



Agenda

Comprehensive Planning Committee

June 10, 2026, at 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Council Chambers, Second Floor, Auburn Hall

- 1. ROLL CALL:** Committee members and staff
- 2. MINUTES:** Minutes from May 19th and May 26th
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 4. FUTURE LAND USE MAP – DESCRIPTIONS:** Staff recommend a slight adjustment to the descriptions of the land use categories for committee approval.
- 5. FUTURE LAND USE MAP – BOUNDARIES:** The Committee will review and approve the boundaries of each of the land use categories to ensure the boundaries align with current and future land uses and the land use category descriptions.
- 6. POLICIES DISCUSSION:** The Committee will discuss the policies section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 7. NEXT MEETING:** June 23th, 2026
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**



DRAFT MINUTES

Comprehensive Planning Committee

May 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Council Chambers, Second Floor, Auburn Hall

1. ROLL CALL: Committee members and staff

Denis Bergeron, Riley Bergeron, John Cleveland, Jane Costlow, Tim Cowan, Jeff Harmon, Bilal Hussein, Paul Jacques, Adam Lee, Bruce Rioux, Rex Rhodes, Dana Staples and Rick Whiting

Absent: Kelly Butler, Beckie Conrad, Mathieu Duvall and Virginia Keel

Note: Virginia Keel resigned from the committee within the past month.

Consultant members present from BerryDunn: Ali Tobey and Ashley Aaron

Staff members present: DeCarlo Brown (Planning Director), Lauren Caffé (Long Range Planner) and Phil Crowell (City Manager)

2. MINUTES: Minutes from April 28th, 2026

Motion was made by John Cleveland and seconded by Paul Jacques to approve the April 28, 2026, minutes as written. Vote: 13-0. Motion Carries

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Steven Beale, of 575 Johnson Road, urged the committee to consider Auburn's varied elevations, neighborhoods, and natural features when drawing land-use map boundaries. He emphasized thinking three-dimensionally rather than relying solely on flat maps to reflect the city's diverse topography.

Rudy Wing, of 499 Penley Corner Road, said he is following the planning and restructuring efforts in the agricultural zone and hopes the committee will keep his veteran-support project in mind. He plans to revisit and adjust his business plan so he can continue working with staff toward establishing a property that would help veterans in Auburn.



4. FUTURE LAND USE MAP – DESCRIPTIONS: The Committee will review and approve the updated written descriptions.

The committee reviewed revised future land use descriptions, clarified questions about compact residential areas, and agreed to remove a four-story minimum in the high-density core. Members approved the updated descriptions with minor amendments. They then examined several map boundary adjustments, beginning with the East Auburn School parcel, correcting a mapping error and reclassifying it to compact residential.

Two North River Road parcels were also corrected from agricultural to neighborhood transition, with one dissenting vote from Dana Staples. The committee supported reclassifying an area near Court Street and Minot Avenue from mixed-use corridor to downtown to better reflect existing development patterns, and later unanimously added a related section in New Auburn to the same category.

Along Summer Street, the group approved shifting the north and south ends to mixed-use neighborhood while leaving the undevelopable middle portion unchanged. For the Walton School area, the committee voted—over opposition from Bilal Hussein and Bruce Rioux—to move the school property and nearby parcels to mixed-use neighborhood to allow flexible reuse, with a note that the change is not meant to influence school closure decisions.

Lastly, the committee discussed whether to change the Lake Street–Gamage Avenue–Field Avenue area from mixed-use neighborhood to compact residential. After mixed opinions and concerns about infrastructure and future growth, the group voted to table the item until more detailed maps and analysis can be provided.

5. FUTURE LAND USE MAP – BOUNDARIES: The Committee will review and approve the boundaries of each of the land use categories to ensure the boundaries align with current and future land uses and the land use category descriptions.

Committee members acknowledged that several remaining map items would require significant explanation and discussion, making it impractical to continue that night. They agreed—by unanimous vote—to table all remaining map reviews until the next meeting, recognizing that changes to one area could affect others and that staff might need time to re-evaluate the maps accordingly.



6. **POLICIES UPDATE:** Lauren will present on the policies process to date in preparation for the Committee's review of the policies at the May 26th meeting.

The committee reviewed policy updates as Lauren Caffé presented the comprehensive plan's policy section and the multi-month process involving subcommittees, city departments, and boards. She explained that the policies were reorganized into a clearer structure of goals, policies, objectives, and actions, with a focus on measurable steps tied to responsible parties and realistic timelines to ensure the plan is a practical working document. Staff noted that the policy packet would be distributed the following day and that the committee would have multiple meetings to review it.

7. **SCHEDULE UPDATE:** BerryDunn will provide an overview of the schedule for the next six months and discuss the June - July meeting schedule.

The group discussed the upcoming schedule, agreeing to meet next Tuesday and add a June 10 meeting, with the possibility of using the regular June meeting if more time is needed. Staff indicated that final plan preparation would require several weeks and that adoption would later move through the Planning Board, City Council, and a state-mandated public hearing.

8. **NEXT MEETING:** May 26th, 2026

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.



DRAFT MINUTES

Comprehensive Planning Committee

May 26, 2026, at 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Council Chambers, Second Floor, Auburn Hall

1. ROLL CALL: Committee members and staff

Denis Bergeron, Riley Bergeron, Kelly Butler, John Cleveland, Beckie Conrad, Jane Costlow, Tim Cowan, Mathieu Duvall, Jeff Harmon, Bilal Hussein, Paul Jacques, Adam Lee, Bruce Rioux, Rex Rhodes, Dana Staples and Rick Whiting (arrived at 6:35pm)

Absent: Bilal Hussein

Consultant members present from BerryDunn: Ali Tobey and Keri Ouellette

Staff members present: DeCarlo Brown (Planning Director), Lauren Caffé (Long Range Planner), Denis D'Auteuil (Assistant City Manager) and Phil Crowell (City Manager)

2. MINUTES: Minutes from May 19th will be approved at the June Meeting

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Banger, of 180 East Hardscrabble Rd., explained that repeated zoning changes have stopped him and many Auburn families from building homes on their own land. He said the newest change made his remaining lot unbuildable, costing him a sale, and he's asking the city to expand rural residential zoning to restore property value and peoples' livelihood.

Stephen Beal, of 575 Johnson Rd., noted that Auburn once had many small markets and mixed-use businesses, and he urged the city to consider this history when shaping zoning language. He also recommended keeping Riverside Drive mixed-use while designating the rest of Ward 5 as compact residential with room for slightly larger housing options.



4. **FUTURE LAND USE MAP – BOUNDARIES:** The Committee will review and approve the boundaries of each of the land use categories to ensure the boundaries align with current and future land uses and the land use category descriptions.

The committee returned to the point where the last meeting ended, focusing on the Walton School area. Bruce Rioux proposed a small wording change to the “Compact Residential” land-use description to allow large existing commercial or public buildings—like Walton School—to be retrofitted into more than four housing units. The intent is to preserve the character of surrounding neighborhoods while allowing reasonable redevelopment of large structures already in place. The committee then opened the floor for Bruce to explain his suggested change before continuing with the rest of the map review.

The group discussed how to handle zoning for the Walton School property if it ever closes. The city attorney has warned that the proposed language allowing more housing units in public or large buildings within compact residential zones could lead to legal challenges, because it would treat public and private properties differently without a strong justification. Members talked about the differences between compact residential zoning, which limits buildings to four units, and mixed-use zoning, which allows higher density and can make school redevelopments financially viable. They reconsidered and ultimately rejected an earlier decision to expand mixed-use zoning to a larger surrounding area. In the end, the group agreed unanimously that only the Walton School parcel should be designated as mixed use, while the surrounding neighborhood would remain compact residential.

The committee discussed whether the Lake Street/Gamage Avenue area should be designated as compact residential or mixed-use. Members debated how the change would affect commercial activity, housing density, neighborhood character, and long-term planning goals. Some argued that mixed-use would allow more flexibility and support neighborhood businesses, while others felt that limiting higher-intensity commercial uses would better reflect community preferences and protect residential areas. After reviewing staff explanations about zoning types and future growth, the committee voted 11 to 4 to designate the area as compact residential; members Jane Costlow, Paul Jacques, Adam Lee and Dana Staples were opposed.

The group discussed the Fairview and Court Street area, reviewing its residential neighborhoods, schools, and mixed-use corridors. Members debated how zoning lines should be drawn, especially where parcels were unintentionally split. They agreed certain lots near Minot Avenue—including Fairview School, nearby housing,



and adjacent properties—should be fully included in the mixed-use corridor. A motion to adjust the map accordingly passed unanimously.

The group discussed several zoning amendments around Minot Avenue, Old Farm Road, and Cleveland Field. After clarifying map boundaries and the difference between mixed-use neighborhood and mixed-use corridor designations, members debated whether the area should remain more residential or be included in the mixed-use corridor to allow for more commercial flexibility in the future. Several people supported connecting the corridor for consistency and because current traffic patterns and noise already make the area less suitable for purely residential use. Following some procedural confusion, the committee re-voted: first unanimously approving the amendment to classify the Minot Avenue frontage area as mixed-use corridor and then approving the overall motion—as amended—by a vote of 10 to 5. Members Jane Costlow, Paul Jacques, Adam Lee, Bruce Rioux and Dana Staples were opposed.

The committee reviewed land-use changes in South Auburn, focusing on areas along South Main Street. They discussed neighborhood characteristics, future city plans for higher-density housing, and concerns about existing businesses. After debate, the group voted to change the gray-shaded section east of South Main and two nearby parcels to compact residential, passing 11 to 4; Jane Costlow, Paul Jacques, Adam Lee and Dana Staples were opposed. Questions about the west side of South Main and the broader corridor were noted but will be handled when the committee reaches those maps later.

