AUBURN
Comprehensive Plan
2026



Photo: Falco Focus Drone

Acknowledgements

The City of Auburn's (City, Auburn) Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) is the product of a collaborative planning process guided by the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) and shaped by input from the public. The CPC served as the primary body responsible for reviewing information, discussing community priorities, considering tradeoffs, and helping guide the development of the plan's vision, goals, policies, objectives, and actions. City staff and the consultant team supported this work through technical analysis, facilitation, engagement support, and recommendations throughout the planning process.

Most importantly, the Plan reflects the ideas, concerns, and aspirations shared by Auburn residents, business owners, community partners, board and committee members, regional collaborators, and other participants. Through public meetings, surveys, focus groups, open houses, online activities, and conversations, community members helped identify the values and priorities that informed the plan. Their input provided the foundation for this document.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements **2**
Letter to Auburn **4**
Executive Summary **6**
A Vision for Auburn **10**
Introduction **14**
What is a Comprehensive Plan? 15
Why Plan? 15
How to Use this Plan 16
Building on a History of Planning **17**
Recent Planning Initiatives 19
Auburn Today 20
Auburn Tomorrow 24
The Planning Process **25**
Community Engagement **29**
Future Land Use Plan **36**
Land Use Categories **43**
High Growth Area Land Use Categories 46
Moderate Growth Area Land Use Categories 60
Low Growth Area Land Use Categories 67
Land Use Category Illustrations 73
Goals, Policies, and Objectives **75**
Future Land Use 78
Community 84
Housing 95
Economy 101
Transportation 106
Natural Environment 114
Parks and Recreation 123
Infrastructure 130
Regional Coordination **134**
Implementation Plan Overview **138**
Implementation Approach 139
Implementation Plan Components 141
Implementation Plan **144**
Future Land Use 145
Community 150
Housing 164
Economy 168
Transportation 172
Natural Environment 183
Parks and Recreation 194
Infrastructure 199
Appendices **202**
Appendix A: Glossary 203
Appendix B: Related Plans, Studies, and Policies 209
Appendix C: Growth Areas Map 210
Appendix D: Community Engagement Summary 212
Appendix E: Inventory and Analysis 256

Letter to Auburn

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On behalf of the City of Auburn, we are proud to present the 2026 Comprehensive Plan, a roadmap that will guide our community's growth, investment, and decision-making for the next decade. This Plan is the product of more than 2 years of dedicated work by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, City staff, our consultant team, and, most importantly, the hundreds of Auburn residents, business owners, and community partners who gave their time and voice to shape it.

Auburn stands at an important moment in its history. As we plan for the future, we are balancing opportunities for housing and economic growth with our responsibility to protect Lake Auburn and our other natural resources; strengthening our downtown and commercial centers while preserving the rural and agricultural places that make our City distinct; and investing wisely in the infrastructure and services our residents rely on every day. Without a clear and shared plan, these decisions risk being made incrementally and reactively and addressing problems only after they arise rather than preparing for them thoughtfully. The 2026 Comprehensive Plan instead provides a coordinated, proactive framework that reflects what our community has told use matters most: being resilient, connected, welcoming, and intentional.

The benefits of this Plan extend to every corner of our City. It provides a foundation for updating our zoning ordinances, prioritizing capital improvements, and pursuing State and federal grant funding. It helps ensure that new housing meets the needs of residents at every stage of life and income level, that our transportation network connects people safely and efficiently to jobs and services, and that our parks, schools, and public infrastructure keep pace with a growing community. Perhaps most importantly, it ensures that as Auburn changes, it continues to reflect the priorities of the people who call it home.

This Plan is a living document that will be revisited and adapted as conditions change, but its foundation is firm: a shared vision, built together, for an Auburn where everyone can thrive. The City will track progress, provide regular updates, and seek public input as projects advance. We want to thank every resident, board and committee member, and City employees who contributed to this effort, and we are confident that, together, we will build on Auburn's long history of thoughtful planning to create a stronger, more resilient, and more connected community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Harmon
Mayor

Phillip L. Crowell, Jr.
City Manager




OPEN
HEART
FARM











Executive Summary



Photo: Richard Plourde Photography

Executive Summary

Auburn is shaped by its people, neighborhoods, businesses, regional connections, and natural resources. Today, the City is navigating population and housing growth, changing household needs, economic investment, workforce constraints, transportation and infrastructure demands, and increasing environmental pressures. These conditions create opportunities, but they also require deliberate choices about where growth should occur, how public resources should be invested, and how community assets should be protected and enhanced. This Plan provides a coordinated, community-driven framework for making those choices over the next decade.

This Plan is a long-range policy document that establishes a shared vision for Auburn. It is not a zoning ordinance, City budget, or approval for a specific project. Instead, it provides the policy foundation for future ordinances, investments, programs, partnerships, and development decisions. It also creates continuity as elected leadership, staff, market conditions, and community needs change.

This Plan builds on more than a century of local planning. In 1919, Auburn was the first community in Maine to develop a comprehensive plan, and the City completed its last full comprehensive plan update in 2010. In 2021, the City undertook a more limited update focused on selected chapters and issues: future land use, recreation and open space, and the agricultural and food economy. The City's 2019 Strategic Plan and additional planning has refined the City's understanding of current conditions. This update brings those efforts together, identifies the community's needs and priorities, and establishes a coordinated direction for the next decade.

Community input is the foundation of that direction. Across surveys, focus groups, open houses, listening sessions, student engagement, online activities, and public meetings, participants consistently called for Auburn to remain affordable, welcoming, safe, and connected while planning intentionally for growth. Key themes included:

- Maintain affordability and expand housing options
- Protect water resources, natural resources, and open spaces
- Improve transportation, walkability, and connectivity
- Strengthen downtown and support local businesses
- Expand parks, recreation, and youth opportunities
- Enhance access to services and support Auburn's residents
- Preserve community design and form while planning for growth

Auburn is growing and attracting investment, but housing production, affordability, and the fit between available homes and changing household needs remain concerns. An aging population and evolving service needs are changing demand for housing, transportation, recreation, education, and public services. Auburn's multi-sector economy and freight, rail, airport, commercial, and industrial

assets create opportunities, while workforce availability and childcare, housing, and transportation access can constrain economic growth. At the same time, aging infrastructure, increased traffic, and pressure on water, agricultural, forest, and other natural resources require coordinated public investment and stewardship.

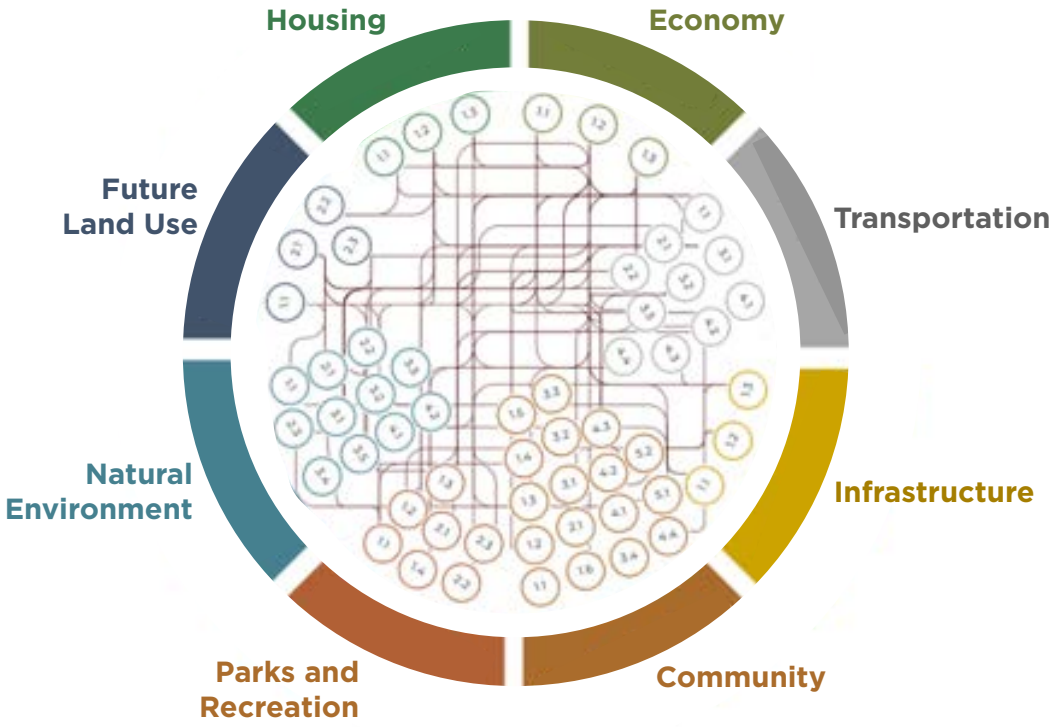
Together, these findings support Auburn's shared vision as a resilient, connected, welcoming, and intentional community where everyone can thrive. The Plan advances that vision by directing higher-intensity growth to places with the infrastructure and capacity to support that growth; supporting transitions between urban and rural areas; and protecting drinking water, working lands, natural systems, and recreational assets.

The CPC guided the planning process by reviewing data and community input, discussing priorities and tradeoffs, and helping shape the vision, goals, Future Land Use Plan, policies, objectives, and actions in this Plan. The Committee's work helped connect varied community perspectives with technical analysis and supported a coordinated set of recommendations for Auburn's future.

Within this framework, goals describe the broad outcomes the community seeks to achieve. Policies establish the City's preferred direction for decisions, regulations, investments, programs, and partnerships. Objectives translate each policy into more specific, measurable priorities, while the actions in the Implementation Plan identify the concrete steps, responsible parties, timing, and resources needed to move those priorities forward. Together, these elements create a line of sight from the community's long-term vision to day-to-day implementation.

Although this Plan organizes each policy and objective is organized under the vision statement goal it most directly supports, the Committee viewed the Plan as an interconnected system rather than a set of separate topic areas. The following figure illustrates these relationships and shows how progress in one area may support, depend on, or reinforce progress in another. For example, expanding housing choice can strengthen the workforce and household stability, but it also depends on land use regulations, infrastructure capacity, transportation access, and nearby services. Likewise, decisions about growth patterns can affect infrastructure costs, environmental conditions, mobility, economic opportunity, and the City's fiscal position.

Figure 1: Interrelated Policies and Objectives



The figure is not intended to show every relationship or a required sequence of work; instead, it highlights the need to coordinate policies and objectives across departments, plans, investments, and partnerships during implementation.

Many of the opportunities and challenges addressed by this Plan extend beyond Auburn's municipal boundaries. Auburn will continue coordinating with neighboring municipalities, regional, State, and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, service providers, businesses, and community groups. These partnerships can help align plans, reduce duplication, and advance solutions that are more effective at a regional scale.

Implementation will translate the Plan's long-range direction into sustained action. The Implementation Plan provides a practical framework for moving each objective forward by clarifying responsibility, sequencing work, tracking progress, and considering available resources. City leaders and staff will use it alongside the City Council's annual goal-setting process to connect the Plan's priorities with budgeting, capital investment, departmental work, and partnerships. Regular reviews will help the City communicate results, coordinate related initiatives, and adapt the work as conditions change in the future.

The Plan is a living document, and is not designed to live on a shelf. Meaningful progress will require continued leadership from elected officials, coordinated work across City departments and boards, collaboration with regional and community partners, and ongoing public participation. By pairing clear priorities with accountable implementation and regional coordination, Auburn can make steady progress toward implementing the community's vision.

A Vision for Auburn



Photo: Daniel J, Marquis

A Vision for Auburn

The vision statement, guiding principles, and goals provide the foundation for Auburn's Comprehensive Plan. The vision statement describes the community Auburn aims to become over the next decade. The guiding principles define the core values that should shape decisions along the way, while the goals translate the vision into focus areas for policy, investment, and implementation. Together, these elements create a shared framework for future land use, community priorities, and City decision-making.

VISION

Auburn is a resilient, connected, welcoming, and intentional community where everyone can thrive. Abundant and healthy farms, forests, lakes, and rivers surround Auburn's vibrant neighborhoods and its dynamic commercial, industrial, and mixed-use centers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RESILIENT

Auburn adapts quickly to new issues and trends, meeting residents' needs while enduring and evolving in the face of challenges.

CONNECTED

Auburn fosters community connection, engagement, and sense of place through a strong network of neighborhoods, businesses, organizations, service providers, civic institutions, and recreational areas.

WELCOMING

Auburn is a friendly, hard-working city that is inviting and affordable to people at all phases of life. Residents feel safe in the community, know where they can go to connect with others, and know how to access services and businesses.

INTENTIONAL

Auburn is a thoughtful, forward-thinking city that sets strategic goals and plans holistically for future growth and investments. Purposeful land use planning and community investment strengthen and solidify Auburn's position in the region and state, establishing a clear identity for the City.

Photo: Richard Plourde Photography

GOALS



Future Land Use

Promote thoughtful land use planning that balances fiscally prudent and ecologically conscious growth with support for Auburn's existing commercial centers, neighborhoods, and rural areas.



Community

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 local organizations and partners.



Housing

Ensure access to a broad range of housing options that meet the needs of the community across income levels, ages, and life stages to support current and new residents and maintain a strong workforce.



Economy

Support a resilient economy that provides quality jobs, fosters innovation, and strengthens local businesses and industries while providing quality education and training for people of all ages.



Transportation

Develop a safe, efficient, and universally available multimodal transportation network and traffic management solutions that connect people to places throughout the City and region.



Natural Environment

Preserve and enhance the City's natural environment and agricultural tradition to protect water quality, improve food access, promote public health, provide connected wildlife habitats, and respond to the impacts of climate change.



Parks and Recreation

Maintain and expand access to parks, trails, and recreational facilities that support social connection and active lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.



Infrastructure

Maintain existing infrastructure and plan strategic investments that prepare the City to respond to changing community needs and future challenges.



Introduction



Photo: Richard Plourde Photography

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term policy document that establishes the City's shared vision for the future and provides a framework for making decisions about growth, development, public investments, and community priorities. A comprehensive plan considers a wide range of topics—including housing, transportation, economic development, natural resources, parks and recreation, public services, and future land use—to help ensure decisions are coordinated and reflect community values.

The comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for the next 10 years while remaining flexible enough to respond to changing conditions and emerging opportunities. It provides the foundation for future zoning updates, infrastructure investments, capital planning, grant applications, conservation efforts, and other implementation initiatives. Most importantly, it helps ensure that future decisions made by the City, its boards and committees, community partners, and others are guided by a shared vision developed through extensive community engagement.

What it is:

- A broad statement on the City's visions, goals and policies for the future
- A framework to guide decision-making and planning
- A long-range perspective on growth, development
- A reflection of community members' ideas, experiences and concerns
- A living document that can be adapted as the needs of the community change

What it is not:

- A zoning ordinance or land development code
- A City budget
- A specific development plan for a project

Why Plan?

Planning gives Auburn a coordinated way to prepare for growth, change, and investment while protecting the qualities that residents value most. A comprehensive plan helps the City make intentional decisions about where growth should occur, where natural resources and working lands should be protected, how housing and transportation needs should be

addressed, and how public resources should be prioritized over time.

The State requires municipalities to adopt a comprehensive plan that is consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA) if they wish to adopt or maintain zoning ordinances beyond the State's minimum shoreland zoning requirements. A GMA-consistent plan can also support eligibility for certain State grant and funding programs and may provide preferred status for some programs.

Beyond State requirements, the planning process helps Auburn create a common reference point for elected officials, board and committee members, City staff, residents, businesses, service providers, and partner organizations. As local leadership, market conditions, demographics, environmental conditions, and community needs change, the comprehensive plan provides continuity and direction. It helps the City evaluate competing priorities, coordinate investments, and make decisions that support Auburn's long-term vision.

For Auburn, planning is especially important because the City is balancing multiple priorities at once: accommodating housing and economic growth, strengthening downtown and commercial areas, protecting Lake Auburn and other natural resources, supporting rural and agricultural lands, improving transportation choices, maintaining public services and infrastructure, and preserving the community assets that makes Auburn unique. The plan provides the framework for making those decisions intentionally rather than incrementally or reactively.

How to Use this Plan

This Plan is a practical guide for City officials, boards and committees, staff, residents, businesses, community organizations, and partner agencies. Readers can use the Plan to understand Auburn's long-term vision, the issues and opportunities shaping the City, and the goals, policies, objectives, and actions that will guide future decisions.

The introductory sections provide context on why the plan matters and how it was developed. The vision, guiding principles, and goals establish the Plan's overall direction. The Future Land Use Plan provides a policy framework for growth, and development patterns. The community goals and implementation sections identify the policies, objectives, actions, responsible parties, and timing needed to move the plan forward.

After adoption, the City should use this Plan as a reference for zoning updates, capital improvement planning, budget decisions, grant applications, development review, departmental work planning, and partnerships. This Plan should also be revisited regularly to track progress, confirm priorities, and adjust implementation as conditions change. In this way, the comprehensive plan is a long-range policy document and a working tool for day-to-day decision-making.



Building on a History of Planning



Building on a History of Planning

Auburn's history has been shaped by its location along the Androscoggin River, its agricultural legacy, and its role as a regional center for industry, commerce, housing, and civic life.

Since time immemorial, the Wabanaki people, including the Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Abenaki Nations, have inhabited what is now northern New England and Canada, including points along the Androscoggin River. The river provided sources for hunting, fishing, and gathering, and nearby agricultural lands provided sources for food.

The Wabanaki developed trail systems throughout what is now Androscoggin County and Auburn. Food and resources were traded along these trail routes and the river. European settlers began arriving in the 1600s, and over time, the Wabanaki were forced out of their traditional hunting, fishing, and farming lands along the Androscoggin River. Today, Wabinaki Tribal and trust lands are scattered throughout central and northern Maine.[1,2]

Incorporated as a town in 1842 and as a city in 1869, Auburn grew from an agricultural community into an industrial and service center connected to Lewiston, Portland, and broader regional markets.

As Auburn's economy and land use patterns changed over time, the City used planning practices to guide growth, protect important resources, and respond to new community needs. The City's first comprehensive plan, prepared in 1919, began a long tradition of municipal planning that has continued through multiple generations of local leadership, community engagement, and investment. The 1919 plan was the State's first municipal comprehensive plan.

1 Wabanaki Alliance. n.d. "Tribal Lands in Maine." Wabanaki Alliance. Accessed April 6, 2025 https://www.wabanakialliance.com/tribal-lands-in-maine
2 Maine Mill. n.d. "First Nations and the Androscoggin River Valley." Maine Mill. Accessed April 6, 2025 https://mainemill.org/learn/for-teachers/first-nations-and-the-androscoggin-river-valley/

"The plea is, therefore, take this plan for what it proposes itself to be—a scientific and skilled answer to the needs of Auburn, its possibilities; its proper development; its wise and sensible structure into a beautiful city. As its planners have said: 'None offers greater possibilities. It rests with the people of Auburn to build.'"

—City of Auburn 1919 Comprehensive Plan


AUBURN LEWISTON JOURNAL AUBURN

Auburn, Maine---A City with an Appreciation of Utility and Beauty and a Striving for High Ideals

Recent Planning Initiatives

Rather than starting from scratch, this Plan builds on decades of local planning work and updates that direction based on current conditions and community priorities. The City completed a full comprehensive plan update in 2010 and revisited selected chapters in 2021, including future land use, recreation and open space, and the agricultural and food economy.

In addition to the comprehensive plan updates, several City planning initiatives have provided more detailed direction for municipal decisions and investments. A full list of recent plans can be found in Appendix B.

The 2019 Strategic Plan established priorities for economic growth, quality of life, municipal services, and public investment. These priorities have been further advanced through a series of neighborhood, corridor, housing, infrastructure, and resource-planning initiatives that provide more detailed guidance for municipal decision-making.

Small-area and corridor planning efforts have focused on strengthening neighborhood centers, improving transportation connections, and enhancing public spaces. The New Auburn Master Plan emphasized village-center revitalization, riverfront improvements, walkability, and phased reinvestment. More recent corridor planning, including Washington Street, Minot Avenue, and Court Street studies, explored how land use, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development can work together to support reinvestment and accommodate future growth.

The City, community members, and partner organizations have invested significant effort in planning for and encouraging active farming, forestry, and recreational uses. This focused on ordinances and policies to protect agricultural land and supporting the continued viability of farming and forestry activities. This includes the work of the Mayor's Ad-Hoc Bona Fide Farming, Agricultural, Recreational and Natural Resources Land Use Committee, which outlined recommendations to leading the definition of bona fide agricultural uses in City ordinances.

Housing has also been a significant area of focus. The Auburn Housing Study found that the city will need more than 1,300 additional homes by 2030 and identified the need for a broader range of housing types that better align with resident incomes, household sizes, life stages, and workforce needs. The study also highlighted obstacles to housing development and opportunities to expand housing choice and affordability.

Natural resource and watershed planning efforts have reinforced the connection between land use and long-term infrastructure and water needs. Because Lake Auburn serves as the drinking water source for both Auburn and Lewiston, the City has continued to work with the Auburn Water District, the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission, residents, and other stakeholders to evaluate watershed protections and balance conservation with appropriate development. Related initiatives have addressed watershed management, stormwater and phosphorus control, flood resilience, septic system management, protection of wetlands and wildlife habitat, working lands, and expanded access to natural resources and recreation.

The City's Capital Improvement Plan provides the primary framework for prioritizing investments in infrastructure, facilities, fleet, and equipment and helps translate planning goals into implementation.

Together, these planning initiatives have helped shape Auburn's recent growth and investment decisions. This Plan builds on that foundation by integrating prior recommendations into a unified framework, updating policies and priorities to reflect current conditions, community input, and emerging challenges.

Recent planning efforts in Auburn have occurred during a period of change across the State. Demographic shifts, including an aging population and shrinking household size, combined with increased in-migration, workforce challenges, housing market pressures, and lasting effects of the global pandemic, have reshaped community needs and development patterns. These trends have heightened demand for housing, infrastructure investment, transportation options, and access to services. Collectively, these trends reinforce the need for Auburn to take an integrated approach to address these challenges.

Auburn Today

In recent years, Auburn has experienced steady population growth, strong development activity, and continued public and private investment while preserving many of the natural resources and neighborhoods that define the City. The City faces many of the same opportunities and challenges affecting communities across Maine, including housing affordability, workforce shortages, demographic change, infrastructure needs, and environmental pressures.

Auburn is home to people with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including families who have lived in the community for generations, those who have recently chosen Maine as a new home, and residents whose roots extend to countries around the world. These varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives contribute to Auburn's social, cultural, and economic fabric.

Since the 2010 update, Auburn's population increased from 23,055 in 2010 to 25,441 people. Over this time, Auburn's median age has increased, in line with regional and State trends, and roughly 20% of Auburn's population is over 65 years old. In addition to the increase in older adults, has also seen an increase in its young adult population, including adults 20 to 34 years old. In line with these demographic shifts, household size in Auburn has decreased, meaning fewer people are living in a home. These shifts are also seen throughout the region and State.

Figure 2: Total City Population, 1840 – 2025[3]

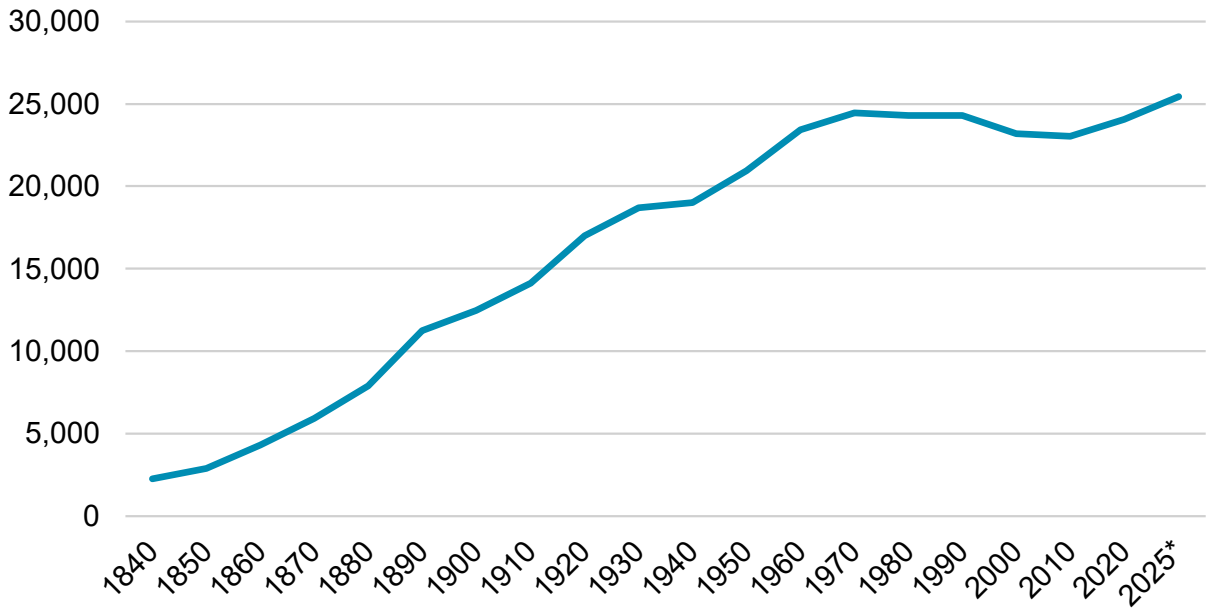


Photo: City of Auburn

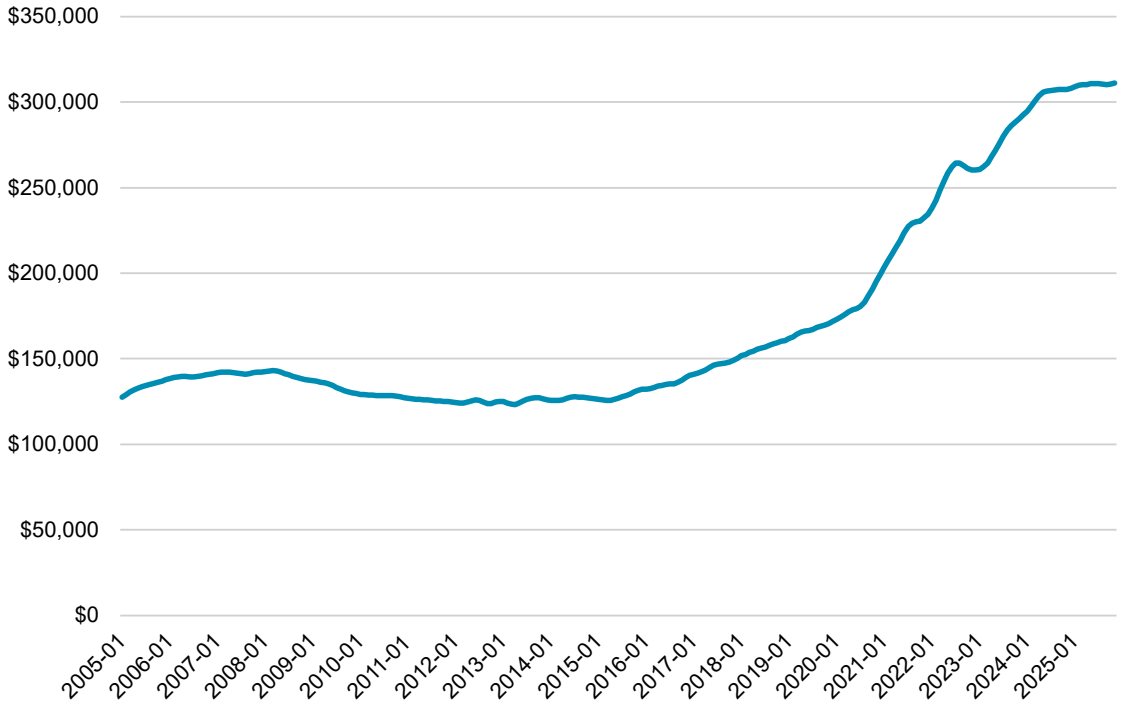


3 Source: Decennial U.S. Census, 1840 – 2020, American Community Survey Population Estimates, 2025*

The local economy remains one of Auburn's greatest strengths. Auburn has a varied economic base that supports jobs and regional investment across a variety of sectors. Strategic transportation assets, industrial parks, commercial districts, and redevelopment opportunities have attracted businesses to Auburn. However, the city has experienced workforce recruitment and retention challenges related to rising housing costs and need for childcare and transportation options to support employees.

Housing demand has increased as Auburn has grown and attracted new residents. The City has committed to supporting 1,300 – 1,400 new housing units by 2030 to accommodate new residents and make up for historic underproduction. New residential projects have been approved in recent years, helping respond to demand, but affordability remains a concern for many residents. Between 2010 and 2020, the median home value in Auburn was relatively table. Since 2020, median home values have increased to over $300,000.

Figure 3: Median Home Value[4]



4 Source: MaineHousing

Auburn's transportation network is a major regional asset. The City's roads, airport, rail infrastructure, transit connections, sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities connect residents to jobs, services, recreation, and surrounding communities. Continued growth will require ongoing attention to traffic management, safety, ease of access, and multimodal options so people can move efficiently throughout the city and region.

The natural environment remains central to Auburn's essence and long-term vitality. Forests, farms, rivers, streams, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and lakes provide environmental, recreational, and economic benefits while shaping the City's form and built environment. Lake Auburn continues to serve as a critical regional drinking water resource, supported by longstanding conservation and watershed protection efforts.

Parks, trails, recreational facilities, and open spaces contribute to residents' health, well-being, and quality of life. Auburn offers a wide range of recreational opportunities and programs for people of all ages, and demand for these amenities continues to grow. These resources support active lifestyles, strengthen community connections, and enhance Auburn's attractiveness as a place to live and work.

Auburn has made investments in infrastructure and municipal services, including public facilities, utilities, transportation systems, emergency services, and long-range capital planning. This includes the construction of the new Edward Little High School and PAL Center buildings. The City's fiscal stability and commitment to strategic investment position it well to accommodate future growth. However, aging infrastructure, rising maintenance costs, changing service demands, and workforce challenges will require continued planning and investment to maintain the level of service residents expect.

These trends create opportunities to strengthen connections among residents and help ensure people of all ages and backgrounds can participate fully in community life.

Underlying these trends is Auburn's longstanding commitment to intentional land use planning. The City has directed growth toward areas served by infrastructure while protecting rural landscapes, agricultural resources, and environmentally sensitive lands. Recent zoning and development initiatives have encouraged redevelopment, housing production, and investment in commercial centers while preserving established neighborhoods.

Auburn Tomorrow

Looking ahead, Auburn will need to continue balancing growth and redevelopment with environmental stewardship, fiscal endurance, and protection of the natural and cultural assets that make the city unique.

The City will respond to local and State trends by taking a more intentional approach to growth and investment.

This Plan directs new housing, jobs, and redevelopment toward areas already served by infrastructure while strengthening downtown, commercial corridors, and employment centers. At the same time, it recognizes that growth and conservation are not competing priorities. Protecting Lake Auburn, farmland, forests, open space, and other natural resources is treated as essential to Auburn's long-term prosperity and identity.

The Plan also addresses changing demographic and economic conditions by expanding housing choices, improving transportation connections, investing in parks and public facilities, supporting workforce development, and coordinating future infrastructure investments. At the same time, population growth, additional housing, increased commercial activity, and expanded public spaces will increase the need for some City services, including 911, Emergency Medical Services, Fire, and Police services. Proactively planning for adequate City services and infrastructure is critical to continue meeting the community's long-term needs.

This planning process creates a framework to guide the City in addressing these challenges and proactively planning for the Auburn of tomorrow.



The Planning Process

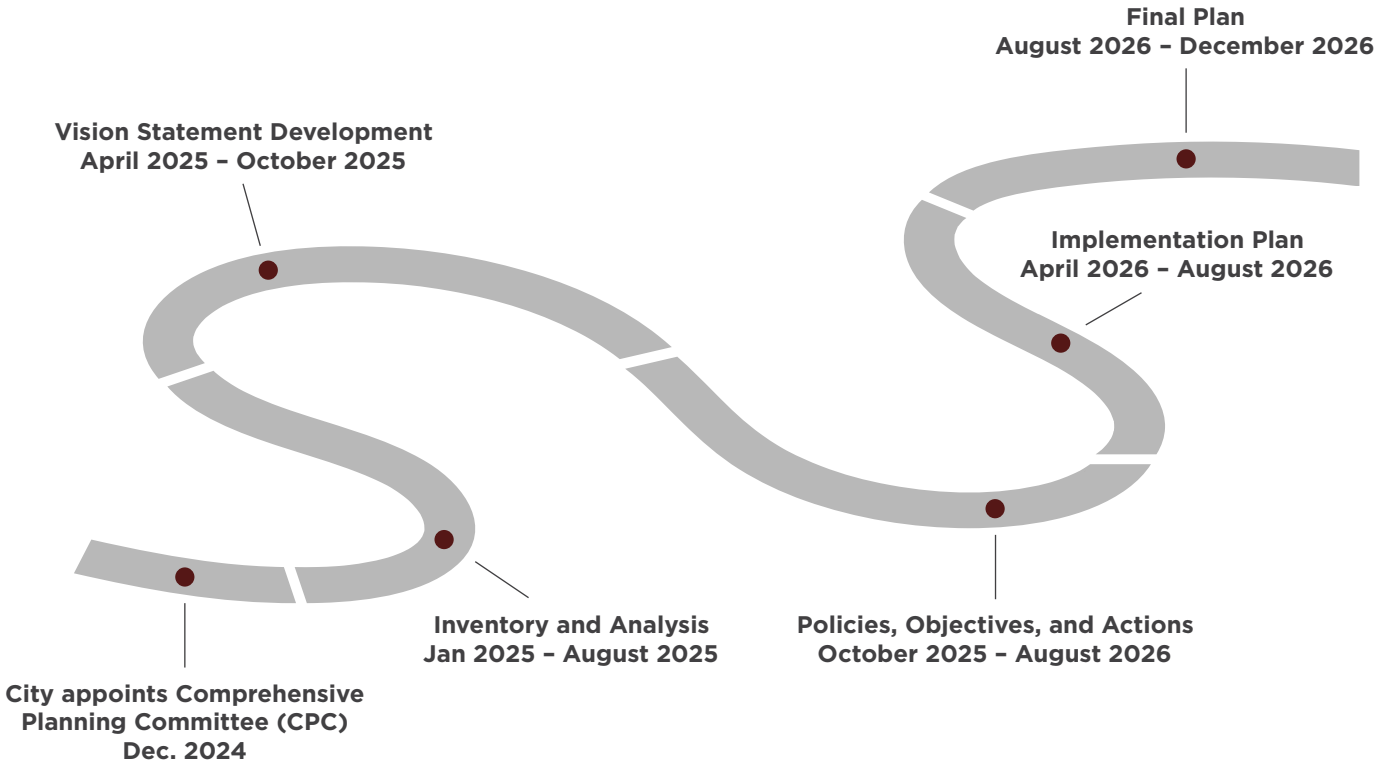


Photo: Carol Lane

The Planning Process

The City began the planning process by appointing the CPC to represent an array of Auburn residents and board and committee members. The CPC, with support from City staff and the consultant team, guided the development of the Plan throughout each phase.

Figure 5: Auburn Timeline



1. Inventory and Analysis

The planning process began with an inventory and analysis of key characteristics and emerging issues across 12 topic areas, including the following:

- Population and Demographics
- Natural and Water Resources
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Land Use
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- Economy
- Housing
- Transportation
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- City Facilities and Public Services
- Climate and Resilience
- Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan

The Inventory and Analysis built upon findings from recent studies, reports, and plans, such as the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Updated Chapters, HR&A Housing Study, ongoing transportation corridor plans, and the 2019 Strategic Plan. This component of the planning process laid the foundation for community engagement and policy, objective, and action development (see Appendix E: Inventory and Analysis for the full report). To review the document, the CPC formed subcommittees and invited subject matter experts from the community to review the document. 6 subcommittee meetings were held.

2. Community Engagement and Visioning

Community engagement and visioning were central to the planning process. The City used multiple engagement methods to hear from residents, students, businesses, service providers, community organizations, and board and committee members. Engagement activities included surveys, focus groups, open houses, pop-up events, listening sessions, online activities, and public comment opportunities. These activities were designed to make participation available, gather input from a range of perspectives, and identify community values, priorities, concerns, and ideas for Auburn's future.

The visioning process translated this input into a shared long-term direction for the City. The CPC reviewed engagement results, existing conditions, prior planning efforts, and emerging trends to develop the vision statement, guiding principles, and goals. The resulting framework reflects both what community members value today and what Auburn will need to address over the next decade, including growth, affordability, transportation, natural resource protection, parks and recreation, public services, and quality of life.

3. Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan was developed to connect Auburn's vision, existing land use patterns, environmental resources, infrastructure capacity, and long-term growth needs. This phase of the process evaluated where future growth could be supported by public water, sewer, transportation access,

public services, and existing development patterns, while also identifying areas where conservation, agriculture, recreation, open space, and drinking water protection should remain the primary priorities.

The resulting framework organizes Auburn into high growth, moderate growth, and low growth areas and defines land use categories that describe the desired form, scale, and general mix of uses in different parts of the City.

4. Policies, Objectives, and Actions

The policies, objectives, and actions were developed to translate Auburn's vision and goals into a practical decision-making and implementation framework. Policies describe the City's preferred direction for public decisions, regulations, investments, partnerships, and programs. Objectives define more specific priorities within each goal area and help organize the work needed to advance the plan. Actions identify concrete steps the City and its partners can take over time to implement the policies and objectives.

This framework was organized around the goals established through the visioning process and refined through community feedback, inventory findings, State requirements, and review by the CPC, City staff, and boards and committees. The CPC provided initial direction for the policies, objectives, and actions during 6 subcommittee meetings. City staff, CPC members, and board and committee members refined the policies, objectives, and actions during focused meetings in February and March 2026.

5. Implementation Plan

The implementation plan identifies how Auburn can move from long-term vision to coordinated action. It organizes Plan recommendations by responsibility, relative timing, and implementation considerations so the City can prioritize work, coordinate across departments and partners, and track progress over time. The implementation plan is intended to support annual budgeting, capital planning, grant applications, ordinance updates, interdepartmental coordination, and future work planning.

Implementation will require ongoing review and adaptation. Some actions may be completed in the near term, while others will depend on future funding, partnerships, staffing capacity, regulatory changes, or additional study. The Plan should be revisited regularly to assess progress, respond to changing conditions, and maintain alignment with community priorities.

6. Final Plan

The final plan brings together the major components of the planning process—the inventory and analysis, community engagement findings, vision statement, future land use framework, policies, objectives, actions, and implementation plan—into one coordinated document. The final plan reflects review and input from the CPC, City staff, community members, and decision-makers.

Community Engagement



Total Engagements



Email Sign Ups
114

Ideas Walls
115

Maps
19

Budgeting Tools
19

Vision Statement Feedback Survey
71

Forms (all other surveys)
22

Future Land Use Open House Events and online responses
541

Community Survey Responses
285

Middle School Survey
143

High School Survey
77

Focus Group
50

Open House Events
36

Photo Contest
11

Drop-In Center Listening Session
22

Farmers Market
114

National Night Out
175

Youth Forum
15

PAL Center Backpack Drive
185

Individuals Providing Public Comment at CPC Meetings
13

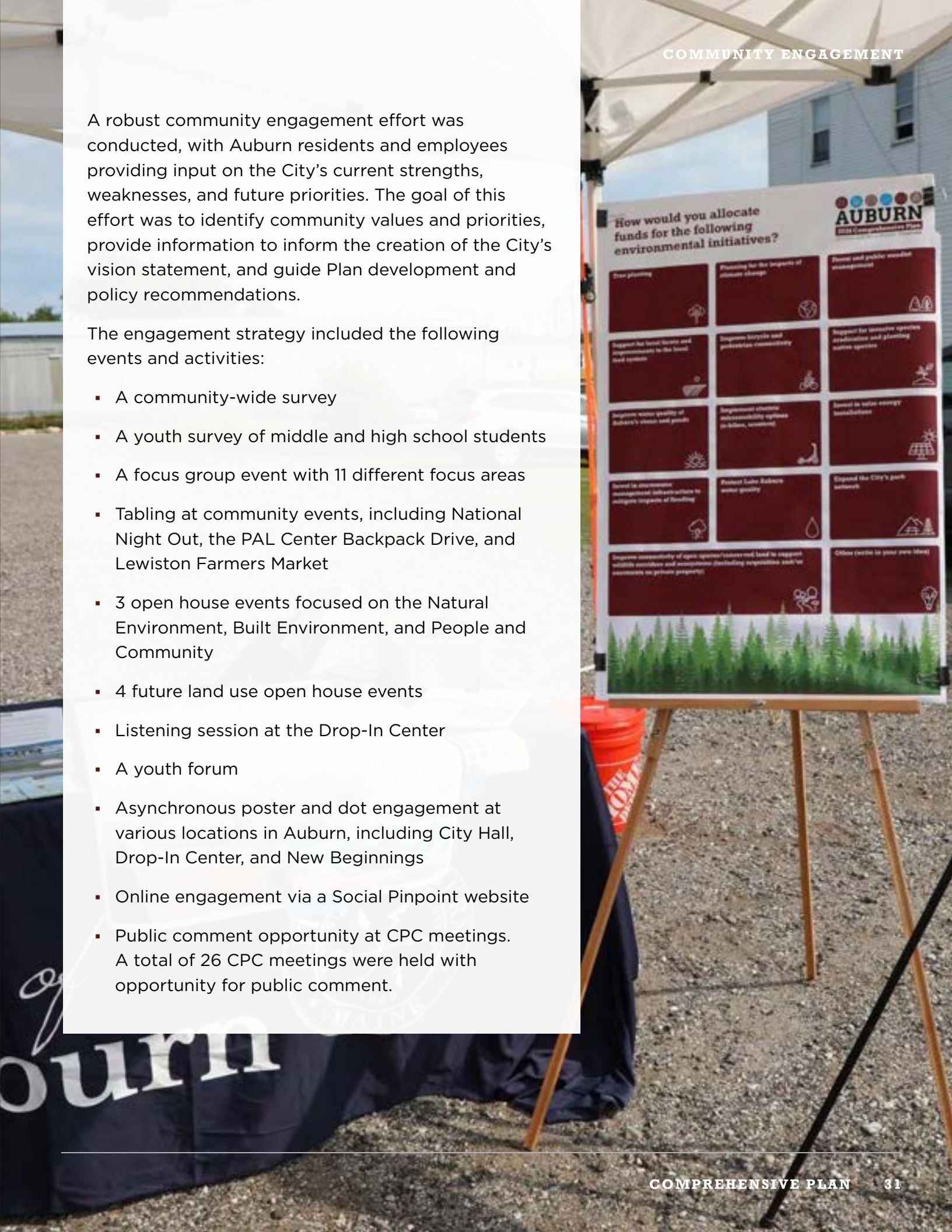


Total Engagements
1,965

A robust community engagement effort was conducted, with Auburn residents and employees providing input on the City's current strengths, weaknesses, and future priorities. The goal of this effort was to identify community values and priorities, provide information to inform the creation of the City's vision statement, and guide Plan development and policy recommendations.

The engagement strategy included the following events and activities:

- A community-wide survey
- A youth survey of middle and high school students
- A focus group event with 11 different focus areas
- Tabling at community events, including National Night Out, the PAL Center Backpack Drive, and Lewiston Farmers Market
- 3 open house events focused on the Natural Environment, Built Environment, and People and Community
- 4 future land use open house events
- Listening session at the Drop-In Center
- A youth forum
- Asynchronous poster and dot engagement at various locations in Auburn, including City Hall, Drop-In Center, and New Beginnings
- Online engagement via a Social Pinpoint website
- Public comment opportunity at CPC meetings. A total of 26 CPC meetings were held with opportunity for public comment.



To help inform the community of the project, there were several methods used to engage participants in the process:

- Mailings were sent to Auburn's roughly **11,000** households to share the community survey.
- Roughly **1,500** organizations, businesses, and individuals were invited to participate in the focus group event and updated throughout the project.
- More than **2,100** individuals visited the project website, which provided additional opportunities for community members to learn about the project and participate in engagement activities online.
- Physical posters or social media posts about the events were shared at City Hall, Senior Community Center, Norway Savings Bank Arena, the Auburn Community Facebook Group, Taylor Pond Association website and Facebook, the Lewiston-Auburn Metro Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, the Auburn Public Library, Edward Little High School, and on City social media accounts.
- City staff tabled local community events, provided engagement activities at local organizations, and held listening sessions. Staff tabled at the Lewiston-Auburn Farmers Market, National Night Out, and PAL Center Backpack Drive. Posters with dots to gauge community preferences were placed at City Hall, Drop-In Center, and New Beginnings. A listening session was conducted at the Drop-In Center.
- 4 Absolutely Auburn podcasts were recorded with City staff and CPC Chair and shared at key points in the project.
- Press releases and stories were published in the Sun Journal.

The full engagement summary is attached as an appendix (see Appendix D). Appendix D details each engagement as well as its results, aimed at summarizing feedback received from community members. Across all engagements, several themes emerged, which can be found below. These themes were used in the development of the City's vision statement.

- **Maintain Affordability and Expand Housing Options:** Across engagement efforts, affordability consistently emerged as a top concern, including the cost of living, housing, and taxes. Participants emphasized the need for a wider range of housing types and price points, as well as strategies to address housing shortages and homelessness.
- **Focus Growth While Protecting Natural Resources:** Residents indicated strong support for directing growth to existing developed areas such as downtown and corridors. At the same time, participants emphasized protecting farmland, forests, and water resources, including Lake Auburn, and avoiding sprawl or uncoordinated development patterns.
- **Improve Transportation, Walkability, and Connectivity:** Participants highlighted the need for better sidewalks, bike infrastructure, and expanded public transit. Participants also highlighted safety concerns and the importance of improving connections within Auburn and to surrounding communities to increase access to jobs, education, and services.



- **Strengthen Downtown and Support Local Businesses:** Feedback across engagement efforts emphasized a desire to transform Auburn into more of a destination rather than a pass-through community. Participants identified revitalizing downtown, increasing restaurant and entertainment options, and supporting small businesses as key strategies to improve economic vitality.
- **Expand parks, recreation, and youth opportunities:** Both youth and adult participants consistently identified parks, trails, and recreational amenities as key assets that should be expanded. Youth-specific feedback highlighted a lack of activities and gathering spaces for teens and young adults, along with a desire for more available and engaging recreational opportunities.
- **Enhance access to services that support a variety of community needs:** Many participants noted unmet needs related to housing, mental health, addiction services, and coordination of social services. Participants emphasized improving access to resources, increasing collaboration among providers, and addressing obstacles faced by unhoused and high-need residents.
- **Preserve community design and form while planning for growth:** Residents expressed strong appreciation for Auburn's sense of community and natural setting. At the same time, there was recognition that growth is needed, with a clear preference for development that aligns with community values, maintains neighborhood fabric, and enhances overall quality of life.

Project participants outlined their vision for Auburn in 10 years and changes they would like to see to get there. A representative sample of unedited responses are presented below.

> In ten years, I would hope the city of Auburn is a more desirable place to live and destination to visit because there is more arts, culture and entertainment. I hope there is a thriving downtown with store fronts and restaurants that are all in walking distance. It doesn't feel like this town has a center, or heart, like a lot of other communities have in downtown areas. It would be nice to have a central place to go for shopping, dining, entertaining, etc. Auburn currently just feels like a town to drive through.

> I think the city should focus on quality of life issues such as protection of and access to the environment, quality educational opportunities, neighborhood communities, youth programs, senior programs, walkability/trails, and affordable housing.

> The city would be inviting for all; potential new residents and existing residences. The city should be a safe environment for all, ownership housing should be more affordable, less crime and homelessness.

> We need to renew the city by offering affordable housing & good schools for young families. We need to create vital neighborhoods with restaurants & shops, playgrounds & parks & things to do.

> I envision a community where young, educated families want to raise their kids. A community that remains safe, provides affordable housing and provides an atmosphere of connectedness. I envision a community that has safe, clean air and water as well as adequate vegetated space for people to recreate. The schools thrive and the aging feel a part of the community. People can live and work and play in our town and succeed financially.

> Converting the industrial downtown to an attractive space for folks to gather, work, and live. I would love to see all the old factories either renovated into offices, shops, housing, or removed to eliminate eyesores. It also be great to have a well maintained and contiguous park on both sides of the river from the falls to the foot bridge. Currently, it feels like a patchwork with several sections being sketchy and not attractive to walk with family or friends.



> My vision is to have a community where the unhoused have a roof over their head, have the ability to hold down a job and contribute to the community. I also want to make sure we protect Lake Auburn and avoid the type of development that endanger Lake Auburn. We must continue to be a welcoming city for Asylum seekers who are looking for a safe place for their families.

> I think the city should focus on quality of life issues such as protection of and access to the environment, quality educational opportunities, neighborhood communities, youth programs, senior programs, walkability/trails, and affordable housing.

> Auburn has so many opportunities to redevelop thoughtfully and I love the direction the city is taking with recent projects!! Improved pedestrian access in New Auburn and new housing along Main Street near downtown are both big wins. There is incredible opportunity in Great Falls plaza and the Auburn Mall to build out denser, mixed-use neighborhoods with affordable housing and green space. Would love to see more opportunities for small businesses to establish a physical presence in more neighborhoods without having to contend with parking minimums that only large chain retailers and big box can afford. Center Street and Minot ave both share similar opportunities for infill. A passenger train connection to Portland and Brunswick would be incredible and could be done with existing track!



> We would like to see more active social scene for young adults, cleaned up public parks that the community can feel safe in, an affordable housing market for young families, more shelters for homeless or unhoused, and expanded transportation options between Portland and Auburn or a connection to the Amtrak Train.

> In 10 years, I would like to be a homeowner in a house that is affordable. I want people to be able to thrive in Auburn and not have to venture elsewhere or out of state to cease great opportunities, and to also be able to have access to both entertainment and community resources/services.

> More affordable housing, lower property taxes, lots of access to nature, including more public access to the Androscoggin River and falls.

Future Land Use Plan





Photo: Richard Plourde

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan translates Auburn's long-term vision into a framework for growth, conservation, infrastructure investment, and policy decisions. It identifies where different types and intensities of development are appropriate and guides zoning updates, capital investments, development review, and infrastructure priorities. Multiple zoning districts may implement one future land use category, with standards tailored to local development patterns, infrastructure capacity, and natural resources.

The Future Land Use Plan aligns with recent development patterns and aims to balance growth with resource protection by directing development to areas with existing or planned infrastructure; supporting downtown, mixed-use centers, corridors, neighborhoods, employment areas, and housing choice; and protecting Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond, working lands, forests, and open space. The City will use the Plan as a guide and update it as growth patterns, infrastructure capacity, housing needs, environmental conditions, and community priorities change.

Recent State Legislation

Recent state housing legislation has increased the importance of proactive planning for housing growth, infrastructure capacity, and land use regulation. During the planning process, the following legislation was passed, which informed CPC discussions when determining growth area boundaries:

- LD 1829: An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract Workers to Maine Businesses by Amending the Laws Governing Housing Density.
- LD 2173: An Act to Update the Laws Regarding Housing Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units.
- LD 997: An Act to Allow Residential Use Development in Commercial Districts.

Many requirements outlined in recent legislation are tied to areas served by public water and sewer, designated growth areas identified through a comprehensive plan, and commercially zoned districts. As a result, comprehensive plans have become an increasingly important tool for guiding where future housing growth should occur and how communities can align local priorities with state housing policy.

Reduced minimum lot sizes and increased density requirements largely apply in designated growth areas and in places served by public water and sewer. The Future Land Use Plan helps Auburn identify where that growth should be encouraged, where infrastructure can support it, and where natural resources, rural areas, agricultural lands, and drinking water resources need stronger protection.

Together, these acts reinforce the need for Auburn to be clear about where growth should occur and what form it should take. The Future Land Use Plan provides that direction by identifying areas that can support housing and mixed-use development, areas where infrastructure investments may be needed, and areas where conservation, agriculture, open space, and water quality should remain the priority.

Growth Areas

Auburn's Future Land Use Plan organizes the City into high growth, moderate growth, and low growth areas. Under the State's Growth Management Act, comprehensive plans are required to designate growth areas and non-growth areas. If appropriate, municipalities can also outline transition areas, which the CPC has chosen to do for Auburn. For this plan, the CPC chose to label growth area categories in the following way:

- Growth areas were labeled as High Growth Areas to highlight that these areas should see the highest amount of growth in Auburn over the next decade.
- Transition areas were labeled as Moderate Growth Areas to highlight that these areas should see less growth than the High Growth Areas but more than the Low Growth Areas.
- Non-Growth Areas were labeled as Low Growth Areas to highlight that these areas should see the lowest amount of growth over the next decade.

A map outlining the City's growth areas with State-required labels can be found in Appendix C.

High Growth Areas

High growth areas are intended to accommodate the greatest amount of development, density, redevelopment, and infrastructure investment and align to the State's definition of a designated growth area. These areas generally include locations served by public water and sewer, areas with significant transportation access, established commercial and mixed-use centers, downtown, industrial areas, and key corridors where compact growth can support housing, jobs, services, and multimodal access.

Principles for High Growth

- Areas served by water and sewer, and areas with planned water and sewer expansion
- Areas near existing rail
- Areas that have a grid of streets or arterial roads to support traffic flow
- Areas with industrial uses

Moderate Growth Areas

Moderate growth areas serve as a transition between Auburn's higher-intensity centers and its lower-growth rural and natural resource areas and align to the State's definition of a transition area. These areas may accommodate some residential and neighborhood-scale development, but at a lower intensity than high growth areas. Moderate growth areas can help provide housing choice while maintaining compatibility with nearby rural, agricultural, or lower-density places.

Principles for Moderate Growth

- Transition between low and high growth areas

Low Growth Areas

Low growth areas are intended to accommodate the least amount of development and infrastructure expansion and align to the State's definition of a rural or non-growth area. These areas include lands where conservation, agriculture, forestry, recreation, open space, drinking water protection, and rural form are the primary priorities. In Auburn, these areas include much of the Agriculture and Resource Protection (AGRP) District and the Lake Auburn Watershed. Development in low growth areas should remain limited, carefully sited, and designed to protect natural resources, water quality, scenic landscapes, working lands, and long-term environmental health.

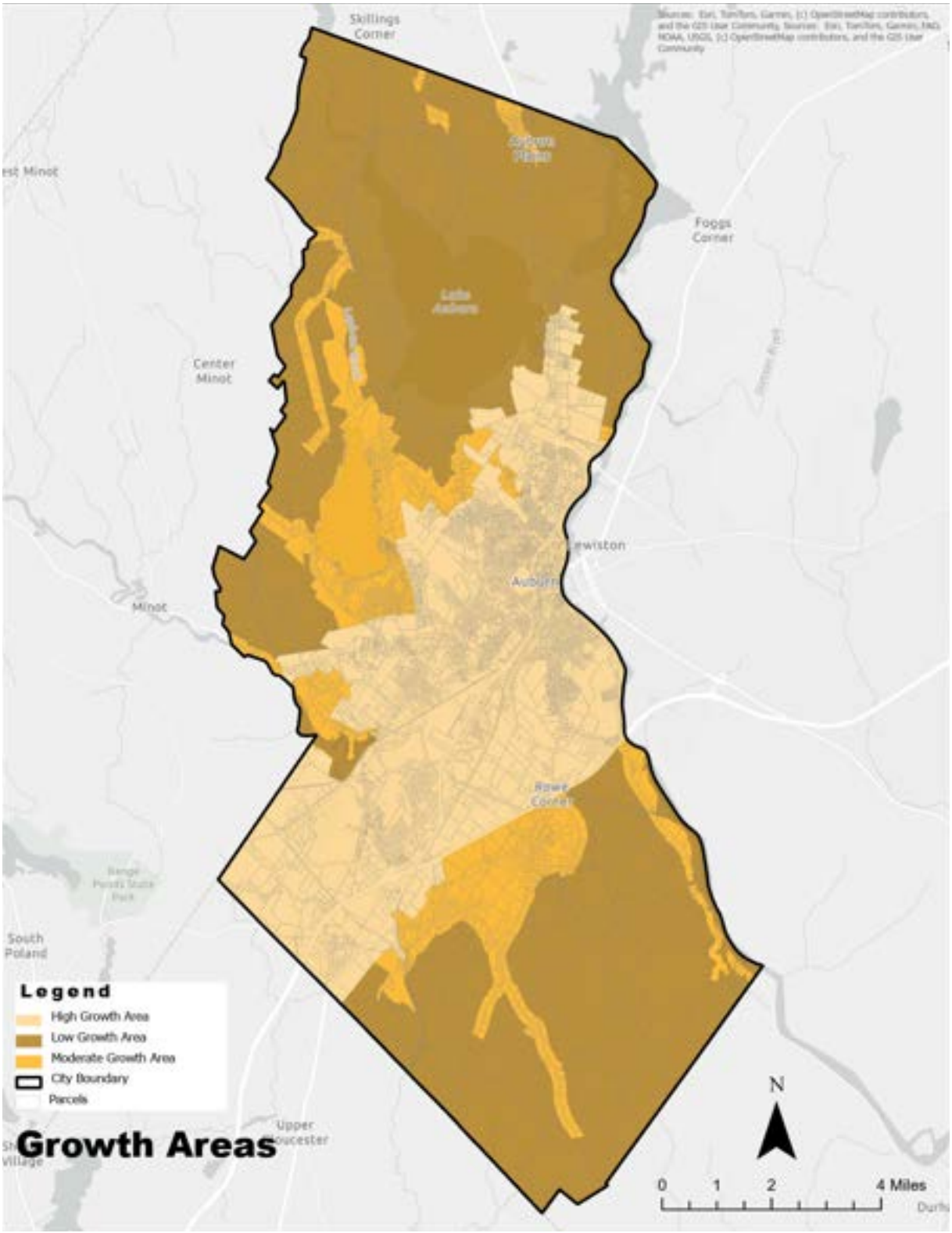
Principles for Low Growth

- AGRP District
- Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Area
- Potential Conflicts Between Principles

The guiding principles for high, moderate, and low growth areas were established by the CPC and were used to evaluate and identify the most appropriate growth area for different parts of Auburn. In some cases, there are conflicts between principles. For example, there are some areas in the AGRP District that have water and sewer or there were areas that are currently in the City's growth area that, based on existing conditions, may be better suited to serve as a transition between the City's high and low density areas. In cases of conflict, the CPC determined a strategy that balanced their guiding principles with current and future land use, environmental concerns, economic growth, and more.



Figure 6: Growth Area Map



Balancing Growth and Development with Natural Resource Protection

Protecting natural resources, agricultural land, and forests are central to Auburn's Future Land Use Plan. The Plan directs housing, jobs, services, and infrastructure to appropriate growth areas while protecting critical natural resources like lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, vernal pools, floodplains, forests, farms, open spaces, and wildlife habitats. These resources support public health and safety, water quality, recreation, and the distinction between developed centers and rural areas.

Growth area designations do not supersede critical natural resource protections. Shoreland zoning, floodplain management standards, wetland and stormwater requirements, Lake Auburn drinking water protections, conservation easements, and other applicable local, State, and federal regulations continue to apply in high, moderate, and low growth areas. The City will also use site design, development review, zoning, conservation tools, infrastructure planning, and resource-based standards to mitigate impacts to these resources.

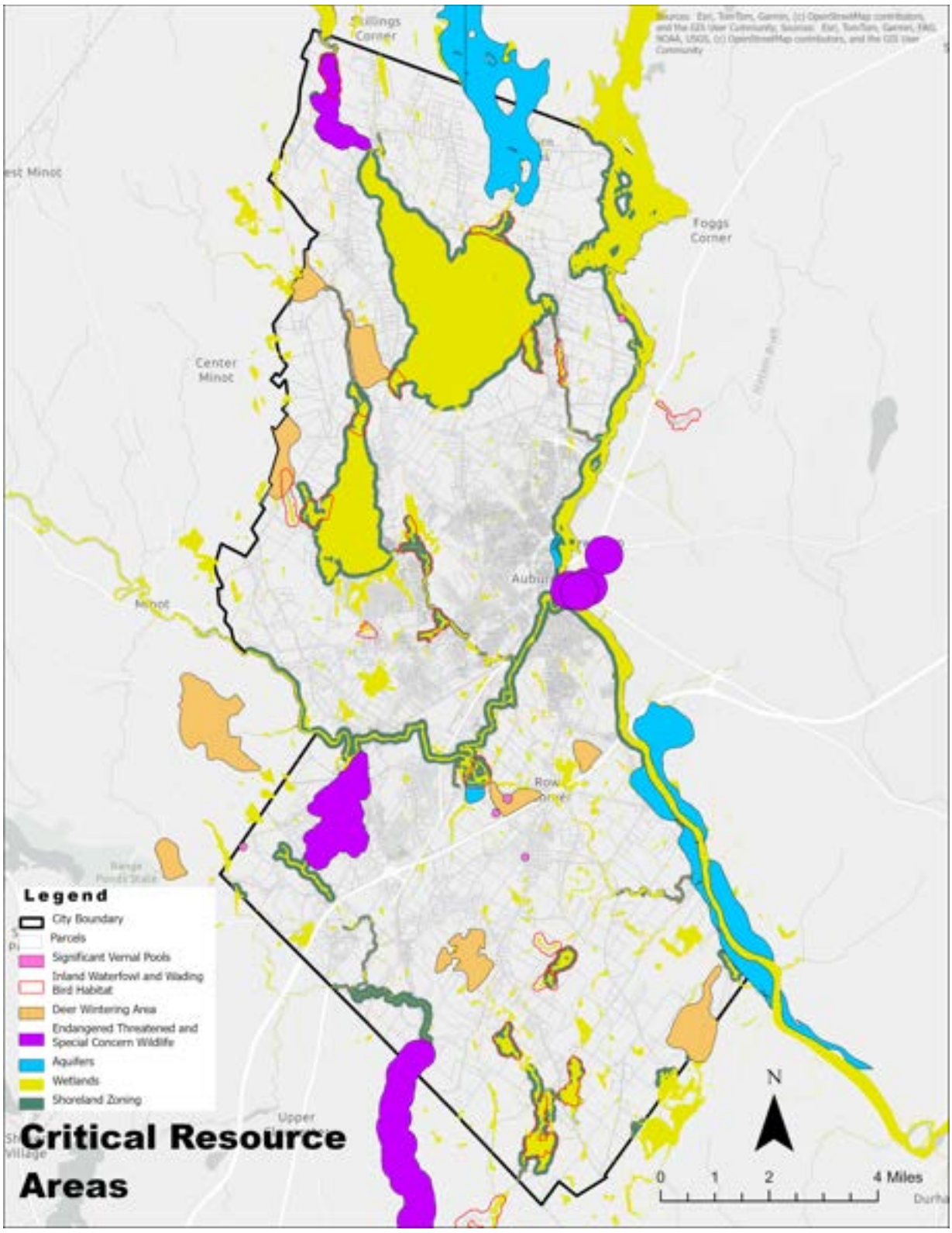
This approach allows Auburn to accommodate needed housing and economic activity while protecting clean water, healthy landscapes, and long-term community resilience. Wetlands, floodplains, farmland, forests, shoreland buffers, and open spaces function as part of the City's infrastructure by absorbing stormwater, reducing runoff and erosion, filtering pollutants, moderating temperatures, supporting wildlife habitat, and reducing risks to homes, businesses, roads, utilities, and public services. Protecting these systems can reduce future costs and improve public health and safety as severe weather, flooding, heat, drought, and other environmental pressures increase.

These areas also provide opportunities for passive and active outdoor recreation. Where appropriate, connections among forests, fields, trails, shorelands, waterways, neighborhoods, schools, downtown, parks, and civic spaces can make access to nature part of daily life for people of all ages and abilities in all areas of Auburn.

Vegetated spaces, including parks, trails, open space, and cemeteries are important amenities that will be considered and planned for in all growth areas. As Auburn grows, the City should continue planning for vegetated spaces as part of the land use framework, not as separate or secondary amenities. This is especially important in areas where new housing, jobs, services, and infrastructure may bring more people into existing neighborhoods, corridors, and mixed-use centers.

In high growth areas, the intent is not to disincentivize vegetated spaces. These amenities can help higher-density areas remain livable, attractive, and connected by providing places to walk, gather, rest, and access nearby natural areas. Parks, trails, open space, and cemeteries will continue to be planned for and incorporated into more dense areas. In moderate and low growth areas, parks, trails, open space, and cemeteries remain important parts of Auburn's broader public space network.

Figure 7: Natural Resources Map



Land Use Categories





Photo: Kathy Mathieu

What Are Land Use Categories?

Land use categories describe the different kinds of places that exist—or could exist—in Auburn based on how land is used, the types of buildings, and how people live, recreate, and get around in different areas. These land use categories align to high, moderate, and low growth areas.

Land use categories include a mix of characteristics like:

- The types of homes in a category (e.g., single-family home, town homes, apartments) and broad scale and spacing
- Whether there are businesses, shops, offices, or industry
- How close together or spread-out buildings are (scale and spacing of buildings)
- What transit options may exist
- 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 comprehensive plan, the City will update the zoning ordinance to establish the regulatory requirements to implement the vision of the future land use map. There might be multiple zoning districts that fit into a land use category, and the conditions and context of a certain area will impact zoning decisions.

High Growth Area Categories

1. High Density Core
2. Downtown
3. Mixed-Use Corridor
4. Mixed-Use Neighborhood
5. Compact Residential
6. Industrial

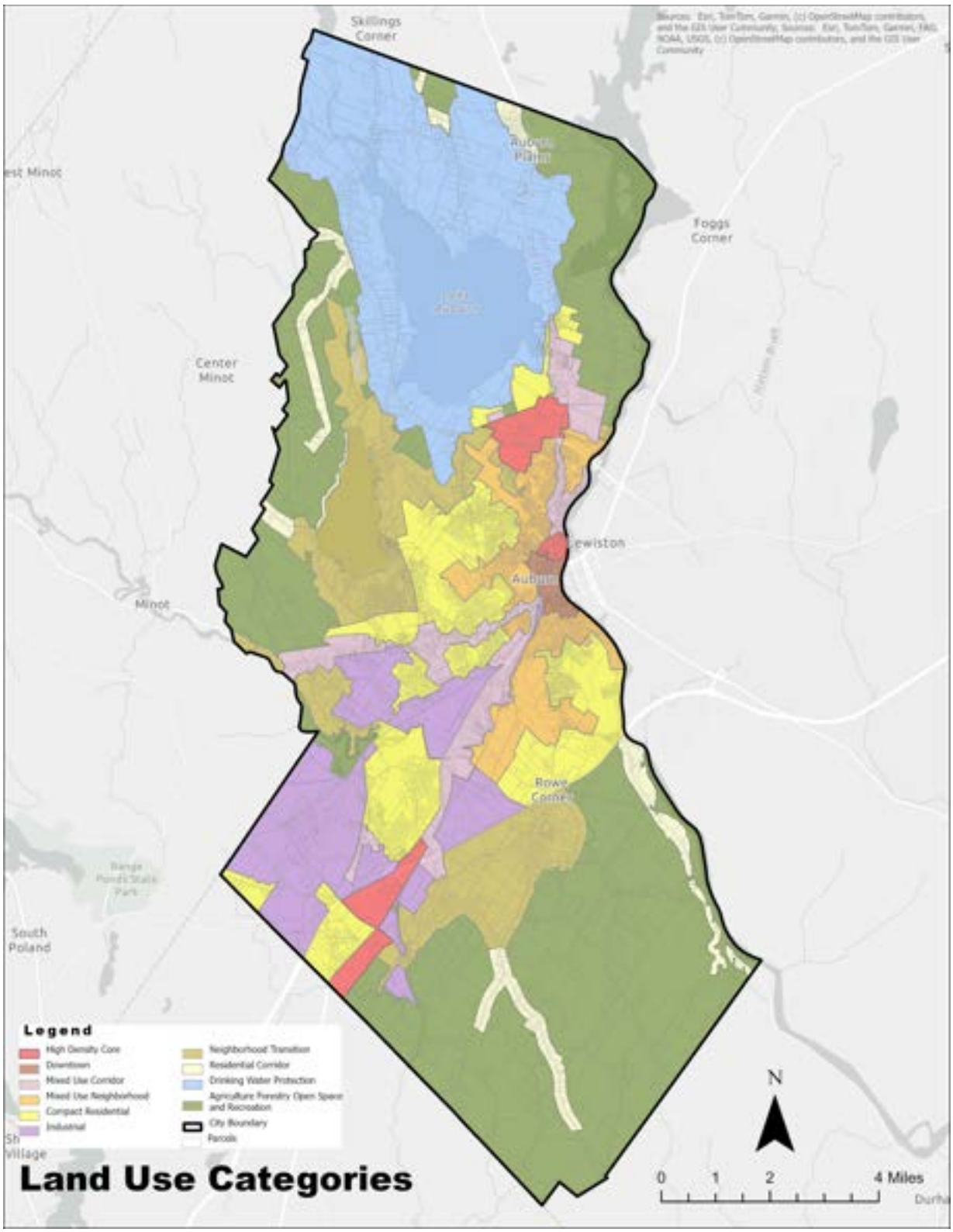
Moderate Growth Area Categories

1. Neighborhood Transition
2. Residential Corridor
3. Industrial Area on Old Danville Road and Morin Brick Road – This area is designated as a moderate growth area. The Industrial land use category description and general guidance apply, but future intensity in this area should be consistent with a moderate growth area.

Low Growth Area Categories

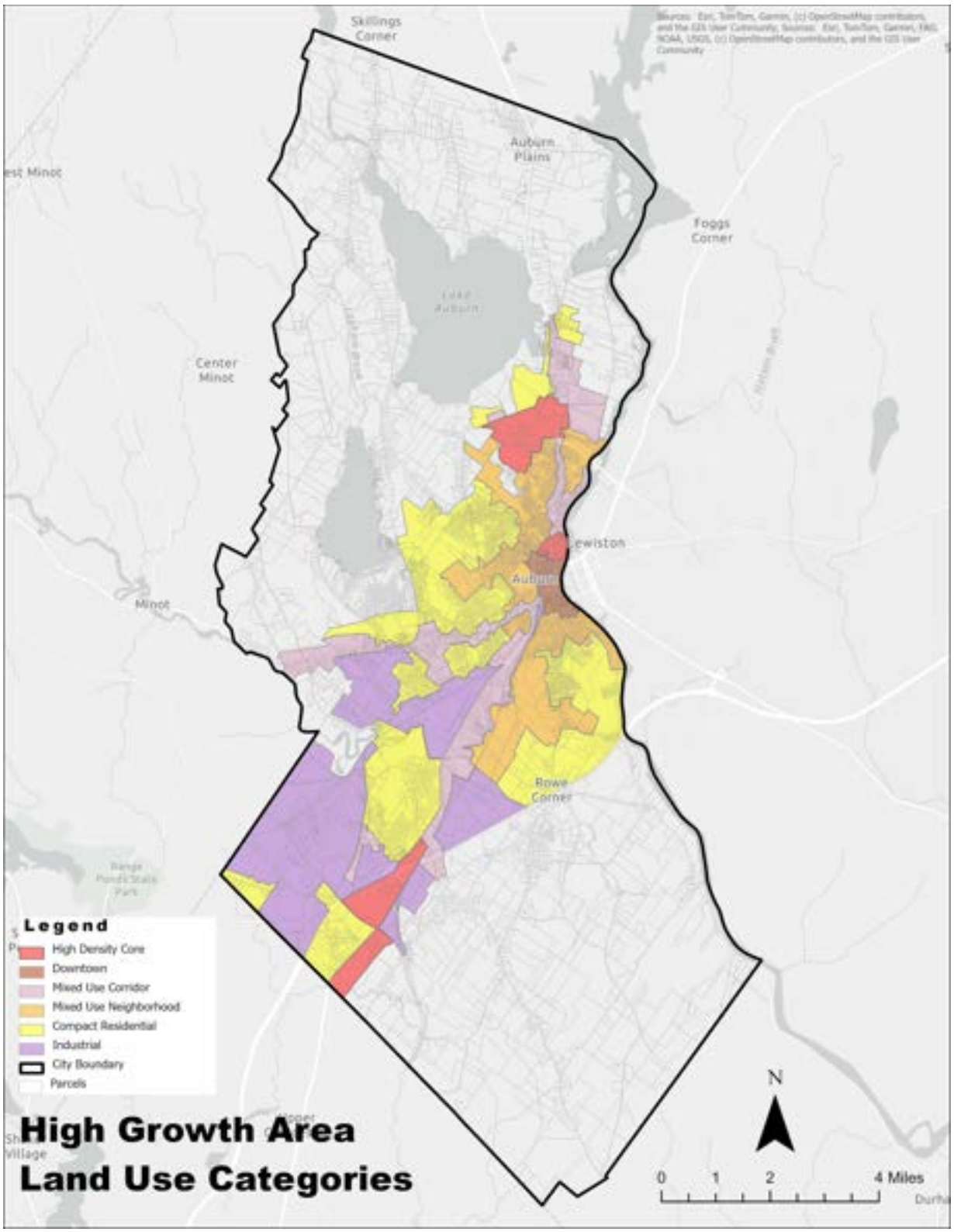
1. Agriculture, Open Space, and Recreation
2. Drinking Water Protection

Figure 8: Land Use Categories



High Growth Area Land Use Categories

Figure 9: High Growth Area Land Use Categories



High Density Core

Description: High Density Core areas 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 organizational 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.

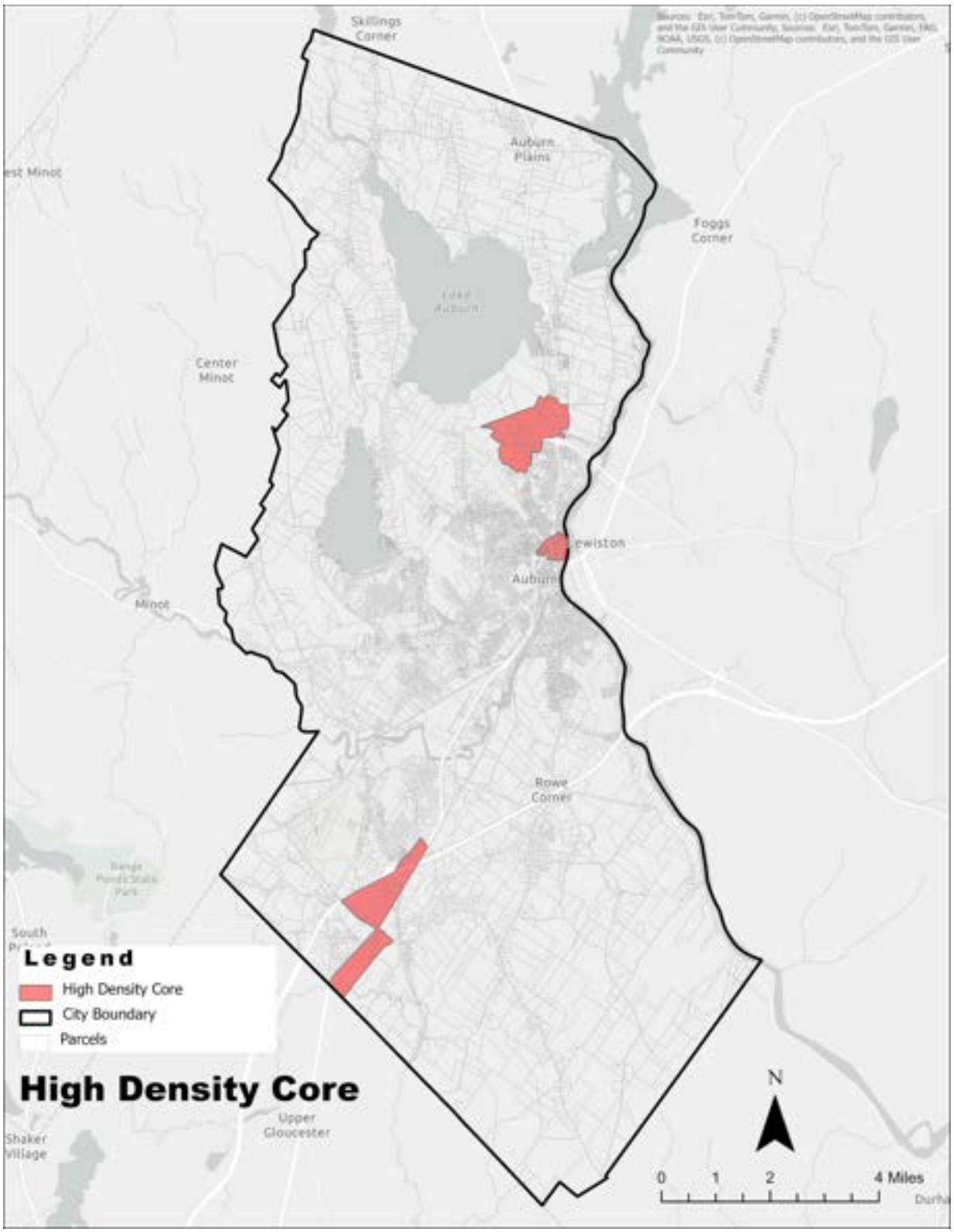
Parking should be shared, structured, or located behind/within buildings where it is feasible to reduce large surface lots and improve the streetscape. Within these cores, streets are designed for safe, convenient walking, bicycling, and transit access, with continuous sidewalks, ADA-compliant crossings, 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.

Figure 10: Design Scenario—High Density Core



This illustration shows a mixed-use building (6 residential floors above 1 retail floor) on a 1-acre lot. This is one possible example for the high density core areas, including ground floor commercial, upper story residential, and buildings sited toward the street front. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 11: High Density Cores



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 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.

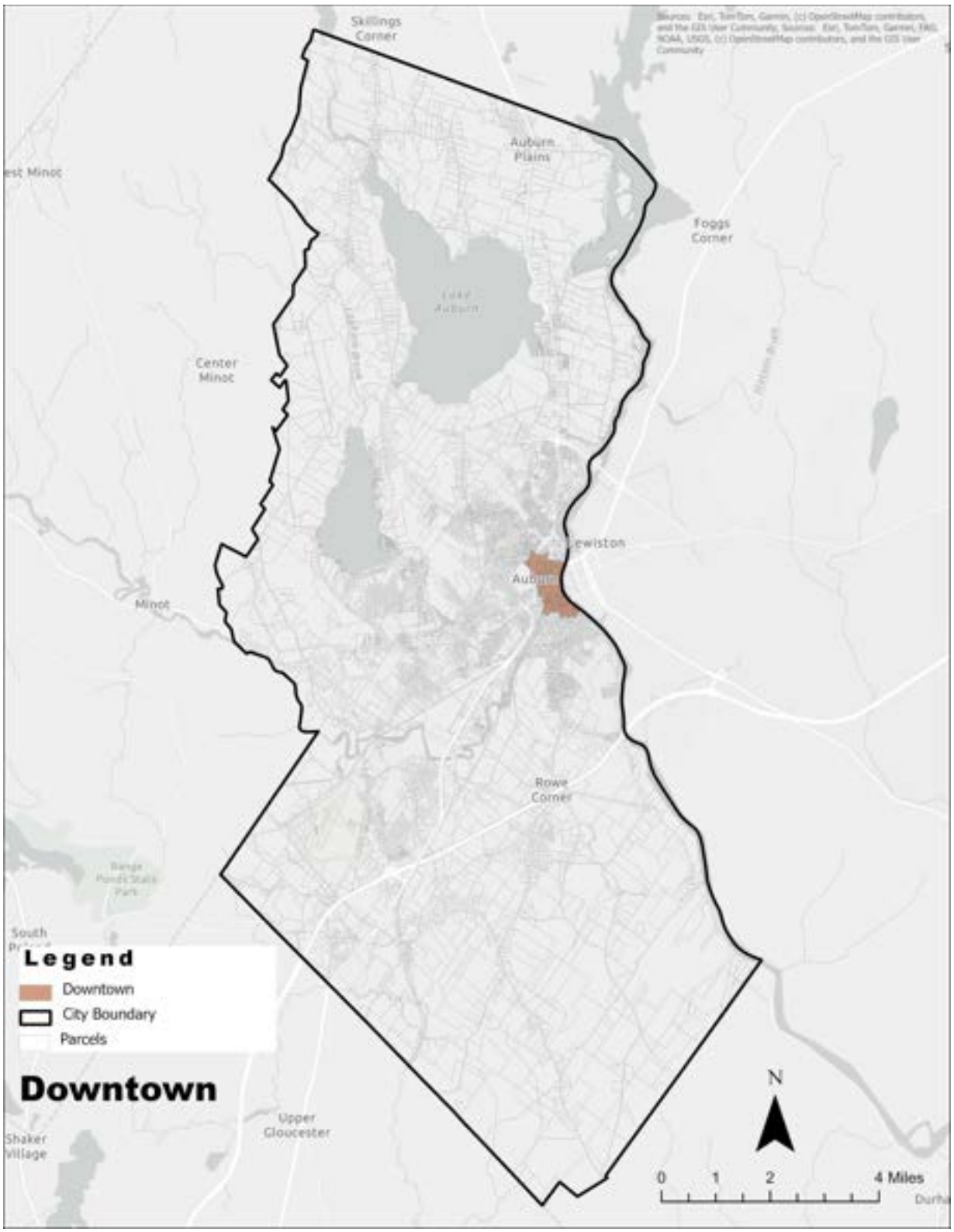
This area is highly walkable and served by public transportation, bike paths, sidewalks, and trail access to support people of all ages and abilities in accessing the area to work, shop, recreate, and live. Streets are designed to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and should reinforce the expectation 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.

Figure 12: Design Scenario—Downtown



This illustration shows a mixed-use building (3 residential floors above 1 retail floor) on a 0.25-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 13: Downtown



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 1-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.

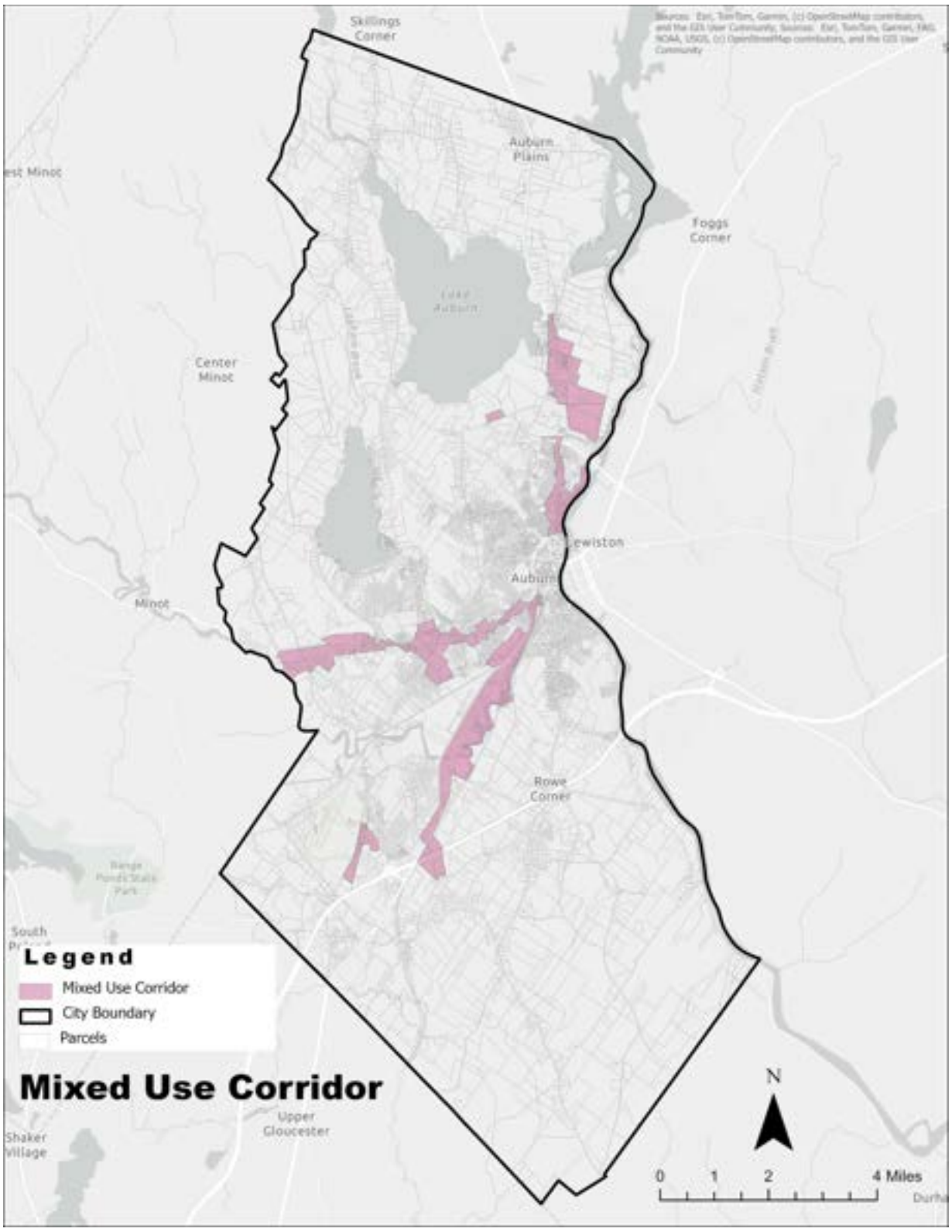
Public transportation and sidewalk and bike networks allow for access to jobs, homes, and recreation amenities. Site design standards, tree-lined streets, buffered sidewalks, and integrated open spaces and parks create an attractive public realm along major corridors.

Figure 14: Design Scenario—Mixed-Use Corridor



This illustration shows a 3-story residential building on a 1-acre lot. This is one possible example of how major corridors could evolve through infill residential development. Commercial uses will remain a prominent feature of major corridors. LD 997 and LD 2173 require municipalities to allow for some residential development in commercial areas. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 15: Mixed-Use Corridor



Mixed-Use Neighborhood

Description: Mixed-Use Neighborhood areas include 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 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.

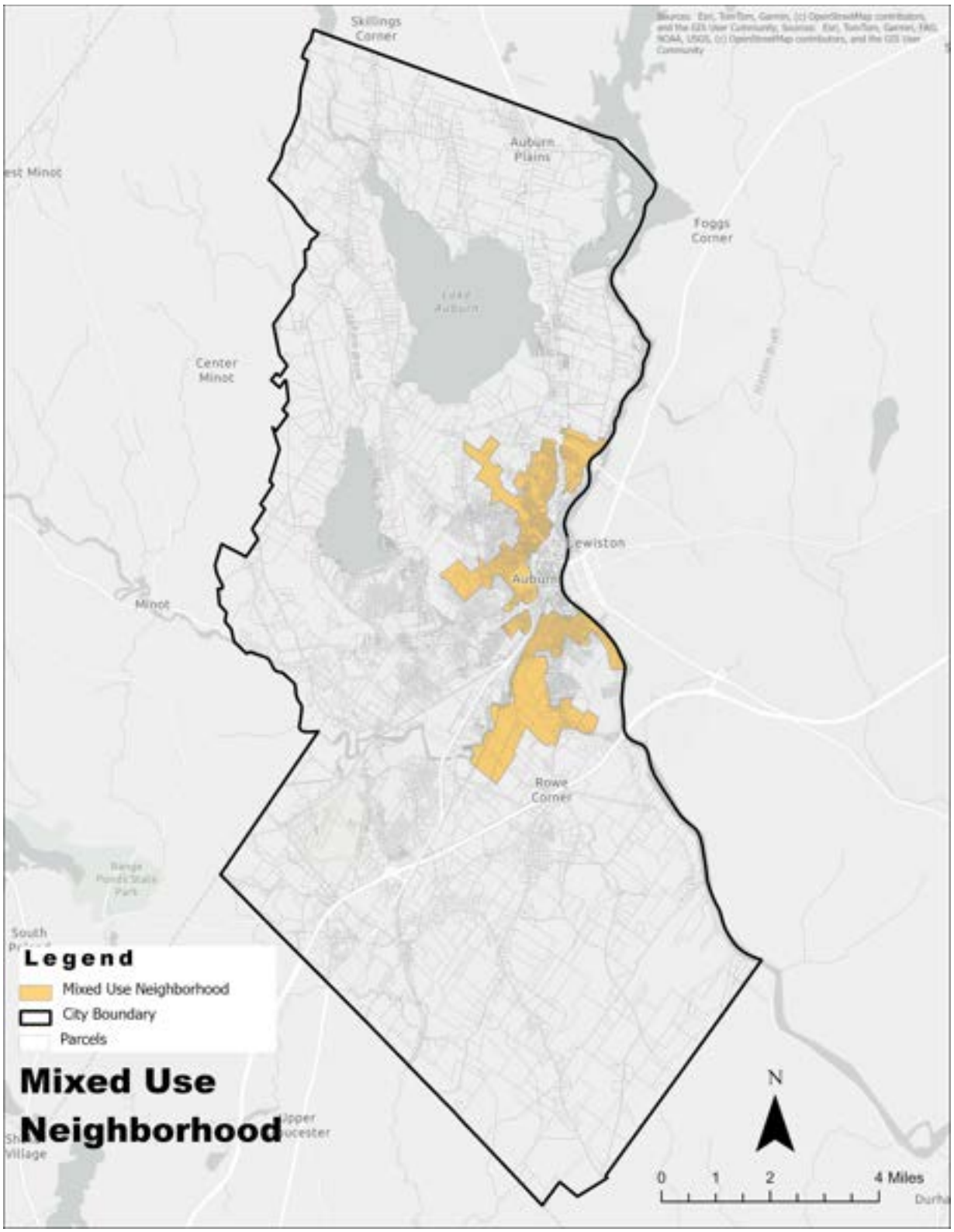
These areas are well integrated into the City's trail, sidewalk, and bike networks, supporting active transportation options. Neighborhood businesses should reflect an appropriate scale, location, and compatibility and may consider providing shared or public parking to avoid overwhelming surrounding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

Figure 16: Design Scenario—Mixed-Use Neighborhood



This illustration shows a 6-unit apartment building on a 0.25-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 17: Mixed-Use Neighborhood



Compact Residential

Description: 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 1-to 4-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.

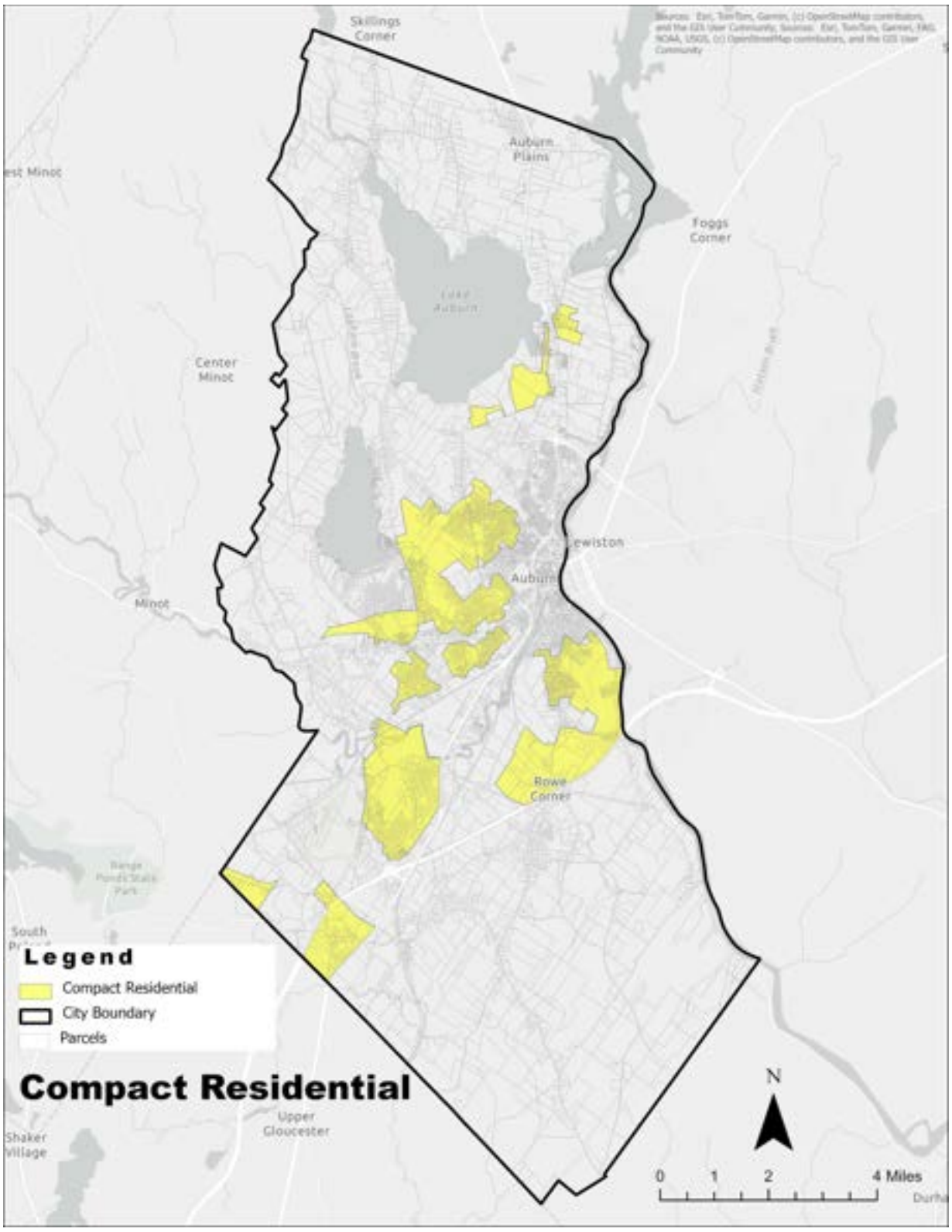
Density and Form: This area is characterized by 1- to 4-family homes on medium to small lot sizes. Homes have moderate setbacks from the street and larger yards than more dense mixed-use neighborhoods. In less developed areas and areas abutting agriculture and resource protection areas, cluster developments are encouraged to allow for housing opportunity while preserving existing open spaces. These areas are well integrated into the City's trail, sidewalk, and bike networks, supporting active transportation options. Open spaces and parks are located throughout neighborhoods.

Figure 18: Design Scenario—Compact Residential



This illustration shows 3 townhomes and 1 ADUs on a 0.25-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 19: Compact Residential



Industrial

Description: 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, agricultural, 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, 3-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, public transit, and trails access, providing residents with convenient access to employment centers.

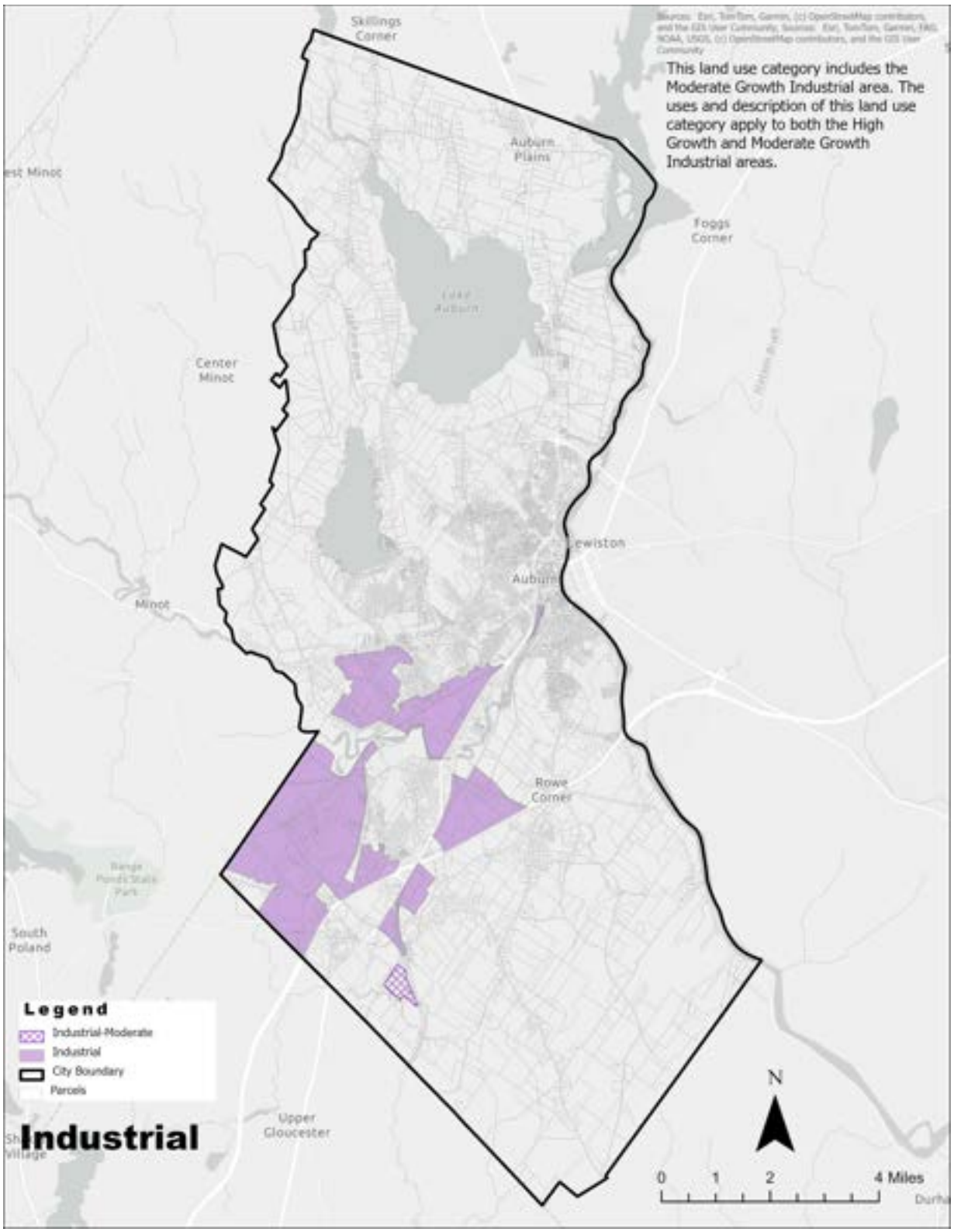
* The Industrial area on Old Danville Road and Morin Brick Road is designated as a moderate growth area. The Industrial land use category description and general guidance apply, the area is shown as an Industrial area in the Industrial Land Use Category Map; however, future intensity in this area should be consistent with a moderate growth area.

Figure 20: Design Scenario—Industrial



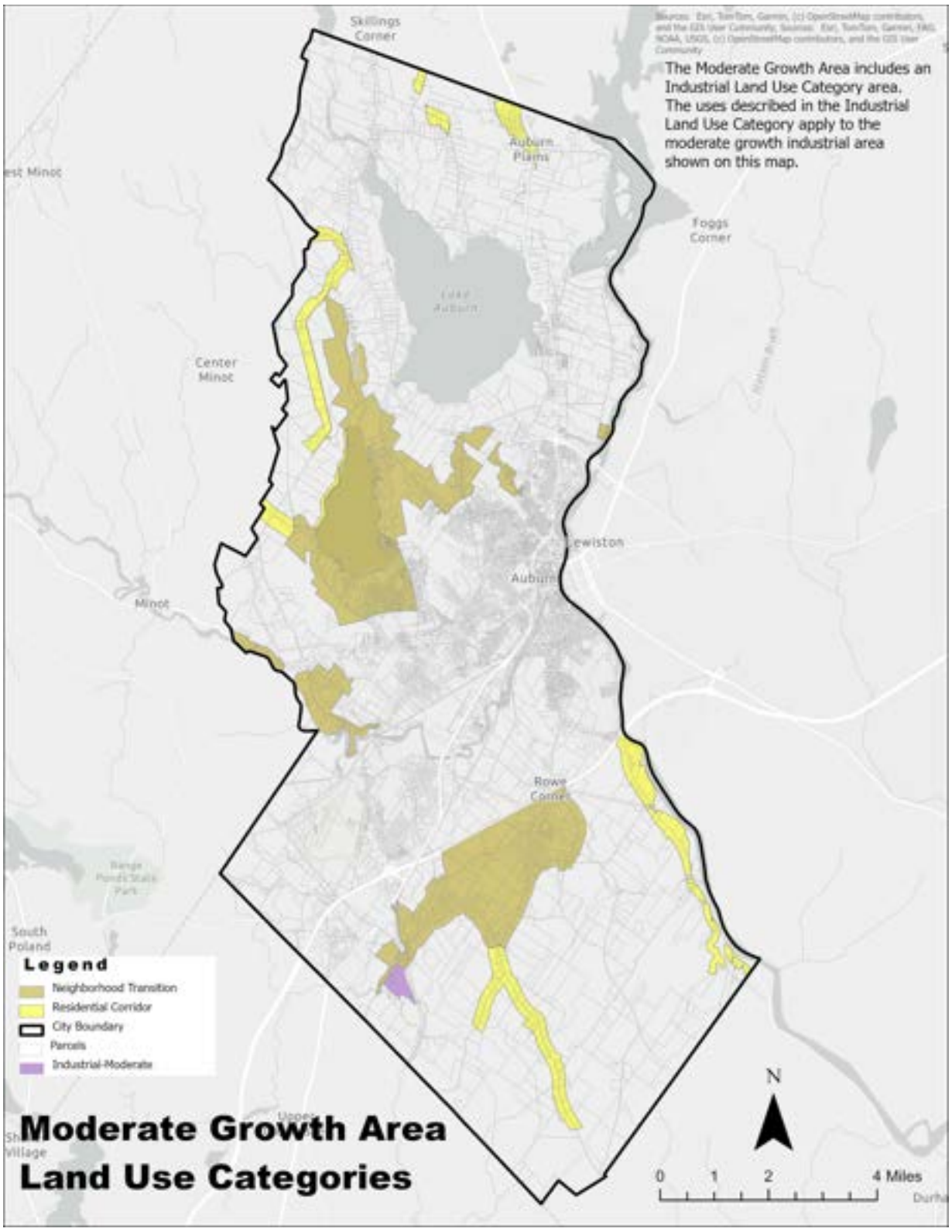
This illustration shows a warehouse building on an 8-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 21: Industrial



Moderate Growth Area Land Use Categories

Figure 22: Moderate Growth Areas



Neighborhood Transition

Description: Neighborhood Transitions 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, 2-family, and 3-family homes. Limited organizational 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 1- to 3-family homes on small to moderate lot sizes. Buildings are typically more setback from the street and each other than in high growth areas. Businesses follow a consistent density and form in surrounding neighborhoods. Areas that border 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.

