

Town of Winthrop
COMMITTEE REVIEW DRAFT
Comprehensive Plan

2010 Update

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Development of the Comprehensive Plan.....	1
2	Moving Winthrop Forward.....	2
3	Profile of Winthrop’s People	6
4	Profile of Winthrop’s Economy	14
5	Profile of Winthrop’s Housing.....	25
6	Land Use and Development in Winthrop	35
7	Public Facilities and Services in Winthrop.....	44
8	Recreation Opportunities	54
9	Transportation Systems.....	62
10	Land and Water Resources	70
11	Resource Development, Farms, and Forest	85
12	Historical Resources	94
13	Regional Coordination.....	98

Map Section:

Chapter 1: Development of the Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is a process for setting forth a set of recommendations for local action to improve the community, based on information about the past and expectations for the future. A plan for a town functions in much the same way as a business plan – developing goals and strategies for controlling costs and increasing benefits. In the case of a community, of course, benefits are measured not in profit, but in the welfare of its citizens.

Winthrop has enjoyed the benefits of comprehensive planning for decades. This document is an update to the current plan, written in 1996 and itself an update to a plan written in 1986. The state law governing comprehensive planning suggests that plans be updated at least every 12 years.

Comprehensive planning is not a state mandate, but the law identifies a set of goals and guidelines for towns that do engage in planning. The goals and guidelines are intended to ensure that local plans support any necessary land use regulation and qualify for state-based grants to improve growth-related public facilities. Winthrop’s plan is written to comply with those guidelines.

The comprehensive planning process is designed to be a reflection of community attitudes and desires. Winthrop’s plan is the result of an inclusive process that began in late 2008.

[results of visioning session]

[History of committee and public participation]

[committee members]

Chapter 2: Moving Winthrop Forward

This plan contains of a set of recommendations. These are strategies for new or continuing action to move Winthrop towards our vision of a better future. Most of them are actions to be taken by local government, though there are also included suggestions for state, regional, or private sector activities to complement our actions. This chapter is a summary of those strategies.

In the previous paragraph, we alluded to our “vision.” A vision is an image of what we want our community to be like in the future. This is comparable to a Mission Statement in a business plan. Or, if you prefer, imagine it as the work of a resident of Winthrop, circa 2030, writing about how wonderful a town she lives in.

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan contains a vision statement, which is reproduced below:

Our vision is a rural community that values and protects our natural resources, provides for quality education, encourages recreational and cultural opportunities, and recognizes the need for responsible development while maintaining a strong sense of community.

Sound good? It certainly describes a nice place to live. In 2010, however, we have a little better understanding of the complex factors at work in Winthrop, and the vision for the future is a little more complex to reflect that. Some of it is borrowed from the 1996 vision, and some is a little more detailed.

The vision of Winthrop in 2030 is as follows:

- Winthrop is a small but diverse community consisting of urban and rural landscapes, young and old residents, artists and entrepreneurs, farmers and lawyers, visitors and lifelong residents;
- Winthrop has a vital downtown with a diversity of small businesses, local services, and events for people of all ages, a tourist destination as well as a center of activity for local residents;
- Winthrop has a wonderful rural landscape, with a variety of local farms, public access to open space and recreation, scenic vistas, and enough undeveloped land to preserve the quality of our lakes;
- Winthrop maintains a relatively low tax rate while providing quality public services, including first-rate education – both secondary and continuing, recreation programs for young and old, public safety, and transportation options;

- Winthrop provides economic opportunities and housing choices by managing new development and encouraging re-development in such a manner that neighborhood values, environmental resources, and the cost of public services are not adversely impacted.

A vision is only as good as our commitment to work for it. This work is broken down into a series of strategies, stretching from recommendations for regulatory changes to ideas for better interlocal and public-private cooperation. Not only must we have the ideas, but we must have a plan for priorities and people to carry them out. The remainder of this chapter sets out the mechanism for carrying out our vision.

[Collected implementation strategies organized under state goals listed below]

1. To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community while protecting the state=s rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.
2. To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.
3. To promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.
4. To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.
5. To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the state=s water resources, including lakes, aquifers, rivers, and great ponds.
6. To protect the state=s other critical natural resources, including, without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.
7. To safeguard the state=s agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.
8. To preserve the state=s historic and archeological resources.
9. To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

[top five strategies, implementation methodology, evaluation measures]

Chapter 3: A Profile of Winthrop’s People

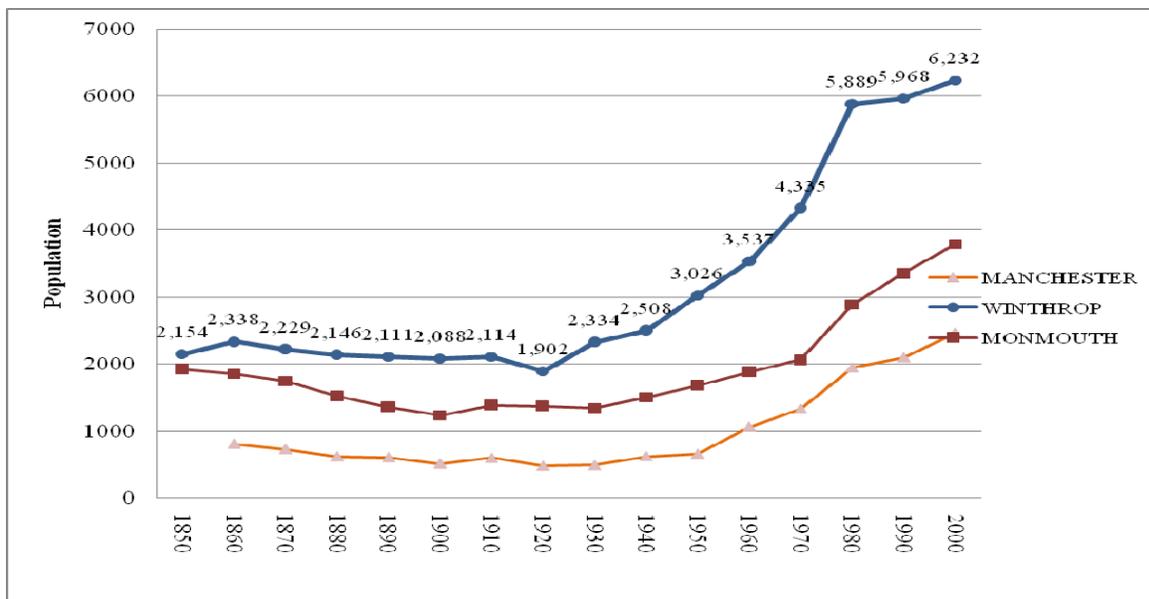
The first step in preparing a comprehensive plan is to get a sense of who we are planning for. This chapter presents a statistical profile of the people of Winthrop. Information is derived from US Census and other federal and state sources. The report also contains a speculative section on the future of Winthrop, presented as a set of future population scenarios. These are intended to illustrate the potential physical impacts of current or anticipated trends.

Population Profile:

“Population” is usually the principal criteria people use in measuring the size and vitality of a town. The current population is used as a yardstick for our role in the region, our expected level of public services, and so on. Winthrop’s last official population measure – the 2000 census – was 6,232. More recent estimates include 6,433 (2007 – US Census) and 6,597 (2009 – KVCOG).

Historic population patterns give hints as to social and economic trends. Figure 3-1, below, shows Winthrop’s population since 1850, along with that of its nearest neighbors.

Figure 3-1: Winthrop Historical Population Trends



Following the Civil War, and lasting until the early 20th Century, virtually all of Maine lost population. This was the era of westward expansion, when many Mainers 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.

Winthrop's population bottoms out in 1920, but begins to show steep gains after that. These are probably consistent with the mills drawing new workers to town. Population really took off for a while in the 60's and 70's, as Winthrop also assumed a role as suburban community for Augusta. Manchester and Monmouth demonstrate generally the same trend, although not as dramatic between 1920 and 1960, since they did not have the same industrial base. The abrupt halt in the upward population climb between 1980 and 1990 probably coincides with mill cutbacks.

Natural Change and Migration

Population change does not tell the whole story. It is the result of a number of trends. Two of these are *Natural Change*, which is the difference between births and deaths, and *Migration*, which is the difference between those moving into town and those moving out.

Natural change is an indicator of trends within the population. A plus number (more births than deaths) suggests not only a lot of babies but a lot of young families. A minus number (more deaths than births) hints at a more elderly population. Elderly populations tend to be larger in high-amenity communities like Winthrop. Suburban and rural communities tend to have larger homes and lot sizes, more attractive to families, while cities have housing more attractive to the elderly. For these reasons, cities commonly have a negative natural change, while suburban towns have a positive. Winthrop is in the former category. Between 1990 and 2000, Winthrop recorded a net decrease of 33, and between 2000 and 2008, the net decrease accelerated to 78. Winthrop is becoming home to an increasingly older population – as is the entire state of Maine.

Augusta, with three times the population of Winthrop, had a net decrease of 263 during the years 2000-2008. By contrast, Monmouth had a net increase of 120.

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, cost of housing, and quality of life. In the 1980=s, Winthrop had an *out*-migration of 100 residents. But in the 1990=s, the town turned around, with an *in*-migration of 297 residents. Based upon the post-2000 estimates for an increasing population, coupled with a negative natural change, we believe the town is continuing a net *in*-migration.

Households and Families:

In community planning, the basic unit of measure is often *Households*. Households consist of everyone living in a housing unit, whether they are single persons, families, or sometimes unrelated individuals. There are occasionally persons who do not live in a

A household, and are classified as living in a group quarters. Winthrop had 203 of these in 2000, but the vast majority of residents live in households.

The table below illustrates the type of households in Winthrop, and how they are changing over time. A common American trend is borne out in the table – decreasing numbers of the traditional “two parents with kids” household. This household type still represents over half of the total, but the numbers again declined during the 90’s.

Table 3-1: Household Characteristics, 1990 and 2000

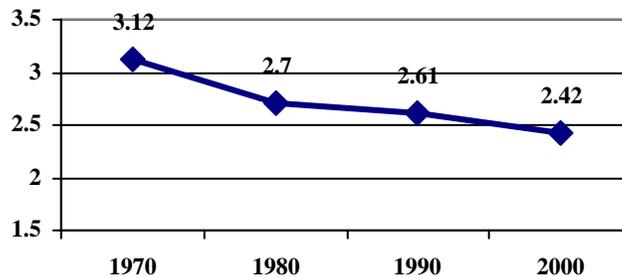
Household Type:	1990	2000	% change
Single-person Households	448	586	31
Single-person Aover 65@	215	228	6
Married-couple families	1,433	1,397	- 2.5
Single-parent male-headed families	62	51	-18
Single-parent female-headed families	200	164	-18
All Households	2,245	2,495	11

A dramatic increase came in the single-person households – almost 140 of them in the 90’s. This should lead us to question, first, what they are doing here, and second, where are they living? Only a small proportion are “elderly;” the others must be individuals of working age. They also must be living in single-family homes, since the census actually recorded a dramatic drop in apartments in the 90’s (see table 5-1). This suggests a demand for new multi-family housing, which could in turn trigger a fresh supply of single-family homes.

Note that the overall number of households increased by 250. Winthrop’s total population increased by only 264. The increase in single-person households reduced the average size of households, though it wasn’t the only factor. Nationally, the average household size has been shrinking for decades. Contributors to this trend include smaller families, broken families, more independent living among the elderly, and delayed marriage among the young.

Winthrop’s average household size has been declining since at least 1970. In 1970, the average home had over three people in it. In 2000, it had less than two and a half. In fact, as baby boomers become empty nesters, and as Winthrop continues to attract retirees, this trend requires that we re-think the type of housing that characterizes our community.

Figure 3-2: Decline in the Number of Persons per Household, 1970-2000



Age Characteristics:

In nearly every community over the past few decades, the significant feature of the population has been the Baby Boom. Technically, this refers to persons born between 1945 and 1965. The Baby Boom Generation has changed the landscape – literally – over its lifetime. In the 1950s and 1960s, we had a sudden boom in school building; in the 80’s and 90’s, we had sprawl, characterized by large suburban houses and lots; and soon, “mature” and senior housing developments will be the hot ticket in cities and small towns.

Table 3-2: Winthrop Population by Age Group, 1980 – 2000 Census

Age Group	1980	1990	2000
Under 18	1,646	1,505	1,411
18 - 64	3,414	3,582	3,762
Over 65	829	881	1,059

Even without Baby Boomers, however, Winthrop’s population is trending towards older. Table 3-2, above, shows that the overall trend is towards fewer children and more seniors. In 1980, there were twice as many kids as seniors; by 2010, the number of seniors will probably match them. When the Baby Boomers move out of working-age and hit retirement, following 2010, things will really start to get interesting.

Another measure of community aging is its Median Age. A median is a point at which exactly half the population is above and half below, and is not the same as an average. Winthrop’s median age in 2000 was 42, a big change from 1980 when its median age was 33. Many more people were added to the old side of the balance than the young side. According to the numbers on the right, Winthrop is one of the “oldest” towns in the region, and aged faster than its neighbors during the 1990s.

	Median Age	
<u>Town</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Augusta	36	40
Manchester	38	42
Monmouth	33	38
Readfield	36	38
Winthrop	36	42
Vienna	37	43

A decreasing household size and aging population provide the context for future development in Winthrop. At 3.12 persons per household in 1970, 1,000 people fit into 320 homes. At 2.42 in 2000, it now takes 413 dwelling units to house the same number of people. This explains why, over 30 years, Winthrop added 1,135 homes, and added only 1,900 residents.

What about the future? For every one-tenth drop in the average household size (e.g. from 2.42 to 2.32), about 110 new dwelling units will be needed just to maintain Winthrop’s current population. In addition, each new household will require a wage-earner (unless they are seniors). In fact, as of 2000, we averaged 1.3 workers per household. Until the baby boomers start retiring, that proportion is likely to remain the same. 110 new dwelling units must be accompanied by almost 150 new jobs – a call for more economic development. And, if the trend to smaller, older households continues, housing demand is likely to change, away from suburban subdivisions and towards higher-density, lower-maintenance living.

Seasonal Fluctuation:

Planning, particularly for public roads and services, cannot be done on the basis of 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. The following are elements of Winthrop's seasonal population:

- As of 2008, the town had 464 housing units listed as “seasonal.” At the height of the seasonal, probably 90 percent of these are occupied, with an average of four occupants each. That amounts to about 1,700 – about one-quarter of the year-round population. However, an unknown number of the camps are owned by local residents, so they cannot be technically added to the seasonal population. There may also be a substantial number of homes that are no longer listed as “seasonal” but are only occupied on a part time basis.
- There are currently 70 overnight accommodation units in Winthrop. At the peak of the season, they are probably at 85 percent capacity. With an average of 2 people per occupied room, this adds 120 people to the seasonal peak population.
- The town hosts the YMCA resident camp on Lake Cobbosseecontee and Camp Mechawana on Lake Annabessacook. For seven weeks during the summer, the camps total about 500 campers and staff.
- The town also benefits from a significant daytrip population because of its many attractions. This population is not easily estimated, but the daytime attractions include several restaurants, the boat launches, the downtown district, and Mt. Pisgah.

Seasonal population and day tourism provide a significant benefit to the town. Encouraging more tourist and recreational activity is one of the town's objectives. The aging of the baby boom 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. There has been no evidence yet of these trends.

Using our History to Predict the Future:

Historic population and demographic trends are interesting; but their true value is in preparing us for the future. The conventional mechanism of forecasting the future is to extrapolate from past trends. A typical forecast would draw on the growth rate from the past 20 years, and assume that it will continue into the next 20 years.

The Kennebec Valley Council of Governments' (KVCOG) growth forecast is based on such a formula. KVCOG projects a population of 7,200 by 2030. The State Planning Office (SPO) uses a more sophisticated formula that takes into account the survival rate of different age groups in town, migration patterns, and other factors. SPO's forecast for 2030 is 7,538. Both predict that Winthrop will grow in a fairly healthy manner (between five and six percent per decade) over the next twenty years.

Simple population projections like the ones described above are rarely accurate. In Winthrop, for example, the population grew by 36 percent in the 70's then turned around and grew only 1.3 percent in the 80's. Major factors driving (and controlling) population growth are the availability of housing and economic conditions.

This suggests that we can work backwards to determine how much development will be necessary to support a given population level. Why do this? We can *manage* development to some extent, giving us the power to work towards a future instead of passively waiting for it.

In this section, we depict three scenarios for population growth to 2030. These are not projections; they are hypothetical future growth patterns, illustrating the relationships between jobs, housing, and other essentials of growth.

A Steady State (No Growth):

The baseline scenario for Winthrop is no population change. However, “no population change” does not mean “no growth.” This scenario is used to illustrate the difference.

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 household size. This scenario assumes a gradual slowing of the declining household size, to reflect the aging of the Baby Boom generation. Winthrop's average household size decreased by 0.42 people in the 1970's, 0.09 in the 1980's, and 0.19 in the 1990's. Let's assume that household size will decrease another 0.30 between 2000 and 2030 (0.10 per decade), yielding an average future household size of 2.12.

Winthrop's 6,232 residents in 2000 occupied 2,490 housing units. That same population in 2030 would occupy 2,844 units (subtracting the 200 residents not living in a household). That means, over a 30 year period, 354 new homes must be built *to accommodate no increase in population* – about 12 dwelling units per year. In order to meet the state goal for affordable, housing, 12 houses per decade must be in the “under \$100,000” price range.

New homes have an impact on the physical resources of the community. Each one will require acreage and street frontage. If we follow the pattern of the recent past, most of the new units will be in the Rural District. A single house lot in the Rural District requires at least 150 feet of road frontage. 354 of them would consume at least 53,000 feet of frontage, or five miles of new or existing road. With an 80,000 square feet minimum lot size in the Rural District, 354 homes would consume 650 acres of undeveloped land – more than one square mile. If, however, the new units were located in the village, at 10,000 square feet, the land to be occupied would drop to 80 acres. Remember, this is the “No Growth” scenario.

It is a little more difficult to calculate the commercial development necessary to support these households. Winthrop in 2000 had 1.34 workers per household; in 1990, it had 1.38. Ordinarily, the ratio of workers to households stays fairly constant, but by 2030 many more of the households will be retired. Since we do not have enough data to predict how many, we have to look elsewhere for an assumption.

In Kennebec County, the average worker to household ratio is 1.25. If we take that for an assumption, Winthrop's 2,844 households will require 3,565 jobs to support them. That is an increase of just over 200 jobs in 30 years. Not all of those will need to be created locally, of course. Winthrop is a net exporter of labor. The town has about three workers for every two local jobs, so if that ratio holds, then only 131 new jobs would be needed in Winthrop. The amount of development necessary to create these jobs varies according to the type of development. One new business in an existing building could create 130 jobs. Ordinarily, though, 130 jobs would require about 18 acres of light industry, or six acres of retail development, or 2-3 acres of office park.

Low Growth (KVCOG Projection):

KVCOG estimates a 2030 population of 7,200 residents. From the 2000 base population of 6,232, this amounts to a growth rate of about 4.8 percent per decade. In the 80's, Winthrop grew by 1 percent, in the 90's by 4.4 percent, so this rate is a little faster than the past (but slower than KVCOG's estimated growth rate since 2000 of 6 percent per decade.)

Applying the same assumptions about household size to this projection gives us a projected demand of 3,300 households. An increase of 800 households over thirty years averages out to 27 per year. According to local assessor's records, Winthrop experienced 281 new housing units between 2000 and 2008, for an average of 35 per year. So the town is ahead of that projection almost 1/3 of the way through it.

That many new housing units, if placed on minimum sized house lots in the Rural District, would consume at least 1,460 acres of undeveloped land (more than two square miles) and eleven miles of road. These are substantial numbers, enough to bring home the argument about the wastefulness of suburban sprawl. If, hypothetically, all of these new units were located on the minimum 10,000 square feet in the Village, that much new development would only require 182 acres.

The new total of 3,300 households, using the assumption of 1.25 workers per household, would require 764 new jobs by 2030. If Winthrop continues to be a net exporter of workers, about 510 of those jobs would have to be located in town, for an average job growth of 17 per year. It is probably worth noting that jobs are sufficient but not necessary for population growth. If the number of jobs fails to keep up with population and housing growth, either the unemployment rate or the home vacancy rate goes up. If job creation goes faster than projected, there is a very good chance population will grow proportionately, but so will house prices.

Rapid Growth (SPO Projection):

The State Planning Office monitors demographic and economic data statewide and has published population estimates and projections as recently as 2007. Winthrop's SPO projection for 2030 is 7,538. That indicates a gain of 1,300 people from the baseline of 2000, approximately 43.5 per year. If Winthrop were on a straight line to meet this projection, its 2009 population would be 6,640. In fact, KVCOG's population estimate is 6,597, lending credibility to this path.

Using the same assumptions on household size, 7,538 residents would require 3,460 homes. That is a gain of 956, equivalent to almost 32 per year. (Since 2000, Winthrop has averaged 31 per year.) That is about one-third more than the total housing now existing in Winthrop, meaning one out of every four houses needed in 2030 has not yet been built.

As with prior scenarios, the land use impacts of 956 housing units will depend on where they are placed. If all were located in the Rural District, They would occupy a minimum of 1,756 acres. Now, Winthrop only has 20,000 acres of land including all the land area already covered by homes and businesses, roads, wetlands, and preserved areas. The new housing required by 2030 *that does not yet exist* will occupy 9 percent of that. At a required frontage of 150 feet, the 956 units would consume over 13 miles of road.

The total of 3,460 households will generate 964 new workers, requiring about 650 new jobs in Winthrop, a job creation rate of 22 per year for 30 years. That many new jobs will require substantial new commercial construction. While many of the jobs will undoubtedly go under existing roofs, at least half of them will probably occupy new buildings. How much, depends largely on the type of business. Using the light industry average (seven workers per acre), we would need 46 acres; using the average for office space (70 per acre), we would need only about five acres.

* * *

These scenarios are intended to identify some of the issues associated with two decades of growth. Do we really have room for 1,700 acres of new house lots and another 50 or so of commercial? Or should we try to channel some of that growth onto smaller lots? Are the 13 miles of road frontage going to be along existing town streets, or new private roads? What will be the impacts of 40 percent more families on schools, roads, solid waste, public safety, recreation facilities? These are just some of the questions to be answered during the planning process.