5. POLICIES DISCUSSION: The Committee will discuss the policies section of the Comprehensive Plan.

The committee didn't have time to review the Policies section, so members were asked to keep reading the 80-page document before the June 10 and 23 meetings. Since a line-by-line review would take too long, members should focus on major issues or gaps. Minor word edits can be sent to staff using track changes in Word, while substantial changes or policy questions will be discussed by the full committee to keep meetings efficient.

6. NEXT MEETING: June 10th, 2026

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Auburn Comprehensive Plan
Project Schedule - Two Plan Review Meetings Needed

Task	Responsible party	Start date	Scheduled or completed by date
CPC June meeting #1 - review future land use map; begin policy discussion	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	June 10, 2026	June Meeting
CPC June meeting #2 - Finalize future land use map, continue policy discussion	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	June 23, 2026	June Meeting
CPC July meeting - Finalize policies and actions (if the regularly scheduled July 28 meeting is needed, timeline will extend one month)	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	July 8, 2026	July Meeting
BerryDunn to develop draft plan (~4 weeks plus one week for committee review ahead of meeting)	BerryDunn	July 2026	August 2026
CPC August meeting #1 - review draft plan	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of August 17	August Meeting
CPC August meeting #2 - review draft plan	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	August 25, 2026	August Meeting
Solicit feedback on comprehensive plan draft online	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	August 2026	September 2026
Joint Planning Board and City Council Workshop - introduce plan	Planning Board/CPC/City Staff/BerryDunn	Week of September 1	September 2026
Planning Board meeting - first meeting to review plan	Planning Board	Week of September 8	September 2026
Tentative: Community feedback session	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of September 14	September 2026
CPC September meeting - Review Planning Board feedback and public comment	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of September 21	September 2026
Special Planning Board meeting - vote to refer plan to City Council	Planning Board	Week of September 28	October 2026
City Council meeting - introduce comprehensive plan	City Council/CPC/City Staff/BerryDunn	October 2026	October 2026
Post materials for public hearing - 30 days	City Staff	October 2026	October 2026
City council meeting and vote to adopt comprehensive plan	City Council/CPC/City Staff/BerryDunn	November 2026	November 2026

**Auburn Comprehensive Plan
Project Schedule - Three Plan Review Meetings Needed**

Task	Responsible party	Start date	Scheduled or completed by date
CPC June meeting #1 - review future land use map; begin policy discussion	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	June 10, 2026	June Meeting
CPC June meeting #2 - Finalize future land use map, continue policy discussion	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	June 23, 2026	June Meeting
CPC July meeting - Finalize policies and actions (if the regularly scheduled July 28 meeting is needed, timeline will extend one month)	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	July 8, 2026	July Meeting
BerryDunn to develop draft plan (~4 weeks plus one week for committee review ahead of meeting)	BerryDunn	July 2026	August 2026
CPC August meeting #1 - review draft plan	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of August 17	August Meeting
CPC August meeting #2 - review draft plan	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	August 25, 2026	August Meeting
Solicit feedback on comprehensive plan draft online	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	August 2026	September 2026
Tentative CPC Meeting , if needed, to review draft plan	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of September 8	September 2026
Joint Planning Board and City Council Workshop - introduce plan	Planning Board/CPC/City Staff/BerryDunn	Week of September 14	September 2026
Planning Board meeting - first meeting to review plan	Planning Board	Week of September 21	September 2026
Tentative: Community feedback session	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of September 28	September 2026
CPC early October meeting - Review Planning Board feedback and public comment	CPC/City staff/BerryDunn	Week of October 6	October 2026
Special Planning Board meeting - vote to refer plan to City Council	Planning Board	October 2026	October 2026
City Council meeting - introduce comprehensive plan	City Council/CPC/City Staff/BerryDunn	October 2026	October 2026
Post materials for public hearing - 30 days	City Staff	November 2026	November 2026
City council meeting and vote to adopt comprehensive plan	City Council/CPC/City Staff/BerryDunn	November 2026	November 2026



Auburn Comprehensive Plan

Land Use Categories

Introduction

Land use categories describe the different kinds of places that exist – or could exist – in a community based on how land is used, the types of buildings, and how people live, recreate, and get around in different areas.

Land use categories include a mix of characteristics like:

1. The types of homes in a category (e.g., single-family home, townhomes, apartments) and broad scale and spacing
2. Whether there are businesses, shops, offices, or industry
3. How close together or spread-out buildings are (scale and spacing of buildings)
4. What transit options may exist
5. Whether there are parks, open spaces, or community facilities

Land use categories establish a high-level vision for an area. Land use categories do not establish zoning. Following adoption of the Plan, the City will update the zoning ordinance to establish the regulatory requirements to implement the vision of the future land use map.

Zoning tools include a mix of overlay districts, lot and bulk requirements (e.g., building setbacks, height, units per lot, density), site development requirements (e.g., landscaping, parking, circulation) and natural resource protection, like shoreland zoning. There may be multiple zoning districts that fit into a land use category, and the conditions and context of a certain area will impact zoning decisions.

The draft land use categories below were developed by consolidation of committee feedback.

High Growth Area Categories

1. High Density Cores
2. Downtown
3. Mixed-Use Corridor

4. Mixed-Use Neighborhood
5. Compact Residential
6. Industrial

Moderate Growth Area Categories

1. Neighborhood Transition
2. Residential Corridor

Low Growth Area Categories

1. Agriculture, Open Space, and Recreation
2. Drinking Water Protection

High Growth Area Land Use Categories

High Density Cores

Description: High Density Cores are located at Great Falls Plaza, the Auburn Mall area, and surrounding interstate exit 75. These areas support Auburn's highest levels of density and include a variety of housing types and businesses. Redevelopment and infill are prioritized to strengthen economic activity, expand housing options, and support a vibrant, all-day environment.

Land Uses: Typical uses include a mix of commercial and residential activities. Some buildings are stand-alone businesses or multi-family residential. Other buildings may be mixed-use with active ground-floor retail, restaurants, cafés, personal services, arts/cultural venues, small-scale grocery/markets, and community-serving services. Upper floors may include multi-family housing, offices, co-working, hotels, and institutional or civic uses.

Public spaces, including plazas, pocket parks, and civic gathering areas, are encouraged as integral components of redevelopment projects, supporting community life and walkable access to daily needs.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by the highest intensity and scale in the City, typically with buildings that are a minimum of four stories. Buildings are generally oriented to the street with minimal setbacks and frequent entrances, and site and building design support pedestrian activity (e.g., transparent storefronts and weather protection). Development should form walkable blocks and incorporate high-quality architecture, durable materials, and site design that supports long-term reinvestment, including streetscape elements such as lighting, trees, seating, parklets, and other features that support a sense of place.

Parking should be shared, structured, or located behind/within buildings where it is feasible to reduce large surface lots and improve the streetscape. Within these cores, streets are designed for safe, convenient walking, bicycling, and transit access, with continuous sidewalks, ADA-compliant crossings, and bicycle facilities. These areas should be well connected to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and the City's broader trail, sidewalk, and transit network to support multi-modal access.

Downtown

Description: Downtown includes areas in Auburn’s historic city center. This area has a mix of uses that support the creation and expansion of local businesses, increase housing options, and promote social activity in a compact, historic city center. Transportation options, trails, and paths improve connectivity downtown and provide access to historic and cultural resources, including the Androscoggin River.

Land Uses: Typical uses include retail, restaurants, personal services, offices, civic, and entertainment uses on the ground floor of buildings, along sidewalks, and on street fronts. Upper floors provide access to office spaces and residences, supporting activity throughout the day and creating additional foot traffic throughout the area. This area serves as a center for jobs, commerce, social activity, arts, and entertainment by leveraging its historic form, riverfront setting, and proximity to Lewiston.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by high-density development of three or more stories with an emphasis on preserving historic building heights, scale, and architectural style. Buildings are oriented toward the street with minimal-to-no setbacks. Some buildings share walls, and others are stand-alone. Shared parking is encouraged. This area includes parks and public spaces, access to the Androscoggin River, and public art, creating a desirable urban fabric and public realm.

This area is highly walkable and served by public transportation, bike paths, sidewalks, and trail access to support people of all ages and abilities in accessing the area to work, shop, recreate, and live. Streets are designed to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and should reinforce the expectation that downtown is a place to walk, bike, gather, and linger, rather than simply drive through. Streets are designed to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Mixed-Use Corridor

Description: The Mixed-Use Corridor areas are primarily along major roadway corridors and function as Auburn’s key entry and exit points. These areas provide commercial amenities, including offices, restaurants, retail, and personal services. These areas also have a mix of larger-scale residential uses in mixed-use developments (e.g., commercial and residential in one structure) or in multi-family homes surrounding commercial development.

Land Use: Typical land uses include mixed-use, commercial, and larger-scale residential developments. Some lower-intensity technology, logistics, lite manufacturing, or lite industrial uses may also be supported, subject to review of environmental and public health impacts. This area is intended to absorb commercial growth, helping reduce the spread of commercial uses into residential areas. These corridors provide a primary location for larger-scale commercial activity and mixed-use redevelopment along major roads.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by larger-scale developments, including one-story and ground-level commercial uses, upper-story office and residential uses, and larger multi-family developments.

Development along these major corridors allows for infill of existing commercial areas, including unused parking areas, and the redevelopment of key gateways into vibrant, mixed-use areas. These corridors have shared parking and include infill of underutilized buildings and parking

lots. Shared parking or controlled access helps to limit curb cuts onto major corridors and maintain through-traffic flow through Auburn, while accommodating for additional development.

Public transportation and sidewalk and bike networks allow for access to jobs, homes, and recreation amenities. Site design standards, tree-lined streets, buffered sidewalks, and integrated open spaces and parks create an attractive public realm along major corridors.

Mixed-Use Neighborhood

Description: The Mixed-Use Neighborhood area includes residential areas with neighborhood-scale commercial development patterns. This area has small lot sizes with a variety of housing types, where people regularly walk, bike, and interact within their neighborhood. These areas support walkability and easy access to daily needs.