Figure 23: Design Scenario—Neighborhood Transition—Without Water and Sewer



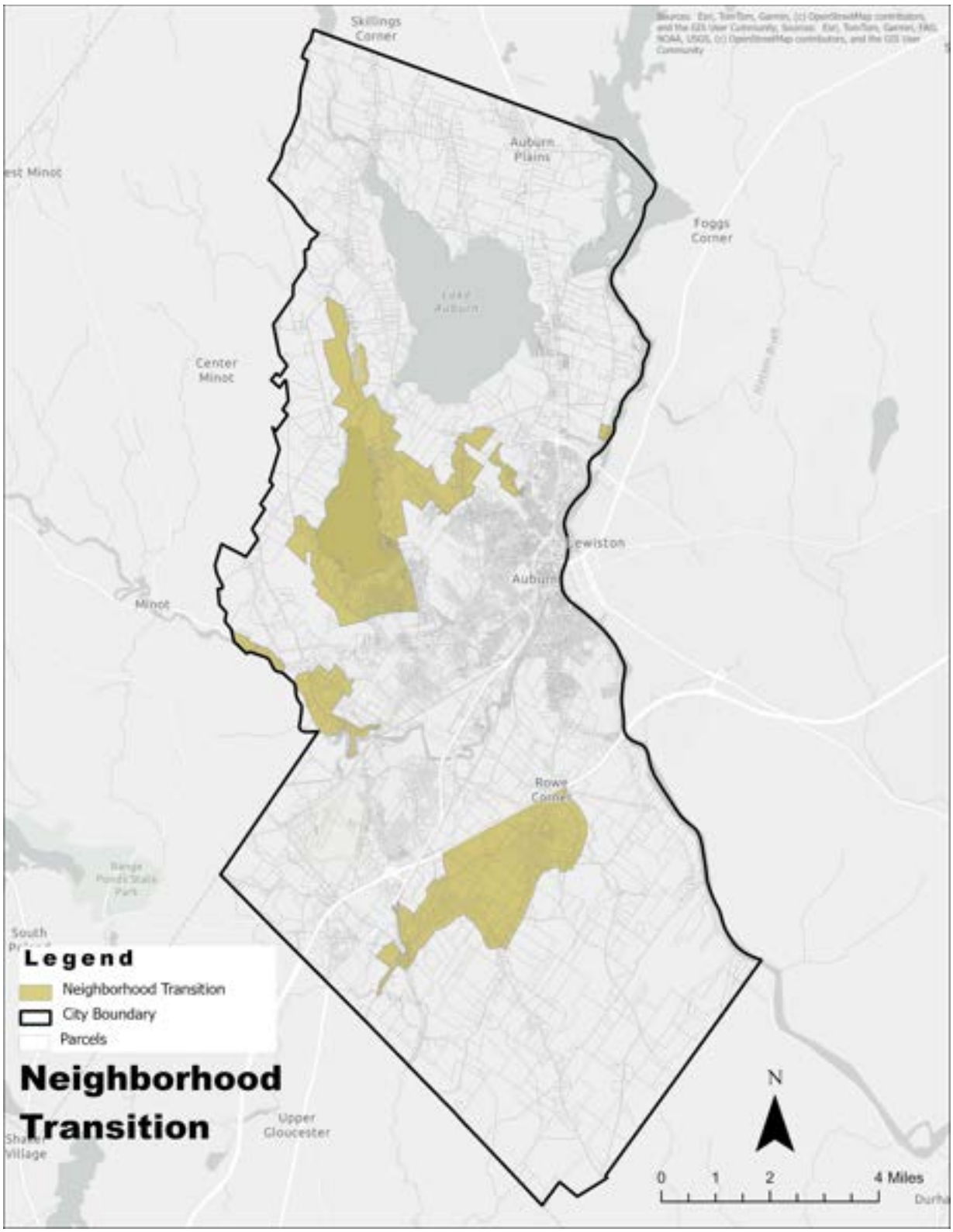
This illustration shows a duplex on a 1-acre lot. This is one possible example for the neighborhood transition areas, including moderate residential development that helps step down from higher-growth areas to rural and lower-density places through smaller-scale buildings and setbacks. Based on LD 2173 and 1829, areas with water and sewer access in the Neighborhood Transition areas can vary in their intensity. The example above does not have water and sewer access. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 24: Design Scenario—Neighborhood Transition—With Water and Sewer



This illustration shows a cluster-style development with 10 homes on a 1-acre lot. This is one possible example for the neighborhood transition areas, including moderate residential development that helps step down from higher-growth areas to rural and lower-density places through smaller-scale buildings and clustered development. Based on LD 2173 and 1829, areas with water and sewer access in the Neighborhood Transition areas can vary in their intensity. The example above has water and sewer access. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 25: Neighborhood Transition



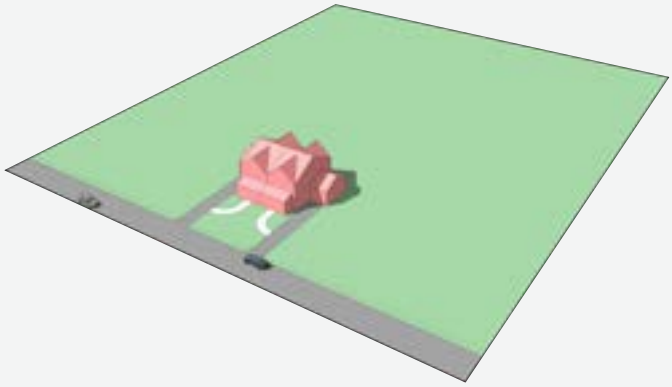
Residential Corridor

Description: 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 form and do not create commercial strip patterns.

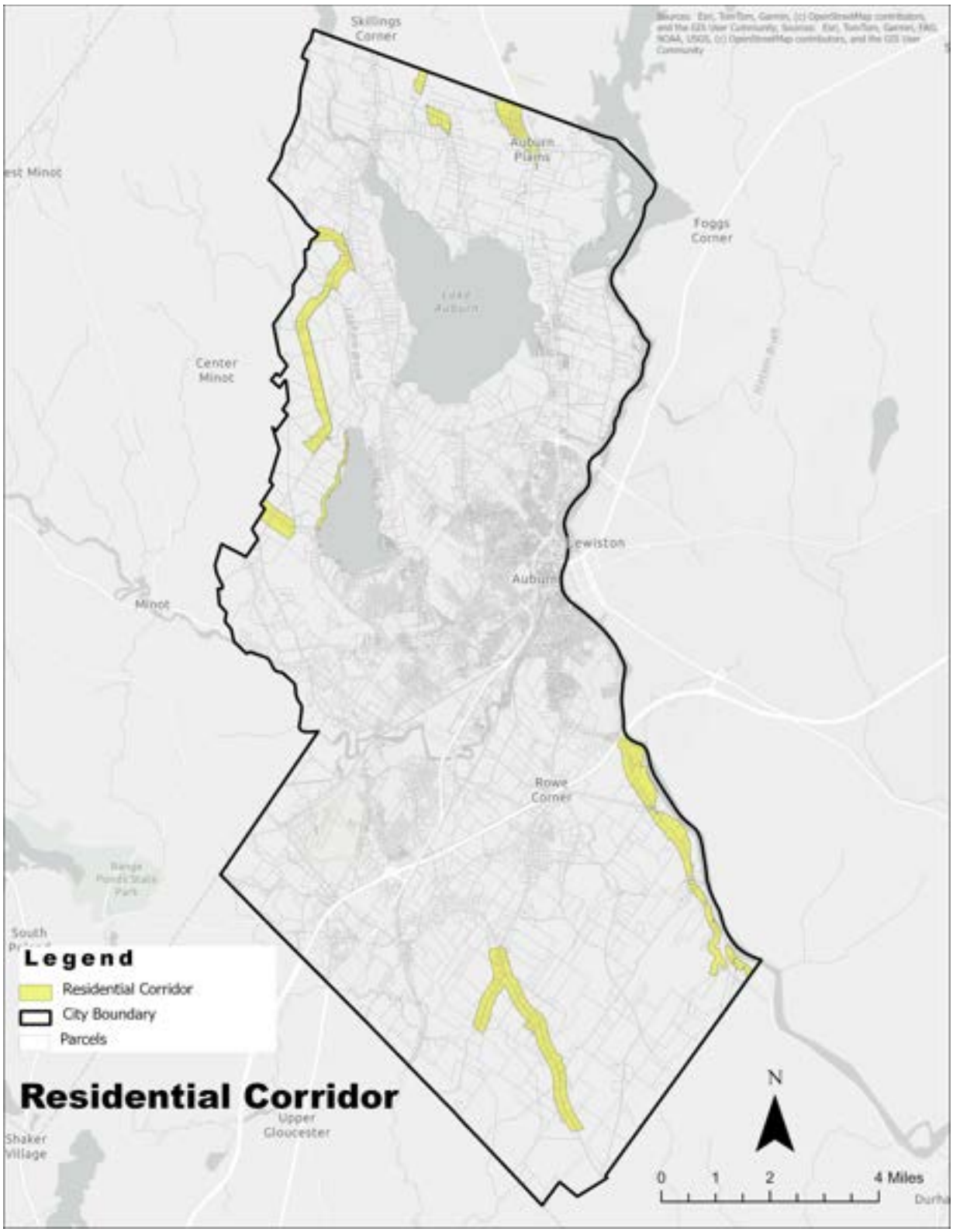
Density and Form: This area is characterized by linear, frontage-oriented development that follows existing public roads, with homes sited to reinforce a rural roadside pattern and protect the open fields and working landscapes behind them. Where feasible, new development should be clustered within the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

Figure 26: Design Scenario—Residential Corridor



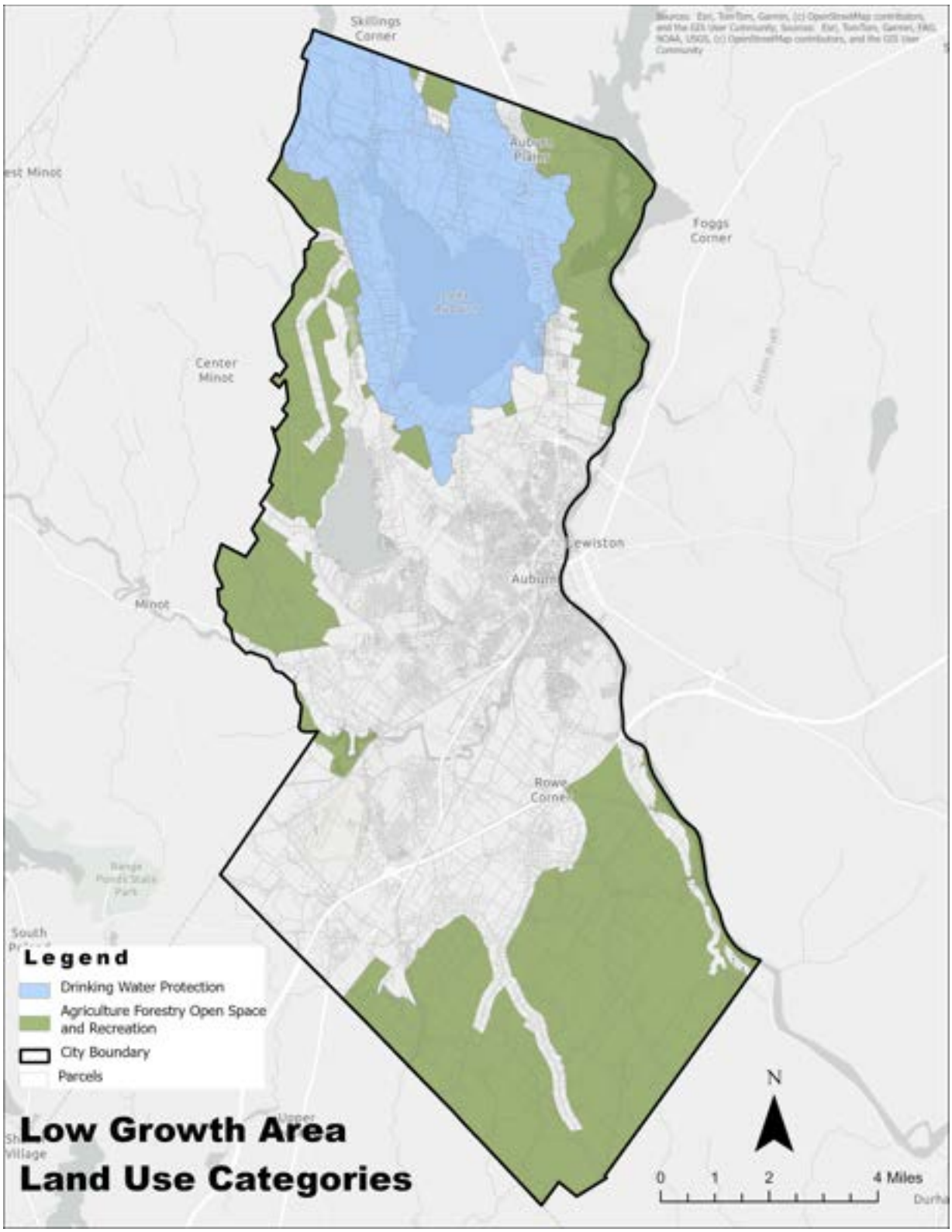
This illustration shows a duplex on a 3-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 27: Residential Corridor



Low Growth Area Land Use Categories

Figure 28: Low Growth Areas



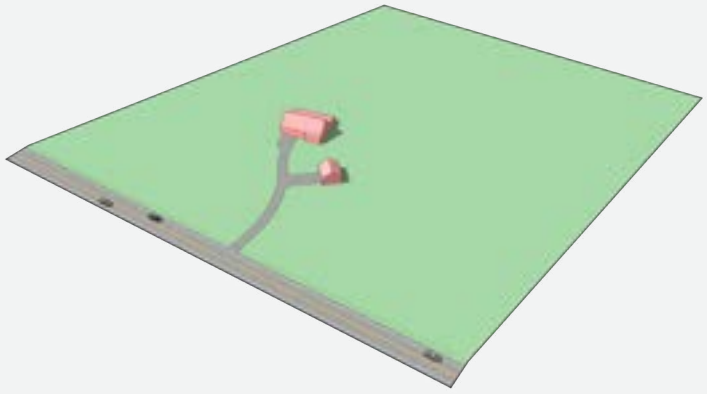
Agriculture, Forestry, Recreation, and Open Space

Description: Agriculture, Forestry, Open Space, and Recreation category encompasses areas intended primarily for agriculture and forestry, and for industrial uses required for the production and / or processing of agricultural, forestry, or other natural resource based products; and for natural resource protection, recreation, and other open space preservation. These areas play a critical role in maintaining the rural character of significant parts of Auburn, supporting agricultural and forest lands, and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

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

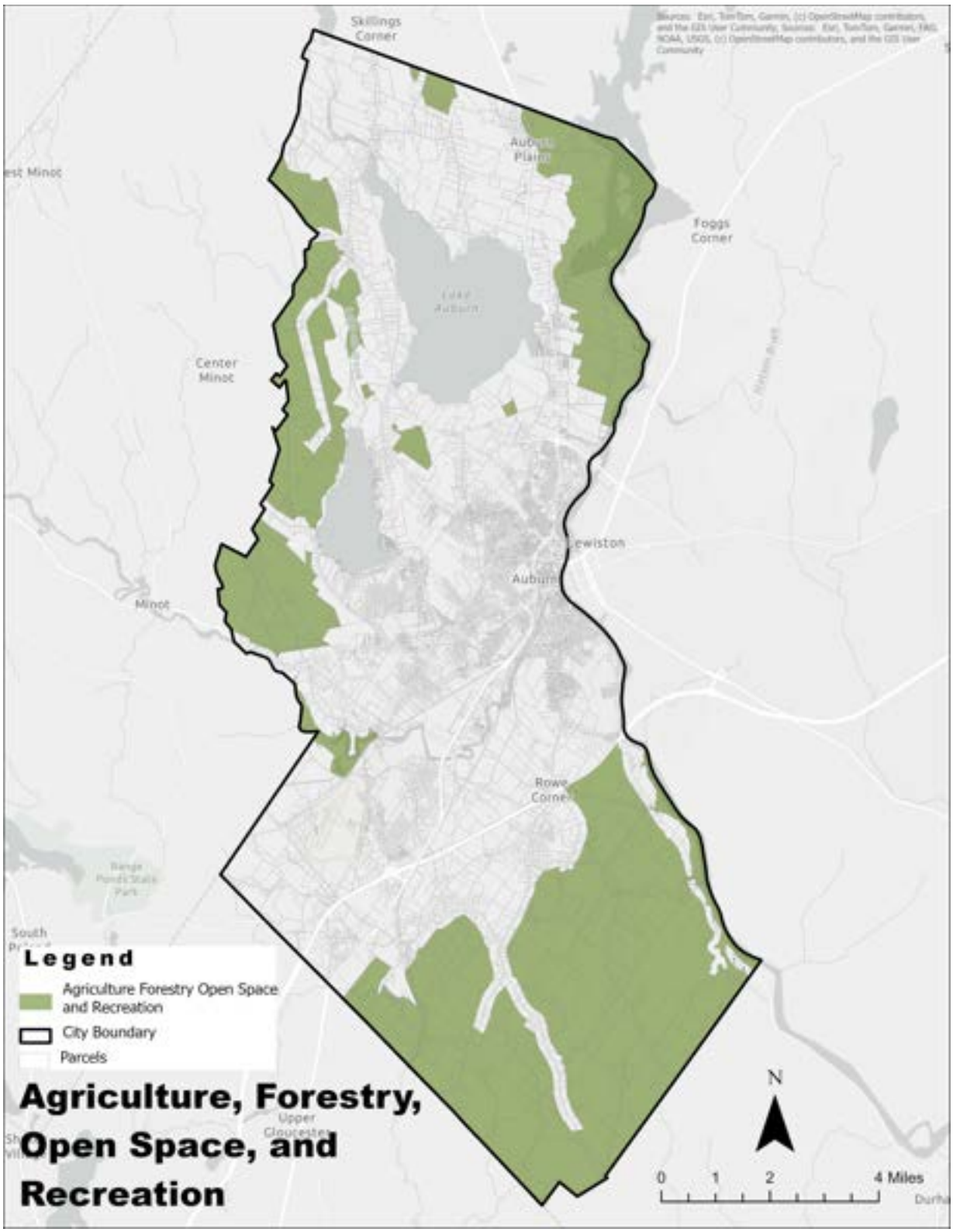
Density and Form: These areas are predominantly open landscapes with farms, fields, forests, and conservation lands, interspersed with agricultural structures and occasional single-family residences associated with agriculture, recreation, or resource-based land uses. These areas are intended to remain 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.

Figure 29: Design Scenario—Agriculture, Forestry, Open Space, and Recreation



This illustration shows a farmhouse and barn on a 10-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 30: Agriculture, Forestry, Open Space, and Recreation



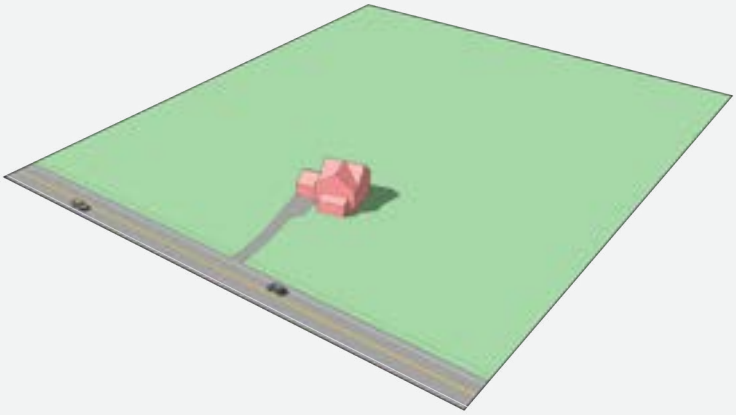
Drinking Water Protection

Description: Drinking Water Protection areas encompass 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.

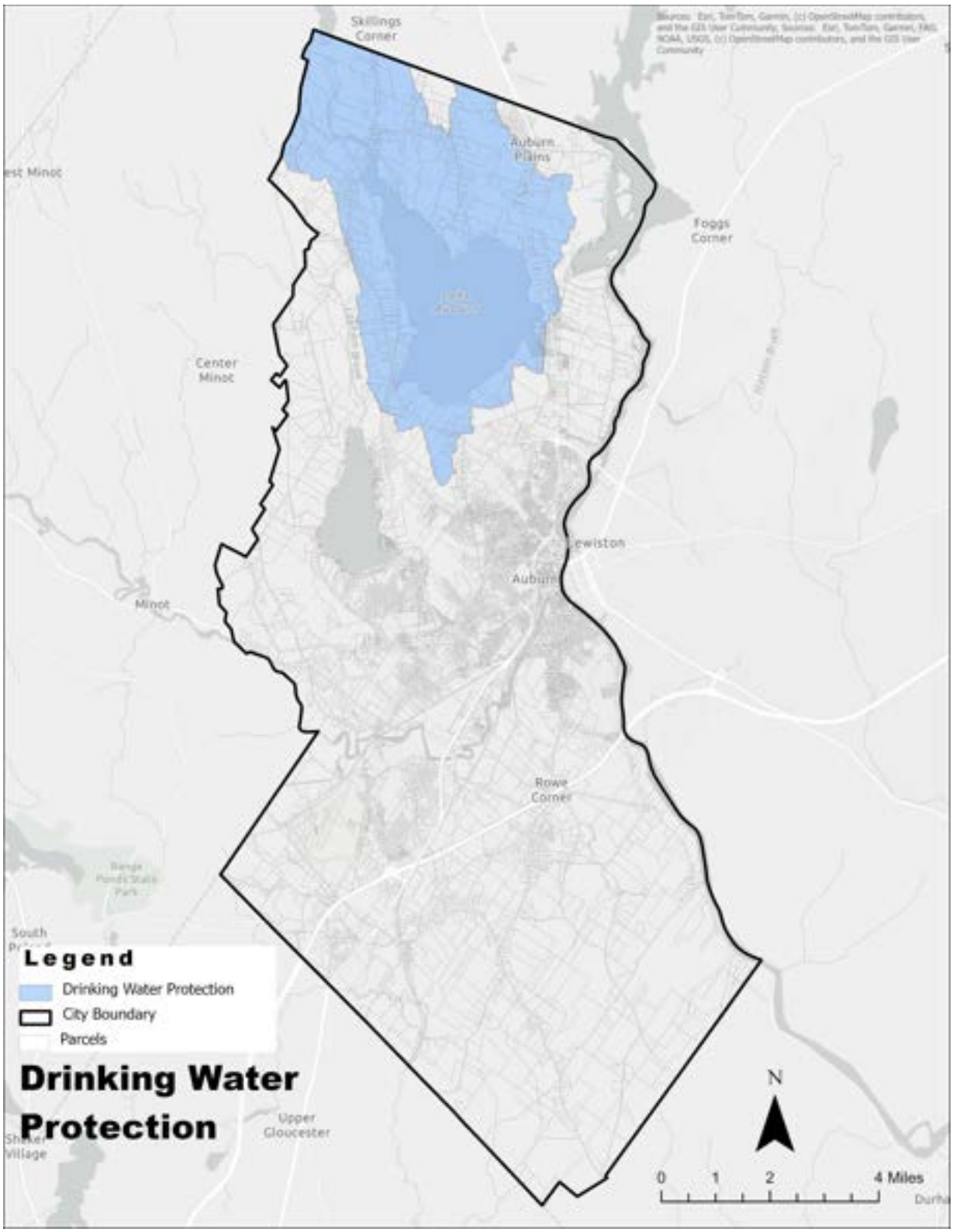
Density and Form: Development levels are tightly regulated, with limits on new dwelling units and restrictions on lot sizes. Density is generally intended to remain at or below existing levels. Open spaces and forests are maintained to protect the City's drinking water source.

Figure 31: Design Scenario—Drinking Water Protection



This illustration shows a single-family home on an 8-acre lot. Actual development may vary based on site conditions, zoning standards, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protections, and design review.

Figure 32: Drinking Water Protection



Land Use Category Illustrations

High Growth Area Visuals

Figure 33: High Density Core



Figure 34: Downtown



Figure 35: Mixed Use Corridor



Figure 36: Mixed Use Neighborhood



Figure 37: Compact Residential



Figure 38: Industrial



Moderate Growth Area Visuals

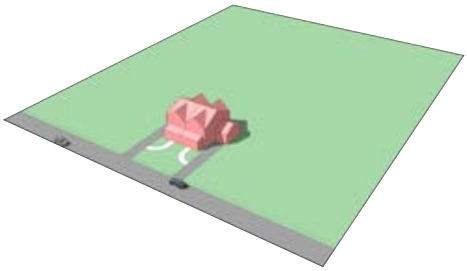
Figure 39: Neighborhood Transition With Water and Sewer



Figure 40: Neighborhood Transition With Water and Sewer



Figure 41: Residential Corridor



Low Growth Area Visuals

Figure 42: Agriculture, Forestry, Recreation, and Open Space

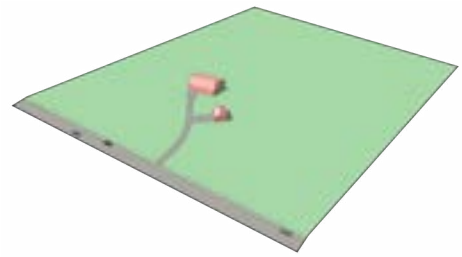
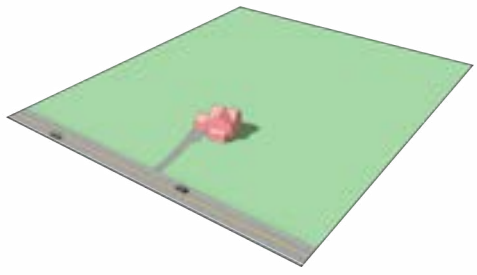


Figure 43: Drinking Water Protection





Goals, Policies, and Objectives



Photo: City of Auburn

Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Framework and Structure

The following sections describe the intent and purpose for each goal with supporting policies and objectives, grounded in community input, existing conditions, and trends as noted in the Inventory and Analysis (see Appendix E).

Although this section is organized by goal area for clarity and ease of use, the Plan is intended to be read as an interconnected system. Decisions about land use affect housing choice, transportation access, infrastructure costs, natural resource protection, economic development, and community health. Similarly, investments in parks, public services, downtown, and neighborhoods can advance multiple goals at once.

This systems-thinking approach helped shape the Plan by recognizing that Auburn's opportunities and challenges do not fit neatly within a single topic area. As a result, policies, objectives, and actions are grouped under the community goal they most directly support, but many are designed to reinforce related goals throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

The framework also reflects the priorities residents, businesses, students, service providers, City officials, board and committee members, and other participants shared throughout the planning process. Community feedback helped identify the issues that matter most to Auburn, including affordability, growth management, natural resource protection, downtown vitality, transportation choices, parks and recreation, access to services, and quality of life. The goals provide the organizing structure for these priorities, while the policies, objectives, and actions provide the path from community vision to implementation.

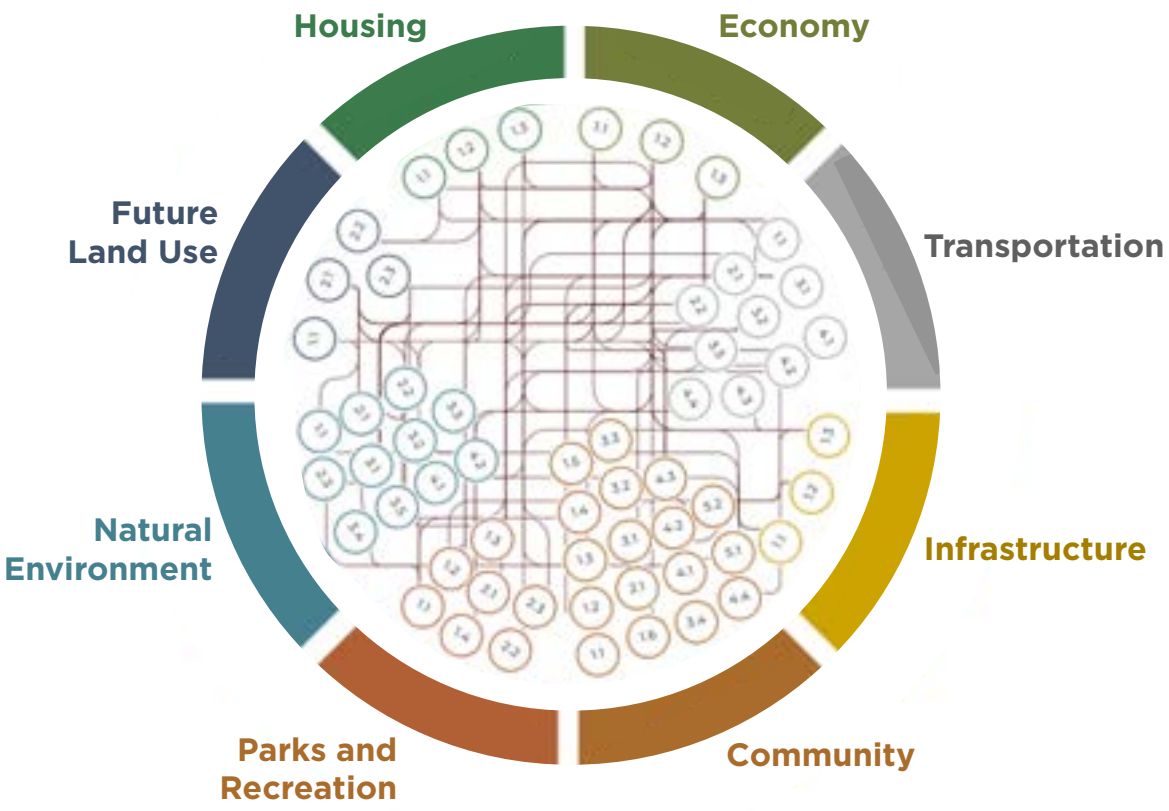
Each of the 8 goals sections outlined in this chapter follow a consistent structure:

1. **Goal statement**
2. **List of policies and objectives for that goal**
3. **How this goal makes Auburn more resilient, connected, welcoming, and intentional**
4. **What we heard from community engagement**
5. **What we learned from existing conditions and trends**
6. **Detailed explanation of each policy and accompanying objectives outlined in bullet point 2**

The goals, policies, objectives, and actions in this Plan translate Auburn's vision, guiding principles, community feedback, and existing conditions into a coordinated framework for decision-making and implementation. The goals identify the broad outcomes Auburn is working toward, based on the community's shared vision for a resilient, connected, welcoming, and intentional city. Policies describe the City's preferred direction for public decisions, regulations, investments, partnerships, and programs. Objectives define

specific priorities to organize the work needed to achieve each goal, based on community priorities and municipal capacity. Actions can be found in the Implementation Plan section of this document and provide specific tasks for the City or other responsible entities to undertake to achieve the stated objectives in this section.

Figure 44: Interrelated Policies and Objectives



This figure lists all objectives under their primary goal area and uses lines to show where related objectives connect across the Comprehensive Plan. The lines are not intended to clearly show every exact relationship or sequence of implementation. Instead, they illustrate that Auburn's plan areas are interconnected and that progress in one area often supports, depends on, or reinforces progress in another. Additional information on related objectives can be found in the Implementation Plan.



Future Land Use

Goal: Promote thoughtful land use planning that balances fiscally prudent and ecologically conscious growth with support for Auburn's existing commercial centers, neighborhoods, and rural areas.

Policy 1

Direct growth to the high-growth area to encourage compact, efficient, and fiscally responsible development.

Objective 1	Ensure land use decisions are coordinated, predictable, and supported by efficient permitting and administration.

Policy 2

Update local ordinances to align with the goals and intent of the Future Land Use Plan, including clearly defining desired scale, intensity, and location of future development, and clearly defining protective measures for natural resources, rural areas, and waterfront areas.*

Objective 1	Promote dense, mixed-use development that strengthens Auburn's economic core and creates a vibrant, walkable environment with a variety of commercial and residential uses in the High Density, High Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.
Objective 2	Support moderate growth that provides a smooth transition from urban neighborhoods to rural landscapes in the Moderate Density, Moderate Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.
Objective 3	Objective 3: Preserve Auburn's low-density places by protecting agricultural and natural resources and limiting development to maintain rural landscapes and environmental health in the Low Density, Low Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

**Indicates a State Requirement*

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by directing growth to areas that can adapt to changing housing, infrastructure, economic, and environmental needs while protecting the natural resources, rural lands, and public systems that help the City endure and evolve over time.

Connected by strengthening the physical relationships among neighborhoods, downtown, commercial centers, employment areas, parks, trails, and transportation networks so residents can more easily move between the places where they live, work, learn, shop, and gather.

Welcoming by supporting a wider range of housing, services, businesses, public spaces, and neighborhood types that can meet the needs of residents of all different backgrounds, ages, incomes, and life stages.

Intentional by giving the City a clear framework for where growth should occur, where resources should be protected, and how zoning, infrastructure, and investment decisions should align with the Comprehensive Plan.

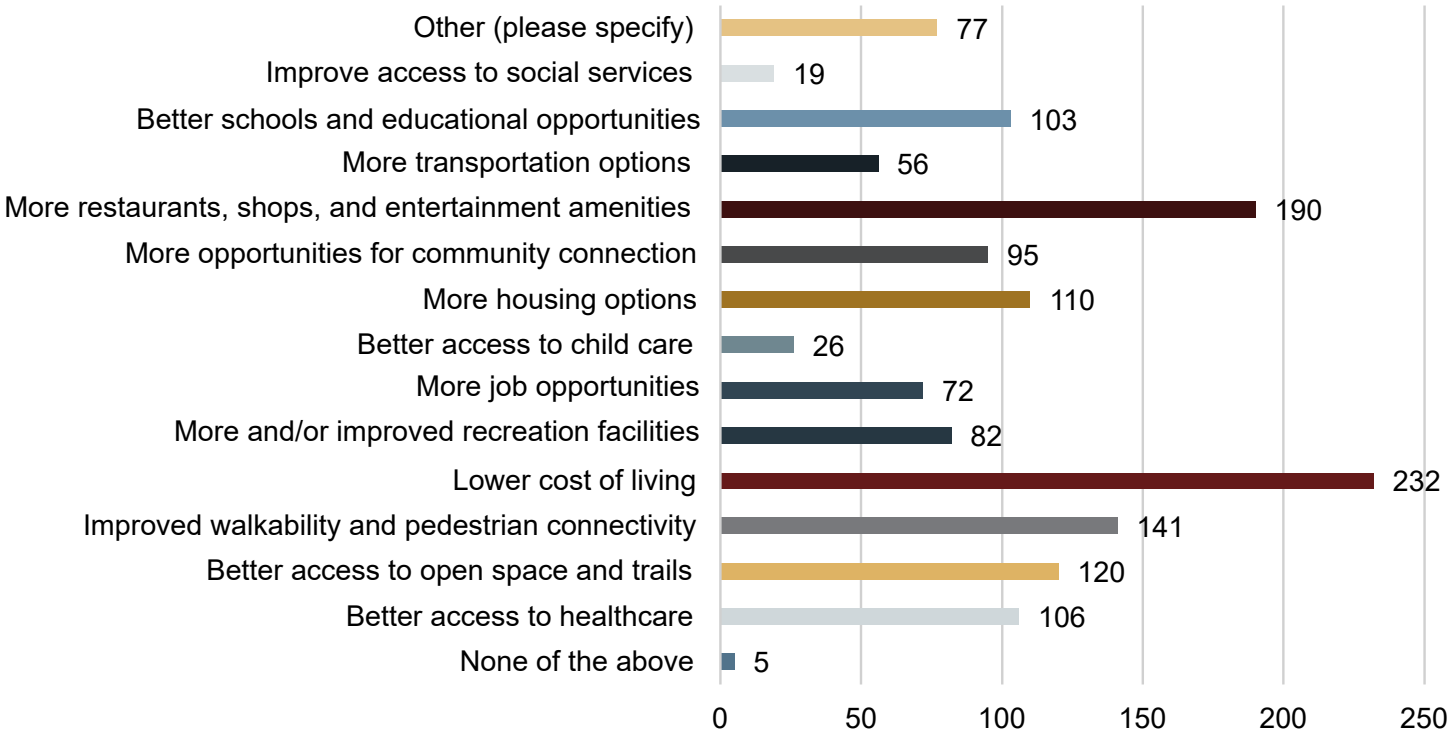
What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members identified cost of living, infrastructure maintenance, housing choice, and natural resource protection as important priorities for Auburn's future. Feedback also emphasized support for revitalized downtown and corridor areas, better transportation connections, and protection of Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond, farmland, forests, open space, and rural areas from development patterns that could increase infrastructure costs or weaken Auburn's natural resource base.

- In future land use engagement, participants supported downtown and key corridors for the most growth and expressed concern about sprawl, infrastructure strain, and loss of rural character.
- Low-growth area feedback favored farms and agriculture-based businesses more than large-lot homes, reinforcing support for rural preservation.

What changes would have the greatest positive impact on your family's quality of life?

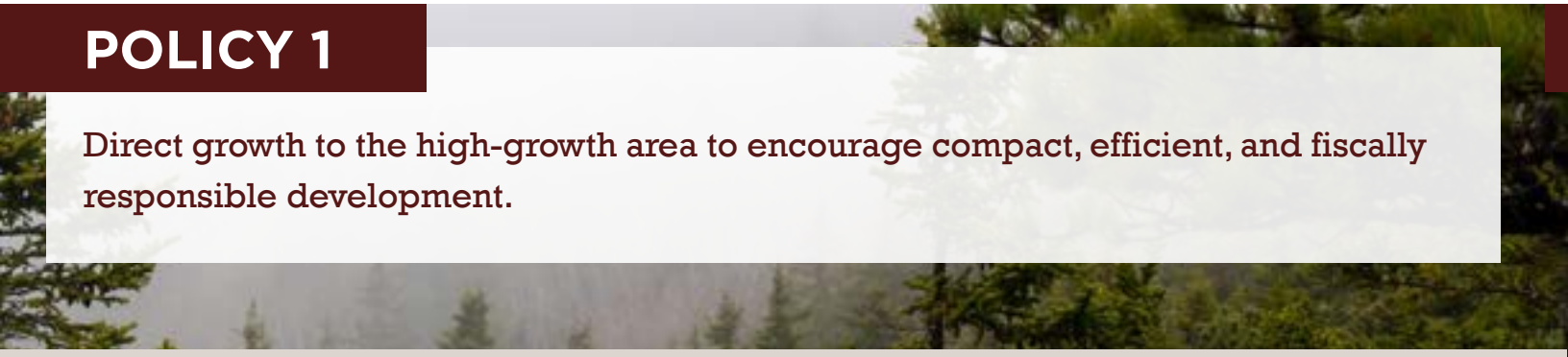


Source: Community Survey

What We Learned

- A large portion of the City's land (roughly 50%) is zoned in the AGRP District, providing opportunity for agriculture, forestry, and recreational growth.
- 65% of parcels in Auburn are within 200 feet of both water and sewer mains.
- Form-based codes apply to approximately 8% of Auburn's land area, reflecting a long-term strategy of promoting walkable, mixed-use environments in urbanized portions of the City.

POLICY 1



Direct growth to the high-growth area to encourage compact, efficient, and fiscally responsible development.

Objective 1: Ensure land use decisions are coordinated, predictable, and supported by efficient permitting and administration.

Compact growth provides a practical framework for balancing Auburn's housing, economic development, infrastructure, and natural resource priorities. Directing a greater share of future development to high-growth areas allows the City to focus growth where public water and sewer, transportation access, established neighborhoods, downtown, mixed-use centers, employment areas, and major corridors can support additional activity. This approach reflects community interest in revitalized centers and corridors, more housing choices, and better access to services while reducing pressure to extend development into rural, agricultural, recreational, conservation, and drinking water protection areas.

A compact development pattern can also support long-term fiscal endurance. Growth in areas already served by roads, utilities, emergency services, schools, parks, and other public systems can strengthen the tax base while limiting the need for costly infrastructure extensions, expanded service areas, and additional long-term maintenance obligations. This is especially important in light of community concerns about cost of living, infrastructure maintenance, and property tax burden.

Coordinated and predictable land use administration is necessary to carry out this direction consistently over time. The Future Land Use Plan should serve as a common reference point for zoning updates, development review, capital planning, and related land use decisions. Clear procedures, objective review criteria, coordinated permitting and code enforcement, trained staff, and consistent documentation help clarify expectations for applicants, residents, staff, boards, and elected officials and help ensure future decisions remain aligned with the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY 2

Update local ordinances to align with the goals and intent of the Future Land Use Plan, including clearly defining desired scale, intensity, and location of future development, and clearly defining protective measures for natural resources, rural areas, and waterfront areas.*

**Indicates a State Requirement*

Objective 1: Promote dense, mixed-use development that strengthens Auburn's economic core and creates a vibrant, walkable environment with a variety of commercial and residential uses in the High Density, High Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

Objective 2: Support moderate growth that provides a smooth transition from urban neighborhoods to rural landscapes in the Moderate Density, Moderate Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

Objective 3: Preserve Auburn's low-density places by protecting agricultural and natural resources and limiting development to maintain rural landscapes and environmental health in the Low Density, Low Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

Local ordinances are the primary tools for translating the Future Land Use Plan into day-to-day development standards. The Future Land Use Plan establishes the intended pattern of growth, transition, and protection across Auburn, but the City's zoning determines how that direction is applied on individual properties. Aligning zoning with the Future Land Use Plan will help make land use decisions consistent, predictable, and transparent.

Community feedback emphasized the need for balanced development. Zoning and development standards should be tailored to the intended role of each area: higher-intensity mixed-use, residential, commercial, and employment growth in high-growth areas; compatible transition in moderate-growth areas; and conservation-oriented development limits in low-growth areas. This allows Auburn to support growth and reinvestment where it is most appropriate while maintaining protections for natural resources, rural areas, waterfront areas, and drinking water resources. It also provides a clearer basis for future ordinance updates, development review, and public decision-making.



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 local organizations and partners.

Policy 1 Support access to lifelong learning opportunities.	
Objective 1	Maintain a high school graduation rate of 95%.
Objective 2	Support the City's elementary schools and Auburn Middle School.
Objective 3	Support youth with career and healthy living pathways for life outside of education.
Objective 4	Increase access to early learning opportunities (ages 3 – 5).
Objective 5	Consistently evaluate programming needs for the workforce and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.
Objective 6	Consistently evaluate programming needs for older adults and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.

Policy 2 Support access to services that meet the needs of the City's most highest-need residents.	
Objective 1	Develop an informed strategic and programmatic plan to address and improve the identified health and well-being priorities of Auburn residents.

Policy 3 Support a safe community through effective, coordinated, and community-focused public safety and emergency services.	
Objective 1	Improve Auburn Fire Department's ISO rating.
Objective 2	Maintain Auburn Police Department and 911 dispatch accreditation.
Objective 3	Achieve accreditation for the Fire Department through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).
Objective 4	Achieve accreditation for the Fire Department through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).

Policy 4	
Enhance community identity and sense of place.	
Objective 1	Deepen relationships between residents and municipal government.
Objective 2	Develop a citywide survey of historic, archaeological, and prehistoric sites.
Objective 3	Create policies for protecting and enhancing historic resources
Objective 4	Promote a vibrant, welcoming, and universally available arts and culture ecosystem.

Policy 5	
Ensure municipal services are administered efficiently and effectively.	
Objective 1	Actively pursue grants and external funding opportunities to support capital investments and minimize the local tax burden.*
Objective 2	Strengthen the role of City boards and committees in supporting effective delivery of public services and implementation of City policies.

**Indicates a State Requirement*

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by strengthening support systems for residents through quality education, available services, coordinated social support, public safety, youth opportunities, and community organizations that can respond to changing community needs.

Connected by fostering relationships among residents, local organizations, schools, businesses, and municipal government while expanding opportunities for community gatherings, events, recreation, arts, culture, and civic engagement.

Welcoming by promoting participation and a sense of place for people of all ages, backgrounds, life stages, and income levels.

Intentional by investing in programs, partnerships, facilities, and policies that strengthen community connection, improve quality of life, and preserve community assets.

What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members noted the importance of Auburn's strong sense of community, friendly residents, quality schools, local organizations, parks and recreation opportunities, and community events. At the same time, residents expressed a desire for more opportunities for social connection, arts and cultural activities, youth programming, support for high-need populations, adult education and workforce training, and stronger coordination among service providers. Many participants also emphasized the importance of creating a stronger community fabric, supporting public safety, and expanding opportunities for youth to stay and thrive in Auburn.

- Strong community connections remain a defining asset, with 31% respondents citing people and neighbors and 19% respondents citing Auburn's sense of community among the things they value most about living in the City.
- Community members consistently emphasized Auburn's fabric as a friendly, residential, small-town community, while also describing the City as being "in transition" and seeking a more unified sense of connection.

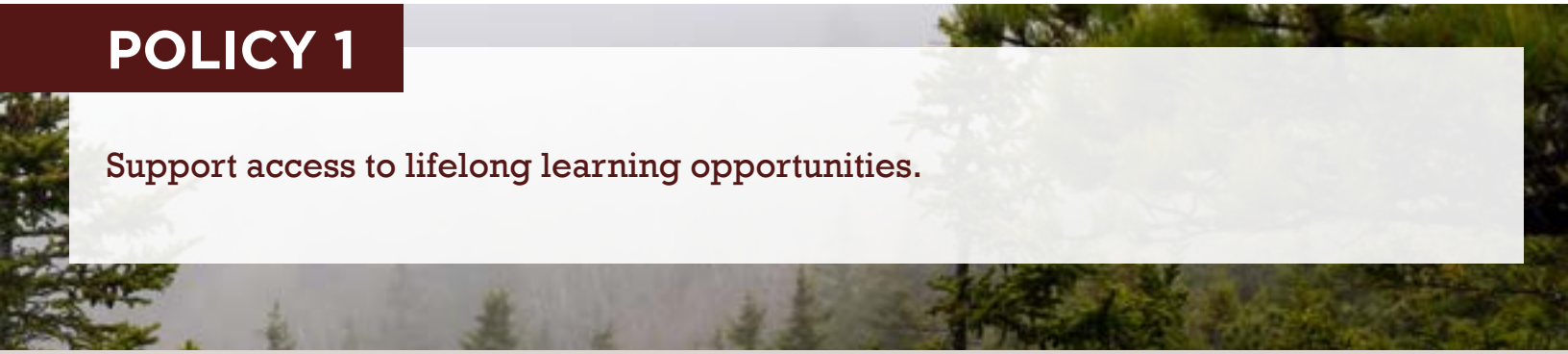
"I love the neighborhoods that exist throughout the City. I enjoy being able to go for walks along the Lake, and places like Mount Apetite. I enjoy being located in a somewhat rural setting, while also having close access to stores and restaurants. I think that the people in office and City staff care about Auburn and its future. I wish the downtown area had more businesses, and I hope the City can help small businesses thrive in our downtown by maintaining a clean and pleasant setting for business development."

Source: Community Survey

What We Learned

- Auburn's population is aging, with median age increasing. There has been growth in Auburn's 55+ aged residents, and residents age 15 – 34.
- There has been an increase in mental health calls and calls to respond to the needs of the City's unhoused population even as criminal activity has generally declined.
- The number of residents with high school or higher education degrees has grown since 2013, but Auburn still lags behind the state in higher education attainment.

POLICY 1



Support access to lifelong learning opportunities.

Objective 1: Maintain a high school graduation rate of 95%.

Objective 2: Support the City's elementary schools and Auburn Middle School.

Objective 3: Support youth with career and healthy living pathways for life outside of education.

Objective 4: Increase access to early learning opportunities (ages 3 – 5).

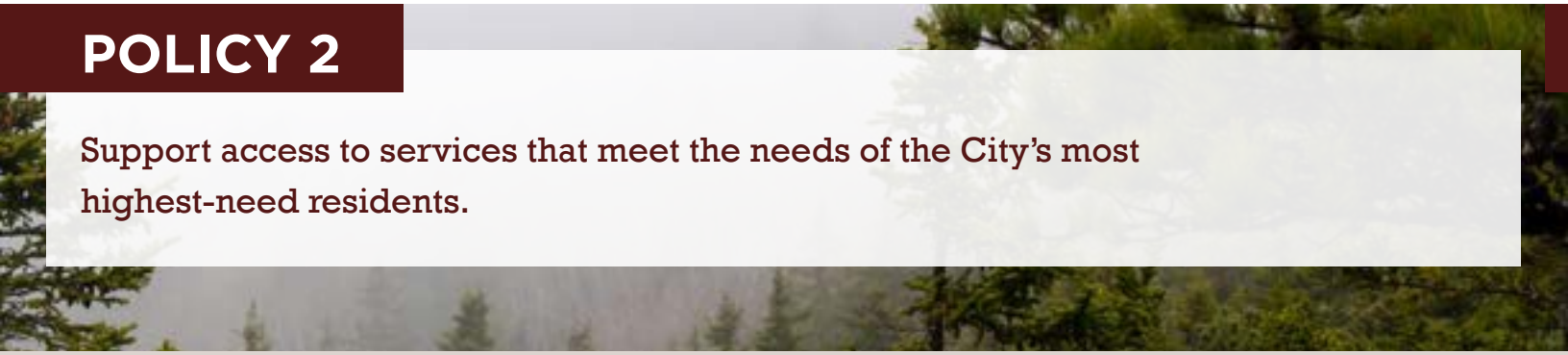
Objective 5: Consistently evaluate programming needs for the workforce and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.

Objective 6: Consistently evaluate programming needs for older adults and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.

This investment in education represents the City's commitment to its residents and the future of Auburn. In recent years, the City has made significant investments in education, including the new Edward Little High School, a new PAL center, and expanded programming at the library. The City will continue to work closely with the Auburn School Department on capital improvement needs for school facilities and collaborate with Central Maine Community College (CMCC), the Auburn Public Library, community organizations, and other educational institutions to meet the programming needs of the community.

Access to education and learning opportunities is essential to individual success, workforce readiness, and overall community well-being.

Supporting learners at every stage of life helps residents develop skills, expand knowledge, build connections, and encourages civic and community engagement. By fostering strong schools, expanding early learning opportunities, supporting youth as they transition to careers and independent living, and partnering with educational and workforce organizations to address community needs, As needs evolve, including changes in demand for workforce development skills and the unique needs of the community, the City will be prepared to support lifelong learning for all Auburn residents.



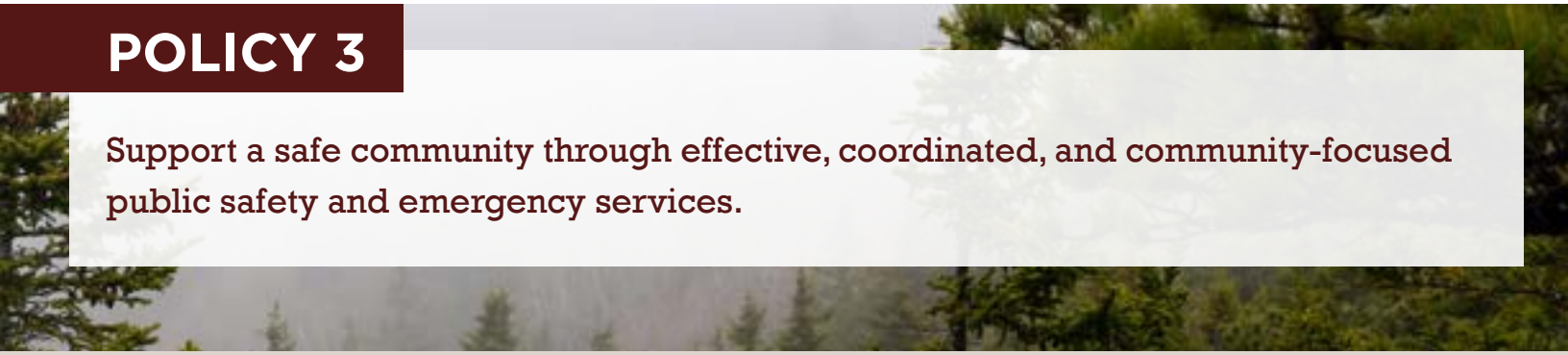
POLICY 2

Support access to services that meet the needs of the City's most highest-need residents.

Objective 1: Develop an informed strategic and programmatic plan to address and improve the identified health and well-being priorities of Auburn residents.

As an urban area and service center, Auburn provides access to critical resources, programs, and amenities for City residents and the region. With a range of challenges facing residents related to housing insecurity and homelessness, mental health, social isolation, substance use, cultural and language obstacles, and educational needs, the City has had to adapt to the changing needs of the community.

The 2022 Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identified mental health, substance and alcohol use, social determinants of health, and access to care as top priorities for Androscoggin County. Continuing to partner with community organizations that support health and well-being and aligning municipal recreation and community programs and initiatives with health priorities will be critical components to addressing health and well-being of residents. In addition to direct programming and support services, the land use, housing, economy, transportation, recreation, and other components of this Plan will impact public health. Issues including the availability of transportation options to access services, access to outdoor recreation, neighborhood design, and walkability all impact community health and well-being, which should be considered in decision-making. Together, these factors influence the social, economic, environmental, and physical conditions that shape residents' health, including their ability to access care, remain housed, travel safely, stay active, connect with others, and live in a clean and resilient environment.



POLICY 3

Support a safe community through effective, coordinated, and community-focused public safety and emergency services.

Objective 1: Improve Auburn Fire Department's ISO rating.

Objective 2: Maintain Auburn Police Department and 911 dispatch accreditation.

Objective 3: Achieve accreditation for the Fire Department through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).

Objective 4: Use data to understand community safety perceptions and guide efforts to strengthen the sense of safety citywide.

Auburn's Police Department has been a leader in law enforcement in the State as the only department in Maine to maintain Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation status. In order to maintain accreditation and continue to improve public safety, the City's Police Department will continue to support training, implementation of new technology, and community outreach.

Accreditation is an important measure of the Police Department's capabilities, but is only one measure of the Department's ability to meet community needs. Future planning should also consider workload trends, calls for service, response times, staffing and vacancy levels, overtime, training requirements, traffic safety, crime trends, and other operational factors.

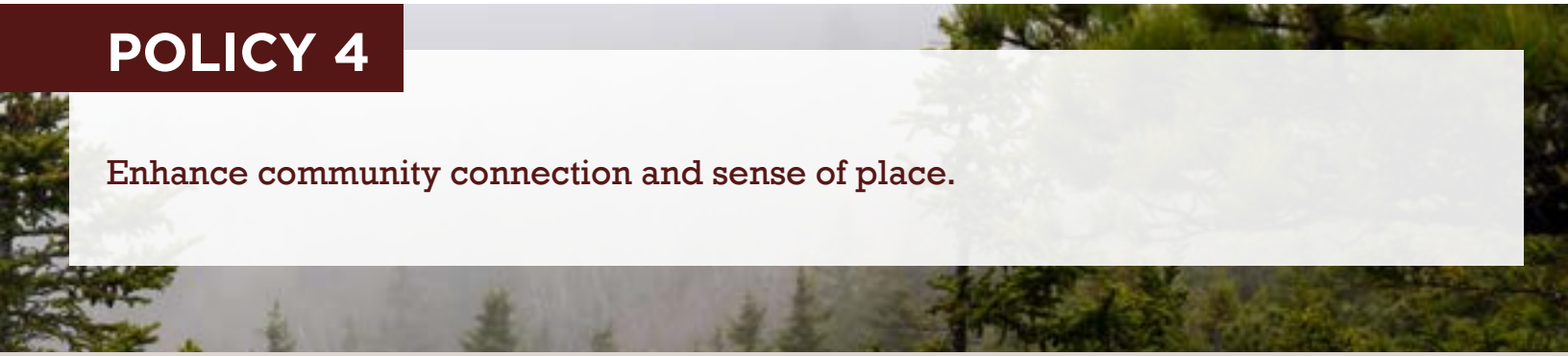
The new public safety facility (currently under construction) will provide expanded work space for the Police and Fire Departments to grow their teams, conduct trainings, and improve ease of access. A new space and amenities within the public safety facility can support staff retention and expand skills to improve service. These investments will support the Fire Department in achieving accreditation and improving its ISO rating, ultimately improving overall public safety in Auburn.

In addition to new technology and staffing challenges, the City's Police and Fire Departments are addressing the changing landscape of public safety, including an increase in Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls and rise in homelessness and mental health challenges. These issues are often very visible to the public and can impact safety and the perception of safety within the community. In addition to efforts to partner with service provider and expanded training, the City's public safety departments can use community

survey data and other available data (e.g., calls for service, crime trends, crash data, disorder-related calls, and other indicators) to understand community safety perceptions and respond accordingly to build a sense of community and safety through outreach and education.

The City's law enforcement should remain a partner in coordinated community responses but should not become the default long-term solution community needs related to housing, behavioral health, addiction treatment and recovery, and other social services. The Police Department will continue to coordinate with social and behavioral health partners to best support the needs of the community.

POLICY 4



Enhance community connection and sense of place.

Objective 1: Deepen relationships between residents and municipal government.

Objective 2: Develop a citywide survey of historic, archaeological, and prehistoric sites.

Objective 3: Create policies for protecting and enhancing historic resources

Objective 4: Promote a vibrant, welcoming, and available arts and culture ecosystem.

A strong sense of place fosters community pride, strengthens connections among residents, and helps preserve Auburn's character. There are several ways in which a sense of place evolves, including through the physical characteristics of a place and through social and cultural connections. Encouraging meaningful engagement between residents and municipal government builds trust and a sense of responsibility among residents for the future of the City, and among municipal leaders for the residents they serve.

Protecting and celebrating historic and cultural resources represent the role physical spaces and landmarks in creating community fabric. Auburn's historic buildings, downtown fabric, cultural landmarks, archaeological sites, and natural features are all important elements to the City's history and evolution. Protecting and documenting significant historical assets and celebrating Auburn's history through the spaces that have defined it over time are critical to preserving community and connecting residents to the City's past.

A vibrant arts and culture environment also contributes to a community's sense of place, often bridging the past and present by creating opportunities for reflection within the context of current issues and thoughtfulness about the future. Public art, events, and arts venues can create welcoming spaces and shared experiences that bring people together, provide opportunities for self-articulation and education, and celebrate the community's creativity.

These efforts to cultivate a sense of place help reinforce community fabric, honor Auburn's heritage, and ensure that residents of all backgrounds feel connected to and invested in the community's future.

POLICY 5

Ensure municipal services are administered efficiently and effectively.

Objective 1: Actively pursue grants and external funding opportunities to support capital investments and minimize the local tax burden.*

Objective 2: Strengthen the role of City boards and committees in supporting effective delivery of public services and implementation of City policies.

**Indicates a State Requirement*

As costs for labor, materials, and resources continue to rise, the City cannot continue to provide the same level of service with the same budget. Efficient and effective municipal service delivery requires creativity and resourcefulness to help ensure that public resources are used responsibly while maintaining the quality of services residents expect. By actively pursuing grant funding and other external resources, the City can offset operating and capital costs, reducing reliance on local property taxes and minimizing the tax burden on residents.

At the same time, volunteers play an important role in municipal operations, supporting municipal programs and strengthening civic engagement. Members of municipal boards and committees contribute valuable expertise, local knowledge, and public input that help guide decision-making, advance community projects, and support the work of elected officials and staff. Together, strategic use of outside funding and volunteer contributions can help the municipality deliver services in a fiscally conscious and community-centered manner.



Housing

Goal: Ensure access to a broad range of housing options that meet the needs of the community across income levels, ages, and life stages to support current and new residents and maintain a strong workforce.

Policy 1 Ensure a supply of housing in a variety of types and sizes that meet the wide-ranging needs of residents, support right-sized living options, and avoid creating cost burdens for households.	
Objective 1	Adopt and achieve the City's housing goals informed by the Auburn Housing Needs Assessment.
Objective 2	Strengthen the City's regulatory structure to create a predictable, development-ready environment and help ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality housing for renters and owners. *
Objective 3	Eliminate chronic homelessness, rehouse individuals who become unhoused within 90 days, and prevent those who are susceptible and are unsafe due to violence from becoming unhoused.

**Indicates a State Requirement*

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by increasing the availability of housing options that allow residents to remain in Auburn through changing life stages, economic conditions, and household needs while supporting workforce recruitment, retention, and long-term community stability.

Connected by encouraging housing development in locations that provide access to jobs, schools, transportation, parks, services, and community amenities while supporting mixed-income neighborhoods and strong neighborhood relationships.

Welcoming by creating housing opportunities for people of different income levels, ages, family sizes, and abilities, including first-time homebuyers, older adults, workforce households, families, and those experiencing housing insecurity.

Intentional by aligning housing policies, investments, and development patterns with community needs and infrastructure capacity while directing development to appropriate locations, protecting natural resources, and maintaining rural areas.

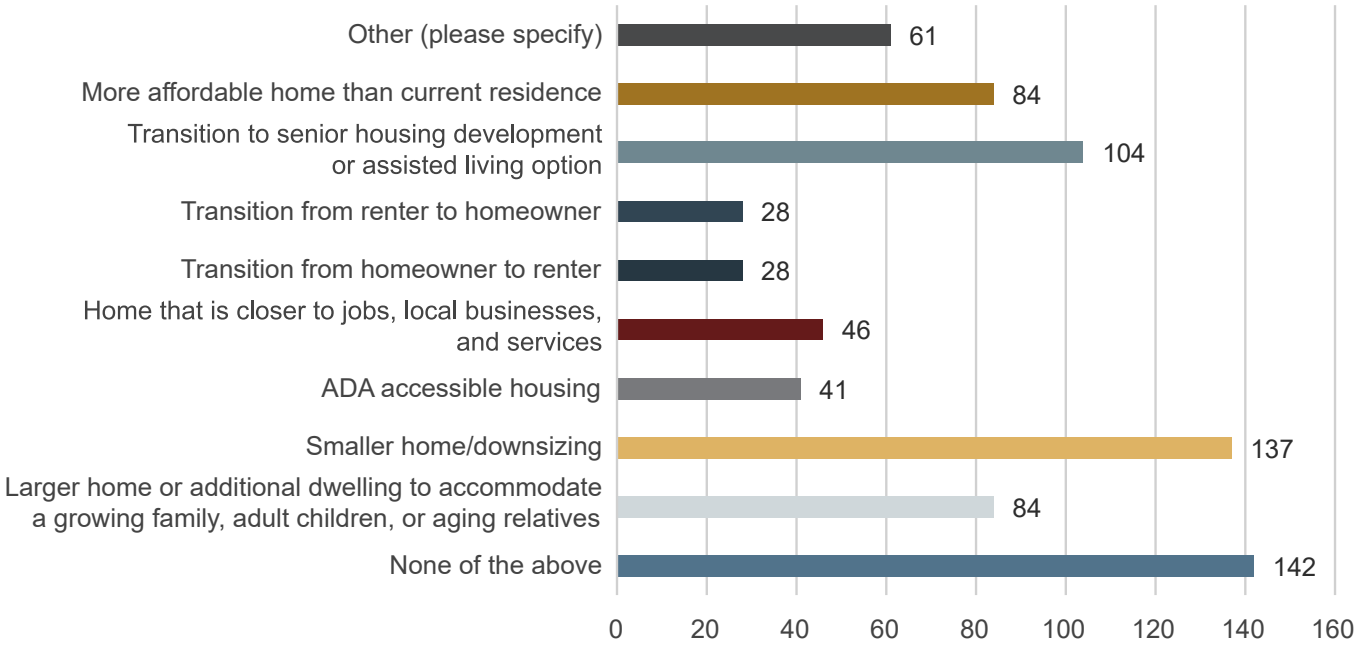
What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members identified housing affordability, housing availability, and housing variety as some of Auburn's most significant challenges and future priorities. Residents expressed a need for housing at a variety of price points and formats and options that allow residents to downsize or age in place. Participants supported directing new housing toward areas with existing infrastructure, redeveloping vacant and underutilized properties, encouraging mixed-use and infill development, and addressing housing insecurity. Housing was consistently identified as a critical factor in supporting economic development, attracting and retaining workers, and maintaining Auburn's status as an attractive place for current and future residents.

- Housing affordability was one of the community's most significant concerns, with 44% of Community Survey respondents identifying a lower cost of living as the change that would most improve their quality of life.
- The need for additional emergency and overnight housing options was a clear priority among unhoused residents, with "more places to stay safely overnight" receiving more votes than any other response in the Drop-In Center engagement activity.
- Housing was the top future investment priority identified by focus group participants, receiving more votes than infrastructure, transportation, parks, and education combined.

How do you see your household's housing needs changing in the next 10 years?



Source: Community Survey

What We Learned

Since 2020, the cost of housing has increasingly become a concern, especially for the City's 4,268 renter households, which make up 41% of total households. In addition, the City continues to face challenges related to housing quality and safety and decline of an aging housing stock. The recently completed Auburn Housing Needs Assessment (October 2024) provides insight into the gap in housing units needed to meet existing demand, the type and cost of housing needed to support current households, and the projected demand for additional housing based on growth estimates.

- Auburn is projected to need approximately 1,300 to 1,400 additional housing units by 2030, yet current production trends leave the City substantially behind that target.
- Auburn has seen an increase of more than 150% in the median home price from 2013 to 2023; in 2023, nearly 72% of households were unable to afford the median home price based on annual household income.
- Household demographics and housing supply are increasingly misaligned: 70% of households contain 1 or 2 people, but only 20% of housing units are studios or 1-bedroom homes.

POLICY 1

Ensure a supply of housing in a variety of types and sizes that meet the wide-ranging needs of residents, support right-sized living options, and avoid creating cost burdens for households.

Objective 1: Adopt and achieve the City's housing goals informed by the Auburn Housing Needs Assessment.

Objective 2: Strengthen the City's regulatory structure to create a predictable, development-ready environment and ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality housing for renters and owners.*

Objective 3: Eliminate chronic homelessness, rehouse individuals who become unhoused within 90 days, and prevent those who are susceptible and are unsafe due to violence from becoming unhoused.

**Indicates a State Requirement*

Auburn's housing strategy focuses on reducing housing cost burden (defined as a household spending more than 30% of its income on housing) expanding the range of housing options available to residents, and supporting people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The City's recent housing goals establish a near-term target of adding 1,300-1,400 new housing units by 2030, providing a measurable benchmark for tracking progress and aligning land use, infrastructure, and partnership decisions with community need. As Auburn grows and its demographics continue to change, the City will need housing that reflects different household sizes, income levels, ages, abilities, and life stages. This includes options for young adults entering the housing market, families seeking larger homes, older adults who want to remain in the community, workers who support the local economy, and other residents whose current housing no longer fits their needs.

Reducing cost burden requires more than increasing the number of homes. It requires aligning housing production, land use regulations, infrastructure investment, redevelopment opportunities, and partnerships so households have access to homes that fit their budgets and daily needs. The Auburn Housing Needs Assessment provides an important basis for setting measurable housing goals, tracking progress, and updating priorities as market conditions and community needs change. The City's role is to use this information to guide policy, remove unnecessary municipal obstacles, support redevelopment and infill where appropriate, and coordinate with public, private, nonprofit, regional, and state partners.

A predictable regulatory environment is central to this work. Clear standards, coordinated permitting, and zoning that supports a broader spectrum of housing types can help reduce uncertainty for applicants, residents, staff, boards, and elected officials. These tools support the development of quality rental and ownership opportunities while directing growth to locations with appropriate infrastructure, services, transportation access, and community amenities. Housing policies also connect to economic development, transportation, infrastructure, parks, and public service goals because housing availability affects workforce stability, access to jobs and services, household transportation costs, neighborhood vitality, and long-term fiscal endurance.

The City also recognizes that housing stability is essential to individual well-being and community health. Supporting people who are experiencing homelessness, preventing susceptible people from becoming unhoused, and coordinating treatment, recovery, and supportive services are necessary parts of a complete housing strategy. Auburn cannot address these needs alone, but it can help create the local policy framework, partnerships, service coordination, and land use conditions needed to support interim and permanent housing pathways. Together, these objectives position housing as a core community priority that supports Auburn's resilience, economic strength, public health, and ability to remain a welcoming place for current and future residents.



Economy

Goal: Support a resilient economy that provides quality jobs, fosters innovation, and strengthens local businesses and industries while providing quality education and training for people of all ages.

Policy 1

Maintain and expand a varied economy in Auburn by increasing employment across the City and employment of Auburn residents and increasing the area median income (AMI) and the property tax base.

Objective 1	Utilize targeted business retention strategies, industry cluster analyses, and available financing tools to invest in priority activity areas.
Objective 2	Reduce transportation, housing, childcare, education and training, and zoning obstacles for employers and employees.
Objective 3	Advance regional economic priorities and actively market the City's economic assets.

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by supporting a wide-ranging economic base, strengthening local businesses, attracting new industries, developing a skilled workforce, and creating employment opportunities that can adapt to changing economic conditions.

Connected by linking residents to jobs, education, training opportunities, transportation, local businesses, and regional economic assets while fostering collaboration among employers, educators, workforce organizations, and economic development partners.

Welcoming by creating pathways for people of varying backgrounds to participate in Auburn's economy through education, job training, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities.

Intentional by aligning economic development efforts with community priorities, infrastructure investments, workforce needs, housing availability, and land use planning to create maintainable and strategic growth.

What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members highlighted economic growth, workforce development, business attraction, and support for local businesses as critical priorities for Auburn's future. Residents expressed a desire for Auburn to become more of a destination community with a stronger downtown, more restaurants, entertainment options, retail opportunities, and community events. Employers and business owners cited workforce shortages, housing affordability, and employee retention as significant challenges affecting growth. Participants also emphasized the importance of education, adult learning, trade programs, entrepreneurship, support for small businesses, redevelopment of key commercial areas, and continued investment in industrial and employment centers.

- Community members identified economic opportunity as a key priority, with 36% of survey respondents selecting more restaurants, shops, and entertainment

amenities as a change that would improve quality of life.

- Support for local businesses and downtown and commercial corridor revitalization were among the highest-ranked economic development priorities during engagement activities.
- In discussions with business owners, workforce shortages were consistently identified as a challenge affecting restaurants, trades, construction, and other industries.

What We Learned

- The median household income in Auburn has increased in the past decade but remains slightly below both county and state averages.
- From 2013 to 2023, the working-age population (ages 20 to 64) declined both as a percentage of the total population and in total numbers.
- Auburn employment by industry sector indicates that the top 3 sectors account for approximately 45% of Auburn's employment; retail trade leads at 19.5%, followed by healthcare and social assistance (13.6%) and manufacturing (12.1%).

POLICY 1

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Objective 2: Reduce transportation, housing, childcare, education and training, and zoning obstacles for employers and employees.

Objective 3: Advance regional economic priorities and actively market the City's economic assets.

Auburn's economy is shaped by its position as a regional service center, its access to major transportation corridors, its industrial and commercial land base, and its relationship with Lewiston and the broader Androscoggin County economy. The City supports a wide range of employers, small businesses, industrial users, service providers, educational institutions, and redevelopment opportunities that together provide a foundation for long-term economic strength. Maintaining this variety is important to support quality jobs, expand the local tax base, increase household incomes, and help Auburn remain competitive within the region.

Economic development is closely connected to housing, transportation, childcare, education, training, infrastructure, and land use. Employers need access to workers, and workers need access to housing, transportation, childcare, and career pathways that allow them to participate in the local economy. For this reason, this plan's economic policies focus not only on business attraction and retention, but also on reducing obstacles that affect employers and employees, aligning workforce development with industry needs, and coordinating public investments with areas where growth and redevelopment are most appropriate. To understand current market conditions and obstacles to economic investment and further define economic needs, the City will create an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Over the next decade, the City will emphasize targeted business retention, industry cluster analysis, financing tools, regional coordination, and strategic marketing of Auburn's economic assets. The City also recognizes the importance of priority activity areas, including downtown, major commercial corridors, industrial areas, the Auburn Mall area, Exit

75, airport and rail-related assets, and other locations where infrastructure, land availability, and market activity can support future investment. Together, these objectives position economic development as a coordinated effort to strengthen Auburn's role in the region while supporting local businesses, residents, and long-term fiscal stability.



Transportation

Goal: Develop a safe, efficient, and universally available multimodal transportation network and traffic management solutions that connect people to places throughout the City and region.

Policy 1	
Provide a network of intercity and intracity public transportation that meets the community's needs.	
Objective 1	Collaborate with partners to regularly evaluate public transportation needs and implement the findings from transportation studies.

Policy 2	
Provide a network of active transportation options that meet the need of users of all ages and abilities.	
Objective 1	Improve connectivity of intercity and intracity active transportation infrastructure.
Objective 2	Generate and share accurate data, maps, and information on active transportation routes.

Policy 3	
Provide, maintain, and improve the City's road network.	
Objective 1	Implement Auburn's Vision Zero Resolve.
Objective 2	Update road and parking standards.
Objective 3	Increase access and efficiency between key areas of the City by maintaining and improving the City's road and sidewalk infrastructure in the most cost-effective manner.

Policy 4	
Strengthen Auburn's position as a regional freight, logistics, and industrial center.	
Objective 1	Improve efficiency, coordination, and funding competitiveness through integrated management of publicly controlled freight and logistics assets.
Objective 2	Protect public investment in airport and rail infrastructure through compatible land use planning, airspace protection, and corridor preservation.

Objective 3	Support plan-driven, right-sized investment in airport, rail, and intermodal infrastructure while streamlining local review for projects consistent with adopted plans.
Objective 4	Recognize and protect Auburn's airport, rail corridors, and intermodal facilities as regional and statewide significant components of Maine's multimodal freight and transportation system.

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by proactively investing in roads, sidewalks, trails, and transit to reduce dependence on any single mode of travel and improve regional mobility.

Connected by providing transportation options that help residents, businesses, and visitors reliably access jobs, education, healthcare, services, and recreation while boosting connections between neighborhoods.

Welcoming by creating transportation options that are safe, available, and functional for people of all ages, abilities, income levels, and travel preferences.

Intentional by coordinating transportation investments with land use planning and environmental goals to improve long-term mobility outcomes.

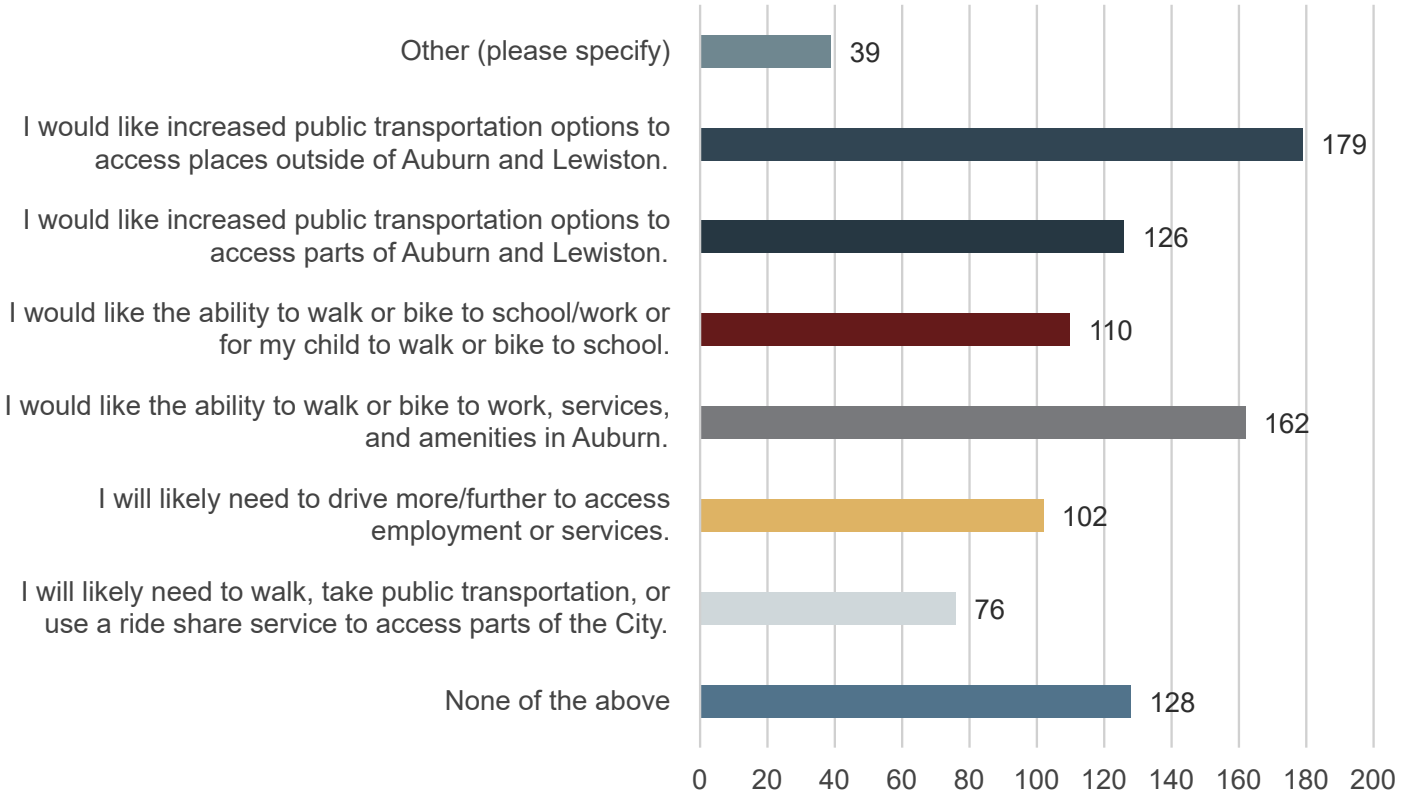
What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members expressed a desire for safer streets, expanded sidewalks, improved bicycle infrastructure, better trail connectivity, and more public transportation options. Traffic congestion, road maintenance, and incomplete bicycle and walking infrastructure were most frequently cited as challenges affecting mobility and access to essential services. Participants emphasized the importance of walkable neighborhoods, improved access to downtown, stronger regional connections, safer pedestrian infrastructure, and investments that make it easier to travel between neighborhoods.

- Residents most wanted to be able to walk or bike to everyday community destinations, with parks/playgrounds and downtown emerging as the top responses.
- Improved access to public transportation and enhanced ability to walk and bike were among the highest-ranked community investment priorities.
- Auburn's location within the region and state was the community's most valued asset according to the Community Survey, selected by 36% of survey participants.

How do you see your (and your family's) transportation needs changing in the next 10 years?

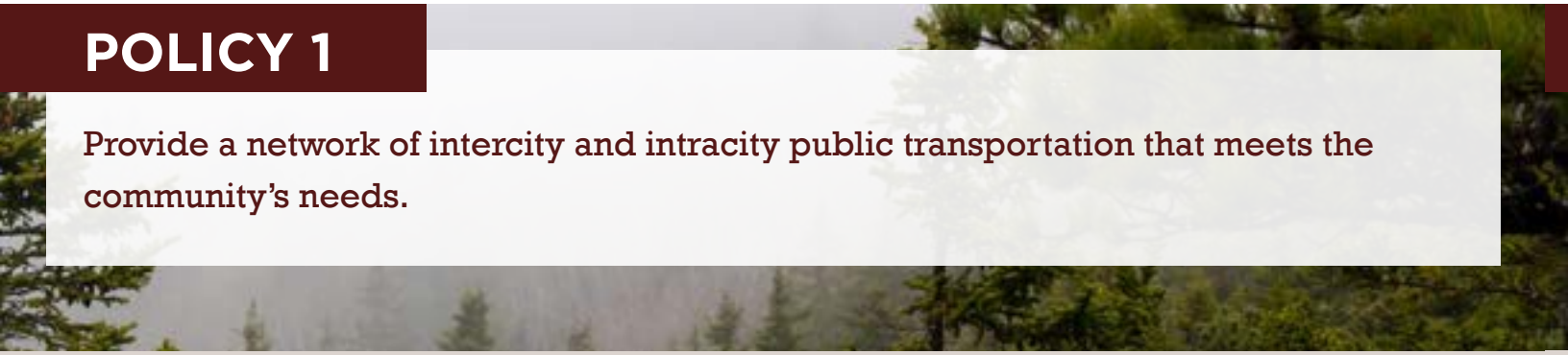


Source: Community Survey

What We Learned

Auburn, located along the Androscoggin River and situated approximately 25 miles from Portland and 35 miles from Augusta, serves as a population, employment, and transportation center for Androscoggin County and the region.

- Auburn's transportation role extends beyond local mobility; the City serves as a regional hub for freight, logistics, air transportation, and commuting.
- Traffic volume in Auburn has broadly increased across road locations from 2020 to 2023.
- In Androscoggin County, there are an estimated 4,130 households without a car, and the estimated annual transportation budget for a family of 4 is the lowest among all Maine counties.



POLICY 1

Provide a network of intercity and intracity public transportation that meets the community's needs.

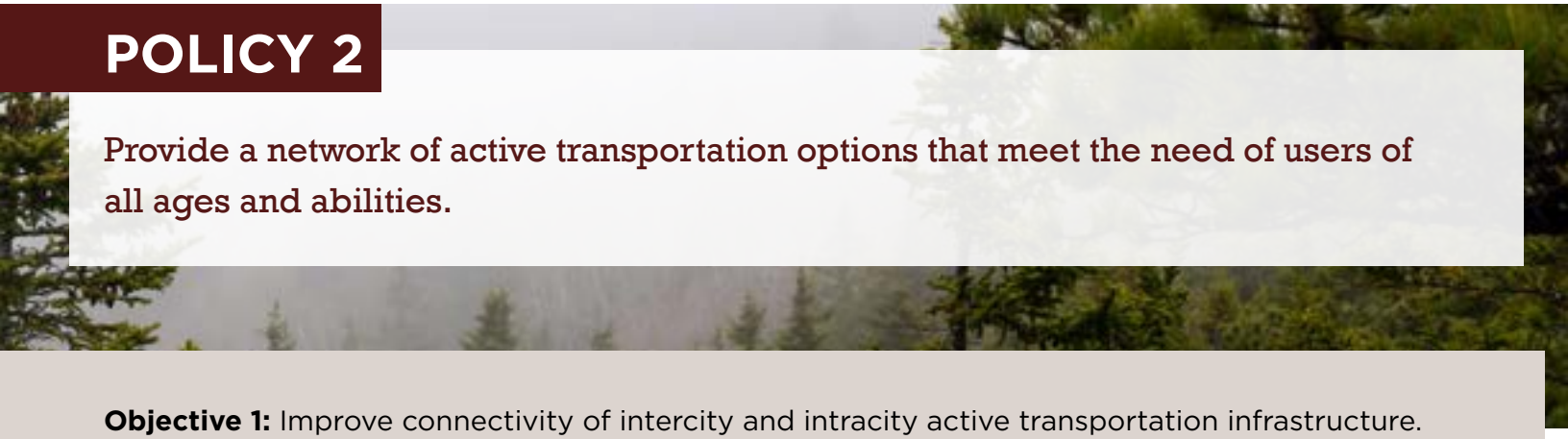
Objective 1: Collaborate with partners to regularly evaluate public transportation needs and implement the findings from transportation studies.

Public transportation plays a vital role in economic activity and quality of life. Many Auburn residents and employees rely on transit, walking, or biking to access jobs, school, healthcare, shopping, and community services, including youth and those who might not have access to a personal vehicle.

Intracity transit options provide important connections for residents and expand mobility options beyond bikeable and walkable areas for those without a personal vehicle. For non-driving residents, public transportation is critical for accessing work, school, and services and allows residents to stay connected to their community. When considering intracity transit, the availability, frequency, cost, and reliability of service should be considered relative to the needs of those who regularly rely on public transportation.

Intercity transportation connects City residents to regional employment centers, educational institutions, and other destinations in the region. It also brings residents from outside the City to jobs, services, and amenities in Auburn, expanding opportunities for residents and making the City a more desirable place to live and work.

Together, the intracity and intercity transit network impacts how land is used and development potential, thus impacting economic opportunity. Transit functions more efficiently in areas of denser development and where appropriate uses are clustered (e.g., office uses near retail centers, housing near services). The existing transit network should be considered in future land use decisions, and likewise, development potential should be factored into decisions about transit expansion or changes to routes. Coordination among City staff and transit partners is essential for effective long-term planning.



POLICY 2

Provide a network of active transportation options that meet the need of users of all ages and abilities.

Objective 1: Improve connectivity of intercity and intracity active transportation infrastructure.

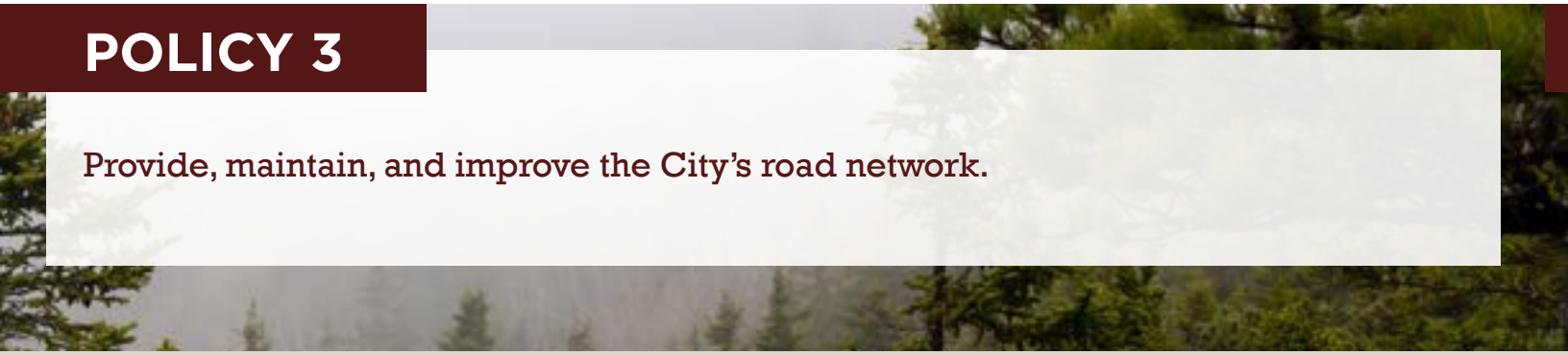
Objective 2: Generate and share accurate data, maps, and information on active transportation routes.

Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered mobility used to get from one place to another. While the most common forms of active transportation are walking and bicycling, the rise of electronic bikes (e-bikes) and scooters has expanded the ways in which people travel and broadened the range of people who can use active transportation.

Expanding the City's active transportation network and improving safety for users have been priorities for Auburn for many years. The City's Pedestrian Safety Mitigation Plan (2019) identified key areas for improvements to address safety concerns and the Auburn Safety Action Plan (2025) provides a roadmap for roadway safety improvements. Off-road trails, including the Riverwalk, provide safe opportunities for mobility and recreation. The proposed expansion of the Riverwalk will increase access to the trail and connect residents to downtown Auburn.

An available and well-connected active transportation network expands mobility options for all users and supports public health, environmental resilience, and quality of life. Safe and convenient options for walking, bicycling, and other forms of active transportation help residents of all ages and abilities travel within the community and connect to destinations beyond it. By improving network connectivity and providing accurate, up-to-date information on routes and facilities, Auburn can expand transportation choices, reduce obstacles to mobility, and encourage more people to incorporate active transportation into their daily lives.

POLICY 3



Provide, maintain, and improve the City's road network.

Objective 1: Implement Auburn's Vision Zero Resolve.

Objective 2: Update road and parking standards.

Objective 3: Increase access and efficiency between key areas of the City by maintaining and improving the City's road and sidewalk infrastructure in the most cost-effective manner.

A safe, reliable, and efficient transportation network is essential to Auburn's economic vitality, quality of life, and long-term resilience. Streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities connect residents to jobs, services, schools, and recreational opportunities while supporting the movement of people and goods throughout the City. By advancing the Vision Zero Resolve, the City will be committing to creating safe streets for all users, recognizing that all community members should be able to move around Auburn safely.

The recently completed Auburn Safety Action Plan (2025) was a collaborative effort between the City and the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) to understand safety challenges for the City's transportation network and identify priority areas for safety improvements for all roadway users. An action plan was developed, incorporating community input and, through an equity lens, understanding that the most high-need and at-risk roadway users are often those with the fewest resources. While efforts have been made to address pedestrian safety, significant improvements are needed to undo roadway reconfigurations from past decades that prioritized automobiles and created unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

By updating roadway and parking standards and strategically maintaining and improving infrastructure, Auburn can enhance safety, strengthen connectivity, and make the most effective use of public resources to meet current and future transportation needs. Addressing infrastructure needs and modernizing road and parking standards will support the community's vision for creating a more available and connected City. While most Auburn residents drive, a majority of survey respondents would like to be able to walk to more places, reflecting the impact of walkability on quality of life and sense of community.

POLICY 4

Strengthen Auburn's position as a regional freight, logistics, and industrial center.

Objective 1: Improve efficiency, coordination, and funding competitiveness through integrated management of publicly controlled freight and logistics assets.

Objective 2: Protect public investment in airport and rail infrastructure through compatible land use planning, airspace protection, and corridor preservation.

Objective 3: Support plan-driven, right-sized investment in airport, rail, and intermodal infrastructure while streamlining local review for projects consistent with adopted plans.

Objective 4: Recognize and protect Auburn's airport, rail corridors, and intermodal facilities as regional and statewide significant components of Maine's multimodal freight and transportation system.

Auburn's strategic location and transportation assets position the City as an important hub for freight movement, logistics, and industrial activity within the region and as a critical node to connect to national and international markets. The City's airport, rail corridors, and intermodal facilities are important and underutilized assets that the City can leverage to generate economic growth. Managing land use and safety along rail corridors requires coordination among numerous entities. Collaborating with municipalities and State agencies can help Auburn align investments and decisions with the broader vision for the rail corridors and the region's industrial future.

As the region grows and experiences economic changes, the ability for industry to adapt and respond to the market will depend on the City's investment and prioritization of transportation and logistics asset. By continuing to invest and support airport and rail infrastructure, including protection of airspace, planning for utility infrastructure expansion, and coordinating compatible land uses along rail corridors and near the airport, the City will be in a strong position to support business competitiveness and economic growth.

By coordinating the management of these assets, protecting critical transportation infrastructure and corridors, and investing in improvements and infrastructure expansion that align with long-term future land use and development plans, Auburn can strengthen its role as a logistics and industrial center and enhance the efficiency and resiliency of the broader transportation network.



Natural Environment

Goal: Preserve and enhance the City's natural environment and agricultural tradition to protect water quality, improve food access, promote public health, provide connected wildlife habitats, and respond to the impacts of climate change.

Policy 1	
Protect and improve the water quality and health of all of Auburn's water bodies.	
Objective 1	Meet or exceed state-designated water quality standards for all waterbodies.

Policy 2	
Support the protection of natural resources like wetlands, vernal pools, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat blocks, and open space. *	
Objective 1	Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state laws regarding natural resource protection.
Objective 2	Encourage public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources.
Objective 3	Generate and share accurate data, maps, and information on natural resources.

Policy 3	
Protect Auburn's agricultural lands and forests.	
Objective 1	Support access to locally grown and sourced food and support the agriculture economy.
Objective 2	Support farming in Auburn.
Objective 3	Improve management of forests on City-owned woodlots.
Objective 4	Improve protection and management of the City's street trees and urban canopy.
Objective 5	Support private property owners in managing and preserving their forest land.

Policy 4	
Address climate resiliency concerns and plan for the impacts of climate change.	
Objective 1	Develop a climate action plan, with a vulnerability assessment and heat-trapping gases inventory
Objective 2	Maintain membership in the Community Resilience Partnership.

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by protecting critical natural resources, strengthening local food systems, preserving forests and farmland, improving water quality, and preparing for the impacts of climate change and extreme weather.

Connected by linking residents to parks, trails, open spaces, waterways, agricultural resources, and natural landscapes while supporting habitat connectivity, ecological health, and recreational access.

Welcoming by providing residents and visitors access to enjoy clean water, open spaces, healthy ecosystems, local food resources, and recreational opportunities that contribute to quality of life, public health, and community well-being.

Intentional by directing growth to appropriate locations and making coordinated investments that balance conservation, recreation, economic development, and climate adaptation.

What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members identified Auburn's natural resources, agricultural history, parks, trails, forests, open spaces, and water resources as some of the City's greatest strengths. Residents frequently highlighted the importance of protecting Lake Auburn, preserving farmland, maintaining wildlife habitat, improving water quality, and conserving open space as the community grows. Participants expressed concern about climate change, invasive species, extreme weather, urban sprawl, and development impacts on natural resources. Many residents supported directing growth toward developed areas while strengthening conservation, environmental stewardship, climate resilience, and local food systems.

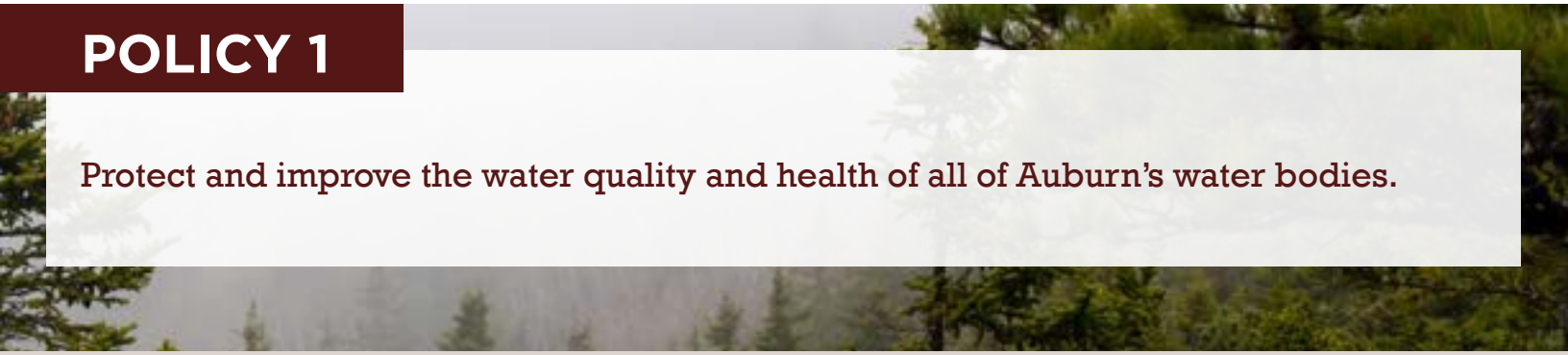
- When asked how to protect water and natural resources, preserving Lake Auburn water quality was the most frequently cited theme.
- For forest protection, participants most often supported directing growth to already developed areas and conserving forests and open space.
- For the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone, respondents more often favored keeping it as-is than expanding the range of uses.
- Environmental stewardship emerged as the community's top Framework for creating this plan.

What We Learned

Auburn has a wide array of natural and water resources that contribute to the community's rich history, quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental health. These natural resources—freshwater wetlands, rivers, lakes, and forested areas—are important to the City's design and fabric, and environmental protection continues to be a priority for the community.

- The Lake Auburn Watershed covers approximately 15 square miles and serves as a source of drinking water for both Auburn and Lewiston.
- Auburn contains extensive ecological resources, including wetlands, vernal pools, habitat blocks, rare species areas, and approximately 7 mapped deer wintering areas.
- Auburn has about 75 acres of solar development built or approved in the Agriculture and Resource Protection District as of June 2025.
- The number of farms in Androscoggin County declined by 22% and the total acreage of land in farms declined by 23% between 2017 and 2022.
- At the time of the 2019 The Auburn Public Woodlots Forest Management Plan, the City's 7 woodlots combined to total 552 acres, with 475 acres of productive forest land.

POLICY 1



Protect and improve the water quality and health of all of Auburn's water bodies.

Objective 1: Meet or exceed state-designated water quality standards for all waterbodies.

Auburn's lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, and watersheds are central to the City's essence and regional role as a steward of important water resources. Water quality generally refers to the physical, chemical, and biological condition of water and whether it can support uses such as drinking water, recreation, agriculture, fisheries, wildlife habitat, and ecological health. This work is especially important because Lake Auburn serves as a drinking water source for Auburn and Lewiston, while the Androscoggin River, Little Androscoggin River, Taylor Pond, and other water resources shape Auburn's ecological conditions, recreational access, and community essence.

Protecting water quality requires coordinated Approaches across disciplines. Development patterns, impervious surfaces, septic systems, road maintenance, agricultural practices, forestry activities, erosion, invasive species, and changing precipitation patterns can all affect runoff, pollutant loading, temperature, habitat, and the overall condition of water bodies.

Regional coordination is essential because water resources and watersheds extend beyond municipal boundaries. The City will continue working with neighboring communities, state agencies, conservation partners, Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission (LAWPC), and the Lewiston-Auburn Clean Water Authority (LACWA), whose regional position can support coordinated approaches to protecting Lake Auburn and related watershed resources. In support of these regional considerations, the City will continue to use local ordinances, capital planning, education, and partnerships to support water quality improvements over time.

State-designated water quality standards help define the level of protection needed for different water bodies and guide decisions about stormwater controls, shoreland protection, impaired stream management, phosphorus reduction, watershed monitoring, culvert and dam evaluation, and public education. Consistent monitoring and data sharing will help the City and its partners understand trends, identify emerging issues, and prioritize investments or regulatory updates where they are most needed.

Water quality protection also supports Auburn's broader growth and resilience goals. Directing development to appropriate areas,

maintaining watershed protections, applying low-impact development and stormwater standards, protecting shoreland and riparian areas, and coordinating with regional and state partners can help Auburn accommodate growth while protecting drinking water, reducing flood and erosion risks, supporting wildlife habitat, and maintaining public access to clean and healthy water resources. Together, these objectives position water quality as a core public health, environmental, infrastructure, and community priority for Auburn's future.

POLICY 2

Support the protection of natural resources like wetlands, vernal pools, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat blocks, and open space.*

**Indicates a State Requirement*

Objective 1: Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state laws regarding natural resource protection.

Objective 2: Encourage public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources.

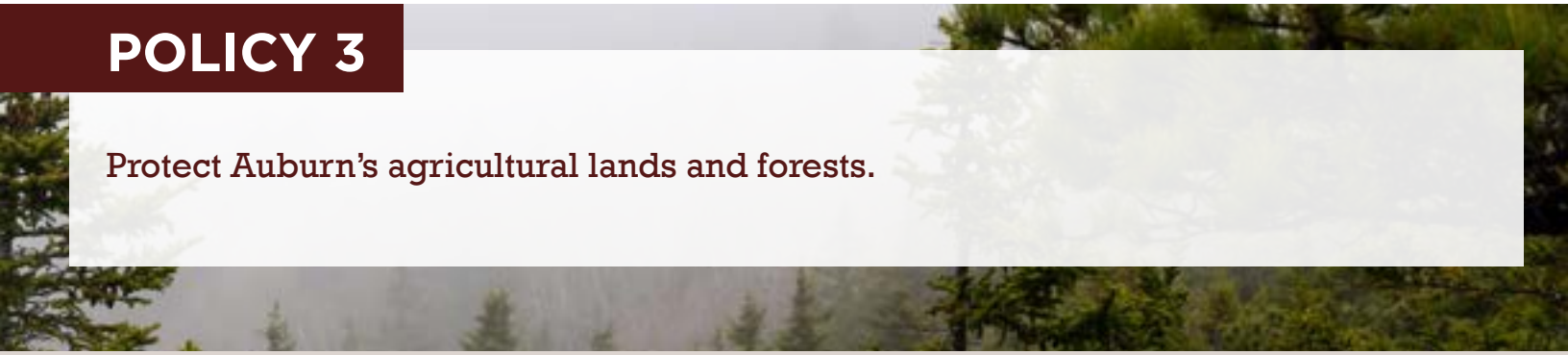
Objective 3: Generate and share accurate data, maps, and information on natural resources.

Auburn's wetlands, vernal pools, wildlife habitat blocks, open spaces, shorelands, and other natural resources form an interconnected natural resource system. These resources help manage stormwater, filter pollutants, support biodiversity, reduce flooding and erosion risks, maintain scenic and rural areas, and provide residents with access to nature. They also help define the areas where growth should be limited or carefully managed so development does not undermine the natural systems that support Auburn's quality of life.

Protecting these resources requires a clear understanding of where they are located.. Access to data, maps, and public information can help residents, landowners, developers, staff, boards, and elected officials identify sensitive areas early and make more informed decisions. This information should be paired with local ordinances that remain consistent with applicable state and federal requirements and provide clear expectations for mitigating impacts where development is proposed.

Natural resources extend beyond municipal boundaries, and a regional approach is needed to preserve these resources. Public and private partnerships are also essential to long-term natural resource protection. Conservation organizations, landowners, regional partners, state agencies, and community groups can help identify priority areas and advance projects that would be difficult for the City to complete alone.

By using accurate information, maintaining clear regulatory standards, and working with partners, Auburn can accommodate appropriate growth while protecting the wetlands, habitats, open spaces, and connected natural systems that support ecological conditions, public health, recreation, and community resilience.



POLICY 3

Protect Auburn's agricultural lands and forests.

Objective 1: Support access to locally grown and sourced food and support the agriculture economy.

Objective 2: Support farming in Auburn.

Objective 3: Improve management of forests on City-owned woodlots.

Objective 4: Improve protection and management of the City's street trees and urban canopy.

Objective 5: Support private property owners in managing and preserving their forest land.

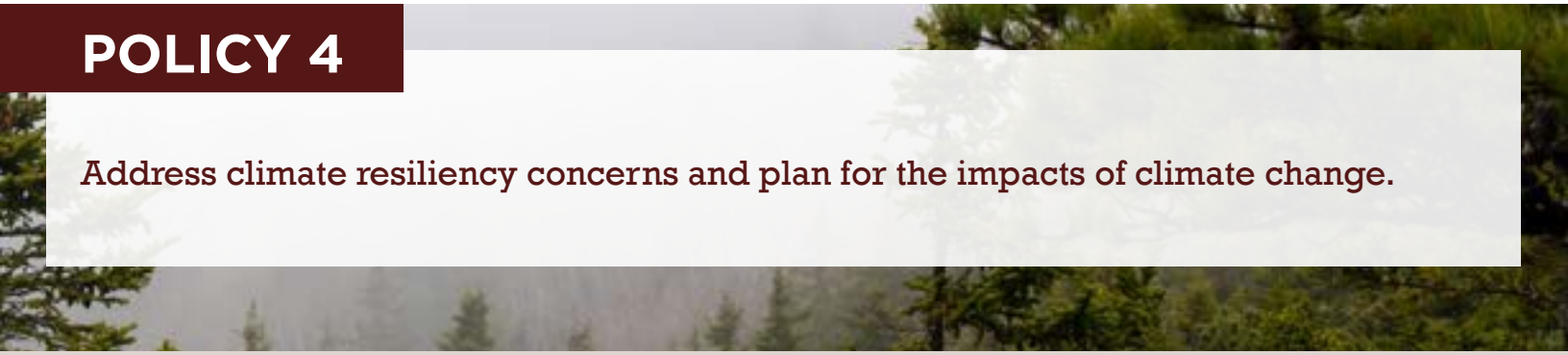
Auburn's agricultural lands and forests are central to the City's history, landscape, economy, and fabric. Long before Auburn developed as a regional service center, farms and forests shaped the City's settlement patterns and rural areas. That legacy remains visible today in the AGRP District, working farms, forested lands, local food systems, open fields, and rural roads that distinguish Auburn from more densely developed communities in the State.

