TOWN OF WINTHROP

DRAFT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2010 UPDATE

To friends and citizens of Winthrop,

What follows is the 2010 update to the 1986 and 1996 Winthrop Comprehensive Plans. It is the culmination of 18 very full months of review, discussion, community input, negotiation, interim drafts, and more discussion. For this update, the committee had the benefit of technology -- anyone who wanted to participate could easily stay up-to-date and provide input through email and the town's website. Over the 18 months, many who did not attend meetings could still play a critical role through research and feedback.

This Comprehensive Planning process has been, I think, unique in its consistently robust discussion -- in-depth, well-researched, presented from varied political perspectives, and always respectful. From time-to-time members would even describe these meetings as both productive and fun. The Committee met twice a month. Additionally a number of subcommittees met on their own to develop more detailed recommendations. The entire Committee and public participants went over every word of the Plan to assure consistent and comprehensive recommendations.

I would like to thank a number of people whose dedication and hard work made this Plan possible. First, obviously, the Committee Members. This group of 13 citizens was terrific to work with. They gave more time and energy to this effort than I could ever have asked for. They listened intently to every person who took the time to come talk with us; they volunteered for additional assignments and got them done; and maintained their good humor through many thorny issues. Next, thanks to fellow residents, who came to meetings week after week and shared their thoughts with us. They made the process dynamic, interesting, and well-rounded, and took on projects that benefited this Plan and the community. Thanks to Margy Knight and Sarah Fuller for providing us with pictures to use in this document. Finally, thanks to Town Manager Cornell Knight and Chris Huck, KVCOG Planning Director and the author of the Plan. We worked through a demanding schedule with seemingly endless meetings and I know there was many a night when they both would have preferred to be home with their families. Their expertise made this process possible.

The Committee recommends that the Town Council to adopt this plan and begin the formal implementation of its recommendations as soon as possible. Winthrop is a terrific community facing many challenges. We, the Committee, believe that the sooner we get moving, the sooner we can achieve our stated community vision.

Thank you, Winthrop, for the privilege of letting me chair this very interesting process. I have enjoyed (almost) every minute of it.

Patrice Putman, Chair, Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Committee

Town of Winthrop
DRAFT Comprehensive Plan
2010 Update

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2010 Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Committee

Patrice Putman, Chair
Kristen Bartlett
John Calinan
Sarah Fuller
Ken Johnson
Brian Ketchen
Andy Wess

Harold Burnett
John Carpenter
Mike Czado
Jack Kaiser
Phil Locashio
Jim Norris

Cornell Knight, Town Manager

Chris Huck, KVCOG Advisor

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.

Community Visioning:

The first formal event in the comprehensive planning process was an attempt to reach out to residents – to generate some interest and excitement for the process as well as information about local priorities. The Community Visioning Day was held on January 10, 2009, and attended by over 50 people.

In a series of brainstorming sessions, attendees were asked to identify big issues in town and suggest some solutions and priorities. At the end of the day, five independent working groups had arrived at a set of five priorities each for presentation. There were common themes. Downtown renewal ranked first or second in all five groups. Maintaining a diversity of housing choices also featured prominently. Also common to more than one group was utilizing our natural resources to bolster recreational development, improving public communications, and maintaining quality education.

Many more issues were generated than solutions. Among the issues suggested were: attracting more young families to town, getting more public access to lakes, making more fun places for people of all ages, job creation, more sustainable development, and achieving a balance between development and open space.

Since the comprehensive plan sets future direction for local government, attendees were also asked to rank where the town should focus its efforts (expressed in terms of spending priorities). The top three priorities were: 1) downtown development, 2) tax reduction, and 3) recreation facilities. Other priorities ranking highly were the school system and economic development.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee and Process:

Following the visioning session (and recruiting somewhat from that session), the Council appointed a Comprehensive Planning Committee. The committee was charged with meeting semi-monthly and producing a plan within 18 months. The committee originally consisted of fourteen members, though no formal roster is kept and non-committee attendees at the meetings are entitled to full participation. Meetings held at the town office generally have attracted at least half a dozen public members, and there is seldom a distinction between the audience and the committee. The chair has estimated over 200 names on her email distribution list.

The committee's initial task was to review elements of the old plan and new information available. The committee was staffed by the town manager and a planning consultant from Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, who were able to produce that information for review.

Following that process, in September of 2009, the committee sponsored another brainstorming session, at which we disassembled the planning process and reassembled it into a list of high-priority topics for discussion. The committee then spent September through March focusing on each of these "Community Issues," which are highlighted in chapters of this plan. This approach allowed the committee to engage in wide-ranging discussion that transcended the traditional categories of recreation, economic development, and so on.

The committee has made use of the town's website for informing the public. All meeting minutes, reports, and recommendations are posted to the website. This exposure may account in part for steady public attendance at regular meetings.

Finally, the completed draft document has been circulated to the entire email list and posted on the website. To help with public awareness, over 700 flyers were distributed at the polls during the primary election held June 8, 2010.

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 outlines the context for those recommendations, including the overall vision, the mechanism for implementing and evaluation, and our "top ten" action list.

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.
- Winthrop provides recreational opportunities to people of all ages and abilities. We make good use of our unique geographical gifts, such as the lakes and Mount Pisgah, and our public facilities. Winthrop is a place where both residents and visitors can play.

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.

Winthrop's "Top Ten:"

Each chapter of this plan contains both its top recommendations and a larger set of action steps. Together, they describe a future for the town as laid out in the vision. But separately, they are a little difficult to track. For this reason, this section provides an initial "top ten" list of the highest priority action items of the plan – a summary of what should be slated for immediate implementation. The list follows:

1. Update zoning ordinance as suggested throughout the plan, involving feedback from stakeholders and encouraging the most growth in designated growth areas
    - Commercial growth
    - Residential growth

2. Engage existing economic and business development organizations in continuing to build Winthrop's downtown
    - Multiuse, light manufacturing and residential
    - Senior housing
    - Develop Royal Street area into a gateway to Downtown
    - Produce a marketing plan for the community

3. Support a Recreational Economy
    - Promote businesses that support recreation: bike and kayak rentals, fishing, snowshoeing
    - Expand hiking and biking trails especially to Mt. Pisgah and beyond town limits
    - Protect our lakes for boating and fishing and swimming

4. Support appropriate commercial development along Rt. 202
    - Promote common access to keep 202 traffic moving

5. Preserve public roads according to a long-term plan

- Maintain existing public roads to limit costly repairs
- Only accept new public roads in the designated growth areas.
- Provide lake protection and road maintenance education to private road associations.

6. Protect open spaces
    - Work with Kennebec Land Trust and others to expand and protect open spaces
    - Prioritize protecting areas that are contiguous to other towns' protected areas.
    - Prioritize protecting areas with significant biodiversity.

7. Expand hiking, walking, and biking trails
    - Build a trail from downtown to top of Mt. Pisgah
    - Build a walkway along the Mill Stream and improve connectivity throughout the downtown
    - Build hiking and biking trail to Manchester

8. Protect our lakes
    - Continue to support Cobbossee Water District and Friends of Cobbossee.
    - Work with other communities to maintain co-owned dams and protect our lakes.
    - Support education to prevent milfoil and other invasive species.

9. Expand housing opportunities in a planned and incremental way
    - Update zoning regulations as suggested throughout the Plan
    - Support affordable senior housing in downtown

10. Maintain and expand needed public facilities
    - Build a new fire station
    - Expand the library
    - Expand sewer and water to growth areas in an incremental and planned way
    - Provide bike storage in downtown and at destination points
    - Maintain the Mt. Pisgah fire tower

Implementation and Evaluation:

There is a great temptation to view the development of a comprehensive plan as a finished product. It is not. It is the establishing of guidelines for moving towards an objective that may never be finished – the reaching of our vision. The plan is a step. It must be implemented, and the results measured.

Each action plan in the individual chapters of this document contains specific recommendations for implementing it. However, there is a need for coordination of the strategies and evaluation of overall success. This plan recommends the following implementation and evaluation strategies:

1. The Town Council is the ultimate body responsible for implementation of the plan. The Council will establish an annual review workshop in June or July (following budget development). The workshop will review activities over the prior year and determine priorities for activities in the upcoming year. The workshop may also be the source for recommendations for updating or amending the comprehensive plan.

2. The Town Council will establish standing agenda items for meetings in December and January on the comprehensive plan. These agenda items will give the outgoing and incoming councils, respectively, the opportunity to ask questions and express opinions on progress of the implementation.

3. To assist in maintaining awareness of implementation progress, the town manager will establish a "Top Ten" list. The list will contain the ten (or so) highest priority action steps from the plan. The list will begin with a selection from the top recommendations in this chapter, but as they are achieved, some will drop off and others will be added. The "Top Ten" list will be provided for each councilor, will be published at the town office, and will be prominently bookmarked on the town website.

4. The council will establish an implementation committee for oversight of implementation activities. The committee will be appointed by the council, and will include representation from the council and other boards/committees involved with implementation, plus resident volunteers as warranted. The committee will meet at least quarterly, to review progress and identify impediments to carrying out the recommendations.

5. The first function of the Implementation Committee will be to compile and prioritize the action recommendations in this plan. There are over 100 separate strategies recommended in this plan, and time and space limitations preclude establishing an implementation schedule for all. The Implementation Committee will coordinate implementation activities with regard to available resources, competing timetables, and relative importance.

6. The Implementation Committee will be responsible for evaluating the success of recommendations. The committee will establish a set of evaluation measures to determine whether 2/3 of new development is occurring in growth zones and whether 10 percent of new housing is affordable. The committee may utilize more recent (2010) census and other data to set evaluation measures, rather than the data in this plan.

7. The Implementation Committee will also review and recommend changes to the strategies based on obstacles encountered. The committee will prepare a summary of activities to be published in the annual report. Regular monitoring of development activity by the code enforcement officer will be reported to the committee, and at such time as it becomes clear that strategies in effect are not working towards the intended vision, the implementation committee will report its observations and recommendations for change to the council.

8. The next scheduled update to this plan will begin in 2021.

Chapter 3: A Profile of Winthrop's People

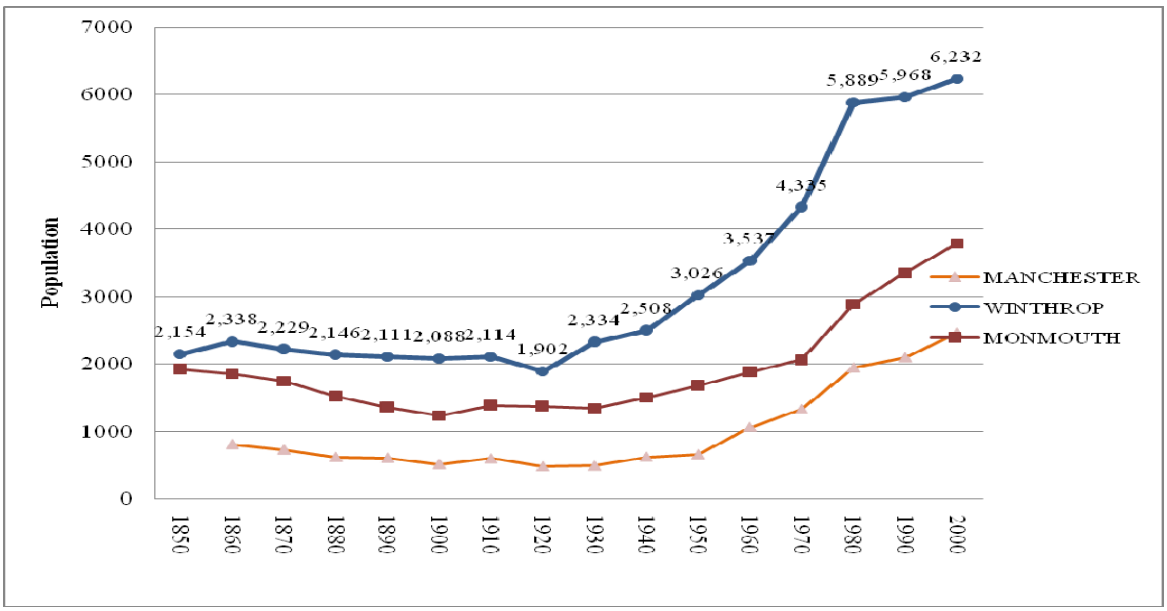
The first step in preparing a comprehensive plan is to get a sense of who we are planning for. This chapter presents a statistical profile of the people of Winthrop. Information is derived from US Census and other federal and state sources. The report also contains a speculative section on the future 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 ANatural Change,@ which is the difference between births and deaths, and AMigration,@ 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 AHouseholds.@ 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

Ahousehold,@ and are classified as living in Agroup 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 (% change). A current 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.