Land Use: Typical uses include a mix of housing types, such as townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, multi-family homes, and single-family homes. These areas also support ground-floor and stand-alone retail uses, restaurants, cafés, and personal services.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by homes and businesses with fewer than four stories on smaller lots. Buildings have limited setbacks from the streets and buildings may have shared walls. Homes may have small yards, and buildings cover most of a lot. This area has a high density, typically supporting multi-family homes, attached housing, and single-family homes on smaller lot sizes. These areas typically have narrower streets and limited space between buildings and the street.

These areas are well integrated into the City's trail, sidewalk, and bike networks, supporting active transportation options. Neighborhood businesses should reflect an appropriate scale, location, and compatibility and may consider providing shared or public parking to avoid overwhelming surrounding residential streets.

Compact Residential

Description: The Compact Residential areas provide access to a variety of housing types in areas adjacent to mixed-use, industrial, suburban, and rural areas. These areas provide a residential transition surrounding the City's densest mixed-use areas and offer a quiet neighborhood feel with less traffic volume. These neighborhoods support compact growth that places more residents in close proximity to jobs, services, shopping, transit, and community amenities.

Land Use: Typical land uses include one to four family homes and accessory dwelling units. Limited home-based businesses may be allowed. Neighborhood-serving businesses, such as cafés, corner stores, and personal or professional services, concentrated in small squares or nodes may also be allowed.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by one to four family homes on medium to small lot sizes. Homes have moderate setbacks from the street and larger yards than more dense mixed-use neighborhoods. In less developed areas and areas abutting agriculture and resource protection areas, cluster developments are encouraged to allow for housing opportunity while preserving existing open spaces. Open spaces and parks are located throughout neighborhoods, and neighborhoods are well integrated into the City's trail network.

Industrial

Description: The Industrial areas include a variety of logistic, manufacturing, production, research and other industrial uses and supporting uses, including airport, rail, and interstate infrastructure. Certain lighter industrial or manufacturing uses may serve as effective transition or buffer uses between more intensive industry and nearby residential areas.

Land Use: Typical uses include production, manufacturing, research, distribution, and other industrial and large-scale commercial uses.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by larger lots with large, low-rise buildings, ample exterior storage and parking, and significant landscaping or open space buffers between adjacent uses. These areas benefit from access to water, sewer, three-phase power, highways, rail, and public transportation and should be protected from incompatible land uses.

These areas are well integrated into the City's transportation network, including highway, rail, freight, and public transit access, providing residents with convenient access to employment centers.

Moderate Density Area Land Use Categories

Neighborhood Transition

Description: The Neighborhood Transition area includes moderate density residential uses and some commercial uses. These areas are designed to provide a transition between the dense urban areas in the high growth area boundary and the very-low density agriculture and resource protection area. These areas manage changes in urban intensity by carefully shaping overall form to gradually step down from denser residential areas.

Land Use: Typical uses include single-family, two-family, and three-family homes. Limited institutional and commercial uses, including recreation businesses, home-based businesses, and low-intensity, neighborhood-scale businesses are allowed.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by one- to three-family homes on small to moderate lot sizes. Buildings are typically set back from the road and from one another. Businesses follow a consistent density and form to surrounding neighborhoods. Areas along borders with the high growth zone may be more intense in scale, while areas closer to rural areas, agricultural and resource protection areas are less dense, providing a gradual transition between urban centers and rural areas.

Residential Corridors

Description: The Residential Corridor areas provide a limited, carefully designed opportunity for housing along existing road frontages in predominantly agricultural and rural landscapes. These areas are intended to accommodate modest residential growth while maintaining the community's working lands, rural areas, and scenic qualities. Development in these frontage strips should be compact, predictable in form, and sensitively sited to minimize conflicts with agricultural uses and open space protection.

Land Use: Typical uses include single-family homes, duplexes, and ADUs on lots sized to reflect the area's rural servicing constraints. Limited small-scale home occupations are appropriate where they remain compatible with residential character and do not create commercial strip patterns.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by linear, frontage-oriented development that follows existing public roads, with homes sited to reinforce a rural roadside pattern and protect the open fields and working landscapes behind them. Where feasible, new development should be clustered within the frontage strip to preserve open space, minimize infrastructure extensions, and reduce the overall footprint of land conversion.

Low Density Area Land Use Categories

Agriculture, Recreation, and Open Space

Description: Agriculture, Recreation, and Open Space category encompasses areas intended primarily for agricultural production, forestry, natural resource protection, recreation, and open space preservation. These areas play a critical role in maintaining Auburn's rural areas, supporting agricultural and forested lands, and providing ample opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Land Uses: Typical uses include agricultural activities and associated businesses, forestry and resource management, passive and active outdoor recreation. Some residential uses are allowed, but are limited and generally secondary uses to agriculture, forestry, and recreation uses.

Density and Form: These areas are predominantly open landscapes with farms, fields, forests, and conservation lands, interspersed with agricultural structures and occasional single-family residences associated with agriculture, recreation, or resource-based land uses. These areas are intended to remain largely undeveloped to protect environmental resources, preserve scenic and rural areas, and support Auburn's agricultural, forestry, and recreation economy. Residences are located on large lots and are set back far from the road. Clustered development approaches may be appropriate where they preserve open space, environmental resources, and agricultural soils.

Drinking Water Protection

Description: Drinking Water Protection area encompasses the Lake Auburn watershed, which provides drinking water for Auburn and surrounding communities. Special protections apply, including septic system inspection requirements, phosphorus controls, manure management standards, and ongoing water quality monitoring.

Land Use: Typical land uses include limited, very-low density residential uses, recreational uses, and open space.

Density and Form: Development levels are tightly regulated, with limits on new dwelling units and restrictions on lot sizes. Density is generally intended to remain at or below existing levels. Open spaces and forests are maintained to protect the City's drinking water source.



Auburn Comprehensive Plan

Land Use Categories

Introduction

Land use categories describe the different kinds of places that exist – or could exist – in a community based on how land is used, the types of buildings, and how people live, recreate, and get around in different areas.

Land use categories include a mix of characteristics like:

1. The types of homes in a category (e.g., single-family home, townhomes, apartments) and broad scale and spacing
2. Whether there are businesses, shops, offices, or industry
3. How close together or spread-out buildings are (scale and spacing of buildings)
4. What transit options may exist
5. Whether there are parks, open spaces, or community facilities

Land use categories establish a high-level vision for an area. Land use categories do not establish zoning. Following adoption of the Plan, the City will update the zoning ordinance to establish the regulatory requirements to implement the vision of the future land use map.

Zoning tools include a mix of overlay districts, lot and bulk requirements (e.g., building setbacks, height, units per lot, density), site development requirements (e.g., landscaping, parking, circulation) and natural resource protection, like shoreland zoning. There may be multiple zoning districts that fit into a land use category, and the conditions and context of a certain area will impact zoning decisions.

The draft land use categories below were developed by consolidation of committee feedback.

High Growth Area Categories

1. High Density Cores
2. Downtown
3. Mixed-Use Corridor

4. Mixed-Use Neighborhood
5. Compact Residential
6. Industrial

Moderate Growth Area Categories

1. Neighborhood Transition
2. Residential Corridor

Low Growth Area Categories

1. Agriculture, Open Space, and Recreation
2. Drinking Water Protection

High Growth Area Land Use Categories

High Density Cores

Description: High Density Cores are located at Great Falls Plaza, the Auburn Mall area, and surrounding interstate exit 75. These areas support Auburn's highest levels of density and include a variety of housing types and businesses. Redevelopment and infill are prioritized to strengthen economic activity, expand housing options, and support a vibrant, all-day environment.

Land Uses: Typical uses include a mix of commercial and residential activities. Some buildings are stand-alone businesses or multi-family residential. Other buildings may be mixed-use with active ground-floor retail, restaurants, cafés, personal services, arts/cultural venues, small-scale grocery/markets, and community-serving services. Upper floors may include multi-family housing, offices, co-working, hotels, and institutional or civic uses.

Public spaces, including plazas, pocket parks, and civic gathering areas, are encouraged as integral components of redevelopment projects, supporting community life and walkable access to daily needs.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by the highest intensity and scale in the City. Buildings are generally oriented to the street with minimal setbacks and frequent entrances, and site and building design support pedestrian activity (e.g., transparent storefronts and weather protection). Development should form walkable blocks and incorporate high-quality architecture, durable materials, and site design that supports long-term reinvestment, including streetscape elements such as lighting, trees, seating, parklets, and other features that support a sense of place.

Parking should be shared, structured, or located behind/within buildings where it is feasible to reduce large surface lots and improve the streetscape. Within these cores, streets are designed for safe, convenient walking, bicycling, and transit access, with continuous sidewalks, ADA-compliant crossings, and bicycle facilities. These areas should be well connected to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and the City's broader trail, sidewalk, and transit network to support multi-modal access.

Downtown

Description: Downtown includes areas in Auburn’s historic city center. This area has a mix of uses that support the creation and expansion of local businesses, increase housing options, and promote social activity in a compact, historic city center. Transportation options, trails, and paths improve connectivity downtown and provide access to historic and cultural resources, including the Androscoggin River.

Land Uses: Typical uses include retail, restaurants, personal services, offices, civic, and entertainment uses on the ground floor of buildings, along sidewalks, and on street fronts. Upper floors provide access to office spaces and residences, supporting activity throughout the day and creating additional foot traffic throughout the area. This area serves as a center for jobs, commerce, social activity, arts, and entertainment by leveraging its historic form, riverfront setting, and proximity to Lewiston.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by high-density development of three or more stories with an emphasis on preserving historic building heights, scale, and architectural style. Buildings are oriented toward the street with minimal-to-no setbacks. Some buildings share walls, and others are stand-alone. Shared parking is encouraged. This area includes parks and public spaces, access to the Androscoggin River, and public art, creating a desirable urban fabric and public realm.

