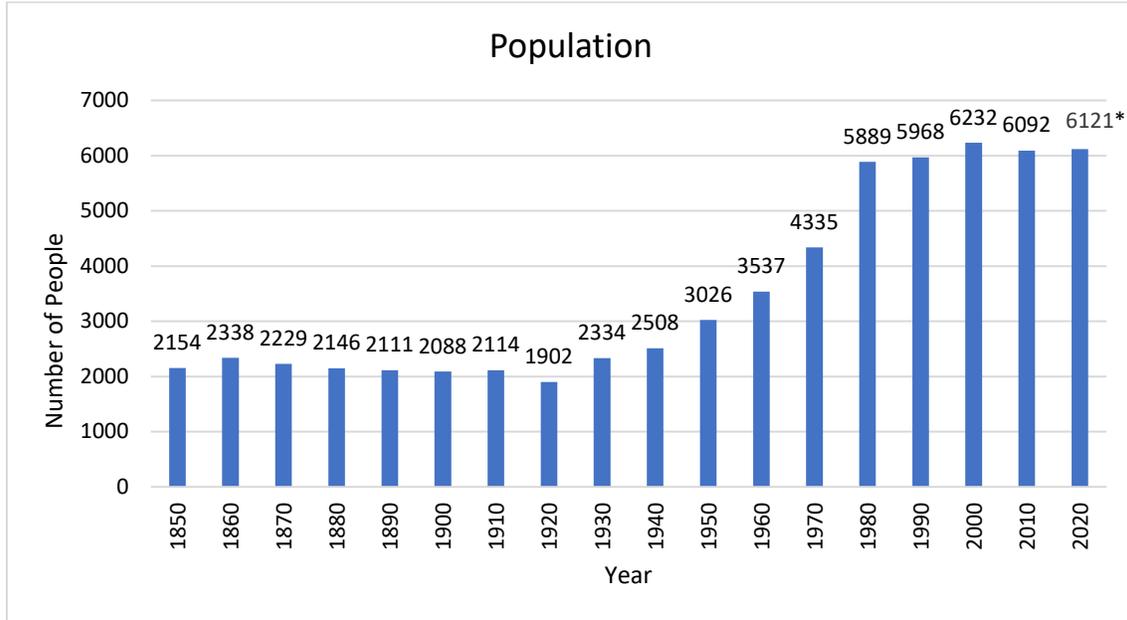
<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>1850</b>	2,154	<b>1940</b>	2,508
<b>1860</b>	2,338	<b>1950</b>	3,026
<b>1870</b>	2,229	<b>1960</b>	3,537
<b>1880</b>	2,146	<b>1970</b>	4,335
<b>1890</b>	2,111	<b>1980</b>	5,889
<b>1900</b>	2,088	<b>1990</b>	5,968
<b>1910</b>	2,114	<b>2000</b>	6,232
<b>1920</b>	1,902	<b>2010</b>	6,092
<b>1930</b>	2,334	<b>2020</b>	6,121

*Source: United States Census*

Following the Civil War and lasting until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, virtually all of Maine lost population. This was the era of westward expansion when many people relocated to the West. Winthrop lost less than most towns, because of the other trend – the industrial revolution. Winthrop was one of a few towns in the area with sufficient energy and infrastructure to attract large industry, which drew residents in from surrounding farm towns.

The data in Table 1 shows Winthrop’s population bottomed out in 1920 but began to show steep gains after that. This is probably consistent with the mills drawing new workers to town. The population took off for a while in the 1960’s and 1970’s, as Winthrop also assumed a role as suburban community for Augusta. The abrupt halt in the upward population increases between 1980 and 1990 likely coincided with mill cutbacks and ultimate closure.

**FIGURE 1: 170 YEARS OF POPULATION CHANGE IN WINTHROP**



Source: United State Census  
\*U.S. Census Population Data

Figure 1 shows the same data as Table 1, but in graph form to display the rapid population increase from 1920 to about 1980.

The 2020 Census shows Winthrop has 3,297 total housing units, 2,646 occupied units, and 651 vacant units. In contrast, the 2020 ACS shows Winthrop as having 3,278 total housing units, 2,556 occupied units, and 722 vacant units. Table 2 below highlights the disparities between the 2020 Census data and the 2020 ACS data for clarification purposes.

**Table 2: Differences in 2020 Census vs. 2020 ACS Data Compared to 2010 ACS Data**

	2020 Census Data	2020 ACS Data	2010 ACS Data	Percent Change 2020 Census Vs. 2010 ACS
<b>Population</b>	6,121	6,005	6,149	-28 -0.46%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	3,297	3,278	3,295	2 0.06%
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	2,646	2,556	2,598	48 1.85%
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	651	722	697	-46 -6.60%
<b>Households</b>	N/A	2,556	2,506	50* 1.99%

Source: 2010, 2020 Census, & 2020 ACS

\*Data comparison of 2020 ACS vs. 2010 Census

In comparing 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census data, Table 2 shows an increase of only two houses for total housing units, but an increase of 48 occupied housing units, which coincides with the decrease in vacant houses in that time. The U.S. Census defines “vacant housing unit” as a housing unit in which no one is living at the time of the interview unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a residence elsewhere -- in other words, a seasonal residence.

The number of households appears to have increased between 2010 and 2020; however, the 2020 household data is from the ACS and is an estimate.

Additional Census or American Community Survey data can paint a broader picture to help with long-term planning for Winthrop. One such example is decreasing household size. This trend is observable throughout Maine and has far-reaching implications on many aspects of a community, such as school enrollment.

Table 3 on the following page shows a breakdown of population characteristics over the past two Census reports.

**TABLE 3: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS: 2010 - 2020**

<b>General Population Characteristics</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010*</b>	<b>2020*</b>	<b>Difference &amp; Percent Change (2010 – 2020)</b>
Total Population	6,232	6,149	6,121	-28 -0.45 %
Male Population	3,085	2,891	3,044	153 5.29 %
Female Population	3,147	3,258	2,961	-297 -9.12 %
Median Age	41.9	43.2	42.8	-0.4 -0.93 %
Total Households	2,495	2,506	2,556	50 2.00 %
Family Households	1,740	1,822	1,546	-276 -15.15 %
Married Couple Family Households	1,397	1,501	1,230	-271 -18.05 %
Nonfamily Households	755	684	1,010	326 47.66 %
Nonfamily Households Living Alone	586	616	451	-165 -26.79 %
Households with children (under 18)	817	751	644	-107 -14.25 %
Single-Person Household 65 years +	228	231	274	43 18.61 %
Average Household Size	2.42	2.39	2.31	-0.08 -3.35 %

*Source: 2000 Census- unless otherwise noted*

*\*2010 & 2020 Data from American Community Survey*

### **Components of Population Change:**

Between 2010 and 2020, the town’s population decreased by 28 persons. However, this is not solely a case of “emigration.” Population change in a community is a result of both natural change and migration. Natural change is the difference between deaths and births in the community over a period of time. Migration accounts for people moving in and moving out. Net migration is population change not explained by births and deaths.

Natural change is an indicator of trends within the population. A positive number (more births than deaths) suggests not only a lot of babies but a lot of young families. A negative number (more deaths than births) hints at a more elderly population. Elderly populations tend to be larger in high-amenity communities like Winthrop. Between 2000 and 2010,

Winthrop's population decreased by 33 people. Between 2010 and 2020, the population decreased again by 28 people. This is indicative that Winthrop is home to an increasingly older population – as is the entire state of Maine which has a median age of 44.8. The 2020 ACS data reflects that the median age in Winthrop has stayed relatively stable, going from 43.2 in 2010 to 42.8 in 2020. When compared to the United States, which has a median age of 38.3, Maine is one of the most elderly states in the nation, and Winthrop is no different.

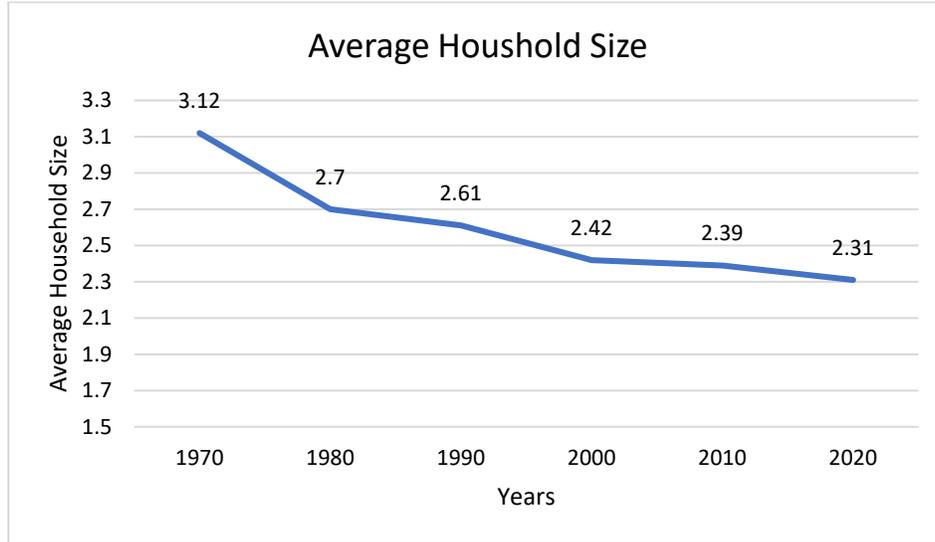
Migration is calculated as the difference between overall population change and natural change. People choose to move into or out of a community based on many factors, such as availability of employment, housing costs, and quality of life.

Several statistical points in Table 3 are indicative of shrinking household sizes, besides the average household size. One indicator is that single-person households over 65 years of age increased by 18.6 percent in a 10-year period. Another indicator is that the number of households with children under 18 decreased by 18.7 percent in the last 10 years. The decrease of average household size by 3.35 percent in the last 10 years by itself is not significant, but when coupled with this other data, it is suggestive of the aging population and fewer children in the community.

The ACS defines household size as the number of people living in one place, who may or may not be related. This contrasts with average family size, which was 3.15 in 2020; average family size is defined as people living in one location who are related to one another.

While the average household size did not decrease that much from 2010 to 2020, it is still significant when compared to previous decades (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2: 1970 – 2020 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE**



*Source: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census  
2010 & 2020 ACS*

Decreasing household size is a trend seen nationally, reflecting social changes like smaller families, lower birth rates, and elderly independent living. What this equates to is a need for more houses just to sustain the current population, reduced school enrollment, increased demand for senior services, and a need for specific housing types to accommodate single people living alone, both elderly and young.

This type of data is imperative when considering the population and housing demands for the future. If the number of people in each household continues to decrease as projected, the community will require not only more houses, but a housing stock made up of smaller houses.

However, the outcomes of current population trends can be combated in several ways. Winthrop has plenty of available land and is a short drive to Augusta and Lewiston for either employment or entertainment. Water access and other outdoor recreational activities are abundant both in Winthrop and in neighboring towns. While the rate of natural change cannot be impacted with town policy, the rate of migration can be affected by managing land use controls, promoting economic sectors that fit the character of the town, and offering public services that town residents want and need.

**TABLE 4: AGE TRENDS 2000 TO 2020**

	<b>2010 % Of Total</b>	<b>2020 % Of Total</b>	<b>10-Year Change</b>
Population	6,149	6,005	-144 (-2.3%)
Median Age	43.2	42.8	-0.4 (-0.9%)
Under 5 years old	272 (4.4%)	362 (6.0%)	90 (33.1%)
5 - 19 years old	1,210 (19.7%)	943 (15.7%)	-267 (-22.1%)
18 years and older	4,817 (78.3%)	4,717 (78.6%)	-100 (-2.1%)
20 - 24 years old	252 (4.1%)	272 (4.5%)	20 (7.9%)
25 - 44 years old	1,526 (2.8%)	1,551 (25.9%)	25 (1.6%)
45 - 54 years old	961 (15.6%)	859 (14.3%)	-102 (-10.6%)
55 - 59 years old	553 (9.0%)	295 (4.9%)	-258 (-46.7%)
60 - 64 years old	466 (7.6%)	427 (7.1%)	-39 (-8.4%)
65 years and older	909 (14.8%)	1,296 (21.6%)	387 (42.6%)

SOURCE: 2010 & 2020 ACS

Some important population changes and trend takeaways from the data analysis in this Table 4:

- The number of individuals between the ages of 5-19 years old decreased by 22.1 percent, a sizable decline.
- Adults that fall roughly into “family-age” category were broken into two separate categories by the ACS:
  - Age category 20-24 increased by 7.9 percent
  - Age category 25-44 increased by 1.6 percent
- Both “family-age adults” age brackets have been relatively steady over the last ten years.
- The “mature adult” age brackets (45 to 54, 55 to 59, and 60 to 64) all saw varying decreases.
  - Age category 45-54 decreased by 10.6 percent
  - Age category 55-59 decreased by 46.7 percent

- Age category 60-64 decreased by 8.4 percent
- In 2010, the 65 and older age category was beginning to show the outliers in the baby boom generation (persons born generally between 1945 and 1965). This age category has been steadily increasing and the real impact will begin this decade. Since 2010, this age category increased 42.6 percent or 387 individuals. This is the largest change documented in this time period.
- As younger baby boomers continue to age, the number in this age category will rise. This will have short-term implications for housing, health care, transportation, recreation, and other services.
- Due to its size this generation placed a strain on the town's education system and housing inventory from 1960 through to 2000, which they addressed by building new schools and housing developments. It is expected they will sustain their active demeanor as they stretch the community's senior housing and healthcare assets.

### **Seasonal Population:**

All population data cited above refers to year-round residents. Winthrop also has a significant seasonal population that includes camp owners/renters, visitors, day-trippers, and people staying at the summer camps.

Planning, particularly for public roads and services, cannot be done based on overall population alone. Just as roads must be designed for the peak hour of use, other public services must be sized for the population peaks.

Because of the attraction of the lakes, Winthrop has been a traditional center of seasonal activity. As of 2020, according to the ACS, the town had 465 housing units listed as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. At the height of the season, if 90 percent of these homes are occupied with an average of four occupants each, that is approximately 1,674 additional people in Winthrop. An additional 1,674 people is an increase of 27 percent over the full-time population in town. But some of the camps and seasonal houses may be owned by Winthrop residents, so they cannot be counted toward the seasonal population. Unfortunately, the Census does not include this data.

This data does not consider hotels, short-term rentals, or other overnight accommodations. These undoubtedly increase the seasonal population; however, their statistics are more difficult to track and not easily estimated. The town also benefits from a significant day-trip population because of its many attractions. Day trip attractions include restaurants, the boat launch, various water bodies, the downtown area, Winthrop's 4<sup>th</sup> of July event, and Mt. Pisgah.

Winthrop also sees a rise in population from those staying at seasonal homes on neighboring lakes and ponds in other towns. These visitors come to shop, dine or travel through. These seasonal residents are similar to day-trippers coming to visit Winthrop, as

their patronizing Winthrop's wide variety of amenities results in small population increases.

In addition, the town hosts the YMCA resident camp on Cobbosseecontee Lake and Camp Mechawana on Lower Narrows Pond. Including campers and staff, approximately 500 individuals stay there for seven weeks during the summer.

Seasonal population and day tourism provide a significant benefit to the town. Encouraging more tourism and recreational activity is one of the town's objectives. The aging of the baby boom generation may, at the same time, increase the leisure time and disposable income of prospective seasonal visitors and make existing seasonal facilities more attractive as permanent residences. Conversion of seasonal homes has not been a major phenomenon in Winthrop, with no permits issued in the past seven years. However, conversion from seasonal to year-round is likely to be occurring, it just may not be adequately tracked.

With the seasonal population contributing to an additional 27 percent of the full-time population, this fluctuation does have significant impact on the town, such as seasonal crowding, increased traffic, and increased demand on commercial establishments. However, the financial benefits the town sees from the seasonal population far outweigh any inconveniences of a temporarily larger population in the area.

#### **Service Center Impacts:**

As a small service center, Winthrop can be expected to see some impacts from a larger daytime population. However, the population flux is overwhelmed by the much larger service centers of Augusta and Lewiston. Winthrop's "service center" status consists of its commercial sector, with a regional supermarket, health services, and an active downtown. No additional accommodation is necessary to deal with this fluctuation in daytime populations.

### School Enrollment Data:

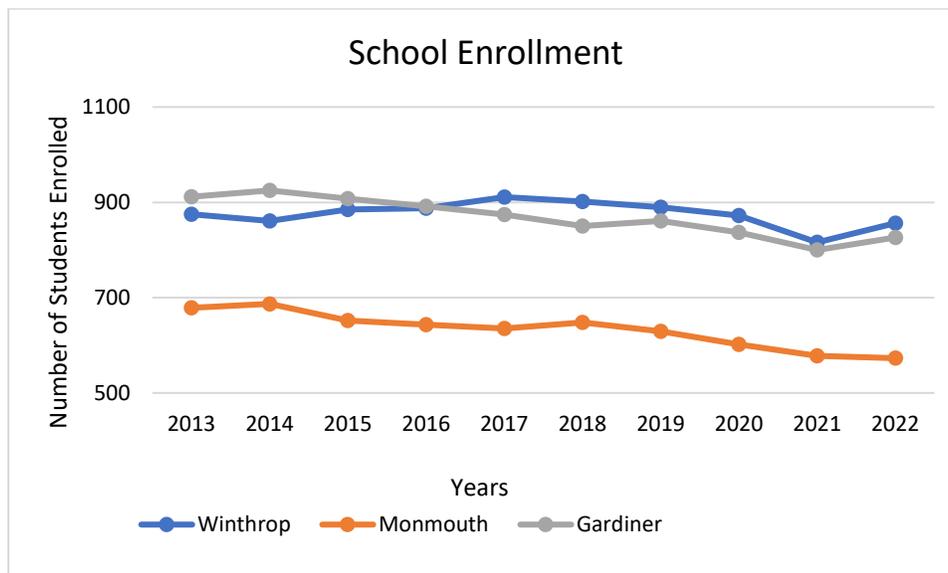
School enrollment is negatively correlated with the increasing population age and the reduced number of younger residents in Winthrop: as the number of school-aged children drops, so does annual school enrollment.

**TABLE 5: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DATA**

County/Town	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	10 Year Average
Winthrop	875	861	885	888	911	902	890	872	816	856	875.60
Monmouth	679	687	652	643	635	648	629	602	578	573	632.60
Gardiner	912	925	908	892	874	850	861	837	800	826	868.50
Augusta	2224	2167	2160	2209	2202	2268	2232	2277	2196	2170	2210.50
Kennebec County	17327	17221	16965	16957	16798	16891	16790	16621	15843	16140	NA

Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data

**FIGURE 3: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT GRAPHED**



Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data

From Table 5 and Figure 3, a trend is apparent for school enrollment in the region. In the past several years there has been a steady decline in school enrollment, not only for Winthrop, but also for surrounding towns and Kennebec County. But, according to 2022 data, there has been a slight uptick in school enrollment.

The combination of increasing housing prices, increasing median age, and decreasing family sizes all contribute to the reduced school enrollment in the past several years. This

trend has been progressing for nearly 10 years, depending on datasets. Towns will undoubtedly be affected by this trend and planning strategies should be discussed to prevent negative impacts. Decreased school enrollment affects everything from school bus routes, teaching jobs, school buildings, teaching styles, and the quality of education provided. However, due to unforeseeable changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, many towns are seeing changes in their school enrollment that were previously unexpected. This data has yet to be collected or analyzed.

**Regional Perspective:**

Winthrop’s development pattern is not at all unusual for Kennebec County. All the towns in this area prospered as farm towns during the 1800’s, went into decline during westward expansion and the urbanization period of the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and began to grow again as suburbs and green spaces. The region’s largest growth period was in the 1970’s and 1980’s, and growth has slowed since.

In Table 6, the trend of small average family sizes and an older median age are observable for Kennebec County and Maine compared to the United States. These are both high impact population trends that are clearly on a larger scale than just at the town level.

**TABLE 6: COUNTRY, STATE, COUNTY, TOWN STATISTICS**

Geographic Location	Population Change		% Change	Average Family Size**	Median Age
	2010	2020			
Winthrop	6,149	6,121	-0.46%	2.96	42.8
Kennebec County	122,151	123,642	1.2%	2.9	44.1
Maine	1,328,361	1,362,359	2.6%	2.9	44.8
United States	234.6 million	331.4 million	7.4%	3.15	38.2

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

\*Source: 2020 ACS

\*\*Average Family Size is defined differently than the Average Household Size by the ACS. Household refers to those living together, related or not. Family refers to those who are living together and are related.

Traditionally, an older median age and reduced family size are indicative of more rural, owner-occupied household trends. Compared with Maine, Winthrop is certainly not an outlier in median age or average family size.

## **Population Projections and Impacts:**

Historic population and demographic trends are interesting, but their true value is in preparing for the future. Population projections provide the short and easy answer. These are mathematical extrapolations of past population growth and factors such as age distribution and household size.

The Maine Office of the State Economist publishes a projection to the year 2038 (prepared in 2018 and based on U.S. Census data). This agency estimates Winthrop's population will be 5,930 by 2038, a decrease of 3.12 percent or 191 residents from the current population in a 16-year period. This is based partially on the advancing age of the residents and the overall observable trend, not necessarily a reflection of the popularity of the town.

The Kennebec Valley Council of Government (KVCOG) also does population projections. It estimates a 2030 population of about 6,200, an increase of 79 people (prepared in 2018). This estimate is based on information from the tax assessor as well as U.S. Census information.

Notice that one of these projections calls for a decline, the other calls for a slight population increase. How accurate are projections? Projections are not a crystal ball; they are based on assumptions of trends from the recent past. And with the recent phenomenon of the global pandemic, these projections will likely not be very accurate.

Further, projections for a town the size of Winthrop are rarely accurate. For example, the population grew by 36 percent in the 1970's then only grew 1.3 percent in the 1980's. Major factors driving (and controlling) population growth are the availability of housing and economic conditions.

The baseline scenario for Winthrop is no population change. However, "no population change" does not mean "no growth." Even if Winthrop's population does not change by 2030, the components of the population will most assuredly be different. Currently, the trend with the greatest impact on growth is declining average household size. This "no population change" scenario includes the assumption that the decreasing household size will eventually plateau, and average age will continue to increase for some time based on the baby boom generation.

Winthrop's average household size decreased by 0.42 people in the 1970's, 0.09 in the 1980's, 0.19 in the 1990's, 0.03 in the 2000's, and 0.08 from 2010 to 2020. Assuming that household size will decrease another 5 percent between 2020 and 2030, this would result in an average future household size of 2.19.

With Winthrop's current population of 6,121, and an average household size of 2.31, town residents occupy 2,646 housing units (2020 Census). If that same population in 2030 had an average household size of 2.19, they would need 2,795 housing units. Based on the

2020 Census data, Winthrop can accommodate this population with its current housing stock of 3,297 and will not need additional housing.

When considering the State Economist's population projection of 5,930 and applying the same principle of dividing the population by average household size (using 2.19) the result would be 2,708 households by 2038. Again, 2,708 housing units does not require the construction of new homes. Hypothetically, if the average household size did not decrease by 5 percent and stayed roughly the same as it is now (2.31), the projected population by the State Economist's Office of 5,930 would require 2,567 housing units in 2038, which is still within the scope of Winthrop's existing housing stock.

Under the State Economist's projection, there would no longer be a need for between approximately 589 and 730 housing units already in existence in Winthrop. And this figure does not take into consideration that new houses will undoubtedly still be built.

Economically, this scenario of Winthrop's population shrinking to this degree seems quite unlikely, as Winthrop is at the edge of Augusta and in close proximity to Lewiston, Auburn, and Waterville, and sees a lot of spillover demand.

Under KVCOG's population projection of 6,200 residents by 2030, if a 5 percent decrease in average household size is assumed (2.19), that population would need 2,831 houses to accommodate the smaller, average household size with this slightly larger population. If the existing average household size (2.31) is assumed with KVCOG's projected population, 2,684 houses would be occupied. In either scenario, Winthrop's current total housing units can accommodate this population projection and household size. In fact, it would negate the need for between 466 and 613 existing housing units in an eight-year period.

But for perspective, when considering Winthrop's current population of 6,121 and current average household size of 2.31, an estimated 2,650 housing units are needed based on dividing the population by the average household size. That leaves 641 housing units currently vacant. The number of vacant units on the 2020 Census is 651. Based on the Census definition of vacant, these housing units may be seasonal and not fit for year-round habitation.

If the results of all four scenarios are averaged, the approximate number of housing units no longer needed would be about 600. This is on par with the number of current vacant housing units.

One problem brought on by possible lack of need for new housing is difficulty reaching the planning goal of 10-percent affordable housing (as defined in the Housing chapter) out of all new houses built. It is unlikely that new residential construction will stop, but if five new houses a year were built, then roughly two would need to be affordable.

The rate of housing development is an effective way to estimate population growth, but it is also a good way to manage it. Local policies can affect the rate of housing growth

through their influence on the cost of development or land use restrictions. Winthrop has relatively low land development costs now, so it would be difficult to accelerate growth this way.

Trends can be managed, to a certain extent, to produce desired results. For example, if the local economy or housing market changes, that in turn affects how the community grows and changes. Municipal regulation and policy can have an influence on the size and types of new houses constructed, which in turn will drive population demographics. Neighborhoods with large lots tend to add to building costs and require expensive homes to be built. Many times, these homes are 3-, 4-, or 5-bedroom residences, suitable for large families with young children. At the other extreme, housing units can be designed exclusively for senior populations with 1- and 2-person households. This type of development would more closely match the demand for housing in Winthrop but would not add as much to the growth potential of the town.

Growth in population and households increases the demand for public services and commercial development. Unless specifically designed for senior citizens, each new household must have one or more jobs to support it. Younger, larger households will generate schoolchildren. Nearly all households require added waste management and road maintenance costs. All these factors must be considered when projecting population growth.

While some towns can use municipal policies to impact population change, it requires a need and consensus to take strong action, which Winthrop may not have. It is important, however, that the community pays attention to annual changes in housing development and other local and regional indicators. The town should continue to monitor the rate of new construction and the type of homes that are being built and should continue to discuss these implications and address them through policy changes.

It is important to bear several factors in mind when considering population estimates. Simple population projections like the ones described above are rarely accurate. They work for small towns with predictable conditions. With the COVID-19 pandemic, these are unprecedented times. Towns are experiencing unpredictable changes and scenarios related to COVID-19. The projections detailed in this section are unlikely scenarios, based on a variety of factors, such as the size of Winthrop's population, the town's ideal location, and the changes brought on by the pandemic.

### **Analysis and Trends:**

The most obvious trends detailed throughout this section are the increasing median age of Winthrop's population and the decreasing average household size. The ideal housing units to accommodate these demographic trends would be smaller, one- or two-bedroom units.

These trends have other implications as well, such as decreased school enrollment, an increased need for multifamily housing-style structures, increased public services, and senior transportation, just to name a few.

Another emerging, recent trend is multigenerational housing. This living situation was born out of necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic and became the new normal, as it seems to be mutually beneficial to all involved. Multigenerational homes are those that include parents living with their adult children and grandchildren, for example. This is beneficial for the parents of the young children, as the grandparents can supply childcare, and it is beneficial for the grandparents as they also have access to help when needed. This situation has proven financially beneficial for all parties.

The services required to accommodate multigenerational housing would be somewhat similar to those mentioned above. Promoting multigenerational housing through relaxed regulations for accessory dwelling units is one way the town can provide appropriate housing for the aging population. In fact, in 2022 the state enacted new legislation mandating that municipalities amend their ordinances to allow for these housing options starting in 2024.

# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

## CHAPTER THREE: LOCAL ECONOMY

### Overview:

Winthrop’s economy needs to be viewed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed every aspect of daily life. At this time, it is not possible to predict the long-term impacts of the virus on the town, but by planning for a range of possibilities, the town can be well prepared. The statistics and data presented in this plan are based primarily on information from the early 2020s, and as such will not reflect the sudden changes brought on by the coronavirus; however, this data should be used as a baseline for the essential components of Winthrop’s local economy. This chapter reports on the economy from two perspectives: statistical information and local business issues.

### Per Capita Income vs. Household Income:

The most conventional measure of a town’s economic health is the income of its individuals and families. The Census reports two basic types of income measures: “per-capita income,” which is the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and “household income,” which is the median income of the households within the town. The latter is more helpful from a planning perspective.

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF PER CAPITA VS. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

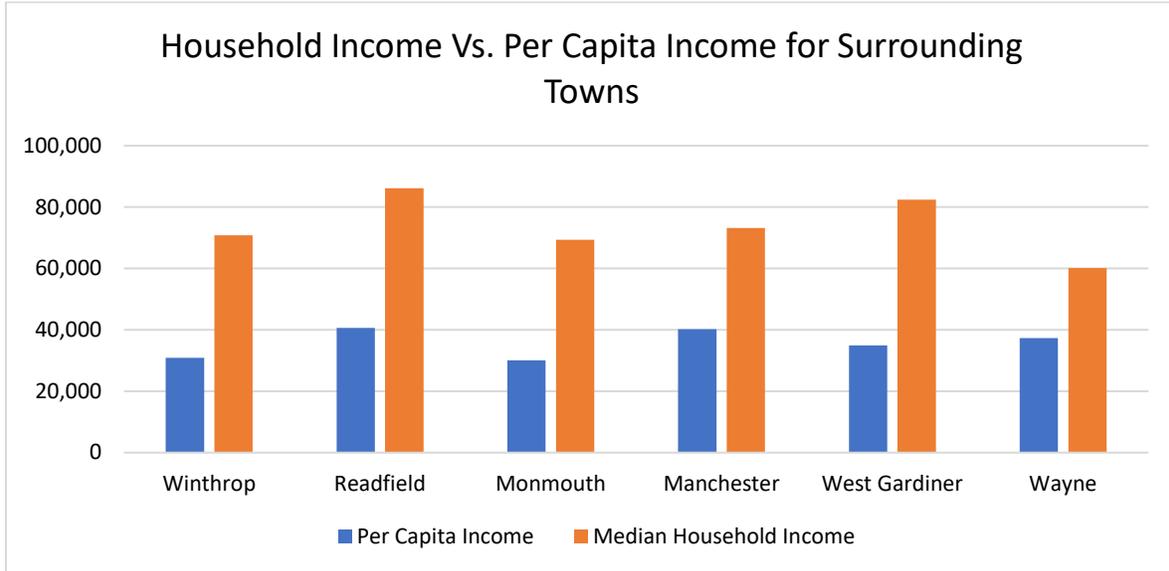
	Winthrop	Readfield	Monmouth	Manchester	West Gardiner	Wayne
Per-Capita Income	\$30,925	\$40,608	\$30,116	\$40,250	\$34,901	\$37,312
Median Household Income	\$70,828	\$86,156	\$69,328	\$73,188	\$82,390	\$60,125

*Source: 2020 American Community Survey (ACS)*

Median household income represents the total gross income received by all members of a household within a 12-month period. The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income, and one-half above the median income. Two factors distinguish it from per capita income:

- 1) Decreasing household size over time,
- 2) Changes in the number of members of the household with income.

**FIGURE 1: PER-CAPITA AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOMES OF SURROUNDING TOWNS**

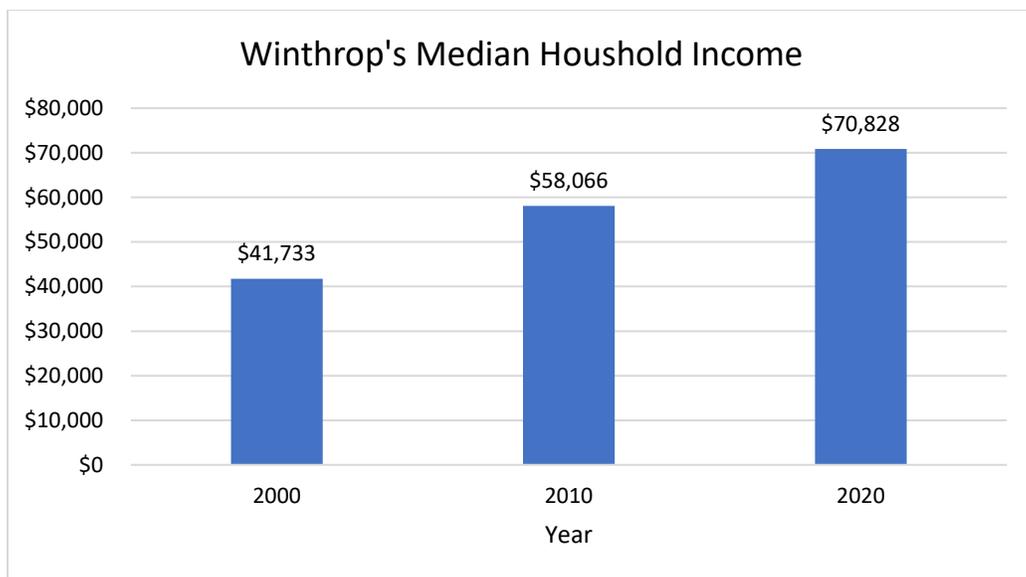


Source: 2020 ACS

Figure 1, above, presents the same data as Table 1, but in a different format. It shows the per-capita income of Winthrop and surrounding towns alongside the household income.

Figure 2, below, shows the increase in household income over a 20-year period. Since 2000, the household income in Winthrop has increased nearly 70 percent. The increase from 2000 to 2010 was 39 percent; from 2010 to 2020 the increase was 22 percent.

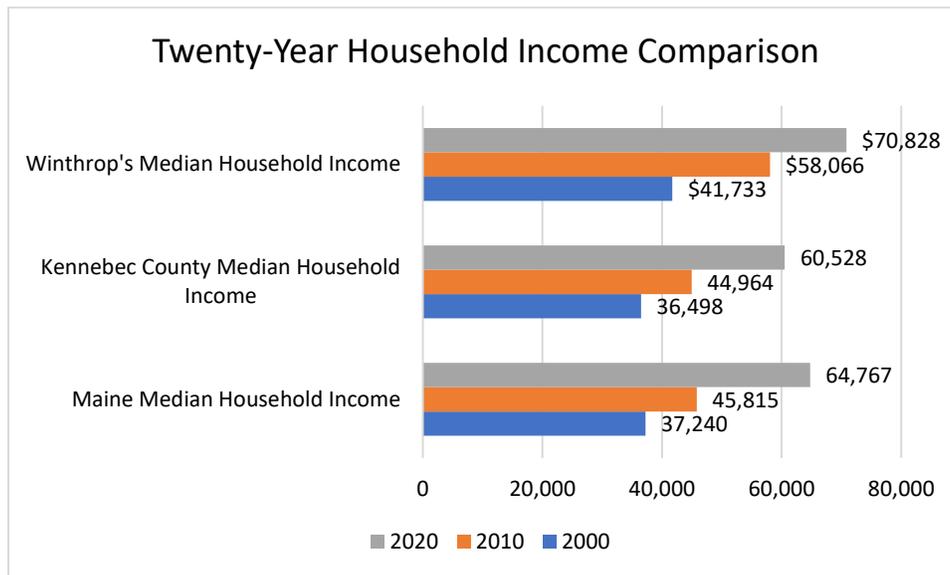
**FIGURE 2: INCREASE IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**



Source: 2020 ACS

Figure 3, below, shows the median household income for the state of Maine and Kennebec County compared to Winthrop over the past three decades.

**FIGURE 3: 2000, 2010 & 2020 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOMES: WINTHROP, KENNEBEC COUNTY AND MAINE**



Source: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2020 ACS

Both Kennebec County and Maine have had lower household incomes than Winthrop from 2000 to 2020, although from 2000 to 2020, Kennebec County saw an increase of nearly 66 percent and the state saw an increase of nearly 74 percent. Both increases were similar to Winthrop's 70-percent increase in household income in this same period.

These income levels are also a way to assess housing affordability. A house is considered affordable if a household whose income is at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) can live there without spending more than 28 percent of their income on housing costs (including heat, electricity, insurance, etc.). What this means in practice differs for rentals than ownership. For rentals to be considered affordable at 80 percent of the AMI, the household should be able to live there without spending 30 percent of their income on housing expenses.

As an example, in Kennebec County, 80 percent of the AMI by family size is as follows:

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Family of 1: \$42,250 | Family of 2: \$48,250 |
| Family of 3: \$54,300 | Family of 4: \$60,300 |
| Family of 5: \$65,150 | Family of 6: \$69,950 |
| Family of 7: \$74,800 | Family of 8: \$79,600 |

This data is from 2021 and can be found on the Maine Housing website. In Winthrop, 80 percent of the median household income comes to nearly \$57,000. Roughly 45 percent of Winthrop's 2,556 households fall below this income level.

The American Community Survey identified 478 households with Social Security income, about 26.7 percent of all households. It also identified 508 households with retirement income; however, there is probably a significant overlap between the two. The 2020 ACS identified 181 families receiving public assistance income.

### **Local Labor Force and Employment:**

The labor force refers to the number of people either working or available to work within the working-age population. To the Census, the working-age population is everyone over the age of 16, including those of retirement age.

According to the 2020 ACS, Winthrop's labor force consisted of 3,244 people, 66 percent of the working-age population. The 3,244 individuals, broken down by sex, equate to 1,516 women (47 percent) and 1,728 men (53 percent). There are 2,556 households in Winthrop, which means an average of 1.26 workers per household. This is higher than the Kennebec County average of 1.14 workers per household.

In 2000, the labor force consisted of 3,361 people (1,709 women and 1,652 men), 67 percent of the working-age population. In 2010, Winthrop had 3,422 individuals in the labor force, 69 percent of the working-age population, of which 1,774 were women (52 percent) and 1,648 were men (48 percent).

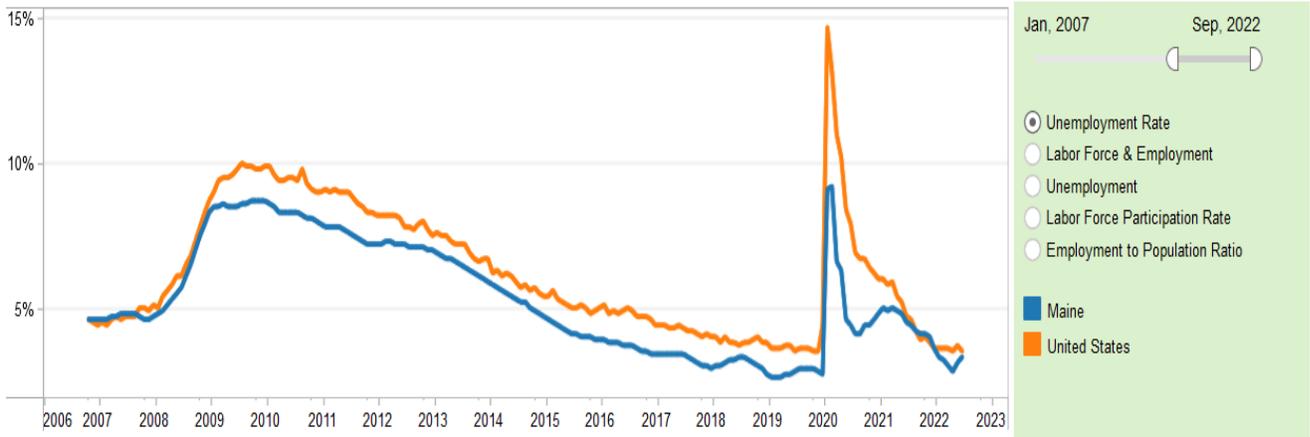
In the past 10 years, the balance between men and women in the labor force has changed, and the number of people in Winthrop's labor force decreased by slightly more than 5 percent.

Being in the labor force is not the same as being employed. The labor force is the sum of the employed plus the unemployed. Thus, 3,244 is the number of individuals *available to work*. According to the 2020 ACS, 82 people in Winthrop were unemployed (22 women, 60 men) for an unemployment rate of 2.5 percent. For comparison, in 2010, the unemployment rate was 4.1 percent. It should be noted the Census defined "unemployment rate" only as representing the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the civilian labor force. It does not specify if those individuals counted toward the unemployment rate were those only collecting unemployment.

Unemployment is better reported by the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), which conducts periodic surveys. Figure 4 is a graph of unemployment in the United States and the State of Maine, of which Winthrop is a reflection.

The MDOL defined unemployment as the number of people who are not employed but are actively seeking work. Included are those who are waiting to be called back from a layoff or are waiting to report to a new job within 30 days. The unemployment rate is measured monthly through a sample of surveyed households.

**FIGURE 4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MAINE AND UNITED STATES**

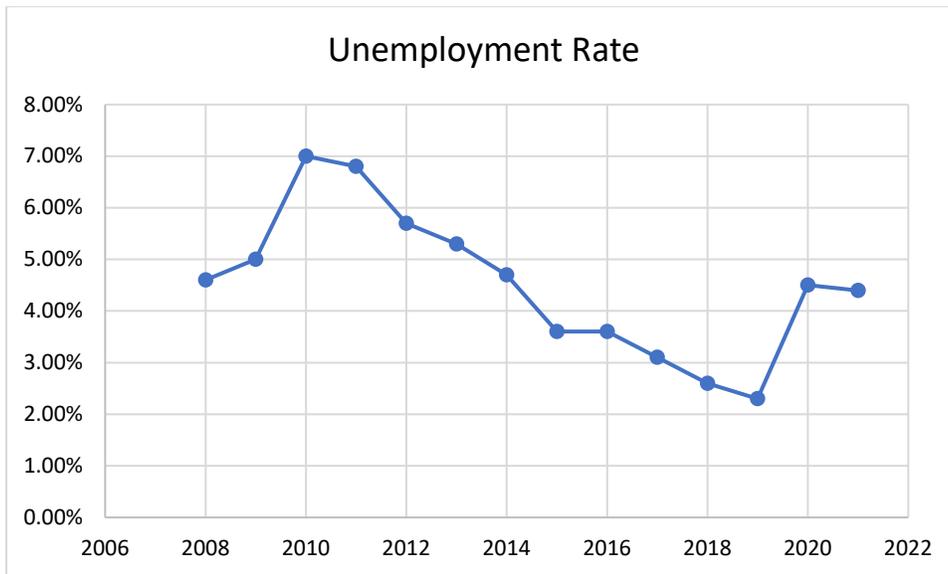


Source: Maine Department of Labor

The graph in Figure 4 depicts the trend of dropping unemployment until 2020. When the global pandemic hit, the unemployment rate skyrocketed until mid-2021. Maine did not see the extremes in high rates of unemployment or length of time as the United States did during the pandemic.

Figure 5, below, shows Winthrop's unemployment rate, taken from the first month of each year. Winthrop did not see the same high rates of unemployment as the state and country did during the pandemic, but the town has taken longer to rebound from those effects.

**FIGURE 5: WINTHROP'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**



Source: Maine Department of Labor

## Labor Market:

Winthrop is a contributor to the regional Augusta Labor Market Area (LMA), which must be considered in any economic development analysis. The LMA had a labor force of 41,779 in 2008; of this, Winthrop contributed 8.52 percent. Table 2 shows Winthrop's contribution to the LMA.

**TABLE 2: LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT IN WINTHROP & AUGUST LABOR MARKET AREA**

Year	Geography	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2021	Augusta Micro	40,274	38,615	1,659	4.1%
	Winthrop	3,261	3,117	144	4.4%
2020	Augusta Micro	39,944	38,152	1,792	4.5%
	Winthrop	3,226	3,080	146	4.5%
2015	Augusta Micro	40,684	39,064	1,620	4.0%
	Winthrop	3,292	3,173	119	3.6%
2010	Augusta Micro	41,635	38,534	3,101	7.4%
	Winthrop	3,377	3,140	237	7.0%
2008	Augusta Micro	41,779	39,703	2,076	5.0%
	Winthrop	3,560	3,398	162	4.6%

Source: *Maine Department of Labor*

Table 2 depicts Winthrop's unemployment rate as a reflection of the Augusta LMA, with a few variations and usually trending slightly lower.

Winthrop is a net contributor of workers to the regional economy, as are all small towns in the area. Augusta is the only net importer of workers.

For the 2020 ACS, 2,609 respondents supplied information on the location to which they commuted; this information is different than the actual number of those in the labor force and the number and percentage in Tables 3 and 4 are based on this.

Table 3 shows that as of the 2020 ACS, 2,609 Winthrop residents held jobs, with 635 employed in the Augusta Metropolitan Area (24.3 percent), followed by 374 employed in Winthrop (14.3 percent).

**TABLE 3: WORK DESTINATION FOR WINTHROP RESIDENTS**

Location	Count	Share
Augusta	635	24.3%
Winthrop	374	14.3%
Lewiston	233	8.9%
Waterville	111	4.3%
Auburn	109	4.2%
Portland	75	2.9%
Monmouth	71	2.7%
Bath	64	2.5%
Bangor	51	2.0%
Gardiner	49	1.9%
Other Locations	837	32.1%

Source: 2020 ACS

According to the 2020 ACS, 374 individuals worked and lived in Winthrop, and 1,675 worked in Winthrop but lived elsewhere. Most of the people who come to Winthrop to work were from Augusta.

Table 4 shows other locations that supply Winthrop's employees. The numbers and percentages are based on the 1,675 Census respondents who provided this information.

**TABLE 4: WHERE WORKERS LIVE WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN WINTHROP**

Location	Count	Share
Winthrop	374	22.3%
Augusta	108	6.4%
Monmouth	101	6.0%
Readfield	52	3.1%
Manchester	42	2.5%
Lewiston	34	2.0%
West Gardiner	33	2.0%
Leeds	32	1.9%
Belgrade	29	1.7%
Gardiner	29	1.7%
Other Locations	841	50.2%

Source: 2020 ACS

Unsurprisingly, these statistics differ little from those presented in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

Winthrop has one Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district. The purpose of a TIF is to capture the future tax benefits of real estate improvements, to pay for the present cost of those improvements. TIFs are usually used to channel funding toward improvements in

underdeveloped areas where development would not otherwise occur. Accordingly, Winthrop’s TIF district is in the Village District and encompasses the Commerce Center campus with the purpose of redeveloping the former textile mill and promoting use of the empty spaces. The Commerce Center is in the Village District, which is part of the designated growth area (see *Existing Land Use Map* in the appendix).

There is little in the way of economic development goals aside from those determined in the Comprehensive Plan. The town’s economic center is growing, however. The newly created position of Town Planner will assist with directing and encouraging economic development in appropriate locations in town. An update to the Zoning Ordinances will also serve to ease the permitting process and clarity of requirements for incoming businesses.

Since Winthrop does not have express economic development goals or priorities outside of those described by the Comprehensive Plan, they are not reflected in regional economic development plans.

**Job Types:**

Table 5 lists the occupational categories of Winthrop’s workers for 2010 and 2020. Nearly half of Winthrop’s workforce was in management, business, science and art in 2010. That number stayed about the same for 2020. The percentages of workers in the other job categories have changed little since 2010, as well.

**TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE FOR WINTHROP’S WORKERS**

Occupation	2010	% Of Total	2020	% Of Total
Management, business, science, and art	1,413	43.1%	1341	42.4%
Service	437	13.3%	458	14.5%
Sales and Office	742	22.6%	774	24.5%
Natural resource, construction, and maintenance	338	10.3%	411	13.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving	352	10.7%	178	5.6%

Source: 2010 & 2020 ACS

The ACS breaks down the category of management, business, science, and art to include management, business, and financial occupations, computer and mathematical occupations, architectural and engineering occupation, life, physical, and social science occupations, community and social service occupation, legal occupations, educational instruction and library occupations, art, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations, health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations, and finally health technologists and technicians. This all-encompassing occupational category is the reason for such a high number of employment results that far surpasses other job categories.

Winthrop’s workforce can also be broken down by industry of employment (Table 6). This is not as specific as describing a person’s actual job because manufacturing, for instance, may include secretaries, managers, sales staff, and skilled workers. However, breaking industries down in this way provides information to gauge which sectors of the economy are doing well. An additional advantage is that this is the classification that the Maine DOL uses for its annual updates.

**TABLE 6: INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION FOR WINTHROP’S WORKERS**

Industry	2010	% Of Total	2020	% Of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	0	0%	86	2.7%
Construction	248	7.6%	275	8.7%
Manufacturing	352	10.7%	189	6.3%
Wholesale trade	91	2.8%	103	3.3%
Retail trade	325	9.9%	384	12.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	101	3.1%	131	4.1%
Information	29	0.9%	89	2.8%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	211	6.4%	220	7.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	311	9.5%	315	10.0%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	825	25.1%	908	28.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	184	5.6%	101	3.2%
Other services, except public administration	189	5.8%	158	5.0%
Public administration	416	12.7%	194	6.1%

*Source: 2010 & 2020 ACS*

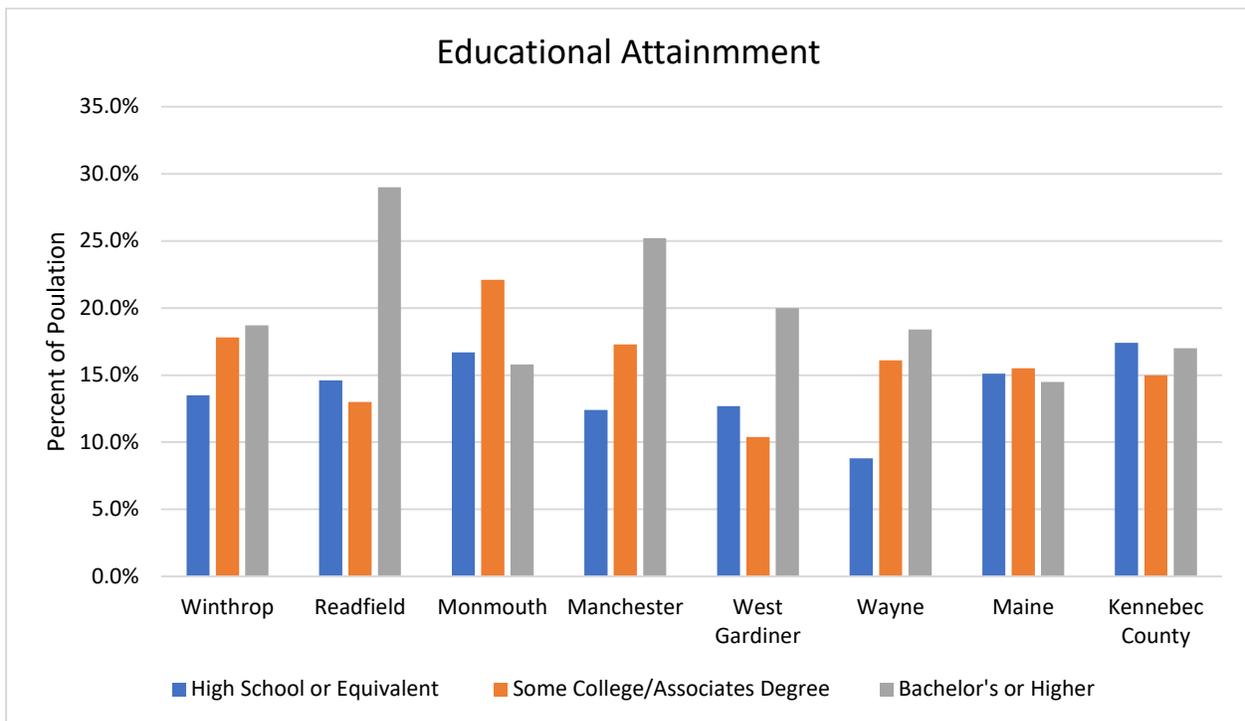
The data in Table 6 shows the major industry for Winthrop’s workers in both 2010 and 2020 were the educational services, health care, and social assistance sectors, by a significant percentage in both decades. For 2020, the industry with the next highest percentage was retail trade, which had an 18 percent increase since 2010. The most surprising increase was in the agricultural industry; it went from none in 2010 to 86 in 2020.

Overall, these figures are consistent with the Augusta Labor Market Area with a high percentage in educational services and in retail trade.

## Educational Attainment:

Another measure of how likely a town is to progress economically is the educational attainment of its residents. College graduation is a basic requirement for many professional, managerial, and educational professions, and wages are higher for jobs demanding higher educational attainment. Figure 6, below, represents the level of education achieved by the population between the ages of 25-64.

**FIGURE 6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS, COUNTY, AND STATE**



Source: 2020 ACS

Winthrop's high school or equivalency attainment is higher than Manchester, West Gardiner, and Wayne, but lower than Readfield, Monmouth, the state, and Kennebec County. Winthrop has more residents who have an associate degree than Readfield, Manchester, West Gardiner, Wayne, the state, and Kennebec County.

For higher education, more Winthrop residents have a bachelor's degree or higher than Monmouth, Maine, and Kennebec County. Overall, Winthrop residents have an average educational attainment when compared with surrounding towns, and a higher average than the state and Kennebec County.

## **Winthrop's Local Business Climate:**

Winthrop had its economic heyday back in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, from the 1940s to the 1980s. Local businesses on Main Street and in other downtown locations included a five-and-dime, a fruit and quick market, a coffee shop, and a hardware and sporting goods store. Since then, many contributing factors have resulted in the disbursement of those active retail businesses, not the least of which is the influx of national chains, mergers and purchases, and big-box chain establishments. But Winthrop has the potential and is poised to become a thriving small town once again.

In recent years, many new businesses and service providers have opened in downtown Winthrop and remain hugely successful, as are existing businesses that have been established for years. Downtown Winthrop is also home to the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, which provides resources for local businesses in Fayette, Manchester, Monmouth, Mount Vernon, Readfield, and Wayne, as well as Winthrop.

The small businesses in Winthrop's downtown serve the needs of Winthrop residents and those passing through. The major retail/commercial centers are downtown, though there are other businesses spread throughout town, too. The downtown area is Winthrop village, which is currently thriving with several new businesses opening in the last five years.

An improving local economy could be anticipated to entice new residents to move to Winthrop. While population projections do not predict a significant population increase, these predictions are rarely accurate and can be influenced by many outside factors. Any population change will be tracked, and the town will respond accordingly to manage population growth, employment, and municipal tax base.

Winthrop also has many small businesses that are home occupations, though the exact number is unknown; the Code Enforcement Officer intends to track those moving forward. Home occupations play a key role in the community by keeping business local and serving specific needs of residents and people from nearby communities. Under the Zoning Ordinance, home occupations are permitted in all zoning districts with the approval of the Code Enforcement Officer. In the same way that home occupations boost the local economy, so do telecommuters who are more apt to shop locally rather than shopping in Augusta or Lewiston as they are driving home from work.

As Winthrop has an abundance of seasonal homes, camps, visitors passing through, and day-trippers, the town's economy is dependent on tourism. One way the town has worked to preserve the market for tourism is through partnering with the Cobbossee Watershed District. The town has a Cobbossee Watershed Trustee board to protect the watershed and water quality. Studies by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection have found that degraded water quality results in decreased property values. This correlates directly to protecting the watershed to ensure future tourism.

## **Winthrop's Health Service Providers:**

Local access to high-quality professional medical care in small communities is difficult to find. Winthrop is uniquely fortunate with the MaineGeneral medical facility located in the Winthrop Commerce Center, 149 Main Street. The building that houses these medical offices was formerly a woolen and textile mill and has been partially renovated to accommodate these offices. The four-story building houses medical service providers on every floor level, all under the auspices of the larger, regional medical provider, MaineGeneral.

There are eight, independent medical practices located in this facility:

- Winthrop Family Medicine
- MaineGeneral Sports Medicine
- MaineGeneral Orthopedics
- Winthrop Outpatient Rehabilitation Services
- MaineGeneral Laboratory Services
- Winthrop Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine
- MaineGeneral Radiology and Diagnostic Imaging
- MaineGeneral ExpressCare

The local availability of these medical services and providers is uncommon in small towns in Central Maine. Multiple factors contributed to MaineGeneral choosing to locate in Winthrop. The town's ideal location within proximity to the State's capital of Augusta and the regional hospital, combined with the availability of space at the Commerce Center, resulted in a perfect match between the town and MaineGeneral.

This resource is a boon to the town's older population, but all generations benefit from having medical services in Winthrop. The Family Medicine and Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine offices are top-notch, and the urgent care (ExpressCare) facilities are just as valued by Winthrop's residents.

Recently, concerns have been raised that MaineGeneral may vacate its offices in the Winthrop Commerce Center in favor of a new location. For obvious reasons, this would have a detrimental impact on the town.

## **Winthrop's Downtown:**

Winthrop has a compact and healthy downtown area, which nevertheless has room for improvement. Although the downtown area, as defined by the "village" district in the Zoning Ordinance, is bounded by Route 41/133 to the west, Route 202 to the south, and roughly the elementary school to the east, the core of it is Main Street. Main Street from the Commerce Center (previously the Carleton Woolen Mill) westward contains most of the downtown commercial buildings and the highest density of development.

In 2000, a Downtown Revitalization Plan was conducted; since that time, many of the plan's recommendations were implemented. The town should consider updating that plan

every 10 years or so to keep it current and viable in providing the best improvements and goals for the downtown area.

Numerous grants are available from which Winthrop could benefit. These grants could be used for rejuvenation and revitalization, as well as economic development benefits, such as exploring options for the creation of a new municipal position to oversee economic development.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan noted challenges for Winthrop's downtown area that are still relevant today. They are:

Commerce Center: An excellent job has been done to restore and redevelop a portion of this building. There is still ample space for housing or other ventures on upper floors while the first floor is predominantly retail space. In fact, a large portion of the first floor is used by a wildly popular market, but it is only open one weekend per month. Issues of note include the broad, blank façade on Main Street and parking limitations.

The western gateway/Royal Street: Main Street, where it joins Route 133, is not an attractive entrance to downtown. A combination of signage, landscaping, and curb improvements could improve this gateway.

Downtown Parking: As discussed in the Transportation Chapter, parking is perennially cited as a problem in all downtowns. One potential solution would be the development of a shared, public parking lot near downtown where patrons can park and walk to their destination.

Traffic Movement: Another issue discussed in the Transportation Chapter is traffic speed along Main Street. While traffic speed indicates a lack of congestion, which is a benefit, it can discourage walkability and make pedestrians feel unsafe. Traffic calming measures can be taken to slow traffic through infrastructure and policing.

Walkability and Bike-ability: Connectivity and walkable downtowns instill a sense of place for people. Although improvements have been made, pedestrian circulation is not yet 100 percent. As noted in the Transportation Chapter, commercial entrances interrupt sidewalks in Winthrop's downtown. These over-wide driveways are intimidating to pedestrians, making it less attractive to traverse Main Street via foot or bicycle.

Public Space: Main Street does not have adequate places for the public to gather, relax, eat lunch, or enjoy the ambiance. The cemetery is the only green space. There are only a handful of benches in the downtown area. In addition, the area around the municipal parking lot was intended to be green space but is not well maintained by the town. This lack of upkeep has resulted in frequent comments and requests by residents that the town improve maintenance.

Green space need not necessarily be green. The downtown might benefit from an outdoor café, or similar establishment.

**Business Capacity:** Downtowns become vibrant and thriving when they attain a critical mix of businesses. This means more than just full capacity, though that, too, is a goal. A downtown should have either an anchor store or a complementary mix. Although Hannaford Supermarket and Walgreens are technically at the edge of downtown, they do not contribute to the mix. If the Commerce Center becomes available for retail, that could contribute.

**Regulation of Economic Development:**

Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance breaks the town into 10 unique districts, each with allowable land uses (covered further under the Existing Land Use chapter and the Future Land Use chapter of this plan). See the *Existing Land Use Map* in the appendix.

Although allowable in small scale in the General Residential and Village districts, the districts created for the intention of directing commercial and industrial development are the Limited Commercial District for low- and medium-impact commercial activities, the General Commercial District for high-impact commercial uses, and the Industrial District for intensive commercial or industrial enterprises. Table 7 below details this in table format.

**TABLE 7: ZONING ORDINANCE SUMMARIZED FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES**

	General Residential	Limited Commercial	General Commercial	Industrial	Village	Rural
Low-Impact Commercial	PB	PB	PB	CEO	CEO	CEO
Med.-Impact Commercial	PB	PB	PB	CEO	CEO	PB
High-Impact Commercial	No	No	PB	PB	PB	PB
Manufacturing	No	No	PB	PB	PB	PB
Reestablishment of Industrial	No	No	PB	PB	PB	PB

Source: Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance

Definitions for high-, medium-, and low-impact commercial uses can be found in Article VI - Definitions of Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance can be accessed via the town’s website: [www.winthropmaine.org](http://www.winthropmaine.org).

PB= Planning Board, CEO= Code Enforcement Officer, No= Not Allowed

**General Residential District** - The purpose of this district is to include areas suitable for residential and limited public and commercial development. It extends to additional areas to provide locations suited to mixed residential and commercial development of a limited scale, compatible with existing development and close to town services and utilities.