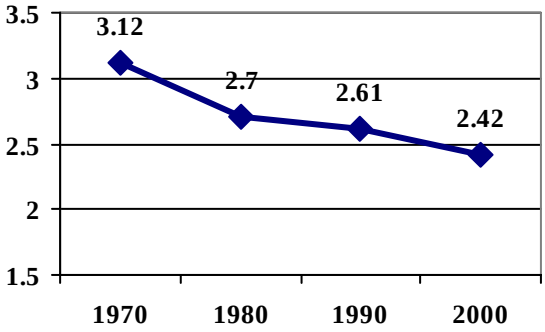
Table 3-1: Household Characteristics, 1990 and 2000 Census Data

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

A dramatic increase came in the single-person households – almost 140 of them in the 90's. This should lead us to ask, 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.



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 AMedian Age.@ A median is a point at which exactly half the population is above and half below, and is not the same as Aaverage.@ 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 Aold@ side of the balance than the Ayoung@ 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

Town	1990	2000
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 season, 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 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 Cobbosseecontee and Camp Mechawana on Lower Narrows Pond. 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 in Winthrop, as seasonal conversions are running at about the same rate as historically.

Service Center Impacts;

As a small service center, Winthrop can be expected to see some impacts from a larger daytime population. However, the population flux is overwhelmed by the much larger service centers of Augusta and Lewiston. There are more than 1,000 more commuters out of Winthrop on a daily basis than commuters in. Winthrop's "service center" status consists of its commercial sector, with a regional supermarket, health services, and an active downtown. No additional accommodation is necessary to deal with this fluctuation in daytime populations.

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 Projection):

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 housing units must be built *to accommodate no increase in population* – about 12 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 housing units. 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

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

Top Recommendations:

* Develop a public-private partnership with owners of Royal Street property to redevelop site, pursuing grants and appropriate zoning standards compatible with vision for the downtown.

* Utilize ordinances to encourage a mix of retail, professional services, and multi-family development in the village area.

* Within the Commercial District, change zoning to encourage manufacturing-distribution-warehouse and office development in the Route 202 corridor while discouraging large-scale retail and strip development.

* Develop a marketing implementation plan over the coming 3-year period.

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: Aper-capita income,@ (PCI) which is the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and AHousehold 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 90's. Kennebec County, as a whole, was lower than

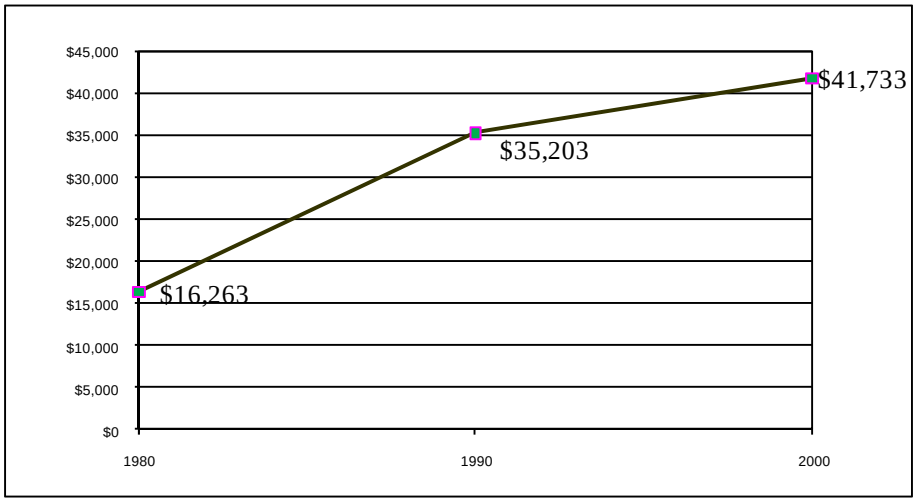
Town	1990 PCI	2000 PCI	% change*
Winthrop	**$ 15,413**	**$ 19,447**	**- 6 %**
Augusta	$ 13,209	$ 19,145	13 %
Manchester	$ 17,410	$ 28,043	29 %
Monmouth	$ 11,412	$ 17,551	22 %
Readfield	$ 14,915	$ 20,707	7 %
Kennebec Co.	$ 12,885	$ 18,520	14 %

% Change calculated after 32 % decade inflation

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 <u>not</u> give us a picture of the *distribution* of income levels. Table 4-1, next page, 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.

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.

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

Range	1990 #	Percentage of Households	2000 #	Percentage
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 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.

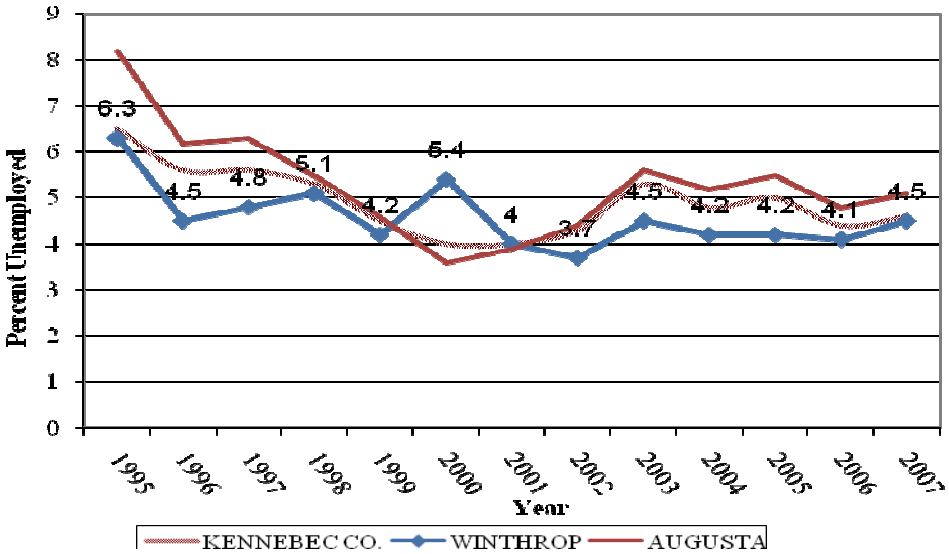
In 2000, the labor force in Winthrop consisted of 3,361 people, 67 percent of the working-age population. That total included 1,709 women (65.5 percent of working-age women) and 1,652 men (69.3 percent of working-age men). An average of 1.34 persons in each household is in the labor force, i.e. four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

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.

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



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 jobs demanding more education.

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

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 was built up from a mercantile village into manufacturing based on water power. Those factors are no longer important; today's economy is based on transportation and communications. Winthrop's Carleton Woolen Mills hung on for many years, but finally closed a decade ago. Taking its place is a whole lot of small businesses. 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 hi-tech industries, 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

In terms of retail and service businesses, the landscape has not changed much in the past decade or so. Most businesses are still locally-owned and cater to Winthrop and surrounding towns. The few franchise businesses are regional chains, and Winthrop has not yet experienced any "big box" interest. The supermarket was recently rebuilt to a much larger size and seems to be attracting from a broader market area.

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 has a history of utilizing economic development incentives. The business park is in a Pine Tree Zone, as is both renovated mill buildings. The Town has also approved a TIF for historic rehabilitation in the downtown area.

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 now appears to be more demand than supply for turnkey floor space, and WKEDA is actively pursuing development of additional properties. Current zoning focuses commercial development on Route 202, without necessarily assuring that the highway will not be negatively affected.

Winthrop is uniquely poised to establish itself as recreational destination area – not for the expensive downhill skiing population which is drawn to western Maine or for the yachting population that is drawn to the coast – but rather for the general population, people who want a nice place to have fun with a hike through some trails, a bike ride around a Lake, a canoe trip to a local island, a swim in a cool, clean lake, a chance to take one's kids fishing.. These wonderful, old fashion ways to enjoy nature are more desirable and needed than ever. Winthrop is a summer time destination for many. Its economy can take much greater advantage of this multifaceted opportunity.

Community Issue: Winthrop Downtown

This summary draws on the *Downtown Revitalization Plan* prepared by Kent Associates and Rothe Associates in 2000. Many of that plan's recommendations have been implemented in ten years, 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 within the downtown.

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:

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 housing to provide a

built-in customer base for stores, restaurants and services. The businesses themselves must be varied enough to attract a range of clientele.

- *Access:* Most people agree a downtown should be "walkable," meaning good pedestrian infrastructure and multiple destinations within easy walking range. But the downtown must also be "rideable," with adequate parking and 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 safe 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, downtown stage, or 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 can help to identify vacant properties and match them with prospective tenants, schedule and coordinate programs and events, and pursue grants and growth opportunities.

The 2000 Plan contained a citizen-developed Vision Statement for the Winthrop's 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.

Downtown Challenges:

There are clearly some challenges remaining for the Winthrop downtown neighborhoods. These are listed below, 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 uppers 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 (pictured). This is on an 11 acre site that otherwise might be prime development land.

New property owners are interested in making changes. This could be an outstanding opportunity for a public-private partnership for redevelopment. Royal Street could become the western anchor of the downtown. 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 fine for on-street riding, Main Street, because of congestion and the number of driveway entrances, is 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 Hannafords 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.

Community Issue: Sustainability in Winthrop

Exploring the Issue:

The concept of Sustainability is one which arches over many elements of this plan. It is primarily an economic issue – sustainability means ensuring long-term prosperity – but it touches on energy-efficient housing, lowering the cost of public services, improving access to transportation and recreation, and sustaining our natural resources and working landscape.

Throughout this plan, there are recommendations that address various areas that could collectively be grouped under the heading "sustainability." While this is not a required plan section, the precarious state of the global environment, food system, and energy resource base beg for it to be addressed. Winthrop's rural heritage and history of commitment to our natural resources contribute to a desire to create a sustainable community that preserves our livelihoods and landscapes, and makes our homes, businesses and municipal buildings energy efficient. Examples of some principles that promote sustainability include: promoting locally grown foods, encouraging active recreation and transportation options, reducing energy use for homes and businesses, developing alternative forms of energy, and reducing the physical impact of development on land and water resources.

Setting a Direction:

In recognition of this need, the Town of Winthrop established a Green Committee in 2009. The committee is currently preparing a report to the town. Several recommendations to be included in the report may also be relevant to this plan. They include:

Housing: Reduce energy usage and dependence on fossil fuels through efficiency and weatherization programs and technologies, financed by grant funding.

Farm and Forest: Promote and encourage local small-scale sustainable agriculture.

Transportation: Create bicycle, pedestrian, carpool, and transit options and include these considerations when planning new or repairing/renovating existing roads.

Economic Development: Invest in renewable energy sources and green industry jobs.

Public Services: Hire or assign a municipal staff person to evaluate and recommend energy conservation and sustainability actions for town government. Use green building supplies

and methods for town and school facilities. Consider the use of green and energy efficient materials for infrastructure projects.

Public Services: Maximize availability of recycling options for businesses, town, and school offices and residents.

Natural Resources: Reduce non-point source pollution in our surface and ground water.

Action Plan:

Local 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.

4. Coordinate economic activities with WKEDA and other regional groups.

Recommended 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) Develop a public-private partnership with owners of Royal Street property to redevelop site, pursuing grants and appropriate zoning standards compatible with vision for the downtown.

c) Utilize zoning ordinance to encourage a mix of retail, professional services, and multi-family development in the Village District.

d) Within the Commercial District, change zoning to encourage manufacturing-distribution-warehouse and office development in the Route 202 corridor while discouraging large-scale retail and strip development.

e) Develop attractions for the downtown area, including walking paths (Mill Stream), public restrooms, regular events and activities, and a downtown beautification project.

f) Develop a marketing implementation plan over the coming 3-year period:

- Aimed at prospective businesses, seniors, young families;
- Promote the downtown, the community, the lakes region;
- Utilize both electronic and traditional media;
- Coordinate with WKEDA and WACC.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report. The town will continue to work with private developers and economic development groups to coordinate efforts in redeveloping existing properties. For the 2012 fiscal year, the Council will budget for the development of a marketing plan, in cooperation with WKEDA and WACC.

Chapter 5: Housing in Winthrop

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

Top Recommendations:

- Review and amend current zoning as necessary to encourage "mixed use" in downtown commercial buildings. Involve owners of industrial/commercial properties within the Village District to promote redevelopment with mixed use.
- If not provided by the private sector within the next five years, consider forming a non-profit housing authority to build senior housing.
- Pursue grant funding for energy efficiency improvements and education for homeowners and landlords.