This area is highly walkable and served by public transportation, bike paths, sidewalks, and trail access to support people of all ages and abilities in accessing the area to work, shop, recreate, and live. Streets are designed to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and should reinforce the expectation that downtown is a place to walk, bike, gather, and linger, rather than simply drive through. Streets are designed to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Mixed-Use Corridor

Description: The Mixed-Use Corridor areas are primarily along major roadway corridors and function as Auburn’s key entry and exit points. These areas provide commercial amenities, including offices, restaurants, retail, and personal services. These areas also have a mix of larger-scale residential uses in mixed-use developments (e.g., commercial and residential in one structure) or in multi-family homes surrounding commercial development.

Land Use: Typical land uses include mixed-use, commercial, and larger-scale residential developments. Some lower-intensity technology, logistics, lite manufacturing, or lite industrial uses may also be supported, subject to review of environmental and public health impacts. This area is intended to absorb commercial growth, helping reduce the spread of commercial uses into residential areas. These corridors provide a primary location for larger-scale commercial activity and mixed-use redevelopment along major roads.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by larger-scale developments, including one-story and ground-level commercial uses, upper-story office and residential uses, and larger multi-family developments.

Development along these major corridors allows for infill of existing commercial areas, including unused parking areas, and the redevelopment of key gateways into vibrant, mixed-use areas. These corridors have shared parking and include infill of underutilized buildings and parking

lots. Shared parking or controlled access helps to limit curb cuts onto major corridors and maintain through-traffic flow through Auburn, while accommodating for additional development.

Public transportation and sidewalk and bike networks allow for access to jobs, homes, and recreation amenities. Site design standards, tree-lined streets, buffered sidewalks, and integrated open spaces and parks create an attractive public realm along major corridors.

Mixed-Use Neighborhood

Description: The Mixed-Use Neighborhood area includes residential areas with neighborhood-scale commercial development patterns. This area has small lot sizes with a variety of housing types, where people regularly walk, bike, and interact within their neighborhood. These areas support walkability and easy access to daily needs.

Land Use: Typical uses include a mix of housing types, such as townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, multi-family homes, and single-family homes. These areas also support ground-floor and stand-alone retail uses, restaurants, cafés, and personal services.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by homes and businesses with fewer than four stories on smaller lots. Buildings have limited setbacks from the streets and buildings may have shared walls. Homes may have small yards, and buildings cover most of a lot. This area has a high density, typically supporting multi-family homes, attached housing, and single-family homes on smaller lot sizes. These areas typically have narrower streets and limited space between buildings and the street.

These areas are well integrated into the City's trail, sidewalk, and bike networks, supporting active transportation options. Neighborhood businesses should reflect an appropriate scale, location, and compatibility and may consider providing shared or public parking to avoid overwhelming surrounding residential streets.

Compact Residential

Description: The Compact Residential areas provide access to a variety of housing types in areas adjacent to mixed-use, industrial, suburban, and rural areas. These areas provide a residential transition surrounding the City's densest mixed-use areas and offer a quiet neighborhood feel with less traffic volume. These neighborhoods support compact growth that places more residents in close proximity to jobs, services, shopping, transit, and community amenities.

Land Use: Typical land uses include one to four family homes and accessory dwelling units. Limited home-based businesses may be allowed. Neighborhood-serving businesses, such as cafés, corner stores, and personal or professional services, concentrated in small squares or nodes may also be allowed.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by one to four family homes on medium to small lot sizes. Homes have moderate setbacks from the street and larger yards than more dense mixed-use neighborhoods. In less developed areas and areas abutting agriculture and resource protection areas, cluster developments are encouraged to allow for housing opportunity while preserving existing open spaces. Open spaces and parks are located throughout neighborhoods, and neighborhoods are well integrated into the City's trail network.

Industrial

Description: The Industrial areas include a variety of logistic, manufacturing, production, research and other industrial uses and supporting uses, including airport, rail, and interstate infrastructure. Certain lighter industrial or manufacturing uses may serve as effective transition or buffer uses between more intensive industry and nearby residential areas.

Land Use: Typical uses include production, manufacturing, research, distribution, and other industrial and large-scale commercial uses.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by larger lots with large, low-rise buildings, ample exterior storage and parking, and significant landscaping or open space buffers between adjacent uses. These areas benefit from access to water, sewer, three-phase power, highways, rail, and public transportation and should be protected from incompatible land uses.

These areas are well integrated into the City's transportation network, including highway, rail, freight, and public transit access, providing residents with convenient access to employment centers.

Moderate Density Area Land Use Categories

Neighborhood Transition

Description: The Neighborhood Transition area includes moderate density residential uses and some commercial uses. These areas are designed to provide a transition between the dense urban areas in the high growth area boundary and the very-low density agriculture and resource protection area. These areas manage changes in urban intensity by carefully shaping overall form to gradually step down from denser residential areas.

Land Use: Typical uses include single-family, two-family, and three-family homes. Limited institutional and commercial uses, including recreation businesses, home-based businesses, and low-intensity, neighborhood-scale businesses are allowed.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by one- to three-family homes on small to moderate lot sizes. Buildings are typically set back from the road and from one another. Businesses follow a consistent density and form to surrounding neighborhoods. Areas along borders with the high growth zone may be more intense in scale, while areas closer to rural areas, agricultural and resource protection areas are less dense, providing a gradual transition between urban centers and rural areas.

Residential Corridors

Description: The Residential Corridor areas provide a limited, carefully designed opportunity for housing along existing road frontages in predominantly agricultural and rural landscapes. These areas are intended to accommodate modest residential growth while maintaining the community's working lands, rural areas, and scenic qualities. Development in these frontage strips should be compact, predictable in form, and sensitively sited to minimize conflicts with agricultural uses and open space protection.

Land Use: Typical uses include single-family homes, duplexes, and ADUs on lots sized to reflect the area’s rural servicing constraints. Limited small-scale home occupations are appropriate where they remain compatible with residential character and do not create commercial strip patterns.

Density and Form: This area is characterized by linear, frontage-oriented development that follows existing public roads, with homes sited to reinforce a rural roadside pattern and protect the open fields and working landscapes behind them. Where feasible, new development should be clustered within the frontage strip to preserve open space, minimize infrastructure extensions, and reduce the overall footprint of land conversion.

Low Density Area Land Use Categories

Agriculture, Recreation, and Open Space

Description: Agriculture, Recreation, and Open Space category encompasses areas intended primarily for agricultural production, forestry, natural resource protection, recreation, and open space preservation. These areas play a critical role in maintaining Auburn’s rural areas, supporting agricultural and forested lands, and providing ample opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Land Uses: Typical uses include agricultural activities and associated businesses, forestry and resource management, passive and active outdoor recreation. Some residential uses are allowed, but are limited and generally secondary uses to agriculture, forestry, and recreation uses.

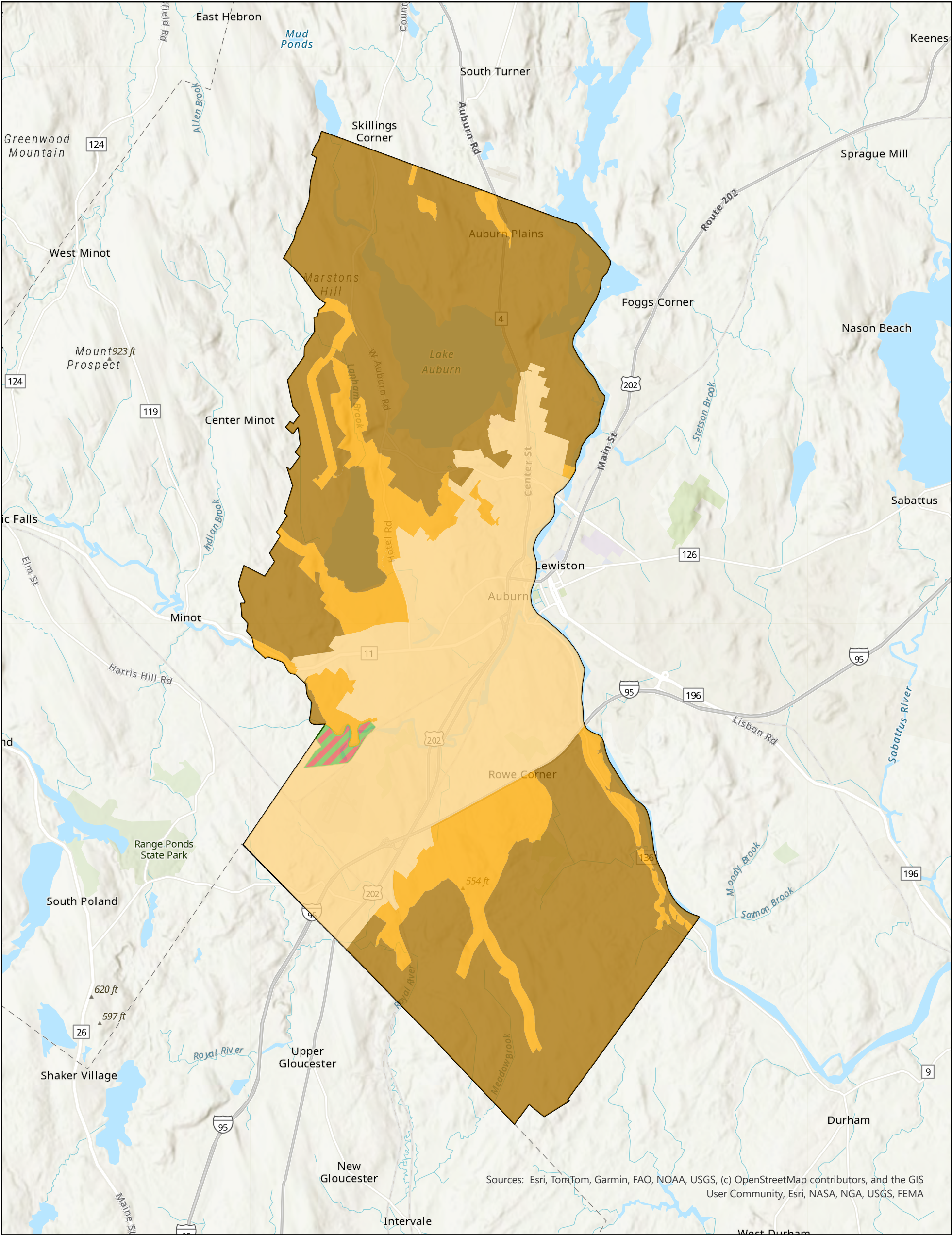
Density and Form: These areas are predominantly open landscapes with farms, fields, forests, and conservation lands, interspersed with agricultural structures and occasional single-family residences associated with agriculture, recreation, or resource-based land uses. These areas are intended to remain largely undeveloped to protect environmental resources, preserve scenic and rural areas, and support Auburn’s agricultural, forestry, and recreation economy. Residences are located on large lots and are set back far from the road. Clustered development approaches may be appropriate where they preserve open space, environmental resources, and agricultural soils.