Limited Commercial District - Includes areas of mixed, residential, and low- and medium-impact commercial uses. This district is devoted to a mix of residential and low-intensity businesses and commercial uses.

General Commercial District - Established areas intended for high-impact commercial uses, which may not be as compatible with other land uses, such as residential or recreational activities. It is located to provide an area suited to such development due to site conditions such as soil type, slopes, proximity to highway access, and public water and sewer services.

Industrial District - Establishes an area intended for intensive commercial or industrial enterprises, which may not be compatible with other land uses, such as residential, recreational, or agricultural activities. It is located to provide an area suited to development due to site conditions such as soil types, slopes, proximity to highway and railway access, and public water and sewer services.

Village District - Includes the most highly developed areas in town. Development is denser than in other areas and covers a broad mix of land uses including commercial, recreational, public, and residential. This district seeks to maintain the existing character and land use mix.

Rural District - Includes lands presently characterized by low-density development, forests, abandoned fields, and farms. This District seeks to protect the existing open space, forestry, agricultural and residential uses, and to restrict commercial activities.

Overall, the designated districts have been created to prevent any incompatible land use issues. In addition to allowing commercial and industrial activities in designated districts, the Zoning Ordinance sets performance standards for the development and creation of these land uses. The performance standards in the Zoning Ordinance could benefit from an update to more current language and practices -- for example, including Best Management Practices for stormwater management and limitations on impervious surfaces. To give the Planning Board the utmost oversight, the development of a Site Plan Review Ordinance would be ideal.

A Site Plan Review Ordinance would allow the Planning Board or other prescribed party the authority to review applications and site plans. In addition, the adoption of this ordinance would allow the prescribed party purview to review commercial, industrial, and other nonresidential development applications to assure they meet public health, safety, and environmental concerns. This is different than zoning and more similar to a subdivision review in that the proposal will be reviewed to ensure it meets specified standards. A Site Plan Review Ordinance would establish processes and standards for local review of retail, industrial, office, service and all other nonresidential development; however, a Site Plan Review Ordinance could also include processes and standards for the review of multi-family housing developments, as well. The local community adopts the review procedures and standards to address the types of development and issues the town may be concerned about.

## **Economic Growth Projections:**

Historically, Winthrop's economic growth has happened in incremental changes. Currently, Winthrop has a strong economy supported by many new businesses as well as existing, established businesses.

Winthrop, as is much of Maine, is home to a small but growing population of individuals who work from home and are increasingly dependent on internet access. This trend boosts the demand for improvements to that infrastructure.

In 2020, Winthrop had 262 people working from home. In 2010, 158 people worked from home. That is an increase of 104 people in 10 years, or 66 percent, of individuals working from home. And the 2020 data was collected before the height of the pandemic, which triggered a massive movement of transitioning to remote work. There are undoubtedly more people working remotely today than ever before. While it is hard to determine trends based on such small numbers, it is expected that working from home will continue to increase, given adequate infrastructure, particularly after this type of work has proven successful for many businesses. This trend boosts the demand for improvements to that infrastructure.

The town is mostly served by public water and sewer service in the areas where commercial growth is meant to be projected and directed. Winthrop's proximity to Augusta has also ensured that it has adequate broadband access, though some employers may need and demand even greater bandwidth than is currently available. To date, the Code Enforcement Officer knows of no development that has been hampered by access to three-phase power. The town's new fire station is a fairly recent example of the ease with which a facility was connected to three-phase power. In short, Winthrop appears to have the infrastructure needed to support commercial growth.

Depending on which population projections are viewed, there is either a loss of residents or minimal population growth. But as stated in the Community Profile chapter, these projections are rarely accurate for a town the size of Winthrop. There will likely be population growth to some degree and undoubtedly a change in population demographics. Population growth and population changes will affect all aspects of life, from jobs to housing.

Because Winthrop is a small part of a regional economy, it is likely most new jobs will be out of town. As only 14 percent of Winthrop residents work in town, with the other 86 percent commuting to work, this will have an impact on public services, especially the transportation system. Routes 133, 135, 41, and 202 are the major commuter routes to other areas of employment. As the population in Winthrop grows and changes, traffic and wear and tear on the main corridors will increase.

Winthrop has dedicated certain areas for various levels of commercial and industrial land uses, limiting the prospect of incompatibility. The districts earmarked for high-intensity industrial and commercial development are not at capacity, nor are the districts where

light to medium commercial development is permitted.

In creating separate districts to accommodate commercial and industrial land uses, Winthrop is protecting its more rural areas, natural resources, and residential districts. The town's Zoning Ordinance has effectively located economic activities in specific areas. Those tools have focused economic development efforts in the downtown area, and the appropriate commercial and industrial districts.

The result of this is a downtown area where many of the businesses are small and privately owned, in keeping with the community's vision of an attractive town with a prosperous economy that provides the fundamental needs of residents. The downtown area also has mixed uses, and a higher density than any other district in town, all in keeping with the historic character of the town.

Some public investment may be needed to encourage the desired growth, particularly in the Commerce Center (formerly the Carleton Woolen Mill) in the village area. However, the municipal sewer and water systems cover nearly all the land suitable for commercial development. Route 202 and Main Street have access to 3-phase power for industrial operations and broadband telecommunications infrastructure.

### **Winthrop's Unique Assets:**

Since Winthrop's total geographic area is approximately 17 percent water, one of its most prominent, unique assets are the numerous lakes, ponds, and other water resources. The influence of Winthrop's vast water bodies cannot be overstated in their importance to the economy and as an attraction. Other contributing factors include the town's numerous cultural, natural, and historical assets.

The town has a significant seasonal population, in addition to hosting day-trippers and those passing through. Winthrop leverages this asset through its wide offering of various locally owned businesses and restaurants, which are an important representation of Winthrop's small-town character. The thriving, vibrant downtown also attracts visitors and serves as a center for commerce and recreation for residents.

Other unique assets include the abundance of open space and conserved land, which contributes to its appeal for outdoor recreation; Winthrop's ideal location and ease of access via transportation infrastructure; and an actively engaged community and residents invested in the town's long-term best interests.

### **Summary of Analysis:**

Winthrop's labor force decreased by approximately 5 percent from 2010 to 2020; however, the unemployment rate also decreased from 7 percent in 2010 to 4.4 percent in 2020 (Maine Department of Labor Statistics). From this information, it can be assumed the decrease of those in the labor force was more likely a result of changing demographics than unemployment. The decrease in the unemployment rate indicates a healthy local

economy.

The largest local private-sector employers in Winthrop are Hannaford Supermarket, Progressive Distributors, MaineGeneral, and Alternative Manufacturing Inc. (AMI); however, more residents work in Augusta (24 percent) followed by 14 percent in Winthrop, 8 percent in Lewiston, and 4 percent in Waterville (Table 3).

The largest employers in the public sector include the school system, with approximately 150 full-time employees, and the Town of Winthrop itself, which has 45 full-time employees.

Currently, Winthrop does not participate in many regional economic development programs or plans aside from the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce and Kennebec Valley Council of Governments.

KVCOG is a non-profit organization, owned and operated for the benefit of its members. KVCOG provides a coordinated approach for planning and economic development at the local and regional level and has been a leader in economic development for the past 50 years.

Other economic development incentives include the availability of public water and sewer connectivity, three-phase power, and broadband. While expansion would allow accommodation of future growth, there are currently no plans to expand these services.

The abundance of water resources draws a seasonal crowd each year, and the town relies on this seasonal population for an economic boost. Other attractions include open space and outdoor recreation, the downtown area, and the ease of access from the transportation infrastructure.

### **Issues for Further Study and Discussion:**

- ❖ Is there an interest in promoting additional work from home as an economic strategy? If so, what infrastructure investments need to be made?
- ❖ How can the town ensure its small businesses remain vibrant and continue to contribute to the quality of the community?
- ❖ Does the town need to take steps such as seeking grants to improve broadband to increase the ability of local businesses and residential access to the internet?

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER FOUR: HOUSING PROFILE

Winthrop's housing supply and prices drive the town's ability to house current and future residents. As housing unit prices rise and household sizes contract, Winthrop needs to review the housing stock available to meet future needs. A mixture of housing unit types will ensure a mixture of residents – old and young, large families and single-person households, as well as different economic classes.

Winthrop's local policies influence the style, price, and location of housing units throughout the community. Housing supply may be difficult to control, but the town can address potential problems with existing housing inventory, for example, through grants for substandard housing units and by addressing energy efficiency challenges. This chapter profiles the housing unit supply and its characteristics in Winthrop.

\*\*\*\*Note: You may notice the population number varies between 6,121 and 6,005. This is because the 6,005 is from the American Community Survey (ACS) and is an estimate. It has been used in certain charts because the data was calculated based on this number from the ACS. To change the population and recalculate the data would be inaccurate. Likewise, the 2020 Census data shows that Winthrop has 3,297 housing units, with 2,646 occupied, and 651 vacant. The ACS data shows Winthrop as having 2,556 occupied housing units and 722 vacant for a total of 3,278. Table 1 highlights these significant differences. It is important to understand this because it could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. These discrepancies have been annotated in several places.

## Introduction:

Winthrop has more than 3,000 housing units of varying sizes, styles, and prices. Approximately 70 percent of those housing units are owner-occupied, with the other 30 percent as rental units. Most of Winthrop's housing falls in the private sector, as there are minimal subsidized housing unit options available.

As with most towns in the region, Winthrop faces issues regarding housing unit affordability and stock. There are several ways in which to address these issues -- for example, by coordinating with the state and seeking assistance from nonprofit organizations.

## The Housing Stock:

The 2020 Census shows Winthrop has 3,297 total housing units -- 2,646 of which are occupied and 651 of which are vacant. In contrast, the 2020 ACS data shows Winthrop has 3,278 total housing units -- 2,556 occupied units and 722 vacant units. It is important to note that the number of vacant units includes housing units that are not used on a full-time basis by the owners, and those that are on the real estate market for sale or rent, in addition to housing units that are truly vacant. Per the Census, a housing unit is considered vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the survey, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one that is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual address elsewhere.

Table 1 below highlights the disparities between the 2020 Census data and the 2020 ACS data.

**TABLE 1: DIFFERENCES IN 2020 CENSUS VS. 2020 ACS DATA COMPARED TO 2010 CENSUS DATA**

	<b>2020 Census Data</b>	<b>2020 ACS Data</b>	<b>2010 Census Data</b>	<b>% Change 2020 Census Vs. 2010 Census</b>
<b>Population</b>	6,121	6,005	6,149	-28 -0.46%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	3,297	3,278	3,295	2 0.06%
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	2,646	2,556	2,598	48 1.85%
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	651	722	697	-46 -6.60%
<b>Households</b>	N/A	2,556	2,506	50* 1.99%

Source: 2010 & 2020 Census, 2020 ACS

\*Derived from 2020 ACS and 2010 Census

In Table 2, below, 2020 ACS data was used for comparison because not all the 2020 Census data was available at the time of this writing and calculations were made (by the Census Bureau) using the ACS data. To switch back and forth between data sources would render data inaccurate. Table 2 shows the development of housing by type since 1980. (There are other discrepancies. For example, the Census changed its definition of seasonal units in 1980.)

**TABLE 2: HOUSING: TYPE AND OCCUPANCY FROM 1980 TO 2020**

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020*
Total Housing Units	1,939	2,704	3,053	3,295	3,278
Occupied Housing Units	1,360	2,136	2,495	2,598	2,556
Vacant Housing Units	579	568	558	697	722
Seasonal Housing Units	445	414	451	488	465
Mobile Homes	219	248	342	237	427
Owner Occupied Housing	-	-	-	2,009	1,783
Renter Occupied Housing	-	-	-	497	773
Single-Family Housing Unit (attached and detached) Including Mobile Homes (out of total housing stock)	1,615	1,596	1,856	2,467	2,338
Two or More Unit Housing	423	475	330	467	513

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 & 2010 Census unless otherwise noted.

\* Data source 2020 ACS

As mentioned above, the U.S. Census defines “vacant” as a housing unit in which no one is living at the time of the Census interview unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one that is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere.

Table 2 shows that between 1980 and 2010, housing construction added a considerable number of units to Winthrop’s overall housing stock. Between 1980 and 1990, the housing stock increased by 39 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, it increased 13 percent, and between 2000 and 2010, Winthrop’s housing stock increased 8 percent.

But between 2010 and 2020, housing construction plateaued. The 2020 ACS shows a decline in the number of housing units in Winthrop in this 10-year period; however, the 2020 Census shows the actual number of housing units in Winthrop to be 3,297, which is a 0.06 percent increase since 2010.

The number of vacant housing units saw a sizable jump from 2010 to 2020, while seasonal housing units decreased slightly.

Another notable area is the increased number of mobile homes from 1980 onward. In fact, from 2010 to 2020, there was an 80-percent increase in the number of mobile homes. Renter-occupied housing units also saw a sizable increase in this same 10-year period, jumping nearly 56 percent.

There is no data directly addressing how many renters live in houses versus apartments, but there is data on how many housing units there are in a building, or multi-family housing units. According to data from the ACS, as of 2020, there were 2,338 attached and detached single-family housing units (including mobile homes) in Winthrop and 513 multi-family housing units, classified as such because they contain two or more housing units. Of the 513 multi-family housing units, some may be owner-occupied, leaving only a small number of single-family housing units rented. Current, available data does not break down housing stock and rented units in this way.

### **Seasonal Housing Units:**

As with most Maine communities, Winthrop has seasonal housing units. Due to its 11 lakes, Winthrop has a larger seasonal population than many other towns. According to the 2020 ACS, there are 465 housing units in Winthrop used only seasonally, though they may have amenities to allow for year-round habitation.

Increasingly since 2020, properties that were traditionally used only seasonally have become year-round housing units or are used more regularly, as part of the overall influx of people coming to Maine. This has not changed Winthrop's housing stock, just the use of said stock.

In 2010, approximately 15 percent of housing units out of the total housing stock were considered seasonal, recreational, or occasional use housing units. In 2020, 14 percent of the housing units were noted as seasonal. The 2020 ACS lists 722 housing units as "vacant;" however, that number includes the 465 housing units listed as seasonal.

Winthrop recently began using online permit tracking software that documents all permit applications, including those for seasonal conversion into year-round houses. Until the adoption of this system, the town has not documented or tracked any kind of permits issued. Therefore, it is not possible to estimate an approximation on the number of seasonal housing units converted for year-round use, nor is it possible to determine the impact these conversions would have on the community.

### **Housing Age and Condition:**

The census tallies the age of the housing unit stock as well as its condition. The age of a housing unit could be an indicator of other issues. A high number of older housing units could mean heightened maintenance and heating costs, but also could indicate potentially historic architecture. Older housing units may have modern plumbing and electric systems but are less energy efficient, while housing units built more recently will typically

be more energy efficient and structurally sound. The age and last inspection of septic systems associated with older housing units is also a concern.

Winthrop’s housing inventory has 2,030 housing units that were built prior to 1980 when the building codes and standards began to change. Many older homes have been lived in for many years by the same family. Trends indicate that more recently purchased older homes tend to sell to those on more constrained budgets. These property purchasers would benefit from updates to septic systems and interior plumbing, electric wiring and panels, energy efficient features, roofing, et cetera, but may not have the means for these improvements. Seeking funding for and encouraging investment in affordable home improvement programs are solid approaches for the town’s residential revitalization and healthy housing inventory.

### **Housing Unit Conditions:**

Minimal statistical data exists on the *age and condition* of the town’s housing unit stock. The Census does ask questions such as the age of a housing unit, and whether it has modern plumbing and heating systems, but this is based on a statistical sample (formerly the “long form,” now called the American Community Survey), and the samples are so small that in a town the size of Winthrop, the figure is little more than a guess.

**TABLE 3: HOUSING CONDITIONS**

<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>2,556</b>
<b>Lacking complete plumbing facilities</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Lacking complete kitchen facilities</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>No telephone service available</b>	<b>78</b>

*Source: 2020 ACS*

Complete kitchens and plumbing are a common identifier used to determine the condition and quality of housing units in each community. Camp-style or seasonal housing units have potential to skew these numbers.

A Census tally of substandard living conditions is intended to identify poverty housing conditions. According to ACS data, Winthrop does not have a pervasive problem with substandard housing units, although 10 housing units were considered over-crowded based on having more than one person per bedroom.

## Housing Unit Age:

The age of housing unit structures can often be used as an indicator of housing unit conditions with varying degrees of accuracy. While some older housing units are structurally sound, they may have inadequate wiring and/or inefficient insulation or contain hazardous materials like lead paint or asbestos. Housing units built in the 1960s and 1970s or earlier tend to have inadequate insulation, whereas housing units built more recently mostly conform to modern building code requirements.

In Winthrop, the 2020 ACS estimates 806 houses were built prior to the start of World War II in 1939 (31.5 percent of all occupied housing stock). In Kennebec County, 23.9 percent of all housing units were built before WWII. In Winthrop, 1,248 housing units, or 49 percent, of the occupied housing units were built after 1980; in Kennebec County, that figure is 41.1 percent (Source: Maine State Housing Authority).

**TABLE 4: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK IN WINTHROP, MAINE**

<b>Age of Housing Units*</b>		
<b>Year Structure was Built</b>	<b># of Housing units</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
1939 or earlier	806	24.6%
1940-1949	271	8.3%
1950-1959	180	5.5%
1960-1969	171	5.2 %
1970-1979	602	18.4%
1980-1989	461	14.1%
1990-1999	351	10.7%
2000-2009	341	10.4%
2010-2013	9	0.3%
2014 or later	86	2.6%

*Source: 2020 ACS*

Table 4 shows an even spread of housing unit ages. It should be noted this age estimate (provided by Census responders) does not jibe at all with the actual number of housing units reported by the Census or ACS.

While much of the housing unit stock in Winthrop has been constructed after the 1970s, a sizable number of housing units have poor insulation, single-pane windows, substandard plumbing, antiquated heating units and faulty septic systems. Several

housing units around Winthrop are in visible need of repair. They are not clustered in any area.

**Housing Prices and Affordability:**

The price of housing units is governed by economic factors and often significantly contributes to the economic life of the town. Often the relationship between affordable housing unit prices and local median and average income levels becomes out of line. This results in insufficient housing unit availability and unaffordability for prospective residents and Winthrop workers and could result in residents relocating to another town because they cannot afford local housing units.

The growth management goal for affordable housing states that 10 percent of new housing units should be affordable to households making less than 80 percent of the median household income. How this goal is attained is left up to the town to determine whether that 10 percent should be as stick-built housing units, mobile homes, rental properties, or elderly apartments.

A housing unit is considered affordable if a household whose income is at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) can live there without spending more than 30 percent of their income (including insurance, utilities, heat, and other housing-related costs). This is true for both renters and owners.

In Kennebec County, 80 percent of the AMI by household size is as follows:

Family of 1: \$42,250	Family of 2: \$48,250
Family of 3: \$54,300	Family of 4: \$60,300
Family of 5: \$65,150	Family of 6: \$69,950
Family of 7: \$74,800	Family of 8: \$79,600

This data is from 2021 and can be found on the Maine Housing website.

Since the initial writing of this chapter, 2023 information has become available. As of 2023, 80 percent of the AMI by household size is:

Family of 1: \$45,550	Family of 2: \$52,000
Family of 3: \$58,500	Family of 4: \$64,950
Family of 5: \$70,150	Family of 6: \$75,350
Family of 7: \$80,550	Family of 8: \$85,750

The determination of whether housing is affordable begins with a discussion of cost. The Census provides adequate (though sample-sized) data regarding the price of housing in Winthrop (Tables 5 and 6). This price is derived through owners' estimation of their housing units value, meaning it does not necessarily match with actual recorded sales prices, assessor evaluations, or real estate appraisals. As such, this information is a good

starting point; however, the margin of error is significant and should be taken into consideration.

According to the Census, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Winthrop in 2010 was \$167,900; the ACS data shows the 2020 median housing unit price as \$246,600. The difference in median housing unit price from 2010 to 2020 increased by over 48 percent.

**TABLE 5: VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS FROM 2000 TO 2010**

	2000	2010	Change
Median Value* of Specified <sup>2</sup> Housing Units	\$97,300	\$162,800	\$65,500 (67.3%)
Number of Units Valued at:			
Less Than \$50,000	102	152	-50 (-49.0%)
\$50,000 - \$99,999	680	290	-390 (-57.4%)
\$100,000 - \$149,999	415	375	-40 (-9.6%)
\$150,000 - \$199,999	177	537	360 (203.4%)
\$200,000 - \$299,999	53	449	396 (747.2%)
\$300,000 - \$499,999	16	196	180 (1,125%)
\$500,000 - \$999,999	10	0	-10 (-100%)
\$1,000,000 or more	0	10	10 (100%)
<p><i>*/ "Value" is the Census respondent's estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale.</i></p> <p><i>2/ "Specified" units exclude single-family houses on 10 or more acres and units with a commercial establishment on the premises. In 2000, mobile homes were excluded as well, but not in 2010, accounting for the significant rise in housing counts.</i></p>			

Source: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census

**TABLE 6: VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS FROM 2010 TO 2020**

	2010	2020	Change
Median Value* of Specified <sup>2</sup> Housing Units	\$162,800	\$242,000	\$79,200 (48.6%)
Number of Units Valued at:			
Less Than \$50,000	152	82	-70 (-46.1 %)
\$50,000 - \$99,999	290	58	-232 (-80%)
\$100,000 - \$149,999	375	137	-238 (-63.5%)
\$150,000 - \$199,999	537	423	-114 (27%)
\$200,000 - \$299,999	449	615	166 (37%)
\$300,000 - \$499,999	196	403	207 (105.6%)
\$500,000 - \$999,999	0	51	51 (100%)
\$1,000,000 or more	10	14	4 (40%)
<p><i>*/ "Value" is the Census respondent's estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale.</i></p> <p><i>2/ "Specified" units exclude single-family houses on 10 or more acres and units with a commercial establishment on the premises. In 2000, mobile homes were excluded as well, but not in 2010, accounting for the significant rise in housing counts <u>Important to note</u>: "Specified Housing Units" is not a term used in the ACS.</i></p>			

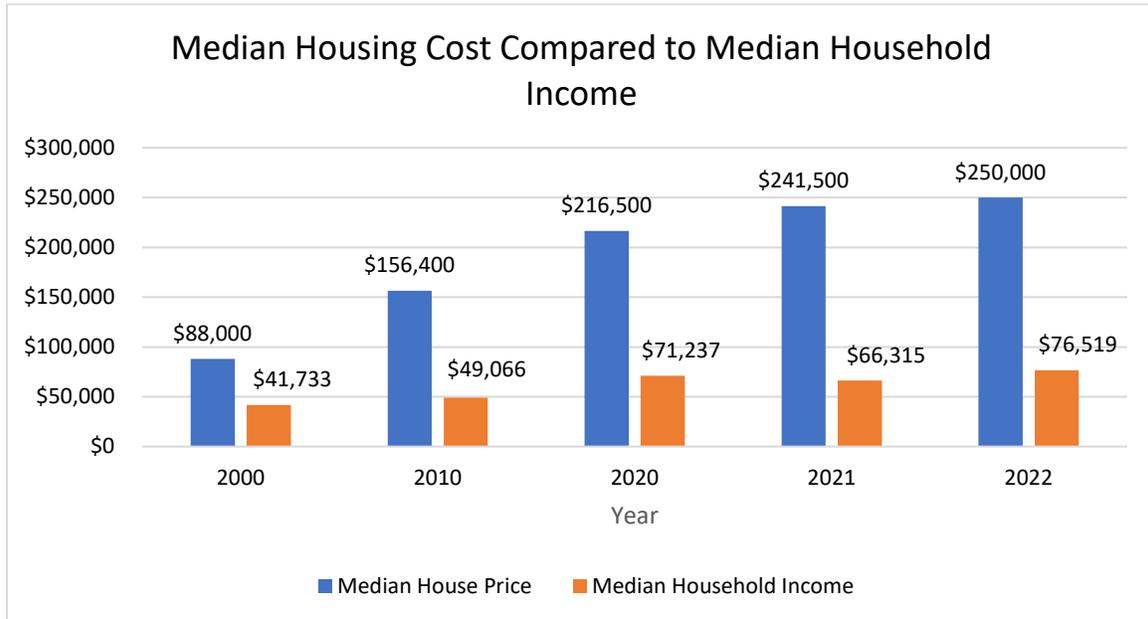
Source: 2010 U.S. Census & 2020 ACS

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is important to bear in mind that the estimated values of the housing units in Tables 5 and 6 are supplied to the Census by the homeowners and do not represent what the housing unit would sell for or even the appraised value. It is also important to understand this data is from 2020 and since that time, housing unit prices have increased exorbitantly. It is easier to understand the above information presented in Table 6 when these circumstances are taken into consideration.

The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tracks actual sales data, though it is sometimes out of date by the time it is published. According to the MSHA, the median price (actual sales) for a housing unit in 2021 in Winthrop was \$241,500. For perspective, in 2010 the median price of a housing unit in Winthrop was \$156,400. In 2020, the median price of a housing unit was \$216,500. The median housing unit price for 2021 (\$241,500) is an increase of 12 percent in just one year. The data from the MSHA will differ from the estimate put out by the ACS.

Since the time of initial writing of this chapter, Maine State Housing Authority released 2022 data, reflected in Figure 1, below. From 2021 to 2022, the median home price in Winthrop increased by 3.5 percent and the median household income increased by 15.4 percent.

**FIGURE 1: MEDIAN VALUE OF HOUSING UNITS & MEDIAN INCOME IN WINTHROP: 2000 TO 2021**

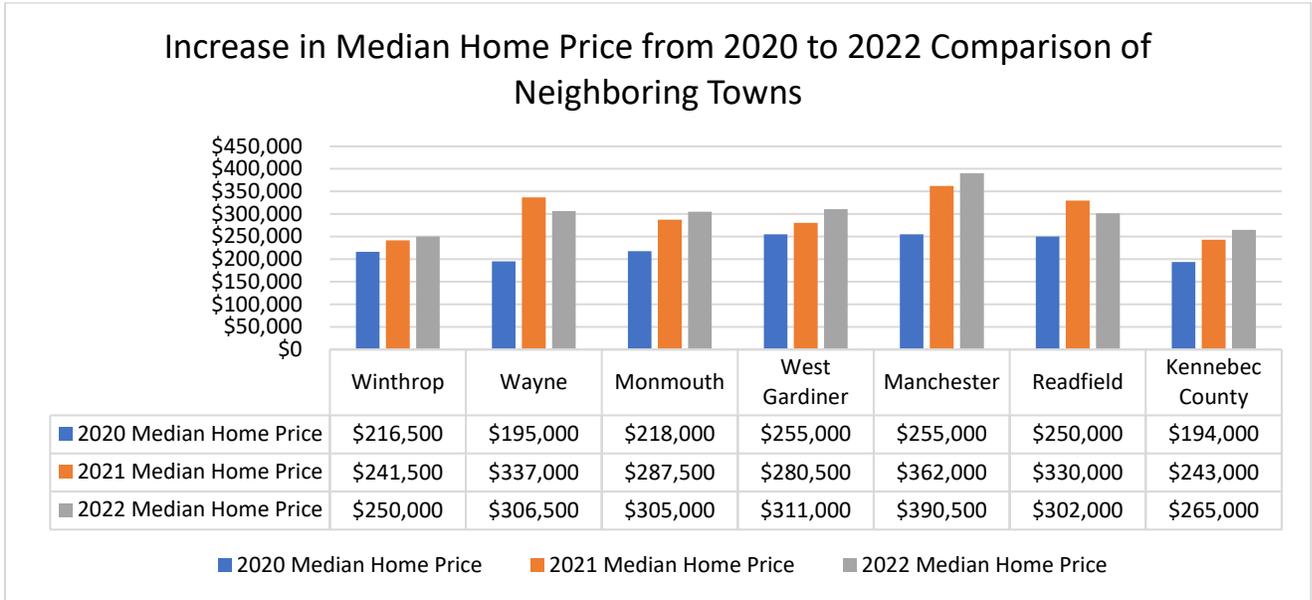


*Source: The Maine State Housing Authority*

According to the MSHA, some counties saw a staggering increase of more than 20 percent in median housing unit prices since 2020. In 2021, the median housing unit price for the State of Maine was \$295,000 and \$243,000 for Kennebec County. Comparatively, in 2015 the median housing unit price was \$176,000 for the State and \$134,250 for Kennebec County. The MSHA predicts this upward trend will continue.

Compared with surrounding communities and Kennebec County, Winthrop's median housing unit prices for 2020 were about average with surrounding towns. Compared with the cost of a median priced housing unit in 2021, Winthrop was lower than surrounding communities. In 2022, Winthrop's median home price remained lower than those of surrounding communities, but still unaffordable to nearly 55 percent of Winthrop residents.

**FIGURE 2: MEDIAN HOUSING UNIT PRICE COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBORING TOWNS: 2020 & 2021**



Source: *The Maine State Housing Authority*

Provisions of affordable housing options are assisted by MSHA programs. MSHA provides some state and federal options for many types of buyers and renters. The Maine State Legislature in 2022 enacted several new bills with provisions to attempt to remediate the affordable housing problem statewide.

## Household Income:

The data from the Maine State Housing Authority is slightly different than the data from the 2020 ACS, presented in Table 7. This table shows a breakdown of household income levels as estimated by the 2020 ACS.

**TABLE 7: WINTHROP'S ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

<b>Total Households: 2,556</b>	<b>Approximate Number of Households</b>
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	135 (5.3%)
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	66 (2.6%)
<b>\$15,000 - \$24,999</b>	212 (8.3%)
<b>\$25,000 - \$34,999</b>	261 (10.2%)
<b>\$35,000 - \$49,999</b>	355 (13.9%)
<b>\$50,000 - \$74,999</b>	389 (15.2%)
<b>\$75,000 - \$99,999</b>	555 (21.7%)
<b>\$100,000 - \$149,999</b>	432 (16.9%)
<b>\$150,000 - \$199,999</b>	84 (3.3%)
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	64 (2.5%)
<b>Median income</b>	<b>\$70,828</b>

*Source: 2020 ACS*

The Maine State Housing Authority breaks down household income and compares it with housing unit prices to create an affordability index. Since the MSHA is looking only at affordability and income levels, its data is a bit more complete and thorough compared with the estimates by the ACS in Table 7.

According to MSHA's data for 2021, the median housing unit price in Winthrop of \$241,500 is considered unaffordable based on the 80 percent of median income rule mentioned above. The MSHA calculates an affordable housing unit at various income levels, factoring in interest rates and other variables, and using the rule of thumb that a household should pay no more than 30 percent of their monthly income in housing costs.

Housing units are almost affordable to the median income household in Winthrop, but not quite. The MSHA data shows 2021 annual median income in Winthrop as \$66,315 and the income needed to afford the median priced housing unit (\$241,500) as \$68,115 annually, which calculates to an hourly rate of \$32.75. This is based on working a full-time, 40-hour week to meet the 80-percent rule.

The difference between the actual annual median income and the annual income necessary to afford the median housing unit price in Winthrop is \$1,800. The housing unit price that is affordable based on the current median income is \$235,117. By that standard, 51 percent of households (1,304 households) cannot afford a median-priced housing unit in Winthrop. Another way of looking at this is that of the housing units sold in Winthrop,

approximately 55 percent of those are considered unattainable based on current annual wages.

That means Winthrop is not affordable for 1,304 households out of 2,556 total households living in town. In general, Winthrop has some affordability challenges, but is faring better than other parts of the state. The MSHA conducts an annual analysis of housing sales data and median household income by community to create the affordability index mentioned above that compares the sale price that would be affordable to the median household income with the median sale price.

In Winthrop, the 2021 affordability index was 0.97, which makes sense since the difference of income needed to afford a median price home was only \$1,800 more than the actual median income. Table 8 compares the index of neighboring towns, county, and state.

**TABLE 8: AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP**

	Year	Median Home Index Price	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Priced Home	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
Maine	2021	0.80	\$295,000	\$63,427	\$79,201	\$236,243
	2020	0.91	\$255,000	\$63,340	\$69,691	\$231,762
	2019	0.90	\$225,000	\$63,340	\$66,044	\$202,959
	2018	0.89	\$212,500	\$56,987	\$64,367	\$188,138
Augusta Micropolitan Area	2021	0.85	\$255,000	\$59,072	\$69,361	\$217,175
	2020	1.06	\$210,000	\$60,799	\$57,560	\$221,814
	2019	1.12	\$182,400	\$60,004	\$53,591	\$204,228
	2018	1.08	\$172,000	\$56,213	\$52,086	\$185,630
Winthrop	2021	0.97	\$241,500	\$66,315	\$68,115	\$235,117
Wayne	2021	0.76	\$337,000	\$69,803	\$92,079	\$255,473
Monmouth	2021	0.78	\$287,500	\$61,383	\$78,540	\$224,697
West Gardiner	2021	1.03	\$280,500	\$72,455	\$70,350	\$288,895
Manchester	2021	0.72	\$362,000	\$71,379	\$98,676	\$261,858
Readfield	2021	0.85	\$330,000	\$78,106	\$92,252	\$279,398
Kennebec County	2021	0.84	\$243,000	\$55,866	\$66,606	\$203,816

Source: Maine State Housing Authority

In Table 8, the rows in red are considered unaffordable, while the rows in green are considered affordable.

**FIGURE 3: PEAKS OF MEDIAN HOUSING UNIT PRICES**



*Source: Maine State Housing*

Figure 3 shows the change and increase in median housing unit prices in Winthrop beginning in 2007. Although 2007 was a peak in median housing unit costs, prices reached 2007 levels again in 2014, then topped that in 2016, and have escalated each year since.

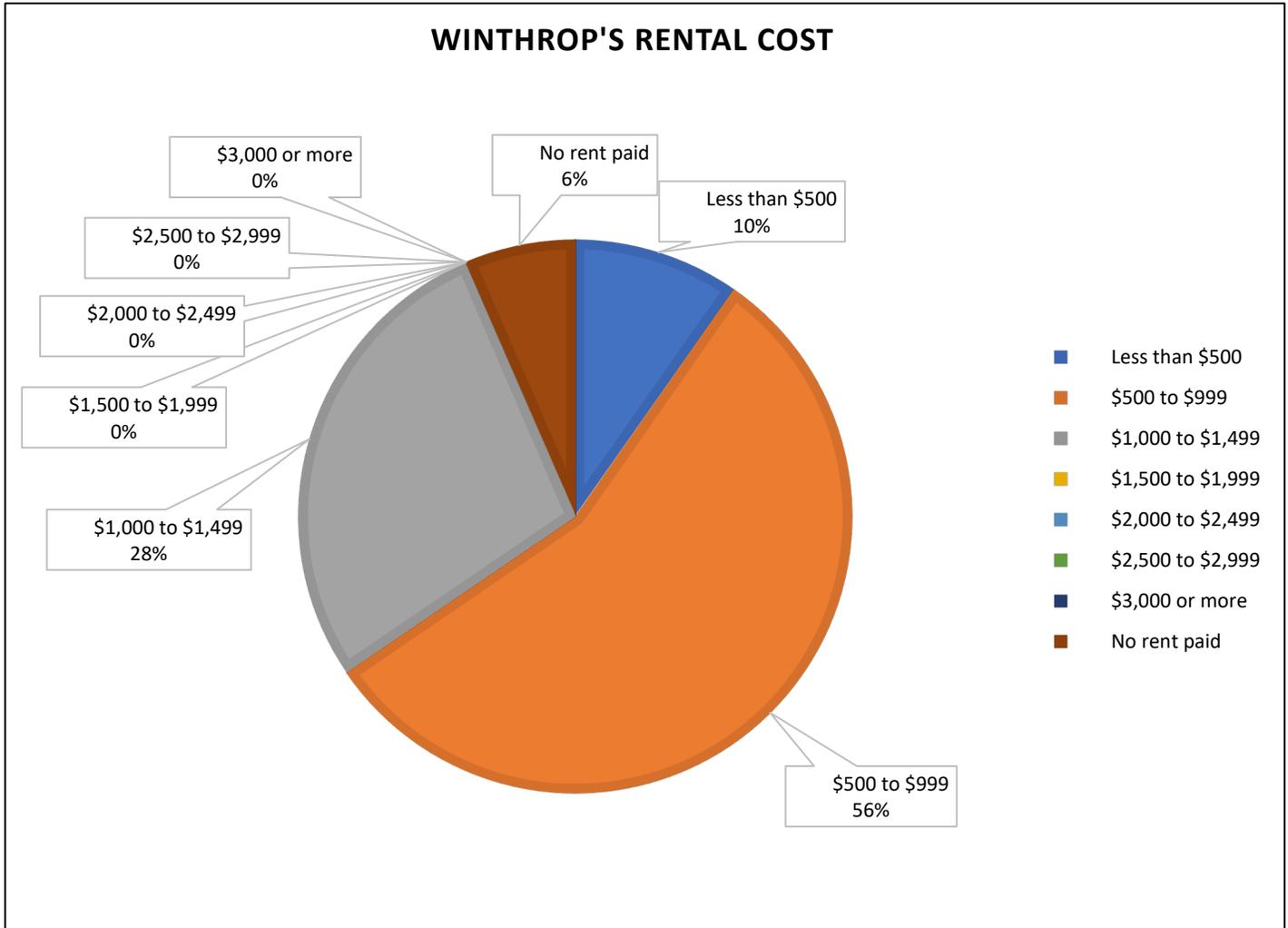
Household incomes rose by 35 percent and prices of housing units rose 54 percent in the period between 2010 and 2022. This data is skewed by a variety of economic factors; however, it is undeniable that household incomes have not increased to keep pace with the rising housing unit prices.

### **Year-Round Rental Housing Units:**

With nearly 30 percent of Winthrop's population, or 723 households, living in rental housing, the affordability of renting is a crucial aspect to consider.

Figures 4 and 5 below show the cost of renting in Winthrop and the gross rent as a percentage of income, respectively. The median rental cost for 2020 was \$862 and 56 percent of those renting fell into this category (statistics are for year-round rentals, not vacation rentals).

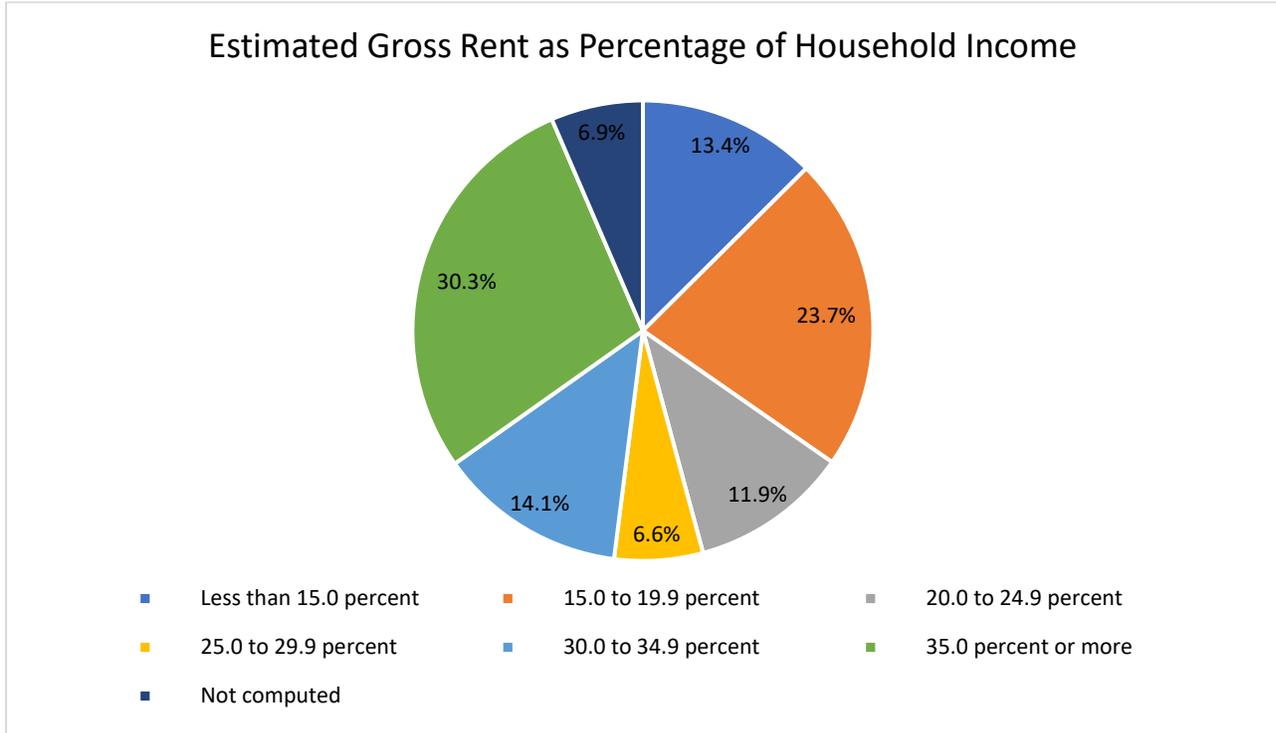
**FIGURE 4: COST OF RENTING IN WINTHROP**



Sources: 2020 ACS

Of the 773 renting households, 321 individuals, or 41.5 percent, paid rents that were above what would be considered affordable based on their incomes. Of those 321 households, 219 renting households paid 35 percent or more of their income toward rent and 102 renting households paid 30 percent to 34.9 percent of their income toward rent. These percentages can be seen in Figure 5 below.

**FIGURE 5: RENT AS PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME**



*Source: 2020 ACS*

Several factors contribute to rent consuming high percentages of household incomes. Generally, those who rent have lower incomes than those who own their own housing units. In addition, rentals are in short supply, which has driven up prices.

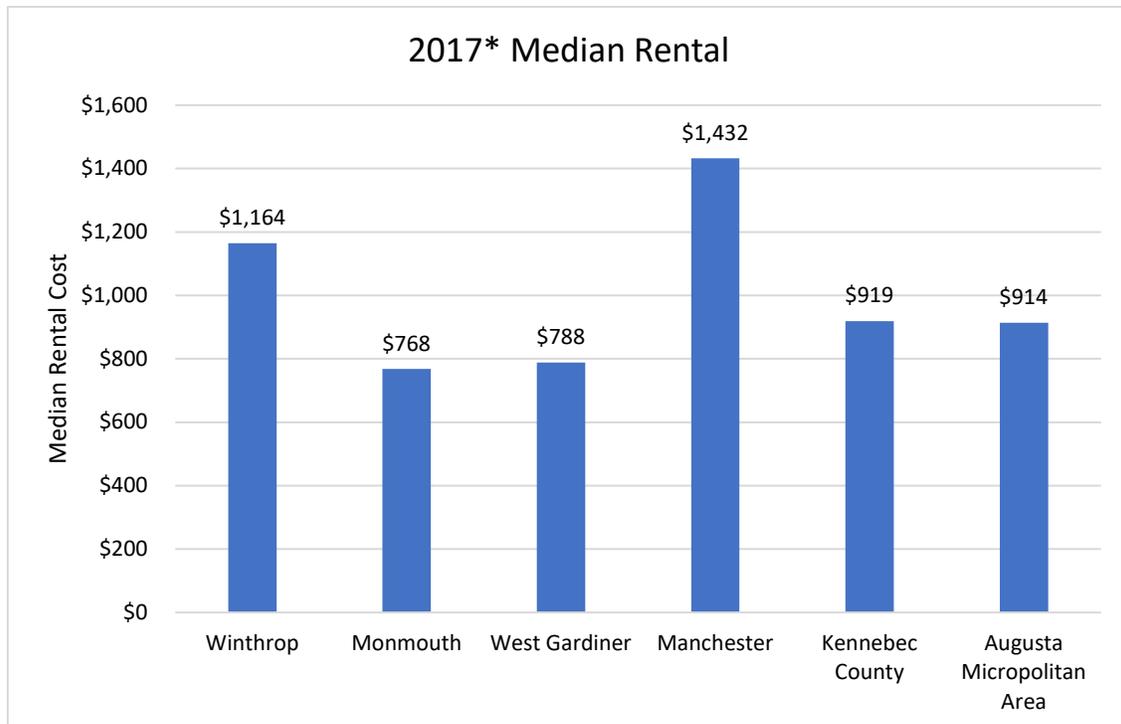
There are undoubtedly people in Winthrop's community, as in every town, who are burdened with housing costs. While the median rent of \$862 may not be statistically excessive, it is still higher than some households can afford. Based on the data presented in Figures 4 and 5 above, this monthly rental cost is a significant burden on almost 50 percent of renting households in Winthrop.

A monthly rental price of \$862 leaves 41.5 percent of renting households rent-burdened, with another 17 percent to 19 percent paying at least 20 percent of their monthly income toward rent. 86 renting households pay between 20 percent and 24.9 percent of their monthly income toward rent, while 46 renting households pay between 29.9 percent and 35 percent of their monthly income toward rent. This is compounded by the unlikelihood of finding a rental property available for this price.

Addressing affordability issues in the rental market is easier than in the home ownership market, as there are state and federal programs to fund low-income affordable rental housing.

Comparatively, according to MSHA statistics, in 2017 (more recent data was not available) the median cost of the average two-bedroom rental in Winthrop was considered unaffordable at \$1,164 per month. By MSHA's calculations, renter's household median income was \$39,509 annually, thus able to afford \$988 a month for rent with that income. MSHA estimates some 61.6 percent of renter households are unable to afford the median cost for an average 2-bedroom rental, though that data conflicts with the ACS data, which is an estimate.

**FIGURE 6: COMPARISON OF MEDIAN COST OF RENTING IN NEIGHBORING TOWNS - 2017\***



Source: Maine State Housing Authority

\*2020 data not available for several of these towns

Figure 6 shows Winthrop's 2017 median rental cost for a 2-bedroom apartment was higher than most neighboring towns, Kennebec County, and the Augusta Micropolitan Area in which it lies. The only exception was Manchester, which had a significantly higher median rent.

Rental prices in the area have also substantially increased since this data was gathered in 2020 while income, again, has not increased to the point of keeping rents attainable for residents. Lower-income households have a more pronounced affordability issue. This suggests a shortage of multi-family rental units.

Since people are likely to be willing to move to find more affordable housing, the housing unit prices need to be considered in a more regional perspective. If people come to work in Winthrop but cannot find a housing unit in their price range, they will either commute from out of town or leave their job to find better conditions elsewhere.

When considering affordability, it is important to bear in mind that potential homeowners are individuals who are often currently renting, typically between the ages of 25-44. Workforce renters are families, typically between the ages of 16-34. These ages need to be kept in mind when planning for future affordable housing.

Seniors, as a population, may benefit from special attention when considering the future of development in Winthrop, as their housing needs may change as they age. To ensure all community members have appropriate, right-sized housing, Winthrop should consider development that allows for a broad range of housing that allows community members to age in their community of choice.

Many seniors are still living in the housing units in which they raised their households. There are usually just one or two people living in housing units that once had four or more occupants. It is likely that if enough smaller housing unit stock were available, seniors living in these situations would downsize, freeing up larger housing units more appropriate for families trying to relocate to Winthrop.

### **Housing Location Trends:**

The Census designates Winthrop as having an urban cluster and a rural area. Of the 2020 Census population, 2,666 individuals are living within Winthrop's Census Designated Place, which leaves 3,455 individuals living in the more rural areas. This obviously shows a greater density of housing within the urbanized area needed to contain close to half the total town population.

Winthrop implemented an online permitting system in the summer of 2022. Prior to that, permit tracking was not maintained consistently. For that reason, new housing location trends cannot be reliably referenced.

### **Projections:**

Winthrop's Community Profile chapter documents a steady decline in the average number of people per household over the last several decades. Counterintuitively, this trend means that more housing units are required even if the population is not growing rapidly or at all.

Based on projections by the Office of the State Economist, by the year 2038, Winthrop's population is estimated to be 5,930, a decrease of 191 residents. Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) projects a population of 6,200 by 2030, a slight increase in the population.

The most likely scenario is no change to the population in terms of numbers, but a change in household size would result in a need for more housing units. With Winthrop's current population of 6,121, and an average household size of 2.31, 2,556 housing units are occupied (2020 ACS). If that same population in 2030 had an average household size of

2.19 (a decrease of just 5 percent from 2.31 to 2.19), they would need 2,795 housing units. Using the 3,297 total housing units from the Census and the 465 seasonal housing units from the 2020 ACS, there are 2,832 housing units that can accommodate year-round occupancy in Winthrop. It is important to bear in mind that 2,832 housing units includes 257 housing units that have been classified as “vacant” by the Census Bureau. Those housing units classified as vacant include housing units for sale, recently sold, for rent, or recently rented. If there were more affordable housing units available, this could encourage younger people and families to relocate to Winthrop and allow seniors to remain in the town of their choosing.

Of those housing units for sale or rent that were classified as vacant by the Census, their status has more than likely changed since publication. To accommodate the projected changing population, Winthrop will need to add to its existing housing stock, ideally with a focus on right-sized housing for the changing demographic of individuals living alone.

As stated in the Community Profile chapter, it is important to remember many outside factors that can influence population change. Population projections may work sufficiently for smaller communities, but for larger ones, they are rarely accurate. To compound this, population projections are based on past trends. With the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not possible to predict the future based on past trends. These are unique circumstances, never seen before. These circumstances have resulted in changes that were not possible to predict.

Regardless, population projections are a starting point, or at least a consideration, when planning for the future, and as such, they are considered in this Plan.

The baseline scenario for Winthrop is no population change. However, “no population change” does not mean “no growth”. Even if Winthrop’s population *numbers* do not change by 2030, the components of the population will most assuredly be different. Currently, the trend with the greatest impact on growth is declining average household size. This “no population change” scenario includes the assumption that the decreasing household size will eventually plateau, and average age will continue to increase for some time based on the baby boom generation.

To some extent, the household-size statistic relates to the type of housing units as well as quantity of housing units needed. A specific type of housing unit suits younger and older individuals, such as apartments or retirement communities. Large-lot subdivisions typically attract families with children. With the impending demographic trend from the retirement of baby boomers, the market for large family housing units may well be greatly reduced in favor of smaller, more efficient housing.

## **Current Housing Regulations:**

The following Ordinances exert regulatory pressures on all land uses:

Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance covers the following:

Article I - General

Article II - Nonconforming Uses, Buildings, and Lots

Article III - Zoning Districts

Article IV - Performance Standards

Article V - Administration

Article VI - Definitions

Groundwater Protection Ordinance

Bike and Pedestrian Plan

Parking and Traffic Control Ordinance

Traffic Ordinance

Winthrop's Downtown Revitalization Plan- 2000

Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code

- International Residential Code
- International Building Code
- International Existing Building Code
- International Energy Conservation Code
- International Mechanical Code

Housing unit construction in Winthrop is impacted by local codes and ordinances, including zoning, subdivision, and building codes. The Zoning Ordinance outlines the town's requirements and standards for land use and construction. Single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings are subject to approval from the CEO (Code Enforcement Officer). Two-family housing units are required to meet the dimensional standards for single-family houses.

The current Zoning Ordinance does little to promote or encourage the development of affordable housing units such as accessory dwelling units or multi-family housing. Multi-family dwellings are allowed only with a Conditional Use Permit granted by the Planning Board in all zoning districts besides the Village District, which requires approval by the CEO (refer to the *Existing Land Use Map* in the appendix of this plan). For multi-family housing units in a shoreland district served by public water and sewer, the dimensional requirements are the product of the number of dwelling units on the lot multiplied by the minimum lot size required for a single-family housing unit. In all other districts, the minimum lot size shall be the same required for a single-family dwelling and 5,000 square feet for each additional dwelling unit beyond the first.

The Zoning Ordinance does not include any information on accessory apartments, which means they are not permitted in any district. Accessory apartments, also known as accessory dwelling units, are often a simple approach to increasing affordable housing stock.

The Zoning Ordinance sets lot sizes in the General Residential District of 30,000 square feet even with public sewer, which limits potential for building walkable neighborhoods on small lots or constructing smaller housing on smaller lots to reduce construction cost.

Cluster Residential Development is allowed in any zoning district where single-family dwellings are allowed, provided that the net residential density is not greater than would be allowed under traditional subdivision development. Other requirements for cluster subdivisions generally include connection to the town's municipal sewer system, a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet, and 100 feet of road frontage.

Topics covered in the Zoning Ordinance (not an exhaustive list):

Minimum Building Lot Requirements

Minimum Structural Requirements

Building Codes

Unsafe, Dilapidated and Casualty Damaged Structures

Planned Residential or Cluster Developments

Mobile Home Parks

Accessory Apartments

Adjunct Residential Uses

Home Occupations

Bed and Breakfasts

Junk Regulations

Winthrop's building code is based on Maine's Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC). These are statewide standards that must be adhered to.

The State of Maine recently enacted several bills to promote affordable housing. Some of these bills may override local land use control, which would thereby force Winthrop to re-examine its Zoning Ordinance. These Legislative bills are part of a nationwide trend to encourage affordable housing.

**Analysis:**

The community has an undeniable interest in maintaining a range of housing unit opportunities for its residents, as a diversity of housing units leads to a diverse and vibrant community. Winthrop's housing unit supply and prices ultimately determine future growth. And, with current housing costs, many people considering purchasing a housing unit in Winthrop are priced out of the market and end up looking in other areas for housing. While not yet reflected entirely in the statistical data, the anecdotal experience of homebuyers and real estate brokers is that home prices have increased exponentially since the COVID pandemic, effectively pricing median wage earners out of the housing market. This is an issue, though not specific to Winthrop, that needs immediate attention.

As structured, many local governments are not in the business of providing housing to residents; however, there are potential channels and levels of engagement to consider, such as establishing or participating with Housing Authorities, establishing development

corporations, implementing housing committees, starting “housing trust funds,” and land banking properties to auction for development by private developers that have deed restrictions ensuring intended use.

As currently structured, most local governments rely on policies that influence style, price, density, and location of housing units.

Towns have historically been responsible for ensuring that their citizens have safe, sanitary, and secure housing units, and have done what they can to keep the price of housing down.

To be effective, housing unit affordability needs to be addressed at a regional level. Since Winthrop has been in preliminary discussions with nearby towns, they have already taken small steps in this direction.

The following demographic trends must be considered when planning for housing needs in the future:

- 1) Populations are aging, nationwide and in Winthrop. Older households have different priorities for housing units. Regionally, there is an ever-increasing shortage of housing units appropriate for seniors.
- 2) The economy in Winthrop is improving. The result is an increasing need for more affordable housing units and rental housing units to continue to attract and retain single people and young couples, thus ensuring the overall health and diversity of the community.

Historically, the housing unit trend has been to construct mid-sized to large single-family housing units on large lots, but this trend is no longer meeting all needs. The town should consider exploring options and strategies that will reduce the cost of housing units without compromising quality.

It is clear that Winthrop’s housing market is falling short of meeting certain needs, particularly for seniors and young potential homebuyers. Assistance is available on the state and federal level through programs that help with housing affordability. MSHA also has programs for first-time homebuyers; however, this program is only a discounted down payment and interest rate. At a certain point, even those incentives are inadequate to compensate for high housing unit prices.

Since Winthrop is the service center for western Kennebec County, there is an increased demand for workforce housing units and elderly housing units. Winthrop has rural character and community support as well as amenities such as medical services, restaurants, and other services. The town has proven to be an excellent location for those starting out in life and those looking to retire.

Zoning, or in many cases, the lack of zoning, is part of the equation in the supply and location of housing units within a community. Private enterprises are also affected by zoning or lack thereof. Just as zoning can influence housing units, so, too can the many styles of housing influence the size, age, and income levels of a community. Additionally, the location of housing units can impact the cost of providing town services and economic health of commercial areas.

The town can help by providing incentives or a regulatory structure, such as zoning, that will favor a preferred form of development. Based on past growth, future housing units should be encouraged to develop as follows:

- There should continue to be a diversity of housing unit size and styles, to reflect the diversity of the town's population.
- At least one of every 10 new housing units constructed will need to be affordable to a family making 80 percent of the median household income.
- Construction quality will be ensured through enforcement of the statewide building code.

The cost of housing units may be reduced primarily through reducing the development cost. Mechanisms for doing this include decreasing the required parcel size in predetermined areas, reducing the required parcel size for multifamily housing units, extending water and sewer services, and allowing mobile and manufactured housing units in more districts. Other mechanisms to consider include permitting more intensive use of existing buildings or forming an affordable housing committee to work with developers and ease the permitting process.

These and other strategies are discussed in more depth in the Policies and Strategies section of this Plan.

One potential impediment to affordable housing can be municipal zoning ordinances. To ensure the Zoning Ordinance aligns with the goals, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan and needs of the town, it should be reviewed upon completion of the Plan.

Winthrop's overall housing objective is to maintain the character of the town while promoting a housing trend that will meet future demand. The community strives to create more affordable housing to provide flexibility and opportunity for property owners in the town's designated growth areas.

Affordable housing units need not be large apartment buildings, nor are mobile homes the only type of affordable single-family housing units. It is possible to design stick-built affordable single-family housing units, providing another option in housing. It is also possible to design affordable housing neighborhoods within the larger community's architectural style.

It is important to keep in mind that affordable housing is not low-income housing. Promoting housing affordability is for the seniors already living in Winthrop who want to

downsize; it's for the young couple who are struggling to start their careers and a family; it's for the younger generation who want to live in the town where they grew up and it's for those who move to town after graduating college to start a career.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER FIVE: PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES & FISCAL CAPACITY

### **Municipal Services:**

The Town of Winthrop, by itself or in collaboration with neighboring towns and other partners, offers comprehensive public facilities and services to residents, workers, and visitors. The following section contains a summary of those services.

### **The Town Office:**

The Winthrop Town Office is the base of operations for general government services. It includes offices for the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Assessor, Town Manager, General Assistance, Finance Office, Code Enforcement Officer, Planner and Executive Assistant, as well as meeting space for the Town Council and other municipal boards and committees. The Winthrop Public Schools' administrative office is also accessible through the Town Office. The Town Office is open for the normal conduct of business 45 hours a week.



Located at 17 Highland Avenue, the Town Office (pictured) is located within the Winthrop Grade School. The space was renovated and occupied by town staff in 2004. The Town Office has its own entrance and parking and is sufficient to meet the needs of the town for the foreseeable future.

## **Public Safety:**

Winthrop is served by municipal police and fire departments, and a regional communications center and ambulance service. The Winthrop Police Department provides 24/7 police protection to the town, supplemented by mutual aid agreements with the Monmouth Police Department and the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office. The department currently consists of 10 full-time officers and currently (as of mid-2023), shares a police chief with the Town of Monmouth.

The department is housed in the old Town Hall building at 15 Town Hall Lane. That structure was remodeled in 2009 to better accommodate police operations. Given the building's age, additional work may always be necessary. Police equipment replacement is scheduled as part of the town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

In the year ending June 30, 2022, Winthrop Police responded to 4,831 calls, an average of 13 per day. The types of calls include, but are not limited to, domestic disturbances, burglary, theft, mental health crisis, assaults, child abuse, citizen assists, animal complaints, traffic complaints and traffic crashes. Actual crimes totaled 166 with a clearance rate of 38 percent. Clearance rates are a measure of crimes solved by the police. They are calculated by dividing the number of crimes for which a charge is filed by the total number of crimes recorded.

The Winthrop Fire Department is an all-volunteer department consisting of an average of about 25 members. As of 2024, the Fire Department has no junior members, but it is always recruiting members of all ages. The department responds to fire, smoke, alarms, and accident calls, as well as storm responses to clear roads of trees and power lines, and mutual aid calls with the neighboring towns of Monmouth, Manchester, Readfield, Wayne, Mount Vernon, Augusta, Wales, and Fayette. In 2022, the department responded to 227 calls. One of the most important functions of the department is training to keep abreast of modern practices and building standards. Between training and response time, volunteers contribute approximately 5,500 hours of service to the town annually.

The Fire Department moved into its new fire station on Route 202 adjacent to Carleton Mill in 2018. The structure boasts 9,600 square feet plus a 1,500-square-foot mezzanine. It has four large bays for equipment, a locker room for personal protective equipment (PPE), a hose tower with several training features incorporated, and an area for decontaminating gear and equipment after calls. The lobby area stores an antique fire truck, as well as some artifacts and awards. The station also has a large meeting/training room, a commercial kitchen, offices, and a crew area with two bedrooms, a fitness room, and a bathroom with a shower.

The Fire Department currently has five trucks: engines dating from 1999, 2009 and 2021, an aerial truck that was acquired in 2004, a 1995 Kubota utility task vehicle (UTV) equipped with tracks, and a water rescue boat that is being replaced with a larger craft. Personal protective equipment costs an average of \$5,000 per member.