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

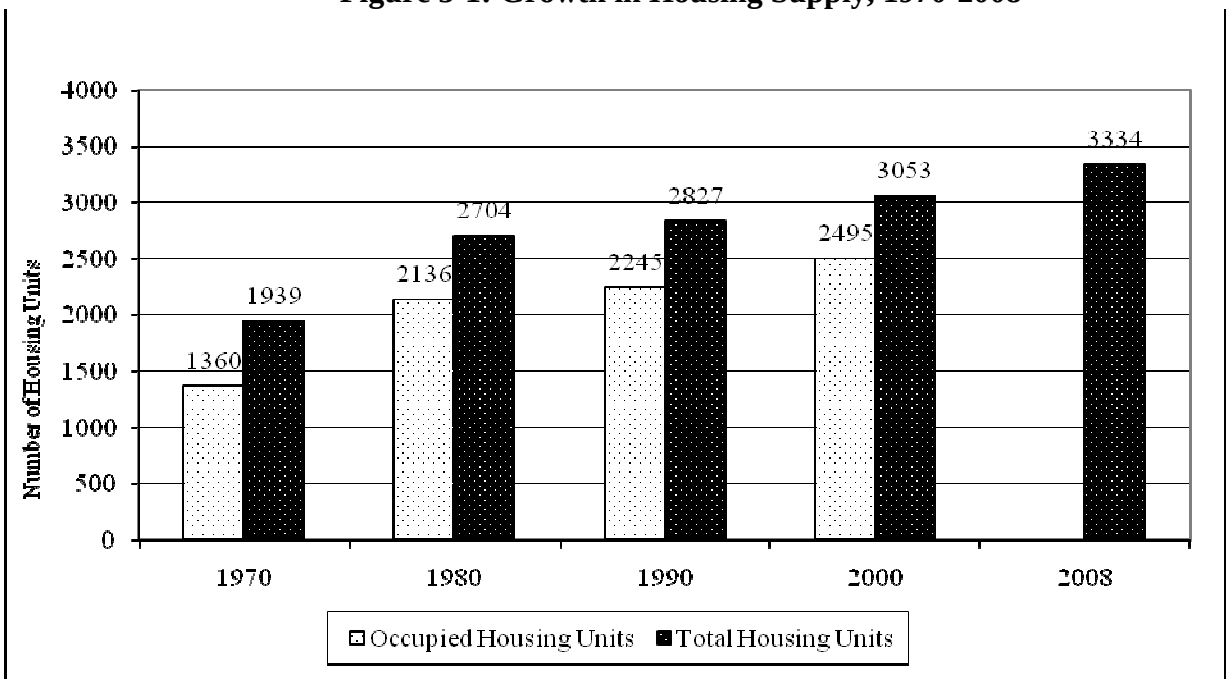


Table 5-1 profiles housing types in Winthrop. The overwhelming majority of housing is single-family (traditional). Between 1990 and 2000, there was a sudden jump in popularity of mobile homes, and a steep drop in multi-family housing units. The number of seasonal units has changed the least – their percentage 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.

Town	2000 Rental Percentage
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, below, 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%).

Table 5-2: Age of Housing in Winthrop

Year Structure Built	Units	Percent
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

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 economic factors. Often, the relationship between prices and local incomes gets out of whack, with prices well beyond what incomes can bear. We recognize this 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%**
Owner Households	*315 (16%)*	*610 (30%)*	*1,354 (67 %)*
Owners over 65	181 (36%)	283 (56%)	416 (83 %)
Renter Households	*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. This does not need to mean 25 new single-family homes per year. There could, and in fact should, be a mix of housing types, including multi-family and mobile homes, to reflect our changing demographics and land use trends. A large percentage of those should be suitable or designated for seniors. New senior housing should be in the downtown area where seniors are easily able to get to local stores, access health services, and connect with others through volunteering, local churches, or civic organizations.

Based on past experience we can guess that few of the new housing units will be either multi-family or rental housing. About ¼ of Winthrop's housing is rental, but it appears to be conversions from existing single-family 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 should be for the rental market.

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 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.

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.

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.

Action Plan:

Local Policies:

1. Encourage 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.

Recommended Strategies:

a) Continue to permit mobile home parks in Residential District where public sewer is available.

b) Review and amend current zoning as necessary to encourage "mixed use" in downtown commercial buildings. Involve owners of industrial/commercial properties within the Village District to promote redevelopment with mixed use.

c) If not provided by the private sector within the next five years, form a non-profit housing authority to build senior housing.

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

e) Permit single accessory apartments with no additional lot size requirement in all residential districts.

f) Clarify that the zoning ordinance permits condominium form of development.

g) Pursue grant funding for energy efficiency improvements and education for homeowners and landlords.

h) Provide training and capacity for the Code Enforcement Office prior to the mandate to enforce the statewide Uniform Building Code in 2012.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report. The Council will also take necessary measures to guarantee enforcement of the Uniform Building Code, including additional enforcement training as appropriate.

The implementation committee will be responsible for monitoring the rate of creation of new affordable housing, using a set of evaluation measures to be developed using 2010 data (see strategy 6-4.) If it becomes clear within five years that the goal to provide affordable housing is not being met, the board will recommend that the Council consider forming a housing authority.

The Green Committee will identify sources and pursue grant funding for residential energy efficiency.

Chapter 6: Land Use and Development in Winthrop

Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.

Recommendation:

* The new Land Use Plan (page 42) provides zoning and other policy direction to encourage growth in commercial, village, and residential districts, while discouraging it in rural and resource districts. The Plan also contains recommendations for expansion and simplification of existing growth areas.

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 Regulation:

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 current (1996) Comprehensive Plan, approved by the town and the State, contained two recommendations: to expand the village district and to adopt a building code. The Village District was expanded three years ago. The town does not have its own building code, but the state will soon mandate one. The 1996 plan 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 202, 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). The district contains very little existing commercial development, 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, although portions are pumped under pressure and would require a separate gravity-feed line.

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, part of 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* consists of strips of land extending from the edge of the Commercial District for an additional 500 feet on either side of Route 202 between Hoyt Brook and the Monmouth town line. The district is meant to encompass the Winthrop Business Park. It has the same dimensional requirements as the General Commercial District, and permits the same uses, with a little broader range of industrial uses allowed.

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.

The ordinances are administered primarily by the planning board and code enforcement officer. The planning board consists of seven members and two alternates and meets monthly. It is responsible for issuing permits under zoning, subdivision, shoreland zoning, and floodplain ordinances, and for recommending necessary changes to these ordinances. The code enforcement officer is a full-time employee of the town and is fully certified. The CEO issues some zoning, shoreland zoning, and floodplain permits, and advises applicants and the planning board. The board and CEO receive regular training opportunities.

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 it's 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 current (1996) comprehensive plan and 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 pre-existing version of the zoning ordinance. The only relevant recommendation in the plan was to consider expanding the Village District. This has been done incrementally over the years, but other districts have also been enlarged, some significantly.

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 <u>doubling the amount of land available for growth</u>.

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 become less restrictive of development in areas now zoned LR (see chart below). 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 new 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 existing 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:

    1. Old Lewiston Road, as far as Cross Road;
    2. Turkey Lane, as far as Soper Road;
    3. Land between Soper Road and Old Lewiston Road, for roughly 4,500 feet;
    4. Route 133, to as far as the Pamela Drive and Ruby Ridge subdivisions;
    5. Sturtevant Hill Road to Nottingham Road (north side) and Grand Hill Place (south);
    6. 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. In this case, priorities for sewer extension

would be in order of the numbered expansion areas. However, a landowner within any identified area may petition to have his land re-zoned if he assumes responsibility 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 or watershed uses, to a depth of 500 feet on each side. 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 (see chart below). Include performance standards to minimize conflicts between commercial and residential uses within the district.

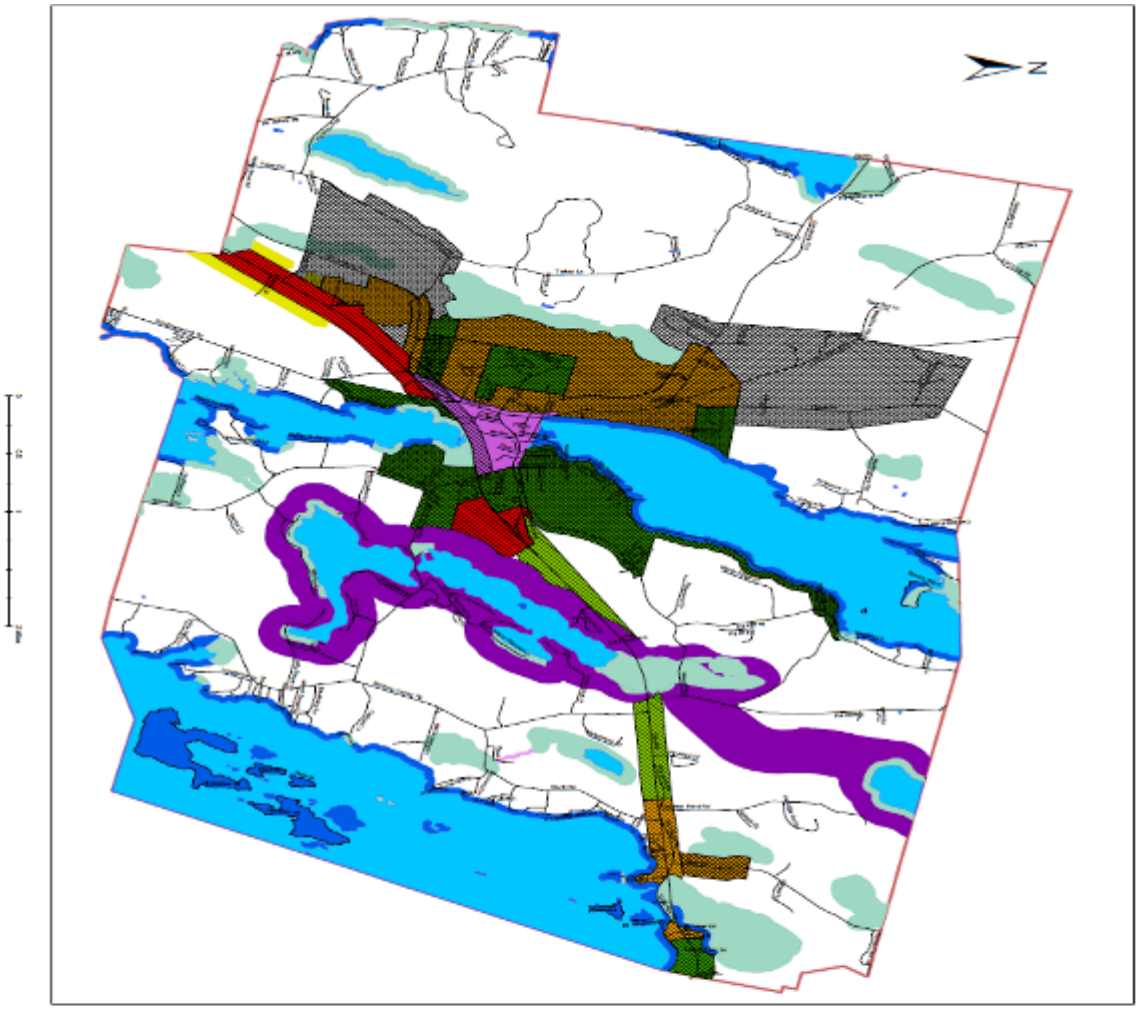
- Wherever land shifts from lower density to higher density permitted uses, there is legitimate concern over the impacts on the neighborhood and property values. These concerns should be addressed through a review and improvement of development standards in zoning and subdivision ordinances for better neighborhood protection.

Proposed changes to the zoning map are illustrated in the "Proposed Future Land Use Plan" on page 46 (overlain on current zoning). The changes are depicted in general terms. Actual zoning boundary changes must be made within the context of the zoning ordinance, and should be implemented only after closer examination, public review, and infrastructure plans put in place.

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 Winthrop's policies will only work in the context of what is going on around us, including state and regional trends and policies. Neighboring towns look to Winthrop as a commercial center, and expect Winthrop to carry a burden of commercial and employment growth. Manchester and Monmouth share Route 202 with Winthrop, and expect it to continue to develop commercially. However, DOT access management limits the development that can actually go there. Winthrop also works closely with the Cobbossee Watershed District and other towns in the watershed, to manage development within the lake watersheds. These examples of cooperation are reflected in the policies listed in this section.