Drinking Water Protection

Description: Drinking Water Protection area encompasses the Lake Auburn watershed, which provides drinking water for Auburn and surrounding communities. Special protections apply, including septic system inspection requirements, phosphorus controls, manure management standards, and ongoing water quality monitoring.

Land Use: Typical land uses include limited, very-low density residential uses, recreational uses, and open space.

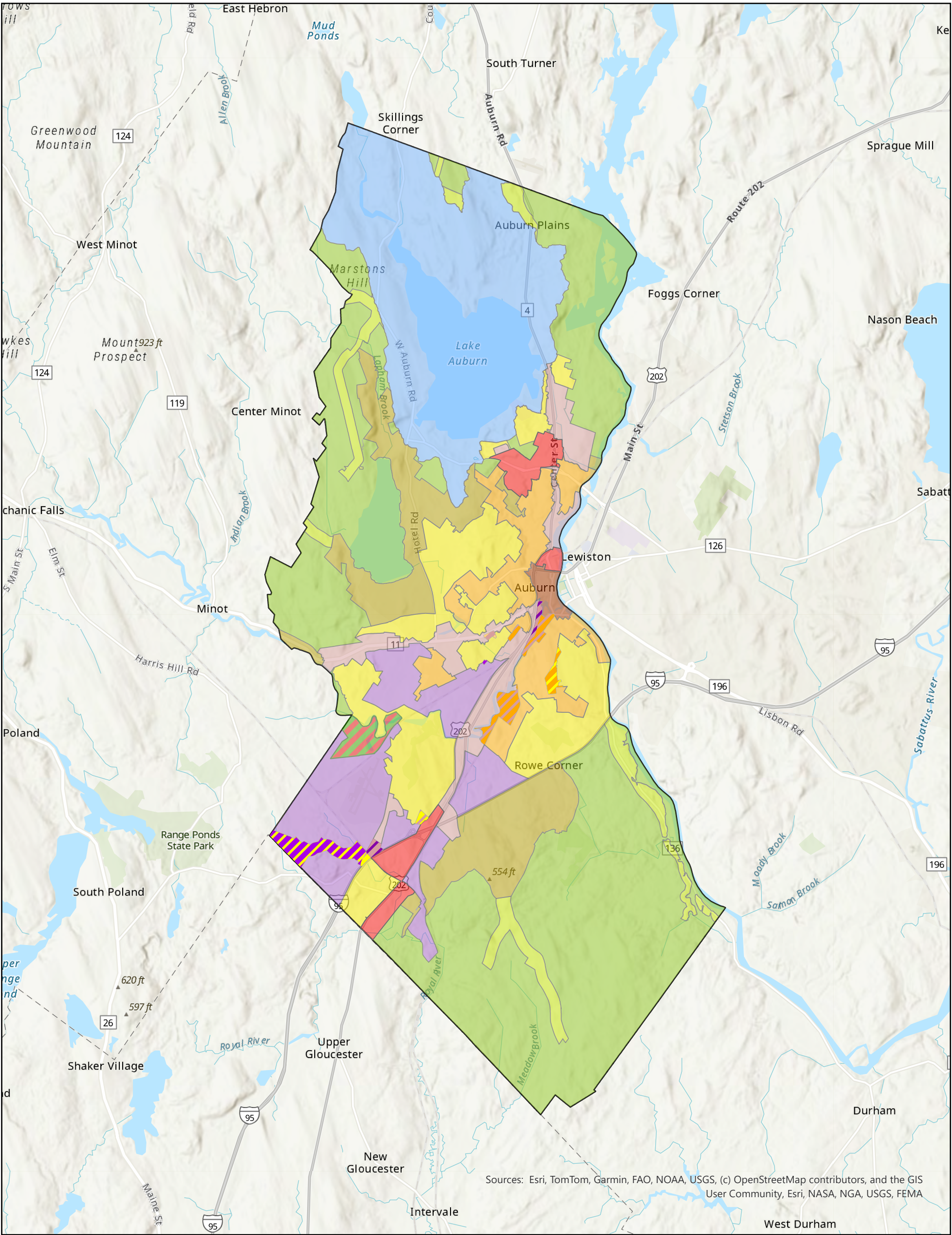
Density and Form: Development levels are tightly regulated, with limits on new dwelling units and restrictions on lot sizes. Density is generally intended to remain at or below existing levels. Open spaces and forests are maintained to protect the City’s drinking water source.



Growth Areas

Legend

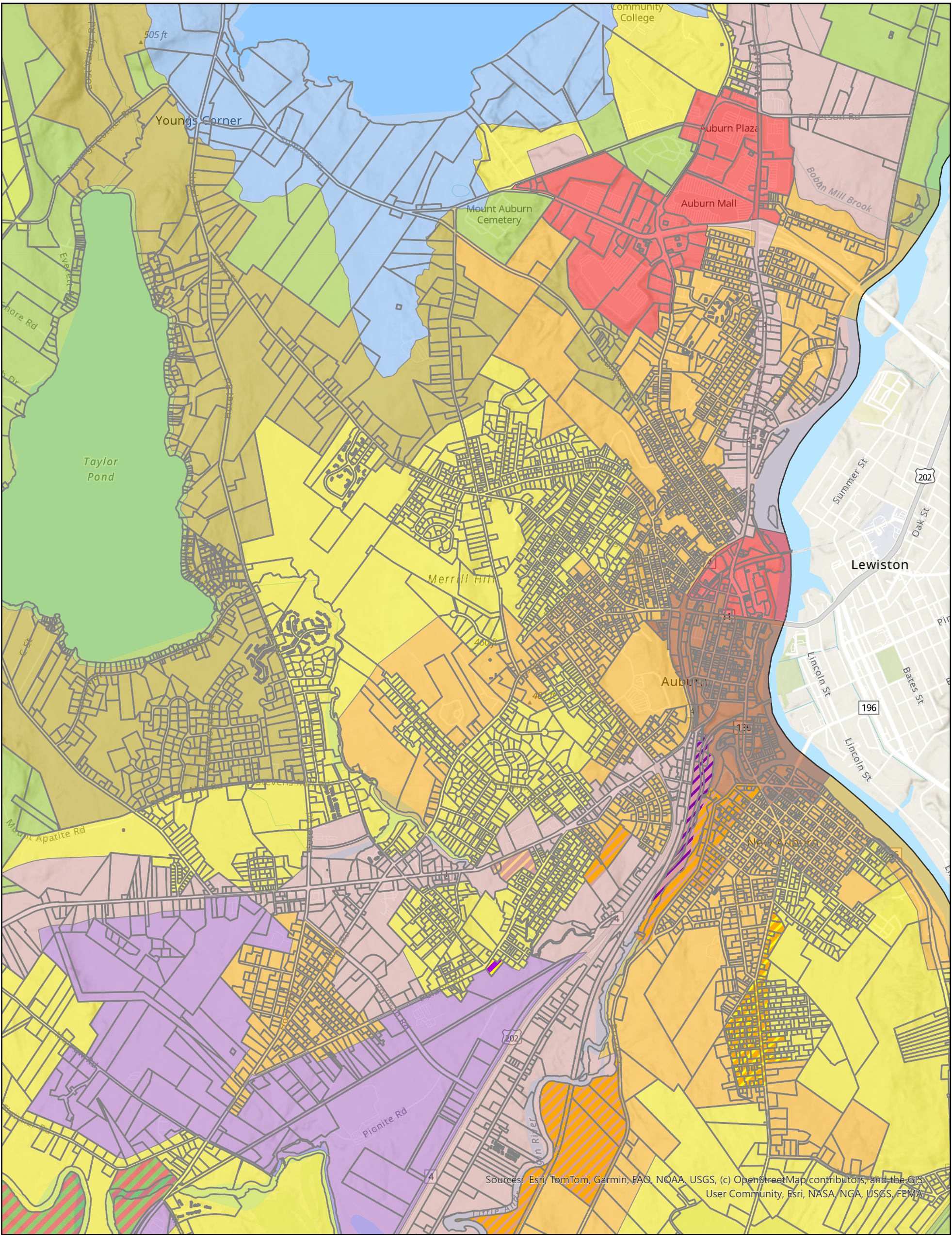
- High Growth Area
- Low Growth Area
- Moderate Growth Area
- Undetermined
- City Boundary



Land Use Categories

Legend

- | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mixed Use | Mixed Use Corridor to Neighborhood | Mixed Use Corridor to Industrial | Downtown | Neighborhood Transition |
| Neighborhood to Compact Residential | Compact Residential to Mixed Use | Mixed Use | Mixed Use Corridor | Residential Corridor |
| Compact Residential vs Industrial | Compact Residential to Mixed Use | Neighborhood to Mixed Use Corridor | Mixed Use Neighborhood | Drinking Water Protection |
| Mixed Use Corridor to Mixed Use Neighborhood | Mixed Use Corridor to Industrial | Mixed Use Corridor to Compact Residential | Compact Residential | Agriculture Forestry |
| | | High Density Cores | Industrial | Open Space and Recreation |
| | | | Undetermined | City Boundary |



Land Use Categories - Downtown/Urban

Legend

- | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Parcels | Mixed Use Corridor to Neighborhood | Mixed Use Corridor to Industrial | Downtown | Neighborhood Transition |
| Mixed Use | Compact Residential to Mixed Use | Mixed Use | Mixed Use Corridor | Residential Corridor |
| Neighborhood to Compact Residential | Mixed Use | Neighborhood to Mixed Use Corridor | Mixed Use Neighborhood | Drinking Water Protection |
| Compact Residential vs Industrial | Mixed Use Corridor to Industrial | Mixed Use Corridor to Compact Residential | Compact Residential | Agriculture Forestry |
| Mixed Use Corridor to Mixed Use Neighborhood | | High Density Cores | Industrial | Open Space and Recreation |
| | | | Undetermined | City Boundary |

Voter Guide: What you need to know to vote in Maine's upcoming election

MAINE NEWS

Population trends in Maine show a shift to the suburbs

Census data shows population growing in Portland's immediate suburbs at a faster rate than the city itself, mirroring a national trend.