The Winthrop Regional Communications Center, located inside the police station, provides dispatching services to Winthrop, Wayne, Wales, Readfield, Mount Vernon, Vienna, and Fayette. The Communications Center is staffed by five full-time dispatchers, who are Winthrop Police Department employees. Initial Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) or E911 calls go to the Androscoggin County Communications Center in Auburn and are forwarded to Winthrop's center. In 2022, the center logged over 10,000 calls for police, fire, or ambulance.

Winthrop needs to upgrade its emergency radio infrastructure; this will include upgrades to the school system, Public Works, ambulance services, the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the Communications Center. The upgrade would include a new radio tower and building. The current tower is approximately 70 feet tall and below the tree canopy. Recent analysis recommends a structure of approximately 160 feet tall to rise above the canopy. The immediate need is to purchase the present tower site from Consolidated Communications so the Town can move forward with its emergency communications improvement plan. The project's anticipated cost is upwards of \$1.2 million and would be divided among the towns that would be served by the communications system.

Emergency Medical Service is provided on a regional basis to Winthrop, Wayne, Mount Vernon, Readfield, Fayette, Manchester, and Monmouth. In the calendar year 2022, the service responded to 2,160 emergency calls for service, roughly 50 percent of which were from Winthrop. Depending on the location and nature of the call, transport may be to any of six hospitals in Augusta, Lewiston, Waterville, or Farmington. The ambulance service consists of eight full-time employees (a Chief, a Deputy Chief, three full-time Paramedics, three full-time Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), and 42 part-time EMTs and paramedics.

In 2008, the service moved into its current facility on Old Western Avenue at the former Winthrop Health Center. The building can house all four of the service's ambulances and eight staff members. The building is expected to be adequate for the long term, though the need for improvements is anticipated within the coming 10 years. There are no reserve funds for vehicle or station replacement in the town's Capital Improvement Plan.

The Fire Chief is the Emergency Management Director for the town. The town is up to date with all its planning and preparation requirements.

Overall, Winthrop's emergency response system is adequate, although needs for future improvement have been identified, such as the \$1.2 million project to improve emergency communications. This cost would cover the entirety of the project.

### **Public Works:**

The Public Works Departments consists of three divisions: streets, waste management, and cemeteries.

The streets division consists of a Public Works Director, a supervisor and six full-time crew members in the winter and five in the summer, with 14 pieces of equipment. They are responsible for winter maintenance for 57 miles of roadway and summer maintenance of 47 miles of road, and stormwater drainage facilities. Additionally, the Public Works Department cares for 4.7 miles of sidewalk. More detailed information on road conditions and needs is located in the Transportation chapter. The highway garage is located at 36 Main Street. The garage was built in 1988 and is insufficient for current needs. It is not well-insulated, leading to higher heating costs. A replacement facility should be considered in the foreseeable future.

Existing stormwater management facilities are adequately maintained, though improvements could be made in the frequency with which stormwater catch basins are cleaned. The town's existing stormwater management system can sufficiently handle the expected future development in this planning period.

The transfer station is located off Route 202 and is run by a staff of four. The facility was built in 1989. Waste is transported to the Maine Waste to Energy facility in Auburn. The cost of waste disposal in 2023 is \$83.62 a ton compared to \$77.31 a ton in 2022. The transfer station includes a recycling facility. In the fiscal year 2022-2023, the station processed 2,217.12 tons of household trash, 725.37 tons of demolition material, 33.22 tons of tires, and about 1,000 tons of miscellaneous recyclables. Income from recyclables is about \$60,000 per year. A new scale and a hot top will be needed for the facility in the near future.

Currently, the waste management facilities and recycling operations meet the needs of residents. The availability of the recycling operation serves to reduce the community's reliance on waste disposal. Aside from a new scale and hot top, mentioned above, no improvements are necessary to meet the needs of the future projected population.

Winthrop is responsible for the care of five cemeteries: Glenside, Maple, Lakeview, East Winthrop, and Metcalf. By far the most active cemetery is Glenside. Recent expansion provided enough capacity at Glenside for at least five to 10 years, and additional expansion is feasible. A Cemetery Committee has been formed to help guide the care and maintenance of the town's burial grounds.

Currently, the town does not have a street tree program.

### **Land Use Planning and Regulation:**

Winthrop employs a fully certified, full-time Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to uphold the town's land use ordinances and Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC). The CEO is staff to the Planning Board, which consists of seven highly motivated, knowledgeable volunteers. The CEO has become increasingly busy with permit applications and code enforcement work in recent years. To assist the CEO, the town recently created the position of Executive Assistant to be shared between the CEO and the Town Manager.

In addition, a need has been identified for an on-staff Town Planner to work with the Planning Board, the CEO, and the Town Manager. In September 2023, the town hired a Town Planner, whose position is also supported by the Executive Assistant.

The Zoning Ordinance was last updated in 2019, although it will need to be updated at the completion of this plan. Upon updating, the Zoning Ordinance will need to be amended to reflect the requirements of the new affordable housing legislation that came about in 2022 (LD 2003).

Winthrop's Subdivision Ordinance was last updated in 1995 and needs to be reviewed and rewritten, as well.

### **Municipal Staffing:**

The Town of Winthrop employs an able staff of 45 full-time dedicated public servants who provide the community with a range of high-quality services. During the peak summer season, the full-time staff is supplemented by up to 60 part-time employees. Terms of employment for police officers, paramedics and emergency medical technicians, and general employees who are not in supervisory positions are dictated by union contracts.

Despite offering a competitive compensation package, the Town has been plagued by employee turnover that diminishes efficiency and efficacy, creating service and knowledge gaps. Vacancies have at times marred employee morale, which further impacts effectiveness. Improving employees' job satisfaction could yield the continuity of service and knowledge that would best serve the citizens. In addition to providing competitive wages and benefits, opportunities to shore up job satisfaction include instituting job descriptions, annual performance reviews, merit raises, cross-training and succession planning, providing for professional development, and ensuring adequate staffing.

### **Education:**

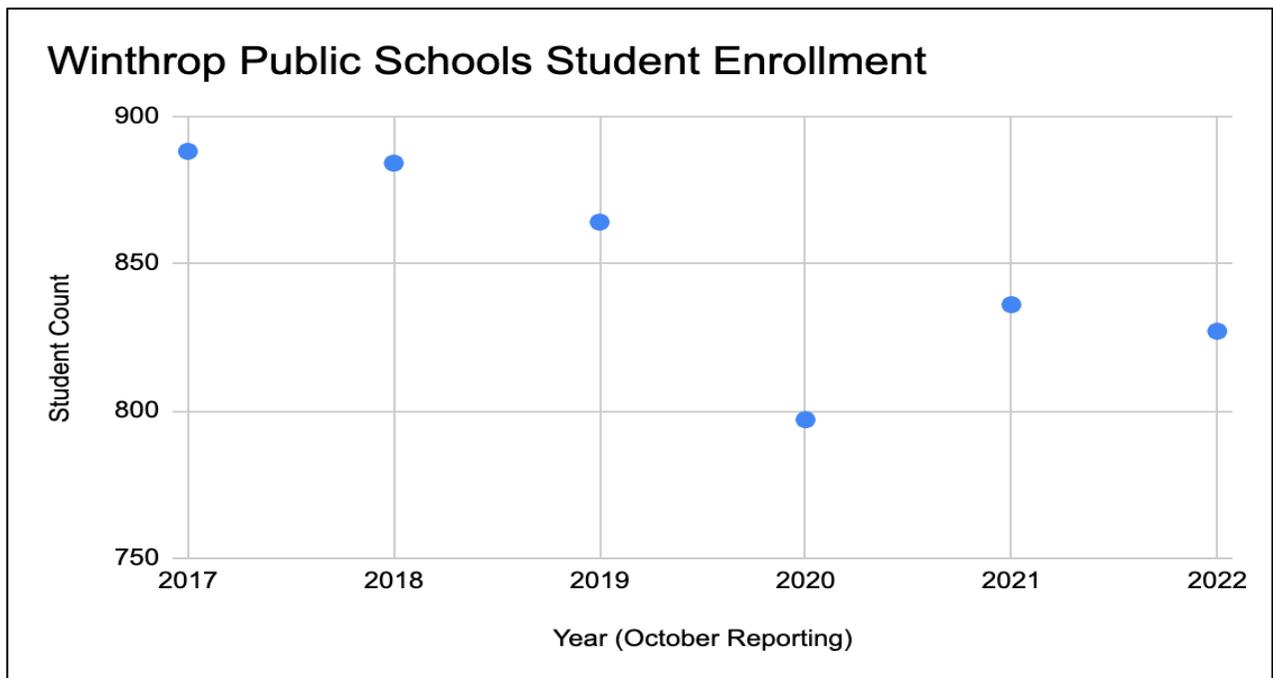
Public education in Winthrop is provided by Winthrop Public Schools (WPS). Facilities include the Winthrop Grade School on Highland Avenue, Winthrop Middle School, and Winthrop High School, which are co-located on the Rambler Road campus at the western edge of downtown. WPS offers students a wide variety of academic and extracurricular opportunities to promote their core values of Respect, Compassion, Integrity, Responsibility and Cooperation. Winthrop Public Schools is commonly acknowledged as one of the top school systems in Maine. The district's new strategic plan focuses on continuous growth to strengthen academics, building relationships, and implementing capital improvements.

In recent years, WPS has made a significant investment in the upkeep and maintenance of its facilities. New roofing, boilers, and lighting were installed in all three buildings. A large focus has been on the grade school, which includes updated handicap accessibility, paving projects, and a new fire suppression system. In late summer 2023, construction

of a new turf field was completed in time for the fall 2023 football season. This is the first step in the development of the Winthrop Athletic Complex, which is being gifted by community donors.

Declining enrollment has been an issue in the past and threatens to increase the costs of education. Student enrollment has steadily declined over the last few years, reaching its lowest during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). Currently, enrollment hovers around 820 students. Figure 1 below shows declining school enrollment.

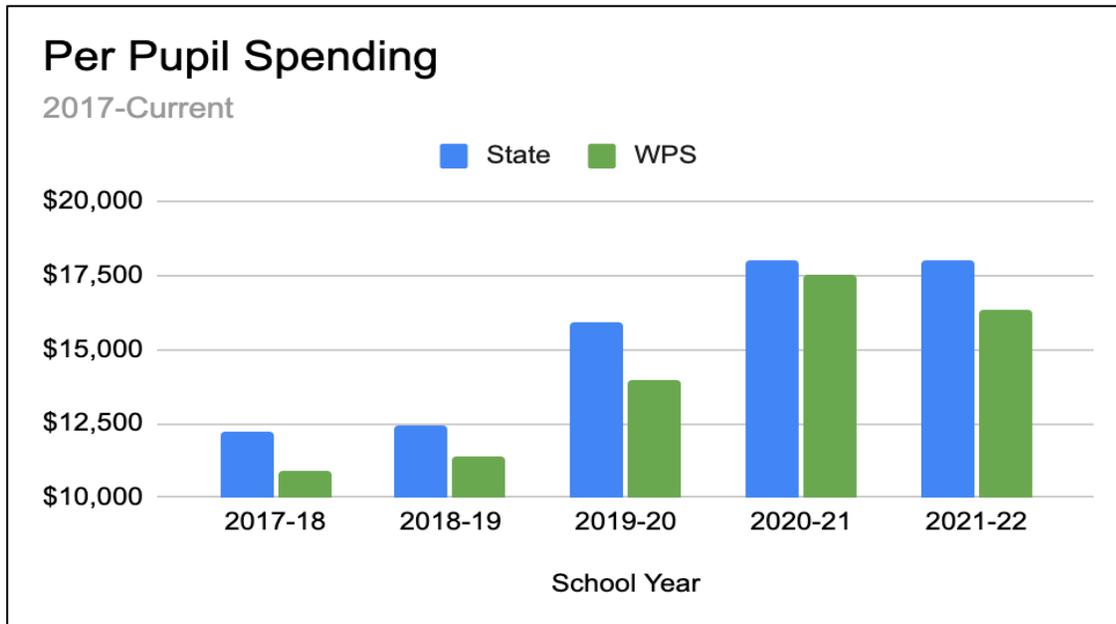
**FIGURE 1: PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 2017-2022**



*Source: Winthrop Public Schools*

Winthrop Public Schools' per-pupil costs are below average for the area. For the 2021-22 school year, the Winthrop expenditure was the third lowest in Kennebec County at \$13,871.77 per student. This can be compared to RSU 2, which includes Monmouth, at \$16,467.97, and RSU 38, Maranacook, at \$15,345.79. The average per-pupil costs statewide were \$16,248.36. Figure 2 below shows a cost comparison between the state and Winthrop Public Schools, on a per pupil basis.

**FIGURE 2: PER PUPIL COST COMPARISON BETWEEN THE STATE AND WINTHROP PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



*Source: Winthrop Public Schools*

Due to declining enrollment over the past five years, no expansion of the existing school buildings is anticipated. Further, several improvement projects are complete or in progress to meet the needs of the current student population.

Winthrop Grade School is in the Village District and the Rambler Road Campus, which houses both Winthrop Middle School and Winthrop High School, are in the Limited Residential District. Both the Village District and the Limited Residential District are designated growth areas, where residential development, as appropriate, would be encouraged.

**Leisure Services:**

Leisure services in Winthrop consist of the library and recreation facilities.

The Charles M. Bailey Public Library is a lifelong learning center offering diverse resources for people of all ages. The library was originally founded as the Winthrop Public Library in 1889 and became the CM Bailey Public Library in 1916 when famous industrialist Charles M. Bailey donated the rock-faced and chiseled granite building still in use today.



After a successful fundraising campaign started in 2010, a 4,000-square-foot addition was opened to the public in 2015. This was followed by a successful fundraising campaign for a new parking lot, which was opened to the public in 2021. The 2015 addition was designed by Winthrop architect Philip M Locashio.

The library became a free library in 1970 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. The library is staffed by three full-time librarians: a Director, an Adult Services Librarian, and a Children's Librarian, in addition to six part-time staff members. The library boasts an impressive and up-to-date collection of 30,000 books for all ages, in addition to 10,000 films, and audio materials. The library also has a collection of specialty items to lend, including fishing poles, snowshoes, birdwatching kits, air-quality monitors, and more. A collection of items for a makerspace -- a place where library users can make things and engage in hands-on learning using a wide range of tools for creativity -- is also available for the public to use.

Winthrop's public library adds value in the lives of Winthrop residents by providing collections, programs, and leadership that help to develop the skills needed to succeed in all stages of life, and by creating occasions for the exchange of ideas, cultural experiences, and discovery. The design of Winthrop's public library is for people of all ages and interests, and includes advisory, information, and digital services, but with an eye on new services. The library hopes to introduce at-home delivery, self-checkout, improved digital infrastructure, and enhanced makerspaces in the future. The 2015 renovation supports the values and strategic priorities of the library, and the use of this space for the community should be constantly evaluated, although the library building, and its current offering can easily accommodate the future projected population.

Winthrop's recreation services are provided jointly with the Winthrop YMCA. Most of the community's recreation facilities fall under the heading of "outdoor recreation" and are discussed in the Recreation chapter. Significant facilities include the town beach and

Norcross Point, tennis, pickleball and basketball courts, a skate park, and ballfields below the grade school. Additionally, the old fire house/ambulance building is a possible home for a new teen center for Winthrop. Programs include a summer swim program, sports camps year-round, and arts and crafts. Almost all of the programs and facilities are oriented toward young people, though there are adult tennis and golf tournaments.

Winthrop High School hosts the Winthrop Performing Arts Center, which is expanding its reach beyond traditional education activities. The center has featured shows and concerts aimed at the community at large. The center is still underutilized and has been spoken of in terms of out-of-town use and regional production.

### **Utilities:**

Public water and sewer service is provided to a portion of Winthrop by the Winthrop Utilities District. The district is governed by a three-member Board of Trustees who are appointed by the Town Council and serve three-year terms. The systems roughly parallel each other on Route 202 and the downtown area. A small portion of East Winthrop is served by the Greater Augusta Utility District. The sewer system feeds into the Augusta trunkline on Route 202, carrying waste (including septage) to the Augusta Sanitary Treatment Plant. The trunkline is owned jointly by Winthrop, Monmouth, Augusta, and Manchester.

The availability of public water supply and sewer systems is a principal factor in growth and development. The availability of public sewer connections enables homebuilders to avoid the state-minimum 20,000-square-foot lot size mandate, permitting greater density of development. All but the smallest and lowest-impact commercial uses demand more water and waste disposal service than can be met through on-site facilities.

Portions of Winthrop are served by both water and sewer service, in roughly concurrent geographic areas, managed by the Winthrop Utilities District (WUD). The water system serves the entire downtown area, up most of Memorial Drive and Annabessacook Road, and Route 202 west of the downtown, consisting of about 1,040 individual customers. The water source is Upper Narrows Pond, and storage consists of a 525,000-gallon storage tank at High Street as well as a 300,000-gallon tank on Metcalf Road.

The sewer system serves the downtown, Memorial Drive, East Winthrop, and Route 202, although portions of the lines along the highway are pressurized (as opposed to operating with gravity flow). Pressurized lines, if damaged, can spew substantial amounts of sewage into the environment. So, the Utility District has a longstanding policy prohibiting new hookups to pressurized lines to avoid the possibility of their being damaged. Thus, pressurized lines are inaccessible to new users. The “trunk line” along Route 202 is part of a multi-town system that transports sewage to the Augusta Sanitary Treatment Plant.

The closure of the old mill (formerly Carleton Woolen Mill) on Main Street eliminated the single-largest financial contributor to the system, leaving the lines underutilized and ratepayers bearing larger burdens. Conversely, the mill's closure has allowed for greater capacity to serve residences. That said, the district is limited in its ability to expand the service area to acquire new users. The water system charter was amended by local and legislative vote in the early 1970s to prohibit ratepayers from bearing the cost of system expansions. The sewer system, while not operating under the same charter, utilizes the same policy.

That means extensions of sewer (or water) lines must be funded by the town, or through grants or private developers. While this has occurred several times in decades past, it is a random occurrence, not tied into any logical scheme for development in Winthrop's village or growth areas. The ideal situation for directing growth would be to pre-install water and sewer extensions in areas designated by this Comprehensive Plan for growth.

Neither the water nor the sewer system has significant issues regarding capacity or maintenance. Both are in good order, except for normal aging issues. The water system has one undersized junction at the intersection of Route 133 and Summer Street, which would only present a bottleneck if service were extended up Route 133. The WUD has identified many lines with the capacity to be extended. Among them are:

- West of Route 133, High Street/Charles Street/Birch Street;
- Old Lewiston Road, by way of Cross Road or Mayflower Way;
- Highland Avenue, south of Route 202;
- Route 133 north of the village;
- East of Greenwood Avenue, extending up Metcalf Road or connecting to Greenwood or Pennwood.

Winthrop's plan supports both expansion of growth areas and better utilization of existing growth areas. Extension of water and sewer lines is an excellent way to achieve this objective. The obstacle to doing so is the lack of a funding stream. This obstacle may be overcome through a grant or through earmarked funding by impact fees or a residential district Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. New hookups currently pay only the cost of running individual sewer or water lines to their buildings; the developer pays the entire cost of new common facilities. Under an impact fee or TIF, the entire new structure is installed up front, with developers paying only their share on a pro-rated basis, in theory reducing the net development cost.

Electric power is distributed in town through Central Maine Power facilities. Winthrop itself has no significant generation capabilities. Three-phase power is generally available in the commercial areas of town and is not an issue. Broadband internet access is easily accessible.

### **Septic Waste Disposal:**

Winthrop is mostly served by private septic systems, in addition to the public sewer connection, as detailed above. When pumping of private septic systems is needed, the town is not involved in the disposal process. When pumping is needed for a private system, it is accomplished through a third-party licensed contractor.

### **Public Health and General Assistance:**

The town's Public Health Officer, who is also Winthrop's Code Enforcement Officer, is responsible for tracking communicable diseases. Through his or her designee, the Town Manager oversees public welfare (General Assistance). There are several public health concerns that have or will present significant issues to Winthrop citizens, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the opioid crisis, brown-tail moths, land and water contamination, climate change, radon threats, and the fire safety of public buildings and older structures.

Recently, the biggest draw from the General Assistance budget has been the establishment of group homes for those recovering from drug addiction. Winthrop's General Assistance funds often go towards paying a portion of rent for those in the group home recovery programs. With the dramatic rise in rental costs and housing prices, homelessness is an unfortunate outcome. Winthrop should explore ways to address this growing concern.

Winthrop is home to several medical facilities (more detail on these is provided in the Local Economy chapter) and within a short drive to other services, including social services programs, larger, regional health care facilities and doctors in Lewiston and Augusta. While many of the residents' health care needs can be met in the immediate area, for health care needs that are not available in Winthrop, additional health care facilities are within a short distance.

### **Fiscal Capacity:**

Winthrop has stayed within its LD1 limits three out of the past six years. LD1 is a state law that attempts to limit the growth of town budgets by requiring a vote if the property tax levy limit, which is determined by the LD1 formula, is exceeded. LD1 Limits on Municipal Commitment are shown in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2: WINTHROP'S LD 1 LIMITS**

LD 1 Limits: 2017 - 2022	
2017	\$3,067,992
2018	\$4,515,433
2019	\$4,447,201
2020	\$4,377,028
2021	\$4,032,893
2022	\$5,082,273

*Source: Town of Winthrop*

The principal threat to a stable budget is the one-time, large ticket expenditure, such as new buildings or equipment. In Winthrop, capital investments are funded through a combination of appropriations, reserve funds, grants, lease programs, and bonding. A Capital Improvements Plan is adopted by the Council annually.

The extent to which investment in facility improvements is directed to growth areas is proportional. Most capital infrastructure is in roads, which are throughout town. Primary public buildings, such as the town office, the library, fire department, Norcross Point, and schools are all within or adjacent to the designated growth area.

Funding for the CIP comes from a variety of sources. Some capital improvements come from appropriations, most notably the \$500,000 dedicated annually to paving. Such improvements are possible because the CIP anticipates and staggers these needs. The Town Council and Town Manager plan to resurrect reserve funds that were previously in place for items such as highway equipment, fire trucks, and transfer station equipment. Bonding is used when necessary; the most recent bond was in 2017 -- \$1.8 million for a fire station. Long-term debt is at 0.44 percent of state valuation, including school debt -- well below the 15 percent legal cap.

The Winthrop Utilities District also maintains a 20-year capital improvement plan (CIP) which identifies aging infrastructure for replacement or expansion. The Utility District's CIP is updated annually and financed through user fees.

In addition to long-range planning, the town is active in seeking ways to reduce capital expenditures by further regionalizing services. The town's dispatch center and ambulance service are shared by multiple towns. The town shares a street sweeper and, as of mid-2023, a police chief with Monmouth. The Winthrop Utilities District is also active in regional cost-sharing. The district provides operations services by contract with Monmouth and Readfield and is experimenting with providing sewer cleaning service to Manchester.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER SIX: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter describes the transportation system, identifies deficiencies within the transportation facilities serving Winthrop, and provides general recommendations for meeting the existing and future needs of those facilities and transportation system. This chapter also addresses how Winthrop can provide the most cost-effective transportation choices, while the Future Land Use Plan and Local Economy chapter address how the town can manage development to make the best use of the system.

As Winthrop becomes more complex and interwoven with neighboring communities, the need for a high-quality transportation system becomes more critical. Businesses need transportation to move products and draw customers. Commuters need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to get out-of-town workers here. Families need transportation for schools, services, shopping, and recreation. Finally, tourists and summer residents need a way to get here. In short, the transportation system is crucial to the future of Winthrop.

### **Winthrop's Highway System:**

#### *State Highways:*

The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) classifies roads by the role they serve in the overall transportation network. The principal classifications are:

**Arterials:** These are the most important travel routes in the state. Arterial roads are designated for their capacity to carry large volumes of traffic efficiently between commercial or service centers. The MDOT has restrictive access standards on arterial roads to preserve this mobility function. These highways carry a federal route number designation, such as U.S. Route 202 and ME Route 133, both of which are minor arterials.

**Collectors:** These are roads that collect and distribute traffic from areas of lower population density onto arterials. Collectors are further divided into "major" and "minor," depending on the proportions of federal, state, and local money available for maintenance and improvements. In Winthrop, Routes 41 and Main Street are classified as Major Collectors and Route 135 is a Minor Collector.

State highways are maintained by the MDOT except that towns are responsible for winter maintenance (plowing) and pavement condition repairs and summer maintenance on state-aid roads (Route 135 and Main Street). Maintenance and improvement projects performed by MDOT are programmed into the state budget through a Biennial Transportation Improvement Program (BTIP). This program outlines transportation projects (including non-road projects) that have been funded with a combination of federal

and state funds.

The backbone of the transportation system is the state highway system, designed to accommodate motor vehicles. Winthrop's state highways are U.S. Route 202 (Route 202), ME Route 133, and ME Route 41, while ME Route 135 and Main Street are state-aid highways (see *General Transportation Map* in appendix).

U.S. Route 202: The principal highway through Winthrop, Route 202 is also one of the state's major highway corridors. It connects Augusta with Lewiston on a modern, well-built highway. The state classifies it as a "retrograde arterial," which dates back to the Access Management Law. The term describes roadways on which the state is interested in limiting new access points if practicable. Landowners are encouraged to consolidate/share access points and allow only new ones where either shared access points are not an option or where there is not ample site distance for safe access. The thinking was that over time, increased access points would erode mobility and reduce speed limits, resulting in costly bypasses and new roads.

Route 202, currently in 2023, does not require any improvements to the highway surface. The state has performed periodic maintenance to this route as necessary, including resurfacing a portion in 2011, and treating sections in 2015, 2019, and 2020. This ongoing maintenance conducted by the state will continue as needed.

ME Route 133 originates in Winthrop Village together with Route 41, but branches from the latter about 1.5 miles north. It proceeds westward through Wayne and into Androscoggin County toward Jay and Livermore Falls. It is a two-lane, minor arterial, probably because of the volume of heavy truck traffic it carries from the Jay-Livermore Falls area. The condition of Route 133 is good. It has been rebuilt to accommodate the level of truck traffic. This route received preservation maintenance treatment in 2015.

ME Route 41 provides a cross-connection between Winthrop's village and Readfield Village, continuing north through Kents Hill and on to Mount Vernon. It is a two-lane major collector, except for a short portion north of Winthrop town center where, when joined to ME Route 133, it is a minor arterial. A substantial portion of the road is unbuilt, meaning it has never been constructed to engineering specifications. This results in more frequent maintenance and poorer alignment, affecting both speed and safety. The state performed light capital paving (a thin pavement treatment to keep poor, generally lesser traveled roads serviceable) of the entire section of Route 41 in Winthrop in 2021.

ME Route 135 is the north-south route running through eastern Winthrop. It joins Route 17 in Readfield, and serves local development, such as Winthrop Center and the Cobbossee/Narrows Pond seasonal development. Route 135 is also an unbuilt road, with many instances of narrow curves and steep hills. Maine DOT classifies Route 135 as a minor collector. This category of road will never be rebuilt unless the Town pays a third or more of the cost. In 2019, the state performed light capital paving of Route 135.

Main Street is also part of the state highway network because it is the former Route 202. Main Street is the only urban highway, meaning that it has curbs and a closed drainage system (catch basins). This makes maintenance and improvement more expensive. In 2010, the state performed catch basin and closed system drainage repair and replacement on Main Street. In 2010 and 2017, the state also milled and filled portions of Main Street.

### **Traffic Volumes:**

Volume of traffic is a measure of the intensity of road use and the potential for traffic delays, congestion, or unsafe conditions. Economic developers also use traffic volumes to determine potential customer base. Historic traffic count data, measured in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), equivalent to vehicles per day, is compiled by MDOT for state roads in several locations throughout Winthrop. Table 1 below shows average annual daily traffic counts as measured by MDOT.

**TABLE 1: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNT**

Location	2014	2017
Annabessacook RD S/O Annabessacook DR		860
Annabessacook RD S/O SR11/100/US 202		1,380
Bearce RD N/O Metcalf RD		650
Birch ST W/O SR 41/133	150	160
Bowdoin ST N/O Main ST	2,800	2,540
Bowdoin ST SW/O Green ST @BR #5442	1,250	
Greenwood Ave N/O Main ST	600	580
Highland Ave N/O SR 11/100/US 202	1,830	
Highland Ave S/O SR 11/100/US 202	2,190	
Holmes RD S/O Narrows Pond RD		1,120
Main ST (EB) E/O Hannaford ENT	4,320	4,220
Main ST (WB) E/O Hannaford ENT	4,490	4,150
Main ST E/O Greenwood Ave	8,480	
Main ST E/O Royal ST	6,370	
Main ST NE/O Depot ST	5,820	
Main ST NE/O Morton ST	7,900	
Main ST W/O Highland Ave	8,530	
Metcalf RD NE/O Main ST	990	880
N Wayne RD N/O Innes RD	430	500
Narrows Pond RD W/O SR 135	510	520
Old Lewiston RD NW/O SR 11/100/US 202		1,140
South RD S/O SR 11/100/US 202	800	710
SR 11/100/US 202 (EB) NE/O Main ST		7,390
SR 11/100/US 202 (EB) SW/O Interchange		5,100
SR 11/100/US 202 (WB) NE/O Main ST		7,020
SR 11/100/US 202 (WB) SW/O Interchange		5,340
SR 11/100/US 202 E/O Highland Ave	10,000	
SR 11/100/US 202 E/O SR 135	13,280	14,310
SR 11/100/US 202 NE/O Annabessacook RD		11,620
SR 11/100/US 202 SW/O Old Lewiston RD		7,710
SR 11/100/US 202 W/O Highland Ave	9,700	10,050

Location	2014	2017
SR 11/100/US 202 W/O SR 135	13,060	
SR 11/100/US 202 W/O Welch's Point RD	13,780	14,260
SR 133 (Wayne RD) (EB) W/O SR 41	5,400	2,950
SR 133 (Wayne RD) (WB) W/O SR 41		2,880
SR 133 NW/O Wayne RD @CWY	4,200	4,560
SR 135 (Stanley RD) N/O Metcalf RD	1,100	
SR 135 (Stanley RD) N/O SR 11/100/US 202	1,580	1,760
SR 135 (Stanley RD) S/O Beaver Dam RD		1,140
SR 135 S/O SR 11/100/US 202	1,140	1,080
SR 135 SW/O YMCA Camp DR	1,110	
SR 41 N/O Sturtevant Hill RD	1,910	1,960
SR 41/133 (Western Ave) S/O Main ST	5,080	5,460
SR 41/133 N/O Main ST	6,780	6,910
SR 41/133 N/O Summer ST	8,210	
SR 41/133 NE/O Ramp to SR 11/100/US 202	2,490	
SR 41/133 SW/O Old Western Ave	2,420	
Sturtevant Hill RD NW/O SR 41	1,020	
Summer ST E/O SR 41/133	1,840	1,910
Turtle Run NW/O SR 11/US 202		220

Source: Maine DOT Traffic Volume annual report, 2019

**KEY FOR TABLE 1:**

SW/O= southwest on  
 SE/O= southeast on  
 S/O= south on  
 NW/O= northwest on

NE/O= northeast on  
 N/O= north on  
 W/O= west on  
 E/O= east on

SR= state route  
 IR= inventory road  
 EB= eastbound  
 WB= westbound

The most recent data available is from 2019, and with the exception of one data point at the intersection of State Route 11/100 and Route 202, westbound on Welch's Point Road, there was no other 2019 annual traffic count information for Winthrop. At this location, the traffic count in 2014 was 13,780. In 2017, it increased to 14,260. In 2019, the traffic count at this location was 14,400.

The state routes and U.S. Route 202 carry the most traffic, based on Table 1. This is not surprising, as they are connecting roads; however, it is surprising to see traffic volumes have not increased significantly, and have, in fact, decreased in some areas (see *Traffic Volumes Map* in appendix).

Part of the declining traffic counts could be attributed to the stable or stagnant economic conditions from 2015-2018, combined with the aging and decreasing local populations. Most of the traffic along these routes are daily commuters, combined with weekend recreation and tourism activities. Winthrop did not see a significant increase in population during this time. Once data is available for 2020-2021, there will be a further decrease in traffic counts because of impacts from Covid 19.

The Maine DOT has permitting requirements for new driveway entrances onto all state roads, with extensive review of major development, especially on Route 202. This increases the cost of development to maintain the mobility of the road. Route 202 has been and continues to be the focus of Winthrop's commercial development corridor.

### **Traffic Controls:**

Despite having a major highway and a busy downtown area, Winthrop has not yet been overwhelmed with traffic controls. The principal form of controls are designated lanes with islands, entering and exiting Route 202.

A recently implemented traffic control at the eastern end of Main Street and the intersection of Route 202 is known as a 'Florida T' and incorporates median strips. This traffic control measure is a type of three-way intersection, usually used on high-traffic volume roads. The design of these intersections has been proven to provide sustainable benefits compared with traditional T intersections.

Where Route 41 joins Route 202, at the western edge of downtown, there is a separate interchange. Due to the high volume of traffic on Route 202, this stretch of road has flashing traffic signals at two separate locations.

Because Route 202 traverses some hilly sections of Winthrop, there were several climbing/passing lanes put in place when the road was rebuilt. These lanes are only marginally effective. Commercial entrances and road junctions reduce the utility of these lanes. When vehicles must make a left turn from a passing lane, waiting for oncoming traffic creates a conflict; current design practices discourage this. The westbound lanes on Route 202 south of downtown have been altered to allow left turns into the Carleton Mill and Highland Avenue, eliminating a stretch of passing lane. The other instance of this is at the Route 135 junction. There is also, on Route 202, heading west, a 'passing' lane, allowing the single driving lane to become a left-hand turning lane at/into Progressive Distributors and the Hannaford Distribution Center.

While strict enforcement of speed limits is effective, it is also expensive. While assigning a police officer to work full-time in the downtown would be beneficial, one full-time officer may not have enough impact on traffic speeds.

Winthrop is committed to using the standard, federally established traffic control practices and devices identified in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as amended. Further consideration is being given to other forms of traffic control devices

and traffic calming measures as speeds and volumes increase.

There are no major conflicts of use on any roads in Winthrop caused by multiple road uses, despite the traffic volume on Route 202.

### **Traffic Safety:**

A critical element in management of a transportation system is the safe movement of traffic. Records are kept of vehicle accidents, and areas along the highway system are marked as High Crash Locations (HCL). MDOT defines an HCL as a roadway intersection or segment that experiences eight or more accidents in a 3-year period and has a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) of more than 1.00. The CRF is a measure of the actual number of accidents compared to the theoretical accident experience that would normally be expected in that situation.

Meeting both criteria on many rural roads in Winthrop would be difficult – because of the lack of traffic, a high CRF may not be statistically valid. But that means there may be some curves or intersections that are dangerous without being identified as an HCL. Some roads in Winthrop produce a volume of traffic that does meet the criteria (see *Crashes Map* in appendix).

According to MDOT data from 2022, there are two HCL nodes at the following intersections:

- Annabessacook Road and Old Lewiston Road (Route 202), CRF= 2.14, 12 accidents in the reporting period.
- Highland Avenue and Route 202, CRF = 1.95, eight accidents in reporting period.

According to MDOT data from 2022, there are two HCL road segments:

- A 0.08-mile section of road along Main Street in the village area, CRF= 2.67, 10 accidents in reporting period.
- A 1.94-mile section of road along Route 135, south of Route 202, CRF= 1.5, 9 accidents in the reporting period.

Several structural techniques could “calm” traffic in downtown areas, though they are less effective or appropriate in areas outside of the downtown. Shifting the curbing out into the roadway at pedestrian crossings is called a “neckdown” because drivers feel they must slow down to fit through a tighter space, even though the driving lanes are the same width. Pedestrians, meanwhile, feel safer with a shorter distance to cross the road. These were suggested by the 2000 *Downtown Revitalization Plan*. Stamped pavement (imitation cobbles) and speed tables (not speed bumps) also cause drivers to slow. Street trees and other amenities also make Main Street feel less like a highway.

## **Traffic and Development:**

Traffic counts and problem locations are symptoms of a much deeper issue: the relationship between highways and development. As highways are designed to serve the properties within their corridors, there comes a point at which development exceeds the capacity of a highway to serve it. This may result from development within the corridor or development in the immediate proximity of the road.

Major traffic generators in Winthrop, such as the Main Street area, the schools, the Carleton Mill complex, and Progressive Distributors, tax the capacity of roads. The impacts are different in various locations. For example, downtown, high-traffic locations result in congestion and slow travel, whereas on Route 202, local traffic generators produce potential conflict points.

Winthrop's proximity to Augusta creates a lot of traffic on Route 202, not only for commuters, but also for more access to commercial, retail, and service providers. During morning and evening rush hours, Route 202 has increased traffic volumes to accommodate commuters to and from Augusta. In addition, since residents of Wayne, Livermore, and Jay must travel through Winthrop to get to larger service centers, main routes of travel, such as Route 133 and Main Street, see increased traffic volume between the hours of 7:30-8:30 am, although there is less emphasis on the evening rush hour traffic in these areas.

Another significant traffic generator is Winthrop Public Schools. When school is in session, the roads in and around the schools see heavy traffic from parents picking up or dropping off their kids.

Hannaford Supermarket is also a significant contributor to increased traffic volumes, as is the Hannaford Distribution Center (Progressive Distributors) for heavy truck traffic. Policies at Hannaford Distribution Center do not allow over-the-road trucks to park in their parking lot after unloading. This results in trucks parking on the shoulder of Route 202 for their mandatory break from driving. This poses a potential traffic hazard.

Over the past several decades, traffic levels have been increasing. Freight (truck) traffic has grown noticeably with an increasing reliance on roads by freight carriers. In terms of road use, however, automobile traffic has the greatest impact. Most trips originate from the residence and move to places of employment, schools, or commercial/retail districts. The transportation impact of sprawl results in rural residents driving longer distances to get to their destinations. Statistically, this would show up as increased use of roads leading into rural areas and stable or declining use of urban roads (see Table 1).

The Maine DOT has established a set of regulations for new development impacting state highways. Traffic Movement Permits are required for major developments, such as shopping centers or large subdivisions. For all other developments on state highways, driveway access permits are required. Permitting rules contain different standards based on road classification. Route 202 has the tightest access rules, followed by Routes 133,

41, and 135; the remaining roads have moderate rules. All the rules have some standards for sight distance, driveway width, spacing, safety, and drainage.

Winthrop's access management and traffic permitting measures are currently limited to a Road Openings Policy for curb cuts and driveways, which references the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated. The town relies predominantly on the state's regulations for the major route through town.

There are several other ways in which the town can influence the impact of development on transportation. They include:

- Updating local road design and construction standards to reflect current practices.
- Offering different road design options based upon anticipated use and traffic volume.
- Rear lot access options to reduce road frontage development.
- Incorporating pedestrian and bicycle travel lanes into public roads and major developments.
- Proper design and location of major land use activities.
- Continue the ongoing roadway and pavement repair and/or replacement according to Winthrop's road maintenance plan.

### **Local Roads:**

Local roads are roads that provide access to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic. In Maine, these roads are the responsibility of the municipality if they are town ways, or private responsibility if they are camp roads, logging roads or have not been dedicated and accepted by the Town. There are many private roads, primarily serving camp communities, but the town bears no legal liability for these and there has been no concerted move to convert them to town roads. There have been no issues in the past 10 years with substandard private roads being accepted by the town.

### **Town Ways:**

The Town maintains 48.6 miles of town ways. The function and condition of these roads varies, from downtown side streets to narrow, rural roads. The town maintains a complete inventory of these roads. Significant roads include:

- Memorial Drive - accessing Maranacook Lake properties on the east side,
- Annabessacook Road - providing access to the western shore of Annabessacook Lake,
- Highland Avenue - connecting the urban areas north and south of Route 202,
- Old Lewiston Road - a former segment of Route 202 in the southwestern portion of town,
- High Street - serving housing blocks and subdivisions west of Route 41 downtown,
- Sturtevant Hill Road - accessing the northwest quadrant of town.

## **Current Ordinances:**

The town has a Road and Street Construction Ordinance, enacted in 1991 and amended through 1995. The ordinance applies to all newly constructed or upgraded streets, both public and private, and is cited as the construction standard in the subdivision ordinance.

The Subdivision Ordinance, enacted in 1990 and amended through 1995, and the Zoning Ordinance also have a few standards and requirements for newly created roads and road upgrades.

Due to the age of the design standards of the Road and Street Construction Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance, they do not require the consideration of bicycle travel and only minimally consider pedestrian traffic. Under Section IV. Design Standards, the Road and Street Construction Ordinance set standards for sidewalk construction but does not require that they are constructed.

Overall, the design standards meet Winthrop's desired land use pattern; however, both the Road and Street Construction Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance, where it pertains to subdivision roads, need updating to reflect the latest standards and technology.

The Subdivision Ordinance does not require that subdivision roads consider future expansion or allow for the creation of a network to other local streets. There is no mechanism in place to limit the length of dead-end roads in subdivisions to produce compact and efficient subdivision design. The only criteria in the Subdivision Ordinance that relates to dead-end roads is a requirement that private dead-end roads shall have a turnaround or cul-de-sac with a 50-foot-wide right-of-way. For subdivision roads to be accepted by the municipality, they are required by the Road and Street Construction Ordinance to have a 60-foot-wide right-of-way in an approved cul-de-sac or turnaround area to specification as diagrammed in the ordinance.

## **Town Roads, Facilities, and Services:**

The appointed Road Commissioner is the Town Manager, and it is his responsibility to manage town ways. Winthrop does not currently have a Road Committee; however, such a committee could provide the structure needed to develop a long-term maintenance plan for the roads in town.

Winthrop's Public Works Department maintains all municipally owned properties, streets, sidewalks, trees, landscaping, buildings and grounds, streetlights, and traffic signals. They also provide street sweeping, snow removal and ice control.

The budget for road maintenance is part of the Capital Investment Plan, specifically, paving, drainage, and culvert replacement. For the fiscal year 2024, the Town of Winthrop has allotted a budget of \$53,500 for summer road maintenance.

Winthrop has raised and appropriated \$350,000 for paving and \$25,000 for drainage and culvert replacement each of the last few years. For the 2024 fiscal year, the paving budget increased to \$500,000. Through reviewing and revising the Capital Investment Plan on a yearly basis, Winthrop adequately budgets for all road maintenance.

To prevent any unnecessary expenditures, Winthrop makes every effort to cooperate and coordinate road work with the Maine DOT Work Plan to the greatest extent practicable.

A large contributor to most towns' road budget is the cost of sanding and plowing. For the last four years, Winthrop's sanding and plowing budget has increased steadily. Table 2 shows this increase.

**TABLE 2: INCREASE OF THE SANDING AND PLOWING COST FROM 2020 TO 2024**

Year	Budget for Sanding & Plowing
2020	\$78,620
2021	\$89,955
2022	\$90,645
2023	\$116,770
2024	\$127,500

*Source: Winthrop's Budget and Financial Records*

Recent projects completed by Winthrop's Public Works Department include a three-year project on Memorial Drive that consisted of drainage work, asphalt reclaiming and paving to improve road conditions. Future projects are predominantly routine paving for predetermined roads throughout town.

**Other Roads:**

Other roads include over 100 privately owned roads throughout town. The most common of these are camp roads. Camp roads provide access to waterfront properties and do not form a part of the public road network. These roads were named during the Street Addressing Project (E-911). Other privately owned roads in Winthrop include roads in approved subdivisions that have not been offered to or accepted by the town. The Town of Winthrop has no legal right or obligation to maintain them, replace culverts or provide snowplowing.

## **Culverts and Bridges:**

The road system in Winthrop includes numerous stream crossings. Many of these are small culverts, which are the town's responsibility to maintain by cleaning and inspecting regularly, and replacing them, as necessary.

There are also several bridges. Bridges are usually the responsibility of the state, although when they are replaced on local roads, a portion of the costs must be contributed by the town. A summary of the MDOT bridge inventory follows:

- New Mill Stream Bridge: Route 202 over Mill Stream. MDOT-maintained, culvert-style bridge, 18' long. New culvert put in recently.
- Route 202 railroad bridge: 378' steel girder bridge, maintained by MDOT.
- Bowdoin Street Bridge: Crossing Mill Stream. 24' concrete slab bridge, maintained by MDOT.
- Mill Stream Bridge: Main Street crossing Mill Stream. 20' concrete slab bridge, maintained by MDOT.
- Stanley Bridge: 10' ADS plastic culvert crossing Stanley Pond on Metcalf Road. Owned and maintained by the Town. Good condition.

## **Transportation Choices:**

While the most common form of daily transportation remains motorized vehicles, it is the intent of the Comprehensive Plan to highlight and encourage alternate means of transportation. Some demographics of the population (notably youth and some elderly) cannot use motor vehicles to get around, and the increasing costs and impacts of energy consumption argues for reduced automobile use in the future. While it is doubtful there will be a sizable shift in demand for alternate transportation over the planning period, construction of transportation systems is both expensive and timely, requiring a long-range view.

### Railroad:

The CSX-Pan Am rail line runs from Lewiston to Waterville, bisecting Winthrop. The Pan Am system provides freight services and has been seen as a potential draw to business development in Winthrop, though no local businesses currently use the freight service. There are industrial spurs available, but they are unused. Restoration of the long-dormant passenger rail service is under consideration by PanAm Railways for central Maine destination points north of Portland. This service would be provided by Amtrak. Winthrop would be a logical stop, as the town is located halfway between Lewiston and Waterville. Proactively promoting a train stop for passenger-use in Winthrop would be a huge boon for the area. The town should consider discussions and, if possible, collaboration with Pan Am Railways to work toward this objective. Winthrop might also be well served to investigate existing grassroot efforts and collaborate with neighboring communities advocating for train stops.

### Public Transportation:

Aside from a part-time taxi company, Central Maine Taxi, there are no public transportation services available in Winthrop. The Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) has a demand-response service and volunteer drivers to pick up and deliver people to various locations. There are no regularly scheduled routes or pick-ups.

A variation on public transit is the use of carpooling or vanpooling. These are often informal arrangements or sponsored by large employers. The MDOT runs “GoMaine,” a service matching riders and drivers from one point to another. GoMaine will organize a vanpool if there is sufficient demand, but Winthrop has not demonstrated a need.

With the increased emphasis on renewable energy, rising costs of fossil fuels, and an aging population, an increased demand for public transportation is anticipated. Winthrop should explore options for meeting residents needs in public transportation options, such as providing those resources within the municipality, working with organizations such as Neighbors Driving Neighbors, or exploring the possibility of expanding Central Maine Taxi’s services. Another option is to work toward the re-installation of a bus stop in the downtown area for Greyhound buses. Contact has been made with Greyhound. One roadblock to adding a bus stop is the company wanted a guarantee on a set number of sales for bus tickets before adding a stop in Winthrop.

### Bicycle Routes:

Bicycle travel in Winthrop is limited to on-street routes or cross-country trails. Because Winthrop has a downtown area with schools, stores, the beach, and other attractions, there is plenty of demand for in-town cycling, but it has not materialized into projects. Potential opportunities include not only additional bike trails and dedicated lanes on roadways, but also facilities for bike storage at strategic locations. The town should identify bicycle-friendly destination points and prioritize them for storage facilities. Any significant, new developments near the downtown should be required to provide convenient bicycle and pedestrian access.

Ideally, newly implemented bike routes would connect destinations of particular importance throughout town and the bike corridors would be stand-alone, not just extensions of highway shoulders. Currently, Winthrop’s only bike corridor is by the grade school on Highland Avenue.

The area outside of downtown provides opportunities as well. Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of tourism, especially in scenic areas such as Winthrop. However, most of Winthrop’s rural roads are narrow and the shoulders are in such poor condition they do not permit safe biking (or walking). Maine’s Bicycle Map shows one bicycle tour, labeled the “Capitol Tour,” that originates in Augusta, comes into Winthrop from East Monmouth up Route 135, and crosses Route 202 to Metcalf Road, west to downtown Winthrop, then south on Annabessacook Road. Route 202 itself is not part of this route because of the heavy traffic.

A separate Winthrop-to-Kennebec River Rail Trail bicycle trail has been recommended by several local and regional plans. Such a trail could parallel Route 202 or utilize the old trolley bed, utility paths, or snowmobile trails to link the town with Augusta or Hallowell. The concept has the support of Winthrop and Manchester residents, but no concrete action has been taken yet.

In 2011, KVCOG completed the *Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan*, based on many public meetings, a survey, and numerous planning studies. This plan includes recommendations, data, and statistics to support constructing and including bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout town and in certain locations outside of town. The plan also identifies roadblocks in pursuing these endeavors.

One roadblock in pursuing the creation and promotion of pedestrian and bicycle paths through town is that current local road design standards do not support the creation of bike lanes.

#### Sidewalks:

Winthrop has a sidewalk network totaling 4.7 miles in the downtown area, though its physical condition is variable. Sidewalks do not receive the investment that roads do. Some sidewalks along Main Street were rebuilt pursuant to the *Downtown Revitalization Plan*, but there are many gaps in the system that discourage more walkability. Pedestrians are occasionally seen walking in the streets due to the lack of, or poor condition of, sidewalks.

A set of walking paths, including traditional sidewalks, would benefit downtown Winthrop. These paths could connect major destinations, including the schools, recreation areas, Maranacook Lake and Mount Pisgah as suggested for the bike paths. They could also be considered as infrastructure to promote public health.

The current Zoning Ordinance does not include requirements or standards for bicycle or pedestrian paths. Revision to include these aspects should be given consideration in the future.

#### Airports:

The Waterville and Augusta airports offer a limited number of commercial flights (passenger service from Augusta only) and provide access for private and corporate planes and small jets. Both airports are a 20- to 30-minute drive from Winthrop. Portland International Jetport and Bangor International Airport offer commercial passenger service to several different hubs, both about an hour away. The Manchester-Boston Regional Airport in New Hampshire offers a popular alternative to Boston's Logan Airport.

There are no public or private airports in Winthrop, except a seaplane base at the northern end of Cobbossee Lake. Augusta State Airport is the nearest airport.

### Electronic Vehicles:

With the increased emphasis on Electronic Vehicles (EV), consideration needs to be given to potential future locations for EV charging stations. If they are on town-owned property, such as the Town Office or public parking lots, discussions on the initial installation cost, number and brands of chargers, and other aspects of the charging stations should be scrutinized. Ideally, EV charging stations should be centrally located in the downtown area, so people can walk around and shop while waiting for their vehicle to charge. There are several grants available for their installation that should be considered, as well.

### **Parking:**

While parking is traditionally provided by the entity responsible for generating the demand, downtown areas such as Winthrop's were built-up before motor vehicles existed and have little space available for parking. To support these businesses, someone else must assume responsibility for providing common lots downtown.

The 2000 *Downtown Revitalization Plan* inventoried 86 parking spaces in common lots and on Main Street. Since then, public parking has been added behind 148 Main Street, at the new town office, at the new post office, and across the street from the CM Bailey Public Library. Though the 2000 plan estimated a shortage of 33 parking spaces, since adding the abovementioned public parking, those needs have been met, although the town office lot is not considered within the immediate downtown area.

In the future, if the Commerce Center adds retail space on the first floor, or residential or commercial space on the upper floors, it will create significant demand for new parking in the downtown area. In the Zoning Ordinance, existing parking requirements could limit growth and create additional impervious surfaces.

The Zoning Ordinance conditionally exempts businesses along Main Street from providing parking. This exemption is for existing structures in the village area and is applicable when the "establishment's lot does not contain sufficient area or is not within three hundred (300) feet of sufficient parking area." This is specific to existing buildings and does not pertain to new development. By including this language in the Zoning Ordinance, Winthrop does not discourage development in the downtown area by having parking standards.

This exemption allows modern use of existing buildings that were likely constructed before parking standards were mandatory. While this exemption does add demand to public parking, it also forces Winthrop's downtown area to be more pedestrian-friendly, as buildings can be easily accessed on foot or by bicycle.

Providing public parking in downtown areas serves multiple purposes, such as promoting and encouraging a walkable downtown and increasing residents' sense of place. The town may want to consider financing additional public parking areas and requiring any new development in the downtown area, or adjacent to the downtown, to construct

sidewalks.

Currently, Winthrop has two public parking lots. One is in the village off Main Street, and the other is across from the library. These two public parking lots create roughly 30-35 additional parking spaces within the downtown area.

Parking issues in Winthrop are typically related to seasonal population fluctuations; when there are more out-of-town visitors and tourists, finding parking directly in front of certain locations becomes more challenging. For those who do not mind walking from one of the public parking lots, parking is not an issue.

Certain locations that are prone to parking issues are in and around Norcross Point and around the larger lakes in the summertime. The funeral home on Bowdoin Street in the downtown area is prone to parking issues during large funerals.

### **Transportation Concerns:**

Traffic on Main Street is a local concern because even though volumes are not heavy, the street is characterized by many driveways, on-street parking, and pedestrian crossings. Speeding through town is a more common complaint than congestion.

Winthrop has seen its share of development in the rural areas. While the transportation system is not stressed in these areas, rural development does not result in efficient use of the road system. Rural development requires a larger percentage of road budget per capita for maintenance and overstresses back roads that were not designed for heavy use.

An increasing concern for Winthrop is the lack of public transportation and the growing need for such a service. Winthrop residents would benefit from public transportation between the two commercial districts, the grocery store, the pharmacy, medical offices, service providers, and other retail establishments along Main Street.

Some roads in Winthrop are not in good condition, causing transportation concerns. The town needs to formulate a plan for road maintenance and for future necessary improvements, both logistically and financially. Ideally, the development of a Road Committee should be considered to oversee a maintenance program.

Another transportation concern is the condition of the town's 4.7 miles of sidewalks. The current sidewalks were installed over 30 years ago and since that time, they have received minimal maintenance.

## **Summary of Analysis:**

Overall, Winthrop's network of roads is adequate and has not required the construction of new roads for many years. Now, the challenge is creating and implementing a plan to maintain these roads in the most cost-efficient manner.

Another challenge is maintaining the existing sidewalks, which are predominantly in the downtown area, and creating new ones, where feasible, throughout town to continue to encourage walkability and connectivity.

Also, where feasible, the construction of bike lanes throughout town, or at least connecting certain locations, would be ideal to promote alternative forms of transportation that are becoming an increasing trend.

Speeding in the downtown area is a common concern, as is increased traffic. People are ever more reliant on vehicles, and without public transportation there are few other viable options. This, coupled with sprawl will eventually make travel on Winthrop's rural roads unpleasant.

With increased transportation costs and more commuters to Augusta and other regional destinations, alternate modes of transport will become more attractive and necessary. While buses and rail are an unlikely scenario, ride-sharing programs with park-and-ride lots conveniently located are more realistic.

Winthrop's future considerations for transportation should be in easy access locations for EV chargers, exploring options to address the need for public transportation, and the creation of biking/walking paths throughout town.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER SEVEN: RECREATION & CULTURE

Outdoor recreation and culture are an invaluable part of community life, particularly in Winthrop, which offers so many opportunities to explore. Winthrop has vast expanses of undeveloped open space, 11 lakes for water-based recreation, numerous locations to explore culture, as well as suitable recreational organizations and infrastructure.

Winthrop has an active and involved Recreation Committee (Rec Committee). The Rec Committee consists of five members who meet on an as-needed basis. They provide planning and oversight for programs and coordinate with other recreational groups and organizations.

Winthrop is fortunate to be the home of one of the few State YMCAs in Maine, the Winthrop Area YMCA. While the YMCA provides numerous programs to the region, the organization partners extensively with the Town in the summertime to provide the Winthrop Recreation Program. In fact, in 2013 the YMCA and the Recreation Program collaborated and launched the “We Play Outside” program. Since the YMCA’s humble beginnings in the 1980s, it has expanded its offerings beyond youth sports into numerous outdoor activities for kids and has recently ventured into an adult offering – pickleball.

**TABLE 1: WINTHROP OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES**

Area	Size in Acres	Ownership	Facilities
High School Fields		School Dept.	Athletic Fields: Baseball, softball, football, soccer, field hockey
High School		School Dept.	Roger Guerette Community Trail, a 1-mile walking/ski trail, with ¼-mile Bog Trail maintained.
Grade School Fields		School Dept.	Little league field, playground, athletic complex (as of mid-2023, currently under construction)
Middle School Fields/David's Field		School Dept.	Athletic Fields: multi-use, softball
Basketball/Tennis Courts at Town Hall Lane		Town	4 tennis courts, basketball court, pickleball courts. All lighted.
Norcross Point	1	Town	Gazebo, benches, BBQ grills, bathrooms, boat launch, parking
Maranacook Town Beach	1	Town	300 ft beach, benches, boardwalk
Annabessacook Lake Boat Launch	7+	State IFW	Boat launch and winter access site
East Winthrop Beach	1	Town	Unsupervised swim area
Fire House Field	1	Town	Softball diamond
Rambler Road property	6.2	Town	Undeveloped
Mt. Pisgah	94	Town	Trails, fire tower
Route 133 Rest Area	1	State IFW	Carry-in boat access to Berry Pond
Upper Narrows Rest Area	1	State IFW	Carry-in boat access to Upper Narrows
Marshview		Private	Carry-in boat access to Little Cobbossee
Lower Narrows Rest Area		Private	Carry-in boat access to Lower Narrows
Snowmobile Trails		Private/multiple owners	Developed trails maintained by Hillandalers Club
State YMCA Camp of Maine	200	State YMCA	Resident camp; conference facilities (seasonal)
Camp Metchewana	300	Methodist Church of Maine	Resident camp; conference facilities (Seasonal)
Weston Woods Preserve		Kennebec Land Trust	More than 2 miles of trails, 1,315 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Little Cobbossee

*Source: Winthrop Comprehensive Plan Committee, Winthrop Recreation Committee*

## **Organized Recreation:**

As illustrated in Table 1, Winthrop has a wide assortment of recreational opportunities and facilities, including programs and activities run by a variety of organizations. There are playing fields for baseball, softball, soccer, and other activities located in several parts of town. Tennis and pickleball courts are available below the grade school, and there's a Town Beach and a boat launch on Norcross Point.

Winthrop YMCA manages numerous recreational activities and programs, including swimming lessons, tennis lessons, summer camps in activities ranging from soccer to karate, and even out-of-town recreation trips. These programs are primarily for children.

The Town Beach, located on Maranacook Lake at the northern end of the downtown area, has supervised swimming during the summer months, also organized through the YMCA.

There are two residential camps, including the State YMCA Camp on a 200-acre site adjacent to Cobbossee Lake, and Camp Mechawana, which is a Methodist Church camp situated on 300 acres adjacent to Lower Narrows Pond and Annabessacook. Both camps operate on a reservation system and are open to all.

## **Organized Youth Sports:**

In addition to youth sporting opportunities provided by the YMCA, Winthrop's public schools collaborate with several nearby communities to offer athletic programs, including:

- Football - RSU 2 (Monmouth Academy, Hall-Dale Middle and High School)
- Girls' soccer - Monmouth Academy
- Girls' hockey - Saint Dominic's Academy
- Nordic and Alpine Skiing - Maranacook Community High School
- Boys' hockey - Cony High School
- Lacrosse - Maranacook Community High School
- Winter track - Saint Dominic's Academy
- Competitive cheerleading - Monmouth Academy

## **Age Friendly Recreation:**

As noted in the Community Profile chapter of this plan and in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, Winthrop's median age is increasing and there has not been a significant increase in the number of young people in town.

Winthrop partners with other towns to provide desired programs and activities to meet the needs of the older population. For example, Winthrop and Monmouth cooperate to offer adult education programs to residents of both towns. Collaborative efforts have been made with the City of Gardiner to expand offerings and broaden the geographic reach of the Kennebec Neighbors Adult Education program.

To continue to adequately provide these services, Winthrop should proactively seek to offer opportunities for adult recreation and programs. Additionally, the town should evaluate which public facilities and town-owned buildings comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and which buildings need upgrades to meet these needs.

### **Community Partners:**

The Town of Winthrop's efforts to preserve and conserve land as well as provide recreational opportunities are an effort that spans multiple entities. Interested parties include:

- Winthrop Conservation Commission
- Winthrop Recreation Committee
- Winthrop YMCA
- Winthrop Plays Outside
- Winthrop Public Schools
- Charles M. Bailey Library (free loans of fishing gear and snowshoes)
- Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce (concert series)
- Winthrop Maine Historical Society (walking tours and cemetery tours)

### **Water-Based Recreation:**

Winthrop has an abundance of lakes and ponds for water-based recreational activities. Waterbodies in Winthrop include (but are not limited to) Maranacook Lake, Cobbossee Lake, Upper and Lower Narrows ponds, Carlton Pond, Berry Pond, Dexter Pond, Apple Valley Lake, Little Cobbossee Lake, Nancy's Bog, Kezar Pond, and Annabessacook Lake. The numerous and vast waterbodies have shaped the history and character of Winthrop, much as they still do today.