Chapter 4: Economic Opportunity in Winthrop

The lifeblood of a community is its economy. Economic activity allows us to add value to the community, in the form of homes, businesses, and public services. Economic opportunities allow us to move a step forward, seeking more value and additional growth in the community.

This chapter addresses both the statistical aspect of the economy – income, employment, and education characteristics – and the geographic and structural characteristics of our business climate. It also addresses specific issues of growth in our downtown, townwide, and regionally.

Statistical Measures of the Economy:

Income:

The most conventional measure of a community’s economic health is income. The US Census reports two basic types of income measures: *A*per-capita income,[@] (PCI) which is the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and *A*Household Income,[@] which is the median income of the households within the town. The latter is more helpful from a planning perspective, since households are the basic social and economic unit of the community.

Per capita income (PCI) can be used for comparisons among geographic areas, such as towns. Winthrop’s PCI in the 2000 census was \$19,447. Although Winthrop’s PCI is higher than average for the region (second only to Manchester), it shows a negative growth rate, calculated in inflation-adjusted dollars. This may be due to the loss of manufacturing-related jobs during the

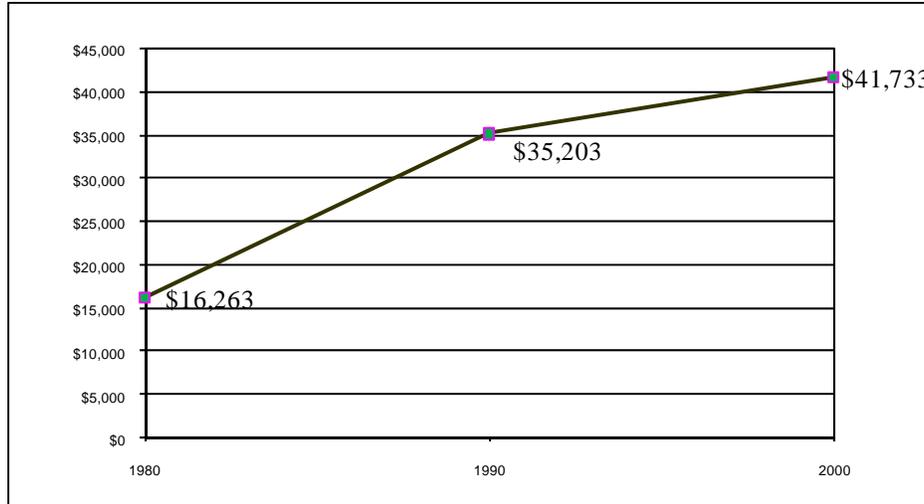
Town	1990 PCI	2000 PCI	% change*
Winthrop	\$ 15,413	\$ 19,447	- 6 %
Augusta	\$ 13,209	\$ 19,145	13 %
Manchester	\$ 17,410	\$ 28,043	29 %
Monmouth	\$ 11,412	\$ 17,551	22 %
Readfield	\$ 14,915	\$ 20,707	7 %
Kennebec Co.	\$ 12,885	\$ 18,520	14 %
<i>% Change calculated after 32 % decade inflation</i>			

90’s. Kennebec County, as a whole, was lower than Winthrop, with a PCI of \$18,520. Maine overall was much closer to Winthrop, with a PCI of \$19,533 in 2000.

Median Household Income (MHI) represents the actual budget for most families. Since household income is calculated based on all family members earning income, individual households can see a dramatic jump if a spouse or other family member starts working. Winthrop’s MHI as reported to the 2000 census was \$41,733. This is not much different from the 1990 Census (\$35,203) once inflation is added in; in fact, it is a loss in real dollars.

Nonetheless, Winthrop's income levels are substantially better than Kennebec County, which showed a five percent loss in real dollars and in 2000 recorded an MHI of \$36,498.

Figure 4-1: Winthrop Median Household Income: 1980-2000



Dollar amount in figure above is for current year, not inflation-adjusted

Looking at median income, however, does not give us a picture of the *distribution* of income levels. Table 4-1, below, shows a breakdown of income levels. The 2000 Census identified over ten percent of Winthrop households earning less than \$10,000 per year, and another 32 percent earning less than \$35,000 (roughly 80 percent of the median). This information will be useful in determining the need for affordable housing. Another 5.4 percent earn more than \$100,000 per year as a household. The comparison with 1990 shows a general rise in income levels, though that is expected over a decade interval. But having 20 percent more in the lowest income bracket is a red flag.

Table 4-1: Winthrop Household Income Brackets, 1990-2000

<u>Range</u>	<u>1990 #</u>	<u>Percentage of Households</u>	<u>2000 #</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than \$10,000	191	8.5	264	10.5
\$10 B 35,000	915	41	796	31.9
\$35 B 100,000	1,029	46.1	1,312	52.3
\$100,000 and over	97	4.3	132	5.4

The census attempts to identify the sources of income as well. In Winthrop, 30 percent of the households receive social security, and 7.2 percent receive public assistance. Both of these numbers were higher in 2000 than in 1990.

The Census Bureau also calculates the *Poverty Rate*, a figure varying from county to county and the number of persons in the household. An actual “poverty level” for an area is not published by the census (because it is different for each household size) but the number of persons below that rate is reported. In 2000, 564 residents of Winthrop fell below poverty level,

representing 9.3 percent of the population. That is somewhat higher than the seven percent below the poverty line in 1990. The 2000 number included 126 persons over the age of 65 and 133 under 18. It represents 152 families. Half of those (75) are single mothers. The single-mother poverty rate in Winthrop is over 33 percent.

Labor Force:

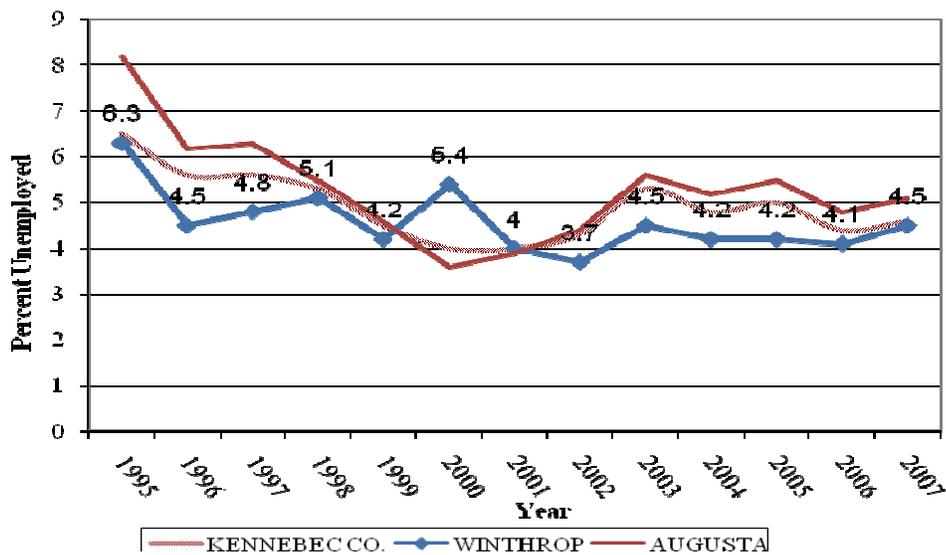
The labor force refers to the number of people either working or looking for work within the working-age population. The Census Bureau considers everyone over age 16 as working-age, including those already retired. Changes in the labor force affect the supply of workers for potential job growth.

In 2000, the labor force in Winthrop consisted of 3,361 people, 67 percent of the working-age population. That total included 1,709 women (65.5 percent of working-age women) and 1,652 men (69.3 percent of working-age men). An average of 1.34 persons in each household are in the labor force, i.e. four workers for every three households.

The labor force includes both employed and unemployed workers. At the time of the 2000 census, 144 people were unemployed, a rate of 4.3 percent.

Unemployment is also reported by the Maine Department of Labor, which takes monthly surveys, and gives a more accurate picture than the US Census' decennial survey. Figure 4-2, below, highlights Winthrop's recent unemployment history (line with markers), together with Augusta (narrow line) and Kennebec County (wavy line). Except for a blip in 2000, Winthrop's unemployment history generally mirrors and slips in under the rates for either Augusta or the county. Winthrop's 2007 unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, marginally under Kennebec County's 4.6 percent. The preliminary 2008 rate of 4.7 percent does not show much influence of the national recession.

Figure 4-2: Winthrop Unemployment Rate, 1995-2007



Regionally, Winthrop is part of the Augusta Labor Market Area (LMA) – the southern half of Kennebec County. The Augusta LMA had a labor force in 2007 of 43,424; Winthrop=s contribution being 3,564, or eight percent of the workers. The Augusta LMA experienced an unemployment rate of 4.4 percent in 2007, slightly less than that for Winthrop.

Winthrop is a net exporter of workers to the LMA, as are all towns but Augusta. In 2000, there were 1,162 more workers in Winthrop than jobs. Although 821 Winthrop residents work in town, 1,207 work in Augusta. Another 234 work in the Lewiston-Auburn area. In contrast, only 156 residents of Augusta commute to Winthrop, with another 138 coming from Monmouth.

Jobs and Occupations:

The census reports on the occupation and type of employment of residents. In 2000, over 41 percent of Winthrop=s workers were executives, managers, and other professionals. The next largest category was “sales and office occupations,” with 22 percent. In 1990, only 37 percent of the workforce were in the “professional” classification, with the next largest category being skilled labor, at 12 percent. Only 0.2 percent of workers are now in what we view as the traditional occupations of farming, fishing, or woods work.

In 2000, 2/3 of the workforce worked for private companies, 25 percent worked for a government entity (including schools) and 9.4 percent were self-employed. Twenty-five percent of Winthrop workers were in the “educational, health, and social services” industry, with 12 percent each in retail trade, public administration, and manufacturing. This is a bit of a reversal from 1990, when 17 percent of the workforce was employed in manufacturing, and only 15 percent in health and education.

Manufacturing grabs headlines when another plant shuts down. Yet, it is clear from the figures that manufacturing is no longer a significant player in the local economy, employing less than one in eight workers. Local skills are now in health and education, and management, which, fortunately, appear to be growing at every level. Economic development aimed at health, education, and other service-related jobs will best serve the current workforce profile.

Education:

Another factor in economic development efforts is the education level of the workforce. Jobs that require mastery of math, science and problem-solving skills are more likely to be attracted to areas with higher educational levels. College graduation is almost a basic requirement for many professional, health-related, and educational positions. Income levels are also higher for

Town	High School	College
Winthrop	85.0 %	26.7 %
Augusta	81.4	19.2
Manchester	91.8	36.7
Monmouth	85.5	18.6
Readfield	90.2	40.8
Kennebec Co.	85.2	20.7
	*percent of persons over age 25	

jobs demanding more education.

Approximately 85 percent of Winthrop adults are high school graduates and 26.7 percent are college graduates. This represents little change from 1990, when 86 percent of the adult population was high school graduates and 27.8 percent college grads. Winthrop's college attainment is well above that of Kennebec County (20.7 percent) and Maine (22.9 percent). But Readfield's and Manchester's high school and college attainment rates are among the highest in the region, which demonstrates the linkage between good education and higher income levels.

Local Business Profile:

Like many small service centers, Winthrop's economy is based primarily is small business. Drive up and down Main Street or Route 202 and you will see dozens of small restaurants, specialty stores, and professional offices for every major employer or franchise operation. In general, Winthrop's business climate is centered on local services, with a few businesses catering to tourism and recreation, a few large and small manufacturers, and a few regional stores.

It should come as little surprise, then, that of the 1,800 + people that work in Winthrop (as of 2000), only 1/3 of them work at "major employers." Significant private employers include:

- Dorothy Egg Farm (Turkey Lane, egg factory) – 90 jobs
- Progressive Distributors (Route 202, warehousing) – 210 jobs
- Alternative Manufacturing, Inc. (downtown, factory) – 175 jobs
- Hannaford Supermarket (Main Street, retail) – 100 jobs
- Notify MD (Route 202, call center) – 22 jobs
- Cutler Hammer (Route 202, factory) – 25 jobs

Current public employers include:

- State of Maine Dept of Disability Determination (Route 202) -- 84 (19 are contract)
- Winthrop Schools (distributed) – 155
- Town of Winthrop (distributed) – 32

Business development is supported by two non-profit organizations that operate locally and regionally – Winthrop Area Chamber of Commerce (WACC) and Western Kennebec Economic Development Alliance (WKEDA). WACC is a membership organization drawing from many towns, but focuses its efforts on promoting regional attractions and Winthrop's downtown. WKEDA consists primarily of representation and funding from area towns, and concentrates on infrastructure development for business. WKEDA operates the Winthrop Business Park on Route 202, and is working to develop additional commercial opportunities throughout the region.

Winthrop's location and history as a job center gives us basic advantages when it comes to job opportunities. The municipal sewer and water systems cover virtually all of the land

suitable for commercial development, and since the closure of the Carleton Mills has more than sufficient capacity for growth for years to come. Route 202 and Main Street enjoy access to 3-phase power for industrial production and broadband telecommunications infrastructure. The closure of the mills left Winthrop with thousands of square feet of quality commercial floor space, but that is well on its way to being re-occupied. There currently appears to be more demand than supply for turnkey floor space, and WKEDA is actively pursuing development of additional properties.

Community Issue: Winthrop Downtown

This summary is based on information contained in the *Downtown Revitalization Plan* prepared by Kent Associates and Rothe Associates in 2000. Many of the recommendations of the plan have been implemented, and ten years have passed, so it is appropriate to re-examine the issues and challenges that remain.

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 woolen mill westward, contains most of the downtown commercial buildings and the densest degree of development. The 2000 Plan counted about an equal number of retail establishments and service businesses. Some turnover has occurred since the plan, but the overall level of occupancy and distribution of businesses remains the same.

Significant changes since the plan include changes at the woolen mill, now primarily occupied by medical offices, the renovation of 48 Main Street, and the relocation of the post office.

The Town has taken steps to implement the plan. Among the recommendations that have been completed are:

- Replacement of water and sewer pipes,
- Replacement of some sidewalks and curbing, with repaving of portions of Main Street,
- Replacement of overhead lighting and relocation of some power lines,
- Planting of street trees,
- Relocation of the town office,
- Renovation of 48 Main Street through a TIF.

Some elements of the plan were determined to be infeasible (such as making Union Street one-way) and some have yet to be addressed.

The “Ideal” Downtown:

The 2000 Plan contained a citizen-developed Vision Statement for the downtown, which is reproduced below:

Vision for Winthrop's Main Street

Winthrop Maine street is a small, friendly, inviting New England Village. The stores and houses have historic white paint and shutters. Sidewalks are sheltered by shade trees and attractive new street lights. It's a walkable place. Most cars are invisible, parked behind the buildings on Main Street. Regular shuttle bus service to neighboring towns and connecting bike trails also reduce traffic. There are interesting shops, attractive apartments and senior housing, an active community center for young and old, and a welcoming new Town Hall. The library is expanded and offers more arts and cultural activities. The Carleton Woolen Mill remains a center of activity, either in its current role of producing cloth, or in a future role as a home for shops, small businesses, or apartments.

The stores attract a diverse mix of people. Shopping ranges from high-end arts, crafts, and ethnic restaurants for professionals and tourists, to day-to-day stores and family restaurants for seniors and young families. Young people are also downtown to listen to music and socialize.

Right in the middle of Town, in the parking lot in front of Sully's and the new post office, there is a fountain, a community bulletin board, and a farmer's market 2 days a week. There is a walking path along the Mill stream connecting Main Street to the two nearby lakes, Maranacook and Annabessacook. On the path is a new park around the old lagoons behind Carleton Mill.

Along Maranacook Lake there are new docks for boats, seaplanes, and the high school sailing and rowing teams; new affordable condominiums; and even a floating restaurant. In the winter there is lighted hockey and skating on the lake. Ducks are controlled. The rail station is rehabilitated and serves day-trippers and tourists, as well as residents seeking to hook up with a new passenger rail service in Augusta.

In short, Main Street Winthrop is a place where young and old can come to shop, eat, work, live, visit, walk, bicycle, skateboard, sail, skate, and celebrate.

Generically, there are several attributes that separate a vibrant downtown from a stagnant one. They are:

- *Visual appeal:* The appearance of prosperity attracts both entrepreneurs and customers. Visual appeal is achieved with clean facades, landscaping, sound infrastructure. It can be enhanced with coordinated efforts like a common image, artwork, amenities.
- *A Mixture of Uses:* A block which contains nothing but retail stores is a shopping mall. Downtowns should be able to tap into a substantial workforce and/or high density housing to provide a built-in customer base for stores, restaurants and services. The businesses themselves must be varied enough to attract a broad range of clientele.
- *Access:* Most people agree a downtown should be "walkable," meaning both a good pedestrian infrastructure and multiple destinations within easy walking range. However, if there is not a substantial density of employment or housing in that walking radius, the

downtown must also be “rideable,” with adequate parking, transit service, or bicycle access. Aspects of this include wide sidewalks without obstructions, safe crosswalks, visible parking, and a continuous network of pedestrian and bike trails.

- *The Urge to Linger:* If a person feels comfortable in downtown, he or she is likely to spend more time there. Amenities play an important role. Public seating (but only in quiet spots), amusements (such as art work), shade trees, and green space are critical. Social and information spots, such as community bulletin boards, performance areas, sidewalk cafes, or community centers, are useful.
- *Where the Action is:* People tend to want to be where other people are. A downtown can be a happening place during events and festivals, but unless they happen 52 weeks a year, they are just temporary fixes. A youth or senior center, a musical venue, farmers/craft markets help to create the buzz necessary to keep the downtown in people’s minds.
- *Human Energy:* Although we like to think of downtowns as self-sustaining, they require a lot of behind-the-scenes energy. An organization or person will be available to identify vacant properties and match them with prospective tenants, schedule and coordinate programs and events, and pursue grants and growth opportunities.

Downtown Challenges:

This section identifies some of the challenges remaining for the Winthrop downtown neighborhoods. They are not in any priority order.

The Commerce Center An excellent job has been done to date bringing the mill buildings back from their closure. A good fraction of the square footage is occupied by offices associated with the medical center. Plans for the upper floors (business or residential) and the ground floor are still in flux.

Issues associated with the mill include the broad blank façade on Main Street (could be enhanced with business signs or awnings once the ground floor is occupied), the manager’s office (now for sale), and parking. Parking is tight, even for the current occupancy; an additional floor of retail or office use will stress it. On the other hand, the lot itself, if not fully occupied, could contribute to a Main Street parking solution.

The western gateway/Royal Street. Main Street where it joins Route 133 is not an attractive entrance to downtown, as noted in the 2000 Downtown Plan. A combination of signage, landscaping, and curb improvements could change this perception.

Contributing to the industrial feel of the neighborhood is, of course, the railroad and adjacent properties. One of these is Royal Street. The dominant feature of Royal Street is a rundown mill/warehouse complex. This is on an 11 acre site that otherwise might be prime development land. Royal Street is discontinuous, meaning that motorists cannot use it to get from Route 202 to Main Street. At least one of the property owners is interested in making changes.

Royal Street could become the western anchor of the downtown. If Royal Street were re-connected, it could provide another entrance point onto Main Street. The property could make a

significant impact, for commercial, mixed use, or multi-family housing. The buildings might not be salvageable, but the site itself might qualify as a brownfield, addressing potential issues of contamination.

Downtown parking. (Discussed in Chapter 9) Parking is perennially cited as a problem in all downtowns. The accepted solution in larger towns is to form a downtown parking district, create additional public parking, and assess new developers and existing businesses that don't provide their own for a share of the lot. This turns out to be much cheaper and more efficient than requiring parking spaces on each property. It also puts people on their feet, and more likely to patronize the entire downtown instead of just one store.

Traffic Movement. (Discussed in Chapter 9) Residents have noted that cars move too fast along Main Street. This is a mixed blessing. It indicates there is not much congestion, but it discourages pedestrians from crossing the street, and makes the sidewalks feel less safe. Traffic can be slowed by two things – infrastructure and policing.

Walking and Biking. Although some Main Street sidewalks were rebuilt following the 2000 Plan, this does not mean the pedestrian circulation is 100 percent. A “walking survey” could reveal many cases of obstructions or interruptions in existing sidewalks. One deficiency noted by the 2000 Plan has not been remedied; there are large gaps where commercial entrances interrupt the sidewalks. These over-wide driveways are intimidating to pedestrians, and make it less attractive to walk Main Street. A non-street walking trail network has been proposed.

The built-up area of Winthrop is quite extensive, and includes all three schools and the town beach. This is almost an ideal setting for a bicycle network. While many of the side streets are suitable for on-street riding, Main Street and some others are not. A separated path would require an additional crossing of Mill Stream, however. In addition, no one will bike to the downtown unless there are convenient places to put their bikes when they get there.

Public Space. Main Street lacks places for people to relax, eat lunch, people-watch, or just enjoy the ambiance. The cemetery is virtually the only green space. There are only three or four benches downtown. The 2000 Plan envisioned two significant green spaces: a town green beside the new post office, and a pocket park next to Mill Stream. Both are now parking lots. The Mill Stream site still has the potential to be developed, but is not a very visible location.

Green space need not technically be green. The downtown might benefit from an outdoor café, though there are few buildings with enough exposed space to develop one. Walking trails, such as the one proposed for Mill Stream connecting the town beach, could also attract people downtown.

Business occupancy. Downtowns become exciting when they attain a “critical mix” of businesses. This means not just full occupancy, though that, too, is a goal. A downtown should have either an anchor store or a complementary mix. Although Hannaford,s and Rite Aid are technically at the edge of downtown, they do not contribute to the mix. If the woolen mill becomes available for retail, that could contribute.

Future planning may provide guidance as to whether Winthrop wants to be a local service center or a recreational attraction. If a local service center, likely businesses would be professional offices, laundromat, shops, and a lunch counter. If an attraction point, the focus shifts to antique shops, outdoor supplies, art gallery, and destination restaurant.

Energy and Direction. (See *Community Issue: Promoting the Town*) Much of the activity, including business attraction, festivals, and events, is shepherded by the Chamber of Commerce. But volunteers cannot continue to carry the burden. A new initiative, funded by both public and private dollars, could help to re-energize downtown plans.