Protecting agricultural land and forests is important because these areas provide more than open space. They support food production, farm businesses, wildlife habitat, scenic landscapes, groundwater recharge, stormwater absorption, carbon storage, and the rural form that many residents identified as a defining feature of Auburn.

Productive soils and large contiguous blocks of farmland and forest are difficult to replace once fragmented or converted to more intensive development. For this reason, land use decisions should continue to recognize agricultural and forest lands as long-term community assets rather than undeveloped land awaiting future conversion.

Supporting farming and forestry activities and strengthening education and outreach can help Auburn balance growth with long-term stewardship of its working lands. Objectives and actions in this plan outline priorities to maintain Auburn's agricultural tradition, protect natural resources, support local food and forestry economies, and preserve the rural landscapes that help make Auburn unique.

POLICY 4



Address climate resiliency concerns and plan for the impacts of climate change.

Objective 1: Develop a climate action plan, with a vulnerability assessment and heat-trapping gases inventory.

Objective 2: Maintain membership in the Community Resilience Partnership.

In recent years, the City has seen increased risks from intense storms, flooding, erosion, heat, drought, and other hazards that can affect residents, businesses, infrastructure, natural resources, and public services.

Planning for resilience will focus on practical risk reduction and readiness. A vulnerability assessment can help the City identify physical and social infrastructure that are most vulnerable. This information can guide capital planning, emergency preparedness, ordinance updates, public facility investments, and maintenance practices so the City can reduce future costs, limit disruptions, and protect public health and safety.

Natural systems are also part of Auburn's resilience framework. Wetlands, floodplains, forests, tree canopy, shoreland buffers, open spaces, and healthy soils can absorb stormwater, reduce runoff, moderate temperatures, limit erosion, protect water quality, and reduce pressure on built infrastructure. Protecting and restoring these systems can provide cost-effective benefits while supporting habitat, recreation, agriculture, and community quality of life.

Maintaining membership in the Community Resilience Partnership gives Auburn access to planning resources, technical support, and potential funding that can help advance priority projects. These efforts should remain tied to the City's capital improvement planning, regional coordination, infrastructure management, public safety planning, and natural resource protection work. Together, these objectives position resilience as a practical governance and investment priority that helps Auburn prepare for future conditions, reduce avoidable risks, and maintain reliable services for residents over time.



Parks and Recreation

Goal: Maintain and expand access to parks, trails, and recreational facilities that support social connection and active lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.

Policy 1	Provide universally available and connected parks, trails, and open space to meet the needs of all users.
Objective 1	Provide access to usable open space for all new development.
Objective 2	Improve park, trail, and open space stewardship and maintenance.
Objective 3	Maintain and enhance parks, trails, and open space connectivity and stewardship.
Objective 4	Provide points of access to major waterbodies for boating, fishing, swimming, and other means of recreation.

Policy 2	Provide recreation programming for people of all ages and abilities.
Objective 1	Establish a continuous evaluation and improvement framework for Auburn's recreation programming.
Objective 2	Complete and implement the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan using existing resources.
Objective 3	Improve the City's capacity to deliver well-managed and maintainable sporting events to benefit sports tourism and sporting opportunities for residents and visitors.

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by supporting public health, active lifestyles, and year-round recreation opportunities that enhance quality of life.

Connected by expanding access to parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation programs that bring people together and strengthen community relationships.

Welcoming by providing a wide range recreation opportunities and public spaces available to residents and visitors of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

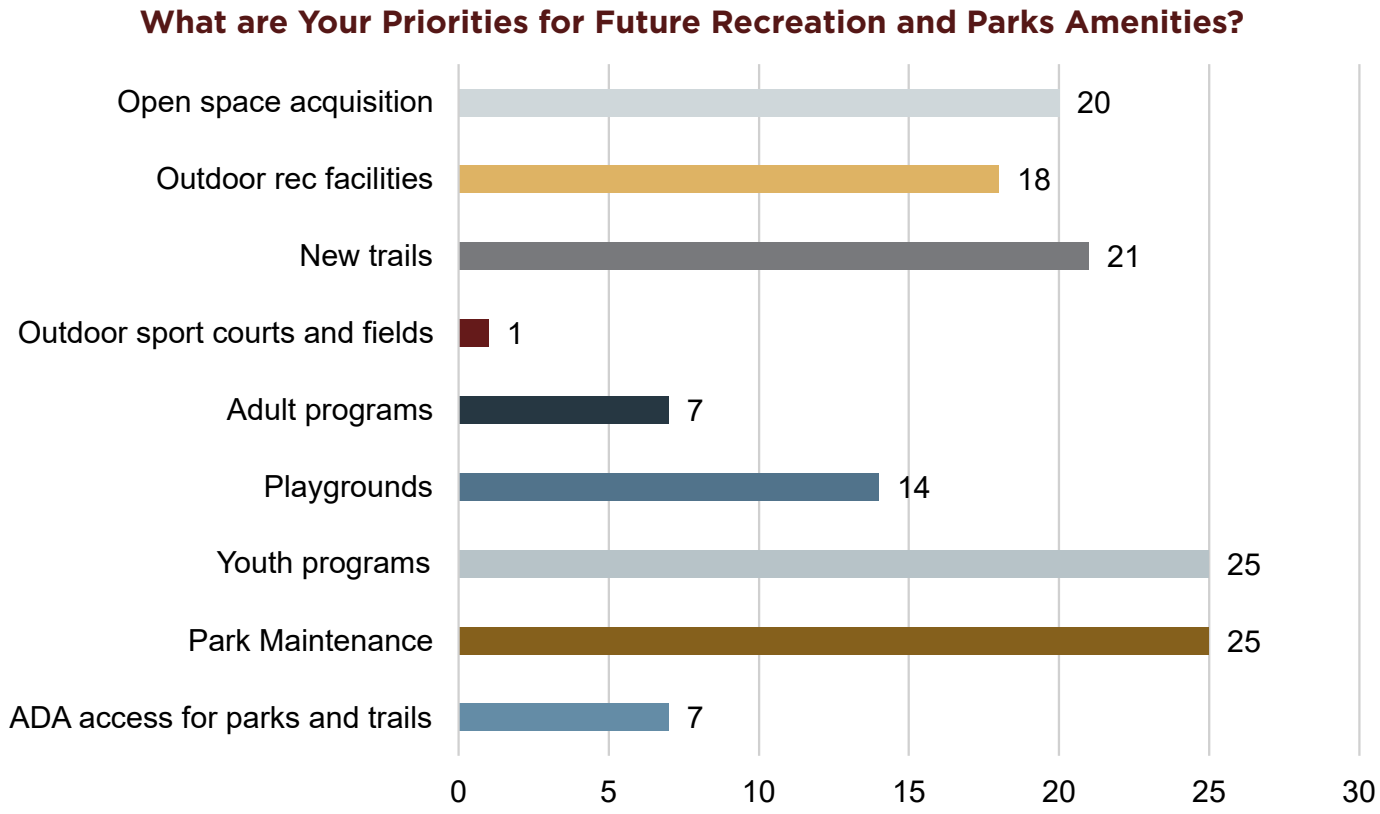
Intentional by investing in parks, trails, facilities, and programs that meet community needs while improving connectivity, availability, and long-term stewardship of recreational assets.

What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members identified parks, trails, lakes, open spaces, and recreational opportunities as some of Auburn's greatest assets. Residents expressed a desire for expanded trail networks, improved park maintenance, additional youth programs, enhanced recreation facilities, and greater access to outdoor recreation. Participants also supported preserving open space, improving ADA ease of access, expanding connections between parks and trails, and investing in recreation amenities that support both residents and visitors.

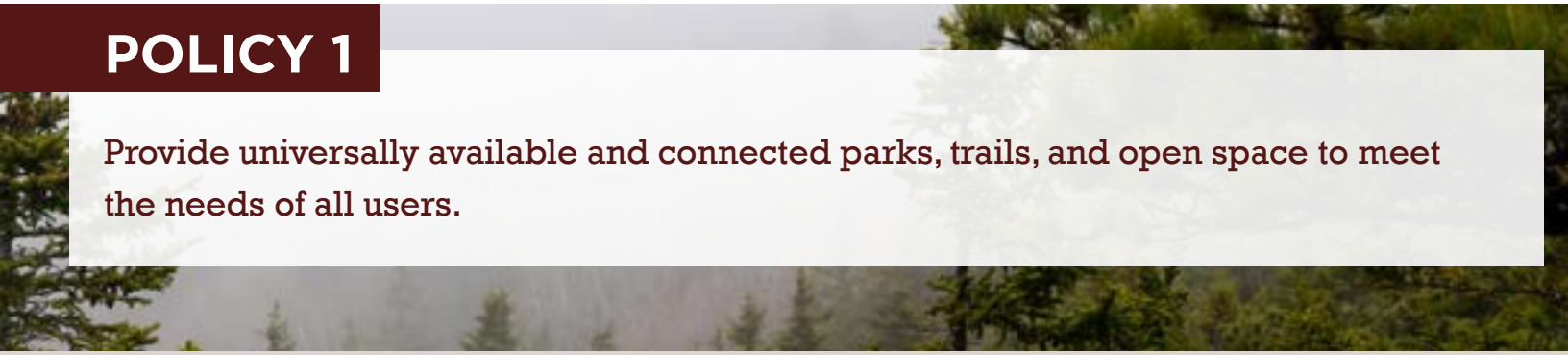
- Parks, trails, lakes, rivers, and open spaces were consistently identified among Auburn's most valued assets across nearly every engagement activity.
- Youth engagement highlighted recreation as one of the strongest community needs, particularly opportunities for teens and young adults.



Source: Budgeting activity at the Natural Resources Open House event, Social Pinpoint

What We Learned

- Auburn's largest recreation space is Mount Apatite Park, a 325-acre wooded area featuring 4 miles of trails for non-motorized activities such as hiking, biking, and snowshoeing.
- The Auburn Recreation Department offered a total of 68 programs in 2024 with a total enrollment of 9,874 people.
- In addition to the 6 municipally owned and operated indoor facilities that support year-round recreation, Auburn offers a variety of non-municipal recreation facilities that contribute to the City's overall access to sports and outdoor activities



POLICY 1

Provide universally available and connected parks, trails, and open space to meet the needs of all users.

Objective 1: Provide access to usable open space for all new development.

Objective 2: Improve park, trail, and open space stewardship and maintenance.

Objective 3: Maintain and enhance parks, trails, and open space connectivity and stewardship.

Objective 4: Provide points of access to major waterbodies for boating, fishing, swimming, and other means of recreation.

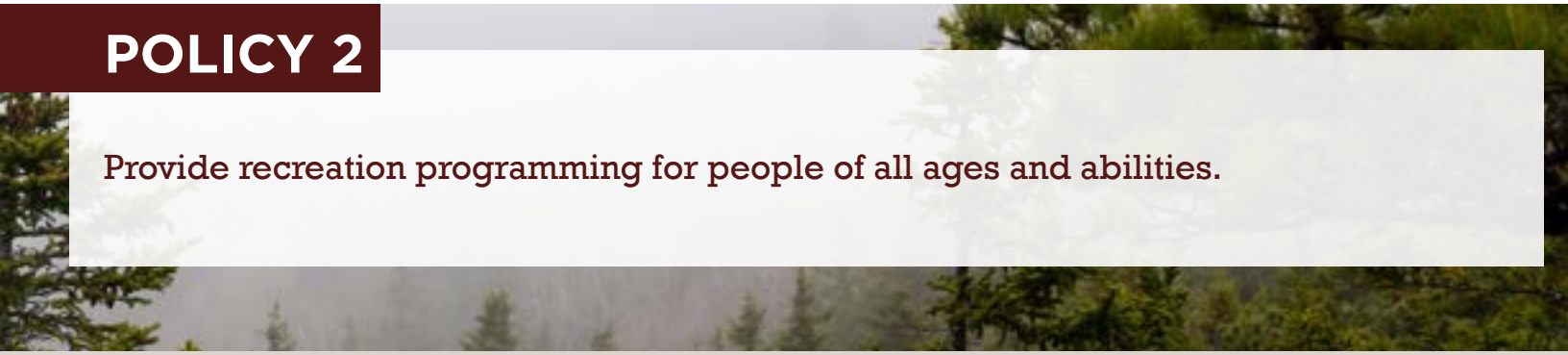
Parks, trails, open spaces, and access to water are essential community assets that support health, recreation, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. A connected and available network of these resources provides opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities to enjoy the outdoors, build community connections, and experience Auburn's natural landscapes.

Connecting these resources to the City's broader road and sidewalk infrastructure network also supports opportunities for active transportation. As Auburn grows, the City should leverage opportunities brought by new development to preserve and enhance access to open space, creating opportunities to expand park and trail networks and strengthen connections between existing recreational and natural areas. For significant projects, Police Department, Fire Department, and 911 Communications input should be considered to help ensure that emergency access, location identification, lighting, rescue access, trail markings, parking, after-hours use, waterfront safety, and other operational concerns are met.

In addition to City-owned parks, there are several conservation areas owned and maintained by nonprofit organizations, such as the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission (LAWPC), the Auburn Land Trust (ALT), and Friends of Mount Apatite. Continuing to coordinate with these organizations and private entities to support environmental stewardship, maintain land for public use, and expand access is a priority for Auburn residents who value the City's natural assets.

Many of these parks and conservation areas also offer access to water and aquatic recreation, including Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond, and the Androscoggin River. After many decades of degraded water quality in the Androscoggin and Little Androscoggin Rivers, residents have welcomed the opportunity

to fish, canoe, and kayak on the rivers. It is a priority of the City to maintain these resources for public use and to continue to expand points of access for boating, swimming, fishing, and other recreational uses.



POLICY 2

Provide recreation programming for people of all ages and abilities.

Objective 1: Establish a continuous evaluation and improvement framework for Auburn's recreation programming.

Objective 2: Complete and implement the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan using existing resources.

Objective 3: Improve the City's capacity to deliver well-managed and maintainable sporting events to benefit sports tourism and sporting opportunities for residents and visitors.

Recreation programs play an important role in promoting health, social connection, and quality of life for residents of all ages and abilities. A varied and universally available recreation system helps meet the evolving needs of the community while creating opportunities for active living, lifelong learning, and community engagement.

Auburn residents have access to public fields and several indoor recreation and community facilities. In addition, private and nonprofit-run facilities, including the Norway Savings Bank Arena and several community gardens, provide additional recreation opportunity. Coordination and evaluation of programming across departments, facilities, and external organizations can help reduce redundancy in offerings and fill programming needs while maximizing utilization of recreation facilities. The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, once completed, can help align programming and facilities with community needs.

In addition to local programming to support residents, the City can expand opportunities to host regional sporting events and benefit from sports tourism. Auburn's central location and access to several indoor and outdoor fields and the ice arena can be leveraged to expand access to sporting events for residents and visitors while also supporting economic growth.

Through efficient management and coordination of recreation resources, strategic planning to align programming with community needs, and leveraging economic opportunity of existing facilities, Auburn can enhance recreational opportunities for residents, attract visitors, support local economic activity, and help ensure the long-term maintainability of its parks and recreation services.



Infrastructure

Goal: Maintain existing infrastructure and plan strategic investments that prepare the City to respond to changing community needs and future challenges.

Policy 1

Provide public facilities in an efficient, coordinated, and fiscally responsible manner that meets current needs and responds to anticipated growth and demographic change.*

Objective 1	Update the 5-year capital improvement plan to a 10-year capital improvement plan.*
Objective 2	Explore opportunities for infrastructure coordination and joint purchasing programs.*
Objective 3	Prioritize infrastructure investment in high-growth areas designated in the Future Land Use Plan.*

**Indicates a State Requirement*

This goal makes Auburn more:

Resilient by maintaining and upgrading critical infrastructure that supports public safety, economic growth, service delivery, and long-term community needs.

Connected by providing residents, businesses, and institutions with reliable access to transportation, utilities, parks, public facilities, and community services.

Welcoming by offering safe, reliable, and well-maintained public infrastructure that supports quality of life for residents and visitors.

Intentional by aligning infrastructure investments with growth areas, community priorities, long-term planning efforts, and fiscal endurance goals.

What We Heard and What We Learned

What We Heard

Community members supported investing in infrastructure that keeps pace with growth, improves public safety, supports economic development, and enhances quality of life. Participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining existing assets, planning for future infrastructure needs, and coordinating investments with growth areas. Participants highlighted the importance of maintaining and improving the infrastructure and appearance of key entry corridors, like Washington Street, for Auburn's economic future.

- When asked what they would like to change about Auburn, middle and high school students most frequently identified infrastructure improvements, including road maintenance, traffic improvements, and sidewalk maintenance.
- Community members emphasized that infrastructure investments should be

focused in higher density areas and heavily trafficked areas to maximize public investment, support economic development, and avoid costly service expansion into rural areas.

- Participants highlighted the importance of maintaining and improving key entry corridors, including Washington Street, recognizing that the condition, appearance, and functionality of major transportation routes influence community image.

What We Learned

The City maintains a strong capital improvement program and continues to plan for ongoing maintenance for facilities and infrastructure.

- The Auburn Public Works Department oversees the maintenance and plowing of 540 lane miles of roads, as well as 60 miles of sidewalks
- The Public Works Department is the only public works department in Maine that is nationally accredited by the American Public Works Association (APWA).
- The City maintains 52 municipal buildings and facilities, with an average facility age of 56 years, underscoring the importance of long-term capital investment, asset management, and replacement planning.
- The Auburn School Department is comprised of 6 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, and 1 alternative school, and serves students in Auburn and surrounding communities.

POLICY 1

Provide public facilities in an efficient, coordinated, and fiscally responsible manner that meets current needs and responds to anticipated growth and demographic change.*

Objective 1: Update the 5-year capital improvement plan to a 10-year capital improvement plan.*

Objective 2: Explore opportunities for infrastructure coordination and joint purchasing programs.*

Objective 3: Prioritize infrastructure investment in high-growth areas designated in the Future Land Use Plan.*

**Indicates a State Requirement*

Public facilities and infrastructure are fundamental to supporting community growth, maintaining quality public services, and helping ensure responsible stewardship of public resources. A 10-year capital improvement plan will help the City plan for necessary long-term infrastructure and facility upgrades and prioritize community needs as identified through this plan. Large capital projects or investments can be deferred as elected officials navigate challenging budget decisions. This can result in a greater cost to taxpayers for the same improvements in future years.

Municipal operating costs continue to increase, and communities are tasked with finding creative solutions to minimize costs for residents. Municipal cost-sharing and joint purchasing programs can help Auburn maximize the value of public investments by reducing costs and improving service delivery. By partnering with neighboring communities, regional organizations, or other agencies, the City could take on new infrastructure projects and share equipment, facilities, specialized staff, and services that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive to provide independently. These collaborative approaches allow municipalities to stretch limited resources, reduce duplication of effort, and maintain high-quality services while strengthening regional coordination and long-term fiscal endurance.

As Auburn evolves, investments in roads, utilities, public buildings, and other municipal assets should be planned and coordinated with the City's Future Land Use Plan to direct infrastructure investments in alignment with areas designated for high growth. Investing in infrastructure and facilities in high-growth and denser areas will help to minimize cost per capita for long-term maintenance.

Regional Coordination



Photo: Richard Plourde Photography

Regional Coordination

Regional Connections

As a regional hub for services, employment, and housing, Auburn plays an important role in addressing regional priorities. The City is a gateway to places across Southern, Western, and Central Maine, and roughly half of the State's population lives within a one-hour drive of Auburn. Home to a wide range of recreational, cultural, educational, and commercial amenities, Auburn is both a destination and a regional service center. Auburn is an affordable community for residents working in nearby cities, offers quality education, and supports a strong agricultural industry.

The City recognizes that many municipal challenges—including public safety, infrastructure maintenance, transportation, economic development, water and wastewater management, and public health—extend beyond municipal boundaries and may be most efficiently and cost-effectively addressed through regional collaboration.

Interlocal agreements offer Auburn and its neighboring communities, particularly the City of Lewiston and surrounding towns, an opportunity to share services, facilities, equipment, and personnel in ways that reduce duplication, lower per-capita costs, and improve service quality for residents. Regional coordination can also strengthen the City's position in pursuing state and federal funding, support coordinated land use and transportation planning, and build resilience in emergency response and public works capacity.

The City should establish a standing process to identify, evaluate, and pursue regional cooperation opportunities, including: conducting a periodic inventory of existing interlocal agreements and service-sharing arrangements to assess performance and identify gaps; convening regular dialogue with the City of Lewiston and other regional partners to explore shared service delivery in areas such as public safety dispatch, fire and EMS mutual aid, public works and equipment sharing, recreation programming, and administrative or technology services; evaluating the feasibility of joint purchasing and shared capital investments for high-cost infrastructure and equipment; and pursuing formal studies, where warranted, to determine the fiscal and operational benefits of expanded regional partnerships. The City should designate responsibility for this ongoing effort within its administration and report progress to the City Council and the public at regular intervals throughout the planning period.

Transportation

The City will continue to work with the Lewiston Auburn Transportation Committee (LATC), and ATRC to address regional transportation challenges. LATC provides a public bus system, Citylink, serving the Lewiston-Auburn area. Coordination with each of these agencies and the City of Lewiston is crucial to improve service, signage and information on bus routes and schedules.

The City will also continue to coordinate with regional rail and air travel partners, including the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport (KLEW) and CSX Transportation, St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, and Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company to help ensure

infrastructure needs are met. The City will continue to collaborate with Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) to complete 2 corridor studies for Washington Street and Minot Avenue and to implement recommendations to improve safe and efficient travel along both corridors.

In addition to public transportation, the airport and railways, regional connection, and expansion of trail networks will require coordination between municipalities, regional trail and conservation organizations, and State agencies. Maintaining and promoting trails can support connectivity between neighboring communities and provide additional opportunities for recreation.

Water Quality Protection

The City will continue to partner with conservation organizations, the State, and municipal partners in monitoring and improving water quality. Understanding land use activities have significant impacts on water quality, the City will work with the City of Lewiston, and the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission (LAWPC), to administer water quality improvement programs and studies. Additionally, the City will coordinate with partners to help ensure landowners and farmers have access to resources on best management practices to reduce pollution within the Lake Auburn Watershed, including the Androscoggin River and the Little Androscoggin River. The City will also coordinate with the State to evaluate and replace culverts consistent with Stream Smart Programs as well as incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards into the City ordinances in alignment with the Maine Stormwater Management Law.

Resiliency

Resiliency planning requires regional coordination and support. The City participates in the Maine Community Resilience Partnership, which provides Auburn the opportunity to seek funding for resilience investments, including the opportunity to partner with other communities to seek funding where appropriate.

Additionally, collaborating with surrounding communities to share resources related to climate planning, education, outreach materials, and resources can benefit the region and support municipalities and residents in implementing more responsible practices.

Conservation agencies and regional organizations have supported efforts to conserve open space, protect environmental health, and implement resiliency initiatives. The City will continue to work with the Androscoggin Land Trust and State agencies to support regional and local resilience initiatives.

Economic Growth

With downtown Lewiston directly across the river from Auburn, the 2 downtown areas are the heart of one economic region. As such, the 2 cities maintain an ongoing partnership and communication on community and economic development initiatives. The City also benefits from tourism to the Western Mountain Region and Lakes Region in Maine, with visitors traveling from all parts of the country. Auburn's growing technology and innovation sector, including the Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub, and the presence of the Auburn/Lewiston Municipal Airport

further strengthen the City's role as a regional employment, business, and transportation center. The City will:

- Collaborate with partners to enhance existing transportation options for the City's workforce as well as engage with surrounding employers to advance economic development priorities.
- Collaborate with higher education institutions to identify and meet workforce needs.
- Engage with businesses and employers to enhance business retention.
- Continue to collaborate with the State to advance economic growth.

Housing

Housing affordability and availability is a regional and statewide issue. The City cannot address housing needs without strong collaboration across the county and State and with external nonprofit and private sector partners. One major priority is eliminating chronic homelessness and rehousing individuals. In support of this priority, the City plans to engage with regional and state housing coalitions. Additionally, the City plans to collaborate with housing coalitions and the State to create development ready areas throughout the City, including addressing ordinance and zoning issues that can limit high-quality development. The Auburn Housing Needs Assessment will support these priorities as the City coordinates with the Auburn Housing Authority, the State, and other municipalities.

Implementation Plan Overview



Photo: Richard Plourde Photography

Implementation Plan Overview

Capital Improvement Plan

The City has an established Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that plays a critical role in maintaining infrastructure, delivering municipal services, and planning for long-term fiscal stability. This Plan builds on that foundation by providing a policy and land use framework to guide how and where capital investments should be prioritized. Long-range capital planning is a key theme carried through the plan's policies and actions, including a recommendation to expand the City's capital improvement planning horizon from 5 to 10 years. Aligning CIP with the goals and future land use strategy in this Plan will help ensure that public investments support Auburn's vision for balanced growth, neighborhood stability, and resource protection.

Integrating the Comprehensive Plan with the CIP will allow the City to intentionally direct infrastructure investments to areas identified for growth, reinvestment, and preservation. Coordinating these efforts will help Auburn avoid inefficient or reactive spending patterns and instead plan proactively for growth and change. Additionally, this alignment should allow the City to better manage development patterns, reduce the need for costly emergency repairs, and promote alignment between infrastructure investments and desired community outcomes.

The CIP should be used as an implementation tool for this Plan, with projects evaluated not only based on condition and need, but also on consistency with this Plan's goals and policies.

As part of the annual CIP update process, City staff should review proposed capital projects to determine how they support identified priorities, including housing development, economic vitality, transportation connectivity, and natural resource protection. Projects that advance these priorities should be elevated during capital planning and budgeting discussions.

The City should also use the CIP to identify opportunities to leverage external funding sources, including state and federal grants, particularly for projects that align with regional priorities such as housing, climate resilience, and infrastructure modernization. Aligning the CIP with the this Plan will strengthen Auburn's ability to compete for funding by demonstrating a clear, long-term strategy for investment.

Implementation Approach

Implementation Framework

This Plan reflects Auburn's shared vision for balancing growth, protecting natural resources, strengthening neighborhoods, and enhancing quality of life. Successful implementation will require sustained coordination among City leadership, staff, boards and committees, and community partners. This section outlines how Auburn will move from vision to action while helping ensure this Plan remains a practical, adaptable tool for decision-making over time.

Implementation should be integrated into the City's annual budgeting and capital planning processes. Each year, City staff, along with City boards and committees, should evaluate which actions to prioritize based on available

funding, staffing capacity, community needs, and emerging opportunities such as grants or partnerships. This prioritization process should be closely tied to land use and growth management decisions, including aligning capital investments with areas identified as appropriate for growth. Tracking these metrics will help the City evaluate whether growth patterns align with community preferences expressed through the future land use engagement and broader outreach efforts.

Monitoring Progress

The City should conduct an annual review of implementation progress, ideally coordinated with the budget cycle. This review should summarize completed actions, identify challenges or obstacles, and recommend adjustments to priorities based on changing conditions. The annual review should also align with the City Manager's and City Council's annual goal-setting process to create the City Manager's Annual Workplan, creating a direct connection between Plan implementation and the City's strategic priorities. This will allow the City to better monitor progress, maintain accountability, and advance priority actions. Ultimately, the City should present the findings of the annual review to City Council. Performance metrics listed in the implementation plan will provide clear guidance to support reporting and tracking on actions over the planning period.

In addition to annual monitoring, Auburn should conduct a more comprehensive evaluation of the Plan every 3 to 5 years. This evaluation should assess whether policies, land use designations, and priorities continue to reflect community needs and values, particularly as development trends, economic conditions, legislation, or demographic patterns evolve. The City might consider formal amendments to the Plan as needed to respond to significant changes or emerging opportunities.

The implementation matrix included in this Plan serves as a roadmap for achieving Auburn's goals. It organizes actions by focus area, identifies responsible parties, and provides guidance on timelines, cost considerations, and potential partners. This tool is intended to support coordinated decision-making across departments and inform resource allocation.

Adaptability and Engagement

As with any long-term plan, flexibility will be essential. External factors such as funding availability, regional economic conditions, development pressures, and community priorities might influence the pace and sequencing of implementation. The City should use the matrix as a guide while remaining responsive to new information to help ensure that actions continue to reflect Auburn's goals of balanced growth, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.

Auburn's engagement process demonstrated the importance of ongoing public involvement. The City should continue engaging residents and stakeholders when advancing major initiatives, including zoning updates, capital investments, and future land use decisions, to ensure implementation remains aligned with community priorities.

Implementation Plan Components

Actions

This column identifies the specific steps the City will take to implement an objective. They translate the Comprehensive Plan's goals, policies, and objectives into practical work that can be assigned, prioritized, tracked, and completed over time.

Related Objective

This column identifies connections between an action and objectives in other goal areas. These connections show where implementation may support multiple priorities, require coordination across departments or partners, or depend on progress in another part of the plan.

Responsible Group

This column identifies the City departments expected to lead, coordinate, or support implementation of each action. Only City departments are listed in this column to clarify internal responsibility. Many actions may also involve collaboration with boards, committees, community organizations, regional partners, state agencies, or private entities, even if those partners are not listed here.

Anticipated Timeline

Short-Term (0 to 3 years)	Immediate actions to build momentum or address urgent needs
Medium-Term (3 to 6 years)	Actions requiring coordination, planning, or phased implementation
Long-Term (6 to 10 years)	Actions tied to longer investment cycles or major capital improvements
Ongoing	Actions, monitoring, or programs that are occurring today or will be ongoing once started

Performance Metric

This column evaluates whether an action has been successfully implemented and is achieving its intended outcome. Metrics might include completed projects, adopted policies, service improvements, participation levels, funding secured, or other quantifiable indicators. All actions include annual or as-needed reports to City Council to monitor performance.

Funding Source

This column identifies broadly available private, federal, state, local, philanthropic, or other grant and financing opportunities that could help support implementation. Not every action will have an identified funding source, and listed sources should be reviewed as opportunities change over time. The funding sources listed are not exhaustive of all grant or financing opportunities, and additional or new funding sources may become available throughout the planning lifecycle.

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Implementation Plan

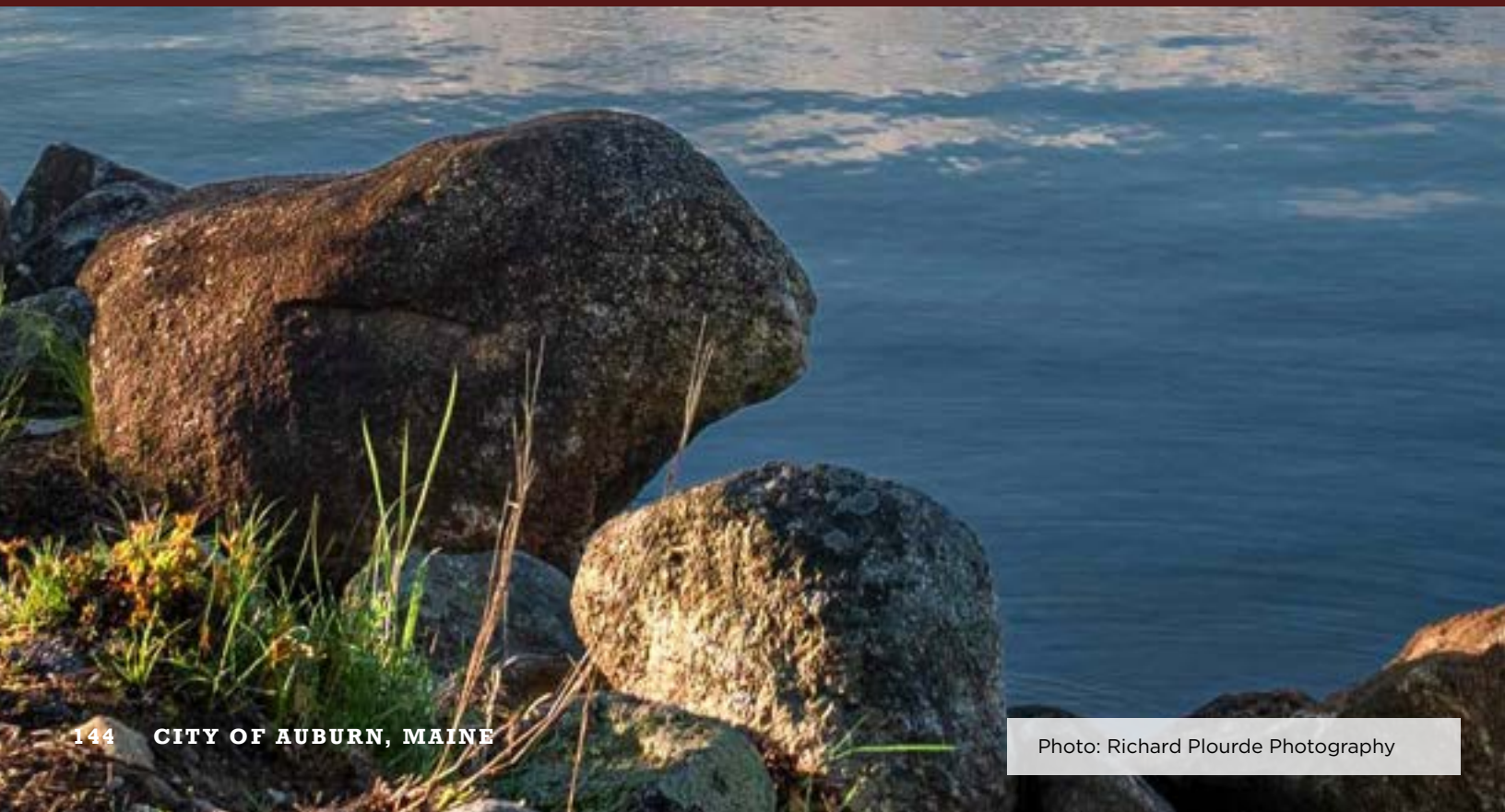


Photo: Richard Plourde Photography

Future Land Use

Community Goal: *Promote thoughtful land use planning that balances fiscally prudent and ecologically conscious growth with support for Auburn's existing commercial centers, neighborhoods, and rural areas.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Direct growth to the high-growth area to encourage compact, efficient, and fiscally responsible development.

Objective 1: Ensure land use decisions are coordinated, predictable, and supported by efficient permitting and administration.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 1.1.1	Prioritize municipal capital investments in the 10-year CIP that support redevelopment, infill, and multimodal transportation access within high-growth areas.*	FLU 2.1, I1.1	City Manager, Public Services Department	Ongoing	A minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments directed into high-growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan. Annual update to City Council.*	Planning Partnership Initiative Planning | Maine Department of Transportation **https://www.maine.gov/dot/programs-services/planning**
FLU 1.1.2	Coordinate with partners, including neighboring communities and regional organizations, on land use issues with cross-boundary impacts.*		Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained coordination. Annual update to City Council, including a report on achievements and ongoing issues.	
FLU 1.1.3	Provide and budget for permitting, planning, and code enforcement staff with the tools, training, required certifications, and support necessary to efficiently and effectively create and enforce land use regulations.*	H 1.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Ongoing	Completion and maintenance of required staff certifications and continuing education. Documentation of annual training activities, technology or process improvements implemented, and periodic internal review confirming staff capacity to administer and enforce land use regulations. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 1.1.4	Evaluate and refine planning and permitting procedures to be applied consistently using objective criteria in planning board decision making. Provide education, training, and guidance on development processes for planning board members.*	H 1.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Ongoing	Completion of a periodic review of permitting and development review procedures, including identification of opportunities to streamline reviews in high-growth areas. Publication or update of applicant guidance materials outlining change development and permitting processes. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 1.1.5	Annually evaluate the Future Land Use Map and category descriptions for consideration of zoning updates. Apply different zoning districts within a single land use category where appropriate to reflect transitions across a land use category.	FLU 2.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Ongoing	Utilization of the adopted Future Land Use Map and category descriptions as the primary reference for zoning ordinance amendments and land use policy updates. Documentation in staff reports and ordinance amendments demonstrating consistency between proposed zoning changes and the Future Land Use Plan. Update to City Council as necessary.	
FLU 1.1.6	Establish an annual report to City Council to track new development approvals by location, type, form, and intensity to evaluate consistency with the Future Land Use Plan.*	FLU 2.1	Planning and Permitting Department, Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Ongoing	Annual development report created and provided to City Council. The report should include data on land use approvals, issued permits, projects under construction and completed, and data in line with actions throughout the Future Land Use objectives and actions. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 1.1.7	Evaluate the Comprehensive Plan every 3 years to amend and align the Future Land Use map with current trends, regulations, and best available data and practices. Amendments must follow state law to amend a comprehensive plan.	NE 2.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Evaluated Comprehensive Plan. Recommended and adopted amendments that align with current trends, regulations, and best available data and practices where feasible. Update to City Council as necessary.	

Policy #2, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 2: Update local ordinances to align with the goals and intent of the Future Land Use Plan, including clearly defining desired scale, intensity, and location of future development, and clearly defining protective measures for natural resources, rural areas, and waterfront areas.*

Objective 1: Promote dense, mixed-use development that strengthens Auburn's economic core and creates a vibrant, walkable environment with a variety of commercial and residential uses in the High Density, High Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 2.1.1	Establish minimum development or density expectations in High Density Core areas to discourage underutilization of prime redevelopment sites.	FLU 1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Adoption of minimum intensity or form standards (e.g., minimum height, floor area, or density thresholds) for High Density Core districts. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 2.1.2	Evaluate necessary updates to form-based code standards and zoning standards among Downtown, High Density Cores, and Mixed-Use Corridors to reflect varying contexts, desired scale, and public realm relationships.	H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Updated form-based code to further promote development in line with land use categories. Annual update to City Council.	Downtown Revitalization Program: CDBG https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process
FLU 2.1.3	Amend ordinances to encourage mixed-use development and buildings that integrate residential, commercial, civic, and open space elements within new and existing developments and buildings. Ensure mixed-use development and mixed-use buildings reflect appropriate scale(s). Review and update interconnected ordinances, such as traffic and waste management, to maintain consistency with the City's land use framework.	H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Completion of a policy and ordinance audit identifying opportunities to support mixed use development. Adoption of ordinance amendments permitting residential and commercial uses within the same development, subject to form and compatibility standards. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.4	Amend ordinances to allow for flexible building forms and design standards that accommodate changing market conditions over time (e.g., adaptive reuse, ground-floor uses with flexible upper-floor uses).	H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that allow for flexible building forms, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.5	Coordinate land use planning with economic development efforts to brand and market key growth nodes (e.g., Great Falls Plaza, Auburn Mall area, Exit 75).	E1.3	Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department	Short-Term	Marketing and branding established for priority development areas by December 2027. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.6	Amend off-street parking regulations to allow creative parking solutions to encourage development in high-growth areas (e.g., incentivize shared parking solutions, create a parking district to fund structured parking garages, or implement flexible parking requirements). With any parking amendments, assess impacts on Public Works operations, including snow plowing, snow removal, and automated trash collection.	T3.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that allow creative parking solutions, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 2.1.7	Amend ordinances to reduce obstacles to development and redevelopment, such as setback, parking, lot coverage, density, or lot size requirements, where appropriate.	E1.2, T3.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that reduce development-related regulatory obstacles, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.8	Assess protections for natural resources and habitats, like wetlands, vernal pools, and shoreland areas, and determine if additional protections are needed to prevent development in environmentally sensitive areas, including in high-growth areas.	H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Completed review of existing local, state, and federal protections for wetlands, vernal pools, shoreland areas, and other environmentally sensitive resources, including those located within high-growth areas. Ordinances and policies updated as needed to improve environmental protection. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.9	Coordinate zoning ordinances, form-based codes, and design standards with ongoing and future transportation studies to ensure land use standards and street design support desired development patterns.	FLU1.1, NE1.1, NE2.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Completed coordinated land use recommendations following corridor or transportation studies. Adoption of ordinance or design standard updates aligned with study findings. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.10	Establish site design standards for Mixed-Use Corridor and Mixed-Use Residential areas to improve mobility and to create safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.	E1.2, H1.2, T1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that establish site design standards related to access and circulation, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.11	Establish and maintain a list of underutilized properties and large parking areas and create a plan for future redevelopment for each property and parking area.	T2.1	Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department, Business and Community Development Department.	Short-Term	Data on redevelopment projects along designated corridors and documentation of reuse of underutilized parcels or parking areas included in the annual development update to City Council.	
FLU 2.1.12	Amend ordinances to establish buffer and transition standards between industrial, commercial, and residential land uses and between high growth and moderate growth areas.	FLU1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that establish buffer standards, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Support moderate growth that provides a smooth transition from urban neighborhoods to rural landscapes in the Moderate Density, Moderate Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 2.2.1	Develop ordinances that encourage cluster and/or conservation subdivisions in transition areas between low- and moderate-density areas to preserve open space while accommodating housing.	FLU1.1, H1.1, H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that encourage cluster or conservation subdivisions, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
FLU 2.2.2	Amend zoning ordinances to allow neighborhood-serving commercial uses in residential areas where they are compatible with residential context, form, and scale.	FLU1.1, FLU2.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that allow limited neighborhood-serving commercial uses where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Preserve Auburn's low-density places by protecting agricultural and natural resources and limiting development to maintain rural landscapes and environmental health in the Low Density, Low Growth areas as delineated in the Future Land Use Map.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
FLU 2.3.1	Maintain low-density development standards in Agriculture, Recreation, and Open Space areas, while allowing limited residential development that supports agriculture, forestry, recreation, and open space land uses.		Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Data on development approvals in Agriculture, Recreation, and Open Space areas included in the annual development report to City Council.	
FLU 2.3.2	Conduct regular engagement with the agriculture community to ensure that zoning standards do not unintentionally restrict modern farming practices.	NE3.1, NE3.2	Planning and Permitting Department, AG Working Group	Ongoing	At least one documented agricultural stakeholder engagement activity per year, with issues and outcomes summarized for staff and Planning Board review. Annual update to City Council.	

Community

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 local organizations and partners.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Support access to life-long learning opportunities

Objective 1: Maintain a high school graduation rate of 95%.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.1.1	Maintain the 4 different diploma pathways and ensure high school credit recovery opportunities are available for all high school students.	C1.3	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	4 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 student's 4 years in high school.	C1.3	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Each student is assigned classroom-based support. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.1.3	Maintain supported and coordinated transitions from middle school to high school.	C1.2	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	3 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 susceptible to 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.	C1.2, C5.2	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.	
C 1.1.7	Maintain resources, tools and support networks to foster safe learning environments for students of all abilities.	C1.2	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Resources for students of all abilities are available and utilized. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Support the City's elementary schools and Auburn Middle School.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.2.1	Engage families in planning processes to understand their needs and priorities related to student learning, wellbeing, and school experience.	C1.2, C1.3	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Documented engagement with families. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.2.2	Maintain and expand after-school summer, and enrichment programming that aligns with identified student needs.	C1.2, C1.3	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Maintained and expanded programming for students. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.2.3	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 and the Minot Avenue and Court Street studies.	T1.1, T2.1, T3.1	Auburn School Department	Medium-Term	Completed evaluation of transportation around school sites and incorporation with the Active Transportation Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.2.4	Consider ways to utilize school facilities to serve a wider range of community and neighborhood functions.	PR2.3, C2.1, C4.1	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Increased utilization of school facilities for community and neighborhood functions. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Ensure residents have access to foundational life skills to support long-term well-being.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.3.1	Consider partnering with organizations and other City departments to provide additional pathway resources for students who need assistance navigating behavioral health services, financial knowledge and health care, and housing challenges. Ensure funding is available to meet additional pathway resource offerings.	E1.2, C1.1, C1.2	Auburn School Department, General Assistance and Public Health Departments	Medium – Long-Term	Documented guidance counseling resources and 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.	C1.5, E1.2	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Articulated agreements with colleges and universities and partnerships with local businesses. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.3.3	Collaborate with partners to develop and offer practical life-skills programming, such as financial literacy, career planning, digital safety, and health management, to ensure residents have access to tools that support everyday decision-making.		Parks and Recreation Department, Business and Community Development Department	Medium – Long-Term	Documented program plans and offerings of life-skills programming. Annual update to City Council	

Objective 4: Increase access to early learning opportunities (ages 3 – 5).

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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	Documented and maintained 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.	E1.2	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Maintained and expanded Pre-K programming during each school year. 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.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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.	
C 1.5.2	Identify workforce gaps and necessary training programs based on assessment findings.	E1.2	Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department, Auburn School Department	Medium-Term	Publication of a skills gap summary. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.5.3	Collaborate with partners to maintain and expand adult workforce training programs that: 1) Address identified industry needs (e.g., trades, healthcare, technology, transportation); and 2) Prepare residents for available jobs in the local economy, including English language instruction to ensure all residents have basic skills to find employment.	E1.2, C1.4	Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department, Auburn School Department	Long-Term	Development, support, and expansion of workforce training. Annual update to City Council.	
C 1.5.4	Maintain a positive and collaborative relationship with Central Maine Community College (CMCC) to ensure that development and investment in CMCC is coordinated with the City.	E1.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented relationship with CMCC. Update to City Council as necessary.	

Objective 6: Consistently evaluate programming needs for older adults and work with partners to develop programs that meet these needs.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 1.6.1	Collaborate with local partners to conduct a needs assessment using surveys, focus groups, and input from older adult serving organizations.	C1.5, C2.1	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 and digital safety, chronic disease management).	C2.1	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 classes, fall prevention workshops, transportation support, caregiver education).	E1.2, C2.1	Parks and Recreation Department, Business and Community Development Department	Long-Term	Launched or expanded new or revised programs. Annual update to City Council.	

Policy #2, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 2: Support access to services that meet the needs of the City's highest-need residents.

Objective 1: Develop an informed strategic and programmatic plan to address and improve the identified health and well-being priorities of Auburn residents.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 2.1.1	Compile a local needs assessment every 3 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 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.		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 Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 2.1.2	Map which of the priorities are already being addressed by current programs, and where the gaps are.	E1.2, C5.2	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 1 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.	C4.1	Business and Community Development Department	Short-Term; Ongoing	Completed supplemental data packet including at least 3 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.	C1.5, C1.6,	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, layering of funding streams, and annual progress reviews to ensure sustained improvement in priority health outcomes.	C5.1, C5.2	Business and Community Development Department	Long-Term; Ongoing	CHNA priority areas demonstrating improvement in key health outcomes over 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.	C4.1	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.	C5.1	Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Annual Report to City Council.	

Policy #3, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 3: Support a safe community through effective, coordinated, and community-focused public safety and emergency services.

Objective 1: Improve Auburn Fire Department's ISO rating.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 3.1.1	Work with L/A 911 to establish a redundant dispatch circuit.	C3.2	Fire Department	Short-Term	Established redundant dispatch circuit. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.2	Partner with Auburn Water and Sewerage District (AWSD) 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.	C3.3	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 require 12 hours per year of continuing education.	C3.3	Fire Department	Short-Term	Established certification and 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.	C3.1, C3.3	Fire Department	Medium-Term	Mandated structural fire training. Annual update to City Council.	
C 3.1.6	Achieve NFPA 1710 apparatus staffing standard levels.	C3.1, C3.3	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.	C3.1, C3.3, I1.2	Fire Department	Long-Term	Completed Fire Department substation. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Maintain Auburn Police Department and 911 dispatch accreditation

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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.	E1.2	Police Department and 911 Dispatch	Short-Term	Documented 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 maintain uninterrupted accreditation status across all review cycles.	C3.4	Police Department and 911 Dispatch	Long-Term	Achieved uninterrupted accreditation status. 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.	C3.1, C3.4	Police Department and 911 Dispatch, Fire Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Maintained and in-creased efficiency of the emergency response model. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Achieve accreditation for the Fire Department through the CPSE

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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.	C3.4	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 5 years.		Fire Department	Long-Term	Fire Department is a candidate agency. Completed onsite visit, assessment, and presentation. Renewed accreditation every 5 years. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 4: Use data to understand community safety perceptions and guide efforts to strengthen the sense of safety citywide.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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.	C3.1	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.	C2.1, I1.3	Police Department, 911 Dispatch, Fire Department, Business and Community Development Department	Long-Term	Incorporation of survey-driven priorities in annual plans and/or budget proposals. Annual update to City Council.	

Policy #4, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 4: Enhance community connection and sense of place.

Objective 1: Deepen relationships between residents and municipal government.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 4.1.1	Implement strong, available feedback mechanisms to ensure residents directly inform city decisions.	C5.2	City Manager, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	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.	C5.2	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 connection.	C4.4, C5.2	City Manager, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Increased place-based events. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.1.4	Convene a working group to develop a Multilingual Resources Plan that evaluates options for providing City documents, meetings, and public resources in alternative formats and languages, and recommends strategies to improve multilingual communication.	E1.2, C1.5, C4.4	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Medium-Term	Developed Multilingual Resources Plan by City working group. Update to City Council as necessary.	
C 4.1.5	Develop a Civic Engagement Handbook that details best practices for public meetings and other forms of civic engagement (including participation on City boards and committees) to reduce obstacles to civic engagement. Explore opportunities to recruit members to City boards and committees that are demographically representative of the City's residents.	C4.4, C5.2	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	Completed Civic Engagement Handbook. Update to City Council as necessary.	
C 4.1.6	Increase participation on City boards and committees by actively recruiting members whose perspectives and experiences reflect the demographics of the City.		City Manager	Short-Term, Ongoing	Members of City boards and commit-tees are representative of City demographics. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Develop a citywide survey of historic, archaeological, and prehistoric sites.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	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.*	C4.4	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Completed survey. Annual update to City Council.	Grants | Maine Historic Preservation Commission **https://www.maine.gov/mhpc/programs/grants**
C 4.2.2	Collaborate with partners to develop informational materials on Auburn's historic and archaeological resources based on the survey.	C4.4	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Medium-Term	Published informational resource (digital or print) and outreach to residents. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.2.3	Consider establishing a Historic Preservation committee to explore historic district designations and opt in historic building designations.	E1.3	City Manager	Medium-Term	Documentation of findings and recommended next steps for Historic Preservation Committee, formation of committee if deemed necessary. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Create policies for protecting and enhancing historic resources, where feasible.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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.*	FLU1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Documented 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.*	FLU1.1, C4.2	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 district(s) and increased historical markers.	FLU1.1, H1.1, C4.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Long-Term	Completed policies and actions with implementation plan. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 4.3.4	Amend ordinances to allow adaptive reuse and redevelopment of historic structures and structures of community significance, including school buildings.	FLU1.1, H1.1, E1.2	City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department, Economic Development Department	Short-Term	Completed or planned adaptative reuse projects, both public and private. Annual update to City Council.	Tax Incentives | Maine Historic Preservation Commission **https://www.maine.gov/mhpc/programs/tax-incentives**

Objective 4: Promote a vibrant, welcoming, and universally available arts and culture ecosystem

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 4.4.1	Establish a Public Art Working Group.	C5.2	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	Established working group 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.	C4.1, C4.2,	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	Completed community engagement effort. Annual update to City Council.	Creative Communities Grant | Maine Office of Community Affairs **https://www.maine.gov/moca/funding/creative-communities-grant**
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 support, avoid overlaps in scheduling, and ensure adequate use of facilities.	E1.2, E1.3, C4.1	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Improved communication and collaboration. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.4	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.	E1.3, T3.3, C5.2	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.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 4.4.5	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 4.4.6	Collaborate with local artists, cultural groups, and community organizations to expand varied, welcoming arts and cultural experiences that reflect the full range of cultures, traditions, and creative articulation.		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	Established collaboration and partnerships and expanded number and variety of arts and cultural events that reflect varied cultural traditions. Annual update to City Council.	GRANTS FOR ARTS PROJECTS | National Endowment for the Arts **https://www.arts.gov/grants/grants-for-arts-projects**
C 4.4.7	Market Auburn as a hub for arts and culture by promoting local artists, events, public art, and partnerships through coordinated branding and outreach.	E1.3	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained engagement with arts-related and event outreach. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.8	Incorporate ease of access into events and venues by ensuring handicap access, age-friendly, walkability, and space for parking, and lowering financial obstacles.	E1.2, T3.1, T3.2	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term, Ongoing	Documented ease of access considerations for City events. Annual update to City Council.	
C 4.4.9	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.	PR1.3	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Medium-Term	Completed beautification initiatives with community partners and neighborhoods. Annual update to City Council.	

Policy #5, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 5: Ensure municipal services are administered efficiently and effectively.

Objective 1: Actively pursue grants and external funding opportunities to support capital investments and minimize the local tax burden.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
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 incorporation 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.	I1.1	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 the estimated local tax savings achieved.	I1.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Identified projects and alternative funding mechanisms. Annual update to City Council.	
C 5.1.4	In line with the budget process, assess municipal services to identify opportunities for regional service delivery.*	C5.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Assessment and 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.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
C 5.2.1	Regularly assess the effectiveness of boards and committees in supporting City services objectives and identify opportunities for consolidation, restructuring, or enhanced support.	C1.2, C3.1, C4.1	City Manager, Department Staff	Ongoing	Conducted assessment(s). Annual update to City Council.	
C 5.2.2	Provide consistent opportunities for boards and committees to provide input and feedback, as stated in the City Charter(s) and ordinances, into capital planning, policy development, and service delivery decisions, including defined points of engagement in budget and planning processes.	FLU1.1, C5.2, I1.1	City Manager	Medium-Term	Documented process depicting when and how boards provide input into CIP, budget, or policy development. Annual update to City Council.	

Housing

Community Goal: *Ensure access to a broad range of housing options that meet the needs of the community across income levels, ages, and life stages to support current and new residents and maintain a strong workforce.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Ensure a supply of housing in a variety of types and sizes that meet the wide-ranging needs of residents, support right sized living options, and avoid creating cost burdens for households.

Objective 1: Adopt and achieve the City's housing goals informed by the Auburn Housing Needs Assessment.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.1.1	Adopt the housing goals informed by the Auburn Housing Needs Assessment.		City Manager	Short-Term	Housing goals adopted by City Council.	
H 1.1.2	Collaborate with partners to leverage City-owned land for low- and moderate-income housing in appropriate areas.	H1.2, H1.3, E1.2	City Manager, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained partner-ships to utilize City-owned land for housing. Annual update to City Council.	Housing Assistance Program: CDBG **https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process** Public Infrastructure Grant Program: CDBG **https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process**
H 1.1.3	Amend zoning ordinances to: 1) Align with City's housing goals, 2) Increase the availability of housing, and* 3) Incentivize a variety of housing types across income ranges, as appropriate (e.g., density bonuses, TIFs).*	FLU1.1, H1.2, E1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that allow identified housing needs (amount and type of housing) where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	Housing Opportunity Program | Department of Economic and Community Development **https://www.maine.gov/decd/housingopportunityprogram**
H 1.1.4	Evaluate the Comprehensive Plan every 3 years for impediments to housing development, including obstacles to infill development and redevelopment that is appropriate in size, scale, and context to existing development. Determine if amendments are needed to remove obstacles.	FLU2.1, H1.2, E1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Comprehensive plan reviewed. Recommended and adopted amendments that remove obstacles to identified housing need(s) where feasible. Update to City Council as necessary.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.1.5	Evaluate and remove municipal obstacles to the construction of low- and very-low-income housing with the goal of 1 in 10 new units meeting the state's definition of affordable housing.*	FLU1.1, E1.2, H1.3	Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that remove obstacles to low- and very-low-income housing where feasible. Continued tracking of affordable housing development in the City. Annual update to City Council.	Supportive Housing Program https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/housing-development/developmentdetails/supportive-housing-program
H 1.1.6	Align housing policies with zoning ordinances to ensure development standards support long-term housing goals.	FLU1.1, H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Completion of a housing–land use policy crosswalk. Documentation showing incorporation of development standards that support a variety of housing types across price points. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.1.7	Collaborate with partners to develop a digital and print housing navigator to help older adults and people with varied physical or cognitive capacities exploring housing alternatives.	E1.2	Business and Community Development Department	Short-Term	Established digital and print housing navigator for residents looking to move. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.1.8	Maintain an inventory of vacant properties in accordance with the City's vacant buildings ordinance and develop strategies, e.g. land banking, to bring vacant buildings online.	H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Ongoing	Maintained inventory of vacant buildings and tracking of revitalized vacant buildings and properties. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.1.9	Allow, and revise requirements as needed, for mobile home parks and mobile homes in the growth area pursuant to state laws 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).*	E1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that allow mobile home parks and mobile homes where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.1.10	Coordinate with local, regional, and state housing coalitions to support housing initiatives in Auburn.*	FLU1.1, E1.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Documented coordination, including meetings and identification of priority projects. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.1.11	Implement and regularly update the 5-year Consolidated Plan(s) and annual Community Development Action Plans.		Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Implemented and updated Consolidated Plan(s). Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.1.12	Utilize Affordable Housing TIF districts that reinvests captured tax increment into both capital projects and community programming, including housing development, rehabilitation, tenant stabilization services, and other initiatives that support long-term housing affordability.	H1.3, E1.2	Business and Community Development Department	Medium – Long-Term	Utilization of Affordable Housing TIF districts and tracking of development(s) funded by the TIF. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.1.13	Track the implementation of the housing goals adopted by City Council. Evaluate and update the Auburn Housing Needs Assessment every 5 years to track the City's progress to its housing goals and align goals with current and future trends and best available data. Adopt new goals based on updated assessment.		Public Services Department	Ongoing	Evaluated and updated Auburn Housing Needs Assessment with consistent tracking of goal(s) progress. Update to City Council, and adoption of goals by City Council, as necessary.	

Objective 2: Strengthen the City's regulatory structure to create a predictable, development-ready environment and ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality housing for renters and owners.*

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.2.1	Evaluate the City's alignment with state building codes and formally document any intentional deviations, including the rational and supporting justification for each, to ensure transparency and regulatory consistency.		Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Short-Term, Ongoing	Alignment with state building codes recorded and justification for intentional deviations. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.2.2	Amend ordinances to lower regulatory obstacles and promote a more efficient, consistent, and predictable development process, where appropriate.	FLU1.1, E1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that promote an efficient development process where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.2.3	Actively market the City to attract investment and encourage high-quality residential projects.	E1.3	City Manager, Economic Development Department, Business and Community Development	Ongoing	Consistent outreach to developers and published up-to-date information on the City's website. Update to City Council as necessary.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.2.4	Support state-level legislative changes that support housing development goals.	FLU1.1, H1.1	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented legislative updates. Annual update to City Council.	
H 1.2.5	Provide clear, available resources, information, and support for new homeowners on the City's website, including guidance on permitting, property maintenance (for new and old buildings), standards, trash and recycling, parking rules, seasonal requirements, and key City contacts.	E1.2	Communications and Community Engagement Department, Public Services Department	Short-Term	New Homeowner re-sources on City website. Update to City Council as necessary.	
H 1.2.6	Collaborate with partners to evaluate alternative ownership models to lower the barrier to entry for homeownership and maintain housing affordability (e.g. limited equity housing cooperative).	E1.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department	Medium-Term	Evaluation of alternative ownership models and implementation, if feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Eliminate chronic homelessness, rehouse individuals who become unhoused within 90 days, and prevent those who are susceptible and are unsafe due to violence from becoming unhoused.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.3.1	In compliance with State statute (MRSA §4357-B (2025)), conduct a land use study to determine districts to allow a homeless shelter(s) in the City.		Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that do not prohibit homeless shelter(s) in all zoning districts, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	Research and National Technical Assistance (RNTA) | U.S. Economic Development Administration https://www.eda.gov/rnta
H 1.3.2	Coordinate with service providers to connect unhoused individuals and those susceptible to becoming unhoused with interim and permanent housing opportunities and housing assistance programs.		Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained coordination and support for service providers. Annual update to City Council.	Housing Opportunity Program | Department of Economic and Community Development https://www.maine.gov/decd/housingopportunityprogram
H 1.3.3	Open a Home for Good Facility and support the application for an additional Home for Good Facility in the L-A Metro Area.	E1.2	City Manager, Business and Community Development Department	Medium-Term	Completed Home for Good Facility and completed process for additional facility. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
H 1.3.4	Strengthen regional coordination of homeless services in the L-A Metro Area by conducting a comprehensive review to identify service overlaps and gaps, eliminate redundancies, and develop strategies to ensure all unmet service needs are addressed.	FLU1.1	Business and Community Development Department	Medium-Term	Completed gap analysis of homeless services in the L-A Metro Area. Annual update to City Council.	Housing Opportunity Program | Department of Economic and Community Development **https://www.maine.gov/decd/housingopportunityprogram**

Economy

Community Goal: *Support a resilient economy that provides quality jobs, fosters innovation, and strengthens local businesses and industries while providing quality education and training for people of all ages.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Maintain and expand a varied economy in Auburn by increasing employment across the City and employment of Auburn residents and increasing the area median income (AMI) and the property tax base.

Objective 1: Utilize targeted business retention strategies, industry cluster analyses, and available financing tools to invest in priority activity areas.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
E 1.1.1	Implement a targeted business and industry retention strategy that seeks to understand operational needs, identify expansion opportunities, and address challenges of specific clusters.		Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Targeted business and industry strategies. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.1.2	Review and evaluate existing business needs to identify and strengthen key industry clusters and proactively recruit complementary businesses that align with existing workforce, supply chain, and market strengths.	E1.2	Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Retention and recruitment of businesses. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.1.3	Conduct an annual survey of targeted businesses within major industry clusters to monitor year-to-year economic shifts, workforce changes, expansion plans, and operational challenges.		Economic Development Department	Short-Term, Ongoing	Completed annual survey. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
E 1.1.4	Leverage mechanisms that can be used to finance infrastructure and economic development initiatives in identified high-growth areas.*	FLU2.1, I1.3	City Manager, Economic Development Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Leveraged financial mechanisms. Annual update to City Council.	Catalyst Program | Northern Border Regional Commission https://www.nbrc.gov/Catalyst
E 1.1.5	Refine Auburn's Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay to attract innovation-oriented businesses, support technology and advanced manufacturing growth, and guide strategic infrastructure and investment planning within designated priority areas.	E1.3	City Manager, Economic Development Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Formalized overlay district with codified clear standards and provisions in the ordinance. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.1.6	Attract and retain a wide range of small and medium-size businesses, focusing on the High Density Cores as shown in the Future Land Use Map. Connect small business owners and entrepreneurs with existing resources to help kickstart and maintain businesses and innovation in the City.	E1.3 FLU2.1	Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Documented targeted small and medium business strategies. Annual update to City Council.	Funding Opportunity: FY 2023 EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs https://sfgrants.eda.gov/s/funding-program/a2j3d0000000KneAAE/fy-2023-eda-public-works-and-economic-adjustment-assistance-programs
E 1.1.7	Fund dedicated staff in planning and economic development departments to support economic development initiatives and coordinate development activities.*	E1.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Annual funding of dedicated staff is included in budget process. Annual update to City Council.	Economic Development Program: CDBG https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process
E 1.1.8	Develop a citywide Economic Development Strategic Plan that identifies priority areas, evaluates market conditions, outlines short-, medium-, and long-term economic initiatives, and aligns with Auburn's land use, housing, and transportation goals.		City Manager, Economic Development Department	Short-Term	Completed and adopted Economic Development Strategic Plan. Annual update to City Council.	Funding Opportunity: FY 2023 EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs https://sfgrants.eda.gov/s/funding-program/a2j3d0000000KneAAE/fy-2023-eda-public-works-and-economic-adjustment-assistance-programs

Objective 2: Reduce transportation, housing, childcare, education and training, and zoning obstacles for employers and employees.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
E 1.2.1	Collaborate with partners to improve and promote existing transportation options that provide door-to-door transportation opportunities for the City's workforce.	T1.1	Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Annual ridership and usage of on-call transportation option. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.2.2	Develop and maintain linkages and connectivity between commercial activity centers and other areas of the City to promote functionality and business development. Encourage complimentary or co-locations between workers, supply chains, service needs, and other goods and services.	FLU1.2, T2.1, T3.3	Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department	Medium-Term, Ongoing	Documented improvements in road-way, transit, or trail connections between and to commercial areas, increased commercial development near complimentary services and housing. Update to City Council as necessary.	
E 1.2.3	Conduct a home-to-jobs ratio analysis every 5 years to assess the balance between available housing and employment opportunities, identify mismatches, and inform future housing and economic development planning.	H1.1	Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department	Medium-Term	Maintenance of ongoing system to track new jobs created and new homes built and regular comparison of these trends. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.2.4	Amend ordinances to lower regulatory obstacles that limit the development of housing options available to the workforce.	FLU1.1, H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that remove obstacles to housing for the workforce, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.2.5	Review ordinances to allow, where feasible and appropriate, childcare as a use-by-right and explore options for increasing daycare operations.	C1.5	Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that allow childcare as a use-by-right where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.2.6	Maintain and expand before- and after-school childcare programming at the elementary schools.	E1.2	Auburn School Department	Ongoing	Maintained and expanded childcare programming. Annual update to City Council.	Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grants (2021-2026) | Department of Education **https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood/pkexpansiongrant/2021**

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
E 1.2.7	Continue collaboration with local and regional higher education institutions to align curricula with regional industry needs, establish specialized programming to meet emerging trends, and advertise apprenticeship programs.	E1.1, E1.2	Auburn School Department, Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Maintained curricula alignment through collaboration with industries and Auburn School Department. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.2.8	Review ordinances to reflect the community's economic vision. Implement the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.*	FLU1.1, E1.1, E1.3	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that align with the Future Land Use Map where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.2.9	Monitor trends and regularly update the comprehensive plan to maintain alignment with current and anticipated economic conditions. Amendments must follow state law to amend a comprehensive plan.	FLU1.1, E1.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Comprehensive plan reviewed. Recommended and adopted amendments that align with economic conditions where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Advance regional economic priorities and actively market the City's economic assets.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
E 1.3.1	Engage employers, regional partners, and surrounding municipalities through regular meetings to share resources, coordinate on economic development priorities, and strengthen the City's role as a regional service center and regional economic development center.*	FLU1.1, E1.2	City Manager, Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Coordinated economic development priori-ties. Annual update to City Council.	
E 1.3.2	Utilize the City's existing marketing resources and consider new opportunities and strategies to market Auburn's economic and residential assets, including the High-Density Cores in the Future Land Use Map.	E1.1, FLU2.1	Economic Development Department, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website.	
E 1.3.3	Support legislative changes that encourage and attract state and federal resources to support the City as a regional service center and regional economic development center.	H1.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented legislative updates. Annual update to City Council.	

Transportation

Community Goal: *Develop a safe, efficient, and universally available multimodal transportation network and traffic management solutions that connect people to places throughout the City and region.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Provide a network of intercity and intracity public transportation that meets the community's needs.

Objective 1: Collaborate with partners to regularly evaluate public transportation needs and implement findings from transportation studies.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 1.1.1	Coordinate with public transit providers to annually collect and review ridership, service coverage, and performance data for local and regional transit services serving Auburn. Use ridership and performance data to identify service gaps and inform adjustments to transit routes, bus stop availability and amenities (especially at high-use bus stops), schedules, inter- and intra-city technological incorporation (transit apps), and complementary services.	E1.2, T2.1	Public Services Department	Ongoing	Documented coordination, including meetings, with public transit providers. Annual update to City Council.	
T 1.1.2	Review and prioritize the recommendations of the 2020 Androscoggin Transportation Re-source Center (ATRC) Area Transit Study to identify near, mid-, and long-term implementation actions that align with Auburn's transportation and land use goals.	T2.1	Public Services Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Prioritized list of ATRC Transit Study recommendations included in the CIP and City budget. Annual update to City Council.	
T 1.1.3	Partner with transit providers to pursue funding and technical assistance for implementing priority recommendations from the 2020 ATRC Area Transit Study.	FLU1.1, T2.1	Public Services Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained partner-ship for funding opportunities. Annual update to City Council.	
T 1.1.4	Implement the recommendations from completed and approved transportation and land use studies, where feasible.		Public Services Department, Engineering Department	Long-Term	Implemented and tracked transportation and land use studies. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 1.1.5	Prioritize development near existing transportation infrastructure, including public transit, bike lanes, sidewalks, and trail networks. Consider incentive programs for developments that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for residents.	FLU2.1, T2.1, R1.3	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department	Long-Term, Ongoing	Documented development near existing transportation infrastructure and documented consideration of incentives for developments that reduce VMT. Annual update to City Council.	
T 1.1.6	Annually review City roads with average daily traffic below 20,000 (AADT), consistent with Maine DOT guidance, to identify candidates for road diets.	T3.2	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term, Ongoing	Annual update to City Council on AADT review and road diet recommendations.	

Policy #2, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 2: Provide a network of active transportation options that meet the need of users of all ages and abilities.

Objective 1: Improve connectivity of intercity and intracity active transportation infrastructure.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 2.1.1	Develop intracity and intercity active transportation plans that inventory existing routes (including trail networks for non-vehicular commuters) and out-line strategies to maintain and create a safe, connected, all season active transportation network within Auburn and to surrounding communities.	T1.1, E1.2	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Medium – Long-Term	Completed studies and plans and tracking of improved and new trails. Annual update to City Council.	
T 2.1.2	Develop and implement strategies to ensure residents can safely and conveniently access Auburn's active transportation network without needing to drive. This may include expanding sidewalk and bike lane connections to trailheads, improving wayfinding signage, coordinating with transit providers to add stops near major access points, and identifying opportunities for neighborhood-level access improvements.	E1.2, T2.2, T3.3, R1.1, R1.3	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Medium – Long-Term	Documented strategies and implementation actions that improve non-vehicular access to trailheads. Annual update to City Council.	Active Transportation Initiative | MaineDOT https://www.maine.gov/dot/programs-services/planning

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 2.1.3	Implement ATRC's Bridging the Gaps Plan, where feasible.	T1.1	Public Services Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Identified implementation actions from Bridging the Gaps Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
T 2.1.4	Coordinate and connect the implementation of the Washington Street corridor improvements with the development of the Casco Bay Trail, part of the East Coast Greenway.	T1.1, T3.2, T3.3	Public Services Department	Short – Medium-Term	Progress toward formal approval and funding of the Washington Street corridor improvements, including the Casco Bay Trail segment of the East Coast Greenway. Annual update to City Council.	Downtown Revitalization Program: CDBG **https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process**
T 2.1.5	Acquire easements from the southern terminus of the Washington Street corridor to the northern terminus of the Berlin Subdivision interim trail to support the development of the Casco Bay Trail.	R1.1, R1.3	City Manager, Public Services Department	Long-Term	Easements acquired. Annual update to City Council.	
T 2.1.6	Complete the Androscoggin Riverwalk Trail Expansion.	R1.3	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Public Works Department	Medium – Long-Term	Completed expansion of the Androscoggin River Walk. Annual update to City Council.	
T 2.1.7	Annually review the City's Safe Streets for All (SS4A) study and identify actions related to walking and bicycling that support connectivity.	T1.1, T3.1	Public Services Department	Ongoing	Identified SS4A related active transportation action(s). Annual update to City Council.	
T 2.1.8	Conduct an audit of the existing trail network(s) and identify improvements for ADA accommodations. Incorporate ADA improvements in trail maintenance and expansion plans.	T2.2, R1.3	Public Services Department, Public Works Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Documented ADA ease of access considerations for all new or substantially upgraded active transportation projects. Annual update to City Council.	State and Local Grant Funding - LWCF (U.S. National Park Service) **https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/stateside.htm**
T 2.1.9	Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy, criteria, and standards for public rights of way that apply to both City initiated projects and private development. Revisit Complete Streets: A Guide to Best Management + Design Practice to affirm current best practices.	FLU1.1	Public Services Department, Planning and Permit-ting Department, Engineering Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that reference Complete Streets principles, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 2.1.10	Evaluate and update Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) requirements in the ordinance to include consideration of all transportation modes and safety impacts with Complete Streets principles as part of project review, where appropriate.	T3.1	Public Services Department, Planning and Permit-ting Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that revise TIA standards to explicitly address multimodal safety and Complete Streets impacts, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 2.1.11	Amend ordinances to require new developments to consider and provide for active transportation access, both internal to the site and surrounding network connectivity.	FLU1.1, T3.3, R1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that require internal and interconnected pedestrian and bike access and mobility, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Generate and share accurate data, maps, and information on active transportation routes.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 2.2.1	Develop and maintain a citywide, virtual and physical map(s) and physical wayfinding signage of all publicly available trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared use paths in the City. Update the map on a regular basis to reflect improvements.	T2.1, R1.1	Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Completed and consistently updated citywide active transportation map. Annual update to City Council.	ATIIP - Bicycle and Pedestrian Program - Environment - FHWA **https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/atiip/index.cfm**

Policy #3, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 3: Provide, maintain, and improve the City's road network

Objective 1: Implement Auburn's Vision Zero Resolve.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 3.1.1	Implement Auburn's Safety Action Plan to achieve the City's Vision Zero goal by 2040.		Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Police Department	Ongoing	Prioritized and implemented initiatives from the 2025 Safety Action Plan; tracking of reduction in pedestrian crashes and fatalities. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.1.2	Implement enhanced pedestrian safety infrastructure (e.g. raised crosswalks, curb extensions, and refuge islands) at high risk locations. Obtain a list from Maine DOT on locations of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and crashes in the City and implement improvements at these locations.	T2.2, T3.2	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Police Department	Medium – Long-Term	Installed or upgraded pedestrian safety infrastructure. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.1.3	Amend ordinances to prioritize pedestrian safety, ease of access, and year round usability, including provisions for enhanced maintenance of brick, uneven, or ice prone materials and alternatives to sidewalks constructed entirely of brick.	T2.1, T3.2, T3.3, C2.1	Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Engineering Department, Police Department	Ongoing	Adopted sidewalk material and maintenance standards. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.1.4	Daylight intersections and crosswalks by establishing minimum setbacks for on street parking and evaluating street tree placement where safety concerns are identified.	T3.2	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Public Works Department, Police Department	Medium-Term	Incorporated daylighting standards at priority locations. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.1.5	Add specificity to waiver criteria and review processes in Chapter 60 and Chapter 46 of the ordinance related to safe streets elements, including sidewalks and bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular infrastructure.	H1.2, T2.1, T3.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Police Department	Ongoing	Adopted waiver criteria and applied procedures during the development review process. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 3.1.6	Develop and implement a comprehensive parking education and signage initiative that clearly communicates where public parking is permitted, time-limits, seasonal restrictions, and when/where residents must move their vehicles during parking bans or maintenance periods.		Public Works, Communications and Community Engagement Department, Police Department	Short-Term	Implemented parking education and signage initiative. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Update road and parking standards.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 3.2.1	Work with regional partners, Maine DOT, and other state agencies to support updates to state level street design policies and requirements that allow greater flexibility in street design.	T1.1	City Manager, Public Services Department, Engineering Department	Medium-Term	Documented legislative updates. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.2.2	Amend ordinances to reduce the number of curb cuts and encourage shared parking facilities or shared use of existing surface parking, particularly in commercial and mixed use areas.	FLU2.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that address curb cuts and shared parking where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.2.3	Develop greater specificity of design elements and land uses that are appropriate for different roadway types.		Engineering Department, Public Works Department	Medium-Term	Updated design standards or policy documents. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.2.4	Review and revise ordinance standards for subdivisions and public and private roads to encourage growth patterns that make effective use of existing infrastructure and provide for strategic street and transit connections.*	FLU1.1, FLU2.1, H1.1, T1.1, T2.1, T3.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that address subdivision and roadway standards where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 3.2.5	Maintain and update local ordinances as necessary to address or avoid conflicts with state transportation policies and regulations, including the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73), state access management regulations (23 M.R.S.A. §704), and state traffic permitting requirements for large developments (23 M.R.S.A. §704 A).*	FLU1.1, T1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that maintain compliance with state transportation policies and regulations where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Increase access and efficiency between key areas of the City by maintaining and improving the City's road and sidewalk infrastructure in the most cost-effective manner.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 3.3.1	Plan for maintenance of the City's existing road network and coordinate with state and regional partners to maintain state-aid highways.*	T1.1	Engineering Department	Ongoing	Maintained road network and continued coordination with state and regional partners. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.3.2	Initiate and actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.* Actively support at the state and regional levels for legislation, funding programs, and policy updates that support Auburn's transportation goals.	T2.1, T3.1	Public Services Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Documented participation in regional and state transportation efforts. Documented legislative updates. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.3.3	Maximize participation in regional, state, and federal transportation funding programs and continue coordination with Maine DOT to fund and implement transportation projects that improve access and efficiency and optimize the City's state and state aid highway networks.*		Public Services Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Documented participation in funding programs and coordination with Maine DOT. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.3.4	Optimize traffic signal coordination, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and access management strategies along major commuter corridors, including Washington Street, Minot Avenue, and Route 4.	T1.1, T3.2	Engineering Department	Ongoing	Completed signal timing reviews or ITS improvements for major commuter corridors. Annual update to City Council.	Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311) | FTA **https://www.transit.dot.gov/rural-formula-grants-5311**

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 3.3.5	Conduct a comprehensive road condition assessment every 3 to 5 years. Utilize the results to prioritize roadway and sidewalk maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation projects for City owned roads.	T3.2	Engineering Department, Public Works Department	Ongoing	Completed road condition assessment(s). Update to City Council every 3 to 5 years.	
T 3.3.6	Prioritize improvements and maintenance activities that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, including increased sidewalks and bike lanes, side-walk repairs, vegetation management, traffic signal maintenance, crosswalks and bicycle pavement markings, snow removal, wayfinding signage, and enforcement of ordinances related to blocked sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks.	T2.1	City Manager, Engineering Department, Public Works Department	Ongoing	Completed bicycle and pedestrian safety related improvements and maintenance activities funded through the CIP or operating budget. Annual update to City Council.	The Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program | US Department of Transportation **https://www.transportation.gov/grants/rural-surface-transportation-grant-program#:~:text=The%20Rural%20Surface%20Transportation%20Grant%20Program%20supports%20projects%20that%20improve,and%20improve%20quality%20of%20life.** Transportation Alternatives - Environment - FHWA **https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/**
T 3.3.7	Coordinate land use activities (e.g., ordinance updates) with transportation planning efforts to maximize the efficiency and maintenance of the existing road network and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).*	T1.1	Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained coordination between Departments during ordinance revisions and development review. Annual update to City Council.	
T 3.3.8	Develop and maintain an inventory of paper streets and public easements.	T2.2	Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Completed inventory of paper streets and public easements. Annual update to City Council.	

Policy #4, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 4: Strengthen Auburn's position as a regional freight, logistics, and industrial center.

Objective 1: Improve efficiency, coordination, and funding competitiveness through integrated management of publicly controlled freight and logistics assets.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 4.1.1	Explore opportunities to better coordinate planning, management, and engagement related to publicly and jointly controlled assets in southwest Auburn, including the Freight Intermodal Facility, Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company, and Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport.	T4.4, FLU1.1	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented and maintained coordination with joint partners. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.2	Pursue operational efficiencies, shared services, and streamlined engagement processes with private sector rail, freight, and logistics partners operating within Auburn.	T4.3, T4.4	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented shared service arrangements, coordination protocols, or streamlined engagement processes. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.3	Ensure Auburn's freight and logistics priorities remain aligned with state and federal plans to strengthen competitiveness for Maine DOT, the Maine Port Authority, FAA, FRA, and discretionary federal funding programs.	T4.4	City Manager	Ongoing	Aligned freight and logistics priorities. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.4	Support incorporation of Auburn multimodal projects in regional capital programs, state capital programs, and grant applications.	T4.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Incorporation of multimodal projects, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.5	Encourage aviation-supportive commercial and industrial uses in appropriate areas near the airport.	T4.2, E1.1, E1.3	City Manager	Medium-Term	Evaluated and adopted aviation supportive land use policies or zoning provisions, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.6	Support reactivation and expanded use of the City-owned Freight Intermodal Facility for inbound and outbound box movement, containerized freight, bulk materials, and transload operations.	T4.2, E1.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Increased utilization opportunities identified or pursued for the Freight Intermodal Facility. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.7	Identify, preserve, and market rail-available industrial development sites along Auburn's active rail corridors.	FLU1.1, E1.3, T4.2, T4.4	City Manager	Ongoing	Completed and maintained inventory of rail available industrial sites. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 4.1.8	Amend zoning ordinances to encourage site design standards that accommodate rail sidings, transload facilities, and logistics operations.	FLU1.1, E1.3, T4.4	City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted rail-supportive ordinance amendments where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.1.9	Integrate airport and rail assets into Auburn's broader economic development, workforce, and supply-chain resilience strategies.	E1.3, T4.3	City Manager, Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Airport and rail assets are referenced in adopted economic development or workforce strategies. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Protect public investment in airport and rail infrastructure through compatible land use planning, airspace protection, and corridor preservation.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 4.2.1	Adopt and maintain airport overlay zoning and airspace protection standards consistent with FAA Grant Assurance 21 to prevent incompatible land uses and obstructions near runway approaches.		City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that strengthen the airport overlay zoning and airspace protection standards where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.2.2	Amend zoning ordinances to require proximity and aviation activity as part of applicable development review processes.	FLU1.1, T4.3	City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that require airport proximity disclosure where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.2.3	Preserve active and potential rail-served corridors and industrial parcels, where feasible, to prevent encroachment that could limit future freight use.	T4.4	City Manager	Ongoing	Identified and protected rail corridors and rail served parcels, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Support plan-driven, right-sized investment in airport, rail, and intermodal infrastructure while streamlining local review for projects consistent with adopted plans.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 4.3.1	Implement the FAA-approved Airport Layout Plan (ALP), where feasible, using phased, demand-driven development consistent with FAA and Maine DOT guidance.		City Manager, City Manager	Long-Term	Airport projects implemented or advanced consistent with the adopted ALP. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 4.3.2	Establish streamlined local review pathways for airport, rail, and intermodal projects, where feasible, that are consistent with adopted plans and applicable zoning standards.	FLU1.1,	City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department	Long-Term	Adopted streamlined review procedures. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.3.3	Coordinate early among City departments, the airport, rail operators, and Maine DOT to improve predictability and re-duce project delivery risk.	T4.2, I1.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented coordination among stake-holders. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 4: Recognize and protect Auburn's airport, rail corridors, and intermodal facilities as regional and statewide significant components of Maine's multimodal freight and transportation system.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
T 4.4.1	Recognize the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport (KLEW) as regionally significant transportation infrastructure within the Maine State Aviation System and the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPI-AS).		City Manager	Short-Term	Airport significance is recognized by the Maine State Aviation System and NPIAS. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.4.2	Acknowledge Auburn's strategic location along CSX Transportation, St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, and Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company corridors.	T4.2	City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Rail corridors are referenced and mapped. Corridors are marketed in economic development initiatives. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.4.3	Align local land use, transportation, and economic development policies with the Maine State Aviation System Plan, Maine State Rail Plan, and Maine Integrated Freight Strategy.	FLU1.1, E1.3, T1.1, T4.2	City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Alignment with local policies and state freight and aviation plans. Annual update to City Council.	
T 4.4.4	Support preservation of airport and rail corridors to maintain long-term freight mobility, emergency response capability, and economic competitiveness.	E1.3, T4.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Preservation of airport and rail corridors. Annual update to City Council.	

Natural Environment

Community Goal: *Preserve and enhance the City's natural environment and agricultural tradition to protect water quality, improve food access, promote public health, provide connected wildlife habitats, and respond to the impacts of climate change.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Protect and improve the water quality and health of all of Auburn's water bodies.

Objective 1: Meet or exceed state-designated water quality standards for all waterbodies.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 1.1.1	Amend zoning ordinances to limit development in current undeveloped areas along the Androscoggin River.	FLU1.1, FLU2.3,	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that limit new development in undeveloped areas along the Androscoggin River, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	Home | MNRCP **https://www.mnrcp.org/**
NE 1.1.2	Support state agencies and legislature for an improved classification of the Androscoggin River.		City Manager	Ongoing	Documented legislative updates. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 1.1.3	Maintain the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District and limit new development in the Lake Auburn watershed.	NE2.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Tracking of limited new development. Annual update to City Council.	319 Grant Program, Maine Department of Environmental Protection **https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/grants/319.html**
NE 1.1.4	Assist property owners with Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission's Septic System Inspection Program to ensure compliance with municipal septic inspection ordinances.	NE2.1	Planning and Permitting Department, Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Ongoing	Compliance with municipal septic inspection ordinances. Annual update to City Council.	Small Community Grant Program, Maine Department of Environmental Protection **https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/grants/scgp.html**
NE 1.1.5	Coordinate with state agencies, regional watershed organizations, and local partners to conduct consistent water quality monitoring, share data, and evaluate trends to inform management decisions and regulatory compliance.	NE2.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented coordination with partners. Annual update to City Council.	Home | MNRCP **https://www.mnrcp.org/**

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 1.1.6	Partner with organizations to purchase land and/or conservation easements along waterbodies.	NE2.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented collaboration with organizations. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 1.1.7	Where applicable, develop an urban impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan that will promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation.*	FLU2.3	Public Services Department	Ongoing	Completed urban impaired stream water-shed management or mitigation plan. Annual update to City Council.	Enhancing Water Resources Projects | Bureau of Reclamation **https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/ewrp/index.html**
NE 1.1.8	Continue the evaluation of dams and culverts. Create an inventory and analysis of dam and culvert ownership, licensing, condition, flood mitigation, and impacts on water quality and fish passage.	NE2.3	Public Works, City Manager, Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Completion and publication of a comprehensive dam and culvert inventory and analysis. Annual update to City Council.	Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants | FEMA.gov **https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation**
NE 1.1.9	Use the dam and culvert inventory to evaluate relicensing efforts and outline strategies to prepare for dam removals as needed.	FLU1.1, NE2.1	Public Works, City Manager, Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Documented progress of relicensing evaluations, grant applications, or negotiations with dam owners. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 1.1.10	Identify areas where public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms may be needed and implement mechanisms to protect these areas.*	NE2.1	Public Works Department, Public Services Department, Engineering Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Public wellhead and aquifer recharge areas identified and evaluated to assess if additional protections are needed. If so, ordinances are updated to add additional protections to these areas. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 1.1.11	Amend ordinances to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards and low impact development (LID) standards consistent with:* ▪ Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater Regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502) ▪ Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds ▪ Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program	NE2.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that incorporate stormwater runoff standards and updated LID requirements where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 1.1.12	Collaborate with partners on clean-up programs, steward-ship activities, and the dispersion of educational materials on water quality to landowners.*		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	
NE 1.1.13	Collaborate with partners to provide materials on aquatic invasive species and to evaluate, remove, and further prevent invasive species in waterbodies and watersheds.*		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	Invasive Aquatic Plants Cost Share Grants, Maine Department of Environmental Protection **https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/grants/invasive/index.html**
NE 1.1.14	Establish policies and construction and road maintenance requirements that protect rivers, streams, and other water bodies in high-growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.*	FLU1.1, FLU2.1, NE2.1	Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that establish construction requirements in designated high-growth areas to protect rivers, streams, and other water bodies where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 1.1.15	Minimize pollution discharges through the maintenance of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities and educate private property owners on septic system maintenance.*		Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Public Works Department, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Completed annual inspections of municipal wastewater and sewer infrastructure with documented maintenance actions. Annual update to City Council.	State Municipal Wastewater Grant Program, Maine Department of Environmental Protection **https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/grants/smwgp/index.html** Public Infrastructure Grant Program: CDBG **https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process**
NE 1.1.16	Collaborate with partners to promote practices that reduce pollutant loading from activities associated with agricultural/farming practices and harvesting of trees, impervious surfaces, lawns, driveways, access roads, and septic systems.*		Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement), Communications and Community Engagement Department, Public Works Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	
NE 1.1.17	Provide local contact information for water quality best management practices.*		Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	

Policy #2, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 2: Advocate for the protection of natural resources like wetlands, vernal pools, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat blocks, and open space.*

Objective 1: Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state laws regarding natural resource protection.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 2.1.1	Review ordinances for compliance with state laws regarding natural resource protection for wetlands, vernal pools, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat blocks, and open space.	NE1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that, at a minimum, comply with state laws. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 2.1.2	Require developers to identify critical natural resources using pertinent Beginning with Habitat (BwH) maps that may be on-site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources.*	FLU2.3	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that further protect critical natural resources and waterbodies. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 2.1.3	Maintain and regularly review regulations governing new gravel mining near critical natural resources and waterbodies to ensure ongoing protection.	NE1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Review of regulations for gravel mining and inspection of gravel pit compliance. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 2.1.4	Participate in regional planning, management, and regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.*	FLU1.1	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Participation in regional meetings, working groups, or joint planning sessions. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Encourage public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 2.2.1	Partner with conservation organizations to purchase land or easements from willing sellers.*		City Manager	Ongoing	Collaboration with organizations and documented strategies for land conservation. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 2.2.2	Partner with conservation groups, fishery organizations, and state agencies to support projects that improve aquatic habitat, enhance fish passage, and restore native fish populations, like natural bottom culverts consistent with Stream Smart Programs.	NE1.1, E1.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Demonstrated collaboration through participation in partner-led habitat or fish restoration projects. Annual update to City Council.	National Fish Pas-sage Program - National Wildlife Federation Nature-based Funding Database https://fundingnaturebasedsolutions.nwf.org/programs/national-fish-passage-program/#:~:text=The%20National%20Fish%20Passage%20Program,by%20removing%20or%20bypassing%20barriers.

Objective 3: Generate publicly available data, maps, and information on natural resources.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 2.3.1	Collaborate with partners to provide publicly available and updated databases on: 1) Natural resources like wetlands, vernal pools, threatened and endangered species, and wildlife habitat blocks 2) Open space current use tax programs 3) Applicable local, state, or federal regulations*	NE1.1,	Planning and Permitting Department, Assessing Department, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	

Policy #3, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 3: Protect Auburn's agricultural lands and forests.

Objective 1: Support access to locally grown and sourced food and support the agriculture economy.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.1.1	Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation in local or regional economic development plans. Consider collaboration with partners to track economic impact of agricultural businesses.*	E1.3, NE3.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department, Business and Community Development Department	Ongoing	Incorporation of agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation in economic development plans. Annual update to City Council.	Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Fund: Maine DACF https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/affp-infrastructure-fund.shtml
NE 3.1.2	Collaborate with farmer's market leaders, community partners, and the City of Lewiston to support a multi-season (indoor/outdoor) local farmer's market.	NE3.2	City Manager, Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Documented support for a multi-season farmers market. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 3.1.3	Implement the Local Foods Action Plan, where feasible.		Public Services Department	Ongoing	Attendance at Local Food Action Plan partnership meetings and continued implementation. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 3.1.4	Connect food producers, consumers, and processors with existing resources on food production, processing, and sales locations.	E1.1	Communications and Community Engagement Department	Short-Term	Published up-to-date information on the City's website. Update to City Council as necessary.	

Objective 2: Support farming in Auburn.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.2.1	Consult with Androscoggin Valley SWCD when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.*	NE1.1, NE2.1, FLU2.3	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Documented collaboration with Androscoggin Valley SWCD. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.2.2	Evaluate subdivision and site design standards and work with developers to protect forested lands and prime farmland soil as open space to the greatest extent practicable.*	FLU2.3	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that protect forested lands and prime farmland soils where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	Maine Farms for the Future - Maine DACF **https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/farms-for-future/index.shtml**
NE 3.2.3	Encourage owners of productive farmland to enroll in applicable current use taxation program(s).* Consider a voluntary municipal support program to allow for tax incentives and increased investment.	E1.3, NE3.1, C5.1	Assessing Department, Planning and Permitting Department, Communications and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Documented outreach to farmers. Annual update to City Council.	Ecological Conditions Incentives Program: Stream Smart - Maine Audubon **https://maineaudubon.org/projects/road-crossings/stream-smart/**
NE 3.2.4	Allow land use activities that support productive agriculture and natural resource operations, such as roadside/wayside stands, community gardens, agrotourism businesses, active / permitted working farms, and pick-your-own operations.* Limit other types of commercial development to protect farm and forestry operations in the AGRP zone.*	FLU1.1, NE3.1, NE3.3, NE3.5	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that expand or clarify permitted agricultural accessory uses where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	Maine Farms for the Future - Maine DACF **https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/farms-for-future/index.shtml** Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program: Agricultural Resource Development Division: Maine DACF **https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/resilient-food-systems-infrastructure.shtml**
NE 3.2.5	Develop a resource page on the City website to assist current and new farm owners with their business, understanding land use, and connecting with partners.		Communications and Community Engagement Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Completed guide for current and new farmers. Update to City Council as necessary.	Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund: Agricultural Resource Development Division: Maine DACF **https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/agricultural_marketing.shtml**

Objective 3: Improve management of forests on City-owned land.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.3.1	Evaluate the City's 2019 Forest Management Plan. Develop a plan to implement forest management strategies and harvest activities on City-owned woodlots.		City Manager, Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Developed action plan to implement or modify recommendations in the 2019 Forest Management Plan. Annual update to City Council.	Urban Forests | US Forest Service https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests

Objective 4: Improve protection and management of the City's street trees and urban canopy.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.4.1	Maintain the City's street tree inventory and public-facing dashboard. The City is responsible for replacing removed street trees; however, it should actively pursue grants, partnerships, and other alternative funding sources to offset replacement costs.	NE3.3, C5.1	City Manager, Public Works Department	Ongoing	Updated street tree inventory and online dashboard. Identified funding opportunities. Annual update to City Council.	Grant Applications: Grants: Project Canopy: Help Trees help you. https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/project_canopy/grants/grant_applications.html

Objective 5: Support private property owners in managing and preserving their forest land.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.5.1	Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.*	FLU1.1, FLU2.3	Planning and Permitting Department	Ongoing	Maine Forest Service is contacted prior to developing or amending land use regulations. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 3.5.2	Permit land use activities that support productive forestry operations, such as firewood stands, sawmills, log buying yards, and tree farms to improve the economic vitality of forestry operations.*	FLU1.1, E1.3	Planning and Permitting Department	Short-Term	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopted ordinance amendments that support productive forestry operations where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 3.5.3	Publish information in applicable current use taxation program(s) to encourage owners of productive forest land to enroll.	NE2.3	Assessing Department, Communication and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents.	
NE 3.5.4	Collaborate with partners to provide educational materials for private property owners on invasive species management and options to mitigate or remove invasive species in forested areas. *		Communication and Community Engagement Department	Ongoing	Published up-to-date information on the City's website and outreach to residents.	Ecological Conditions Incentives Program: Stream Smart - Maine Audubon **https://maineaudubon.org/projects/road-crossings/stream-smart/**

Policy #4, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 4: Address climate resiliency concerns and plan for the impacts of climate change.

Objective 1: Develop and implement a climate action plan, with a vulnerability assessment and heat-trapping gases inventory.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 4.1.1	Utilize Community Resilience Partnership grants to conduct a climate change action plan that includes infrastructure and community risk assessments.	NE4.2	City Manager	Short-Term	Completed vulnerability assessment and climate action plan. Annual update to City Council.	Track 2: Grants and Technical Assistance Opportunities | Maine Office of Community Affairs https://www.maine.gov/moca/programs/community-resilience-partnership/grants-technical-assistance
NE 4.1.2	Implement mitigation and adaptation recommendations, where feasible, from the climate action plan.		City Manager	Medium – Long-Term	Implemented recommendations from the climate action plan. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 4.1.3	Expand energy efficient and renewable energy infrastructure to reduce overall energy use and byproducts, where feasible.		City Manager	Ongoing	Expanded energy efficient and renewable energy infrastructure, where feasible. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Maintain membership in the Community Resilience Partnership

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
NE 4.2.1	Review and update the Community Resilience Partnership Community Actions and prioritize their implementation.	NE4.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Updated and prioritized list of actions. Annual update to City Council.	
NE 4.2.2	Leverage grants through the Community Resilience Partnership to implement resilience initiatives.	NE2.1, C5.1, I1.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Annual submission of Community Resilience Partnership grant application. Annual update to City Council.	Community Action Grant | Maine Office of Community Affairs https://www.maine.gov/moca/funding/community-action-grant

Parks and Recreation

Community Goal: *Maintain and expand access to parks, trails, and recreational facilities that support social connection and active lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Provide universally available and connected parks, trails, and open space to meet the needs of all users.

Objective 1: Provide access to useable open space for all new development.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 1.1.1	Amend the ordinances to require an open space fee-in-lieu structure for subdivisions where on-site open space is infeasible. Direct all collected fees to a designated Parks and Recreation capital fund.	FLU1.1	Planning and Permitting Department, Parks and Recreation Department	Ongoing	Reviewed ordinances. Recommended and adopt-ed ordinance amendments that require an open space fee-in-lieu, where feasible. Parks and Recreation fund created. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.1.2	Prepare an annual report summarizing fee-in-lieu revenue, expenditures, project allocations, and recommended investment priorities.	R1.1, NE2.3	Planning and Permitting Department, Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Annual update to City Council and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.	

Objective 2: Improve park, trail, and open space stewardship and maintenance.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 1.2.1	Utilize the fee-in-lieu funds from the open space fee-in-lieu to fund the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan.	PR1.3, PR1.4	Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Completed Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan. Annual update to City Council.	Recreational Trails Program: Bureau of Parks and Lands: Maine DACF **https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/recreational_trails_program.shtml**

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 1.2.2	Identify and prioritize recommendations from the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan for implementation. Connect the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan with the intercity and intracity trail plans.	PR1.1, PR1.3, T2.1	Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Implementation actions are evaluated during CIP process. Annual update to City Council.	Maine Trails Program: Grant Program: Bureau of Parks and Lands: Maine DACF https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/maine-trails-program.shtml
PR 1.2.3	Develop and adopt park level-of-service (LOS) and maintenance standards for all park and recreation assets, including fields, courts, playgrounds, trails, and waterfront facilities, to guide capital investment.	PR2.1, I1.2	Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department	Medium-Term	LOS and maintenance standards for 100% of park assets. Integrate LOS standards into CIP scoring criteria. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.2.4	Conduct an annual parks and recreation system evaluation, including SWOT analysis, participation data, maintenance condition reporting, and progress tracking to establish a list of maintenance needs, recreation amenities and needs, and open space conservation areas.*	T2.2, PR2.1	Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department	Ongoing	Completed SWOT analysis and recommended improvements. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.2.5	Establish and maintain an inventory and capital replacement schedule for parks, trails, and open space facilities and places. Integrate schedule into the CIP.	PR2.1	Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department	Short-Term	Incorporated asset re-placement priorities into CIP. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.2.6	Compile a comprehensive inventory of City-held subdivision easements, map them, and establish metrics to monitor ease of access, condition, and use.	PR1.1, H1.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Public Works Department	Medium-Term	Completed inventory. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.2.7	Partner with organizations to purchase land and/or conservation easements for recreation.	FLU1.1, FLU2.3	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented and maintained collaboration with organizations. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Maintain and enhance parks, trails, and open space connectivity and stewardship.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 1.3.1	Collaborate with partners to provide educational resources for landowners allowing public recreational access to their property. At a minimum, this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.*	PR1.2, NE2.1, NE3.5	Communications and Community Engagement Department, Parks and Recreation Department	Short-Term	Published up-to-date in-formation on the City's website and outreach to residents. Update to City Council as necessary.	
PR 1.3.2	Collaborate with partners to conduct meetings with local and regional organizations, property owners, and neighboring municipalities to identify strategies and available land to connect the City's publicly available open spaces and regional open space networks.*	PR1.2	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented and maintained collaboration. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.3.3	Collaborate with partners to redevelop existing parks and develop underutilized spaces in high-density residential areas into parklets, vegetated spaces, or community gardens.	FLU2.1, T2.1	Parks and Recreation Department, Business and Community Development Department, Planning and Permitting Department	Medium-Term	Redevelopment of existing parks and development of new parklets, vegetated spaces, and community gardens. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.3.4	Collaborate with partners to expand awareness and participation in volunteer programs supporting year-round park, trails, and open space maintenance.		Parks and Recreation Department	Ongoing	Documented partnerships and projects with local organizations. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 4: Provide points of access to major waterbodies for boating, fishing, swimming, and other means of recreation. .

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 1.4.1	Identify and assess potential locations for new or expanded public boat launches and waterfront access points across Auburn's major waterbodies. Incorporate long-term maintenance, safety planning, and operational resilience into waterfront access projects.	NE1.1	City Manager, Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works, Engineering Department	Ongoing	Identified and assessed public boat launch(es) and waterfront across point(s). Annual update to City Council.	Boating Facilities Fund: Bureau of Parks and Lands: Maine DACF https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/boating_facilities_fund.html

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 1.4.2	Implement the recreation plans specified in Gulf Island's FERC Hydropower License for increased pond access and a boat launch.	PR2.1	Planning and Permitting Department, Public Works	Medium-Term	Implemented recreation plans. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 1.4.3	Support the Androscoggin River and Little Androscoggin River as a recreational and intrinsic asset by increasing activities and programming along the Riverwalk, improved trail and park maintenance and connectivity, increased signage, adequate lighting, and promotion of the rivers.	NE1.1, E1.3, PR1.2, PR1.3, PR2.3	City Manager, Communications and Community Development Department, Public Works, Public Services	Ongoing	Documented support for the Androscoggin and Little Androscoggin Rivers through programming, improved maintenance, signage, lighting, and promotion. Annual update to City Council.	

Policy #2, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 2: Provide recreation programming for people of all ages and abilities.

Objective 1: Establish a continuous evaluation and improvement framework for Auburn's recreation programming.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 2.1.1	Regularly conduct a community needs assessment for recreation programming.		Parks and Recreation Department	Ongoing	Determined regularity of conducting the community needs assessment. Completion of the community needs assessment. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.1.2	Integrate the community needs assessment for recreation programming with the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to accomplish identified program enhancements.	PR2.2	Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Integrated community needs assessment with Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.1.3	Develop a standardized set of evaluation metrics and data collection methods to measure the economic benefits of Auburn's recreation system.	PR2.3, E1.3	Parks and Recreation Department, Economic Development Department	Medium-Term	Measured economic benefits of recreation system. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.1.4	Assess Auburn's program fees and costs against peer municipalities to ensure pricing remains competitive, balanced, and aligned with community affordability.	PR2.1	Parks and Recreation Department	Ongoing	Completed assessment. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Complete and implement the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan using existing resources.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 2.2.1	Complete the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan.	PR2.1, PR2.3	Parks and Recreation Department	Short-Term	Completed Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.2.2	Integrate the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan with the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan and coordinate strategies with other City-wide plans, including in transportation, housing, and the economy.	FLU1.1, E1.3, T2.1, PR2.1	Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Aligned Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan and other City-wide plans. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.2.3	Utilize the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to determine program enhancements. Implement program enhancements, where feasible.	PR2.1	Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works	Long-Term	Implemented Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.2.4	Regularly update the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to align with the community needs assessment(s).		Parks and Recreation Department	Long-Term	Determined regularity of strategic plan update and align community needs assessment(s) with update(s). Update to City Council as necessary.	