*Photo: A kayaker glides across the waters of Maranacook Lake at sunset.*

Each of Winthrop's lakes provides a range of recreational opportunities, including fishing, boating, swimming, paddling, wildlife observation, ice fishing, and many more. The greatest opportunities for these activities lie with shoreline residents and landowners. Overall, the public has limited access to the numerous waterbodies throughout town. For example, aside from Norcross Point, the only beach access to Maranacook Lake is through the neighboring town of Readfield.

***Beach Areas:***

Winthrop has limited public swimming locations. Just north of the downtown area, the Town Beach and Norcross Point offer public access to Maranacook Lake. This facility includes a town park, picnic tables, a boat launch, and a beach with a swimming area. The Town Beach is a 300-foot sand beach, adjacent to Norcross Beach. Norcross Point has a gazebo, port-a-potty and free-standing restrooms in the summer, as well as other amenities. The YMCA provides a supervised swimming area, swimming programs, and other activities at the Town Beach and Norcross Point.

There is also a town beach in East Winthrop, which is accessible via East Winthrop Beach Lane, on Cobbosseecontee Lake. This town beach is unsupervised, with no lifeguard on duty.

### ***Fishing:***

Winthrop has many opportunities for fishing. Several lakes support cold-water fisheries and are managed and stocked by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. Public access is essential to utilization of fisheries as a recreational resource. More information on fish species in each waterbody can be found in the Natural Resources chapter of this plan.

### ***Norcross Point:***

Norcross Point is one of the town's most visible and valuable assets. Norcross Point, adjacent to the public beach, consists of a beach swimming area, boat launch, floating docks, picnic area, bathrooms, gazebo, park amenities, and veterans memorials.

The boat launch is owned by the town and consists of a 20-foot wide, paved ramp and launching platform with docks. Parking is available for eight vehicles with trailers, plus another 16 spaces for vehicles without boat trailers, shared with the adjoining town beach.

The town will be applying for a state grant in spring of 2024 to improve the current boat launch, which was last improved in 2001. If received, the town will be eligible to reapply for another grant in 2025 to refurbish and expand the parking area at Norcross Point to allow for more boat trailers. Winthrop has already applied for a 2023 grant, that if selected, will go toward replacing the boarding float adjacent to the boat ramp.

Norcross Point and the public beach serve a variety of community needs and interests, including a civic gathering space, swimming, boating, fishing, and much more. Both have a long tradition of providing family recreation for Winthrop residents. Norcross Point has the potential to host more community activities, ranging from festivals to music concerts. In fact, for the past 14 years, there has been a summer concert series on Sunday afternoons in July and August. Because of the location and site restraints, any improvements must be made with a lot of forethought and communication among users and neighbors.

Over the past several years, there has been limited, if any, improvements made to the infrastructure assets at Norcross Point. These assets at Norcross Point have been in place since the 1970s and need upgrades, repairs, replacement, or removal. Additionally, the waterfront and beach have seen significant degradation over the last 10 years.

Because time has lapsed since the creation of the *Norcross Point and Public Beach Redevelopment Plan*, drafted in 2020-21, the town has decided to start again at square one. The process of determining project needs and priorities will be started again with public engagement to ensure that whatever improvements are pursued align with what

the public wants, at the state's recommendation. The grant funds that were originally requested in 2020-2021 are now insufficient to cover the cost of the improvements outlined in the original *Norcross Point and Public Beach Redevelopment Plan*.

The following is not an exhaustive list of known improvements needed at Norcross Point:

### Norcross Point

#### Boating

- Floating docks
- Boat launch
- Boat inspection/wash station

#### Site Access, Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

- Access drive
- Parking lot
- Walkways
- New boardwalk at the beach

#### Shorefront Stabilization

- Stone toe armoring
- Vegetative buffers

#### Park Amenities

- Restrooms
- Gazebo
- Veterans Memorials
- Playground
- Signage, trash receptacles, bike racks
- Lighting, security cameras, public Wi-Fi
- Picnicking and seating
- Landscaping

### Public Beach

#### Swimming

- Concrete swim pier removal
- Swim area delineation
- Lifeguard chair

#### Site Access, Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

- ADA access to beach
- Parking
- Sidewalks

#### Shorefront Stabilization

- Stone toe armoring
- Vegetative buffers

#### Site Amenities

- Signage, trash receptacles, bike racks
- Lighting, security cameras, public Wi-Fi
- Beach area space delineators
- Picnicking and seating
- Landscaping
- Temporary restrooms

### **Norcross Point Improvements Details:**

Parking has been an issue at Norcross Point for many years. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan noted the parking limitations which are exacerbated when there are numerous boat trailers in the parking area. If the town is eligible to apply for the 2025 grant detailed above, those funds would be earmarked for this improvement.

Another important area for improvement is the restroom facilities. The town currently addresses this need using port-a-potties on site. Consideration should be given as to how the town will address this in the future.

Beach deterioration has been an issue for many years, also noted in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The shoreline stabilization will be an essential element in Norcross Point improvements, as the erosion from the beach has potential to degrade water quality.

These and other improvements will undoubtedly increase the popularity of Norcross Point and Town Beach for public recreation and will undoubtedly contribute to the attractiveness of the downtown area.

### **Boat Access:**

In addition to the boat launch at Norcross Point, a few other boat launches are scattered throughout Winthrop. There is a simple carry-in facility at the north end of Upper Narrows Pond. No road access or parking is available at this site except at the nearby rest area. Other, less formal carry-in facilities have been identified at Marshview (Little Cobbossee), Lakeside Motel (Cobbossee), and Lower Narrows Pond Rest Area (Lower Narrows Pond). In addition, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) maintains a boat launch off Turtle Run Road in East Winthrop for to access Cobbossee Lake. It is a more rustic facility, with a gravel entry road and no designated parking.

Additional facilities are available to access Winthrop's lakes from neighboring towns. They include:

- a carry-in launch facility at the north end of Berry Pond in Wayne,
- a boat ramp at the south end of Wilson Pond in Monmouth,
- a well-developed facility off Route 135 in Monmouth onto Cobbossee Lake,
- a boat ramp into Annabessacook Lake in Monmouth,
- a boat ramp into Maranacook Lake just south of Readfield Village.

The public has available access to Winthrop's many water bodies in a variety of ways. All are accessible off town roads to those who wish to walk to them.

A common issue with allowing public boat access is the introduction of aquatic invasive species, particularly milfoil. Any improved access must be coordinated with intensive invasive species monitoring and courtesy boat inspections.

## **Land-Based Activities:**

Land-based recreation consists of activities such as hunting, hiking, birdwatching, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, cycling, and many more. These activities take place throughout town, but many depend in large part upon public access to tracts of undeveloped land. This access can be in the form of publicly owned or managed tracts of land, such as Mt. Pisgah, but can also include easements or landowner agreements permitting public use of private land, such as with snowmobile trails. Continued access to these opportunities is contingent upon the continuing goodwill of landowners.

Development in rural areas and expanded posting of land could potentially limit future outdoor recreational opportunities in Winthrop unless steps are taken to preserve open space.

## ***Trail System:***

Winthrop has a plethora of trails for all pursuits. Included in the trail system are both publicly owned and privately owned land, maintained across multiple entities.

Winthrop is crisscrossed by snowmobile trails and linked to an interstate network through the Interconnected Trail System (ITS) trail #87 running along the western edge of town. Snowmobile trails are maintained by the Hillandalers Snowmobile Club, using contributions from public and private sources.

In addition to snowmobile trails, there are many casual and developed hiking and walking trails in Winthrop, including at the high school-middle school complex. Probably, the best known and most extensive network of trails are in the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area.

Mt. Pisgah is the highest point of land in Winthrop, a popular hiking destination, and the site of a former Forest Service fire tower. The Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) has holdings of over 900 acres surrounding the mountain. The fire tower itself, along with 94 acres, was deeded from the state to the Town of Winthrop in 2003. Since then, the town, in collaboration with the KLT, has established a management plan, emphasizing low-impact recreation uses, such as hiking, picnicking, and nature education. Development for these uses is ongoing. Mt. Pisgah, with approximately 3 miles of trails, is by far the most outstanding land-based recreation asset in the region. On a clear day, the fire tower offers views of Mount Washington to the west and Camden Hills to the east.

Bicycling is becoming increasingly popular as a recreational activity as well as a form of transportation. Except for mountain biking, most cycling takes place on public roads. Few off-road or designated bike routes exist in Winthrop. This is a significant, untapped opportunity. A bicycle network linking the built-up areas, lakes, and other attractions would not only alleviate some transportation-related problems but could serve as a tourist attraction.

A Central Maine volunteer mountain bike program called Pedal Power uses the Roger Guerette Community Trail. Girls in grades 3-12 are encouraged to join Pedal Power. The program is aimed at developing confidence.

Most hiking trails in Winthrop are maintained by a diligent group of local volunteers. The trails are well-maintained and there are no noted use conflicts. The exception to this is the trails at Mt. Pisgah, which are maintained by the KLT and KLT volunteers, and the snowmobile trails, which are maintained by the snowmobile club.

**Hunting:**

There are no statistics available on the percentage of land in Winthrop that is open to hunting. There is a statewide trend toward more posting of private land, particularly in locations where large parcels have been subdivided. Winthrop is somewhat untouched by this trend. Inevitably, there are some postings and restrictions to private land, but there is no data available to confirm or measure the change.

Overall, traditional access is not being restricted in Winthrop to a detrimental degree and there are no obvious issues related to this. Further, the town does not restrict hunting on town-owned parcels.

**Conserved Lands:**

There are many public and private tracts of land in Winthrop, used for multiple purposes, including conservation. Many are open to public recreation, as well. Table 2 lists conserved land areas and ownership.

**TABLE 2: CONSERVED LAND IN WINTHROP**

Landowner	Acreage	Acres in Easements Held
Kennebec Land Trust	1,055	160
Town of Winthrop*	210	
Winthrop Utilities District	254	
Greater Augusta Utilities District	220	
Maine Woodlot Owners Assoc.	155	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,894 acres</b>	

*Source: Winthrop Conservation Commission*

\*Does not include ballfields and beaches.

The 1,894 preserved acres account for approximately 9.5 percent of the total land base in Winthrop. The amount of preserved acreage shown here only represents the undeveloped land in Winthrop and does not include properties enrolled in the Open Space, Farmland, Forest Farmland, or Tree Growth Tax Law Programs.

Currently, the open spaces commonly used for recreational purposes are a mixture of publicly owned and privately owned lands. The Hillandalers Snowmobile Club secured access over numerous privately owned parcels over the course of many years, though access is exclusive to snowmobiles. The town and Conservation Commission work collaboratively with the Kennebec Land Trust in securing permanent conservation status on numerous acres throughout Winthrop that are open to the public.

Winthrop does not currently have an open space fund for the acquisition of property, although they partner extensively with the Kennebec Land Trust to preserve open space and secure access to preserved/conserved properties.

### **Winthrop's Culture:**

Opportunities for cultural exploration abound in Winthrop and are available in multiple locations throughout the year. These cultural opportunities are open to both visitors and residents alike.

### **Venues:**

Venues for gatherings and events offering a cultural experience include the Performing Arts Center (PAC) in Winthrop's High School, and the King Event Room, downstairs at the Bailey Public Library. Norcross Point, close to the village area, is an active outdoor venue for entertainment.

### **Events:**

The following is a list of events held throughout the year in Winthrop (not an exhaustive list):

- ✓ Summer Concerts, Norcross Point
- ✓ Summer Art Festival, Downtown, Town of Winthrop
- ✓ Speakers Series, Winthrop Maine Historical Society
- ✓ Lakes Region Forum Speakers Series, Bailey Public Library
- ✓ Storytime with Miss Jenn, Bailey Public Library
- ✓ Bailey Ukelele, Bailey Public Library
- ✓ Bailey Title Waves Book Club, Adult, Bailey Public Library
- ✓ The Summer Community Read, Bailey Library
- ✓ Young Writers Workshop, Bailey Public Library
- ✓ Tweens and Teens Book Club, Bailey Public Library
- ✓ Poetry Series, Bailey Public Library

### **Bailey Public Library:**

Winthrop is a library-centric community, and the town is immensely proud of its library's wide offerings both culturally and recreationally.

Library buildings are rich in symbolism and meaning, and the Bailey Public Library is the epitome of this. Libraries have long been known to provide cultural assets to communities, such as non-mainstream points of view, a voice for local artists and authors, and opportunities for free classes. Regardless of how grand a library is or is not, the physical space of the library communicates to the public the community's underlying, core values that libraries, information, and shared community space matter, all which Bailey Public Library personifies.

The new adult wing in the Bailey Public Library is a stunning addition to the historic portion of the library that houses the children's wing. There is an amazing playroom for the youngest readers, computers for school-aged children, and a wonderful, quiet space for study, research and reading.

### **Love of Winthrop's History:**

Winthrop is proud of its history and the revitalization of the Winthrop Maine Historical Society (WMHS) is evidence of this. The Society opened the new Winthrop Maine Historical Society Center in 2021 and offers many events, series, and even a small gift shop from its new location. The volunteers of WMHS are passionate, knowledgeable, and involved in the community.

### **Winthrop's Vital Town Center:**

Winthrop could be considered a shopping and retail hub for surrounding rural communities. One local retailer on Main Street hosts a weekend-long event on a monthly basis that draws hundreds of customers to the Commerce Center. Other businesses and restaurants benefit from these monthly events, and they participate with their own sales and other offerings during those weekends. In addition, there are many other retailers, both established as well as new in town, that continue to grow the town's economy and culture.

### **Recreation is Part of Our Culture:**

Year-round outdoor recreation is a considerable part of Winthrop's culture. From winter to summer, Winthrop "plays outside." Ice fishing, ice hockey, ice skating, skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and winter hiking are some of the more popular wintertime activities enjoyed in Winthrop. Summer boasts fishing, boating, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, water skiing, walking, hiking, and spotting and photographing wildlife -- both flora and fauna. Hunting is another type of recreation that is a popular all-season pursuit in Winthrop.

### **Analysis and Key Issues:**

Much of Winthrop residents' recreational activity needs are met through current offerings by existing entities in the town. The Recreation Committee and the YMCA have grown

and expanded to meet the changing needs of residents and continue to offer a wide range of options.

The town's trail system is well-maintained and there is an abundance of organized recreational opportunities and programs, though mostly for youth. Winthrop's current offering of youth programs should be maintained and evaluated for areas of improvement and levels of demand in the future.

Although there is a variety of offerings for youth activities, a need has been identified for more diverse recreational opportunities for all generations, specifically infants/toddlers, new parents, middle and high school-aged kids, as well as adults and seniors. An emphasis on young teens or middle school-aged kids, outside of school-sponsored offerings, should be considered. Opportunities for non-athletic enrichment programs, such as dance and gymnastics, would improve and complement Winthrop's current recreational offerings. Future considerations regarding the benefits and potential offerings of a Community Center should be considered now, as construction is unlikely to take place during this planning period.

An increased demand for adult recreation programs and opportunities is anticipated. The current "baby boomer" generation is indicating a desire to stay physically and mentally active. They want to go to concerts, take classes, participate in the community, ride bikes, kayak, and engage in interesting pursuits in their retirement. If Winthrop wants to attract or keep its aging baby boomer population, a variety of recreational opportunities and programs that this demographic find appealing is necessary.

Winthrop has excellent prospects for a variety of recreational activities with existing facilities, numerous water bodies, open space, and working relationships with the YMCA, the Cobbossee Watershed District, and Kennebec Land Trust. In these areas, continued planning for future demand and financing the necessary facilities are all that is necessary.

The town is taking steps to maintain and improve the treasured Norcross Point, by determining areas that need to be addressed, applying for grants, and garnering public input and support.

Another community project was the effort to build a turf field behind the grade school and Town Office building. Completed in 2023, this field will serve to maintain the current level of use for youth recreation.

Future consideration should be given to handicapped accessibility in locations with known noncompliance. The middle school and high school already meet ADA standards, while the library, Water District, and most significantly, elementary school do not. There is a need for additional ADA compliance within and around the existing brick and mortar town facilities.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER EIGHT: AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

### **Farming Overview:**

The capacity to produce food locally is a tremendous asset for a community, one that is too often taken for granted and undervalued. Most of the food Maine residents consume is imported from either the western United States or from foreign countries. As a result, the food supply could be interrupted or threatened for any number of reasons. Production from local farms makes substantial contributions to a community's food needs daily but becomes more valuable in times of high costs and supply disruption.

Due to the dramatic expansion of industrial agriculture, family farms are quickly becoming a relic of the past across America. Between 1974 and 2002, the number of corporate-owned U.S. farms increased more than 46 percent. Between 2005 and 2006, the United States lost 8,900 farms (a little more than one farm per hour). Another threat is development; according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 3,000 acres of productive farmland in America are lost every day to development.

On a more local level, American Farmland Trust's 2020 national study, *Farms Under Threat: The State of the States* found that only 4.8 percent of Maine's total agricultural land is currently protected, the lowest percentage of any New England state. This same study estimated that one of the most significant threats to farmland in Maine is low-density residential development.

### **Importance of Local Farms:**

Food safety is paramount when considering where the food came from. As a result of the pervasive use of antibiotics in confined animal feedlots, antibiotic resistant human pathogens have emerged. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that each year roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases due to complications related to antibiotics in confined animal feedlots.

The trend of local farms disappearing affects not only food supply and quality but also the local economy; as family farms are bought out, the businesses they helped support disappear. Local seed and equipment suppliers shut down because corporations go straight to wholesalers or manufacturers. Demand for local veterinarian services collapses. This results in shops, restaurants, and doctor's offices closing, while communities shrink, which forces people to drive an hour or more for amenities and services.

Local farms also contribute to quality of life in communities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service conducted studies of what made certain rural areas thrive over others. The results showed, in part, amenities such as agritourism,

farmland protection in developing areas, and potential interactions between farmland conservation practices and rural amenities were key factors.

Equally important, farm and forested land also provide a buffer against high taxes. Dozens of fiscal studies have demonstrated that farm and forest land have a higher ratio of tax revenue-to-service demands than any other form of commercial or residential development. A farm on a tract of land demands minimal cost of local services for every tax dollar paid, while a house on the same tract would require more money for local services provided for every dollar of tax revenue. It stands to reason that undeveloped land subsidizes the “tax base” that towns so often pursue.

Finally, food security is an ever-increasing concern of late. While there are a number of national reserves for strategic materials such as rare metals or oil, there is no national reserve for food. Recognizing how critically dependent the food supply has become on fossil fuels and an intact transportation system, many towns and cities are actively pursuing plans to increase local food production.

To combat food insecurity, Maine’s Climate Action Plan, “Maine Won’t Wait,” has established goals to increase the amount of Maine-produced food consumed in the state, and to increase the total amount of land conserved statewide to 30 percent by 2030.

The benefits of local farms and farmland are too numerous to cover in their entirety. In addition to those highlighted above, other advantages include climate and environmental benefits such as:

- Avoiding the greater emissions associated with developed land.
- Providing the land base to grow a local and regional food economy and to create greater food security.
- Preserving the climate sequestration benefits that can result from farmers using climate-friendly agricultural practices on the land.

In Maine, agriculture and forestry provide the traditional economic backbone and the original engine that drove the local economy, and in many ways, they still do. Farm Credit East’s Northeast Economic Engine report, completed in 2020, calculated that Maine’s agriculture industry contributes over \$3.6 billion in economic impact and supports approximately 27,000 jobs statewide. In Winthrop, even today dozens of families rely on employment in the agricultural or forestry industries, or revenue from their own fields or woodlots. Farm and forest land also provides open space, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics, all of which Winthrop residents consider elemental to their community’s rural character.

This chapter profiles the current state of farming and forestry, and the extent of the resources for supporting these activities in Winthrop, which first gained fame as a center for apple orchards and the raising of Jersey dairy cattle.

## **Agriculture in Kennebec County:**

The USDA conducts a county-by-county census of farms every five years. As of the 2017 Census of Agriculture (most recent data), there were 7,600 farms in Maine; a decrease of 573 or 7 percent since 2012, which showed 8,173 farms in the state. However, the Census of Agriculture showed 642 total farms in Kennebec County, a 6-percent increase since 2012, with 23 percent growing crops and 77 percent raising livestock, poultry, and related products (eggs, milk, wool, other animals, and animal products). For Kennebec County in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, the land area that accounted for farmland was 82,132 acres, an increase of 5 percent since 2012, and the average farm size was 128 acres, which is a decrease of 1 percent since 2012. The Census of Agriculture can break down farms by type and production by ZIP code. Not surprisingly, farm production in Winthrop mirrors that of Kennebec County.

Kennebec County is certainly not the center of Maine agriculture, but these farms still contribute significantly to the local and regional economies. The average farm in the region boasts an average market value of products sold at around \$76,000. Furthermore, many of these farms contribute to the labor market by providing employment.

From equipment repair to agriculture supply stores and veterinarian services, farming and agriculture create a diverse economic base for the region. The economic impact of agriculture extends even further; agritourism provides alternative opportunities for the public to interact with and observe farming activities. As of 2012, there were 270 farms participating in agritourism in Kennebec County. Farming can bring communities closer through farm days, harvest suppers, and farmers' markets. These opportunities drive collaboration and education and increase connections between farms and their communities.

According to the USDA, the major land uses for Maine's farmland were broken down in the following ways. From Table 1 below, Maine clearly is still very much a farming state with only 1 percent considered urbanized at the time of publishing for this data.

Of note, Maine has ranked number one in the United States for wild blueberry production since the 1950s. As of 2020, Maine ranked third in the production of maple syrup and ninth for potato production.

**TABLE 1: MAJOR LAND USES IN MAINE**

<i>Land use acreage Maine</i>		Acres (1,000)	Percent
Cropland	Cropland idled	55	0%
	Cropland pasture	8	0%
	Cropland used for crops	328	2%
Grassland pastur..	Pasture and range	159	1%
Forest use	Forestland grazed	48	0%
	Forest-use not grazed	17,143	87%
Special uses	Defense and industrial	21	0%
	Farmstead	34	0%
	Parks and wilderness areas	356	2%
	Rural transportation	198	1%
Urban	Urban	231	1%
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	1,159	6%

Source- USDA, Economic Research Service, 2012, updated 2017

\*Miscellaneous includes land in such uses as wetlands and unprotected woodlots.

### **Local Farms:**

The principal farming enterprises in Winthrop have historically been poultry, dairy, livestock, and fruits and vegetables. Recent trends in Maine and elsewhere indicate that small, specialty farms, also known as micro farms, are growing in numbers and replacing large, commodity-based farms.

Farms of all sizes, including smaller to mid-sized but in particular large farms, require prime farmland, hired labor, transportation infrastructure, and support services -- a mixture hard to find and maintain in Maine, whereas micro farms require only a local market for their products. These small farms can be managed part-time on small parcels of land, they can diversify into niche and value-added products, and they are flexible enough to shift products when necessary. The recent public emphasis on "local" and "organic" is an effort to highlight the importance of small farms. Examples of small farms are local vegetable stands, pick-your-own strawberries, maple syrup producers, and nursery operations.

While the average farm size in Kennebec County has decreased by 1 percent, per the 2017 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms has increased by 6 percent, representing the trend toward smaller scale farms. This trend toward smaller farms and micro farms is apparent in Winthrop, as well. There are fewer large-scale commercial

farms and an increased number of smaller, niche farms in recent years. Table 2 is a list of local farms in Winthrop; this list is by no means exhaustive as there are too many farms to list.

**TABLE 2: LOCAL FARMS IN WINTHROP**

Farm Name	Product/Specialty	Farm Name	Product/Specialty
Cobb Heritage Farm	Grapes, hay, corn, pepper, eggplant, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, tomatoes, squash, pumpkins	Absolem Cider	Cidery and winery
Cranberry Rock Farms	Certified organic vegetables, baked goods, prepared foods, vegan & gluten-free options	AGreekulture Farmstead	Free-range pork, permaculture
Hound and Hound Farm	Eggs, produce, hand dyed yarn and knitwear	Annabessacook Farm	Organic farm stand, community gardens, recreational opportunities
RT Farms	Equine & livestock feed and supplies	Wholesome Holmstead	Organic beef
Stevenson Farm Stand	Locally grown produce, PYO strawberries	Harvest Moon Farm	Tree fruit, maple syrup, flowers
Dirigo Hill Farm	Vegetables and fiber sheep	Cosmic Goat Farm and Creamery	Organic cheese, raw milk, certified organic produce

*Source: Winthrop Comprehensive Plan Committee members*

Although many acres of land in Winthrop are hayed annually, they remain largely unforested and undeveloped; in terms of agriculture, this land is generally underutilized for crop production or lying fallow (see *Agricultural and Forestry Resources Map* in appendix). These agricultural parcels and farmlands provide natural areas and rural vistas that are important landscapes for the “rural character” and ecological habitat in Winthrop. Even though this land is currently underutilized, preservation and conservation of these areas is crucial to protecting the essence and history of the town, and hay production occurring on these lands remains important to the local and regional economy.

## **Farming Infrastructure:**

Prime farmland is defined as land that is superior to produce food, feed, forage, and other crops. Prime farmland has the soil quality (as designated by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and identified through soil taxonomy), growing season, and moisture supply required to economically produce sustained high yield of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Prime farmland soils produce the highest yields and farming in these areas may result in less damage to the environment.

The *Soils Map* included in the appendix of this Plan delineates the extent of “Prime Farmland soils” in Winthrop. Soils identified as Prime Farmland soils account for 2,503 acres, and an additional 1,594 acres have been identified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. These two designations account for approximately 21 percent of the total acreage in Winthrop. This does not include those soils potentially identified by the County Soil and Water Conservation District as being locally important for agriculture or forestry practices.

Prime Farmland soil is one of many principal factors important for preserving agriculture (along with accessibility to markets, capital, and many others). And while producers at all scales acknowledge the importance of Prime Farmland soils and Soils of Statewide Importance, less emphasis is placed on them with the paradigm shift toward the new style of farming and micro farms on much smaller amounts of land. However, this does not negate the need to protect and preserve land with these important natural characteristics and soil types, as they are a finite resource.

A growing trend in agriculture is the increasing popularity of high tunnels (temporary structures made from steel frames, usually semi-circular and covered in plastic; they are also known as hoop houses) and greenhouses. This is particularly important in Maine where there is a short growing season. By using high tunnels or greenhouses, growing seasons can be extended, and crops can be protected from unpredictable climate conditions with increased yield.

The availability of markets for agricultural produce is particularly important for the new style of small producers who do not have access to commodity markets and operate too close to the margin to afford wholesalers or middlemen. Local farmers’ markets, roadside stands, pick-your-own, and nursery/greenhouses are examples of local marketing styles necessary for today’s farmers.

While Winthrop does not have a farmers’ market in town, there are nearby markets in Augusta, Hallowell, Wayne, and Belgrade. Winthrop also has several roadside produce vendors, of which Stevenson’s, mentioned above, is the most prominent. There has been discussion about reinitiating a farmers’ market in Winthrop to promote small farms and encourage buying local products. The municipal parking lot, in the village area, would make an ideal, central location for the prospective farmers’ market.

Winthrop currently does not have any Community Supported Agriculture, although there is a community garden. Winthrop Community Gardens is located on Annabessacook Road and was established in 2010. Participating community members can lease plots of land each growing season. Expanding or increasing the offerings of these amenities is an option for Winthrop to explore in the future.

### **Growing Farmer Population:**

Currently, the biggest challenge Winthrop farmers are faced with is likely the same challenge every farmer is encountering -- finding adequate labor. This challenge has several contributing factors, including the average age in Maine is mid-40s and Maine has the oldest population in the country. That means fewer young people for farming careers. This is exacerbated by the fact that fewer young people are learning vocational trades, and more are choosing traditional college educations. With most of the population being middle-aged, few young people, and fewer still who are interested in farming, the difficulty in finding labor is no surprise. This is coupled with the fact that farming is physically hard work with long hours and pay that doesn't typically compensate for the arduous number of hours worked.

And, as detailed further in the Housing chapter of this plan, the availability of workforce housing, rental housing, or other affordable housing options is another limiting factor for finding and retaining labor. This is compounded by the scarcity of those housing options in the more rural parts of Winthrop.

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), Maine Farmland Trust (MFT), and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) advocate for farming-friendly communities through a variety of land-use policies and farmland protections, and by promoting and building the population of farmers.

The Agricultural Resource Development Division of the DACF provides a variety of programs, resources, and information that help individual businesses in agriculture flourish and succeed despite the challenges of farming in Maine. A few examples include a grants and loans webpage, information on exhibitor opportunities, energy efficiency opportunities, training and education programs, Market Promotion and Special Events Program, and more. The DACF also has information and programs available on its webpage for the consumer, such as Explore, Experience, Discover, and Connect with Maine Farms, Maine Agritourism, State Fairs, Maine Maple Sunday, Open Farm Day, and Farmers' Markets.

The Maine Farms for Future Program is another great example of a program provided by DACF's Agricultural Resource Development Division. This program provides grants to farm business owners to conduct research and strategic business planning that brings about changes aimed at long-term, maintainable, farm profitability, and net worth.

While Winthrop does not currently have a community supported agriculture program, or community forests, there have been discussions about developing a farmers’ market. A farmers’ market may evolve into more interest in these other areas such as a community supported agriculture program in the future.

**Land Use Policies:**

Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance defines 10 districts in town with various allowable uses in each district (see *Existing Land Use Map* in appendix). Of those 10 districts, four are aimed at protecting natural resources and include state-mandated language for agricultural practices. Aside from the table of allowable uses in each district, there is minimal language relating to agricultural and forestry practices.

**TABLE 3: AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND ZONING DISTRICTS**

Zoning District	Livestock Keeping	Agriculture	Intensive Agriculture
General Residential	Planning Board	Planning Board	Not Allowed
Limited Commercial	Planning Board	Planning Board	Not Allowed
General Commercial	Planning Board	Planning Board	Not Allowed
Industrial	Allowed	Planning Board	Planning Board
Village	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Rural	Allowed	Allowed	Planning Board
Resource Protection	Not Allowed	Planning Board	Not Allowed
Shoreland	Not Allowed	Planning Board	Not Allowed
Stream Protection	Not Allowed	Planning Board	Not Allowed
Public Water Supply	Not Allowed	Planning Board	Not Allowed

*Source: Winthrop Zoning Ordinance*

Under Article IV- Performance Standards, 13. Specific Activities, B. Livestock and Poultry Keeping, the Zoning Ordinance details specifics:

*Farm buildings, sheds, feedlots, and fenced pens used intensively for the keeping of livestock (such as horses, cattle, sheep, poultry, goats, and pigs) shall be located fifty (50) feet away from property lines, except where a property line abuts a public way, and one hundred (100) feet away from any existing abutting residences. Adverse conditions resulting from livestock keeping shall be handled under Section 12 (F). Nuisance Conditions.*

The referenced section on nuisance conditions states that noise, vibration, dust, smoke, odors, heat, glare, radiation, and waste disposal resulting from any use shall be kept to a practical minimum to avoid nuisance conditions.

While this may sound restrictive of agricultural practices in Winthrop, the *Existing Land Use Map* in the appendix clearly shows that the Rural District is the largest zoning district in town. The Rural District has the most generous allowances for livestock keeping, agriculture, and intensive agriculture. In fact, only intensive agricultural uses need Planning Board approval, whereas livestock keeping, and agriculture are allowed without Planning Board approval in the Rural District.

Further, livestock keeping, and agriculture are allowed with Planning Board approval in General Residential, Limited Commercial, and General Commercial. The only Zoning District that disallows any type of agriculture is the Village District, and this land area consists of only a fraction of the town, is densely developed, and not ideal for any type of agricultural activities.

Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance strives to prevent incompatible land uses by encouraging agricultural practices in certain areas and requiring review for these practices in other areas. By promoting farming in the rural areas and discouraging it in the more densely settled village areas, the chances of incompatible land uses should be significantly reduced and most conflict avoided.

Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance allows both medicinal and recreational marijuana establishments along with cultivation facilities. There is a large cultivation facility located in a former printing operation building on Route 202. Cannabis cultivation facilities are essentially a form of agriculture.

Several organizations in Winthrop are actively working to protect farmland and forestland. They are detailed below:

- **Kennebec Land Trust (KLT)** works cooperatively with landowners and communities to permanently protect and conserve forests, shorelands, fields, and wildlife habitat. This is done by donation, fee purchases, and conservation easements. KLT offers educational programs and field trips for schools and other interested organizations on relevant natural history, land stewardship, and conservation themes. KLT has also created miles of trails and conducts ongoing monitoring and land management.
- **Maine Farmland Trust** is a member-powered, statewide organization that protects farmland, supports farmers, and advances the future of farming. It strives to protect Maine farmland and to revitalize Maine's rural landscape by keeping agricultural lands working and helping farmers and communities thrive. It accomplishes this by working with farm families and collaborating with other partners, such as statewide groups, local and regional land trusts, and municipalities. Maine Farmland Trust has permanently protected one farm in Winthrop through an Agricultural Conservation Easement – the Cobb Heritage Farm. Maine Farmland Trust offers three programs aimed at protecting farmland: Farmland Protection and Access Program, Policy and Research Program, and Maine Farmlink Program.

- **Land for Maine’s Future (LMF)** is the primary state-administered funding vehicle for conserving land for its natural and recreational value. Types of land conserved by this program include mountain summits; shorelines of rivers, lakes, and ponds; coastal islands; beaches; forests; grasslands; wildlife habitat; farmland; and wetlands. Land acquired is from willing sellers only. The LMF pursues a mission defined by the public, providing a tangible return to all who cherish Maine’s landscape (from hunters, hikers and snowmobilers to birdwatchers), and leverages federal and private funding for state priority purchases.

### **Farmland Protection Efforts:**

Since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, Winthrop has promoted agriculture in appropriate locations in town. The previous Plan also noted that despite Winthrop’s farming history, large-scale farms have disappeared. In their place, small-scale farms, and backyard farms have popped up, typically on much smaller acreages than required of their predecessors. This is a trend that continues today.

Regardless of the shrinking farm size, Winthrop’s 2010 Comprehensive Plan included provisions for the protection of lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry and encouraged farm and forestry economic vitality. The plan also called for including them in economic development planning.

There are several regulatory measures Winthrop could take to further promote agriculture and farming in appropriate areas of town, if desired. These include developing a “Right to Farm” ordinance that can implement setback and buffer requirements for new developments that abut agricultural uses and can require residential developers to notify potential new homeowners when a property abuts a farm and that farmers have the right to engage in farm practices.

Winthrop could promote agriculture in town by amending the Zoning Ordinance to make agritourism more permissible. Agritourism is becoming increasingly popular and is a huge financial boon to many struggling farms of all sizes. Agritourism can take many forms, from farm visits, tours, and local shopping, to cultural, recreational, and learning experiences.

Another provision the town could consider is Maine’s Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program. Through this program, towns are allowed to develop a system of “farm support arrangements” with eligible farmland owners. The farmland owners voluntarily apply and may then be formally accepted by the town’s legislative body. If accepted, they may be granted a 20-year agricultural conservation easement to the town in exchange for full or partial reimbursement of property taxes on their farmland and farm buildings during that 20-year period.

These and other strategies for supporting and encouraging agricultural and forestry practices in appropriate areas are detailed further in the Policies and Strategies table of this plan.

The *Soils Map* found in the appendix identifies the prime farmlands found throughout Winthrop as well as the conserved land owned by a variety of State and Federal offices.

The state has many provisions available to farmers for their protection and to aid them in continuing operation of viable farms. One such provision is Maine's Agriculture Protection Act (commonly known as the Right to Farm Law) that protects farmers from complaints regarding odors, noise, and other aspects of farming operations.

The state also offers multiple tax programs aimed at improving and protecting the businesses of agriculture and forestry. There are three current-use tax programs that relate to forestry or agriculture in Winthrop: Farmland Tax Law, Open Space Tax Law, and Tree Growth Tax Law (Tree Growth will be addressed later in this chapter). The Maine Legislature declared in the Farm and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36, MRSA, '1101 et. seq.), that "it is in the public interest to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm products close to the metropolitan areas of the state." These programs are detailed below:

- Farmland Tax Law: This tax law was adopted to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space land and to protect farmland and open space land from competing with higher-valued uses. The farmland program provides for the valuation of farmland based on its current use as farmland, rather than based on its fair market value for other potential uses. This reduced land value results in lower property tax bills for owners of farmland. Lower taxes are designed to act as an incentive to preserve Maine's farming communities. In addition to reducing the farmland owner's tax burden, the municipality avoids costs associated with development and state subsidies are positively impacted.
- Open Space Tax Law: This law provides for the valuation of land based on its current use as open space, rather than its highest and best use. To qualify for open space classification, land must be preserved or restricted for uses providing a public benefit. This classification encourages landowners of open, undeveloped land to prevent or restrict its use from development by conserving scenic resources, enhancing public recreation, promoting game management, or preserving wildlife, and/or wildlife habitat. This is mutually beneficial, as the landowner's proportionate tax burden is reduced, the municipality avoids costs associated with development, and state subsidies are positively impacted.

**TABLE 4: PARCELS OF LAND IN WINTHROP ENROLLED IN THE FARMLAND TAX LAW**

	2010	2020	% Change
<b>Number of Parcels</b>	13	14	7.69 %
<b>Acres First Classified</b>	0	0	0
<b>Farmland Acres</b>	210	296	41.0 %
<b>Farmland Valuation</b>	\$60,100	\$93,875	56.2 %
<b>Woodland Acres</b>	651	623	-4.30 %
<b>Woodland Valuation</b>	\$141,600	\$201,530	4.23 %

Source: 2020 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

**TABLE 5: PARCELS OF LAND IN WINTHROP ENROLLED IN THE OPEN SPACE TAX LAW**

	2010	2020	% Change
<b>Number of Parcels</b>	16	23	43.8 %
<b>Acres First Classified</b>	0	0	0 %
<b>Total Acres</b>	626	1060	69.3 %
<b>Total Valuation</b>	\$110,700	\$159,800	4.77 %

Source: 2020 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Both Tables 4 and 5 show a positive percent increase in the number of parcels enrolled in the state's current use tax law from 2010. For the Farmland Tax Law, the number of parcels increased by only one, but the acreage increased by 41 percent. The number of parcels enrolled in the Open Space Tax Law increased by 43.8 percent in the past decade, with an increase of 69.3 percent in acreage. Of these two tables, the only category that decreased was woodland acres; that category decreased by 4.3 percent in the last 10 years.

There are also many publicly sponsored programs to support local agriculture, including the Maine State Grange, University of Maine's Sustainable Agriculture program, and the Farmlink Program through Maine Farmland Trust, which matches prospective farmers in search of land with retiring farmers in search of successors, to name a few. Additionally, the DACF has put a great deal of effort into marketing local agriculture, from promotions like Maine Maple Sunday and Open Farm Days, to support farmers' markets and institutional buying.

### **Threats to Farmland and Farms:**

As mentioned above, one of the biggest hurdles for farms of nearly every size, for a variety of reasons, is finding sufficient labor. But the challenges of owning and running an operational farm are limitless. Also mentioned above is the importance of Prime Farmland Soil and Soils of Statewide Importance.

In Maine, development pressure from commercial solar projects is also impacting farmlands. According to an analysis conducted by Maine Audubon, of the 185 solar development proposals that were reviewed and approved by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as of June 2021, 90 percent intersected with land

identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance.

As these commercial solar projects eat up the land with finite soils that yields the highest production, farmers are further challenged. In Winthrop, the encroachment of new homes and commercial development onto land that was previously used for agricultural purposes is less of an issue than the construction of commercial solar projects on old farmland.

### **Forestry:**

Forests provide many values to the Winthrop community in addition to supplying a source of wood and income to landowners, residents, and local sawmills. Forested areas typically collect water in the landscape by intercepting precipitation thereby reducing the volume and rate of runoff as well as reducing soil erosion and phosphorus loading in lakes, streams, and ponds. Forests also retain soil moisture across a broad landscape that may otherwise be subject to larger seasonal flooding and its associated erosion problems. Additionally, forests provide habitat and travel corridors for wildlife, and outdoor recreational areas, and they purify the air.

Winthrop's tree coverage, depicted in the *Agricultural and Forestry Resources Map* in the appendix, shows a significant forested area across the town. Small tree plantations, many of which sprung from the Civilian Conservation Corps era, are scattered throughout the town and are often adjacent to agricultural land use. Wooded areas are functionally divided into coniferous softwoods, deciduous hardwoods, and mixed forests. Wooded areas may also include tree plantations, managed and unmanaged forests, and some developed areas where a closed canopy obscures the view of urbanization and suggests a relatively lower density of development.

Despite the amount of forested land in Winthrop, the town does not currently have a town or publicly owned woodland or forest under management.

Table 6 below shows the forestry harvest data from 1991 to 2020, along with totals and averages from each category. Perhaps the most notable column is the "Change of Land Use, Acres" category. From 1991 to 1999, there were only six changes in land use. From 2000 to 2008, the acres converted to a different land use increased dramatically, coinciding with the housing bubble at the time. From 2009 to 2013, only 9 acres were converted to a different land use. From 2014 on, the trend of converting acres to a different land use continued to increase, albeit somewhat erratically with only 2015 having no conversion to a different use over that span.

**TABLE 6: FORESTRY HARVEST INFORMATION**

YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	# of active notifications
1991	306	10	3	319	3	11
1992	199	13	12	224	0	11
1993	138	0	1	139	1	7
1994	179	23	0	202	0	8
1995	163	65	5	233	0	9
1996	185	25	0	210	2	5
1997	447	25	0	472	0	6
1998	775	40	10	825	0	16
1999	362	0	30	392	0	25
2000	104	10	15	129	12	30
2001	168	117	0	280	30	18
2002	346	0	0	346	23	15
2003	212	0	0	212	14	9
2004	226	0	0	226	4	12
2005	96	100	0	156	6	10
2006	215	0	0	215	17	12
2007	147	0	0	147	24	9
2008	149	0	0	149	19	11
2009	59	0	0	59	0	10
2010	30	0	0	30	0	5
2011	446.38	0	0	446.38	0	19
2012	280.12	23	0	303.12	9	14
2013	122	39	0	161	0	17
2014	165	12	0	177	64	15
2015	506	0	0	506	0	15
2016	280	0	0	280	12.5	15
2017	350.5	8	5	363.5	32	19
2018	214	20	0	214	4	17
2019	178.8	2	0	180.8	5	16
2020	94	0	0	94	15	16
Total	7,143	532	81	7,691	297	402
Average	238	18	3	256	10	13

Source: Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service.

**Tree Growth Tax Law Program:**

As of 2020, 45 parcels in Winthrop were classified as Tree Growth properties under the State’s Tree Growth Tax Law Program (Table 7). This program, like the Farmland and Open Space Tax Law programs, provides landowners an opportunity to have their land valued for its productivity rather than its market value. Over the course of the last decade, there has been a 21.6-percent increase in the number of parcels participating in this program and an increase of 29 percent of total acres enrolled in Winthrop’s Tree Growth Tax Law Program. The biggest increase, at 98 percent, is the total value of the land in this program.

**TABLE 7: WINTHROP PARCELS ENROLLED IN THE TREE GROWTH TAX LAW PROGRAM**

	2010	2020	% Change
# Of Parcels	37	45	21.6 %
Softwood Acres	92	200	117 %
Mixed Wood Acres	832	1,003	20.6 %
Hardwood Acres	430	545	26.7 %
Total Acres	1,354	1,747	29.0 %
Total Value	\$305,344	\$603,262	98 %

*Source: 2020 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary*

In contrast to the Farmland Tax Law and the Open Space Tax Law programs, the State reimburses municipalities for a portion of lost tax revenues from properties enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. Additionally, local participation is typically higher because this tax law allows multiple uses on the designated property, if the parcel remains primarily used for the growth of trees to produce forest products that have commercial value. As with the Farmland Tax Law and the Open Space Tax Law programs, land withdrawn from the Tree Growth Tax Law Program before maturity is subject to financial penalties.

**Analysis:**

Winthrop’s economic history lies in farming and forestry, trends that shaped the population and landscape and are still visible today. While there has been an undeniable shift in the style and types of farming from these early years, it is also undeniable that agriculture and forestry are still an essential factor in Winthrop today.

With the increasing trend of small farms, micro farms, and buying locally produced food, there are steps the town could take to support, promote, and encourage these farms. Amending the Zoning Ordinance to be more permissible in allowing agritourism would be

beneficial to the farming community. There has also been significant interest in forming a farmers' market in town, which is a viable option for the town to explore.

These and other recommendations can be found in the Policies and Strategies table of this plan. Farming, forestry, and local food production are essential elements for communities of all sizes. Winthrop should consider what steps can be taken to ensure that the existing farms are fully supported through the town, while streamlining the permitting process for future farming endeavors.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER NINE: NATURAL RESOURCES

Winthrop is fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional natural beauty and a high-quality environment. This makes it easy to take the town's natural resources for granted. Yet Winthrop's natural resources are responsible for productive forest and farmland, clean water for recreation and drinking, and wildlife habitat. Arguably, the most important and noticeable natural resource in Winthrop is the abundance of lakes found throughout town. These lakes serve as the economic engine that drives the local economy, as tourism is Winthrop's top industry. The waterfront properties around the lakes contribute significantly to the town's tax base because they are appraised at a higher value than non-waterfront properties. The subsequent tax base is necessary to support public services, municipal government, and public schools. All of that contributes to the overall quality and natural beauty of the town.

One of the functions of this plan is to ensure that growth and development can occur concurrent with preservation of the natural environment. It is possible, but it requires foresight. Some forms of development have greater potential for negative environmental impacts, resulting in some locations that are more suitable for development than others. It is in the town's best interest to ensure that future development is appropriate and in locations to allow maintenance of the natural assets so valued by the town's residents and by visitors.

This chapter identifies and documents Winthrop's natural and water resources and identifies the physical limitations the natural environment imposes on the planning process for future development.

### **Geology and Soils**

Winthrop's soils – and the rock that supports them – influence the topography and the type of vegetation, and constrain endeavors of development, farming, and forestry.

The advance and retreat of glaciers molded Winthrop's landscape. As glaciers advanced, the ice mass scoured the ground. Retreating, they left a mixture of sand, silt, clay, and stones. Today, much of Winthrop is covered by this glacial till, consisting of a heterogeneous mixture of sand, silt, clay, and stones. Till usually overlies bedrock but may underlie or include sand and gravel. Additionally, glacially formed hills may consist of till deposits over 100 feet thick.

One variety of till in Winthrop is fine-grained and compact with low permeability and poor drainage. The other is loose, sandy, and stony, with moderate permeability and fair to good drainage. The till blanket is interrupted by bedrock outcrops. Some of Winthrop is underlain by a glacial delta, which was formed as glacial meltwater washed into the ocean. Winthrop was once a coastal town.

Winthrop soils are typical of western Kennebec County. With a few exceptions, Winthrop soils fall into the Hollis-Paxton-Charlton-Woodbridge association (see *Soils Map* in the appendix). These are sandy loams, typically found in hill and ridge areas at elevations of 200 to 700 feet above sea level. While Hollis soils are shallow and do not retain water well, Paxton-Charlton-Woodbridge soils are deep and moderately well drained. Soils such as these are valued for forest land, hay, pasture, orchards, cultivated crops, and homebuilding. The “delta area” – Winthrop village to the south and west – is a different soil association. Buxton-Scio-Scantic association are deep soils, with drainage capabilities and development potential depending a lot on the slope of the land.

Soil characteristics are particularly important to farming, roadbuilding, construction, and septic system installation.

Most soils in Winthrop are Woodbridge and Paxton stony fine sandy loams with 3 percent to 15 percent slopes. These soils are rated as having moderately high potential for low-intensity development where slopes do not exceed 8 percent. Scantic and Scio soils are common around Annabessacook Lake and are typically associated with wetland areas. Although these soils can be used for agriculture, the high-water table creates severe limitations for residential and commercial development.

From this list of soils, it is immediately apparent that flat, well-drained land is good for both farming and development, and there is an inherent conflict between competing land uses that farming, because of low economic returns, usually loses.

The State Plumbing code also has its list of soils that are unsuitable for subsurface waste disposal. The plumbing code concentrates on those soils in which septic systems will not function, because water is too near the surface, or the slope is too steep. Soils with water too near the surface are:

Biddeford silt loam  
Leicester stony loam

Monarda silt loam  
Peat and muck

Walpole fine sandy loam  
Limerick silt loam

Winthrop’s *Soils Map* (appendix) shows soils by type and location. Maps of these soils involve a degree of generalization. A mapped area of poor soil does not by itself exclude development; however, it does make potential developers aware of challenges.

Regardless of soil type, when cleared of vegetation, all soils are subject to accelerated erosion. Eroding soil contributes to the degradation of water quality. Silt can reduce visibility, harm fish populations, and contribute phosphorus and other destabilizing nutrients into waterbodies. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that, when present in high concentrations, can cause algal blooms. Eroding soil and unmanaged stormwater runoff have been documented as the primary source of increased phosphorus levels in Maine’s lakes, resulting in reduced property values and recreational opportunities.

Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance contains performance standards to protect against excessive erosion during and after construction. Article IV- Performance Standards,

General Requirements, E, sets performance standards that include erosion control. Under sections J. Stormwater Runoff, and K. Water Quality Protection of the General requirements section are other standards to reduce stormwater runoff and water quality degradation.

### **Topography:**

Winthrop has often-challenging topography, due to the geological features described above. The land west of Maranacook Lake is elevated and steep. Several hills exceed 500 feet in elevation, topped by Mount Pisgah at 809 feet. The eastern part of town is just as hilly, but with a lesser elevation. South of U.S. Route 202, some of the land is flatter and more level.

The lakes represent the low points of topography. Apple Valley Lake, in the shadow of Mt. Pisgah, is the loftiest, at 318 feet. The Cobbossee chain begins with Maranacook, at 211', and drops to Cobbossee Lake, at approximately 166 feet above sea level.

The topography of an individual site accounts for much of the cost, difficulty, and potential adverse impact of land development. Development on slopes greater than 15 percent accelerates stormwater runoff velocity, erosion, and sedimentation, particularly in sensitive watersheds. The state Plumbing Code limits the installation of septic systems to land with an original slope of 20 percent or less. Road construction on steep slopes becomes expensive and road maintenance costs increase significantly. Therefore, large contiguous areas with slopes of more than 20 percent are impractical for new construction.

Areas of slope exceeding 20 percent show up on topographic maps, but those are only as accurate as the scale of the map. Development of steep slopes may best be regulated on a site-specific basis. Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance classifies areas of two or more contiguous acres, with sustained slopes of 20 percent or greater, as a Resource Protection District. Resource Protection Districts fall under the state's mandatory Shoreland Zoning guidelines, which include standards governing allowable land uses for these areas.

The topography of the land is responsible for the array of lakes and drainage basins or watersheds. A watershed is the area of land within which all precipitation drains to a single water body. The delineation of watersheds (*Water Resources Map* and *Topography Map* in the appendix) show how water runs off the land, where it accumulates, and how it collects into larger bodies of surface water. Winthrop has all or part of 12 separate watersheds.

Since planning for lake water quality is closely integrated with watershed planning, information on watersheds can be found in the analysis of each waterbody.

## **Scenic Resources:**

Topography is also often the primary component of scenic vistas. While it is said that the quality of a scenic vista is “in the eye of the beholder,” it is often the case that varied topography and overlooking perspectives rank consistently high. In Winthrop, several vistas are notable:

- The view across the bog to Little Cobbossee Lake in East Winthrop,
- The view down Annabessacook Lake from Route 202 south of the village,
- The view of Maranacook Lake from Norcross Point, and
- The panoramic view from Mt. Pisgah.

All these locally important views originate from public property, and none are threatened by development. Mt. Pisgah, of course, is wooded and must be maintained to preserve the view.

## **Floodplains:**

Floodplains do not play a significant role in planning for Winthrop, but are a function of local topography, so are included here.

A floodplain is an area adjacent to a water body that is subject to periodic flooding. Winthrop’s 100-year floodplains are depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the appendix. A 100-year flood is one in which there is a 1-percent chance of flooding in any given year. The 100-year designation is significant because federal law requires local regulation of 100-year floodplains. Winthrop has an approved local Floodplain Management Ordinance, which is enforced, consistent with state and federal standards, and requires periodic reviews and updates.

Winthrop can thank its naturally hilly topography for minimizing the number of floodplains adjacent to its larger waterbodies. Most of the floodplain areas are already boglands. There are two small areas of concern: the land adjacent to Hoyt Brook, just west of downtown, and along Mill Stream inside the village. Fortunately, the village area is built out, without infringing on the floodplain, so there have not been many cases in which regulation has been imposed.

## **Groundwater:**

Local groundwater is the source of drinking water for all residents not serviced by the public water system, as well as several summer camps and other businesses. Groundwater is also a potential future source for public supplies. A “significant aquifer” provides a water supply in large enough volumes for commercial use, but all groundwater in the town should be protected from potential contamination by oil, chemicals, or other sources.

In Winthrop, one significant sand and gravel aquifer is defined. It has an estimated yield of 10 to 50 gallons per minute and is located west of Annabessacook Lake. There are no

existing public water supply wells in this aquifer. A public water supply is one that serves 15 or more individual hookups or 25 or more people from a single source.

Outside of the aquifer, 15 wells serve as public water supplies at nine locations. The following is a summary of public water supplies from groundwater in Winthrop, as reported by the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health Drinking Water Program, which regulates public water supplies. There are an additional three drinking water supplies from surface waters.

- ASSOCIATION OF CAMPOWNERS (east shore of Annabessacook Lake), 110' drilled well.
- CAMP MECHUWANA, three wells, serving a seasonal campground: 434' drilled well (high risk for coliform but none reported), 125' drilled well, 135' drilled well.
- AUGUSTA WEST CAMPGROUND, 120' drilled well.
- COBBOSSEE MOTEL, drilled well (high risk for coliform, none reported)
- DOROTHY EGG FARMS, 350' drilled well (high existing risk of contamination).
- 184 SOUTH ROAD (site of the former Flickers Restaurant), 325' drilled well (moderate existing risk of contamination).
- LAKES REGION MOBILE VILLAGE, five wells, all unknown depth (all high future risk of contamination).
- STATE YMCA CAMP, unknown depth drilled well.

The Drinking Water Program promotes the establishment of Wellhead Protection Planning for public water supplies. Plans are prepared by the well owners but should be implemented with the cooperation of the town. A minimum 300-foot radius of restricted land use around a wellhead (more for larger systems) is recommended, although most existing water supplies do not have this level of control or protected area. The DWP provides source water assessments for public water supplies in Maine towns, as well as maps showing potential threats to public water sources (*Water Resource Sources Map* in the appendix).

Winthrop's proactive approach on protecting groundwater and surface water supplies includes provisions in both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance's, Article IV- Performance Standards, 12 General Provisions, H. Sanitary Provisions, and K. Water Quality Protection contain a routine prohibition on discharging waste into waterbodies. Winthrop's Subdivision Ordinance, Section VIII, B.6, requires a study of the concentration of nitrates in the groundwater in certain cases.

In addition to manmade conditions, there is potential for numerous natural elements to contaminate private well water, causing health concerns. Two known environmental contaminants present in Winthrop are Arsenic (As) and Radon (Rn). Both are known carcinogens that can be found in almost any drinking water supply throughout Maine, with certain towns having a higher documented concentration than others. Both Arsenic and Radon are naturally occurring in the environment, although Arsenic can also be the result

of human activities such as industrial and agricultural practices. The state and town can offer guidance for residents on dealing with these environmental contaminants.

Emerging well water contaminants that are not naturally occurring are Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Historically, these manmade chemicals were used in many different applications and products. Because of how slowly they breakdown and their persistence in the environment, they have earned the name “forever chemicals.” PFAS have been documented in agricultural sites, drinking water supplies, landfills, wastewater, sludge and septage spreading sites, and remediation and cleanup sites. As these contaminants are a newer concern than Radon and Arsenic, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has yet to determine a Maximum Contamination Level (MCL). Standards, guidelines, and remediation measures are still becoming available to Maine residents.

### **Surface Waters:**

An interconnected system of surface waters begins as tiny brooks on hillsides and flows through a system of streams, ponds, and wetlands, eventually reaching the sea. Wetlands and lakes are critical points along the network of surface waters. Wetlands serve important natural functions such as wildlife habitat and stormwater regulation and are susceptible to development. Lakes contribute to natural beauty, are an attraction for residents and economic development, and are a center for recreation. They are vulnerable to pollution and overuse, which in turn lowers property values. Currently, 30.8% of Winthrop’s property value is on the waterfront. However, that figure is likely artificially low. Winthrop’s last property revaluation occurred in 2007. Market prices on the waterfront have skyrocketed since 2020. As of October 2023, the Town is planning a revaluation, which is likely to cause that percentage to rise.

Many land-use practices can impact surface water quality. Improperly functioning or unsuitably located systems for sanitary waste may cause bacteria to contaminate surface waters. Poor agricultural practices can result in nutrient enrichment of ponds and lakes (e.g., phosphorus). Construction creates erosion and siltation, potentially reaching waterbodies. Any improperly managed land use or land-based activity can accelerate degradation of water quality. The first step in managing the community's surface waters is to understand the systems, their existing quality, and factors that influence their quality.

### **Rivers and Streams:**

There are several perennial streams in Winthrop; however, because the chain of lakes is so pronounced, they are often not the focal point. In addition to enhancing the scenic landscape, flowing water provides a unique habitat for numerous wildlife species and plays an essential role in the drainage of land areas during storms or snow melt. Streams also serve as the flushing and refill conduits for the larger, open waterbodies to which they are connected.

The state has four classifications for freshwater rivers, streams, and brooks: AA, A, B, and C. All streams and brooks in Winthrop are Class B. The classification system should be viewed as a hierarchy of risk more than for use or quality assessment. As an example, a Class B stream is considered more at risk than a Class A stream. The risk is the possibility of a breakdown of the ecosystem and loss of use due to either natural or human-caused events. Ecosystems that are more natural in their structure and function can be expected to be more resilient to new stressors and to show more rapid recovery.

Class B waterbodies are suitable for drinking water supply, recreation in and on the water, fishing, industrial processes and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation and an unimpaired habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The *Water Resources Map* (appendix) shows Winthrop's streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. Most streams are bounded by the Stream Protection District, as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. The Stream Protection District establishes a 75-foot building setback from the stream high-water mark.

### **Lakes and Ponds:**

Winthrop's lakes and ponds are the defining feature of the town's landscape. Large, open bodies of water provide scenic views, a variety of recreational opportunities, important fish and wildlife habitats, sources of drinking water, and prime real estate development opportunities.

The quality of water in any lake or pond depends on many factors, including the surface area and depth of the lake; the flushing rate of the lake; the size of the watershed surrounding the lake; the extent of development along the shore; the extent of agricultural activity in the watershed; and the degree to which obvious sources of pollution, such as septic effluent, sewage, agricultural fertilizers, and manure are kept from entering the water body.

The state designates waterbodies encompassing 10 acres or more as Great Ponds. Great Ponds and their shorelands are subject to special regulations through Shoreland Zoning and Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. The state has one standard of classification for both Great Ponds and natural lakes and ponds less than 10 acres in size; this classification is GPA. The water quality attainment goal for Class GPA waterbodies is that they are suitable for drinking water, recreation, fishing, hydro-electric power generation and as natural habitat for fish and other aquatic life. If a water body is not meeting its attainment goal, it is described as a "nonattainment" lake.

None of Winthrop's waterbodies currently meet the GPA classification for a variety of reasons. As with the water classification system for rivers, the classification should be viewed as hierarchy for risk, rather than for use or quality assessment, with the risk being the possibility of a breakdown of the ecosystem and loss of use due to either natural or human-caused events.

The following section describes the natural features and characteristics of the 11 great ponds and lakes in Winthrop. Included in these descriptions are an assessment of water quality based on eight indicators. Those indicators are listed along with the State's averages below.