Creating a unique identity has worked for some towns as well. This requires coordinated effort by the business community to identify and work towards a common image, through joint marketing, branding, signage, complementary services, and so on.

Planning Recommendations:

State Goal: Promote an economic climate that increase job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

Policies:

1. Create and maintain the physical and administrative infrastructure to promote local and regional economic growth.
2. Enhance the attractiveness and experience of Winthrop's downtown with development and activities oriented to local commerce.
3. Target continued development along Route 202 to activities that require transportation and regional commerce, and locations that do not impact the mobility of the highway.

Strategies:

- a) Continue to support the Winthrop Area Chamber of Commerce and Western Kennebec Economic Development Alliance in their respective roles promoting greater economic opportunities in the town and region.
- b) Work with owners of Royal Street property to redevelop site while pursuing community goals for the downtown.
- c) Utilize zoning and other ordinances to encourage retail and local service development in the downtown area and manufacturing-distribution-warehouse and office space in the Route 202 corridor.

- d) Develop amenities for the downtown area, including walking paths (Mill Stream), public restrooms, regular events and activities.
- e) Create a downtown beautification project.
- f) Develop a marketing plan for Winthrop, targeting downtown and Route 202 opportunities.

Chapter 5: Housing in Winthrop

Winthrop's housing supply and prices determine the potential for future growth in the town, as well as its diversity of opportunity. A mixture of housing types encourages a mixture of residents – old and young, singles and large families, as well as different economic classes.

Although local government is generally not in the business of providing housing to its residents, many local policies influence the style, price, and location of housing. Towns have historically been responsible for ensuring that its citizens have safe, sanitary, and secure homes, and have done what they can to keep the price of housing down. This chapter profiles the housing supply and its characteristics in Winthrop.

Statistical Measures of Housing:

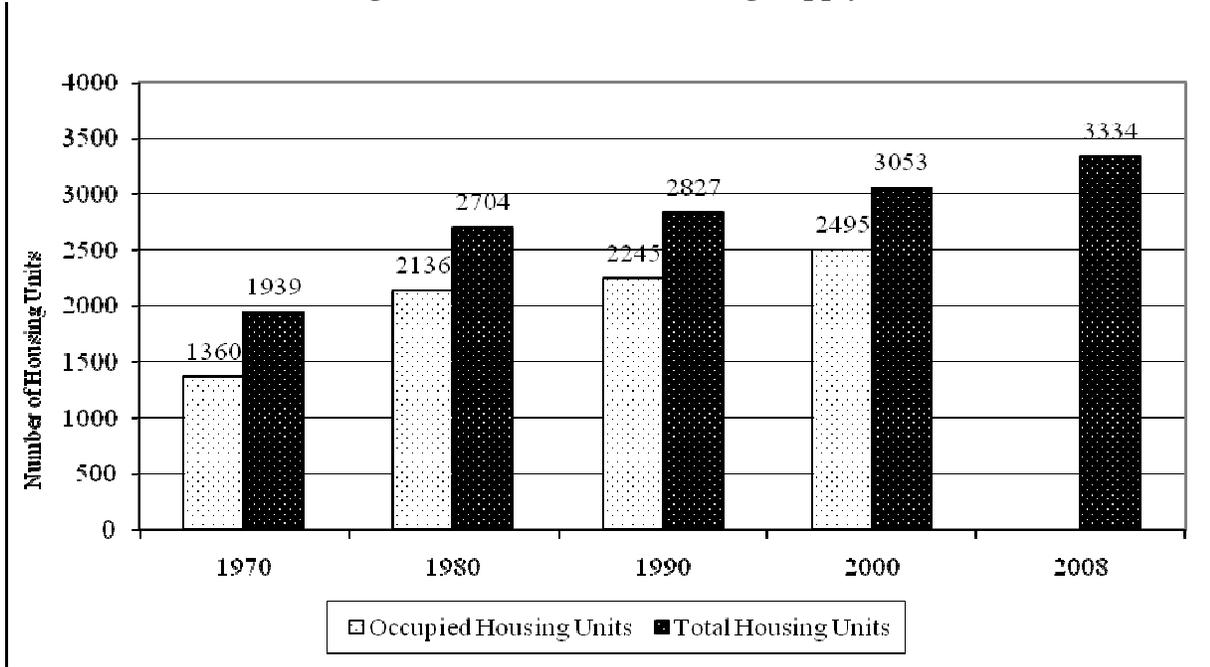
Housing Supply and Type:

Winthrop's demographic profile documents a steady decline in the average number of people per household. What this means is that we must have more housing even if we have zero population growth. At the rate that the household size in Winthrop has declined over the past 20 years, the town needs to add at least 13 homes per year just to hold population steady; 13.4 is our "break-even" housing rate. 281 new homes built since 2000 (figure 5-1) is well above the break-even rate, indicating population growth.

To some extent, the "household size" statistic relates to the *type* of housing as well as its quantity. Young and old households (seniors, singles, etc.) tend to be smaller than average. A specific type of housing serves them (apartments, retirement communities). Large-lot suburban subdivisions tend to attract families with children. With the looming demographic trend being the retirement of baby boomers, there is a good chance the market for family housing will dry up in favor of the market for smaller, more efficient units.

Figure 5-1, below, shows the growth in the number of housing units in Winthrop since 1970. The difference between "total housing units" and "occupied housing units" is the number of vacant and seasonal homes. The 2008 total is based on adding in the number of houses built since 2000 according to local tax records, but of course we do not know how many of these are occupied. The chart illustrates that, after gaining an average of 12 housing units per year in the 80's and 22.5 per year in the 90's, since 2000, our average has been almost 35 per year (peak years: 2005 and 2007).

Figure 5-1: Growth in Housing Supply, 1970-2008



The table below profiles housing types in Winthrop. The overwhelming majority of housing is single-family (traditional). Between 1990 and 2000, there was a sudden jump in popularity of mobile homes, and a steep drop in multi-family housing units. The number of seasonal units has changed the least – their percentage of the whole has dropped.

Table 5-1: Winthrop Housing Types

Housing Type	1980		1990		2000		2008	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
Single-family	1615	60%	1596	56%	1856	61%	2048	61%
Multi-family	423	16%	475	17%	330	11%	352	11%
Mobile Home	219	8 %	248	9%	342	11%	396	12%
Seasonal	445	16%	414	15%	451	15%	464	14%

Source: US Census (1980, 1990, 2000), Winthrop Municipal Valuation Return (2008)

The decline in the number of multi-family units is a concern heading into the future. As indicated earlier, this is the type of home that is in demand by most of Winthrop’s 586 single-person households, will see growing demand in the future. If nothing else, the lack of apartments to rent means we cannot attract or keep young people to work in town.

We know households are trending smaller over time. Smaller households are more likely to be in flux; they tend to be renters, as well. (At the last census, owner-occupied housing had an

average of 2.53 persons in a household; a renter-occupied unit had an average of 2.05.) In 2000, Winthrop had 601 rental units, almost ¼ of the total housing stock. In 1990, we had 511. That is an increase of 90 rental units, even though the same decade saw a loss of 145 multi-family (apartment) units. This suggests a large increase in single-family or mobile homes that are being converted from owner-occupied to rental units. Indeed, about 1.5 percent of the total housing stock between 1990 and 2000 shifted this way.

Rental units, especially multi-family units, are characteristic of more urban patterns. Augusta has over 45 percent rentals, while neighboring, more rural towns have in the teens. Winthrop very much resembles Kennebec County as a whole – generally a rural area, though with an urban core. Kennebec County has a 28.8 percent rental rate.

<u>Town</u>	<u>2000 Rental Percentage</u>
Winthrop	24.0 %
Augusta	45.5 %
Manchester	13.3 %
Monmouth	15.7 %
Readfield	11.9 %

Although there are a substantial number of seasonal homes in Winthrop, they do not have a large impact on the overall housing stock. Fewer than two new camps are built each year, but the town office fields very few requests for year-round conversions. It is possible that some are being converted without the knowledge of the town, because the value of lakefront property is such that converting a house to year-round use is a logical and relatively small expense.

Housing Age and Condition:

The census tallies the age of the housing stock as well as its condition. The age of the housing could be an indicator of other issues. A relatively high number of older houses could mean heightened maintenance and heating cost, but also could indicate potentially historic architecture. Housing built during the 50’s and 60’s had modern plumbing and electric systems, but tended not to be very energy-efficient, while housing built recently is generally going to be very energy-efficient and structurally sound.

Table 5-2: Winthrop Age of Housing

<u>Year Structure Built</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1990 to 1999	404	13%
1980 to 1989	475	16%
1970 to 1979	541	18%
1960 to 1969	400	13%
1940 to 1959	500	16%
1939 or earlier	733	24%

Source: 2000 Census

Table 5-2, above, indicates a fairly even spread of housing ages. The 2008 housing estimate indicates another 281 homes – a ten-year rate of 350, which would be somewhat below the historical rate. It should be noted, however, that this age estimate (provided by census respondents) does not tally at all with the actual number of homes added to the census every ten

years. Kennebec County, compared to Winthrop, has a much higher percentage of pre-war homes (28.5 %) and a lower percentage of homes built in the 60's (9.6%).

A census tally of substandard living conditions is intended to identify poverty housing conditions. According to the census, Winthrop has no problem at all with substandard housing. The 2000 Census did sample 36 homes lacking complete plumbing facilities (just over 1 percent of the total), 26 lacking a kitchen and 18 lacking a telephone. Eighteen homes were considered to be overcrowded (more than one person per room).

Winthrop does not have a building or housing code, so there is currently no way to monitor or estimate the quality of construction in town. The town is required to begin enforcing the statewide Uniform Building Code in 2012, which will necessitate increased training and hours by the code enforcement officer.

Housing Prices and Affordability:

The price of housing is governed by supply and demand. But, when the relationship between price and local incomes gets out of whack, we recognize it as a public policy issue; one of *affordability*. It is natural for most housing developers to build the one type of housing that provides the greatest profit; the community, on the other hand, has an interest in maintaining a range of housing opportunities. A diversity of housing leads to a diverse and vibrant community.

The US Census asks respondents what they think their home is worth. While this is not a statistical measure of price, it is a decent mirror. In 2000, the median reported value of a single-family, stick-built home in Winthrop was \$97,300. Seven percent of homes were valued under \$50,000, and 5.4 percent were more than \$200,000. That is a surprisingly small rise from 1990, when the median value was \$91,600. If these values are accurate, incomes of Winthrop residents rose at three times the rate of home prices. A house generally became more affordable.

The story since 2000 is dramatically different. Prices shot up in the early part of the decade, and peaked in 2007. Based on prices of actual sales (Maine State Housing Authority), the median home value in 2008 (most recent data) was \$150,250. During a period when the CPI (measure of inflation) rose 20 percent, and local household incomes rose by 19 percent, the price of homes rose by 54 percent.

Housing has become less affordable. The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) created an "affordability index" to reflect a 30% rule (a household should not spend more than 30% of its income on housing.) If the Index equals 1.00, then the median household income is sufficient to afford the median home price. If the Index is greater than 1.00, then the median income can afford an above-median home; an Index less than 1.00 means that a median income cannot afford the median home.

Winthrop's 2000 index rating was 1.24 – easily affordable. By 2003, the index was at 0.97 – a significant drop, to the point where the average house is not affordable to the average household. In 2008 – a year of recovery from the 2007 peak prices – the affordability index was

at 0.92. The average household in 2008 could only afford a \$139,000 home, but the average home price was \$150,000.

Lower-income households tend to rent rather than own, so measures of home value are inconsequential at some level. But the affordability issue may be even more pronounced in Winthrop’s rental market. In 2000, the median rent was \$459. By 2003, it had gone to \$606, a rise of 32 percent. In 2008, it had risen to \$739 – another 22 percent. Although the 200 and 2008 numbers are not entirely comparable, it suggests an increase of around 60 percent – triple the rise in CPI or local incomes. (This also suggests a shortage in multi-family rental units, as indicated earlier in this chapter.)

Since people are very likely to be willing to move in order to find more affordable housing, we need to look at housing prices in a more regional perspective. If people come to work in Winthrop but cannot find a house in their price range, they may well either commute from out of town or quit their job to find better conditions elsewhere. In 2008, the median home price in the Augusta Housing Market Area was \$138,500. This is much more affordable to Winthrop’s wage earners, creating an incentive for people to look elsewhere for housing. The median rental was \$747, a bit more than Winthrop.

Up to now, we have been talking about “medians,” regarding income and home prices. But being affordable at the median does not address the need for diversity. Half of the population earns less than the median income; those people are necessary for a functioning economy, but much more likely to have trouble paying for housing. MSHA statistics illustrate the demand for affordable housing according to income levels. Table 5-3, below, shows a breakdown.

Table 5-3: Winthrop Income Classes by Tenure, 2008

	Below 50% of Median	Below 80%	Below 150%
<i>Owner Households</i>	315 (16%)	610 (30%)	1,354 (67 %)
Owners over 65	181 (36%)	283 (56%)	416 (83 %)
<i>Renter Households</i>	277 (40%)	431 (62%)	638 (23 %)
Renters over 65	74 (66%)	91 (82%)	107 (96 %)
Potential Homeowners	89 (32%)	138 (50%)	243 (87 %)
Workforce Renters	203(35%)	340 (58%)	531 (91%)

Source: MSHA 2008 *Housing Facts*

The table shows that 315 homeowners and 277 renters earned less than \$24,766 (50 % of median) in 2008. An affordable house at that income is \$69,000; an affordable rent is about \$600/month. Thirty percent of homeowners and 62 percent of renters earned less than \$39,625 (80%). An affordable home for them is \$110,000; an affordable rent is about \$950/month. The state’s growth management rules require towns to plan for at least 10 percent of new housing to be affordable at this threshold.

“Potential Homeowners” on Table 5-3 are current renters who are of an age to be in the market to buy a house – 25-44. There are 138 of these making less than \$39,625, therefore a potential for 138 new homes below the \$110,000 mark. “Workforce Renters” are families (16-

34) who are more likely to be in the rental market. Their demand is for 340 units below \$950, a threshold Winthrop currently meets.

Seniors are almost always the class most in need of affordable housing. Fifty six percent of senior homeowners and 82 percent of senior renters – that’s 344 households, total – have incomes below the \$39,625 mark.

The 2000 census reports on “percent of income spent for housing.” Among homeowners in Winthrop, 279 households (almost one out of five) were paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing; 165 households paid more than 35 percent. Among renters, 159 households (more than one out of four) paid more than 30 percent; 119 paid more than 35 percent. That means that in 2000, 438 families were paying for housing beyond their means, even in a year when, on average, housing was affordable in Winthrop.

It is clear that the traditional housing market in Winthrop is falling short of meeting our needs, particularly those of seniors and young, potential homeowners. The state and federal governments have several programs in place to assist in providing affordable housing. The federal government provides subsidies for renters who earn less than 50 percent of median income. The subsidy may be through projects, or directly to landlords (section 8). In Winthrop, 50 subsidized rental units are available for “families” (24 in a project, 26 vouchers), and 27 designated for seniors (24 in a project, 3 vouchers). However, the MSHA reports an unmet need of 123 units, meaning we could use more than twice as many subsidies.

MSHA’s most popular program is aid for first-time home buyers. In 1999, 16 home buyers in Winthrop took advantage of this program, but participation has dropped steadily. Since 2004, an average of only five home buyers per year used the program. Rather than being an indicator that this program is unneeded, this could be a signal that first-time buyers are getting frustrated with looking for property in Winthrop. The program only provides a discounted down payment and interest rate. At a certain point, even those incentives are inadequate to compensate for high home prices.

An impediment to affordable housing is sometimes state or local zoning or building regulations. On the surface, that does not appear to be the case in Winthrop. Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance permits lot sizes as small as 3,500 square feet in the Village District, with multi-family dwellings permitted in several districts with additional lot area requirements of 5,000 square feet or less per unit. Mobile home parks are permitted in the General Residential District, with lot sizes dictated by state law. However, a recent affordable housing proposal met with stiff resistance within the town, and was withdrawn before the formal review. This suggests that future efforts at affordable housing must be structured differently.

Estimate of Future Demand:

Current housing demand should continue throughout the planning period. There is no shortage of available land, and economic drivers are good. The future growth scenarios outlined in Chapter 3 assume between 12 (no population growth) and 32 (rapid growth) homes per year over the next 20 years; an average of 31 per year have been built during this decade.

The *preferred growth rate* estimate used for the purpose of this plan is 500 housing units over 20 years, an average of 25 per year. No attempt has been made to estimate the type of housing that will be built, though based on past experience we can guess that very little of it will be rental housing. About ¼ of Winthrop’s housing is rental, but it appears to be conversions from owned housing, not new construction. This is contrary to emerging demographic demand, and will need to be addressed. Based only on current ratios, 125 of the 500 units to be built would be for the rental market. A large percentage of those should be suitable or designated for seniors.

State growth management rules require planning for an affordability goal of ten percent of new housing units priced for 80 percent of median incomes. In 2008, that was \$110,000 for an owner-occupied home, and \$950 for a rental unit. While that goal may seem achievable (between two and three housing units each year under those thresholds), it is a fairly low goal that a) does not address the deficiency in affordable housing at the current time, and b) does not satisfy the nearly-600 households that are currently making only 50 percent of median.

Current need among low income renters is for 153 family-style housing units and 47 senior units in the \$600 price range, and another 130 that cannot afford the median rent. There are also 138 households – existing renters in Winthrop – who could potentially be in the market *to own* housing priced under \$110,000.

Winthrop is also the service center for western Kennebec County. This increases the likelihood of demand for workforce housing, and that elderly residents from more rural areas of the county will consider retiring in Winthrop. If we do not plan to meet this demand, our young people will move away, it will become harder to attract employers, and our older residents will be forced to relocate to Augusta or Portland.

Community Issue: The Changing Demand for Housing

Exploring the Issue:

Traditionally a function of private enterprise, the supply and location of housing within the community is a major determinant of its future. The many styles and forms of housing can influence the size, age, and income levels of a community, and the location of housing can impact the cost of providing town services and the economic health of commercial areas.

The Growth Management Law requires our plan to examine our housing stock for its safety, quality, and cost, and create policies that ensure it will remain safe and affordable. This requires that we peer into the future to anticipate what changes there may be in the housing market, both with and without the aid of local intervention.

The Town of Winthrop does not have experience as a developer of housing, and is not interested in taking on that role. The Town can, however, provide incentives or a regulatory structure that will favor a preferred form of development. Based on past growth, we are planning for about 25 new housing units each year, to be developed as follows:

- There should continue to be a diversity of housing size and styles, to reflect the diversity in our population;
- At least one of every ten new housing units will need to be *affordable* to a family making 80 percent of the median household income. In 2010 terms, that means a unit sale priced at under \$110,000, or rented for less than \$950/month.
- Construction quality will be ensured through enforcement of the statewide building code.

There are two demographic trends which must be accommodated within the housing market: 1) populations nationwide and in Winthrop are aging. Older households have changing priorities in housing. Already, in Winthrop we can see a shortage of housing appropriate for seniors. 2) The economy in Winthrop is improving, but for continued growth requires an entry-level workforce. Such workers tend to be singles or young couples, with wages that cannot afford the typical new home.

Since the current trend in Winthrop is for the construction of mid-sized to large, single-family homes on large rural lots, it is clear that we are not responding to future demand. We need to provide strategies that will reduce the cost of housing, while not impacting its quality.

The cost of housing may be reduced primarily through reducing development costs. Mechanisms for doing this include: increasing the number of housing units that can be put on a parcel of land, extending sewer and water services, or permitting more attached housing units. Other mechanisms include: permitting more intensive use of existing buildings, or forming a non-profit housing developer.

The size of house lots, also known as “density,” is tied closely to the availability of public services and relation to the existing built-up areas. There are several areas inside the built-up area of Winthrop which could be developed at higher density. This would reduce the development pressure on rural land, increase the efficiency of public utilities, and improve the vitality of the village. Housing units could be added within the village by such measures as converting portions of the Winthrop Commerce Center to housing, redeveloping other properties (such as Royal Street) to mixed use, or permitting congregate housing for existing single family homes.

Winthrop’s village can also be expanded in limited areas based on sewer availability. Areas that have potential include Old Lewiston Road, Greenwood Ave., and Lakeview Ave.

Setting a Direction:

The following recommendations are intended to encourage a housing trend that will meet future demand, while also providing more flexibility and opportunity for property owners in growth areas of town:

Housing: Ensure that current zoning permits/encourages housing units as a “mixed use” in downtown commercial buildings.

Economic Development: Work with the owner of the Winthrop Commerce Center to promote the development of housing units in a portion of the building.

Housing: If not provided by the private sector within the next five years, form a non-profit housing authority or regional coalition to supply senior housing.

Economic Development: Encourage the redevelopment of property along Royal Street for a mixed use development.

Land Use: Amend the zoning ordinance to permit congregate housing (guest houses, room rentals) in the Village District.

Land Use: Judiciously expand the Village District or reduce the minimum lot size (density) requirements for other residential districts with access to public sewer.

Housing: Permit single accessory apartments with no additional lot size requirement in all residential districts.

Housing: Ensure that the zoning ordinance permits condominium form of development.

Planning Recommendations:

State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

Policies:

1. Encourage adequate workforce housing to support community and regional economic development.
2. Ensure that the zoning ordinance and building code encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.
3. Seek to achieve at least 60 new affordable housing units by 2030 through a combination of public and private efforts.
4. Encourage and support regional housing efforts in addressing workforce and affordable housing needs.

Strategies:

- a) Continue to permit mobile home parks in General Residential District. Consider permitting in Limited Residential District where public sewer is available.
- b) Ensure that current zoning permits/encourages housing units as a “mixed use” in downtown commercial buildings.

- c) Work with the owners of industrial/commercial properties within the Village District to promote redevelopment with mixed use including affordable housing.
- d) If not provided by the private sector within the next five years, form a non-profit housing authority or regional coalition to supply senior housing.
- e) Amend the zoning ordinance to permit congregate housing (guest houses, room rentals) in the Village District.
- f) Judiciously expand the Village District or reduce the minimum lot size (density) requirements for other residential districts with access to public sewer.
- g) Permit single accessory apartments with no additional lot size requirement in all residential districts.
- h) Clarify that the zoning ordinance permits condominium form of development.
- i) Pursue grant funding for energy efficiency improvements and education for homeowners and landlords.
- j) Provide training and capacity for the Code Enforcement Office prior to the mandate to enforce the statewide Uniform Building Code in 2012.