Winthrop Comprehensive Plan
2010
Proposed Future Land Use
Proposed FLU Commercial
Proposed FLU Residential
Current Land Use Districts
General Commercial
General Residential
Industrial
Limited Commercial
Limited Residential
Resource Protection
Shoreland
Stream Protection
Village
Watershed District
Note: Where zoning boundaries follow parcel lines, location on this map is approximate.
Prepared by the
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
June 2010
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY
KVCOG
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General Recommendations:

1. Maintain 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 and to become more user-friendly in general;

3. Amend zoning and subdivision ordinances to incorporate current definitions, technology, and standards for better quality and more cost-efficient development;

4. Update and modernize zoning maps to comply with shoreland zoning mandates and incorporate local zoning changes.

5. Develop a development tracking and reporting system that will allow the planning board to evaluate the effectiveness of growth management policies. The implementation committee and planning board should conduct an annual review of plan implementation effectiveness;

6. Meet periodically with planning boards from Monmouth and Manchester, to discuss issues of development along mutual boundaries;

Recommendations to Direct Growth to Growth Areas:

7. 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 will not include property taxes, but may include grants, bonding, Tax Increment Financing, Impact fees, or other non-taxation sources.

8. Amend the zoning ordinance to reduce lot size and frontage requirements for development on public sewer.

9. 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.

10. Utilize WKEDA and other public-private partnerships to develop/redevelop properties within the growth area with potential for significant residential or commercial impacts.

11. Amend the zoning ordinance to encourage mixed use and small scale commercial and to permit congregate-style housing in the village area.

12. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other entities to improve amenities and attractions in the village area and minimize commercial vacancies.

13. Prioritize road improvements to give preference to growth area roads (part of road improvement plan).

14. Strengthen existing standards in the zoning ordinance to manage or combine commercial access and limit strip development along Route 202. Overall size of developments will be limited based on traffic impacts (trip generation), and other standards will be in place to limit physical and visual impacts.

15. Amend permitted uses in new residential and commercial districts to permit more growth. The chart below should provide a starting point (subject to revision)

Proposed Residential District:	Proposed Commercial District:
Permitted by right: 1. Open-space uses 2. Earth-moving less than 10 cubic yards 3. Signs	*Permitted by right:* 1. Open-space uses 2. Earth-moving less than 10 cubic yards 3. Signs 4. Agriculture or livestock keeping
Codes Enforcement Officer permit: l. Single-family dwelling, including mobile home 2. Two-family dwelling 3. Earth-moving greater than 10 cubic yards 4. Accessory structures 5. Timber harvesting or clearing of land 6. Home occupations 7. Uses similar to these uses	*Codes Enforcement Officer permit:* 1.Low impact commercial uses and structures 2. Earth-moving greater than 10 cubic yards 3. Timber harvesting or clearing of land 4. Accessory structures 5. Home occupations 6. Uses similar to these uses
Permit from the Planning Board: 1. Agriculture or livestock keeping 2. Recreational facilities, such as parks and golf courses 3. Campgrounds 4. Multi-family dwelling 5. Public Buildings 6. Cemeteries 7. Low impact commercial uses 8. Mobile home parks	*Permit from the Planning Board:* 1. Recreational facilities, such as parks and golf courses 2. Public Buildings 3. Medium-impact commercial uses 4. High-impact commercial uses 5. Multi-family structures 6. Intensive agriculture

15. Because of potential sensitivity of conversion of existing residential neighborhoods along Route 202 to the proposed commercial zone, prior to rezoning a survey will be conducted to judge attitudes and future plans for the affected landowners.

16. Establish as town policy that new private roads will only be accepted as town ways in the Village, Residential, or Commercial Districts.

Recommendations to Discourage Growth in Rural Areas:

17. Continue to permit only low-impact commercial uses in the rural district.

18. 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.

19. Amend the subdivision ordinance to limit the number of access points from subdivision lots onto public roads.

20. 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.

21. Develop and implement an Open Space Plan, which will identify critical resource areas and other high-value rural lands (scenic areas, high-value farmlands, etc.) and devise mechanisms to protect those lands (conservation easements, grants for acquisition, development standards, etc.)

22. The existing Resource Protection and Public Water Supply Zones and the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area are considered Critical Resource Areas within the Land Use Plan, and may be augmented by additional areas identified by the Open Space Plan to be developed.

23. 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.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report. The planning board is expected to prepare amendments to the zoning ordinance within 12 months of adoption of the plan, and to the subdivision ordinance within 24 months. (The board may consider combining ordinances into a single code.)

The council will authorize and fund the development of an Open Space Plan within five years of the adoption of this plan. The Conservation Commission will be responsible for overseeing development of the plan.

Chapter 7: Public Facilities and Services in Winthrop

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

Top Recommendations:

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

* Implement steps to make the village more attractive and accessible, including working with WACC and private businesses to establish amenities in the downtown area.

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, general assistance, finance office, 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 (pictured) is located in space within the Winthrop Elementary School on Highland Ave. The space was renovated and occupied in 2004, with its own entrance and parking and is sufficient to meet the needs of the town for the foreseeable future.

Public Safety:

Winthrop is served by municipal police and fire departments and a regional communications center and ambulance service. The Winthrop Police Department provides 24/7 police protection to the town, supplemented by 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, 2009, Winthrop Police responded to 4,640 calls an average of 13 per day, but a 2 percent decrease from 2008. The large majority of these calls were for citizen assists, animal complaints, or traffic accidents. Actual crimes totaled only 117. 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 53 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 2008-09, the department responded to 149 calls – 52 accidents, eight structure fires, four chimney fires, and 11 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 station is undersized and outdated. The department plans to erect a new station on town-owned on Route 202 adjacent to Carleton Mill. The town was unsuccessful in applying for federal stimulus money for construction; $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 Somerset County Communications Center in Skowhegan and are forwarded to Winthrop's center. In 2008-09, the center logged over 7,455 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 2008-09, the service responded to 2,058 calls for service, roughly 60 percent from Winthrop, and a 25 percent jump from the prior year. 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 30 part-time EMT's and paramedics.

The service moved into a new facility in 2008. The new building can house four units; the service currently owns four – three active. 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 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 a minority of towns in Maine without a salt storage shed. Construction of a shed is planned for in the CIP, but a low priority by the DOT. Consideration should also be given to joint cooperation with the DOT or neighboring towns on salt storage.

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 2008-09, the station processed 3,097 tons of household trash, 850 tons of demolition material, 2,325 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.

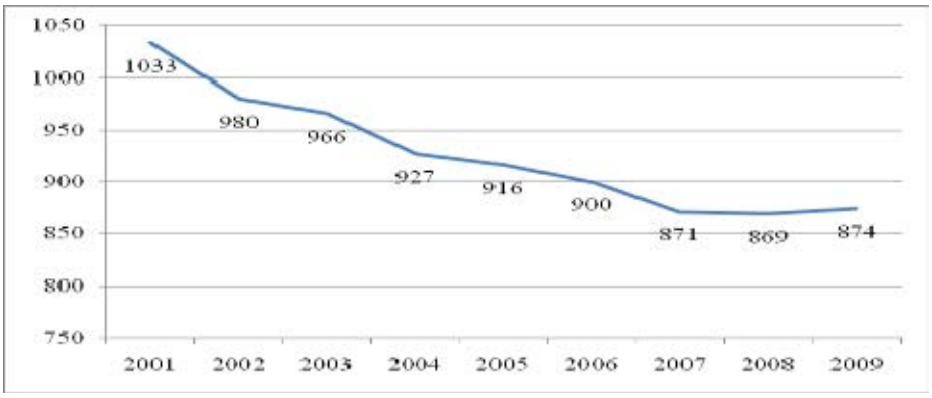
Education:

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 was built in the 70's but has been expanded within the past ten years. The high school was built within the past decade. Both 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, next page, enrollment was last 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.

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.

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



Leisure Services:

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

The C.M. Bailey Library (pictured) 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, and setting up the library for wifi. Both the collection and the circulation have been expanding in recent years.

The library building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Plans are underway for an expansion onto the adjacent lot purchased from the Masonic Hall in 2005. 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. A new teen center is planned for 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.

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

Utilities:

Public water and sewer service is provided to a portion of Winthrop by the Winthrop Utilities District. The district is governed by a three-member Board of Directors appointed by the Town Council. 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, carrying waste (including septage) to the Augusta Sanitary Treatment Plant. The trunkline is owned jointly by Winthrop, Monmouth, Augusta, and Manchester. Sewer and water services are profiled as a Community Issue.

Electric power is distributed in town through Central Maine Power facilities. Winthrop itself has no significant generation capabilities, however, a municipal committee has been formed to explore generation potential at the Mill Stream dam. 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:

A significant element of the public services picture is the ability of the town to finance and maintain its services. Town governments are faced with multiple challenges: ordinary population growth, sprawling new patterns of development, new technology and mandates from state and federal government, and more sophisticated demands from residents for leisure services, protection, education, and so on. Coupled with a heavy reliance on property taxes from a very slow-growing valuation base, fiscal management is key to delivery of all other services.

Comprehensive plans are not intended to dictate day-to-day financial decisions of local government. They are intended to identify long-term trends and needs resulting from growth and development. These needs usually resolve into new or expanded capital facilities or an increased range of public services. These needs must be balanced with the capacity of a town to fund them.

Winthrop, despite being a service center, is primarily a residential town in terms of taxable property. Of the $589,832,530 in taxable valuation in town, 86 percent of it comes from residential property. Eleven percent comes from commercial property, with the remainder coming from exempt or personal property. Tax-exempt property is relatively minor. The two summer camps (YMCA and Methodist) and post office are the most significant. Other modifications to valuation are two TIFs for historic building renovation, approximating $55,000 per year. Taxable valuation yielded property tax revenue of $7.3 million in 2009, approximately 45 percent of the overall revenues.

The total revenues for 2009 come to $16.2 million, and include excise taxes (937,000), intergovernmental transfer (($5.7 million – primarily state aid to education), and outside services ($857,000) as contributors. The $16.2 million revenue total is only slightly up from $14.9 million in 2006, and in fact, the property tax component is up by only $155,000 (two percent) since 2006. Overall valuation has increased by $165 million (37 percent) during that time.

As illustrated in Table 7-1, municipal expenditures track fairly closely with revenues. The largest single item is education, consisting of more than 50 percent of expenditures. Since 2006, school expenditures have risen seven percent, about the rate of inflation and consistent with increases in other line items. County tax has increased by 21 percent over that period.

Table 7-1: Revenue and Expenditure History, 2006-2009

		2009	2008	2007	2006
Revenues	Property taxes	7,279,753	7,422,567	7,365,162	7,124,004
	Excise taxes	937,242	979,717	1,009,002	908,000
	Intergov. Revs	5,684,267	6,132,139	6,078,668	5,854,607
	Intergov on-behalf	848,237	847,659	854,453	-
	Outside services	857,314	676,909	516,349	436,169
	Interest Revenue	21,333	75,275	88,024	-
	Miscellaneous	616,127	638,586	776,519	544,236
		16,244,273	16,772,852	16,688,177	14,867,016

Expenditures		2009	2008	2007	2006
Current:	General Government	1,225,919	1,162,097	1,155,454	1,082,227
	Public Safety	1,809,016	1,717,132	1,554,227	1,451,012
	Health & Welfare	529,945	548,174	515,314	466,068
	Recreation & Culture	218,927	201,899	223,928	208,594
	Education w/o debt	8,435,699	8,393,334	7,902,147	7,879,439
	Public Works	540,835	588,944	394,095	521,279
	Unclassified	180,254	166,956	172,544	130,145
	Overlay/abatement	14,315	128,609	2,593	12,998
	MPERS-on behalf	848,237	847,659	854,453	-
	Intergov-county tax	545,347	530,949	483,099	450,348
	Expenditures from fund	338,245	451,712	179,199	52,167
Debt Service	Principal	1,165,592	1,281,191	1,591,498	1,438,115
	Interest	527,010	579,300	640,064	652,657
	Leases	29,658	29,658		
Capital Outlays		193,725	176,749	113,327	85,577
		16,602,724	16,804,363	15,781,942	14,430,626

The control of expenditures has allowed Winthrop to stay well within its LD1 limits since enactment of the law. The town has not required a vote to exceed LD1 limits and does not expect to in the near future. Currently, service demands are not outpacing revenue growth. LD1 Limits on Municipal Commitment are shown in the box at right.

LD 1 Limits: 2004-2009	
2004 CORE	$2,554,145
2005	$2,666,844
2006	$2,817,833
2007	$2,950,389
2008	$3,064,563
2009	$3,168,617

The principal threat to a stable budget is the one-time, large ticket expenditure, such as new buildings or equipment. In Winthrop, capital investments are funded through a combination of appropriations, reserve funds, grants, lease programs, or bonding. A Capital Improvements Plan is adopted by the Council annually. Table 7-2 contains the most recent edition of the plan.