<b>Water Quality Assessment and State Averages</b>	
Transparency	Transparency is set at a certain water depth. Factors that reduce water clarity are algal blooms, zooplankton, the color of the water, and silt, with algae being the most abundant. In Maine, the current overall average for transparency is 5.3 meters.
Chlorophyll	This test measures the green pigment found in plants, including microscopic algae. This measure is used to estimate algal biomass -- the higher the chlorophyll content, the higher the quantity of algae in the lake. In Maine, the average is 5.7 parts per billion (ppb).
Phosphorous	Phosphorus is a major plant nutrient needed for growth; however, high phosphorus levels are often a sign of pollutants entering the waterbody. As levels of phosphorus increase, the quantity of algae increases, resulting in reduced water quality. The average in Maine is 11.2 ppb.
Color	This measure refers to the amount of dissolved organic acids such as tannins and lignin, resulting in tea-colored water. The unit of measure for color is Standard Platinum Units or SPU. Color reduces the lake's transparency and increases phosphorus readings. The average color reading in Maine is 20.1 SPU.
Alkalinity	This is the measure of the capacity of the water to neutralize acids (called buffering). A waterbody's ability to buffer acids is affected by the natural geology of the surrounding area, and the presence of naturally available bicarbonate, carbonate, and hydroxide ions. It is measured in milligrams per liter (mg/L). The average alkalinity is 11.1 mg/L in Maine.
pH	Like alkalinity, pH is the measure of acidity of the water. How acidic or basic the water is will determine which plant and animal life will be present. The measure of acidity is on a scale of 1 to 14, with 7 indicating neutral acidity, 1 being highly acidic, and 14 being highly basic. A one-unit change in pH represents a 10-fold change in the concentration of hydrogen ions (H <sup>+</sup> ), which determines the acidity of the water. The average pH in Maine is 7.23.
Conductivity	Specific conductivity measures the ability of the water to carry an electrical current and is related to the dissolved ions (charged particles) in the water. Conductivity is measured in microSiemens per centimeter. This quality is used to calculate fish yield estimates. Specific conductivity will increase if there is an increase in pollutants entering the water, usually in the form of runoff from urban or residential areas and roadways. Maine's average specific conductivity is usually below 95.3 micro-Siemens per centimeter.
Dissolved Oxygen	Adequate levels of dissolved oxygen (DO) in water bodies are essential to most life in the water. DO is an important indicator of water quality and it influences water chemistry. DO levels are strongly affected by water temperature: warmer water is less dense and its ability to hold oxygen is reduced.

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

## **Berry Pond**

Direct Drainage Area: approximately 2,080 acres in Winthrop

Area: 175 acres

Maximum Depth: 25 feet

Mean Depth: 14 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: warmwater

### **Fish species:**

Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )	Brook trout ( <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> )
American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )	Minnnow species ( <i>Cyprinidae</i> family)
Northern Pike ( <i>Esox lucius</i> )	Smallmouth bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

**Plant species:** (not an exhaustive list) aquatic moss, bladderwort, coontail, muskgrass, pickerel weed, pondweed, water lily, water marigold, waterweed, and wild celery.

**Mussels and Crayfish:** No information available.

Loon counts have taken place on Berry Pond sporadically since 1983. The loon population has varied over the years, but the current population appears to be holding stable.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	2	1	2001	6	2
1984	2	0	2008	6	0
1985	0	0	2009	2	0
1987	2	0	2010	2	0
1990	2	2	2012	1	0
1991	2	3	2014	2	0
1992	8	0	2021	4	0
1999	1	0			

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

## Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Berry Pond
Transparency	5.3 M	4.5 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	4.2 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	12 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	27 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	19.0 mg/L
pH	7.23	6.94
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	61 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Berry Pond appears to have reduced DO levels during warmer months, as expected, but the levels of DO are stable in cooler months.

All the above information indicates that Berry Pond has average levels of phosphorus, color, chlorophyll, and alkalinity. The transparency and chlorophyll levels that are higher than state average indicated reduced water quality.

Berry Pond and Dexter Pond (covered below) are of comparable size and located next to each other in Wayne and Winthrop. Berry Pond has 2,080 acres of drainage area in Winthrop while Dexter Pond has 390 acres of drainage area in Winthrop.

Both ponds show dissolved oxygen depletion in the bottom waters during summer months, which may facilitate the internal recycling of phosphorus from bottom sediments during these periods.

### **Dexter Pond**

Direct Drainage Area: approximately 390 acres in Winthrop.

Area: 113 acres

Maximum Depth: 25 feet

Mean Depth: 13 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: warmwater

**Fish species:**

Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )	Minnow species ( <i>Cyprinidae</i> family)
American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )	Smallmouth bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Plant Species:** (not an exhaustive list) arrowhead, bladderwort, bur-reed, metaphyton, pickerel weed, pondweed, rush, water lily, watershield, and wild celery.

**Mussels & Crayfish:** No information available.

Loon counts have taken place on Dexter Pond sporadically since 1983. The loon population has varied over the years, but the current population appears to be holding stable.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	1	0	1996	3	0
1984	1	0	1998	3	0
1987	2	0	1999	3	0
1990	4	0	2020	2	0
1993	4	0	2021	2	0
1994	1	0	2022	1	0
1995	2	0			

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Water Quality Assessment:**

Variable	State Average	Dexter Pond
Transparency	5.3 M	5.0 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	4.6 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	11 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	22 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	17.6 mg/L
pH	7.23	7.05
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	67 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Dexter Pond has reduced DO levels during warmer months, as expected, but the levels of DO increase in colder months, as stated above.

Based on the comparison of Dexter Pond’s water quality to the averages for the State of Maine, Dexter Pond has below average transparency, color, alkalinity, and conductivity. Dexter Pond had above average chlorophyll levels, phosphorus levels, and pH level.

Dexter Pond is listed on the Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List as Watch List and “Sensitive, Sensitive due to Sediment Chemistry” under the Threatened Lakes Priority List. It is not, however, listed under Impaired. Lakes are listed on the Watch List if they were recently impaired and still sensitive, or data suggests their water quality is near the impairment threshold.

Dexter Pond is listed as “Sensitive due to sediment chemistry” because it has been determined to be susceptible to internal phosphorus release because the ionic soil composition does not readily bind and hold phosphorus. Rather, phosphorus is released into the waterbody from the soil chemistry.

Dexter Pond is listed as “Sensitive” to additional phosphorus input due to the pond’s hydrology and threats in the watershed.

**Carlton Pond**

Direct Drainage: 1,383 acres  
 Area: 223 acres  
 Maximum Depth: 57 feet  
 Mean Depth: 24 feet  
 Invasive species: unknown  
 Fisheries management: no fishery

<b>Fish species:</b>	
Banded Killifish ( <i>Fundulus diaphanous</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Rainbow Smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )
Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )	Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Crayfish Species:** Virile crayfish (*Orconectes viriles*)

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on mussel species or plant species found in Carlton Pond.

Loon counts have taken place on Carlton Pond sporadically since 1983. The loon population has varied over the years.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1986	0	0	1995	0	0
1990	3	0	1996	1	0
1991	1	0	1997	0	0
1992	0	0	1999	0	0
1993	0	0			

Source: Lakes of Maine

### Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Carlton Pond
Transparency	5.3 M	6.1 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	4.5 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	11 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	16 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	13.5 mg/L
pH	7.23	6.96
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	48 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Carlton Pond has reduced DO levels during warmer months, as expected, but the levels of DO increase in colder months.

All the above information indicates that Carlton Pond has slightly above average water quality when compared to state averages.

Carlton Pond, located in Winthrop and Readfield, is the backup water supply for the Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD), which serves up to 40,000 people per day. It discharges into Upper Narrows Pond, which is the primary water supply for the town of Winthrop.

The watershed of the pond is well-protected. Between 1905 and 1908, the GAUD purchased approximately 600 acres in Readfield and 50 acres in Winthrop, and since that time has owned the entire perimeter of the pond. Today, the District owns 710 acres surrounding Carlton Pond. There are no current plans to sell or develop any of the district's ownership. Of that total, 125 acres are enrolled as Tree Growth and managed for timber production. Portions of the watershed are also a state game preserve and public access to the pond is highly restricted. The district also owns and operates the dam controlling the pond's water level, which is located at the outlet in Winthrop.

Carlton Pond is on the DEP's Non-Point Source (NPS) Priority Watershed Listing as a Threatened Lake because it is licensed by the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program as a "Public Water System" with a lake or pond as the surface water source. The DEP lists the pond as moderate-sensitive with a high level of protection for phosphorus loading. Its allowable phosphorus allocation is 0.052 pounds per year per acre. Carlton Pond is also

on DEP’s list of “Lakes Most at Risk from New Development” which requires projects in the watershed to meet additional standards (Chapter 502, *Stormwater Management Rule*).

The undeveloped nature of the watershed, including an undeveloped shoreline, forces consideration of major development impacts in the future. The Greater Augusta Utilities District owns substantial amounts of land in the watershed, which is also valuable as open space. The Zoning Ordinance sets stringent controls on land uses within 1,000 feet of Carlton Pond and Narrows Pond via the Public Water Supply District to protect these important resources.

Additionally, Carlton Pond is a Waterfowl Production Area, as it is one of the few areas in the state that provides nesting habitat for black terns (*Chlidonias niger*), which is a state-listed endangered species. Black tern populations have been monitored by the state since 1990, and MDIF&W manages their habitats by maintaining stable water levels in impoundments, taking efforts to deter predators, and using floating nest platforms.

**Little Cobbosseecontee Lake (A.K.A Little Cobbossee Lake)**

Direct Drainage: 1,724 acres  
 Area: 91 acres  
 Maximum Depth: 33 feet  
 Mean Depth: 17 feet  
 Invasive species: unknown  
 Fisheries management: warmwater

<b>Fish species:</b>	
American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )	Fourspine Stickleback ( <i>Apeltes quadracus</i> )
Banded Killifish ( <i>Fundulus diaphanous</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Rainbow Smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )
Golden shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )	Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )
Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )	Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
Northern Pike ( <i>Esox lucius</i> )	White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on mussel species or crayfish species found in Little Cobbosseecontee Lake.

**Plant Species:** (not an exhaustive list) common waterweed, flat-stem pondweed, floating bur-reed, lesser duckweed, and stiff arrowhead.

Loon counts have taken place on Little Cobbossee sporadically since 1983.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	1	2	2008	3	0
1991	2	1	2009	0	0
1992	2	0	2010	2	1
1993	0	0	2011	3	0
1994	1	0	2012	5	0
1995	1	0	2013	0	0
1996	0	0	2014	0	0
1997	0	0	2015	2	0
2000	0	0	2016	2	0
2001	0	0	2017	2	1
2002	0	0	2018	0	0
2003	0	0	2019	1	1
2004	3	0	2020	0	0
2005	0	0	2021	1	0
2006	0	0	2022	0	0
2007	0	0			

Source: Lakes of Maine

### Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Little Cobbossee Lake
Transparency	5.3 M	3.4 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	11.8 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	36 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	27 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	19.3 mg/L
pH	7.23	6.98
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	72 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Little Cobbossee Lake appears to have significantly reduced DO levels throughout much of the year except for colder months.

Of Little Cobbossee's 1,724-acre watershed, 41 percent (roughly 700 acres) are in northeast Winthrop. This lake is listed on the State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection 2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report as "attaining some standards; assumed to meet others." The report also notes that water quality is improving, and algal blooms are rare.

Little Cobbossee is listed on the Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List as “Watch List and Sensitive” under Threatened Lakes. It is not listed under Impaired. Lakes are listed on the “Watch List” if they were recently impaired and still sensitive, or data suggests their water quality is near the impairment threshold. The lake is listed as “Sensitive to additional phosphorus inputs”, due to the lake’s hydrology and threats in the watershed.

Little Cobbossee is also on the list of Direct Watershed of Lakes Most at Risk from New Development. A lake is considered most at risk from new development if it meets the criteria below. The criteria this determination is based upon is as follows:

1. The lake is a public water supply.
2. The Lake is identified by the Department of Environmental Protection as being in violation of class GPA water quality standards (GPA is the one classification for water quality for lakes and ponds in Maine) or as particularly sensitive to eutrophication based on:
  - a. Current water quality.
  - b. Potential for internal recycling of phosphorus.
  - c. Potential as a cold-water fishery.
  - d. Volume and flushing rate,
  - e. Projected growth rate in the watershed.
3. Severely blooming lakes are a subset of lakes most at risk. A severely blooming lake has a history of algal blooms, and the reduction of existing watershed phosphorus sources sufficient to eliminate those algal blooms is expected to be so difficult that the addition of new, incompletely mitigated development sources may prevent successful restoration of the lake.

According to DEP’s *Phosphorus Control Action Plan and Total Maximum Daily (Annual Phosphorus) Load Report, Little Cobbossee Lake, Kennebec County, Maine (2005) (Little Cobbossee Lake PCAP-TDML Report)*, at the time, there was a history of excessive amounts of algae in the late summer-early fall, due in large part to the contribution of phosphorus prevalent in the soils that eroded and accumulated in the sediments. The frequency of algal blooms in the early 2000’s spurred federal, state, county, and local groups to work together in addressing this nonpoint source water pollution problem. This resulted in the 2005 *Little Cobbossee Lake PCAP-TDML Report*.

TMDL is an acronym for Total Maximum Daily Load, which represents the total amount of a pollutant (e.g., phosphorus) that a waterbody can receive on an annual basis and still meet water-quality standards. According to this report, the TMDL target goal at time of writing was 15 ppb total phosphorus a year. Also, at the time of the report, the amount of total phosphorus loading into Little Cobbossee generated by the watershed was approximately 20 ppb. That has since grown to 36 ppb.

It was noted in the previous Comprehensive Plan that the lake bloomed on a near-annual basis and water quality was listed as poor.

**Maranacook Lake (northern and southern basins\*)**

Direct Drainage: southern: 2,907 acres (49.2 percent in Winthrop), northern: 6,604 acres (18 percent in Winthrop)

Area: 1,844 acres

Maximum Depth: 128 feet

Mean Depth: 30 feet

Invasive species: Chinese Mystery Snail (*Cipangopalundina chinensis malleatus*)

Fisheries management: warm & cold-water

\*The Lakes of Maine website does not differentiate data between the northern and southern basins of Maranacook Lake.

Fish Species:	
Brown Trout ( <i>Salmo trutta</i> )	Banded Killifish ( <i>Fundulus diaphanous</i> )
American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )	Black Crappie ( <i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i> )
Brook Trout ( <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> )	Fallfish ( <i>Semotilus corporalis</i> )
Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )	Lake Trout ( <i>Salvelinus namaycush</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
Landlocked Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )	Rainbow smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )
Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )	Slimy Sculpin ( <i>Cottus cognatus</i> )
Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )	White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )
White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )	Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Plant Species:** (not an exhaustive list) bladderwort, bryozoan, bur-reed, coontail, pickerel weed, pipewort, pondweed, waterweed, and wild celery.

**Mussels & Crayfish:** Eastern elliptio and Eastern floater; crayfish are present.

Loon counts have been done regularly since 1983. Since that time, the loon population has stayed relatively stable.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	4	0	1998	14	0	2010	27	2
1984	6	0	1999	20	2	2011	31	2
1987	6	0	2000	25	2	2012	23	1
1989	13	1	2001	24	3	2013	28	2
1990	15	2	2002	21	3	2015	33	1
1991	18	1	2003	30	1	2016	25	4
1992	18	2	2004	21	0	2017	23	1
1993	15	1	2005	36	1	2018	9	3
1994	15	2	2006	23	0	2019	24	2
1995	29	0	2007	27	1	2020	43	0
1996	18	0	2008	23	2	2021	27	2
1997	16	0	2009	29	1	2022	26	2

Source: Lakes of Maine

#### Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Maranacook Lake
Transparency	5.3 M	5.5 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	4.5 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	10 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	17 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	16 mg/L
pH	7.23	6.92
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	60 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Dissolved Oxygen:** The data shows that dissolved oxygen is reduced drastically in warmer months of the year. In cooler months, there is a slight rebound in DO in the upper portions of the lake, but is depleted in the deeper parts, which is normal. Overall, Maranacook Lake's water quality is lower than average for the state.

Maranacook Lake is composed of two distinct basins, although the Lakes of Maine website does not present the data as two different lakes. The northern basin located in Readfield is smaller and shallower and exhibits water quality that is slightly below average for Maine lakes. The possibility of excessive watershed phosphorus loading and the potential for internal phosphorus recycling are concerns for the future water quality of this basin.

The southern basin of Maranacook Lake is located partially in Readfield and primarily in Winthrop, directly downstream of the northern basin. Maranacook Lake is a secondary water supply for Winthrop and is used as a source of drinking water by some lakefront owners. It is a large, deep lake. During stratification it remains well-oxygenated to the bottom depths, providing a large volume of water to support a cold-water fishery.

Together the basins of Maranacook Lake and their watersheds pose the greatest challenge to water quality management in Winthrop and Readfield. The lake is rated “moderate-sensitive” and is classified as a “Lake Most at Risk from Development” by the DEP. The watershed in Readfield consists of over 9,500 acres (almost half of Readfield’s land area) and includes both Readfield Village and the Depot, the more densely settled areas. There are extensive areas of recent development within Winthrop’s 2,600-acre watershed, as well. Concerns expressed by the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) range from erosion along camp roads to runoff from the school parking lots.

The CWD completed a Watershed Management Plan for Maranacook Lake in 2008, outlining prescribed actions for citizens and officials in Winthrop and Readfield to ensure future protection of the lake.

Maranacook Lake is listed under the Threatened Lake Priority List by the DEP as “Sensitive” due to sediment chemistry, the lake’s hydrology, and threats in the watershed. This listing is based on predictions for the lake’s phosphorus concentration increasing due to watershed growth projections and watershed threats. The DEP listed the water quality category as moderate-sensitive regarding phosphorus loading and the level of protection as high. The south basin has an allowable limit of 0.052 pounds phosphorus per year, per acre, while the north basin has an allowable limit of 0.032 pounds per year, per acre.

### **Apple Valley Lake (aka Nancy’s Bog)**

Area: 101 acres

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: n/a

The Lakes of Maine website did not have information on fish species, aquatic plants, loons, mussels, or crayfish for Apple Valley Lake. Nor was information available on water quality.

**Description:** Apple Valley Lake is an isolated reservoir just east of Mount Pisgah, with virtually no development activity in its direct watershed. Also known as Nancy’s Bog, it was controlled by an earthen dam until the dam failed in 1997, causing a dramatic reduction in pond volume. Prior to that, the pond had a depth of 25 feet; it has not been measured since the dam failure. It was previously listed as having “moderate/sensitive” water quality.

**Annabessacook Lake**

Direct Drainage: 13,543 acres (33.6% in Readfield)

Area: 1,415 acres

Maximum Depth: 49 feet

Mean Depth: 21 feet

Invasive species: variable-leaf milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*), confirmed in 2014, and Chinese Mystery Snail (*Cipangopalundina chinensis malleatus*)

Fisheries management: warm-water

Fish species:	
Brown Trout ( <i>Salmo trutta</i> )	American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )
Banded Killifish ( <i>Fundulus diaphanous</i> )	Common Shiner ( <i>Luxilus cornutus</i> )
Brook Trout ( <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )	Northern Pike ( <i>Esox lucius</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
Rainbow Smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )	Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Plant species:** (not an exhaustive list) aquatic moss, arrowhead, bladderwort, bulrush, pickerel weed, pondweed, coontail, and waterlily.

**Mussels & Crayfish:** No information available.

Loon counts have been done regularly since 1983. Since that time, the loon population has increased slightly over the years.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	5	0	1996	14	1	2010	33	1
1984	5	1	1998	18	4	2011	34	3
1985	6	1	1999	10	0	2012	21	0
1986	6	1	2000	5	1	2013	34	2
1987	2	0	2001	21	2	2014	29	5
1988	9	1	2002	12	3	2015	29	0
1989	9	2	2003	16	2	2016	37	4
1990	11	0	2004	25	4	2017	29	1
1991	21	3	2005	18	0	2018	18	2
1992	11	2	2006	15	0	2019	22	3
1993	15	3	2007	28	0	2020	33	0
1994	16	3	2008	22	3	2021	36	0
1995	17	2	2009	24	0	2022	34	0

Source: Lakes of Maine

## Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Annabessacook Lake
Transparency	5.3 M	3.3 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	11.4 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	22 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	18 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	16.6 mg/L
pH	7.23	7.01
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	61 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

**Dissolved Oxygen:** In warmer months, data shows that dissolved oxygen is reduced at approximately 26 feet and continues to decline until it reaches zero at the depths of the lake. In cooler months, the level of dissolved oxygen is not depleted entirely. These circumstances are not unusual for a lake of this depth. Typically, the dissolved oxygen content is higher in the upper levels of lakes large enough to stratify, while they are reduced at depths.

Annabessacook Lake lies in the southwestern corner of town. It covers 1,420 acres and has a direct watershed area within Winthrop of more than 4,400 acres. The total Annabessacook watershed, including four upstream lakes (Maranacook, Cochnewagon, Wilson, and Lower Narrows) is 83.5 square miles. The shoreline is well-developed on the southern and western shores, but there is less dense development along the eastern shore.

Annabessacook Lake has a history of supporting excessive amounts of algae in the late summer, due in large part to the contribution of phosphorus in the form of nonpoint source pollution caused by erosion. As soil particles wash from the watershed into the lake, they also bring phosphorus, which acts as a fertilizer for plant growth, decreasing water clarity. Excessive phosphorus can harm fish habitat and lead to nuisance algal blooms.

Nonpoint source pollution (NPS), as described above, is the main reason for declining water quality in Annabessacook Lake. NPS can result from the development of residential dwellings (seasonal and year-round occupancy), and recreational pursuits, including boating, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, and the beach area. Further, agricultural activities, which are numerous, are another source of nonpoint source pollution.

In the 2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Report, Maine DEP included this information: “Annabessacook Lake (1,420 acres) in Monmouth [Winthrop] is technically meeting the attainment criteria of not blooming in more than half of the 10-year assessment period and could be delisted on that basis. However, discussions with the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD), the primary stakeholder, revealed that they continue to be concerned with the depression of annual transparency means which occurred during the middle of this assessment period, and the slight reversal of improving

trend over the last few years. Thus, it was decided to continue tracking improvement to increase confidence in any listing changes.”

As of March 2023, Annabessacook Lake was one of the state’s 22 lakes listed on the Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List as “Impaired,” due to its status in the 2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Report, by Maine DEP.

Annabessacook Lake is also on DEP’s list of Maine Lakes at Risk of having an Algal Bloom. Its frequency is “often,” and risk level is “high.” Annabessacook Lake is also on DEP’s list of Direct Watersheds of Lakes Most at Risk from New Development. The criteria this determination is based on is as follows:

1. The lake is a public water supply,
2. The Lake is identified by the department as being in violation of class GPA water quality standards or as particularly sensitive to eutrophication based on:
  - a. Current water quality,
  - b. Potential for internal recycling of phosphorus,
  - c. Potential as a cold-water fishery,
  - d. Volume and flushing rate, or
  - e. Projected growth rate in the watershed.
3. Severely blooming lakes are a subset of lakes most at risk. A severely blooming lake has a history of algal blooms, and the reduction of existing watershed phosphorus sources sufficient to eliminate those algal blooms is expected to be so difficult that the addition of new, incompletely mitigated development sources may prevent successful restoration of the lake.

Under these criteria, Annabessacook Lake is noted as “severely blooming.” However, with the restoration initiatives and several updates to the watershed-based management plan through the Cobbossee Watershed District, the water quality in Annabessacook Lake is slowly showing signs of improvement. Although the water quality is still considered poor, it is gradually improving, based on historic measures of Secchi Disk Transparencies, total phosphorus, and chlorophyll a. The noted improvements are likely because of the CWD’s 2004 Phosphorus Control Action Plan - Total Maximum Daily Load Report, required by the EPA.

**Cobbossee (Cobbosseecontee) Lake:**

Direct Drainage: 20,608 acres

Area: 5,516 acres

Maximum Depth: 100 feet

Mean Depth: 37 feet

Invasive species: Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum* L.) and European frog's bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), both confirmed in 2018.

Fisheries management: warm and cold-water

Fish species:	
Brown Trout ( <i>Salmo trutta</i> )	American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )
Banded Killifish ( <i>Fundulus diaphanous</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Brook Trout ( <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> )	Emerald Shiner ( <i>Notropis atheinoides</i> )
Black Crappie ( <i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i> )	Northern Pike ( <i>Esox lucius</i> )
Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )
Rainbow Smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )	White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	Fourspine Stickleback ( <i>Apeltes quadracus</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	Rudd ( <i>Scardinius erythrophthalmus</i> )
Landlocked Alewife ( <i>Alosa pseudoharengus</i> )	

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Plant species:** (not an exhaustive list) aquatic moss, bladderwort, coontail, pickerel weed, pondweed, and waterlily.

**Mussels:** Eastern elliptio (*Elliptio capanata*), Eastern lampmussel (*Lampsilis radiata*)

**Crayfish:** No information available.

Loon counts have been done regularly since 1983. Since that time, the loon population has increased.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	27	2	1996	23	0	2009	66	3
1984	30	2	1997	15	1	2010	77	3
1985	37	6	1998	44	2	2011	68	2
1986	55	9	1999	35	3	2012	73	5
1987	37	5	2000	38	2	2013	82	3
1988	2	0	2001	38	3	2014	83	8
1989	33	1	2002	26	3	2015	73	9
1990	33	4	2003	31	7	2016	95	9
1991	39	2	2004	58	8	2017	47	8
1992	28	0	2005	51	8	2018	54	3
1993	26	5	2006	56	3	2019	72	11
1994	33	3	2007	53	2	2020	84	8
1995	40	7	2008	51	4	2022	73	2

Source: Lakes of Maine

#### Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Cobbossee Lake
Transparency	5.3 M	4.0 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	8.8 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	16 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	16 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	18.1 mg/L
pH	7.23	7.04
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	62 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Cobbosseecontee Lake shows signs of depleted dissolved oxygen in cooler months and in warmer months, typically indicative of degraded water quality.

Cobbossee Lake is the largest of the Winthrop lakes, with shoreline shared by Manchester, West Gardiner, and Monmouth. The lake drains Annabeessacook Lake, but despite its size, the direct watershed covers only 2,250 acres in eastern Winthrop. Five other towns contribute to the watershed. Both the shore frontage and the larger watershed of Cobbossee are moderately well-developed, making it extremely sensitive to additional development.

Cobboossee Lake has annual or near annual algal blooms and is listed by the DEP as a moderate risk for future algal blooms.

Cobboossee Lake is also on DEP's list of Maine Lakes Most at Risk from New Development, as it relates to algal blooms. The criteria this determination is based on is as follows:

1. The lake is a public water supply,
2. The Lake is identified by the department as being in violation of class GPA water quality standards or as particularly sensitive to eutrophication based on:
  - a. Current water quality,
  - b. Potential for internal recycling of phosphorus,
  - c. Potential as a cold-water fishery,
  - d. Volume and flushing rate, or
  - e. Projected growth rate in the watershed.
3. Severely blooming lakes are a subset of lakes most at risk. A severely blooming lake has a history of algal blooms, and the reduction of existing watershed phosphorus sources sufficient to eliminate those algal blooms is expected to be so difficult that the addition of new, incompletely mitigated development sources may prevent successful restoration of the lake.

The lake is also listed as a Threatened Lake under DEP's Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List. On this list, the Lake is marked under "Watch List," "Sensitive," and "Sensitive – Sediment Chemistry." The "Watch List" classification includes lakes that were recently impaired and therefore still sensitive, or data suggesting their water quality is near the impairment threshold. Lakes classified as "Sensitive" are sensitive to additional phosphorus inputs due to the lake's hydrology and threats in the watershed. Lakes that are "Sensitive due to Sediment Chemistry" are those in which the sediment chemistry has been analyzed and found to be susceptible to internal phosphorus release, leading to internal phosphorus loading.

This lake is listed on the State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection 2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report as "attaining some standards; assumed to meet others." The report also notes that water quality shows persistent improvement. This improvement is largely due to the monumental efforts of the Cobboossee Watershed District in reducing phosphorus loading into the lake. Cobboossee Lake has been showing steady signs of improvement since the 1990s, and in 2006, the state removed Cobboossee from the list of impaired waterbodies and awarded CWD with the DEP's Outstanding Achievement award for three decades of aggressive effort.

**Upper Narrows Pond:**

Direct Drainage: 2,729 acres

Area: 239 acres

Maximum Depth: 54 feet

Mean Depth: 25 feet

Invasive species: Unknown

Fisheries management: warm- and cold-water

Fish species:	
Banded Killifish ( <i>Fundulus diaphanous</i> )	American Eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )
Brook Trout ( <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )	Northern Pike ( <i>Esox lucius</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
Rainbow Smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )	Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	Slimy Sculpin ( <i>Cottus cognatus</i> )
Landlocked Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )	Lake Trout ( <i>Salvelinus namaycush</i> )
Fallfish ( <i>Semotilus corporalis</i> )	

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Plant species:** (not an exhaustive list) bladderwort, pondweed, water lily, and waterweed.

No information is available for mussels or crayfish.

Loon counts have been done regularly since 1983. Since that time, the loon population has stayed stable.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	2	2	1996	2	0	2010	2	0
1984	2	0	1997	2	0	2011	2	0
1985	3	1	1998	2	0	2012	2	1
1986	2	1	2000	2	0	2013	2	2
1987	3	0	2002	2	0	2014	2	0
1989	2	1	2003	2	0	2015	0	0
1990	2	1	2004	4	1	2016	0	0
1991	2	0	2005	2	2	2020	0	0
1992	2	1	2006	2	1	2021	5	0
1993	4	1	2007	2	1	2022	5	0
1994	4	0	2008	2	0			
1995	4	0	2009	2	0			

Source: Lakes of Maine

## Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Upper Narrows Pond
Transparency	5.3 M	6.4 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	4.2 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	9 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	20 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	17.3 mg/L
pH	7.23	6.98
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	98 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Upper Narrows Pond shows signs of depleted dissolved oxygen in warmer months, while dissolved oxygen levels are typically maintained in cooler months.

According to the 2004 Upper Narrows Pond *Phosphorus Control Action Plan and Total Maximum Daily (Annual Phosphorus) Load Report* by Maine DEP, this water body has experienced a decline in water quality over the last three decades, in terms of significant depletion in dissolved oxygen in deep areas of the lake. In fact, the dissolved oxygen was reduced to minimum levels, which threatens the cold-water fishery. This decline is due to the contribution of phosphorus found in area soils and transported into the water body via runoff.

Maine DEP's 2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Report lists Upper Narrows Pond as "Attaining some standards; assumed to attain others," and that data indicates a stable trend.

Upper Narrows Pond is on DEP's Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List under Threatened Lakes Priority List. On this, it is listed under "Public Water Supply System" because it is the primary source of water for the Winthrop Utilities District, thus it requires a high level of protection. Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance includes both Upper and Lower Narrows Ponds in its Public Water Supply District, which requires stringent controls on land uses within 1,000 feet horizontally of the shorelines of these ponds and the streams linking them. Upper Narrow Pond is also listed on the Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List as "Watch List" and "Sensitive" because it is a public water supply source.

Upper Narrows Pond is also on DEP's list of Lakes Most at Risk from New Development because it is a public water supply system.

**Lower Narrows Pond:**

Direct Drainage: over 2,729 acres

Area: 223 acres

Maximum Depth: 106 feet

Mean Depth: 31 feet

Invasive species: Unknown

Fisheries management: Warm- and cold-water

Fish species:	
Brook Trout ( <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> )	Brown Bullhead ( <i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> )
Smallmouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> )	Northern Pike ( <i>Esox lucius</i> )
Chain Pickerel ( <i>Esox niger</i> )	Golden Shiner ( <i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i> )
Largemouth Bass ( <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> )	Pumpkinseed ( <i>Lepomis gibbosus</i> )
Rainbow Smelt ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> )	Redbreasted Sunfish ( <i>Lepomis auratus</i> )
White Perch ( <i>Morone americana</i> )	White Sucker ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> )
Yellow Perch ( <i>Perca flavescens</i> )	Slimy Sculpin ( <i>Cottus cognatus</i> )
Landlocked Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )	Lake Trout ( <i>Salvelinus namaycush</i> )
Fallfish ( <i>Semotilus corporalis</i> )	

Source: Lakes of Maine

**Plant species:** (not an exhaustive list) pondweed, water lily, and waterweed.

No information is available on mussels or crayfish.

Loon counts have been done regularly since 1983. Since that time, the loon population has stayed relatively stable.

Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	3	0	1996	1	0	2014	1	0
1984	3	0	1997	3	0	2015	2	0
1985	3	0	2004	2	1	2016	0	0
1986	8	3	2005	6	0	2017	2	0
1987	2	0	2006	2	0	2018	1	0
1989	2	1	2007	3	0	2019	3	0
1990	2	0	2008	2	0	2020	1	0
1991	1	0	2009	3	1	2021	0	0
1992	1	0	2010	1	0	2022	0	0
1993	3	0	2012	4	0			

Source: Lakes of Maine

## Water Quality Assessment:

Variable	State Average	Lower Narrows Pond
Transparency	5.3 M	6.8 M
Chlorophyll	5.7 ppb	5.7 ppb
Phosphorous	11.2 ppb	8 ppb
Color	20.1 SPU	14 SPU
Alkalinity	11.11 mg/L	17.2 mg/L
pH	7.23	7.04
Conductivity	52.6 $\mu$ S/cm	73 $\mu$ S/cm

Source: *Lakes of Maine*

**Dissolved Oxygen:** Lower Narrows Pond shows signs of depleted dissolved oxygen in warmer months, while dissolved oxygen levels are typically maintained in cooler months.

In the comparison between water quality at Lower Narrows Pond and the state's averages, it appears that Lower Narrows Pond's water quality is slightly above average.

Lower Narrows Pond is on the Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List, under Threatened Lakes Priority List as "Sensitive" to additional phosphorus inputs due to the lake's hydrology and threats in the watershed. This lake is also on the DEP's list of Direct Watershed of Lakes Most at Risk from New Development, likely because of its proximity to Upper Narrows Pond, which is a public water supply source.

Upper and Lower Narrows Ponds are in the central part of town, and each has its own distinct, direct watershed separated by the causeway of Narrows Pond Road.

## Watersheds:

A watershed is a natural drainage basin that collects precipitation and sends it to a body of water through an interconnected system of streams, brooks, and other wetlands. Unmanaged or improper human activities in any part of a watershed can negatively affect the water quality of the waterbody into which the watershed drains.

Several of Winthrop's lakes are within the Cobbossee Lakes system and thus within the jurisdiction of the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD), of which Winthrop is a member. The CWD provides technical assistance and review of development applications as well as volunteer lake water-quality monitoring and management of lake water levels. Even though these lakes may not be wholly or even partially in Winthrop, their watershed lies within the town's boundaries, so they are included in this chapter.

The Town of Winthrop, in cooperation with CWD and DEP, has collaborated on several programs to maintain and improve water quality in the numerous lakes and watersheds in Winthrop. Additionally, the town has participated in numerous restoration and phosphorus mitigation projects.

## Wilson Pond

Wilson Pond lies upstream from Annabessacook, in Monmouth and Wayne. The watershed of Wilson Pond covers about 1,700 acres in Winthrop, and a total direct drainage area of 4,304 acres. The total Wilson Pond drainage area, inclusive of associated sub-watersheds of Berry and Dexter ponds is approximately 15.2 square miles.

The pond has had good water quality in the past but has declined steadily. The DEP's 2018/2020/2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report lists Wilson Pond as a lake that is impaired or threatened for one or more designated uses but does not yet require development of a Total Maximum Daily Load. Typically, lakes that fall into this category are so placed due to internal phosphorus loading. For this reason, Wilson Pond is on the Impaired Lakes Priority List under the DEP's list of Lakes Most at Risk from New Development, due to sensitivity for phosphorus loading.

The CWD surveyed the watershed in 2005-06, identifying locations of existing and potential phosphorus runoff. The state listed Wilson Pond as Impaired in 2006. CWD and partners completed the Phosphorus Control Action Plan – Total Daily Maximum Daily Load Report in 2007.

### **Wetlands:**

Wetlands serve many essential functions, such as stormwater storage areas, surface water filtration systems, and critical wildlife habitat and essential breeding grounds. They also serve as important travel corridors for many species of wildlife. In addition, wetlands provide open space for some forms of recreational enjoyment and/or aesthetic appreciation.

There are at least 20 such wetlands in Winthrop (*Water Resources Map, Critical Natural Resources Map* in the appendix). The most significant are often associated with open water; Annabessacook Lake, Apple Valley Lake, Upper Narrows Pond, and Little Cobbossee Lake all have wetlands connected to them. There is also an extensive wetland along Case Road.

Among other standards, the Winthrop Zoning Ordinance provides protection of wetlands through setback requirements consistent with the mandatory Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

### **Vernal Pools:**

A vernal pool is defined as a naturally occurring, temporary to permanent inland body of water that forms in a shallow depression and typically fills during the spring or fall and may dry during the summer. Vernal pools contain no viable populations of predatory fish, and it provides the primary breeding habitat for wood frogs, spotted salamanders, blue

spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp. The presence of any one or more of these species is usually conclusive evidence of a vernal pool.

Vernal pools do not fall under the protection provided to wetlands by Maine Natural Areas Program, a facet of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that maintains a database of areas designated as ecological reserves. But, as of September 2007, significant vernal pool habitats are protected under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). A vernal pool is considered “significant” if it has a high habitat value, either because 1) a state-listed threatened or endangered species uses it to complete a critical part of its life history, or 2) there is a notable abundance of specific wildlife. This regulation protects areas within a 250-foot radius of the spring or fall high-water mark of a significant vernal pool, which is considered critical terrestrial habitat. Any activity on, in, or over these areas must be approved by the Maine DEP and requires either a Permit by Rule or individual NRPA approval.

To date, significant vernal pools have yet to be mapped. And unfortunately, the Beginning with Habitat data does not have significant vernal pools information for every town, Winthrop included.

With new attention to their importance in the ecosystem, the town should consider conducting a vernal pool survey and incorporating some protection for vernal pools into its development standards. Extra protection through Shoreland Zoning is a consideration for these sites, as well.

### **Threats to Winthrop’s Water Resources:**

The quality of water in any lake or pond depends on many factors, including the surface area and depth of the lake; the flushing rate of the lake; the size of the watershed surrounding the lake; the extent of development along the shore; the extent of agricultural activity in the watershed; and the degree to which obvious sources of pollution can enter the water body.

The single greatest threat to water quality at present is the introduction of phosphorus into a waterbody through runoff within the watershed. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element and a plant nutrient. Excessive phosphorus is responsible for causing nuisance algae blooms and excessive aquatic plant growth. When severe enough, algal blooms reduce dissolved oxygen levels and could result in fish die-offs.

The level of phosphorus entering a waterbody is a direct function of disruption in the watershed, primarily from human-induced activities. Since most of Winthrop is encompassed in lake watersheds, this can have a major constraint on development.

Sources of potential threats to water quality are too numerous to list extensively, but a few include increased and poorly managed development, impervious surfaces related to development, faulty or failing septic systems, agricultural fertilizers, poor stormwater management, erosion, and much more. Typically, the erosion related to poorly maintained

camp roads and gravel driveways within watersheds are the biggest contributors to runoff and increased phosphorus intake in waterbodies.

Increased impervious surfaces can cause runoff and result in erosion during precipitation events if not effectively managed. When the water runs off impervious surfaces, it collects pollutants that end up in stormwater drains and eventually find their way into waterbodies.

Faulty or failing septic systems in older or seasonal homes in the Shoreland Zone are another threat to water quality. Many seasonal homes that have been converted to year-round use may have septic systems that cannot adequately manage year-round use. Many older homes may have faulty septic systems. The state now has a requirement of filing a septic inspection report for any transfer of title within a Shoreland Zone. The purpose of this requirement is to provide proof of inspection to ensure subsurface waste disposal systems in Shoreland Zones remain in good working condition to prevent water quality degradation. While some towns require that a copy of the inspection report also be submitted to the town, Winthrop does not yet have such a requirement.

This requirement has limitations, however. One example is when a property within the Shoreland Zone is passed down generationally without benefit of officially changing documented ownership, the requirement of a septic inspection is not triggered.

Fertilizer associated with agricultural activities can run off land into surface water, resulting in algal blooms. If severe enough, algal blooms can drastically reduce water quality.

Additionally, what was traditionally considered a well-manicured lawn sloping down to a lakeshore is also a source of pollutants. Lawn maintenance, in particular fertilizers, and lack of a natural vegetative buffer are increasingly known to cause water quality degradation.

Work on public infrastructure near and in the water is managed to avoid erosion and sedimentation. Careful consideration must be given to the miles of ditching, and hundreds of road culverts that are town-maintained. Public supplies of salted sand are stored in a Maine DEP-approved building and erodible materials are stored away from drainage areas and waterbodies. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for activities such as culvert replacement, street sweeping, public works garage operations, and salt/sand pile maintenance are essential in protecting water quality. BMPs and strategies are gathered and utilized from many sources but primarily from Maine DOT.

Winthrop's Public Works Department takes careful measures to incorporate BMPs into their daily work routines.

An increasing concern in relation to water quality is the threat of invasive water plants. Maine, for years isolated from the plague of milfoil, is now seeing increasingly frequent occurrences. Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum* L.), the most aggressive species, was found in Cobbosseecontee Lake in 2018, along with European frog's bit

(*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*). Variable leaf watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) has been found in Annabessacook Lake. Farther south in Monmouth, another infestation of Variable leaf watermilfoil was identified in Jug Stream, a connector between Annabessacook Lake and Cobbosseecontee Lake.

The State has initiated several measures aimed at preventing further spread of invasive aquatic plants, including posting signs at strategic points, and supporting courtesy boat inspections at most public boat landings. In addition, the CWD has the *Maranacook Watershed Management Plan*, completed in 2008, which outlines strategies to control the introduction of invasive plants. The Annabessacook Association in conjunction with the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed and the CWD have invested heavily over several years in the extraction of invasive milfoil from the lake. These efforts continue.

### **Point and Nonpoint Source Pollution:**

Point Source Pollution can be linked back to one location, or point, such as a leaking oil tank. Point sources come from a direct source and are easily identified and managed.

Nonpoint Source Pollution cannot be traced to one sole source. One example is stormwater runoff. Stormwater can come from anywhere, especially impervious surfaces. Stormwater is water that does not soak into the ground during a precipitation event, but flows on top of the ground instead, to a body of water. As this water travels across the surface of the ground, it collects pollutants such as petroleum products, heavy metals, fertilizers, and manure, which can originate from any location within a watershed. Where stormwater runoff erodes soil, the soil itself transports phosphorus into waterbodies.

Several of Winthrop's lakes and watersheds of lakes that lie within town boundaries have been the subject of nonpoint source pollution remediation projects. A few of these include Cobbossee Lake, Annabessacook Lake, and Wilson Pond.

Winthrop has language in its Zoning Ordinance that sets standards that require the management of stormwater and are based on state standards. Surface and subsurface drainage systems are options for minimizing stormwater runoff, as is minimizing bare soil within a Shoreland Zone. In addition, the town partners with local watershed districts to address gravel road issues. This is done through education and volunteer erosion control efforts.

### **Remediation Sites:**

Winthrop has 12 remediation sites listed by the DEP, all in various stages of progress. The following sites are listed as "remedy in place: closed - undertaking post-closure obligations":

- Winthrop Landfill, 294 Annabessacook Road (2007) (Brownfield Site)
- Turkey Lane, near Jacobs Lane (2009)
- Former Audettes Hardware, corner of Bowdoin and Main streets (2005)
- Inmont Summer Street at 30 Summer Street (2000)

- Old Bonafide Industries Dump on Royal Street (2001)
- Northeast Industrial, 40 Winada Drive (2005)

Listed as “Investigation Stage - Ongoing” are 2 sites:

- Squire Hill Dry Cleaning, 399 Main Street (2013)
- Seaway Boats, 1109 ME-100 (1998)

Other:

- Quaker Lace Company on Royal Street is listed as in the remediation stage, awaiting resources (2019).
- Comtel Poleyard on Royal Street is listed as complaint investigated, reviewing preliminary site information (2017).
- Progressive Ironworks on Western Avenue is listed as complaint investigated-unsubstantiated (2009).
- An upland area near Winthrop landfill is listed as being in the investigation stage-ongoing (2016).

Winthrop Landfill is a Brownfield Site, which the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) defines as “a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

Background Information on Winthrop Landfill:

The 13-acre Winthrop Landfill site is located off Annabessacook Road on the west side of Annabessacook Lake. The site consists of two adjacent properties owned by the Town of Winthrop and a local family. A sand and gravel pit initially operated on site in the 1920s, and by the 1930s, parts of the site received municipal, commercial, and industrial waste. The site accepted hazardous substances between the early 1950s and mid-1970s.

In late 1979, the Town of Winthrop attempted to expand the landfill. Upon further assessment, it was determined that chemicals had been disposed of at the site. The Town decided to close the landfill and construct a transfer station on the site.

The site was listed on the National Priorities List in December 1982 and cleanup activities were subsequently implemented through United States EPA and Maine Department of Environmental Protection oversight. Cleanup activities generally included installation of a landfill cap, installation and operation of a groundwater extraction and treatment system, extension of public water service, activity and use limitations (e.g., restricting groundwater use in the immediate vicinity of the site, etc.) and other engineered systems to protect human health and the environment.

What Is the Current Site Status?

Based on the EPA’s most recent evaluation of the site (Seventh Five-Year Review Report, August 2022), the site continues to be protective of human health and the environment.

Biennial inspections and long-term maintenance of the landfill cap and cover system continues. The cap and perimeter fence are maintained annually and are in serviceable condition. Long-term monitoring of groundwater, surface water, and sediment also continues.

### **Wildlife Habitat:**

Waterbodies, watercourses (ex. streams and brooks), and wetlands are necessary habitats for the continued survival of many wildlife species. Unfragmented blocks of land are as essential to high-quality habitat as the many watercourses and wetlands found in Winthrop because they provide sanctuary for woodland birds, and other wildlife species, including critical habitat for some rare or endangered species.

The extent and quality of wildlife habitat is an indicator of not just the richness and diversity of the flora and fauna in Winthrop, but the overall health of the ecosystem. The availability of high-quality habitat for plants, animals, and fish is essential to maintaining abundant and diverse populations for ecological, economic, and recreational purposes.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) administers a program called Beginning with Habitat (BwH) to identify significant wildlife habitat and critical natural areas under the National Resources Protection Act.

BwH, a collaborative program of federal, state, and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, is a habitat-based approach to conserving wildlife and plant habitat on a landscape scale. The goal of the program is to maintain sufficient habitat to support all native plant and animal species currently growing and breeding in Maine. BwH compiles habitat information from multiple sources, integrates it into one package, and makes it accessible to towns, land trusts, conservation organizations, and others to use in a proactive approach to conservation. This information can be seen on Winthrop's *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the appendix, with descriptions of essential features below.

Significant habitats, as defined by MDIF&W, includes species appearing on the official state or federal list of endangered or threatened species, high and moderate value deer wintering areas, and high and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitats.

Before conducting any activities in, on, or over significant wildlife habitats, a National Resources Protection Act (NRPA) permit must be obtained. Activities include construction, repair, or alteration of any permanent structure; dredging, bulldozing, removing or displacing soil, sand, or vegetation; and drainage or filling. The standard for protecting significant habitats highlights mitigation and compensation. Actions must be taken to A) avoid negative impacts on habitats, B) minimize the impacts if unavoidable, C) restore or rehabilitate impacted habitats, D) reduce an impact over time, or E) replace the affected habitat.

## **Deer Wintering Areas:**

Although white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are common in Winthrop, their existence is predicated on sufficient habitat. Summer habitat is commonly referred to as “edge habitat,” which includes farm fields, orchards, and open areas adjacent to forested lands. The habitat limitations for deer occur in the winter when there is heavy snow and extreme cold. Deer wintering areas (DWA) are defined as a forested area used by deer when snow depth in the open/hardwoods exceeds 12 inches; deer sinking depth in the open/hardwoods exceeds eight inches and mean daily temperatures are below 32° F. Non-forested wetlands, non-stocked clear cuts, hardwood types, and stands predominated by Eastern Larch are included in DWAs only if less than 10 acres in size. Agricultural and development areas within DWAs are excluded regardless of size. Deer wintering areas that have yet to be confirmed through professional survey are considered “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas” until otherwise verified through a survey.

Winthrop has approximately eight “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas,” either entirely or partially within town boundaries. They have yet to be confirmed through a survey. They are scattered throughout town in no uniform way (see *Critical Natural Resources Map* in appendix).

## **Other Wildlife:**

Raccoon, beaver, and red fox are the most abundant species of furbearers in Winthrop. Other abundant species include mink, fisher, coyote, otter and various waterfowl species.

Accurate or even estimated population counts of waterfowl populations are not available, aside from the loon survey by the Maine Audubon Society. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has been conducting an ongoing survey of wild duck populations, of which the information is not yet available.

Other than generalized habitat protection measures, primarily for wetlands, the state has no coordinated program for maintaining species populations. Various conservation groups and lake associations engage in programs to promote local populations such as putting out nesting boxes for ducks or platforms for loons.

There are numerous waterfowl and wading bird habitats scattered throughout Winthrop, varying in size. These habitats provide breeding, migration, and wintering grounds for a multitude of bird species. Since 2006, Maine’s Shoreland Zoning Regulation requires that waterfowl and wading bird habitats, as designated by MDIF&W, must be protected by a 250-foot buffer.

Winthrop has upwards of 20 known inland waterfowl/wading bird habitats designated by MDIF&W; they can be seen on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in appendix. They are around Winthrop’s numerous lakes, ponds, and wetland areas.

The BwH maps also show an abundance of wetland areas valuable for wildlife that are not regulated as inland waterfowl and wading bird habitats, so they are not afforded the protection of the 250-foot buffer.

### **Rare, Endangered, and Valuable Species and Habitats:**

Beginning with Habitat compiles data on rare, endangered, and valuable species and habitats in Winthrop (see *Critical Natural Resources Map* in appendix). This information includes rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife, rare or exemplary plants and natural communities, essential wildlife habitats, and significant wildlife habitats.

### **Animals:**

One site containing an endangered animal is identified at the northern end of Cobbosseecontee Lake. The species' identity has been withheld for its own protection.

A Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) has been identified between Route 135 and Cobbosseecontee Lake. Great Blue Herons are a species of Special Concern in Maine. A species of Special Concern is any species of fish or wildlife that does not meet the criteria of an endangered or threatened species but is particularly vulnerable, and could easily become endangered, threatened, or extirpated due to restricted distribution, low or declining numbers, specialized habitat needs or limits, or other factors. Special Concern species are established by policy, not by regulation, and are used for planning and informational purposes; they do not have the legal weight of endangered and threatened species. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife reviews the list of Special Concern species at the beginning of each calendar year and based on criteria in the Maine Endangered and Threatened Species Listing Handbook, revises the list as appropriate.



### **Plants:**

Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) through Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (DACF) ranks species on both a global level and a state level. A 5-point ranking system from critically imperiled (1) to secure (5) facilitates a quick assessment of a species or habitat type's rarity. Each species or habitat is assigned both a state (S) or global (G) ranking on the scale of 1-5. Factors such as range extent, the

number of occurrences, intensity of threats, as well as other factors, contribute to the assignment of state and global ranks. The definitions for state and global ranks are comparable but applied at different geographic scales; for example, something that is state imperiled may be globally secure.

There are four locations in Winthrop providing habitats for rare plants and/or natural communities.

**Water Stargrass (*Heteranthera dubia*)**, a plant with a state status of Species of Special Concern has been identified at two locations in the northern part of the Upper Narrows Pond. Its state ranking is S3 which is vulnerable in Maine and at a moderate risk of extirpation due to a fairly restricted range, very few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors. The Water Stargrass's global ranking is G5 which means it is globally secure and at a very low risk for extinction globally due to a very extensive range, abundant populations, or occurrences, and little to no concern from decline or threats.



- **Habitat:** damp sands, often submerged in quiet waters.
- **Ecological Characteristics:** In Maine, this species may occur along shallow shorelines or in open water.
- **Range:** Southern Quebec to North Dakota and Washington, south to Cuba and South America.
- **Known Distributions in Maine:** This rare plant has been documented in a total of 15 towns in the following counties: Aroostook, Hancock, Kennebec, Penobscot, Somerset, Waldo.
- **Phenology:** Flowers June - September.
- **Reasons for Rarity:** At northern limit of range.
- **Conservation Considerations:** Maintain water quality in the lakes and ponds in which it occurs.

**Stiff Arrowhead (*Sagittaria rigida*)** is a plant species classified as Special Concern. It has been identified off the northern end of Cobbosseecontee Lake. Its state ranking is S2 which is high risk for extirpation in Maine due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors. This plant's global ranking is G5, which means it is globally secure and at a low risk for extinction globally due to an extensive range, abundant populations, or occurrences, and little to no concern from decline or threats.



- **Habitat:** Calcareous or brackish mud or water.
- **Ecological Characteristics:** In Maine, this species is typically found in fresh to brackish tidal mud flats.
- **Range:** Maine and Quebec to Minnesota, south to Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, and Nebraska.
- **Known Distribution in Maine:** This rare plant has been documented in a total of 13 towns in Kennebec, Lincoln, Penobscot, Sagadahoc, and York counties.
- **Phenology:** Flowers July – September.
- **Reasons for Rarity:** At northern limit of range.
- **Conservation Considerations:** Prevent degradation of marsh and estuary habitat from adjacent land uses.

**Columbia Water-meal (*Wolffia columbiana*)**, a plant with a state status as Species of Special Concern has been identified in the downtown area, at the northern end of Annabessacook Lake. Its state ranking is S2, which means it is imperiled in Maine and at a high risk of extirpation due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors. The Columbia Water-meal's global ranking is G5, which means it is globally secure and at a low risk for extinction globally due to an extensive range, abundant populations, or occurrences, and little to no concern from decline or threats.



- **Habitat:** Ponds and still waters.
- **Ecological Characteristics:** Columbia water-meal often grows in association with *Lemna* species (duckweed).
- **Range:** Southern Maine to southern Ontario and Minnesota, south to South America.
- **Known Distributions in Maine:** This rare plant has been documented in a total of nine towns in the following counties: Cumberland, Kennebec, Knox, York.
- **Phenology:** Reproduces by vegetative budding. Flowers are rarely produced.
- **Reasons for Rarity:** At northern limit of range.
- **Conservation Considerations:** Possibly under-reported in southern Maine.

## Important Habitat:

Also noted by BwH is an Exemplary Natural Community, with the common name Enriched Northern Hardwood Forest, that has been identified on the shared boundary between Winthrop and Wayne. Sometimes referred to as “cove forests,” these closed canopy forests are dominated by sugar maple, with beech and/or yellow birch subordinate. Basswood and white ash are typical indicators but are not necessarily abundant, and they are often absent in northwest Maine. The shrub layer is usually sparse and dominated by saplings of the canopy species. The lush herb layer may contain species that are strong indicators of this forest type, such as maidenhair fern, blue cohosh, Dutchman’s breeches, grape fern, spring beauty, and silvery spleenwort. These and many rare species are characteristic of forests with relatively nutrient rich soils.



The lush herb layer may contain species that are strong indicators of this forest type, such as maidenhair fern, blue cohosh, Dutchman’s breeches, grape fern, spring beauty, and silvery spleenwort. These and many rare species are characteristic of forests with relatively nutrient rich soils.

The Enriched Northern Hardwood Forest has a state ranking of S3, which means it is vulnerable in Maine, and at moderate risk of extirpation due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors. It is important for this forest to be protected.

## Undeveloped Habitat Blocks, Connectors, and Conserved Land:

There is a distinct, direct relationship between the quantity and variety of wildlife and the size of their habitat. Of course, there is urban wildlife such as skunks and mourning doves that do not require significant portions of land to thrive. However, many other types of animals are much less conspicuous and depend upon unbroken stretches of forest for survival. As roads, farms, and houses intrude on the habitat of these creatures, the large habitat blocks become fragmented, displacing the wildlife that relies on them.

Development in rural areas often causes these fragmentations, reducing the land’s value as wildlife habitat. Wildlife travel corridors linking individual habitat blocks together are critical to accommodate animal movement. Ensuring wildlife travel corridors helps preserve the region’s biodiversity and maintains rural community character. Limiting development at the edges of unfragmented habitat also helps maintain environmental integrity by giving forest-dwelling creatures a natural buffer.

The Beginning with Habitat program maps these unfragmented habitat blocks. The BwH maps include information such as who owns the habitat block and how it is conserved (federally protected, state protected, municipally owned and protected, or through conservation easement). The *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the appendix shows these unfragmented blocks, as well.

By far, the largest unfragmented block in Winthrop is the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area with over 900 acres of conserved land, including the portions in Wayne. This large, unfragmented block is in the southwest corner of the town. The Kennebec Land Trust holds the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area.

In the northeast corner is the second largest, unfragmented block of land, all combined at approximately 470 acres. Maine Woodland Owner holds the Georgia Fuller Wiesendanger Wildlife Protection Area, which consists of 271 acres between Winthrop and Readfield. It is adjacent to an additional 30 acres of woodlot, also held by Maine Woodland Owner. Other land holdings adjacent to this block are: 57 acres held by KLT and Little Cobbossee Outway Preserve, and 58 and 62 acres, all held by KLT.

Other smaller conserved land holdings exist around Winthrop. The most notable of these are the islands in Cobbosseecontee Lake, all held by the KLT.

The two largest unfragmented blocks of land in Winthrop both contain several candidate deer wintering areas, inland wading bird and waterfowl habitats, the exemplary natural community, and several plant species of Special Concern, underscoring the importance of unfragmented habitat blocks. These two blocks are protected by ownership and have no known risks of destructive development.

Critical natural resources, particularly waterbodies, are inevitably threatened everywhere in Maine, to varying degrees. Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance, which includes the Shoreland Zoning, has protective measures aimed at reducing these threats. In addition, Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed are proactive in trying to address erosion issues and invasive plant infestations to protect and preserve Winthrop's waterbodies. The Kennebec Land Trust actively works to preserve and maintain large blocks of land throughout town to ensure unfragmented habitat blocks.

### **Regulatory Protections:**

In addition to state and federal standards to protect water quality, Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance includes language to provide further protection of natural and water resources (see Existing Land Use chapter for more information). The Zoning Ordinance includes Shoreland Zoning requirements that are consistent with state guidelines.

The Zoning Ordinance designates four zoning districts for the purpose of protecting water resources:

*Resource Protection District (RP)*: includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the shoreland zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, except that areas which are currently developed and areas which meet the criteria for the Limited Commercial District need not be included within the Resource Protection District.

- a) Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, which are rated "moderate" or "high" value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, including nesting and feeding areas, by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by either MDIF&W or the Department of Environmental Protection as of December 31, 2008. For the purposes of this paragraph "wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers" shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with a great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. "Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers" are considered to be part of that great pond or river.
- b) Floodplains along rivers and floodplains along artificially formed great ponds along rivers, defined by the 100-year floodplain as designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, or the flood of record, or in the absence of these, by soil types identified as recent floodplain soils.
- c) Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater.
- d) Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during the period of normal high water.
- e) Land areas along rivers subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or riverbed movement.

*Shoreland District (S):* includes those areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance from the normal high-water line of great ponds and are suitable for residential and recreational development. It includes areas other than those in the Resource Protection District, or Stream Protection District.

*Stream Protection District (SP):* includes all land areas within seventy-five (75) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland. Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the above waterbodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

*Public Water Supply District (PW):* surrounds ponds which serve as water supplies to Augusta and Winthrop. The use of Carlton and Narrows Ponds as water supplies, and the fact that these ponds have a low capacity for assimilating pollutants necessitates additional protective measures around them. Since runoff from agricultural and development activity is apt to cause water quality problems, more stringent controls on such activities are applied to land areas within 1,000 horizontal feet of the shorelines of these ponds and the streams linking them.

*Rural District (RD)*: includes land presently characterized by low density development, forests, abandoned fields, and farms. This District seeks to protect the existing open space, forestry, agricultural and residential uses, and to restrict commercial activities.

Winthrop's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are the first lines of protection for watersheds and water quality, since development and other human-related activities within a watershed are the largest contributors to degraded water quality. Development can be designed to minimize phosphorus runoff, by mandating BMPs for construction and Low Impact Development (LID) design criteria (*LID Guidance Manual for Maine Communities, Approaches for Implementation of Low Impact Development Practices at the Local Level*, 2007). LID describes land planning and engineering design approaches to manage stormwater runoff that mimics natural processes, resulting in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitats.

To preserve and protect water quality, it is imperative that the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances are reviewed and updated regularly. Regular updates will ensure the most current standards and practices are included, such as LID and BMPs for phosphorus control and stormwater management.

Another layer of protection is the Cobbossee Watershed District. It provides technical assistance and review of development applications, performs volunteer lake water-quality monitoring, and educates the public about maintaining water quality.

The Winthrop Zoning Ordinance does not currently require applicants to identify or protect rare and/or endangered species and/or natural communities. The Subdivision Ordinance (Section VIII.B.11) permits the Planning Board to require open space to be set aside for "rare and irreplaceable natural areas ..."

### **Local and Regional Coordination:**

#### Local Partners:

Winthrop's Conservation Commission

#### Regional Partners:

The Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) is a non-profit organization that collaborates with landowners and communities to protect the Kennebec Valley's natural features, working landscapes, and fragile ecosystems. The properties entrusted to KLT are usually open to the public. The KLT works to preserve natural resources through land protection, stewardship, education, advocacy, and cooperation. The KLT is active in Winthrop, offering landowner assistance with conservation easements and accepting donations of property.