Objective 3: Improve the City's capacity to deliver well-managed and maintainable sporting events to benefit sports tourism and sporting opportunities for residents and visitors.

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
PR 2.3.1	Complete an inventory and breakdown of uses for all rentable sports facilities in the City.	NE2.3,	Parks and Recreation Department	Short-Term	Completed Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.3.2	Assess opportunities to enhance and expand indoor and outdoor sport facilities.	E1.3	Parks and Recreation Department	Medium-Term	Identified opportunities for improved and/or expanded sport facilities. Annual update to City Council.	
PR 2.3.3	Coordinate with the School Department to ensure public access to school facilities outside of school related functions.	C4.1	City Manager, Parks and Recreation, Public Works	Ongoing	Documented and maintained coordination to provide access to facilities for events outside of school re-lated functions. Annual update to City Council.	

Infrastructure

Community Goal: *Maintain existing infrastructure and plan strategic investments that prepare the City to respond to changing community needs and future challenges.*

Policy #1, Objectives, and Actions to Implement Objectives

Policy 1: Provide public facilities in an efficient, coordinated, and fiscally responsible manner that meets current needs and responds to anticipated growth and demographic change.

Objective 1: Update the 5-year capital improvement plan to a 10-year capital improvement plan.*

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
I 1.1.1	Expand the City's capital improvement plan from a 5-year to 10-year planning horizon, maintaining a detailed first 5 years and a programmatic outlook for 6 to 10 years to improve long-range coordination and fiscal planning.	I1.1	City Manager	Short-Term	Adopted 10-year CIP. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.1.2	Integrate all major infrastructure categories into the 10 year CIP, including transportation, water, sewer, stormwater, public facilities, parks, trails, roads (including road safety improvements), and major equipment across all capital investments.	FLU1.1, NE1.1, T1.1, I1.1	City Manager, Department Staff	Short-Term	Included all major infrastructure categories in the adopted CIP. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.1.3	Annually review the CIP with the City Council and align with the budget cycle to evaluate progress, adjust priorities, and reaffirm alignment with comprehensive plan objectives.	I1.1	City Manager	Ongoing	Completed annual CIP review. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.1.4	Establish measurable performance indicators for the CIP and create a transparent tracking dashboard.	I1.1	City Manager	Medium-Term	Established performance indicators and tracking dashboard. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.1.5	Build flexibility into the CIP for emergencies or contingency scenarios to respond to legislative changes and unforeseen events.	I1.1	City Manager	Ongoing	Contingency reserve or deferred project category in CIP. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.1.6	Incorporate climate resiliency investments into the CIP. Track and leverage funding programs to overlap resiliency opportunities with other CIP needs.	NE4.1, I1.1	City Manager	Ongoing	Documented number and value of CIP projects that include resiliency components. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 2: Explore opportunities for infrastructure coordination and joint purchasing programs.*

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
I 1.2.1	In line with the budget process, assess infrastructure functions to identify opportunities for regional coordination or joint purchasing.		City Manager	Ongoing	Completed assessment of infrastructure functions during budget cycle. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.2.2	Collaborate with regional partners, service districts, and councils of governments to evaluate shared infrastructure investments, equipment purchases, or coordinated capital timing where possible.	T4.3	City Manager, Department Staff	Ongoing	Documented findings and recommendations. Incorporated feasible opportunities into the CIP and annual budget discussions. Annual update to City Council.	

Objective 3: Prioritize infrastructure investment in high-growth areas designated in the Future Land Use Plan.*

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
I 1.3.1	Establish formal CIP project scoring criteria that prioritize infrastructure investments in designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use map.	FLU1.1, FLU2.1, T4.3,	City Manager	Short-Term	Adopted CIP scoring framework. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.3.2	Ensure capacity of utility services (natural gas, electricity, broadband, etc.) and collaborate with partners to improve and expand sewer and water service in the high growth area.	H1.1, FLU2.1, C5.2	Planning and Permitting Department, Economic Development Department	Ongoing	Coordination with utility service providers and water and sewer district(s). Annual update to City Council.	Public Infrastructure Grant Program: CDBG https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process
I 1.3.3	Provide adequate educational, emergency service, municipal service, community-wide, and public works buildings and facilities.	C4.1	City Manager, Public Works Department, Police Department, Fire Department, 911 Communications	Ongoing	City-owned buildings and facilities meet established service capacity and condition standards. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.3.4	Maintain collaboration with AWSD and LACWA to evaluate water and wastewater treatment capacity (both dry and wet weather capacity) and growth-related impacts to rate payers.*	NE1.1	Public Services Department	Ongoing	Documented and maintained collaboration. Annual update to City Council.	

No.	Actions	Related Objective	Responsible Group	Timeline	Performance Metric	Funding Source
I 1.3.5	Track and report the percentage of capital investments located in high-growth areas, with a target of 75% of new public facilities being placed in high-growth areas.* Consider infrastructure gaps, including the need for public restrooms, during development of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	FLU2.1, C5.2	Public Services Department	Long-Term	At least 75% of new growth-related capital investment value located in designated high-growth areas, with consideration of infrastructure gaps for future CIP consideration(s). Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.3.6	Identify infill and redevelopment potential and relocation of public utilities, including drainage and stormwater infrastructure. Identify City-owned vacant lots and determine redevelopment opportunities.	FLU2.1, E1.2, H1.1, H1.2	Public Services Department	Ongoing	Evaluated infill or redevelopment areas and initiated utility relocation or upgrade projects. Annual update to City Council.	
I 1.3.7	Improve code enforcement capacity to track, monitor, and enforce vegetation maintenance requirements approved through the site review and development approval process.	FLU1.1, C5.2, PR1.3	Public Services Department, Planning and Permitting Department (Code Enforcement)	Short-Term	Established tracking process for approved vegetation maintenance conditions and documented enforcement actions. Annual update to City Council.	Community Enterprise Grant: CDBG https://www.maine.gov/decd/community-development/cdbg-program/application-process
I 1.3.8	Periodically evaluate the impact of community growth and changing service demands on police, fire, and communications staffing, facilities, equipment, technology, training, and operational capacity.	C3.4	City Manager, Police Department, Fire Department	Ongoing	Identified needs are incorporated into the City's annual budget and CIP. Annual update to City Council.	



Appendices



Photo: Jewels Lapointe

Appendix A: Glossary

Accessory dwelling unit (ADU): A self contained dwelling unit located within, attached, or detached from a single-family dwelling unit located on the same parcel of land as a primary dwelling unit.

Active Recreation: Recreational activities that typically require dedicated facilities, equipment, or organized spaces to support physical activity and active participation.

Active Transportation: Any human-powered or self-propelled form of travel, primarily walking and bicycling, but also rolling in a wheelchair, skateboarding, or using low-speed electric micromobility like e-bikes—used to get from one destination to another

ADA accessible: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards—along with the Title II and Title III regulations—state what is required for a building or facility to be physically accessible to people with disabilities.

Adaptive reuse: The renovation and reuse of preexisting structures for new purposes.

Affordable Housing (State of Maine Definition): Rental housing that a household whose income does not exceed 80% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, can afford without spending more than 30% of the household's monthly income on housing costs. With respect to housing that is owned, housing that a household whose income does not exceed 120% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, can afford without spending more than 30% of the household's monthly income on housing costs.

Agriculture: The cultivation, breeding, care, or management of plants or animals for commercial purposes—whether for sale or lease—including forage and sod, grain and seed crops, dairy livestock and products, poultry and their products, livestock in general, fruits and vegetables, and ornamental plants.

Agriculture and Resource Protection (AGRP): Rural Auburn has a unique Agricultural and Resource Protection (AGRP) District, which has been in place since the early 1960's and contains over 50% of the City's land area, or over 20,000 acres. The AGRP regulations have limited development and promoted food, agricultural, timber, and natural resource production, and associated uses.

Amenities: An amenity refers to a feature or service within a city that enhances residents' comfort, convenience, or enjoyment. These can include natural elements like lakes or trails, public services such as recreational centers or nonprofit groups, and commercial offerings like restaurants or entertainment spots.

Area median income (AMI): Area Median Income (AMI) represents the middle point of a region's income range and is updated each year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is used as a standard to categorize household income levels and determine eligibility for housing assistance programs.

Capital improvement plan (CIP): A CIP lays out the financing, location, and timing for capital improvement projects over several years. A CIP typically consists of one or more capital improvement projects, which are financed through a capital budget. CIPs are important tools for local governments, allowing them to plan strategically for community growth and transformation.

Climate resiliency: The ability of a community, business, or the natural environment to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from a hazardous event.

Class GPA waters: Class GPA is the sole classification both of great ponds and of natural lakes and ponds less than 10 acres in size. Class GPA waters must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection, recreation in and on the water, fishing, agriculture, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, and navigation; they should also be suitable as a habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat must be characterized as natural.

Cluster development: Cluster developments allow for a reduction in the minimum lot size and building footprint requirements (without an increase in the overall number of units in a development) to conserve a portion of the property as common open space for recreation and/or the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. These neighborhoods essentially "cluster" homes into smaller lots on a smaller overall portion of a lot to preserve open space or natural resources.

Complete Streets: Complete streets is a transportation policy and design approach that ensures public roads are planned and built for all users. This includes people walking, biking, riding public transit, and driving, across all ages and abilities.

Conservation easement: A legally enforceable restriction on the future uses of a property granted in the form of a deed to a governmental entity or qualified conservation land trust. Conservation easements can be designed to keep a property in an essentially wild state or to allow limited residential uses, farming, and forestry. Some conservation easements grant public access on or over private lands.

Conservation land: Property owned in fee that is protected for the primary purposes of retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open space values; assuring its availability for agricultural, forest, recreational or open space use; and protecting natural resources such as maintaining or enhancing air or water quality.

Critical habitat: Critical habitat is defined as specific areas within the geographic range occupied by a species at the time it was listed, containing essential physical or biological features necessary for the conservation of endangered and threatened species.

Current use taxation (tax) program: The State of Maine has four current tax use programs that offer property owners a reduction in their property's assessed value. Properties used for farmland, open space, tree growth, and working waterfront are eligible to enroll in one of the 4 current tax use programs.

Duplex: A structure containing 2 dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside.

Dwelling unit: A room or group of rooms designed and equipped exclusively for use as permanent, seasonal, or temporary living quarters for only one family at a time, and containing cooking, sleeping, and toilet facilities. The term shall include mobile homes and rental units that contain cooking, sleeping, and toilet facilities regardless of the time period rented. Recreational vehicles are not residential dwelling units.

Feasibility: Capable of being done or carried out.

Farmland of statewide importance: Farmland of statewide importance in Maine includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of local importance.

Floodplain: A floodplain is a flat or nearly flat area adjacent to rivers, lakes, and streams that is subject to periodic flooding.

Form-based code: Form-based codes regulate the built environment with a focus on the design and feel of the built environment rather than the use of the land. Form-based codes tend to focus on the size and design of a building instead of how the building is used.

Growth area: The Growth Management Act defines growth areas as "an area that is designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for orderly residential, commercial or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development, and into which most development projected over 10 years is directed."

Housing-cost burdened: A household can be considered housing cost burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing, leaving the rest of their income for food, transportation, health care, savings, and entertainment, among other things. Households that pay above 30% of their income on housing are considered cost burdened and those paying above 50% are considered severely cost burdened.

Impervious surface: An impervious surface is a hard or compacted man-made cover, like asphalt, concrete, roofs, or packed gravel, that prevents rainwater and snowmelt from soaking into the ground. Instead of filtering through soil, the water becomes surface runoff, flowing rapidly into storm drains and local waterways.

Infill development: Building within unused and underutilized lands within existing development patterns, typically but not exclusively in urban areas.

Invasive species: A plant or animal that is not indigenous, non-native, to an ecosystem that causes harm to the environment, economy, or human, animal, and/or plant health.

Labor force participation rate: The percentage of the population aged 16 years and older who are currently employed or unemployed and seeking work. This percentage represents the relative amount of labor resources available in the City, as well as the percentage of the population that is not actively seeking employment.

Livable: The sum of various elements that add up to a community's quality of life, including the built and natural environments, social stability and equity, economic prosperity, educational and cultural opportunity.

Limited growth area: The Growth Management Act defines limited growth or transition areas as "an area that is designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial or industrial development but that is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area."

Low-impact development (LID): A site design approach that uses planning, development, and stormwater management practices to minimize impervious surfaces, reduce runoff, and lessen environmental impacts from development.

Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Shoreland Zoning Act: Maine DEP's Shoreland Zoning Act requires municipalities to adopt and enforce local ordinances that regulate land use activities in the shoreland zone. Shoreland zones include any land area within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of a pond or river, upland edge of a coastal wetland, upland edge of defined freshwater wetlands, and all areas within 75 feet of the normal high-water line of certain streams.

Mixed-use development: Developments that provide more than 1 use or purpose within a shared building or development area. Mixed-use projects may include any combination of housing, office, retail, medical, recreational, commercial, or industrial components.

Multi-family development: A building designed or intended to be used or used exclusively for residential occupancy by 3 or more families living independently of one another and containing 3 or more dwelling units.

Multimodal: Multimodal planning refers to planning that considers various modes of transportation (walking, cycling, automobile, public transit, rail, truck, air, etc.) and connections between those modes.

Natural resources/areas: Any land or water area—public or private—that maintains or has regained its natural qualities, even if not entirely untouched, and that supports endangered, threatened, or rare species, native ecosystems, or features of geological, hydrological, scenic, historical, or scientific importance that offer educational or community value.

Non-growth area: The Growth Management Act defines non-growth or rural areas as "a geographic area that is identified and designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted."

Open space: Open space includes all unbuilt areas, whether publicly or privately owned, protected, or unprotected. Open space lands include forests and grasslands, farms and ranches, streams and rivers, and parks. They provide ecosystem services, support agricultural and forest production, and offer opportunities for recreation.

Parking requirements/minimums: A form of land use regulation that prescribes a specific amount of parking to be provided by the developer of any new development. Parking requirements can include both minimums and maximum requirements.

Passive recreation: Recreational activities that do not require prepared facilities like sports fields or pavilions.

Prime farmland: Prime farmland is a designation assigned by U.S. Department of Agriculture defining land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these land uses.

Public-private collaboration: A partnership between the public sector and the private sector for the purpose of delivering a project or service.

Redevelopment: The action or process of developing something again or differently.

Resilient: The ability to withstand or recover quickly after an event.

Revaluation: Revaluation refers to the adjustment of the value of a property to reflect its current market value or fair value, rather than its historical cost or book value.

Rural area: The Growth Management Act defines non-growth or rural areas as "a geographic area that is identified and designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted."

Services: Services encompass a wide range of activities, businesses, and industries found within a community. These could include healthcare, financial, or professional services, educational institutions, restaurants, transportation, personal services like hair salons and massage therapists, or household services such as lawn care or electricians.

Service center: The Maine State Legislature identifies service centers as the communities where people work, shop, obtain medical care, or enjoy cultural experiences. Service centers are defined as areas with all or some of the following characteristics: over 500 jobs, high retail sales per capita, a high percentage of service sector jobs, and/or a high percentage of federally assisted housing units.

Shoreland zoning: Shoreland zoning is a specific zoning type, required by the State of Maine, which covers all land within 250 horizontal feet of great ponds, rivers, wetlands, and certain streams. Shoreline zones are required to be regulated by specific ordinances in each municipality.

Short-term rental (STR): A residential dwelling that is rented on a temporary basis, typically for a period of less than 30 consecutive days. Unlike long-term rentals, which typically involve lease agreements of 6 months or more, STRs cater to vacationers, business travelers, and temporary residents seeking flexible lodging options.

Single-family home: A building designed or intended to be used exclusively for residential occupancy by 1 family only and containing only 1 dwelling unit, or 1 dwelling unit with an accessory apartment, including a manufactured housing unit with no horizontal dimension smaller than 24 feet.

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability can refer to fiscal, economic, development, and environmental actions.

Tax increment financing (TIF): Municipal tax increment financing (TIF) is a flexible finance tool used by municipalities, plantations, and unorganized territories to leverage new property taxes generated by a specific project or projects within a defined geographic district. Any portion of the new taxes may be used to finance public or private projects for a defined statutorily allowable period. The municipality or plantation defines the district size, determines the amount of new taxes to be captured, and identifies allowable public and private projects along with the term, with the whole proposal requiring local approval.

Townhouse: A 1-family dwelling unit, with a private entrance, that is part of a structure whose dwelling units area attached horizontally in a linear arrangement, with a totally exposed front and rear wall to be used for access, light, and ventilation.

Transit-oriented development: Transit-oriented development (TOD) is an urban planning strategy that focuses on creating compact, walkable communities centered around public transportation hubs to promote responsible living and reduce reliance on cars.

Triplex: A building containing 3 individual dwellings. Accessory dwelling units are not included in this definition.

Vitality: A community's collective capacity to respond to change with an enhanced level of participation (a process) with aspirations for a healthy and productive community (an outcome or vision of success).

Vision Zero: Vision Zero is a strategy and public health approach to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe mobility for all.

Walkability: Walkability refers to the measure of how friendly an area is to walk, encompassing factors such as the presence of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and proximity to essential services. It is also defined as the ability to safely walk to services and amenities within a reasonable distance, typically a walk of 30 minutes or less.

Appendix B: Related Plans, Studies, and Policies

City Plans, Studies, and Policies

- 2010 Comprehensive Plan
- 2021 Comprehensive Plan Updated Chapters
- 2019 Strategic Plan
- New Auburn Master Plan
- New Auburn Village Center Plan
- Addressing Homelessness in Auburn Maine
- Joint Land Use Study – Mount Apatite/ Maine Army National Guard Facility
- Barker Mill Dam License Renewal Planning
- Lewiston Falls Hydropower License Renewal Plan
- Auburn Consolidated Plans
- Annual CDBG action plans
- 5-year CIP
- Communications and Community Engagement Plan
- Washington Street Corridor Study
- Minot Avenue Corridor Study
- Court Street Study
- HR&A Housing Study
- Pedestrian Safety Mitigation Plan
- Equity Policy
- Auburn Public Woodlots Forest Management Plan
- Athletic Facilities Needs Assessment
- Auburn Indoor Sports and Recreation Complex Feasibility Report
- 2009 Center Street Traffic Management Study
- 2007 Park Avenue Corridor Study
- 2011 Portland to Lewiston/Auburn and Montreal Intercity Passenger Rail Feasibility Study
- New Auburn Walkable Audit Report
- Evaluation of Improvement Potential for Lake Auburn
- Report of the Mayor's Ad-Hoc Bona Fide Farming, Agricultural, Recreational and Natural Resources Land Use Committee

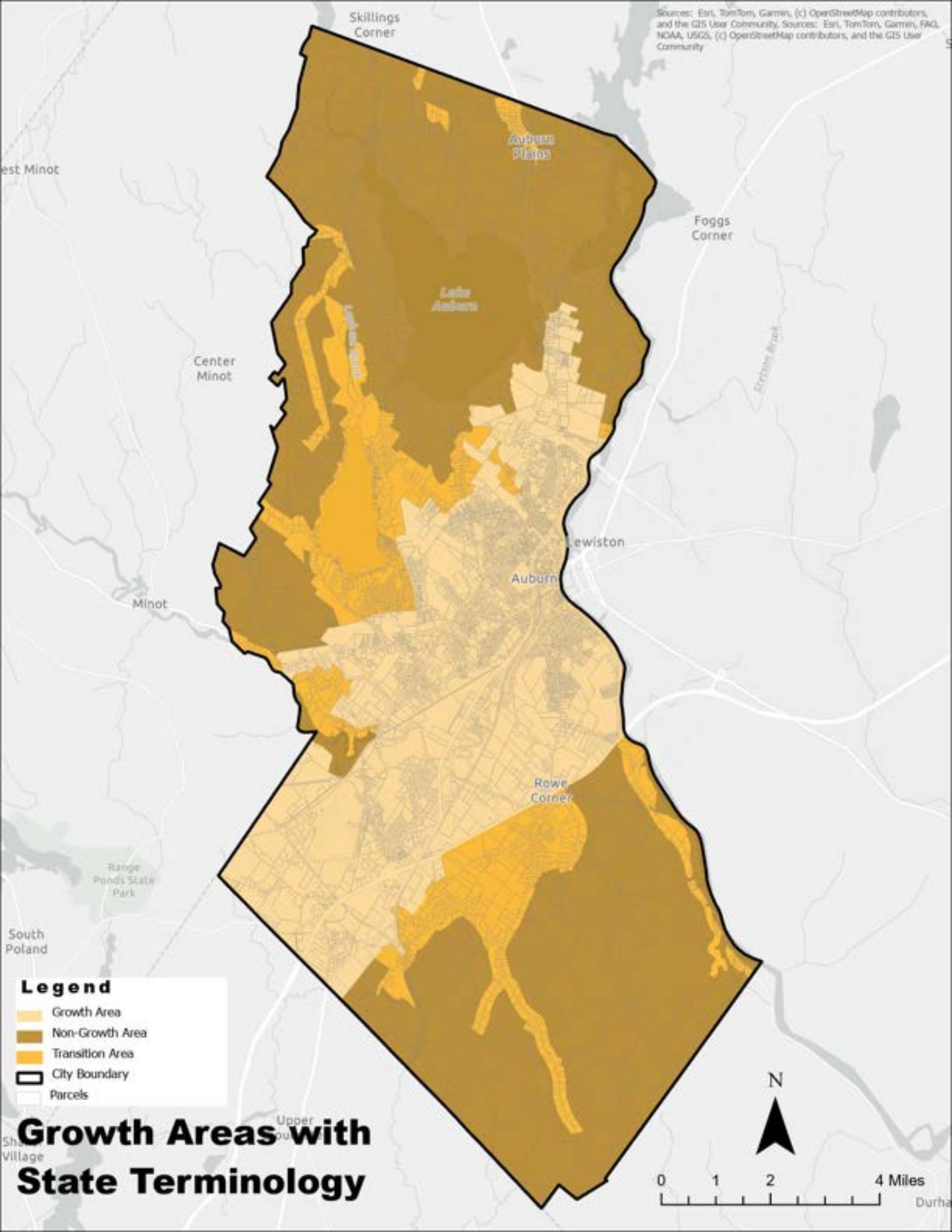
Regional Plans

- Local Food Action Plan
- Androscoggin River Watershed Comprehensive Plan
- ATRC Complete Streets: A Guide to Best Management and Design Practice
- Androscoggin County - 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan

State Plans

- Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan
- Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Maine Economic Development Strategy
- Maine Housing Needs Production Study

Appendix C: Growth Areas Map



Growth Areas with State Terminology

Appendix D: Community Engagement Summary

Contents

Introduction 4

Community Surveys 9

General Community Survey 9

School Surveys 11

Open House and Community Events 16

General Visioning 16

Natural Environment 22

Water and Natural Resources 22

Agriculture and Forestry 23

Recreation 24

People and City Services 24

Built Environment 26

Auburn's Economy 26

Housing in Auburn 28

Transportation 29

Auburn's History 30

Drop-In Center 31

Community Focus Groups 38

Hospitality and Retail 38

Strengths 38

Challenges 38

Goals 39

Essential and Social Services 39

Strengths 39

Challenges 39

Goals 39

Education and Youth Services 39
Strengths 40
Challenges 40
Goals 40
Environment and Sustainability 40
Strengths 40
Challenges 41
Goals 41
Agriculture and Food Systems 41
Strengths 41
Challenges 41
Goals 41
Real Estate, Housing, and Development 42
Strengths 42
Challenges 42
Goals 42
Transportation and Mobility 43
Strengths 43
Challenges 43
Goals 43
Future Investment Priorities Dot-Voting Activity 43

Introduction

As part of the City of Auburn's (City) Comprehensive Plan Update, City staff, Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) members, and the City's consulting partner (BerryDunn) conducted a public engagement effort to obtain input from Auburn's residents, workers, and visitors. The goal of this effort was to identify community values and priorities, provide information to inform the creation of the City's vision statement, and guide plan development and policy recommendations. The engagement strategy included the following events and activities:

- A comprehensive survey open to all community members
- A youth survey of local middle and high school students
- A focus group event with 11 different focus areas
- Tables at community events, including National Night Out, the PAL Center Backpack Drive, and the Lewiston Farmers Market
- Three open house events aimed at the general population
- Four additional open houses focused on future land use
- Listening sessions at the Drop-In Center and focus group with staff
- A youth forum
- Poster and dot engagement at various locations in Auburn, including City Hall, the Drop-In Center, General Assistance Office, and New Beginnings
- Online engagement via a Social Pinpoint website

To help inform the community of the project, there were several methods used to engage participants in the process:

- Mailings were sent out to more than 10,000 households to inform them of the project and community survey.
- Roughly 1,500 organizations, businesses, and individuals were invited to participate in the focus group event.
- Over 1,500 organizations, businesses, and individuals were directly invited to participate in the open house events. Physical posters or social media posts about the events were also shared at City Hall, Senior Community Center, Norway Savings Bank Arena, the Auburn Community Facebook Group, the Taylor Pond Association website and Facebook page, the Lewiston-Auburn Metro Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, the Auburn Public Library, Edward Little High School, and on City of Auburn social media accounts.

- City staff also tabled at local community events, provided engagement activities at local organizations, and held listening sessions. Staff tabled at the Lewiston-Auburn Farmers Market, National Night Out, and PAL Center Backpack Drive. Posters with dot activities were placed at City Hall, Drop-In Center, and New Beginnings. A listening session was conducted at the Drop-In Center.

The table below summarizes outreach totals and engagement event totals from March 2025 through June 2026.

Table 1.1: Total Outreach and Engagement Inputs March 2025 – May 2026

Event	Total Engagements or Participants
Outreach	
Mailings	~11,000
Focus Group Invites	~1,500
Open House Invites	~1,500
Social Pinpoint Website Visitors	2,173
Engagements and Inputs	
Social Pinpoint Email Sign Ups	52
Social Pinpoint Ideas Wall and Forum Posts	114
Social Pinpoint Map Posts	115
Social Pinpoint Budgeting Tools	19
Social Pinpoint Form Responses	19
Community Survey Responses	541
Middle School Survey Responses	285
High School Survey Responses	143
Focus Group Attendees	77
Natural Environment Open House Attendees	30
People and City Services Open House Attendees	15
Built Environment Open House Attendees	9
FLU Open House Attendees and Online Participation	22
Photo Contest	3
Drop-In Center Listening Session	11
Farmers Market Interactions	22
National Night Out Interactions	125
Youth Forum Interactions	15

Event	Total Engagements or Participants
PAL Center Backpack Drive Interactions	185
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting Public Comment	8
Total Invites and Mailings:	**16,136**
Total Engagements or Inputs:	**1,931**

Source: BerryDunn and City of Auburn outreach tracking

This high-level summary details each engagement as well as its results, aimed at summarizing feedback received from community members. Across all engagements, several themes emerged. Below, these themes are categorized by subject area.

General Vision

- Auburn should be a safe, exciting, and friendly place to live, and an appealing destination for visitors.
- Protecting natural resources, parks, and rural areas is a priority.
- Auburn should be affordable for everyone, with housing, food, and transit options that are accessible to households of all income levels.
- Auburn should be a place for young people to thrive, grow, and stay. This might include improving recreational opportunities for those ages 5-25, keeping educational quality high, and investing in future infrastructure, services, and housing.

Housing and Affordability

- Cost of living, tax burden, and overall affordability are top priorities across engagement activities.
- Auburn needs housing at a variety of price points, including housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- A variety of housing types are needed to meet the needs of residents moving forward.
- Housing shortages are seen as a barrier to livability and economic development.
- New development should be located where buildings and infrastructure exist to provide new housing while protecting natural resources and agricultural land.
- Improvements should be made to reduce the number of vacant or abandoned buildings and facade improvements are needed for abandoned or aging buildings throughout Auburn.

Transportation, Walkability, and Connectivity

- Infrastructure is needed to improve and expand walkability and bikeability.
- Public transit is underdeveloped and critical for improving equity in access to jobs, education, and services (especially to areas outside of Lewiston-Auburn).
- Sidewalks, traffic calming, and bike lanes are priorities for improving street safety.

Parks, Recreation, and Natural Assets

- Parks, trails, lakes, and outdoor recreation access are valuable assets, and access to recreation amenities should be expanded.
- The City's natural beauty and access to open space should be preserved as Auburn grows.
- Climate change and environmental sustainability are rising concerns, with support for conservation, water quality improvements, and forests and agricultural land conservation.
- Lake Auburn is an asset that should be protected.

Economic Development and Local Business Support

- Auburn should become a destination, with more shopping, dining, and entertainment, rather than a pass-through community.
- Downtown should be revitalized to attract more visitors.
- Auburn's downtown lacks foot traffic and retail spending power, tied to affordability issues.
- Workforce challenges are common, including staffing shortages, especially for food service, construction, and trade industries.

Services

- There is a need for better support for unhoused individuals, alongside accessible mental healthcare, addiction recovery.
- There is a need for better coordination among providers and with the City.
- Youth services and activities are lacking.

Education and Youth Opportunity

- Education quality, affordability, and access are the key to Auburn's future.
- Auburn needs more adult education and job training opportunities, particularly trade programs.
- There is a need for more teen-focused entertainment and gathering spaces, particularly those in walking distance from schools and denser residential areas.

Infrastructure and City Services

- Roads and infrastructure maintenance are a core concern.
- The City should focus on traffic flow, safety, litter control, pothole management, and responsive services.
- Visual quality, especially of entry corridors like Washington Street, is important to Auburn's economic future.

Community Identity

- Auburn's sense of community, friendliness, and small-town feel are valued by residents.
- Events, festivals, and civic spaces are ways to strengthen community ties and support local businesses.
- The community is undecided on what Auburn's identity is today but would like to promote unifying features and a greater sense of identity for the City in the future.

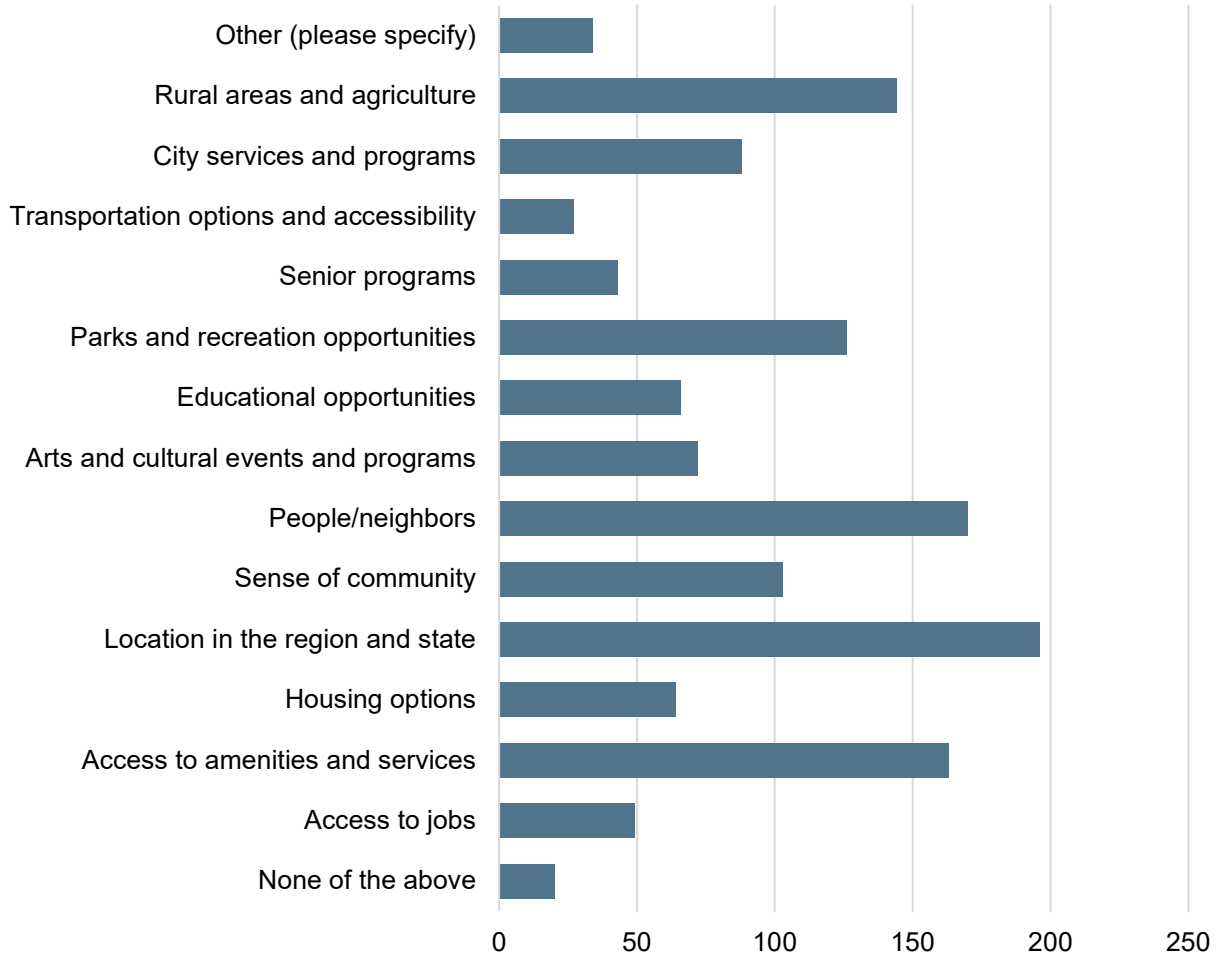
Community Surveys

General Community Survey

The City distributed a community survey via postcards mailed to residents, flyers posted at several locations, and social media and email outreach. The survey generated 541 responses and covered a variety of topics related to the Comprehensive Plan.

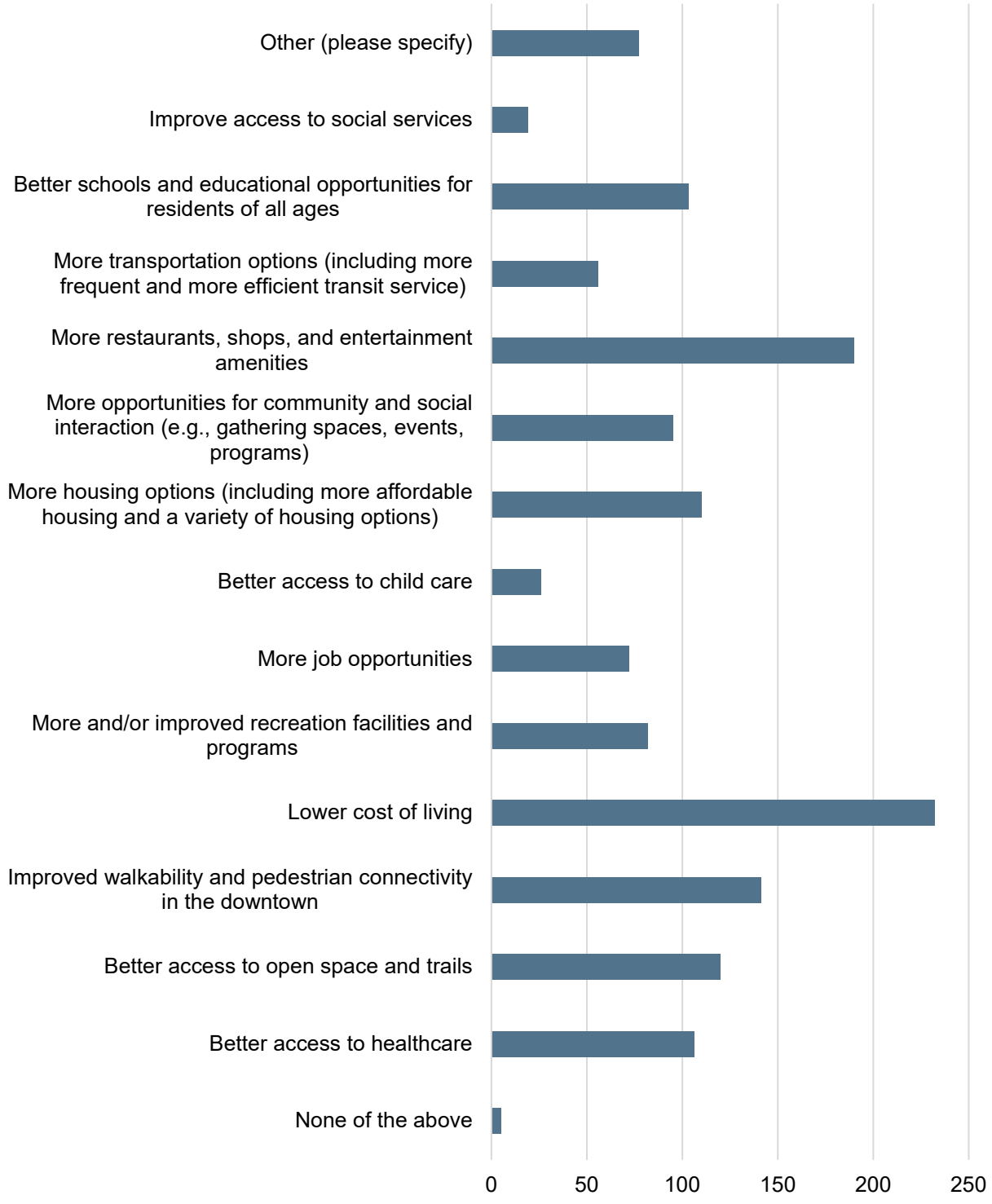
When asked what they value most about Auburn, respondents highlighted the City's location within the region and state, its strong sense of community, and the friendliness of neighbors. Parks and recreational opportunities, along with access to amenities and services, were also frequently mentioned as important aspects of life in Auburn.

Figure 1.1: What do you value most about Auburn?



Source: Community survey

Figure 1.2: Which changes would most improve your quality of life?



Source: Community survey

Looking ahead to the next decade, many respondents indicated a desire for more walkable and bikeable infrastructure, as well as expanded public transportation options both within Auburn and to surrounding areas. Housing needs are expected to shift, with some residents seeking larger homes to accommodate family changes, while others anticipate downsizing or transitioning to more affordable or accessible housing.

Survey participants also shared their priorities for City spending. High-priority areas included road and infrastructure maintenance, public safety services, housing affordability, and recreational programs. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure was also seen as a valuable investment.

Overall, most respondents rated their quality of life in Auburn positively. Positive feedback centered on the City's location, community spirit, available amenities, and access to nature and education. However, concerns were raised about the tax burden, road conditions, safety, affordability, and support for unhoused individuals.

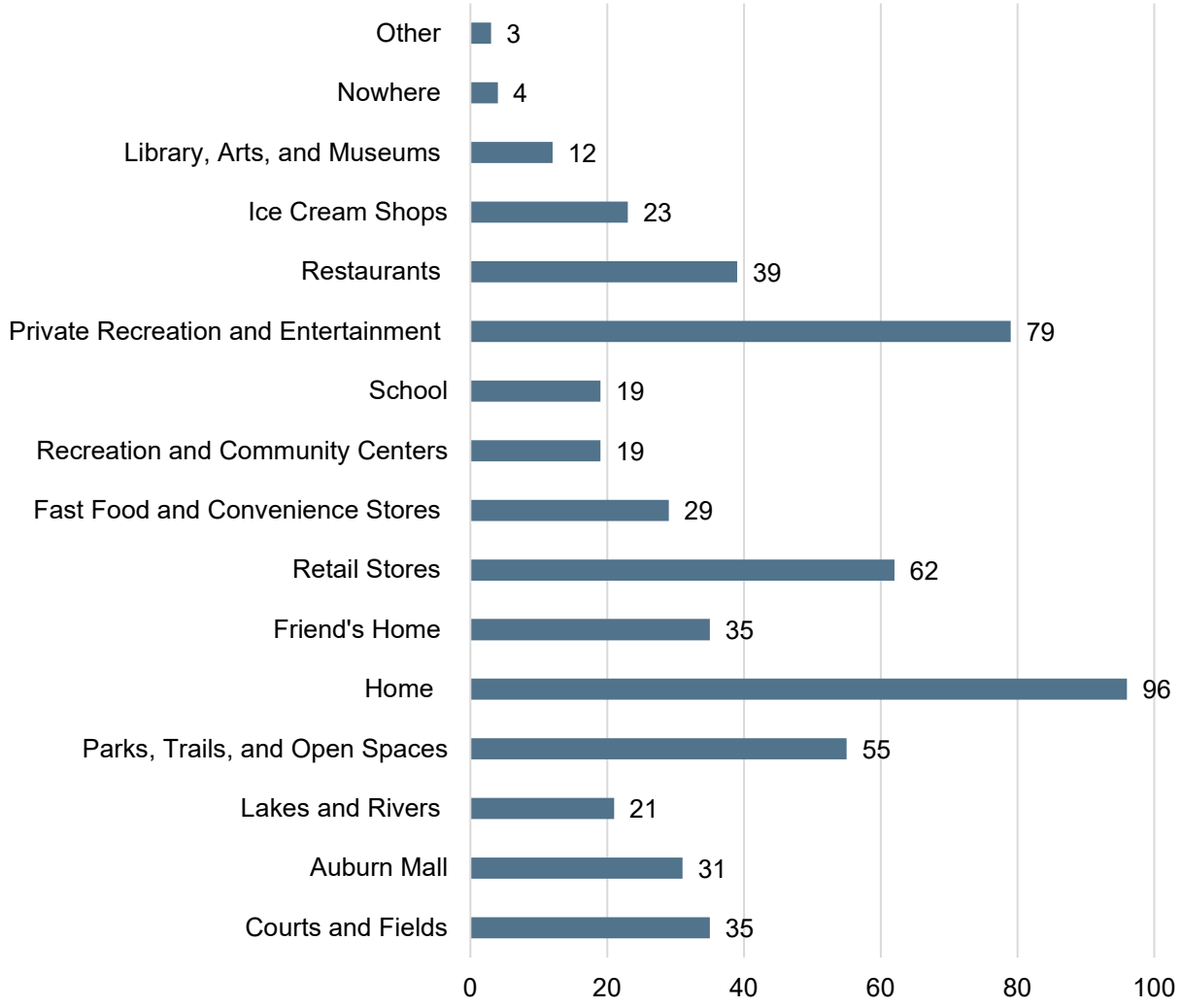
When envisioning Auburn's future, residents emphasized the importance of increasing affordability, maintaining infrastructure, expanding parks and recreation, and supporting local businesses. Improving education, walkability, and environmental sustainability were also common themes. The overarching vision is to make Auburn more affordable, accessible, and environmentally conscious, while preserving its natural beauty and fostering a vibrant, inclusive community.

School Surveys

The City conducted two surveys among students in Auburn: one for middle school students, and one for high school students. A total of 428 students participated in the survey, with 285 from the middle school and 143 from the high school.

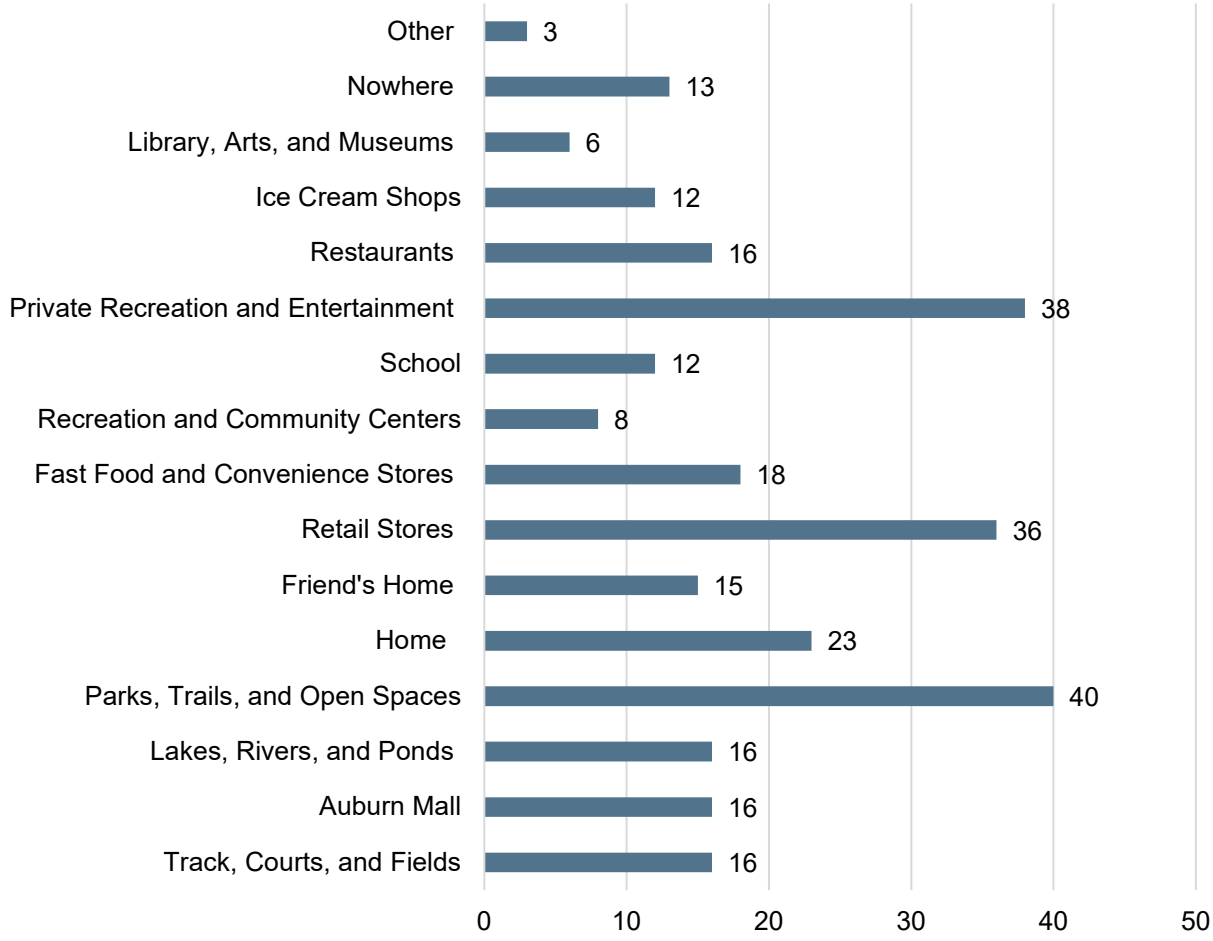
Students' favorite places in Auburn include parks, trails, lakes, and recreational centers. Middle schoolers especially enjoy fast food options, retail stores, and entertainment venues like Lost Valley and trampoline parks. High schoolers also favor parks and the Auburn Mall but show slightly less interest in private entertainment venues. When asked how they get around the City, middle schoolers primarily rely on rides from adults or walking, while high schoolers also include driving themselves and using public transportation.

Figure 1.3: Middle Schoolers' Favorite Places in Auburn



Source: Survey distributed to Auburn middle school students

Figure 1.4: High School Students' Favorite Places in Auburn

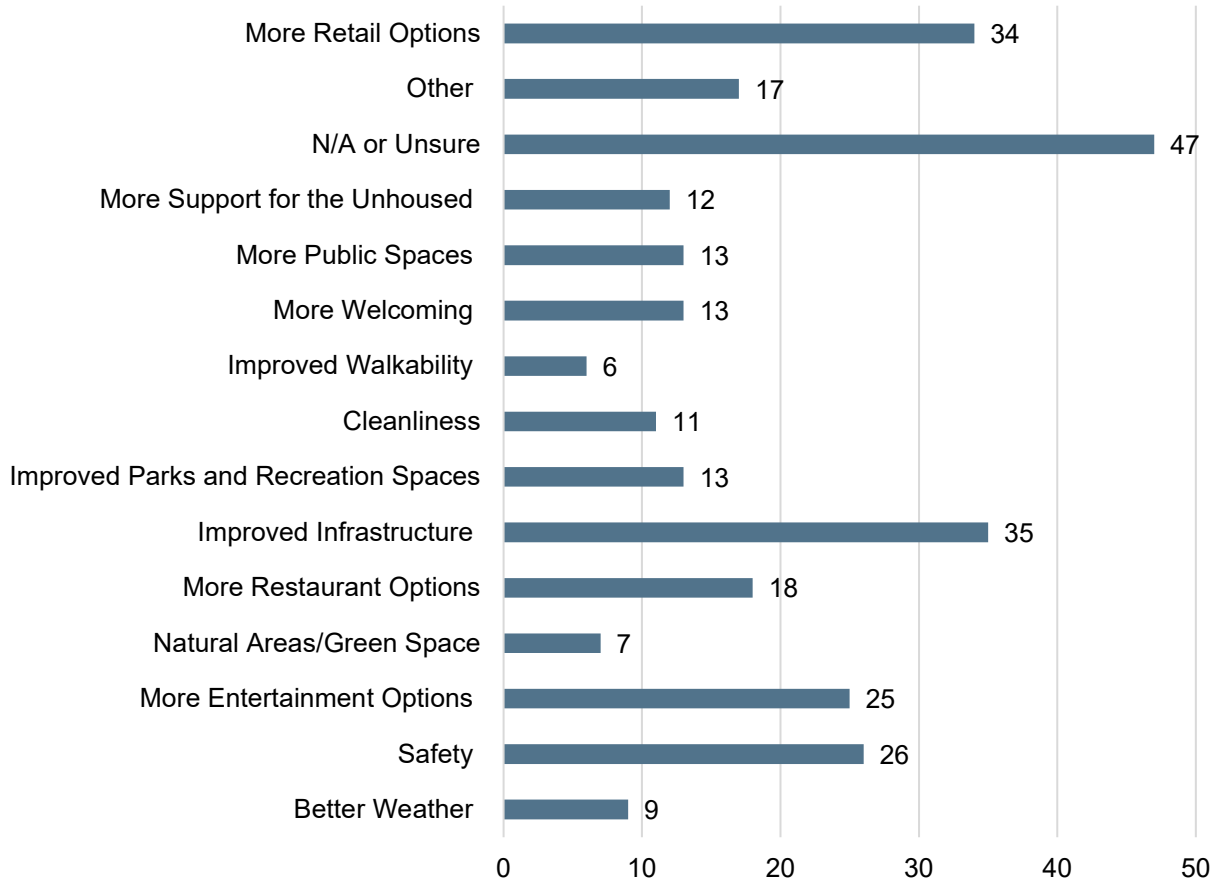


Source: Survey distributed to Auburn high school students

When asked what they would tell a newcomer their age about Auburn, responses varied. Middle schoolers often described the City as "nice," "walkable," and "friendly," though some noted it can be "boring" or "cold." High schoolers echoed similar sentiments, with a mix of appreciation for the community and critiques about limited entertainment and retail options.

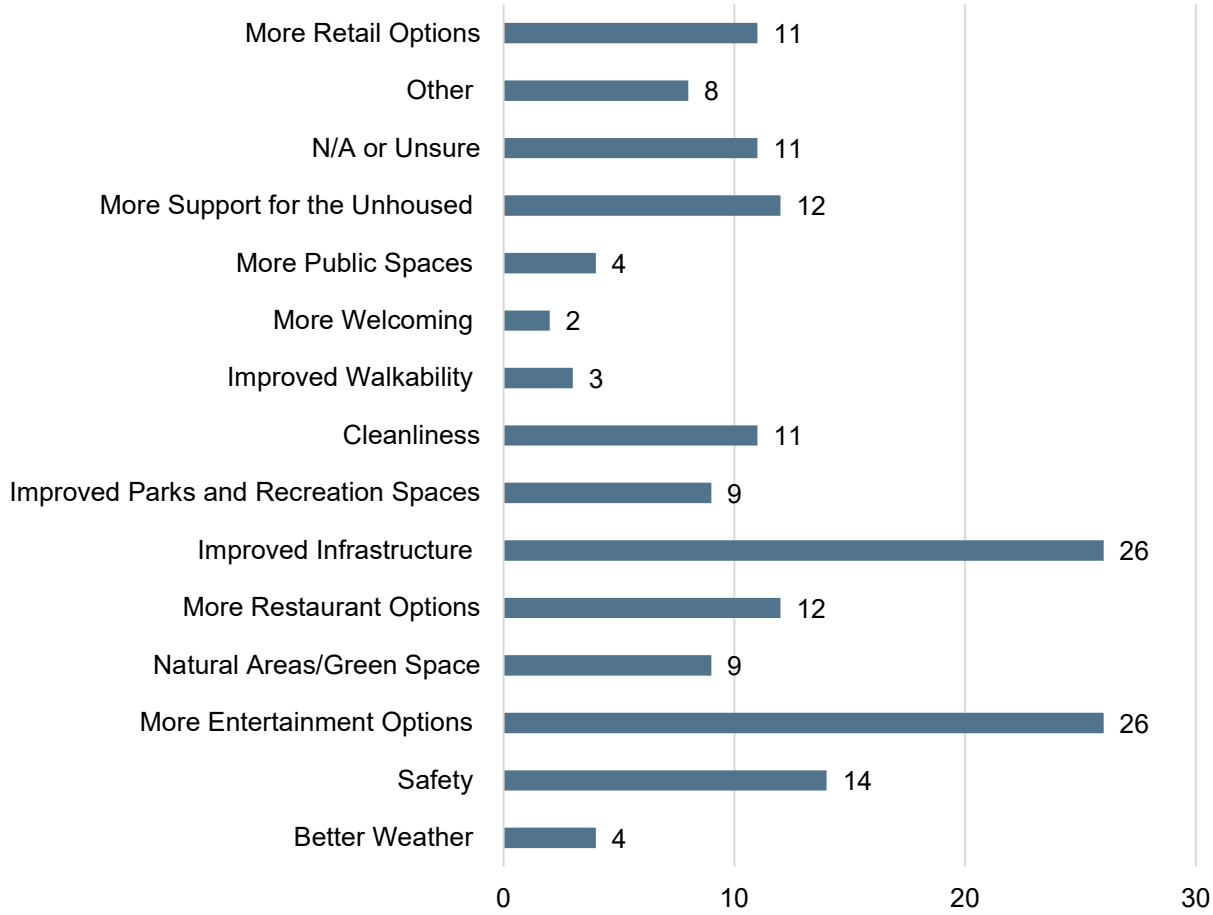
Students were also asked what they would change about Auburn. Both groups emphasized the need for more entertainment, better infrastructure, and improved parks and recreation. High school students were particularly vocal about the need for more public spaces and support for the unhoused. Infrastructure concerns included roads, traffic, and public transit.

Figure 1.5: What Middle School Students Would Like to Change in Auburn



Source: Community survey distributed to Auburn middle school students

Figure 1.6: What High School Students Would Like to Change in Auburn



Source: Community survey distributed to Auburn high school students

A key question asked high schoolers whether they would choose to stay in Auburn as adults. The majority said “no” or “maybe,” citing reasons such as boredom, a desire for better job opportunities, and Auburn’s cold weather. Those who wanted to stay appreciated the community and proximity to family.

Open House and Community Events

In June and July 2025, the City and the CPC held a series of open house events to discuss priorities for the Comprehensive Plan with community members. The events included a natural environment open house, a people and City services open house, and a built environment open house. All three events were held in person, with the natural environment event held at Lake Grove Park in Auburn, the people and City services held at Edward Little High School, and the built environment event held at the Auburn Senior Center.

Participants were given a series of interactive ways to express their opinions, concerns, and hopes for Auburn's future, and were also offered the opportunity to provide feedback on general questions about challenges and priorities for Auburn in conversations with City staff and CPC members.

Each activity conducted at open house events was recreated on Social Pinpoint to allow those who were unable to attend an opportunity to provide feedback on the same questions and topics.

City staff also attended several community events, including the National Night Out, the PAL Center Backpack Drive, and the Lewiston Farmers Market. Additional engagement was conducted at the Drop-In Center and at a youth forum, and the PAL Center. Dot-voting activities were also displayed at City Hall, General Assistance Office, New Beginnings, and the Drop-In Center.

Between the open house events, community events, dot-voting activities, and Social Pinpoint, similar activities and questions were used. These activities and responses were aggregated and compiled into four categories: general visioning, the built environment, the natural environment, and people and City services.

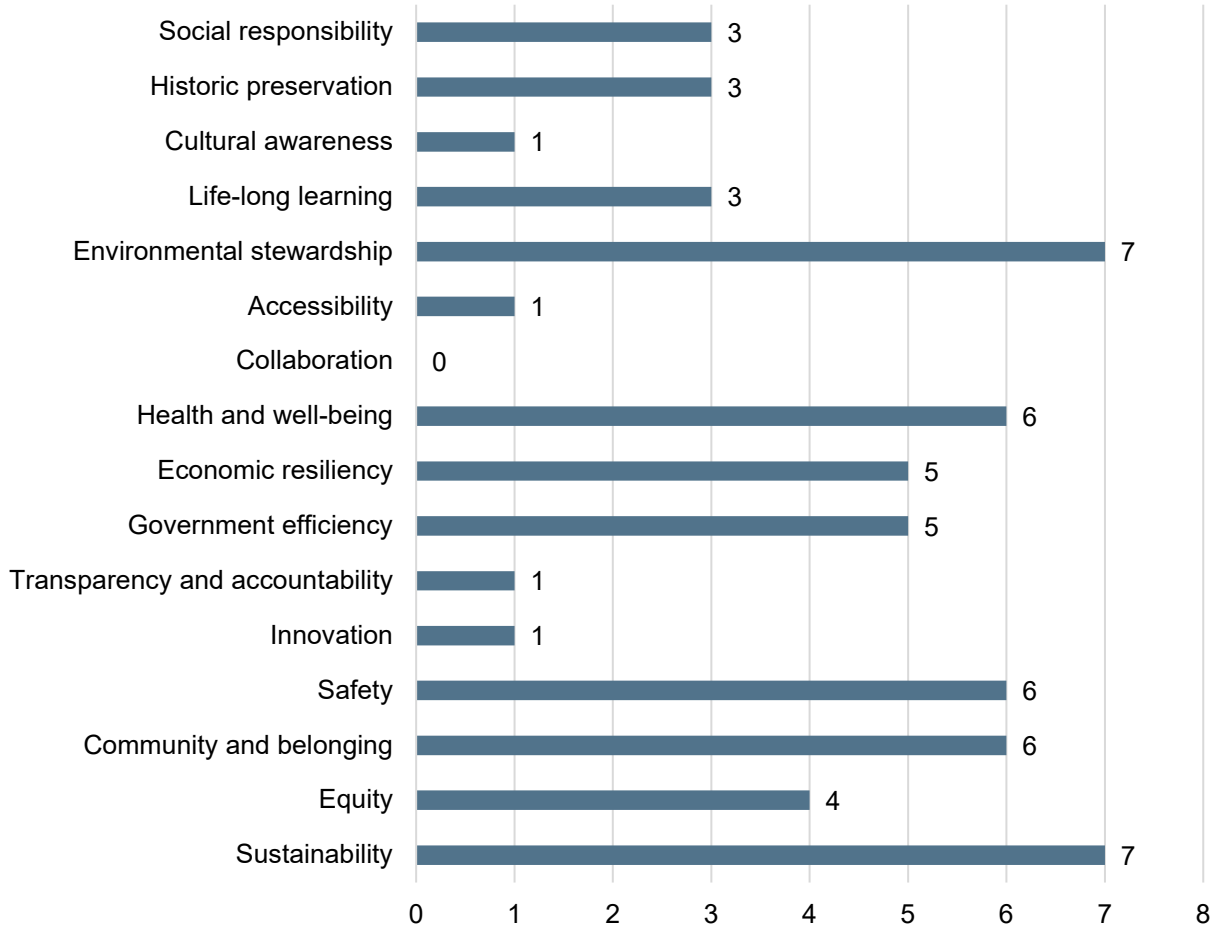
In April 2026, the City conducted a targeted round of outreach focused specifically on future land use. This included a series of four future land use open house activities and an accompanying online survey designed to gather feedback on draft land use categories and growth patterns. Building on earlier engagement, these activities were intended to better understand how residents, workers, and stakeholders experience Auburn today and how they feel about change over time, so that future land use policies and mapping reflect shared values and local context.

A key component of this phase of engagement was the use of visual preference exercises. Because land use concepts can be abstract and rely on technical terminology, these tools allowed participants to react to images representing different building types, scales, and development patterns. This approach supported more intuitive feedback by helping participants identify what types of places feel appropriate or comfortable in different parts of the community. Participants were also asked targeted questions about growth, including where growth feels most appropriate and where concerns exist related to traffic, scale, or neighborhood compatibility. Together, this input helps clarify not only where growth may be supported, but also why certain areas generate support or concern. Information gathered from all community and open house events and Social Pinpoint are summarized below.

General Visioning

At the open houses and community events, as well as online, a set of questions were asked to help inform the creation of the vision statement. Results from all events and online activities are compiled below.

Figure 1.7: What Values Should Guide our Comprehensive Plan?



Source: Community dot-voting activities conducted at each open house event, Social Pinpoint

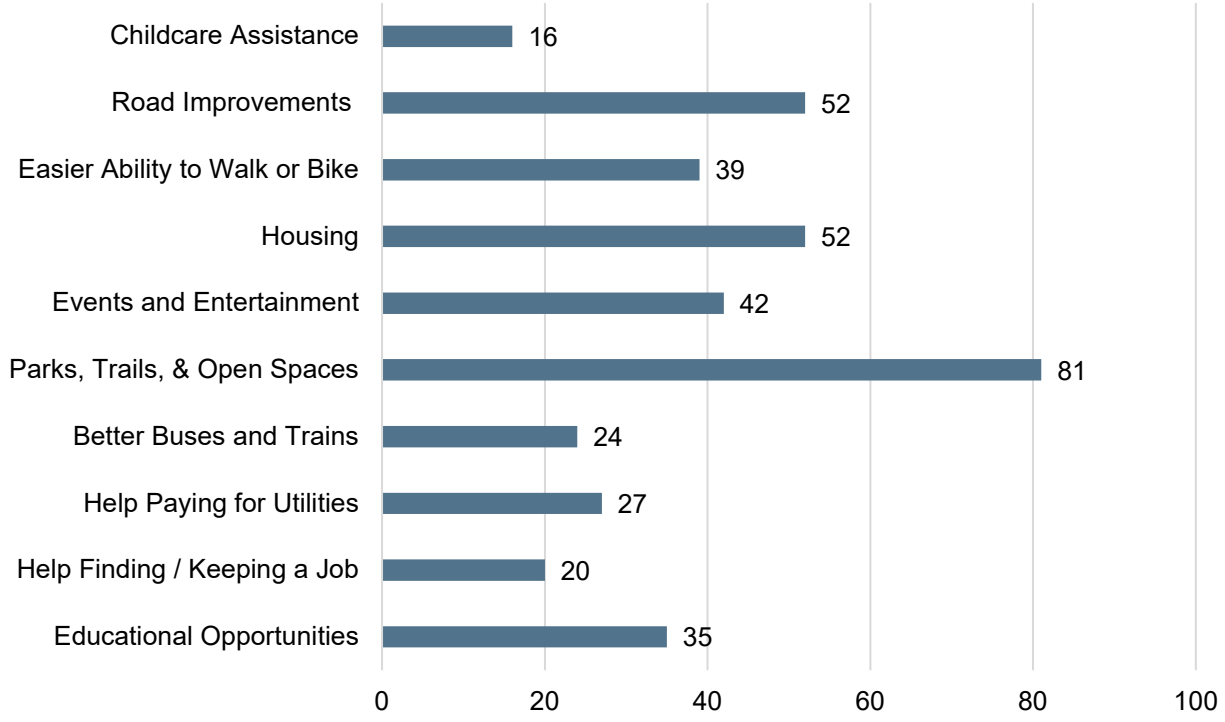
How would you describe Auburn's identity today? (12 responses)

- Residential or neighborhood oriented (4 responses)
- Rural or small-town (3 responses)
- Retail (3 responses)
- Friendly (2 responses)
- In transition (3 responses)
- Other: diverse, accepting, hardworking, authentic, and opportunistic

How would you like people to describe Auburn in 10 years? (24 responses)

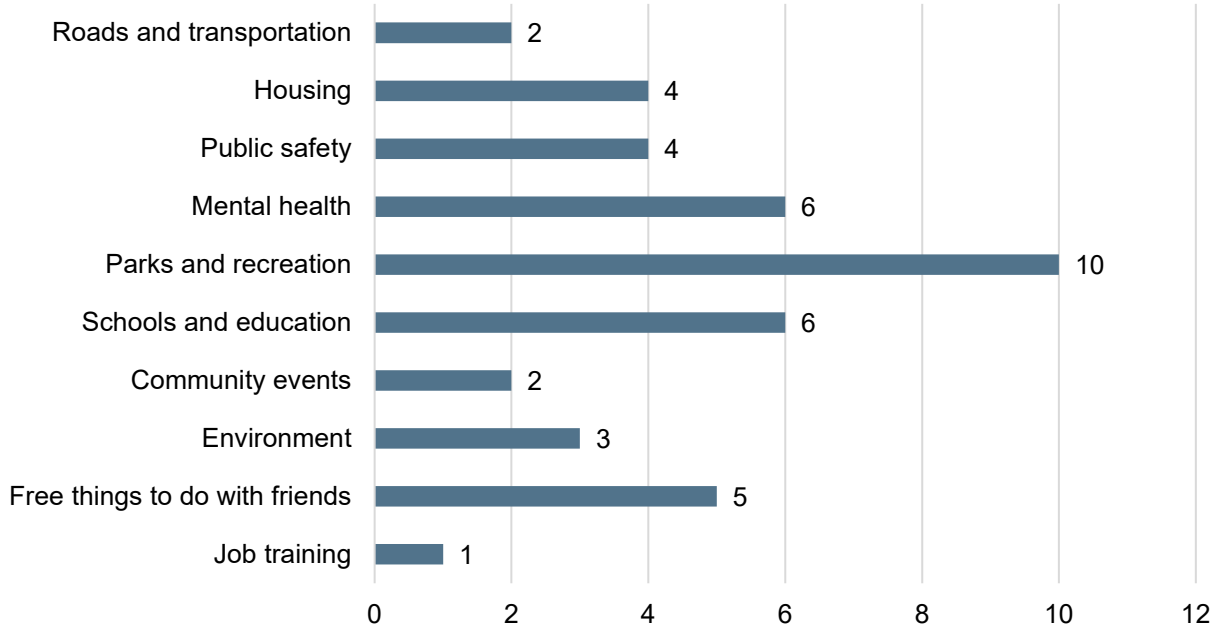
- Great outdoor access and recreation amenities (6 responses)
- New or exciting businesses – business-friendly (3 responses)
- Affordable or accessible to everyone (2 responses)
- A strong downtown (2 responses)
- Great schools (2 responses)
- A destination (2 responses)
- Other: family friendly, peaceful, vibrant, likeable, reduced homelessness, growth

Figure 1.8: PAL Center Backpack Drive Future priorities



Source: Dot-voting activity at the PAL Backpack Drive

Figure 1.9: Youth Forum Future Priorities



Source: Dot-voting activity at the youth forum

What does the term "affordability" mean to you? (34 responses)

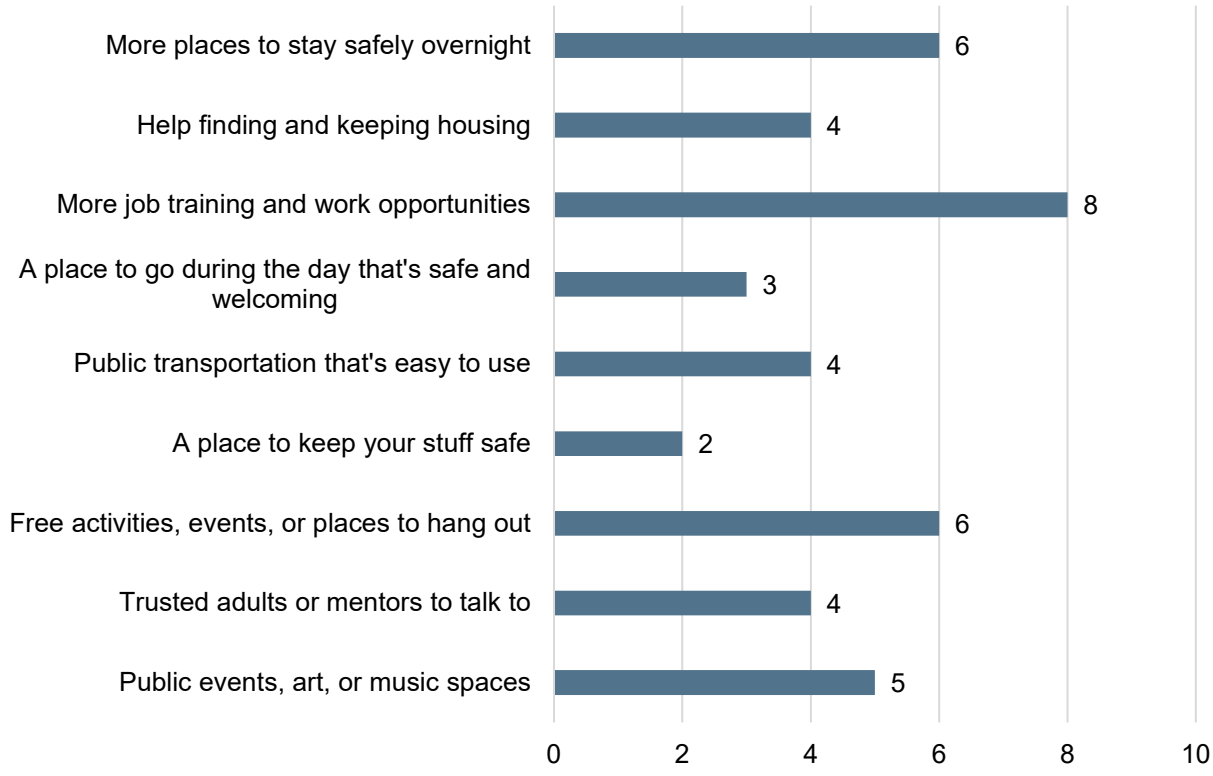
- People can afford basic needs like housing, food, taxes, electricity, clothing, transportation and have extra money left over (8 responses)
- Costs within means of average residents
- Food and housing security
- Better prices for groceries or housing
- Making purchases within one's budget

What are Auburn's strengths? What is missing? (8 responses)

- Strengths
    - Access to stores
    - Access to medical care
    - Location in the State
    - Farmland and watershed protection
    - Transportation
    - Relative affordability

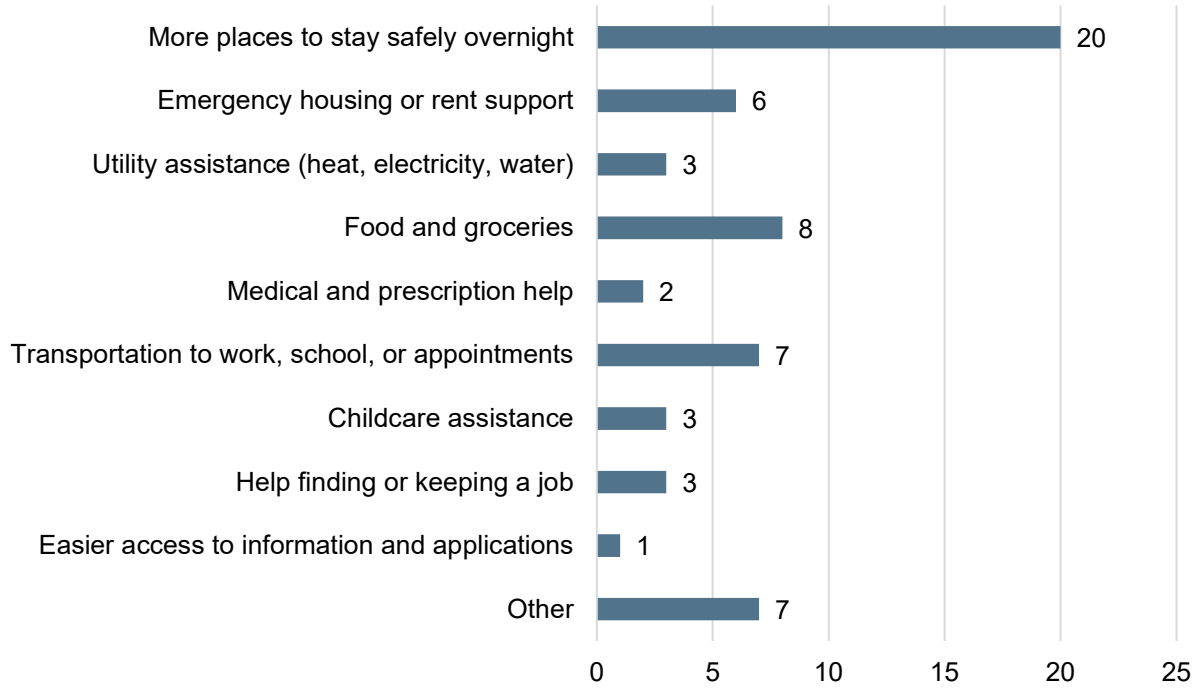
- Missing
    - Activities for people ages 18 – 30
    - Neighborhood design and form
    - Pedestrian-friendly streets
    - High taxes
    - Strong downtown

Figure 1.10: What Would Make the Biggest Difference in Helping You Feel Safe, Supported, and Hopeful for the Future?



Source: Dot-voting activity at New Beginnings

If You Could Change Things in the City to Make it Easier to Get By, What Would it Be?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Drop-In Center and General Assistance Office

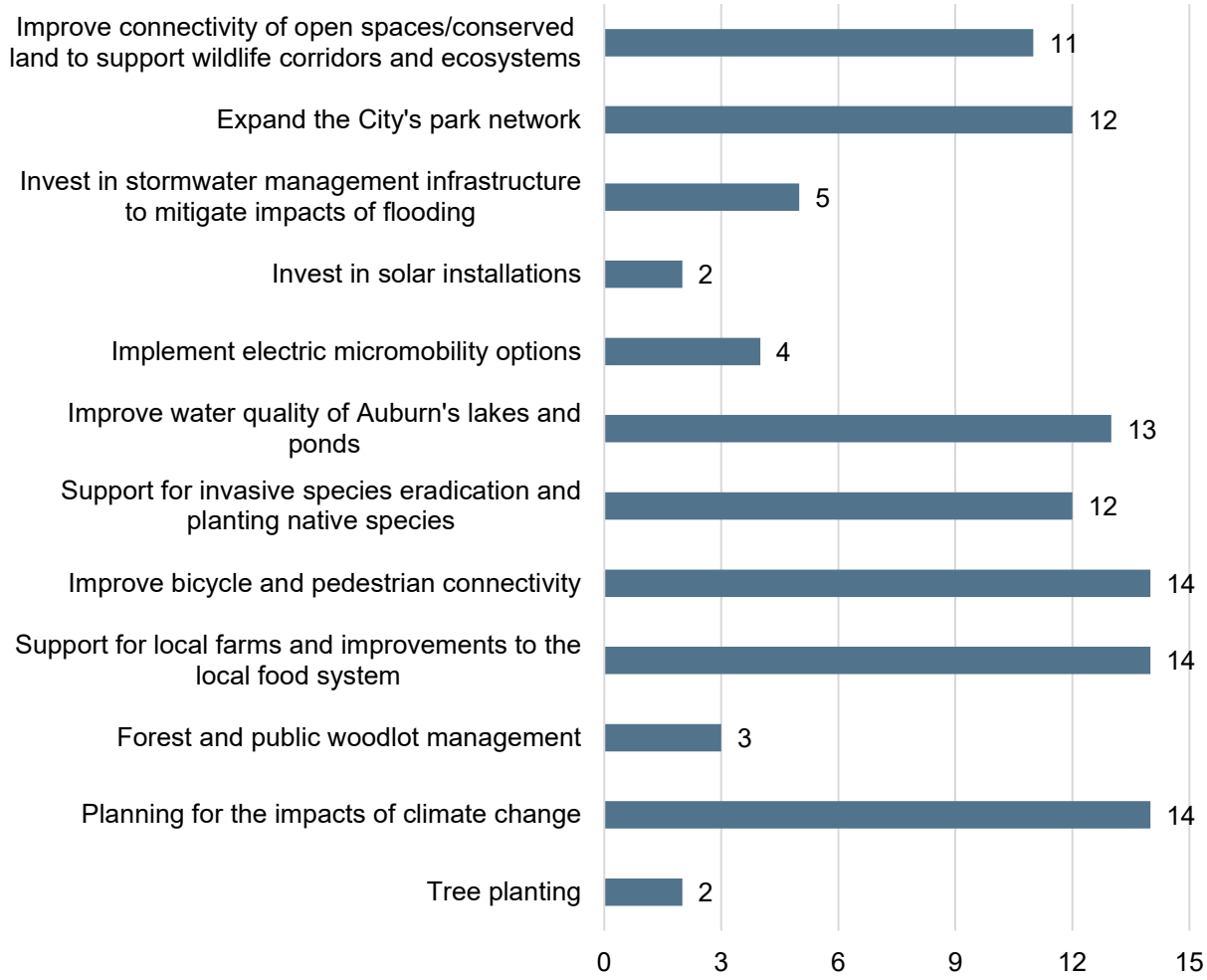
Other:

- More child care facilities and more options for children with autism in the Lewiston/Auburn area
- Help finding and keeping housing and transitional housing
- Expanded Drop-In Center hours
- Ending mass homelessness
- Better food options at the Drop-In Center
- Improved safety

Natural Environment

Water and Natural Resources

Figure 1.11: How Would You Allocate Funds for the Following Environmental Initiatives?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Natural Resources Open House event, Social Pinpoint

What do you value most about Auburn's natural environment? (14 responses)

- Trails and greenbelt (4 responses)
- Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone (3 responses)
- Trees (2 responses)
- Other: Natural beauty, country roads, wildlife, Lake Auburn

What do you think the City should do to protect water and natural resources (21 resources)

- Protect and improve Lake Auburn water quality through limited development, stormwater management, strong agreements with towns in the watershed, and education resources (8 responses)
- Improved education and involvement in environmental initiatives (3 responses)
- Improve stormwater management (2 responses)
- Other: improve policies, increase recreation access, preserve the agriculture zone with some expanded uses

Agriculture and Forestry

How can we better protect forested areas from development or climate impacts? (23 responses)

- Strong zoning requirements (2 responses)
- Direct growth to areas with existing buildings or housing (5 responses)
- Conserve forests and open space (5 responses)
- Limit new development (2 responses)
- Natural resource protection (e.g., wetland and vernal pool protection) (2 responses)
- Other: Research PFAs, eliminate invasive species, protect the agriculture zone

How can the City better support local food systems? (9 responses)

- Community infrastructure for processing (2 responses)
- Other: Community gardens, incentives for farmers and producers, plant fruit trees, develop a directory of producers and farms, develop an urban food hub

What is the future of the agriculture and resource protection zone? (9 responses)

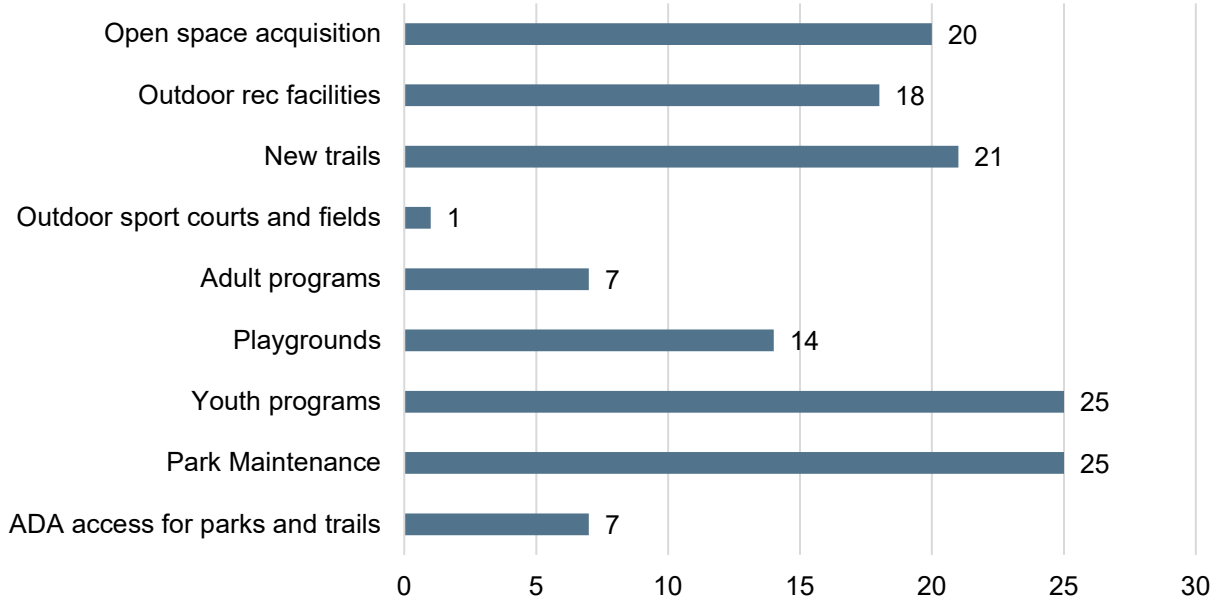
- Diversity uses (3 responses)
- Keep it as it is (6 responses)

What are barriers to accessing local food in your neighborhood? (3 responses)

- Venue for local farmers to sell food, or Auburn farmers market

Recreation

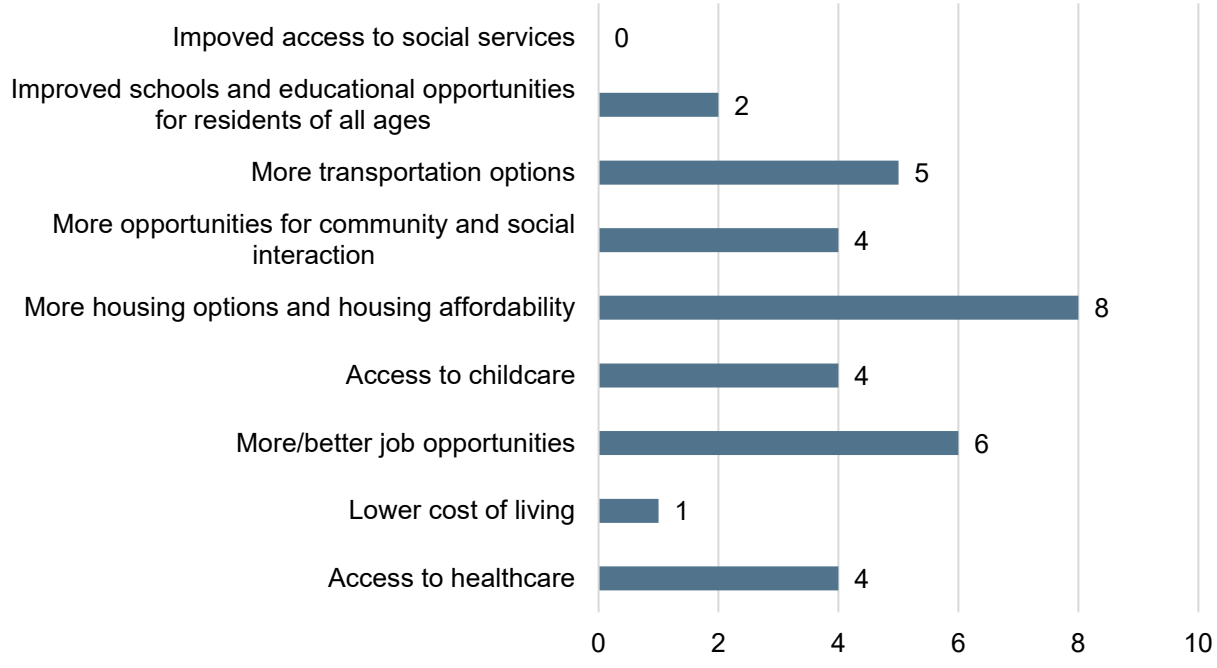
Figure 1.12: What are Your Priorities for Future Recreation and Parks Amenities?



Source: Budgeting activity at the Natural Resources Open House event, Social Pinpoint

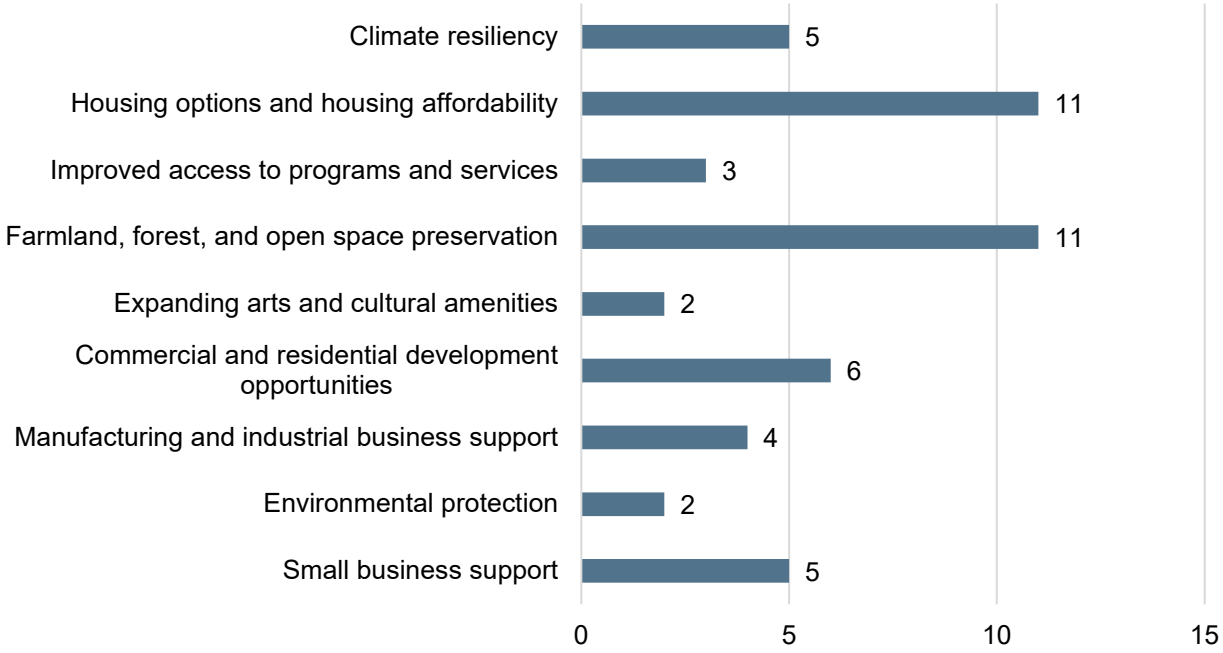
People and City Services

Figure 1.12: Which Services or Amenities Would Improve Your Quality of Life?



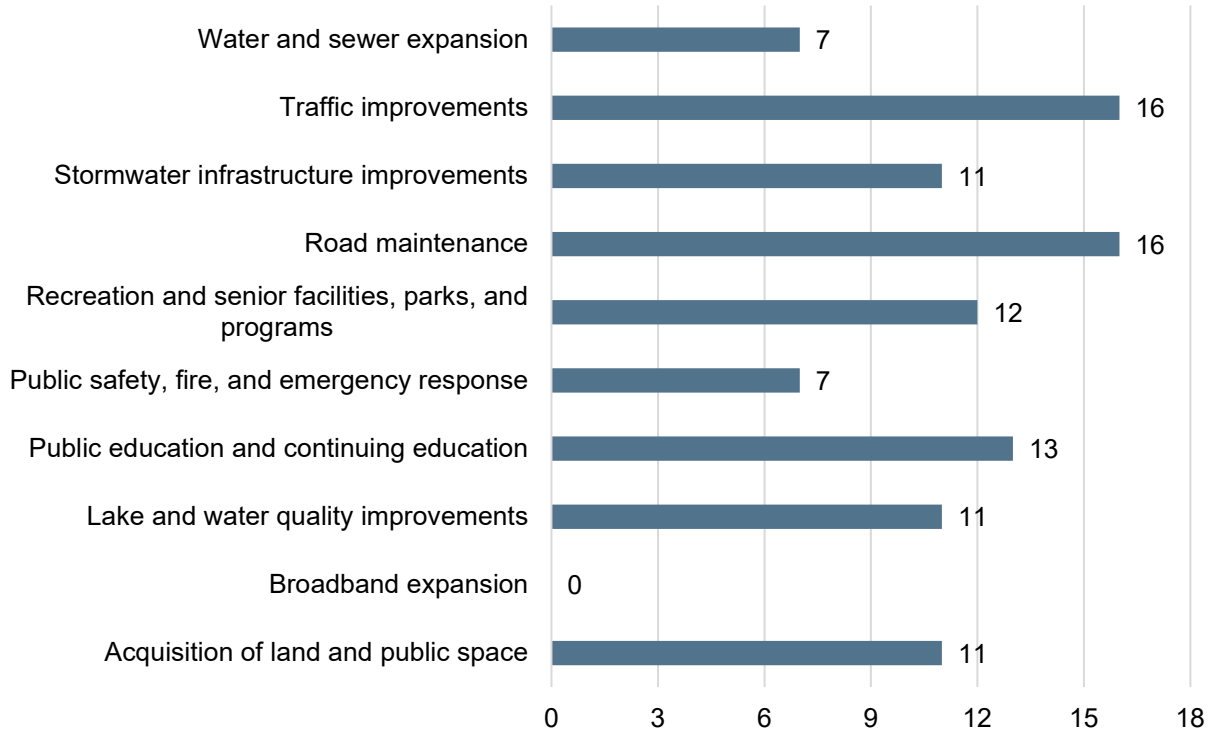
Source: Dot-voting activity at the People and City Services Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.13: What Policy Areas Should the City Focus On?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the People and City Services Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.14: What Infrastructure Projects Should the City Prioritize?

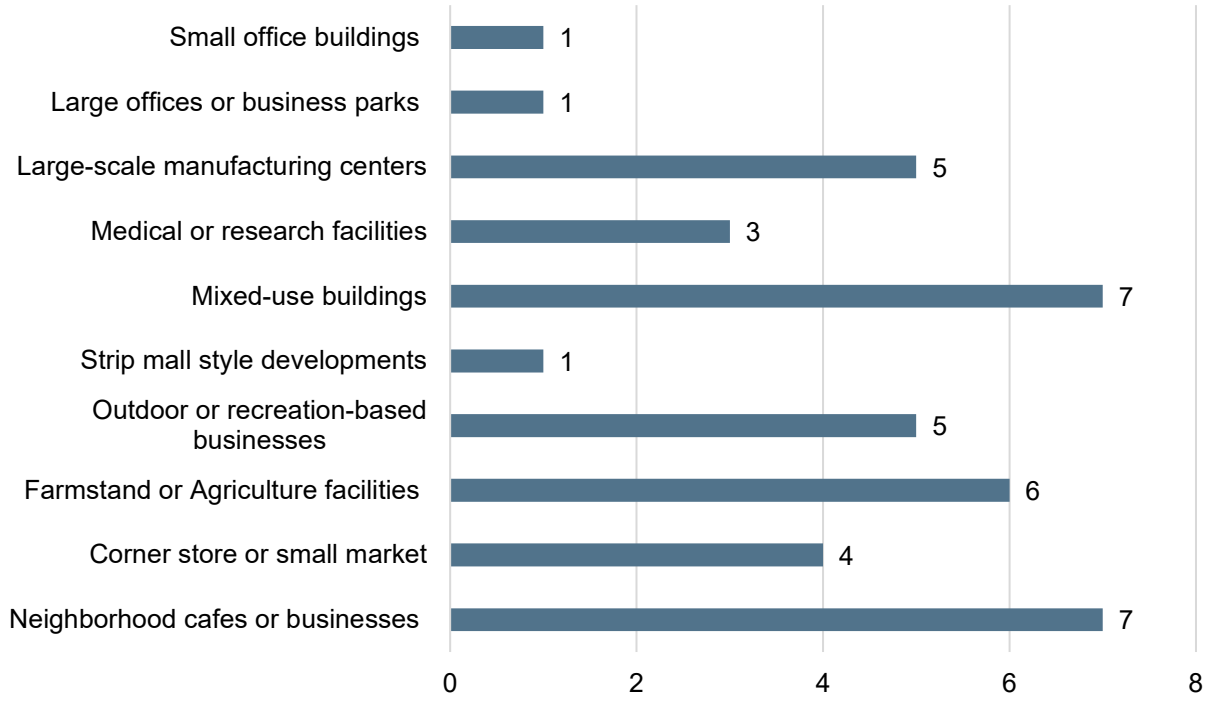


Source: Budgeting activity at the People and City Services Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Built Environment

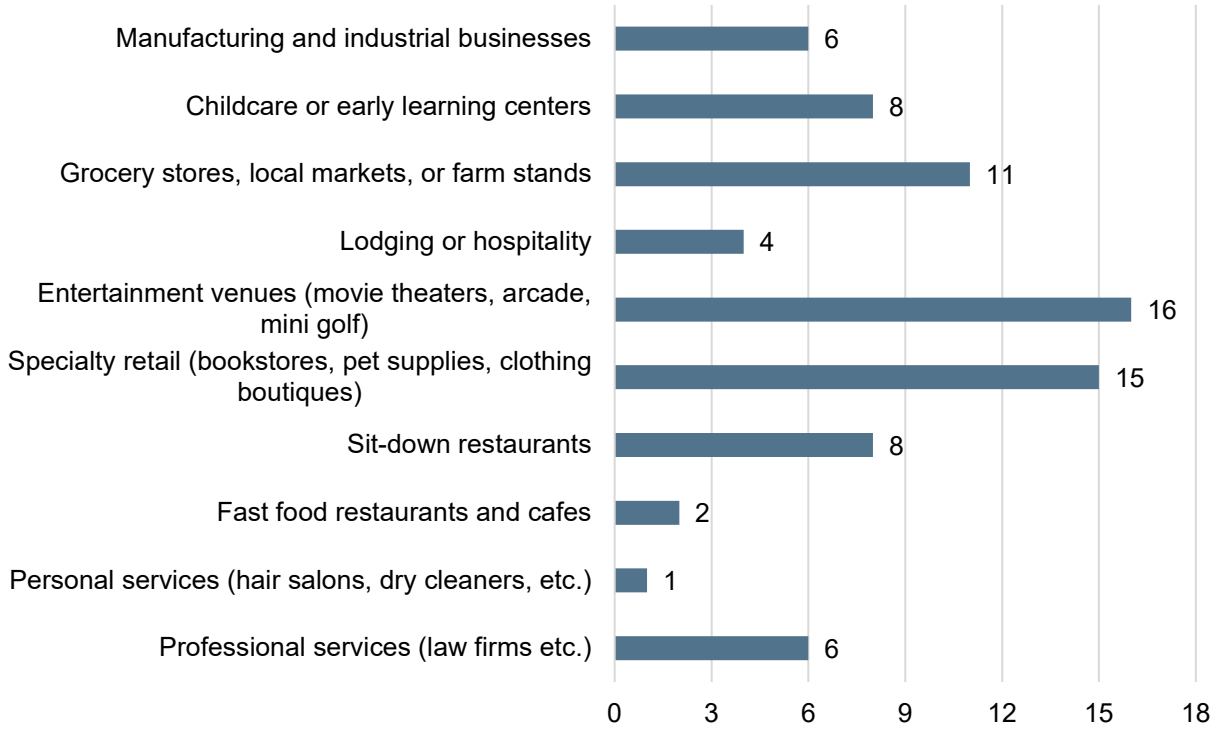
Auburn's Economy

Figure 1.15: What Types of Commercial Development Do You Think Would Benefit Economic Growth in Auburn?



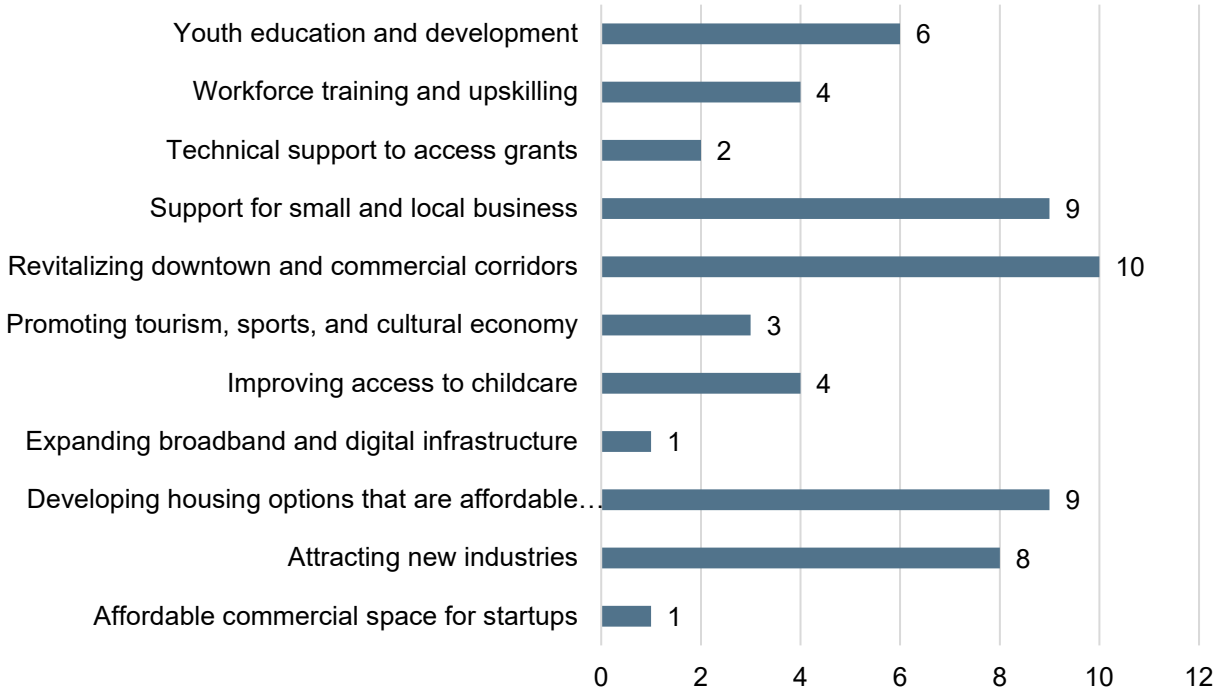
Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.16: What Types of Businesses Would You Like to See More of in Auburn?



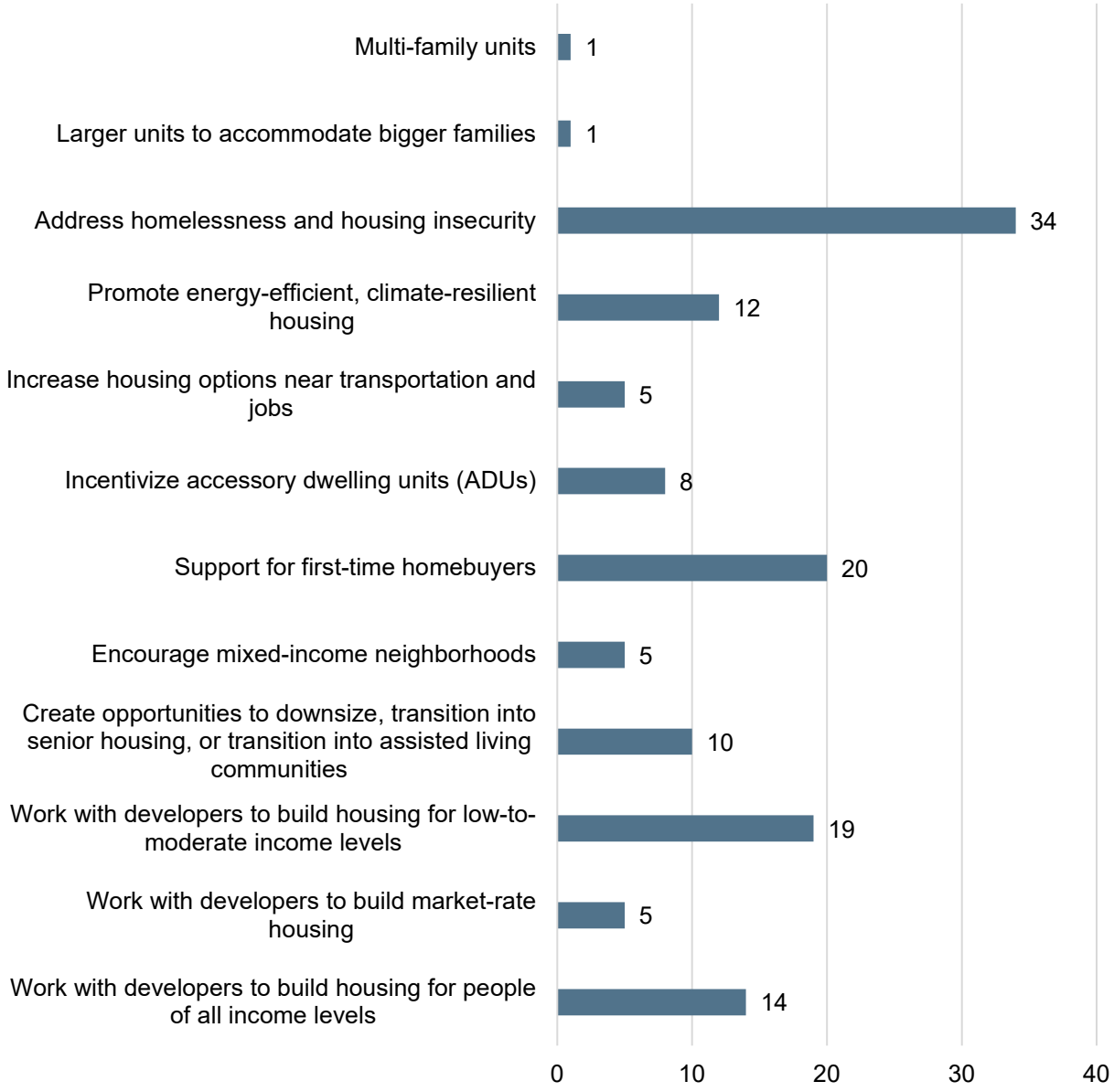
Source: Visual preferences activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.17: Which Economic Incentives Should Be Prioritized?