Chapter 6: Land Use and Development in Winthrop

As a community grows, its character is defined by the use of its land area. Our self-image as a small city, or a farm town, or a suburb, is molded from the actions of our neighbors in the development of their various enterprises.

It is quite common for individuals to live or work in a certain area because they appreciate the character of the community. What we do not sometimes realize is that a community's character shifts over time. If we do not wish to end up as part of a community we don't want, we need to manage that shift. This often means walking a fine line between letting our neighbors develop land in their own best interest, and imposing limits to protect the community's interest.

The chapter on development examines how the use of land in Winthrop is evolving now, and how that may be changing the community character. If we are facing trends that will not be welcome, we can make adjustments in how we manage our growth. Such trends may be the loss of open space, loss of productive farmland, increasing cost of public services, or lack of vitality in the village center.

Current Land Use Patterns:

Like many towns in Maine, Winthrop is the culmination of an historical growth pattern based on settlement over the course of some 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 settlement eventually led to the need for a mercantile center. The current Winthrop village was the logical candidate, being the passage between Maranacook and Annabessacook Lakes, and a source of water-generated power at Mill Stream.

The 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. The village remains the most densely settled square mile of town, but is not the development powerhouse it once was. Residential development has largely shifted to lakefronts and rural areas, a result of the abundant supply of land and the ease of access bought on by cheap gas and good roads. The energy for new commercial development is Route 202. Route 202 provides ease of access and high visibility, plus undeveloped land for growth. Modern commercial development tends to require more land – partly for parking for customers and employees living in the rural areas – and that land is not generally available in quantity inside the village.

Land Use Regulations:

These trends bring us up to the present day, and are reflected in Winthrop's current zoning ordinance. The first zoning ordinance was established in 1972. It has been expanded and amended several times since. The 1995 Comprehensive Plan contained two recommendations, to expand the village district and to adopt a building code, though neither seems to have been achieved. The 1995 plan also did not distinguish which of the districts should be considered growth areas and which rural areas, as required by state law.

The zoning ordinance establishes a number of individual districts. Five of them are directly related to shoreland zoning (provisions incorporated into the general zoning ordinance) or the public water supply, so do not directly influence development patterns. The other seven are described below:

The *Village District* covers the most densely developed portion of Winthrop, the current downtown area. The district extends generally between Route 133 and Highland Ave., from Route 202 to the southern tip of Maranacook. The area is characterized by closely-spaced, multi-story commercial buildings and houses. Because of the density of development, there is very little vacant land in this district. There are, however, several underutilized buildings and sites. Generally permitted uses include single- and multi-family homes, small business and light industry. Commercial/industrial development over a certain size (or other impact criteria) is not permitted unless in a pre-existing building. Based on the current pattern of development and the availability of public water and sewer, the minimum lot size is the smallest in town, at 3,500 square feet.

The *General Residential District* surrounds the village district and encompasses several existing neighborhoods. Portions of this district east of the village between Main Street and Route 202, and west of the village along Route 133 are extensively built-up, as is a portion of the district along Route 202 and Case Road near East Winthrop. Additional portions of the district south of the high school and north of Summer Street are developed along the road, but with undeveloped back land. All forms of housing are permitted, but commercial development is limited to low impact uses. Public sewer extends to only a portion of the district. In sewered areas, lots as small as 30,000 square feet are permitted, but elsewhere, the minimum is 40,000 square feet (if water is available) or 80,000 square feet, with 100 feet of road frontage required.

The *Limited Residential District* also abuts the village district for the most part. The largest segment of the district lies between Greenwood Ave., Memorial Drive, and Metcalf Road, and contains quite a bit of undeveloped (but mostly inaccessible) back land. Other segments include lands south of Route 202m west of Route 133 (High Street neighborhood), and along Route 202 east of East Winthrop. This district tends to encompass newer and higher-value subdivisions (though not entirely). There is very little existing commercial development in these neighborhoods, and additional commercial development is not permitted, except for home occupations. Also, only single-family homes are permitted. Mobile home parks are not allowed. Only a small percentage of this district is sewered. Sewered lots are permitted down to 40,000 square feet, unsewered lots must be 80,000 square feet. All lots must have at least 125 feet road frontage.

The *Limited Commercial District* is intended to provide a buffer area between general commercial development and existing neighborhoods. This district occupies 500 feet on either side of Route 202, between Carleton Pond Road and Main Street. This district was established in 2002, because those areas along Route 202 that had been zoned Rural were undergoing commercial development. This segment now has several small commercial buildings along it. Permitted uses include most forms of housing (excluding mobile home parks) and smaller commercial uses. The minimum lot size is 80,000 square feet, and frontage requirement is 150 feet. Sewer service is available on the trunk line that runs along Route 202.

The *General Commercial District* is intended to accommodate the highest-impact commercial uses. It includes two segments: the new Carleton Mill complex on Route 202 and a band 500 feet on either side of Route 202 south from Route 133 to the Monmouth town line. In addition to the mill tract, the Winthrop Business Park and progressive Distributors occupy this district, along with several smaller businesses and a few residences. Pretty much all commercial uses and light industry are permitted. New housing is not permitted in this district, unless a minority part of a mixed use project. The minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet, with 150 feet road frontage. Also, no more than 40 percent of the lot is permitted to be developed with impervious surface, in consideration of the proximity to the lakes.

The Industrial District

The *Rural District* includes all land not otherwise zoned, and encompasses roughly 60 percent of Winthrop's land area. Dimensional standards are similar to the Limited Residential District – 80,000 square foot lot size and 150 feet frontage – but other standards are relaxed. Small commercial uses are permitted, as well as multi-family housing and mobile home parks. Although this district is largely undeveloped, with large tracts of open land and forest, it is also the most attractive to development because of low per-acre development costs.

The zoning ordinance is complemented by a separate *Subdivision Ordinance*. The subdivision ordinance was adopted in 1990 to implement the state subdivision law, and amended as recently as 1995. The ordinance requires planning board review of creation of new lots. It does not govern the size or location of the lots, but standards offer a level of regulation with regard to the environmental impacts of development. The subdivision ordinance lacks many contemporary standards that would do a better job of ensuring efficient development while protecting public values, and should be updated.

Development Trends:

Winthrop does not have an efficient method of tracking recent development. A development tracking system would identify the number and type of residential or commercial units by year and location, allowing the Town to determine whether its regulatory and other measures to manage development are effective.

Over the past ten years, the town has experienced an average of about 31 new, year-round homes and 17 seasonal homes. Twenty-two of the units were part of a multi-family development. That leaves 291 new homes on individual lots.

Subdivision activity over the past decade has been sparse, but there has been a backlog of subdivision lots available for building, as well as many individual lots. Anecdotal evidence suggests that none of the new homes were built in the village district, a few in the General and Limited Residential districts, and the majority in the rural district or one of the shoreland zones.

Housing construction is primarily a function of economic factors. The supply of land in the rural district is probably the chief influence on siting new homes. Few homes could be built in the village because there is little vacant land there. The availability of public services – roads, sewer, and water – is also a factor. Most of the vacant land in the Limited and General Residential districts has not been built on because of lack of road frontage 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.

High density housing is an exception to this trend, primarily because public sewer service is almost essential. Without public sewer, a development must occupy land equivalent to the minimum lot size for each individual unit – generally two acres. On public sewer, only 5,000 square feet per additional unit are required. Winthrop has a number of different styles of multi-family units in the village or General Residential districts, with the potential to add more in under-developed properties such as the commerce center and Royal Street.

Commercial development responds to different priorities. While a commercial developer also wants to minimize the cost of development, he must also think of the demands of the functioning business. Most businesses require either good access to transportation or communications infrastructure or large volumes of water and sewer service. In any case, very few businesses locate in rural areas, and those that do so, are either grown internally (home occupations, etc.) or reliant on some rural resource or clientele.

In Winthrop, the two commercial draws are the village area and Route 202. The small lots along Main Street have constrained the size of development there. The two buildings vacated by Carleton Mills have absorbed a lot of redevelopment activity, which has taken some demand from new siting. But the Winthrop Business Park, located on Route 202 south of downtown, is nearly at capacity, and there appears to be pressure to expand the availability of commercial land.

The Land Use Plan for Winthrop:

A Land Use Plan consists of a map and narrative describing Winthrop’s growth and rural areas, and recommended changes to both regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to guide development. This version of the Land Use Plan will build upon the original (1996) comprehensive plan and current zoning ordinance. We start by testing the existing plan and ordinance to see a) if the recommendations were implemented, and b) if they were effective.

The 1996 plan did little to advance land use planning other than endorse the current version of the zoning ordinance. The only relevant recommendation in the plan was to consider expanding the Village District. (The plan also recommended adoption of a building code, but that does not belong in the land use section.) There is no evidence to indicate that this was done. However, several changes have been made to the zoning ordinance to

In the years since that plan was adopted, the State Planning Office has developed guidelines for directing development to growth areas and developing stronger strategies. Step 1 of that process is to determine whether the growth area(s) is of appropriate size.

Delineation of Growth Areas:

Maine's Growth Management Law requires towns preparing comprehensive plans to designate areas preferred for new development, termed "growth areas," and areas where new development should be discouraged, termed "rural areas." This approach can be viewed as the perpetuation of villages and countryside, or as the identification of portions of town with amenities and capacity for growth versus areas with environmental or other constraints. The law only says that growth areas must be "suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development."

The town cannot create a growth area so large that it would make the designation meaningless, so a growth area must be limited in size. In Winthrop, the size is dictated by our expected growth. The following calculation estimates the optimum size of our growth area.

- According to plan scenarios, new housing growth in Winthrop will be between 350 and 950 units by 2030. A growth area should accommodate at least 2/3 of projected growth. That means our goal should be to place between 230 and 630 new units in the growth area. For the purpose of calculation, we are estimating 500 new units overall, with a goal of 350 of them inside the growth area.
- In Winthrop, the existing growth area is the current built-up area – essentially the village plus portions of the General Residential, Limited Residential, and General Commercial (for commercial development) districts. Constraints to new development in these growth areas include the lack of availability of public sewer to portions of the area, and the lack of vacant land. There are possibilities for infill and redevelopment, which we estimate to be able to accommodate 50 new units. That leaves us with a goal of placing 300 new units either inside undeveloped areas of the growth area, or within newly-designated growth area.
- Calculating acreage needed for housing demand requires substantial assumptions. Winthrop's zoning contains multiple districts and lot size requirements. The Village and General Residential Districts seem to be designed for the majority of housing growth. If we assume an average lot size of 40,000 square feet, 300 new units would occupy about 275 acres of land. However, as a practical matter, new homes are seldom built on the minimum lot size, and additional land is necessary to allow for roads, drainage, etc. The rule of thumb is to triple the minimum to arrive at an "average land per housing unit." For Winthrop, this estimate would be about 825 acres.

- An effective way of reducing the total demand for acreage would be extension of sewer service. All zoning districts permits housing at a higher density when connected to sewer. If, hypothetically, public sewer were available to all growth areas, demand could be met on as little as 210 acres.
- Compare these figures to the growth areas depicted in the 1996 plan. The plan showed 1,150 acres in General Residential (GR). With 40 percent occupied by existing development, that leaves about 450 acres available for development.
- Additional land must be figured for commercial growth. Estimating commercial demand is impractical at the local level because the sample size is too small to draw conclusions. However, the plan projects that 340 new jobs would be needed to support growth in the next 20 years. The amount of land area required varies by type of business, ranging from approximately 0.15 acres per industrial worker, to 0.05 acre per retail worker, to 0.019 acres per office worker. A typical mixed use development requires 0.027 acres per employee. 340 employees would require nine acres. Using a factor of (3x), this would yield a demand of 27 acres of commercially zoned land. Approximately 210 acres are in commercial growth. This area is roughly 80 percent developed, leaving 42 acres available for development.
- Based on this analysis, the greatest need is to add acreage for residential growth. Some demand can be alleviated by adding housing units in the village and limited commercial, but we should still be looking at almost doubling the amount of land available for growth.

Once we have established the target size of growth areas, the next step is to find a place for them. The Growth Management Act specifies only that a growth area must be “suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development.” “Suitability” may be subjective, but we can generally assume that means no major constraints such as steep slopes or wetlands.

From a more practical perspective, we want to identify a growth area that makes sense for public services. Some services are directly location-sensitive -- public water and sewer service, and road access. Others are a little less so – proximity to a fire station, recreation area, or school. Development should be encouraged where it is accessible to public water, sewer, and good roads, and preferably near schools and existing service centers. There are secondary considerations as well, such as what’s happening across town boundaries, or the location of lake watersheds. Finally – and most importantly – new areas designated for growth should be a logical extension of existing growth districts.

Recommendations for Changes to the Land Use Plan/Zoning Map:

This plan proposes the following strategies for accommodating growth within growth areas:

- Combine the existing General Residential and Limited Residential districts into a single, “Residential” district, with the permitted uses and dimensional requirements of the existing General Residential District. The general effect of this action would be to permit

more uses (specifically multi-family and mobile home development) in the LR District. It would also permit smaller lot sizes for those portions of the district with access to public sewer.

- Since only portions of either district are currently served by sewer, the districts are essentially bifurcated both now and as proposed – portions with sewer can accommodate higher densities than those without sewer. There is no reason why this distinction could not be extended to defining permitted uses as well. For example, within the proposed residential district, multi-family units might only be permitted where connected to sewer.
- The proposed residential district should be enlarged, as indicated on the Future Land Use Plan Map. Since the current zoning (Rural) is already non-restrictive, this extension will not have a great effect on permitted uses or lot sizes. Combined with a plan to expand the reach of public sewer, however, it will provide additional acreage to accommodate growth. The proposed expansion areas include:
 - Old Lewiston Road, as far as Cross Road;
 - Turkey Lane, as far as Soper Road;
 - Land between Soper Road and Old Lewiston Road, for roughly 4,500 feet;
 - Route 133, to as far as the Pamela Drive and Ruby Ridge subdivisions;
 - Sturtevant Hill Road to Nottingham Road (north side) and Grand Hill Place (south);
 - Route 41 to Maranacook Road (east side) and Sherwood Forest subdivision (west)
- Expansion of the residential district into these areas may be coordinated with a plan to extend public sewer. In other words, changes to the zoning map may not be implemented until such time as public sewer is available. It also means, however, that a landowner may petition to have his land re-zoned if he takes it on himself to pay for the sewer extension.
- Combine the existing General Commercial and Limited Commercial Districts into a single “commercial” district. This district would front Route 202, excluding only land currently zoned for shoreland, watershed or residential uses. Because of the value of Route 202 for mobility, however, this should be done only in conjunction with stronger standards in the zoning ordinance to limit future access points and prevent strip development.
- Change the zoning for the commercial district to include high-density residential as a permitted (conditional) use. Include performance standards to minimize conflicts between commercial and residential uses within the district.
- Wherever land shifts from lower density to higher density permitted uses, there is legitimate concern over the impacts on the neighborhood and property values. These concerns should be addressed through a review and improvement of development standards in zoning and subdivision ordinances for better neighborhood protection.

Implementing Growth Policies:

It is not enough to designate a growth area and hope that 2/3 of new development occurs there. We need to recommend municipal strategies that will either encourage new development to locate in the growth area or discourage it from locating in the rural area. The plan must contain specific recommendations – either regulatory or non-regulatory – designed to encourage growth in Winthrop’s growth area. At the same time, we must recognize that, short of the government actually building the houses, we cannot guarantee that our policies will provide sufficient motivation.

General Recommendations:

1. Refer to Winthrop’s community vision (Chapter 2) when developing specific strategies to encourage or discourage development;
2. Amend Winthrop’s zoning and subdivision ordinances to promote more fair and efficient permitting procedures;
3. Amend zoning and subdivision ordinances generally to incorporate current technology and standards for better quality and more cost-efficient development;
4. Develop a development tracking and reporting system that will allow the planning board to evaluate the effectiveness of growth management policies. The planning board should conduct an annual review of plan implementation effectiveness;
5. Meet periodically with planning boards from Monmouth and Manchester, to discuss issues of development along mutual boundaries;

Recommendations to Direct Growth to Growth Areas:

6. Work with the Winthrop Utilities District to develop a plan and financing strategy to extend sewer service within existing and proposed growth areas. The financing strategy may include grants, bonding, Tax Increment Financing, Impact fees, or other non-taxation sources.
7. Amend the zoning ordinance to reduce lot size and frontage requirements for development on public sewer.
8. Add or amend performance standards in zoning and subdivision ordinance to accommodate higher density development. Included in these could be procedures for *phosphorous credits*, allowing more intensive development in lake watersheds, and requirements for interconnecting road extensions, to reduce congestion and permit quieter neighborhoods.
9. Work assertively with developers and WKEDA to develop/redevelop properties within the growth area with potential for significant residential or commercial impacts.
10. Amend the zoning ordinance to encourage mixed use and small scale commercial and to permit congregate-style housing in the village area.

11. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other entities to improve amenities and attractions in the village area and minimize commercial vacancies.
12. Prioritize road improvements to give preference to growth area roads.
13. Strengthen existing standards in the zoning ordinance to manage or combine commercial access and limit strip development along Route 202, such as limiting the overall size of retail developments.

Recommendations to Discourage Growth in Rural Areas:

14. Continue to permit only low-impact commercial uses in the rural district.
15. Continue the clustered housing provisions in the current zoning ordinance. If they are not often used, consider making mandatory in certain areas, such as lake watersheds or critical resource areas, or provide density incentive for clustering.
16. Amend the zoning ordinance to prohibit mobile home parks in the rural area.
17. Amend the subdivision ordinance to limit the number of access points from subdivision lots onto public roads.
18. Amend the subdivision ordinance to discourage town acceptance of private roads in the rural area, and require the establishment of homeowners' road associations responsible for maintenance.
19. Develop and implement an Open Space Plan, which will identify critical natural 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.)
20. Establish or assign a municipal committee to actively promote the use of rural land for appropriate economic activity, such as local farms and farmstands, woodlots, eco-tourism.

Chapter 7: Public Facilities and Service in Winthrop

Municipal Services:

The Town of Winthrop, by itself or in cooperation with neighboring towns, offers comprehensive public facilities and services to residents, workers, and visitors. The following section contains a brief 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, and code enforcement officer, as well as meeting space for municipal boards and committees. The town office is open for the normal conduct of business 45 hours a week.

The town office is located in space within the Winthrop Elementary School on Highland Ave. The space is separated from the school, with its own entrance and parking. The location is a result of a move from the old town hall within the past decade, so 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 state police and the Kennebec County Sheriff. The department currently consists of ten full time officers and five reserve officers.

The department is housed in the old town hall, building, which was remodeled in 2009 to better accommodate it. No additional changes or expansions should be necessary for the foreseeable future. Police equipment replacement is scheduled as part of the town's CIP.

In the year ending June 30, 2008, Winthrop Police responded to 4,716 calls, and average of 13 per day, but a 2 percent decrease from 2007. The large majority of these calls were for citizen assists, animal complaints, or traffic accidents. Actual crimes totaled only 126. On average, police response time was under five minutes. The department reported a crime rate of less than half that of either the state or Kennebec County, with a clearance rate of 50 percent.

The Winthrop Fire Department is an all-volunteer department consisting of an average of 25-30 members, plus five junior firefighters. The department responds to fire, smoke, and accident calls, as well as mutual aid calls with neighboring towns. In 2007-08, the department responded to 128 calls – 29 accidents, nine structure fires, eleven chimney fires, and 12 calls for mutual aid. One of the most important functions of the department is training to keep up with modern practices and building standards. Between, training and response time, volunteers contributed more than 8,300 hours of service to the town.

The existing fire hall is undersized and outdated. The department plans to erect a new fire hall on property it is acquiring on Route 202 adjacent to Carleton Mill. Federal stimulus money is being sought for the building, while \$1,000,000 has been allocated in the CIP. The CIP also funds equipment replacement. One of the five trucks in the department was replaced in 2009. Personal equipment costs an average of \$3,000 per member, which limits the number of volunteers. Funding for training is also a limiting factor.

The Winthrop Regional Communications Center provides dispatching services to Winthrop, Wayne, Wales, Readfield, Mt. Vernon, Vienna, Fayette, and Leeds. Initial PSAP (E911) calls come in to the State Communications Center in Augusta and are forwarded to Winthrop's center. In 2007-08, the center logged over 7,324 calls for police, fire, or ambulance. Though the communications center operates effectively, there have been studies at the state level recommending further regionalization of PSAP and dispatching services, so Winthrop's facility future is unknown.

Ambulance service is also provided on a regional basis to Winthrop, Wayne, Mt. Vernon, Readfield, Manchester, and Fayette. In 2007-08, the service responded to 1,660 calls for service, roughly 60 percent from Winthrop. Depending on the location and nature of the call, transport may be to any of six different hospitals. The ambulance service consists of three full-time employees and another 33 part-time EMT's and paramedics.

The service moved into a new facility in 2008. The new building can house four unit; the service currently owns three. The building is expected to be adequate for at least fifteen years. A reserve fund for vehicle replacement is established in the town's CIP.

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

Public Health:

Public Works:

Public works functions include the highway department, waste management, and cemeteries.

The highway department consists of a foreman and four full-time crew, with 13 pieces of equipment. They are responsible for winter and summer road maintenance, and stormwater drainage facilities. More detailed information on road conditions and needs is located in chapter

9. The highway garage is located at 36 Main Street. The garage is sufficient for current needs, but Winthrop is one of the few towns in Maine without a salt storage shed. Construction of a shed is planned for in the CIP.

The transfer station is located off of Route 202 and is run by a staff of five. The facility was built in 1989, with construction bonds recently paid off. Waste is transported to the Penobscot Energy Recovery facility in Orrington. As a charter member of that facility, the cost of waste disposal is about \$45 a ton, compared to retail cost of \$72.

The transfer station includes a recycling facility. In 2007-08, the station reported 3,207 tons of household trash, 751 tons of demolition material, over 3,000 tires, and about 1,000 tons of miscellaneous recyclables. Income from recyclables is about \$60,000 per year. No significant improvements will be needed for the facility in the near future.