Winthrop is a member of the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD). The CWD provides technical assistance and review of development applications as well as volunteer lake water-quality monitoring and management of lake water levels.

Of the 11 lakes with water in Winthrop, five have lake associations that work to protect those waterbodies from invasive plants and to preserve water quality. Those five associations are: Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed, the Maranacook Lake Association, the Annabessacook Lake Association, the Narrows Pond Improvement Association, and the Berry, Dexter, Wilson Ponds Watershed Association.

### **Analysis:**

Winthrop is a place of abundant natural beauty with numerous water bodies, wetlands, critical natural areas, forested habitat, as well as important natural resources, all deserving of protection. The Zoning Ordinance, including the Shoreland Zoning language, offers a degree of protection through setting particular requirements and standards in each zoning districts; however, the ordinance could be updated to provide stronger protection to sensitive areas.

Several plant species of Special Concern, one bird species of Special Concern and one endangered species make their home in the rich habitat Winthrop offers. Protecting these species comes down to protecting their habitat. With the two largest, unfragmented habitat blocks and several others scattered throughout town, Winthrop has begun to take these measures.

The biggest threat to natural resources is residential development, particularly in rural areas or open spaces. The town has little in the way of nonregulatory incentives to encourage development in appropriate, designated growth areas. This is explored more extensively in the Existing and Future Land Use chapters. Winthrop will need to find a balance between the need to draw people to town, economic development pressures, and the importance of preserving the essential natural resources outlined here.

Additionally, natural resources do not stop at the town's boundaries, nor are they the exclusive responsibility of the town. Successful protection of valuable resources depends on cooperation with neighboring towns, conservation organizations, and private landowners. Winthrop's Conservation Commission is also charged with coordinating activities with other conservation-related organizations, such as the Kennebec Land Trust.

### **Future Considerations:**

- ❖ Should Winthrop partner with other towns in developing a regional Open Space Plan?
- ❖ What parts of town should be prioritized for preserving natural resources?
- ❖ Are there any specific pieces of property the town would like to prioritize in preserving, if they become available?
- ❖ How can the town better promote the importance of conserved land and wildlife corridors?
- ❖ Should Winthrop do more to protect its wildlife habitat land such as deer wintering yards and other land that is not formally conserved?

- ❖ Should Winthrop do more to protect its rural areas?
- ❖ How can the town further support private landowners to manage their Farm and Open Space and Tree Growth parcels? These lands are key for wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CHAPTER TEN: EXISTING LAND USE

***Vision: Winthrop is a vibrant, inviting town with a rich history and diverse population which strives to support its local businesses, schools, housing and recreation while preserving its culture, natural resources and history – a wonderful place to live, work and play.***

Existing land use patterns and future land use considerations are key elements in a community's Comprehensive Plan. In fact, every chapter of the Comprehensive Plan can be tied into both the Existing and Future Land Use sections. As such, relating the community's Vision Statement into the Existing Land Use chapter and Future Land Use Plan is a fundamental practice in ensuring alignment throughout the plan.

A vision is only as good as a community's commitment to work toward it. This work is broken down into a series of strategies, ranging from recommendations for regulatory changes to ideas for better interlocal and public-private collaboration. In addition to ideas, there must be a plan for priorities and implementation to support a successful vision.

### **Introduction:**

As a community grows, its character is defined by the use of its land area. The community's self-image as a small city, farm town, or a suburb is molded by the actions of its residents in the development of their various enterprises and taken into account the directions presented in the Comprehensive Plan.

Most people live in a certain area because they appreciate the character of the community. However, a community's character can shift over time. The shift needs to be managed to ensure it remains desirable. This often means walking a fine line between enacting regulations and allowing personal preferences.

Trends that will not be welcomed, such as loss of open space, loss of productive farmland, increasing cost of public services, or lack of vitality in the village center, can be addressed through proper management of growth.

The Existing Land Use Chapter serves to review the land use patterns and development in Winthrop. Like many rural municipalities in Central Maine, Winthrop can be characterized as a rural, residential community within commuting distance to larger, regional hubs, including Bath/Brunswick, Lewiston/Auburn, and Augusta. Winthrop remains committed to providing residents with high-quality housing at affordable prices, ensuring the elderly can age in place, offering appropriate economic development opportunities, protecting natural resources, and maintaining the community character of the town, consistent with the vision statement.

## **Settlement Patterns:**

The Town of Winthrop comprises about 24,256 acres, of which 19,980.8 acres is land, with 11 lakes constituting approximately 4,276 acres of water. Winthrop is at the heart of the Winthrop Lakes Region, which is one of the many reasons it was originally called Pond Town. The town's landscape is mostly open farmland, forest, and scenic views of lakes and hills, which account for the rural character (see *Basic Planning Map* in the appendix).

Like many towns in Maine, Winthrop is the culmination of historical growth patterns based on settlement over the course of more than 250 years. Initial settlement, of course, came about in the form of homesteaders, intent on converting land from forest to farmland to sustain their families. Prosperous settlements eventually led to the need for a mercantile center. The historic Winthrop Village was the logical candidate, being the passage between Maranacook and Annabessacook lakes, and a source of water-generated power at the Mill Stream.

Winthrop Village emerged as the economic center of the town at the end of the 19th century, with the much smaller villages of Winthrop Center and East Winthrop fading. Winthrop Village (currently, the village or downtown) remains the most densely settled square mile in town, but it is not the development powerhouse it was in the past. Residential development has shifted to lakefronts and rural areas, a result of the abundant supply of land and the ease of access brought on by improved transportation and roads.

In more recent years, the location for new commercial development is along U.S. Route 202 and in the business park just off Route 202. This location provides ease of access and high visibility, plus undeveloped land for growth. Modern commercial development tends to require more land, which is not available in quantity inside the village.

## **Characteristics of Winthrop's Land:**

Winthrop has an abundance of natural resources, outlined further in the Natural Resources chapter. When considering land-use planning, it is imperative to plan with consideration of these fragile, natural resources, if not just for their inherent values, then also for Winthrop's property values. The University of Maine and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) launched numerous studies on the relationship between property values and degraded water quality, all with the same results: impaired water quality results in reduced property values.

The primary threat to Winthrop's natural resources is phosphorous from runoff due to development, which can be abated through proper precautions such as proactive stormwater management and Low Impact Development design requirements (*LID Guidance Manual for Maine Communities, Approaches for Implementation of Low Impact Development Practices at the Local Level*, 2007). LID describes an approach to land planning and engineering design that manages stormwater runoff to mimic natural

processes, resulting in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitats.

Further, the Cobbossee Watershed District office is in Winthrop and, as a member of the District, Winthrop is provided with free site plan review assistance. Other layers of protection for natural resources include the town's Zoning Ordinance, which includes the mandatory Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, a Resource Protection Zone, a Stream Protection Zone, and a Public Water Supply Zone; the Subdivision Ordinance; the Code Enforcement Officer; and the Planning Board.

Upper Narrows Pond is the source of Winthrop's public water supply and, as such, should be preserved and protected. Some of the other lakes and ponds throughout town also serve as private household water supplies.

### **Residential Land Uses:**

Residential land uses are most concentrated in the village due to smaller lot sizes and access to public water and sewer, which negates the need for water wells and septic systems. While the Village District remains the most densely settled area in town, there is currently little land left that can be developed due to zoning restrictions. Residential development has shifted to lakefronts, major travel corridors, and more rural areas.

Winthrop implemented the online permitting system, iWorQ System, in summer 2022 to maintain records and track permits issued. Prior to this system, there was no efficient method for tracking permits and development, including conversion of seasonal housing into year-round housing. The online permitting system will enable and encourage tracking of development by type (for example, residential versus commercial), location, and type of permits issued. This system will allow the town to look more closely at the locations where most permits are issued and where new development takes place. This further allows the town to evaluate how effective its current regulations are at encouraging growth in the designated growth areas and away from the rural areas.

Housing construction is primarily a function of economic factors. The supply of land in the rural district is the chief influence on siting new homes. Few homes can be built in the Village District because of the lack of available land. The availability of public services – roads, sewer, and water – are also a factor. Most of the vacant land in the General Residential District has not been built upon because of a lack of road frontage and/or sewer service. The town has not constructed any new roads in decades, and current policies prohibit the Winthrop Utilities District from extending sewer availability at its own expense. These factors will continue to discourage construction in those districts.

For the construction of multifamily and high-density housing, public sewer service is essential for viability and affordability. The presence of public water and sewer connections greatly enhances the opportunities for high-density housing development. Without public sewer connections, a development must occupy land equivalent to the minimum lot size for each individual unit – generally 40,000 square feet in the General

Residential District. On public sewer, only 5,000 square feet per additional dwelling unit is required beyond the first unit. Winthrop has several assorted styles of multi-family units in the Village and General Residential Districts, with the potential to add more of these types of housing in underdeveloped properties such as the Commerce Center (also known as the mill or Carleton Woolen Mill) and other vacant buildings throughout town.

### **Subdivision Developments:**

New subdivisions typically reflect patterns of development throughout town and beyond. Subdivisions are regulated in Winthrop by both the Zoning and the Subdivision Ordinances. Winthrop's current Subdivision Ordinance was adopted in 1990 and updated once in 1995, thus in need of updating to reflect current standards.

There have been minimal subdivisions created recently. One of the most recent, Mountain View Subdivision, produced a total of 10 lots. With the increase in price of construction, infrastructure, and land, building new subdivisions has become too expensive for most developers. Mountainview, developed roughly eight years ago, and Cathedral Acres, one year ago (with only one lot available for sale), have not yet had electric service run to them and thus have not been built upon. Demand for this area is great, so it is expected these areas will be developed once they are connected to electric service. For a number of reasons, particularly building costs and related expenses, there remains a few subdivision lots available for building from previously created subdivisions. The roadblock of rising expense to develop exceeds what developers are willing to invest.

Adding to the cost of construction, there are not many parcels of land left under current lot size restrictions that could take advantage of the town's 21 miles of public water and sewer. If Winthrop could expand public utilities to areas of undeveloped land, the price for future development would be less prohibitive.

The analysis and statistics on the number of subdivisions in Winthrop is based on the state definition of "subdivision." Maine defines subdivision as:

*The division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more lots within any five-year period that begins on or after September 23, 1971. This definition applies whether the division is accomplished by sale, lease, development, buildings or otherwise. The term "subdivision" includes the division of a new structure or structures on a tract or parcel of land into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period, the construction or replacement of three or more dwelling units on a single tract or parcel of land and the division of an existing structure or structures previously used for commercial or industrial use into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period.*

For comparison, the state does not consider the following to be subdivisions:

1. Gifts to [of land] relatives,
2. Transfer to governmental entity,
3. Transfer to conservation organizations,

4. Transfer of lots for forest management, agricultural management, or conservation of natural resources,
5. Unauthorized subdivision lots in existence for at least 20 years.

The specific details relating to what constitutes subdivision and what does not are outside the scope of this plan. For a deeper understanding, review the enabling statutes (MRS Title 30-A §4401 et seq. Municipal Subdivision Law, and MRS Title 12, §682-B. Exemptions from Subdivision Definition).

### **Industrial and Commercial Development:**

Winthrop developed an industrial center early on, surrounded by farms and forestland. Over the years, with the advent of the automobile and railroad, Winthrop could not compete with larger, urban areas and the town returned to primarily a farming community. Today, Winthrop serves as a regional hub for smaller communities, and acts as a bedroom community for those who commute to other towns for employment.

Traditionally, most commercial development in Winthrop has occurred along the Route 202 corridor. There are many small home businesses and single-person operations in Winthrop. Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance allows for home occupations in all districts and requires approval only from the Code Enforcement Officer. Encouraging small businesses in town is in keeping with the community's vision as it promotes character, drives the economy, and increases available services in town.

Winthrop developed a business park on Winada Drive that originally had nine lots specifically designed for business growth. Three lots remain in this park. Due to significant wetlands on these three parcels, a developer is considering combining the three and developing them as a solar farm. The business park is in keeping with the community's vision, as it provides an appropriate location for commercial and industrial businesses where there will not be incompatibility issues with residential neighborhoods and away from natural resources. Ongoing business growth is important for Winthrop's future.

In addition to traditional commercial businesses, there are several recreation-based businesses. Augusta West Campground brings people to the area for camping opportunities. Camp Metchuwana, which is affiliated with the Methodist Church, runs overnight and day programs on the shores of Lower Narrows Pond. Winthrop has the only YMCA in the state that has no buildings but runs many programs throughout the town. There is also a state YMCA camp on Cobbossee Lake. These facilities provide a venue for private functions when the camp is not in session. These recreation-based businesses fulfill the community's need for activities and encourage community involvement.

There are several unoccupied, vacant, and/or underutilized buildings throughout town, both in the downtown area and in the rural areas. Most of these buildings previously housed commercial or industrial businesses and have potential to do so again.

Continued growth of commercial and industrial development along the Route 202 corridor is anticipated since this area is served by public water and sewer connections and is easily accessible.

### **The Institutional and Service Sector:**

A range of businesses in Winthrop provide critical services to people throughout the town and the region. Many of Winthrop's public facilities and services are in the village area. The Town Office, the Charles M. Bailey Public Library, Winthrop schools, the State salt shed, the town garage, the Winthrop Utilities District, and the volunteer fire and rescue department are near the town center.

Winthrop's largest employers include Progressive Distributors on Route 202, Dave's Appliance on Central Street in the downtown areas, Hannaford Supermarket on Main Street, and Alternative Manufacturing, Inc. (AMI) partially in the Village District and partially in the Shoreland District (located prior to adoption of any Shoreland Zoning Ordinances). Progressive Distributors employs between 250 to 499 employees at any given time and supplies the local grocery store chains. AMI employs approximately 100 individuals and manufactures electronic parts. Dave's Appliance sells and services appliances as well as heat pumps and has roughly 55 employees. Hannaford Supermarket employs roughly 150 people.

Winthrop Utilities District supplies public water and sewer connections, extending through the Village, the General Commercial, and the Industrial Districts. According to staff at the Winthrop Utilities District, the system has the capacity to accommodate an expansion.

### **Retail Development Patterns:**

As with many other rural towns in the region, Winthrop initially experienced a gradual but steady decline in its retail sector since the interstate was built. Retail chains, fast-food establishments, and other highway-oriented businesses have chosen to locate in areas with ease of access on and off the highway. This competition has affected Winthrop with the closing of some retail operations. Recently, there has been a revival of businesses in the downtown area that has brought new life to the town.

While some national and regional chains have a presence in Winthrop, the town also still has unique character and offers many small businesses and retail options with specific appeal of buying locally. The retail businesses in Winthrop seem to be ever-growing and changing. Changes include moving to accommodate growth and new ownership of existing businesses.

The town is in the unique position of offering goods and services to neighboring, more rural towns that do not have such amenities. Winthrop also draws many visitors both passing through and coming for the numerous lakes and ponds in town. Winthrop's village center is the hub of the community, as well as the critical contributor to the retail sector.

The number of retail businesses in Winthrop is increasing. The new businesses coming into or starting up in Winthrop far surpass businesses leaving. Another added benefit of the growing retail sector is the redevelopment of buildings. For example, Dunkin Donuts renovated a building that previously housed a bank. The old bank drive-up window was repurposed for a drive-through.

These business opportunities give Winthrop the chance to concisely form the future character and direction of the downtown area while developing even more attractive entrances. The growing retail sector is an opportunity for the town to reconfigure its denser village area while taking advantage of the link between needed goods and services, and the number of consumers within Winthrop's market area, especially those coming to visit.

### **Land Use Trends:**

New development in Winthrop has not been strong in the last several years whether in the residential, retail, or commercial sectors. The recent recession has slowed both residential and commercial development in Winthrop and surrounding areas. However, this downturn in the economy will not last, and Winthrop's Future Land Use Plan will prepare the town for an economic rebound with a strong plan to support the local economy.

Currently, most of the newer development in Winthrop has been spread throughout town, on a lot-by-lot basis. Predominantly, new development has been residential in the past several years. Minimal new subdivisions or new commercial developments have been created.

New residential development is more challenging to direct into growth areas than commercial development because there are fewer regulatory and nonregulatory incentives. For example, most new commercial development would opt for a location served by public water and sewer connections (a nonregulatory incentive); however, this is rarely a consideration for residential development. Additionally, most people moving to Winthrop appreciate the town's rural atmosphere, resulting in housing construction in rural areas.

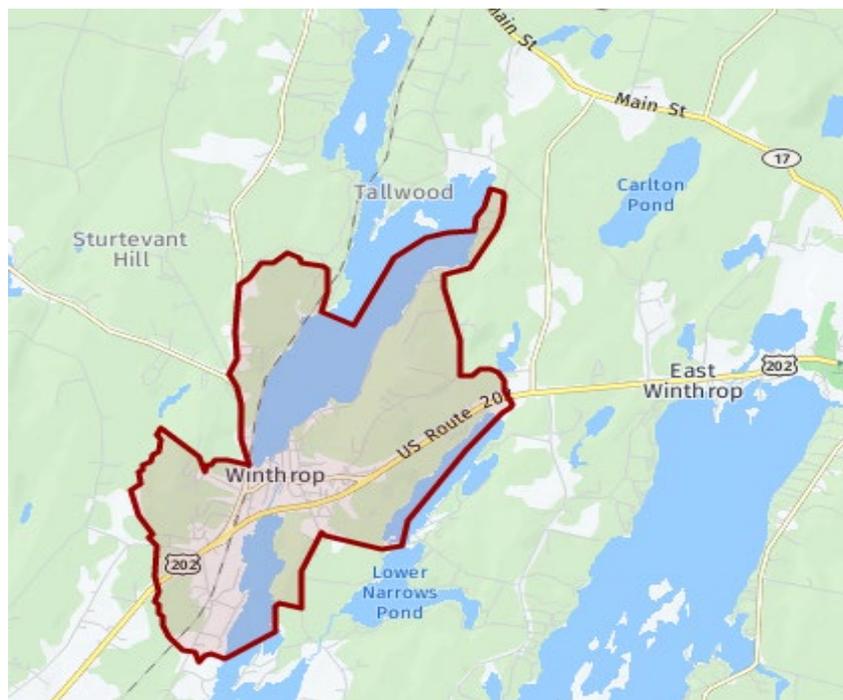
As previously stated, Winthrop did not have an efficient method for tracking recent development permitting until the summer of 2022. This was an issue also noted in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Until the online permitting system was initiated, there was minimal documentation of past permits available for analysis. For this reason, it is not possible to evaluate the success of directing development to the designated growth areas or for consistency with the community's vision. More importantly, the town has recognized the need to address this issue and implemented an online permitting system.

## Census Designated Place:

Winthrop has the notable feature of having a Census Designated Place or CDP. A CDP is a concentration of population defined by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes only. A CDP is not the same as a town; it is a location delineated by the Census Bureau based on population density in that area.

Winthrop's Census Designated Place had a population of 2,666 as of the 2020 Census. The boundaries of the CDP are comprised of the primary, original settlement in Winthrop and consists of approximately 7.2 square miles, of which 5.6 square miles are land, with the rest being water. Winthrop is classified as U1 Census Class Code, which means it is a Census Designated Place with an official federally recognized name. In the figure below, outlined and shaded in red is the official, federally recognized Census Designated Place in Winthrop. The CDP is only the more densely populated and developed portion of town. Winthrop's entire town population, per the 2020 census is 6,121; approximately 43.6 percent of the population in Winthrop live within the CDP. Winthrop's CDP ranks 75th for population density when compared to the 153 other CDPs throughout the State of Maine.

**FIGURE 1: WINTHROP'S CENSUS DESIGNATED PLACE BOUNDARY**



Source: 2020 Census

## Land Use Regulation:

The Town of Winthrop employs a full-time, fully certified Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to work with and advise the Planning Board. The Town's Planning Board consists of seven members and two alternates, who are involved and care about what happens in their community.

The Town has recently added two positions to help support planning and enforcement activities. These positions are Town Planner and Executive Assistant, which will be shared between the CEO and the Town Manager. The Town Planner will deliver technical assistance to the Planning Board and other municipal officials, on an array of land use, development, environmental and infrastructure topics. Responsibilities include researching, drafting, reviewing, and revising local plans, regulations, ordinances, and related materials, and developing funding proposals and preparing grant applications for development initiatives. Additionally, the Executive Assistant to the Town Manager and Code Enforcement Officer will provide support to the CEO, allowing that person to spend more time in the field engaged in enforcement activities.

Winthrop first adopted its Zoning Ordinance in 1972; it has been amended through 2019. The Subdivision Ordinance was adopted in 1990 and amended in 1995. The Subdivision Ordinance requires Planning Board review for creation of new lots. It does not give the size or location of lots, but standards offer a level of regulation regarding environmental impacts of development. The Subdivision Ordinance lacks many contemporary standards that would more effectively ensure efficient development while protecting public values and natural resources. The town will soon begin updating the Subdivision Ordinance, a task the town manager will assign to the new Planner.

Overall, Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance is complete, though it could use refreshing and updating. The Zoning Ordinance includes the Shoreland Zoning standards and seeks to preserve and protect natural resources. The Ordinance does not specify the designated growth areas, though it is written so that growth is directed away from certain areas. The town should update the Zoning Ordinance to be clearer and to include the latest standards and legislation.

Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance includes:

- Article 1- General
- Article 2- Nonconforming Uses, Buildings, and Lots
- Article 3- Zoning Districts
- Article 4- Performance Standards
- Article 5- Administration
- Article 6- Definitions

Under the current Zoning Ordinance, the town is divided into 10 zoning districts (see *Existing Land Use Map* in appendix). Four of the zoning districts are related to Shoreland Zoning or wetland protection (provisions incorporated into the general Zoning Ordinance)

or the public water supply, so do not directly influence development patterns. The other six are described below.

*General Residential District:* This encompasses the area surrounding the Village District and includes several existing neighborhoods. Some portions of this district are extensively built up, while others are only built-up along the roadway with undeveloped land in back lots. All forms of housing are generally permitted in this district with only multifamily housing requiring Planning Board approval. This district includes areas that provide locations suited to mixed residential and commercial development on a limited scale, compatible with existing development and close to town services and utilities. Low- and medium-impact commercial development is subject to Planning Board review; manufacturing is not permitted, nor is re-establishment of industrial uses. In areas with access to public sewers, the minimum lot size is 30,000 square feet, while areas without access to public sewers have a minimum lot size requirement of 40,000 square feet. The road frontage requirement throughout the district is 100 feet.

*Limited Commercial District:* This includes areas of mixed, residential, and low- and medium-impact commercial uses\*. Two sections of this district are located along Route 202, east of the town village. A third section is along 202, west of the town center, bordering the General Commercial zone in that area. This district is devoted to a mix of residential and low-intensity business and commercial uses. Single- and two-family houses are permitted, while multi-family homes require Planning Board review, as do low- and medium-impact commercial uses. High-impact commercial uses are not permitted, nor is manufacturing. The minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet, with a requirement of 150 feet of road frontage.

*General Commercial District:* This establishes areas intended for high-impact commercial uses\*, which may not be compatible with other land uses, such as residential or recreational activities. This district provides an area suited to such development due to site conditions such as soil, slopes, proximity to highway access, and public water and sewer services. The General Commercial District is divided into two sections: along Route 202 south from ME Route 133 to the Monmouth town line and a second exists near the intersection of Main Street and Route 202 on both sides of the road. Low-, medium-, and high-impact commercial and industrial land uses are permitted, via Planning Board review and approval. New housing of any type is subject to Planning Board review and approval as well, as these land uses are generally discouraged in this district. The minimum lot size required is 40,000 square feet with a road frontage of 100 feet. Also, no more than 40 percent of the lot is permitted to be developed with impervious surface without a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board, in consideration of the district's proximity to the lakes.

*Industrial District:* This establishes an area in Winthrop intended for intensive commercial\* or industrial enterprises, which may not be compatible with other land uses, such as residential, recreational, or agricultural activities. It is located to provide an area suited to development due to site conditions such as soil, slopes, proximity to highway and railway access and public water and sewer services. The Industrial District consists of strips of

land extending from the edge of the Commercial District for an additional 500 feet on either side of Route 202 between Hoyt Brook and the Monmouth town line. The district is meant to encompass the Winthrop Business Park. It has the same dimensional requirements as the General Commercial District, and permits the same uses, with a little broader range of industrial uses allowed.

*Village District:* This includes the most highly developed areas in town. Development is denser than in other areas and covers a broad mix of land uses, including commercial, recreational, public, and residential. This district seeks to maintain the existing village character and land use mix. This district is generally located between Route 133 and Highland Avenue, from Route 202 to the southern tip of Maranacook. Because of the density of development, there is little vacant land available; however, there are underutilized buildings and sites. Generally, permitted uses include single- and multi-family residences, small businesses, and light industry. High-impact commercial uses\*, manufacturing, and re-establishment of industrial uses are subject to Planning Board review. Based on the current development pattern and the availability of public sewers and water, the minimum lot size in the Village district is the smallest in Winthrop, at 3,500 square feet.

*Rural District:* This includes land presently characterized by low-density development, forests, abandoned fields, and farms. This District seeks to protect the existing open space, forestry, agricultural and residential uses, and to restrict commercial activities. The Rural District includes all land not otherwise zoned and encompasses roughly 60 percent of Winthrop's land area. Dimensional standards are 80,000-square-foot minimum lot sizes with 150 feet of road frontage.

These zoning designations can be seen in a simplified table below.

\*Definitions for high-, medium-, and low-impact commercial uses can be found in Article VI - Definitions of Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance can be accessed on the town's website at [www.winthropmaine.org](http://www.winthropmaine.org).

**TABLE 1: CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS**

Growth Areas	Village District	Most densely developed area. Includes a broad mix of land uses, including commercial, recreational, public, and residential. Seeks to preserve character of town.	Minimum Lot Size: 3,500 SF	
	General Residential District	Supports higher density residential, and limited public and commercial development near town services and utilities.	Min. Lot Size with Sewer: 30,000 SF	Min. Lot Size without Sewer: 40,000 SF
	General Commercial District	Designated for high-impact commercial uses not compatible with residential or recreational land uses.	Minimum Lot Size with or without Sewer: 40,000 SF	
	Limited Commercial District	Includes areas for mixed-use residential and low-/medium-impact commercial uses.	Minimum Lot Size with or without Sewer: 40,000 SF	
Rural Areas	Rural District	Low-density development, forests, fields, and agricultural uses. Seeks to protect existing open space and agricultural land uses. Restricts commercial activity.	Minimum Lot Size with or without Sewer: 80,000 SF	
Shoreland Districts	Shoreland District	Allows low-intensity residential and recreational development within Shoreland Zone.	Min. Lot Size with Sewer: 40,000 SF	Min. Lot Size without Sewer: 80,000 SF
	Public Water Supply District	Surrounds ponds which serve as water supplies to Augusta and Winthrop to provide additional protection.	Min. Lot Size with Sewer: 60,000 SF	Min. Lot Size without Sewer: 80,000 SF
	Resource Protection	Preserve water quality, productive fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic and natural values.	Min. Lot Size with Sewer: 60,000 SF	Min. Lot Size without Sewer: 80,000 SF
	Stream Protection		Min. Lot Size with Sewer: 40,000 SF	Min. Lot Size without Sewer: 80,000 SF
Industrial	Industrial District	Designated and limited to intensive commercial or industrial land uses.	Minimum Lot Size with or without Sewer: 40,000 SF	

Source: Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance, 2019

Cluster residential development is another regulatory tool included in the Zoning Ordinance with the purpose of encouraging development in designated growth areas. Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance defines cluster development as follows:

*A development controlled by a single developer on any size parcel of land which contemplates an imaginative, more compact grouping of residential housing units. Cluster developments treat the developed area as an entirety to promote flexibility of design, architectural diversity, the efficient use of land, a reduction in the size of road and utility systems, the creation of common open space, and the retention of the natural characteristics of the land.*

This provision allows clustered residential development in any zoning district where single-family dwellings are allowed. Clustered residential development mandates connection to municipal sewer services due to the significant decrease in required minimum lot size.

Further, the Zoning Ordinance is relatively permissive in allowing two-family and multifamily homes; both types are allowed in all zoning districts with approval from either the Code Enforcement Officer or the Planning Board.

Growth Areas Explained: The Maine Growth Management Act requires towns to prepare Comprehensive Plans to designate areas preferred for new development, called "growth areas," and areas where new development is not encouraged, termed "rural areas." This approach directs new development to parts of town with amenities and capacity for growth and away from areas with environmental or other constraints. The purpose of the Growth Management Act is to prevent sprawl. Sprawl in rural areas increases the town's expense in road maintenance and other municipal services. It also has a negative environmental impact on natural resources, such as habitat, biodiversity, water quality, and loss of farmland.

### **Non-Regulatory Measures:**

In addition to a Zoning Ordinance with a full suite of regulatory measures aimed at encouraging and promoting development in designated growth areas, Winthrop could introduce non-regulatory means to encourage development in growth areas, as well. The most obvious way to promote a growth area and encourage appropriate development is expansion of sewer and water availability. This would lower development costs and result in future development in desired locations.

There are other, non-regulatory options the town could consider, too. One option is to revitalize Winthrop's downtown by improving the sidewalks and crosswalks. Encouraging walkability or creating bike lanes, where feasible, is a viable way to promote the village area. Creating or improving pocket parks or outdoor places for residents to gather not only revitalizes the downtown and encourages growth, but also creates a sense of community.

The town collaborates with several organizations and municipal committees in preventing sprawl, protecting natural resources, and directing development away from Winthrop's rural areas. Non-regulatory measures to direct growth away from rural areas also preserve open space, farmland, and forestland. These non-regulatory measures are in addition to the regulatory protections of the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Agriculture and Open Space:**

As farming and forestry were the historical economic cornerstones of the community, these resource-based practices should be supported and afforded protection. They are as important today as they have always been. Winthrop partners with the following organizations to protect and conserve forests, shorelands, fields, farmland, and wildlife habitat: Kennebec Land Trust, Maine Farmland Trust, Cobbossee Watershed District, Maine Woodlot Owners Association, and Land for Maine's Future, as well as others.

Enrollment in the Open Space, Farmland, and Tree Growth Tax Law are encouraged to reduce property tax valuations. The amount of acreage enrolled in the Farm Tax Law, Open Space Tax Law, and Tree Growth Tax Law adds up to 3,726 acres.

This number does not include land that has been conserved in a trust or protected in any other way; the 3,726 acres accounts only for land enrolled in one of the State's Tax Law programs (see *Existing Land Use Map* in the appendix). This acreage accounts for 18.65 percent of the total land base in Winthrop. For further information on agriculture and forestry in Winthrop, see the Agriculture and Forestry Chapter of this Plan.

### **Winthrop's Rural-Urban Balance:**

The largest Zoning District in Winthrop is the Rural District. The Census Designated Place accounts for only about 18 percent of the town's total land base and houses nearly 44 percent of the population, underscoring the increased density in this area. With about 19 percent of the land base in a State Tax Law program, and 9.5 percent of land in conservation (excluding land used for ballfields, beaches, or undeveloped land) Winthrop's provides the best of both rural and urban life to its residents.

Winthrop's more rural areas are less likely to see any high-density development simply because they lack public utilities to support these land uses. When considering options to promote growth areas, availability of public utilities is at the forefront of the discussion. To encourage appropriate development in keeping with the town's character, protecting the rural areas from future over-development and sprawl is key, as is providing amenities residents want and need in more appropriate areas.

### **Floodplain Management Ordinance:**

The town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as outlined in the

Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted in 2011. Maps are updated with federal data releases.

### **Projections:**

Referring to the population projections in the Community Profile, it is difficult to anticipate any future demand at all for housing – projected population estimates by two outside sources have Winthrop’s population between 5,930 in 2038 (State Economist’s projection) - a decrease of 3.12 percent or 191 residents from the current population in a 16-year period, and 6,200, which is an increase of just 79 individuals (KVCOG’s projection). Obviously, these are quite different scenarios and underscore the undependable nature of population projections.

It is important to note that these projections do not consider the decline in household size, which requires additional housing to accommodate individuals living alone. Winthrop’s average household size has decreased steadily since the 1970s and is now 2.31 people per household, on average.

With Winthrop’s current population of 6,121, and an average household size of 2.31, the population occupies 2,646 housing units (2020 Census). If that same population in 2030 had an average household size of 2.19 (a decrease of just 5 percent), they would need 2,795 housing units. Based on the 2020 Census data, Winthrop can accommodate this population with its current housing stock of 3,297 and will not need additional housing.

The baseline scenario for Winthrop is no population change. However, “no population change” does not mean “no growth.” Even if Winthrop’s population *numbers* do not change by 2030, the *components* of the population will most assuredly be different. Currently, the trend with the greatest impact on growth is declining average household size. This “no population change” scenario includes the assumption that the decreasing household size will eventually plateau, and average age will continue to increase for some time based on the baby boom generation.

The aging population is presently an essential consideration. This demographic has a specific set of requirements, such as handicapped accessible homes so residents can age in place, the construction of more one-story homes and appropriately sized homes. With the increase in residents, young and elderly, living alone, smaller homes will grow in demand. In short, the population may not be increasing, but the changes in the demographics of the population may result in the need for more homes or a different type of home.

Depending on the growth/change scenario the town chooses to adopt, the number of new houses and land that goes with that will change. It is unreasonable to assume no new houses will be built, regardless of existing housing stock and population stagnation or decreases. The construction of new houses will consume more land for development. For example, if 20 new houses are constructed over the next 10-year period in the Rural District (approximately 2-acre lots per house), that would add up to at least 40 acres; in

the General Residential District (approximately 1-acre lots per house), that would be at least 20 acres. These speculations are not counting the land required for utilities or other necessities that go along with new home construction.

In either scenario, Winthrop will undoubtedly experience new development within its existing residential districts. Ideally, those new homes would be in the designated growth areas, which is consistent with comprehensive planning guidelines.

New commercial and industrial development in Winthrop in the past 10 years has been minimal. Based on these trends, no significant new commercial or industrial development is projected in the planning period. That is not to say there are not new businesses coming into Winthrop, just that these new businesses are inhabiting existing buildings rather than constructing new buildings.

### **Analysis:**

Winthrop is undeniably changing. The town will need to find ways to protect its natural resources, rural areas, and open space to prevent negative impacts related to growth and sprawl.

The town may need to examine the type of available housing stock to continue to provide adequate housing for existing senior residents so they can age in place. As of mid-2023, there are no small houses available for sale or being built, which forces young adults and the elderly to look outside of Winthrop for housing. This may mean encouraging the construction of specific types of homes, such as one-story, handicapped-accessible, or elderly housing.

The town's Zoning Ordinance will need to be reviewed for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan update and new legislative requirements based on affordable housing. The Zoning Ordinance should also be reviewed as it relates to directing growth to prevent sprawl. The Subdivision Ordinance needs review and updating to reflect amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. These recommendations will be analyzed further in the Future Land Use section.

### **Issues for Further Study and Discussion:**

- ❖ Does the existing Zoning Ordinance provide for the land use patterns that Winthrop wants for the future? Does it provide a balance between agricultural, residential, and commercial uses to accommodate Winthrop's residents? Are there the right number of zoning districts?
- ❖ Are all existing zoning districts relevant? Does the General Residential District accomplish that for which it was created?
- ❖ How can Winthrop Village be kept sustainable and viable? Are there any areas that need special attention? Is there anywhere that should be expanded?
- ❖ What measures can Winthrop take to be prepared for increased development? How can the town better direct the location of residential development?

- ❖ How can the town promote the Village District as an inviting area for future development? For example, can walkability be increased? Are there enough parks or green spaces for the public to gather?
- ❖ What utilities should be considered if density bonuses were offered? Should broadband be included?
- ❖ How effective is current zoning at protecting water quality and open space?

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- One: General Recommendations
- Two: Land Use Plan
- Three: Capital Investment Planning Process
- Four: Regional Coordination

## RECOMMENDATIONS CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Plan lists general recommendations, in the form of policies and strategies, for each element of the plan. These recommendations are intended to address the issues raised in the review and analysis of the chapters in the *Community Assessment* section. The matrix also shows a suggested implementation timing and responsible party.

For this section, the implementation priority is divided into near-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing, defined as the following:

- **“Short term”** is presumed to be activities which can be completed within two years. These are primarily changes to Zoning and other ordinances and are easily achievable actions.
- **“Mid-term”** activities will be commenced and/or completed between two and five years after adoption of the plan. These consist of lower-priority activities or those which require additional planning or preparation to accomplish.
- **“Long-term”** activities are those which are more nebulous, and for which the path to implementation has not yet come into focus.
- **“Ongoing”** is used to identify strategies which are currently in place and should continue.

### **Implementation Mechanism and Evaluation Measures:**

Winthrop’s Town Council should consider an approach to implement and monitor the progress of the Comprehensive Plan by appointing a standing Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee that will work in coordination with the Town Council. The Town Council and the Town Manager should meet biannually with the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to review the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate implementation and progress. If the evaluation concludes that portions of the current plan and/or its implementation are not effective, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee could propose changes.

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Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>HISTORIC RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>The Winthrop Maine Historic Society (WMHS) is active and strives to preserve the town's valued heritage through a variety of efforts, including education and outreach. Winthrop has an abundance of historic buildings and sites, with four on the National Register. While most of these historic buildings have been well maintained and preserved, the privately owned buildings that have fallen into disrepair present a challenge.</p> <p>The town currently has no requirements above the state requirements for site assessment for historic artifacts.</p> <p><b>Goal: To preserve the State's historic and archeological resources by continuing to seek public and private funding, continuing efforts to house historical and archeological materials, and providing a base for research and educational activities, public displays and lectures in the Winthrop Maine History and Heritage Center.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.</p>	<p>1.1: For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers 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.</p> <p>1.2: Adopt or amend land use 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.</p> <p>1.3: Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary, plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
2. Continue efforts to preserve Winthrop's history.	<p>2.1: Continue inventorying the materials and documents donated to the town and stored at various municipal locations.</p> <p>2.2: Continue effort to sort, catalogue, and document items that have been donated to the Society.</p> <p>2.3: Continue working to digitize all historic materials and documents, when possible, for ease of access.</p>	<p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Ongoing.</p>
3. Continue to support the WMHS's efforts to raise awareness and interest in town history.	<p>3.1: Continue fundraisers, historical walking tours and cemetery tours, lecture series, new family events, active social media postings and more to create excitement and involvement about Winthrop's history to continue to engage the community to be more involved in the town's history.</p> <p>3.2: Consider initiating an oral history project and collect records for preservation by enlisting high school English and/or History departments for both curriculum development and community service time.</p>	<p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society, Winthrop Public Schools. Ongoing.</p>
4. Work with Maine State Historic Preservation to conduct a study on the Civil War statute located in front of the former Town Hall.		Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Mid-term.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>5. The town recognizes the importance of buildings and sites of historic significance and looks to encourage and support the Winthrop Maine Historic Society in further developing historic listings.</p>	<p>5.1: Conduct a comprehensive inventory of historical buildings in Winthrop for potential identification and inclusion on state or federal historic listings.</p> <p>5.2: Establish a historical marker program for locally identified historical sites and buildings in Winthrop.</p> <p>5.3: Consider the development of an Ordinance to protect Listed and Eligible Historic buildings.</p>	<p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Winthrop Maine Historic Society, Town Planner, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>6. The Town will prevent disturbance of archeological resources by regulating development in areas likely to contain those resources and requiring surveys before construction activity.</p>	<p>6.1: Explore ordinance provisions or building standards that require applicants to identify and protect archeological resources in sensitive areas. Make building permits conditional with appropriate use.</p> <p>6.2: Make Maine Historic Preservation Commission information and map of areas with high archeological potential widely available.</p>	<p>Town Planner, CEO, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>CEO. Short term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<b>LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:</b>		
<p>Winthrop’s local economy is essential to the health and vitality of the town and is also linked to many areas of town policy. Like many other communities, Winthrop is facing economic challenges due to lack of investment capital.</p>		
<p>Winthrop’s unemployment rate is low, and the town has many favorable assets such as its water bodies, recreational opportunities, commercial and retail establishments, proximity to services, and a good quality of life.</p>		
<p>The town should strive to promote these assets, cooperate with private businesses and regional economic players, while maintaining a focus on suitable economic development to succeed in building a more robust economy.</p>		
<p><b>State Goal: To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community’s role in the region.</p>	<p>1.1: If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community’s economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Long term.</p>
<p>2. To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.</p>	<p>2.1: Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.</p> <p>2.2: If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.3: Explore grant opportunities for appropriate economic development.</p> <p>2.4: Update the 2000 Downtown Revitalization Plan.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>3. To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.</p>	<p>3.1: Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>4. Continue to market Winthrop to entice and draw new businesses into town.</p>	<p>4.1: Reintroduce a weekly farmer’s market in the downtown area.</p> <p>4.2: Explore ways to encourage Main Street business owners in both commercial/retail locations to focus on and improve curb appeal.</p> <p>4.3: Consider a town-sponsored contest for best landscaping, best holiday décor, or similar event to create a sense of community.</p> <p>4.4: Maintain sidewalks throughout town to encourage walkability, which in turn, would promote more business.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>4.5: Consider creating an economic development plan that recognizes gaps, evaluates the downtown area, works to fill vacant store fronts, and supports all existing businesses, including home businesses.</p> <p>4.6: Engage Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce in creating a regional, 5- to 10-year marketing plan.</p> <p>4.7: Explore opportunities and possibilities to fund the effort of creating the regional marketing plan.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-term.</p>
<p>5. Update the Zoning Ordinance with consideration given to specific areas that will affect the local economy.</p>	<p>5.1: Explore the option of revising the performance standards in the Zoning Ordinance to include Best Management Practice requirements for new business.</p> <p>5.2: Consider developing a Site Plan Review Ordinance to give the Planning Board more oversight.</p> <p>5.3: Consider developing a set of standards and guidelines for Winthrop’s commercial storefronts in both the commercial/retail district locations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>6. Promote both commercial/retail district locations.</p>	<p>6.1: Support and promote programs to engage middle school and high school students in participating in Main Street cleanup and maintenance.</p>	<p>Town Manager, School Superintendent, Town Council, School Board. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>6.2: Support and promote programs in which students assist elderly living along Main Street in private property maintenance.</p> <p>6.3: Promote and encourage Main Street activities such as the Memorial Day parade.</p> <p>6.4: Explore options and the need for a local business organization to promote new businesses and coordinate events.</p> <p>6.5: Energize the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce to promote small businesses and work toward improvements.</p> <p>6.6: Explore tools to help existing businesses stay in Winthrop.</p>	<p>Town Manager, School Superintendent, Town Council, School Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-term.</p>
<p>7. Promote pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures.</p>	<p>7.1: Explore ways to restrict U-turns on Main Street.</p> <p>7.2: Consider traffic calming measures, such as narrowing, deflecting, or restricting traffic, in areas known to be unsafe for pedestrians.</p> <p>7.3: Investigate ways to enhance existing crosswalks, such as improving signage or repainting.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	7.4: Investigate the need for a bicycle police officer from May through October.	Town Manager, Police Chief, Town Council. Mid-term.
8. Continue to promote Winthrop’s downtown village area.	<p>8.1: Establish Winthrop as a leading center for remote work by, among other initiatives, providing public internet access to core village areas where the public congregates.</p> <p>8.2: Continue to provide appropriate support and an overall environment in which all of Winthrop’s local, small businesses thrive.</p> <p>8.3: Explore options for adaptive reuse of underutilized historic buildings to develop a strategy and long-term implementation plan for their rehabilitation and reuse.</p> <p>8.4: Support future economic growth compatible with the environment and landscape of the village area by improving public access, sidewalks, update infrastructure, bury utilities, and promote connected parking lots to improve walkability.</p> <p>8.5: Work to install new benches along Main Street to encourage community gathering.</p> <p>8.6: Continue to work to maintain existing parks in the downtown area.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Public Works, Town Council. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	8.7: Establish community gateways and landscaping at both ends of Main Street to better define the village area.	Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works. Mid-term.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>HOUSING:</b></p> <p>Winthrop has a growing housing stock that offers a variety of housing options in just as many locations. However, considering the changing demographic trend, the town can anticipate an increasing need for more rental and right-sized housing. In fact, at present Winthrop is experiencing a housing shortage, resulting in dramatically increased housing prices.</p> <p>Affordability is an issue for both owner-occupied homes and rental homes. Winthrop should continue to work toward the conversion and development of additional multifamily homes within the designated growth areas to provide a variety of housing options for a variety of residents.</p> <p>Winthrop has a Zoning Ordinance and zoning districts designed to accommodate a variety of land uses while providing protection to others.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. Encourage and promote adequate affordable and workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.</p>	<p>1.1: Maintain, enact, or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density; decrease lot size, setbacks, and road widths; or provide incentives such as density bonuses to encourage the development of affordable / workforce housing.</p> <p>1.2: Maintain, enact, or amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.</p> <p>1.3: 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).</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>2. Develop and maintain land-use controls and local ordinances that encourage the development and sustainability of high-quality housing, including affordable and rental housing.</p>	<p>2.1: Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.</p> <p>2.2: Ensure municipal ordinances, including but not limited to the Zoning Ordinance and Building Code, encourage the development of high-quality affordable housing, including rental housing.</p> <p>2.3: Provide initial and ongoing training for the Town Planner, Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The training should prepare all with current knowledge in their subject areas to ensure they are best equipped to make decisions and implement policy.</p> <p>2.4: Investigate and promote opportunities to provide for energy-efficiency improvements to reduce home ownership housing costs.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Planner, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. Encourage and support the efforts of regional housing coalitions or groups with similar purposes in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.</p>	<p>3.1: Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.</p> <p>3.2: Investigate options for and pursue any opportunities to establish relationships with a regional nonprofit housing developer or coalition with neighboring communities to provide more real estate options, collaborative planning, and budgeting.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>3.3: Consider establishing Winthrop as the lead community in proactively working with non-profit housing developers and existing coalitions in addressing affordable housing.</p> <p>3.4: Continue to market Winthrop as a hub to surrounding, rural communities in providing leadership in working with non-profit housing developers and existing coalitions in addressing affordable housing.</p> <p>3.5: Explore options in encouraging workforce housing to support community and regional economic development.</p> <p>3.6: Pinpoint unutilized or underutilized buildings throughout town that could be repurposed or developed to provide a variety of housing options, styles, and locations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>4. Ensure Winthrop’s municipal ordinances regulating, related to, or impacting housing are reviewed regularly and kept up to date.</p>	<p>4.1: Ensure the Zoning Ordinance complies with current Maine statues, including PL 2021 ch. 672.</p> <p>4.2: Consider the creation of, and explore options for, overlay zoning districts, Planned Development Districts, or other zoning techniques, in the Zoning Ordinance to allow for increased density in appropriate, predetermined locations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>4.3: Encourage multi-family housing within existing and newly created housing units in locations where it is appropriate.</p> <p>4.4: Explore options where the development of multi-family housing would be appropriate and in keeping with the town’s character.</p> <p>4.5: Schedule bi-annual review and update of all related land and zoning ordinances to keep them in sync with current legislation.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
<p>5. Proactively work to ensure new housing development meets the current and future needs of Winthrop’s changing population.</p>	<p>5.1: Invest in opportunities to support, engage in, or form an entity that will increase the development of senior, affordable and workforce housing.</p> <p>5.2: Consider options to promote and encourage the development of senior housing with all appropriately sized housing developments.</p> <p>5.3: Explore the possibility of forming a Housing Committee, whose volunteers will act to ease the permitting process for developers, keep informed of current housing issues in Winthrop, and collaborate with relevant Town staff, boards, and other committees.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>6. Implement a system to track changes to and the quality and quantity of Winthrop’s housing stock.</p>	<p>6.1: Implement a system that tracks municipal building code permits issued/requested that impact changes to the housing stock (including change in use, change in type, etc.)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>6.2: Explore options for and encourage the documentation of septic inspections reports to be filed with the property data at the Code Enforcement Office when there is a title transfer of properties in shoreland districts, in conjunction with State law.</p> <p>6.3: Ensure all conversions from seasonal housing units to year-round housing units are adequately tracked and documented.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>CEO, Town Planner, Executive Assistant. Ongoing.</p>
<p>7. Explore options to increase housing variety and availability to improve affordability.</p>	<p>7.1: Consider reducing lot sizes in specific locations to increase affordability in developing the land in those locations.</p> <p>7.2: Consider options for encouraging the development of new housing in the designated growth areas to the greatest extent practicable to increase affordability.</p> <p>7.3: Investigate the allowance of condominiums or multi-unit housing construction in all approved districts for new residential development.</p> <p>7.4: Promote and encourage the development of housing using all tools available to the municipality, including but not limited to properties with existing tax increment financing and the development of affordable housing tax increment financing districts.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Short-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>7.5: Consider options and benefits of developing a public-private partnership for the purpose of creating more housing on currently vacant properties within town.</p> <p>7.6: Consider the establishment of a Housing Committee, with a charge that includes affordable housing and collaborating with developers to potentially ease the permitting process.</p> <p>7.7: Explore options for allowing mobile homes and manufactured homes in more districts.</p> <p>7.8: Explore options for reducing parcel size for multifamily homes on lots served by public sewer and water.</p> <p>7.9: Promote the development of right-sized housing to fit the needs of citizens, such as workforce housing, senior housing, and housing appropriate for single persons living alone.</p> <p>7.10: Explore all means possible to increase housing stock and provide housing at affordable prices, including for example, developing a regulation for tiny homes and manufactured housing.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>8. Implement policies and ordinances that facilitate the development of a thriving village that includes mixed-use (commercial and residential) buildings.</p>	<p>8.1: Research and review downtown revitalization strategies of other Maine communities, particularly aspects of those revitalizations that include mixed-use buildings.</p> <p>8.2: Implement policies and ordinances that create the opportunity for a thriving, walkable downtown with establishments and building styles that encourage community members to stay in town and attracts visitors to consider Winthrop a day-trip destination.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Short term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES:</b></p> <p>Winthrop provides numerous public services to its residents. The town is responsible mainly for fire and emergency services, public works, and cooperates with the school district on education.</p> <p>The town has public water and sewer connections in certain locations that are adequate to accommodate expansion.</p> <p>The town is in a good position to accommodate the future population with adequate public facilities and services. Expansion of the water and sewer connection is physically possible. Emergency services are adequate and well suited to the community.</p> <p><b>Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.</p>	<p>1.1: Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community’s anticipated growth and changing demographics.</p> <p>1.2: Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.</p> <p>1.3: Continue to work toward making all public buildings and properties ADA compliant and accessible.</p> <p>1.4 Explore opportunities to produce hydro and solar power at the Winthrop Commerce Center (the former mill).</p>	<p>Town Council, Town Manager, Department Directors, Town committees. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Department Directors, Town committees. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Department Directors. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>2. To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.</p>	<p>2.1: Encourage local sewer and water districts to coordinate planned service extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>2.2: If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify, and protect suitable sources.</p> <p>2.3: Explore options for regional delivery of local services.</p>	<p>Utilities District, Town Council, Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Utilities District, Town Council, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Department Directors. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. Improve and encourage citizen participation in town government and community affairs.</p>	<p>3.1: Explore ways to encourage residents to volunteer for local boards, committees, and activities.</p> <p>3.2: Annually recognize individual volunteers who have made significant contributions of their time.</p> <p>3.3: Resurrect the annual Town Report to keep residents informed about what is happening with town government.</p> <p>3.4: Consider options for implementing an e-newsletter to complement the town website and annual Town Report.</p>	<p>Town Council, Town Manager, Department Directors, Town committees. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Department Directors, Town committees. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Department Directors, Town Committees, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Department Directors. Short term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>3.5: Ensure the town website and e-newsletter include information such as offerings at the library, and historic, and cultural opportunities and events.</p> <p>3.6: Continue to promote the town's YouTube channel and social media pages.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Department Directors. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Town Council. Ongoing.</p>
<p>4. Continue to maintain taxes as low as possible.</p>	<p>4.1: Improve planning for capital expenditures through an annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP) based on the Capital Investment Plan.</p> <p>4.2: Reduce potential future town expenses by encouraging new development in locations close to existing public facilities and services.</p> <p>4.3 Direct at least 75 percent of new, growth-related capital improvements into designated growth areas, as delineated by the Future Land Use chapter in this plan.</p> <p>4.4: Explore options for the establishment of a Road Committee to set goals and determine a long-term plan for road improvements and construction needs using a system such as Road Surface Management System.</p> <p>4.5: Continue to plan for long-range solid waste disposal and recycling needs.</p>	<p>Town Council, Town Manager, Finance Director, Department Directors. Short term.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Public Works Director, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Public Works Director, Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>4.6: Reduce potential future town expenses by encouraging new development in locations close to existing public facilities and services.</p> <p>4.7: Plan for open space acquisition and community park and recreation development.</p> <p>4.8: Reduce citizens' tax burden by continuing to stay within LD 1 spending limits.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Finance Director, Department Directors. Ongoing.</p>
<p>5. Seek increased opportunities for regional cooperation with neighboring towns.</p>	<p>5.1: Follow-up on recommendations of regionalization studies.</p> <p>5.2: Establish a protocol to look at opportunities for equipment sharing, including purchases of new equipment.</p> <p>5.3: Engage neighboring towns in planning for disaster mitigation.</p> <p>5.4: Continue contacts and discussions with neighboring towns and regional entities on new ways to provide more efficient services.</p>	<p>Town Council, Town Manager. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Department Directors. Mid-term.</p> <p>Fire, Police &amp; Ambulance chiefs, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.</p>
<p>6. Work with state and county officials to increase enforcement of traffic laws, especially in residential neighborhoods.</p>	<p>6.1: Investigate the possibility of contracting for a sheriff's deputy for dedicated, part-time coverage from May through October.</p>	<p>Police Chief, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	6.2: Explore the possibility of hiring another police officer or even two to increase traffic enforcement.	Police Chief, Town Manager. Mid-term.
7. To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.	7.1: Construct a sand-salt storage building on a suitable site or investigate alternatives for regional cooperation.	Town Manager, Public Works Director, Finance Director. Short term.
8. Continue to improve the town's management of solid waste, including increasing recycling, by pursuing recycling efforts.	8.1: Maximize availability of recycling options for businesses, town, and school offices and residents.	Public Works Director, Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.
	8.2: Consider options for financing the replacement of the scale and a new hot top for the transfer station.	Public Works Director, Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.
9. Work with the Augusta Utility District and Winthrop Utility District on future plans.	9.1: Continue to work with AUD and WUD to develop a master plan for expansion of sewer service within existing growth areas and into new growth areas	Public Works Director, AUD and WUD, Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.
	9.2: Work toward identifying and implementing a funding stream for financing of the top priority sewer and water extensions.	Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>FISCAL CAPACITY:</b></p> <p>Winthrop in recent years has achieved a solid financial standing with little debt and sound financial management practices in place. In general, revenues have been reasonably stable in the last decade. The Town Manager and Town Council are committed to achieving a balanced municipal budget in an innovative and sustainable manner.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To fund and finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.</p>	<p>1.1: Formalize, review, and update the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan on an annual basis, incorporate improvements into the annual budget, and expand its scope to 10 years into the future.</p> <p>1.2: Resurrect the town’s capital reserves and start populating those accounts with surplus funds from each year’s budget in excess of the fund balance policy to reduce the reliance on financing for capital improvements.</p> <p>1.3: Continue to manage debt service by replacing retired debt with new debt in an effort to stabilize the portion of the mil rate that funds interest and sinking.</p> <p>1.4 : Support legislative initiatives to increase state financial support to towns and schools.</p>	<p>Finance Director, Town Manager, Department Directors, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Finance Director, Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Finance Director, Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, School Superintendent, Town Council, School Board. Ongoing.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>1.5 : Seek new, compatible, and diverse forms of industrial and commercial development to be situated in appropriate locations.</p> <p>1.6 : Establish a comprehensive road improvement and maintenance plan, with input from a Roads Committee. The road plan would be included in the CIP and would establish a budget amount for road improvements, to be funded annually through appropriations or periodically through bonding, as necessary.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Finance Director, Director of Public Works. Short term</p>
<p>2. To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.</p>	<p>2.1: Task the Town Manager and Town Planner with exploring grant opportunities and applying for as many as is feasible.</p> <p>2.2: Consider retaining a grant writer to apply for grants if it would be beneficial to the Town Planner.</p> <p>2.3: Capitalize a Capital Improvement Reserve Account with estimate of annual depreciation of existing buildings.</p> <p>2.4: Explore educational budget alternatives and ways to reduce the per student cost.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Finance Director. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, School Board, School Superintendent, Town Council. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.5: Maintain a working knowledge and listing of grants and deadlines for financing special projects.</p> <p>2.6: Continue to work toward the improvements and suggestions made in the Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, as well as other viable avenues for improving biking and walking paths throughout town. Continue to seek grants to fund this work.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.</p>	<p>3.1: Explore opportunities to collaborate with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Finance Director, Town Council. Short term.</p>
<p>4. Explore options to encourage and manage appropriate development outside municipal tax dollars.</p>	<p>4.1: Explore opportunities to provide financial support other than tax dollars to fund projects that would be beneficial to the community at large.</p> <p>4.2: Encourage planning and grant writing activities.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Ongoing.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>TRANSPORTATION:</b></p> <p>Transportation is an essential element to the local economy and community. At its simplest, it provides access to jobs, services, and supplies. Without transportation and road access, a community could not exist.</p> <p>Winthrop’s transportation system provides access both within the town and to larger market areas. The road network serves primarily motor vehicles and is generally in good condition.</p> <p>There are other forms of transportation, besides motor vehicles, that must be considered when planning for the future. For example, pedestrian networks, bicycle access, ride-sharing programs and public transportation.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public highway and road facilities as well as town services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.</p>	<p>1.1: Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community’s transportation network.</p> <p>1.2: Explore the feasibility of creating a Roads Committee to assist with planning and prioritizing road construction and maintenance.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Short term.</p>
<p>2. To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.</p>	<p>2.1: Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.</p> <p>2.2: Work with MDOT to improve the existing transportation system.</p> <p>2.3: Take into consideration scenic road corridors when planning, designing, and executing roadway improvements.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.4: Work closely with the MDOT to set appropriate speed limits on state and local roads.</p> <p>2.5: Ensure that road maintenance and improvement operations minimize erosion, phosphorus runoff, protect groundwater and maintain safety.</p> <p>2.6. Evaluate and update current ordinances, such as the Road and Street Construction Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance to unify all references and cross check that they are made to existing ordinances.</p> <p>2.7: Update relevant ordinances to include the newly created position of Town Planner where necessary.</p> <p>2.8: Continue discussions regarding the installation of Electronic Vehicle charging stations in appropriate locations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Public Works Department, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>3. To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.</p>	<p>3.1: Update the Road and Street Construction Standards Ordinance to include requirements for protecting natural resources, while ensuring future roads are constructed to meet safety standards.</p> <p>3.2: Explore options for connecting points of interest, such as schools and other public areas, to make them more accessible and safer for walking and bicycling.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	3.3: Where possible, give preference to road improvements within growth areas in the road improvements plan.	Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Short term.
4. To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).	<p>4.1: Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73);</li> <li>○ State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and</li> <li>○ State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.</li> </ul> <p>4.2: Consider updating the Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan periodically to keep it viable and relevant.</p> <p>4.3: Investigate and continue to support programs that provide transportation for elderly, disabled, and low-income community members, such as Central Maine Taxi, Neighbors Driving Neighbors, and Kennebec Valley Community Action Program.</p> <p>4.4: Explore the possibility of designating a pickup/drop off area for individuals who work in either Lewiston or Augusta to promote public transportation for carpooling or vanpooling.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>4.5: Continue to work toward the re-installation of a Greyhound bus stop in the downtown area by exploring potential roadblocks.</p> <p>4.6: Explore the possibility of adding a train stop in Winthrop by contacting the railways and discussing their requirements and investigate collaborating with neighboring communities to expand the railway’s plans to implement passenger service north of Portland.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Long term.</p>
<p>5. To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.</p>	<p>5.1 Maintain, enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>6. Continue to address traffic speed and pedestrian safety on Main Street, especially in the downtown area.</p>	<p>6.1: Consider conducting a traffic study with the aim of improving the walkability and safety along Main Street.</p> <p>6.2: Work with Maine DOT in exploring the need for traffic calming measures, up to and including traffic lights, in certain known problem areas within town.</p> <p>6.3: Update the 2000 Downtown Revitalization Plan to keep it up-to-date and viable.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board, Police Chief. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department, Police Chief. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>6.4: Work with Maine DOT to implement pedestrian safety improvements at the Main Street and Highland Avenue intersection, particularly during school hours.</p> <p>6.5: Investigate feasibility and effectiveness of traffic calming measures for the Highland Avenue and Main Street intersection.</p> <p>6.6: Establish community gateways and landscaping at both ends of Main Street to better define the village area and make visitors aware they're entering the town's village.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department, Police Chief. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Mid-term.</p>
<p>7. Work toward making the downtown area more pedestrian-friendly.</p>	<p>7.1: Evaluate the sidewalks for connectivity and work toward fixing problem areas.</p> <p>7.2: Evaluate the sidewalks for ADA compliance.</p> <p>7.3: Improve the physical condition of the sidewalks where necessary.</p> <p>7.4: Consider revising the Zoning Ordinance to include provisions with requirements and standards for the creation of pedestrian and/or bike paths in new developments.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Public Works Department. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>7.5: Explore the need and options for a common, public parking area near downtown to alleviate parking issues and encourage people to walk the downtown area.</p> <p>7.6: Ensure crosswalks are highly visible, either with fresh paint or other measures.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Public Works Department, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Public Works Department. Short term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>RECREATION:</b></p> <p>Winthrop’s recreational opportunities are largely provided by the Recreation Committee, the Kennebec Land Trust, the Bailey Public Library, local volunteer groups, and the regional school system, although plenty of self-guided, individual recreational opportunities exist as well.</p> <p>Two of the town’s greatest recreational assets are Mt. Pisgah, with an abundance of trails and breathtaking views, and Norcross Point, Winthrop’s waterfront beach and park. In addition to trails, boat launches, beaches, and sporting fields, Winthrop has many acres of preserved land coordinated across through both private, nonprofit, and municipal ownership.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities and public water resources as necessary to meet current and future needs.</p>	<p>1.1: Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.</p> <p>1.2: Continue to support the town’s community parks, ballfields, tennis courts, and community buildings, as well as looking for opportunities for expansion.</p> <p>1.3: Investigate the possibility of coordinating with neighboring towns in the development of a shared community building to serve all ages.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>1.4: Support the efforts to build a new athletic turf field behind the grade school and town office buildings, including development and upgrade of related amenities, restroom, bleachers, snack bar and more.</p> <p>1.5: Continue to improve school-based recreation facilities: middle school soccer field, high school track, high school fitness trail.</p> <p>1.6: Investigate options to gain hand-carry access to Winthrop's smaller waterbodies, including Lower Narrows Pond and Little Cobbossee Lake.</p> <p>1.7: Work collaboratively with the KLT in improving signage at Mt. Pisgah to better direct visitors.</p> <p>1.8: Explore the feasibility of developing a walking path along Mill Stream to the beach.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, School Superintendent, Recreation Committee, School Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee. Short term.</p> <p>Downtown Revitalization Committee, Town Manager, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p>
<p>2. To preserve and develop open space for recreational use where appropriate.</p>	<p>2.1: Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.2: Work with an existing local land trust (KLT) or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.</p> <p>2.3: Develop and implement an Open Space Plan, which will identify critical resource areas and other high-value rural lands (scenic areas, high-value farmlands, etc.) and devise mechanisms to protect those lands (conservation easements, grants for acquisition, development standards, etc.)</p> <p>2.4: Consider options to work with the KLT and private landowners to expand beyond the current trail system around Mt. Pisgah.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission. Long term.</p>
<p>3. Seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.</p>	<p>3.1: 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.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p>
<p>4. Explore options for the development of activities, programs, and appropriate recreational opportunities for all generations, particularly, older residents.</p>	<p>4.1: Consider what deficiencies the town currently has in meeting the future needs of older citizens and anticipate ways to fulfil those deficiencies.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>4.2: Consider recreational options for middle school and high school age students outside of school-sponsored offerings.</p> <p>4.3: Evaluate Winthrop’s current recreational offering for areas that seem to be lacking, for example, non-athletic enrichment programs, such as dance, gymnastics, and art.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p>
<p>5. Work to establish a calendar of year-round community events.</p>	<p>5.1: Investigate hiring a part-time events coordinator for the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, and fund-raising activities to support the calendar of events.</p> <p>5.2: Incorporate events into promotional literature, town newsletters, and websites.</p> <p>5.3: Work with the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce to coordinate events with downtown store hours, parking demand, sidewalk use, etc.</p> <p>5.4: Continue to support summertime music concerts at Norcross Point.</p> <p>5.5: Promote future endeavors at Norcross Point such as more concerts and theatrical offerings in the open-air stage.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>5.6: Coordinate downtown activities with Norcross Point activities.</p> <p>5.7: Develop and promote annual events, such as art shows, summer festivals, Fourth of July celebrations, holiday parades, and townwide celebrations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short-term.</p>
<p>6. Improve and continue to promote Norcross Point.</p>	<p>6.1: Continue to work toward the improvements needed at Norcross Point by applying for grants and pursuing public input.</p> <p>6.2: Work with the DEP and Cobbossee Watershed District in implementing this plan.</p> <p>6.3: Promote Norcross Point and the walkability of the downtown by investigating walking paths, sidewalks and trails that make accessible connections to popular locations and sites around downtown.</p> <p>6.4: Develop the facilities and management structures to continue to attract a variety of family entertainment.</p> <p>6.5: Seek out private vendors to provide canoe and kayak rentals.</p> <p>6.6: Improve visibility and access to the town beach through Norcross Point.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Recreation Committee. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>7. Promote green spaces and small parks in the downtown area for those who wish to recreate with limited time.</p>	<p>7.1: Revitalize the small park and picnic area behind the mill.</p> <p>7.2: Explore the feasibility of creating a public ice-skating rink in Winthrop during winter months.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Short term.</p> <p>Recreation Committee, Recreation Director, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p>
<p>8. Ensure public buildings and recreation facilities meet current ADA standards to provide handicapped access to people of all ages.</p>	<p>8.1: The town should explore the possibility of doing an assessment of town-owned buildings and properties to determine ADA accessibility.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p>
<p>9. Promote Winthrop as a bike-friendly town.</p>	<p>9.1: Explore options to create bike trails throughout town or manage current trails in a way as to make them accessible for bike traffic.</p> <p>9.2: Consider the development of an off-road trail system, including linking popular destinations such as schools, the town beach, and the downtown area.</p> <p>9.3: Ongoing review and update of the 2011 Bike and Pedestrian Plan.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<b>AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES:</b>		
<p>Agriculture and forestry were Winthrop’s first forms of economic development and are still an important part of the town today for many reasons.</p>		
<p>Farming in Winthrop, and throughout the state, is evolving from a commodity-based market industry to locally based, smaller businesses that produce specialty products on smaller land parcels. Supporting and encouraging these types of small farms is a meaningful opportunity for the town.</p>		
<p>Forest management is supported by markets for wood products that are beyond local control, but since forest gains value from one year to the next, it can generally withstand temporary fluctuations.</p>		
<p><b>State Goal: To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.</p>	<p>1.1: Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.</p> <p>1.2: Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.</p> <p>1.3: Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.</p> <p>1.4: Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers’ markets, and home occupations.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>1.5: Consider adding a provision that requires soil test in areas where commercial solar farms have been proposed to determine whether the property has Prime Farmland Soils or Soils of Statewide Importance.</p> <p>1.6: Explore the usefulness and possibility of offering density bonuses for proposed developments in the designated growth area, in exchange for a fee or the protection of farmland in the rural areas.</p> <p>1.7: Consider making cluster subdivisions mandatory where applicable to preserve critical rural agricultural land.</p> <p>1.8: Investigate the enactment of open spaces or conservation subdivisions designed to protect agricultural land and support the continued agricultural use of land that is reserved through those developments.</p> <p>1.9: Explore additional ordinance standards to minimize impacts of solar development on important agricultural resources, such as soils, as well as farmers' ability to access the land base they need for their operations now and in the future.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>2. To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.</p>	<p>2.1: Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.</p> <p>2.2: Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Assessor. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.3: Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.</p> <p>2.4: Catalogue whether the town owns any underutilized land that could be used for agricultural purposes. If so, work toward leasing town-owned agricultural land to farmers.</p> <p>2.5: In addition to cataloging any underutilized land, (Strategy 2.4) explore and establish community need and support. This might mean some form of public engagement to find out more about the land access needs of local farmers, and whether leasing town-owned land could be helpful.</p> <p>2.6: Consider conducting some form of public engagement (survey, public forum, series of interviews) with local farmers, specifically to hear directly about their needs and issues, and how the town could better support them. The information that is gathered could be used by the town to best support local agriculture.</p> <p>2.7: Included in the abovementioned public engagement could be a question if a Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program (strategy 8.3) is something farmers would be interested in enrolling in, and that information could in turn help the town determine whether it is worth establishing that program.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	2.8: When reviewing the Zoning Ordinance in the future, consider reviewing what the town charges for permit fees for agricultural structures to promote the economic viability of farming.	Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.
3. Investigate ways to encourage youth education, interest, and participation in agriculture, forestry, and farming.	<p>3.1: Explore options to engage farmers and schools to start an FFA chapter and agricultural education program centered around internships with local farms.</p> <p>3.2: Work with schools to encourage partnerships with local farms by procuring locally grown food.</p> <p>3.3: Engage sources to assist in the development of a forestry curriculum such as the Maine Tree Foundation, Project Learning Tree, Maine Audubon, the Kennebec Land Trust, and Professional loggers and contractors.</p>	<p>Town Council, School Superintendent, School Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, School Superintendent. Long term.</p> <p>School Superintendent, School Board. Long term.</p>
4. Expand, promote, encourage, and increase local awareness of the importance and value of agriculture in Winthrop to increase the viability of farming and agriculture.	<p>4.1: Expand agriculture-oriented activities and events on the town calendar.</p> <p>4.2: Increase the public's awareness and knowledge of the programs and support provided through Maine Farmland Trust in efforts to aid working farms and protect important farmland.</p> <p>4.3: Consider the possibility of developing an Agricultural Committee to oversee all things related to agriculture, farming, and forestry in town.</p>	<p>Executive Assistant. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short Term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>4.4: If and when an Agricultural Committee is formed, one of its roles could be to support the implementation of strategies within the agriculture portion of the Comprehensive Plan, in collaboration with the stakeholders outlined here.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short Term.</p>
<p>5. Use the most current standards available for erosion and stormwater control, site reclamation and vegetative buffers in all agriculture and forestry practices.</p>	<p>5.1: Continue to review and update the Zoning Ordinance regularly to reflect most up to date requirements.</p> <p>5.2: Promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, CEO, Town Planner, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>6. Explore the options and work toward developing a farmers' market in Winthrop.</p>	<p>6.1: Consider assigning an existing committee or board to oversee the farmers market or develop a new committee or board for such purposes.</p> <p>6.2: Involve the Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets in the development of Winthrop's farmers market, as necessary. (<a href="https://mainefarmersmarkets.org/">https://mainefarmersmarkets.org/</a>)</p> <p>6.3: When conducting public outreach to farmers, explore the topic of a need/desire to establish a local farmers' market or if it would be more beneficial for the town to collaborate with an existing, nearby market instead.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-Term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>7. Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to support, promote, and encourage appropriate agricultural practices in well-suited locations throughout town.</p>	<p>7.1: Allow market gardening (fruits and vegetables that are grown for the purpose of selling) in all districts so residents can grow their own food.</p> <p>7.2: Chickens, rabbits, and other forms of livestock that do not require the use of permanent land improvements should be regulated. Odor and insects can be controlled through proper manure handling. Noise, particularly that of poultry, can be minimized by limiting the number of poultry and allowing only hens in predetermined zoning districts.</p> <p>7.3: Consider setting parameters on the amount of acreage required for keeping non-commercial livestock such as horses (example: one horse requires one acre; two horses require one and a half acres).</p> <p>7.4: Explore current setback requirements for barns, animal shelters, and pens in zoning districts where animal keeping is permitted to reduce unnecessary restrictions.</p> <p>7.5: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to support agritourism activities and make the approval process smoother for farms.</p> <p>7.6: Consider adding a definition for “Urban Agriculture” when revising and updating the Zoning Ordinance that permits gardening/some level of agriculture in most zoning districts.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>8. Explore and consider adopting ordinances that support locally produced agriculture.</p>	<p>8.1: Consider adopting a Food Sovereignty ordinance that allows small-scale, backyard producers, homesteaders, hobbyists, etc. to produce foods without being a state-inspected and -licensed facility. This applies only when food is being sold directly to the consumer at the site of production.</p> <p>8.2: Investigate the need and support for the development of a “Right to Farm” ordinance (detailed in text of chapter).</p> <p>8.3: Explore the establishment of a Voluntary Municipal Support Program to develop a system of “farm support arrangements” with eligible farmland owners. (See Winslow as an example.)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Assessor, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<b>NATURAL AND WATER RESOURCES:</b>		
<p>Winthrop’s land and water assets provide a necessary buffer against environmental degradation and support for resource-based economic activity such as forestry. Water-based assets provide a basis for recreation and tourism, as well as sustaining life. Protection of these assets from overdevelopment is an important function of this Plan.</p>		
<p><b>State Goal for Natural Resources: To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.</b></p>		
<p><b>State Goal for Water Resources: To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<b>Natural Resources Policies and Strategies Below:</b>		
<p>1. To conserve critical natural resources in the community.</p>	<p>1.1: Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.</p> <p>1.2: Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>1.3: Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers 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.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Code Enforcement Officer. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>1.4: Through local land use ordinances, require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent Beginning with Habitat (BwH) maps and information regarding critical natural resources.</p> <p>1.5: Educate the public about the town's natural resources to raise awareness and improve protection efforts.</p> <p>1.6: Encourage the development of an Open Space Plan.</p> <p>1.7: Minimize the fragmentation of large parcels of undeveloped land, seek to preserve a variety of different habitats and seek to ensure that wildlife travel corridors connect wildlife habitats.</p> <p>1.8: Ensure the floodplain management ordinance receives regular review and is updated to keep current with state and federal guidelines with specific attention to protecting natural resources.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>2. To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.</p>	<p>2.1: Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.</p> <p>2.2: Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.</p> <p>2.3: Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.</p> <p>2.4: Cooperate with the state, relevant organizations, and other communities to protect lakes and lands from invasive species.</p> <p>2.5: Maintain membership in the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) and Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) and continue to work with other organizations devoted to protection of natural resources in Winthrop.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Assessor's Agent, Executive Assistant. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p>