Table 7-2: Town of Winthrop Capital Improvements Plan, April, 2010

PROJECT NAME	DEPT	Funding Source	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
Ambulance lease/purchase	AMB	A,L	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	150,000
Turnout Gear	AMB	A,L		12,000	12,000			24,000
Power Stretcher	AMB	A,L		13,700				13,700
Stryker Stretcher	AMB	A,L		6,500				6,500
LP12 - Defib.	AMB	A,L		24,000				24,000
Co-monitors	AMB	A,L,G		4,200				4,200
Box Ambulance	AMB	A,L		175,000				175,000
Recorder System	COM	A,L	5,000	5,000				10,000
Fire Truck Reserve	FD	A	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	125,000
Fire Station Constructon	FD	R		1,000,000				1,000,000
Heating System	FD	R		6,000				6,000
Fire Truck Pumper	FD	A,B,R					600,000	600,000
Library Addition	LIB	A,G,B,F		1,300,000				1,300,000
Cruiser Replacement/ lease/purch.	PD	A,L	8,000	16,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	48,000
Car Lease Chief - Chev Impala 09	PD	A	4,600					4,600
Cruiser Replacement/lease/purch.	PD	A,L	7,900	7,900				15,800
199 Ft. Radio Tower	PD	A,G,R		50,000				50,000
Pickup Truck 4x4	PD	A,L		24,500				24,500
Public Works Equip. Reserve	PW	A	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
Pick Up Truck	PW	A,R		12,000	25,000			37,000
Pick Up Truck - 1 Ton	PW	A,R,B		65,000				65,000
Loader	PW	R,B		140,000				140,000
Trackless Tractor	PW	R,B			125,000			125,000
Plow Truck	PW	A,R		133,000				133,000
Road side mower	PW	A,R			25,000			25,000
Cobbossee Dam Repair	PW	A,B			50,000			50,000
Salt / Sand Shed	PW	A,R,B			250,000			250,000
Excavator	PW	A,R				100,000		100,000
Street Sweeper	PW	A,R,G			140,000			140,000
Tennis Courts Resurfacing	REC	A	5,000					5,000
Computer TH Hardware & Software	TO	A	3,500					3,500
Transfer Station Reserve	TS	A		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000
Open Topped Trailer	TS	A,R,B		40,000	40,000			80,000
Closed Top Trailer	TS	A,R,B			55,000			55,000
Skid Steer	TS	A,R,L		60,000				60,000
Road Tractor	TS	A,R,L		80,000				80,000
Demo wall	TS	A,R			30,000			30,000
TOTAL			**109,000**	**3,259,800**	**845,000**	**193,000**	**693,000**	**5,099,800**

Funding Source Key:

A - Appropriations
B - Bonding
G - Grant
L - Lease
R - Reserves
S - Surplus
F - Fund Raising

Funding for the CIP comes from a variety of sources. Some capital purchases come from appropriations, such as $632,000 in 2008 for ambulance building purchase and renovation. These are possible because the DIP anticipates and staggers these needs. Reserve funds are in place for highway equipment, fire trucks, and transfer station equipment. Bonding is used when necessary; the most recent bond was in 2009 -- $1.2 million for three purposes. Prior to that, the last bond was in 2005. Long-term debt is at 1.71 percent of state valuation, including school debt – well below the 15 percent legal cap.

The Winthrop Utilities District also maintains a 20 year CIP which identifies aging infrastructure for replacement or expansion. Their CIP is financed through user fees.

In addition to long-range planning, the town is active in seeking ways to reduce capital expenditures by regionalizing services. The town's dispatch center and ambulance service is shared by five towns. The town shares a street sweeper with Monmouth. The town contracts with Augusta for assessing services. The Winthrop Utilities District is also active in regional cost sharing. The district provides operations services by contract with Monmouth and Readfield, and is experimenting with providing sewer cleaning service to Manchester.

Community 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.

Economic Development: Develop a marketing implementation plan over the coming 3-year period.

- Aimed at prospective businesses, seniors, young families;
- Promote the downtown, the community, the lakes region;
- Utilize both electronic and traditional 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, and recreational trail system.

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: Expanding Access to Public Water and Sewer

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, consisting of about 1,040 individual customers. The water source is Upper Narrows Pond, and storage consists of a 525,000 gallon storage tank at high Street as well as a 300,000 gallon tank on Metcalf Road.

The sewer system serves the downtown, Memorial Drive, East Winthrop and Route 202, although portions of the 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 sewered 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.

Action Plan:

Local 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 ¾ of new, growth-related capital investments into areas designated for growth in the Future Land Use Plan.

6. Reduce citizens' tax burden by continuing to stay within LD 1 spending limits.

Recommended Strategies:

a) Establish a new fire station on Route 202 site.

b) Work with the Bailey Library Trustees and other interests to expand the library and provide the community with multi-use offerings.

c) Construct a sand-salt storage building on a suitable site or investigate alternatives for regional cooperation.

d) Implement steps to make the village more attractive and accessible, including working with WACC and private businesses to establish public amenities in the downtown area.

e) Improve public access to information on offerings of library, historic, cultural opportunities and events.

f) Develop an e-newsletter and other social media outlets to complement the town website.

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

h) Use green building supplies and methods for town and school facilities. Consider establishing the position of sustainability coordinator within the town and the use of green and energy efficient materials for infrastructure projects.

i) Maximize availability of recycling options for businesses, town, and school offices and residents.

j) Continue contacts and discussions with neighboring towns and regional entities on new ways to provide more efficient services.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will instruct the Implementation Committee to monitor and report on progress in achieving these strategies. Since most of them call for a continuation or expansion of coordination functions, little affirmative action is required. The town manager will incorporate the capital investment plan (below) into the CIP, beginning with the 2011 fiscal year. The 2011 budget should also include a budget for an e-newsletter and other communication enhancements.

Capital Investment Plan:

The Capital Investment Plan for Winthrop consists of the existing Capital Improvements Plan plus the recommendations for significant investment made in this plan. Coordinating capital investments also requires determination whether the town is spending ¾ of capital improvements within the designated growth area. Fortunately in Winthrop's case, nearly all traditional capital facilities are already located in the village or commercial districts. With the possible exception of the salt shed, 100 percent of CIP location-sensitive improvements are proposed for these areas.

The following elements gathered from recommendations in this and other chapters should be considered for inclusion in the CIP or addressed in conjunction with the CIP process:

A. Fire station, library expansion, sand-salt shed (already in CIP). Fire station and library are planned for within the growth area. No site has been selected for a salt shed.

B. A public-private initiative for future improvements to the downtown. The town will actively seek out and support grants or other funding sources for improving gateways and traffic flow and establishing amenities such as furniture, landscaping, and restrooms. This is an ongoing, cooperative process designed to invest in the growth area.

C. Fund the development of a bicycle-pedestrian plan for the implementation of a downtown sidewalk and trail system, and a downtown-to-Mt. Pisgah trail. The plan is a high-priority to be completed within two years to take advantage of the DOT pedestrian and bicycle funding cycle. Both projects are intended to enhance livability of the village.

D. Fund a study for the construction of a regional bicycle trail, utilizing existing trolley lines or other rights-of-way. The study should be timed to coordinate with federal or state grant sources for actual construction. While a regional trail would not be entirely within growth areas, it is seen as necessary to alleviate traffic and hazards on the highway system.

E. Beginning with the 2012-2013 budget year, establish a comprehensive road maintenance plan for local roads as a companion to the CIP. Road improvements are not currently

included in the CIP. The road maintenance plan would establish a standing budget amount for road improvements, to be funded annually through appropriations or periodically through bonding. The plan would identify the amount necessary to cover the estimated average annual cost of capital improvements to the system. While the vast majority of local roads are located within the growth areas, road maintenance should not discriminate among priority needs.

F. In 2012, 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. The plan should identify and implement a funding stream for financing of the top priority sewer and water extensions, including, if necessary, an impact fee program.

G. In cooperation with private and non-profit development groups, fund the creation of a marketing plan for the Town of Winthrop/lakes region, as outlined in the community issue earlier in this chapter.

H. Develop an open space plan for the town within five years. While the development of the plan may or may not require additional appropriation, the plan itself may call for the establishment of a municipal fund for acquisition of open space land or development rights.

Chapter 8: Outdoor Recreation in Winthrop

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

Top Recommendations:

* Maintain and improve the recreation trails, fire tower, and facilities at Mt. Pisgah. Plan for and develop a connecting trail from the downtown to Mt. Pisgah.

* Pursue the development of a walking path network in the downtown, along Mill Stream, and to Norcross Point.

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

Area	Size in Acres	Ownership	Facilities
High School Fields		School Dept.	Athletic Fields: Baseball, softball, football, soccer, field hockey, running track
Grade School Fields		School Dept.	Little league field, playground
Middle School Fields/ David's Field		School Dept.	Athletic Fields: multi-use, softball
Skate Park, Basketball/ Tennis Courts at Town Hall Lane		Town	8 Ramps, 2 tennis courts, basketball court. Lighted
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
Rambler Road property	6.2	Town	Undeveloped

Nature Area Route 202	9	Town	Trails
Trail at high school		School Dept.	3 mile walking/ski trail
Mt. Pisgah	90	State DOC	Trails, spring
Route 202, DOT Land	17	State DOT	Undeveloped Land
Route 133 Rest Area	1	State IFW	Carry in boat access to Berry Pond
Upper Narrows Rest Area	1	State IFW	Carry in boat access to Upper Narrows
Marshview		Private	Carry in boat access to Little Cobbossee
E. Winthrop Cemetery		State IFW	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/multiple owners	Partially developed trail
Snowmobile Trails		Private/multiple owners	Developed trails maintained by Hillandalers Club
State YMCA Camp of Maine	200	State YMCA	Resident camp; conference facilities (seasonal)
Camp Metchewana	300	Methodist Church of Maine	Resident camp; conference facilities (Seasonal)
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. Tennis courts are 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 beach access 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. Right-of-way ownership issues must be resolved before recommending any improvements or greater use of this facility.

- 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,
- a boat ramp into Annabessacook in Monmouth,
- and a boat ramp into Maranacook just south of Readfield Village.

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. A perceived danger in allowing boat access for the general public is the introduction of invasive plant and animal species, particularly milfoil. Any improved access must be coordinated with more intensive invasive species monitoring.

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 are currently experiencing a decline in the numbers of young people (15 percent fewer in 2000 than 1980.) We have a good assortment of kids programs. 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 "baby boomer" generation is showing signs of wanting to stay physically and mentally active. They want to go to concerts, take classes, participate in the community, ride bikes, kayak, and do other interesting things in their retirement. If Winthrop wants to attract or keep its aging baby boomer population, we have to make many and varied recreational opportunities easily available to them.

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:

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 suggested 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.

Action Plan:

Local 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.

Recommended Strategies:

a) Instruct the recreation committee to focus on gaps in recreation programs for adult and senior recreation.

b) Continue to 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 and rehabilitate or remove the pier at town beach.

d) Analyze what added costs and potential revenues would accrue from allowing non-residents to use the town beach and make recommendations for future policy.

e) Maintain and improve the recreation trails, fire tower, and facilities at Mt. Pisgah. Plan for and develop a connecting trail from the downtown to Mt. Pisgah.

f) Pursue the development of a walking path network in the downtown, along Mill Stream, and to Norcross Point.

g) Develop and promote annual events, such as art shows, a bass tournament, summer festivals and townwide celebrations.

h) Work with the Kennebec Land Trust to continue protection of important open space or recreational land.

i) Provide education regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property.

j) Expand opportunities for off-road or hybrid bicycle touring, for both recreation and transportation, accessing downtown, lakes, and interlocal networks.

k) Pursue resolution of right-of-way issues for continued public access at East Winthrop beach.

Implementation:

The recreation committee will be responsible for overall timing and coordination of these strategies. Several of these strategies are already in the planning stages. A source of funding and implementation should be identified for strategies b, c, e, and f for grants or inclusion in the next CIP. The recreation committee will coordinate implementation with the YMCA, Chamber of Commerce (for strategy g) and Kennebec Land Trust.

Chapter 9: Winthrop's Transportation Systems

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

Top Recommendations:

* Develop a road maintenance plan for municipal roads, with specific goals and a predictable funding stream.

* Establish community gateways at both ends of Main Street, to slow traffic and better define the village area.

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 Winthop'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.

At the request of MaineDOT, Kennebec valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) is completing a Multimodal Corridor Management Plan for the Route 202 corridor. This plan contains a set of recommendations for improvements not just to highways but all components of the transportation system, in an initiative to alleviate strain on the state highway system. The plan has been prepared with the participation of the town, and contains several recommendations that are repeated in the action plan for this chapter.