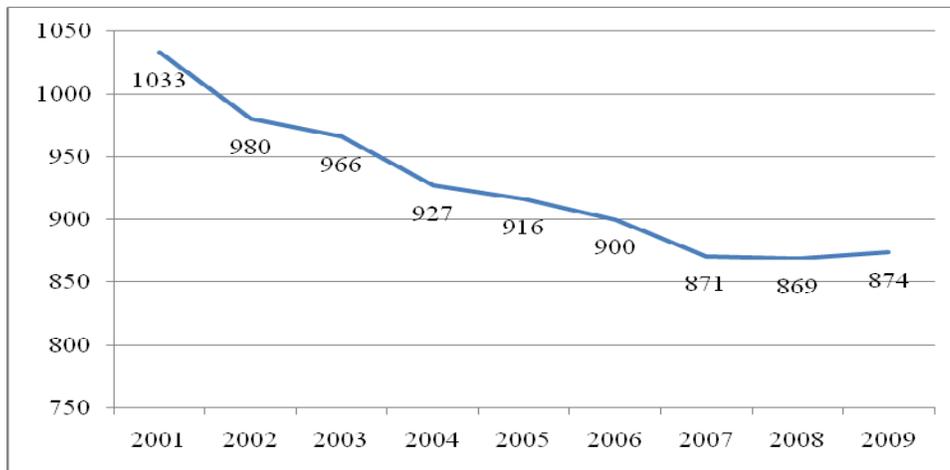
Winthrop is responsible for the care of five cemeteries: Glenside, Maple, Lakeview, East Winthrop, and Metcalf. By far the most active cemetery is Glenside. Recent expansion provided enough capacity at Glenside for at least five to ten years, and additional expansion is feasible.

Education:

Public education in Winthrop is provided by the Winthrop School Department. Facilities include the Winthrop Grade School, on Highland Ave., and the Winthrop Middle School and High School, located together on the Rambler Road campus at the western edge of the downtown. The middle school and high school were both built within the past decade, and provide excellent learning environments. The Winthrop school system is commonly acknowledged as one of the top systems in Maine.

Declining enrollment has been an issue in the past, and threatens to force up the costs of education. As can be seen in Figure 7-1, below, enrollment was over 1,000 in 2001. It appears to have leveled off since 2007, but the trend bears watching. As the demographic of Winthrop changes with the aging of the baby boom, there may be fewer families in town.

Figure 7-1: Public School Enrollment -- April 1, 2001-2009



Despite the newer facilities and the declining enrollment, per pupil costs are about average for the area. For the 2008-09 school year, the average per-pupil operating cost was \$9,277. This compares with the Monmouth school system, at \$8,491, or Maranacook CSD, at \$10,489. Average per-pupil costs statewide were \$9,625. Winthrop has slightly lower elementary costs and slightly higher secondary costs than the state average.

Leisure Services:

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

The C.M. Bailey Library serves Winthrop residents from its location on Bowdoin Street downtown. The library is staffed by three employees plus volunteers and is open 39 hours a week. The library counts over 48,000 print materials and 18,000 other media materials. The facility has done a good job of keeping up with contemporary media, including downloadable audio books. Both the collection and the circulation have been expanding in recent years.

The existing library building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Plans are underway for an expansion next door onto the lot formerly housing the Masonic Hall. A consultant is working with the library on elements to be included in the expansion. The expansion could house a meeting room, community center, technology center, and/or historical book collection.

Winthrop’s recreation services are provided jointly with the Winthrop YMCA. The majority of recreation facilities fall under the heading of “outdoor recreation” and are discussed in Chapter 8. Significant facilities include the town beach and Norcross Point, tennis courts, a skate park, and ball fields below the grade school, and a new teen center in the old ambulance building. Programs include a summer swim program, sports camps year-round, and arts and crafts. Almost all of the programs and facilities are oriented towards young people, though there are adult tennis and golf tournaments.

Utilities:

Public water and sewer service is provided to a portion of Winthrop by the Winthrop Utilities District. The district has its own Board of Directors. The systems roughly parallel each other on Route 202 and the downtown area. A small portion of East Winthrop is served by the Augusta Water District. The sewer system feeds into the Augusta trunkline on Route 202, that carries waste (including septage) to the Augusta Sanitary Treatment Plant. The trunkline is owned jointly by Winthrop, Monmouth, and Manchester. Sewer and water services are profiled as a Community Issue, elsewhere in this chapter.

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, and has been a factor in attracting call centers and other tech companies to town.

Fiscal Management:

Community Issue: Promoting the Town

Exploring the Issue:

The comprehensive plan recognizes that a part of our vision of a healthy, growing community is attracting and retaining vital community members. Self-promotion is not often recognized as a public service which plays a critical role in community development.

Winthrop wishes to keep our current community character, plus attract new residents and businesses that will contribute to its vitality. We need to put ourselves in the position of a salesman, to market Winthrop, using conventional marketing analysis and techniques to identify what we have to sell, who our buyers are, and how we find them.

What can Winthrop offer as a community? How can we distinguish ourselves from the dozens of other small towns in Maine with a pretty village, good schools, and developable land? Prospective residents are in the market for a house (or building site), but also for the amenities in a community. They look for proximity to their job, and more and more they are looking for a place where they and their children can have fun and be healthy.

In a brainstorming of community assets, several perspectives come to the surface. The first, of course, is our lakes location. The next is the village – not just the existing setting but the potential to take a lot more advantage of assets like the mill building and the lakeshore. “Healthy” and “Green” are two big buzzwords in community development today, and Winthrop has something to sell in both these areas. Prospective businesses look for property to develop and the potential workforce. Winthrop’s role as an employment and service center, while still maintaining its “smallness,” can be a selling point.

Who are we marketing to? Marketing to young families means emphasizing the healthy community, good schools, and recreation opportunities. Marketing to seniors and “empty nesters” means an emphasis on walkable destinations, scenic and cultural assets, and access to health and emergency services. Marketing to entrepreneurs and businesses means profiling your labor force, properties, training opportunities, and access to rail, air, and highways.

We must also remember to communicate with those who’ve already made Winthrop their choice. By recognizing why current residents and businesses are here, we avoid the temptation to turn Winthrop into something different, “killing the goose that laid the golden eggs.” We have plenty of input from our visioning sessions and public meetings on what we like about Winthrop; it’s a matter of incorporating that into our message.

How do we communicate? The method of communication must match the audience. Winthrop has a very fine website, oriented towards current residents, but which could also be a marketing tool. This is a passive news source (you must make the effort to find it), which could be complemented by an e-newsletter. The town could reach prospective residents, either tourists or house hunters, with a snappy brochure stressing year-round recreation and the village. A business directory could lead prospective businessmen to recognize an opening, and attract more local commerce.

Marketing is traditionally a function of civic groups, such as a chamber of commerce, rather than town government. Town government can assist these groups by providing data and assisting in distribution. But the most important function of local government is to invest in creating the elements of a community that are worth promoting.

Setting a Direction:

We know that we want to do a better job of communicating Winthrop’s advantages to promote the kind of growth we want. Therefore, we will need a marketing plan. At the same time, we know a few things that we can do to immediately make the town more marketable. These recommendations move us forward in marketing while at the same time building our assets.

Public Services: Develop a marketing implementation plan over the coming 3-year period.

- Aimed at entrepreneurs, seniors, young families;
- Promote the downtown, the community, the lakes region;
- Utilize both electronic and traditional media;
- Identify outlets – realtors, tourists, media;
- Coordinate with WKEDA and Winthrop Area C of C.

Public Services: Implement steps to make the village more attractive and accessible.

Economic Development: Maintain an inventory of available land and buildings.

Recreation: Improve visibility and access to town beach, Mt. Pisgah

Public Services: Improve coordination and information on offerings of library, historic, cultural opportunities and events.

Public Services: Develop an e-newsletter to complement the town website.

Transportation: Develop and implement a pedestrian/bicycle plan for the village.

Community Issue: Public Water and Sewer Service

Exploring the Issue:

The availability of public water supply and sewer systems is a principal factor in growth and development. The availability of public sewer enables home-builders 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.

Winthrop is 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, a good distance up Memorial Drive and Annabessacook Road, and Route 202 west of the downtown from an intake on Upper narrows Pond and a 525,000 gallon storage tank. The sewer system serves the downtown area, Memorial Drive, East Winthrop and Route 202, although portions of the highway are under pressure and inaccessible. The “trunk line” along Route 202 is part of a multi-town system which transports sewerage to the Augusta Sanitary Treatment Plant.

Sewer management in Winthrop faces a bit of a dilemma. The closure of the Carleton Mill eliminated the single largest contributor to the system, leaving the lines very much underutilized and the ratepayers bearing larger burdens. On the other hand, 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 70’s 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 that extensions of sewer (or water) lines must be funded by grants or private developers. While this has occurred several times in the past few decades, it is a random occurrence, not tied in to 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 the comprehensive plan for growth.

Neither the water nor the sewer system has significant capacity or maintenance issues. Both are in very 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 Ave., south of Route 202;
- Route 133 north of the village;
- East of Greenwood Ave., 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. New hookups currently pay only the cost of running individual sewer or water 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.

Setting a Direction:

The challenge is to extend sewer and water service to new growth areas (or within existing unsewered growth areas) without placing a burden on existing rate-payers. A parallel challenge is to increase utilization within the existing system. Planned expansion of commercial and residential development must closely coordinate with public sewer and water availability:

Public Services: Develop a master plan for expansion of sewer service within existing growth areas and into new growth areas as depicted by the land use plan (? Old Lewiston Road, Greenwood, Route 133?).

Public Services: Identify and implement a funding stream for financing of the top priority sewer and water extensions.

Land Use: Increase the permissible density of development on sewerred lots within the General Residential and Limited Residential Districts.

Water Resources: Continue acquisition of property or development rights for land within the watershed of Upper narrows pond (water source).

Economic Development: Identify need for expansion of commercial development land and apply for grant funding to extend public sewer if necessary.

Planning Recommendations:

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

Policies:

1. To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.
2. To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.
3. To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.
4. To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the town.
5. Direct at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of new, growth-related capital investments into areas designated for growth in the Future Land Use Plan.
6. Reduce citizens' tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limits.

Strategies:

- a) Establish a new fire station on the Route 202 site recently acquired.
- b) Work with the Bailey Library trustees and other interests to expand the library and provide multi-use offerings.
- c) Construct a sand-salt storage building on Annabessacook Road site and utilize other buildings on that site.
- d) Develop a marketing implementation plan over the coming 3-year period.
 - o Aimed at entrepreneurs, seniors, young families;
 - o Promote the downtown, the community, the lakes region;
 - o Utilize both electronic and traditional media;
 - o Identify outlets – realtors, tourists, media;
 - o Coordinate with WKEDA and WACC.
- e) Implement steps to make the village more attractive and accessible, including working with WACC. and private businesses to establish public bathrooms in the downtown area.
- f) Improve coordination and information on offerings of library, historic, cultural opportunities and events.
- g) Develop an e-newsletter to complement the town website.
- h) Develop a master plan for expansion of sewer service within existing growth areas and into new growth areas as depicted by the land use plan.

- i) Identify and implement a funding stream for financing of the top priority sewer and water extensions.

Chapter 8: Outdoor Recreation in Winthrop

Outdoor recreation is a valuable element of community life, particularly in a town such as Winthrop, with so many opportunities to explore. Winthrop has large expanses of undeveloped open space, as well as multiple lakes for water-based recreation, and a good recreational infrastructure.

Outdoor recreation can generally be classified into two categories: organized, or “active,” recreation – usually supported by developed facilities and programs, and unorganized, or “passive,” recreation, often with supporting facilities, but more a solitary or family activity. Both are addressed here. Not addressed are indoor forms of recreation, such as the Y, or school and senior programs; they are described as public facilities and services.

Table 8-1: Winthrop Outdoor Recreation Facilities (from 1995 plan)

Area	Size in Acres	Ownership	Facilities
High School Playfield	5	School Dept.	Athletic Fields: Baseball, football, soccer, general play
Grade School Playfield	.5	School Dept.	Athletic Field: Softball, general play
Middle School Playfield	3	School Dept.	Athletic Fields: general Play, 3-miles of multi-use trails (run/ski)
Project GROW Playground	1	School Dept.	Playground equipment: swings, slides, etc.
Norcross Point	1	Town	Gazebo, benches, BBQ grills, bathrooms, boat launch, parking
Maranacook Beach	1	Town	300 ft beach, benches, swim dock
East Winthrop Beach	1	Town	Unsupervised Swim Area
Fire House Field	1	Town	Softball diamond
Charles Street	6.2	Town	Undeveloped, Project Park, nature & ski trails
Nature Area Route 202	9	Town	Trails
Davis Fields	2	Dick Davis/Softball Assoc.	2 Softball Diamonds
Scott Fields	2	Harry & Helen Scott/WYAL	2 Little League Baseball diamonds
Mt. Pisgah	90	State, Forestry	Trails, spring
Route 202, DOT Land	17	State DOT	Undeveloped Land

Route 133 Rest Area	1	State Fish & Wildlife	Carry in boat access to Berry Pond
Upper Narrows Rest Area	1	State Fish & Wildlife	Carry in boat access to Upper Narrows
Marshview		Private	Carry in boat access to Little Cobbossee
E. Winthrop Cemetery		Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	Carry in boat access to Cobbossee
Lakeside Motel		Private	Carry in boat access to Cobbossee
Lower Narrows Rest Area		Private	Carry in boat access to Lower Narrows
Trolley Bed		Private/Many owners	Partially developed trail
Snowmobile Trails		Private/Many owners	Developed trails maintained by Hillandalers Club
State YMCA Camp of Maine	200	State YMCA	Resident camp; conference facilities (seasonal)
Camp Metchewana	300	Methodist Churches of Maine	Resident camp; conference facilities (Seasonal)
Perry Island & part of Hodgdon Island	6+	Kennebec Land Trust	Undeveloped Land

Organized Recreation

As illustrated in Table 8-1, Winthrop has a wide assortment of organized recreation opportunities, 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. There are tennis courts located below the grade school. There is a well-developed town beach and boat launch on Norcross Point. And there are two residential summer camps that not only provide opportunities, but draw activity into town.

Most organized outdoor recreation in Winthrop is managed by the Winthrop YMCA. The Y offers swim and tennis lessons, camps in activities ranging from soccer to karate, and even out-of-town recreation trips. These programs are primarily for children.

The town beach, on Maranacook Lake at the northern end of the downtown area, has supervised swimming during the summer months, a playground, picnic tables, and bathrooms. This is discussed in more detail below and in the Community Issue elsewhere in this chapter.

The two residential camps include the State YMCA Camp, on a 200 acre site adjacent to Cobbossee Lake, and Camp Mechawana, a Methodist Church camp on 300 acres adjacent to Lower Narrows Pond and Annabessacook. Both of these camps operate on a reservation system and are open to all.

Unorganized Recreation:

Unorganized recreation can be further divided into water-based and land-based activities.

Water Access and Activities:

Winthrop has an abundance of lakes for water-based activities, but the limiting factor tends to be in the available access points. The town has limited swimming and boat launch facilities, as described below:

- The Norcross Point facility provides boat access onto Maranacook Lake just north of the downtown area. The boat launch is run by the town and consists of a 20 foot wide, paved ramp and launching platform with floats. Parking is available for eight vehicles with trailers, plus another 16 spaces, shared with the adjoining town beach.
- The Town Beach is a 300 foot sand beach adjacent to Norcross Beach. It has a supervised swim area with float, and port-a-potty rest rooms. It has no expansion capacity, and is open only to town residents and guests. See Community Issue later in this chapter.
- The Cobbosseecontee Lake facility is located off Turtle Run Road in East Winthrop. It is owned by the state Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. It is a considerably more rustic facility, with a gravel entry road and no designated parking.
- There is also 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 Rest Area (Lower narrows).

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 Cobbosseecontee Lake, and a boat ramp into Maranacook just south of Readfield Village. Since Carleton Pond is basically off-limits to watercraft, this leaves only Annabessacook among major lakes without public access.

Except for Apple Valley Lake, which is primarily a bog, and Carleton Pond, which is surrounded by conservation land, each of Winthrop's lakes provides a range of recreation opportunities, including fishing, boating, swimming, wildlife spotting, and ice fishing. The greatest opportunities for these activities lie with shoreline residents and landowners, but the general public can find access for the most part.

Land-based Activities

Land-based passive recreation consists of such activities as hunting, hiking, bird-watching, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and cycling. It takes place throughout town, but depends 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, but is more often in easements or landowner

agreements permitting public use of private lands. In fact, continued access to these opportunities is contingent upon the continuing good will of landowners.

Snowmobiling, though occasionally loud, is considered passive form of recreation. 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.

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. Very 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 and health asset.

There are many casual and developed hiking and walking trails in Winthrop, including the old trolley bed, the Route 202 nature area, and the high school-middle school complex. But perhaps the best known and most extensive network of trails is located 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 has holdings of over 600 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, along with Kennebec Land Trust, has established a management plan, emphasizing low-impact recreation uses, such as hiking, picnicking, nature education, and primitive camping. Development for these uses is ongoing. Eventual plans call for a trail connection into downtown Winthrop. Mt. Pisgah is by far the most outstanding land-based passive recreation asset in the region.

Analysis and Key Issues:

The key issue to be addressed with regard to outdoor recreation is whether we are prepared for future demand. We need to look at expected demographic and economic changes, as well as our overall vision for future direction, to determine what the nature of future recreation demand will be.

For example, we recognize that our population profile is aging, partly reflected in a decline in the numbers of young people (15 percent fewer in 2000 than 1980.) We have a good assortment of programs for young people. If those programs are satisfactory now, we have but to maintain them, as there is likely to be lower demand in the future. That is, unless something else happens to attract many more young families and “turn over” the demographic.

At the other end of the chronological spectrum, an aging population means more seniors. In the past, the kind of recreation demand generated by this dynamic has been more community- and indoor-oriented, but the current generation of retiring seniors is much more likely to be the

“active retirement” type. These tend to show a preference for outdoor activities, such as boating, cycling, and hiking. Winthrop may have a supply of these opportunities now, but it may not be adequate, and demand is likely to rise. This demand will be augmented if Winthrop’s overall vision is to develop into a resort and retirement community.

Winthrop has excellent prospects, both on the organized side, with its existing facilities and working relationship with the YMCA, and on the unorganized side, with its lakes and open space, and respective relationships with the Cobbossee Watershed District and Kennebec Land Trust. In these areas, it is merely a matter of planning for future demand and financing the necessary facilities.

There are a few perceived needs that should be addressed:

There is no “official” public access to Annabessacook Lake. This may not be a priority need, as there are plenty of other lakes and access points in the town and region. While there is also no public access to Carleton Pond, this is a public drinking water source, with virtually the entire frontage owned by the Augusta Water District.

The Mt. Pisgah Community Conservation Area needs to be developed according to the plan. This includes additional investment in trails and facilities, maintenance costs, and a possible trail connection to downtown.

Winthrop has a large potential demand for bicycle trails, both for recreation and transportation. While bicycles can currently use paved roads, these are not as safe as separated trails, especially Route 202. The town should plan for development of an off-road trail system, starting with linking destination points, such as the schools, town beach, and downtown.

The town also needs to ask itself if traditional access to recreation opportunities over private lands is shrinking or in jeopardy. The trend across the country is for landowners to restrict access, either to assert private property rights or to avoid potentially liability or destruction of property. In many places, this results in a loss of opportunities that the town has taken for granted for decades.

Community Issue: Community Recreational Events

Exploring the Issue:

Outdoor recreation is often viewed exclusively as team sports or solitary exercise, but it can also become a fun activity that the entire community can be involved in. These may or may not involve exercise and competition; they always involve mental and physical diversion from everyday activities.

An events calendar is something that many towns do for economic development as well as recreation. Community events draw visitors and energize the local economy. Downtown organizations regularly host events, to get people to appreciate downtowns. Winthrop already enjoys events such as Fourth of July Fireworks, the Sidewalk Art Show, and the Holiday Parade.

There are dozens of other possibilities, ranging from music and Norcross Point to ice sculptures and craft shows. The number and variety of events is limited only by the time and money we have to plan and implement them.

The time it takes to organize events is the principal challenge. The chamber of commerce has coordinated several events in the past, but as an all-volunteer organization is strapped for time. If we are to expand our event offerings, we must invest in a paid coordinator, with the resources to make things happen. A coordinator could work for or with the town's recreation committee or the chamber. Fund-raising would be mostly from private sources.

Setting a Direction:

Strategies recommended to address this issue include:

Recreation: Establish a calendar of year-round community events. Start slowly and expand as time and money are available.

Public Services: Investigate hiring a coordinator and fund-raising activities to support the calendar of events.

Public Services: Incorporate events into promotional literature, town newsletters, website.

Economic Development: Work with the chamber of commerce to coordinate events with downtown store hours, parking demand, sidewalk use, etc.

A tentative schedule for community events is as follows:

- January: Winter Weekend, including ice fishing derby, showshoe races, snowman
- February: Jazz and Mardi Gras events
- March: Maple Sunday activities
- April: Earth Day and garden kickoff events
- May: Memorial Day parade and car show
- June: Lake Days
- July: Independence Day events
- August: Art Show, book sale, concerts
- September: Harvest Festival
- October: Octoberfest and bike events
- November: Old Winthrop/New Winthrop Day
- December: Holiday Parade and Craft Show

Community Issue: Norcross Point and the Town Beach

Exploring the Issue:

One of Winthrop's most valuable local assets is the public access to Maranacook Lake at Norcross Point. Included in this facility are a town park, a boat launch, and a residents-only

beach with swimming area and float. The point is only a few blocks from downtown Winthrop, but is nearly unnoticed by casual visitors to town.

The point and beach are space-constrained. With water on one side, Memorial Drive on the other, and bisected by Mill Stream, there is no room for expansion. Parking is limited to a few dozen spaces, most occupied by vehicles with boat trailers. Visitors often park at the VFW lot across the street. There are swim programs and other recreation activities organized by the YMCA. There is a gazebo at the point and port-a-potties during the summer. Recently, the beach has become a popular teen hangout, prompting more demand for police patrols.

Nevertheless, the park's popularity and proximity to downtown gives it a lot of potential for expansion of its visibility. Both the point and the beach have a long tradition of providing family recreation for residents. Non-residents are not currently permitted, but in the past have been allowed and charged a fee. The point has the potential to host more community activities, ranging from festivals to music concerts. The beach has deteriorated somewhat but can be restored and revitalized. A veteran's memorial has been proposed for the point.