<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>5. To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.</p>	<p>5.1: Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.</p> <p>5.2: Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local 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.</p> <p>5.3: Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) design standards.</p> <p>5.4: Maintain up-to-date and flexible regulatory standards for land-use activities to protect lake water quality. Such standards should include measures such as buffers, erosion and stormwater runoff controls, and Low Impact Development (LID) design standards to minimize phosphorus contamination.</p> <p>5.5: Incorporate LID standards into the Land Use Ordinance to manage stormwater runoff.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Conservation Commission, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>5.6: Maintain standards for earth-moving and land-clearing activities in lake watersheds.</p> <p>5.7: Utilize the Department of Environmental Protection's handbook, <i>Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds</i>, to aid in establishing density, design, and development standards to meet lake water quality goals.</p> <p>5.8: Continue to work with the Cobbossee Watershed District to control phosphorus loading of lakes.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
<p>6. To minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.</p>	<p>6.1: Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.</p> <p>6.2: Through local ordinance, require the documentation of septic inspections reports for town records when there is a title transfer of properties in shoreland districts.</p> <p>6.3: Seek funds to assist homeowners in voluntary upgrading of inadequate septic systems.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, Public Works Director, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>7. To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.</p>	<p>7.1: Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.</p> <p>7.2: Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p>

## RECOMMENDATIONS CHAPTER TWO: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

### **Winthrop's Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement:**

***Winthrop is a vibrant, inviting town with a rich history and diverse population which strives to support its local businesses, schools, housing and recreation while preserving its culture, natural resources and history – a wonderful place to live, work and play.***

### **Overview:**

As the Comprehensive Plan vision relates to future land use, this section seeks to highlight the steady growth in Winthrop over the last decade, while plotting a path to preserve and improve the qualities residents appreciate and cherish. Ensuring sustainable growth and environmental conservation are paramount and can be achieved through proper land-use strategies and planning with the future in mind.

Neighboring towns look to Winthrop as a commercial hub and a service center. Winthrop can expect to carry a burden of not just commercial growth but also employment growth. Care must be taken to meet these needs, but a balance must be struck between meeting these needs and protecting Winthrop's abundant and critical natural resources and important historic landmarks. Winthrop's future land use requires continued focus to meet economic and commercial demands, as well as to preserve and secure valuable natural resources for future generations.

### **Future Growth:**

A Land Use Plan consists of a map and narrative describing Winthrop's future designated growth areas and rural areas. It includes recommendations and suggested changes for both regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to guide development in a desirable way. This Land Use Plan will build upon the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, and the existing Zoning Ordinance.

An essential part of Winthrop's plan for the future is its plan for growth. This plan is based on many assumptions that support continued growth while striving to maintain the town's rural character and natural resources. Examples of assumed future growth include increased and additional economic development, expansion of public services, new home construction, and increased job opportunities. The physical impacts that are a direct result of projected future growth and development are the primary focus of this chapter.

A crucial consideration for future growth is that public services are more costly to provide to development spread throughout town, rather than to village areas or other high-density locations. This includes not just roads, but also schools, buses, utilities, fire protection, and other public services. To prevent unnecessary expenditure and ensure sustainability,

a balance must be met between the existing growth trends of rural development and Winthrop's historic growth patterns. This can be achieved by guiding future development with careful intent and providing cost-effective public services. All of that is in keeping with the community's vision for providing a healthy mix of choices for learning, working and playing, with the intent of preserving the town's natural resources.

### **Future Land Use Plan:**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole, and ultimately the Future Land Use Plan, is to highlight issues raised by the Town of Winthrop and its residents, determine desirable outcomes, and chart possible strategies to accomplish these outcomes in appropriate sections of this Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is not intended to implement or direct any specific regulatory or policy changes, as that would be too narrow a focus, and outside the scope of the Plan. Implementation of the provisions of this Plan would be accomplished within the context of the town's established administrative procedures and policies -- for example, formal adoption of ordinance revisions, Town Council consideration, and public participation.

Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance manages growth and sprawl by setting parameters for allowable land use in each zoning district. By utilizing designated zoning districts with different minimum lot sizes, different allowable land uses, and varying density standards, Winthrop is providing residents, potential residents, and businesses with options to best fit their needs.

When considering designating future growth areas, location must be top of mind. For example, the location of a growth area needs to make sense in relation to public services. Some services are directly location-sensitive, such as public water and sewer services, and road access. Others are less location sensitive, such as proximity to fire stations, recreation areas, or schools. For obvious reasons, development should ideally be encouraged where access is available to public water, sewer, and well-maintained roads, and preferably near schools and existing service centers. Additionally, secondary considerations when locating growth areas include proximity of wetlands and watersheds.

The most important consideration for locating new growth areas is that they should be a logical extension of existing growth areas. Care must be taken not to create a growth area so large that it would make the designation meaningless. The size must be limited and dictated by expected, future growth and natural constraints.

Properly managed land use provides a layer of protection for Winthrop's numerous natural resources. The policies and strategies to manage the town's future land use are detailed further in the Policies and Strategies of the Future Land Use Plan.

## **Delineating Growth Areas:**

The growth area delineated in Winthrop's previous Comprehensive Plan included the Village District and portions of the General Residential District for residential growth, while the Limited Commercial District and General Commercial District were identified for future commercial development, as was the Village District for appropriate commercial development.

The current growth areas are predominantly served by public utilities and encompass a sizable portion of land along Route 202, a location already densely developed (see *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendices). The areas designated for residential growth extend approximately north along Route 41, west of the village area and on both sides of Route 202 east of the village area. The locations designated for commercial development coincide with nearly the entire stretch of Route 202 through Winthrop.

Winthrop's anticipated future growth is predominantly expected in residential land uses. To accommodate these growth patterns, the Future Land Use Plan delineates a larger, residential growth area, as well as locations for future commercial and industrial development, as delineated on the *Future Land Use Map* in the Appendices.

This proposed future growth area is similar to that proposed in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan in that it includes the Village District, and portions of the General Residential District. Unlike the 2010 Plan, the designated growth area proposed in this updated Plan includes all the General and Limited Commercial District for commercial growth. The designated growth areas for residential and commercial growth are detailed further below.

*Designated Growth Area for Commercial Land Uses:* All areas currently zoned as Limited and General Commercial Districts. Areas outside the Limited and General Commercial Districts include:

- In the northeast corner of Winthrop along Route 202, a small portion of the General Residential District, from approximately Turtle Run Road to the town line;
- A portion of land, currently zoned Rural District, west of the Village District between Route 202 and Upper Narrows Pond; and,
- Through the Village District along Route 202.

*Designated Growth Area for Residential Land Uses:* Most of the General Residential District is included in the designated growth area. Areas outside the General Residential District include:

- In the northern part of town west of Maranacook Lake, a portion of the Rural District along Sturtevant Hill Road and Route 41;
- In the southern part of town west of Annabessacook Lake, a small portion of land zoned Rural District along Old Lewiston Road;
- Between Maranacook Lake and the Public Water Supply District, a portion of land zoned Rural District; and
- In the northeast corner of Winthrop, a portion of land zoned Rural District.

For more accurate details on the exact location of the designated growth areas, please see the Future Land Use Map in the Appendix of this plan.

The designated growth area does not include any locations in the Shoreland Zone, Stream Protection, Resource Protection, or the Public Water Supply Districts. The areas chosen for the designated growth area were selected only after significant consideration and deliberation and have been so designated because they are already predominantly developed or are areas where Town officials believe future growth should and could well occur.

Where the residential growth area has been expanded into the Rural District, it is because the amount of development in those areas no longer fits the description for the Rural District. As such, small pockets of rural areas are surrounded largely by land that is mostly developed.

Due to this configuration of developed land surrounding land that is rural, these locations are a logical choice for future growth. Unifying and aligning the current land uses with the appropriate zoning designations and intended future use will prevent potential use conflicts. The proposed designated growth area would also provide the town with more capacity in which to direct desired development. Because these areas have already been built up more than other rural areas, directing additional growth to these areas would be more cost-effective in the provision of public services.

The proposed expansion of the growth area is in part due to the fact the current growth area has reached capacity in some areas, particularly the Village District. There is little developable land left in the Village District, and to achieve the vision for Winthrop, a designated growth area with capacity for future development is preferred. This would prevent sprawl, protect natural resources, preserve rural areas, and ultimately be more cost-effective for the town.

Additionally, the growth area proposed by the 2010 Comprehensive Plan was never entirely utilized as such, underscoring the capacity of Winthrop's updated designated growth area. The previous plan included an expansion of the designated growth area into several locations that were zoned Rural District, but those areas were not rezoned and thus, not required to be employed as growth areas. As such the new growth areas have only limited area in the Rural District that are there should growth exceed capacity in the Residential and Commercial Zones.

## **Current Land Use Patterns:**

The Existing Land Use chapter details Winthrop's land-use patterns and Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance establishes 10 land-use districts for the purposes of guiding and directing development so it will not conflict with natural resource protection, public health, safety, flood damage prevention, and economic well-being. Existing land-use controls have built a strong foundation to preserve the rural character of the town with the intention of directing growth into appropriate, predetermined locations, and away from rural areas.

Winthrop's Village District was the initial settlement of the town. Today, the Village District allows a variety of land uses, and is the most densely settled location. At the suggestion of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the General Residential District and the Limited Residential Districts were combined to accommodate the projected need for future housing, as the General Residential District was deemed nearly at capacity for residential uses. The effect of this action was intended to reduce restrictions on development and permit smaller lot sizes for those with access to public sewer services in areas that were zoned Limited Residential. An overall expansion for the General Residential District, in concert with extension of public sewer, was also recommended; however, it was not entirely implemented because of the prohibitive cost of extending the sewer systems.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan also acknowledges that only portions of the resulting, expanded General Residential District would be served by public sewer services. The intent of this was to continue to allow higher-density development and decreased lot size in those locations served by public sewer, whereas locations not served by public sewer would continue with larger lot size requirements and lower densities.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan suggested the General Commercial District and the Limited Commercial District be combined into a single commercial district, which was intended to run the entirety of Route 202, excluding areas zoned as shoreland or watershed. This proposed district was intended to extend to a depth of 500 feet on each side of the road. This rezoning was suggested only in conjuncture with updating and adding stronger standards to the Zoning Ordinance to limit future access points and prevent strip development. In addition to combining the Limited and General Commercial Districts, the 2010 Plan suggested amending the Zoning Ordinance to include high-density residential as a permitted (conditional) use, allowable with performance standards to minimize commercial/residential conflicts within district boundaries. For a variety of reasons, these suggestions were not implemented, and the General Commercial and Limited Commercial zones remained separate districts. This should continue to be reviewed for consideration as the town grows and expands its commercial enterprises.

## **Land Use Districts within Winthrop's Current Growth Areas:**

Winthrop's designated growth area is appropriate in size and consists of four zoning districts with a variety of allowable uses in each. Because Winthrop has not sufficiently tracked permits issued, it is not currently possible to determine if most of the recent growth

has occurred in the designated growth areas. This will be remediated through the iWorQ software, specifically created for permit tracking and documentation.

The designated growth areas are defined by existing dense development patterns and infrastructure. They provide locations for a variety of residential, commercial, and municipal land uses. Proposed Areas currently designated for growth in the Zoning Ordinance and on the Future Land Use Map are:

- ***Village District:***

Winthrop's one remaining village area, as depicted on the *Future Land Use Map*, is the most densely developed part of town. It was initially defined by this existing dense development pattern and infrastructure. Currently, it contains a mixture of residential, commercial, recreational, and public land uses. The configuration of the Village District has been shaped since Winthrop's early days when settlements were predominantly established near mills and people traveled mostly by train. The Village District has multiple road junctions, with several primary roads into and out of the district. The Village District seeks to maintain the existing character and land-use mix.

The Zoning Ordinance describes the Village District as the most highly developed area in town. The Village District designation strives to promote a compact and dense (rather than sprawling) pattern of development, by allowing mixed land-use patterns. This district seeks to ensure proposed development and land uses are compatible with existing land uses, while maintaining the historical integrity and village character.

Designating the Village District as a growth area is in line with the community's vision as this area is the ideal location for the town's continued growth of mixed-uses, including commercial and residential land uses at a higher density than in other locations. Development in this area, if done properly, will minimize sprawl in rural areas and protect natural resources.

- ***General Residential District:***

The General Residential District, shown on the *Future Land Use Map*, was combined with the Limited Residential District following suggestions made in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. This new, larger district provides areas suitable for residential and limited public and commercial development. It extends to additional areas to provide locations suited to mixed-use residential and commercial development on a limited scale, compatible with existing development and close to town services and facilities.

The goal of this district is to encourage and protect higher-density residential development in locations served by public sewer, while requiring larger lot sizes for the areas of this district not served by public sewer. In 2010, this expansion was intended to relieve the restrictions in lot sizes in areas served by public sewer.

This growth area designation is in keeping with the community's vision because it promotes higher-density residential development and increases housing options. The higher-density development around the village prevents residential sprawl into the rural areas and protects natural resources. This district supports a sustainable future by directing future growth into locations that are already densely settled. In addition, this reduces the cost of providing public services to more remote parts of town.

- **General Commercial District:**

This district, shown on the *Future Land Use Map*, is designated to establish areas for high-impact commercial uses, which may not be as compatible with other land uses, such as residential and recreational activities. It is located to provide an area suited to such development due to site conditions such as soil types, slopes, proximity to highway access, and public water and sewer services. This district includes areas already under commercial use.

The General Commercial District reflects the community's vision in that it provides a location for economic development opportunities. It is also located to protect the virtue of residential development from incompatible land uses on neighboring lots.

- **Limited Commercial District:**

Like the General Commercial District, the Limited Commercial District, shown on the *Future Land Use Map*, allows areas of mixed-use, residential, and low- and medium-impact commercial uses. This district is devoted to a mix of residential and low-intensity business and commercial uses.

As this district includes less intense commercial development and mixed-use residential, it is in keeping with the community's vision for providing for a diverse community, including a variety of housing options. This designation also provides a location of less obtrusive commercial development that can fit among residential uses without incompatibility issues.

Due to the rate of new development in Winthrop since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, a need for an expanded growth area to accommodate future growth, while still protecting natural resources and rural character, has been identified. The proposed expansion to the growth area fits the criteria outlined under *Directing Growth* in this chapter, provides the town with capacity in which to direct proposed development, and aligns with the community's vision for the future of Winthrop.

There are no extraordinary natural constraints in the designated growth areas that would limit their potential for development. The most obvious constraint for development is that the town does not have public sewer and water throughout the designated growth areas. The areas currently designated for growth are shaped by natural opportunities and historic growth patterns. They consist of locations with suitable land for development and are home to many if not all public facilities.

In the last decade, most of the new developments in Winthrop have been outside of the growth areas and located instead in old farm fields, along rural road corridors, and predominantly along lakeshores. These rural locations are exactly what the town wants to preserve, by strategically defining intended growth areas and directing growth to areas that are already more developed and have capacity for additional growth.

### **Land Use Districts Outside of the Designated Growth Areas:**

The Zoning Ordinance identifies and describes six land-use districts outside of the designated growth areas, outlined in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. These districts are detailed below.

- **Three Classifications of Shoreland Areas:** The overall purpose of these designations is to protect water quality, productive fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic and natural areas.
  - **Shoreland District** includes all shoreland areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water mark of great ponds, and are suitable for residential and recreational development. It includes areas other than those in the Resource Protection District or the Stream Protection District.
  - **Resource Protection District** includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality; productive, biological ecosystems; or scenic or natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the shoreland zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, except that areas which are currently developed and areas which meet the criteria for Limited Commercial District need not be included within the Resource Protection District.
    - Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of freshwater wetland and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, which are rated “moderate” to “high” value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, including nesting and feeding areas, by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by either MDIF&W or the Maine Department of Environmental Protection as of December 31, 2008. For the purposes of this paragraph “wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers” shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with a great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. “Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers” are considered part of that great pond or river.
    - Floodplains along rivers and floodplains along artificially formed great ponds along rivers, defined by the 100-year floodplain as designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, of the F, or in

the absence of these, by soil types identified recently as floodplains soils.

- Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater.
  - Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during the period of normal high water.
  - Land areas along rivers that are subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or riverbed movement.
- **Stream Protection District** includes all land area within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland. Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the above water bodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

- **One classification of Rural District:**

The purpose of the rural district designation is to ensure that proposed development and land uses are compatible with the preservation of Winthrop's open, rural character and are protective of sensitive natural resources and visual/scenic qualities. The rural district includes land presently characterized by low-density development, forests, abandoned fields, and farms. This District seeks to protect the existing open space, forestry, agricultural and residential uses, and to restrict commercial activity.

- **One classification of Public Water Supply District:**

The Public Water Supply District surrounds ponds that serve as water supplies to Augusta and Winthrop. The use of Carlton and Narrows Ponds as water supplies, and the fact that these ponds have a low capacity for assimilating pollutants necessitates additional protective measures around them. Since runoff from agricultural and development activity is apt to cause water-quality problems, more stringent controls on such activities are applied to land areas within 1,000 horizontal feet of the shorelines of these ponds and the streams linking them.

- **One Classification of Industrial District:**

The Industrial District, shown on the *Future Land Use Map*, established an area intended for intensive commercial or industrial enterprises, which may not be compatible with other land uses, such as residential, recreational, or agricultural activities. It is located to provide an area suited to development due to site conditions

such as soil, slopes, proximity to highway and railway access, and public water and sewer services. The location and size of the Industrial District is intended to reduce potential negative effects on other, less abrasive land uses.

The land-use districts not included as growth areas are designated to protect natural resources, public drinking water supplies, and the character of the town by directing development into appropriate areas.

### **Anticipated Growth:**

At the conclusion of the Existing Land Use and Housing chapters of this plan, growth and population projections and land consumption estimates were presented based on current and historic trends, ordinances, and lot sizes. One projection predicts Winthrop's population to decrease by 191 residents, while the other predicts an increase of 79 residents. While neither population projection anticipates a large population increase, there is an undeniable need for additional housing, more specifically, right-sized housing for the growing trend of smaller-sized households, single-family households, and increasing population age.

Detailed more thoroughly in the Housing chapter, the most likely scenario for Winthrop is no population change in terms of numbers but decreasing household sizes resulting in a need for more housing units of the right size to accommodate smaller household sizes. Currently, Winthrop has a total housing stock of 3,297 housing units, with 465 seasonal housing units, and approximately 250 vacant housing units (classified at time of Census). Due to housing unit prices and general shortages of housing units in the region, Winthrop could likely add 10 or more housing units to its housing stock and there would still be a need for additional housing. However, it is important to bear in mind the *style* and *type* of housing unit to be added to the housing stock. What appears to be in highest demand are right-sized housing units for seniors looking to downsize, single-person households, or small families just starting out. There appears to be less need currently for large, 3- to 4-bedroom houses on large lots.

The ideal locations for new housing would either be the Village District or the General Residential District, both of which are in the designated growth area. Since the entirety of the Village District is served by a public sewer system, the minimum lot size is 3,500 square feet (SF). The General Residential District is only partially served by public sewer connections, so the minimum lot size ranges from 30,000 SF for those with sewer access and 40,000 SF for those without sewer access.

Since it is unlikely that housing construction will cease entirely, if it is assumed that 10 new houses are built in the planning period, depending on the where the houses are built, very different scenarios result. If all 10 were constructed in the village area, on the minimum lot size, the land area required for these new houses would be less than an acre. It is imperative to bear in mind that this example scenario is simply to demonstrate how different zoning districts, due to varying minimum lot sizes, would require vastly different amounts of land to accommodate the addition of 10 houses. This example *does*

*not* mean that the addition of 10 housing units would adequately meet the current demand for housing in Winthrop.

If all 10 hypothetical new houses were constructed in the part of the General Residential District served by public sewer and on minimum lot sizes, the result would be 350,000 SF, or slightly more than eight acres.

In contrast, if all 10 houses were built in the General Residential District, not served by public sewer connections, and on minimum lot sizes, the land area required would be 400,000 SF, or slightly more than nine acres.

Lastly, if the scenario were applied to the Rural District, which has a minimum lot size of 80,000 SF, the required land area for 10 houses would be 800,000 SF, which calculates to roughly 18.4 acres.

These hypothetical scenarios do not consider the possible need for road construction or utilities. It is also unlikely in any of these scenarios that all new houses would be built on minimum lot sizes; nor do they consider that all new housing requires road frontage. If all developed lots were square, in the Village District each would require 50 feet of road frontage, in the General Residential District each would require 100 feet of road frontage, and in the Rural District each would need 150 feet of road frontage. However, these hypothetical scenarios serve the purpose of evaluating the amount of land that would potentially be consumed by the construction of 10 new houses in either the Village or General Residential districts compared with the Rural District. Again, bear in mind that this is an example and the addition of 10 new housing units would not meet the demand for housing currently in Winthrop.

Another consideration is the potential location for future commercial development. Depending on the level of intensity and impact, new commercial development could locate in any of the designated growth areas. If the commercial business is low-impact and in keeping with the village character, it could be directed to locate in an existing building in the Village District. The General Residential District can also support low-impact commercial uses, although it would be on a more limited scale. The minimum lot sizes for the General Residential District are the same for a commercial establishment as they would be for residential land uses and are dependent upon public sewer connection availability.

Any commercial development that is medium- to high-impact would be directed to the Limited Commercial or General Commercial District, whichever is deemed a more appropriate fit. The Limited and General Commercial districts each have minimum lot size requirements of 40,000 SF, regardless of public sewer connections.

Commercial and industrial development are difficult to predict; however, with Winthrop's public water and sewer accessibility and many options for their location, new businesses undoubtedly will be coming to town. Winthrop has already taken important measures in preparing for this by providing locations for commercial establishments that allow for all

levels of impact to prevent incompatibility issues. Winthrop's designated growth areas strive to encourage new development in locations close to existing public services rather than in rural areas and close to other built-up areas in town. The most likely scenario for new commercial businesses coming to Winthrop would be for them to locate in empty or underutilized, existing buildings, based on recent trends.

The challenge in the creation of this Plan is to work with the current rate of development and to manage it in such a way as to reduce the impacts it will have on both the town's rural character, natural resources, and on Town services. The best way to accomplish this is by encouraging new development to locate close to existing public services and near each other, rather than in rural areas. Winthrop's designated growth areas fit the criteria for directing new development into more densely settled areas and close to existing town services, but the town needs to find a way to successfully encourage new development to locate in the designated growth areas, either through regulatory or non-regulatory measures, to realize the town's vision.

The strategies listed in the Policies and Strategies Table are in keeping with the community's vision in that they promote community character by encouraging appropriate growth in the more densely settled parts of town, and promote options for a blend of retail, commercial, and service locations. By directing residential, commercial, and industrial development into appropriately designated growth areas and away from rural locations, Winthrop is preserving its physical, ecological, and natural resources.

### **Directing Growth:**

Some growth areas are intended to accommodate higher-density housing, while others are intended for development necessary to support and improve Winthrop's local economy. Most commercial activities, except for home-based occupations and natural resource businesses (agriculture and forestry, for example), should be directed or strongly encouraged to locations that are designated growth areas, as should most future municipal capital investments. Anticipated major capital investments needed to support proposed land use will depend on implementation of strategies described in the Public Facilities and Services chapter.

A fundamental strategy when promoting a designated growth area is to direct a minimum of 75 percent of municipal growth-related capital investments into these locations. This strategy demonstrates the town's commitment to using public investments and land use regulations to reduce or discourage development pressure in other areas, while encouraging it in the designated growth areas. It is important to note that road maintenance and other maintenance-type expenditures in designated rural areas would not count as a "growth-related" expenditure.

Even designated future growth areas may have natural or developmental constraints. Examples of development constraints include availability of public water and sewer connections, the presence of wetlands, watersheds, rock or ledge outcroppings, and roads. For obvious reasons, future growth should be directed away from sensitive natural

areas and toward more densely developed areas closer to municipal services. Current designated growth areas have one or more of the following attributes that should also be considered in making any future designations of growth areas:

- Many of the town's public facilities and services are already in this location.
- The area contains existing homes and most businesses.
- The area is located at the intersection of most state and federal routes that run through town and has some available road frontage.
- The area is an existing downtown center.
- There are relatively few natural development constraints.
- The area is a natural and logical extension of an existing growth area.
- The area aligns with the Vision Statement.

The following have been identified as possible general approaches to encouraging growth in the growth area:

- Develop areas as gateways to the community, with improved entry signs.
- Promote and encourage the redevelopment of the Commerce Center (the former Carleton Mill) along with other underutilized larger buildings in town.
- Consider unique zoning techniques, such as allowing Planned Development Districts or zoning overlays in specific areas.
- Consider reducing the minimum lot size in designated growth areas served by public sewer.
- Promote a range of compatible, mixed uses in the Village District , including high-density residential uses; village-scale commercial uses such as businesses, offices, and retail; community facilities such as governmental uses and quasi-governmental facilities.
- Consider reducing the minimum lot size in the areas adjacent to the Village District. All areas that are served by public sewer should be considered the growth zone with an overlay to that zone of reduced lot size dimensions and road frontage. These areas are already served by public water and sewer and are adjacent to our town services.
- Consideration should be given to rezoning portions of the Rural District that are surrounded by the General Residential District, as the town has grown up to the boundaries of the current General Residential District and there is a need for expansion.

The following have been identified as possible general approaches to discouraging growth outside the designated growth area:

- Consider developing and creating an Open Space Plan.
- Coordinate efforts to implement conservation projects and seek out land conservation opportunities.
- Incorporate future potential for agriculture and forestry into the town's economic development planning and strategies.

- Continue to promote enrollment in current-use agricultural and tree growth tax programs.
- Work with the Planning Board, Town Council, and developers in appropriately locating infrastructure improvements and other types of development that promote growth away from rural areas.
- Continue to avoid sprawl development while identifying locations for small-scale commercial development in the designated growth areas.
- Promote Cluster Subdivisions where feasible.
- Support town practices and regulations that encourage or provide incentives for the protection of sensitive natural resources and the continued use of land for farming and forestry, and as open space.
- Implement rules within the Zoning Ordinance to take into consideration the potential location of a manufactured house park to help meet the need for affordable housing.

The following are suggested non-regulatory measures to encourage development in the designated growth areas that do not require changes to the town's Land Use Ordinances:

- Invest in growth areas with infrastructure and improvements.
- Create an inviting environment in the designated growth areas that is attractive to development.
- Support expansion of public water and sewer where feasible to support designated growth areas.
- Consider proximity of growth areas to parks.
- Improve and create sidewalks to promote walkability in village areas.
- Continue to market available land and buildings.
- Improve access to back lots.
- Improve parking provisions.
- Pursue downtown development improvements.
- Make façade improvements.
- Encourage outdoor recreation and community-based recreation in growth areas to attract and retain development.
- Encourage the development of affordable housing and workforce housing in designated growth areas.

### **Land Use Regulation and Monitoring:**

As detailed in the Existing Land Use chapter, Winthrop has a Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map in place, both of which establish standards for land use and development in specific locations within town. The town reviews and updates its Zoning Ordinance periodically, although both the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map will need to be reviewed and updated at the completion of this Plan to guarantee its currency, enforceability and consistency with State rules and new legislation. The review and revision of the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map will ensure they match existing conditions and changes, and that they provide clarity. The Zoning Ordinance includes provisions to meet the requirements of the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act, includes

phosphorus control measures, regulates stormwater management, establishes permit and site plan review requirements, and addresses other aspects related to land use and development.

Winthrop also has a Subdivision Ordinance that was last revised in 1995. This Ordinance includes application procedures, subdivision plan requirements, standards for erosion and phosphorus control, open space, subdivision roads, and more. However, due to the age of this Ordinance, it needs to be rewritten to reflect the latest language, standards, and state legislation.

The town also has a separate Floodplain Management Ordinance, as mandated by the State.

Winthrop employs a full time, fully certified Code Enforcement Officer and has a Planning Board consisting of seven volunteer members and two volunteer alternate members who are actively involved in the community. Additionally, a Town Planner has been hired. This new position will give the town's government the wherewithal to review and update land-use ordinances without having to contract for outside expertise. Also, the Town has hired an Executive Assistant to assist the Planner and Code Enforcement Officer with administrative matters.

The town should work toward consistently tracking and fully utilizing the newly implemented permit tracking software, iWorQ. Growth and development should be monitored on at least an annual basis. If it becomes apparent that growth is occurring beyond expected levels or does not align with the community's vision, this should trigger an appropriate response. The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), in conjunction with the Executive Assistant, are instrumental in implementing and using this tracking system, as the CEO already keeps records of permits issued and subdivisions. The following methods are recommended:

- The CEO will continue to utilize a permit tracking system to identify the location, by district, of new housing and commercial buildings. Conversions from seasonal lake camps to year-round residences should also be tracked.
- The CEO will prepare a written report for the 2023 calendar year, and on an annual basis, thereafter, containing the data from the permit tracking history. The report will be presented to the Planning Board and Town Council for review and discussion.
- The Planning Board and town officials should mandate a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance scheduled at regular intervals, such as every two years, to ensure it reflects the town's changing needs. These reviews should be in conjunction with the annual town budget process.

The effectiveness of land use planning is typically not vastly different across town lines. Therefore, this plan recommends the town make efforts (at least once per year) to meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land-use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.

## **Comprehensive Plan Implementation:**

Winthrop's Town Council should consider an approach to implement and monitor the progress of the Comprehensive Plan. One option is creating and appointing a standing Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee that will work in coordination with the Town Council. The Town Council and the Town Manager should meet biannually with the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to review the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate implementation and progress.

As the committee works toward implementation of the Strategies identified in this Comprehensive Plan, implementation progress should be reviewed in the following specific categories:

- The degree to which the Future Land Use plan strategies have been implemented,
- The percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas,
- The location and amount of new development in relation to the community's designated growth areas, rural areas, and transition areas (if applicable),
- The amount of critical natural resources, critical rural, and critical waterfront areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

If the evaluation concludes that portions of the current plan and/or its implementation are not effective, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee could propose changes. To ensure adequate communication, progress, and focus, the Town Council, Town Manager, and Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee should meet and review the Plan regularly.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>Land Use Plan:</b>  Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance manages growth and sprawl by clearly setting parameters for allowable land uses in each zoning district. By providing zoning districts with different minimum lot sizes, different land uses, and varying density standards, Winthrop is providing residents, potential residents, and businesses with options that best fit their needs.</p> <p>Winthrop’s designated growth area, as proposed by the Future Land Use Plan, will be expanded slightly, and will become the newly created Growth District, for ease of delineation. The proposed expansion is shown on the <i>Future Land Use Map</i> in the appendix of this plan.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting Winthrop’s rural character, thus the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.</b></p> <p>Managing land use also protects natural resources, of which Winthrop has many. The policies and strategies of managing the town’s future land use are partially in the Existing Land Use Chapter and Future Land Use Plan, but presented here in detail:</p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To coordinate the community’s land-use strategies with other local and regional land-use planning efforts.</p>	<p>1.1 Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board, or municipal official.</p> <p>1.2 Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land-use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>2. To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.</p>	<p>2.1 Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development.</li> <li>b. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas, as well as conducting regularly scheduled reviews of those procedures at predetermined intervals.</li> <li>c. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources.</li> <li>d. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed.</li> </ul> <p>2.2 Periodically (no sooner than every two years and no later than every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan in accordance with the Chapter 208 Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, Section 207.</p> <p>2.3: Foster, promote, and encourage recently established retail development in appropriate areas to allow for more services for residents.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Council, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.4: Investigate possible grant opportunities to extend public sewer and water lines to areas designated as growth areas.</p> <p>2.5: Use the online permitting system to create a report that will detail types of permits and locations to be presented to the Planning Board on a predetermined basis.</p> <p>2.6: Appoint a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to work with the Planning Board periodically in reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>2.7: Explore the usefulness of developing a Site Plan Review Ordinance.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, CEO, Executive Assistant. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>3. To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.</p>	<p>3.1 Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>3.2 Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Department Directors, Planning Board, Town Council. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>3.3: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other entities to improve amenities and attractions in the village area and minimize commercial vacancies.</p> <p>3.4: Consider appointing a Town Council liaison to collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>3.5: Prioritize road improvements to give preference to roads in growth areas as part of the road improvement plan. This can be accomplished, in part, by appointing a Roads Committee.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Public Works Director. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Council, Town Manager, Public Works Director, Roads Committee. Mid-term.</p>
<p>4. To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.</p>	<p>4.1 Provide the Code Enforcement Officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.</p> <p>4.2: Update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to make them both clearer and reduce barriers in permit application.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO, Town Council. Short term.</p>
<p>5. To protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.</p>	<p>5.1 Track new development in the community by type and location.</p> <p>5.2: Update and modernize existing zoning maps to comply with Shoreland Zoning mandates and incorporate local zoning changes.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Code Enforcement Officer, Executive Assistant. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Code Enforcement Officer. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>5.3: Consider reviewing and updating tax maps either annually or biannually. Make updated tax maps available to the public via the town website and paper copies in the Town Office.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Assessor. Short term.</p>
<p>6. Evaluate the existing Zoning Ordinance for areas of improvement and consider what the town wishes to accomplish with these amendments.</p>	<p>6.1: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow for different zoning techniques, such as Planned Development Districts or Zoning Overlays, to promote desired development in certain areas.</p> <p>6.2: Review lot sizes in all zoning districts to ensure they are still relevant and in keeping with the town's goals.</p> <p>6.3: Consider appropriate areas for the reduction of lot sizes, being mindful of the designated growth areas, to encourage affordable housing by reducing development costs.</p> <p>6.4: Explore the possibility of reducing minimum lot size requirements in the General Residential District, in predetermined locations, to 8,000 SF if public sewer connection is available and 20,000 SF without public sewer, provided adequate soils for suitability of septic systems.</p> <p>6.5: Consider allowing more dense development, through zoning techniques, in locations within walking distance of town amenities and the village.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Manager, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, Town Manager. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, Town Manager. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>6.6: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to streamline the permitting process for additional dwelling units and accessory dwelling units on residential lots with existing housing units on them.</p> <p>6.7: Consider revising the Zoning Ordinance to streamline the process of converting a single-family home into a multifamily home.</p> <p>6.8: Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance so they clearly define, and state which districts make up the growth areas and which make up the rural area.</p> <p>6.9: Review all town ordinances relating to land use to update definitions, technology, state standards, and Best Management Practices.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Council, Town Manager. Short term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p>
<p>7. Work with developers to increase the mixture of types of housing units.</p>	<p>7.1: Explore options for increasing the availability of right-sized housing to include housing for a variety of citizens' needs such as work force housing, senior housing, and housing for singles.</p> <p>7.2: For newly developed housing units, consider encouraging that a certain number or percentage be designated specifically for seniors.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Council, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>7.3: Promote senior housing in locations with easy access to stores, health services, and other needed services.</p> <p>7.4: Encourage the construction of additional, right-sized dwelling units to meet a variety of housing needs.</p> <p>7.5: Explore options to encourage mixed-use housing in the Village District, specifically the Commerce Center (the former Carleton Mill) and other underutilized buildings.</p> <p>7.6: Explore the possibility of participating with a regional housing authority such as Augusta Housing Authority or Lewiston Housing Authority.</p> <p>7.7: Explore options to encourage and promote the development or redevelopment of right-sized housing for single-person households.</p> <p>7.8: Continue to promote cluster development to reduce environmental impact.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
<p>8. Ensure all new amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and any other ordinances require the utmost protection of natural resources.</p>	<p>8.1: When considering lot size reductions, do not reduce lot sizes in Public Water, Resource Protection, Shoreland, and Stream Protection districts.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council, Town Manager, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>8.2: Ensure Shoreland Zoning is upheld for any new development or construction.</p> <p>8.3 Regularly review Shoreland Zoning restrictions for ongoing regulatory compliance and appropriateness.</p> <p>8.4: State law requires all properties that have septic systems in the Shoreland Zone be inspected upon transfer. A copy of these inspections should be required to be given to the town and added to the records for that property. If the system is found to be substandard, the town should work with the property owner to improve the system.</p> <p>8.5: Consider setting a maximum percentage of impervious surface or maximum percent allowable lot on all lots to protect waterbodies.</p> <p>8.6: Explore the possibility of developing an Open Space Plan.</p> <p>8.7: Ensure critical natural areas are designated as Critical Resource Areas on Zoning Maps reflecting changes made because of this plan.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Town Planner, Code Enforcement Officer. Ongoing.</p> <p>Planning Board, Town Planner, Code Enforcement Officer. Ongoing</p> <p>Code Enforcement Officer, Town Manager, Town Planner. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

## RECOMMENDATIONS CHAPTER THREE: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLANNING PROCESS

This Comprehensive Plan strongly supports programming and scheduling of capital investments as part of the town's annual budgeting and administrative process. A Capital Investment Plan provides a process for identifying public facilities, infrastructure and equipment that will require major investment over the coming years either due to growth or capital deterioration. In Winthrop, the Capital Investment Plan is more commonly known as the Capital Improvement Plan, or CIP. The CIP determines priorities, along with when each investment will be necessary and how to fund it.

### Why a CIP?

The CIP allows Winthrop to forecast upcoming major expenses with minimal surprises. Developing a CIP presents the town the opportunity to:

- Engage in a reasoned discussion about priorities.
- Prepare a pre-planned list that better enables Winthrop to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, such as grants, low interest rates and price drops.
- Forecast, plan, and mitigate property tax impacts.

### The CIP Process:

- The town determines the scope of the CIP. The CIP for this Comprehensive Plan is a condensed version of Winthrop's full CIP, which is reviewed and adjusted annually, and includes only fixed assets costing more than \$5,000 plus the paving schedule and culvert purchases. This condensed CIP sets a plan window of 10 years.
- Winthrop's annually reviewed CIP is based on an estimated asset replacement schedule. It captures capital expenses from one to 10 years but has a focus of five years due to the relative uncertainty of anything beyond that term. It includes a paving element, though the town should develop a comprehensive paving schedule that considers the maintenance needs of all the town's public roads and sidewalks.
- Items and prospective costs are identified for inclusion. In Winthrop's case, items range from repair of existing facilities (e.g., tennis courts or the police station), to acquisition of new facilities (e.g., a new Public Works garage), to acquisition of new or replacement equipment (e.g., a street sweeper, or police and fire radios). Costs are estimated and priorities are set.
- The source of funding is identified (*see below*). There may be more than one source and/or alternative sources.
- Timing and priorities are assigned. Generally, a high priority is reserved for items affecting public health or safety. Conversely, low priorities are "wish list" items. Timing can be consistent with priority, but the purpose of the plan is to balance costs over time. Thus, if too many items rely on a single funding source, they may have to be staggered. In Winthrop's case, a target date has

been set but is not limited by an ability to act sooner if funding becomes available.

- In some cases, the cost, priority, or timing of improvements are contingent on decisions that require greater scrutiny and public input.

### **Financing the CIP:**

A source of funding for each item has been identified. The less certain the item is, the more speculative the funding can be.

- Annual appropriations: While funding a major purchase in a one-time annual appropriation can be disruptive to the budget, it works for lower-priced equipment or when a continuing monetary stream can be tapped for regular needs. Such is the case for paving in Winthrop's CIP.
- Undesignated fund: In keeping with its fund balance policy, the Town maintains at least one-twelfth or 8% of the year end audited General Fund budget total in undesignated funds. Funds in excess of those required by the policy may be used for one-time capital expenditures or to address emergency or even catastrophic needs that may unexpectedly arise.
- Reserve accounts: Winthrop's use of saving funds in capital reserve accounts for a number of years to pay for capital improvements has diminished from past practice. However, the Town Council has expressed a keen interest in resurrecting that practice, including appropriating unspent funds at the end of each fiscal year into those accounts.
- Bonding/lease-purchase agreements: Winthrop has used bonding (financing an immediate purchase with the debt to be repaid over time) for its largest capital needs, such as the construction of a fire station as recommended in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The Town has also used lease-purchase agreements to finance the acquisition of equipment and vehicles, including police patrol cruisers.
- Grants: Grants are generally competitive and, therefore, not assured. A grant is acceptable for "wish list" items, but not for essentials. A grant search should be part of the annual CIP update process.
- Sale of surplus equipment: Equipment that has outlived its usefulness yet retains some value is offered for sale through a public process. Typically, the revenue that sales generate supplements the departmental budget that paid for the equipment.
- Outside contributions: In many cases, other organizations may join with the Town to contribute to a project of joint benefit. This may include other towns (such as for upgrades to emergency communications systems) or associations (such as for construction of the new athletic complex). While this source of funds may be more reliable than grants, it requires coordination with timetables outside of the Town's control. Funding for some items, such as Fire Department equipment using funds collected under the Town's Cost Recovery Ordinance, may come from fees assessed by the town, but would be limited to the rate at which fee revenue is accrued.

Financing of the CIP may come from any of a mix of sources, but the most important element is to ensure the impact on the annual Town budget is spread out over time. Under this Plan, the major impacts will come from bonding. Winthrop is fortunate in that it has smartly managed its bond financing and lease-purchasing and maintains a constant level of bonded indebtedness by replacing retired debt with new debt. Even so, the Town is looking to rebuild its reserve accounts and rely less on financing. Potential items in the planning matrix (*below*) that could be bonded include:

- A system upgrade to dispatch and emergency communications – estimated \$1.2 million. This cost will be shared with the seven other communities that rely on Winthrop for dispatching services and will certainly require bonding.
- A replacement of the library's elevator -- \$200,000. This expense will be funded with federal American Recovery Program Act (ARPA) funds.
- Acquisition of diesel fuel tanks -- \$400,000. This expense would be shared with the Winthrop Public Schools.
- Replacement of the Public Works facility – cost TBD. This expense would require bonding.
- Improvements to Norcross Point and Winthrop's neighboring public beach – cost TBD. The Town plans to seek state and federal grants for this project, each of which requires a local match.

### **Fiscal Management:**

A significant element of the public services picture is the ability of the town to finance and maintain its services. Town governments are faced with multiple challenges: ordinary population growth, sprawling new patterns of development, new technology, mandates from state and federal government, and more sophisticated demands from residents for leisure services, protection, education, and more. Coupled with a heavy reliance on property taxes, fiscal management is key to the successful delivery of all other services. Local property values were last assessed in 2007. The housing market has changed dramatically since 2007, particularly with waterfront property and even more significantly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic; out-of-staters flocked to Maine, seeking refuge from both the pandemic and urban lifestyles. In mid-2023, the Town Council began exploring the possibility of a revaluation, as the town's minimum assessment ratio turned downward to the 70 percent required by state law.

Comprehensive plans are not intended to dictate day-to-day financial decisions of local government. They are intended to identify long-term trends and needs resulting from growth and development. These needs are usually resolved by new or expanded capital facilities or an increased range of public services. These needs must be balanced with the capacity of a town to fund them.

Winthrop, despite being a service center, is primarily a residential town in terms of taxable property. Of the \$705,670,900 in taxable valuation in town in 2023, 80 percent of it comes from residential property. Nine percent comes from commercial property, with the remainder coming from industrial property, exemptions, and personal property. Tax-exempt property is relatively minor. The two summer camps (YMCA and Methodist), the American Legion Hall and post offices are the most significant examples of tax-exempt entities. Another modification to valuation is one tax increment financing (TIF) district for historic building renovation, approximating \$45,000 per year. Tax revenue, including excise taxes, equated to \$13.8 million in 2022, approximately 80 percent of overall revenues.

Total revenues for 2022 equaled \$17.3 million, and include licenses and permits (\$197,376), intergovernmental revenue (\$2 million), and charges for services (\$1.3 million) as contributors. The \$17.3 million revenue total is up about 19% from \$14.5 million in 2019. The property tax component is up by only \$155,000 (2 percent) since 2019. Overall total taxable value has increased by \$6 million (1 percent) during that time.

As illustrated in Table 1, municipal expenditures track fairly closely with revenues. Public education costs account for nearly 50 percent of total expenditure.

**TABLE 1: REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE HISTORY, 2019-2022**

Cultural & Recreation	360,862	391,482	392,772	445,951
Public assistance	20,848	31,256	27,433	7,619
Intergovt. assessment	725,834	736,749	807,889	801,969
Unclassified	-	5,000	10,000	-
Capital purchase transfer	223,611	537,800	-	68,472
Debt service	457,333	880,610	715,165	1,137,743
	7,092,149	7,946,089	7,532,329	8,405,688
<b>Other financing sources (uses)</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Transfer from other fund	9,986	18,074	75,000	307,993
Transfer to school ops	(6,579,352)	(7,753,931)	(7,053,706)	(7,043,681)
Transfer to other funds	(233,384)	(469,710)	(1,127,103)	(1,160,993)
	(6,802,750)	(8,205,567)	(8,105,809)	(7,896,681)
Net change in fund balance	621,554	(213,300)	882,525	1,007,866

Source: Town of Winthrop

**Winthrop Capital Investment Planning Matrix (Preliminary):**

The table below provides a suggested approach to the CIP based on recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The formal Capital Improvements Plan is established and revised annually by the Town Council.

**TOP CAPITAL NEEDS SUMMARY - 10-YEAR HORIZON, OVER \$100,000:**

Department	Project / Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement	Estimated Cost New	Primary \$ Source
Public Works	Public Works facility	M	2034	TBD	Bond
Public Works	Street sweeper	M	2031	250,000	Lease-finance
Public Works	Trailers (4)	M	2032	490,000	Lease-finance
Public Works	Plow trucks (2)	M	2032	350,000	Lease-finance
Public Works	Excavator	M	2032	125,000	Lease-finance
Public Works	Loader	M	2030	300,000	Lease-finance
Public Works	Sand/salt shed	M	2030	300,000	Lease-finance
Public Works	Paving	H	2034	500K/yr	Annual appropriation
Public Works	Transfer Station scales	M	2030	250,000	Annual appropriation
Police	Dispatch / communications upgrade	H	2028	1.2M	Bond
Library	Elevator	H	2024	200,000	ARPA
Ambulance	Ambulance re-chassis (4)	H	2032	1.8M	Lease-finance
Ambulance	Car garage	L	2032	150,000	Lease-finance
Fire Department	Ladder truck	H	2034	2.1M	Lease-finance
Fire Department	Fire engine	H	2032	625,000	Lease-finance
Administration	Norcross Point improvements	M	2034	TBD	Grants & appropriation

**Priority Level:**

L= Low

M= Medium

H= High

## RECOMMENDATIONS CHAPTER FOUR: REGIONAL COORDINATION

As part of the western Kennebec service area (Augusta and Lewiston are the main Service Centers), Winthrop can play an ongoing role in bringing together communities for the purpose of enhancing economic development, providing important health services and emergency medical services, ensuring affordable housing opportunities, managing government resources, and protecting natural resources.

In addition, Winthrop participates in larger, regional organizations in which it is evident that a regional effort is more effective. Winthrop also strives to provide cost-effective public services, while promoting protection for the area's many lakes and other natural resources by collaborating with neighboring towns to achieve these goals.