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.

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 improvements to 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.

The town has a Road and Street Construction Ordinance, enacted in 1995. The ordinance applies to all newly-constructed or upgraded streets, both public and private, and is cited as the construction standard in the subdivision ordinance. There have been no issues in the past ten years with substandard private roads being accepted by the town. There are many private roads, primarily serving camp communities, but the town bears no legal liability on these and there has not been any concerted move to convert them to town roads.

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.

<u>Bridges:</u> 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* inventoried 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 not be considered within the immediate downtown.

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 business along Main Street from providing parking. That allows the building to occupy more lot, but adds demand public parking. In other locations and for other uses, Winthrop's parking requirement is generally too high. The "national average" cited below is generally for suburban-style development, where each customer is one trip. Demand in downtowns would be less, because a person can park once and walk. If Winthrop reduced its parking requirement, it would reduce the cost of development as well as the environmental impacts of extra paving. The chart 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.

One approach would be to finance more public parking 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.

An alternative or companion approach would be to encourage pedestrians and bicyclists instead of more vehicles downtown. Main Street and several side streets have sidewalks, however, the zoning ordinance does not require new development to accommodate pedestrians or cyclists. The parking standards in the zoning ordinance could be amended to encourage more alternative travel, including making parking lots easier and safer to negotiate.

Parking lots may also be used to <u>reduce</u> 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 identified 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 population density to support either, 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 rail 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. If so, it would consist only of a stop in downtown.

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 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 pursuant to the downtown revitalization plan, but there are many gaps in the system that discourage more walking. Pedestrians are occasionally seen walking in the streets due to the lack of, or poor condition of sidewalks.

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

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 town should identify bicycle-friendly destination points and prioritize them for storage facilities. Significant new development near the downtown should be required to provide convenient bicycle and pedestrian access.

The area outside of downtown provides opportunities as well. Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of tourism, especially in scenic areas such as Winthrop. However, most of Winthrop's rural roads are narrow and the shoulders are 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, and crosses

Route 202 to the Metcalf Road, west to downtown Winthrop, then south on Annabessacook Road. Route 202 itself is not part of this route because of the heavy traffic.

A separate Winthrop-to-Kennebec bicycle trail has been recommended by several local and regional plans, most recently the Multimodal Corridor Management Plan being prepared by KVCOG for this region. Such a trail could parallel Route 202 or utilize the old trolley bed, utility paths, or snowmobile trails to link the town with Augusta or Hallowell. The concept has the support of Winthrop and Manchester residents, but no concrete action has been taken yet.

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

Overall traffic levels have generally been growing over the past few decades. Freight (truck) traffic has grown 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

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. But more traffic means more wear and tear and conflicts for road users. The same cannot be said for Route 202. 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. On a portion of Route 202, near the intersection with 135, the DOT has recently proposed installing a three lane section, with a center left turn lane. This would specifically address safety issues with development-related driveways as well as Route 135.

State and regional transportation plans over the past few years have focused on the impact of development on mobility, rather than physical infrastructure conditions. The Route 202 Corridor Management Plan under development poses a set of alternative improvements depending on how Winthrop decides to grow. The primary concern is maintaining travel on Route 202. This highway has been and will continue to be the main focus for Winthrop's commercial development. As indicated in Chapter 6, the town has chosen to address this impact by discouraging large retail development and limiting the overall size of businesses directly accessing the highway, as well as aggressively managing access itself.

Traffic on Main Street is a local concern, because even though volumes are not onerous, the street is characterized by many driveways, 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 in a downtown. Shifting the curbing out into the roadway at pedestrian crossings is called a "neckdown" because drivers feel they must slow down to fit through a tighter space (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 other amenities 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.

Winthrop has seen its share of development in the rural areas. The transportation system is generally not stressed in these areas. But it does not result in efficient use of the system. Not only must we spend a larger percentage of road budget per capita on maintaining rural roads, but rural development reduces the chances of cost-effective alternatives. We anticipate some day in

the future public bus service coming to Winthrop, but if so it would only benefit those in downtown. We cannot afford bike paths or sidewalks along rural roads. And in the long run, rural development would overstress the back roads never designed for heavy use.

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.

Environmental Impacts of the Transportation System:

We most often think of the transportation system as a means to move people and goods, and seldom consider how it affects our natural and built environment. We all know about air pollution, and how it would be nice if we drove less and in cleaner cars. But much closer to home is where we see how the transportation system produces both positive and negative impacts.

We think of Winthrop as a very scenic town, but for most of us, scenery is only accessible via the transportation system. Route 202 and several minor roads provide the panoramic views of lakes and bogs; the trails up Mt. Pisgah lead to a scenic vista. There are no identified scenic overlooks or turnouts in Winthrop, though maybe there should be. Transportation improvements can often affect the built environment as well, with road widening impacting historic buildings, stone walls, or street trees, but there are no known issues with this in Winthrop.

Increased traffic on public roads leads to spillover effects, particularly noise and light. Heavy traffic on Route 202 is possibly affecting residential property values along the highway, and was one of the considerations in proposing expansion of the commercial district to encompass some existing homes. Highway lights are minimal, though most lighting complaints usually stem from parking lots. The zoning ordinance has a standard limiting light pollution from parking lots.

Potential damage to the natural environment can occur in construction of new roads or maintenance of existing ones. The town's road ordinance contains standards for erosion control and stormwater management for new roads. Existing roads have been a problem in the past, but the Cobbossee Watershed District and the town have been cooperating in retrofitting older culverts and drainways, and providing educational assistance to private road owners. Nevertheless, runoff from poorly-maintained private roads continues to be a concern, addressed in the community issue on page 101 of this plan. Wildlife can also be impacted by poorly designed drainage, or even poor road alignment. The town's road crew should continue to take training on environmentally sensitive road maintenance.

Action Plan:

Local 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.

Recommended Strategies:

a) Develop a road improvements plan for municipal roads, with specific goals and a predictable funding stream.

b) Work with Maine DOT to implement pedestrian safety improvements at the Route 202/Highland Ave. intersection.

c) 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.

d) Review and amend the zoning ordinance, as appropriate, to encourage a higher density of development downtown with lower congestion: reduce requirements for commercial parking supply, improve incentives for common-use downtown parking, and require bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for major development.

e) Amend the subdivision ordinance to require applicants to demonstrate that curb cuts onto public ways are the minimum necessary and at safe locations.

f) Coordinate ordinance amendments with DOT access management requirements.

g) Plan for a dedicated intercity bicycle path between Winthrop and the Kennebec.

h) Establish community gateways at both ends of Main Street, to slow traffic and better define the village area.

i) Perform a sidewalk inventory and pedestrian/bicycle plan for downtown, identifying needed bicycle facilities, additional work on sidewalks, and elements of a village pedestrian trail system for inclusion in the town's CIP.

j) Coordinate transportation projects regionally, according to the Route 202 Multimodal Corridor Management Plan.

k) Support the continuation of active rail service through Winthrop and eventual re-establishment of passenger service, with a station in downtown Winthrop.

l) Evaluate Royal Street and propose for acceptance as a town way if meeting standards.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report. The town will seek to create a bicycle/pedestrian plan for downtown, and other bicycle improvements, in 2011. The town manager will continue to work with Maine DOT to implement recommendations affecting state highways, including the establishment of gateways to the downtown. The town manager will work with Maine DOT and highway foreman to establish a road improvements plan for town ways in 2012, with implementation into the CIP by 2013.

Chapter 10: Public Health

Top Recommendations:

* Create a network of bike and walking trails, especially in and around the downtown, to Mt. Pisgah, and connecting Winthrop to Manchester and ultimately to the Kennebec.

* Support a well-established community garden that offers fruits and vegetables to Winthrop residents (especially its children) through an innovative program that makes eating "5 a day" the norm rather than the exception. Suggest hours working at the community garden as part of student community service projects.

* Work with the school to incorporate an approach to healthy lifestyles throughout its curriculum for example through healthy cooking classes, field trips to an organic farm or daily trail walks behind the high school.

* Market Winthrop as a community where healthy choices are supported. Provide information about healthy things to do at the schools, churches, town hall, and library. Support school and community programs that encourage healthy activities such as a "community day of walking" or a "Park and Walk" day.

As stated in Chapter 1, community planning is intended to develop a physical, economic, and social environment that contributes to overall community well-being. Nowhere is this more evident than in the health status of a community's residents. There is increasing awareness that the development, transportation, and other design impacts on the physical environment have a significant impact on the health of residents as well.

National organizations such as the *Project for Public Spaces* and *Active by Design* recognize that there is a link between community design and our own health. Closer to home, the *Center for Active Living and Healthy Communities* at New Hampshire's Plymouth State University and Maine's *Rural Health Research Center* have been working to identify barriers and opportunities to incorporating healthy physical activities into the routine of daily life.

Development of the sparsely populated regions of New England has resulted in "rural sprawl" and the need to drive considerable distances to work, schools and shopping. In its work with three Maine towns, the *Rural Health Research Center* has identified lack of transportation as a major barrier, with rural children less likely to participate in healthy physical activities than their counterparts in suburban or urban areas. However, children are not the only ones affected. Dependence on automobiles for virtually every aspect of community life has contributed to a culture of physical inactivity and a public health problem of obesity.

In a study entitled Obesity in Maine, (2007, Maine CDC, DHHS), it was reported that:

- The obesity rate in Maine doubled in 17 years, from 12% in 1990 to 26% in 2006.
- 1 in 5 Maine residents are obese.
- 59% of Maine residents self-reported being overweight or obese.
- 25% of Maine high school students are overweight.
- 36% of children enrolled in Maine kindergartens are obese or at risk of obesity
- More than 66% of Maine adults who are defined as disabled are overweight or obese.

The costs to the health care system for overweight/obesity related diseases are significant:

- Obesity-related illness (primarily heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension) costs the national economy $117 billion annually. $61 billion is spent on direct care costs and $56 billion is attributable to lost productivity. Maine's share is $500 million.
- Obesity-related illnesses raise the cost of medical care by 36% and the cost of medication by 77%.
- In Maine, 1 in 5 premature deaths are due to obesity or overweight.
- Adults with obesity related illnesses account for 11% of Maine's health care expenditures.

Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are the major causes of overweight/obesity:

- Caloric intake nationally increased by 15% in 13 years (2002 data).
- 48% of the average American's food budget is spent away from home. One-third of daily caloric intake takes place away from the home.
- 27% of Americans report no leisure time physical activity.
- In six Maine counties, 80% of parents with children under 18 reported that they (the parents) had no leisure time physical activity in the previous 12 months.
- Children aged 2-18 average 4 hours daily watching television, playing video games, or recreational computer use. One in 5 children watches 5 or more hours of television per day. These children are 5 times more likely to be obese than children who watch 2 hours or less.
- 60% of childhood obesity is attributable to time spent watching television.

Obviously, community planning cannot correct all of our public health problems. However, advocates of the "public health/ community design connection" argue that our cities and towns no longer incorporate opportunities for physical activity or social interaction into planning and development considerations. One national study found that people living in sprawling low-density areas walk less, weigh more, are more likely to be obese, and are more likely to suffer from hypertension than people who live in more "walkable" communities. There is a need to emphasize a more compact and mixed land use pattern that offers nearby access to interesting destinations. We can experience pedestrian friendly thoroughfares that encourage integrating healthy physical activity into the routine of daily life.

Residents in communities designed with awareness of these issues engage in 70 minutes more of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week than do residents of sprawling communities. The *Project for Public Spaces* notes, "A beautifully designed space is not worth anything if people do not use it." Commercial, recreational and social attractions encourage physical activity among residents. Amenities make places appealing and enjoyable and make

residents feel good about being in public places. Regulated vehicular traffic, benches, or small, centrally located parks are essential to healthy communities as well as to commercial success.

In addition to making destinations more pedestrian-friendly, the presence of parks, greenways, and hiking trails can increase physical activity. One survey found that adults with access to parks were nearly twice as likely to be active as those without. Walking trails have been shown to be particularly well-used and beneficial among women. Greenways (corridors of protected land along waterways or other scenic locations) have been rated as contributing the most to health and fitness in some communities. A recent local newspaper editorial stated:

> Along with a healthy diet, exercise is the best way to prevent many chronic diseases. That should be part of the equation when we make land-use decisions, and it should be factored into the cost of building amenities such as hiking trails, parks and sidewalks in rural communities.