Communities: **Portland, Scarborough, Windham, Gorham, Westbrook**

Posted May 31



Hannah LaClaire

Staff Writer



7 min read

Gift Article



Paula Reichel and her family moved to Scarborough from the Washington, D.C. area at the end of April. (Daryn Slover/Staff Photographer)

SCARBOROUGH — Paula Reichel is still settling into the yellow farmhouse that her neighbors call “the chicken house.”

Less than a month has passed since Reichel, her husband, daughter and dog swapped life in the Washington, D.C. area for the coastal Portland suburb of Scarborough. There are still boxes to unpack, but 4-and-a-half year old Violet has already befriended all the neighbors.

“She literally says hi to everybody,” said Reichel, 41. “Everybody stops and talks to her. That almost never happened in my (old) neighborhood.”



Explore our Voter Guide

What you need to know to vote in Maine's upcoming election.

Start reading



That friendly feel is a major part of what drew the family to Scarborough after 18 years in a major metropolitan area.

It's just rural enough to have “a little bit of Maine serenity,” she said, but they can still walk to the ice cream shop or the beach and Portland is a short drive away.

That “exurban” shift — from hearing “nothing but sirens and traffic outside of my window, (to) now hearing little 6-year-olds in motorized cars” — has become increasingly popular across the state and country, U.S. Census Bureau data shows, as people eschew major urban areas.

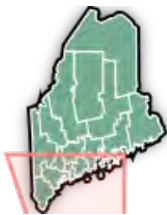
Advertisement

The trend is reshaping Maine towns and cities, particularly in Cumberland County, as officials and residents in Portland's bedroom communities grapple with seemingly exponential population growth.

Scarborough, Windham, Gorham and Westbrook are growing rapidly — Portland isn't.

Town-by-town growth in Cumberland and York counties (2020-2025)

Cumulative % Change (2020-2025): ☐ -0.7%-2.9% ☐ 2.9%-6.5% ☐ 6.5%-10.1% ☐ 10.1%-13.7%



STAFF INTERACTIVE | JAKE LAWS



SUBURBAN GROWTH

Over the last five years, the four Greater Portland communities have seen their populations grow between 5% to 11%. Portland grew just over 2% in that time and is expected to lose people by 2032, according to data from the Maine State Economist’s Office.

Scarborough added 2,431 new residents between 2020 and 2025, while Portland added 1,505. Windham, a town less than one-third of Portland’s population, added almost as many new people in that span, growing 8%.

Gorham saw the state’s greatest population jump last year, adding 656 new residents. Portland added 159.

RELATED...

Thousands of people moved to Maine since the pandemic. The influx isn’t over.

Since 2020, city centers of many of the country’s major metro areas have had sluggish population gains, with some places like New York City even declining, according to a May report from the bureau.

Advertisement

“Where growth did occur, it was mostly on the outer edges of these metro areas,” the report said.

This is holding true for Maine’s smaller cities as well.

In York County, Eliot and Kittery, on the New Hampshire border and roughly equidistant from Boston and Portland, have each seen double-digit percent growth, while Boston saw a slight decrease. In Androscoggin County, Auburn is growing faster than Lewiston.

And in Penobscot County, Orono, Old Town and Veazie all welcomed new residents last year, while Bangor lost a few.

IF YOU BUILD IT...

Housing — its affordability and availability — is a major factor limiting metropolitan population growth, according to the state economist’s office.

In Greater Portland, where the need for more and more affordable housing is particularly acute, “this has pushed population growth into the outlying towns,” the office said in an emailed statement.

Advertisement

Portland’s housing pipeline **has hit a clog**, with record-high approvals but near record-low completions. Developers have consistently blamed the city’s **inclusionary zoning policy**, which they say has made affordable housing too expensive to build.

This, coupled with high building costs and what many have called an arduous permitting process, has caused some developers to look beyond the city limits to neighboring communities where land is plentiful, cheaper and in some cases, easier to build on.

RELATED...

Is a Portland rule requiring affordable units slowing down real housing growth?



A person walks their dog across Frontrunner Way at The Downs in Scarborough on Friday. (Daryn Slover/Staff Photographer) 

Purchase this image

Many have turned to Scarborough, which has issued more annual building permits than Portland in the majority of each of the last 25 years.

Karen Martin, executive director of the Scarborough Economic Development Corporation, said the town was responsible for roughly 20% of the housing permitted in Cumberland County in 2024, despite only having about 7% of the population.

“We really have been doing our fair share, if not more,” she said.

It’s now the fastest-growing community in Greater Portland.

Advertisement

Scarborough’s population has been growing steadily for decades but in the last five to 10 years, the pace has increased as developers invested heavily in multi-family housing, drawing hundreds of new residents and

shifting the town's makeup away from what Town Manager Tom Hall said was historically "a series of one-acre lots on a cul-de-sac."

Between 2010 and 2014, of the 320 units that Scarborough added to its housing stock, 312 were single-family homes. But just a decade later, between 2020 and 2024, the town permitted 384 single-family homes and 862 units across 49 large multi-family projects.

RELATED ...

In a region known for quaint downtowns, a community without one builds from scratch

Much of the town's growth can be attributed to the redevelopment of Scarborough Downs. The **reimagining of the former racetrack** has so far added 622 new units, with more than 1,000 more in the works, Martin said.

The property accounts for about 38% of the town's building permits since 2019.

But the break-neck pace may be slowing down. Scarborough is in a "lull," Hall said, while the Downs developers focus away from residential projects and other developers have to work harder to find space.

"All the easy tracts have already been built," Hall said. "Large-scale single family traditional suburban subdivisions are going to be fewer and far between."

Advertisement

AFFORDABILITY A DRIVER

While Scarborough can directly tie its increase in population to the increase in housing, that hasn't been the case for its neighbor.

Westbrook's population has increased 5.7% since 2020, adding 1,158 residents, according to state data. In that same period, the city has issued about 790 building permits, though many from 2024 and 2025 haven't opened yet.



Caren Michel, left, of Westbrook and Monique Cornett of Buxton enjoy each other’s company at Saccarappa Park in downtown Westbrook on Friday. Michel of the Warren Memorial Foundation and Cornett of the Westbrook Economic Development Department discussed the park’s current restoration project. (Daryn Slover/Staff Photographer) [Purchase this image](#)

“If you look at the data, it can’t be explained by the building of new units alone,” said David Morse, Westbrook’s mayor. “If that were the case, then you’d see the population increases being proportional and in the same places where units are being created. (But) if you line those things up, it doesn’t shake out that way.”

RELATED ...

‘Buy America’ rule killing Maine affordable housing, developers say

Morse said the lack of affordability in Portland has likely driven people to Westbrook, which in April had a **median home sale price** of \$500,000 — the lowest in the region.

In Portland, according to MaineListings, the median sale was \$580,000. In Gorham, it was \$627,500 and in Scarborough it was \$790,248.

“(The cost) started to make surrounding areas more attractive,” he said.

As housing has gotten more expensive, Morse has also noticed people using it differently, which he said could explain some of the disconnect between new units and population growth. For example, more people in two-bedroom apartments are taking on roommates. And new inventory has allowed older adults to downsize, **freeing up room** for a larger family to move in.

“There was a time when people made a lot of conscious choices about what municipality they wanted to live in, but that nowadays is really driven by, ‘Where can I find an affordable place to live?’” he said.

Increasingly, Westbrook is seen as a viable option.

The downtown has “come alive” in the last 20 years and the ongoing **Rock Row development** has brought both jobs and visitors to the community. The river and surrounding trails have also been a boon.

“Westbrook wasn’t thought of in that way in the 90s and earlier, when we still had a mill town environment. We’re not a mill town anymore,” he said.

Developers have taken notice and the city is gearing up for an avalanche of housing activity — from May through June, the planning board reviewed or will review plans for eight projects that together would add about 1,125 units.

CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Maine’s pandemic-driven population boom has been well-documented. After years of population decreases, the state grew by almost 4% to just over 1.4 million between 2020 and 2025 as people fled densely packed cities for more rural areas.

Between 2020 and 2023, Maine was the fastest-growing state in New England. It has since fallen to second, behind New Hampshire.

While that flood has slowed to more of a trickle, **people are still moving to Maine**, and the state is feverishly trying to build the **tens of thousands of units** officials say are needed by 2030.

For the state’s fastest growing communities, this has created some friction between municipal government and existing residents who worry about the impacts of all these new people.

Will this make traffic worse? Does the **sewer have capacity**? What about the schools (Scarborough and Westbrook have seen enrollment either plateau or decline amidst their population booms)? Will taxes go up? What about the character of the town?