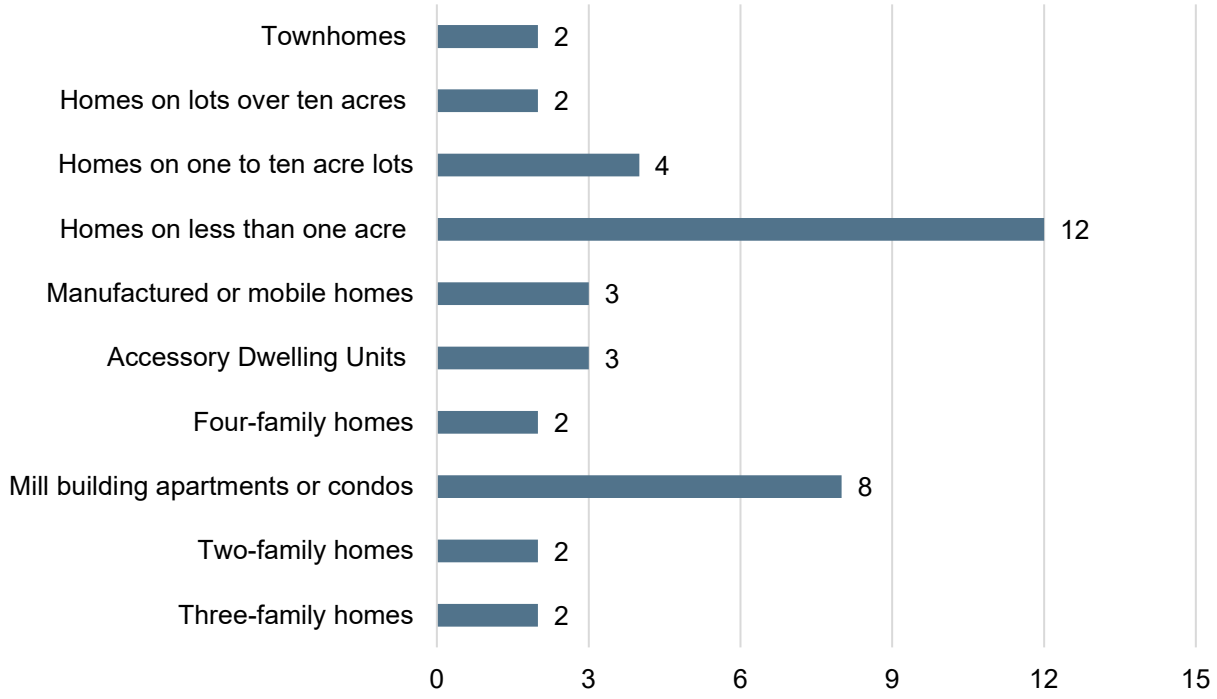
Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.18: Which Housing Initiatives Should the City Prioritize?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

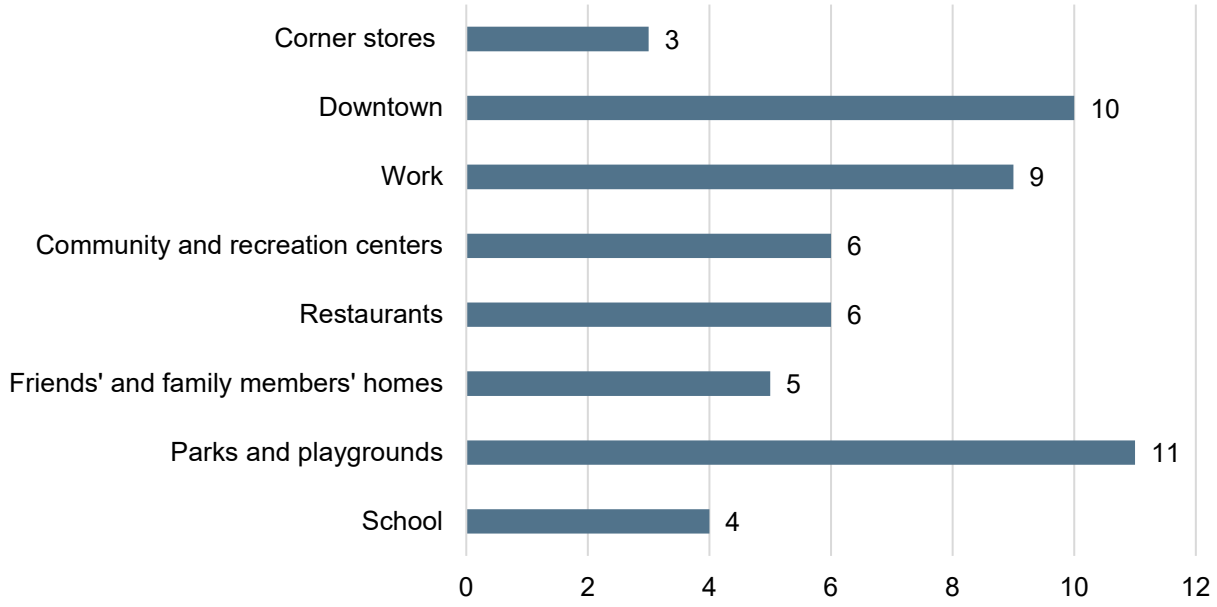
Figure 1.19: What Types of Housing Do You Think Are Needed to Support Auburn Residents in the Future?



Source: Visual preferences activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Transportation

Figure 1.20: What Types of Places Do You Wish You or Your Family Could Walk or Bike to?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

What are your transportation challenges? (4 Responses)

- Traffic congestion (4 responses)

What barriers exist to getting where you need to go?

- Traffic volume
- Road maintenance
- Lack of passenger rail
- Access between New Auburn, downtown, and Lewiston

Auburn's History

What are your favorite historic sites or buildings in Auburn?

- Library
- Barker Mill
- City Hall
- Engine House

Future Land Use

In Auburn, what areas are appropriate for the most amount of change or growth? (All responses)

- Strong concern about visual blight (e.g., clearcuts, large pits) and desire for more beautification and reclamation efforts
- Interest in new community amenities, particularly a splash/water playground for all ages
- Support for focusing growth in downtown and key corridors using compact, mixed-use, infrastructure-aligned development
- Emphasis on revitalizing underutilized/vacant sites to increase housing without sprawl
- Desire for intentional, community-focused development in downtown/New Auburn (not just investor-driven)

What concerns you most about recent or future development?

- Protecting natural resources, farmland, forests, and ensuring equitable access to green space
- Concern about rezoning or development reducing agricultural land and open space
- Preference for preserving key areas (e.g., Perkins Ridge, Taylor Pond) for agriculture, recreation, and environmental protection

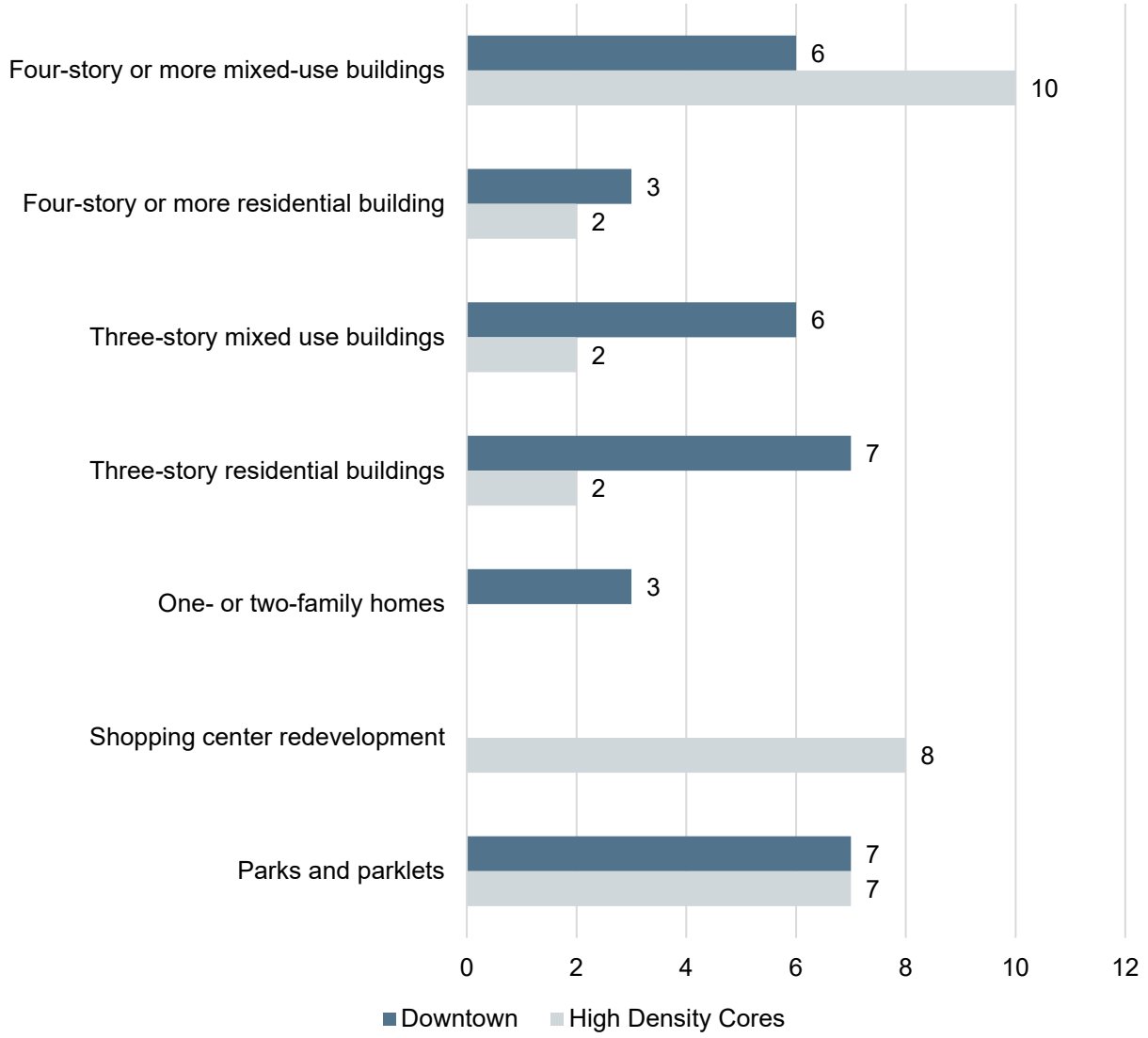
- Desire for development approaches (e.g., cluster development) that conserve open land and minimize environmental impact
- Concern about uncoordinated growth leading to sprawl, infrastructure strain, and loss of community character
- Skepticism around large-scale rezoning and developer-driven growth that may not align with community priorities

Future Growth Activity

Key Takeaways

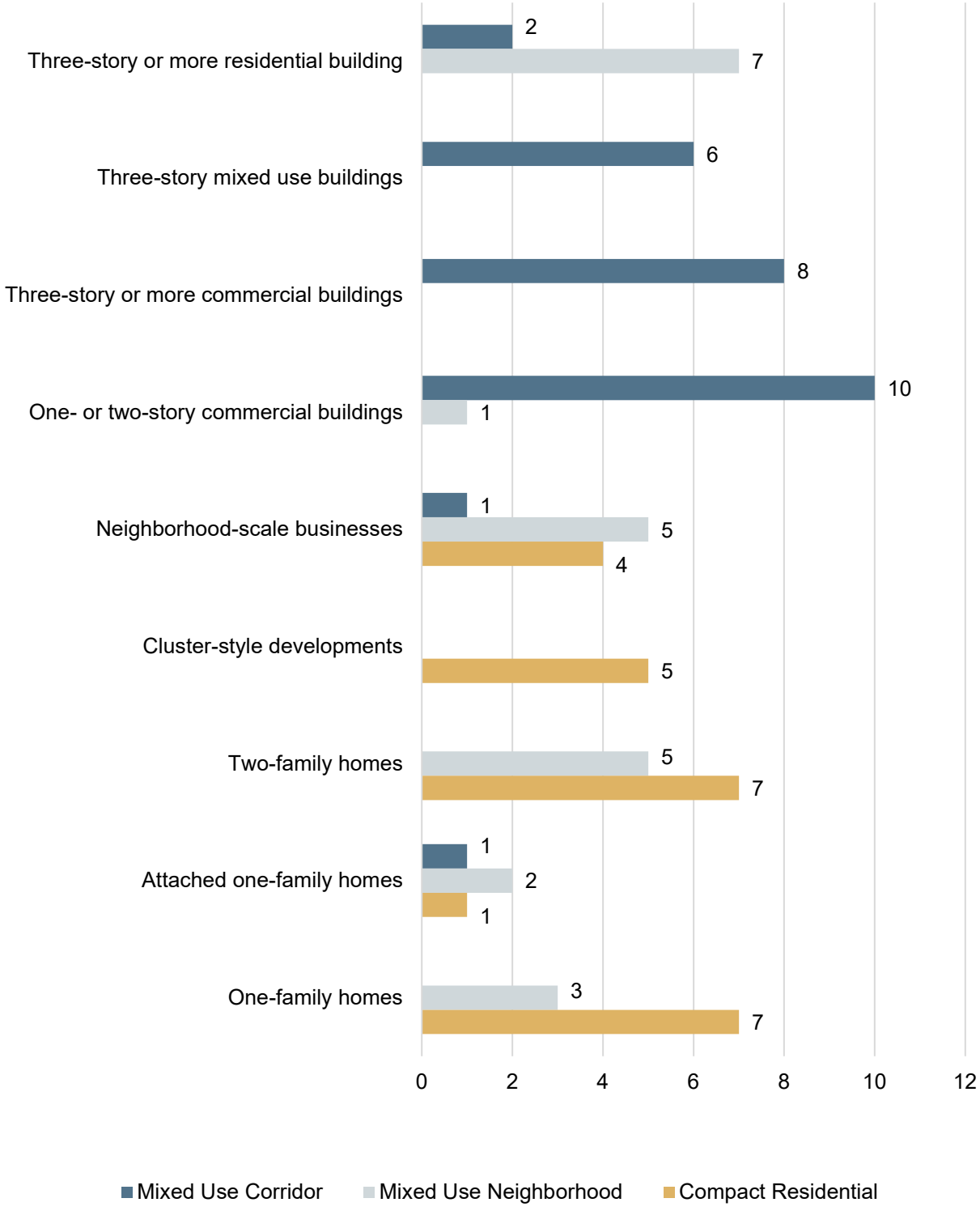
- 3-story or more commercial or mixed-use buildings are most strongly supported in High Density Core and Mixed-Use Corridor areas, reflecting comfort with taller, activity-generating development along key corridors and in concentrated centers.
- 3-story or taller residential buildings are seen as most appropriate in Downtown and Mixed-Use Neighborhood areas, where higher-density housing is expected but still integrated within a mixed-use or neighborhood context.
- Compact Residential areas favor smaller-scale, neighborhood-oriented development, including cluster layouts and 1–2 family homes.
- Neighborhood Transition and Residential Corridor areas serve as scale buffers, with a preference for gradual shifts in intensity, such as small multi-family or townhouse forms.
- Industrial areas support larger building footprints rather than vertical height, suggesting acceptance of scale in terms of site coverage and employment uses.
- Low Growth areas (Agriculture, Open Space, Recreation and Drinking Water Protection) show a strong preference for minimal or no structural scale, with development expected to remain limited, low-impact, and clustered to preserve natural systems.

Figure 1.21: High Density Core and Downtown – What Does Future Growth Look Like in This Area?



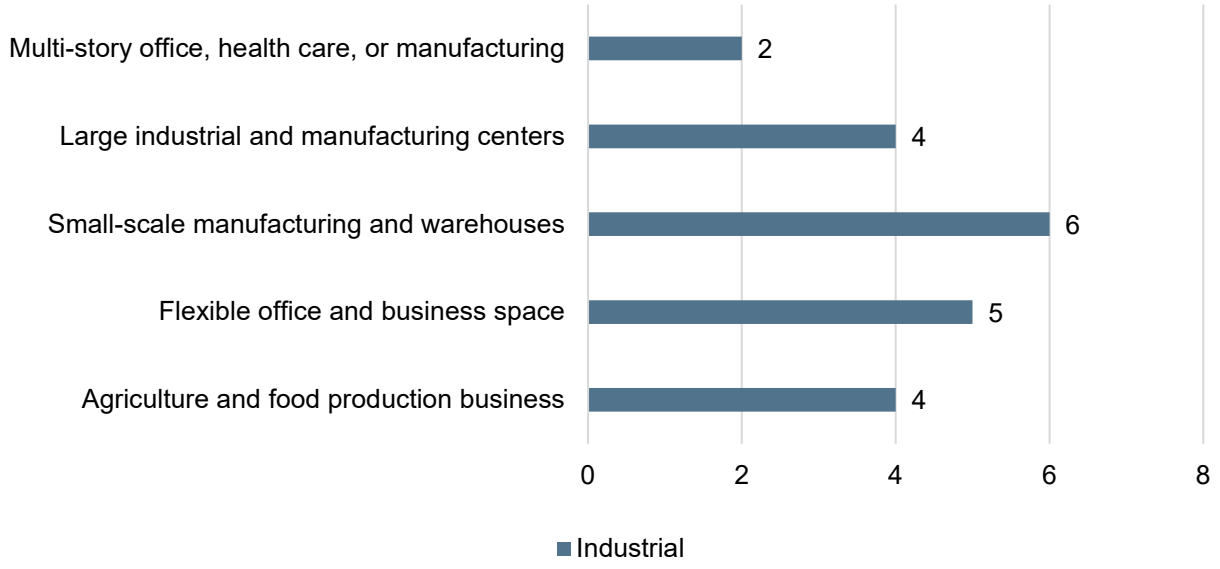
Source: Visual preferences activity at the FLU Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.22: Mixed Use Corridor, Mixed Use Neighborhood, and Compact Residential – What Does Future Growth Look Like in This Area?



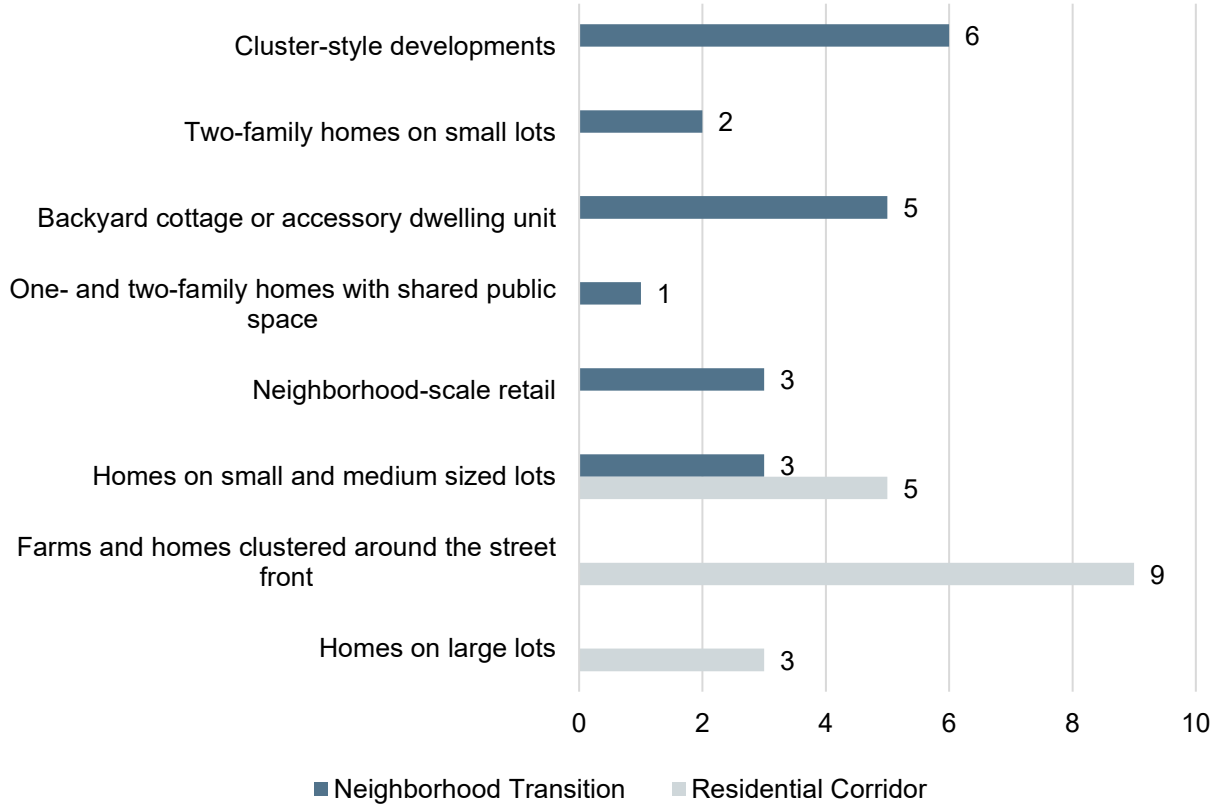
Source: Visual preferences activity at the FLU Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.23: Industrial – What Does Future Growth Look Like in This Area?



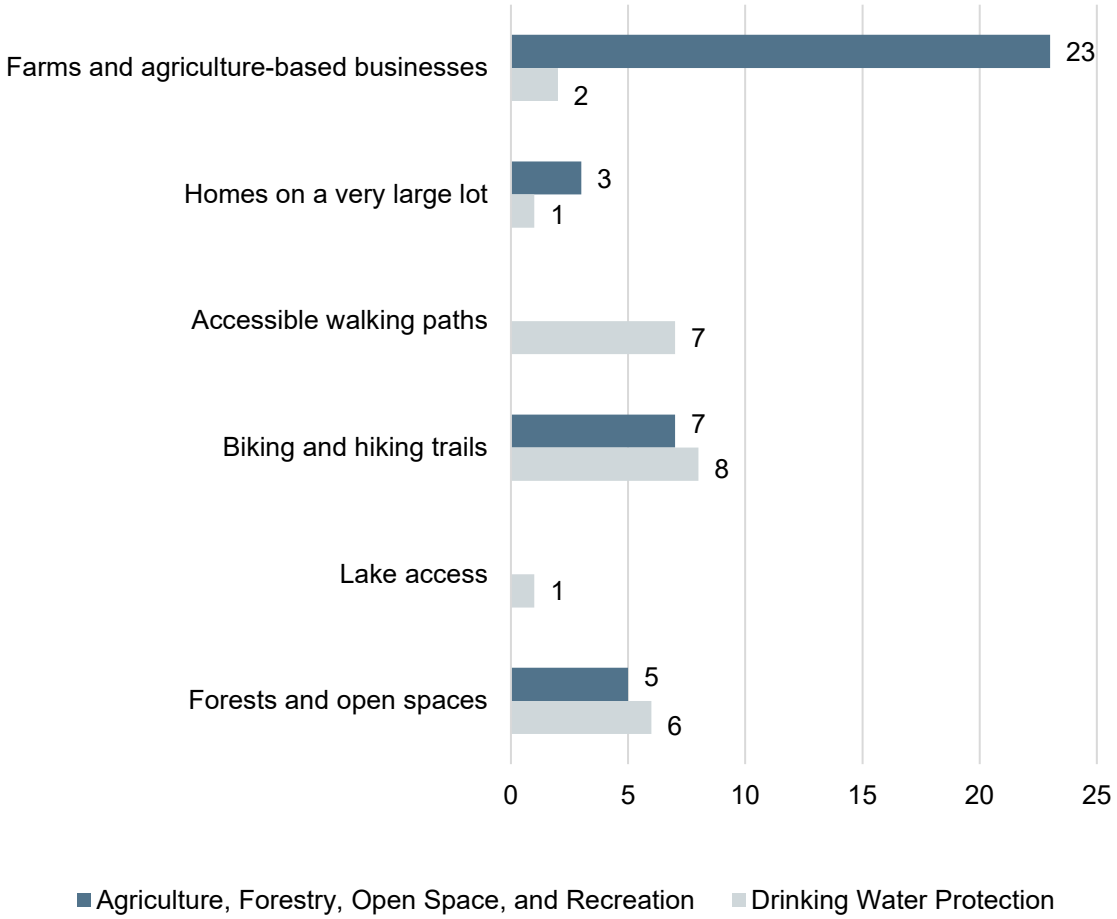
Source: Visual preferences activity at the FLU Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.24: Neighborhood Transition and Residential Corridor – What Does Future Growth Look Like in This Area?



Source: Visual preferences activity at the FLU Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.25: Agriculture, Forestry, Open Space, and Recreation and Drinking Water Protection – What Does Future Growth Look Like in This Area?



Source: Visual preferences activity at the FLU Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Drop-In Center

The Drop-In Center serves as a low-barrier physical space for unhoused individuals to rest and replenish. The Center is open two days a week and serves nearly 100 individuals in those two days. The engagement materials for the Comprehensive Plan were available and displayed for the month of July.

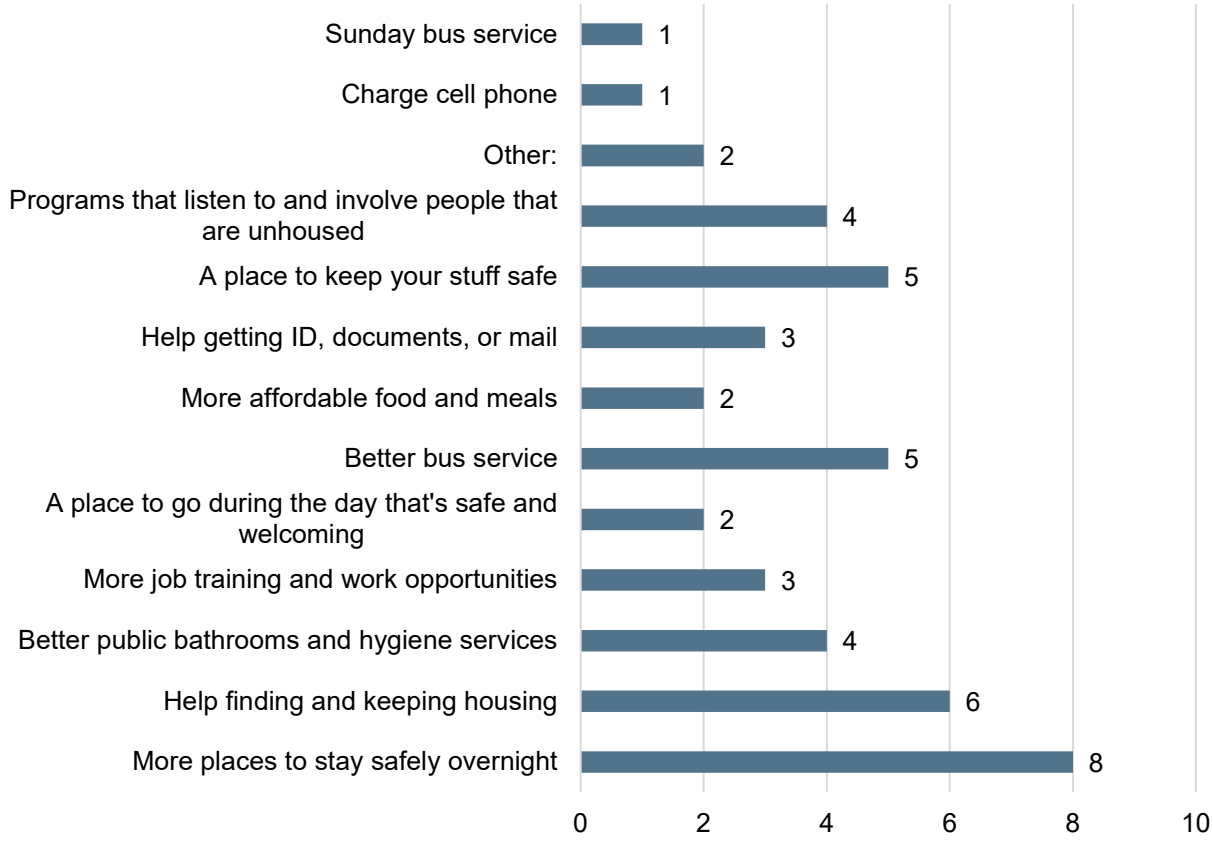
Safety

Concerns about safety and a desire for more resources promoting safety emerged as a common theme. More places to stay safely overnight was the most frequently cited change that individuals at the Center vocalized would make daily life easier. Many individuals also expressed the need for a place to keep belongings safe.

Resources to Promote a Path Forward

Unhoused individuals frequently voiced an interest in resources that might provide a path out of homelessness, such as assistance obtaining documentation or mail and more work opportunities. Underpinning the issue of houselessness, however, is the need for more affordable housing and resources to connect unhoused individuals with housing opportunities.

Figure 1.26: If You Could Change One Thing in the City to Make it Easier to Get By, What Would it Be?



Source: Dot-voting activity at Drop-In Center

In addition to the dot-voting activity, City staff conducted listening session with unhoused residents (five residents) as well as six service providers. Key themes from these conversations include the need for improved collaboration, increased education, and expanded services.

1. Collaboration: There is a need for a gap analysis of social services provided by both the City, private, and nonprofit organizations to determine overlaps and gaps.
2. Education for the public about the unhoused community to help improve support and reduce stereotypes or stigmas around the unhoused.
3. Services: Provide services and improve communication and awareness around services to help people access services. Some ideas included a mobile care truck and lockers for people to store their belongings.

Community Focus Groups

The City of Auburn and the CPC held a focus group event on July 11, 2025, to discuss priorities for the Comprehensive Plan with community leaders. The meeting was held in person at Edward Little High School and consisted of discussions in table groups divided by discussion topic, as outlined below. There were more than 70 participants in attendance, including community service providers, industry leaders, City elected officials and staff, small business owners, and other community members. Participants were also offered the opportunity to provide feedback on general questions about challenges and priorities for Auburn in conversations with City staff and CPC members. The following is a summary of key themes heard from participants in each group and other feedback collected.

Hospitality and Retail

The hospitality and retail group included a variety of small businesses in Auburn across a variety of sectors, including restaurants, trades, outdoor recreation, retail operations, and more. Thirteen participants attended this meeting.

Strengths

- The local restaurant community in Auburn has a keen sense of community and a real interest in helping each other when challenges arise.
- Many businesses have a consistent, repeat customer base. People support local businesses repeatedly when they choose to visit them.
- The Auburn/Lewiston area is the second largest metro area in Maine, providing a large, local customer base.

Challenges

- Auburn is a commuter area, with residents leaving the City for everything but their housing. Auburn is not a destination, and there are not enough local events and amenities to attract tourists.
- The availability and suitability of the workforce is a concern. Many restaurants and trades have had trouble retaining qualified employees.
- With many Auburn residents earning lower wages than nearby communities, leisure activities and services have become unaffordable to most people in the area. When residents' rent, taxes, and transportation costs are too high, they will not spend money on food, entertainment, and luxury services.
- There are public safety concerns in Auburn, and employees have felt unsafe in some areas of downtown Auburn. They emphasized the need for drug treatment options and an increased public safety presence.

Goals

- Make Auburn a destination city. Festivals, events, and amenities could draw visitors, especially a music venue. Businesses would benefit from increased traffic from events like the Balloon Festival.
- Increase availability of all types of housing—from low-income, affordable units to luxury developments. Support the development of a range of options to aid in Auburn's growth as a diverse and sustainable community.
- Engage in climate resiliency efforts, as changing weather patterns have already begun to impact sales for a variety of local businesses.

Essential and Social Services

This group included service providers from a variety of organizations, from New Mainers support networks to local senior service providers. Fifteen community members participated in the discussion.

Strengths

- The Auburn/Lewiston area has a large community of local organizations that serve a variety of populations.
- Individuals in Auburn have a strong desire to improve their community, opening the door to increased support and funding from the City.

Challenges

- There is a growing unhoused population in Auburn, with a variety of contributing factors. The largest areas of service needed include addiction services, mental health resources, employment opportunities, and low-income housing opportunities.
- Auburn has several organizations that provide similar services, risking duplicating efforts. There is a need to work together on initiatives to best serve the community. Asset mapping could help identify duplicate or missing services.

Goals

- Create a new position for city-level navigator, who would be responsible for helping residents locate and obtain support that they qualify for.
- Develop diverse housing options–including low-income, multigenerational, mixed-use, high-end, rental, and other housing options.
- Continue to invest in current issues, with special attention paid to shaping youth development and sustainable economic growth to support necessary services.

Education and Youth Services

This group was comprised of representatives from local schools, community colleges, educational nonprofits, and more. Seven participants contributed to this group.

Strengths

- There is existing collaboration between educational and youth services, with a variety of organizations represented.
- Existing support services, like the Purple Bus from Central Maine Community College, are strong drivers of success in the community.

Challenges

- Many teens lack structured opportunities and transportation access, leading to worse career outcomes.
- Post-secondary education and child care are increasingly unaffordable to many Auburn residents.
- Recreational activities for young people are limited.

Goals

- Establish a collaborative effort with community organizations to create more recreational activities for young people in the community, with potential for a teen center, collaborative efforts with Parks and Recreation, and the addition of new transportation options.
- Explore creating a shelter for unhoused youth in the community, potentially to be shared with Lewiston.
- Identify and develop opportunities for education for adults in Auburn, both trade-related and academic.

Environment and Sustainability

Several groups in Auburn representing environmental efforts were present, along with City staff and interested individuals. The group had nine members, with written comments submitted by community members who were unable to attend the discussion.

Strengths

- Auburn has a variety of natural resources, especially Lake Auburn and its associated watershed.
- Auburn's existing network of parks and trails provides a strong environment for outdoor recreation.
- A strong community of local organizations works in Auburn to help the community work toward long-term protection and engagement with the natural environment.

Challenges

- There is an increasing threat of climate change and associated damage to local natural resources, along with threats from invasive and displaced species.
- As Auburn grows, urban noise generation and pollution will grow with it, harming surrounding natural areas. Urban sprawl will increasingly threaten agricultural areas.
- Increased extreme weather events will disproportionately affect lower-income and vulnerable communities in Auburn.

Goals

- Enhance the local tree canopy, adaptive reuse of wastewater, flood assessments, water quality management, and other climate resilience measures.
- Increase efforts to educate the Auburn community on climate change, extreme weather preparedness, invasive species management, and outdoor recreation resources.
- Conduct an inventory of parks and natural resources, and other open spaces, with a dedicated City staff person to coordinate the resources (e.g., Urban Forester, Sustainability Coordinator).

Agriculture and Food Systems

In this focus group, local farmers, nonprofit representatives, and City staff discussed issues relating to local agriculture efforts, food access, and climate. Nine community members were present.

Strengths

- There is a strong community of local farmers, environmental groups, and community organizations that are actively working to better serve Auburn's communities.
- Auburn has a significant percentage of its land that is zoned for agricultural purposes, creating opportunities for local businesses.
- Small-scale farming tax breaks and grants exist and are extremely important to local farmers.

Challenges

- Climate change is a concern, as it may significantly affect food production and farm infrastructure in the coming years.
- The overall profitability of local farming is a challenge, with small-scale agriculture unable to charge fair prices without risking becoming unaffordable to local communities.
- Auburn residents may not have access to local foods where they shop, especially those who have less disposable income.

Goals

- Allow a diverse set of uses for farmland to allow farmers to continue to produce while bringing in additional revenue through commercial ventures (agrotourism, small-scale nonagricultural business on farmland).
- Build infrastructure that is climate-resilient and diverse to combat known climate risks.
- Investigate re-zoning agriculture zones to allow for different uses on some land, including small businesses and limited development.

Real Estate, Housing, and Development

A group of developers, construction company executives, local service providers, and City staff participated in this group. Fourteen group members were present.

Strengths

- There are a variety of possible development initiatives and potential solutions to address housing and development needs.
- The City's sewer and water infrastructure is well-maintained and supports current uses.
- New Mainers can fill employment gaps within the City, with the City employing roughly 150 New Mainers on various projects with staffing shortages.

Challenges

- Housing is a paramount concern, with a significant need for housing at every level (low-income to luxury).
- Staffing construction and infrastructure projects is also a concern, with many potential employees unable to afford to live in Auburn.
- City staff involved in the discussion expressed a concern that the best areas for development have been utilized, leaving areas with low utility-connectivity and natural resources as the only realistic development sites.

Goals

- Increase development, as it would be beneficial to the City's economy. Explore mixed-use developments and infill developments as potential ways to maximize available resources. Consider new ways to incentivize land development using tax incentive programs.
- Support more high-income housing to attract residents with disposable income, who would boost Auburn's economy.
- Support development of industrial areas, particularly around the airport, to provide high-quality employment opportunities for locals.

Transportation and Mobility

The transportation and mobility focus group was made up of local transit advocates, community organizations, and City staff.

Strengths

- Auburn's central location within Maine is an asset, with potential transit to Lewiston, Portland, and other communities as a likely and welcome proposal.
- Existing access to natural areas and trails for transportation and recreation is strong.
- Ongoing traffic calming initiatives are steering the City in the right direction for public safety and walkability.

Challenges

- Safety, especially surrounding bikeability is a concern. There are several incomplete bike lanes and areas without sidewalks.
- The lack of public transit options is a barrier to employment, education, and livability in Auburn.
- Planned traffic calming measures have been slow to be implement, with many projects stalled on State-owned routes.
- The areas surrounding downtown Auburn are visually unwelcoming, especially along Washington Street.

Goals

- Increase local and regional bus services, especially to the Portland metropolitan area.
- Implement climate protection measures, including increasing the electric vehicle infrastructure in the area.
- Focus on walkability and bikeability in land use planning, along with ensuring roads are well-maintained and visually appealing.

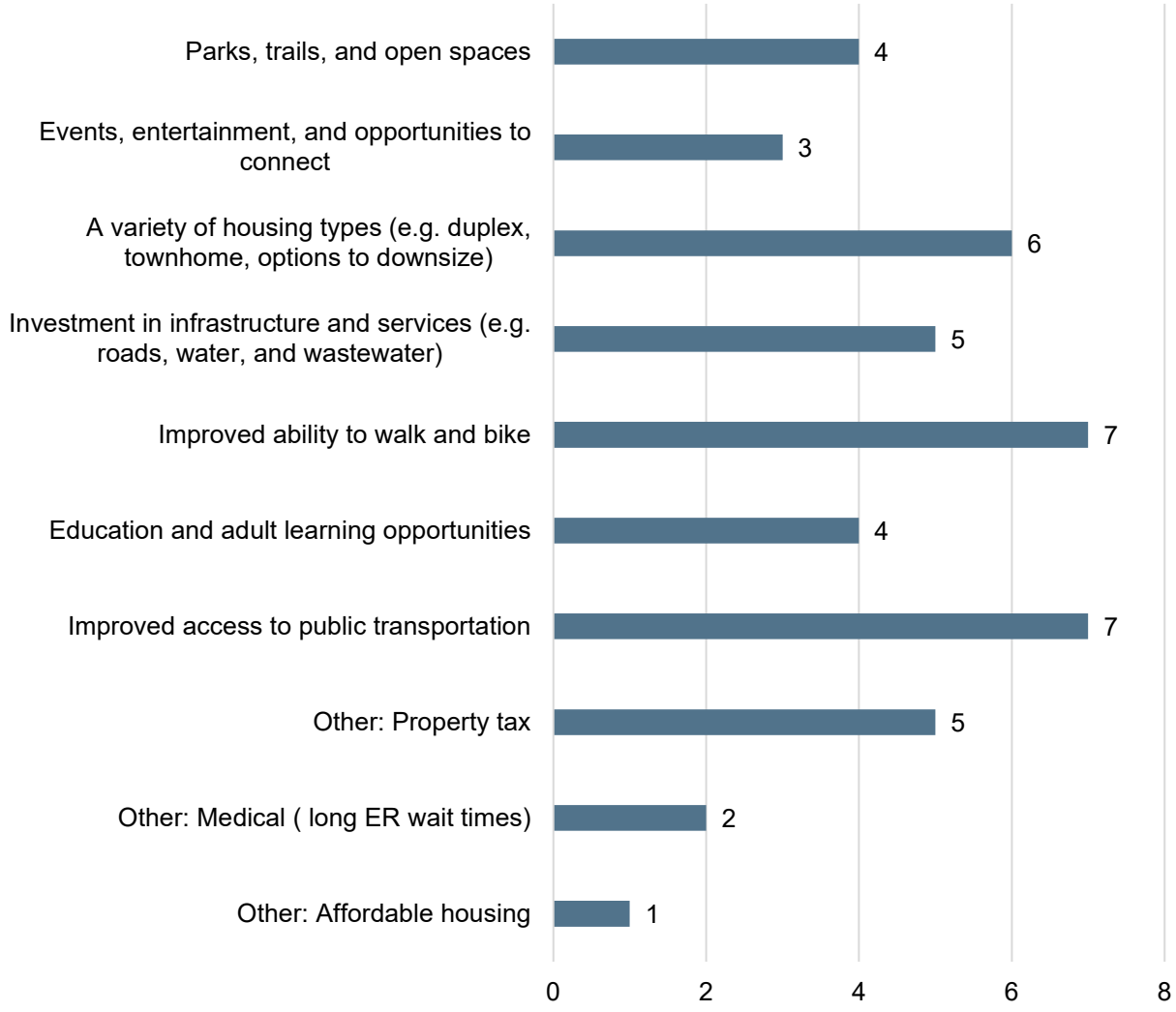
Future Investment Priorities Dot-Voting Activity

Separately from their table-group discussions, attendees were given the opportunity to express preferences for future investments through an interactive voting activity. Several areas for potential investment were provided, with residents placing dot stickers beneath the topics they prioritized for funding.

Housing was the most popular area for investment (22), with infrastructure and services next (12), followed by parks, trails, and open spaces (10), improved ability to walk and bike (8), education and

adult learning opportunities (8), events, entertainment, and opportunities to connect (6), small and large businesses (6), and improved access to public transportation (5).

Figure 1.27: What Investments Do You Think are Most Important to Support a Strong Community?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the focus groups event

Appendix E: Inventory and Analysis



AUBURN

2026 Comprehensive Plan

MOVING AUBURN FORWARD: **TOGETHER.**

City of Auburn, ME

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Draft 4: July 7, 2026

Table of Contents

Section **Page**

Table of Contents i

Introduction 1

Population and Demographics 3

- Introduction 3
- Population Change 3
  - Age 6
  - Household Size 10
- Race and Ethnicity 10
- Education 12
  - School Enrollment 12
  - Educational Attainment 17
- Income and Poverty 18
- Seasonal Population 19
- Challenges and Opportunities 19
- Sources 19

Natural and Water Resources 20

- Introduction 20
- Watersheds 20
- Surface Waters 21
- Rivers and Streams 21
  - Androscoggin River 22
  - Little Androscoggin River 22
  - Stream Crossings 25
  - Dams 27
- Lakes and Ponds 28

Lake Auburn 29
Taylor Pond 30
The Basin 31
Wetlands 31
Groundwater 32
Floodplains 32
Resilience 32
Water Quality 34
Nutrient Control 36
Shoreland Zoning 37
Geology and Soils 37
Scenic Resources 38
Critical Habitat 38
Challenges and Opportunities 43
Sources 43
Agriculture and Forestry 45
Introduction 45
AgricultureState Agriculture Current Use Tax Program 46
Additional Agriculture Support 47
Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance 48
Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone 50
Farms in Auburn 51
Food Access 54
Forest Resources 56
Tree Growth Current Tax Use Program 56
Best Management Practices 58
Community Forest Working Group 58

Public Woodlot and Street Tree Maintenance 59
Challenges and Opportunities 62
Sources 63
Land Use 65
Introduction 65
History of Development in Auburn 65
Future Land Use Plan 66
Zoning 69
Residential Districts 72
Form-Based Code Districts 72
Commercial Districts 74
Industrial Districts 74
Resource Protection Districts 75
Overlay Districts 75
Revisions to Land Use Ordinances 80
Existing Land Use 81
Challenges and Opportunities 82
Sources 84
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space 86
Introduction 86
Municipal Parks and Programming 86
Non-Municipal Facilities and Programming 91
Open Space and Conservation Land 91
State Open Space Current Tax Use Program 94
Cemeteries 94
Challenges and Opportunities 97
Sources 97

Economy 99
Introduction 99
Regional Economy 100
Economic Conditions 108
Employment by Industry 108
Job Growth 109
Commuter Patterns 110
Labor Force Participation Rate 111
Unemployment 112
Wages 113
Commercial Development and Growth Areas 113
Economic Development Financing Tools 115
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts 115
Challenges and Opportunities 116
Economic Trends and Outlook 117
Sources 118
Housing 119
Introduction 119
Housing Stock 119
Age of Housing Stock 120
Housing Types 121
Housing Development 122
Housing Tenure and Longevity 123
Vacant Housing 124
Affordability 125
Cost of Construction 130
Housing Production Needs 130

Recent and Proposed Housing Development 132
Affordable Housing 134
Homelessness 134
Challenges and Opportunities 134
Sources 135
Transportation 136
Introduction 136
Roadway System 136
Auburn Public Works Department 137
Engineering Division 139
Traffic Counts 141
Crash Data 142
Parking 143
Regional Transportation 143
Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities 144
Rail and Air Transportation 147
Rail Transportation 147
Air Transportation 148
Challenges and Opportunities 151
Sources 151
Historic and Cultural Resources 153
Auburn History 153
Historic and Archaeological Resources 154
Prehistoric Archaeological Sites 154
Historic Archaeological Sites 154
Historic Properties 158
Historic Preservation in Auburn 161

Historic and Archaeological Resources 161
Adaptive Reuse 161
Incentives for Historic Preservation 162
Organizations Dedicated to Historic Preservation 162
Art and Culture Resources 162
Challenges and Opportunities 163
Sources 164
City Facilities and Public Services 165
City Departments 165
Police 166
Fire and Emergency Medical Services 167
Library 169
Schools and Educational Facilities 170
City-Owned Properties 171
Public Health 175
Youth and Young Adult Health 176
Community Services 177
CDBG/HOME 177
General Assistance 178
Homelessness 179
Other Community Support Services 180
Collaboration 181
Infrastructure 181
Public Sewer System 181
Public Drinking Water 184
Stormwater 188
Solid Waste Management 188

Septic Waste Disposal 189
Energy Infrastructure 190
Broadband 190
Solar 190
Challenges and Opportunities 191
Sources 192
Climate Change 194
Introduction 194
Flooding 196
Climate Change Effects on Flooding 197
Severe Summer Weather 199
Climate Change Effects on Severe Summer Weather 201
Severe Winter Weather 203
Climate Change Effects on Severe Winter Weather 204
Wildfire 205
Climate Change Effects on Wildfire 206
Drought 208
Climate Change Effects on Drought 208
How Climate Change Affects Various Sectors 210
Mental Health 210
Physical Health 211
Housing 211
Economy 211
Agriculture 212
Freshwater 213
Forests and Forestry 214
Biodiversity 214

Conclusion 215
Sources 216
Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan 217
Fiscal Capacity in the Planning Context 217
Revenue and Expenses 217
Municipal Valuation and Mil Rate 219
Revaluation 220
Debt Capacity 220
Capital Planning 221
Challenges and Opportunities 222
Sources 222

Introduction

The City of Auburn (City) is located along the banks of the mighty Androscoggin River, which has provided agricultural, cultural, and industrial benefits to the City throughout its history. Today, Auburn balances the preservation of natural resources and agricultural lands with growing economic opportunities and demand for additional housing.

Auburn is home to both small and large businesses, employing people throughout Androscoggin County and beyond. Located 35 miles north of Portland, Auburn is also within commuting distance for employees from the Portland Metropolitan Area. The City coordinates closely with the City of Lewiston to provide regional services, including transportation options, for both communities.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Maine (State) saw high levels of in-migration, with people drawn to various amenities. In 2021, Maine saw the highest percentage of inbound moves in the United States and the second highest in 2022.[1] The State has continued to see population growth, though not at the same rate as 2021 and 2022. Auburn's population grew at a similar rate to the State and Androscoggin County (County) at just over 5% from 2010 to 2023. Maine has remained a top destination for out-of-state home buyers, ranking as the eighth in a list of 10 states with the highest domestic migration interest. Maine was the only New England state to make the list.[2]

At the same time, demand for housing throughout the State has become a challenge. Auburn has experienced an increase in building permit applications and the construction of new homes. Auburn's position as a major employment center and its proximity to recreation and cultural amenities has made it a desirable location for residents. However, the City has also experienced new challenges, including rising costs of housing and City services. Shifting demographics, as the population ages and new residents move to Auburn from outside the region, are also impacting the City's ability to provide services to residents.

Looking ahead, Auburn will have to balance its preservation of agriculture and open space, protection of natural resources, and demand for new businesses, housing, and services. As Auburn looks to navigate the next decade, it is important to understand current conditions, new challenges, and potential regional impacts will be important to consider.

The Inventory and Analysis includes an assessment of current conditions, provides an overview of recent trends, and identifies key issues to further explore in the next phase of the comprehensive planning process. This document provides a snapshot of existing conditions in Auburn as of 2025. The assessment is based on the most recent data currently available, including sources such as the U.S. Census, the

[1] Valigra, Lori. Bangor Daily News. January 3, 2023. *Maine among the most popular states to move to in 2022*. Accessed May 12, 2025. https://www.bangordailynews.com/2023/01/03/business/maine-inbound-moving-2022

[2] O'Brien, Kathleen. Bangor Daily News. July 25, 2025. *Maine is a top destination for out-of-state home buyers.* Accessed August 10, 2025. https://www.bangordailynews.com/2025/07/25/business/maine-top-destination-for-out-of-state-home-buyers-joam40zk0w/

American Community Survey (ACS), MaineHousing, and the Maine State Economist; however, there are limitations to available data, including timeliness and accuracy, especially for small communities. Larger surveys, like the U.S. Census and ACS, are limited by the accuracy of responses and have some margin of error included. This analysis is based on available data as well as interviews with City staff.

The Inventory and Analysis should be understood as a planning-level resource rather than a complete audit of every local condition, asset, or issue. Data sources vary in collection methods, geographic scale, update cycles, and level of precision. Some datasets represent estimates rather than exact counts; some local conditions may have changed since the data were collected; and mapped information should be interpreted at the scale for which it was prepared. In addition, several topics rely on the best available information at the time of drafting, supplemented by local knowledge and staff input where quantitative data are limited. For these reasons, the findings in this document are intended to identify patterns, constraints, opportunities, and questions for future policy discussion, not to serve as final engineering, legal, fiscal, or site-specific determinations.

This document will support the City and the Comprehensive Plan Committee in developing the next Comprehensive Plan by providing background for understanding current challenges and opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan's purpose is to guide future growth, policy decisions, and capital planning for the next decade. Understanding current conditions and potential impacts from changes at the State and regional level will be critical to creating an actionable plan that will support Auburn in addressing community needs.

Population and Demographics

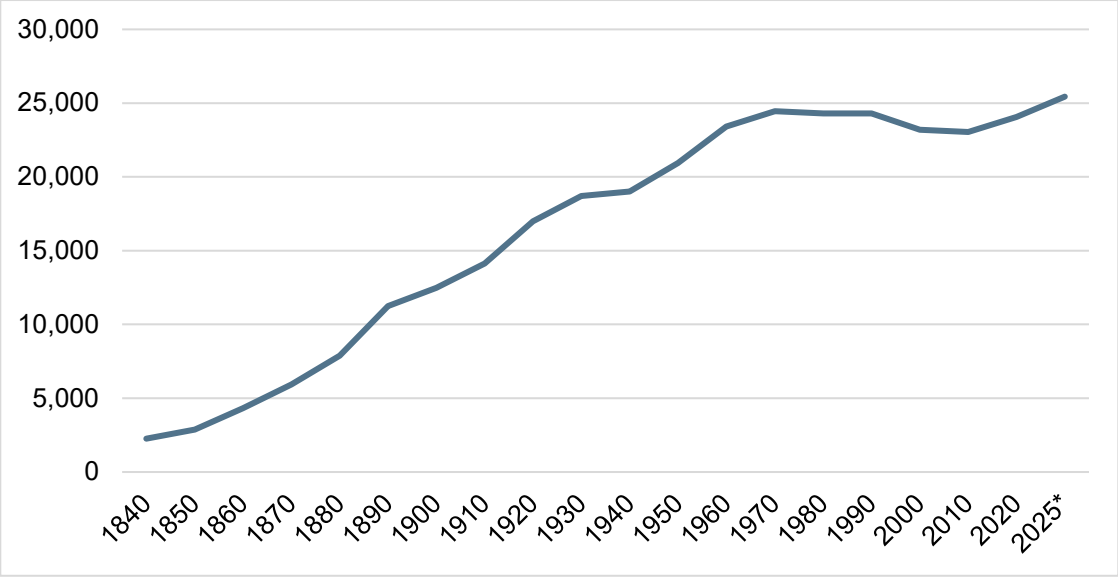
Introduction

Auburn's population growth has been modest in recent years. From 2010 to 2020, the City saw a 4.4% increase in population, growing from 23,055 to 24,061 residents. In contrast, Auburn saw a slight population decline of 0.6% in the previous decade. This modest growth is accompanied by demographic shifts, including an aging population, impacting workforce participation, housing needs, and access to services. Understanding these population changes is integral to develop an effective plan for addressing future community needs.

Population Change

In 2025, Auburn had a population of 25,441 residents, reflecting continued growth since 2010. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Auburn experienced periods of growth tied to industrial development, mainly catering to manufacturing industries. The City's population fluctuated in the mid-1900s, with peaks in the 1970s before experiencing declines in subsequent decades.

Figure 1.1: Total City Population, 1840 – 2025



Source: Decennial U.S. Census, 1840 – 2020, American Community Survey Population Estimates, 2025

In the future, the City anticipates continued growth. As of 2024, Auburn's population is estimated to be 25,200, indicating a 4.7% population increase from 2020 to 2024. This represents slightly faster growth in Auburn compared to the State and County. Lewiston has experienced a similar pace of growth from 2020 to 2024.

Table 1.1 shows population changes for communities in the region from 2010 to 2024. All communities experienced growth, except for Livermore Falls, which saw a slight 0.4% decline during this time.

Table 1.1: Population Change by Municipality

		April 1, 2020 Estimates Base	Population Estimate (as of July 1 of each year)					Percent Change	
	2010		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020 - 2024	2010 - 2024
Auburn	23,055	24,067	24,086	24,286	24,417	24,989	25,200	4.7%	9.3%
Durham	3,808	4,174	4,182	4,205	4,265	4,306	4,355	4.3%	14.4%
Greene	4,350	4,377	4,377	4,375	4,415	4,443	4,492	2.6%	3.3%
Leeds	2,326	2,262	2,263	2,271	2,292	2,314	2,362	4.4%	1.5%
Lewiston	36,592	37,124	37,110	38,379	38,632	38,709	38,772	4.4%	6.0%
Lisbon	9,009	9,716	9,727	9,714	9,760	9,781	9,814	1.0%	8.9%
Livermore	2,095	2,124	2,127	2,145	2,165	2,169	2,190	3.1%	4.5%
Livermore Falls	3,187	3,061	3,061	3,061	3,075	3,124	3,173	3.7%	-0.4%
Mechanic Falls	3,031	3,107	3,108	3,097	3,122	3,147	3,196	2.9%	5.4%
Minot	2,607	2,769	2,770	2,775	2,792	2,805	2,826	2.1%	8.4%
Poland	5,376	5,905	5,906	5,913	5,952	5,978	6,010	1.8%	11.8%
Sabattus	4,876	5,037	5,041	5,058	5,102	5,151	5,213	3.5%	6.9%
Turner	5,734	5,815	5,821	5,845	5,847	5,924	6,013	3.4%	4.9%
Wales	1,616	1,595	1,599	1,609	1,618	1,637	1,656	3.8%	2.5%
Androscoggin County	107,702	111,139	111,178	112,733	113,454	114,477	115,272	3.7%	7.0%
Maine	1,328,361	1,363,196	1,364,571	1,378,931	1,390,922	1,399,646	1,405,012	3.1%	5.8%

Source: Decennial U.S. Census, 2010 and 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates

Auburn has experienced steady population growth over the past decade, with an estimated 9.3% population increase from 2010 to 2024 (an increase of approximately 2,145 residents). This growth aligns with broader trends, as the State's total population increased 5.8%, and the county's population increased 7.0%.

Looking ahead, the City's population is projected to increase slightly before declining from 2027 to 2042, with an overall projected decline in population from 2022 to 2042. While the County's population is projected to increase slightly over the same period, the projected regional shift in age cohort (Figure 1.5) and overall aging population is anticipated to be a driver of potential population decline in Auburn.

The Maine State Economist calculates population projections beginning with county-level projections. The methodology used for the county projections is the cohort-component method. This widely used methodology utilizes births, deaths, and migrations to advance each age-sex cohort through the projection period. It allows for specific survival and migration rates to be calculated for each age-sex cohort.

Most of the city/town projections are calculated by estimating a constant rate of growth for each municipality's share of their county population between 2018 and 2022 and then extrapolating this growth into the future. For Androscoggin County, 2019 and 2022 estimates were used.

In all methodologies, the emphasis is on a community's growth as a share of its county's total growth. This is done to help ensure the town totals within a county equal the total county projection, but this can create some counterintuitive results. Towns with historical population growth in counties that are projected to grow may have projected population declines if that town's share of the county population has been declining (that is, if the other towns in the county have been growing faster than the town in question). City/town projections should be used with caution, particularly in situations where the results seem unlikely.[3]

The Maine State Economist encourages municipalities to limit the use of projections beyond 2032 if possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic played a significant role in this trend, prompting increased migration into the state, with many counties, including Androscoggin County, growing in population during this period. Although in-state migration has slowed since 2022, it remains a key factor in demographic changes.

The longer-term demographic shifts are uncertain, as the availability (or lack of) housing has been a primary driver of population growth in communities across Maine. The City of Auburn Housing Study, completed in May 2025, determined that Auburn needs more than 1,300 additional homes by 2030 to address historic underproduction and meet future housing demand. This number is based on the total statewide and county share of housing needs from the 2023 State of Maine Housing Production Study and allocating Auburn's share of housing needs based on current population share (22%) and employment share (22%) for the City. Auburn's ability to meet this demand will directly impact the City's population change and regional employment growth.

Table 1.2: Population Projections

Municipality	Population Observed	Population Projected				Total Percentage Change
	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042	2022 – 2042

[3] https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/sites/maine.gov.dafs.economist/files/inline-files/Maine%20Population%20Outlook%20to%202032.pdf

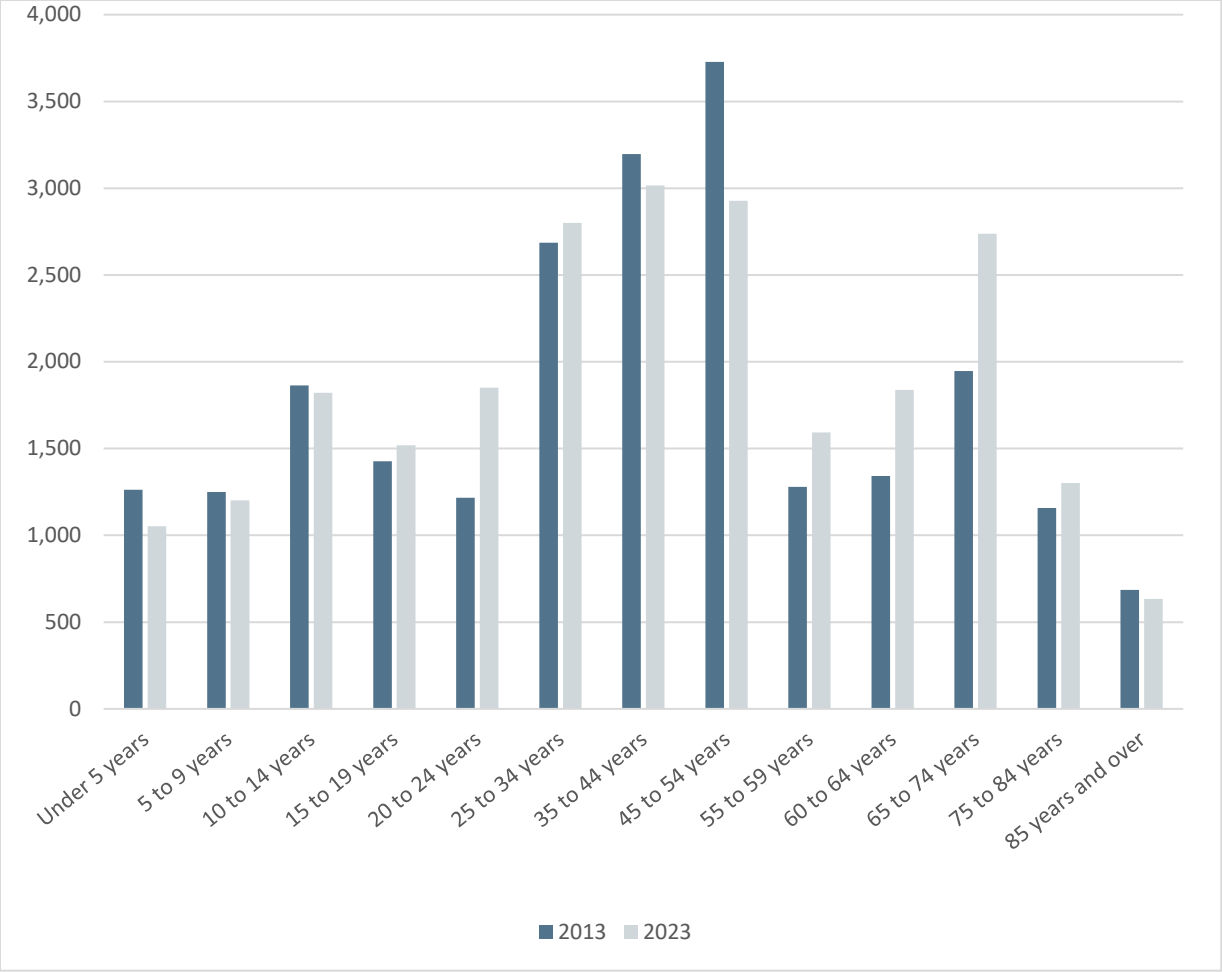
Municipality	Population Observed	Population Projected				Total Percentage Change
Auburn	24,369	24,494	24,465	24,228	23,819	-2.3%
Durham	4,255	4,370	4,460	4,514	4,535	6.6%
Greene	4,409	4,349	4,271	4,155	4,011	-9.0%
Leeds	2,289	2,264	2,232	2,181	2,114	-7.6%
Lewiston	38,512	40,029	41,328	42,287	42,938	11.5%
Lisbon	9,738	9,838	9,845	9,769	9,623	-1.2%
Livermore	2,167	2,187	2,196	2,187	2,162	-0.2%
Livermore Falls	3,069	2,995	2,905	2,790	2,656	-13.5%
Mechanic Falls	3,116	3,091	3,047	2,976	2,885	-7.4%
Minot	2,788	2,794	2,780	2,744	2,687	-3.6%
Poland	5,948	5,985	5,978	5,919	5,819	-2.2%
Sabattus	5,104	5,106	5,080	5,010	4,905	-3.9%
Turner	5,849	5,851	5,802	5,704	5,565	-4.9%
Wales	1,612	1,605	1,588	1,558	1,517	-5.9%
Androscoggin County	113,225	114,957	115,976	116,022	115,235	1.8%
Cumberland County	308,837	316,999	322,973	325,336	324,302	5.0%
Oxford County	59,458	59,736	59,578	58,864	57,631	-3.1%
Maine	1,389,338	1,419,888	1,438,344	1,438,019	1,424,857	2.6%

Source: Maine State Economist, Population Projections 2042

Age

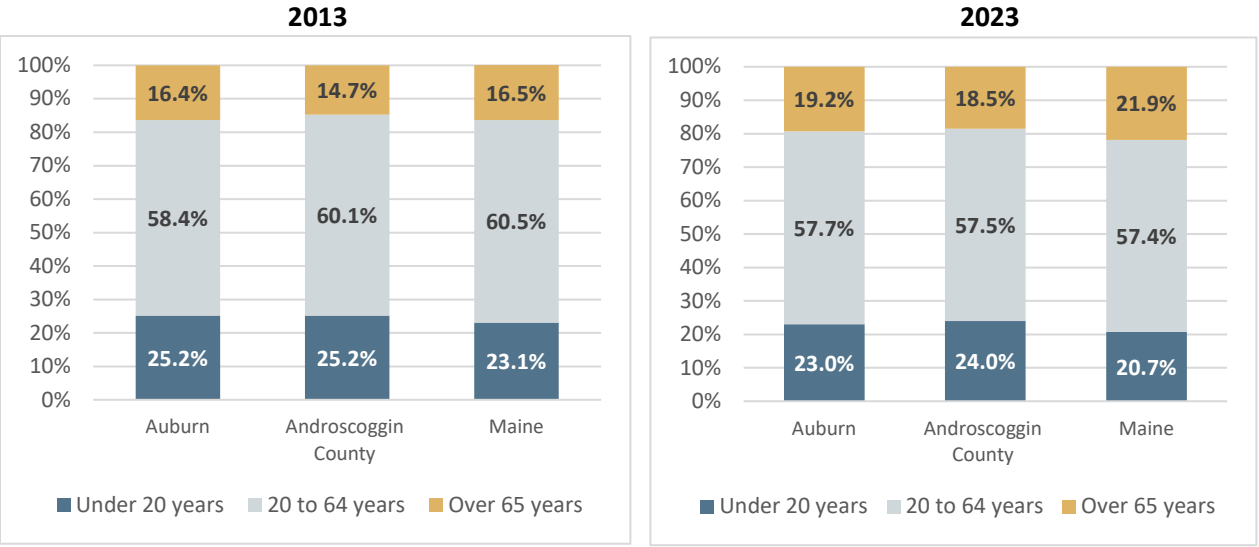
From 2010 to 2020, Auburn's overall population remained relatively stable, showing only modest changes; however, there have been notable shifts in age breakdown. Similar to the state and county, Auburn is experiencing a decline in the youth and workforce populations, and its population is aging. From 2013 to 2023, the working-age population (ages 20 to 64) declined both as a percentage of the total population and in total numbers. Additionally, the population under age 20 decreased by 3.6%, while the population over age 65 increased by 4.2%. Despite the overall decline in the youth and workforce-age populations (18-65), the population of individuals ages 20 to 24 increased by 51.6%, the largest percentage increase in population of any age group.

Figure 1.2: Auburn Population by Age Category



Source: 2013 and 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

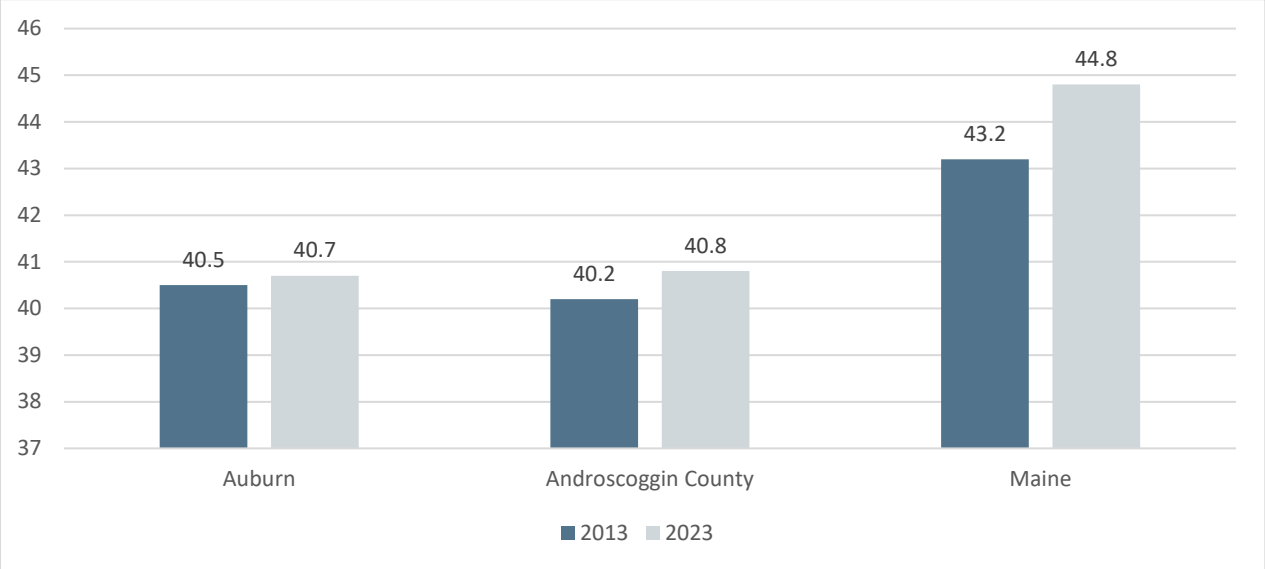
Figure 1.3: Regional Age Breakdown



Source: 2013 and 2023 5-year estimate

Across the City, County, and State, the percentage of adults between 20 and 64 years old has declined. The 20 to 64 age category represents most working-aged adults. As this age cohort declines, there are fewer working adults to support and provide services for children and older adults who may not be working. Auburn's median age increased from 40.5 in 2013 to 40.7 in 2023. Compared to the State, Auburn and the County saw minor increases in median age.

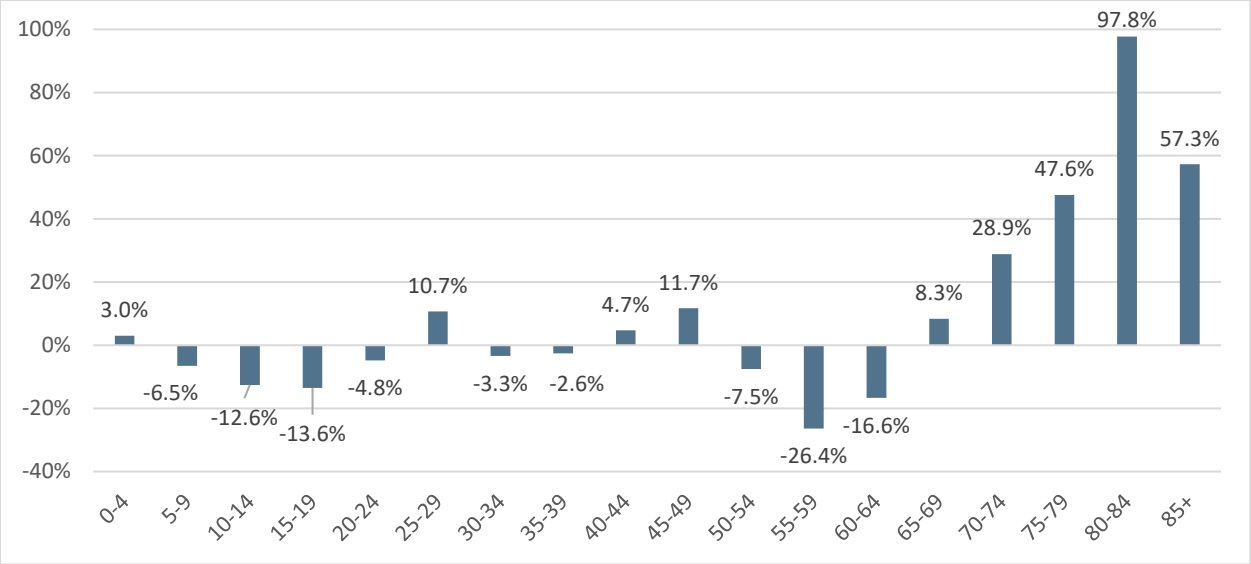
Figure 1.4: Median Age



Source: 2013 and 2023 ACS 5-year estimate

While the State does not provide population projections by age cohort at the municipal level, projected population shifts at the county level estimate a decline in all five-year age cohorts from 5 to 24 years and a significant increase in population for all five-year age cohorts for those ages 65 and over from 2022 to 2032. Based on recent trends, a similar pattern can be expected in Auburn in the next decade.

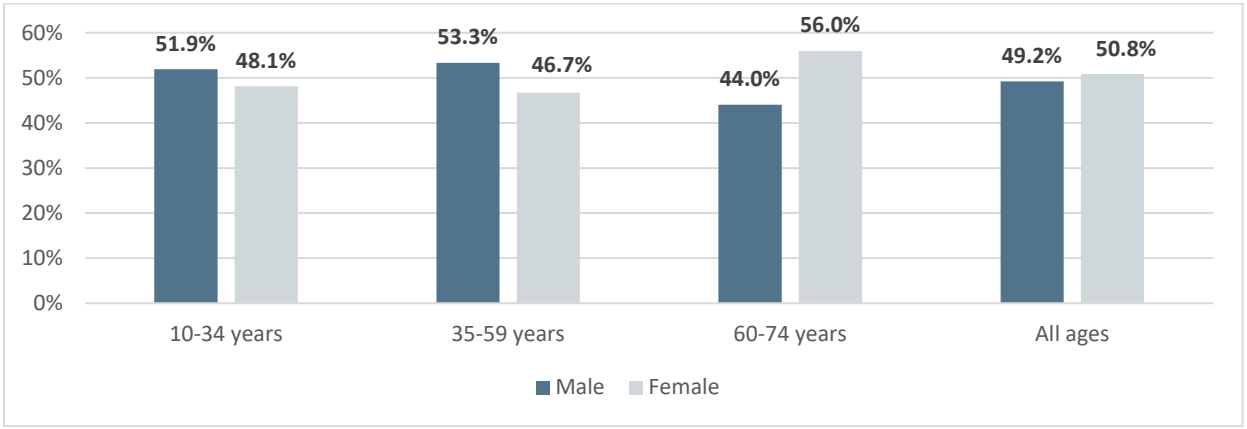
Figure 1.5: Androscoggin County Population Projections by Age Cohort, 2022 – 2032



Source: Maine State Economist, Population Projections 2042

Similar to broader trends at the state and county levels, Auburn has a slightly higher percentage of female residents (50.8%). However, this ratio varies across age groups. Males make up 51.9% of the population in the 10 to 34 age group and 53.3% in the 35 to 59 age group, highlighting notable shifts across these cohorts. While there are slightly more males than females in the 10 to 59 age range, women tend to live longer, which could be contributing to the significant difference in the 60 to 74 age group, where women make up a larger proportion of the population (56%).

Figure 1.6: Sex by Age Group

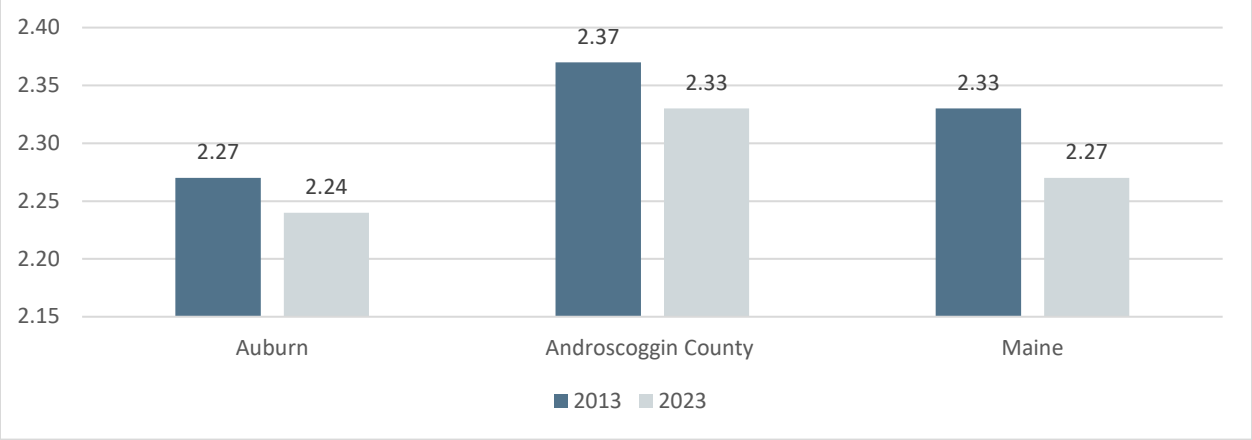


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Household Size

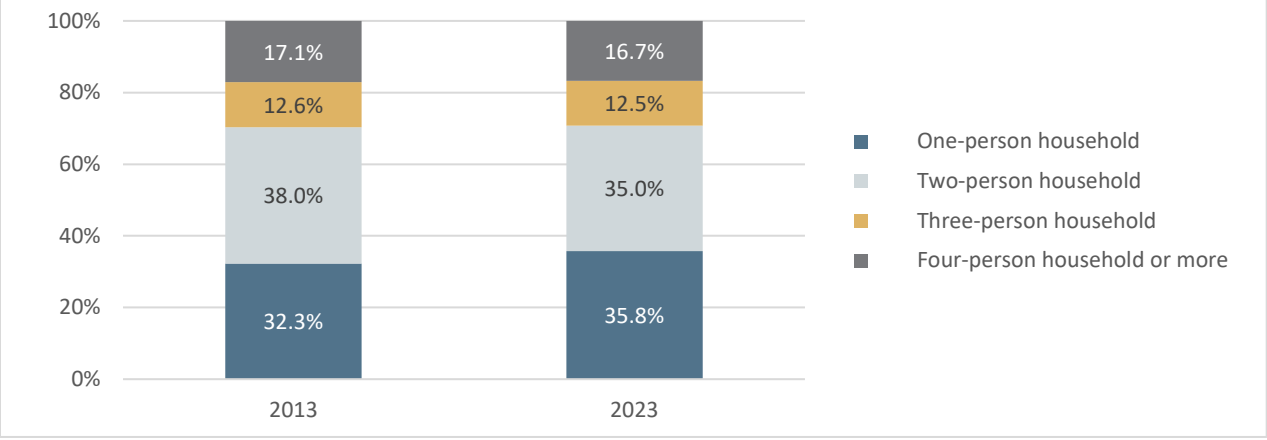
The average household size in Auburn has declined slightly from 2.27 in 2013 to 2.24 in 2023. Statewide, the decline in average household size was twice as large as in Auburn–.06 compared to .03, respectively. This is representative of the aging population, with a similar slight increase in single-person households, from 32.3% of all households in 2013 to 35.8% (3,731 residents) in 2023. Further, the recent increase of individuals ages 20 to 24 could have also driven the increase in single-person households.

Figure 1.7: Change in Average Household Size



Source: 2013 and 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Figure 1.8: Auburn Change in Household Size



Source: 2013 and 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Race and Ethnicity

In 2020, Maine was ranked as the least diverse state according to the U.S. Census Bureau's diversity index, which calculates the likelihood that two randomly selected people will come from different racial

or ethnic backgrounds. Auburn, much like the broader region and state, has a population that is predominantly white, although it has seen a gradual increase in diversity between 2010 and 2020. The largest growth has been observed in the category of individuals who identify as two or more races.

Over the last 10 years, Auburn's racial and ethnic diversity has not changed significantly. Each race or ethnicity category fluctuated within one percentage point, with the exception of residents identifying as black alone. The population of residents identifying as black alone declined between 2013 and 2020, but increased from 1.3% to 3.1% between 2020 and 2023.

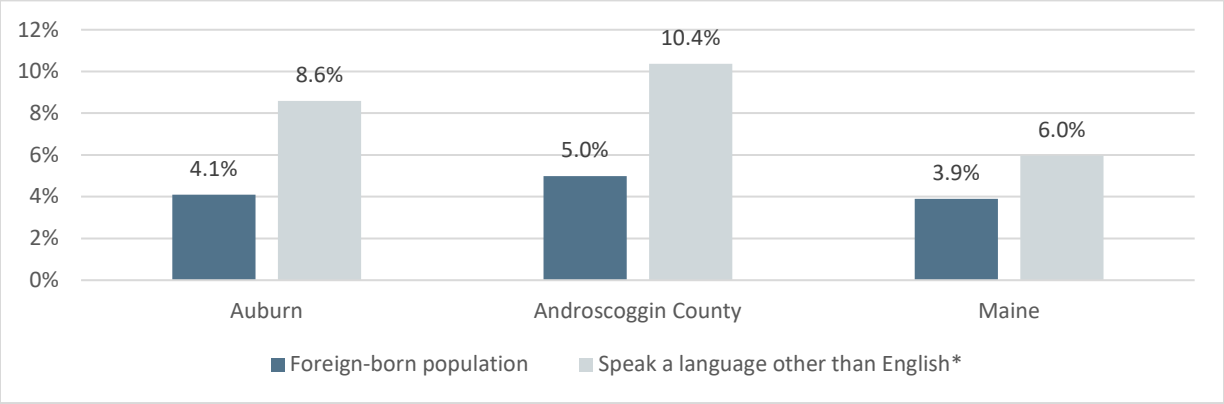
Table 1.3: Race and Ethnicity Over Time

	2013	2017	2020	2023
White alone, percent	91.8%	91%	90.4%	91.2%
Black alone	2.3%	1%	1.3%	3.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0%
Asian alone	1%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0%	0%	0%	0%
Two or More Races	4.3%	5.7%	6%	4.3%
Hispanic or Latino	2%	1.5%	2%	2.3%

Source: 2013 - 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Auburn reports that the community is less diverse than at the county level regarding the variety of languages spoken at home, which indicates cultural diversity within the community. In 2023, 8.6% of Auburn's population (ages 5 or older) spoke a language other than English at home, down from 11.5% in 2013. However, Auburn sits above the state average, where approximately 6% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

Figure 1.9: Diversity Indices, 2023



Percentage of the population over five years

Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Additionally, in 2023, 4.1% of Auburn's residents were born outside of the United States, compared to 5% of those in Androscoggin County and 3.9% of those in Maine. While Auburn has become slightly more diverse over the past decade regarding race, it remains less racially and culturally diverse than the County.

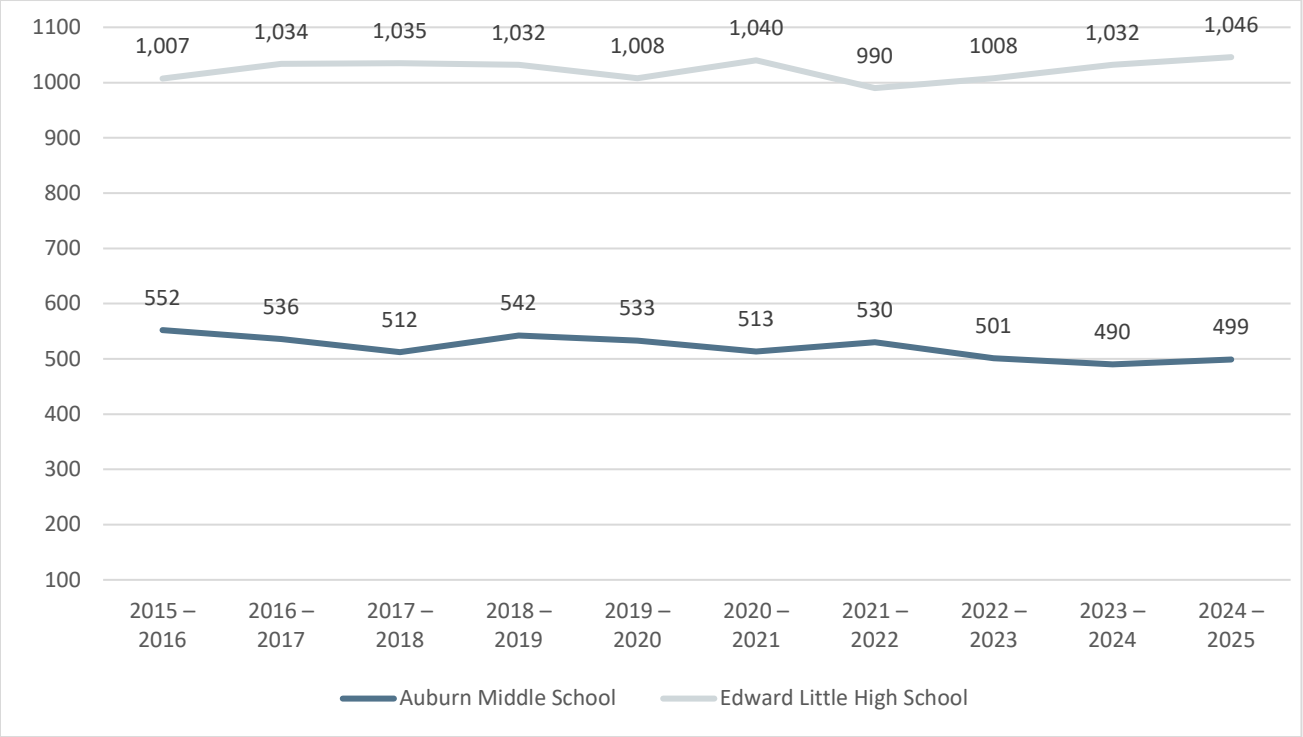
Education

School Enrollment

The Auburn Public School District serves the City of Auburn with a variety of schools, including Auburn Middle School, East Auburn Community School, Edward Little High School, Fairview Elementary School, Park Avenue Elementary School, Sherwood Heights Elementary School, Walton Elementary School, and Washburn Elementary School. Total enrollment in the district experienced a steady decline since the 2017 – 2018 school year, with the highest enrollment recorded at 3,579 students for that time frame. Enrollment further dropped during the 2020 – 2021 school year, likely due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the total falling to 3,320 students. Although there has been a modest increase in enrollment since 2021, the district's total enrollment for the 2023 – 2024 school year remains lower than pre-pandemic levels by approximately 9.4%.

Enrollment in Auburn Middle School has declined by 9.6% over the past decade while Edward Little High School has seen a 3.9% increase in enrollment. Since the 2021 – 2022 school year, Edward Little High School has seen a 5.7% increase in enrollment.

Figure 1.11: Enrollment by School and School Year (Middle and High School)



Source: Maine Department of Education

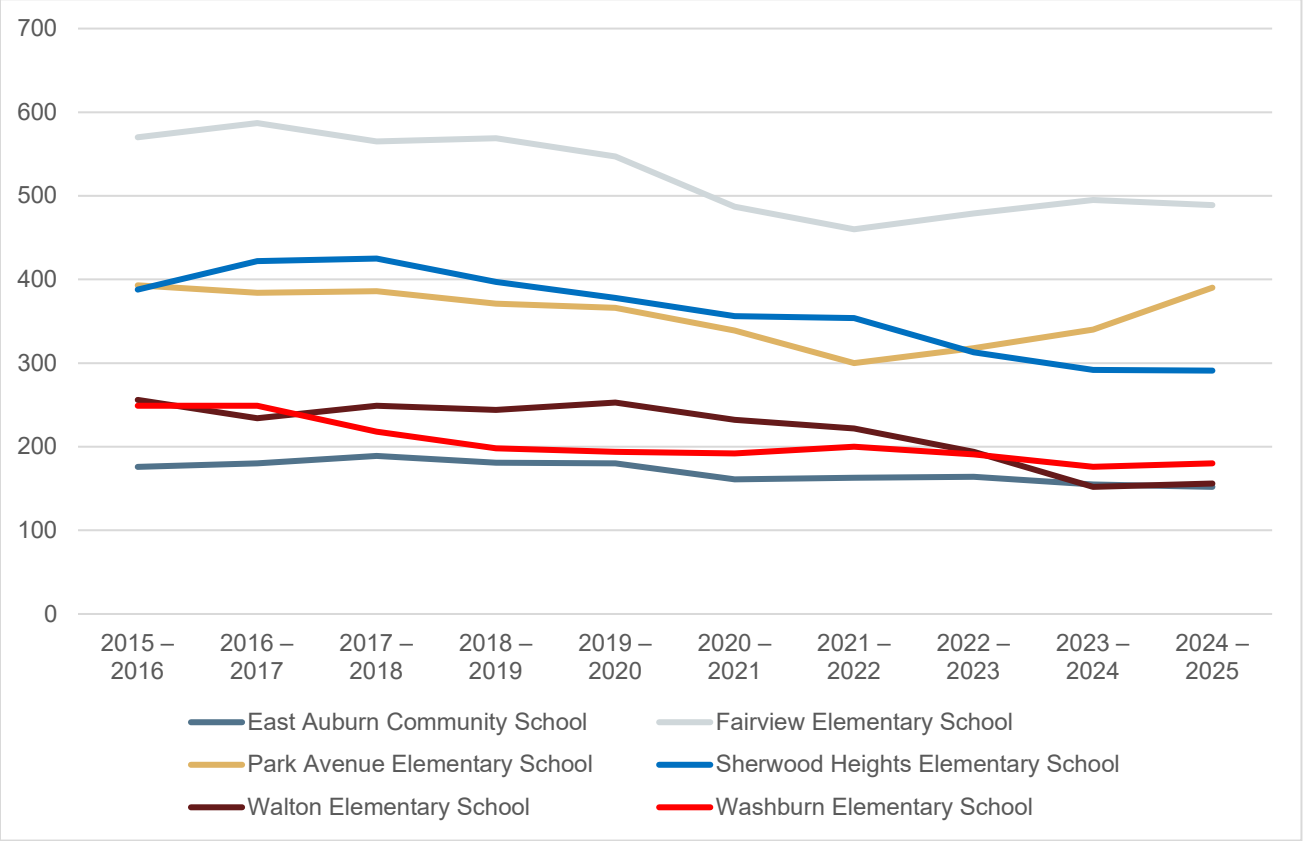
Table 1.10: Middle and High School Enrollment Data

School Year	Auburn Middle School	Edward Little High School
2015 – 2016	552	1,007
2016 – 2017	536	1,034
2017 – 2018	512	1,035
2018 – 2019	542	1,032
2019 – 2020	533	1,008
2020 – 2021	513	1,040
2021 – 2022	530	990
2022 – 2023	501	1008
2023 – 2024	490	1,032
2024 – 2025	499	1,046

Source: Maine Department of Education

Among Auburn's five elementary schools, the most significant decline in enrollment occurred at Walton Elementary School. As declines in enrollment steadied for many schools following the pandemic, Walton Elementary School continued to see declining enrollment, with a 29.7% decrease since the 2021 – 2022 school year. Similarly, Sherwood Heights Elementary School experienced a 17.7% decline in enrollment in the same time period.

Figure 1.12: Enrollment by School and School Year (Elementary School)



Source: Maine Department of Education

Table 1.10: Elementary School Enrollment Data

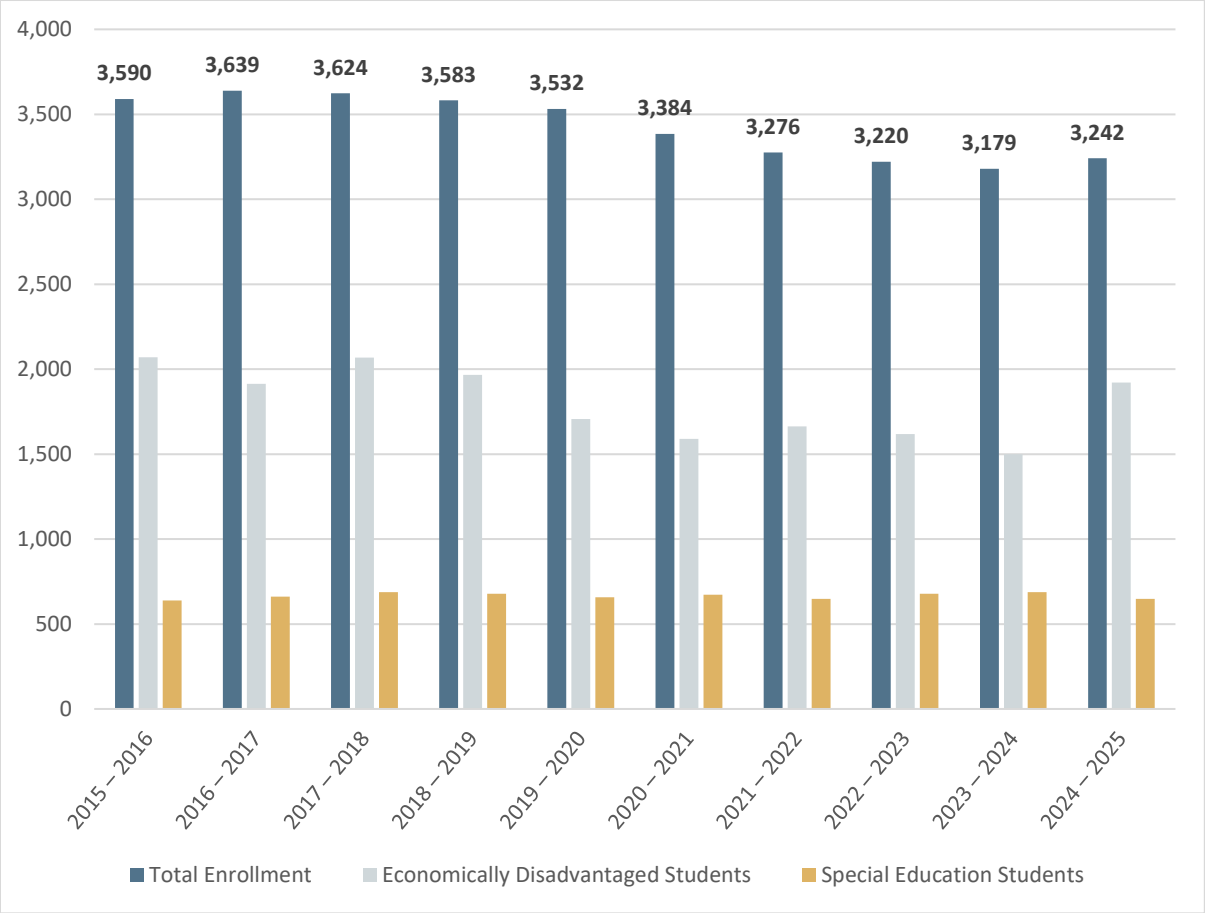
School Year	Fairview Elementary School	Park Avenue Elementary School	Sherwood Heights Elementary School	Walton Elementary School	East Auburn Community School	Washburn Elementary School
2015 – 2016	570	393	388	256	176	249
2016 – 2017	587	384	422	234	180	249
2017 – 2018	565	386	425	249	189	218
2018 – 2019	569	371	397	244	181	198

School Year	Fairview Elementary School	Park Avenue Elementary School	Sherwood Heights Elementary School	Walton Elementary School	East Auburn Community School	Washburn Elementary School
2019 – 2020	547	366	378	253	180	194
2020 – 2021	487	339	356	232	161	192
2021 – 2022	460	300	354	222	163	200
2022 – 2023	479	318	313	194	164	191
2023 – 2024	495	340	292	152	155	176
2024 – 2025	489	390	291	156	152	180

Source: Maine Department of Education

In contrast to the overall decline in enrollment, the number of special education students in the Auburn Public School District has fluctuated but remained relatively stable from 2020 to 2024. Enrollment in special education rose slightly from 672 students in the 2020 – 2021 school year to 687 students in 2023 – 2024. This represents a slight increase in the percentage of special education students relative to total enrollment, from about 19.9% in 2020 – 2021 to approximately 21.6% in 2023 – 2024. The total number of special education students was higher in 2023 – 2024 than in 2019 – 2020, when the district had 658 students in special education. This trend highlights ongoing demand for special education services, even as overall student enrollment has declined.

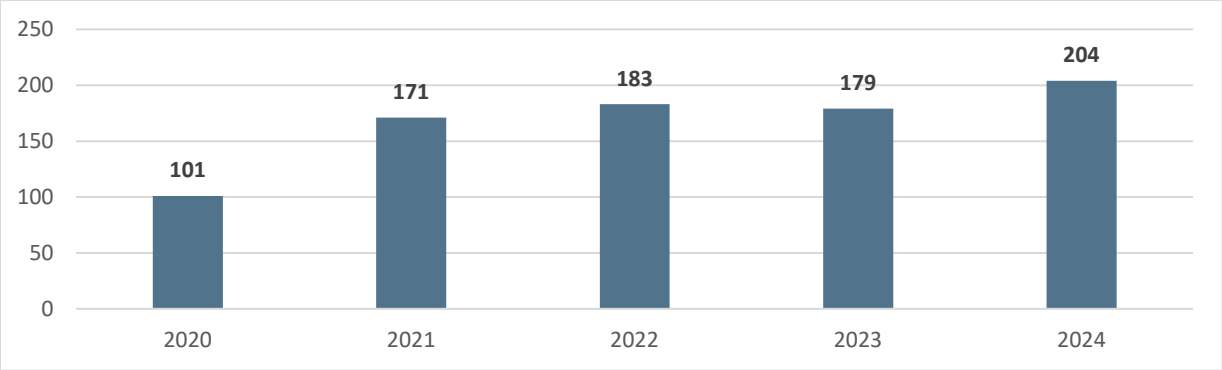
Figure 1.11: Publicly Funded Attending Students by School Year



Source: Maine Department of Education

The number of home instruction students in Auburn has experienced significant growth since 2020, with a sharp increase in 2021 and 2022. The peak of home instruction occurred in 2022 when the number of students reached 183. While the number of home instruction students declined slightly in 2023 to 179, the enrollment for 2024 saw an uptick, reaching 204 students. Overall, the rate of home instruction students in Auburn remains higher than pre-pandemic levels, reflecting a continuing trend of choosing alternative education options.

Figure 1.12: Students Receiving Home Instruction (Auburn Public Schools)

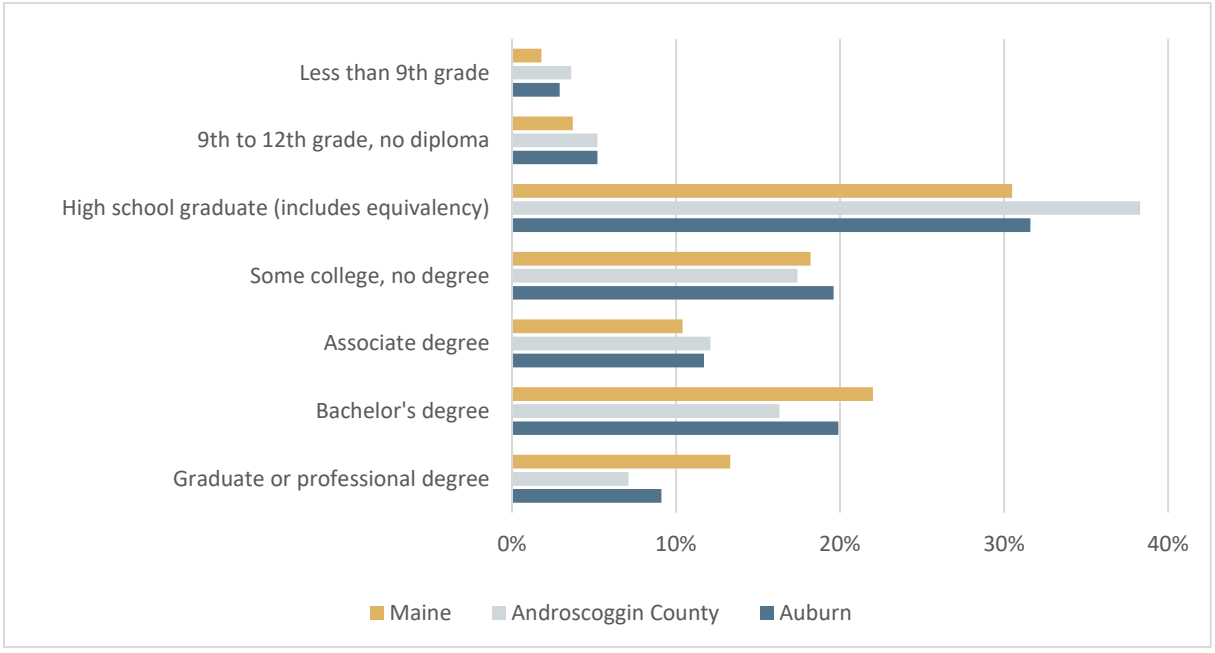


Source: Maine Department of Education

Educational Attainment

Auburn experienced notable improvements in educational attainment over the past decade. In 2023, 91.9% of residents ages 25 and over were high school graduates, a slight increase from 91.2% in 2013, aligning with the state and county averages. Furthermore, the percentage of adults with higher education degrees has grown significantly. The number of adults with a bachelor's degree increased from 24.9% in 2013 to 28.9% in 2023, and those with graduate or professional degrees made up 9.1% of the adult population, compared to 8% in 2013. Auburn's educational attainment is now more closely aligned with state and county averages, with a more significant upward trend in higher education rates than at the county level.

Figure 1.13: Highest Level of Educational Attainment

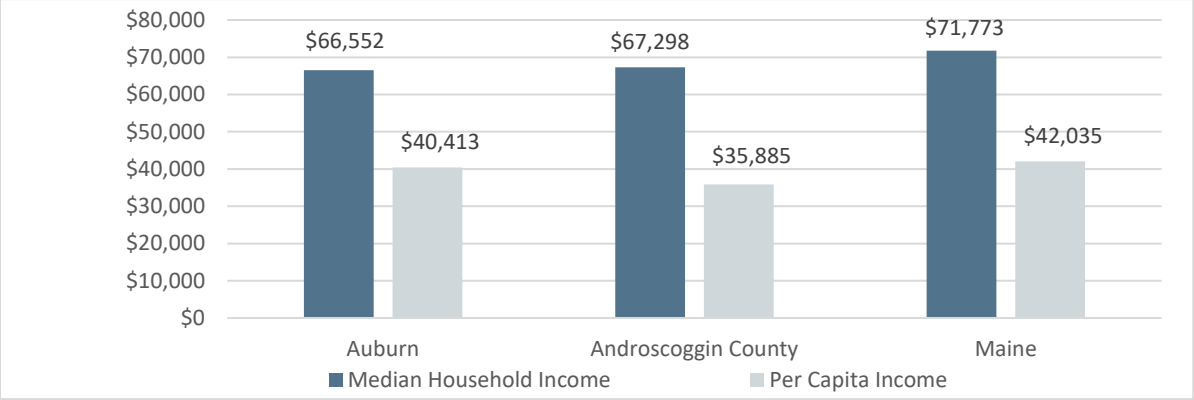


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Income and Poverty

The median household income in Auburn has increased in the past decade but remains slightly below both county and state averages. In 2023, Auburn's median household income was $66,552, compared to $67,298 for the county and $71,773 for the state. The City's household composition may partially explain this lower median household income. Additionally, Auburn's per capita income is higher than the county's but slightly lower than the state average. This metric suggests that Auburn's overall household income is below that of the state and county, while its per capita income remains relatively strong.

Figure 1.14: Median Household Income



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Figure 1.15: Household Income by Income Bracket



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Seasonal Population

Unlike areas of coastal Maine and the lake and mountain regions, Auburn does not have a significant tourism industry or seasonal population. Less than 0.5% of all housing units are for seasonal or recreational use. Some seasonal homes and homes used as short-term rentals exist near Taylor Pond and in Downtown Auburn; however, there are no significant shifts in seasonal populations.

Challenges and Opportunities

Auburn is facing demographic shifts that present both challenges and opportunities for the community. The City's aging population will increase the demand for senior services, including transportation, property tax relief, home repairs, and recreational programs. There will also be an increased need for more accessible housing options, such as senior housing communities and assisted living facilities.