Setting a Direction:

Norcross Point and the town beach are a wonderful community asset, with potential to become even more. We can increase the public's access to recreation opportunities, as well as providing an attraction to downtown Winthrop. Because of the location and site restraints, any improvements must be done with a lot of forethought and communication among users and neighbors.

Economic Development: Establish Norcross Point as a performance venue. Develop facilities and management structure to attract music and other forms of family entertainment. Coordinate with other downtown activities.

Economic Development: Seek out a private vendor to provide canoe and kayak rentals at the point.

Recreation: Restore and stabilize sand at the beach.

Recreation: Establish student/volunteer patrols at the beach to reduce litter, vandalism, abuse.

Public Facilities: Sponsor an annual (end-of-summer) meeting with abutters, to discuss problems and areas for improvement for the following season.

Recreation: Determine what added costs and potential revenues would accrue from allowing non-residents to use the facilities.

Planning Recommendations:

State Goal: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for citizens, including access to surface waters.

Policies:

- 1 Maintain or upgrade existing facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
- 2 Preserve open space for recreation.
- 3 Seek or continue 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.

Strategies:

- a) Re-establish a standing recreation committee, to address gaps in recreation programs such as adult and senior recreation.
- b) Improve school-based recreation facilities: middle school soccer field, high school track, high school fitness trail.
- c) Address erosion problems at Norcross Point and the town beach; restore sand.
- d) Determine what added costs and potential revenues would accrue from allowing non-residents to use the town beach.
- e) Maintain and improve the trails and accommodations at Mt. Pisgah.
- f) Pursue the development of a walking path network in the downtown, along Mill Stream, Norcross Point.
- g) Develop and promote annual events, such as art shows, a bass tournament, summer festivals and townwide celebrations.
- h) Market Winthrop recreation opportunities as part of overall marketing plan to local residents and visitors.
- i) Work with the Kennebec Land Trust to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
- j) Provide education regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property.

Chapter 9: Winthrop's Transportation Systems

As our community becomes more complex and interwoven with our neighbors, the need for a quality transportation system becomes more and 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 to schools, services, shopping, and recreation. And tourists and summer residents need a way to get here.

The transportation system to this point has grown somewhat organically; that is, we grew up from cowpaths and wagon trails to the highways we use now. As the cost of building and maintaining the system grows, though, we suddenly have to begin planning for how to manage it with more limited resources. This addresses how we can provide the most cost-effective transportation choices, while the land use and economic development chapters also address how we manage development to make the best use of the system.

System Elements and Issues:

State Highways:

The backbone of our transportation system is the state highway system, designed to accommodate motor vehicles. "State highways" also include the category of state aid roads, maintenance of which is only partially borne by the state. Winthrop's state highways are:

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 means that it is an essential highway that has, unfortunately, a higher-than-average incidence of highway crashes caused by cars entering and exiting. This is partly the result of the high level of development adjacent to the road.

Route 202 does not require any improvements to the highway surface, as a result of total reconstruction and partial relocation about 30 years ago. The relocation bypassed Winthrop's downtown, improving mobility and reducing downtown congestion. It also left small bits of the old alignment at various points along the corridor.

ME Route 133 originates in Winthrop village together with Route 41, but branches off from the latter about 1.5 miles north. It proceeds westward through Wayne and into Androscoggin County towards 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.

ME Route 41 provides a cross-connection between Winthrop 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 where, when joined to ME Route 133, it is a minor arterial. A large portion of the road is unbuilt, meaning it has never been constructed to engineering specifications. This results in more frequent maintenance and a poorer alignment, affecting both speed and safety.

ME Route 135 is the north-south route running through eastern Winthrop. It joins Route 17 in Readfield with Monmouth, 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, and is classified as a minor collector. This category of road will never be rebuilt unless the Town pays 1/3 or more of the cost.

Main Street is also part of the state highway network, because it is the former US 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. The DOT had scheduled repaving of Main Street, at a cost of \$600,000, for 2009, but the project was deferred for lack of funding.

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. A complete inventory of these roads is maintained by the Town. Roads of major significance include:

- Memorial Drive, accessing Maranacook Lake properties on the east side,
- Annabessacook Road, providing access to the western shore of Annabessacook Lake,
- Highland Ave., 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.

The Town has a maintenance plan for town roads but insufficient funding to pursue it. In 2009, the town only repaved 1,100 feet of road, out of its 48.6 miles. An audit using the DOT's Road Surface Management System was completed in 2005, but has not been done since. Major projects in the pipeline awaiting funding include:

- Reconstruction of portions of Sturtevant Hill Road,
- Culverts and drainage issues on Case Road,
- Causeway on Narrows Pond Road.

The budget for capital improvements on the road system is not part of the CIP, but is set annually. The 2008-09 budget for this line was \$135,000. The town receives \$63,000 per year in Maine DOT URIP (Urban-Rural Investment Program) funding, which partially offsets this expenditure.

Support Infrastructure for the Road System:

In order to function efficiently, the highway system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges, traffic controls (signals, directional controls), and parking.

Bridges: Winthrop's road system of necessity includes a large number of stream crossings. Many of these are small culverts, which are the responsibility of the town to maintain. Culverts are cleaned and inspected regularly, and replaced as necessary. There are also a number of 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 DOT bridge inventory follows:

- Tempy Bridge: Winthrop Road between Wayne and Winthrop, crossing Wilson Pond outlet. Culvert-style bridge, 14' long, owned and maintained by the Town. Fair condition.
- New Mill Stream Bridge: Route 202 over Mill Stream. DOT-maintained, culvert-style bridge, 18' long. Fair condition.
- Route 202 railroad bridge: 378' steel girder bridge, maintained by DOT, in good condition.
- Bowdoin Street Bridge: Crossing Mill Stream. 24' concrete slab bridge, maintained by DOT. Good Condition.
- Mill Stream Bridge: Main Street crossing Mill Stream. 20' concrete slab bridge, maintained by DOT. Satisfactory condition.
- Stanley Bridge: 10' steel culvert crossing Stanley Pond on Metcalf Road. Owned and maintained by the Town. Fair Condition.

The bridge inventory demonstrates that all bridges in Winthrop are in working order, and there are no problem areas or pending replacements.

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. At the eastern end of Main Street, at Route 202, is a grade intersection with median strips channeling traffic. Where Route 41 joins Route 202, at the western edge of downtown, there is a separated interchange. Winthrop's only full traffic signal is just west of this interchange, at Route 202 and Old Lewiston Road. A flashing signal is located at the junction of Route 202 and Highland Ave., just south of the downtown.

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 have to 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 Ave., eliminating a stretch of passing lane. The other instance of this is at the Route 135 junction.

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 and have little space available for parking on business sites. To support these businesses, someone else must assume responsibility for providing common lots downtown.

Parking is perennially short in all downtowns, although not as much in Winthrop as some others. The 2000 Downtown Revitalization Plan counted 86 parking spaces in common lots and on Main Street. Since then, public parking has been added behind 48 Main, at the new town office, and the new post office. The 2000 plan estimated a shortage of 33 parking spaces. With the three above-mentioned lots added, we have possibly met that need, although the town office lot may be a little far away to count. Looking to the future, if the Commerce Center adds retail space on the first floor, it will create significant demand for new parking; second, existing parking requirements of the zoning ordinance could limit growth and create excess impervious surface.

The zoning ordinance conditionally exempts small business along Main Street from providing parking. That frees up development to occupy more of the lot, but puts additional pressure on public parking. In other locations and for other uses, Winthrop’s parking requirement is generally too high. If Winthrop reduced its parking requirement, it would reduce the cost of development as well as the environmental impacts of extra paving. The table below illustrates:

Use	Winthrop’s Ordinance	Actual demand (national average)	KVCOG model
Multi-family	2	1.21	1.5 (0.3 if senior hsg.)
Retail and service	6.7 per 1,000 S.F. + 1 per employee	3 per 1,000 s.f.	3.5 per 1,000
Restaurant	12.5 per 1,000 S.F. + 1 per employee	9 per 1,000 s.f.	1 per 3 seats of rated capacity
Offices	3.3 per 1,000 S.F.	2.79 per 1,000 s.f.	3 per 1,000 s.f.

The “national average” cited above is generally for suburban-style development, where each customer is one trip. Demand in downtowns would be even less, where a person can park once and walk.

One solution is to form a downtown parking district to manage lots, assessing new developers a portion of the costs based on their share of new parking demand. This turns out to be much cheaper and more efficient than a few parking spaces on each property. It also puts people on their feet, and more likely to pass several businesses on the way to the one they want.

Parking lots may also be used to reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Strategically located lots may allow commuters and others to consolidate their trips by sharing rides. These park-and-ride lots are becoming more popular, and are supported by the Maine DOT. One such lot subsidized by DOT is located in Winthrop, at the St. Francis Catholic Church on Lake Street. It has a capacity of 10 spaces. The DOT does not provide data on usage.

Transportation Choices:

Even though in today's society, a huge majority of trips and miles travelled are by motor vehicle, there is still demand for alternatives. Some segments 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 into the future. While we do not anticipate an enormous shift in demand over the period of this plan, transportation systems take an enormous amount of time and money to put in place, and require planning well in advance.

Urban areas are usually served by rail or public transit service. Winthrop does not have the population density to support either of these options, although the Pan Am rail line from Lewiston to Waterville bisects the town. The Pan Am system provides freight rail service. This 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 long-dormant passenger service has been discussed. Winthrop would be a logical stop, halfway between Lewiston and Waterville, but discussions have not progressed beyond high speculation.

Public transit is not generally available in Winthrop. For special needs services, Kennebec Valley Transit provides on-demand bus service and volunteer driver services. KV Transit would consider extension of its service to Winthrop out of Augusta if the demand were justified.

A variation on public transit is the use of carpooling or vanpooling. These are often informal arrangements or sponsored by large employers. The DOT 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. This is somewhat surprising. According to the 2000 census, approximately one out of seven commuters in Winthrop carpooled. The incidence of carpooling is expected to rise as a result of increasing gasoline prices.

For those with not so far to go, or an inclination for physical activity, the options are bicycling or walking. Winthrop has a well-developed sidewalk network in the downtown area, though its physical condition is variable. Sidewalks generally do not receive the investment that roads do. Some sidewalks along Main Street were rebuilt upon the recommendation of the downtown revitalization plan, but there are many gaps in the system that discourage more walking. Pedestrians are occasionally seen walking on downtown streets (as well as rural roads) due to the lack 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 and recreation areas, as well as being potential public health infrastructure.

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 could be plenty of demand for in-town cycling, but it has not materialized into projects. Potential opportunities include not only additional bike trails or dedicated lanes on roadways, but facilities for bike storage at strategic locations.

The area outside of downtown provides opportunities as well. Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of tourism, especially in scenic area such as Winthrop. However, most of Winthrop’s rural roads are narrow and the shoulders are too poor to 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, crosses Route 202 to the Metcalf Road, west to downtown Winthrop, then south on Annabessacook Road. Route 202 in Manchester is not part of this route because of the heavy traffic. Several communities west of Augusta have endorsed the idea of a regional off-road bicycle trail paralleling 202, both for recreation and seasonal commuting.

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.

Traffic and Development:

The quality of the transportation system depends not only on its physical condition, but on the usage it receives. Government is generally responsible for the infrastructure itself, but in the past has not had much control over how (and how much) it is used. Traffic levels are a function of the location of trip points (“traffic generators”); traffic conflicts (“crashes”) are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Traffic levels have generally been growing over the past few decades. Freight (truck) traffic has risen noticeably, a result of our increased standard of living (more consumer goods and food travelling longer distances) and an increasing reliance on roads by freight carriers. In terms of road use, however, automobile traffic has the greater impact. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. The transportation impact of sprawl is that more rural residents drive 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. This is illustrated on Table 9-1, below.

Table 9-1: Historical Traffic Volumes

Location	1979	1996	2006	2008
Annabessacook Rd.	920	1,600	1,540	1,390
Narrows Pond Rd.	670	760	1,060	790
Route 202 @ Manchester TL	n/r	17,020	14,850	14,020
Route 202 w/o Rt. 135 No.	n/r	13,770	14,200	14,450
Route 202 e/o Highland Ave.	5,600	9,070	10,370	10,330
Memorial Drive	n/r	580	770	n/r
Rt. 41/133 n/o Main Street	n/r	6,270	7,700	7,000
Main Street (western end)	n/r	7,080	7,420	6,770
Old Lewiston Road	n/r	1,350	1,370	1,280

Source: 1996 Comp. Plan, MDOT Traffic Counts

Traffic volumes are sensitive to economic conditions. The record of traffic on Table 9-1 shows that traffic dropped off nearly everywhere in 2008, when gas prices peaked, followed by

the recession. Otherwise, they were generally on a growth trend. Traffic on Narrows Pond Road, for example, grew 40 percent in the ten years 1996 to 2006; traffic on Rt. 41/133 just north of town grew 23 percent, and on Memorial Drive grew 33 percent.

None of these roads are in danger of exceeding their capacity, though more traffic usually means more wear and tear, and conflicts for road users. Where capacity may become an issue is on major roads like Route 202. Traffic volumes on Route 202 are such that any substantial new development would have to pay to accommodate its impact on traffic flow. 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 in an effort to maintain the mobility of the road.

Traffic on Main Street is a particular concern, because even though volumes are not onerous, the street is narrow, with on-street parking and pedestrian crossings. Speeding through town is a more common complaint than congestion.

There are several structural techniques that can “calm” traffic. 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 (the driving lanes are actually 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 any other improvements make Main Street feel less like a highway.

While strict enforcement of speed limits is effective, it is also expensive. Assigning a police officer to work full-time in the downtown is definitely a good idea for several reasons, but even one full-time officer may not have enough impact on traffic speeds. The town could take baby steps by investing in “apparent enforcement.” The police station is conveniently located at one end of Main Street. A *very obvious* sign in front of the station could get motorists’ attention. At the western end of Main Street, a new gateway and welcome sign could also include a “drive 25” message. Some towns even park an unused police cruiser at the entrance to their village.

The visible result of traffic conflict is the traffic accident. While traffic accidents can happen anywhere and for any reason, traffic engineers can use a statistical analysis to determine if there are certain crash locations that are particularly prone. Route 202 is designated as a “retrograde arterial,” for example, because it has statistically more accidents stemming from driveway entrances than the statewide average. Fortunately, according to DOT Winthrop does not have any *High Crash Locations*, intersections or road segments that have experienced eight or more serious crashes in the past three years.

Planning Recommendations:

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

Policies:

1. Establish and prioritize transportation needs to further safe and efficient use of the system.
2. Coordinate transportation and development policies to optimize efficiency of the transportation system and travel demand.
3. Develop future transportation projects with consideration for changing economic and demographic demand and opportunities for multiple forms of travel.
4. Consult with the Maine DOT to maximize the efficiency of the state-managed transportation network.
5. Improve the overall walkability of downtown.

Strategies:

- a) Develop a road improvements plan for municipal roads, with specific goals.
- b) Work with Maine DOT to improve pedestrian safety at the Route 202/Highland Ave. intersection.
- c) Establish community gateways at either end of Main Street, to slow traffic and better define the village area.
- d) Analyze the potential of additional commercial development sites along Route 202 and amend the zoning ordinance as necessary to better manage the location, number, and design of future access, to maintain the mobility of the highway.
- e) Review and amend the zoning ordinance, as appropriate, to reduce requirements for commercial parking supply and improve incentive for common-use downtown parking.
- f) Amend the subdivision ordinance to require applicants to demonstrate that roads and driveways are the minimum necessary and safe locations when coming onto public ways.
- g) Coordinate ordinance amendments with STPA and DOT access management requirements.
- h) Begin to plan for a dedicated intercity bicycle path between Winthrop and Augusta.
- i) Perform a sidewalk inventory and overall pedestrian/bicycle plan for downtown, prioritizing additional work on sidewalks and creation of a village pedestrian trail system.
- j) Coordinate transportation projects regionally, according to the Route 202 Corridor Management Plan.

Chapter 10: Land and Water Resources

Winthrop is fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional natural beauty and a high quality environment. This makes it easy to take our natural resources for granted. Yet Winthrop's nearly 40 square miles is responsible for productive forest and farm land, clean water for recreation and drinking, wildlife for hunting and tourism, and the overall natural beauty of town.

One of the functions of this plan is to ensure that growth and development can be done concurrent with preservation of our natural environment. It is possible, but it requires foresight. Some forms of development have greater potential for environmental impact than others. Some locations are more suitable than others. It is in our interest to see that new development will be of a kind (and location) that allows us to maintain the natural assets we already value.

The following chapter identifies the physical limitations the natural environment imposes to be addressed in the planning process.

Geology and Soils

The soils of Winthrop – and the rock that supports them – influence the topography and the type of vegetation, and constrain our efforts at development, farming, or forestry.

The advance and retreat of the glacier molded Winthrop's landscape. As the glacier advanced, the ice mass scoured the ground. When it retreated, the glacier left its mixture of sand, silt, clay, and stones, called till. Today, much of Winthrop is covered by this glacial till. The till is a heterogeneous mixture of sand, silt, clay, and stones. Till generally overlies bedrock, but may overlie or include sand and gravel. 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 few exceptions, Winthrop soils fall into the Hollis-Paxton-Charlton-Woodbridge Association. These are sandy loams, typically found in hill and ridge areas at elevations of 200 to 700 feet. While Hollis soils are generally 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.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has published *Soil Survey Data for Growth Management in Kennebec County, Maine* (1989), which is considered the authority for suitability of soils for specific purposes. Most soils in Winthrop are Woodbridge and Paxton stony fine sandy loams with 3% to 15% slopes. These soils are rated as having relatively high potential for low-intensity development where slopes do not exceed 8 percent. Scantic and Scio soils are common in the area of 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 or commercial development.

A soils map of Winthrop (Appendix) depicts in general terms the soils which may be problematic for development. In some locales, the Maine Plumbing Code would prohibit new septic systems; in others, the construction of foundations and roads would be expensive or impractical. The mapping of these soils involved a degree of generalization; therefore, the outlined areas may include more suitable soils. A mapped area of poor soils does not by itself exclude development; it does, however, put us on notice that these are harder sites to develop.

All soils, when cleared of vegetation, are subject to accelerated erosion. Eroding soils contribute to the degradation of water quality in lakes, ponds, and streams. Silt can reduce visibility, harm fish populations, and contribute phosphorus and other destabilizing nutrients to lakes and streams. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient which, when present in high concentrations, can cause algal blooms. Eroding soils and uncontrolled stormwater runoff have been demonstrated to contribute significantly to phosphorus levels in Maine’s lakes, reducing property values and recreational opportunities.

Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance contains performance standards to protect against excessive erosion during and after construction. Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.6 require developers to provide adequate erosion control and stormwater management, and 4.1.7 requires phosphorous control plans. Advances in the science of stormwater management have occurred since the last updating, however, and the ordinance should be changed to encourage “low impact development” stormwater techniques.

Topography

Winthrop has often-challenging topography, as depicted on the Natural Features Map (Appendix). The land west of Maranacook 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 a little lower. South of Route 202, some of the land is actually somewhat flat.

The lakes establish the lowest 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 % accelerates stormwater 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 % or less. Road construction on steep slopes becomes expensive; maintenance costs increase significantly. Therefore, large contiguous areas with slopes in excess of 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 should best be regulated on a site-specific basis.

Winthrop's current zoning ordinance contains provisions (section 4.0.5) limiting the development of steep slopes when they cover two acres or more. The ordinance also has standards to control erosion and stormwater.

The topography of the land is responsible for the multiplicity of lakes and drainage basins. A watershed is the area of land within which all water falling ultimately drains to a single water body. The delineation of watersheds (Water Resources Map) shows how water runs off the land, where it accumulates, and how it ultimately collects into larger bodies of surface water.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) identifies each lake and pond as having its own watershed. So Winthrop is actually shown as containing twelve separate watersheds. Since planning for lake water quality is so closely integrated with watershed planning, the discussion of each pond and its watershed will be found in the section on lakes and ponds, below.

Groundwater

Local groundwater is the source of drinking water for all residents not on 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 there is one significant sand and gravel aquifer defined. It has an estimated yield of 10 to 50 gallons per minute and is located to the west of Annabessacook Lake. There are no existing public water supply wells in this aquifer.

Outside of the aquifer, there are 15 wells serving as public water supplies at nine locations. A public water supply is one which serves 15 or more individual hookups or 25 or more persons from a single source. 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 (following section).

ASSOCIATION OF CAMPOWNERS (east shore of Annabessacook), 110' drilled well;

CAMP MECHUWANA, three wells, serving seasonal camp: 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)

DOROTHY EGG FARMS, 350' drilled well (high existing risk of contamination);

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 Programs promotes the establishment of Wellhead Protection Planning for public water supplies. The Rule of Thumb is that all wells should maintain a minimum 300' radius of restricted land uses around their wellhead (more for larger systems). Most existing water supplies do not have this level of control or protected area.

Winthrop's Zoning Ordinance, section 4.1.7, contains a routine prohibition on discharging wastes into water bodies. The ordinance requires that developers demonstrate that they have sufficient water for their own use, but does not require any analysis of impact of development on overall groundwater supplies or public water systems. Winthrop's Subdivision Ordinance, section 8.B.6, requires a study of the concentration of nitrates in the groundwater in certain cases.

Surface Waters

An interconnected system of surface waters begins as tiny brooks on hillsides and flows through a system of streams, ponds, and wetlands, ultimately reaching the sea. Critical points along the network include wetlands and lakes. Wetlands serve important natural functions such as wildlife habitat and stormwater regulation, but are susceptible to development. Lakes contribute to natural beauty, are an attraction for residents and economic development, a center for recreation, but are vulnerable to pollution and overuse, which in turn lowers property values.

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 loading to ponds and lakes. Construction creates erosion and siltation, potentially reaching water bodies. Any land use, managed improperly, can accelerate the process of eutrophication – lake water becoming warm, cloudy, and somewhat slimy due to a substantial increase in algal and plant growth in the lake.

The first step in managing the community's surface waters is to understand the systems, their existing quality, and the factors that influence their quality.