Public health professionals are shifting focus, from attempting to change unhealthy individual behavior to creating a community where healthful living is the norm. A public health/community design approach to planning and development takes into account several important issues. By integrating into the built environment features that encourage activity a culture of healthy living is being encouraged. A walk to a farmers' market replaces a drive to a fast food outlet. A school curriculum on good nutrition reinforces the benefits of fresh produce over processed food, is of economic benefit to local growers or promotes community gardening. Land that might otherwise go to increasing sprawl is retained in more productive use.

Similarly, healthful recreational opportunities can become routine and contribute to the economic vitality of the community. Hiking, biking, rowing, nature exploration, or other outdoor activities can be integrated into school programs, lead to retail or manufacturing opportunities for the community, and specific programs may be part of local healthcare providers referral patterns.

Winthrop has a head start over most small towns in Maine in attaining the benefits of a healthy community because many of the ingrediants are readily available. There are a dozen lakes/ponds located in whole or in part within the boarders of the town. These provide opportunity for kayaking, canoeing, open-water and ice fishing, skating, snowshoeing, and a number of other activities. Mt. Pisgah and the Winthrop schools trails make hiking and nature walking readily available. Winthrop also has a full range of facilities for traditional sports such as football, soccer, baseball, basketball, skateboarding, etc.

A local organic farmer has made land and technical assistance available for residents interested in growing their own produce. An active farmers' market has become a fixture in the town. Winthrop is one of the few small towns in Maine with a defined downtown and a network of sidewalks that allow residents to park their cars and walk around.

To fully realize these benefits of making Winthrop a healthy community, a cultural change will be essential. All sectors of the community must participate. Public facilities such as the Bailey Library, Town Hall, etc., should be used to display and distribute information about activities available to the community. Schools should incorporate active lifestyle into the curriculum. Churches and other community organizations should sponsor bird watching and nature walks, particularly for residents who might not otherwise have a chance to exercise and

socialize. Healthcare providers can "prescribe" exercise and diet the same way they do medication, and referrals to a hiking or kayaking program should be handled in a manner similar to the referrals to traditional medical therapy or rehabilitation programs.

Public Safety personnel have an important role in facilitating the residents' opportunities for an active life. The quality or quantity of resources in the community will not matter if public safety concerns stop people using them. For understandable reasons, parents may drive their children to and from events rather than allow them to go hiking for an afternoon with their friend. Senior citizens may be unwilling to take a solitary nature walk in an isolated rural area.

No community can afford to provide assurances to all residents at all times in all locations. However, Public Safety can work to reduce both the incidence and the perception of the real crime threats present in the community. They can be technical assistants to other responsible individuals (e.g., boy scouts) who might volunteer to oversee a group of children for a hiking or cycling day. Or, the police department could be kept informed of events that are happening within the community.

The point is that concern about public safety should not be a barrier to improving the quality of life now or into the future. To not participate in physical activities that can provide enjoyment and healthful benefits on a life-long basis creates other long-term problems.

Action Plan:

Policies:

1. Encourage new development that will accommodate and promote recreational activities and healthy lifestyles.

2. Work with public service providers to incorporate healthy lifestyles into daily living.

3. Support the overall health and well-being of our population.

Strategies:

a) Create a network of bike and walking trails, especially in and around the downtown, to Mt. Pisgah, and connecting Winthrop to Manchester and ultimately to the Kennebec.

b) Provide safe storage for bicycles in the downtown, at Mt. Pisgah, at each school, and other destination areas.

c) Require walking and/or bicycle access and facilities for new development in the village.

d) Encourage businesses that support physical activity such as kayak and bike rentals, a hunting and fishing store, a skate shop, etc.

e) Adopt a plan so visitors can use our public beach in specific situations (such as if they are also renting bikes or kayaks at a Winthrop business)

f) Support a well-established community garden that offers fruits and vegetables to Winthrop residents (especially its children) through an innovative program that makes eating "5 a day" the norm rather than the exception. Suggest hours working at the community garden as part of student community service projects.

g) Work with the school to incorporate an approach to healthy lifestyles throughout its curriculum for example through healthy cooking classes, field trips to an organic farm or daily trail walks behind the high school.

h) Distribute bike helmets through health and safety promotions, or sell at cost to families.

i) Use the public library to reinforce healthy lifestyles: as a distribution center for bike helmets, an information center for local hiking, biking, and walking routes, a healthy lifestyle display – organic gardening, healthy cooking, fitness books.

j) Engage Public Safety personnel in developing programs that will address concerns about safety as a barrier to fully utilizing public resources that contribute to an active and healthy community.

k) Market Winthrop as a community where healthy choices are supported. Provide information about healthy things to do at the schools, churches, town hall, and library. Support school and community programs that encourage healthy activities such as a "community day of walking" or a "Park and Walk" day.

l) Support multiple well-organized community activities for seniors (trips to Monmouth Theater, special programs at the Performing Arts Center, bridge tournaments, memoir writing), as elements of a senior program within the existing Winthrop YMCA program.

m) Incorporate healthy spaces planning for seniors where they can enjoy walking outdoors (such as the Mill Stream path) and have informal places to socialize indoors.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will authorize the formation of ad ad hoc task force to assign responsibility for these recommendations. The task force will consist of representatives from the town, the school, the police, and MaineGeneral's facilities in Winthrop. The task force will access expertise from *Healthy Maine Futures*, the *Bicycle Coalition of Maine*, and other organizations for assistance in carrying out these activities. Public health elements will appear in the town's marketing plan and in the development of recreational trails.

Chapter 11: Land and Water Resources

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.

Top Recommendations:

* Consult with government agencies and water supply operators to ensure that the zoning ordinance contains suitable mechanisms to protect public water supplies and aquifers.

* Continue to participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect, and improve surface water quality, including CWD and camp associations. Through appropriations or grants, support educational efforts of the CWD and Friends of Cobbossee, particularly regarding invasive species.

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. Retreating, it left its mixture of sand, silt, clay, and

stones. 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.

The Resource Constraints Map for Winthrop (Appendix) depicts in general terms the soils which may be problematic for development. In some locales, the Plumbing Code would prohibit new septic systems; in others, the construction of foundations and roads would be expensive or impractical. Maps of these soils involve 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.

Topography

Winthrop has often-challenging topography, as depicted on the Topographic 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 represent the low points of topography. Apple Valley Lake, in the shadow of Mt. Pisgah, is the loftiest, at 318 feet. The Cobbossee chain begins with Maranacook, at 211', and drops to Cobbossee Lake, at approximately 166 feet above sea level.

The topography of an individual site accounts for much of the cost, difficulty, and potential adverse impact of land development. Development on slopes greater than 15 % accelerates stormwater velocity, erosion, and sedimentation, particularly in sensitive watersheds. The 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 may 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. Winthrop has all or part of 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.

Scenic Resources:

Topography is also often the primary component of scenic vistas. While it is said that the quality of a scenic vista is "in the eye of the beholder," it is often the case that varied topography and overlooking perspectives rank consistently high. In Winthrop, several vistas are notable:

* The view across the bog to Little Cobbossee in East Winthrop,
* The view down Annabessacook from Route 202 south of the village,

* The view of Maranacook from Norcross Point, and
* The panoramic view from Mt. Pisgah.

It should be noted that all of these locally-important views originate from public property and none are threatened by development. Mt. Pisgah, of course, is wooded and must be maintained to preserve the view.

Floodplains:

Floodplains do not play a significant role in planning for Winthrop, but are a function of local topography, so are included here.

A floodplain is an area adjacent to a water body that is subject to periodic flooding. Winthrop's 100-year floodplains are depicted on the Resource Constraints Map (appendix). A 100-year flood is one in which there is a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year. The 100-year designation is significant because federal law requires local regulation of 100-year floodplains. Winthrop has an approved local Floodplain Management Ordinance, which is enforced and periodically reviewed and updated.

Winthrop can thank its naturally hilly topography for minimizing the amount of floodplain adjacent to its larger water bodies. Most of the floodplain areas are already boglands. There are two small areas of concern: the land adjacent to Hoyt Brook, just west of downtown, and along Mill Stream inside the village. Fortunately, the village area is already built out, without infringing on the floodplain, so we have not seen many cases where regulation has been imposed.

Groundwater

Local groundwater is the source of drinking water for all residents not serviced by the public water system, as well as several summer camps and other businesses. Groundwater is also a potential future source for public supplies. A "significant aquifer" provides a water supply in large enough volumes for commercial use, but all groundwater in the town should be protected from potential contamination by oil, chemicals, or other sources.

In Winthrop 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, none reported)

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 (e.g. phosphorous) enrichment of 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, we often fail to notice them. In addition to enhancing the scenic landscape, flowing 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 within the watershed. Phosphorous is a naturally-occurring element and plant nutrient. Excessive phosphorous is responsible for causing nuisance algae blooms and excessive aquatic plant growth in lakes. The level of phosphorous entering a lake is a direct function of disruption in the watershed, primarily from human-induced activities. Since most of Winthrop is encompassed in lake watersheds, this can have a major constraint on development. However, development can be designed so as to minimize phosphorous runoff.

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 amount of allowable phosphorous in runoff – the per-acre allocation, or "P-value" – the more sensitive the lake is to phosphorous loading and the more intensely that runoff from new development needs to be controlled. For Winthrop lakes, the P-values range from 0.020 (pounds of phosphorous per acre per year) for Little Cobbossee Lake to 0.072 for Lower Narrows Pond.

The DEP, in its publication *Phosphorous Control in Lake Watersheds* (1992 and 2008), 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 when approving developments located within lake watersheds. 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 Water-milfoil, the most aggressive species, has yet to penetrate this area, but other forms of non-native milfoil, particularly Variable Water-milfoil, have shown up nearby, most critically in Pleasant Pond, the terminal water body in the Cobbossee chain. The State has initiated several measures aimed at preventing the spread of invasive plants, including posting signs at strategic points, and supporting courtesy boat inspections at most public boat landings. In addition, the CWD has a Maranacook Watershed Management Plan, completed in 2008, outlining strategies to control the introduction of invasive plants.

Berry/Dexter Ponds

Berry and Dexter Ponds, Siamese twins located in Wayne and Winthrop, have approximately 2,080 and 390 acres, respectively, of drainage area in Winthrop. Both ponds show dissolved oxygen depletion in the bottom waters during summer periods, which may, to some degree, facilitate the internal recycling of phosphorous from bottom sediments during these periods. The ponds have a TSI which indicates moderate algal production usually associated with average transparency and average chlorophyll-a, a photosynthetic pigment that imparts the green color to algae and other plants. Water quality in both Berry and Dexter Ponds is rated as moderate-sensitive.

Carlton Pond

Carlton Pond, located in Winthrop and Readfield, serves as a backup water supply for the Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD). It discharges into Upper Narrows Pond, which serves as primary water supply for the Town of Winthrop.

The watershed of the pond is 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 GAUD owns substantial amounts of undeveloped land in the watershed.

Little Cobbossee Lake

Little Cobbosseecontee (Cobbossee) Lake, a 74 acre lake 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 demonstrates algal blooms on a near-annual basis, which severely reduces transparency. Water quality in Little Cobbossee is classified as "poor," one of three lakes with watershed in Winthrop so-designated, but it is relatively undeveloped. A good portion of the watershed is used in agriculture, particularly orchards. The lake remains on the State's list of impaired waterbodies, and as a consequence, a Phosphorous Control Action Plan – Total Maximum Daily Load Report was completed by CWD for the lake in 2005.

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 for drinking water by some lakefront owners. The large south basin of Maranacook is the deepest lake in Kennebec County, at over 125 feet. 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 respective direct watersheds pose the greatest challenge to water quality management in Winthrop and Readfield. The lake is rated "moderate-sensitive" by DEP. There are extensive areas of recent development within Winthrop's 2,600 acre watershed. Concerns expressed by the Cobbossee Watershed District range from erosion along camp roads to runoff from the school parking lots. The CWD

completed a Watershed Management Plan for Maranacook Lake in 2008, outlining prescribed actions for citizens and officials in Winthrop and Readfield to ensure future protection of the lake.

Apple Valley Lake

Apple Valley Lake is an isolated pond just east of Mount Pisgah, with virtually no development activity in its direct watershed. Also known as Nancy's Bog, it was controlled by an earthen dam until the dam failed in 1997, causing a dramatic reduction in pond volume. Prior to that, the pond had a depth of 25 feet; it has not been measured since the dam failure. It was previously listed as having "moderate/sensitive" water quality.

Annabessacook Lake

Annabessacook Lake lies in the southwestern corner of town. It covers 1,420 acres, and has a direct watershed area within Winthrop of more than 4,400 acres. Lakes immediately upstream include Maranacook, Wilson Pond, and Lower narrows Pond. The shoreline is well-developed on the southern and western shores, but less intensively on the east shore.