The decline in the working-age population (ages 20 – 64) introduces another challenge. As the number of retirees grows, Auburn must attract and retain younger residents to maintain a stable workforce and support the economy. Without a balanced workforce, local industries could face significant strain or hardship.

As the City continues to experience a decline in the youth population, impacts on school enrollment and funding is inevitable. This decline specifically requires attention to help ensure schools remain adequately supported. Additionally, with an increasing number of one- and two-person households, there will be greater demand for smaller housing options, particularly for older adults wishing to downsize.

Finally, as Auburn grows in population size, there will be heightened demand for municipal services, such as public safety, waste management, and water and sewer systems. The City may need to enhance its overall infrastructure to meet these needs and help ensure longevity. Proactive infrastructure and municipal services planning may soon be essential to sustain growth and maintain quality of life in Auburn.

Sources

City of Auburn Housing Study, 2023

Maine Department of Education

Maine State Economist, Maine State and County Population Projections 2042

Maine State Economist, Maine City and Town Population Projections 2042

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Natural and Water Resources

Introduction

Auburn has a diverse array of natural and water resources that contribute to the community's rich history, quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental health. These natural resources—freshwater wetlands, rivers, lakes, and forested areas—are important to the City's design and identity, and environmental protection continues to be a priority for the community.

Auburn's history is deeply connected with its natural resources, and they have played a pivotal role in shaping the City's development. The fertile land and abundant water resources made it an ideal location for agriculture. The area was originally inhabited by the Anasagunticook Tribe, part of the larger Wabanaki Confederacy, which thrived along the Androscoggin River. Early settlers relied on farming and timber harvesting to drive economic growth and fuel development. As industry grew, the Androscoggin River provided waterpower for mills and factories and led the way to a thriving textile and shoe manufacturing and commerce ecosystem that helped Auburn flourish and expand.

With that growth in industry, the Androscoggin River became one of the 10 most polluted rivers in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s and was broadly seen as an influence in Maine Senator Edmund Muskie's work on the Clean Water Act. The community has since recognized the importance of balancing growth with the preservation of its natural environment. Years of efforts to restore and enhance the City's natural and water resources have been effective, as Auburn has some of the most beautiful and healthy natural spaces.

Watersheds

A watershed is a land area that directs and channels water, both rain and snowmelt, to creeks, streams, rivers, and, eventually, to discharges, like the ocean or a bay. All land is in a watershed. As the water flows across the land, it impacts people, land, and wildlife and is critical to the overall health and well-being of communities. Rain and snow that run off the land often pick up pollutants, which adversely affect the watershed's ecology and, ultimately, its receiving waterbody. As development increases, and more impermeable surfaces are created, the more natural landscapes and hydrology are changed. Watersheds play important roles in the local ecosystem and water management efforts. Watershed management is challenging, as watersheds tend to cross municipal boundaries and require coordination and partnership.

The Lake Auburn Watershed is a critical watershed in Auburn. It covers approximately 15 square miles and includes parts of Auburn, Lewiston, Minot, Hebron, Turner, and Buckfield. Lake Auburn is a source of drinking water for both Auburn and Lewiston, and the watershed is managed by the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission (LAWPC) to maintain water quality through various management, conservation, and educational efforts. These efforts have resulted in excellent water quality. Lake Auburn's high water quality provides a waiver from added filtration requirements by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to meet drinking water standards. If water quality were to decline in the lake,

the cities would need to construct a water treatment facility to provide safe drinking water to residents. Other notable watersheds within Auburn include the Androscoggin River Watershed, the Little Androscoggin River watershed, the Taylor Pond watershed, and the Sabattus River watershed.

Since 1992, the Androscoggin Valley Soil & Water Conservation District (AVSWCD), teamed with the Taylor Pond Lake Association, Auburn, Minot, and several government agencies, to continue a watershed management project under EPA's Section 319 grant program to address nonpoint source pollution within the Taylor Pond Watershed. Long term monitoring has identified trends in declining water quality due to elevated phosphorus pollution, forest conversion, erosion from shorelines and roadways, as well as pollution from septic and sewer systems. This has resulted in a reduction in water clarity, lower levels of dissolved oxygen and overall habitat degradation within Taylor Pond Watershed that has greatly affected the coldwater fishery. The work being done through this program continues today by supporting ongoing water quality surveys, installations of Best Management Practices (BMPs), micro grants to homeowners, and road maintenance training for residents.

Surface Waters

Auburn has many surface water features that include lakes, reservoirs, rivers, ponds, creeks, and wetlands. Healthy surface waters are a crucial resource because of their ecological, social, and scenic benefits. The health of surface waters plays an important role in recreation, providing opportunities for hiking, swimming and fishing. Auburn is committed to enhancing public access for all members of the public, including the angling community. In alignment with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) stocking and management programs and public access goals, public waters must not be limited to City residents only. Currently, there is no exhaustive inventory for all of Auburn's publicly accessible flowing water. While currently only the Royal River is stocked with brook trout, most streams inside Auburn are likely to have wild brook trout and represent high-quality angling opportunities.

Rivers and Streams

In the State of Maine, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) classifies streams based on their water quality, use, and risk and uses a letter-based scale. All streams have similar use designations including drinking water after disinfection, fishing, agriculture, recreation, industrial processes, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and certain habitats for aquatic life. However, their habitat requirements range based on their classification. The majority of rivers and streams in Auburn have been classified as Class B according to the MDEP Stream Classification Viewer. The exceptions include Little Androscoggin River and Androscoggin River, which are both classified as Class C.

Class AA represents the highest level of protection in this system and these waters are designated to support pristine conditions, where criteria must be met to attain desired environmental goals. Class A streams are designated as the second-highest classification and are subject to minimal human impact, allowing only limited activities such as impoundments and tightly controlled discharges to minimize

ecological risk. To qualify for this classification, stream habitats must exhibit characteristics consistent with a "natural" condition. Class B streams are the third-highest classification with fewer restrictions but are still required to maintain high water quality standard, though the potential for degradation increases slightly due to greater human use. Class B streams must have habitat characterized as "unimpaired". Class C streams hold the lowest classification, maintaining good water quality but with the least stringent criteria and the fewest restrictions on use. Habitats in Class C streams must remain suitable for all indigenous fish species and their associated ecological communities (MDEP).

Androscoggin River

The Androscoggin River is a significant 178-mile waterway that flows through Maine from its source in New Hampshire to where it discharges into Merrymeeting Bay, joins the Kennebec River, and eventually flows out to the Gulf of Maine. It is the main surface water feature in Auburn. The Androscoggin River drops more than 1,200 feet from its source to the mouth and has a drainage basin of approximately 3,500 square miles. The river is a popular destination for boating, kayaking, and fishing and supports habitats for Atlantic salmon, smallmouth bass, northern pike, trout, largemouth bass, fallfish, rock bass, and black crappie. The Androscoggin River serves as the natural eastern boundary between Auburn and the City from Lewiston. The landmark is significant for both communities, providing recreation, scenic views, and economic opportunities. Historically, the river was heavily utilized by textile mills, paper mills, and other industries and helped in the development of many communities. Located in the heart of Auburn's downtown, the Great Falls are natural and drop about 37 feet over rocky outcrops. The falls have been harnessed for hydroelectric power and are a defining feature and draw for the City. The river can be accessed by the Auburn Riverwalk that links Bonney Park, Festival Plaza, and Great Falls Plaza. The river is a central community space and City focal point, and hosts a variety of events throughout the year including RiverFest, the Lewiston-Auburn River Race, and the Great Falls Balloon Festival. There is a public access ramp at Northern River Road, and a carry-in boat launch in Anniversary Park at the mouth of the Little Androscoggin River where it meets the Androscoggin River.

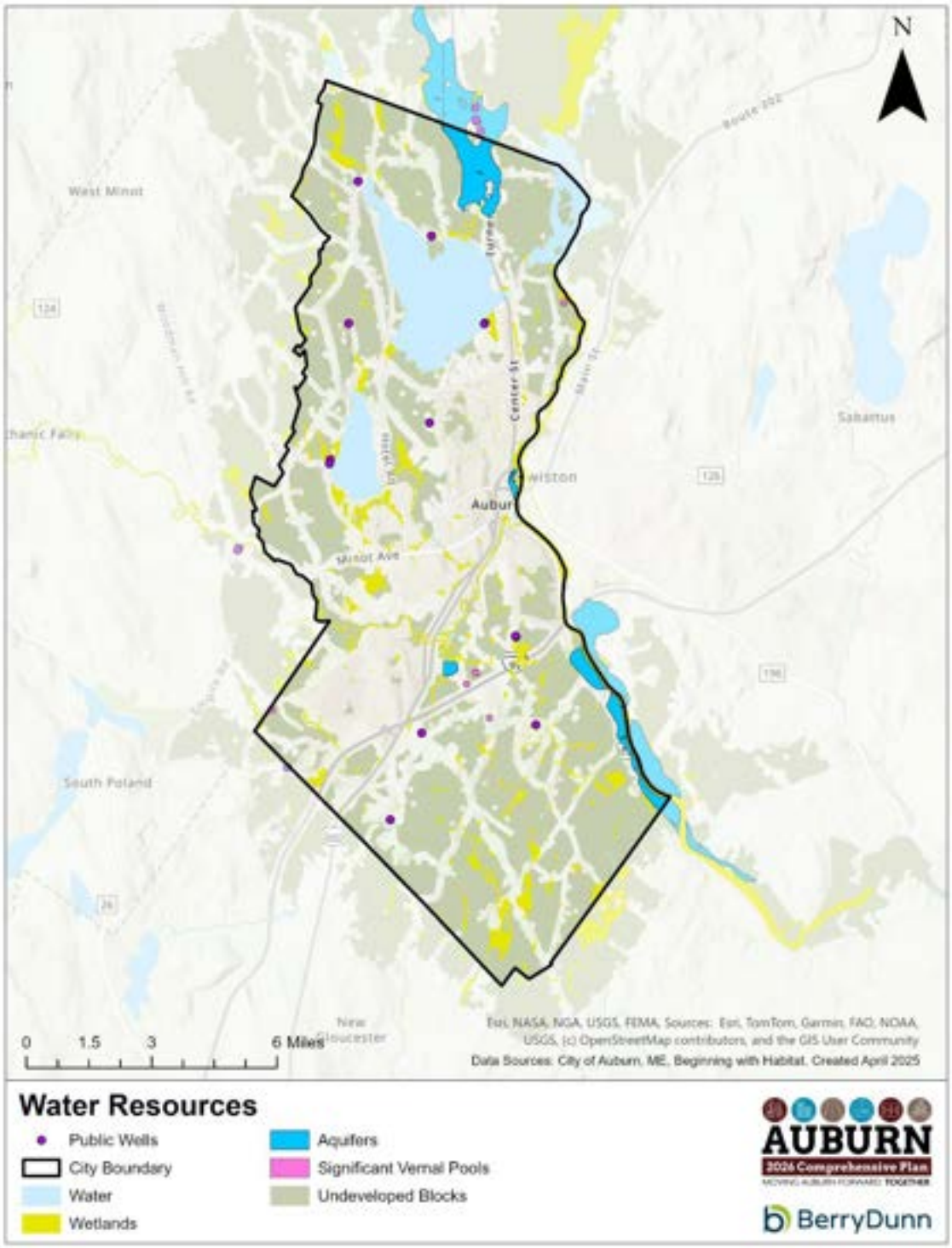
Anglers fishing the upper Androscoggin enjoy access to landlocked salmon, along with brook, rainbow, and brown trout. Sea-run Atlantic salmon, however, are federally protected and cannot legally be harvested anywhere in Maine due to their endangered status. Angling restrictions are aligned with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s broader efforts to restore self-sustaining populations of Atlantic Salmon in the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment, including long-term plans to improve fish passage, reintroduce salmon to historic ranges, and recover the species under the Endangered Species Act.

Little Androscoggin River

The Little Androscoggin River is a 51.4-mile tributary of the Androscoggin River. It originates from Bryant Pond in Woodstock and transverses several communities—including Greenwood, West Paris, Norway, Oxford, Mechanic Falls, Minot, and Poland—before flowing into the Androscoggin River in Auburn. The river is a distinct community feature that provides a scenic background as well as recreation and habitat

opportunities. The river is home to several species of trout, including brook trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, as well as smallmouth bass, northern pike, American shad, alewife, and American eel, making it for a good location for connecting to wildlife and recreational fishing.

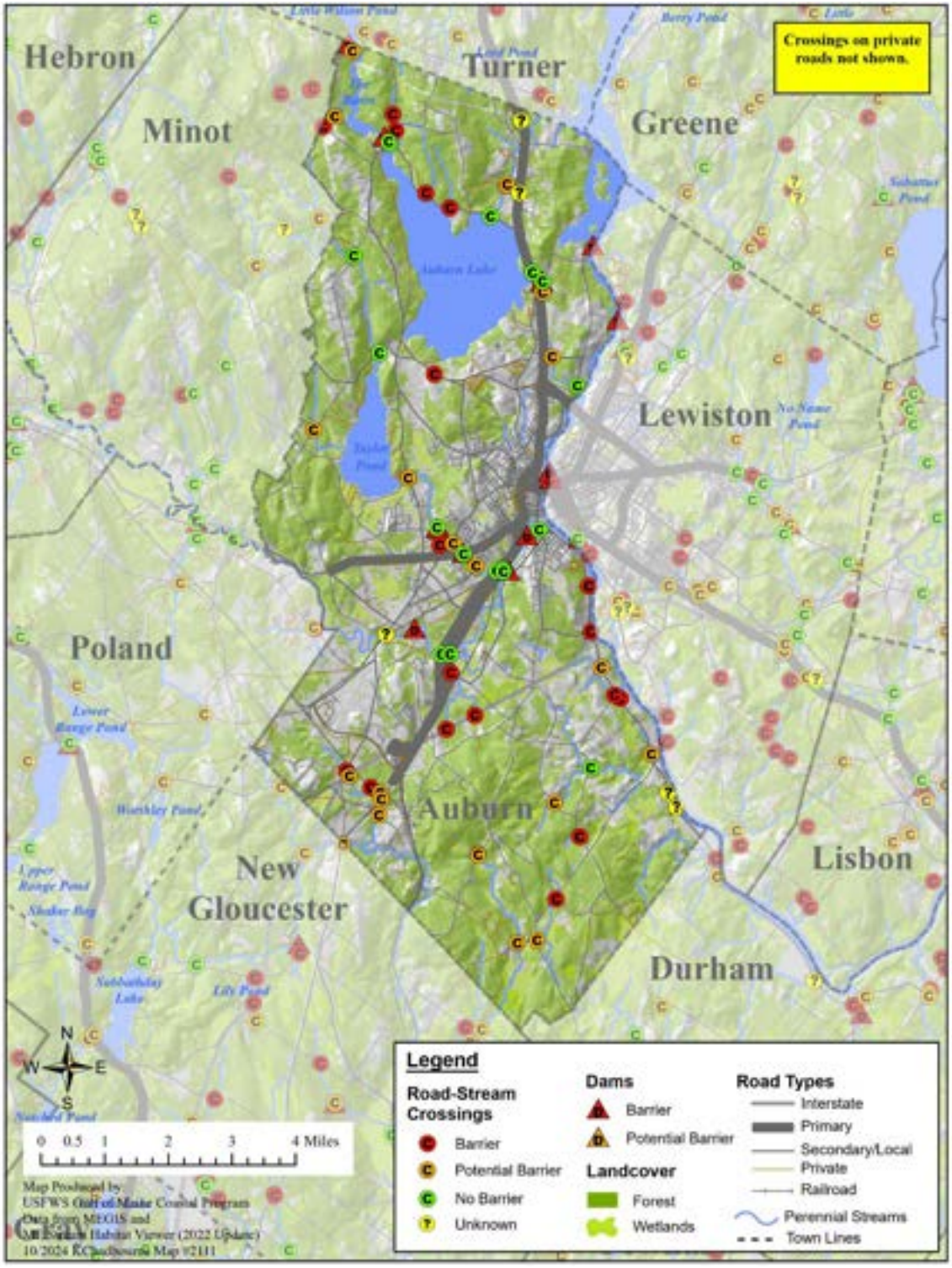
Figure 2.1: Water Resources Map



Stream Crossings

Stream crossings intend to maintain the continuity of streams to control stream volume, accommodate wildlife, and protect stream health. Stream continuity is critical to stream health and the wildlife that depend on streams, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Typical stream crossing problems include undersized crossings; shallow or perched crossings easily blocked by debris; scouring, erosion, and high-flow velocities; and habitat and migration limitations. There are 43 municipally owned stream culverts at crossroads and other structures in Auburn. These culverts and their conditions have been mapped by the MDMR's Maine Coastal Program in the figure below and uses the Stream Habitat Viewer as a data source. The Stream Habitat Viewer provides a starting point for towns, private landowners, and others to learn more about stream habitats, fish passage barriers, and road crossings in inland, non-tidal areas across the state. The Stream Habitat Viewer is Convened by the State of Maine Coastal Program, the Maine Stream Connectivity Work Group is a partnership of state, federal, industry and non-government organizations working to improve Maine's stream restoration efforts. The following map provides information about surveyed stream crossings, dams and natural features that can act as barriers to the movement of native fish and wildlife between important aquatic habitats in Auburn. Currently, Auburn has a variety of road stream crossings that have barriers, potential barriers, and no barriers. Auburn is committed to improving these crossings as the need arises to support fish and wildlife.

Figure 2.2: Fish Passage Barriers



Source: USFWS Gulf of Maine Coastal Program

These culverts vary in their capacity to support streams and aquatic life, with many acting as a barrier rather than a connection. Among the 43 culverts, 19 have been classified as barriers, 21 as potential barriers, and only three have no barriers. While many culverts are assessed to be in "okay" condition, six are rated as "poor," and 10 lack condition data. Aquatic life passage may also be adversely affected by the outfall characteristics of these culverts. Notably, over one-third (16) are graded as "freefall" at the outlet, which can significantly impede migration, compared to 27 that align with the natural stream grade. Additionally, 13 culverts exhibit further physical obstructions such as accumulated debris or sediment, fencing, or structural deformations. It is also worth noting that for 21 of the culverts, no data is available regarding physical barriers, suggesting that the actual number of impeded structures may be underreported (MEGIS).

Maine DEP's Municipal Stream Crossing Grant Program provides grants that match local funding for the upgrade of culverts at stream crossings on municipal roads. Program-funded projects benefit public infrastructure and safety by replacing failing culverts at risk of complete washout or collapse. They also reduce flooding and increase resiliency with the installation of larger, higher capacity, and longer-lived crossings, benefiting fish and wildlife by opening and reconnecting stream habitat fragmented by undersized and impassable culverts. Auburn has leveraged this program in the past and was awarded a 2021 and 2022 Municipal Stream Crossing Grant for Fish Hatchery Road and North Auburn Road.

Dams

Dams play a significant role in shaping stream ecosystems, often presenting barriers to natural flow regimes and aquatic connectivity. At the same time, dams in Auburn also provide for power generation. In Auburn, the presence of multiple dams has implications for stream continuity, habitat quality, and fish migration. There are 11 active dams in Auburn impacting stream continuity, impacting habitat and fish migration. Watersheds delineated by the U.S. Geological Survey on the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 12 level include Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River, and Stetson Brook-Androscoggin River. Two dams are located within the Lake Auburn watershed, six dams within the Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River watershed, and four dams within the Stetson Brook-Androscoggin River watershed. According to Maine GIS (MEGIS), all dams currently block various amounts of Atlantic Salmon habitat, ranging from 0.005 to 415 acres. Refer to table 3-1 for an inventory of active dams located in Auburn.

Table 2.1: Active Dams

Name	Site ID	Waterbody Association	HUC 12 Watershed	Coordinates
Barker Mill Dam	D1078	Little Androscoggin River	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.08688, -70.22925)
Barker Mill Upper	D1079	Little Androscoggin River	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.07881, -70.23487)

Name	Site ID	Waterbody Association	HUC 12 Watershed	Coordinates
Gulf Island Dam	D1087	Merrymeeting Bay	Stetson Brook-Androscoggin River	(44.15307, -70.20985)
Kendall Dam 1	D1093	Taylor Brook	Lake Auburn	(44.0883, -70.25783)
Kendall Dam 2	D1129	Taylor Brook	Stetson Brook-Androscoggin River	(44.08796, -70.25702)
Lake Auburn Dam	D0733	Unknown	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.14468, -70.22583)
Lewiston Falls Project	D1074	Merrymeeting Bay	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.10146, -70.22249)
Little Wilson Pond Dam	D1138	Little Wilson Pond Outlet	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.19813, -70.28795)
Littlefield Dam	D1887	Little Androscoggin River	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.06535, -70.26431)
North Auburn Dam	D1088	Unknown	Stetson Brook-Androscoggin River	(44.17703, -70.2764)
Taylor Brook Dam	D1089	Taylor Brook	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.08266, -70.24922)

The Auburn Public Works Department (APW) addresses stormwater and infrastructure-related maintenance, including dams. The City has sought and secured funding to support the removal of the Little River Dam—also referred to as the Littlefield Dam— on the Little Androscoggin River and is in the early stages of engineering and review for dam removal.

Lakes and Ponds

Auburn is home to several lakes and ponds, contributing to year-round scenic beauty, drinking water supply, and recreational opportunities. Consistent with Maine statute, lakes and ponds in Auburn greater than ten acres are classified as Great Pond Act (GPA) waters, which requires these water bodies meet high standards for water quality. Class GPA waters must maintain a stable or decreasing trophic state and be free of culturally induced algal blooms. Lakes not meeting this standard require municipalities to evaluate water quality impacts and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to achieve a GPA level. Class GPA waters are suitable for the designation of drinking water after disinfection. They can also be used for recreation, fishing, agriculture, industrial process and cooling

water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat must be characterized as natural. Recent development and an increase of impervious surfaces within lake watersheds have also increased phosphorus and other nutrients. Phosphorus is a natural element found in soil particles and organic matter (such as leaves) that are transported to lakes and streams through erosion and stormwater runoff. Sources include pet waste, lawn fertilizers, failing septic systems, and decomposing organic matter. Phosphorus controls are considered and regulated in the shoreland zoning and plan review process.

Lake Auburn

Lake Auburn is an approximately 2,260-acre significant lake and reservoir. It serves as Auburn, Lewiston's and portions of Poland's primary water supply for more than 40,000 residents. Greater than 79% of the total watershed area is held by Auburn with an ongoing demand for housing and economic development. Since the 1990's, strict watershed protections have been in place restricting activities, such as swimming, ice fishing, and animal wading, to protect the water supply. Motor boats are allowed with specific regulations. In 2023, Section 60-4 of the zoning ordinance established the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District to maintain safe and healthy environmental conditions and protect the lake's high-quality drinking water supply. This overlay district plays a critical role in regulating land use and development activities within the watershed. It limits allowable uses to reduce impacts, requires strict erosion control measures on construction and forestry operations, and imposes building setbacks to preserve scenic and natural buffers along the shoreline. The ordinance also regulates private sewage disposal systems to prevent contamination from septic failures, setting standards to protect groundwater and surface water quality. Agricultural practices within the watershed are subject to best management practices that minimize runoff and nutrient loading. Forestry activities must follow sustainable harvesting guidelines that reduce soil disturbance and sedimentation risks. Together, these regulations help protect wildlife spawning grounds, control building sites, and maintain both the volume and quality of the potable water supply for Auburn, Lewiston, and surrounding communities. After facing pressure and legal challenges from landowners and developers, in 2023-2024, ordinances were adopted to allow limited development under a "phosphorus neutral standard". In 2025, the City of Lewiston purchased over 400 acres of land within the Lake Auburn watershed to prevent future development and help preserve the lake's exceptional water quality—an effort aimed at maintaining its filtration-free status and avoiding the substantial cost of constructing a drinking water treatment facility. The Lewiston land purchase also reflects an acknowledgment of the pressures faced by the two cities in managing the shared watershed, underscoring the need for a shared commitment to protecting Lake Auburn's water quality. At this time, Lake Auburn will continue to serve as the City's drinking water source, and new public water supply sources are not anticipated.

For recreational users, the area is accessible via Whitman Spring Road, which is popular for walking, hiking, and biking. Motorized boats are allowed, but the City of Auburn Parks and Recreation does not allow boats with in-house toilets or sleeping quarters, to limit the size of boats and protect water quality. There is a public boat launch located on Route 4 and is the only approved launch site for trailered boats. The lake supports a variety of fish species, including salmon, lake trout, brook trout, largemouth bass, and chain pickerel, making it a popular recreational fishing destination. The state of

Maine has official fishing seasons and limits on various fish species to protect fish populations and water quality. Additionally, fishing of any endangered or threatened species is prohibited, and a license is required for anyone 16 years of age or older to promote responsible fishing and conservation practices (MDIFW).

The southernly portion of the lake is a no-activity zone, meaning fishing, including shore fishing, is not allowed. There are also daily limits and minimum length limits for certain fish species. Lake Auburn and all its direct tributaries are closed to taking smelts. The historic Merrick's Way is a multi-use network of trails (4.8 miles) for walkers, bikers, snowshoers and skiers. Whitman Spring Trail (also Spring Road Trail) is a 3.9-mile out-and-back scenic pedestrian trail following along the western shoreline of Lake Auburn. These trails serve as the public gateway to the lake and surrounding forests.

Auburn Municipal Beach, also known as Lake Grove Park or The Outlet, is a park on the east side of Route 4 and an outlet from Lake Auburn. Historically, this is the only spot on Lake Auburn where swimming is allowed at the swimmer's own risk; however, swimming has been restricted occasionally due to water quality issues. The park offers picnic tables, gazebos, a playground, grills for cooking, a recreation station for games, a snack shack, and water activities such as canoes, kayaks, and paddle boats. This park is an important gathering place along the lake for the community during warmer months.

Section 60-4 of the zoning ordinance establishes a Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District to maintain safe and healthy environmental conditions, help prevent and control water pollution, protect spawning ground for local wildlife, control building sites, provide and enhance scenic resources, and protect and maintain the volume and quality of the potable water supply. This overlay limits allowable uses, requires erosion control, regulates private sewage disposal systems, and imposes building setback rules.

Taylor Pond

Taylor Pond is an approximately 625-acre central recreational body of water that is popular for boating, fishing, and connecting with nature. The pond naturally supports smallmouth bass, white perch, yellow perch, chain pickerel, and American eel. While there is limited public access to the pond, many surrounding properties have private access. The Taylor Pond Yacht Club offers access to the pond for its members as well as a range of activities and services. The Taylor Pond Association (TPA) is a community-based organization dedicated to preserving the pond's ecological health through regular water quality monitoring.

Section 60-4 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes a Taylor Pond Overlay District (TPO) to align land use and future development with the needs of the community and to help ensure the protection and health of Taylor Pond. This overlay district establishes use regulations as well as proper permitting and review systems to help ensure compliance.

The Basin

The Basin is a 107- acre body of water to the northwest of Lake Auburn. MDIFW regularly stocks the basin with brook trout to support the overall health of the Lake Auburn Watershed. Access is limited, and most fishing occurs at the North Auburn Road bridge and the surrounding banks. The Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) conducts comprehensive water testing and monitoring for lakes in Maine, including those in the Auburn area. Its reports cover various aspects of water quality, such as dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, total phosphorus, clarity, and overall lake health. In general, dissolved oxygen in the basin is supportive of aquatic life. The chlorophyll data suggests minimal algae growth and clear water, and total phosphorus levels are not excessive. Water clarity reflects clean clear water. Overall, these consistent water quality indicators suggest that The Basin maintains a healthy aquatic ecosystem with stable conditions supportive of both wildlife and recreational use.

Wetlands

Wetlands are located throughout Auburn and include habitats such as marshes, wooded swamps, bogs, sedge meadows, and vernal pools. Wetlands are identified by the presence of hydric soils, hydrophilic (i.e., water-loving) plants, and a high-water table for a portion of the year. Wetlands are important for cleansing water, providing flood control, protecting shorelines from erosion, maintaining stream flows, and supporting wildlife habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is the principal federal agency tasked with providing information on the extent and status of the nation's wetland and deepwater habitats as well as changes to these habitats over time. As part of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, FWS maps wetlands in the U.S., conducts decadal national wetlands status and trends studies, and reports its findings to Congress. The FWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map for Auburn identifies and classifies these wetland types, their characteristics, and extent.

Maine's wetlands are resources to communities, the state, and the nation. All three levels of government have a stake in their continued health and availability. Congress established federal regulatory power concerning wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In Maine, the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) established state regulatory authority over wetlands in 1988. Auburn established regulated buffers on lands within 75 feet from the normal high-water line of a great pond, river, or freshwater wetland. These regulations help protect water quality, prevent flooding and preserve wildlife habitats by controlling development and land use in sensitive areas.

Vernal pools are naturally occurring, temporary wetlands that are depressional freshwater bodies of water in glaciated landscapes. These usually occurs from winter to spring when the water table is seasonally high. They are of particular importance because they provide critical breeding habitat for several native amphibian species that, in turn, sustain other forms of woodland wildlife. As the summer heat dries up the pools, young frogs, salamanders, turtles, and fairy shrimp crawl onto nearby dry land to their fall and winter homes.

Vernal pools are protected under the NRPA, which prohibits development in the pool itself and limits development within 250 feet of the pool in a resource protection zone (known as the Critical Terrestrial

Habitat [CTH]); however, regulations do not protect the full suite of habitats that vernal pool wildlife use, including breeding, summering, and wintering habitats. Significant vernal pools must be identified on development plan reviews. It is likely that most vernal pools within Auburn have not been mapped yet. Urbanization and new development continue to threaten these areas.

Groundwater

Large aquifers exist under the land's surface in Auburn. Groundwater refers to water found underground in the spaces between rocks, like sand and gravel, and in the cracks that form large layers of solid rocks. Groundwater accumulates from rain and snowmelt that soaks into the ground, where it seeps through soil and other rock materials before collecting in an aquifer. The type of soil greatly impacts an aquifer's ability to recharge as does the development and creation of impervious surfaces. Specifically, the sand and gravel deposits beneath the City have created large volumes of groundwater. Groundwater and these aquifers recharge Lake Auburn and affect its water quality and availability. The Maine Geological Survey provides oversight and mapping of aquifers in Maine.

Floodplains

Floodplains are low, mostly flat areas adjacent to rivers, streams, ponds, and the ocean and are periodically covered by rising water during major periods of rain or snowmelt. The mapped 100-year floodplain has a 1% chance of being flooded during any year. The Auburn floodplain is mapped and regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Androscoggin River has a history of flooding, with significant events happening multiple times per decade. In 2023 storms caused severe flooding in Auburn, reaching near historic levels seen in 1936 and 1987 floods. Many of the City's lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands are prone to flooding with some more resilient than others, and snowmelt compounds these concerns with additional runoff. Auburn participates in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to help manage flood risks. Through this program, Auburn adopted and enforces floodplain management ordinances that define building standards for new and existing developments in high-risk flood zones. This allows residents to be eligible to purchase NFIP flood insurance and to receive disaster assistance for flood-related damage. Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) covering the City of Auburn were published and made effective July 8, 2013. Auburn adopted a floodplain management ordinance in 2013 that requires recognizing and evaluating flood hazards in all official actions relating to land use in floodplain areas with special flood hazards. This ordinance also establishes a flood hazard development permit system and review procedures for development activities in the designated flood hazard areas of the City. Section 60-892 of the Auburn Zoning Ordinance creates a Flood Plain Overlay District and establishes a flood hazard development permit system and review procedure for development activities in designated flood hazard areas.

Resilience

Auburn is committed to addressing climate change and being a resilient city that can adapt to, mitigate, and promote economic, social and environmental change. In line with these resiliency commitments,

the six-member Sustainability & Natural Resource Board (SNRB) was adopted into the municipal code in 2015. The purpose of the SNRB is to advance Auburn's commitment to sustainability by serving as a research, advisory and advocacy group on environmental issues and natural resource management within the city. The SNRB is created with the purpose of improving the relationship and communication between City Council, existing committees, and staff with the aim of creating more effective organization of the city's sustainability efforts. Working groups of the SNRB include the: Natural Products & Agriculture Working Group, Conservation Working Group, Community Forest Working Group, and the Sustainability Working Group.

Further setting their commitment, Auburn City Council passed a resolve to direct elected officials, staff, businesses, and its citizens to align with the Maine Climate Plan Action Goals when conducting its planning, purchasing, and operations in 2021. These Goals include the following:

- Reduce Maine's Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Avoid the impacts and Costs of Inaction
- Foster Economic Opportunity and Prosperity
- Advance Equity through Maine's Climate Response

In 2024, The SNRB refined their Community Resilience Partnership list of Community Actions that track the progress of over 70 implementable items. They are organized in the following categories; Accelerate the Transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs), Improve Mobility and Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), Advance Clean Energy Adoption, Transition to Clean Energy, Support Maine's Natural Resource Economy, Support Clean Energy Jobs and Businesses, Protect Natural and Working Lands and Waters, Plan for Community Resilience, Reduce Flood Risk, Strengthen Public Health, Assess Climate Vulnerability of Infrastructure, Utilize Climate-ready Standards, Designs and Practices to Improve Infrastructure, Increase Public Awareness of Climate Change Impacts and Opportunities to Take Action, and Engage the Business Community and Recognize Climate Leadership. This list promotes transparency and accountability for tangible actions in alignment with the sustainability goals of the community.

The SNRB hosted a Sustainability Initiatives Meeting in February 2025 that brought community members together to discuss current initiatives and identify priorities for the future. These initiatives were organized in Stations and summarized below:

Table 2.2: Sustainability Initiatives

Station	Completed/Current Projects & Practices	Future Priorities
Station 1: Tour of EL	- New Facilities position - EL geothermal system & energy credits - Hydro system & energy credits - NSBA rink floor replacement, "cube" system	- Brightly Energy Manager - Composting in Auburn schools

Station	Completed/Current Projects & Practices	Future Priorities
	- Full Plates/Full Potential grant - Composting pilot at Sherwood Heights	
Station 2: Public Works	- Salt Brine & Cirrus systems - New road cameras - Brightly Asset Management implementation - Pollinator garden - Apparel Impact - Solid waste, recycling, organic waste	- EV charging stations at Library, NSBA & PAL
Station 3: Public Services	- Proactive solar permitting ordinance - Tracking solar & heat pump permits - Ag/resource protection - Taylor Pond Overlay District - Lake Auburn Watershed	- Comprehensive Plan process - Littlefield Dam RFP/grant & hydropower relicensing - MECERP

Many of these initiatives are further described in SNRB's "Sustainable Auburn" Storymap from February 2025 that can be found on Auburn's website.

Water Quality

Land use, municipal operations, infrastructure, and individual users greatly impact water quality within a watershed. The Clean Water Act requires the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to identify state waters that fail to meet state and federal water quality standards. Currently, Auburn has two streams listed as "Not Supporting" under the latest approved 2024 EPA 303(d) list. This designation signifies that the stream does not meet water quality standards due to pollutants from various sources. The designation requires an in-depth evaluation and efforts to improve water quality. The Androscoggin River is an impaired stream under category 5 with causes listed as algae, dioxins, excess nutrients, oxygen depletion, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), and turbidity. No total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) have been established for the river. Due to the nature of PCBs, no TMDL can address the pollutant, and the concentration is expected to diminish over time. Gully Brook has also been listed on the 2024 303(d) list under category 5 due to oxygen depletion, pathogens, and impaired biota. Logan Brook is also listed as an urban impaired stream, which is identified as being impacted by pollutants from urban runoff, such as sediments, nutrients, and other contaminants. Urban development and industrial activities adjacent to the brook contribute to water quality issues.

As of March 2024, monitoring and investigation has been underway to manage stream impairments (MDEP) in the Androscoggin River. Completed in 2020, the Androscoggin River Watershed Comprehensive Plan outlines a strategy for improving water quality in the Androscoggin River and the broader watershed. Centered on restoration, conservation, public access, and sustainable energy, the plan serves as a blueprint for revitalizing and protecting aquatic habitats while supporting sustainable development.

In addition, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and the MDIFW created a Draft Fisheries Management Plan that outlines strategies for improving water quality, managing fish populations, and restoring habitats. There is a carry-in boat launch at Anniversary Park (formerly known as Little Andy Park) off Pulsifer Street that enables easy access to the Androscoggin River. Thompson Lake, a popular fishing and boating destination, is located within the Little Androscoggin River watershed.

The Maine DEP's Biological Monitoring Program assesses the health of rivers, streams, and wetlands by evaluating the composition of resident aquatic benthic macroinvertebrate and algal communities. The program also assesses the health of a waterbody based on the number and types of aquatic macroinvertebrates and algae living in it, which changes when waterbodies are polluted or disturbed. There are roughly two dozen Maine DEP Biological Monitoring Program Biomonitoring Sites in Auburn's boundaries. This data is used by a variety of stakeholders including scientists and researchers, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, educators and students, and public and community groups. The LAWPC and State Drinking Water Program utilize this information to detect early warning signs of ecosystem degradation before water chemistry shifts noticeably, allows prioritization of actions and management strategies in areas of high biological integrity, and allows measurement of water quality improvements where active management is taking place.

The Auburn Water and Sewerage District (AWSD) plays a central role in protecting and maintaining water quality for the City of Auburn, with a primary focus on safeguarding Lake Auburn, the city's public drinking water source. AWSD conducts regular water quality monitoring, including routine sampling for parameters such as turbidity, algae, nutrients, temperature, and bacteria, to ensure compliance with state and federal drinking water standards. The district also coordinates with the LAWPC to oversee watershed management, enforce land-use protections, and implement best practices aimed at preventing contamination from runoff, septic systems, and other nonpoint sources. By maintaining continuous data collection and collaborating with agencies like the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program and Maine DEP, AWSD ensures both regulatory compliance and the long-term sustainability of Auburn's drinking water supply.

Lewiston-Auburn Water Treatment Plant water quality treatment staff run a robust monitoring program on Lake Auburn, sampling the lake at six data sites multiple times each week.

Total phosphorus (TP) levels exceeding 25 µg/L may be indicative of elevated levels of pollution. Other metrics used to assess water quality in lakes and ponds include the Secchi Disk Transparency (SDT), which measures water clarity, and Chlorophyll-a, which estimates algal biomass. In Maine, SDT readings relate to the production of algae with the following guidelines: productive = 4 meters or less, moderately productive = 4 – 8 meters, unproductive = 8 meters or greater. Together, SDT, total phosphorus, and Chlorophyll-a data are used to determine whether a lake or pond's trophic state, the general status of nutrient availability, is changing.

Table 2.3: Water Quality in Lakes and Ponds

Water Body	Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)	Chlorophyll-a (µg/L)	Total Phosphorus (µg/L)	Water Clarity (SDT, m)
Lake Auburn**	9.4	0.60	8.6	8.3
Barker Mill Upper	7.8	1.8	10	4.8
Gulf Island Dam	7.2	3.0	15	4.2

Source: Lewiston-Auburn Water Treatment Plant

***2024 Lake Auburn Data provided is the average of 6 in-lake sampling sites sampled May through November. Chloraphyll A, and Dissolved Oxygen are sampled every meter and are shown as lake wide averages. Total Phosphorous is sampled as a surface core as well as a grab sample 1 meter off the bottom of Lake Auburn at all 6 in-Lake sampling sites.*

Auburn participates in the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit program. This program is designed to manage and reduce stormwater pollution. Auburn has developed a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) to comply with MS4 General Permit requirements. The program includes measures such as public education, pollution prevention, and construction site runoff control. Additionally, Auburn addresses stormwater management in its land use ordinance. Chapter 60 of the City's Zoning Ordinance regulations outline managing stormwater management to help prevent pollution and protect water quality, which include stormwater runoff control, erosion and sediment control, and pollution prevention. Compliance with the MS4 permit program also requires a comprehensive stormwater management plan.

Maine DEP's NPS Management Program Plan was issued in 2020. NPS pollution has a major impact on Maine's lakes, rivers, streams, and marine waters. Unlike pollution from point sources, such as industrial and wastewater treatment plants, NPS pollution comes from many diffuse sources. It is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground and picking up natural and human-made pollutants, such as fertilizer, road salt, sediment, oil, and bacteria along the way. Eventually, these contaminants end up in waterbodies, where they can threaten drinking water supplies, cause nuisance algal blooms, diminish recreational activities, and endanger aquatic habitats. The NPS Management Program Plan outlines goals and approaches for protecting and restoring water quality statewide and at the watershed level.

Nutrient Control

In the past, elevated phosphorus levels have been observed in Lake Auburn and Taylor Pond, driven in part by stormwater runoff and land development. These sources contribute excess nutrients to the lake, raising concerns about water quality and the potential for harmful algal blooms. In response, Section 60-1064 of the Auburn Zoning Ordinance establishes the Phosphorus Control Ordinance (PCO) to protect

against additional phosphorus export to Taylor Pond and Lake Auburn from new land uses and changes in existing land uses. It does this by ensuring development within the watershed does not generate more phosphorus than the water bodies can assimilate and by removing or reducing existing sources of phosphorus. This ordinance regulates land use within the Taylor Pond and Lake Auburn watersheds and establishes a review and permitting process. It requires a comprehensive erosion and sedimentation control plan be submitted to the City as part of the permitting process. Per the City Ordinance, activities should be conducted in accordance with BMPs recommended by the DEP, the Maine Soil and Waters Conservation Commission, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

Farming and other agricultural activities are also major contributors to excess nutrient inputs, particularly phosphorus, nitrogen, and potassium, into the surrounding environment. To mitigate these impacts within the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District, Section 60-952 of the City Zoning Ordinance has prohibited the spreading, storage, and disposal of manure and sludge. In addition, any manure must be stored on an impervious surface and covered to prevent nutrient runoff. Section 60-952 of the Zoning Ordinance also regulates fertilizer use within the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District, prohibiting fertilizers containing phosphorus unless a waiver is granted. All fertilizer applications are also banned within 100 feet of the ordinary high-water mark of lakes, ponds, streams, brooks, or wetlands listed in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI).

Shoreland Zoning

Section 60-4 of the City's Zoning Ordinance established a Shoreland Zoning Overlay (SLO) in 1971 to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and the local natural beauty; regulating development in shoreland areas for the protection of natural resources. Auburn's ordinance establishes a shoreland buffer zone 250 feet from the normal high-water line of any great pond or river, the upland edge of coastal and freshwater wetlands. Under Maine's Shoreland Zoning Act, updated statewide in 2019, and further revised by the City of Auburn in 2024 for the Lake Auburn watershed, a 75-foot vegetated buffer is required from the normal high-water line of certain streams—specifically those that outlet to a great pond or lie below the confluence of two perennial streams—helping to reduce erosion, filter pollutants, and protect water quality. Within these areas of the SLO, special permits are required for construction or expansion of structures, the alteration of vegetation, and earthmoving activities.

Geology and Soils

The Central Maine Region's geology is part of the broader geological history of Maine, which includes a mix of bedrock and surficial deposits. Auburn's bedrock is composed of metamorphic rocks such as schist, phyllite, and slate. These rocks formed through various geological processes, including sedimentation, volcanism, and mountain-building events over hundreds of millions of years. Throughout the City, there are exposed bedrock outcroppings formed by glacial and deglacial processes. These natural features add to the scenic character of Auburn, impact water flows, and constrain development. The area is covered with unconsolidated materials like sand, gravel, clay, and till. Most of Auburn's surface areas are deposits formed by glacial and deglacial processes during the last stage of continental

glaciation. The remaining surficial deposits are the products of postglacial processes, such as river floodplains and human activity (fill and earthwork). Land use decisions and environmental issues are related to surficial geology. Construction projects that involve activities such as locating new roads, excavating foundations, or siting new homes are affected by site geology.

Scenic Resources

Scenic resources help define community and celebrate significant landscape and historic features. They are attributes that contribute to community identity and make a place appealing to live and attract visitors. These resources include natural views and vistas as well as cultural assets identified by the State and the community as defining parts of the City's character. The natural beauty of the region is abundant, including many peaks and views of lakes, rivers, mountains, and forests. Auburn scenic resources of note include the Androscoggin River, Great Falls, the Riverwalk, Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond, the Little Androscoggin River, Lost Valley, Mount Apatite, and the Main Street Historic District. There are vistas and attractive landscapes, woodlands, bodies of water, open meadows, city parks and walkways throughout the city.

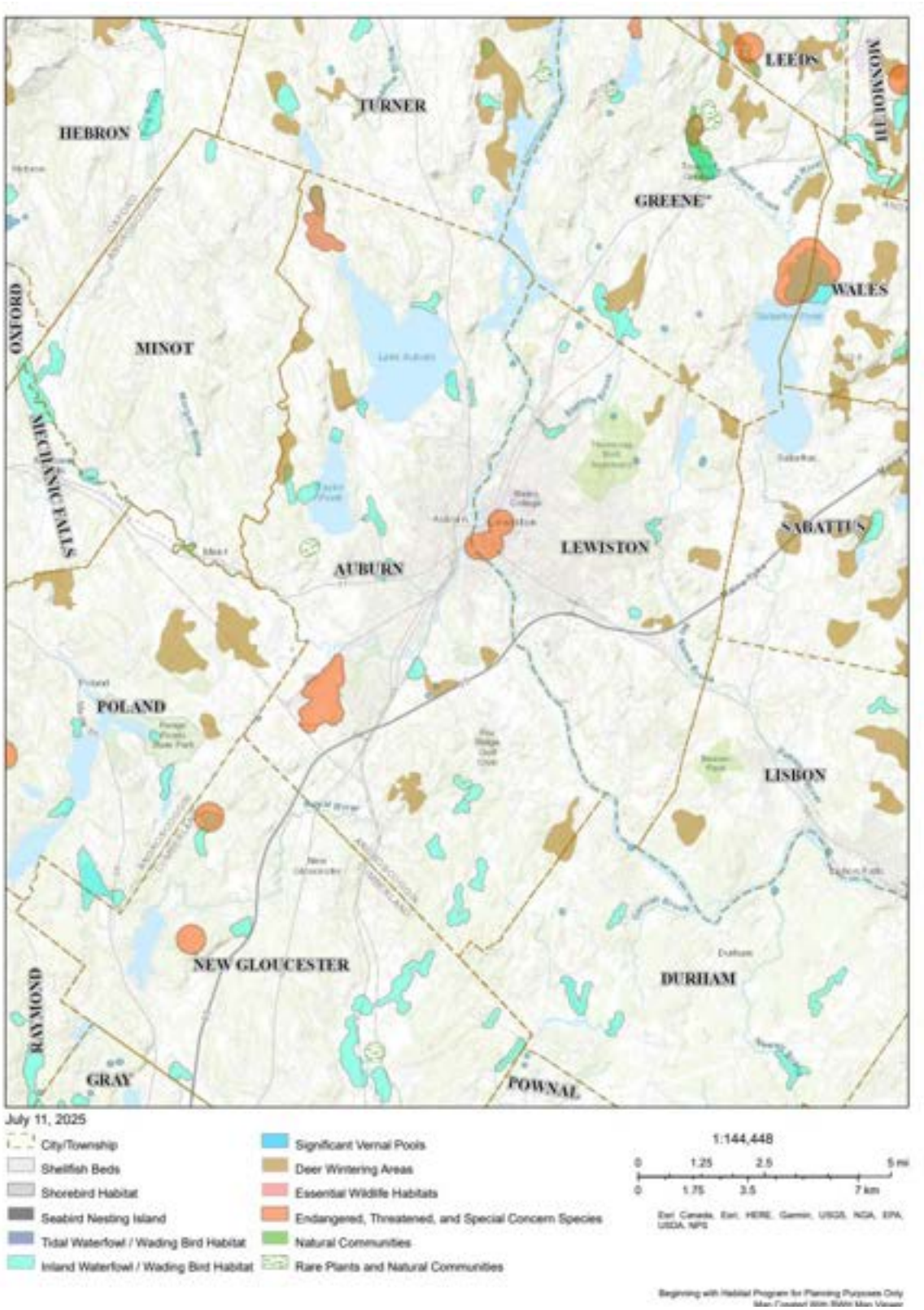
Critical Habitat

Despite significant development over the years, Auburn has an abundance of natural resources that feature a diverse range of habitats. The MDIFW established the Beginning with Habitat program to help municipalities, landowners, and land trusts build habitat conservation into their long-term plans. The program has identified a catalog of rare animals in the region. These include the peregrine falcon, scarlet bluet, upland sandpiper, and the wood turtle. The peregrine falcon is a state endangered rapid-flying bird of prey mostly found along cliff edges. Scarlet bluets are a rare species of damselfly and a state species of special concern; they are found in acidic, sandy ponds with floating vegetation, often with water lilies. The upland sandpiper is a rare grassland bird and is a state threatened species. The wood turtle is one of the state's rarest turtles and is listed as a species of special concern, found in both aquatic and terrestrial habitats and typically along slow-moving streams, rivers, and adjacent floodplains. In addition, inland waterfowl and wading bird habitats have been identified throughout Auburn, which are crucial for biodiversity, breeding and nesting, feeding grounds, and migration stopovers. Protecting these habitats helps maintain ecological balance and supports the overall health of the environment.

In addition to rare animals, MDIFW has also identified rare or exemplary plants—plants either threatened, endangered, or of special concern due to their limited distribution and ecological significance. In Auburn, these include broad beech fern, dry land sedge, small whorled pogonia, and swamp white oak. Broad beech ferns are a species of special concern found in rich, often rocky, hardwood forests. Dry land sedge is a species of special concern and can be found in dry, sterile, or sand soil, in open places in light shade. Small whorled pogonia is an endangered

plant found in mix-succession mixed forests. Swamp white oak is a threatened plant species found in bottomlands, stream margins, and swamps.

Figure 2.3: Rare Plant and Animal Communities

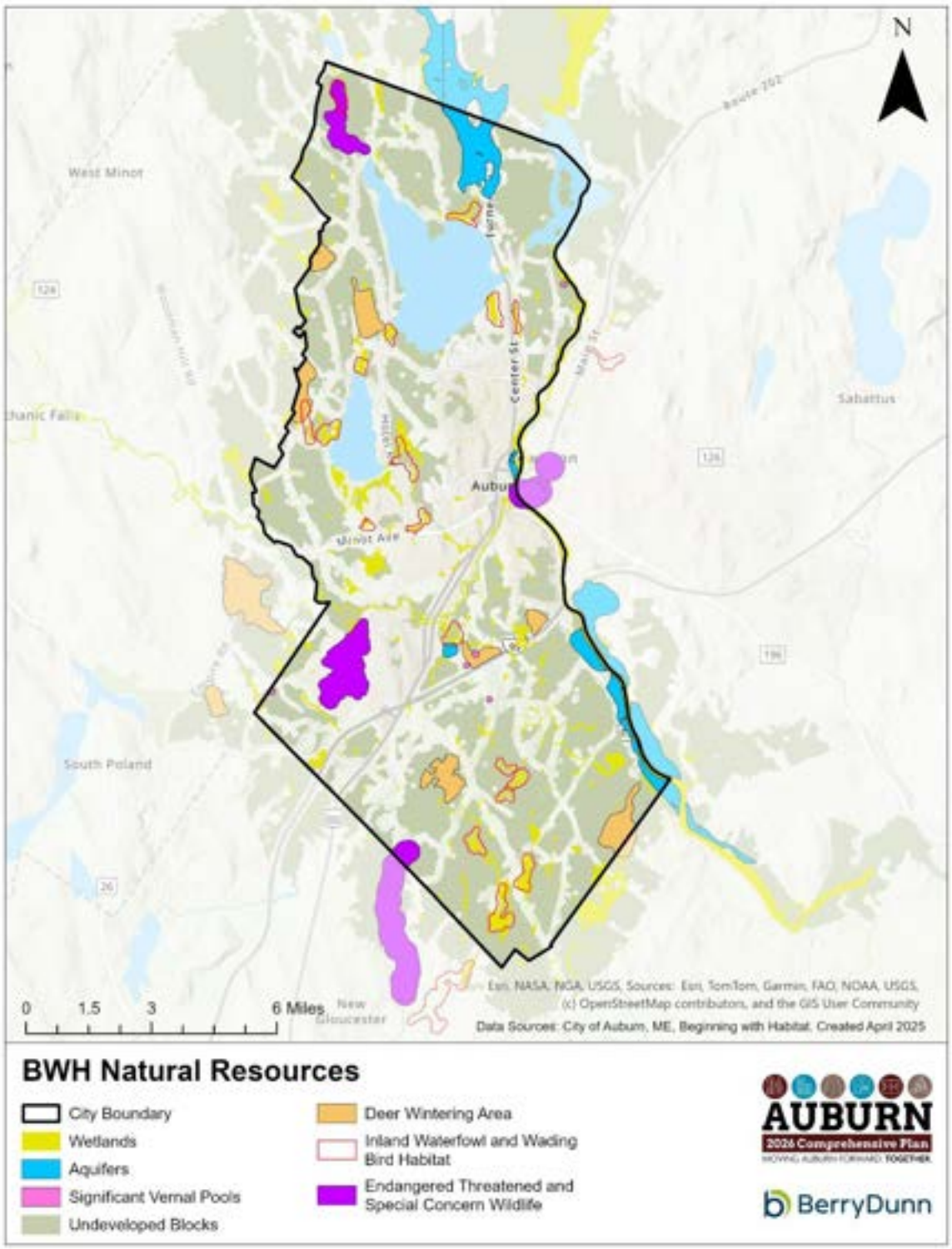


Auburn has approximately seven deer wintering areas, which are identified and protected by the MDIFW. These areas are crucial for deer survival during harsh winter conditions and are protected under Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act. In Auburn, any development or land use change within these designated areas are part of Auburn plan review and subdivision process, requiring special review and permits to help ensure habitats are preserved.

The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) is a division of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that plays a key role in identifying, protecting, and managing the state's most significant natural features. MNAP maintains a statewide inventory of rare plants, rare and exemplary natural communities, and critical wildlife habitats, serving as a centralized source of scientifically vetted ecological information.

Through tools like the Beginning with Habitat program and the Rare Plant and Natural Community Database, MNAP helps landowners, municipalities, and conservation planners understand where sensitive or high-value ecological resources are located. This information is essential for guiding land-use decisions, protecting endangered species, informing permitting processes, and supporting habitat conservation strategies. For watershed areas like Lake Auburn, MNAP data is often used to identify and avoid development impacts on wetlands, stream corridors, and rare or vulnerable plant and animal habitats.

Figure 2.4: Beginning With Habitat Map



Challenges and Opportunities

Shifting federal priorities and increasing budget constraints pose a growing risk to the stability of funding for natural resource management across the country. In recent years, fluctuations in appropriations for conservation, climate resilience, and water infrastructure programs have led to uncertainty for local governments and project partners. Competitive grant programs that support watershed restoration, habitat connectivity, and climate adaptation have seen delays, rescissions, or reduced availability due to changes in federal policy and economic conditions. For communities like Auburn that rely on a combination of federal, state, and local resources to support natural resource initiatives, this evolving funding landscape underscores the importance of strategic planning, diversified funding sources, and adaptive project design to ensure long-term success and resilience.

Following the industrial decline and closure of many of the City's mills in the 1950s and 1960s, the State and City invested significant resources toward improving water quality of the City's surface waters. Continuing to improve and maintain healthy water quality is critical for community health and well-being. In addition, broadly supporting a healthy environment is also important to the community to have access to outdoor recreation, protecting habitats and maintaining ecological balance, and preserving open space and natural features that contribute to the beauty of the City and attract people to the region.

With the need for more housing and desire for economic growth, development pressure will continue to be a potential challenge to protecting natural and water resources. Consideration should be given to where new development and infrastructure expansion will be directed. Reinvestment in the City's natural resources has been a success for Auburn in recent years, including expanding public access to the Androscoggin River and conserving land around Lake Auburn.

Sources

Androscoggin River Watershed Comprehensive Plan (2020)

Auburn Public Works Department

Auburn's Stormwater Management Program (SWMP)

Auburn Sustainability and Natural Resources Management Board

Auburn Zoning Ordinance

Clean Water Act

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission

Lakes Environmental Association (LEA)

Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Maine DEP 303(d) list

Maine DEP's Biological Monitoring Program

Maine DEP's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Program Plan

Maine DEP's Municipal Stream Crossing Grant Program

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW)

Maine Natural Areas Program

MDIFW Fisheries Management Plan

MDIFW Beginning with Habitat Program

MDIFW Deer Wintering Areas

Maine Department of Marine Resources

Maine Geological Survey

Maine Stormwater Management Design Manual

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

NFIP, Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS)

US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

FWS National Wetlands Inventory

FWS Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986

Lake Water Quality Monitoring Reports

Agriculture and Forestry

Introduction

Farms and forests are valuable assets that have environmental, economic, and social benefits. They provide habitats for wildlife, filter and absorb stormwater runoff, provide groundwater recharge, can help control flooding, and provide recreation opportunities and access to locally grown food.

Farms and farmland provide environmental, economic, and community benefits. Farmlands and wetlands are important areas for groundwater recharge, allowing water to move downward into the water table instead of running off into water bodies. Farmland also helps sequester carbon and provides important wildlife habitat.

In addition to environmental benefits, agriculture provides local economic benefits and can diversify the local economy while preserving rural areas. Farms support a variety of business types, including equipment sales and manufacturing, veterinary services, fuel suppliers, farm supply stores, mechanics, and local retailers. Agriculture has been an important part of Auburn's history, and the City continues to prioritize protection of its agricultural resources and farms.

Like agricultural lands, forests are vital to the City's environmental health. Healthy, managed forests provide wildlife habitat, clean air, and water; stabilize the soil; and absorb stormwater runoff. Forests also yield economic benefits, providing employment opportunities for foresters, loggers, lumber companies, mills, truckers, mechanics, manufacturers, and surveyors. Forests also provide recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat.

Historically, farming and forestry were important drivers of the state's economy. Both industries have seen a decline over the last century but are starting to see a resurgence across the state. The state has seen an increase in small- and large-scale farming operations, and the forestry industry has begun to invest in innovative approaches to benefit from forest resources. The state has created a forestry recovery initiative to support the industry in finding creative solutions and industries (e.g., biomass, mass timber, advanced manufacturing) to support forestry operations statewide. The City has looked to leverage this investment with its own Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay near the airport. Additionally, the City's Agriculture and Resource Protection (AGRP) zoning district helps to protect and encourage land to be used for farming, forestry, open space, and recreation purposes. This zone is unique to Auburn and provides significant protection for agriculture, forestry, recreation, and conservation uses and establishes a natural buffer around Auburn's more urban areas.

The City's AGRP zone has undergone changes since the 2010 comprehensive plan update. Work done by several City boards and committees, City staff, and City Council conducted a significant amount of work between 2017 and 2023 to understand community concerns and desires and work through a solution that balances perspectives across the community. Community members have expressed a variety of viewpoints related to the zone. Some desire a greater ability to develop in this zone while others want to limit development and see the land preserved as open space, farms, forests, and recreation areas.

Changes in 2023 attempted to balance these perspectives and create a solution that preserves the zone's intent and purpose, while eliminating the income requirement and tying residential uses to planned forestry, farming, recreation, or conservation uses.

The Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan, updated in 2024, outlines strategies to improve Maine's climate resilience. Several of these strategies and actions relate to the preservation of Maine's natural resources. Strategy E: Protect the Environment and Natural and Working Lands and Waters in Maine outlines seven goals related to natural resource protection. These include:

- Increasing the total acreage of conserved natural and working lands in the state to 30% by 2030
- Developing new incentives to increase forest carbon storage
- Increasing the amount of food consumed in Maine from state food producers to 30% by 2030
- Reducing food loss and waste by 50% by 2030
- Supporting farming, forestry, and fisheries industries in Maine in adapting to climate change
- Better monitor inland and coastal and marine ecosystems to increase resilience
- Reduce and capture methane emissions from Maine's waste sector

Auburn has an opportunity to continue to support its farm and forest sector to help meet Maine's climate action goals, establish policies that support active farms and forests, and help industries become more resilient. Additionally, climate change has exacerbated drought conditions in the West, which is likely to make agriculture in Maine more competitive and economically necessary. Adequate planning can position Auburn to take advantage of resources and investments and prepare for changes in the American farming landscape.

AgricultureState Agriculture Current Use Tax Program

The State of Maine has four current use programs that offer property owners a reduction in their property's assessed value. Properties used for farmland, open space, tree growth, and working waterfront are eligible to enroll in one of the four current land use programs. To qualify for the farmland program, property owners must use their land for farming, agriculture, or horticulture, and the parcel must contribute at least $2,000 in gross income from farming activities each year. In 2023, Auburn had 43 parcels totaling 1,471 acres enrolled in the farmland tax program. The total number of parcels and acres enrolled in the program have fluctuated over the past 10 years. For 2013 and 2023, enrollment in the program included the same number of parcels and similar total farmland acres (1,453 and 1,471, respectively). Over the past 10 years, program enrollment peaked in 2018 at 61 parcels, with more than 1,870 acres enrolled. This data does not include all active farms or agricultural lands in Auburn.

Table 3.1: Agriculture Current Land Use Program Data

Year	Number of Parcels	Farmland Acres	Total Farmland Valuation
2013	43	1,453	$501,670
2014	44	1,615	$553,790
2015	46	1,682	$570,115
2016	46	1,783	$610,926
2017	51	1,798	$615,810
2018	61	1,870	$645,277
2019	48	1,624	$563,398
2020	52	1,548	$538,698
2021	45	1,535	$564,205
2022	56	1,603	$551,176
2023	43	1,471	$507,299

Source: Maine Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Additional Agriculture Support

Outside of the State's current use tax programs, the Maine Department of Agriculture and Forestry (DACF) has several resources available to farmers, including technical assistance and open grant and loan programs that support various aspects of farming. Available grants through DACF are listed and described below:

- Farms for the Future Program – Provides selected farms with business planning assistance and investment support to improve viability and profitability of a farm.
- Agricultural Development Grant – Provides cost share grants to conduct Market Promotion, Market Research and Development, Value-Added Processing and New technology Demonstration projects.
- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund – Offers a loan for either 75% or 90% of the total cost of a project for capital improvements for the business. At a 5% interest rate, this program can help save money for agricultural enterprises making improvements.
- Agriculture, Food System, and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Fund – Strengthening Maine's agricultural, food, and forest products economy, and making strategic investments in infrastructure to add value to Maine's raw commodities.
- Dairy Improvement Fund – Open to Maine farms engaged in the commercial production of cow milk or cow milk products. Offers a loan for 75% or 90% of the total cost of a project to make

capital improvements that will maintain and enhance the viability the dairy farm and/or dairy enterprise.

- Farmers Drought Relief Program – Provides select farmers grant funding to build wells and water storage ponds.
- Land for Maine's Future – Protects nearly 10,000 acres of farmland and over 330,000 of working land for agricultural and timber use.
- Maine Healthy Soils Program – Equips farmers with resources to prepare soil for the changing climate and promote a resilient agricultural system from the foundational level.
- USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Funds market research and new technology for farmers of specialty crops.

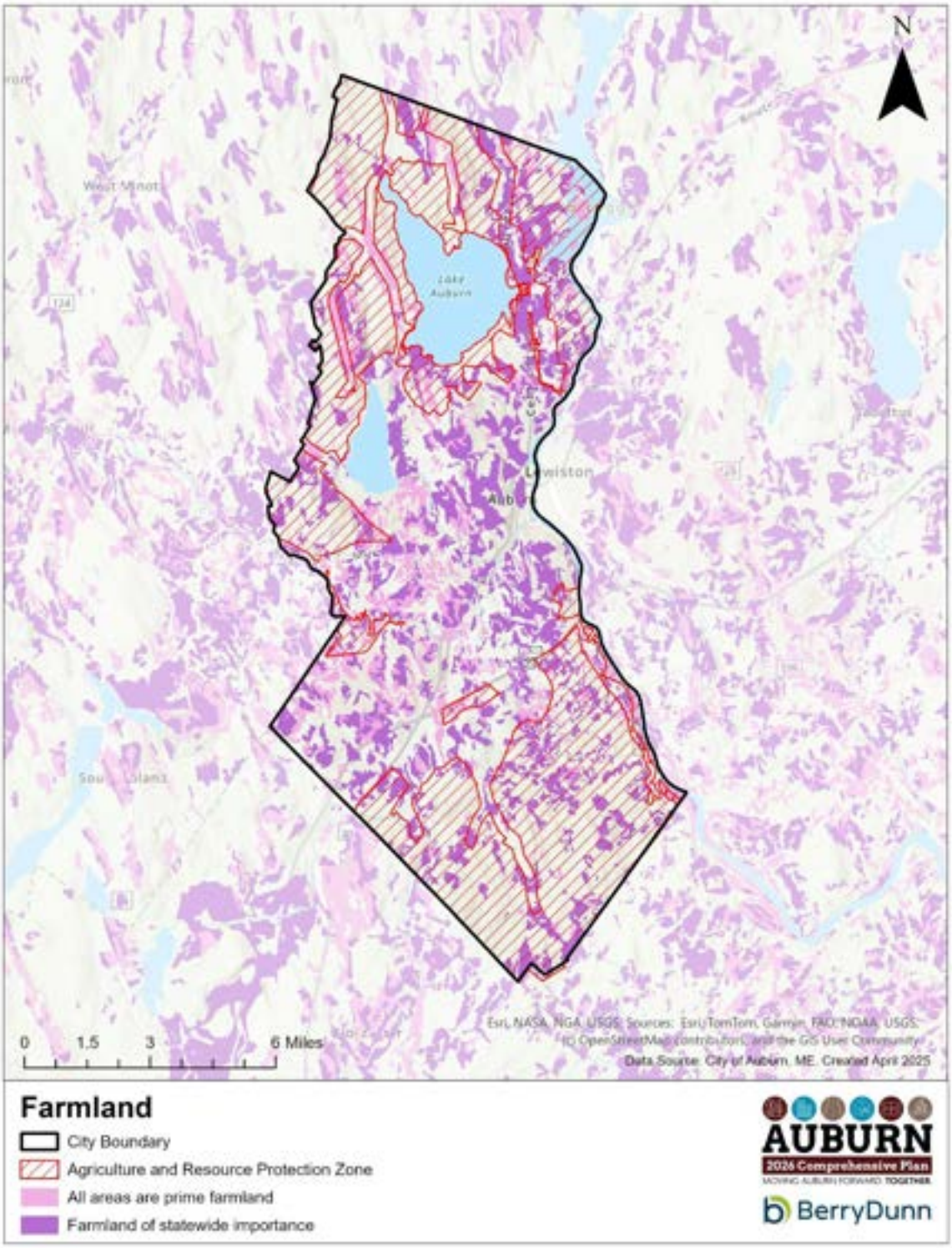
Federally, The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides additional loan and grant programs for farmers. These programs include farm loans, housing assistance, beginning farmer and rancher programs, livestock insurance, marketing improvement programs, specialty crop block grant programs, organic cost share programs, and farmers market promotion programs.

Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance

There is a significant amount of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance in Auburn. Prime farmland is defined as land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing agricultural products like wood, fiber, feed, or crops. Prime farmland—defined by the National Soil Survey Handbook—produces consistently high crop yields when managed and farmed properly. Land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other lands that are not intensely developed land or water. These areas are located mostly in the central and western half of Auburn, south of Lake Auburn, and west of the Little Androscoggin River and I-95. Additional concentrations of prime farmland are located west of Lake Auburn and South of I-95 near Pownal Road.

Auburn has a larger amount of farmland of statewide importance. These lands do not meet the standards for prime farmland but still have favorable physical and chemical characteristics for growing crops. In Auburn, these farmlands are mostly located throughout the City in between Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond, and the Androscoggin River, and South of Taylor Pond throughout the southern half of Auburn.

Figure 3.1: Farmland and Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone



Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone

The City adopted the Agriculture and Resource Protection (AGRP) Zone in 1964. According to the City's current zoning data in its GIS database, the AGRP covers 20,262 acres in Auburn in 2025. There are many parcels that are split between the AGRP and other zoning districts. The AGRP layer shows only the portion of lots included in the AGRP zoning district. Lake Auburn and Taylor Pond are excluded from this acreage; however, the Basin (the inlet to Lake Auburn) is included within the AGRP acreage calculation.

The purpose of this zone is to enable the conservation of natural resources and open space and encourage agriculture, forestry, and some recreation uses. These areas serve an important role in preserving the natural and scenic resources in these areas, promoting agriculture and forestry industries, and protecting the natural environment. The ordinance also outlines the need to protect rural and agricultural areas away from existing development centers from uncontrolled growth and development.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan recommended greater flexibility in the AGRP. The plan suggested an additional range of rural uses, including natural resource-based industries and agricultural buildings, should be allowed in the AGRP. The plan recommended that residential uses should continue to be limited to preserve these areas from development impacts. This included maintenance of existing zoning district boundaries and minimum lot size but encouraged additional flexibility in siting new structures and road frontage requirements. Notably, the plan suggested that the 50% income standard for new residential structures be changed to encourage new approaches and new economic realities in Auburn. Based on the desire to conserve additional natural resources and open space, the plan suggested creating two additional zones: the Resource Protection District and Conservation/Open Space District.

In 2017, the City launched the Agriculture Economic Study to further support and enhance Auburn's agriculture sector. An ad hoc committee worked with a consultant to develop recommendations for City Council. Most notably, these included the creation of a permanent committee in Auburn to advise City Council on policy development of agriculture, forestry, and resource protection initiatives and to eliminate the 50% income rule within the AGRP but supplement this requirement with an alternative that will support the long-term goals of the AGRP and agriculture industry. Other recommendations include additional incentives for investing in agriculture and improving infrastructure, reviewing the 10-acre minimum lot size, and reviewing residential strip depth in rural areas.

In 2017, the City also adopted a food sovereignty ordinance to help ensure residents are provided access to local food and to limit governmental regulation of the food system to spur local agriculture production. Producers, growers, and processors of local food or food products in Auburn are exempt from licensure and inspection requirements related to their provision or sale to consumers within the City's food system.

Updates were made to the zoning ordinance in 2023 to change the income requirements within the AGRP. The zoning changes in the AG Zone maintain the 10-acre minimum lot size, outlines building footprint and impervious surface maximums, and requires that new one-family dwellings provide a

farm, agricultural, recreational, or natural resource use business or land use plan that is feasible and is approved by the planning and permitting director. The ordinance does not include an income requirement for agriculture or forestry activities. Instead, it requires a business or land use plan to show how farm, forest, recreation, or conservation uses will be conducted on the property. The 2023 zoning changes were intended to preserve open space, agriculture and forested lands, and provide a buffer around the City's urban areas while still allowing for limited development in the zone without allowing for sprawl or dense development within the zone.

Since the 2023 updates to the AGRP, there have been four approved farm plans in the AGRP.

Table 3.2: Approved Projects in the AGRP Since 2023

Location	Approval Date	Use
Trapp Road	Approved 10/13/2023	Medicinal herbs, apothecary
Steele Road	Approved 7/09/25	Greenhouse, fruit trees and seedlings
Sophers Mill Road	Approved 1/30/25	Chestnut orchard
Pownal Road	Approved 4/14/25	Hayfield

Source: City of Auburn

In 2023, the City's Planning, Permitting, and Code Department conducted a survey titled "Growth, Conservation, and Agriculture and Resource Protection Survey." The purpose of this survey was to understand community sentiment surrounding agriculture and open space protection and thoughts on growth and development. Overall, the survey had 336 responses. Respondents indicated a strong desire to preserve open space, wetlands, and water and natural resources. Respondents value the City's unfragmented open space, existing farmland, community gardens, and recreation amenities. Additionally, most respondents found it very important or somewhat important to locate new development close to City services, available utilities, existing roads, and along emergency response routes. Respondents indicated that the City should concentrate growth in Central Auburn, both east and west of Washington Street and the downtown.

Farms in Auburn

Auburn is home to several farms, open spaces, and forests that provide food, economic, and ecological benefits to the community. A list of farms in Auburn was developed by Stanwood Gray as part of the community-led Save Auburn AGRP initiative in 2023. This list may not be exhaustive of all farms in Auburn today. There are also several leased pasture lands, open spaces, and hayfields in Auburn that are unnamed.

- Valley View Farm
- Few Acres Farm

- Legume Farm
- Bishop Tree Farm
- Gagnon Tree Farm
- W.I.S.H Farm
- Libro Farm
- Bruun Farm
- Pine Ridge Farm
- Capano Tree Farm
- Bosworth Farm
- Foss Pasture
- Bell Farms
- Gauthier Farms
- Foss Farms
- Bartlett Farms
- Tuckaway Farm
- Hunniwell Farm
- Libby Orchard
- Aghra Cappal LLC
- Walker Farm
- Roux Farm
- Field Farm Dairy
- Cyr Farm
- Clemmer Homestead
- Ferland Farm
- Huston Field
- DanMar Farm

- Coutures Creatures
- Mt. Apatite Farm
- Brayden's Vegetable Stand
- Farmer's Garden and Caron Farm
- Bliss Farm
- Apple Ridge Farms Orchard
- Naum's Christmas Trees
- Apple Ridge Farms
- Tardif Hay Field
- Gould Farm
- Ference Farm Hay Field
- Oakwood Equestrian Center
- Taylor Farm
- Stetson Road Community Gardens
- Keene Farms
- Lewis Dairy Farm
- Maloney Corn Field
- Daily Horse Farm
- Ewe Turn Farm

The USDA conducted an update to the 2017 Census of Agriculture in 2022. This Census is available at the county-level but provides insight into changes in the agriculture landscape over a five-year period. Overall, the number of farms in Androscoggin County declined by 22% between 2017 and 2022. There were 385 farms in the County in 2022. The total acreage of land in farms declined by 23% between 2017 and 2022. There were 42,899 acres in farms in 2022.

The market value of products sold per farm increased 25% between 2017 and 2022. It was estimated that $102,477 in goods per farm were sold in 2022. However, the total production expenses per farm averaged $102,686, which is a 37% increase from 2017. Net cash farm income was estimated to be around $7,887 per farm – a 45% decline between 2017 and 2022.

In 2022, there were an estimated 659 farmers and producers in Androscoggin County. Of these producers, 71 are under the age of 35, 289 are between 35 and 64 years old, and 299 are over 65 years old. 279 of these producers identify as new and beginning farmers.

The top crops in acres were forage (hay/haylage) at 10,008 acres, vegetables at 707 acres, corn for silage/greenchop at 441 acres, apples at 340 acres, and sweet corn at 226 acres. The livestock inventory estimates that there were 4,861 heads of cattle, 1,417 meat-type chickens, 659 hogs and pigs, 619 sheep and lambs, 365 turkeys, 320 horses and ponies, 221 goats, and 196 pullets.

Food Access

Select chapters from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan were updated in 2021. This update included a new chapter on food access and the agriculture economy. This chapter established goals, objectives, and strategies to enhance equity in accessing healthy food and grow the farm and agriculture economy in Auburn. Goals and objectives focused on support for farming and food operations, availability of transportation throughout Auburn to access food, zoning updates to further incentivize food operations and access, development of community gardens and farmers markets or farm stands, and removal of barriers to start farms or food operations.

The Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn (GFCLA), a member of the Maine Network of Community Food Council, was formed in 2012 to support collaborative planning and approaches to improving the local food system and food access. GFCLA—in coordination with Gather to Grow and other local partners—developed a Local Food Action Plan to outline priorities and responsible parties for implementing the plan's four goals and 15 actions. The four goals are as follows:

1. Strengthening access to local and culturally preferred foods with a focus on food stability while expanding growth opportunities for farm and food businesses, including farmers markets, community markets, and coordinated food pantries (strengthen).
2. Integrating local food, agriculture, and climate resilience into municipal and school activities, including community planning and economic development strategies (integrate).
3. Building local food and agriculture into the brand identity of Lewiston and Auburn (build).
4. Increasing equitable access, ownership, and preservation of land to grow food in Lewiston, Auburn, and surrounding communities (increase).

Table 3.2, below, outlines the actions associated with each goal. Actions are designed to help the community implement each big goal.

Table 3.2: Local Food Action Plan Goals and Actions

Related Goals	Action	Status
Strengthen, Build	Build a vibrant, sustainable Lewiston Farmers Market	In Progress

Related Goals	Action	Status
Strengthen, Build	Secure and develop a site for the LA Community Market, the first cooperatively run market and kitchen in Maine	In Progress
Strengthen	Foster Food Stability and access through coordinated emergency food response	Not Yet Started
Strengthen, Integrate	Increase local, cultural, and Halal foods in schools	Not Yet Started
Strengthen, Integrate	Increase scratch cooking in the schools	Not Yet Started
Increase, Strengthen	Ensure land security and justice for marginalized groups	In Progress
Increase, Strengthen	Protect Community Gardens for the future	In Progress
Integrate	Facilitate strong local food and agriculture municipal policy	In Progress
Strengthen, Integrate	Integrate garden and nutrition education in schools	Not Yet Started
Integrate	Foster municipal protection and support of local farms	Not Yet Started
Integrate	Advocate for comprehensive plans inclusive of food and agriculture	Not Yet Started
Integrate	Build a generation of farmers across cultures and communities	Not Yet Started
Integrate	Identify and advocate for municipal climate action priorities	Not Yet Started
Build	Celebrate agriculture, food cultures, and local food	In Progress
Build	Facilitate robust marketing and branding for local food businesses	Not Yet Started

Source: Local Foods Action Plan

Auburn used to have its own farmers market, but, over the past six years, the Auburn Farmers Market has ceased operations. The City of Lewiston now hosts the only farmers market between the two cities. The Lewiston Farmers Market is centrally located on 2 Oxford Street, just over the river in downtown Lewiston. Auburn residents can still access locally grown foods at this location. The Local Food Action Plan outlines an action to further strengthen the Lewiston Farmers Market.

The School-Based Food Hub is an initiative between the Auburn, Lewiston, and Lisbon school districts to connect school cafeterias with local farms. The goal of the Hub is to increase sourcing, processing, and integration of locally grown foods into school meals. This project is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture School Food System Innovation Grant. School departments have collaborated with Healthy Androscoggin, GFCLA, Gather to Grow , Cultivating Communities, and Blackie's Farm Fresh Produce to support the Hub's initiatives. GFCLA has also partnered with Five Pillars Butchery, who received a separate USDA grant, to increase Halal meals in Auburn schools. Five Pillars Butchery received

funding from the USDA Meat and Poultry Processor Expansion Program and state funding to construct a 5,400 sq. ft. facility in the summer of 2025. The new facility will have an operational capacity of nearly one million pounds of meat annually.

Auburn has three community gardens that are managed by Gather to Grow , the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Androscoggin Land Trust, a neighborhood resident, and a garden coordinator. There are seven additional gardens in Lewiston. Community members can apply for a plot to grow herbs, fruits and vegetables, and other flowers. Gardeners are expected to support the maintenance of the community gardens that they use, including trash pickup, caretaking of shared beds, and pest monitoring.

Community members are also able to access food at conventional grocery stores, like Hannaford. Blackie's Farm Fresh Produce in Auburn also provides access to low-cost, locally grown produce, meat, and other food products.

Forest Resources

Forests provide key habitats for plants and animals and are important to the overall health of watersheds. Auburn's forests are a mix of softwoods like hemlock and pine varieties, and hardwoods, including ash, maples varieties, beech, quaking aspen, and red oak. These resources provide economic and employment opportunities for the region.

Forest management and timber harvesting produces sawlogs, pulpwood, biomass and other products that support Maine's $8 billion forest products economy. Healthy forests provide a range of benefits, including protection of water quality, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and carbon sequestration. Woodlots provide a financial reserve for landowners willing to actively manage their woods, since Maine's markets for forest products are robust.

Tree Growth Current Tax Use Program

The Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DACF) regulates timber harvesting activities to minimize adverse impacts on forest resources, including improper harvesting leading to erosion, phosphorus pollution in lakes and streams, and increased runoff.

The Maine Tree Growth Tax Law helps landowners maintain their properties as productive woodlands through well-planned harvesting.

The State incentivizes the active management and utilization of land through the program. This program is similar to the Current Use Tax Program for agriculture. When enrolled in the program, landowners can receive favorable property tax assessment reductions. Landowners must have an approved forest management plan to participate, and forests can be managed to meet a variety of landowner goals, including recreation, wildlife habitat, and lake and fishery protection. The program requires some commercial harvest in line with the property's approved forest management plan.

In 2023, Auburn had 54 parcels enrolled in the Current Use Tax Program, totaling 2,742 acres. The total assessed value of land enrolled in the program in 2023 was $1,057,013. Over the last 10 years, the number of parcels and total acreage enrolled in the program increased.

Table 3.3: Tree Growth Current Land Use Program Data

Year	Number of Parcels	Softwood Acres	Hardwood Acres	Mixed Wood Acres	Total Acres	Total Land Value
2013	44	530	489	1,419	2,438	$786,100
2014	45	530	505	1,428	2,463	$786,581
2015	47	531	542	1,481	2,554	$793,078
2016	47	482	578	1,465	2,525	$1,009,912
2017	48	482	603	1,478	2,564	$1,062,910
2018	49	482	577	1,504	2,564	$1,102,413
2019	50	477	538	1,604	2,589	$1,108,491
2020	51	442	538	1,618	2,597	$1,130,578
2021	50	450	560	1,590	2,600	$1,050,742
2022	46	445	560	1,609	2,614	$1,044,884
2023	54	457	560	1,725	2,742	$1,057,013

Source: Maine Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Over the last 30 years, there have been fluctuations in the size, type, and quantity of harvests being carried out in Auburn; 2002 to 2011 saw the largest total harvests. The number of clearcut acres has declined since the 1990s, likely due to additional requirements and regulations for clearcutting land in Maine.

Forest operations and timber harvests are regulated by the Maine Forest Practices Act. Landowners are required to file a Forest Operations Notification (FON) with the Maine Forest Service and post the permit on site. The Maine Forest Service will respond if issues arise and are reported. Harvests require thoughtful planning to effectively meet the landowner's objectives. Forest Management Plans and Harvest Plans are typically written by foresters who must be licensed by the State.

Selection, shelterwood, or clearcut systems may be applied based on the existing site conditions, composition of the forest stand and the regeneration desired. For example, hemlock and maple require shade provided by a selection system to regenerate. Pine thrives under shelterwood which maintains partial shade to discourage white pine weevil. Birch, aspen, spruce and fir thrive in full sun after a clear cut. Each harvesting system provides a different wildlife habitat.

The timing of a harvest is planned depending on the specific site, soil conditions, and desired outcomes. For example, harvesting on frozen ground can reduce the impact on fragile sites and soils. Regenerating white pine requires creating an exposed mineral soil seedbed during a seed year that typically occurs every four to five years. With proper planning, drier upland sites may have harvests operate year-round.

Table 3.4: Confidential Year-End Landowner Report Data

Year	Selection	Shelter Wood	Land Use Change	Clearcut	Totals	# of Reports
1991 – 2001	3,322	489	198	171	4,180	147
2002 – 2011	5,466	333	240	10	6,049	179
2012 – 2021	4,237	696	373	75	5,381	164
Total	13,025	1,518	811	256	15,610	490

Source: Confidential Year-End Landowner Reports

Best Management Practices

The Maine Forest Service outlines best management practices (BMPs) for woodlot management. These are a combination of regulatory and voluntary measures designed to protect water quality during a timber harvest. BPMs allow loggers to select the most effective and efficient BMPs for use on a particular harvest. The Maine Forest Service conducts state-wide monitoring of BMPs on harvests to assess the use and effectiveness of regulatory and voluntary measures. The Forest Service prepared an updated edition of its BMPs for forestry to protect water quality in 2017.

Some of the BMPs related to water quality preservation include how to size and install bridges and culverts; planning, building, maintaining, and removing wetland crossings; planning and building logging truck routes; planning, building, maintaining, and removing log landings; trails and harvesting; and use of hazardous materials. The Maine Forest Service and Maine Department of Environmental Protection also provide education and enforcement of state-wide standards for timber harvesting in shoreland areas. These standards include limits on vegetative clearing in the shoreland, creation of buffer strips along in the shoreland, and replanting.

Community Forest Working Group

The Community Forest Working Group is a standing working group of the Auburn SNRB. The group develops and implements a program that promotes the socioeconomic, environmental, and aesthetic values of the Community Forest, which is defined as the sum of street trees, trees in public spaces like parks, and public woodlots owned by the City and the Auburn School Department. The group also maintains Auburn's Tree City USA certification. The group meets jointly with representatives from Lewiston to maintain the Lewiston-Auburn Community Forest Board (LACFB).

The LACFB Strategic Plan, developed in 2024, outlines goals and objectives to protect and preserve trees across both cities. Goals include maintaining Tree City USA designations, completing a street tree inventory, jointly managing forests along North Auburn Road, preparing for tree diseases, promoting equitable distribution of street trees across neighborhoods, advocating for City arborist positions, and improving public awareness of invasive species.

Public Woodlot and Street Tree Maintenance

Public Woodlot Management

In 2008, the City commissioned a forest management plan for its woodlots, which was completed in 2009. The Auburn Public Woodlots Forest Management Plan focused on creating an inventory of the City's forests to determine the volume and value of resources across seven woodlots. At the time, the City was interested in generating revenue to provide residents with home heating assistance. A program was started, but revenue came from street tree salvage products instead of public woodlot management.

In the decade following the plan, there was no harvesting activity on City-owned woodlots. In 2013, the School Department harvested the Edward Little High School woodlot and East Auburn School woodlot. Public reaction to these harvests prompted the City Council to impose a moratorium on harvesting, and a Public Woodlot Ordinance was drafted with input from the LAFCB.

In 2018, the LACFB identified the need to update the 2009 plan. This update was completed in 2019. Additions in the 2019 plan include an evaluation of threatened and endangered species by the Maine Natural Areas Program, recommendations on invasive plants, description of deed restrictions on parts of Mount Apatite Park, and a narrative on the use of woodlots for education. The updated plan also outlines services that the City could expect from a contracted consulting forester related to harvest plan development and harvest supervision.

Auburn has seven public woodlots: Mt. Apatite, Pettengill Park, South Main Street, Broad Street, Sherwood Heights School, East Auburn School, and Edward Little High School. At the time of the 2019 plan, the seven woodlots combined to total 552 acres, with 475 acres of productive forest land.

The City's primary goal is to conserve its woodlots for public use. Additional goals include forest health and productivity, maintaining wildlife habitat, maintaining green space, and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and education. The 2019 plan outlines objectives for each woodlot property to help meet these goals.

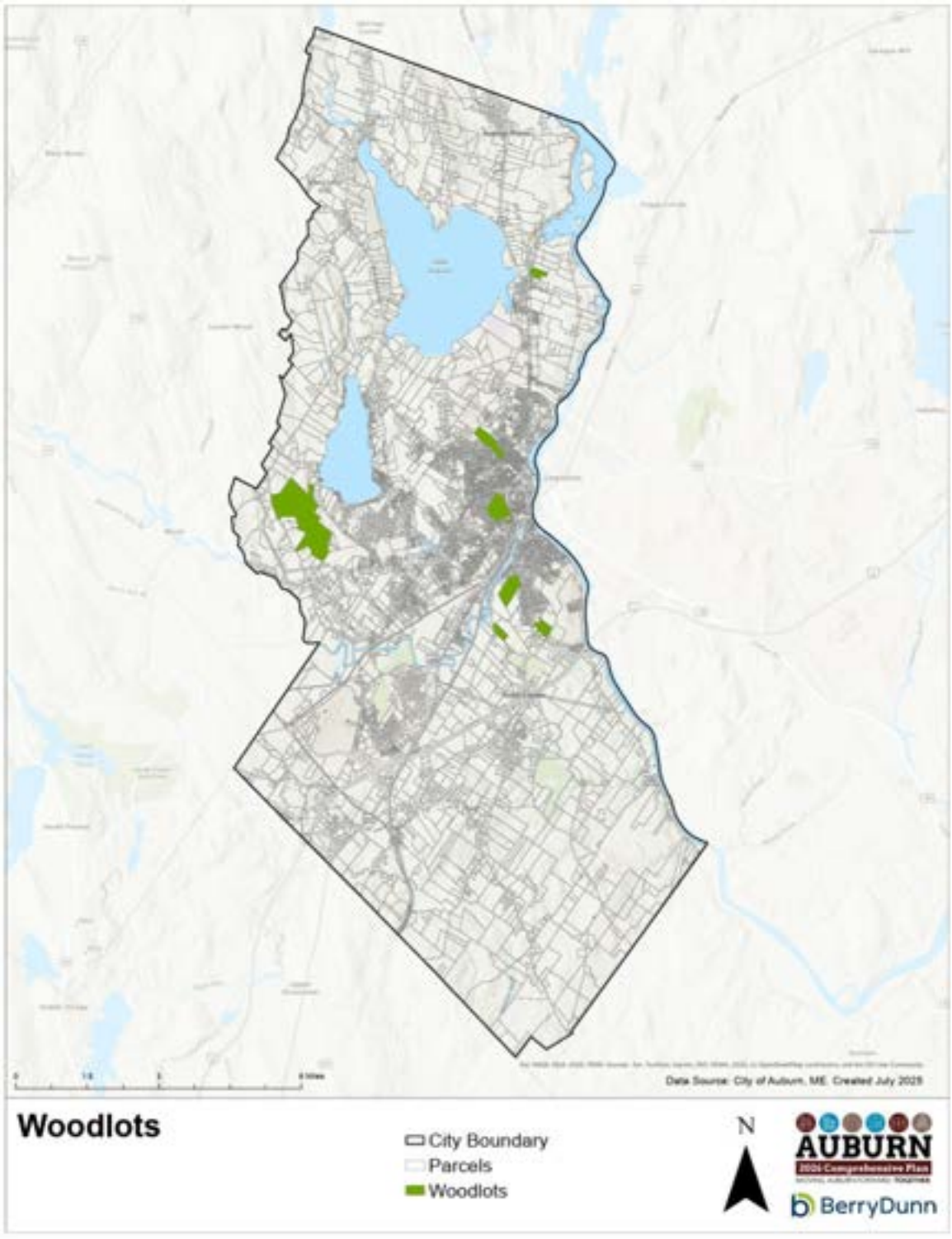
Auburn has seven public woodlots outlined in the 2019 Public Woodlot Management Plan, listed in Table 3.5, below:

Table 3.5: Auburn Public Woodlots

No.	Name	Map-Lot	# of acres
1	Edward Little High School	Map 240; Lot-322	31 Forested Acres
2	East Auburn School	Map 337; Lot-023	16.7 Forested Acres
3	Sherwood Heights School	Map 200; Lot-028	43 Forested Acres
4	Broad Street	Map 182; Lot 003	17 Forested Acres
5	South Main Street	Map 191; Lot 101	24 Acres
6	Pettengill Park	Map 250-095	21.4 Forested Acres
7	Mt. Apatite Park	Map 213; Lot 014	325 Acres

Source: Auburn 2019 Public Woodlot Management Plan

Figure 3.5: Public Woodlots



Street Tree Maintenance

The City's Vegetation Ordinance outlines provisions for the public works director or a designee to protect and support the management of public and private forests and street trees. This includes identifying tree disease on private properties, working with property owners to remove damaged or dangerous trees, and carrying out control measures to protect forest and community health. The ordinance also establishes requirements for the care, treatment, and removal of public (street) trees.

The ordinance outlines requirements for public woodlot management, including the development of a forest management plan to outline how public woodlots will be managed, harvest guidelines, and guidelines for cutting or altering shade trees. The public works director or a designee is also responsible for maintenance of street trees throughout Auburn. The ordinance includes requirements for maintenance and replacement of street trees. Each fiscal year, the municipal arborist shall propose to the city manager a budget sufficient for the city to purchase, plant and maintain the number of trees equal to the number of removed street trees from the previous fiscal year. Replacement trees may be placed at the sites of removed street trees, or at other locations which the municipal arborist deems appropriate in consultation with the Community Forest Working Group or any successor committee.

If the final budget adopted by City Council is insufficient to fund all replacement trees requested by the municipal arborist, the number of unfunded replacement trees shall be carried forward and added to the list of trees to be replaced in future years.

The City maintains a street tree inventory that tracks trees by condition, diameter, risk category, and needed maintenance. The City has catalogued 5,729 street trees. Currently, 4,720 trees are in good or fair condition, 821 are either in poor condition or dead, and 138 trees are either stumps or new planting areas.

The City also jointly manages a nursery at the Lake Auburn Community Center. The cities are currently in their seventh year of a 20-year lease on the nursery land.

Challenges and Opportunities

Auburn's current zoning regulations protect agricultural lands and many forested parcels that could be sold for intense development. Development pressure is the greatest threat to agriculture, open space, and forested lands. Within the AGRP, there is still opportunity for targeted agriculture, forestry, and recreation investment and development on parcels in these zones.

Outside of the AGRP, there is opportunity to encourage property owners to enroll in Maine's tax growth programs. These programs offer incentives to landowners and encourage the management and preservation of forests, farmlands, and open space. There is also additional opportunity to support small-scale agriculture, street tree planting, and other agriculture and forestry initiatives outside of the AGRP.

Climate change has increased weather variability and storm intensity. Auburn has experienced severe storms and flooding in recent years, as well as warmer overall temperatures. A significant portion of Auburn's land area is forested, and warming temperatures can create wildfire concerns. Warm

temperatures, droughts, and/or buildup of fuels can increase wildfire concerns. Homes, other buildings, and infrastructure within forested areas are at a higher risk for wildfire damage. Community wildfire protection plans, regional coordination, and local zoning updates can help prepare a community for potential wildfires. Incorporating trails into properties to serve as fuel breaks, updating landscaping requirements around structures, and encouraging agriculture lands around dense development can help reduce risks of wildfire.

Tree diseases and invasive species have also been impacting forests statewide. In Auburn, the Community Forest Working Group has identified emerald ash borer as an invasive species likely to impact Auburn's forests. Removal of dead ash trees is important to protect community and forest health. Preparing for removal and replacement of ash street trees can be costly, but dead trees pose safety risks to the community. Additionally, providing resources to property owners and encouraging the removal of infected trees will be important to protecting the City's overall forest canopy.

Sources

AG Zone Development Potential Dashboard

AGRP Zone History Summary

Auburn Community Gardens

Auburn Public Woodlots Forest Management Plan

Auburn Street Tree Sustainability Ordinance

Auburn Vegetation Ordinance

Community Forest Working Group

Current Land Use Tax Programs

Final Agriculture Committee Report to City Council (2018)

Food Sovereignty License Exemption

Good Food Council Lewiston-Auburn

Growth, Conservation, and Agriculture and Resource Protection Survey Results (2023)

LACFB Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028

Lewiston-Auburn Food Plan

Lewiston Farmers Market

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Grant Programs

Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

School-Based Food Hub

Street Tree Inventory

USDA Census of Agriculture

Land Use

Introduction

The City of Auburn spans 66 square miles, featuring a mix of rural landscapes, historic urban neighborhoods, and commercial/industrial areas. The City's development pattern has been influenced by a prominent agricultural economy, historic preservation, residential neighborhoods, and infrastructure capacity, including transportation, sewer, and water systems. Effective planning improves quality of life by protecting and enhancing important community characteristics noted elsewhere in this plan, like recreation, mobility, historic architecture, and economic growth.

This chapter analyzes historic development patterns, land use and development regulations, and land use considerations for accommodating future growth.

History of Development in Auburn

Auburn's early land use patterns were predominantly agricultural, with farms supplying grain and produce to the region. The integration of transportation infrastructure, notably the construction of a bridge to Lewiston in 1823 and the arrival of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad in 1848, facilitated Auburn's transition from an agrarian landscape to an industrial hub. The railroad originally went to Danville, and the cities of Lewiston and Auburn built a spur to the mills in Lewiston. Today, this is publicly owned by the Lewiston-Auburn Railroad Corporation.

The establishment of the City as a mill and factory location capitalized on the hydropower provided by falls on the Androscoggin and Little Androscoggin Rivers. These resources were pivotal in Auburn's and Lewiston’s development into a manufacturing center. By the mid-1800s, Auburn’s factories were producing shoes, cotton, textiles, carriages, bricks, and furniture, reflecting a shift in land use and the economy from agricultural to industrial. This transformation attracted a new workforce of primarily Irish and French-Canadian immigrants, leading to rapid urbanization and necessitating residential development to accommodate the growing population. Auburn’s factories and industrial downtown are closely tied to the shared success of mills in Lewiston. Today, both downtowns reflect historic factory- and mill-style development, which was supported by shared access to the Androscoggin River and the arrival of the railroad to support industry.

After incorporating as a town in 1842 and a city in 1869, Auburn's land use patterns continued to reflect industrial and residential expansion, with the shoe industry becoming the City's dominant economic driver. The geographical expansion, through annexing the town of Danville and land from surrounding towns, including Poland and Minot, reflected Auburn's growth ambition, making it one of Maine's largest municipalities by land area.

Post-World War II economic shifts led to the decline of Auburn's shoe manufacturing industry, prompting changes from an industrial base to more diversified residential and commercial sectors. This

period marked a re-evaluation of Auburn's urban planning and zoning policies, focusing on controlled growth and redevelopment strategies to revitalize the economy.

Both the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and 2021 chapter updates to the comprehensive plan reaffirm a central policy of land use planning in Auburn: development in the City should grow outward from the downtown areas and older, established neighborhoods. The Future Land Use Plan prioritizes development contiguous to the historic neighborhoods and districts while maintaining Auburn's rural charm by restricting sprawling "leapfrog" development, promoting efficient service delivery, and preserving natural landscapes. This strategic approach seeks to accommodate residential, commercial, and industrial needs while protecting the City's natural resources and historical identity, ensuring Auburn's land use patterns continue to support community growth and resilience.

Future Land Use Plan

The Maine Growth Management Act requires comprehensive plans to include a future land use plan, which should outline growth areas, transition or limited growth areas, and non-growth or rural areas.

The Growth Management Act defines growth areas as "an area that is designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for orderly residential, commercial or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development, and into which most development projected over 10 years is directed."

The Growth Management Act defines non-growth or rural areas as "a geographic area that is identified and designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted."

The Growth Management Act defines limited growth or transition areas as "an area that is designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial or industrial development but that is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area."

The City's Land Use Map includes the following areas in Growth Areas, including Downtown, New Auburn, Danville, and Stevens Mill. These Growth Areas are broad land use categories where the City intends most growth and development to occur over the next decade, encompassing both residential and non-residential projects.

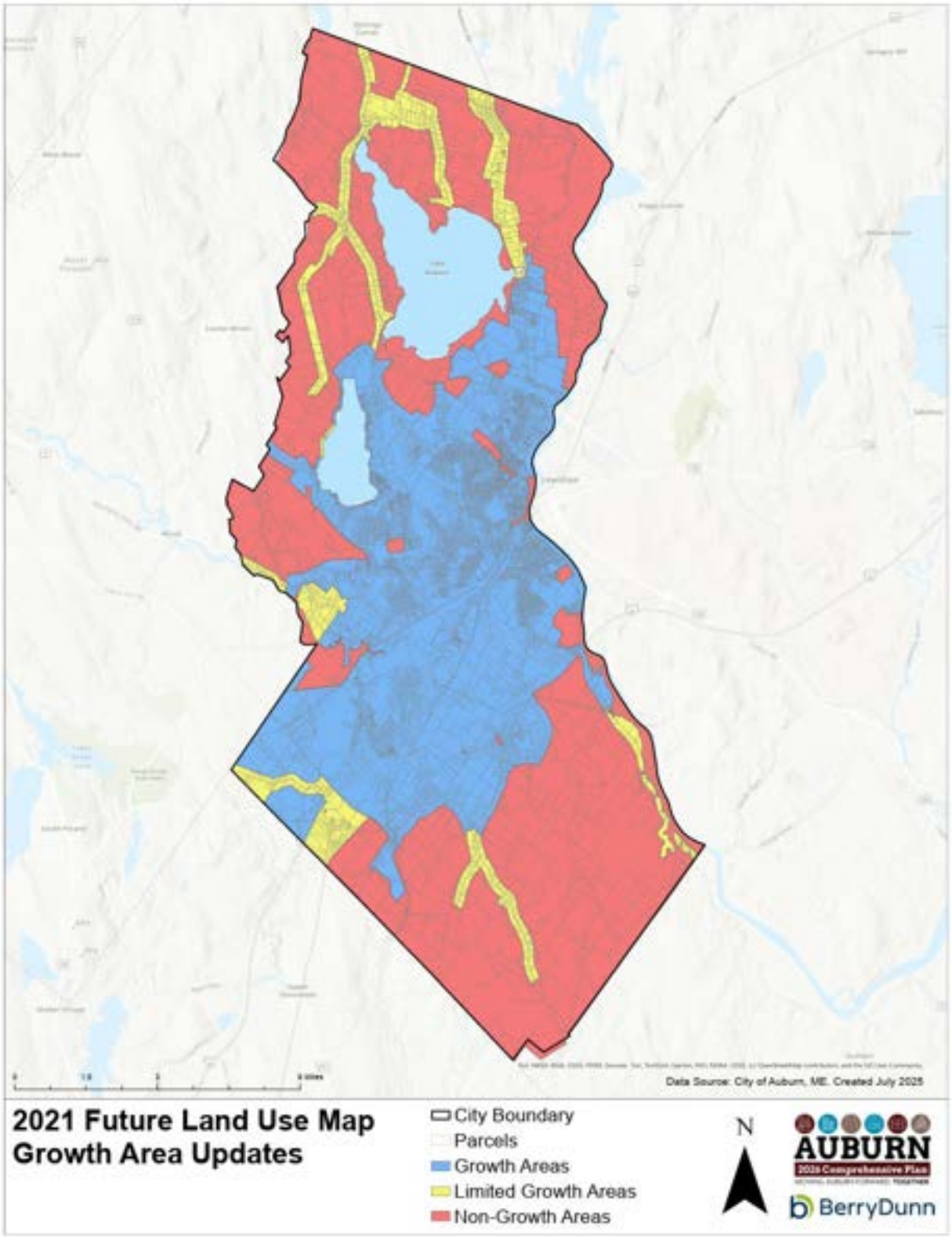
The City's Land Use Map includes Limited Growth Areas, which are primarily located along roadways like Turner Road and West Auburn Road. This category contains areas that are already developed or contain undeveloped land, where only a moderate amount of development is preferred.

Restricted or Non-Growth Areas, including agricultural and rural areas, are identified as unsuitable or undesirable for development, with the City aiming to minimize growth over the next ten years.

Though existing and future land use maps are not intended to substitute for zoning maps or zoning amendments, the 2010 comprehensive plan and 2021 updated chapters accompany the broad categories of Growth, Limited Growth, and Non-Growth with detailed zoning recommendations.