Rivers and Streams

There are several perennial streams in Winthrop; however, because the chain of lakes is so pronounced, none of them serve a significant function in the water cycle. In addition to enhancing the scenic landscape, moving water provides a unique habitat for a number of 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 water bodies to which they are connected. All streams and brooks in Winthrop are Class B. Class B water bodies are suitable for drinking water supply, recreation in and on the water, fishing, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and on unimpaired habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

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.

By State definition, all lakes and ponds are classified GPA. Class GPA water bodies are suitable for drinking water supply, recreation in and on the water, fishing, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and a natural habitat for fish and other aquatic life. If a water body is not meeting its classification standards, it is described as a "nonattainment" lake.

The single greatest threat to lake water quality at present is the introduction of Phosphorous into lakes through runoff throughout the watershed. Since most of Winthrop is encompassed in one of several lake watersheds (illustrated on the Water Resources Map), this can have a major constraint on development.

The DEP has estimated the future area of development for most of the watersheds listed, and calculated the impact of Phosphorous runoff for development. They have indicated the level of phosphorous (parts per billion per acre year) that may be allowed without significant deterioration (based on the level of protection). The Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) has also done more precise calculations for the lakes within its jurisdiction. In general, the lower the number, the more constrained sites will be for development.

The DEP, in its publication *Phosphorous Control in Lake Watersheds* (1992), lists performance standards and techniques for reducing phosphorous from new development. Winthrop requires developments subject to its Subdivision Ordinance (section 8.B.5) and Zoning Ordinance (section 4.1.7) to design according to these standards, and utilizes CWD review capabilities within the Cobbossee watershed. The CWD provides technical assistance and review of development applications as well as performing volunteer lake quality monitoring.

A more recent planning concern in relation to lake water quality is the threat posed by invasive water plants. Maine, for years isolated from the plague of milfoil, is now seeing more and more frequent occurrences of it. Eurasian Milfoil, the most aggressive species, has yet to penetrate this area, but other forms of milfoil have shown up nearby, including in Messalonskee Lake. The State has initiated several measures aimed at preventing the spread of invasive plants, including signs and monitors at most public boat landings. In addition, the CWD has a Maranacook Watershed Management Plan, including strategies to control invasive plants, completed in 2005.

Berry/Dexter Pond

Berry Pond, located in Wayne and Winthrop, has approximately acres of drainage area in Winthrop. It shows dissolved oxygen depletion in the bottom waters to levels, which are considered to be high risk and has developed, or will develop, a significant phosphorus internal recycling problem. The pond has a TSI which indicates moderate algal production usually associated with average transparency and average chlorophyll-a. Water quality in Berry Pond is pegged at moderate-sensitive. The standard for Phosphorous allocation is 0.029 parts per billion (ppb), which means very strict measures should be in place to minimize phosphorous export.

Carlton Pond

Carlton Pond, located in Winthrop and Readfield, is currently the secondary water supply for the Augusta Water District, which serves up to 40,000 people per day. It discharges into Upper Narrows Pond, the primary water supply for the Town of Winthrop. Cobbosseecontee Lake is available as a backup, and the District recently activated three deep wells to relieve pressure on Carleton Pond. The District has a filtration plant to treat all water.

The watershed of the pond is well-protected. Between 1905 and 1908 the District purchased approximately 600 acres of land 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. It is currently listed 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 classified "moderate-sensitive" in DEP's water quality classification. Total phosphorus levels are relatively high for such a pristine lake, and in 1998, it experienced an algae bloom. The lake has had several years of poor clarity in monitoring test, and also has a

history of low dissolved oxygen levels. None of these problems rise to the level of significant concern for the water district.

The undeveloped nature of the watershed, including a virtually undeveloped shoreline, forces a consideration of major development impacts in the future. The Augusta Water District owns substantial amounts of undeveloped land in the watershed.

Little Cobbossee

Little Cobbosseecontee (Cobbossee) Lake, a 74 acre pond located in northeast Winthrop, shows dissolved oxygen depletion in the bottom waters to levels which are considered to be high risk and has developed, or will develop, a significant phosphorus internal recycling problem. The lake has algal blooms, which severely reduce transparency. Water quality in the Little Cobbossee is classified as “poor,” the only lake with watershed in Winthrop so-designated, but it is relatively undeveloped, much of the watershed used for agriculture.

Maranacook Lake

Maranacook Lake is composed of two distinct basins. The northern basin, located in Readfield, is smaller and shallower and exhibits water quality that is slightly below average for Maine lakes. Phosphorus concentrations have, for several years, hovered at about 12-14 parts per billion (with 15 being a critical threshold), but there has been no significant decline noticed in clarity or other measures. Oxygen depletion occurs in the bottom waters during the summer. The possibility of excessive watershed phosphorus loading and the potential for internal phosphorus recycling are real concerns for 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 used as a source of drinking water by some lakefront owners. It is a large lake, and over 125 feet deep. 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. The lake is rated “moderate-sensitive” by DEP. The watershed in Winthrop consists of over acres (almost half of Winthrop’s land area). There are extensive areas of recent development within the watershed. Concerns expressed by the Cobbossee Watershed District range from erosion along camp roads to runoff from the school parking lots. The Phosphorous export per-acre figure established by DEP is .032 (ppb), which is a figure low enough to severely constrain new development.

Apple Valley Lake

Apple Valley Lake is an isolated pond just east of Mount Pisgah, with virtually no development activity. Also known as Nancy’s Bog, its maximum depth is only 25 feet and is controlled by a dam. It is listed as having “moderate/sensitive” water quality.

Annabessacook Lake

Annabessacook Lake lies in the southwestern corner of town. It is the third largest water body in Winthrop (1,420 acres), and has a watershed area of more than 6,000 acres – draining Maranacook, Wilson Pond, and most of southwestern Winthrop. The shoreline is well-developed on the southern and western shores, but largely undeveloped on the east. Annabessacook has responded in recent years to aggressive treatment with substantially lower phosphorus concentrations, increased clarity, and decreased algal biomass, and now exhibits very good water quality, according to the Cobbossee Watershed District. The DEP, however, still classifies the water quality as “Poor,” and recommends a moderate level of protection, resulting in permissible phosphorous levels from new development of only 0.034 pounds per acre per year.

Cobbossee (Cobbosseecontee) Lake

Cobbossee Lake is the largest lake located in Winthrop, covering the most acreage and lying along the southeastern boundary of town. The lake drains Annabeessacook, and the watershed within Winthrop covers acres. A considerable fraction of Monmouth, Manchester, West Gardiner, and Litchfield also drain into the lake. Both the shore frontage and the larger watershed of Cobbossee are moderately well-developed, making it very sensitive to additional development. The lake has also been known for serious water quality problems in the past, and water quality is still rated “poor.” Phosphorus loading was nearly cut in half following a 1978 restoration project and the lake has not experienced any mid-summer algae blooms since. Algae blooms still happen in Cobbossee, but they often do not occur until September.

The CWD has focused lake protection efforts since the restoration on agricultural animal waste management in the watershed, as well as on preventing phosphorus loading from new development. DEP recommends a “high” level of protection for the lake, which would result in allowable phosphorous runoff of 0.043 pounds per acre per year.

Narrows Pond (Upper and Lower)

Upper and Lower Narrows Ponds are considered to be two separate watersheds, and lie in the central area of Winthrop. Both of them are in the 250-300 acre size range, and over 50 feet deep. Both have moderate shoreline development and are listed as “moderate-sensitive” for water quality. Upper Narrows Pond is the source of water for the Winthrop Utilities District.

Wilson Pond

Wilson Pond lies upstream from Annabessacook, technically in Monmouth and Wayne. The watershed of Wilson Pond covers acres in Winthrop. The pond has had good water quality in the past, but has declined steadily, exhibiting its worst water quality on record in 2004. In 2005, water quality improved somewhat, but this may have been due to higher rainfall totals or the closure of a dairy farm near the lake in Wayne. The CWD surveyed the watershed in 2005-06, identifying locations of existing and potential phosphorous runoff. DEP assigned a high probability of development to this watershed (even though it is relatively isolated) and the CWD

concluded that Wilson Pond is highly likely to decline. DEP's recommended phosphorous allocation is 0.041 pounds per acre per year.

Except for Apple Valley, every lake in Winthrop is on the DEP's list of lakes most at risk from development (Appendix A from *DEP Rules Chapter 502, Stormwater Management*). The Town of Winthrop, in cooperation with CWD (of which it is an active member) and DEP, is part of several programs to maintain and improve water quality in our lakes. The Town has participated in restoration work and phosphorous mitigation projects.

Wetlands

Wetlands serve important functions as stormwater storage areas and surface water filtration systems. They also provide critical habitat for certain species of birds, fish, and aquatic mammals, especially as breeding grounds. They provide unique environments necessary for certain aquatic vegetation. In addition, wetlands provide open space for some forms of recreational enjoyment or aesthetic appreciation.

Maps prepared under the National Wetlands Inventory and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife show wetlands with high and moderate value for waterfowl. The riparian area surrounding these wetlands is required to be subject to Shoreland Zoning. These areas are shown in the Water Resources Map.

In Winthrop, there are at least twenty such wetlands. The most significant are often associated with open water; Annabessacook, Apple Valley, Upper Narrows, Kezar, and Little Cobbossee Lakes all have wetlands complexes connected to them. There is also an extensive wetland along Case Road.

An emerging issue for the town is the existence and location of vernal pools. Usually associated with wetlands, vernal pools are seasonal bodies of water that provide essential breeding habitat for several species. They are not always recognizable in other seasons, so have been vulnerable to destruction on a regular basis. They are not yet mapped to any extent, but with new attention to their importance in the ecosystem, the Town should incorporate some protection of them into its development standards.

Critical Natural Areas

Water bodies, watercourses, and wetlands provide habitats necessary for the continued survival of many wildlife species associated with Winthrop and its environs. Lakes and their shorelines, streams, brooks, and wetlands provide suitable habitats, nesting areas, or travel corridors for fish, beaver, muskrats, mink, otter, fisher, racoon, deer, moose, waterfowl, and other birds, to name just a few of the wildlife species indigenous to Winthrop.

Natural Heritage and Critical Areas

The State has identified natural heritage and critical areas reflecting endangered or valuable plants through its Natural Areas Program. Their data (shown on the Natural Features

Map) identifies one “Exemplary Natural Community,” an area of northern hardwood forest just to the east of Wilson Pond, featuring a complex of maple, basswood, and ash. The map also identifies three other areas that may contain exemplary populations of rare plant species. They are:

- Water Stargrass, located at the north end of Upper Narrows Pond,
- Broad Beech Fern, on an island in Cobbossee Lake, and
- Stiff Arrow-head, located on the north shore of Little Cobbossee Pond.

A bald eagle nest has been identified on an island in Annabessacook Lake near the Monmouth town line. State rules prohibit development activity within a quarter mile radius of the nest site, which would affect a very small portion of the mainland shoreline in the area.

The Winthrop Zoning Ordinance does not currently require development applications to identify or protect rare or endangered species or natural communities. The subdivision ordinance (section 8.B.11) permits the planning board to require open space to be set aside for “rare or irreplaceable natural areas.”

Deer Habitat

Whitetail deer are the most common large wildlife in Winthrop. Deer are drawn to areas with both food and shelter available, commonly referred to as “edge,” and Winthrop residents are accustomed to viewing them throughout town. The habitat limitation for deer, however, occurs in the Winter, when heavy snow obscures most food sources. At this time, food and shelter are limited to areas of fairly dense evergreen cover, where the ground may be exposed and the climate is somewhat moderated. These areas are known as deer wintering areas or “deeryards.”

According to IF&W, there are at least seven deer wintering yards in Winthrop, none of which are particularly threatened by development. These are depicted on the Natural Features Map. The more significant ones include an area between Route 202 and Annabessacook Road, another to the northwest of Little Cobbossee Lake, and another just south of Maranacook Road.

The IFW does not recommend limitations on development or timber cutting to preserve deer wintering areas, but encourages landowners to adopt management practices that will preserve their integrity.

Planning Issues

Analysis and Threats to Water Resources:

One significant sand and gravel aquifer is defined in Winthrop. The remainder of the Town has a moderate to low potential groundwater yield. The location of the aquifer is such that it could have potential for public water supply; however, the closed town landfill sits on top of it and its quality is unknown.

Regardless of whether groundwater sits within an aquifer or not, it is susceptible to pollution from either point or non-point sources. Point sources are primarily land use activities that involve chemicals or toxic waste products. These range from gas stations to dry cleaners. All such new activities should be required to have a spill control plan and containment systems.

Non-point sources are those that do not have an identifiable discharge point. One of the principal non-point pollutants is nitrate. Nitrate contamination of groundwater is most likely on agricultural lands, where it can be generated by manure or over-fertilization. A farm such as the egg farm has a high potential for nitrate contamination if their wastes are not adequately managed, as do old dairy farms. Poorly designed or malfunctioning septic systems may also be a source of nitrates. Winthrop's subdivision ordinance contains a nitrate testing requirement.

Winthrop has outstanding surface water resources, though threatened by both point and non-point pollution sources, the same as groundwater. Point sources may include commercial emissions, combined sewer runoff ("CSO's"), or "straight pipes" or malfunctioning septic systems from camps. Winthrop has been working for years to eliminate these potential pollution sources from lakes and streams, together with the state and federal governments. As long as these efforts continue, point sources are considered a minor threat.

Non-point sources are a harder nut to crack. Lake watersheds, in particular, are potentially vulnerable to development and other activities that may produce surface runoff and soil erosion, contributing to a decline in surface water quality. Little Cobbossee, Annabessacook, Wilson Pond, and Upper Narrows Pond (the public water supply) are probably the highest priorities, but all lakes in town except Carleton Pond and Apple Valley Lake are at risk from development.

Continued work with the Cobbossee Watershed District addresses new development, but existing land use and maintenance activities, such as farming, road maintenance, or lawn care, must be addressed as well. Landowner education and implementation of Best Management Practices for earth-moving activities are necessary program elements.

Wetlands associated with the Town's hydrologic system provide important functions for water storage, filtration, waterfowl habitat, and open space. Existing protections for wetlands include Shoreland Zoning (local), the Natural Resource Conservation Act (state), and Army Corps. of Engineers (federal – for filling). The conflicts usually occur only when determining where the wetland boundaries lie. This usually requires trained personnel, and is done in conjunction with a development application. Vernal pools are an emerging issue. They are much harder to identify.

Analysis and Threats to Critical Natural Resources:

Water bodies, watercourses, and wetlands provide habitats for many wildlife species. Other special habitats are provided by wooded areas. The State has identified six natural heritage or critical areas in Winthrop reflecting endangered or valuable plants or unique habitats. The "Beginning With Habitat" Initiative has produced a series of maps and analyses illustrating how conservation lands together with large blocks of undeveloped space, wetlands, riparian areas and

other elements of wildlife habitat can work together to preserve essential natural resource features of a town.

Our 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, with conservation organizations, and with private landowners. Winthrop’s Conservation Commission, primarily engaged in management of the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area (discussed in Recreation Chapter), is also charged with coordinating activities of other conservation-related organizations. The Kennebec Land Trust is active in Winthrop.

Resource Constraints to Development:

The natural landscape--its topography, soils, surface water, groundwater, wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, potential for resource production, and other natural areas--as well as the built environment present both constraints to and opportunities for development. The constraints can be generalized as follows:

	<u>Severe</u>	<u>Significant</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
Slope greater than or equal to 20%	X		
Soils unsuitable for development(w/septic)	X		
100-Year Floodplain	X		
Aquifers -- high yield			X
Lake watersheds		X	
Unique Areas and Wetlands:			
! waterfowl and wading bird habitats			
- high/moderate value	X		
! deer wintering yards			X
! Critical natural areas	X		
Scenic views			X

As can be seen from this table, the most severe constraints to development are steep slopes, floodplain, and certain high value natural areas. The best solution is to prohibit development altogether in these areas, though the town’s Floodplain Ordinance should permit limited forms and design of development.

Unsuitable soils can present significant constraint to development. In some cases, where the soil type is indicative of wetlands or steep slopes, it becomes a severe constraint. But in other cases, the constraint may be overcome with more expensive design or construction techniques.

Other constraints are considered “moderate,” because they present fewer challenges to development. In nearly all cases, these challenges can be met with suitable design standards.

Community Issue: Private Roads

Exploring the Issue:

Winthrop has an extensive network of private roads. Most of them are in place to serve camp communities. Unlike public roads, private roads are maintained by individual contractors at the request and expense of the individuals who live on these roads. As a result, there is broad variation in the maintenance levels on these roads.

The Town of Winthrop is prohibited from expending taxpayer funds on the maintenance of private roads. However, there is a public interest in the quality of maintenance. Since most of the roads are in the immediate vicinity of the lakes, those with poor construction or maintenance can result in erosion and runoff pollution of lake water quality. Also, town emergency services must respond to all calls, regardless of the ownership or quality of the access roads.

There are several voluntary mechanisms in place to encourage better maintenance of the roads to protect water quality. The Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District has published a *Camp Road Maintenance Manual* and also provides best management practice standards for logging roads. The Cobbossee Watershed District provides educational programs and one-on-one technical assistance. The Department of Environmental Protection occasionally provides grant funding for repair of particular problem facilities.

The majority of private roads are well maintained. But road maintenance is not cheap. The Town can explore ways to provide incentives to road associations or other groups for practices that will reduce the potential for erosion and runoff. New roads, regardless of whether they are public or private, should be constructed to a standard that will minimize the hazards.

Setting a Direction:

The town should undertake a combination of incentive and regulatory measures to ensure that private roads do not contribute to a reduction in lake water quality and are accessible to emergency vehicles.

Water Resources: Secure funding through appropriations or grants to support educational efforts of the CWD and Friends of Cobbossee.

Water Resources: The Town Office should display information for camp owners promoting good maintenance of camp roads.

Land Use: Amend the zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure an adequate administrative and financing structure for private road maintenance.

Public Services: Investigate the legality and feasibility of joint purchasing (e.g. culverts, gravel, fabrics) or contracted services (town road crews) between the town and private road owners.

Planning Recommendations:

State Goals:

Protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.

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.

Policies:

1. Protect current and potential drinking water supplies,
2. Protect significant water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed,
3. Protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas,
4. Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems,
5. Cooperate with neighboring communities and local or regional advocacy groups to protect water resources and shared critical natural resources,
6. Conserve critical natural resources in the community.

Strategies:

- a) Amend zoning and subdivision ordinances to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with the Maine Stormwater Management Rules, DEP allocations for phosphorous, and the MPDES program. Evaluate the effectiveness of low impact development standards and incorporate into zoning ordinance if warranted.
- b) Consult with government agencies and water supply operators to ensure that the zoning ordinance contains suitable mechanisms to protect public water supplies and aquifers.
- c) The Town Office should display information for camp owners, farmers, and loggers promoting good maintenance of camp and working roads.
- d) Add standards to the zoning ordinance requiring that users or storage facilities for toxic chemicals or waste products have spill control and containment plans.
- e) Continue to participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect, and improve surface water quality, including CWD and camp associations.

- f) Secure funding through appropriations or grants to support educational efforts of the CWD and Friends of Cobbossee. Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding invasive species.
- g) Update zoning ordinance provisions for shoreland zoning to current state guidelines.
- h) Designate Critical Resource Areas as part of protected areas in an Open Space Plan.
- i) Require subdivision and commercial property developers to identify and take appropriate measures to protect critical natural resources on their sites, through site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
- j) Routinely consult maps and information provided by the Maine Beginning with Habitat Program in development review processes.
- k) Adopt best management practices (BMP's) for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties; require their implementation by public employees and contractors.
- l) Use the findings of the Open Space Plan to establish public/private partnerships to protect critical natural resources such as purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.
- m) Make information available to those living near critical natural resources about applicable local, state, or federal regulations. Identify undeveloped land with greater than 20 percent slope to make owners aware of development limitations.

Chapter 11: Resource Development, Farms, and Forests

Agriculture and forestry provide the traditional economic backbone of Maine. Even today, dozens of Winthrop families rely on employment in the agricultural or forest industries, or revenue from their fields or woodlots. Farm and forest land also provide open space critical to our community's character, environmental protection, and wildlife habitat.

Farm and forest land also provide a buffer against high taxes. Dozens of fiscal studies have demonstrated that farm and forest land has a higher ratio of tax revenue to service demands than any form of commercial or residential development. A tract of farmland demands only sixteen cents in local services for every dollar in taxes paid. A house on the same tract would require \$1.27 in services for every dollar paid. It stands to reason that undeveloped land subsidizes the "tax base" that towns so often pursue.

This chapter profiles the current state of farming and forestry, and the extent of the resources for supporting these activities in Winthrop.

Farming in Winthrop:

Commercial farmland is that land which is being used in the cultivation and production of food and/or fiber. The capacity to produce food locally is a tremendous asset for a community – too often taken for granted. Most of the food Maine people eat is imported from either western states such as California, or from foreign countries. As a result, our food supply could be interrupted or threatened for any number of reasons. Production from local farms can make substantial contributions to the food needs of the community at all times, but becomes much more valuable in times of high costs and supply disruptions.

Due to the dramatic expansion of industrial agriculture, U.S. family farms are quickly become a relic of the past. Between 1974 and 2002, the number of corporate-owned U.S. farms increased by more than 46 percent. Between 2005 and 2006, the US lost 8,900 farms (a little more than 1 farm per hour). At the same time, concerns about food safety are at an all time high. As a result of the pervasive use of antibiotics in confined animal feeding operations, antibiotic resistant human pathogens have emerged. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that each year 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths in the U.S. result from food-borne pathogens.

Food security, the availability of food, is also of increasing concern. While there are a number of national reserves for strategic materials such as rare metals or oil, there is no national reserve for food. Indeed, the entire world has only an estimated 54 days worth of food stores. Recognizing how critically dependent our food supply has become on fossil fuels and an intact transportation system, many cities are actively pursuing plans to increase local food production.

Local farms also contribute to the economic stability of a town. Farms generate local revenue. Jobs are created to work the farm as well as process the crops at harvest time. Finally, local farms contribute to the quality of life in the community. By keeping farmland as farmland rather than developing it, open space is preserved, enhancing the aesthetic qualities of the town.

Local Farms

The principal farming enterprises in Winthrop have historically been poultry, dairy, livestock, and fruits and vegetables. Dairy farms in Maine are increasing in size but are declining in number, and much of the grain fed to poultry is not grown in this area. Apple orchards are on the decline. Truck crops are grown for local distribution.