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-restorable," and recommends a high level of protection. Despite improved water clarity, the lake remains on the list of impaired waterbodies. The CWD prepared a Phosphorous Control Action Plan – Total Maximum Daily Load Report as required by the EPA in 2004.

Cobbossee (Cobbosseecontee) Lake

Cobbossee Lake is the largest of the Winthrop lakes, with shoreline shared by Manchester, West Gardiner, and Monmouth. The lake drains Annabeessacook, but despite its size, the direct watershed only covers 2,250 acres in eastern Winthrop. Five other towns, including Litchfield and the four with shoreline, also contribute. 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, but the lake continued to experience frequent mid-summer algae blooms. As a result, the State placed Cobbossee on the list of impaired waterbodies. Beginning in the 1990's, however, the lake showed consistent improvement, and after about ten years without a nuisance algae bloom, the State removed Cobbossee from the list in 2006 and awarded CWD with the DEP's Outstanding Achievement award for three decades of aggressive effort. Algae blooms still occur in Cobbossee, but often not until September. According to CWD, there is still much to be done to protect Cobbossee further.

The CWD has focused lake protection efforts since the restoration on agricultural animal waste management and other existing non-point sources of pollution in the watershed, as well as

on preventing phosphorus loading from new development. Despite impressive improvements in water quality, the DEP continues to recommend a "high" level of protection for the lake.

Narrows Pond (Upper and Lower)

Upper and Lower Narrows Ponds are located in the central part of town, and each has its own distinct direct watershed separated by the causeway of Narrows Pond Road. Both of them are in the 250-300 acre size range, and relatively deep, at 59 and 106 feet, respectively, with a combined direct watershed of over 2,700 acres. Both have moderate shoreline development and are listed as "moderate-sensitive" for water quality. Upper Narrows Pond is the primary source of water for the Winthrop Utilities District. It requires a high level of protection. Any degradation of water quality would stress the WUD treatment system to the point where it may not meet water quality standards. Because of this potential, all of both Narrows Ponds, along with the feeder stream from Carleton Pond, is zoned 1,000 feet deep with a Watershed Protection District.

Upper Narrows Pond is listed on the State's "Lakes Most at Risk from Development," as well as the list of impaired waterbodies. For these reasons, the pond was the subject of a Total Maximum Daily Load Report prepared by CWD in 2001. Fortunately, Upper Narrows does not support algae blooms, and has wonderful clarity, but the bottom waters of the pond exhibit oxygen depletion during the summer. This limits the available habitat for coldwater fishes and raises the potential for phosphorous liberation from bottom sediments. The primary recommendation of the TMDL Report was to reduce phosphorous loading sufficiently to lower the average concentration in the pond by 1 part per billion, considered adequate to stabilize the pond's water quality.

Wilson Pond

Wilson Pond lies upstream from Annabessacook, technically in Monmouth and Wayne. The watershed of Wilson Pond covers about 1,700 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. The DEP assigned a high probability of development to this watershed (even though it is relatively isolated) and the CWD concluded that unless immediate action is taken to mitigate phosphorous runoff from development, Wilson Pond is highly likely to decline further. The State placed Wilson Pond on its list of impaired waterbodies in 2006. CWD and others completed the Phosphorous Control Action Plan – Total Daily Maximum Daily Load Report in 2007 and followed that up with a successful DEP grant application to address the identified problems.

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 Lake, Apple Valley Lake, Upper Narrows Pond, Kezar Pond, and Little Cobbossee Lake 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, raccoon, 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 with endangered or valuable plants through its Natural Areas Program. Their data (Critical 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 Lake.

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:

Winthrop has outstanding surface water resources, though threatened by both point and non-point pollution sources. Point sources could 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 CED and the state and federal governments. As long as these efforts continue, point sources are considered a negligible threat.

Due to their diffuse nature, non-point sources of pollution are more difficult to bring under control than are point sources. One of the principal non-point pollutants is nitrate. Poorly designed or malfunctioning septic systems may be a source of nitrates. Winthrop's subdivision ordinance contains a nitrate testing requirement.

Lake watersheds, in particular, are potentially vulnerable to development and other activities that may cause increases in surface runoff and soil erosion, contributing to a decline in surface water quality. With the exception of Carleton Pond and Apple Valley Lake, all lakes in or abutting Winthrop are considered at risk from new development.

Continued work with the Cobbossee Watershed District addresses both new development and existing land uses. Land use and maintenance activities such as farming, road maintenance, or lawn care, need to be done in an environmentally responsible manner to ensure continued

improvement of our surface waters. Landowner education and implementation of Best Management Practices for earth-moving activities are necessary program elements. Winthrop's shoreland zoning, which is integrated with its zoning ordinance, protects water quality by managing development in riparian areas and in wetlands. A subcommittee of the planning board is currently working on updates to the map and provisions to be consistent with the state model.

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 Protection 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:

	Severe	Significant	Moderate
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	
Natural Areas/Wildlife habitat:			
! 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 permits 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 were originally put in place to serve camp communities. Unlike public roads, private roads are maintained by individuals or contractors at the request and expense of the users. 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, citizens of Winthrop have great 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 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.

Action Plan:

Local 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.

Recommended Strategies:

a) Amend zoning and subdivision ordinances to update stormwater runoff performance standards for commercial development and subdivisions consistent with the Maine Stormwater Management Rules, DEP allocations for phosphorous, and the Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.

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 provide information for camp owners, farmers, and loggers promoting good maintenance of camp and working roads, and prepare/provide a permitting package for home builders promoting the use of low impact development techniques.

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. Through appropriations or grants, support educational efforts of the CWD and Friends of Cobbossee, particularly regarding invasive species.

f) Update zoning ordinance provisions for shoreland zoning to current state guidelines.

g) Designate Critical Resource Areas as part of protected areas in an Open Space Plan.

h) 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.

i) Routinely consult maps and information provided by the Maine Beginning with Habitat Program in development review processes.

j) Adopt best management practices (BMP's) for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties; require their implementation by public employees and contractors.

k) 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.

l) 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.

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report. The Open Space Plan is referenced in Chapter 6, Land Use.

The town office will contact CWD about expanding its education and outreach efforts to promote good land use and maintenance practices. The town will continue to work closely with CWD and other organizations on water quality improvement projects.

Chapter 12: Resource Development, Farms, and Forests

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

Top Recommendations:

* Amend ordinances to require commercial or subdivision development in rural areas with prime farm soils to maintain them as open space to the greatest extent practicable through the use of clustered housing or similar techniques.

* Limit non-residential development in rural areas to natural resources-based businesses and low-impact uses such as nature tourism, outdoor recreation, farm markets, and home occupations.

* Amend the zoning ordinance definitions and permitted uses to permit gardening and the sale of site-grown 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 any district.

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, family farms are quickly becoming 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.

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 diversify into 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. In addition, there are several smaller, part-time farms that do not show up on the commercial map. They are represented by tables at the farmers market, and by occasional roadside farm stands.

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.

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 and capital.

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 (pictured) is a good example of local marketing. Roadside stands, pick-your-own, and nursery/greenhouses are additional examples.

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 Athe 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.

<u>Existing Protection Measures</u>

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. Maine's 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.

4. The Town of Winthrop has a Tree Board. The Tree Board works with the Public Works Department to manage trees located on town property, including street trees. The town has been pursuing recommendations of the *Downtown Revitalization Plan* to plant more street trees along Main Street.

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, large 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, contribute to public health, and add energy to the community.

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 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.

The issue of vegetable gardening for fun and profit has not yet arisen in Winthrop. The zoning ordinance lumps all agriculture together, and in principle could be interpreted to include market gardening as a prohibited use under vague 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 opposed to limiting "urban agriculture." On the other hand, farm practices do have the potential to produce deleterious effects across property boundaries, including smells, 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:

- Market 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 be regulated. 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 young-stock
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 young-stock

- 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.

Action Plan:

Local 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.

Recommended Strategies:

a) Consult with the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District when amending ordinances pertaining to agricultural practices. Consult with the Maine Forest Service and local professional foresters when developing ordinance standards affecting forest practices.

b) Amend ordinances to require commercial or subdivision development in rural areas with prime farm soils to maintain them as open space to the greatest extent practicable through the use of clustered housing or similar techniques.

c) Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas to natural resources-based businesses and low-impact uses such as nature tourism, outdoor recreation, farm markets, and home occupations.

d) Amend the zoning ordinance definitions and permitted uses to clarify that market gardening and the sale of site-grown produce is permitted 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 any district.

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) Increase the number of community gardening opportunities accessible by village residents.

Implementation:

Following adoption of this plan, the town manager will seek volunteers to help coordinate and advocate for the promotion of farm and forest activities, including working with the WACC and WKEDA to integrate farm activities into local publicity, and working with the school and interested parties to establish additional community gardening opportunities in 2011.

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report.

Chapter 13: Historical Resources

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

Top Recommendation:

* Re-establish the Winthrop Historical Society, with public and private 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.

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 these were not institutionalized.

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 (pictured). 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. It only requires consultation with MHPC on or adjacent to Historic Register sites within shoreland areas.

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.

Until recently, there has been no local nucleus for historic preservation. The town's historic society had 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. This is underway in 2010.

A venue for storage and display of historical items is the greatest current need. Such a project could be the catalyst to re-energize a local historical society. The venue need not be a free-standing museum; space is required for display cases, and research space to access historical records, overseen by a curator. An area 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 competing demands for the expansion.

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.

Action Plan:

Local Policies:

1. Protect significant historical and archeological resources in Winthrop.

2. Preserve and utilize historical artifacts and records.

Recommended 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 public and private 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.

e) Complete the high school's oral history project and collect records for preservation.

Implementation:

The new historical society is in the process of organizing as this plan is written. Their first responsibility should be to pursue a facility for historical storage and display. At least once during 2011, the historical society should meet with the planning board, to talk about historic and archeological assets within the town and how to protect them from development. The town should also support the historic society in pursuit of grants for further evaluation and study of local historic assets.

Chapter 14: Regional Coordination

Winthrop is the service center community for western Kennebec County. It has the tradition and responsibility to take a leadership role in the region. 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.

Public Services:

- Communications Center: The Winthrop Communications Center provides emergency and public safety communications for a number of towns and agencies in western Kennebec County. It is tied in to the Somerset County PSAP.

- Emergency Medical Team: The emergency medical services team provides three active ambulances for response to Winthrop, Manchester, Readfield, Wayne, Mount Vernon, and Fayette.

- Winthrop Utilities District: The district provides water to both Monmouth and Winthrop. The district contracts for operations services with Monmouth Water Association, Monmouth Sanitary District, and Readfield Corner Water Association. The district works with other districts and state agencies to ensure that water quality standards and sewer rules are enforced district-wide. The district is a member of the "trunkline group," which administers the Winthrop-Monmouth-Manchester sewer collector system, delivered into the treatment plant for the Greater Augusta Utilities District.

- Household Hazardous Waste Collection: The town participates in an annual collection event with other towns in the Augusta region.

- The town co-owns a street sweeper with Monmouth.

- Winthrop Public Schools and the Fayette School Department have agreed on an alternative organizational structure that will become effective July 1, 2010.

- The town contracts with the City of Augusta for assessing services.

Natural Resource Protection and Management:

- Cobbossee Watershed District: The CWD is a nine-town collaboration, existing since 1973, described as a lake management district. CWD maintains a broad portfolio of watershed activities, including education, development review, technical assistance, and planning.

- Kennebec Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to acquiring property or easements in support of conservation. The town cooperated with KLT in acquiring the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area, and the land trust has other activities in Winthrop.

Future Activities:

There are abundant opportunities for additional regional cooperation. Not all of them require the active involvement of town government.

To help identify and brainstorm some opportunities, the comprehensive planning committee met with its counterpart from Manchester prior to development of this document. The meeting was devoted to exploring what has been done and where possibilities exist for additional work. The following items were identified:

* An inter-city bicycle trail, using the old trolley line or other existing rights-of-way. Planning, engineering, and grant-writing.

* Development along the Route 202 Corridor. Individual towns' expectations and coordination of planning through DOT Corridor Management Plan.

* Winthrop's Performing Arts Center. Potential for use by Manchester school groups (Manchester facility is inadequate.) Library expansion in Winthrop could also provide opportunities for Manchester.

* Collaboration on recreation activities, particularly senior citizen programs, swim and summer programs, trails (interconnections).

* Open Space Planning. Manchester has one, Winthrop will be developing one.

* Economic development. WKEDA has a Manchester project under development. A marketing plan by Winthrop emphasizing active recreation should identify the "Lakes Region" as a whole, including Manchester.

This plan offers multiple recommendations for continued or expanded regional coordination. These recommendations are found in the respective action plans for each chapter.