The 2021 updates to the future land use sections of the 2010 comprehensive plan amended the limits and substance of the three growth categories (growth, limited growth, and non-growth categories). The 2021 update expanded the Growth Areas, increasing land considered suitable for higher-density development in an effort to strategically accommodate population and economic demands, promote infill development, and utilize existing infrastructure in established neighborhoods. These growth categories are visualized in Figure 4.2, below.

Figure 4.2: Land Use Growth Categories



Zoning

Auburn's Zoning Ordinance highlights a community focused on balancing urban growth with conservation of farmland and rural areas, as indicated by 51% of the total land area in the Agriculture Resource Protection Zone (AGRP). This significant allocation underscores the City's commitment to preserving rural lands and maintaining ecological balance. Meanwhile, the Rural Residence (RR) classification accounts for just under 12% of the area, supporting low-density housing while ensuring rural areas can be maintained.

Industrial developments occupy 8% of the City's land area reflecting Auburn's modest industrial base, whereas the Low-Density Country Residential (LDCR) at 7% and Suburban Residence (SR) at 4% indicate an emphasis on low- to moderate-density residential suburban living. Business and commercial areas, including General Business (GB) and General Business II (GB II), comprise about 6% combined, revealing a balanced approach to commercial activity.

In 2016, Auburn adopted a form-based code, which now regulates development of 8% of the City's zoned land area. The form-based code illustrates Auburn's efforts to concentrate development within existing neighborhoods and urban areas, promoting walkable, mixed-use environments. The small allocations for higher-density urban residential and other metropolitan areas, such as Great Falls Metropolitan (T-6) (0.04%) and Downtown City Center (T-5.2) (0.06%), reflect planning efforts to accommodate future growth while prioritizing community cohesion within existing neighborhoods.

Table 4.1: Base Zoning Classification by Area (in Acres)

District Title	Classification	Short Title	Total Area	Percentage
Agriculture and Resource Protection	Resource	AGRP	20,262*	51.69%
Rural Residence	Residential	RR	4,692	11.97%
Industrial	Industrial	ID	3,357	8.56%
Form-Based Code			3,237	8.26%
Traditional Main Street Neighborhood	Residential/Commercial	T-4.1	6	0.02%
Traditional Neighborhood	Residential/Commercial	T-4.2B	2,548	6.50%
Traditional Downtown Neighborhood	Residential/Commercial	T-4.2	368	0.94%
Downtown Traditional Center	Residential/Commercial	T-5.1	274	0.70%
Downtown City Center	Residential/Commercial	T-5.2	24	0.06%
Great Falls Metropolitan	Residential/Commercial	T-6	18	0.04%

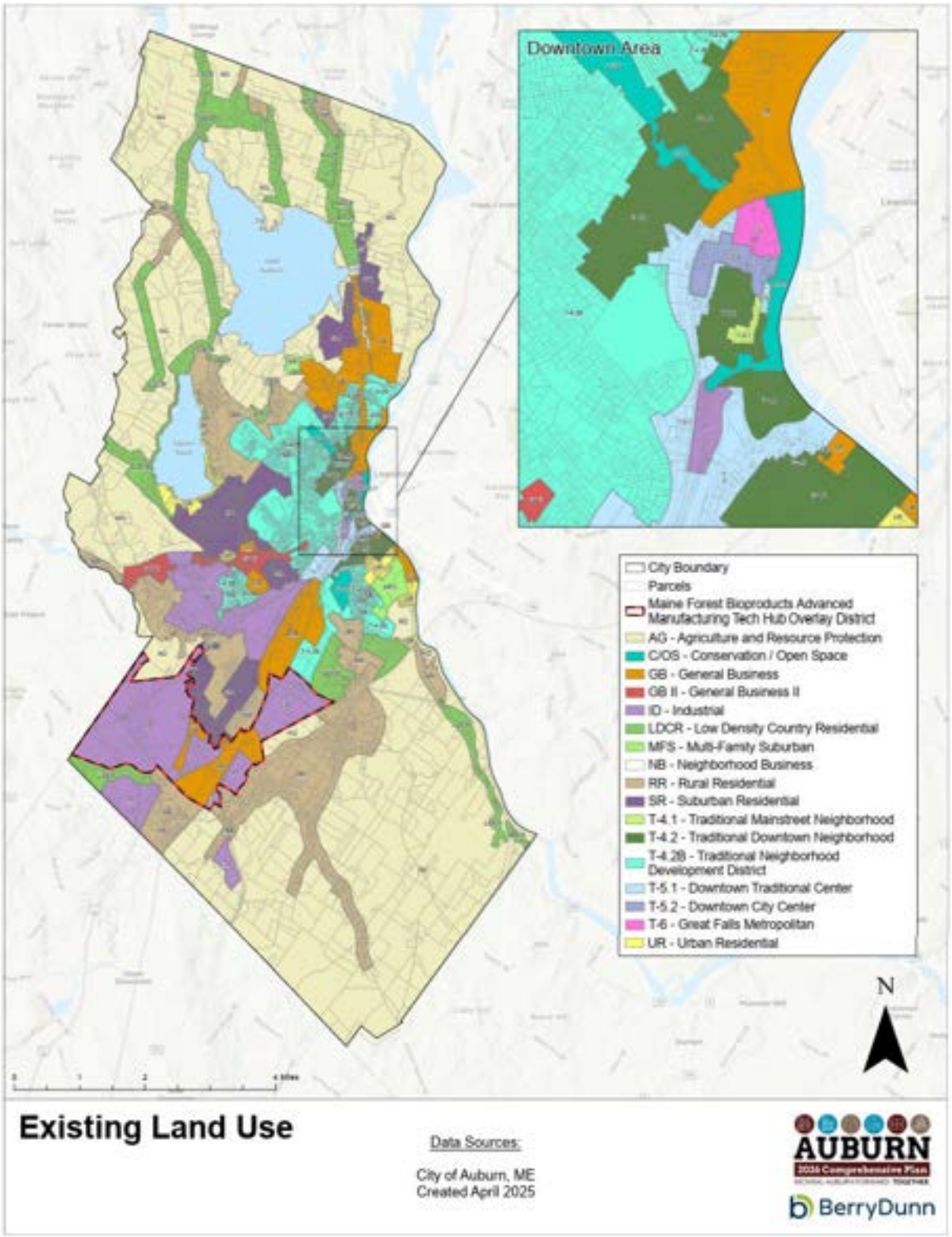
District Title	Classification	Short Title	Total Area	Percentage
Low-Density Country Residential	Resource/Residential	LDCR	2,778	7.09%
General Business	Commercial	GB	1,998	5.10%
Suburban Residence	Residential	SR	1,800	4.59%
Urban Residence	Residential	UR	359	0.92%
GB II	Commercial	GB II	318	0.81%
Multifamily Suburban	Residential	MFS	218	0.55%
Conservation / Open Space	Conservation	C/OS	173	0.44%
Neighborhood Business	Commercial	NB	4	0.01%
Total			39,195.80	100%

Source: City of Auburn

** According to the City's current zoning data in its GIS database, the AGRP covers 20,262 acres in Auburn in 2025. There are many parcels that are split between the AGRP and other zoning districts. The AGRP layer shows only the portion of lots included in the AGRP zoning district. Lake Auburn and Taylor Pond are excluded from this acreage; however, the Basin (the inlet to Lake Auburn) is included within the AGRP acreage calculation.*

Administration of Auburn's land use regulations are specified in the City's Code of Ordinances, with local review authority varying by type and scale of regulation. The Planning, Permitting and Code Division of the Public Services Department administers land use, building, housing, plumbing, and electrical codes and oversees the development and implementation of plans for various areas of the City. The Planning Board is responsible for reviewing zoning requests, reviewing site plans and subdivisions, and recommending land use policies to the City Council, while the Zoning Board of Appeals reviews appeals of staff decisions and applications for variances.

Figure 4.3: Auburn Existing Land Use



Residential Districts

Residential land uses are permitted in approximately 33% of Auburn's land area. Residential zones specify permitted housing types and dimensional requirements such as height, lot sizes, density, and setbacks in different areas of the City, and help to establish or reinforce a zone's physical design. Auburn's potential residential densities and building types vary widely by zone, including low-density zones such as the Low-Density Country Residential (LDCR) and Rural Residence (RR), with 3-acre and 1-acre lot minimums respectively, and denser zones such as the Urban Residence (UR), which permits single-family homes on 12,000 square foot lots, as well as allowing multifamily development. Intensity of permitted development generally aligns with the Growth Area, Limited Growth and Restricted, or Non-Growth Areas identified in the City's Future Land Use section of its adopted comprehensive plan.

Zones such as residential Planned Unit Development zones, form-based code areas, and mixed-use business zones allow for greater densities in Auburn's growth areas, as well.

There are four categories of Planned Unit Developments, none of them pre-emptively mapped, and each needing special use approval. The PUD-R and PUD-RR zones are residential, and the PUD-C and PUD-I are for commercial and industrial developments, respectively.

Auburn's six residential districts include:

- Rural Residence Low-Density Country Residential Suburban Residence Multi-family Suburban
- Urban Residence
- Manufactured Housing Overlay District
- Planned Unit Development (PUD-R and PUD-RR by special use approval)

Form-Based Code Districts

Auburn has six form-based code transects outlined in Division 15 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. Section 60-547 of the City's Zoning Ordinance defines transects as "a system of ordering human habitats in a range from the most natural to the most urban. Auburn's transects are organized using five form-based code districts."

Auburn's form-based code created building development guidance focused on physical form and its relationship to both public and private spaces, encouraging compatible and diverse land uses. The form-based code is primarily used in Auburn's more urban areas, where greater density and mix of uses are permitted.

Figure 4.4: Form-Based Code



Source: Illustrative view of Traditional Downtown Neighborhood T-4.2. From Auburn Zoning Ordinance.

Form-based code differs from Euclidean zoning (historically the basis for zoning codes throughout the United States, and the type of zoning that defines the other zones in Auburn) by emphasizing the physical form of development and its relationship to public spaces, rather than segregating areas of the City primarily by permitted uses.

Form-based codes focus on design elements such as building placement, streetscape, and architectural features to achieve a desired community aesthetic and functionality, promoting mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly areas. In contrast, Euclidean zoning emphasizes use types and dimensions, categorizing areas according to permitted activities such as residential, commercial, or industrial.

Auburn's form-based code includes some elements that are typically associated with Euclidian zoning, including setback requirements,

Auburn's form-based code has six transect areas:

- Traditional Main Street Neighborhood (Transect 4.1)
- Traditional Neighborhood (Transect 4.2B)
- Traditional Downtown Neighborhood (Transect 4.2)
- Downtown Traditional Center (Transect 5.1)

- Downtown City Center (Transect 5.2)
- Great Falls Metropolitan (Transect 6)

Section 60-553 of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) District. Regulations within this district are included within the form-based code section of the Zoning Ordinance. The C/OS District is reserved for natural resource and compatible open space uses such as agriculture and forestry, low-intensity recreation, facilities that provide water access, and similar low-impact uses. Uses involving significant development should not be allowed in this district. Today, this district applies to four parcels adjacent to the City's form-based code districts.

Commercial Districts

Commercial zoning districts—located along Union Street, Washington Street, Minot Avenue, and Center Street—are designed to allocate specific areas within Auburn that are suitable for a range of business activities, supporting economic growth and providing spaces for diverse commercial uses like retail and services. Though identified in the Code of Ordinances as business districts, they are mixed-use, each of them allowing residential development. The GB and GB II districts in particular allow for relatively high residential densities, making them important for Auburn's commercial areas and as areas that welcome concentrations of people. These zones differ in scale and range of uses to meet the anticipated needs of different mixed-use areas of the City and contribute to available services, amenities, and employment opportunities.

Auburn has three commercial districts and the potential for commercial Planned Unit Developments by special use approval:

- General Business (GB)
- General Business II (GBII)
- Neighborhood Business (NB)
- Planned Unit Development (PUD-C by special use approval)

Industrial Districts

Industrial zoning in Auburn supports economic development by accommodating manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution activities, which form an important element of the local and regional economy. Areas in the Industrial District include Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport, Kittyhawk Industrial Park, an industrial cluster off Exit 75 on I-95, a foreign trade zone, an intermodal facility, a UPS distribution center, and the former Cascade Building. The Exit 75 area alone contains more than four dozen businesses and more than 3,000 jobs in manufacturing transportation, and warehousing. The intermodal facility moves containers between rail and truck, capitalizing on Auburn's proximity to the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport, freight rail lines, and the Maine Turnpike. In recent years, the facility has moved approximately 15,000 containers annually through its 35-acre facility.

Auburn has one industrial zoning district and the potential for industrial Planned Unit Developments by special use approval:

- Industrial (ID)
- Planned Unit Development (PUD-I by special use approval)

Resource Protection Districts

Resource Protection Districts are areas for preserving and managing natural resources and open spaces. They include allowances for agriculture, forestry, recreation, and low-density residential development. Their explicit purpose includes limiting sprawling development patterns by restricting growth in these areas. Both resource protection zones permit limited residential development, but the AGRP district emphasizes that residential uses are secondary in their emphasis to agriculture, forestry, recreation, or natural resource uses and include restrictions on expanding infrastructure for new residential development as a way to balance the priorities of the zone.

Auburn has two resource protection zoning districts:

- AGRP District
- Low Density Country Residential (LDCR)

Overlay Districts

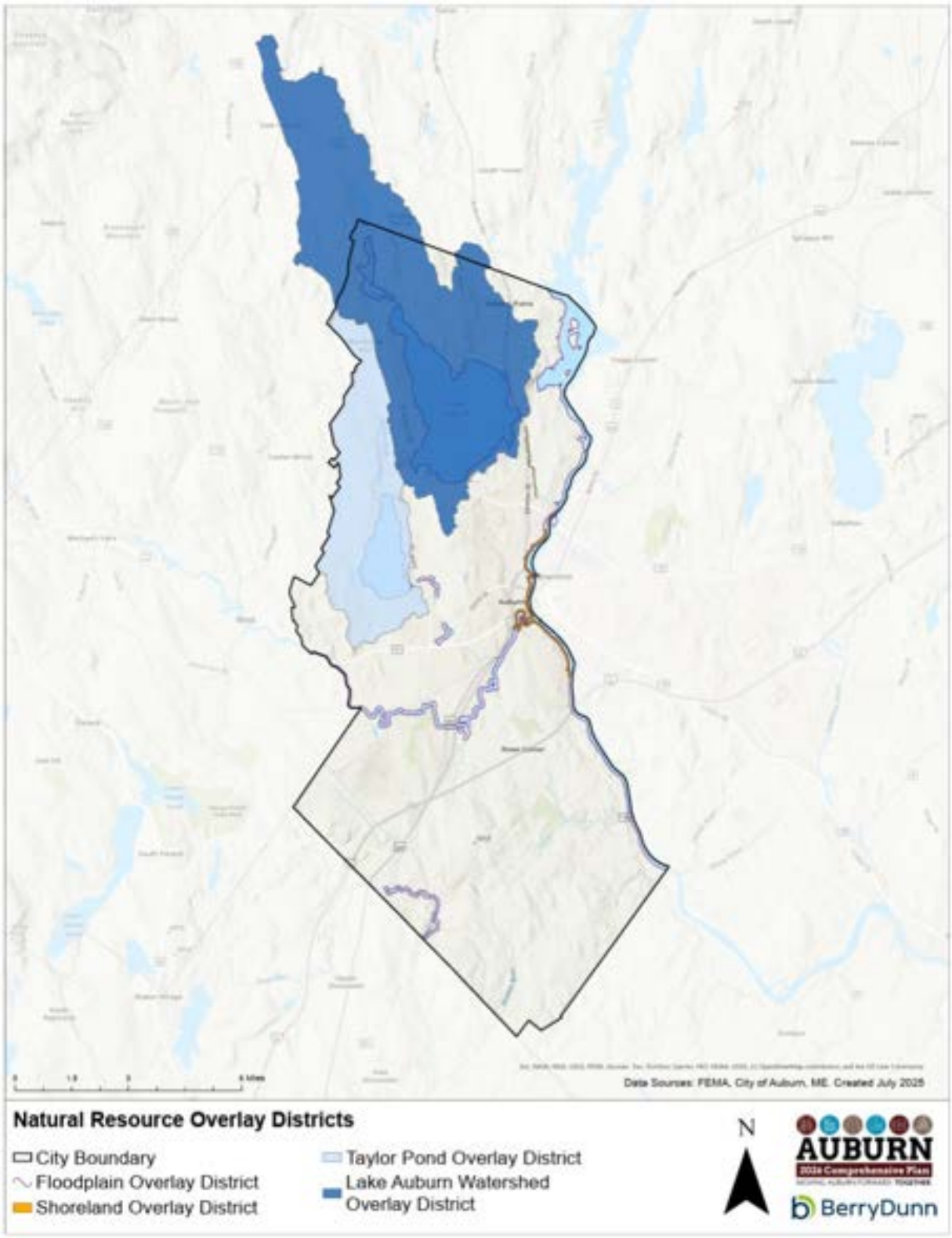
Auburn has several overlay zones designed to protect critical natural resources either through restricting new development or by creating additional standards for uses and construction to minimize impacts. These overlays include:

- **The Floodplain Overlay District** regulates areas of the City subject to periodic flooding. Auburn is a participating community in the National Floodplain Insurance Program and complies with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968.
- **The Taylor Pond Overlay District** addresses historic and current land uses around Taylor Pond to mitigate pollution and logistical challenges by requiring new construction to connect to the City's sewer system and ensuring public investment in the protection of the pond.
- **The Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District** preserves environmental health, helps prevent water pollution, safeguards wildlife habitats, regulates building sites, and maintains the quality and availability of potable water for the Auburn-Lewiston area.
- **The Shoreland Overlay (SLO) District** complies with Maine's Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (MSZA), which regulates development within 250 feet of certain ponds, rivers, streams, coastal and inland wetlands, and areas affected by tidal action. In Auburn, the areas abutting the Androscoggin River and parts of Little Androscoggin River are within the overlay. The SLO was most recently amended in 2021 to comply with changes to Maine DEP regulations. In Auburn,

the goals of SLO are to protect critical natural habitats, historic and archaeological resources, buildings and land subject to flooding and erosion, as well as to protect inland waters. The SLO allows Auburn to respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas.

Figure 4.4, below, shows the Floodplain Overlay District, Taylor Pond Overlay District, Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District, and Shoreland Overlay District.

Figure 4.4: Natural Resource Overlay Districts

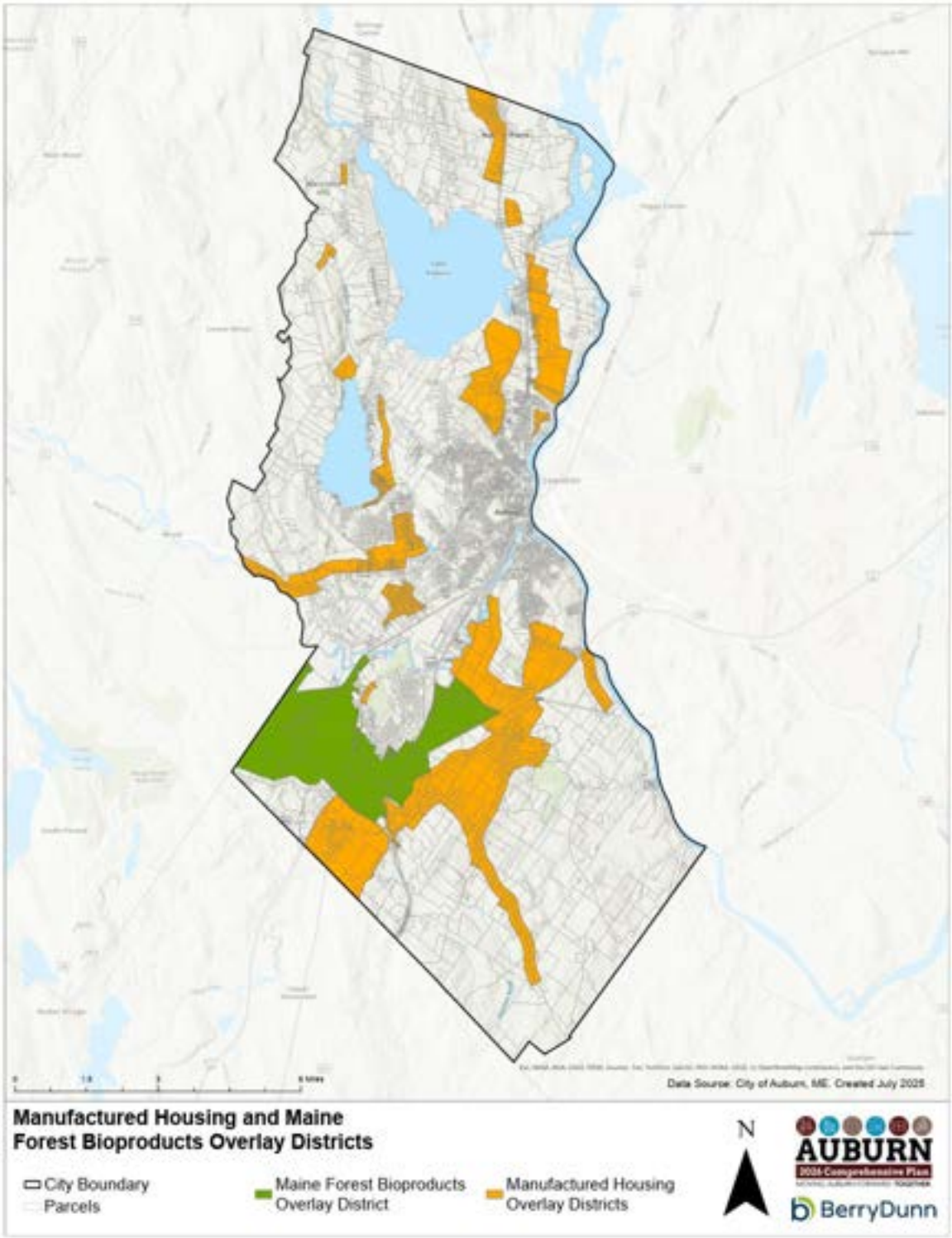


Auburn has two additional overlay districts that address key building products and development intentions.

- **Manufactured Housing Overlay (MHO) District** includes standards for the placement of new manufactured housing, standards for the location of older mobile homes and trailers, and design standards. The MHO establishes minimum standards for the placement of manufactured housing in accordance with the provisions of Maine Statute 30-A M.R.S.A. § 4358, Regulation of Manufactured Housing, to restrict the location of older mobile homes and trailers, to require that manufactured housing be aesthetically compatible in terms of design standards with site-built homes, and to provide alternatives for the location of affordable and safe housing within the City. Manufactured housing, as one source of affordable housing, is required to be permitted where single-family dwellings are allowed, per Maine Revised Statutes Title 30-A, §4358.
- **The Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District** was adopted in 2024 to support the manufacturing of goods from Maine-derived forest, agricultural, or other natural resource-derived products. This overlay includes the airport, which has restricted use, building heights, and other requirements due to FAA regulations.

Figure 4.5, below, shows the MHO District and Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District.

Figure 4.5: MHO and Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay Districts



Revisions to Land Use Ordinances

Between 2020 and 2025, Auburn experienced a series of significant zoning changes addressing the evolution of energy, residential, and urban planning needs. In 2020, the City amended its ordinances to permit small-scale solar energy systems in the Industrial and Agricultural and Resource Protection Districts, reflecting a growing emphasis on sustainable energy solutions. In 2021, the City made key changes to promote mixed-use development and diversity in housing options by expanding the T-4.2 Traditional Downtown Form-Based District to encompass more of New Auburn, adding two-family dwellings as a permitted use in the Low-Density Country Residential District, and reducing off-street parking requirements for residential and non-residential uses to encourage higher-density living and public transportation.

Auburn further refined its development framework in 2022 by transitioning approximately 240 acres along Washington Street and Minot Avenue from General Business to Form-Based Code Downtown Traditional Center T-5.1, with the intention of encouraging new businesses along those corridors. Additionally, portions of land previously in the AGRP District were reclassified into the Suburban Residential District to accommodate growing housing demands. Continuing into 2023, the City increased allowable lot coverage from 30% to 60% in some districts, revised minimum dwelling size regulations to foster more accessible housing solutions, and rezoned substantial rural areas to LDCR zones to manage suburban sprawl.

Updates to shoreland zoning implemented in 2021 helped advance several environmental protection goals of the previous comprehensive plan, including identification of unfragmented habitat blocks and wildlife corridors.

In 2024 and 2025, Auburn made several substantive zoning updates in response to LD 2003. Passed in April 2022 and effective July 2022, LD 2003 addressed housing needs in Maine by requiring municipalities to update local regulations to meet new standards for expanding residential development opportunities.[4] LD 2003 required minimum density allowances, including permitting for units on vacant lots in growth areas, allowing at least one accessory dwelling unit on lots with existing homes, lowering parking minimums, and offering density bonuses of 2.5 times the maximum density in designated growth areas for developments meeting affordability criteria. Auburn established an LD 2003 Ad Hoc Committee to address the inconsistencies between Auburn's Code of Ordinances and LD 2003 requirements and to recommend ordinance text amendments, which the City Council ultimately adopted in 2024.

The City's zoning amendments over the past five years reaffirm the City's commitment to addressing the state's residential requirements and local housing demand while balancing agricultural, ecological, and community needs.

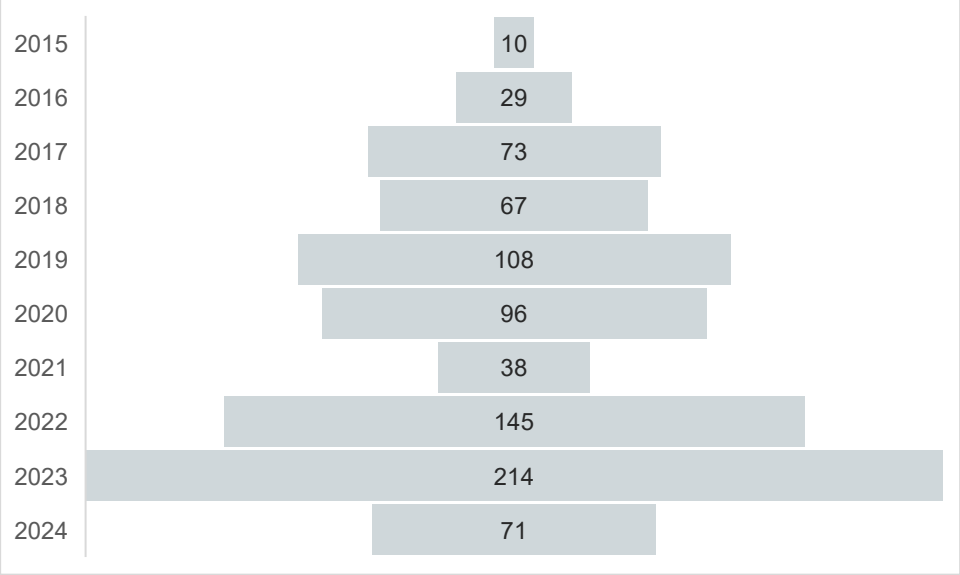
[4] Housing Legislation LD 2003 - Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission

Existing Land Use

Development in Auburn is most heavily concentrated in the downtown, New Auburn, the Stevens Mill neighborhood, and along key transportation corridors like Center Street and Minot Avenue. Through its recent amendments, form-based code, and resource protection measures, Auburn has provided a framework to respond to new growth in a manner that respects ecologically sensitive land, maintains areas of unique rural feel, supports a diverse economic base, and fosters vibrant, walkable neighborhoods rich with culture and historic context in its Growth Area.

Development approvals over the last ten years have resulted in 851 new dwelling units permitted, or a net of 695 new dwelling units when accounting for removal of existing residences in the same period. The number of permits issued annually is highly variable, reflecting a variety of factors and market conditions, including a brief but steep drop in permits in 2021, when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was strongly felt, and a noteworthy surge in permits issued in 2022 and 2023.

Figure 4.4: New Residential Units Permitted 2015-2024



Source: City of Auburn

Total permits for all categories of activity issued over the prior decade reveal a highly active period, not just for new construction, but for renovations, maintenance, and additions.

Figure 4.5: Ten-Year Permitting Totals (2015 – 2024)

Ten-Year Permitting Totals	
Commercial Building	1,259
Residential Building	1,872
Electrical	5,572

Ten-Year Permitting Totals	
Plumbing	1,824
Total Permits Issued	11,624

Source: City of Auburn

Specific examples of recent development approvals include a diverse range of development types, from two pending solar projects to several notable recent residential developments. These include multi-family buildings such as the recent Stetson Road Multi-Family development of 56 new buildings (22 duplexes and 34 quadplexes) in the GB Zone; 44 new single family homes as part of the Danville Corner Housing Development, also in GB; 24 units in four six-plexes on Minot Avenue, in GBII, and duplexes at Broad Street Farms and Riverside Drive.

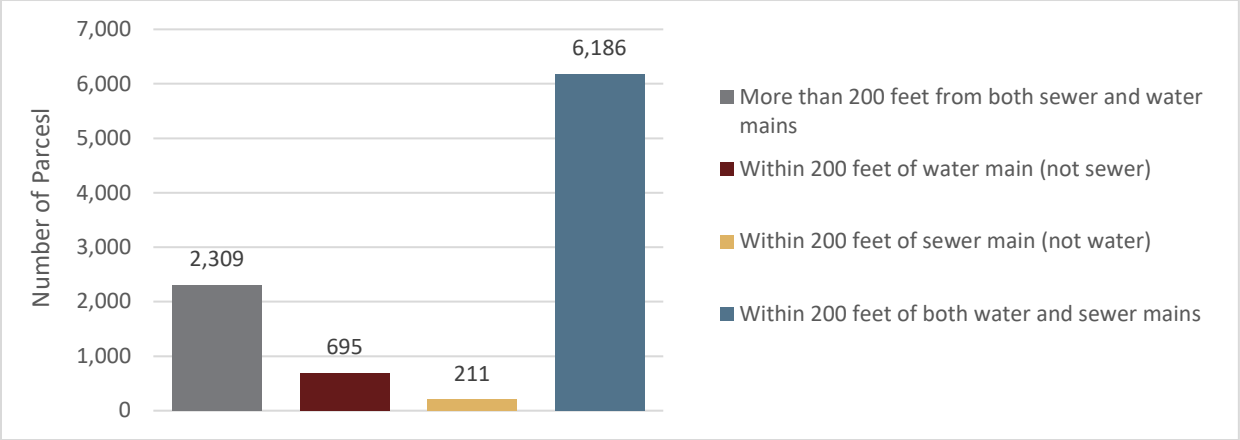
Challenges and Opportunities

The proactive planning for Auburn's future since the adoption of the last comprehensive plan— such as adopting code changes, beginning implementation of the New Auburn Master Plan, and corridor improvements to support growth—poise Auburn to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decade. Auburn's expected population growth can be a benefit for its neighborhoods, its local businesses, and the vibrancy of the local community, but new growth also brings challenges and impacts that can be anticipated and planned for now.

Future development in Auburn faces several challenges. Balancing commercial, industrial, or residential growth with the conservation of rural landscapes and protection of water resources is a challenge and a priority. With roughly 50% of the City's land area zoned for AGRP and stringent residential regulations in the Lake Auburn watershed, navigating development while preserving these areas' ecological and economic integrity remains complex. However, the City has large areas served by both water and sewer, and new residential, commercial, and industrial growth can be accomodated in existing growth areas. There are vacant and underused industrial and commercial sites, as well as undeveloped sites, that could accomodate commercial and industrial growth, and infill, redevelopment, and development of vacant properties can accomodate new housing growth.

Infrastructure capacity, namely water and sewer systems, must accommodate increasing development demands. Although 65% of parcels in Auburn are within 200 feet of both water and sewer mains, most of these parcels are undeveloped. Though these can potentially accommodate new growth in the form of redevelopment and infill, large parcels located further from the downtown area would require additional investment to the City's water and sewer infrastructure to expand capacity. Traffic congestion and road safety also represent key infrastructure that must be planned for accommodate new growth.

Figure 4.4: Number of Parcels with Water/Sewer Access



Source: City of Auburn

The State of Maine Revised Statues Chapter 11, Title 11, §1160 outlines provisions that properties within 200 feet of a sewer or drain of a sanitary district are deemed accessible to sewer. Properties accessible to sewer must have a sanitary sewer or drainage system connected with the sewer or drain of the established sanitary district. Properties with existing buildings served by a private sewer or drainage system are not required to connect with a district's system if the private sewer or drainage system functions correctly and abides by laws or ordinances. There are circumstances where the City and State have coordinated to allow for some exceptions to this rule based on extenuating circumstances.

There can be some challenges to connecting new buildings to existing water and sewer systems including the overall cost to connect, need for private pump systems or gravity systems to move water and wastewater, and property site constraints (e.g., ledge, existing infrastructure, location of building on a property).

Recent zoning amendments and community sentiment around land use also present opportunities for strategic growth. The City has taken action to plan and seek funding for improvements within the urban core. Auburn's form-based code initially targeted areas like Great Falls Plaza and New Auburn, which remain prime candidates for redevelopment. A priority of Auburn's Five-Year Downtown Revitalization Plan was the transformation of the Great Falls area into a mixed-use destination. Implementation of this plan is already taking shape, with a mixed-use building featuring two commercial units and 18 apartments set to be constructed at the formerly vacant 186 Main Street, with completion anticipated in 2025. The Auburn Mall area has also been identified as suitable for redevelopment or infill.

The rezoning of land along Washington Street is another avenue for the City to address community needs through land use changes. As of October 2024, the City was working on "A New Gateway to Auburn," a study to reimagine Washington Street and the Little Andro District.[5] This corridor study

[5] A New Gateway to Auburn

explores the transition of Washington Street from a four-lane highway into a local street, which could foster new connections between neighborhoods across the Little Androscoggin River and adjacent open space amenities.

Additionally, there is potential for infill development under existing zoning, and continued resident education about accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential zones could increase and diversify Auburn's housing stock and promote walkability in targeted growth areas.

In addition to residential and mixed-use development, opportunities for economic growth exist in expanding renewable energy projects and sustainable practices, building on recent zoning updates that permit small-scale solar energy systems. This focus can generate clean energy or tax revenue for the City and position Auburn as a leader in the regional green economy.

As Auburn looks ahead to a decade of anticipated growth and change, crafting land use regulations, tools, and incentives that balance open space, industry, working lands, a diversity of neighborhood types, and a vibrant downtown is as important as it has ever been. Recent zoning changes and long-range planning efforts provide a strong foundation for the City, even as it responds to new challenges. Having recently reorganized some City departments, bringing planning, code, and economic development functions under one umbrella, Auburn is poised to plan for and respond efficiently and creatively to new land use pressures. Future growth will continue to emphasize the need for a diversity of housing types, conservation where natural resources and agricultural lands are most valuable, infill and neighborhood development where there is existing infrastructure to support it, and where there are opportunities to foster walkability and transit use.

Sources

AccessAuburn – Auburn's GIS Database

A New Gateway to Auburn

Auburn Maine's Manufacturing, Warehousing, and Distribution Hub StoryMap

City of Auburn | 2021 5-Year Downtown Revitalization Plan

City of Auburn | Agriculture and Resource Protection Zoning District

City of Auburn | Code of Ordinances Chapter 60 - ZONING | Municode Library

City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan – 2010

City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan - 2021 update

Maine Office of the State Economist

Maine Population Outlook 2020 to 2030

Maine State Legislature LD 2003 Site

Maine State Statute - Title 30-A, §4358

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Introduction

Parks, recreation, and open spaces are integral to Auburn's community, offering a wide range of outdoor and indoor activities for residents and visitors. The City provides various parks, trails, and conservation areas, along with facilities for sports, fitness, and community programs. These spaces support year-round recreation and enhance Auburn's overall quality of life.

Municipal Parks and Programming

The City of Auburn offers a variety of recreation spaces, including parks, trails, and natural areas. The largest of these is Mount Apatite Park, a 325-acre wooded area featuring 4 miles of trails for non-motorized activities such as hiking, biking, and snowshoeing. The Riverwalk is another City-owned trail that runs along the Androscoggin River, offering scenic views of the downtown area. Additionally, the Auburn Community Gardens provide 88 raised beds across three locations for residents interested in gardening.

The City also owns and maintains six indoor facilities that support year-round recreation. The Ingersoll Turf Facility features 20,000 square feet of indoor field space and includes batting cages. The Norway Savings Bank Arena is an ice-hockey facility with two rinks, a concessions area, and locker rooms. The arena hosts hockey tournaments, educational clinics, and ice skating open to the public on Sundays. The Hasty Community Center houses an indoor basketball court and two multipurpose rooms. Other indoor facilities include the Senior Community Center, which offers two multipurpose rooms, and the Pond Building, which contains one function room. The Police Activities League (PAL) Center provides youth programming and mentorship and is currently being rebuilt at a new location.

School facilities provide additional access to recreation during school hours, and local schools permit public use of the playgrounds and athletic fields on school grounds outside of school hours. Below is a list of City-owned parks and their associated recreation amenities.

Table 5.1: City of Auburn Parks

Name	Athletic Space	Green Space	Playground	Public Art	Shelter	Trails/ Paths	Water Access
Anniversary Park		x		x			x
Bonney Park		x	x				x
Chestnut Park	Multipurpose Field	x	x				
Cleveland Field	Multipurpose Field	x					

Name	Athletic Space	Green Space	Playground	Public Art	Shelter	Trails/ Paths	Water Access
East Auburn Courts	Tennis and Pickleball						
Edward Little Park		x					
Festival Plaza				x	x		x
Lake Auburn Community Center	x	x				x	
Lake Grove Park	Basketball Court	x	x		x		x
Lake St Park			x				
Lakeview Fields	Diamond Fields						
Mothers Park			x				
Moulton Park	Skate Park	x				x	
Pettengill Park	Diamond Fields, Basketball Court	x	x			x	
Raymond Park		x	x				
Sullivan Square		x					
Tot Lot		x	x				
Union Street Park	Futsal Courts, Basketball Courts						
West Pitch Park						x	

The Auburn Recreation Department offers a variety of programs for community members of all ages and abilities. In 2024, total program enrollment was 9,874 people, split across the following six program types. The department offered a total of 68 programs in 2024. The 2025 enrollment numbers are marked with an asterisk (*) because program registration is still open or is not yet open for the year for many programs.

Table 5.2: Age-Friendly and Senior Programs

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	4	7	7	7	8	132

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Enrollment	2,402	2,652	3,737	3,558	5,052	1,636

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.3: Senior (50+) Trips

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	10	6	12	13	13	114
Total Enrollment	283	233	811	1,024	906	1,356

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.4: Childcare Programs

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	4	4	5	5	5	5
Total Enrollment	315	461	352	401	363	283*

Table 5.5: Special Events

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	9	5	9	11	10	3
Total Enrollment	1,095	522	1,720	1,651	1,549	966

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.6: Adult Leagues

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	7	5	15	14	14	5
Total Enrollment	680	420	1,660	1,460	1,390	1,138

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.7: Youth Leagues

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	19	21	18	18	18	19
Total Enrollment	805	1,000	984	716	614	1,107*

Source: City of Auburn

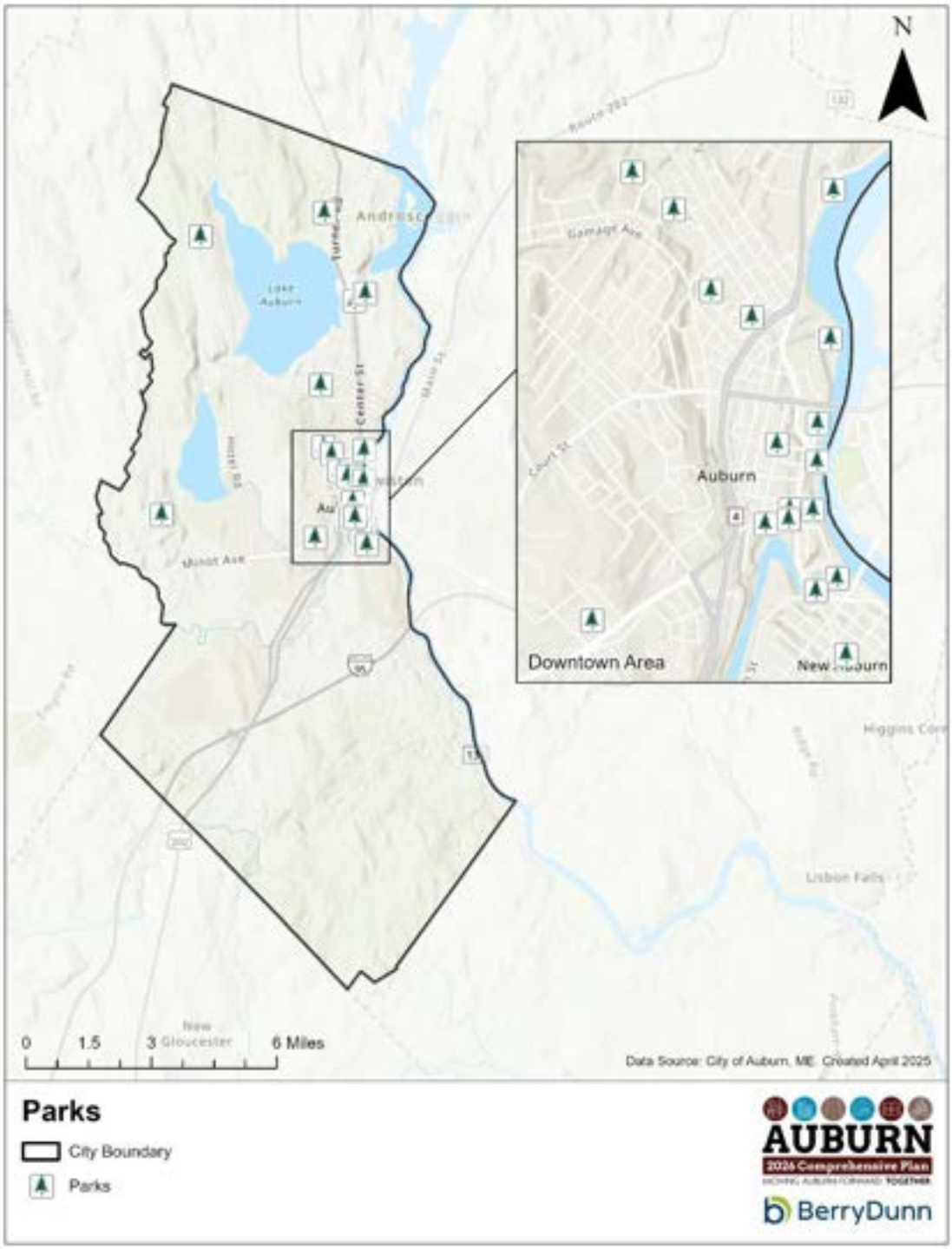
Since 2019, there has been a significant increase in demand for senior and age-friendly programs. Enrollment in these programs has roughly doubled since 2021. As Auburn's population ages, there will

likely be increased demand for recreation opportunities and programs that meet the needs of older residents.

Enrollment in childcare programs, special events, adult leagues, and youth leagues declined slightly between 2023 and 2024. Auburn Recreation Department staff reported that they have experienced staffing challenges, and costs for part-time staff members have increased. Staff reported high demand for programming but staffing and cost are often a limiting factor in whether the department can accommodate additional participants. The department has had to balance increased costs for services while still remaining affordable for Auburn residents.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board reviews and sets policies for the Parks and Recreation Department regarding implementation of program participation and conduct. It develops recommendations for more efficient use of facilities and personnel.

Figure 5.1: Parks Facilities



Non-Municipal Facilities and Programming

In addition to municipally operated spaces, Auburn offers a variety of non-municipal recreation facilities that contribute to the City's overall access to sports and outdoor activities. The Lake Auburn Community Center is a community recreation and conservation space managed by the Lake Auburn Watershed Neighborhood Association (LAWNA). The property offers recreational amenities such as a sand volleyball court and horseshoe pits. The site also serves as the entrance to Auburn's Community Forest, a conservation area with a 4-mile network of trails.

The YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston further expands recreational opportunities with indoor aquatics, fitness equipment, youth sports, summer camps, and wellness programming. In addition to its indoor location on Turner Street, the Y Outdoor Learning and Education Center at 151 Stetson Road has outdoor playing fields, basketball court, swimming pool, archery range, fire pits, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant trails. The Lost Valley Ski Area serves as a local option for skiing and snowboarding in the winter and hosts year-round events. The ski trails are maintained by the Auburn Nordic Ski Association (ANSA), a nonprofit organization that, in addition to grooming, facilitates community programming and events on the Lost Valley property. The City also has two golf courses, Martindale Country Club and Fox Ridge Golf Club, three mini golf courses, Taber's Mini Golf, Roy's Mini Golf, and Roy's Par 3, as well as two disc golf courses, Campbell Highlands and Pine Acres.

Auburn is home to a variety of aquatic resources, though public access to these waters is somewhat limited. Lake Auburn is the City's most prominent waterbody and is well known for fishing. A public hand-carry boat launch off Route 4 provides access to the lake, but restrictions exist due to the lake's use as a public drinking water supply. Similarly, Taylor Pond offers boating opportunities, but recreation is limited for conservation purposes. The Taylor Pond Yacht Club provides seasonal access for members and offers sailing lessons and youth classes around the pond. Lake Grove Park, located at Lake Auburn's outlet, offers a designated swimming area along with amenities such as a playground and picnic spots. The Androscoggin River is another popular choice for fishing, as well as kayaking and canoeing.

Open Space and Conservation Land

Auburn is home to a small network of conservation lands that protect the City's natural resources and provide residents and visitors with opportunities for outdoor recreation. The conservation areas are managed through a combination of municipal oversight and nonprofit stewardship. Additional privately owned lands are currently available to the public for recreational purposes through easements, open space tax program requirements, or with property-owner permission. The conservation lands shown in the map below come from the Maine Natural Areas Program and include private easements, land trusts, municipally owned lands, and water supply lands.

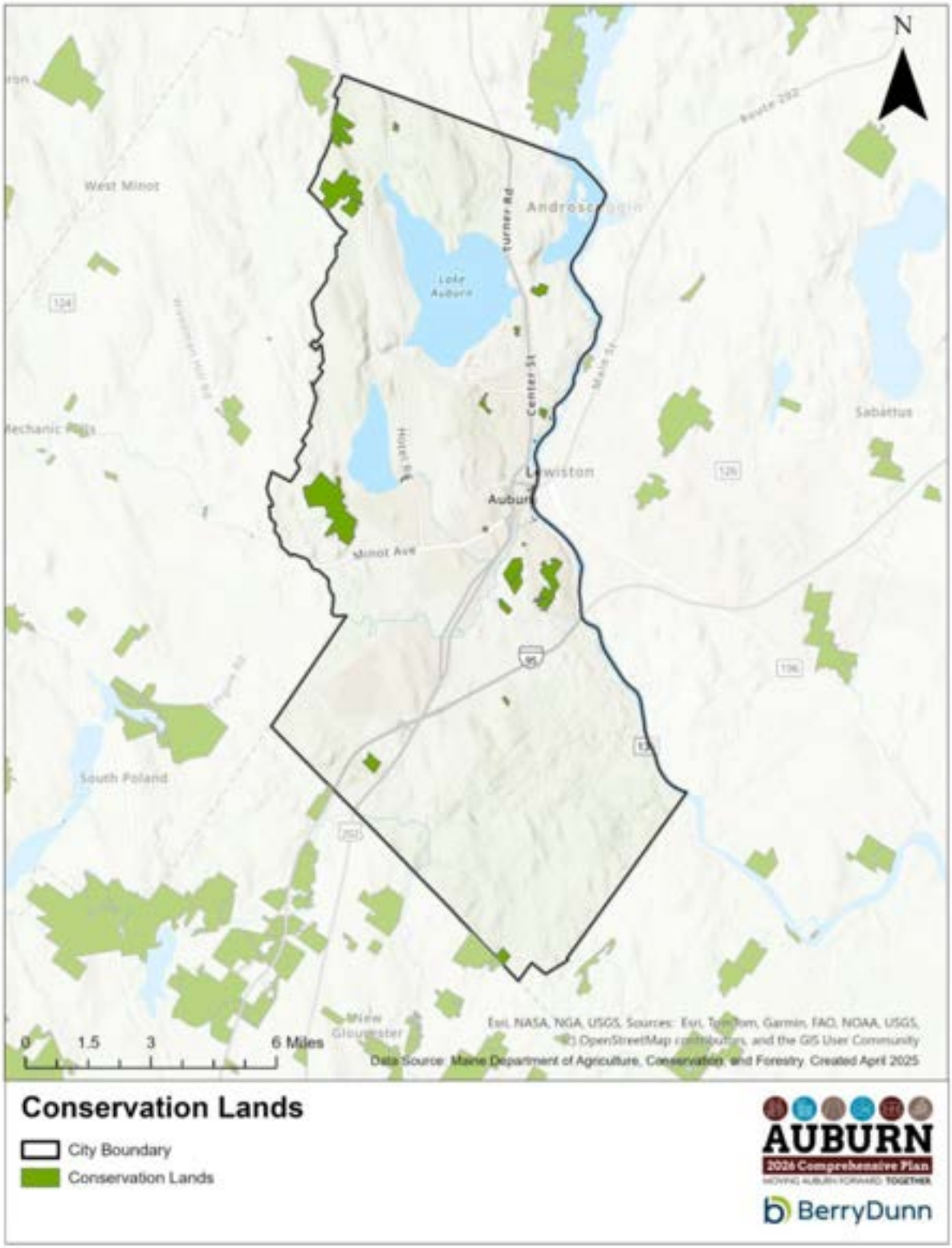
The Sherwood Forest Conservation Area is a 78-acre property managed by the Androscoggin Land Trust (ALT) in partnership with the City of Auburn. It features 2.1 miles of trails and is open to the public for non-motorized recreation. The Pope Conservation Area is a 35.6-acre property located along Lake Auburn. The LAWPC owns the property, with ALT holding a conservation easement. Low-impact

recreation is available to the public on the southwest portion of the property and is accessible from Summer Street. Within New Auburn, ALT manages Huston Farm Conservation, an 89-acre farmland and open space property. ALT owns 27 acres and maintains a conservation easement on the remaining 62 acres, which are available for public use. Additionally, ALT holds scenic view easement, allowing the land to maintain the rural feel of the area, supports natural resource conservation, and provides permanent open space to a growing residential community. Mt. Apatite is a City-owned, 325-acre wooded area with 4 miles of trails for non-motorized activities such as hiking, biking, and snowshoeing.

LAWPC owns approximately 1,600 acres throughout the 9792-acre watershed of Lake Auburn. Their objectives are to promote safe and healthy environmental conditions for all species that rely on the lake and surrounding watershed. The Royal River Conservation Trust also owns land within the southern parts of the watershed.

The Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan has a goal of conserving 30% of the State's land area. Today, 978.37 acres of land in Auburn is conserved, according to the Maine Natural Areas Program. This is roughly 2.5% of Auburn's total land area. Conservation lands are shown in Figure 5.2, below. In addition to permanently conserved lands identified by the State, the Lake Auburn Watershed Commission owns acreage around Lake Auburn for the purpose of protecting water quality.

Figure 5.2: Conservation Land



State Open Space Current Tax Use Program

The Open Space Current Land Use Program requires land be preserved or restricted for public benefit uses, including recreation, scenic resources, or wildlife habitat. There is no minimum acreage requirement for the program. The program offers anywhere from a 20% to 95% reduction in assessed property value based on certain criteria being met. Setbacks and minimum areas are excluded from classification. From 2013 to 2018, the total acreage enrolled in the Open Space Current Land Use Program was relatively consistent. Between 2019 and 2022, the total acreage enrolled decreased and leveled at 106 acres. There was a sharp increase in the total acreage between 2022 and 2023, increasing from 106 acres to 194 acres, the highest total acreage enrollment in the past 10 years.

Table 5.8: Open Space Current Land Use Program Data

Year	Number of Parcels	Acres	Total Valuation
2013	7	127	$160,900
2014	7	127	$160,900
2015	8	134	$165,000
2016	6	117	$151,600
2017	7	124	$155,700
2018	7	124	$155,700
2019	7	106	$220,700
2020	6	106	$220,700
2021	6	106	$220,700
2022	6	106	$220,700
2023	9	194	$294,700

Source: Maine Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Cemeteries

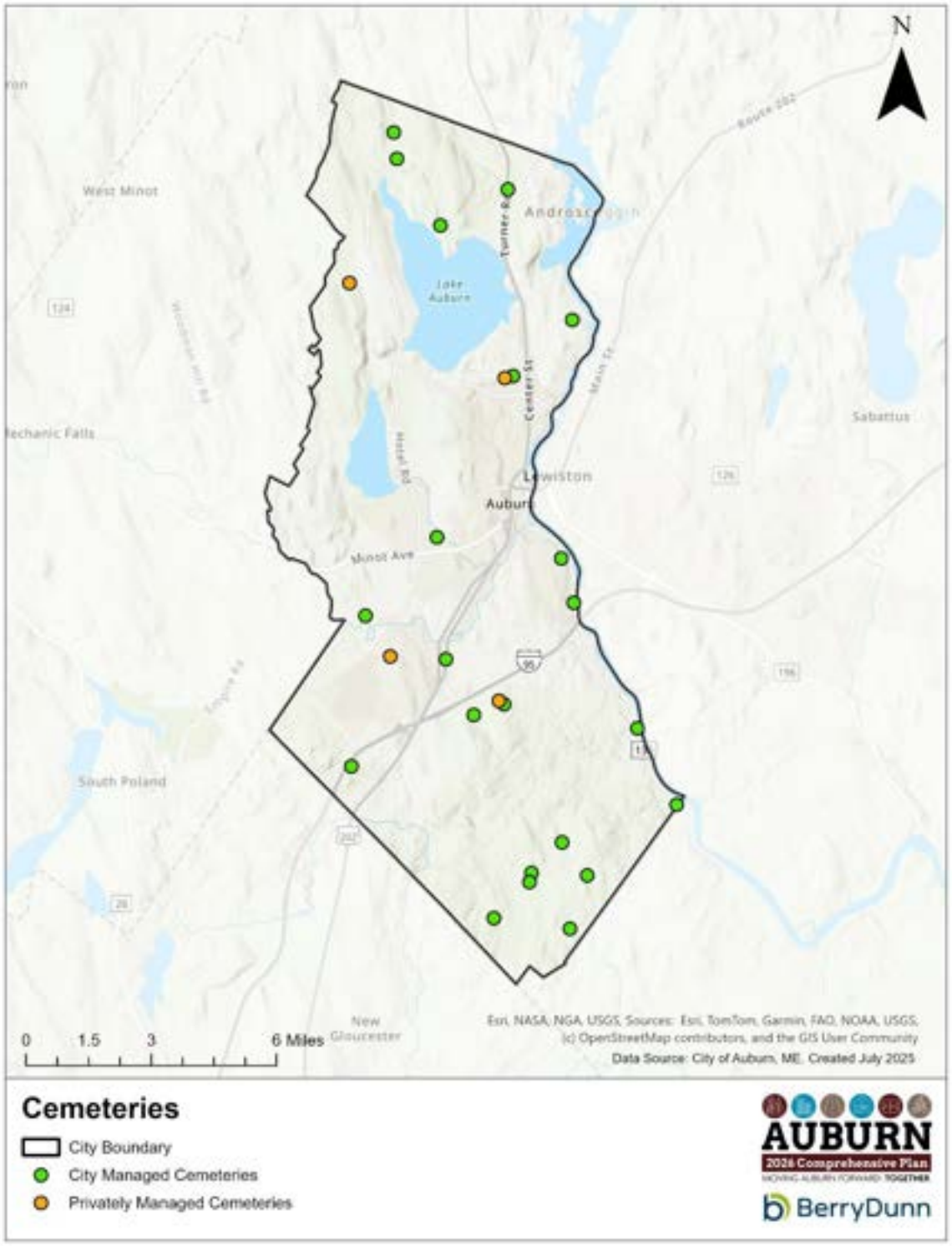
On its website, the City of Auburn lists 18 cemeteries for which it is responsible. Of these, Oak Hill Cemetery is the only one with available lots. The City's parcel data highlights four additional cemeteries that are managed by the City, as well as five privately managed cemeteries.

Table 5.8: Cemeteries

Cemetery Name	Address	Management
Dillingham Hill Cemetery	95 Johnson Rd	City Managed
Plains Cemetery	2865 Turner Rd	City Managed

Cemetery Name	Address	Management
Tabor's Cemetery	477 Lake Shore Dr	City Managed
Dill Cemetery	1095 North River Rd	City Managed
Briggs Cemetery	1016 Turner St	City Managed
Evergreen Cemetery	111 Stevens Mill Rd	City Managed
Oak Hill Cemetery	265 Riverside Dr	City Managed
Fletcher Road Cemetery	232 Fletcher Rd	City Managed
Rumford Junction Cemetery	1133 Washington St N	City Managed
Fitz Cemetery	355 Old Danville Rd	City Managed
Wagg Cemetery	Riverside Drive	City Managed
Old Hotel Road Cemetery	65 Old Hotel Rd	City Managed
Pine Stump Cemetery	940 Jordan School Rd	City Managed
Libby Hill Cemetery	1091 Sopers Mill Rd	City Managed
Libby-Waterhouse Cemetery	Fickett Road	City Managed
Plummer's Corner Cemetery	1251 Jordan School Rd	City Managed
Ben Gordon Cemetery	1698 Jordan School Rd and	City Managed
Small Cemetery	1560 Pownal Rd	City Managed
Riverside Drive Cemetery	653 Riverside Dr	City Managed
Union Cemetery	2335 Riverside Dr	City Managed
North Auburn Cemetery	269 Skillings Corner Rd	City Managed
Pine Street Cemetery	155 Pownal Rd	City Managed
Brookvale Cemetery	1538 Perkins Ridge Rd	Privately Managed
Beech Hill Road Cemetery	640 Beech Hill Rd	Privately Managed
Gracelawn Memorial Park	980 Turner St	Privately Managed
Beth Abraham Cemetery	147 Old Danville Rd	Privately Managed
Life Forest Whistle Ridge	589 Trapp Road	Privately Managed

Figure 5.3: Cemeteries



Challenges and Opportunities

The City of Auburn is committed to providing a variety of year-round recreation opportunities and efficiently allocating resources to support these diverse needs. In 2014, the City completed an Athletic Facilities Needs Assessment and found that, overall, the community's recreational needs were being met in terms of capacity. However, the study emphasized that quality improvements could be made to existing facilities. Since then, the City has made improvements to Lake Grove Park and replaced three playgrounds across the City, all with capital improvement program funding. An additional study conducted in 2021 and 2022 focused on the feasibility for a new sports and recreation complex to attract participants from Auburn, the region, and beyond. The study examined several sites throughout the City and analyzed the cost of different types of amenities. The City is examining the potential for funding this type of capital investment as well as its long-term economic returns.

Embracing existing partnerships with nonprofit organizations is an area of continuing opportunity for the City. Organizations including LAWPC, ALT, and Friends of Mt. Apatite are working with the City to increase trail and aquatic access to Auburn. This includes additional access to the Androscoggin River and Little Androscoggin River.

Discussions with the Recreation Department identified potential challenges including staffing needs for the soon-to-be rebuilt PAL Center as well as broader staffing demands to support expanding programming. The City is interested in offering additional recreational opportunities, such as volleyball clinics and increased childcare services. However, sustaining and funding these programs without significantly increasing registration fees remains an ongoing concern.

Communication was also highlighted as a key challenge. The current program registration system does not enable the Recreation Department to directly reach community members. Additionally, promotional and informational communications must be routed through the Communications Department, which decreases the department's ability to engage the public.

Costs for services have continued to rise, impacting the department's ability to provide additional programs and hire staff to support these programs. Staff reported strong demand for enhanced programming across all age groups, and the department has had to make strategic decisions about participant capacity for programs relative to staff support. Additionally, the department has had to balance program costs with the ability for Auburn's low- and middle-income earners to afford programs. The department strongly desires to remain affordable for residents across all income levels.

Sources

Athletic Facilities Needs Assessment, 2014

Androscoggin Land Trust

Auburn Comprehensive Plan Implementation Update, 2023 – 2024

Auburn Indoor Sports and Recreation Complex Feasibility Report

Auburn Recreation Department

Taylor Pond Association

LA Trails

Lake Auburn Watershed Commission

Economy

Introduction

The urban commercial core areas of the adjacent cities of Lewiston and Auburn function as a single commercial service center for Southern Maine. Separated by a river, the two cities have long operated in economic tandem, especially since the construction of textile mills along the river. Economic growth in the area has been mutually beneficial, with residents routinely commuting across City lines for work and shopping. Auburn's economic future is closely tied to that of its neighboring city.

The earliest inhabitants of the Lewiston-Auburn area were nomadic paleo hunters. The earliest Europeans in the area were farmers. In the mid-1800s, more rapid growth began with the construction of a canal system and several textile mills, catalyzing a period of economic expansion. This activity drew thousands of French-Canadian immigrants to the area in the latter part of the 19th century. In addition to textile production, the region became known for shoe manufacturing and was home to the second-largest shoe manufacturer in the world in the early 20th century, which employed more than 8,000 workers. The rise of the textile and shoe industries spurred economic activity, population growth, and the development of both downtowns.

The adjacent downtowns of Lewiston and Auburn once supported a robust retail infrastructure that served the surrounding rural communities of Southern Maine. In the latter part of the 20th century, several factors contributed to the economic transformation of the Lewiston-Auburn area. The mill era came to an end in the 1970s as manufacturing relocated—first moving south to be closer to raw material sources, then eventually shifting overseas in response to global competition. At the same time, the rise of larger shopping centers and auto-oriented retail created new competition, undermining the viability of the downtown districts.

These challenges spurred the creation of the Lewiston-Auburn Economic Growth Council (LAEGC), which was formed through the partnership of the Auburn Business Development Corporation and the Lewiston Development Corporation. LAEGC adopted a proactive, progressive strategy to revitalize the region's economy. One of its key strategies was the development of industrial parks to help ensure economic relevance in a changing landscape. A pivotal success came with the Walmart distribution center investment in Lewiston, which brought much-needed jobs to the area. The LAEGC formed into the Auburn Community Development Corporation between May and June 2025.

Today, manufacturing remains an important part of the regional economy and continues to evolve and adapt. Several shoe companies still operate in Lewiston and have gained global attention by outfitting U.S. Olympians. Auburn-based Panolam Surface Systems dominates the bowling lane market. Other notable companies include Tambrands (a Procter & Gamble subsidiary), Auburn Manufacturing, Maine Heritage Weavers, Elmet Technologies, and Bourgeois Guitars. A distinctive piece of local culinary history, Labadie's Bakery in Lewiston is credited with originating the whoopie pie. Additionally, Norway

Savings Bank Arena and other recreation and ballfield amenities support the City's sports tourism industry.

Regional Economy

The twin cities of Lewiston and Auburn form a combined urban area, stimulating economic activity between the two municipalities seamlessly. Lewiston is about 50% larger than Auburn by population, while Auburn is the county seat of Androscoggin County. Lewiston-Auburn's combined population of more than 61,000 residents accounts for more than half of the total population of Androscoggin County in about one-fifth of the land area. The remainder of Androscoggin County is largely rural and characterized by rolling farmland, forested areas, and small communities.

As the economic engine of the Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), major employers are located largely in the twin cities, as listed below.

Table 6.1: Lewiston-Auburn MSA Major Employers

Company	Industry/Business Category	City	Employees
Central Maine Healthcare Corp	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	Lewiston	2,501 to 3,000
St Mary's Regional Medical Center	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	Lewiston	1,001 to 1,500
Bates College	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	Lewiston	501 to 1000
Tambrands Inc.	Sanitary Paper Product Manufacturing	Auburn	501 to 1000
Wal-Mart Associates INC	General Warehousing and Storage	Auburn	501 to 1000
Panolam Surface Systems	Manufacturing (Decorative Laminates and Paper)	Auburn	Approx. 600
Central Maine Community College (CMCC)	Education	Auburn	Approx. 500
Lepage Bakeries	Commercial Bakeries	Auburn	Approx. 500
Androscoggin Home Healthcare and Hospice	Home Healthcare Services	Lewiston	1 to 500
Bonney Staffing Center LLC	Temporary Help Services	Auburn	1 to 500
Clover Manor INC	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	Auburn	1 to 500
The Dingley Press, Inc.	Commercial Printing (except Screen and Books)	Lisbon	1 to 500
Hannaford Bros Co.	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (Except Convenience Retailers)	Lewiston	1 to 500

Company	Industry/Business Category	City	Employees
Hannaford Bros Co	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (Except Convenience Retailers)	Auburn	1 to 500
Happy Haven LLC	Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities	Lewiston	1 to 500
Lepage Bakeries Cedar Street	Commercial Bakeries	Lewiston	1 to 500
Lepage Bakeries Park Street	Commercial Bakeries	Lewiston	1 to 500
L.L. Bean	Clothing, Footwear and Soft Goods Manufacturing	Lewiston	1 to 500
Mr. Boston Brands LLC	Distilleries	Lewiston	1 to 500
M.S. Ambrogio Group	Metal Crown, Closure, and Other Metal Stamping (Except Automotive)	Auburn	1 to 500
Nestle Waters North America INC	Bottled Water Manufacturing	Poland	1 to 500
Paychex North America INC	Payroll Services	Auburn	1 to 500
Pioneer Plastics Corporation	Laminated Plastics Plate, Sheet (Except Packaging), and Shape Manufacturing	Auburn	1 to 500
TD Bank NA	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	Lewiston	1 to 500
Thayer	Construction – HVAC	Auburn	1 to 500
United Parcel Service	Couriers and Express Delivery Services	Auburn	1 to 500
VIP Tires	Automotive Retail and Repair Services	Auburn	1 to 500
Wal-Mart Associates INC	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	Auburn	1 to 500
Androscoggin Bank	Finance	Lewiston	Not Specified
Auburn School Department	Education	Auburn	Not Specified
Elmet Technologies	Advanced Materials Manufacturing	Lewiston	Not Specified
Geiger	Promotional Products Manufacturing and Distribution	Lewiston	Not Specified
North Country Associates	Long-Term Care Facilities Management	Lewiston	Not Specified
Northeast Bank	Finance	Lewiston	Not Specified
Sam’s Italians	Food Services	Lewiston	Not Specified
Sun Journal	Newspaper Publishing	Lewiston	Not Specified

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Healthcare, education, and manufacturing dominate regional employment. Central Maine Healthcare (2,501 – 3,000 employees) and St. Mary's Regional Medical Center (1,001 – 1,500 employees) are the region's largest employers. Key Auburn-specific employers include Tambrands, Panolam Surface Systems, and CMCC, each employing approximately 500 – 1,000 workers. Auburn's Walmart distribution center, also employing between 500 and 1,000 workers, is one of the largest in New England. The presence of major corporations indicates significant corporate confidence in Auburn. Auburn's economy benefits from a mix of stable institutions (healthcare, education) and industrial operations.

Regional employment by industry sector is highlighted in the table below. The healthcare, retail, and manufacturing sectors lead, followed by the accommodation and food services and construction sectors. Job growth for each sector over the preceding five years is listed, along with location quotient, an indicator of competitiveness based on the relative employment concentration of an industry sector compared to the national average. A location quotient value of 1 shows parity with the national average, while values above 1 indicate a regional concentration or competitiveness.

While the Lewiston-Auburn MSA is competitive in healthcare and retail, those sectors experienced job loss over the last five years, signaling a maturing of those sectors. In comparison, the construction sector is competitive in the region and grew 14% in five years; this sector is playing a leading role in employment and growth in the region. Similarly, the manufacturing, transportation/warehousing, and educational services sectors demonstrate both competitiveness and recent job growth. Industries with below-average concentration in the area but experiencing recent growth include accommodation and food services, wholesale trade, real estate, and arts, entertainment, and recreation.

Table 6.2: Lewiston-Auburn MSA Employment and Competitiveness by Industry Sector

NAICS Sector	2023 Employment	Five-Year Job Growth Percentage	Location Quotient
NAICS 62 Healthcare and social assistance	9,553	-2%	1.43
NAICS 44-45 Retail trade	6,073	-3%	1.25
NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing	5,215	4%	1.29
NAICS 72 Accommodation and food services	3,661	4%	0.83
NAICS 23 Construction	2,988	14%	1.20
NAICS 56 Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	2,520	-27%	0.86
NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing	2,435	1%	1.20
NAICS 54 Professional, scientific, and technical services	1,895	-12%	0.56
NAICS 52 Finance and insurance	1,537	-8%	0.78
NAICS 42 Wholesale trade	1,519	3%	0.79

NAICS Sector	2023 Employment	Five-Year Job Growth Percentage	Location Quotient
NAICS 61 Educational services	1,409	5%	1.44
NAICS 81 Other services (except public administration)	1,047	-3%	0.73
NAICS 55 Management of companies and enterprises	937	-27%	1.17
NAICS 11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	612	44%	1.56
NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing	452	14%	0.60
NAICS 71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	346	4%	0.44
NAICS 51 Information	300	-32%	0.32
NAICS 22 Utilities	114	-7%	0.63
NAICS 21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	69	13%*	0.38

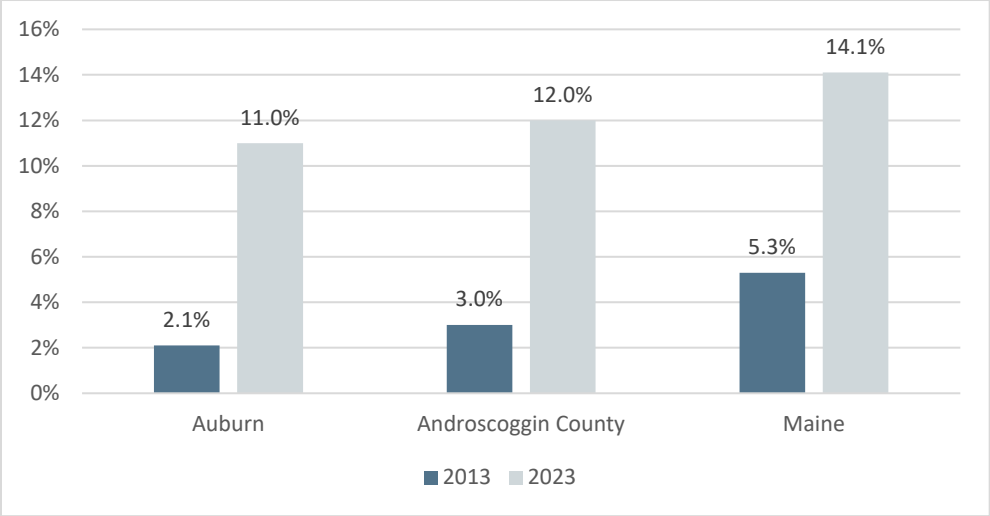
*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (*BerryDunn estimate)*

Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction employment totals were available in 2023 through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; however, this employment sector was not listed as an industry sector in the 2018 MSA data. The five-year change was calculated using a ratio of statewide employment totals in the industry sector, which was then applied to the Lewiston-Auburn MSA.

In addition to employment noted above, the number of people in Auburn who work from home has increased. Attracting new workers to the workforce is one of the State's core economic development goals. Since 2020, net migration to Maine has remained substantially positive, although it is unclear if this trend will continue. According to Maine DECD's study on recent migrants (Why People Move to Maine) completed in January 2025, 32% of migrant survey respondents noted that the ability for them or a partner to work remotely was an influencing factor in their decision to move to Maine.[6] The percentage of workers (over age 16) who worked from home increased from 2.1% in 2013 to 11.0% in 2023. While still less than the State, the growth in remote work in Auburn was more substantial than the County or State.

[6] Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. January 2025. *Why People Move to Maine: A Study of Recent Migrants*. Wallace Economic Advisers, LLC.

Figure 6.1: Worked From Home (Workers 16 years and over)



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Central Maine Community College provided data that outlines recent graduates' employment industry and employment location, as well as the number of degrees awarded per degree program While this data does not give a full picture of workforce qualifications, it can give insight into the fields students are training in and earning certifications in. It can also provide insight into how many students are staying in Auburn following graduation.

CMCC recently started a new pre-graduation survey process. Of May 2025 graduates, 116 of CMCC's 500+ graduates completed the survey. This survey data does not identify where students are from; it only identifies where they say they will be working. Of the 116 students who responded to the survey, only 88 listed employment information. Table 6.3, below, outlines the 88 students' responses to the industries that they plan to work in. Table 6.4 outlines the location where students plan to work following graduation.

Table 6.3: CMCC Graduated Student Employment Industry

Industry	Number	Percent
Animal Husbandry	1	1.14%
Automotive	2	2.27%
Construction	4	4.55%
Education	13	14.77%
Electrical	3	3.41%
Energy	1	1.14%
Environmental	2	2.27%

Industry	Number	Percent
Finance	3	3.41%
Government	2	2.27%
Health	11	12.50%
Hospitality	14	15.91%
Human Services	10	11.36%
Manufacturing	6	6.82%
Real Estate	1	1.14%
Religious	1	1.14%
Retail	9	10.23%
Security	1	1.14%
Technology	1	1.14%
Water	1	1.14%
Unknown	2	2.27%
Total	88	

Source: CMCC

Table 6.4: CMCC Graduated Student City of Employment

Location	Number	Percent
Appleton	1	1.14%
Auburn	6	6.82%
Augusta	1	1.14%
Biddeford	1	1.14%
Bowdoin	1	1.14%
Bridgton	1	1.14%
Clinton	1	1.14%
Freeport	1	1.14%
Gray	1	1.14%
Kennebec County	1	1.14%
Kennebunk	1	1.14%
Kingfield	1	1.14%

Location	Number	Percent
Lewiston	6	6.82%
Lisbon	1	1.14%
Livermore Falls	1	1.14%
Nebraska	1	1.14%
Norway	1	1.14%
Oquossoc	1	1.14%
Oxford	2	2.27%
Portland	3	3.41%
Rumford	3	3.41%
Sabattus	1	1.14%
Saco	1	1.14%
South Paris	2	2.27%
South Portland	4	4.55%
Temple	1	1.14%
Topsham	1	1.14%
Turner	1	1.14%
Vassalboro	1	1.14%
Vienna	1	1.14%
West Poland	1	1.14%
Westbrook	1	1.14%
Yarmouth	2	2.27%
Unknown	35	39.77%
Grand Total	88	

Source: CMCC

For three graduation cycles (three years of graduates from August 2022 to May 2025), 1,411 degrees were awarded, with 1,353 distinct students earning degrees. Table 6.5 outlines how many students graduated in each degree program. The data below is not unduplicated. Students may earn additional degrees within a three-year period (e.g. those in the Criminal Justice degree program are likely counted again in the Police Operations program as it is a third-year advanced certificate).

Table 6.5: Degrees Awarded by Degree Program 2022 – 2025

Degree Programs	Degrees Awarded
Accounting	64
Architectural and Civil Engineering	22
Automotive	47
Building Construction	42
Business	211
Career, Liberal, and Professional Studies	31
Computer Technology	38
Conservation Law	15
Criminal Justice	73
Culinary Arts	24
Cybersecurity-Digital Forensics	15
Early Childhood Education	27
Education	39
Electromechanical Technology	74
Esports	9
Exercise Science	9
General Studies	166
Graphic Design	27
Heat, Ventilation, Air, and Refrigeration	32
Human Services	103
Justice Studies	10
Life Science	14
Medical Assistant	13
Medical Coding and Electronic Health Records	74
Nursing	96
Physical Fitness Specialist	8
Plumbing and Heating	37
Police Operations	24

Degree Programs	Degrees Awarded
Precision Machining	38
Psychology	12
Social Sciences	17
Grand Total	**1411**

Source: CMCC

Economic Conditions

Employment by Industry

Auburn employment by industry sector (shown below) indicates that the top three sectors account for approximately 45% of Auburn's employment. Retail trade leads at 19.5%, followed by healthcare and social assistance (13.6%) and manufacturing (12.1%). Traditional sectors like construction, education, and food services also remain significant employers.

While Auburn's economy relies heavily on consumer-oriented sectors (retail and healthcare), the City's strong manufacturing presence reinforces its historical industrial identity. Limited employment in finance (1.9%) and tech/professional services (3.5%) indicate potential opportunities to diversify employment.

Table 6.6: Auburn Employment by Industry Sector, 2023

Industry Sector	Employees	Percentage
Retail Trade	3,157	19.5%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	2,202	13.6%
Manufacturing	1,948	12.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,669	10.3%
Educational Services	1,058	6.5%
Construction	987	6.1%
Admin/Support/Waste Management	956	5.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	925	5.7%
Wholesale Trade	674	4.2%
Professional/Scientific/Tech	567	3.5%
Public Administration	414	2.6%
Other Services (Excluding Public)	410	2.5%

Industry Sector	Employees	Percentage
Finance and Insurance	304	1.9%
Management of Companies	223	1.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	210	1.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	208	1.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	159	1.0%
Information	86	0.5%

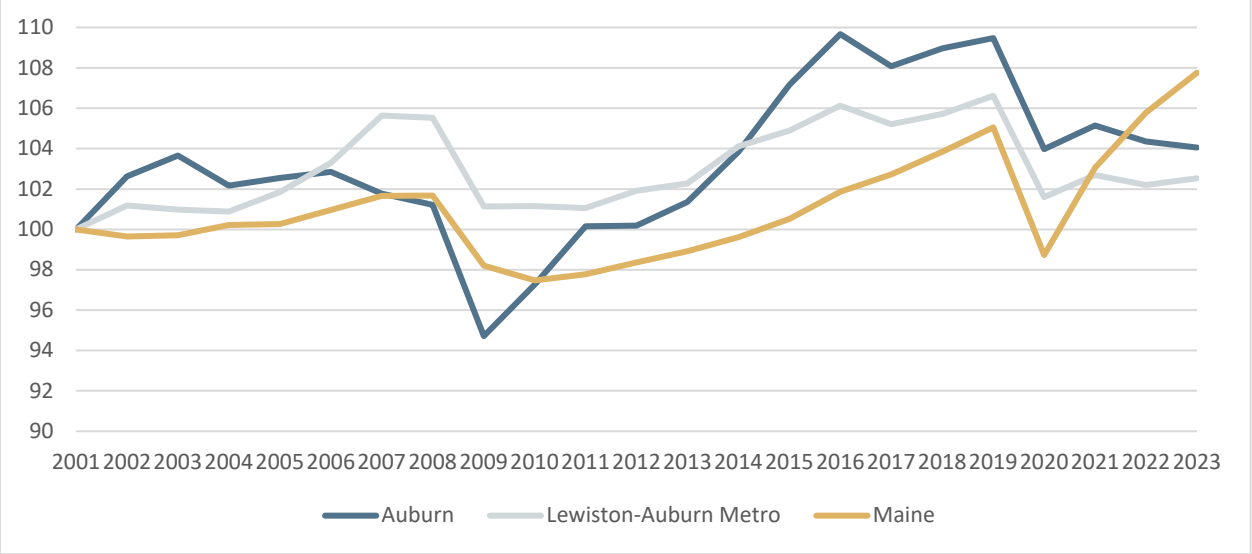
Source: Maine Department of Labor

Job Growth

Job growth has varied in Auburn over the last two decades, largely mirroring trends in the Lewiston-Auburn MSA, coincident with Androscoggin County, and the state as a whole. As shown by Job Growth Index trends in the chart below, Auburn's job losses in 2009 were more severe than the broader regions, but the City's recovery in 2010 – 2011 outpaced that of the MSA or state, with a nearly 6% gain in jobs in two years. Job losses in 2020 were similar in degree across all three geographies, but since then, the state's job recovery rate has exceeded rates in the City and the MSA.

As of 2023, there were 16,227 jobs in Auburn, a 5-point decrease from the City's employment peak of 17,103 in 2016. Since recovering from the 2009 employment low of 14,771, employment levels have largely remained within the 16,000 to 17,000 range.

Figure 6.2: Job Growth Index (2001 Employment Level = 100)



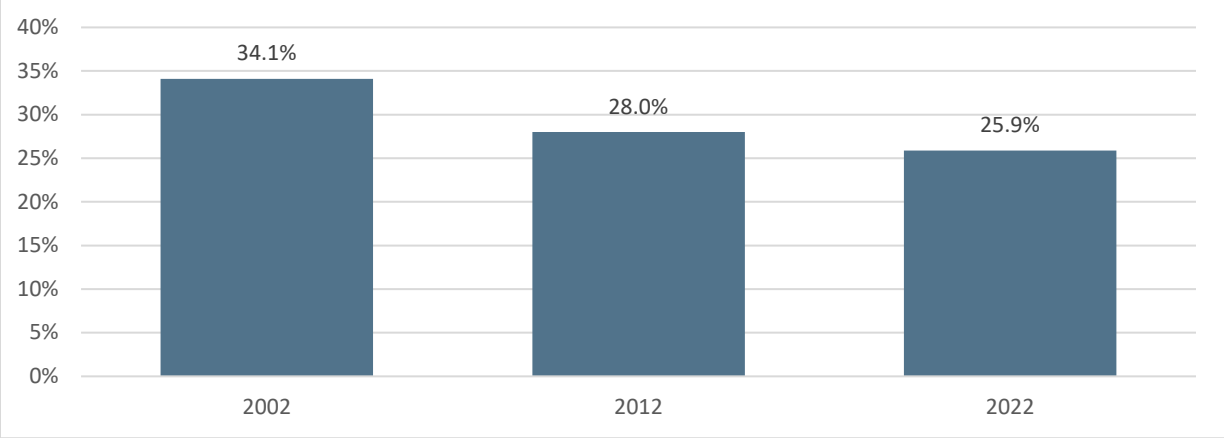
Source: Maine Department of Labor

Commuter Patterns

Auburn is a primary service center. Primary service centers are a State designation given to urban areas that provide vital employment, retail, education, healthcare, and cultural services to surrounding rural populations. As a primary service center, Auburn serves a day-time population of employees that commute to Auburn from surrounding communities. The total commuter population is smaller than the City's resident population. The origins of Auburn-based employees and the destinations of working Auburn residents were reviewed based on U.S. Census data. Of the 16,282 workers employed in Auburn in 2022, 13,581 commuted to Auburn from outside the City, while 2,701 both live and work in the City. Additionally, 7,728 Auburn residents commuted to places of work outside the City.

The percentage of employees living and working locally has declined from 34.1% (2002) to 25.9% (2022). Increased regional commuting indicates broader economic integration with surrounding municipalities, especially Lewiston. Challenges in housing affordability, local job opportunities, or changes in commuting preferences might contribute to this trend as well.

Figure 6.3: Percentage of Employees Living and Working in Auburn



Lewiston is the top origin of workers commuting to Auburn by a wide margin, accounting for nearly 16% of Auburn's employees. Similarly, commuters to Lewiston account for 25% of working Auburn residents. The tables below list the top commuter origins and destinations.

Table 6.7: Origins of Auburn Workers, 2022

City or CDP	Count	Share
Auburn City, ME	2,701	16.6%
Lewiston City, ME	2,576	15.8%
Portland City, ME	272	1.7%
Mechanic Falls CDP, ME	236	1.4%

City or CDP	Count	Share
Augusta City, ME	156	1.0%
Lisbon CDP, ME	155	1.0%
Biddeford City, ME	147	0.9%
Lisbon Falls CDP, ME	132	0.8%
Sanford City, ME	119	0.7%
Brunswick CDP, ME	113	0.7%
All Other Locations	9,675	59.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 6.8: Destinations of Working Auburn Residents, 2022

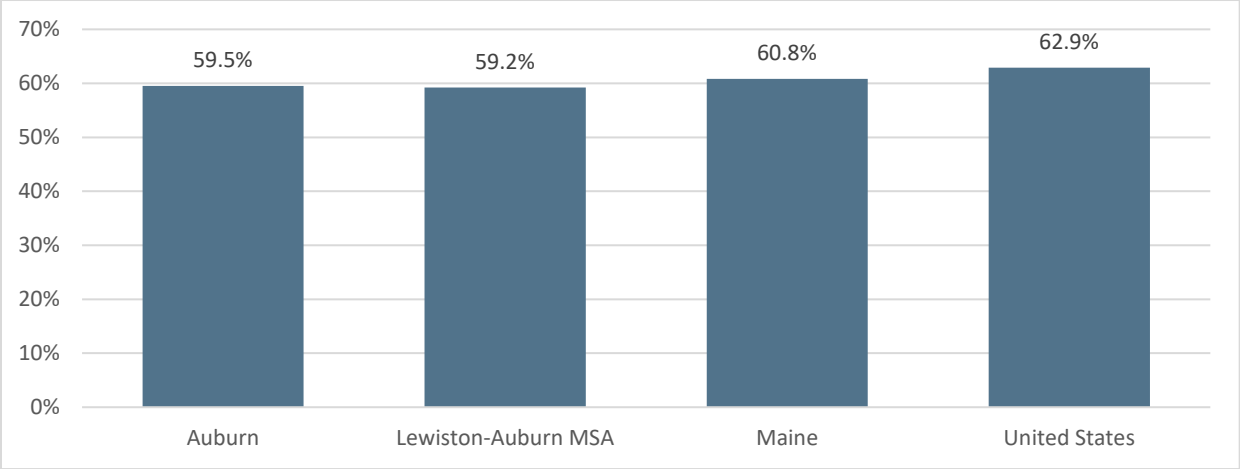
City or CDP	Count	Share
Auburn City, ME	2,701	25.9%
Lewiston City, ME	2,603	25.0%
Portland City, ME	638	6.1%
Augusta City, ME	317	3.0%
South Portland City, ME	290	2.8%
Bath City, ME	197	1.9%
Westbrook City, ME	181	1.7%
Brunswick CDP, ME	148	1.4%
Bangor City, ME	128	1.2%
Yarmouth CDP, ME	93	0.9%
All Other Locations	3,133	30.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Labor Force Participation Rate

Labor force participation rates were reviewed for Auburn and three broader comparison geographies. Auburn's participation rate (59.5%) aligns closely with the broader Lewiston-Auburn MSA (59.2%). Both are lower than the state of Maine (60.8%) and the U.S. average (62.9%). The labor force participation rate represents the portion of working-age residents who are either employed or actively seeking employment. Lower participation rates reflect potential demographic shifts, aging population trends, or barriers to workforce entry.

Figure 6.4: Labor Force Participation Rates, 2024

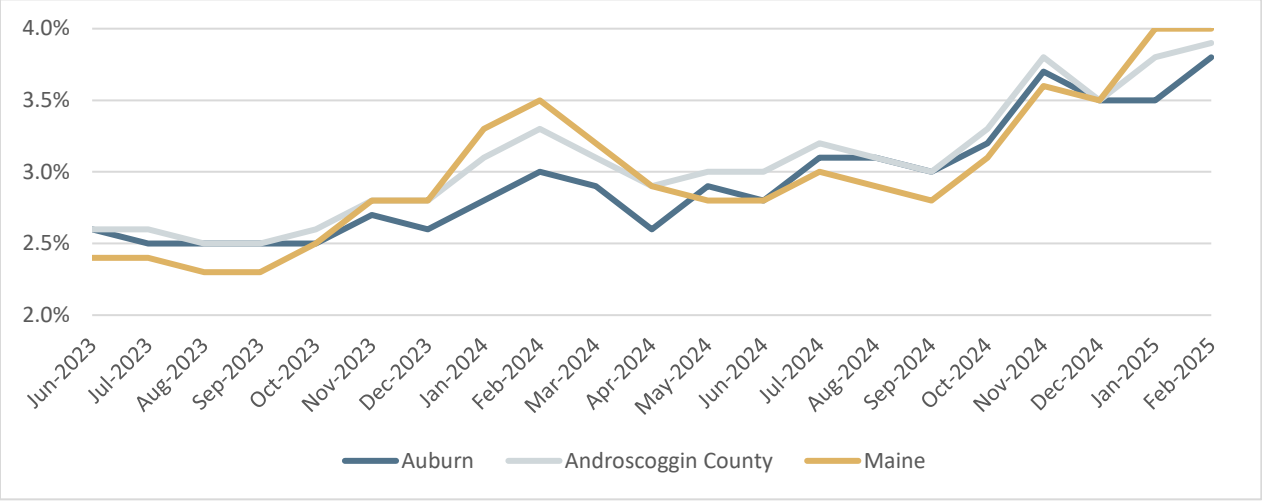


Source: Esri

Unemployment

Increasing over the course of the past 20 months, Auburn's unemployment rates ranged from a low of 2.5% (July – October 2023) to a high of 3.8% (February 2025). Unemployment rates exhibit distinct seasonality, increasing notably during winter months (December – February), consistent across Auburn, the Lewiston-Auburn MSA, and the state of Maine.

Figure 6.5: Unemployment Rates



Source: Maine Department of Labor

Auburn's unemployment rate closely aligns with Lewiston-Auburn MSA averages, with both geographies exhibiting slightly higher unemployment rates compared to the state average in this time frame.

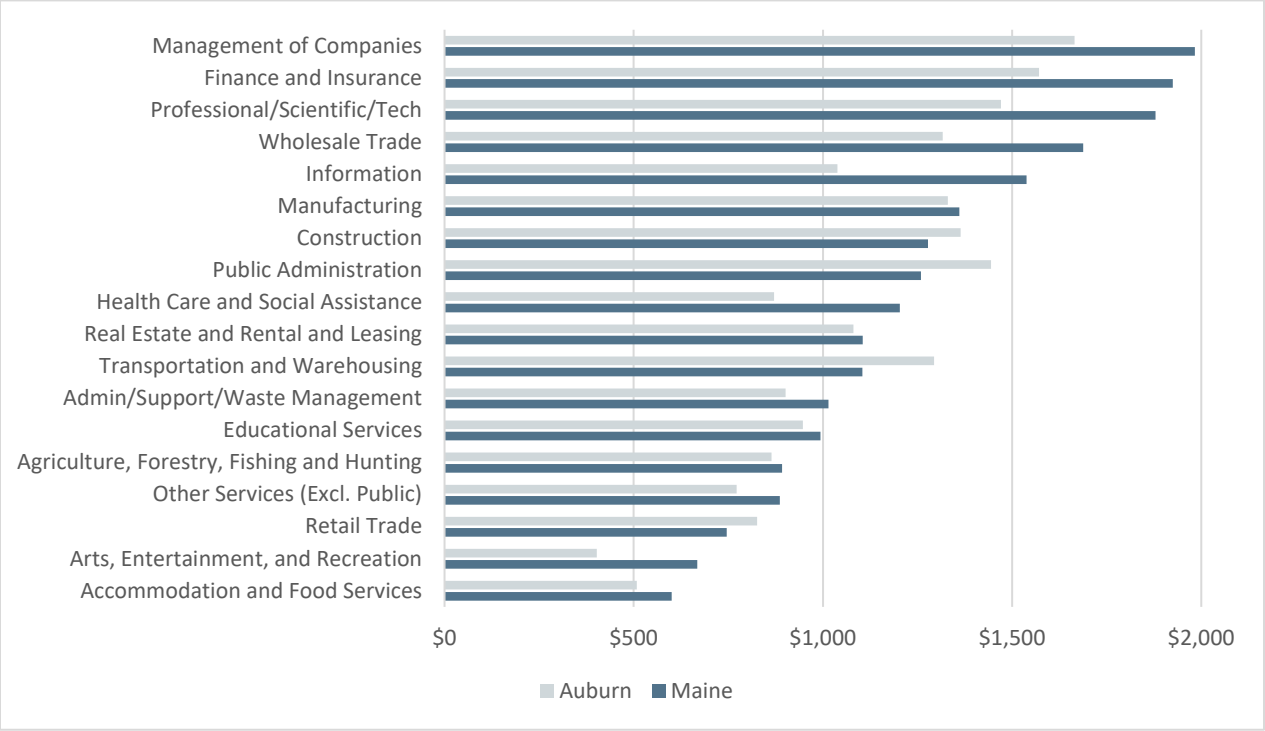
Auburn's low unemployment rates (below 4%) across the observed period indicate economic stability and strength. Consistent alignment with regional and state figures indicates Auburn benefits from broader regional economic conditions. Higher unemployment rates in winter (e.g., February 2025: Auburn 3.8%, MSA 3.9%, Maine 4%) suggest seasonal economic activity reductions, common in northern climates that rely on outdoor occupations, tourism, or seasonal jobs.

Overall, Auburn exhibits a healthy labor market with unemployment rates that are consistently low and closely tied to regional and state benchmarks. The economic outlook remains robust, with minimal fluctuations or disruptions outside seasonal norms.

Wages

Wages in Auburn vary significantly by industry, with management of companies, finance and insurance, and professional/scientific/tech sectors providing the highest weekly wages. Lowest wages appear in accommodation and food services, arts and recreation, and retail trade. Auburn wages closely align with Maine averages for most industries but lag behind the state in the highest-paying sectors.

Figure 6.6: Average Weekly Wages by Industry, 2024



Source: Maine Department of Labor

Commercial Development and Growth Areas

Auburn surpassed previous records in residential permitting in 2024, issuing 1,369 permits driven by a surge in renovations, rooftop solar installations, and heat-pump retrofits. More than 230 new housing

units filled the permitting pipeline as of early 2025, reflecting market demand. Across Lewiston-Auburn, planners green-lit more than 1,060 units in eight projects, including development projects following the post-pandemic trend of converting mill facilities into apartments and mixed-use communities.

Commercial permitting has also remained robust in the past two years. Total construction valuation in 2024 topped $74.6 million, anchored by Tambrands' $15 million industrial expansion. Late 2023 highlights included a 50,000-square foot prefabricated steel warehouse at 56 Harriman Drive ($9.55 million), while September 2024 saw Mac's Downeast Seafood invest $25,000 in a modern renovation. Multifamily housing took shape at 555 Court Street in two 12-unit buildings, and the City invested in its own facilities through office remodels at 33 Industry Avenue and 296 Gracelawn Road.

The 2021 update to Auburn's comprehensive plan emphasizes targeted growth areas strategically positioned south of Lake Auburn and Taylor Pond, near potential passenger rail access and turnpike exits. Key designated growth areas include Gracelawn Pits, the Center Street General Business/Shoreland Zone Corridor along Bobbin Mill Brook, and the Stetson Road area, all of which are positioned to capture and guide new development.

Specific zoning designations, including the following, collectively position Auburn for cohesive, sustainable, and economically diverse growth: the Commercial Development District (CDD) for retail, medical, office, lodging, and light manufacturing; the Gateway Development Districts promoting mixed-use development; the Industrial Development District (IDD) designed for industrial, distribution, and transportation uses; and the Form-Based Code Development District (FBCDD) for offices and services.

The recent designation of a Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub further enhances Auburn's economic competitiveness. Located strategically at Exit 75 on the I-95 corridor, this area includes a pre-approved 109.5-acre Auburn Commerce Center business park, offering incentives and technical assistance to attract tenants and developers. Supported by the nearby Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport—a designated general aviation reliever airport—and an intermodal facility with access to rail, highway, and air transit, this tech hub leverages Auburn's excellent regional connectivity, positioning it as a manufacturing and logistics nexus for Southern Maine.

Additionally, Auburn's ongoing capital improvement plans represent targeted investments in critical infrastructure to facilitate further industrial and commercial growth. Plans to extend water and sanitary sewer services to industrial areas on Hackett Road, Witham Road, and in New Auburn, along with infrastructure upgrades near the turnpike and multimodal facility areas, demonstrate a forward-looking approach to economic development. Coupled with opportunities to redevelop the mall area and establish the New Auburn Village Center District, these initiatives signal Auburn's intent to foster sustained growth through both redevelopment and new investment, setting the stage for robust economic expansion over the coming years.

Economic Development Financing Tools

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

Auburn currently uses municipal TIF districts to provide financial assistance to applicable development projects and to direct incremental property tax revenue generated by the new investment to fund special projects, programs, and initiatives.

TIF districts allow the City to shelter the increased property valuation within the district from computation of its state subsidies (general purpose aid to education and municipal revenue sharing) and county tax assessments. TIF districts are used to encourage development by allowing some or all property tax revenue generated by new development to be used to supplement project costs, through credit enhancement agreements (CEAs), and for targeted City economic development initiatives for the community as a whole, such as road and sidewalk infrastructure and utilities. Historical TIFs, including #1-#5, #7-#9, #14-#18, #21, and #22, have been used or have expired. Auburn has 18 active TIF districts:

Table 6.9: Auburn Active TIF Districts

Name	Term (Years)	TIF Start	TIF End	Acreage	Original Assessed Value	Taxable Valuation (as of April 1, 2025)
# 6 Proctor & Gamble (Tambrands II)	30	4/1/2001	3/31/2031	84.0	$520,900	$19,276,012
#10 Downtown Omnibus	30	7/1/2002	6/30/2032	247.6	$80,002,900	$138,319,700
#12 Auburn Industrial Park	30	2/2/2006	2/1/2036	144.0	$334,200	$9,372,700
#13 Retail Development	30	2/23/2007	2/22/2037	29.7	$5,425,400	$18,857,800
#14 Mall Revitalization	30	1/5/2007	1/4/2037	38.9	$11,328,400	$18,823,800
#15 Mall Area Hotel	30	3/24/2008	3/23/2038	1.5	$4,900	$12,212,800
#19 Hartt Transportation Industrial Park	20	7/1/2015	6/30/2035	43.0	$1,278,600	$4,674,250
#20 62 Spring Street	23	7/1/2017	6/30/2040	0.8	$474,300	$5,032,400
#23 Auburn Memory Care	20	7/1/2019	6/30/2039	8.6	$327,100	$8,839,800
#24 Gracelawn Apartment Complex	24	7/1/2020	6/30/2044	2.9	$262,600	$4,422,900
#25 Futureguard Omnibus	25	7/1/2021	6/30/2046	26.2	$3,838,700	$7,099,100
#26 North River Road Apartments	20	7/1/2022	6/30/2042	3.3	$60,300	$3,599,500
#27 Stable Ridge	20	7/1/2023	6/30/2043	13.2	$235,500	$11,908,400

Name	Term (Years)	TIF Start	TIF End	Acreage	Original Assessed Value	Taxable Valuation (as of April 1, 2025)
#28 Agren Appliance Warehouse	30	7/1/2024	6/30/2054	11.6	$1,051,500	$5,005,100
#29 186 Main Street	30	7/1/2024	6/30/2054	0.2	$0	$680,200
#30 Diamond Point	30	7/1/2024	6/30/2054	5.5	$518,900	$6,380,100
#31 Academy Street Housing	30	7/1/2024	6/30/2054	1.3	$0	$201,400
#32 Mount Auburn Housing	30	7/1/2024	6/30/2054	29.1	$941,700	$6,936,500
TOTAL				*691.4*	*$106,605,900*	*$281,642,462*

Source: Maine Department of Economic and Community Development; City of Auburn Finance Department

TIF funds have been used and plan to be used for projects such as the new public safety facility, road and sidewalk improvements, economic development programs (including staff salaries, marketing costs, and other operating expenses), affordable housing development, recreational trail development, professional services costs for administering TIF districts, and other public infrastructure projects.

In FY 2024, the City captured $2,951,315 in incremental revenue through new value growth within active TIF districts. While a portion of this sheltered tax revenue is reimbursed to developers through CEAs, the City has used TIF funds for economic development initiatives and infrastructure projects, including sidewalks and parking improvements. The City currently has 14 CEAs through TIF districts to support investment in infrastructure or project financing that will result in public benefit. In FY 2024, the City's payments to developers through CEAs totaled $253,558. The State's TIF program sets a threshold for establishing TIF districts. TIF districts can make up a maximum of 5% of the City's total acreage and 5% of the City's total valuation. As of 2026, the Auburn's TIF districts account for 4.2% of the City's total valuation.

The City should continue to review TIF district revenue capture rates and assess the likelihood of using TIF revenues for specific purposes related to the design and construction of projects. Furthermore, the City should review the real growth assumptions within current TIF districts and related impacts to valuation increase assumptions to allow for greater accuracy of estimates.

Challenges and Opportunities

Auburn's economy is facing several challenges and uncertainties. First, rising inflation presents uncertainties for Auburn by increasing operational costs for businesses and municipal budgets. This pressure may reduce profit margins, deter new investment, and constrain consumer spending, impacting overall economic growth. Further, limited housing availability and high costs constrain Auburn's potential to attract and retain residents and workforce talent. Housing shortages and

affordability challenges can reduce economic competitiveness, discourage labor force expansion, and limit growth opportunities for businesses seeking local talent.

Uncertainty stemming from tariffs affects Auburn's manufacturers, construction firms, and consumers by increasing the costs of imported goods and raw materials. This can lead to higher production costs, reduced competitiveness of locally produced goods, and uncertainty in investment and expansion decisions.

The workforce shortage is a challenge across the State and across industries as people continue to age out of the workforce, posing significant barriers to economic growth, and limiting business expansion and new business attraction in Auburn. Difficulty in finding qualified employees can deter investment, slow economic momentum, and constrain productivity and innovation within local industries.

In the context of these challenges, however, Auburn is strategically positioned for continued economic growth, supported by its proactive approach to attracting both commercial and industrial development. Despite challenges like high interest rates and construction costs, the City's commercial real estate market remains vibrant, evidenced by robust development activity and ongoing investments by national retailers and manufacturing interests. Compared to the greater Portland area and the rest of Southern Maine, Auburn offers significantly lower costs for land and facilities, attracting firms priced out of the state's more saturated markets.

The City is making efforts to position Auburn as a center for economic growth, including diversification into advanced technologies. The creation of a manufacturing consortium, along with partnerships with area universities and the Roux Institute, represent proactive strategies for growing the workforce and boosting business expansion.

Further enhancing Auburn's economic prospects are recent demographic trends and targeted infrastructure improvements. The City's strategic investments in wastewater treatment, water pipelines, and improved logistics infrastructure reinforce Auburn's competitive advantage as a regional hub for manufacturing and distribution. Collectively, these factors position Auburn favorably to capitalize on emerging opportunities in manufacturing, distribution, and advanced technologies, establishing a foundation for sustained economic vitality.

Economic Trends and Outlook

Several key trends give shape to the City's economic path, reflecting the City's resilience and adaptability amid changing conditions. Over the past 20 months, unemployment rates have exhibited clear seasonal variations and a gradual upward trend, yet remain within a sustainable range, closely tracking state and regional averages. Employment levels have shown more dramatic fluctuations compared to broader geographies, including sharper declines during downturns and somewhat slower recoveries.

At the same time, the City continues to benefit from substantial ongoing investments in its foundational manufacturing sector, underscored by recent expansions from major industrial firms like Procter &

Gamble (Tambrands) and Panolam Surface Systems. Further, the City's recent robust permitting activity is evidence of sustained housing demand/investment interest.