RELATED...

The hidden barrier to solving Maine's housing crisis

Large-scale housing developments are being **challenged by neighbors** who argue the changes are too much, too fast.

Advertisement

The tension has only been exacerbated by a **new state law** that bypasses Maine's history of local control and loosens various land use restrictions in an effort to boost housing production statewide. It goes into effect next summer.

More than ever, community planning is going to be crucial, said Joe Oliva, outreach and communications director for GrowSmart Maine, a nonprofit that helps communities grow in sustainable ways.

Concentrating growth around town centers and existing infrastructure, investing in downtowns and mixed-use development and focusing on multi-modal transportation to reduce traffic congestion and car-reliance will all help communities weather future changes, he said.

"The more you can plan for growth, you're in a better place when growth comes," he said.

<https://www.pressherald.com/2026/05/31/population-trends-in-maine-show-a-shift-to-the-suburbs>

Community

Table C1.1: Goal, Policy #1, and Objectives

Community
Goal: Foster a friendly and welcoming environment where all community members feel safe, engaged, and connected and are supported through strong schools, a thriving arts and culture scene, and a network of organizations and partners.
Policy: Support access to life-long learning opportunities.
Objectives: 1. Maintain a high school graduation rate of 95%. 2. Support the City's elementary schools and Auburn Middle School. 3. Support youth with pathways for life outside of education. 4. Increase access to early learning opportunities (ages 3 – 5). 5. Consistently evaluate programming needs for the workforce and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs. 6. Consistently evaluate programming needs for older adults and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.

Table C1.2: Actions to Implement Objectives

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
Objective 1: Maintain a high school graduation rate of 95%.						
C 1.1.1	Maintain the four different diploma pathways and ensure high school credit recovery opportunities are available for all high school students.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Four diploma pathways and credit recovery opportunities are maintained. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.1.2	Maintain classroom-based consistent staff support, including homeroom teachers, counselors, and assistant principals, over the course of a		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Each student is assigned classroom-based support. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	student's four years in high school.					
C 1.1.3	Maintain supported and coordinated transitions from middle school to high school.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Annual meeting between Auburn Middle School and Edward Little High School administrative staff. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.1.4	Maintain consistent coordination with secondary and district administrators to evaluate each student's diploma progress.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Three annual meetings with secondary and district administrators. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.1.5	Maintain and improve intervention strategies and support teams for students who are at risk of non-completion.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Intervention strategies identified and utilized. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.1.6	Maintain comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data on each student. Consistently utilize data to guide coordination, decision-making, and policy development.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Data includes, but is not limited to, attendance, behavior, grades, test scores, and relevant family context(s). Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 2: Continue to support the City's elementary schools and Auburn Middle School.						
C 1.2.1	Engage families in planning processes to understand their needs and priorities related to student learning, well-being, and school experience.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Continued engagement with families. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.2.2	Explore capital planning opportunities to efficiently deliver identified improvements.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Identified and implemented education strategies in capital planning. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.2.3	Maintain and expand after-school summer, and enrichment programming that aligns with identified student needs.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Maintained and expanded programming for students. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.2.4	Evaluate traffic flow, drop-off/pick-up safety, sidewalks, and crosswalk improvements around school sites (including Edward Little High School). Integrate this work with the Active Transportation Plan.		Auburn School Department	Medium Term	Completed evaluation of transportation around school sites and integration with the Active Transportation Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 3: Support youth with pathways for life outside of education.						
C 1.3.1	Maintain robust and tailored guidance for students on post-graduation pathways. Consider partnering with organizations and other City departments to provide additional pathway resources for students who need assistance navigating mental and behavioral health services, financial knowledge and health care, and housing challenges.		Auburn School Department, General Assistance and Public Health Departments	Medium Term	Continued guidance counseling resources. Expanded partnerships to include additional pathway resources. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.3.2	Maintain and increase, through partnerships, articulated pathways for post-secondary and workforce opportunities.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Articulated agreements with colleges and universities and	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
					partnerships with local businesses. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 4: Increase access to early learning opportunities (ages 3 – 5).						
C 1.4.1	Support the Lewiston Regional Technical Center's (LRTC's) Education and Development of Children Program ("LRTC preschool") in continuing and expanding programming.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Continued partnership with LRTC and expanded programming hours. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.4.2	Maintain and expand Auburn School Department's free, public pre-K program.		Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Maintained and expanded Pre-K programming during each school year. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.4.3	Implement the state mandate transferring responsibility for special education services for children ages 3 – 5 from the Maine Department of Education's Child Development Services to the City's public school system.		Auburn School Department	Short Term	Eligible 3- to 5-year-old children received special education services. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 5: Consistently evaluate programming needs for the workforce and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.						
C 1.5.1	Collaborate with local partners to conduct a needs assessment using employer surveys, labor market data, and feedback from adult learners.		Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department, Auburn School Department	Short Term	Completion of needs assessment. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.5.2	Identify workforce gaps and necessary training programs based on assessment findings.		Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department, Auburn School Department	Medium Term	Publication of a skills gap summary. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.5.3	Collaborate with partners to maintain and expand adult workforce training programs that address identified needs (e.g., trades, healthcare, technology, transportation).		Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department, Auburn School Department	Long Term	Development or expansion of workforce training. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 6: Consistently evaluate programming needs for older adults and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.						
C 1.6.1	Collaborate with local partners to conduct a needs assessment using surveys, focus groups, and input from senior-serving organizations.		Parks and Recreation Department, Business and Community Development Department	Short Term	Completion of assessment with participation from older adults and community partners. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.6.2	Collaborate with local partners to analyze feedback to determine priority programming needs (e.g., social connection, mobility, digital literacy, chronic disease management).		Parks and Recreation Department, Business and Community Development Department	Medium Term	Publication of a prioritized needs summary. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.6.3	Collaborate with partners to develop or expand programs directly addressing identified needs (e.g., tech literacy		Parks and Recreation Department, Business and	Long Term	Launched or expanded new or revised programs.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	classes, fall prevention workshops, transportation support, caregiver education).		Community Development Department		Annual update to City Council.	

Table C2.1: Goal, Policy #2, and Objectives

Community
Goal: Foster a friendly and welcoming environment where all community members feel safe, engaged, and connected and are supported through strong schools, a thriving arts and culture scene, and a network of organizations and partners.
Policy: Support access to services that meet the needs of the City's most vulnerable residents.
Objectives: 1. Develop an informed strategic and programmatic plan to address the identified health and well-being priorities of Auburn residents.

Table C2.2: Actions to Implement Objectives

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
Objective 1: Develop an informed strategic and programmatic plan to address identified health and well-being priorities of Auburn residents.						
C 2.1.1	Compile a local needs assessment every three years, informed by local data which may include: General Assistance data, Community Development public survey data, the Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (Maine Shared CHNA); Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data; Police and Fire Department data related to overdoses, illicit substance use, alcohol use disorder, and mental health calls for service; consultations with local partners, service providers, and people with lived experience; and collected input through surveys, focus groups, or informational interviews by		Business and Community Development Department, Police Department and 911 Dispatch, Fire Department	Short Term; Ongoing	Completion of a prioritized list of top 3–5 health and well-being needs. Creation of a summary analysis identifying root causes and priority populations for 100% of the listed priority areas. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	the City of Auburn or identified local and regional partners. Extract a short list of the 3-5 top health and well-being priorities. Identify the drivers, root causes, and population groups impacted most for each priority.					
C 2.1.2	Map which of the priorities are already being addressed by current programs, and where the gaps are.		Business and Community Development Department	Short Term; Ongoing	Development of a completed program–priority alignment map covering all priority areas, including identification of at least one programmatic gap per unmet need. Annual update to City Council.	
C 2.1.3	Gather supplemental data (internal outcome data, local public health reports, qualitative community feedback) to deepen understanding of identified needs.		Business and Community Development Department	Short Term; Ongoing	Completed supplemental data packet including at least three data sources (e.g., internal outcomes, public health data, community input). Annual update to City Council.	
C 2.1.4	Create an implementation plan with milestones, roles, timelines, and required resources.		Business and Community Development Department	Medium Term; Ongoing	Created implementation plan. Annual update to City Council.	
C 2.1.5	Implement the plan through phased expansion of evidence-based interventions, long-term partner commitments,		Business and Community Development Department	Long Term; Ongoing	CHNA priority areas demonstrating improvement in key health outcomes over	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	layering of funding streams, and annual progress reviews to ensure sustained improvement in priority health outcomes.				indicated timeline (long term). Annual update to City Council.	
C 2.1.6	Formalize a quarterly meeting of new and existing service providers in the region to reduce duplication, enhance awareness of services being provided, increase cross-agency referrals and collaborations, and respond to new or changing trends.		Business and Community Development Department	Short Term	Formation of quarterly meeting.	
C 2.1.7	Report on trends, data, and implementation status annually to City Council.		Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Annual Report to City Council.	

Table C3.1: Goal, Policy #3, and Objectives

Community
Goal: Foster a friendly and welcoming environment where all community members feel safe, engaged, and connected and are supported through strong schools, a thriving arts and culture scene, and a network of organizations and partners.
Policy: Support a safe community through coordinated emergency services
Objectives: 1. Improve Auburn Fire Department's ISO rating. 2. Maintain Auburn Police Department and 911 dispatch accreditation. 3. Achieve accreditation for the Fire Department through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). 4. Conduct an annual public safety survey to assess community safety perceptions.