Recent trends in Maine and elsewhere indicate that small, specialty farms are growing and replacing large, commodity-based farms. Large farms require prime farmland, hired labor, transportation infrastructure, and support services – a mixture hard to find and maintain in Maine. Small farms require only a local market for their products. Small farms can be managed part-time on small parcels of land, can specialize in niche products and value-added, and are flexible enough to shift products. 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.

This trend is demonstrated by the statistics generated by the US Census of Agriculture. This census is not detailed enough to profile Winthrop, but the figures for Kennebec County are representative. The *total acreage* in farms has declined steadily, from 95,400 acres in 1992, to 86,000 acres in 2002, to 82,500 acres in 2007. The *average size* of farms has declined from 193 acres in 1992, to 150 acres in 2002, to 127 acres in 2007. But the *number of farms* was 494 in 1992, rose to 575 in 2002, and to 649 in 2007.

Perhaps most importantly, the market value of agricultural production has gone from \$34,000,000 in 1992, to 30,229,000 in 2002, then to \$63,521,000 in 2007. That means that more Kennebec County farmers are generating more income on less land than ever before. That is actually a formula for a growth industry. While county-wide, the traditional production of dairy products, eggs, and hay are still the big revenue generators, we are actually seeing the growth in the more exotic areas, such as beekeeping (#1 county in the state), Christmas trees (#4), and berry lands (#7).

What goes on in the rest of the county may be of note, but what is happening in Winthrop? The largest, single farm operation in Winthrop would be the Dorothy Egg Farms. Maine’s farm marketing website lists several more: Wholesome Holmstead, a diversified family farm on

Stanley Road, Mike's Maple Sugar House, off of Highland Ave., and Barefoot Kitchen, a value-added producer.

Farm Protection Efforts

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." This program enables farmers to operate without the additional burden of property taxes fueled by run-away land values. The land is not taxed based on its fair market value, but its significantly lower value as farmland. Farmland is eligible for this program if it consists of at least five contiguous acres in a single town, and has shown gross earnings from agricultural production of at least \$2,000 during one of the last two years, or three of the last five years.

As of 2007, there were eleven parcels in Winthrop registered in the Farmland Program. This was about evenly split between cropland (221 acres) and woodland (217 acres.) Unfortunately, two parcels, totaling 446 acres, were removed from the program that year. Ten years prior (1997), the town had 1,136 acres in farmland.

There are many other publicly-sponsored programs to support local agriculture, from the Sustainable Agriculture Program at the University of Maine, to the Farmlink Program of the Maine Farmland Trust, which matches prospective farmers in search of land with retiring farmers in search of successors. (The average age of farmers in Kennebec County is 56.) The Maine Department of Agriculture has, over the past five years or so, put a great deal of effort into marketing of local agriculture, from promotions like Maine Maple Sunday and Open Farm Days, to support for farmers markets and institutional buying.

Farming Infrastructure

Prime farmland is that land which is superior for the production of food, feed, forage, and other crops. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime farmland produces the highest yields and farming it results in less damage to the environment.

The extent of "prime farmland" in Winthrop may be seen on the soils map in the appendix to this report. However, due to the decline of traditional farming operations and methods, prime soils are no longer a principal factor in preserving agriculture. The new farming paradigm depends much less on the intrinsic fertility of the soil, and more on access to markets.

The availability of markets for agricultural produce is particularly important for the new breed of small producers who do not have access to commodity markets, and operate too close to the margin to afford wholesalers and middlemen. The Saturday morning farmers market on Union Street is a good example of local marketing. Roadside stands, pick-your-own, and nursery/greenhouses are additional examples.

Local agriculture also benefits from value-added processing. Jams and jellies, tinctures, apple cider, maple syrup, even Christmas wreaths, help farmers and entrepreneurs to bolster their income while preserving the farm economy.

The Forest Resource in Winthrop

Forest lands are defined by the State as land used primarily for the growth of trees and forest products. About three-quarters of Kennebec County, and about two-thirds of Winthrop's land area, are wooded. The forest provides the basic raw products for employment of many people and contributes materially to the wealth of landowners and the economy of the area.

According to reports on the forest resource in Kennebec County, about 25 percent of the wooded area is in the white pine/hemlock forest type. The spruce and balsam fir forest type is predominant in the northern area and in low-lying areas of organic soils – it covers about 40 percent of forest land area. Northern hardwood, consisting mainly of birch, beech and maple, is also an important forest type and covers approximately 12 percent. Other hardwoods in the elm/ash/red maple and the aspen/birch forest type cover approximately 29 percent.

Some harvesting of timber does occur in Winthrop, though these operations are generally limited to small wood lots – no industrial forest holdings. Statistics provided to Winthrop from the Maine Forest Service indicate that for the ten-year period 1998-2007, an average of 293 acres per year was cut in Winthrop in about 16 harvest operations per year. Over the period, only 55 acres was clearcut, but another 130 acres was cleared for conversion to a developed use.

There are several parcels of land in Winthrop being managed for forest production, though no good inventory of them is available. This includes certified tree farms, tree growth parcels (which require management plans) and Christmas tree operations (which are often classified as farms, due to the short rotation cycle).

Tree Growth Program

The Maine Legislature declared, in the Tree Growth Tax Law, that the public interest would be best served by encouraging forest landowners to retain and improve their holdings of forest lands upon the tax roles of the state and to promote better forest management by appropriate tax measures in order to protect this unique economic and recreational resource. The law applies to all parcels of forest land over 500 acres in size and, at the discretion and application of the owners, to parcels less than 500 acres but more than 10 acres in size. It taxes forest land on the basis of its potential for annual wood production as opposed to market value.

Enrollment in Tree Growth is not the same as forest management or tree farming, and some landowners choose not to enroll their forest land because of the program rules or other reasons. Land enrolled in the Tree Growth program comprises approximately 8.4% of Winthrop's land area, which means that for every eight acres of forested land in Winthrop, only one acre is enrolled in tree growth.

Based on the 2007 Municipal Valuation Statistical Summary, only 1,401 acres on 37 parcels of land are currently registered. “Only,” because 1,401 acres comprises just seven percent of the land area of Winthrop, yet 2/3 of Winthrop is forested. Tree growth land does not, however, include the Mt. Pisgah tracts, the Carleton Pond Wildlife management Area, or several other conserved parcels in town.

The 1,401 acres is an increase from the 963 acres listed in 1997. Increases in Tree Growth participation indicate that more landowners are utilizing their woodland for economic benefits.

Threats to Farm and Forest Lands

The greatest threat to farmland and productive woodlands is growth and development. As the population increases, more residential areas will be needed. Level, accessible farmland and woodlands are typically very suitable for building; these areas are considered prime areas for residential and commercial development. According to this plan’s projections, the new homes expected to be built between now and 2030 would consume between 650 and 1,800 acres. While some of the house lots will be on waste land, probably a majority will be on land that would otherwise be very desirable for farming or forestry.

Existing Protection Measures

1. The Farm and Open Space Tax Law and the Tree Growth Tax Laws are two very good ways to protect these economically and environmentally important areas from fiscal pressures which contribute to conversion and development.
2. The Shoreland Zoning Law and Subdivision Law provide communities a means to review development plans and have them modified if necessary to limit the impacts on farm and forest land. Winthrop’s Zoning Ordinance, incorporating the Shoreland Zoning mandate, places limitations on agriculture and timber harvesting, but does not specifically limit conversion of farm and forest to developed uses.
3. Other state laws support continued efficient operation of these businesses, such as the Right to Farm Law and the Forest Practices Act.

Planning Issues:

Agricultural and forest lands are significant components of Maine’s rural environment, economy, and way of life. In addition to their primary function of producing food and fiber, agricultural and forest lands also have significant value as open space, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation opportunities, and as scenic resources. As agricultural and forest lands are developed and increasingly urbanized, such intangible values are lost forever.

- Active farms and forests, like any other form of land use, have the potential to create erosion and sedimentation in lake watersheds, destruction of significant fish and wildlife habitat and rare, unique and exemplary plant communities, and unsavory visual impacts.

Towns historically shy away from regulation of farm and forest practices, preferring the alternative of education and technical assistance.

- Prime agricultural lands and productive woodlands are threatened by development pressures in Winthrop. Market pressures for conversion to non-farm uses raises land prices and property taxes, making it harder for landowners to hold onto their land and oftentimes forcing them to make premature decisions to sell all or part of their holdings. On the other hand, many landowners rely on escalating land prices as a buffer against hard times or retirement. We cannot just ban development. We need to find ways of providing more incentive-based measures.
- Development in rural areas has another impact on agriculture. When rural homes are placed near operational farms, it tends to generate nuisance complaints, both against the farmer for dust and noise, and against the neighbor for vandalism and dogs running loose. These are naturally conflicting land uses, and ideally should be separated by a buffer.
- Restricting the development of resource lands through zoning or other means protects these lands in the short term, but does not achieve the ultimate goal of keeping farms and forest economically viable. Some state-level programs operate to protect farmland through acquisition of development rights or conservation easements. Though the Town of Winthrop cannot fund a program like this on its own, it can facilitate the work of others like the Kennebec Land Trust through support of local or regional efforts.
- No degree of farmland protection will work unless farmers are able to operate as a business. This means limiting restrictions and supporting markets for farm products. Market development and promotion of locally grown produce is more effective at supporting small-scale farming than land protection strategies.
- Forest management is often viewed differently than farming, in part because the practices are much less visible. But forest landowners face the same threats and opportunities as farmers, and programs which benefit the one often benefit the other. The state has several laws and rules that restrict clearcuts, require regeneration, mandate certain management practices, and limit liquidation harvesting prior to subdivision. Several towns have taken the additional step of enacting local forest practice standards and private/professional organizations help to certify land management practices and promote responsible land use.
- Current use tax programs help support land preservation economically. Winthrop's tree growth enrollment seems under-subscribed. The town could review its program, to see if there is a way to encourage participation.

Community Issue: Micro-Farming

Exploring the Issue:

Historically, residents of Winthrop, as well as cities and small towns throughout the country, have kept market gardens, poultry, and other small livestock in their backyards. At some

point in the 20th Century, however, population densities, as well as the concept of “personal space” became such that livestock-keeping, in particular, was discouraged. Many contemporary local ordinances prohibit or tightly regulate livestock on urban lots.

Despite its farming history, family farms have all but disappeared from Winthrop and for many reasons are highly unlikely to return. The alternatives for local food production are sub-commercial community gardens and backyard farming. Often measured in fractions of an acre, these alternatives can produce a diverse variety of crops using low energy inputs. Their produce can sustain farmers’ markets and add vibrancy to the downtown.

For those without other access to land, community gardens provide an opportunity for gardening and recreation and should be encouraged and given generous municipal support. However, they do have numerous disadvantages including:

1. Inconvenience of location, requiring a planned “expedition” and usually transportation to do a little gardening.
2. Community gardens are rarely placed on good agricultural land.
3. Access to water and power is usually limited or non-existent.
4. Lack of security leads to theft and vandalism.
5. Conflicts inevitably arise between those who wish to farm organically and those who wish to use chemicals or raise genetically modified crops.
6. The raising of animals under these situations is almost always impossible.

Personal, backyard farming avoids many of these problems. Most importantly, the production of high value animal protein is feasible. A review of many zoning ordinances from around the nation indicates that there is little uniformity in regulations concerning the keeping of farm animals in residential areas. Winthrop’s zoning ordinance itself somewhat arbitrarily restricts some land uses to particular zoning districts without consideration of lot size. The raising of farm animals is permitted by right in the Stream Protection, and Industrial zones. It is permitted by right up to 50 animal units in the General Commercial and Rural districts but is conditional for additional animals. It is conditional in the Shoreland, General Residential, Public Water Supply and Wetland zones and prohibited in the Limited Commercial, Limited Residential, Village, and Resource Protection zones. Zoning for these uses is independent of lot size. For example, lot sizes are larger in Limited Residential than in General Residential. It is also worth noting that the median lot size in the Rural district is only 2 acres.

Other impediments to the raising of livestock are the \$50 permit fee and the 50 foot property line setback requirement for buildings and pens used to keep animals. The \$50 fee unduly impacts very small scale animal husbandry and the 50 foot property line setback requirement seems unnecessary given that the ordinance also requires that animals must be kept a minimum of 100 feet away from abutting residences.

While no one has said a word about gardening, it is not addressed in the Winthrop Zoning Ordinance and in principal could be determined to be a prohibited use under current definitions.

Many residents of Winthrop’s urban areas were raised in rural areas, or bred chickens in their youth, and are not that removed from farm life. A recent survey of high school students

revealed a large majority that would be opposed to regulating “urban agriculture.” On the other hand, farm practices do have the potential to produce deleterious effects across property boundaries, including small and contamination of manure, noise of livestock and machinery, and chemical applications. These effects can be amplified on small lots. Even if limited forms of agriculture were permitted to be re-established in Winthrop, these impacts should not be allowed to be a nuisance to neighbors.

Setting a Direction:

A limited form of food production should be permitted in Winthrop’s residential neighborhoods. Uses should be regulated on the basis of their impact (effects on neighbors) and size (relative to overall lot size). These recommendations provide direction to future changes in local regulations:

- Gardening should be permitted by right in all districts. Market gardens should be distinguished as separate from general agriculture, limited to a percentage of a lot, and regulated for chemical use, manufacturing/retailing, and erosion control.
- Chickens, rabbits, and other forms of livestock that do not require the use of permanent land improvements should not be regulated in the zoning ordinance. It is suggested that they be regulated under an ordinance for annual licensing. Odor and insects can be controlled by proper manure handling. Noise, particularly that of poultry, can be minimized by limiting the number of roosters and requiring cooping between sundown and sunrise.
- The establishment of barns and stables on property in residential districts, for the keeping of non-commercial livestock, can be limited based on the number of animal units. One animal unit would be allowed for each additional one-half (1/2) acre above three-quarters (3/4) acre, subject to the 100 foot setback requirement from abutting residences.

Type of Animal	No. of Animals per Animal Unit	No. of Animals on 1/4 acre	No. of Animals on 1/2 acre	No. of Animals on 3/4 acre
Rabbits	50	12	25	50
Chickens	50	12	25	50
Ducks	12	0	0	12
Geese, Turkeys	8	0	0	8
Sheep, Goats, (excluding youngstock)	4	0	0	4 plus youngstock
Pigs(excluding 1 litter under 3 months)	1	0	0	1 plus 1 litter
Horse, Pony, Lama, Cow, (excluding youngstock)	1	0	0	1 plus youngstock

- Require no greater property line setback for barns, animal shelters, or pens than for any other structure in a given zoning district.
 - Avoid overly broad proscriptions on the sales of home raised garden produce and livestock, allowing them latitude similar to that of yard sales.
-

Planning Recommendations:

State Goal: Safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.

Policies:

1. Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.
2. Promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.
3. Support farming and forestry and encourage their economic vitality.

Strategies:

- a) Consult with the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District when developing regulations pertaining to agricultural practices.
- b) Amend ordinances to require commercial or subdivision development in critical rural areas to maintain areas with prime farm soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable through the use of clustered housing or similar techniques.
- c) Limit non-residential development in rural areas to natural resources-based businesses and low-impact uses such as nature tourism, outdoor recreation, farm-based markets, and home occupations.
- d) Amend the zoning ordinance to permit gardening and the casual sale of produce by right in all districts. Continue to permit roadside stands, greenhouses, and pick-your-own farms in the rural district. Set new zoning standards for the keeping of livestock in all districts, or permit by right and create a separate licensing ordinance.
- e) Encourage owners of productive farms and forests to enroll in current use taxation.
- f) Include agriculture and forestry promotion in economic development planning.
- g) Establish community gardening opportunities accessible by village residents.

Chapter 12: Historical Resources

Historical Overview:

Within Winthrop's borders there are a dozen lakes and ponds with as many various size streams extending from them and in some cases connecting the water bodies to each other. Undoubtedly because of the water ways, millennia of settlers found this area to be 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, all of the shoreline surrounding Winthrop's lakes has archeological potential and should be surveyed.

European settlement is recorded as starting 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, rather than being selected by the town's citizens. Readfield split off from Winthrop in 1791, and Manchester did the same in 1850.

Originally, Winthrop's industrial base fed off of the availability of water power, and included a cotton mill, grist mill, cheese factory, floor coverings, leather products, etc. Mercantile businesses grew up around the factories, forming Winthrop Village. Winthrop's other villages – East Winthrop and Winthrop Center, grew around the establishment of separate churches. US Route 202, connecting Augusta to Lewiston, drew additional commercial attention, particularly since it was relocated to bypass the downtown area.

Winthrop's historic settlement pattern is still very much in evidence. Water power fueled the development of Winthrop village. The rural areas were dominated by large farm acreages and the lakeshores by seasonal settlement. These patterns are threatened by the sprawl of contemporary development.

Inventory of Historical Resources:

Interest in Winthrop's history has increased in recent years. There are several officially printed histories of Winthrop. Some of the older histories in the town library require binding or copying before the public can use them. The librarian and the library trustees are working to preserve and copy these documents.

Numerous non-inventoried historic 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. It would be a prudent action to have all of these documents and materials cataloged and where appropriate to have them copied on microfilm or microfiche.

Oral histories present an important and interesting way to document a town's history. At present this type of documentation has not been done for public usage. Projects of this type could be done cooperatively with the high school English and History departments for both curriculum development and community service time. A high school class took some oral histories several years ago, but their current whereabouts are unknown.

There are three known prehistoric archeological sites on Cobbosseecontee Lake and Lower Narrows Pond. There is also an archeological site on Ladies Delight Island in Cobbosseecontee Lake that is privately owned. It has occupation evidence dating back at least 7,000 years. As mentioned, the MHPC has identified virtually all of the shoreline of the major lakes and ponds as having potential for pre-historic archeological evidence.

There are no known cellar holes or other evidence of initial European settlement. It is probable that re-development of sites in the village has obliterated original evidence.

There are three properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. They are Moses Bailey House on Route 135 in Winthrop Center, the Charles M. Bailey Library on Bowdoin Street, and the Cobbossee Lighthouse on Ladies Delight Island. There are several other structures, including commercial buildings along Main Street, which probably have potential for listing as historic buildings. The town hall was built in 1855-56, originally as a combination town office and high school, and recently renovated to house the police department. The masonic hall is an "old" building, which is coming down to accommodate the library addition, but several of the original architectural elements are being salvaged. The Morrill House has also been mentioned as worthy of protection.

The zoning ordinance contains a provision to protect archeological sites, but it is weak, as it only requires consultation with MHPC on or adjacent to Historic Register sites within shoreland areas. A stronger provision would require the applicant to perform their own study of any site with historic or archeological potential.

Community Issue: Preserving our Heritage

Exploring the Issue:

Our town recognizes the value of local history. Our connection with the past helps to explain what we are today. This connection need not be limited to the protection of old buildings. In Winthrop, in fact, the greater need is to protect artifacts and documents that are currently being stored in less-than-ideal conditions in locations around town.

There is no local nucleus for historic preservation. The town's historic society has not met for over 15 years. The council recently discussed the establishment of an historic commission, but the consensus was to try to revive the historic society as an initial step. All that needs to be done is to re-file for non-profit status.

A venue for storage and display of historical items is the greatest current need. This need not be a free-standing museum, though it should include both display cases and an area to access historical records, with a curator. It has been noted that space has been offered at the Winthrop Commerce Center (old woolen mill), but this is a tentative offer of unfinished space. The expanded library may also offer an opportunity, though there are many existing demands on this project.

Volunteers and students are currently in the process of establishing a Winthrop Art and History Walk, which will highlight the many elements of public art and local history available downtown. This is another opportunity to re-establish the downtown as a center of community life and draw for tourism and economic development.

Setting a Direction:

Preserving our heritage is a matter for both public policy and private activity. Both sectors can work cooperatively to provide a better appreciation and preservation of history:

- Re-establish the Winthrop Historical Society, with funding support and a mission to initiate the process to develop a facility to house historical and archeological materials, provide a base for research and educational activities, and public displays and lectures.
- Complete development of the Winthrop Art and History Walk, and document for materials provided by public and private organizations promoting tourism or other economic development activity.

Planning Recommendations:

State Goal: Preserve the state's archeological and historical resources.

Policies:

1. Protect significant historical and archeological resources in Winthrop.
2. Preserve and utilize historical artifacts and records.

Strategies:

- a) The planning board should be familiar with and routinely consult MHPC maps and other resources to identify sites with potential for historical or archeological resources. Where identified, developers should make a reasonable effort to inventory historic or archeological resources, and take appropriate measures to protect them.
- b) Re-establish the Winthrop Historical Society, with funding support and a mission to initiate the process to develop a facility to house historical and archeological materials, provide a base for research and educational activities, and public displays and lectures.
- c) Seek funding to complete a town-wide evaluation and report on historical and archeological assets and sites.
- d) Complete work on the Art and History Walk, and publish the results on the town's website and in Chamber of Commerce literature.

Chapter 13: Regional Coordination

Winthrop is the service center community for western Kennebec County. It has the tradition and responsibility to take a leadership role in regional development. This includes playing a strong role in economic development, and establishing cooperation with neighboring towns in efforts to provide more effective and less costly public services, and better protection of our lakes and other significant natural resources.

Economic Development:

- The Winthrop Area Chamber of Commerce focuses on supporting tourism and businesses in the Winthrop Lakes Region, with over 125 members hailing from Fayette, Manchester, Monmouth, Mount Vernon, Readfield, and Wayne.
- Western Kennebec Economic Development Alliance (WKEDA) is a non-profit organization formed to promote sustainable economic development in the western part of the county, from Vienna to Monmouth. Although the major portion of its funding and activities are centered in Winthrop, WKEDA is currently working on projects in Monmouth and Manchester. WKEDA oversees development of the Winthrop Business Park.
- Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) is a regional organization providing both community and economic development services to a three-county area. KVCOG has connections to federal and state grant funding for economic development projects, as well as small business counseling and loan funding. Winthrop has traditionally supported KVCOG with membership on the Board of Directors and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee.
- Local job training initiative?

Public Services:

- Communications Center
- Ambulance Service
- Trunkline Group/ASD

- Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Natural Resource Protection and Management:

- Cobbossee Watershed District
- Friends of Cobbossee Watershed
- Kennebec Land Trust