### **Current regional activities include (this is not an exhaustive list):**

- Mutual aid with neighboring municipalities for recreation, and fire and rescue services.
- Dispatch and ambulance services provided to seven neighboring communities plus Winthrop.
- As of July 2023, Winthrop shares a police chief with Monmouth. He manages both police departments, which remain separate entities. There have been preliminary discussions about the two towns possibly sharing other staff, as well, in the future.
- Winthrop is actively involved with multi-town, regional watershed organizations and groups for the waterbodies in town.
- Winthrop's municipal government is a member of the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce.
- The Town is also a member of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG).

### **Public Services:**

- **Communications Center:** The Winthrop Communications Center provides emergency and public safety communications for Winthrop, Monmouth, Manchester, Readfield, Wayne, Mount Vernon, Vienna and Fayette and their fire departments in western Kennebec County. Additionally, the Winthrop Communications Center provides dispatching for the Monmouth Police Department. The center is tied into the Androscoggin County Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP).
- **Emergency Medical Services:** The Winthrop Ambulance Service provides four active ambulances staffed with a Paramedic and an Emergency Medical Technician that provide 24/7 response to Winthrop, Monmouth, Manchester, Readfield, Wayne, Mount Vernon, Vienna, and Fayette.
- **Maranacook Outlet Dam:** Under an interlocal agreement, Winthrop and Readfield share in the ownership, maintenance, and operational costs of this dam. Winthrop pays 46.7% of the costs associated with the dam; Readfield pays the balance.

- Health Center: Located in the Winthrop Commerce Center, MaineGeneral Health (MaineGen). MaineGen provides a range of health-care services for numerous area towns, people of all ages, and in a variety of care settings. MaineGen’s focus on Winthrop is on emergency services, lab services, radiology, diagnostic imaging, orthopaedics, outpatient rehab, and family care.
- Winthrop Utilities District: The district provides drinking water to Monmouth and Winthrop. The district contracts for operations services with the Monmouth Water Association, Monmouth Sanitary District, and Readfield Corner Water Association. The Winthrop Utilities District works with other districts and state agencies to ensure that water-quality standards and sewer rules are enforced districtwide. The district is a member of the “trunkline group,” which administers the Winthrop-Monmouth-Manchester sewer collector system, delivered into the treatment plant for the Greater Augusta Utilities District.
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection: The town participates in an annual collection event with other towns in the Augusta region.
- Winthrop Public Schools: Winthrop’s public schools collaborate with several towns to offer services and provide opportunities for youths and adults alike. For fiscal year 2024, Winthrop Public Schools, Maine School Administrative District No. 11 (MSAD 11) and Regional School Unit No. 2 (RSU 2) entered into an interlocal agreement to work cooperatively to consolidate the adult and community education programs by establishing the Kennebec Neighbors Adult Education program. For youths, Winthrop Public Schools partners with other schools to provide programs for high school-level athletic competitions. These include:
  - Football - RSU 2 (Monmouth Academy and Hall-Dale Middle & High School)
  - Girls’ soccer - Monmouth Academy
  - Girls’ hockey - Saint Dominic Academy
  - Nordic and Alpine Skiing - Maranacook Community High School
  - Boys’ hockey - Cony High School
  - Lacrosse - Maranacook Community High School
  - Winter track - Saint Dominic Academy
  - Competitive cheerleading - Monmouth Academy

**Natural Resource Protection and Management:**

- Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD): Existing since 1973, the CWD is a nine-town collaboration described as a lake management district. CWD maintains a broad portfolio of watershed activities, including education, erosion control, invasive plant mitigation, development review, technical assistance, and planning.
- Kennebec Land Trust (KLT): The KLT is a non-profit organization dedicated to acquiring property through purchase or easements in support of conservation. The town cooperated with the KLT in acquiring the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area. The land trust engages in other conservation activities in Winthrop.
- Winthrop Conservation Commission: The Conservation Commission has indicated an interest in seeking grant funding for the specific purpose of developing an open space plan for Winthrop.

### **Future Regional Endeavors:**

- Work toward becoming involved with the Augusta Housing Authority.
- Consider partnering with the Town of Manchester on a Community Resilience Partnership grant.

For this comprehensive plan, several of the recommendations contain a regional component. The following is an incomplete listing of those strategies:

### **Local Economy**

- Policy 1. To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.
- Strategy 1.1: If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).
- Policy 3. To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.
- Strategy 3.1: Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.
- Strategy 4.6: Engage Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce in creating a regional, five- to 10-year marketing plan.
- Strategy 4.7: Explore opportunities and possibilities to fund the effort of creating the regional marketing plan.
- Strategy 6.5: Energize the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce to promote small businesses and work toward improvements.

### **Housing**

- Policy 1. Encourage and promote adequate affordable and workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- Strategy 2.1: Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- Policy 3. Encourage and support the efforts of regional housing coalitions or groups with similar purposes in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- Strategy 3.2: Investigate options for and pursue any opportunities to establish relationships with a regional nonprofit housing developer or coalition with neighboring communities to provide more real estate options, collaborative planning and budgeting.
- Strategy 3.4: Continue to market Winthrop as a hub to surrounding, rural communities in providing leadership in working with non-profit housing developers and existing coalitions in addressing affordable housing.
- Strategy 3.5: Explore options in encouraging workforce housing to support community and regional economic development.

## **Public Facilities and Services**

- Strategy 2.3: Explore options for regional delivery of local services.
- Policy 5. Seek increased opportunities for regional cooperation with neighboring towns.
- Strategy 5.1: Follow-up on recommendations of regionalization studies.
- Strategy 5.2: Establish a protocol to look at opportunities for equipment sharing, including purchases of new equipment.
- Strategy 5.3: Engage neighboring towns in planning for disaster mitigation.
- Strategy 5.4: Continue contacts and discussions with neighboring towns and regional entities on new ways to provide more efficient services.
- Strategy 7.1: Construct a sand-salt storage building on a suitable site or investigate alternatives for regional cooperation.
- Policy 9. Work with the Augusta Utility District and Winthrop Utility District on future plans.

## **Transportation**

- Policy 1: To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
- Strategy 2.1: Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.
- Strategy 4.4: Explore the possibility of designating a pickup/drop off area for individuals who work in either Lewiston or Augusta to promote public transportation for carpooling or vanpooling.
- Strategy 4.5: Continue to work toward the re-installation of a Greyhound bus stop in the downtown area by exploring potential roadblocks.
- Strategy 4.6: Explore the possibility of adding a train stop in Winthrop by contacting the railways and discussing their requirements.

## **Recreation**

- Strategy 1.3: Investigate the possibility of coordinating with neighboring towns in the development of a shared community building to serve all ages.
- Strategy 2.1: Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.

## **Agriculture and Forestry**

- Strategy 2.3: Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.
- Strategy 3.1: Explore options to engage farmers and schools to start an FFA chapter and agricultural education program centered around internships with local farms.

## **Natural Resources**

- Policy 2. To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.
- Strategy 2.1: Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.
- Strategy 2.4: Cooperate with the state, relevant organizations, and other communities to protect lakes and lands from invasive species.
- Strategy 2.5: Maintain membership in the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) and Kennebec Land Trust (KLT), and continue to work with other organizations devoted to protection of natural resources in Winthrop.
- Strategy 5.8: Continue to work with the Cobbossee Watershed District to control phosphorus loading of lakes.
- Policy 7. To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.
- Strategy 7.1: Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.

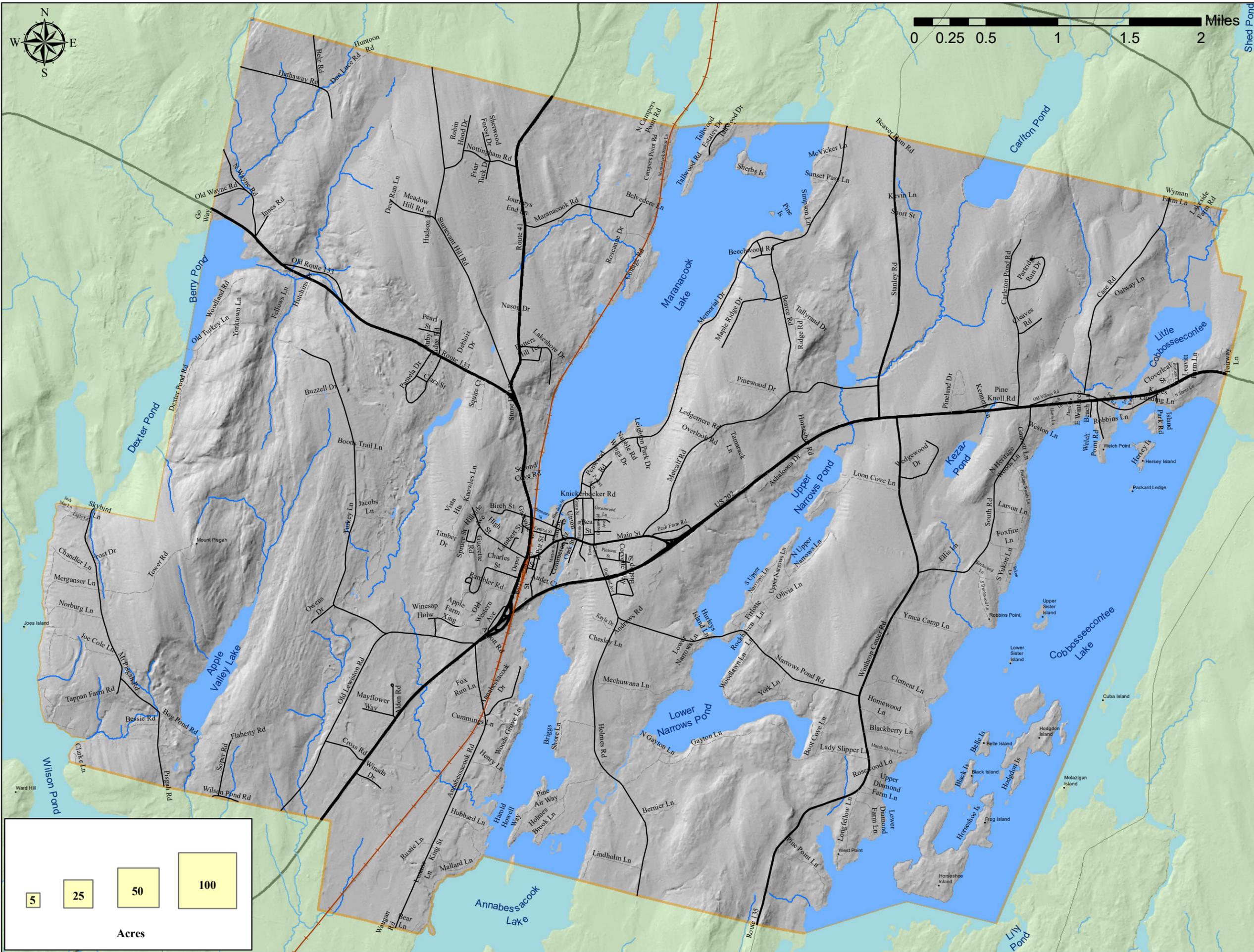
## **Future Land Use Plan**

- Policy 1. To coordinate the community's land-use strategies with other local and regional land-use planning efforts.
- Strategy 1.2 Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land-use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
- Strategy 7.6: Explore the possibility of participating with a regional housing authority such as Augusta Housing Authority or Lewiston Housing Authority.

## APPENDICES

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# Winthrop Comprehensive Plan 2023 General Planning Map

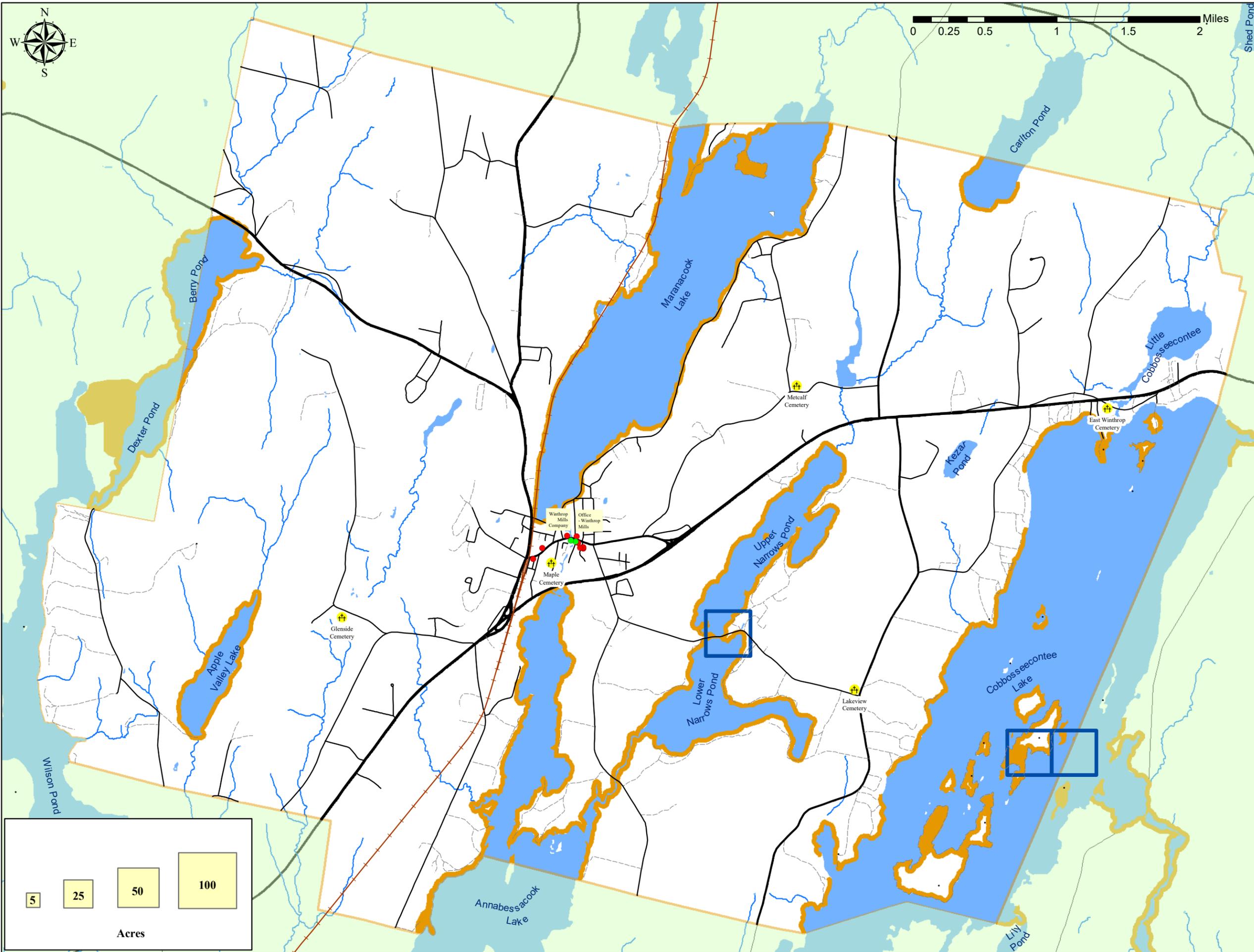


### Legend

	State Highway		Railroad
	State Aid		Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
	Local		Streams
	Private		

Neither KVCOG nor the Town of Winthrop assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observation. Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 06-2023 by JG

**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**Historic and Archeological Resources Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**



**Legend**

**Roads**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private
- Railroad

**Lakes, Ponds & Rivers**

- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Streams

**Cemeteries**

- Cemeteries

**Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites**

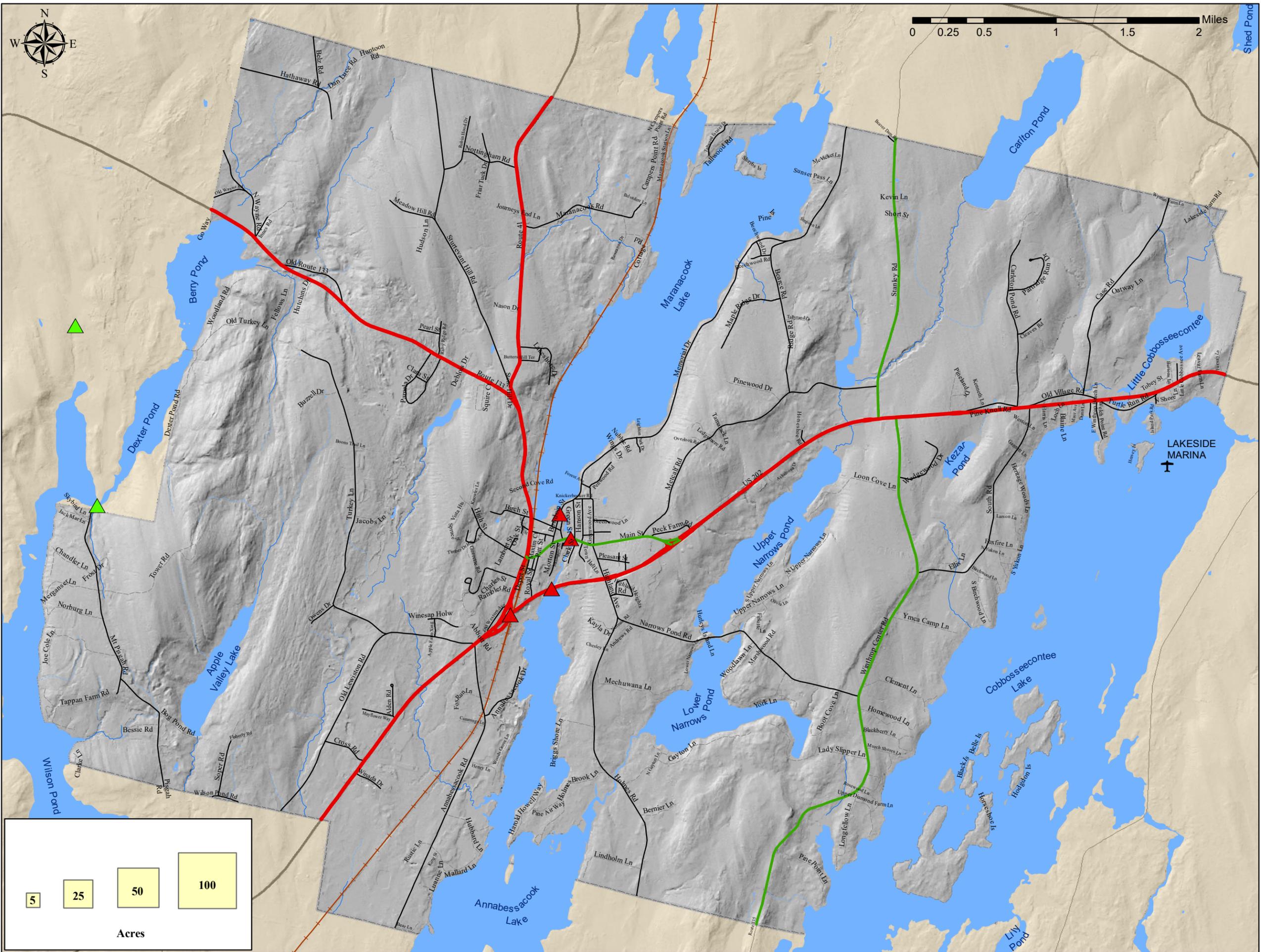
- Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

**Historic Properties**

- LISTED
- ELIGIBLE

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**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**General Transportation**  
**Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**Roads**

**Jurisdiction**

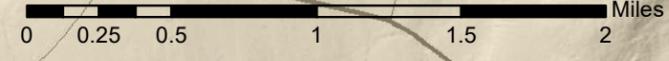
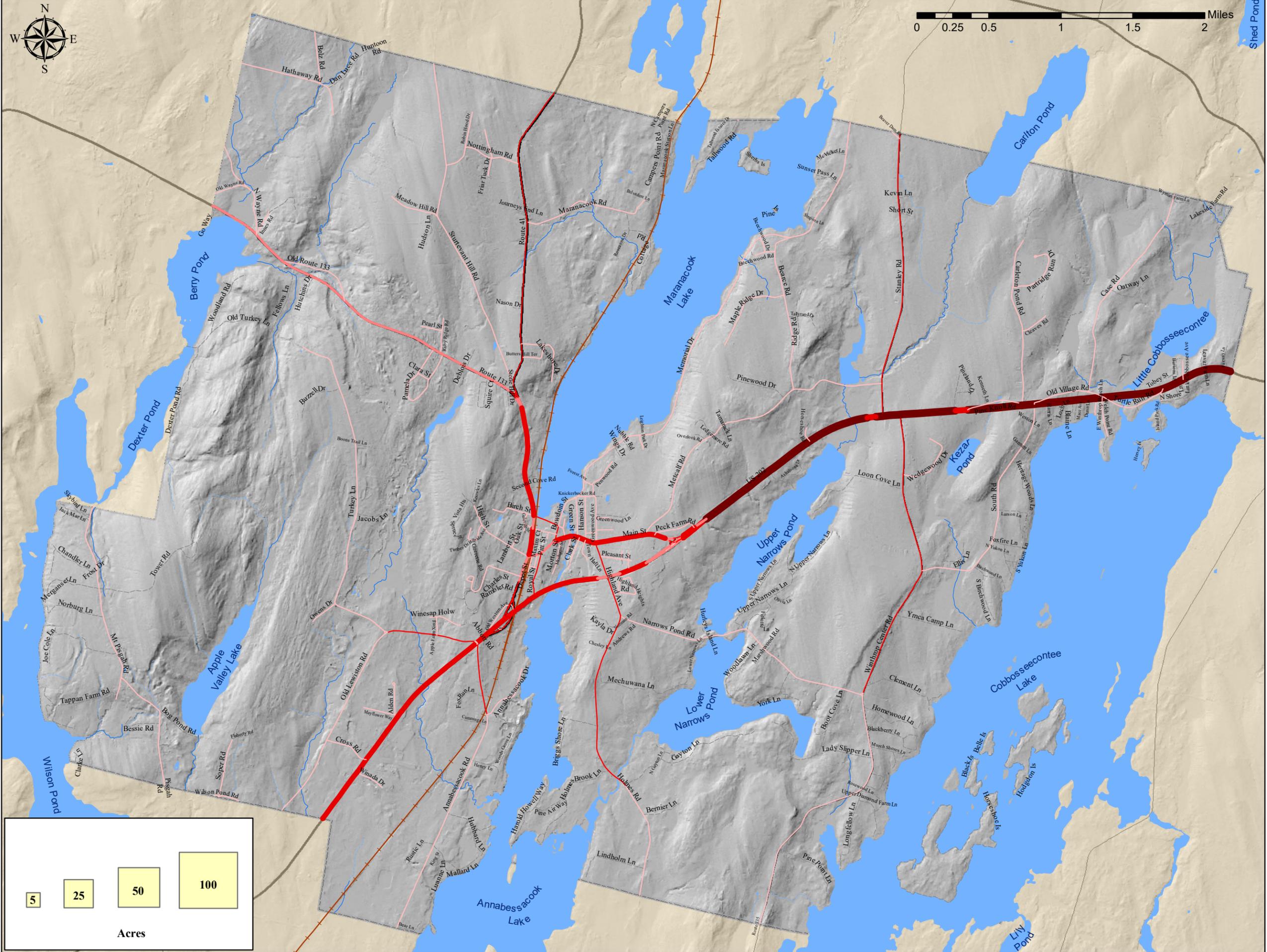
- State Highway
- State Aid
- Roads
- - - Private Roads
- +— Railroad

**Bridges by Maintainer**

- ▲ Municipal (with Wayne)
- ▲ State
- ✈ Airports
- ☾ Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Perennial Streams
- - - Intermittent Streams

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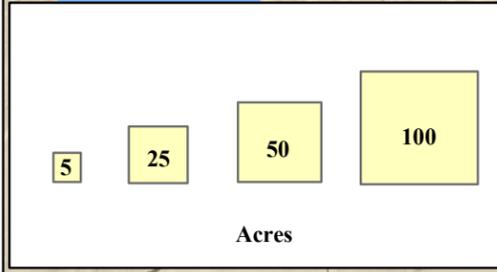


**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**AADT Transportation**  
**Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**Annual Average Dail Traffic**

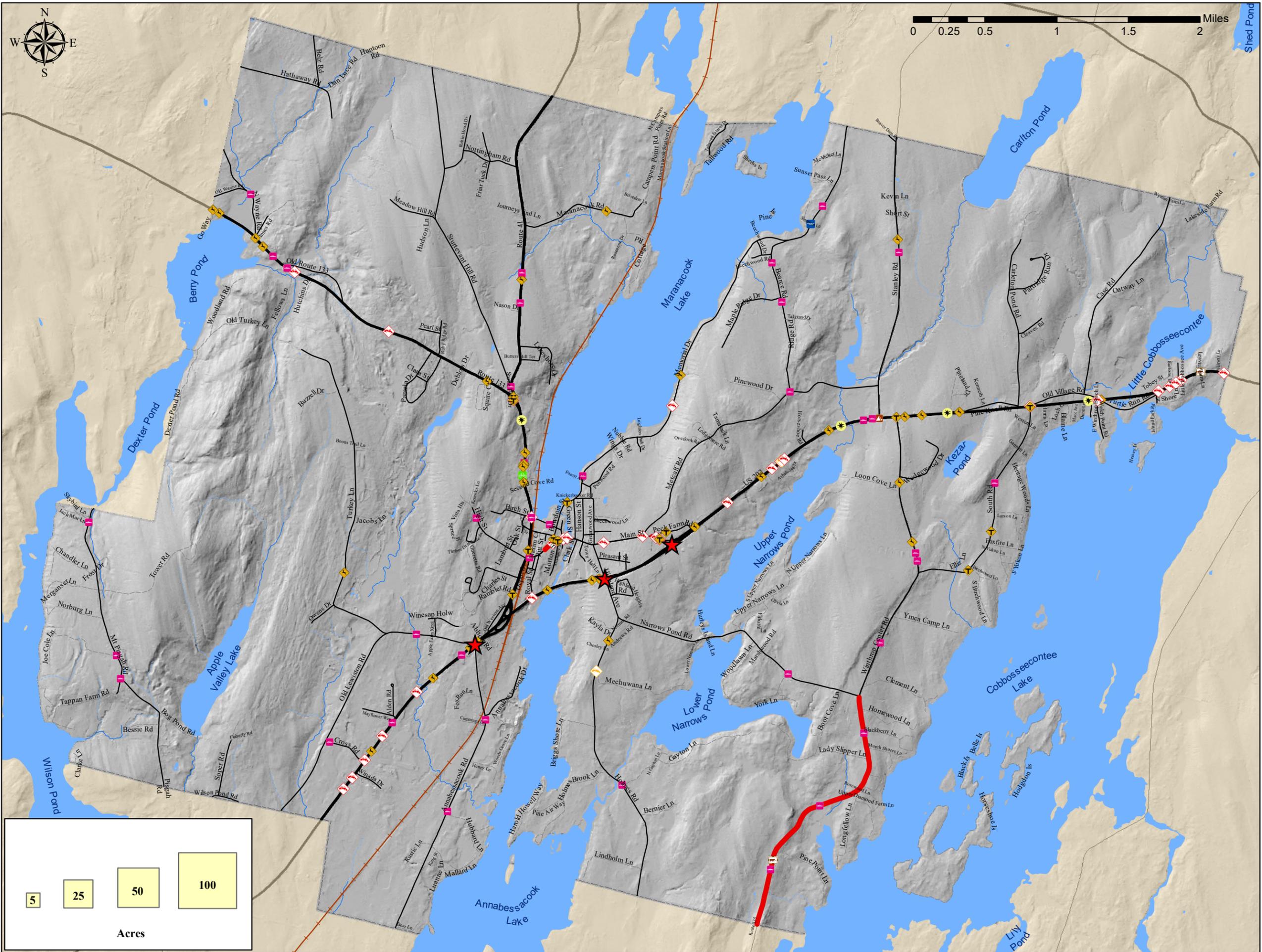
- 10 - 1000
- 1001 - 3500
- 3501 - 7000
- 7001 - 12000
- 12001 - 16844
- Private Roads
- Railroad
- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Perennial Streams
- Intermittent Streams



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**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**Crashes Transportation**  
**Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**



**Legend**

**Jurisdiction**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Roads
- Private Roads
- Railroad
- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Perennial Streams
- Intermittent Streams

**High Crash Location - Nodes**

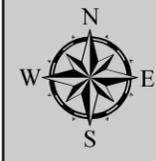
- High Crash Location - Nodes (Red Star)
- High Crash Locations - Segment (Red Line)

**2022 Crashes by Type**

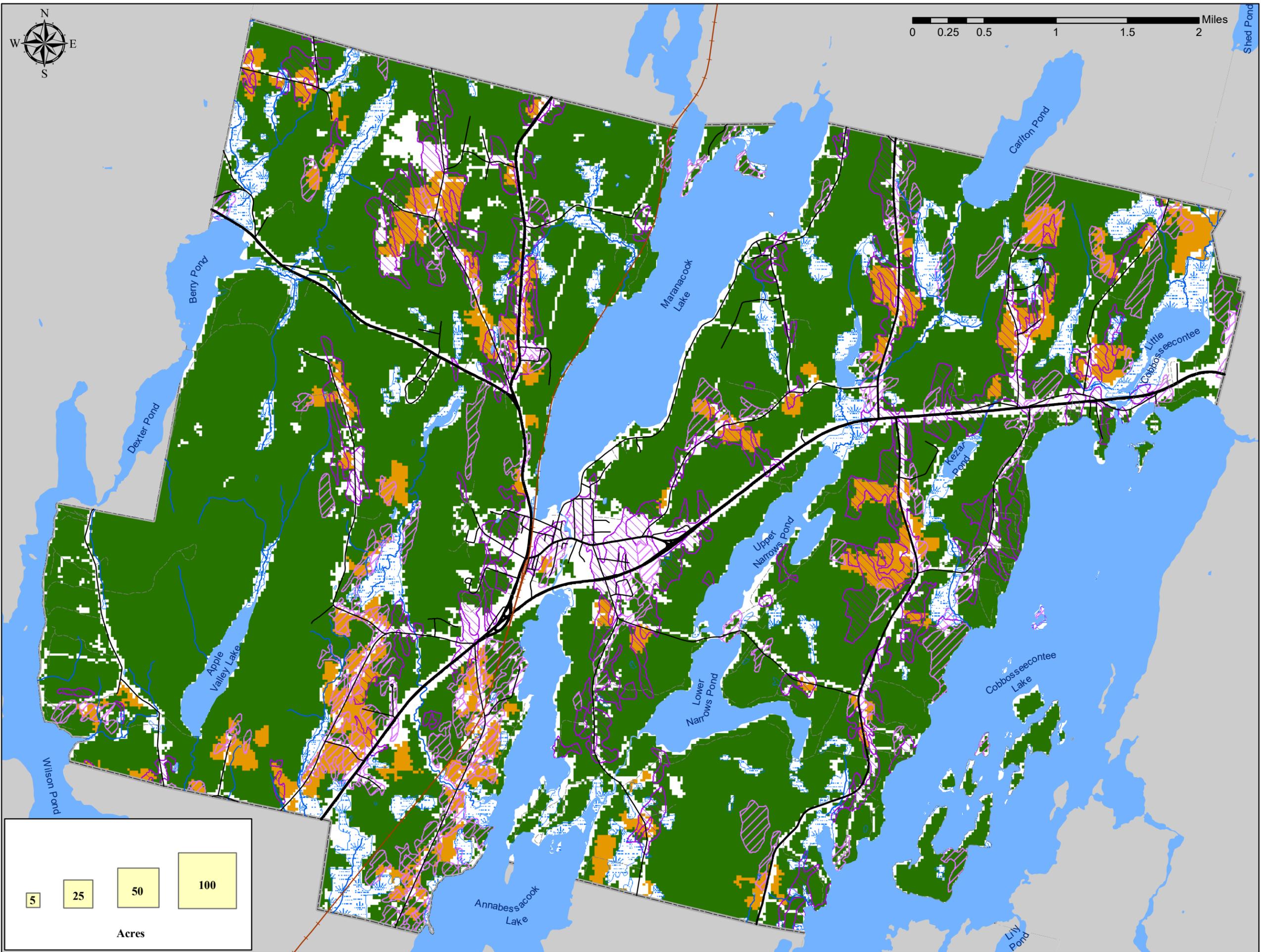
- Went Off Road (Pink Square)
- Deer (Yellow Diamond)
- Rear End / Sideswipe (Red Diamond)
- Intersection Movement (Yellow Diamond with Arrow)
- Other (Yellow Star)
- Head-on / Sideswipe (Yellow Diamond with Arrow)
- All Other Animal (Brown Square)
- Object in Road (Red Triangle)
- Bicycle (Green Square)
- Rollover (Blue Square)

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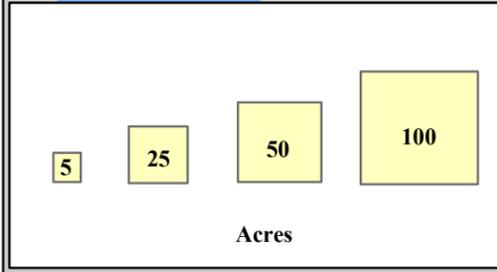


**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**Agriculture and Forestry Resources Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**



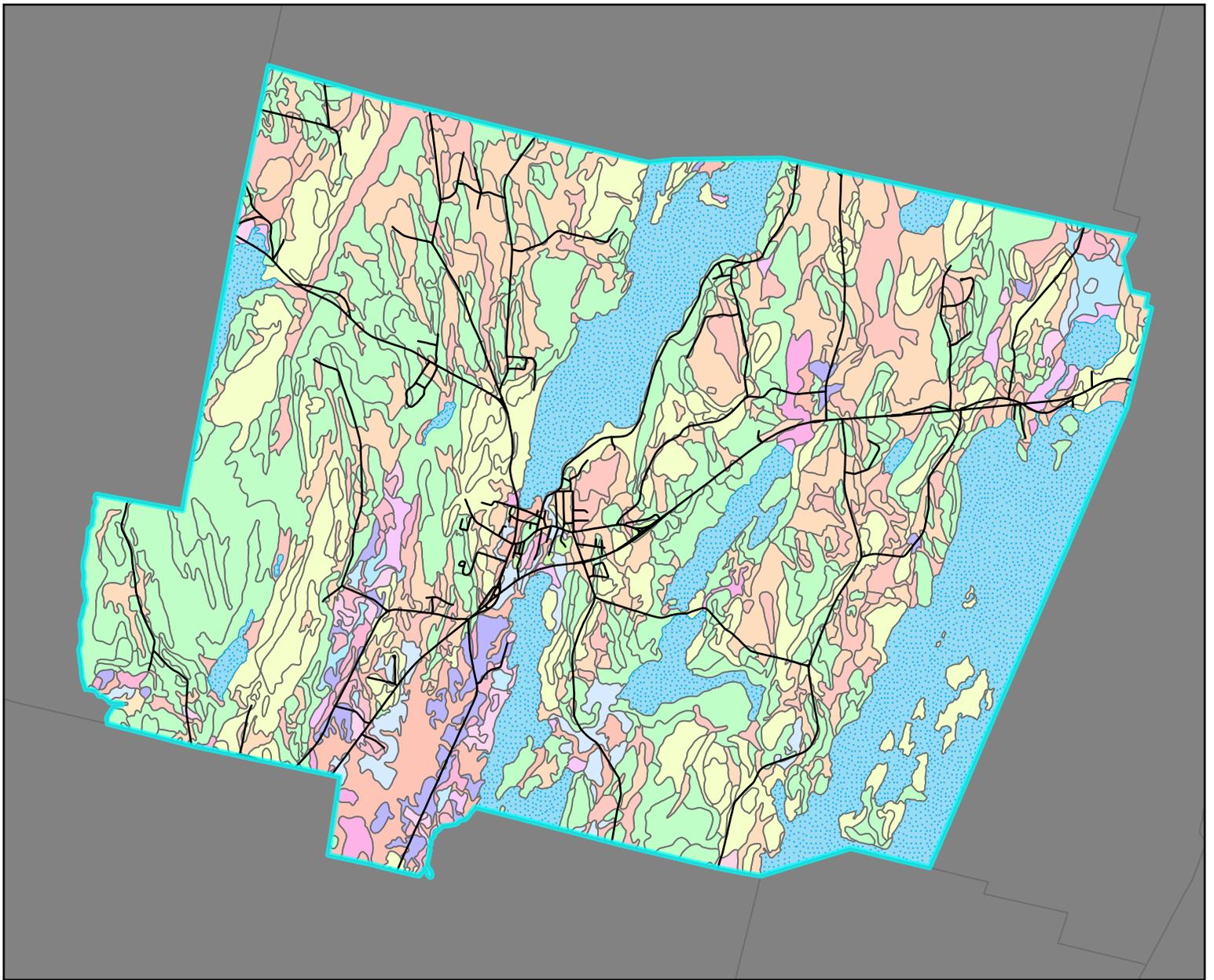
**Legend**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Streams
- Wetlands
- All areas are prime farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Cultivated Crops, Pasture, and Hay Land
- Forestland
- Open/Other Land



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### Legend

#### Winthrop Soil Types

ADAMS	CUT AND FILL LAND	LIMERICK	RIDGEBURY	WALPOLE
AGAWAM	DEERFIELD	LYMAN	ROCK LAND-HOLLIS	WATER BODIES
BELGRADE	DUNE LAND	MADE LAND	SACO	WHATELY
BERKSHIRE	ELMWOOD	MELROSE	SCANTIC	WHITMAN
BIDDEFORD	HADLEY	NINIGRET	SCARBORO	WINDSOR
BUXTON	HARTLAND	PAXTON	SUFFIELD	WINOOSKI
CHARLTON	HINCKLEY	PEAT AND MUCK	SUTTON	WOODBRIDGE
	HOLLIS	PERU	SCIO	<all other values>
	LEICESTER	QUARRIES	SWANTON	

**Kennebec Valley**  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
*Regional service. Local results.*

# Winthrop Soil Types

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 02-2023 by JC

2023

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 19N

N

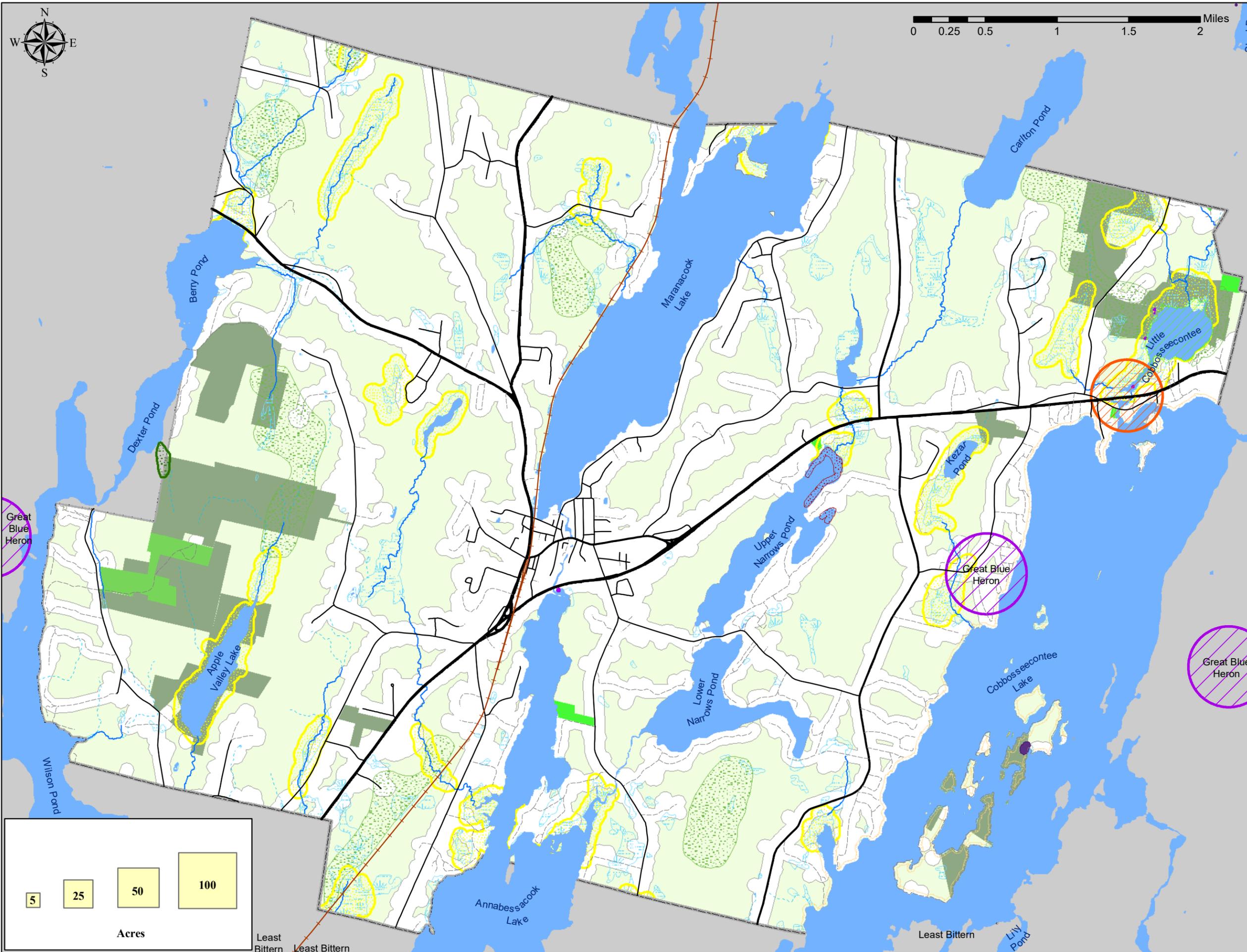
0 0.5 1 Mi  
0 1.25 2.5 Km

# Town of Winthrop

## Kennebec County, Maine

### Critical Natural Resources Map

### 2023 Comprehensive Plan



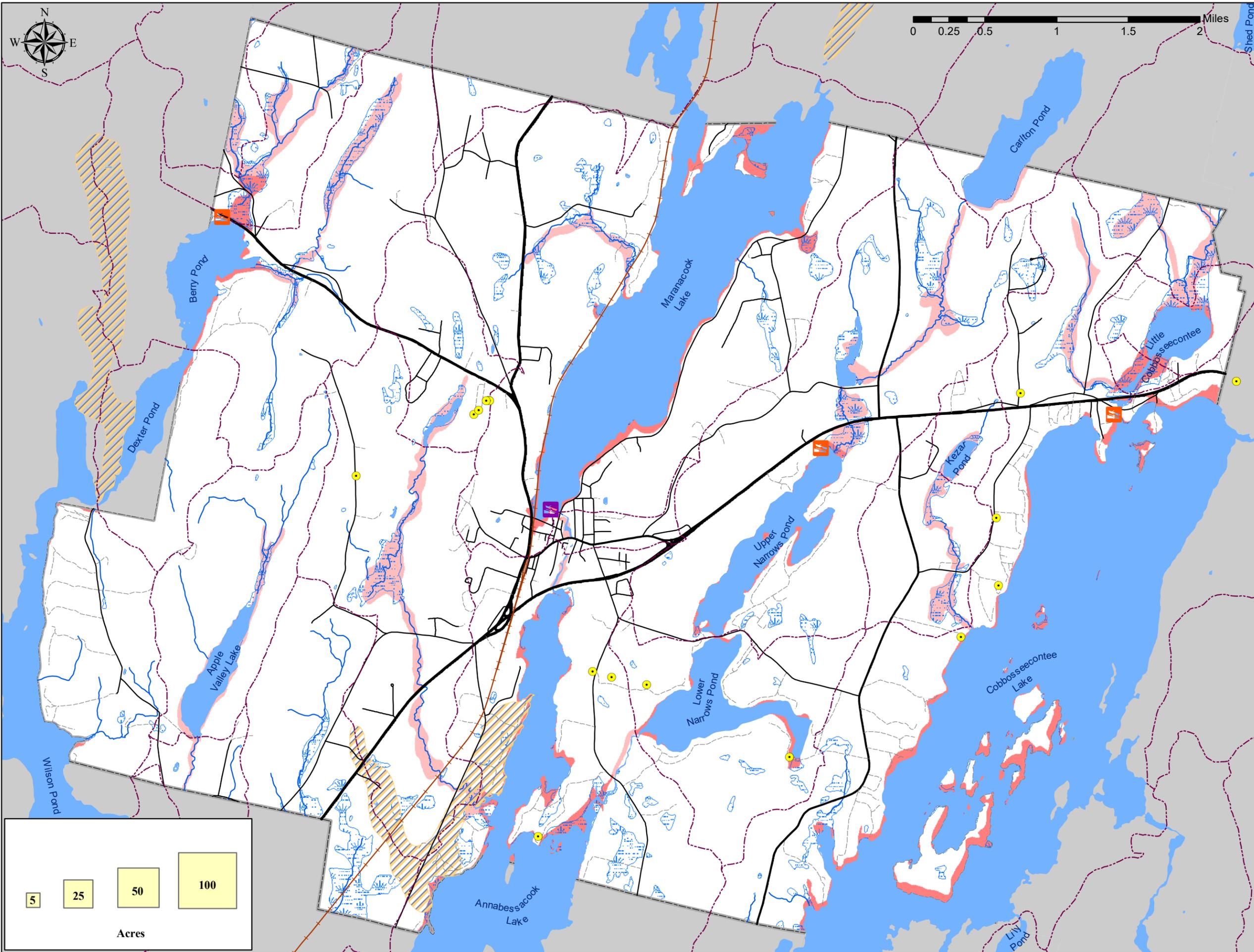
#### Legend

- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Perennial Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Wetlands
- Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat
- Brook Trout Habitat
- Deer Wintering Area
- Rare, Threatened or Endangered Plants & Animals**
- Species of Special Concern
- Rare Species (Name Withheld)
- Broad Beech Fern
- Columbia Water-meal
- Stiff Arrowhead
- Water Stargrass
- Rare and Exemplary Natural Community / Ecosystem**
- Enriched Northern Hardwoods Forest
- Conserved Land by Ownership**
- Municipal
- Private
- State
- Undeveloped Blocks

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**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**Water Resources Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**



**Legend**

- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Class B Streams
- Wetlands
- Watersheds
- Aquifer w/Flow of 10-50 gpm

**Floodzones**

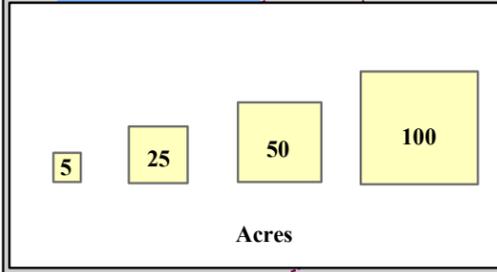
- 100 year Flood with Base Flood Elevations
- 100 year Flood with no Base Flood Elevation

**Public Water Supply Wells**

- Public Water Supply Wells

**Boat Launch by Owner**

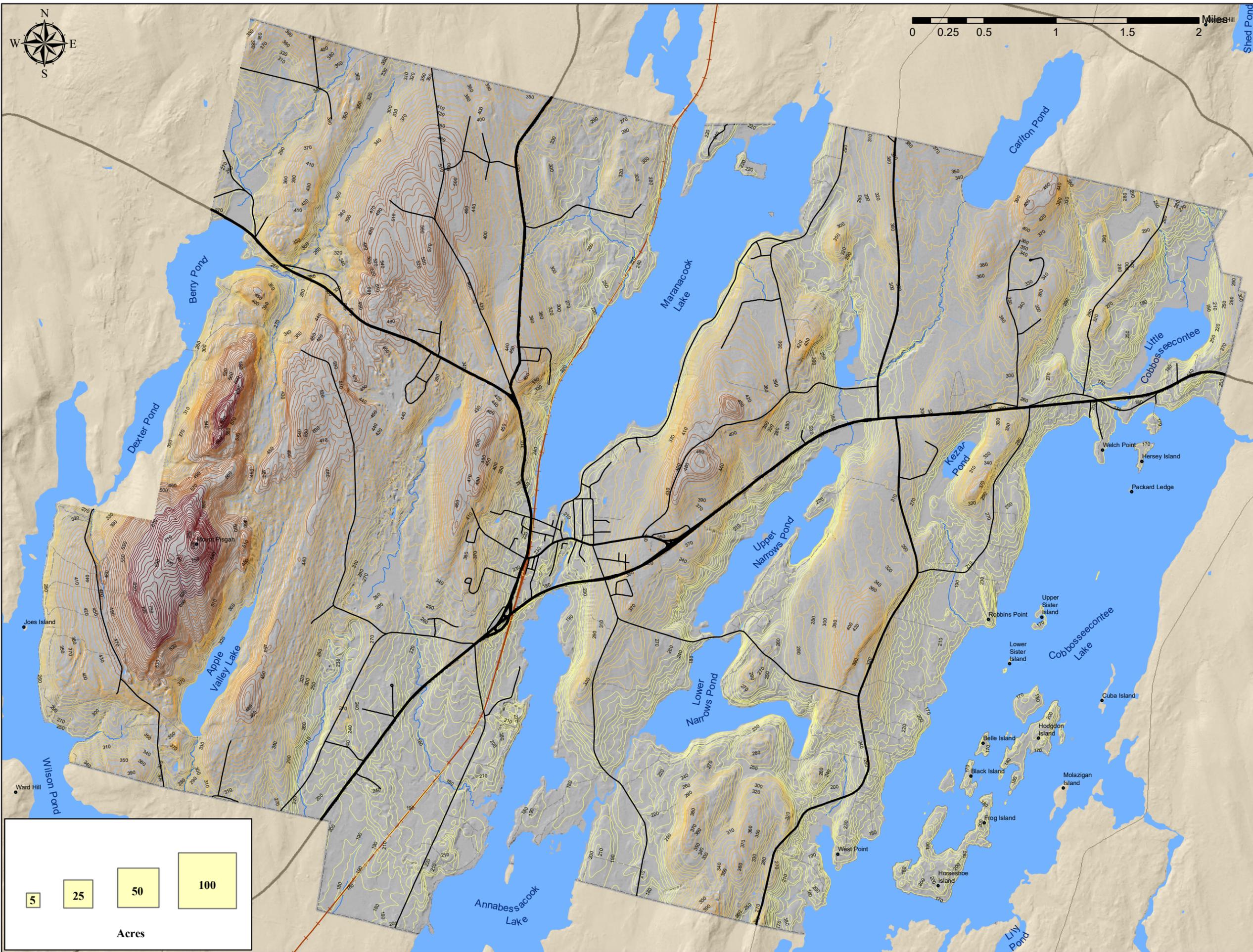
- Town
- DIFW



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**Town of Winthrop**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**Topographic Map**  
**2023 Comprehensive Plan**



**Legend**

- Roads
- Private Roads
- Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
- Perennial Streams
- Intermittent Streams

**Countours (Feet)**

- 170 - 250
- 251 - 340
- 341 - 440
- 441 - 590
- 591 - 810

**Acres**

- 5
- 25
- 50
- 100

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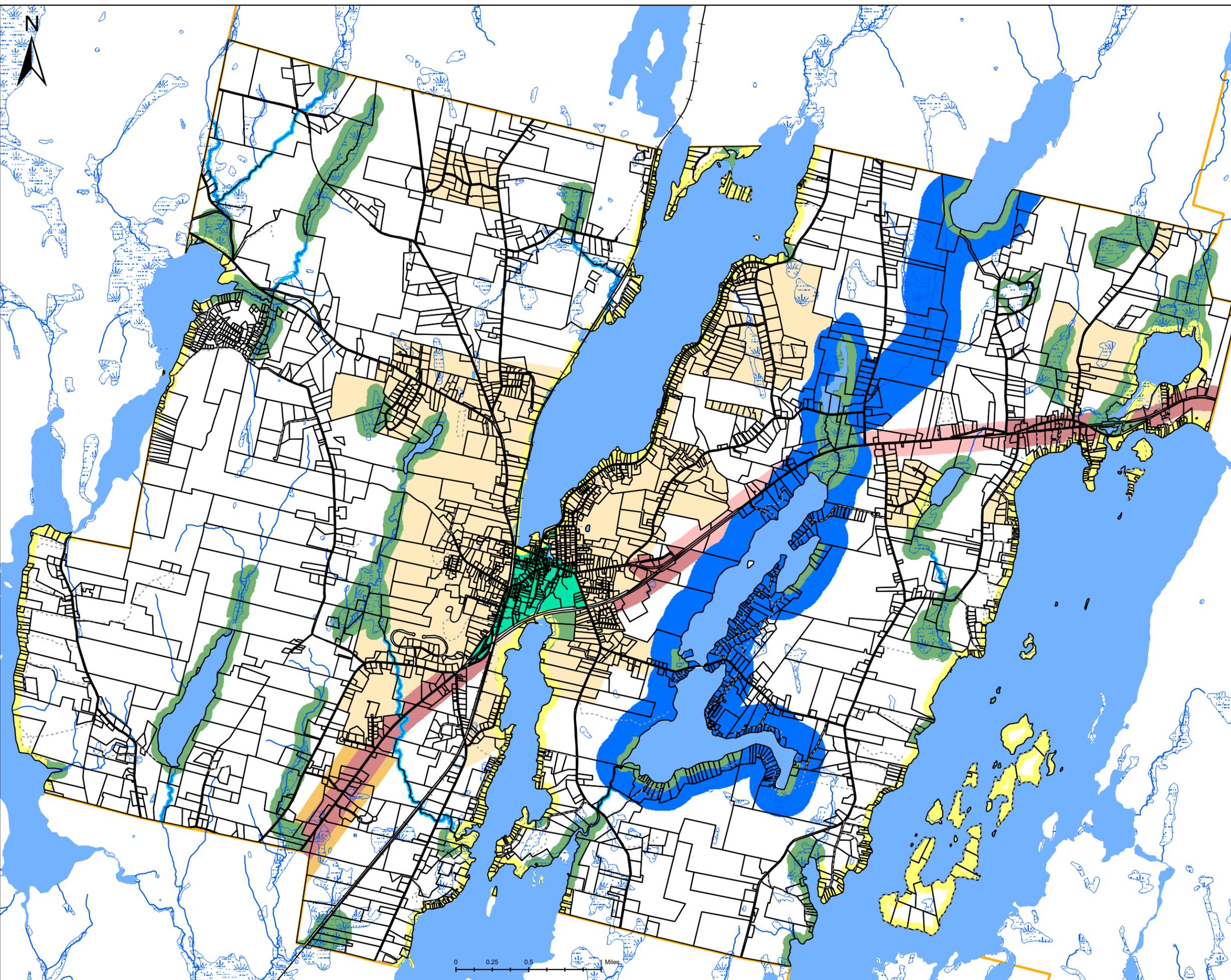
# Town of Winthrop Kennebec County, Maine

## 2023 Comprehensive Plan

### Current Land Use

- Roads
- - - Private Road
- + + Railroad
- Tax Parcels
- Waterbodies
- Streams
- Wetlands
- Zoning Districts**
- General Commercial
- Limited Commercial
- Industrial
- Village
- General Residential
- Rural
- Overlay Zoning Districts**
- Public Water Supply
- Resource Protection
- Shoreland Zone
- Stream Protection

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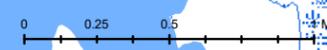
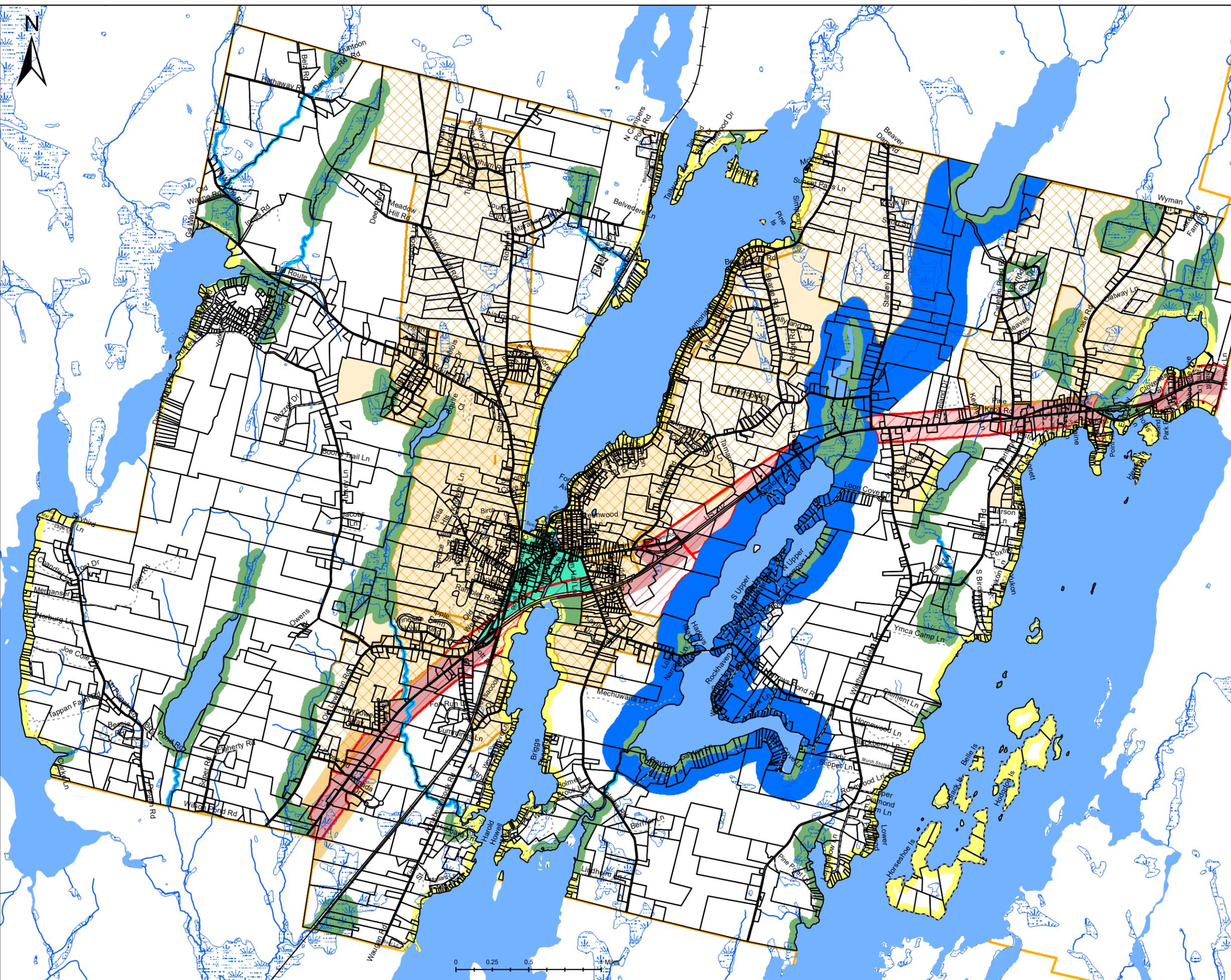
# Town of Winthrop Kennebec County, Maine

## Comprehensive Plan

### Future Land Use Map

-  Roads
-  Private Road
-  Railroad
-  Tax Parcels
-  Waterbodies
-  Streams
-  Wetlands
- Zoning Districts**
-  General Commercial
-  Limited Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Village
-  General Residential
-  Rural
- Overlay Zoning Districts**
-  Public Water Supply
-  Resource Protection
-  Shoreland Zone
-  Stream Protection
- FLU Growth Areas 2024**
-  Commercial
-  Residential

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, BwH, MDEP Updated 01-2024 by JG



## List of Acronyms

ADA = American with Disabilities Act  
ACS = American Community Survey  
BTIP = Biennial Transportation Improvement Program  
BwH = Beginning with Habitat Program (MDIFW)  
CEO = Code Enforcement Officer  
CIP = Capital Investment Plan  
CPC = Comprehensive Plan Committee  
CRF = Critical Rate Factor  
CWD = Cobbossee Watershed District  
DACF = Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
DWA = Deer Wintering Area  
DWP = Drinking Water Program  
EMT = Emergency Medical Technician  
GPA = Great Pond Standard  
HCL = High Crash Location  
KLT = Kennebec Land Trust  
LID = Low Impact Development  
LMA = Labor Market Area  
LMF = Land for Maine's Future  
KVCAP = Kennebec Valley Community Action Program  
KVCOG = Kennebec Valley Council of Governments  
MDEP = Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
MDIFW = Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
MDOL = Maine Department of Labor  
MDOT = Maine Department of Transportation  
MFT = Maine Farmland Trust  
MHPC = Maine Historical Preservation Commission  
MNAP = Maine Natural Areas Program (MDOC)  
MRSA = Maine Revised Statutes Annotated  
MSHA = Maine State Housing Authority  
MUTCD = Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices  
NRPA = Natural Resources Protection Act  
R = Rural District  
RP = Resource Protection District  
RSU = Regional School Unit  
SP = Stream Protection District  
TIF = Tax Increment Financing