Table C3.2: Actions to Implement Objectives

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
Objective 1: Improve Auburn Fire Department's ISO rating.						
C 3.1.1	Work with L/A 911 to establish a redundant dispatch circuit.		Fire Department	Short Term	Established redundant dispatch circuit. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.2	Partner with Auburn Water to increase hydrant system testing and inspection frequency.		Fire Department	Medium Term	Increased hydrant system testing and inspection frequency. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.3	Integrate annual Pre-Fire Planning inspections into Fire Prevention work for all non-residential structures.		Fire Department	Short Term	Integrated Pre-Fire Planning inspections into Fire Prevention. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.4	Establish minimum officer certification requirements and		Fire Department	Short Term	Established certification and	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	require 12 hours per year of continuing education.				continuing education requirements. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.5	Mandate 18 hours per year of structural fire training for each employee in accordance with NFPA 1001.		Fire Department	Medium Term	Mandated structural fire training. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.6	Achieve NFPA 1710 apparatus staffing standard levels.		Fire Department	Long Term	Achieved staffing standard levels. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.7	Build a Fire Department substation near the airport to support ISO standards for having a fire engine within 1.5 miles of developed areas of the jurisdiction.		Fire Department	Long Term	Completed Fire Department substation. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 2: Maintain Auburn Police Department and 911 dispatch accreditation						
C 3.2.1	Maintain continuous compliance with all applicable accreditation standards, conduct internal audits to identify and correct any compliance gaps, and provide ongoing training to supervisors and command staff on accreditation responsibilities.		Police Department and 911 Dispatch	Short Term	Continued accreditation compliance, internal audits, and staff training. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.2.2	Complete reaccreditation cycles for both police and 911 dispatch with no conditions or deficiencies.		Police Department and 911 Dispatch	Medium Term	Completed reaccreditation cycles. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.2.3	Utilize accreditation data and assessments to inform policy development, training priorities, and operational decisions to		Police Department and 911 Dispatch	Long Term	Achieved uninterrupted accreditation status.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	maintain uninterrupted accreditation status across all review cycles.				Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.2.4	Maintain and strengthen collaborative support models within the emergency response system to ensure coordinated, appropriate assistance for residents.		Police Department and 911 Dispatch, Fire Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Maintained and increased efficiency of the emergency response model. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 3: Achieve accreditation for the Fire Department through the CPSE.						
C 3.3.1	As a registered agency with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), complete required training for the designated accreditation manager.		Fire Department	Short Term	Fire Department is a registered agency. Completed training for accreditation manager. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.3.2	As an applicant agency with CFAI, complete a community risk assessment, community-driven strategic plan, and self-assessment manual.		Fire Department	Medium Term	Fire Department is an applicant agency. Completed risk assessment, strategic plan, and self-assessment manual. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.3.3	As a candidate agency with CFAI, complete on-site visit and assessment and present accreditation report before the CFAI. Renew accreditation every five years.		Fire Department	Long Term	Fire Department is a candidate agency. Completed on-site visit, assessment, and presentation. Renewed accreditation every five years. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
Objective 4: Conduct a public safety survey to assess community safety perceptions.						
C 3.4.1	Design and conduct a public safety survey that captures community perceptions of safety, trust in public safety agencies, and priority concerns.		Communications and Community Engagement Department, Police Department, 911 Dispatch, Fire Department	Short Term	Completed survey, with demographic representation reflective of the community. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.4.2	Prioritize the top safety concerns identified in the survey and develop a list of recommended strategies for each.		Police Department, 911 Dispatch, Fire Department	Medium Term	Prioritized concerns and developed strategies. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.4.3	Integrate survey findings into long-term planning efforts.		Police Department, 911 Dispatch, Fire Department, Business and Community Development Department	Long Term	Inclusion of survey-driven priorities in annual plans and/or budget proposals. Annual update to City Council.	

Table C4.1: Goal, Policy #4, and Objectives

Community
Goal: Foster a friendly and welcoming environment where all community members feel safe, engaged, and connected and are supported through strong schools, a thriving arts and culture scene, and a network of organizations and partners.
Policy: Enhance community identity and sense of place.
Objectives: 1. Deep relationships between residents and municipal government. 2. Develop a citywide survey of historic, archaeological, and prehistoric sites. 3. Create policies for protecting and enhancing historic resources, where feasible. 4. Establish an Arts and Culture City Committee, implement the citywide public art policy, and offer diverse and accessible events.

Table C4.2: Actions to Implement Objectives

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
Objective 1: Deepen relationships between residents and municipal government.						
C 4.1.1	Implement strong, accessible feedback mechanisms to ensure residents directly inform city decisions.		City Manager, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Improved and streamlined feedback mechanisms for residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	
C 4.1.2	Increase city staff presence in the community through ongoing outreach and attendance at local events and check-ins at local gatherings.		All Departments	Ongoing	Increased staff presence in the community. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.1.3	Partner with local organizations to organize recurring place-based events (e.g. block parties, cultural festivals, neighborhood walks) to activate public spaces and build shared identity.		City Manager, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Continued and increased place-based events. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 2: Develop a citywide survey of historic, archaeological, and prehistoric sites.						

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 4.2.1	Collaborate with partners and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to conduct a survey of Auburn's historic and archaeological resources. *		Planning and Permitting Department	Short Term	Completed survey. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.2.2	Collaborate with partners to develop informational materials on Auburn's historic and archaeological resources based on the survey.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Medium Term	Published informational resource (digital or print) and outreach to residents. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 3: Create policies for protecting and enhancing historic resources, where feasible.						
C 4.3.1	Require Planning Board review of maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission during the development review process to protect historic and archeological resources to the greatest extent practicable. *		Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Continued ordinance requirement for maps and information on historic and/or archaeological resources. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.3.2	For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, require developers and property owners to take appropriate measures to protect these resources. *		Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Required documentation of protective measures in development proposals located in known or sensitive archaeological areas.	
C 4.3.3	Utilize the survey of Auburn's historic and archaeological resources to develop policies and actions for historic resources, including the establishment of a historic		Planning and Permitting Department	Long Term	Completed policies and actions with implementation plan. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	district(s) and increased historical markers.					
C 4.3.4	Encourage and support the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of historic structures and structures of community significance, including school buildings.		City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Completed or planned adaptive reuse projects, both public and private. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 4: Establish an Arts and Culture City Committee, implement the citywide public art policy, and offer diverse and accessible events.						
C 4.4.1	Develop a charter and recruit members to the Arts and Culture City Committee.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short Term	Established committee with representation from arts organizations, businesses, and multiple neighborhoods. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.2	Conduct a community engagement effort to identify existing and needed arts and culture institutions and areas of community importance.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short Term	Completed community engagement effort. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.3	Enhance collaboration with local arts and cultural organizations and businesses to identify ongoing needs, develop strategies for areas where the City could provide		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Improved communication and collaboration. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	support, avoid overlaps in scheduling, and ensure adequate use of facilities.					
C 4.4.4	Develop set of goals for the Arts and Culture Committee to implement the public art policy.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Medium Term	Implementation of public art policy. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.5	Evaluate the feasibility of a percent-for-art program, public art requirements, or fee-in-lieu payments for projects in key areas (e.g., downtown, village centers, commercial corridors) to maintain and grow the creation of public art throughout the City.		Planning and Permitting Department	Medium Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that support creation of public art where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.6	Continue to promote Downtown Auburn as the focal point for arts and entertainment and community events.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Maintained and expanded City events in Downtown. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.7	Collaborate with local artists, cultural groups, and community organizations to expand diverse, inclusive arts and cultural experiences that reflect the full range of cultures, traditions, and creative expression.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short Term	Established collaboration and partnerships and expanded number and variety of arts and cultural events that reflect diverse cultural traditions. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.8	Continue to market Auburn as a hub for arts and culture by promoting local artists, events, public art, and partnerships		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Continued engagement with arts-related and event outreach.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	through coordinated branding and outreach.				Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.9	Incorporate accessibility into events and venues by ensuring handicap accessibility, age-friendly, walkability, and space for parking, and lowering financial barriers.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Continued accessibility considerations for City events. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.10	Partner with residents, neighborhood groups, and local organizations to implement beautification initiatives such as landscaping, clean-ups, public art, and improved maintenance of shared spaces.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Medium Term		

Table C5.1: Goal, Policy #5, and Objectives

Community
Goal: Foster a friendly and welcoming environment where all community members feel safe, engaged, and connected and are supported through strong schools, a thriving arts and culture scene, and a network of organizations and partners.
Policy: Ensure municipal services are administered efficiently and effectively.
Objectives: 1. Actively pursue grants and external funding opportunities to support capital investments and minimize the local tax burden. * 2. Strengthen the role of City boards and committees in supporting effective delivery of public services and implementation of City policies.

Table C5.2: Actions to Implement Objectives

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
Objective 1: Actively pursue grants and external funding opportunities to support capital investments and minimize the local tax burden. *						
C 5.1.1	Maintain an inventory of active and potential grant programs (state, federal, and other sources).		City Manager	Ongoing	Updated grant inventory and inclusion in CIP and budgeting process. Annual update to City Council.	
C 5.1.2	Align CIP project development with grant readiness, including cost estimates, schedules, and required matching funds, to improve competitiveness for external funding.		City Manager	Ongoing	Identified percentage of CIP projects with cost estimates, schedules, and match requirements. Annual update to City Council.	
C 5.1.3	Identify projects suitable for alternative funding mechanisms. Report on grant applications submitted, awarded, and leveraged and		City Manager	Ongoing	Identified projects and alternative funding mechanisms. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objectives	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
	the estimated local tax savings achieved.					
C 5.1.4	In line with the budget process, assess municipal services to identify opportunities for regional service delivery. *		City Manager	Ongoing	Continued coordination on regional service delivery. Annual update to City Council.	
Objective 2: Strengthen the role of City boards and committees in supporting effective delivery of public services and implementation of City policies.						
C 5.2.1	Consistently assess the effectiveness of boards and committees in supporting City services objectives and identify opportunities for consolidation, restructuring, or enhanced support.		City Manager, Department Staff	Ongoing	Conducted assessment(s). Annual update to City Council.	
C 5.2.2	Establish clear pathways for board and committee input into capital planning, policy development, and service delivery decisions, including defined points of engagement in budget and planning processes.		City Manager	Medium Term	Documented process depicting when and how boards provide input into CIP, budget, or policy development. Annual update to City Council.	