Auburn stands at a promising crossroads. The City is actively pursuing strategic investments to support further industrial growth and economic diversification, exemplified by targeted infrastructure enhancements such as wastewater system upgrades and utility expansions into key industrial zones. These efforts align closely with the City's broader objectives of solidifying Auburn's position as a regional logistics hub and potentially developing a specialized technology-oriented economic cluster.

Through its strong industrial foundations and infrastructure readiness, the City has laid the groundwork for economic vitality. By strategically addressing its challenges, particularly workforce availability and housing affordability, Auburn can position itself on an upward economic trajectory. In line with these goals, establishing an economic strategy following the comprehenisve plan will help position the City to further capitalize on economic strengths, as there has not been an economic strategy developed in recent years.

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Housing

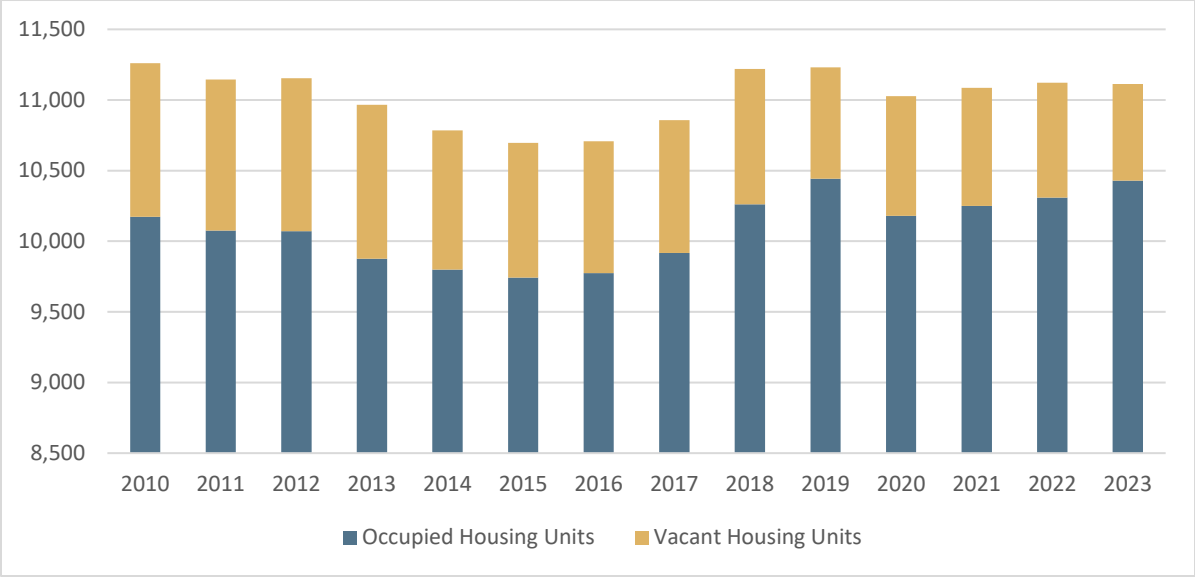
Introduction

Auburn's housing market and residents' housing needs have shifted substantially since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Until 2020, the City was considered affordable for homeowners and renters, with households making the median income being able to afford the median home price and rents rising slowly but generally in alignment with wage increases. Since 2020, housing affordability has increasingly become a concern, especially for the City's 4,268 renter households, which make up 41% of total households. In addition, the City continues to face challenges related to housing quality and safety and decline of an aging housing stock. The recently completed Auburn Housing Needs Assessment (October 2024) provides insight into the gap in housing units needed to meet existing demand, the type and cost of housing needed to support current households, and the projected demand for additional housing based on growth estimates.

Housing Stock

Auburn's housing stock has remained relatively stable since 2010. Total housing units declined slightly from 2013 to 2015, and then increased. Still, the City had fewer total housing units in 2023 than it did in 2010. Likely, current total housing units (in 2025) now exceeds the 2010 peak of 11,260 units, with recent large multifamily developments completed and under construction. While the number of total housing units did not change substantially from 2010 to 2023, the number and percentage of vacant housing units dropped dramatically from 2020 to 2021. In 2023, 6.1% (683 units) of housing units were vacant. This likely points to renewed investment and rehabilitation of dilapidated, previously vacant structures and a more competitive housing market in which there is faster turnover for both rental units and homes for sale.

Figure 7.1: Auburn Total Housing Units (Occupied and Vacant)

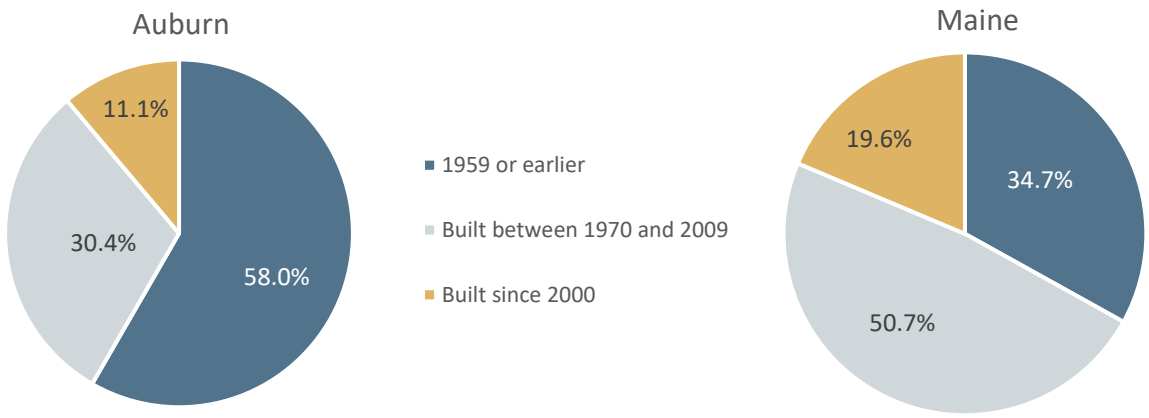


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Age of Housing Stock

The age of housing stock is a particular concern in the northeast United States, with additional challenges related to maintenance, repair, and compliance with code requirements. Auburn's housing stock is notably older than the state's total housing stock, with 58% of units built prior to 1960, compared to only 34.7% for the state.

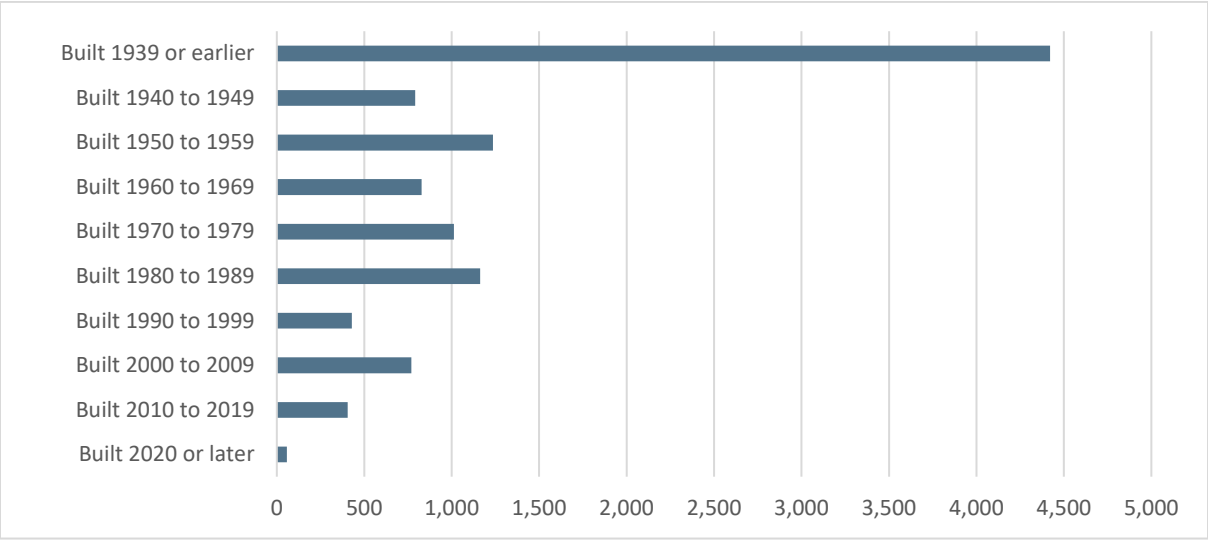
Figure 7.2: Housing Stock by Year Built Comparison



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Compared to the state, Auburn experienced much less new development and housing growth from the 1970s through the 2010s. The 2010s was the City's slowest decade for housing growth, with only 406 of current housing units built from 2010 to 2019.

Figure 7.3: Auburn Housing Stock by Year Built

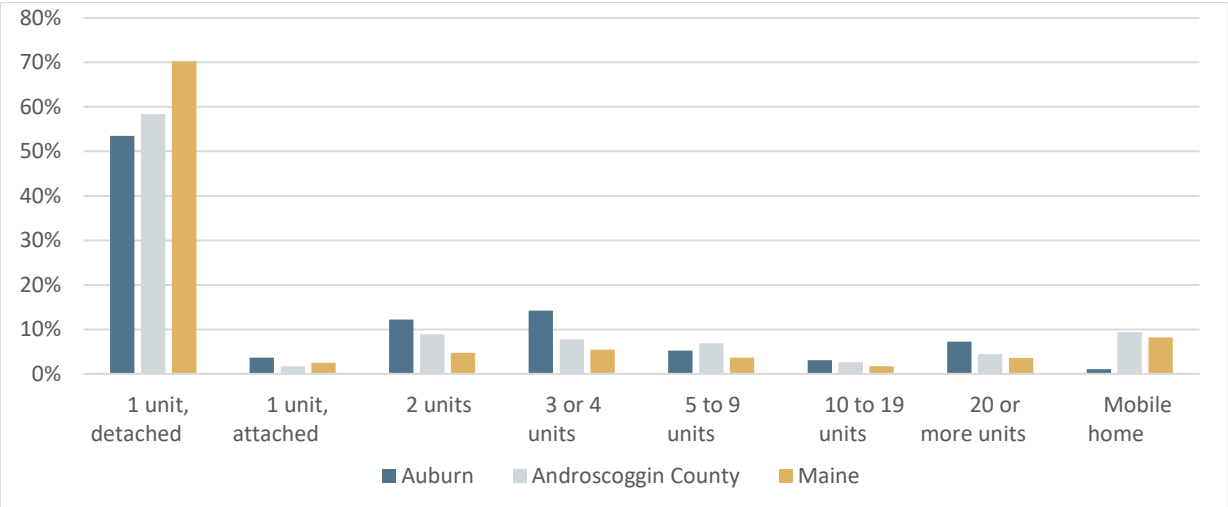


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Housing Types

Just over half (53.5%) of all housing units in Auburn are single-unit detached homes. The City has a greater diversity of housing types compared to the state, with a higher percentage of two-unit and multifamily structures.

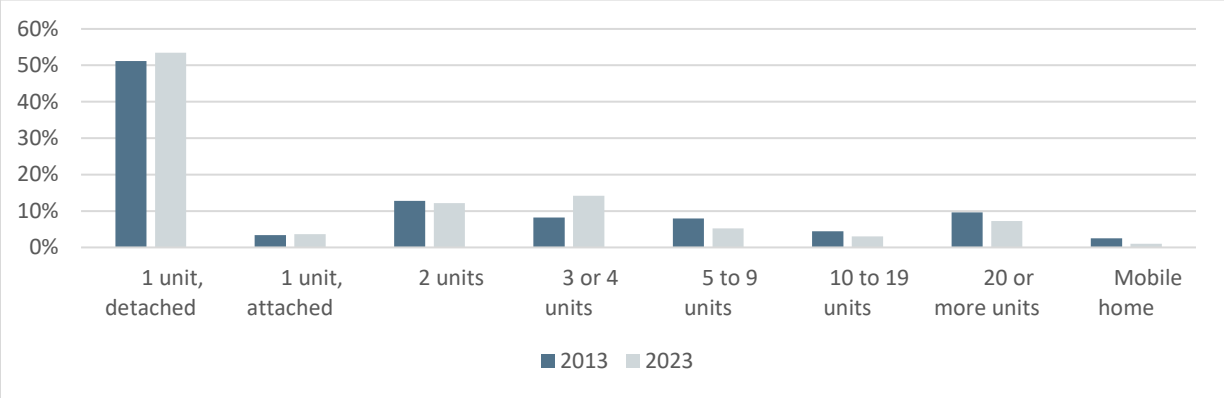
Figure 7.4: Percentage of Housing Units by Type



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

From 2013 to 2023, the mix of housing types (by units in structure) shifted slightly. In 2023, there was a higher percentage of one-unit detached structures and units in three- and four-unit structures, but a smaller percentage of housing units of all other housing types. In real numbers, the City experienced a decline in multifamily housing units (structures with five or more units) from 2,412 in 2013 to 1,723 in 2023. Recent developments, including several multifamily housing developments (in structures with five or more units) that have been approved and are under construction/recently completed, have likely shifted the breakdown of housing units in Auburn.

Figure 7.5: Percentage Change of Auburn Housing Units by Type

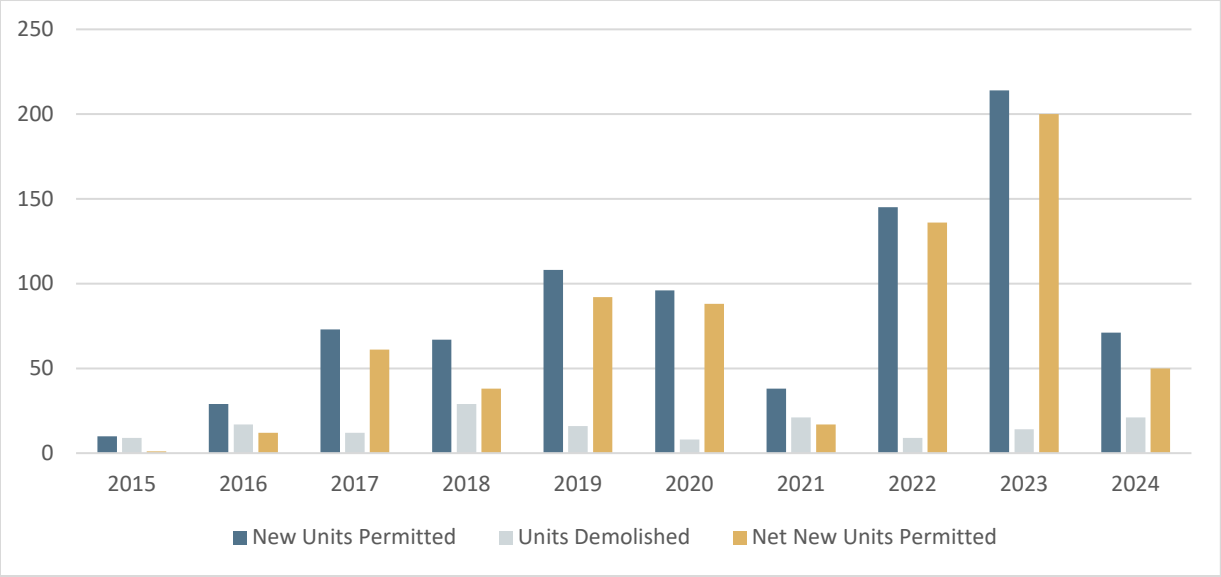


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Housing Development

In 2022 and 2023, the City saw an increase in proposed housing development after several years of slow growth. In addition, there were more proposals for multifamily housing and large housing developments. The number of housing units permitted by the City peaked in 2023, with 214 new units approved, and then declined in 2024, with only 71 new units approved. Construction for some units approved in 2023 has not been completed at the time of this report (spring 2025).

Figure 7.6: New Housing Units Approved



Source: City of Auburn, Planning, Permitting and Code Department

Likely, most units for which permits were issued during and after 2022 are not captured in ACS housing data, which are period estimates representing data collected from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2023. Recent and planned development and growth trends of recent years should be considered in evaluating future housing needs.

Housing Tenure and Longevity

Of the City's 10,430 occupied housing units, approximately 59% are owner-occupied and 41% are renter-occupied. Compared to the county and state, the City has a lower rate of home ownership and a higher percentage of renter households.

Table 7.1: Owner and Renter Occupancy

	Auburn		Androscoggin County		Maine	
Occupied housing units	10,430		46,632		589,085	
Owner-occupied	6,162	59.1%	31,410	67.4%	436,029	74.0%
Renter-occupied	4,268	40.9%	15,222	32.6%	153,056	26.0%
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.48		2.41		2.38	
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	1.9		2.14		1.96	

Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Vacant Housing

Compared to the state, Auburn has a relatively small percentage of vacant housing units (6.1% compared to 21.1% of housing units in the state). Auburn and Androscoggin County have very few seasonal homes compared to other parts of the state that see a seasonal influx of part-time residents.

Table 7.2: Vacant Housing Units by Reason for Vacancy

	Auburn		Androscoggin County		Maine	
Total vacant units:	683	6.1%	3,570	7.1%	157,467	21.1%
For rent	46	6.7%	244	6.8%	7,027	4.5%
Rented, not occupied	0	0.0%	27	0.8%	1,674	1.1%
For sale only	41	6.0%	191	5.4%	3,806	2.4%
Sold, not occupied	0	0.0%	128	3.6%	2,792	1.8%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	33	4.8%	1,207	33.8%	116,637	74.1%
For migrant workers	29	4.2%	42	1.2%	207	0.1%
Other vacant	534	78.2%	1,731	48.5%	25,324	16.1%

Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

The short-term rental (STR) platform, AirDNA, identifies the Lewiston-Auburn area as one of 31 submarkets that make up inland Maine's broader STR landscape. Within this submarket, 161 properties are listed as rentals. As of April 2025, just 49 of those were active—a 14% decline from April 2024. Activity reached its highest point in the last three years in September 2024, when 93 listings were live.

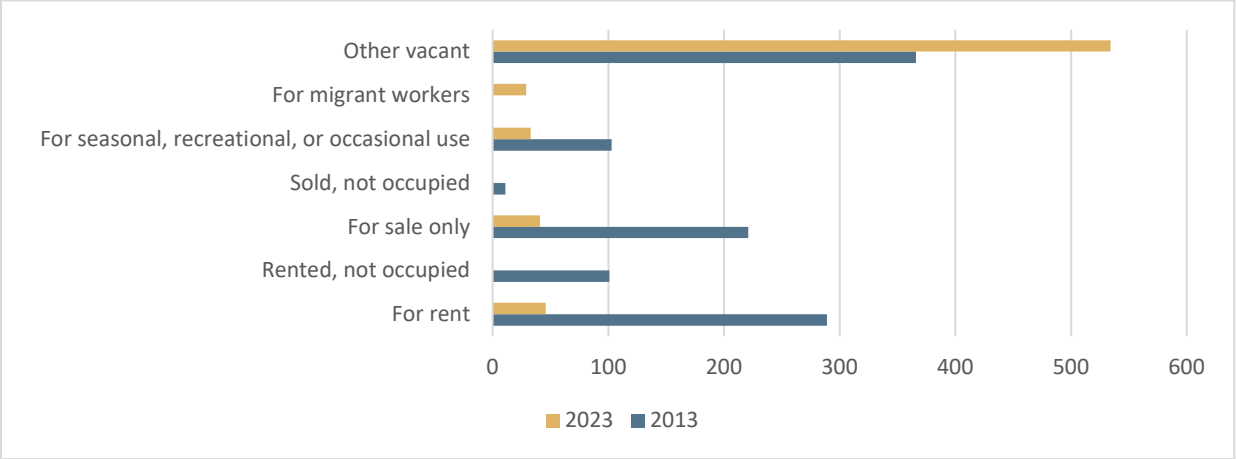
Most STR properties in the Lewiston-Auburn submarket are entire-home rentals (61%), while the remaining 39% are single-room accommodations within a home. The market skews heavily toward occasional use (as opposed to units rented out year-round as STRs): roughly three out of four listings are available fewer than six months per year, and more than half (53%) are listed for 90 nights or fewer annually, indicating that very few homes in the Lewiston-Auburn area are used primarily as STRs.

The total number and percentage of vacant units has declined since 2013, with a significant drop from 2020 to 2021. The total number of vacant housing units declined by 37% from 1,091 units in 2013 to 683 units in 2023. The breakdown of vacant units reflects the significant shift in the City and region's housing market in recent years, with far fewer units that are vacant and for rent or sale. In 2023, roughly 87 units, or less than 1% of total housing units, were vacant and available, either for rent or for sale. In comparison, in 2013, approximately 510 units, or 4.7% of all units, were vacant and available.

The "other vacant" category represents the majority of vacant housing units in Auburn and includes units that are vacant due to foreclosure or abandonment, units in need of repair, units being prepared to rent or sell, or other reasons not accounted for. The percentage of other vacant housing units in

Auburn is slightly higher (4.8%) than that of the county (3.4%) or state (3.4%), likely due to the age of the City's housing stock and challenges in maintaining older units for occupancy. Policies and programs that support maintenance and repairs, access to funding, and lower costs of living may support property owners in repairing properties or help prevent abandonment and foreclosure. High construction costs, the older average age of Auburn's housing stock, and increasing cost of living may create barriers to bringing these units back online.

Figure 7.7: Auburn Change in Vacant Units

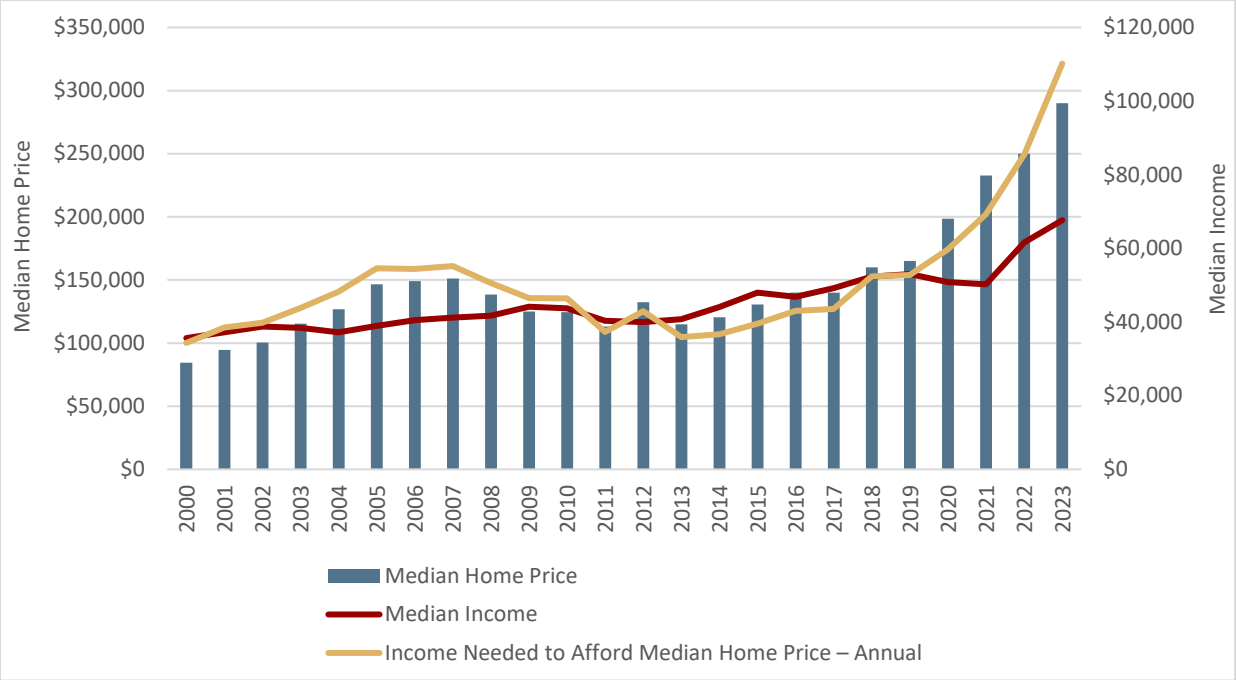


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Affordability

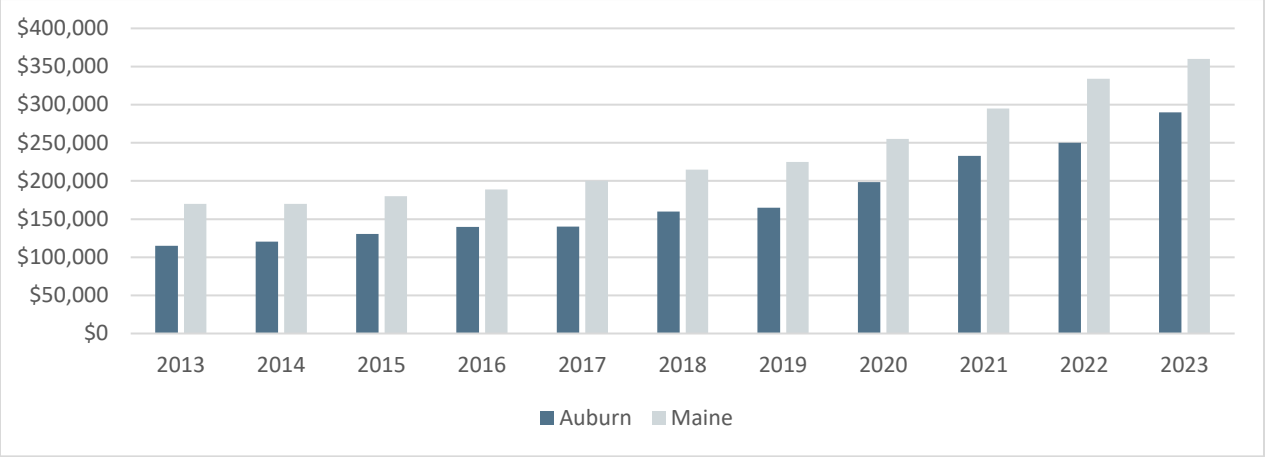
The City, like other communities in the state and region, has experienced a significant rise in housing costs in recent years. While the City's median home price ($290,000 in 2023) remains substantially lower than the state's ($360,000), the community has seen an increase of more than 150% in the median home price from 2013 to 2023. Median income has increased over the same period, but not as drastically, and there is a significant and growing gap between the median income and the income needed to afford the median home price. Until 2020, Auburn was considered affordable, with the median income and the income needed to afford the median home price in the City being generally comparable. Since 2020, the affordability gap has widened. In 2023, nearly 72% of households were unable to afford the median home price based on annual household income.

Figure 7.8: Auburn Change in Median Home Price and Median Income



Source: MaineHousing

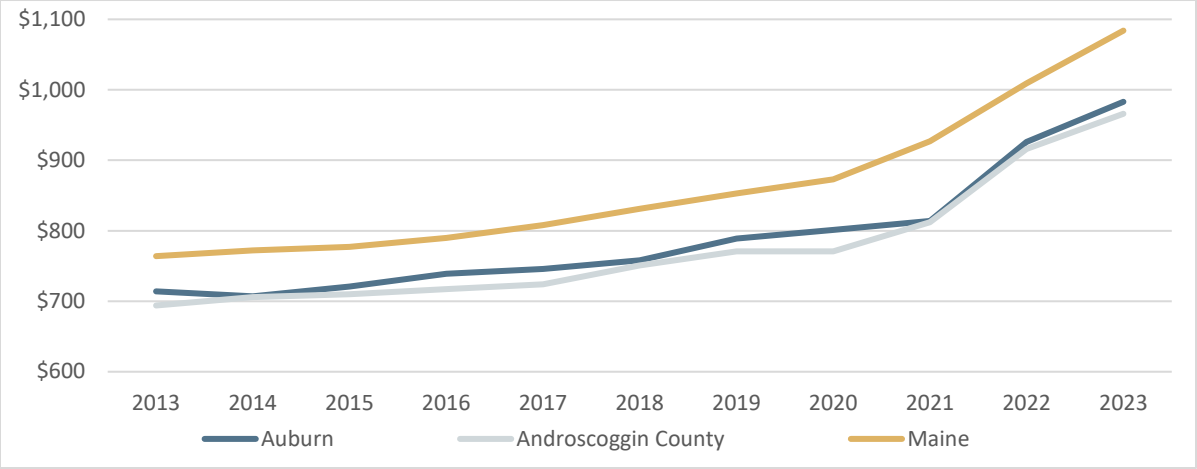
Figure 7.9: Change in Median Home Price



Source: MaineHousing

In addition to homeownership costs, rents have also increased substantially since 2020. While median rent in Auburn remains lower than the overall median rent for the state, median rent has increased 22.7% from 2020 to 2023.

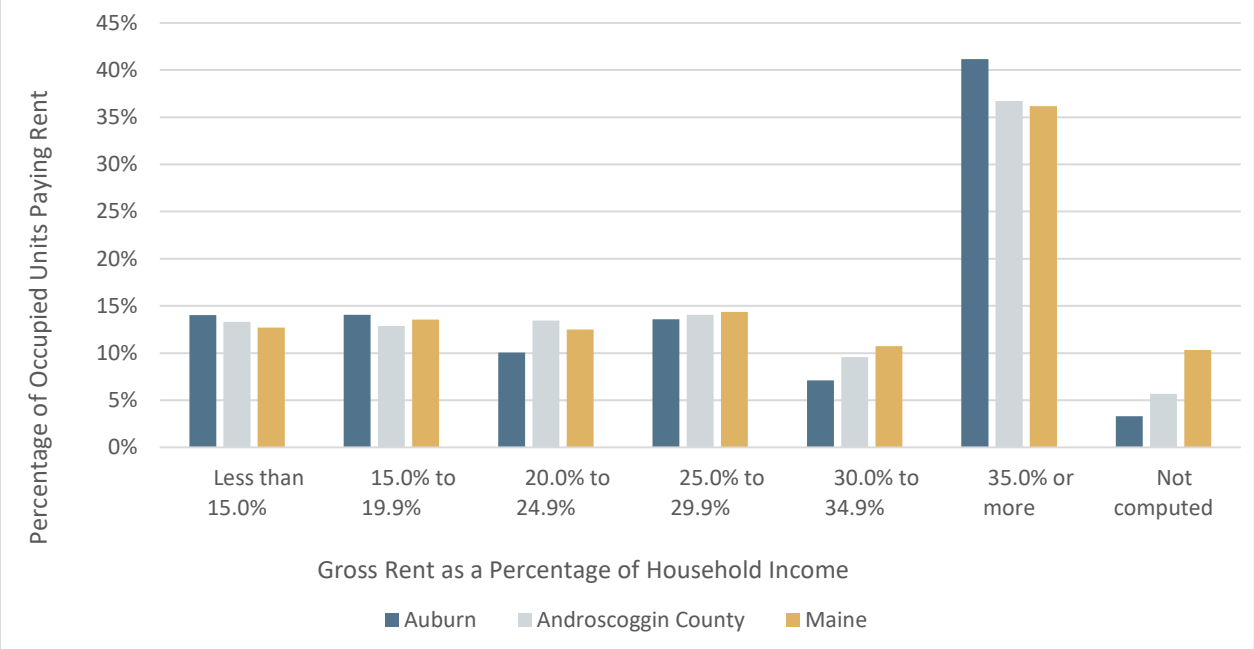
Figure 7.10: Median Rent



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Similarly, the City also has a higher percentage of renter households paying 35% or more of their household income for rent. Approximately 41% of households in occupied rental units (1,700 households) pay more than 35% of their household income on rent. Nearly half (48.3%) pay more than 30%.

Figure 7.11: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income



Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

With housing costs increasing faster than wage increases in the region, households must pay more for adequate housing. For current households, renters are far more cost-burdened than homeowners, with

46.7% of renter households (1,994 households) paying more than 30% of their household income on rent. More than 60% of renter households have an annual household income less than $50,000, and 74% have a household income less than $75,000. This group of low- and moderate-income renters are especially vulnerable as housing costs rise. The City has seen an increase in the development of new rental housing in recent years; however, these units are largely market rate and do not adequately address the housing needs of current renters in Auburn.

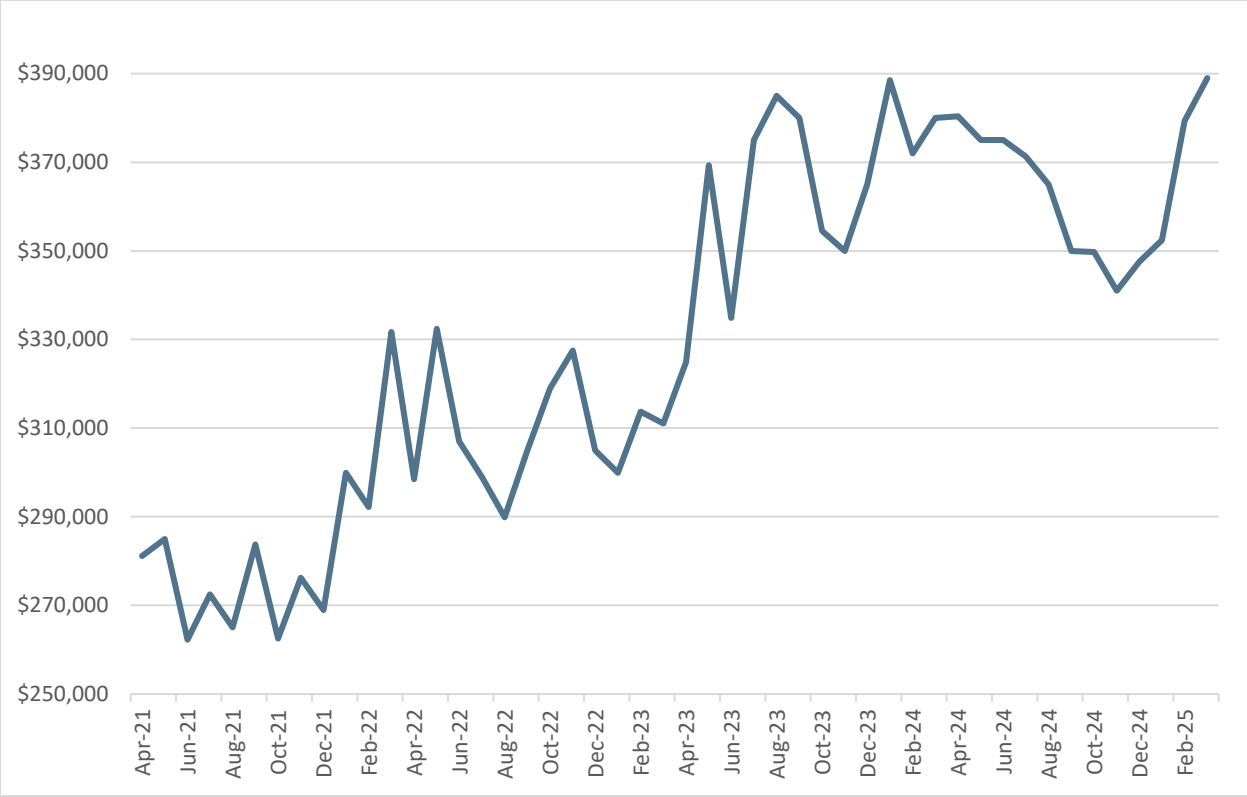
Table 7.3: Tenure by Housing Costs and Household Income

	Auburn		Androscoggin County		Maine	
Renter Housing Units						
Renter households paying 30% or more of household income on housing costs	1,994	46.7%	6,668	43.8%	65,062	42.5%
Renter households with income less than $50,000	2,635	61.7%	8,947	58.8%	77,864	50.9%
Renter households with income less than $75,000	3,160	74.0%	11,685	76.8%	103,344	67.5%
Owned Housing Units						
Owner households paying 30% or more of household income on housing costs	1,365	22.2%	6,488	20.7%	95,088	21.8%
Owner households with income less than $50,000	1,166	18.9%	7,501	23.9%	114,587	26.3%
Owner households with income less than $75,000	2,409	39.1%	13,420	42.7%	188,249	43.2%

Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

In addition to rental housing affordability challenges, 22.2% of owner households are considered cost burdened. Rising property taxes and increases in costs for home maintenance are impacting homeowners. New homeownership opportunities are increasingly out of reach for low- and moderate-income households, including renters who may be looking to purchase a home or homeowners looking to downsize. The median listing price in the Lewiston-Auburn Metro Area increased 32.4% in just four years from March 2021 ($293,750) to March 2025 ($389,000). While the housing market in the region remains more affordable than some other metro regions in the state, including southern and coastal Maine, home prices and rents in Auburn are now unaffordable for most current Auburn residents.

Figure 7.12: Median Listing Price (Lewiston-Auburn Metro Area)



Source: Realtor.com

While rents and home prices have increased substantially in Auburn, housing costs remain lower than those of the greater Portland area or other coastal areas in Maine. As a result, migration trends indicate that people are moving within Maine to Auburn at higher rates compared to Portland and the state as a whole, likely due to lower housing costs. This trend is making it increasingly difficult for existing low- and moderate-income Auburn residents to access housing.

Table 7.4: Place of Residence One Year Ago

	Auburn, ME	Portland, ME	Maine
Population 1 year and over	24,017	67,585	1,365,152
Same house	84.0%	82.4%	88.8%
Different house (in the U.S. or abroad)	16.0%	17.6%	11.2%
Different house in the U.S.	15.9%	16.5%	10.9%
Same County	10.4%	7.9%	5.5%
Different County	5.6%	8.6%	5.4%
Same state	4.3%	2.6%	2.6%

	Auburn, ME	Portland, ME	Maine
Different state	1.3%	6.0%	2.8%
Abroad	0.1%	1.1%	0.3%

Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Cost of Construction

In addition to growing demand for housing in the State and region, increasing construction and labor costs have also contributed to rising home prices. Housing production costs have steadily increased in the past few years across the country. Table 7.5 shows the total construction cost and cost per square foot for a typical single-family home.

Table 7.5: Average Construction Cost of a Typical Single-Family Home*

Year	Total Construction Cost	Cost Per Square Foot
2011	$184,125	$80
2013	$246,453	$95
2015	$289,415	$103
2017	$237,760	$86
2019	$296,792	$114
2022	$392,241	$153
2024	$428,215	$162

**Based on the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Construction Cost Survey to home builders; typical home size varies by year*

Source: National Association of Home Builders, Costs of Constructing a Home, 2024

Housing Production Needs

The State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study, completed in 2023, calculated the number of additional housing units needed to remedy the historic underproduction of homes over time, and the number of homes needed by 2030 to meet the state's population projections. In total, the study estimates that Androscoggin County needs 6,500 additional housing units to address underproduction (3,800 units) and support projected growth (based on a high population growth scenario). Based on current breakdown of population and jobs in the county, Auburn would need to produce 1,300 – 1,400 new housing units to support this goal.

Table 7.6: Androscoggin County Future Housing Needs, 2020 – 2030

	Housing Units
Historic Underproduction	3,800
Future Need - Low*	2,200
Future Need - High*	2,700
Total New Homes Needed – Low Estimate	6,000
Total New Homes Needed – High Estimate	6,500

Source: State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study

In addition to housing demand due to underproduction and projected population change, the City should consider specific housing needs as a result of demographic shifts. As noted in the Population and Demographics section of this report, Androscoggin County (similar to the state) is expected to see significant growth in all age cohorts for ages 65 and over through 2042, while age cohorts for those under age 20 are expected to decline. As a result of this shift, there is and will continue to be a demand for housing for older adults (including senior housing developments, assisted living facilities, and Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] accessible housing) and smaller housing types. At the same time, long-term planning should consider the projected demographics and housing needs beyond 2042. Investing and encouraging housing that can meet the needs of different age and demographic groups or that can be transitioned easily can help to ensure that the City does not have a future mismatch of housing types and households (e.g., a surplus of assisted living units and lack of housing for families with children).

The City of Auburn Housing Study, completed in May 2025, identified key factors related to housing demand in Auburn, including demographic changes and affordability challenges. Overall housing production has not kept pace with demand, but more specifically, the type, size, and cost of homes being built are not meeting the needs of the community. There is a mismatch between the size of households and the size of homes, with 70% of households being one- or two-person households while only 20% of housing units are studio or one-bedroom units. Conversely, 61% of housing units have three or more bedrooms while only 17% of households have four or more people. Many one- and two-person households are comprised of young adults (ages 18 to 24) or adults over age 65 (both cohorts that have increased in recent years), necessitating consideration for specific housing needs, including ADA accessible units, access to transportation, and amenities.

In addition to changing demographics, affordability is a challenge for current residents and households seeking housing in Auburn. Homeownership is becoming further out of reach for most households as prices rise faster than incomes. Higher interest rates compared to five years ago are also a limiting factor for potential home buyers. Low-income households are facing a shortage of rental options, with a majority of renter households being cost-burdened.

According to the City of Auburn Housing Study, Auburn is on track to build 720 new homes by 2030, which would fall short of the 1,300+ goal by at least 580 units. Of the 1,300 units needed, the Housing Study identified a need for 530 new rental housing units and 770 units for homeownership with a specific need for rental units that are affordable to low-income households and starter homes for those earning the median income.

Recent and Proposed Housing Development

In the years since the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has seen an increase in housing development. In 2022 and 2023, the City issued permits for two new multifamily apartment buildings on Tailwind Court (total of 48 units), two four-story apartment buildings at Mount Auburn Avenue (total of 102 units), and a new multibuilding development at Stable Ridge. Phase 1 of the Stable Ridge development was approved in 2023 and consists of five 12-unit buildings (total of 60 units). Phases 2 and 3 are planned, with each phase expected to include an additional 60 units.

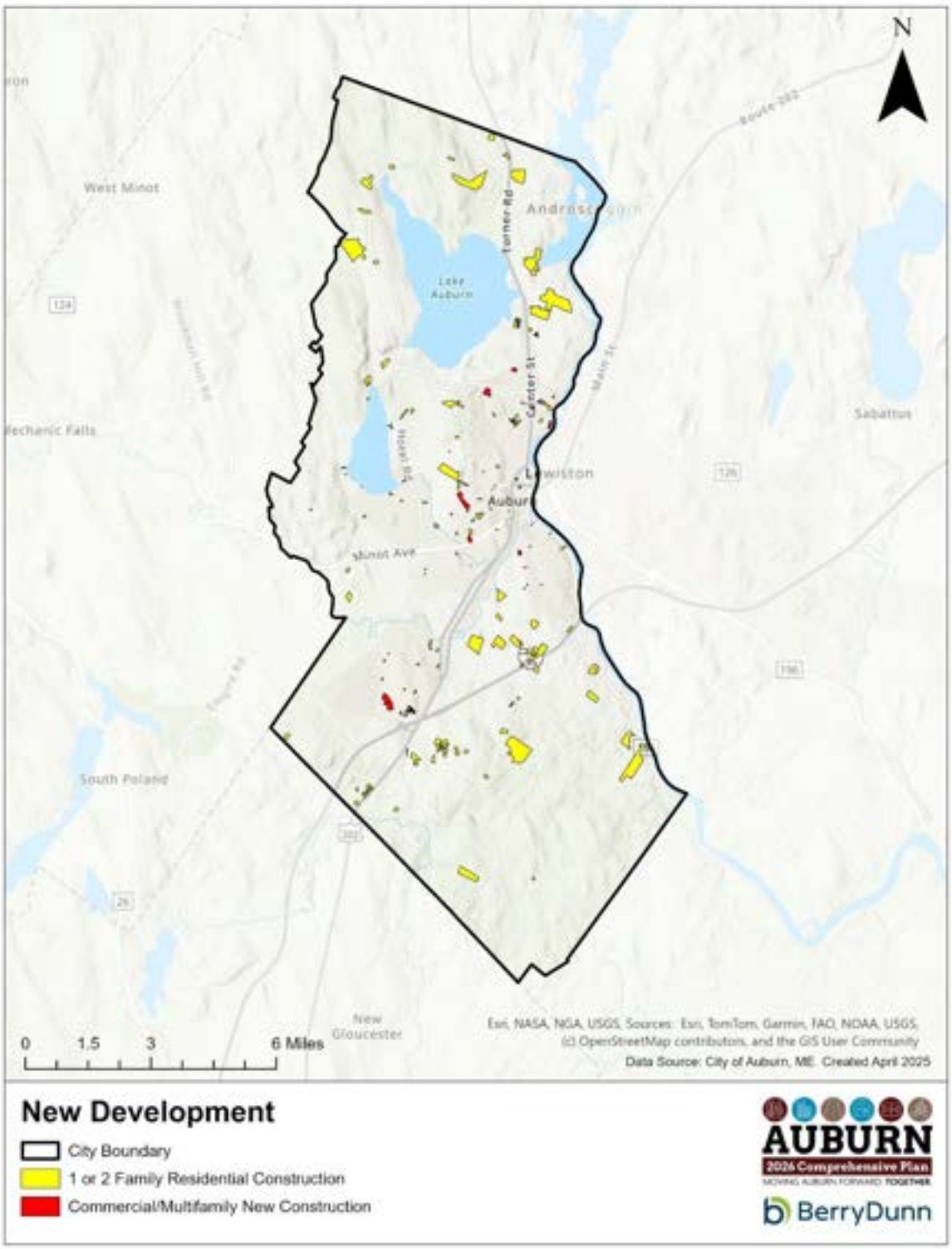
Other projects recently approved or under review by the Planning Board, but not yet under construction include the following: [7]

- Stetson Road – 160 units proposed
- West Shore Village LLC – 48- unit multifamily development at Adamian Drive
- Broad Street Farms – 12 two-family homes (total of 24 units)
- 1315 Minot Avenue – four multifamily buildings consisting of 24 units total
- Danville Corner Road – 21 two-family homes (total of 42 units)

After several years of minimal or no net new housing growth, the City is seeing renewed interest from developers. New and proposed housing development is responding to a greater demand for smaller units and rental housing options; however, all of the projects noted above are market rate developments. In addition, much of the City's new residential development is outside of downtown Auburn, in areas that are not easily accessible by transit or walking.

[7] Fischer, Tina. April 1, 2025. "City of Auburn has Multiple Housing Projects in the Works." *MaineBiz*. Accessed April 24, 2025. https://www.mainebiz.biz/article/city-of-auburn-has-multiple-housing-projects-in-the-works

Figure 7.13: New Approved Development 2015 – 2025 (YTD)



Affordable Housing

Auburn has a long history of providing housing and supporting housing programs for low-income individuals and families. The Auburn Housing Authority (AHA) was established in 1966 by the City of Auburn. The AHA maintains 177 units of public housing across five developments serving income-eligible households. Two of these developments, including 97 units, are designated for older adults (ages 62 and over) and people living with disabilities.

The AHA also administers HUD programs that provide affordable housing, including the Housing Choice Voucher program, the Project-Based Rental Assistance Housing program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. The Project-Based Rental Assistance Housing program provides subsidies to project owners for eligible low-income families. The AHA has 285 units across three developments in this program. The LIHTC program provides tax credits for the development of income-restricted affordable housing units. There are currently 86 LIHTC units across three developments.

Homelessness

The 2020 – 2024 Consolidated Plan for Auburn and Lewiston (Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] program plan), indicated that approximately 51 Androscoggin County residents were experiencing homelessness, including 13 children under age 18, per the 2020 HUD point-in-time count of individuals experiencing homelessness. This number increased to 214, for the January 2024 point-in-time count. City staff indicated there are 190 active individuals in the City's system (as of April 2025) who are seeking homelessness services, and that the total number of individuals who are unhoused is likely close to 300. The City's Community Development division and regional service providers all indicated an increase in demand for social services in recent years, which could indicate a growing homeless population in the region.

Challenges and Opportunities

While issues related to an aging housing stock are common throughout Maine, Auburn's housing stock is even older than the state's, with 58% of housing units built before 1960. In addition, with more than 40% of units being renter-occupied, ensuring that property owners maintain safe and quality housing for tenants has been an ongoing challenge for the City. In an effort to address housing quality, the City has established several programs to help property owners make needed repairs to their homes and rental units and to encourage rehabilitation of dilapidated housing. As construction costs have increased, these programs are especially important to support safe housing and allow homeowners to stay in their homes.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, homeownership and rental housing were considered relatively affordable. As housing in the greater Portland area has become increasingly unaffordable, more people have sought homes in less expensive housing markets, such as Auburn. Approximately 29% of the individuals who moved to Androscoggin County between 2021 and 2022 moved from Cumberland

County.[8] Growing demand for housing from in-migration has decreased affordability for existing residents. In the City's 2025 Community Development Survey, affordable housing was the top priority that respondents would like the City to focus on. While the City has seen an increase in market rate housing development since 2022, there has not been significant increase in income-restricted affordable housing in Auburn.

There is a need for a variety of housing types to meet different needs, including affordable homeownership opportunities, senior housing, workforce housing aligned with the needs of specific growth industries in the region, and housing for low-income households and the City's unhoused population. While new market rate housing is attracting people from outside of the region, including those in the Greater Portland area seeking less expensive housing options, new and proposed housing is not adequately addressing the needs of the Auburn community with regard to affordability, including for existing residents that are cost-burdened, those looking to transition or downsize, and to accommodate the workforce. According to the City of Auburn Housing Study, the City is not on track to meet the goal of 1,300 new homes by 2030. Despite an increase in housing units permitted in 2022 and 2023, the City is still expected to fall short of the 1,300 homes goal by 580 units. In addition, a dedicated effort to address housing affordability for renters and home buyers is critical to meeting the housing needs of the Auburn community. In addition to increasing housing supply to meet the specific needs of the community, there is a need to support ongoing initiatives to expand housing resources and services, including homelessness services, tenant and landlord programs, and financing education.

Sources

Addressing Homelessness in Auburn, Maine – Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness

Auburn Housing Authority

Auburn Housing Needs Assessment, October 2024

City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan, 2010

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Maine State Economist, Maine City and Town Population Projections 2042

Maine State Economist, Maine State and County Population Projections 2042

Maine State Housing Authority, Maine's Housing Outlook, January 2025

State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study, 2023

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

[8] City of Auburn. *Housing Need in Auburn, Maine: City of Auburn Housing Study*. May 2025. HR&A Advisors.

Transportation

Introduction

Auburn, located along the Androscoggin River and situated approximately 25 miles from Portland and 35 miles from Augusta, serves as a population, employment, and transportation center for Androscoggin County and the region. Since 2010, Auburn's population has increased by 5.4%, marking a recovery from a decline experienced between 1970 and 2010. Recent population change, supported by projections of continued increases of population in the coming decade, indicates that Auburn is poised for further growth in the coming years. Ensuring corresponding transportation infrastructure to support expected and planned changes will be vital. Enhancing the City's transportation network so that it is safe and efficient for vehicular traffic, public transportation, as well as expanded and integrated bike and pedestrian networks will help accommodate rising population and increased traffic. It will also help with promoting sustainable modes of transportation, reducing congestion, and improving the quality of life for residents. Investing in these areas will strengthen Auburn's appeal as a vibrant, accessible, and forward-thinking community.

Auburn has set goals to promote alternative transportation since the adoption of its 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Since then, it has initiated several ambitious projects to plan for a safe, efficient, multimodal transportation network. Several projects have set the stage for proactive improvements to Auburn's transportation system, including the following: the Auburn Safety Action Plan (currently underway in conjunction with ATRC and MaineDOT); the Reimagine Washington Street initiative (underway); adoption of a Complete Streets Policy; the 2019 Bridging the Gaps: A Long-Range Facilities Plan for Bicycling and Walking in the ATRC Region; the 2019 Auburn Pedestrian Safety Mitigation Plan; the 2020 Court Street Improvement Study (in conjunction with ATRC); the 2020 Strategic Plan, which included goals for a safe and connected pedestrian environment; and years of planning for and beginning construction on transportation and land use changes recommended by the New Auburn Village Center Plan.

Roadway System

Auburn is traversed by key State highways, including Maine State Route 202, and Route 4 and Maine Turnpike I-95. The Maine Turnpike serves as a key connector for Auburn to Portland and other areas in Southern Maine. The Maine Turnpike also serves as a connector to the rest of the state as it leads to the Northeast.

Route 202 serves as the key connector for City residents to access the Maine Turnpike, allowing many residents to travel to Southern Maine for work. Route 202 is also a connector for Auburn and the City of Lewiston. Route 4 is the key connector for visitors traveling from the South to recreate near Auburn and in the Sugarloaf Region. MaineDOT 2024-2026 outlines improvements proposed for Auburns roadway infrastructure. In 2026, MaineDOT plans to repave Court Street from Union Street to Turner Street; repave Minot Avenue from the rotary north on Minot Avenue to Oak Hill Road; repave Western Avenue

from Minot Avenue to Court Street and improve pedestrian crossings; and signalize the intersection of Washington Street (Route 202), Beech Hill Road and Danville Corner Road. The City is currently in the process of conducting corridor study for Minot Avenue and Route 202.

The corridor studies are expected to support the City in improving walkability and bikeability in alignment with the community's desire for safer roadways and improved mobility. Additionally, Chapter 46 of the City's Code of Ordinances, has an Article for Design and Construction Standards.

Auburn Public Works Department

The APW consists of approximately 60 full-time employees, including administration and management and roughly 48 crew and mechanics. The existing equipment includes 23 dual trash/plow trucks, two road graders, four loaders, two back hoes, two excavators, five sidewalk tractors, and eight support vehicles. This and other equipment at APW accounts for over 100 pieces of rolling stock that the department is constantly using and managing.

The main APW facility is located at 296 Gracelawn Road and serves as the central hub for operations, including administration, highway maintenance, parks, solid waste management, traffic safety, and fleet services; fleet services include the maintenance of the City's fire, ambulance, police, and municipal vehicles. The facility contains a carpenter shop, warm storage with two washing bays (including catch basins for separating cleaning fluid), an unconditioned storage building, and a sand and salt shed.

The APW oversees the maintenance and plowing of 540 lane miles of roads, as well as 60 miles of sidewalks. The team transitions to catch basin cleaning and street sweeping after winter as part of their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) compliance. The team also maintains culverts and catch basins, conducts street repairs, patches potholes, stripes crosswalks, installs and takes down seasonal decorations, and supports the Engineering Department on small projects. The arborist crew has a bucket truck and maintenance equipment to trim, remove, and grind trees and stumps. The team maintains the City's green spaces, cemeteries, and park spaces as well as municipal buildings and school grounds. They handle the collection of trash and recycling across the community, ensuring waste is properly managed and transported to the appropriate facilities.

APW's vision is to exceed resident expectations and strive for continuous improvement at all levels, maintain and improve upon infrastructure, and prepare for new growth through planning, teamwork, communication, and exceptional service. The department's values are safety, integrity, fiscal responsibility, accountability, transparency, teamwork, excellence, and sustainability.

APW is currently working on the following reconstruction and maintenance projects:

- **2024 Reconstruction Project** at Fourth Street (Broad Street to End) and Marian Drive (Broad Street to Sherwood Drive), which includes road and sidewalk reconstruction, pedestrian lighting, and utility upgrades.

- **2025 Reconstruction Project** at Granite Street (Fern Street to Hillsdale Street), Davis Avenue (Lake Street to End), and Hillsdale Street (Granite Street to Lake Street) focuses on road and sidewalk reconstruction, drainage upgrades, slipform curbing, and utility upgrades.
- **Merrow Road Reconstruction Project** from Hotel Road to Minot Avenue involves road reconstruction, drainage upgrades, and utility upgrades.
- **Blanchard Road Reconstruction Project** includes road reconstruction, drainage installation, and slipform curbing.
- **2024 Reclamation Project** at South Witham Road (South Main Street to Harmons Corner Road) and Harmons Corner Road (South Witham Road to Old Danville Road) involves road reclamation and reconstruction with drainage upgrades.
- **2025 Reclamation Project** at Hersey Hill Road (North Auburn Road to Minot town line) and Perkins Ridge Road (Garfield Road to West Shore Road) includes road reclamation and reconstruction with drainage upgrades and some curbing installation. Gendron will start with Hersey Hill Road reclamation on April 22 and 23, 2025, followed by drainage upgrades.
- **Hotel Road and Manley Road Pavement Restoration Project** from Minot Avenue to Poland Spring Road and Hotel Road to Rodman Road entails completing punch list items and overlaying the last section of Hotel Road from Minot Avenue to Manley Road. Gendron will restart in spring/summer 2025.
- **Pownal Road Pavement Restoration Project** from Old Danville Road to Trapp Road is planned by Pike to begin in May 2025.
- **Trapp Road Pavement Restoration Project** from Pownal Road to Town Line will also begin in May 2025 by Pike.
- **Sopers Mill Road Pavement Restoration Project** from Penley Corner Road to Town Line is set to start in May 2025 by Pike.
- **Mount Auburn Avenue Pavement Restoration Project** from BJs and Home Depot entrances to Turner Street involves a mill and fill for pavement restoration. Gendron plans to begin this work in summer 2025.

In FY24-25, APW had a State/local road assistance budget of $400,000, which has been the same since FY23. Given the interconnectedness and range of work, APW works closely with all City agencies, especially the Department of Engineering. It also collaborates with the Lewiston Department of Public Works and does joint training. APW recently onboarded Brightly Asset Essentials, a cloud-based asset management software, to streamline its operations. The system provides a centralized work order management system, preventive maintenance scheduling, inventory tracking, mobile access, GIS integration, and asset information for data-driven decision-making.

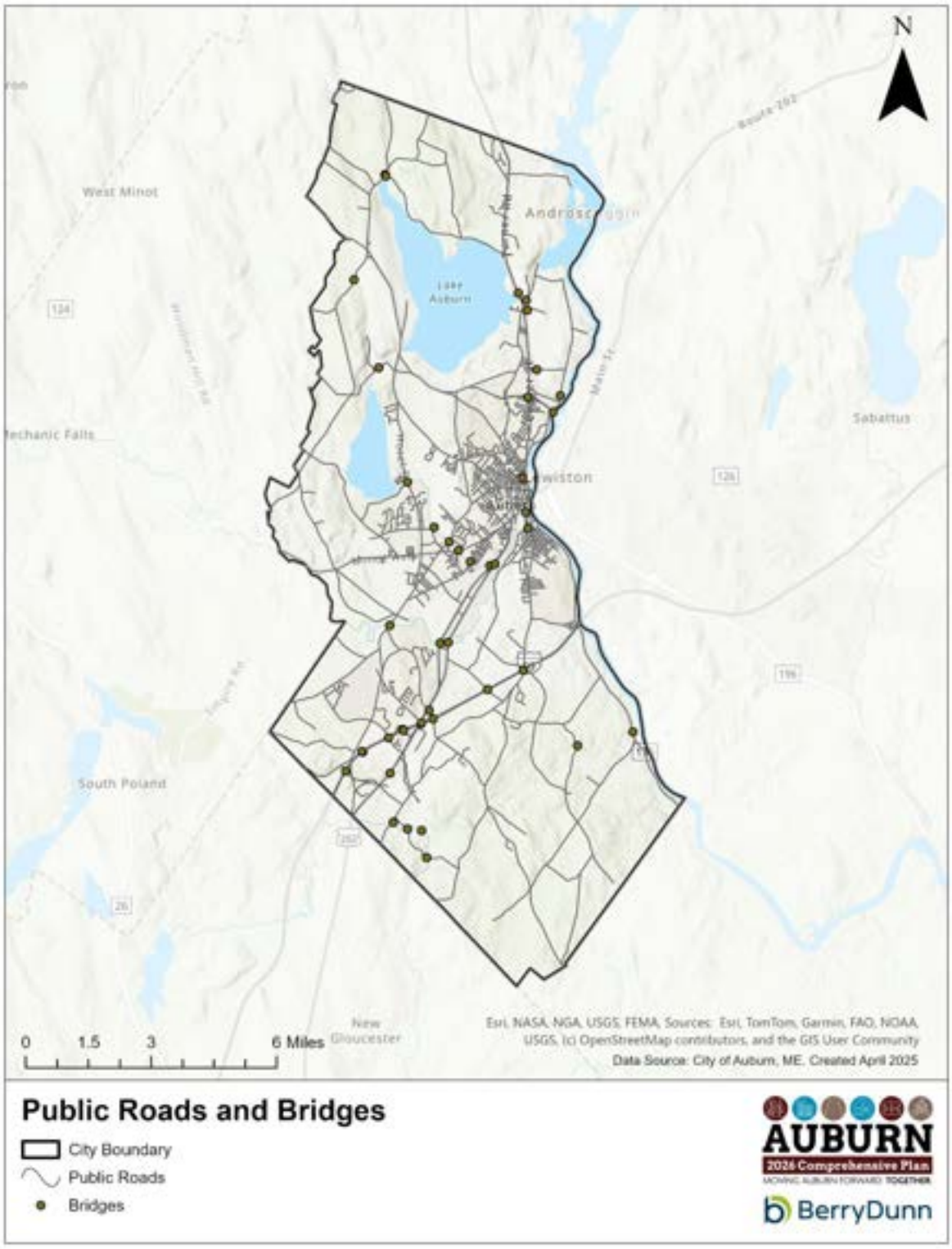
The Auburn Fire Department intends to temporarily use 67 Kittyhawk Avenue while the new public safety building is being constructed. Once the fire department moves to the new building, 67 Kittyhawk will be transitioned to APW for additional space. Future occupation and fit-out needs to best utilize the space are still being considered and planned.

The APW is currently the only public works department in Maine accredited by the American Public Works Association (APWA). This accreditation recognizes excellence in the agency's operations and management and reflects the agency's commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. This prestigious acknowledgment helps in recruiting and retention.

Engineering Division

The Engineering Division plays an important role in maintaining and improving the City's quality of life through planning, compliance, and implementation related to City infrastructure and development. At the time of preparation of this Comprehensive Plan Update, this small department consists of just three people: a professionally licensed project engineer, director, and a project inspector. Seasonally (April through November), the team oversees construction of City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects. The rest of the time is spent preparing for the construction season and designing and bidding projects. The group makes recommendations and provides estimates and due diligence for the next CIP. Typically, the list for the CIP goes out in December and is approved by June, with in-house projects being designed from September through December for the following year's construction season. Given the limited staff and capacity, keeping up with the volume of work continues to be a challenge for the department. During the construction season, the inspector is particularly busy overseeing compliance of all public and private construction in the City.

Figure 8.1: Public Roads and Bridges



Traffic Counts

Auburn faces significant traffic and infrastructure challenges as the population grows, and as both a jobs center and a base for commuters. The City's infrastructure is stressed during peak morning and evening hours due to the dispersion of employment across the north Auburn retail district, southern industrial parks near the turnpike interchange, and the downtown area. A substantial number of Auburn residents commute to Lewiston, home to the region's largest employers, or greater Portland, attracted by Auburn's more affordable housing. At the same time, more commuters who live elsewhere flow into Auburn for work than those who leave. This commuter flow, combined with the City's role in a regional transportation network, can strain local traffic patterns. The Androscoggin and Little Androscoggin Rivers further complicate traffic flow, creating natural barriers that restrict land access and funnel traffic across four key bridges between Lewiston and Auburn. Table 8.1 shows the average daily traffic volume for 2014, 2020, and 2023 at key corridors identified by the City. This data illustrates traffic pattern changes on key commuter corridors over the past decade.

Table 8.1: MaineDOT Average Daily Traffic Volume Over Time

Road Location	2014	2020	2023
Route 4			
N/O North River Road	22,910	21,160	23,790
W/O Turner Street	-	6,200	7,320
N/O Court Street	7,210	6,300	7,320
Minot Avenue			
At Minot TL	11,930	10,390	-
E/O Western Avenue	-	14,100	16,250
Washington Street			
NE/O Miami Avenue	8,150	7,890	8,940
N/O Adams Street	14,480	13,600	15,600
Riverside Drive			
NW/O Dunn Street	-	6,390	6,640
N/O Vickery Road	5,130	4,340	5,790
Turner Street			
N/O Court Street	-	5,220	5,990
SW/O Center Street	7,560	6,370	7,020
Elm Street			

Road Location	2014	2020	2023
NE/O Minot Avenue	-	5,560	4,580
E/O Spring Street	-	3,370	3,580
Park Avenue			
S/O Summer Street	-	3,060	4,280
N/O Summer Street	-	4,490	4,270

Source: MaineDOT, Traffic Division

From 2014 to 2020, traffic volume trends in Auburn's key corridors showed a marked decline, largely attributed to COVID-19-related travel impacts. By 2023, traffic volumes generally recovered and increased, exceeding previous levels, which indicates heightened commuting activity and economic recovery. Variations in traffic patterns suggest local influences such as roadwork or development. Noteworthy growth was observed between 2020 and 2023 on corridors like Route 4 north of North River Road, Washington Street north of Adams Street, and Minot Avenue east of Western Avenue. However, Turner Street north of Court Street and Washington Street northeast of Miami Avenue experienced minimal growth during the same period. Both locations on Elm Street exhibited decreased growth from 2020 to 2023, corresponding with employment relocations further away from the Downtown Auburn area.

Overall, the upward trend from 2020 to 2023 points to growing transportation demand in Auburn, highlighting the need for the City to collaborate closely with MaineDOT on maintaining and, where possible, improving the transportation network. Current collaboration focuses on implementing infrastructure improvements, such as adding travel lanes and reconfiguring intersections to enhance connectivity. These efforts are largely reactive, as the City strives to meet current needs. Looking forward, Auburn plans to address ongoing pressures from population changes and regional employment shifts, which continue to place demands on its transportation infrastructure. Additional efforts are needed to identify priority routes and develop public transportation solutions to accommodate future growth and commuting trends.

Crash Data

In Auburn, the vehicle crash data for 2023 revealed a total of 922 crashes, with 233 resulting in injuries, meaning 25.3% of these crashes led to injury.[9] When comparing this to historical statistics, crashes over the past decade peaked in 2017 at 955; there were fewer crashes in 2014 (770) and in 2020 (705). According to analysis of monthly trends for 2023, the highest frequency of crashes occurred in December (10.2%), followed by November (10%) and March (9.5%), likely due to adverse weather conditions such as snow and ice in the winter months. Regarding the time of day, crash patterns were

[9] MaineDOT. n.d. "Public Crash Query Tool." *Maine Department of Transportation*. Accessed April 4, 2025. https://mdotapps.maine.gov/mainecrashpublic/

highest on Thursdays and Fridays, with low numbers from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., increasing from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m., and peaking between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Most crashes in 2023 were rear-end/sideswipe incidents, accounting for 38.4% of the total, followed by intersection movement at 28.3%, and run-off-road crash types. Notably, deer-involved crashes accounted for 7.8% of incidents, while 14.1% occurred in dark, non-lighted conditions. Injury-producing crashes were most frequent on Mondays and followed similar time-of-day trends to the total crashes in 2023.

Examining high crash location (HCL) data for 2023 revealed the intersection with the greatest injury rate was Hotel Road and Kittyhawk Avenue, with 17 crashes and an injury rate of 58.8%.[10] The intersection with the greatest number of injuries was North Washington Street, the Route 95 Ramp, and South Washington Street, with 19 injuries and an injury rate of 38.5%. Other significant intersections showed varying percentages of injury crashes. These findings underscore the need for targeted traffic safety interventions in Auburn, particularly at identified HCLs and during peak rush hours to mitigate crash severity and frequency. Additionally, North Washington Street is a busy route and is frequently used by residents and visitors, producing pass through traffic, and hosts many businesses along the route as it enters Minot Avenue near Downtown Auburn.

Parking

The majority of Auburn's Downtown parking options are on-street parking, which is sufficient for the parking needs of the City. The Mechanics Row parking garage is the only garage Downtown. The City has approximately five public parking lots off of Mt. Auburn Ave, including Turner Center garage. Auburn has a Park and Ride off the Route 95 Ramp. The City also offers permitted and public parking in the Great Falls Plaza parking lot. Parking has not been a limitation for the City.

Auburn has adjusted land use ordinance parking requirements in the City over the past few years to reduced off-street parking requirements. The City made this change to encourage higher density development and promote use of the public transportation system.

Regional Transportation

The Citylink Bus System serves Auburn and Lewiston, reducing car use and enhancing road safety with essential public transit routes. In Auburn, key routes include Auburn Malls, New Auburn, Minot Avenue, and CMCC, operating on weekday and Saturday schedules to connect residents to major locations. Auburn Malls and New Auburn routes run hourly on weekdays from 6:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., with a reduced two-hour headway on Saturdays.

Regional routes extend service to Portland, Lisbon, and Farmington. Western Maine Transportation Services provides the Lisbon Connection, linking Lewiston and Auburn to Lisbon, while the Green Line connects these cities to Farmington. In July 2024, Concord Coach Lines suspended services to Portland

[10] Ibid.

and Augusta and was replaced by MaineDOT's new "LAP" Commuter Bus, which connects Lewiston and Auburn to Portland and supports workforce commuting.

A recent study prepared by the John T. Gorman Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Portland, reviewed access to transportation for families across Maine. The study found families experienced challenges in accessing transportation options and vehicles. An estimated 40,000 households in Maine do not have a vehicle and face challenges going to work, school, medical appointments, and grocery stores.

In Androscoggin County, there are an estimated 4,130 households without a car, and the study estimates that the annual transportation budget for a family of four (two adults and two children) is $15,921. Androscoggin County has the lowest estimated annual budget for transportation among all Maine counties. Affordability and access have more acute impacts to rural Mainers, young Mainers, and older Mainers. It is estimated that roughly 10% of adults aged 20 to 29 and 11% of adults over 75 do not have driver's licenses.

At the community-level, the study recommends that communities examine potential solutions like car-share programs, ride-share programs, workforce transportation programs, microtransit and regional public transit options, and volunteer driver programs.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Auburn's dedication to walkability is highlighted in its 2010 and 2021 comprehensive plans, which emphasize developing a well-designed road network that accommodates all users, including cars, buses, bikes, and pedestrians. The City's strategy promotes traditional neighborhood growth patterns in areas like Danville and New Auburn by fostering interconnected streets that provide multiple travel pathways and discourage rigid street hierarchies. This approach is pivotal for efficient transportation and for enhancing safety.

The current state of walkability in Auburn presents several critical areas of concern, as highlighted in the Auburn's 2019 Pedestrian Safety Mitigation Plan. Based on feedback from the 2017 Community Pedestrian Safety Forum, key areas where residents reported feeling unsafe include the following:

1. **Court Street in Downtown Auburn:** Noted for inadequate crosswalk visibility and malfunctioning signals.
2. **Minot Avenue, Washington Street, and the rotary:** Noted issues with speeding vehicles.
3. **Center Street toward the mall:** Noted issues with speeding traffic and a lack of visible crosswalks.
4. **Mount Auburn Avenue at the mall and Turner Street:** Noted issues with a lack of pedestrian access from nearby apartments.

5. **Veterans Memorial Bridge:** Noted issues with high-speed traffic and no pedestrian accommodations.

These concerns emphasize the necessity for targeted improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility in Auburn.

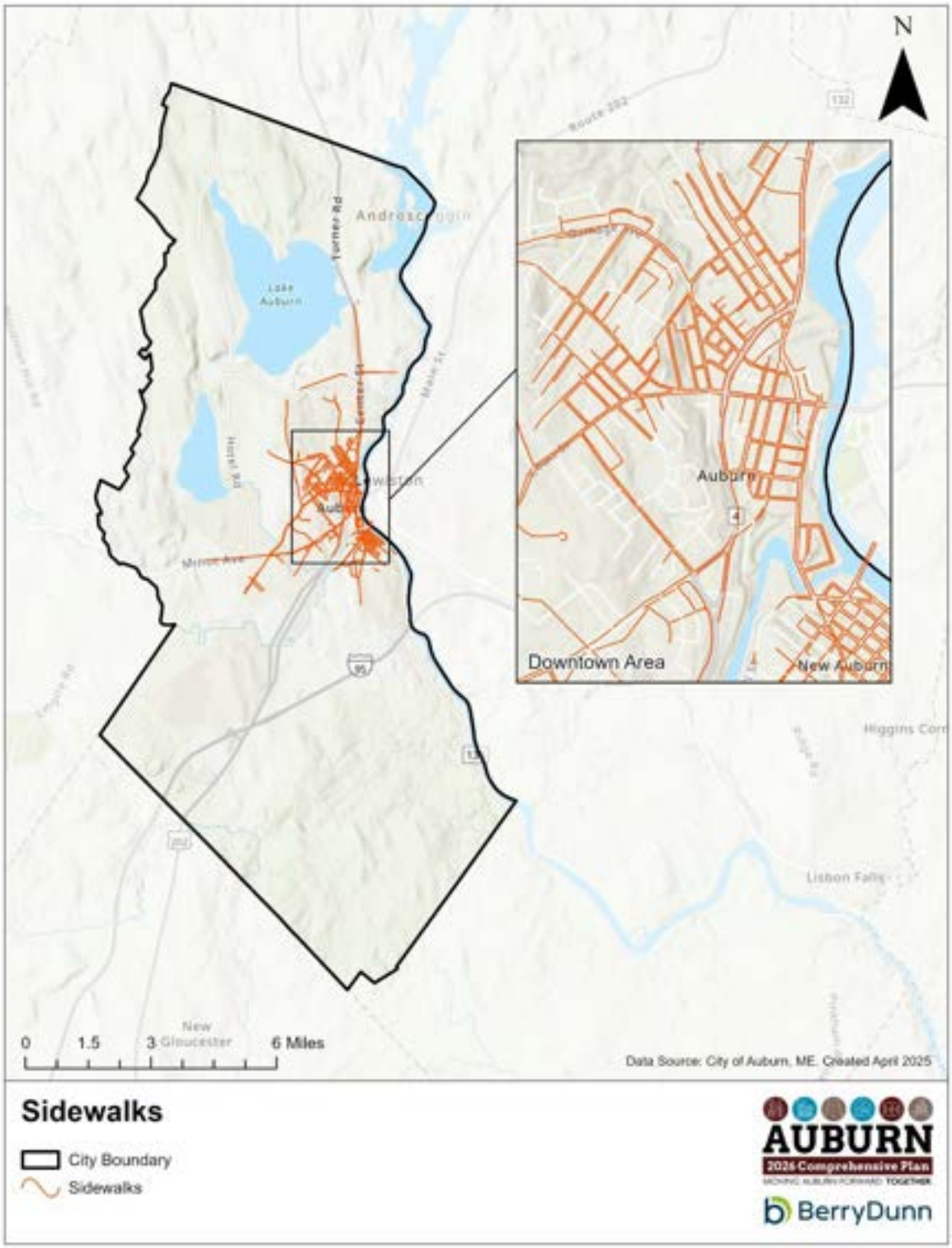
Auburn is making strides with infrastructural improvements and tackling existing challenges through projects like the 2023 Reconstruction Project on Second Street and Dunn Street. This initiative included road and sidewalk reconstruction, enhanced lighting, utility upgrades, and intersection realignment. Another significant effort, the 2024 Reconstruction Project on Fourth Street and Marian Drive, plans similar enhancements and is critical to improving urban street infrastructure comprehensively.

In terms of development and planning, Auburn actively encourages the inclusion of sidewalks and bikeways in new developments. The Planning Board approval process facilitates detailed discussions and conditions through which applications are evaluated, and decisions are made. Municipal code provisions under Section 46-3 emphasize the Complete Streets Policy, which aims to create an integrated transportation system accommodating all users. This policy highlights the importance of pavement markings, sidewalk lighting, ADA compliance, and supportive neighborhood designs to enhance walkability and road use flexibility.

Auburn's commitment to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is further demonstrated by various plans and initiatives. The 2015 Complete Streets Guide provides comprehensive planning and design guidance to promote walking, cycling, and transit use. Chapter 46 of the City Code, established in 2017, includes standards for the planning, design, review, and maintenance of an inclusive transportation system. The 2020 Strategic Plan aligns with these objectives by planning for strong neighborhoods, improved transit systems, and increased downtown walkability. Feedback from the 2019 Pedestrian Safety Mitigation Plan continues to inform strategies for enhancing pedestrian safety and reducing accidents. Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments' (AVCOG) Bridging the Gaps Plan, updated in 2019, aims to establish a seamless bicycle and pedestrian network across the ATRC Region. New Auburn has also seen several planning efforts and studies to improve transportation and infrastructure.

Community and collaborative efforts play a vital role in advancing Auburn's goals. The Complete Streets Committee actively promotes and advises on multimodal transportation designs, offering policy recommendations to support diverse travel modes. The Bicycle Coalition of Maine partners with Auburn and MaineDOT to help ensure the safety and rights of bicyclists and pedestrians, leveraging community forums to foster a better environment for walking and cycling across the City.

Figure 8.2: Sidewalks



Rail and Air Transportation

Rail Transportation

Rail transportation is a key component of Auburn's industrial economy and regional freight movement strategy. While Auburn currently lacks passenger rail service, the city is well-positioned along the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad (SLR), part of the Genesee & Wyoming family of shortline railroads. This connection provides Auburn with direct access to three Class I railroads: Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), Canadian National (CN), and CSX.

The Auburn Intermodal Facility and the SLR line through Auburn support double-stack intermodal rail access to Montreal and onward to the West Coast via CN, making Auburn a critical node in national and international freight logistics. During its initial active period from 1994 to 2014, the Auburn-owned Intermodal Facility benefited from U.S. Customs service as an extension of the Port of Portland. Additionally, a Foreign Trade Zone designation was once held by a local development entity, but it was dissolved due to lack of client demand for the service.

Auburn's industrially zoned area is also served by the Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company (LARC). Established in 1872 to connect the downtown mill district and support the movement of raw materials, finished products, and people, LARC remains a private entity with all shares held by the cities of Lewiston (75%) and Auburn (25%). Today, the only active section of the LARC rail line is located in Auburn. LARC also owns commercial real estate in downtown Lewiston, which has contributed to that city's riverfront redevelopment.

City officials work closely with MaineDOT, SLR, and CSX to maintain safety at at-grade crossings and accommodate growth in freight and potential future passenger service.

While MaineDOT's 2011 Intercity Passenger Rail Feasibility Study outlined three options for extending passenger rail—including a connection to Montreal—the state has thus far opted not to advance those plans. A 2018 Transit Propensity Report commissioned by the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and MaineDOT also evaluated expansion to Lewiston-Auburn, resulting in interim bus connections as a placeholder for future rail service.

Passenger rail planning in Maine is heavily shaped by state administrations, whose priorities drive forward project development and funding. To date, passenger rail service to Auburn has not been a primary focus of the state's transportation agenda. However, a recent legislative resolve directing the Maine-Canadian Legislative Advisory Commission to explore connections between Maine and Montreal may reopen discussion on passenger rail service through Auburn in the future.

The Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG) identified several strategic goals for rail in its 2022 Regional Strategic Transportation Investments Plan:

- Establish passenger rail service on the SLR line between Portland and Yarmouth Junction.
- Extend the High-Speed Rail Corridor designation north of Auburn.

- Preserve and enhance freight infrastructure in support of economic growth.

Auburn remains committed to strengthening its freight rail network while remaining adaptable to future opportunities for passenger rail development.

Air Transportation

The Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport (KLEW) is a vital regional aviation asset serving corporate, charter, cargo, and recreational aviation. As designated under the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), KLEW functions as a regional reliever airport, helping reduce congestion at larger commercial airports.

The nearest Part 139 airport offering scheduled commercial service is the Portland International Jetport (PWM), located approximately 29 miles from Auburn. PWM is the primary public airport serving Auburn-area residents and businesses for commercial air travel.

Auburn's 2021 Comprehensive Plan originally included a proposal to develop an intermodal freight and passenger facility at the Auburn-Lewiston Airport. However, MaineDOT ultimately chose not to pursue that concept. The new Airport Master Plan instead focuses on aviation-specific infrastructure, including the development of additional hangars on the previously proposed intermodal site.

Key current and future priorities for the airport include:

- Construction of new hangar space to accommodate increased aviation demand.
- Strategic property boundary extensions to support growth.
- Incorporate environmental protections in sensitive areas.
- Improve ground transportation connectivity.
- Review of zoning regulations to ensure compatibility with aviation activity.
- Ensure that construction in the airport vicinity meets FAA safety and airspace standards.

The 2022 AVCOG Regional Strategic Transportation Investments Plan prioritizes investment in the Auburn-Lewiston Airport and recommends expanding general aviation services in surrounding communities such as Bethel, Oxford County, and Rangeley.

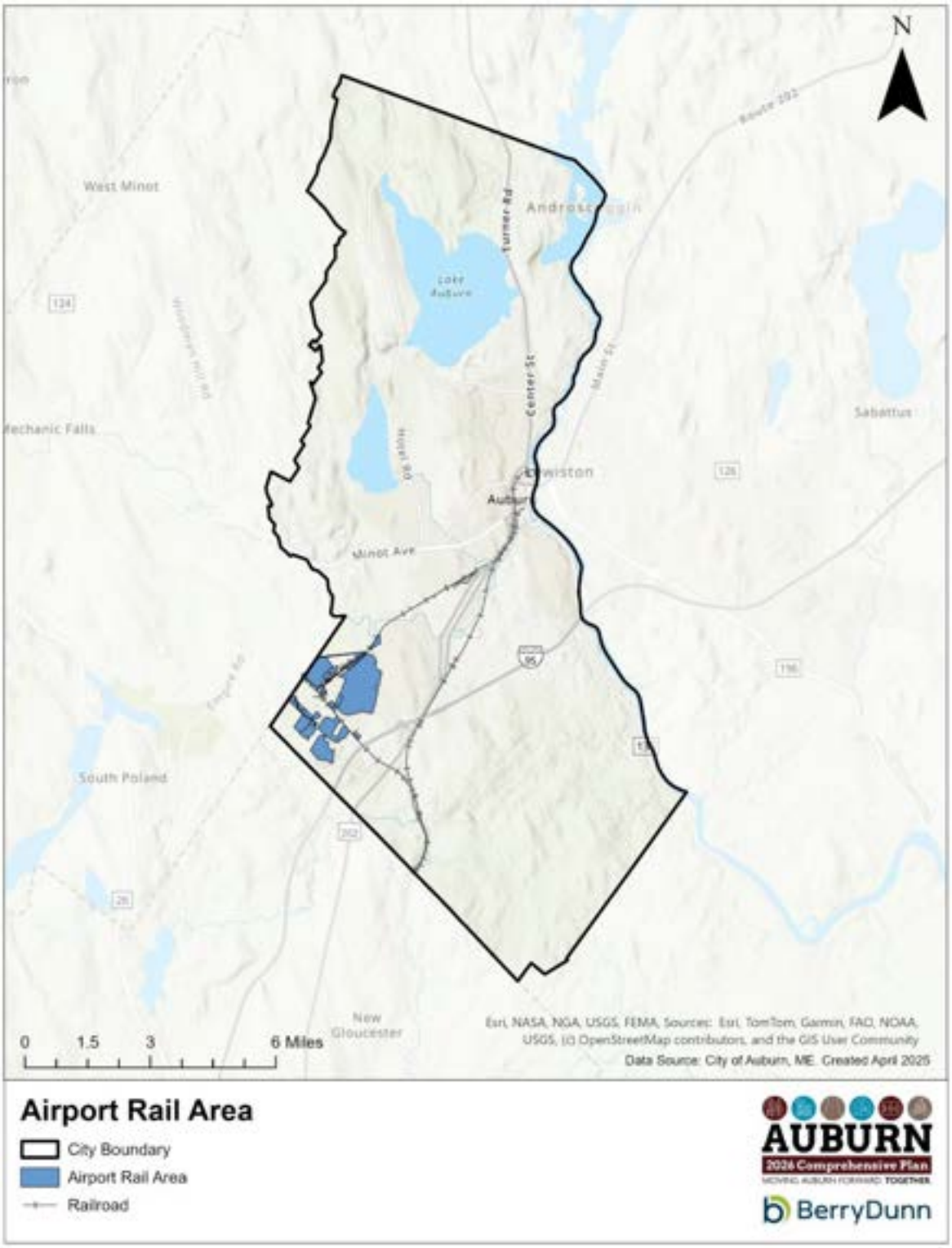
Supporting the long-term viability of KLEW will require integrated land use, transportation, and economic development policies, as well as continued attention to mitigating impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The Regional Strategic Transportation Investments adopted by the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments' (AVCOG) Executive Committee in 2022 outlined the following goals for rail and air transportation:

- Pursue investments at Auburn-Lewiston Airport.
- Pursue investments that will allow Bethel, Oxford County and Rangeley to provide general aviation services to their areas.
- Establish passenger rail service on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Rail Line between Portland and Yarmouth Junction.
- Extend Designation of High-Speed Rail Corridor north of Auburn.

A 2018 Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan Transit Propensity Report, commissioned by the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and MaineDOT to evaluate possible expansion of passenger rail service to Lewiston-Auburn. Interim bus connections were developed as intermediary step to connect Lewiston/Auburn to Portland.

Figure 8.3: Rail and Airport Infrastructure



Challenges and Opportunities

Auburn's transportation infrastructure faces several challenges affecting both mobility and road conditions. Reductions in the Auburn Malls Line have constrained public transport options, limiting residents' accessibility. Many rural roads, originally designed for lower traffic volumes, are now in poor condition, posing significant safety risks. The introduction of a new MaineDOT federal funding allocation process, where the ATRC only recommends priorities, adds uncertainty as funding priorities remain undefined. Staffing challenges, including difficulties in retaining employees and the need for additional seasonal staff, further complicate infrastructure maintenance and development. Public complaints can be common during construction seasons due to traffic disruptions, which are a consequence of needed road maintenance and reconstruction. Additionally, financial resources need to be balanced with the City's many needs year to year, not only for transportation infrastructure but for all City services and capital expenses, such as recent investments in a new Public Safety Building and High School. To address these issues, it is crucial to identify priorities and the most urgent improvements, while implementing effective maintenance plans for existing infrastructure.

Auburn, despite its transportation challenges, has a unique opportunity to transform its infrastructure and support future change through strategic improvements. Optimizing the road network to alleviate congestion during peak hours and streamline commuter flows, especially for residents traveling to major employment centers in Lewiston and Portland, is vital. Expanding the Citylink Bus System and enhancing connections within regional transit networks could increase accessibility and ease commuter burdens. Collaboration with the Complete Streets Committee and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine can help integrate bike and pedestrian pathways to reduce car dependency, promote sustainable, healthy lifestyles, and improve accessibility throughout the City. Moreover, there is a pressing need for improved maintenance through increased funding pathways and strategic planning to help ensure that both existing and new infrastructure can efficiently support the population. Collaborative efforts with MaineDOT to address traffic management and safety concerns are essential to prevent systemic strain on infrastructure.

Furthermore, exploring passenger rail and air service enhancements at the Auburn-Lewiston Airport could solidify the City's position as a regional mobility leader, fostering seamless connectivity and economic vitality. Auburn's strategic improvements, driven by proactive planning and community engagement, aim to establish the City as a vibrant, resilient, and forward-thinking hub that can accommodate future growth and development.

Sources

City of Auburn, Public Works Department

The Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center (ATRC)

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City of Auburn, 2010 Comprehensive Plan

City of Auburn, 2019 Pedestrian Mitigation Plan

ATRC, Complete Streets: A Guide to Best Management + Design Practice

City of Auburn, Safety Action Plan

2011 Portland to Lewiston/ Auburn and Montreal Intercity Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

2009 Center Street Traffic Management Study

2007 Park Avenue Corridor Study

Minot Avenue Corridor Plan Scoping

New Auburn Walkable Audit Report

Bicycle Coalition of Maine

City of Auburn, Complete Streets Committee

MaineDOT, LAP Commuter

Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee, citylink

MaineDOT, Rail System 2016

Pan AM Southern (PAS)

John T. Gorman Foundation: Addressing the Transportation Challenges of Maine Working Families

Historic and Cultural Resources

Auburn History

For thousands of years, the Wabanaki people inhabited points along the Androscoggin River. The river provided sources for hunting, fishing, and gathering. These people heavily relied on farming and agriculture. Over time, the Wabanaki developed trail systems throughout what is now Androscoggin County and Auburn. Food and resources were traded along these trail routes and the river. European settlers began arriving in the 1600s, and over time, the Wabanaki were forced out of their traditional hunting, fishing, and farming lands along the Androscoggin River.[11] Today, Wabinaki Tribal and trust lands are scattered throughout central and northern Maine.[12]

The first settlers in what is now Auburn were farmers. Farms were located near the fertile land along the Androscoggin River. As Maine's timber economy began to flourish, the river became vital to drive logs to mills. As the Industrial Revolution made its way north, other industries emerged in mills along the river alongside lumber mills. The Androscoggin River provided abundant manufacturing opportunities in Auburn.

Auburn experienced significant growth with the development of a canal system and several textile mills. This activity drew thousands of French-Canadian immigrants to the area in the latter part of the 19th century. In addition to textile production, the region became known for shoe manufacturing and was home to the second-largest shoe manufacturer in the world in the early 20th century. The rise of the textile and shoe industries spurred economic activity, population growth, and development in Auburn's downtown area. Manufacturing continued to thrive in Auburn through the end of World War II. Over time, manufacturing in Auburn and Maine began to slow down. The mill era came to an end in the 1970s as manufacturing relocated to more advantageous markets. At the same time, the rise of larger shopping centers and auto-oriented retail created new competition, undermining the viability of the downtown districts.[13]

Throughout this time, Auburn retained much of its original agricultural land, and farmers continued their operations during the 19th and 20th centuries. As larger strip-style development moved into Auburn, a consultant for the City's comprehensive plan determined that agriculture would no longer be a significant part of Auburn's economy. However, the 1958 report outlined the need to preserve this land for small-scale agriculture/open space and drive development toward downtown.[14] Because of this,

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[11] Maine Mill . n.d. "Frist Nations and the Androscoggin River Valley." *Maine Mill* . Accessed April 6, 2025 https://mainemill.org/learn/for-teachers/first-nations-and-the-androscoggin-river-valley/

[12] Wabanaki Alliance . n.d. "Tribal Lands in Maine ." *Wabanaki Alliance* . Accessed April 6, 2025 https://www.wabanakialliance.com/tribal-lands-in-maine/

[13] Lewiston-Auburn Metro Chamber of Commerce . May 5, 2025. "A recent innovative history of the Androscoggin region." *Lewiston-Auburn Metro Chamber of Commerce* . Accessed May 8, 2025 https://lametrochamber.com/5603-2/

[14] Megan Phillips Goldenberg and Ken Meter. November 29, 2017. "Summary of Significant Events in Protecting Agricultural

traditional patterns of development in these areas remain. Remnants of the mills and mill-style housing, like the New England Triple Decker, small single-family homes, and multifamily homes, are still evident in the downtown and New Auburn area. Less traditional development patterns, like strip mall development and subdivisions, are located in areas between the broader downtown area and agriculture zones.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

Prehistoric archaeological sites refer to sensitive Native American (pre-European contact) sites, which include campsites or village locations, rock quarries and workshops, and petroglyphs or rock caving. Prehistoric archaeological site locations are based on the State's current understanding of Native American settlement patterns. These sites are most often located within 50 meters of canoe-navigable waters on relatively well-drained, level landforms. Some sites are located on sandy soil within 200 meters of small streams that are not canoe navigable.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) retains data on prehistoric archaeological sites. MHPC has identified 39 prehistoric sites in Auburn. There are six Paleoindian (circa 9,000 B.C.) sites located on Auburn-Lewiston Airport property, and six more within a 1-mile radius. All other sites known in the City of Auburn are located on banks of Androscoggin River and Little Androscoggin River or the shores of Lake Auburn. Two sites on the banks of the Androscoggin River above Gulf Island Dam are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

A professional archaeological survey of the Androscoggin Riverbank was completed upstream from Deer Rips Dam and Little Androscoggin River upstream from Littlefield Dam in 2012. MHPC identified that the Androscoggin Riverbank and valley south of Downtown Auburn needs to be surveyed. Some of the Little Androscoggin River valley needs additional surveying as do the shorelines of Taylor Pond and Lake Auburn. MHPC also noted that areas of sandy soil away from the river need survey before construction, especially within a 2-mile radius of the airport.

Historic Archaeological Sites

Historic archaeological sites refer to mostly European-American sites occupied after 1600. These sites may include historic homesteads, foundations for farm buildings, mills, wharves and boat yards, and near-shore shipwrecks. Historic archaeological sites can be predicted most often by a review of historic records, maps, and deeds. After 1600, European settlement often focused on transportation corridors—first rivers and then roads as they were built. Archaeological sites from the first wave of European settlement are likely to be eligible for the NRHP.

Lands in Auburn." *City of Auburn* . Accessed May 8, 2025 https://agzone-auburnme.opendata.arcgis.com/documents/869fd77d71fd42aeac66390709e69e6c/explore

MHPC maintains additional data on historic archaeological sites. MHPC has identified 12 historic archaeological sites in Auburn. Table 9.1 below describes Auburn's historic archaeological resources.

Table 9.1: Historic Archaeological Resources

Site Name	Site Type	Period of Significance
Auburn Spring Hotel	Hotel	1890s
Keene-Hayes Cellar	Domestic Site	1850s – 1950s
Jacob Royal Homestead	Domestic Site	Early to late 1800s
Jacob and Sally Stevens Home	Domestic Site	19th century component, but with continued miniatous and repair through the 20th century
Rifle Range Target Complex, 200 – 300 yards	Military, Rifle Range	1914 – 1945
Rifle Range Target Complex, 500 – 600 yards	Military, Rifle Range	1914 – 1945
Rifle Range Target Complex, 800 – 1,000 yards	Military, Rifle Range	1914 – 1945
Fournier Bleachery Works/Residence	Bleachery	1890 – present
Burial 1	Cemetery	Before 1850
Fort Laurel Hill	Settlement, Fortified	1675 – 1730
Grinding stone	Artifact Finds, Miscellaneous	Prior to 1800
Holbrook Homestead	Domestic Site	Undetermined

Source: MHPC

MHPC identified that no professional citywide survey for historic archaeological sites has been conducted in Auburn. MHPC recommends that future surveying focus on identifying significant resources associated with Auburn's agricultural, residential, and industrial history, particularly resources associated with the early European settlement in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Figure 9.1: Known Historic Archaeological Sites

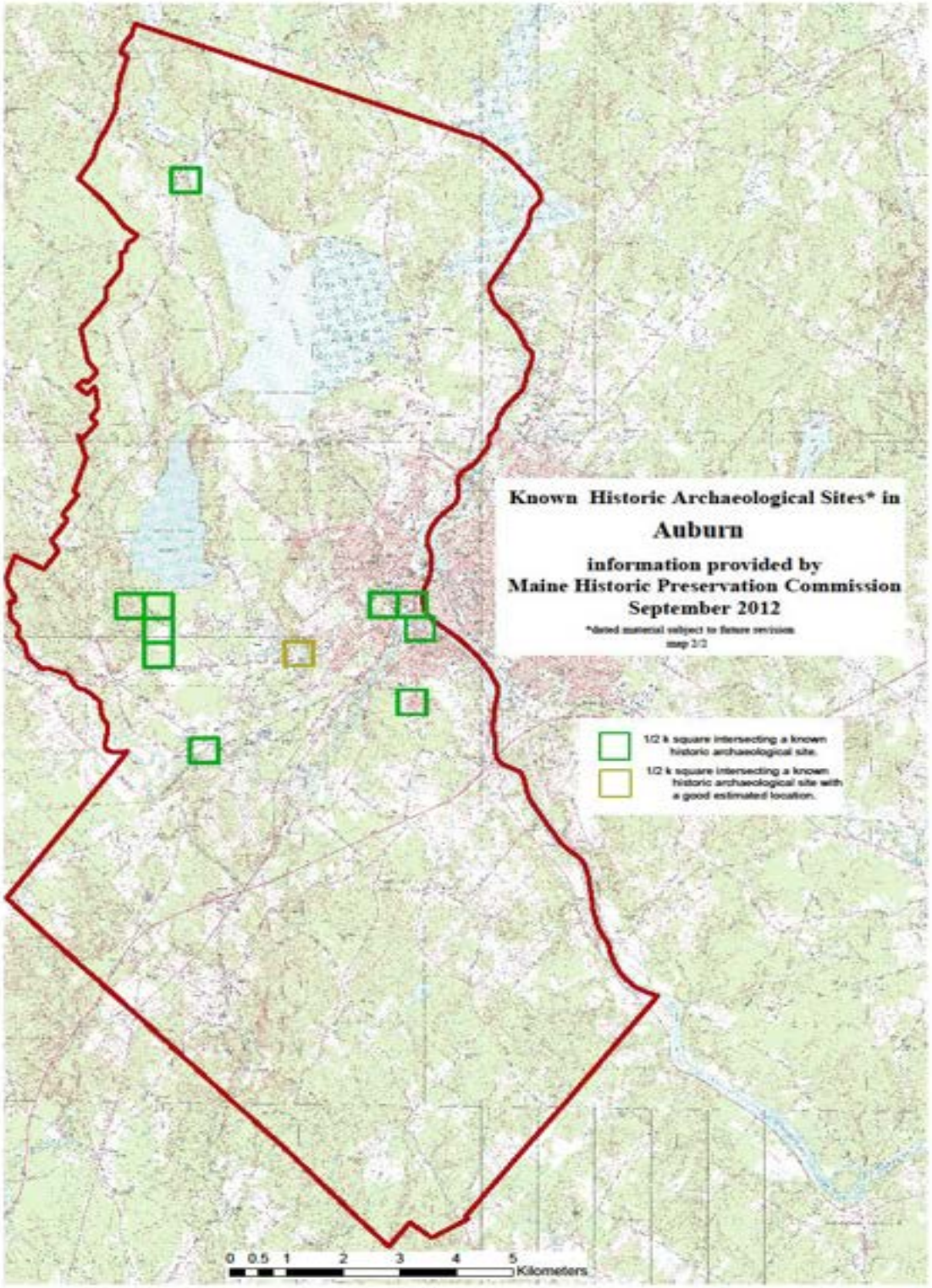
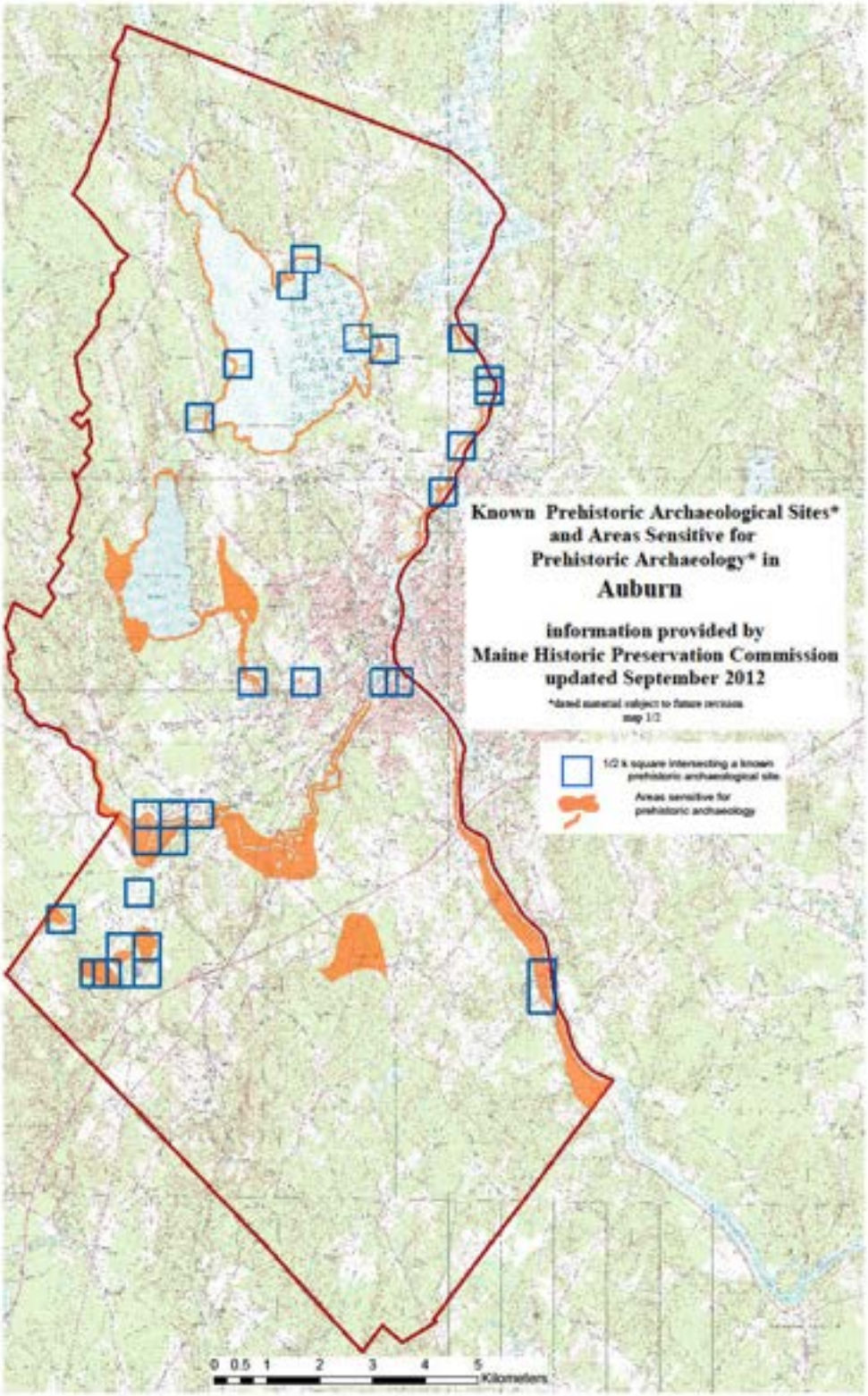


Figure 9.2: Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites



Historic Properties

In addition to historic archaeological sites, Auburn is home to 24 NRHP-listed properties. The NRHP designation is determined by the National Park Service as part of its national program to preserve historic structures and sites. In Auburn, NRHP-listed properties include homes, civic and commercial buildings, and historic districts. Table 9.2 includes NRHP-designated properties.

Table 9.2: NRHP Properties in Auburn

Property Name	Address
Charles A. Jordan House	63 Academy Street
Edward Little House	217 Main Street (Main Street Historic District)
Horatio G. Foss House	19 Elm Street (Main Street Historic District)
Holman Day House	2 Goff Street
Engine House	Court and Spring Streets
First Universalist Church	Elm and Pleasant Streets
Barker Mill	143 Mill Street
Frank L. Dingley House	291 Court Street
Charles L. Cushman House	8 Cushman Place
Horace Munroe House	123 Plesant Street
Roak Block	144 – 170 Main Street
Androscoggin County Courthouse and Jail	2 Turner Street
Auburn Public Library (APL)	49 Spring Street
William Briggs Homestead	1470 Turner Street
A.A. Garcelon House	22 Main Street (Main Street Historic District)
Penley Corner Baptist Church	Riverside Drive
Main Street Historic District	Main Street
William A. Robinson House	11 Forest Avenue
Gay-Munroe House	64 Highland Avenue
Webster Grammar School	95 Hampshire Street
Auburn Commercial Historic District	Main and Courts Streets (Goff Block)
F.M. Jordan House	18 Laurel Avenue
Danville Junction Grange #65	15 Grange Street

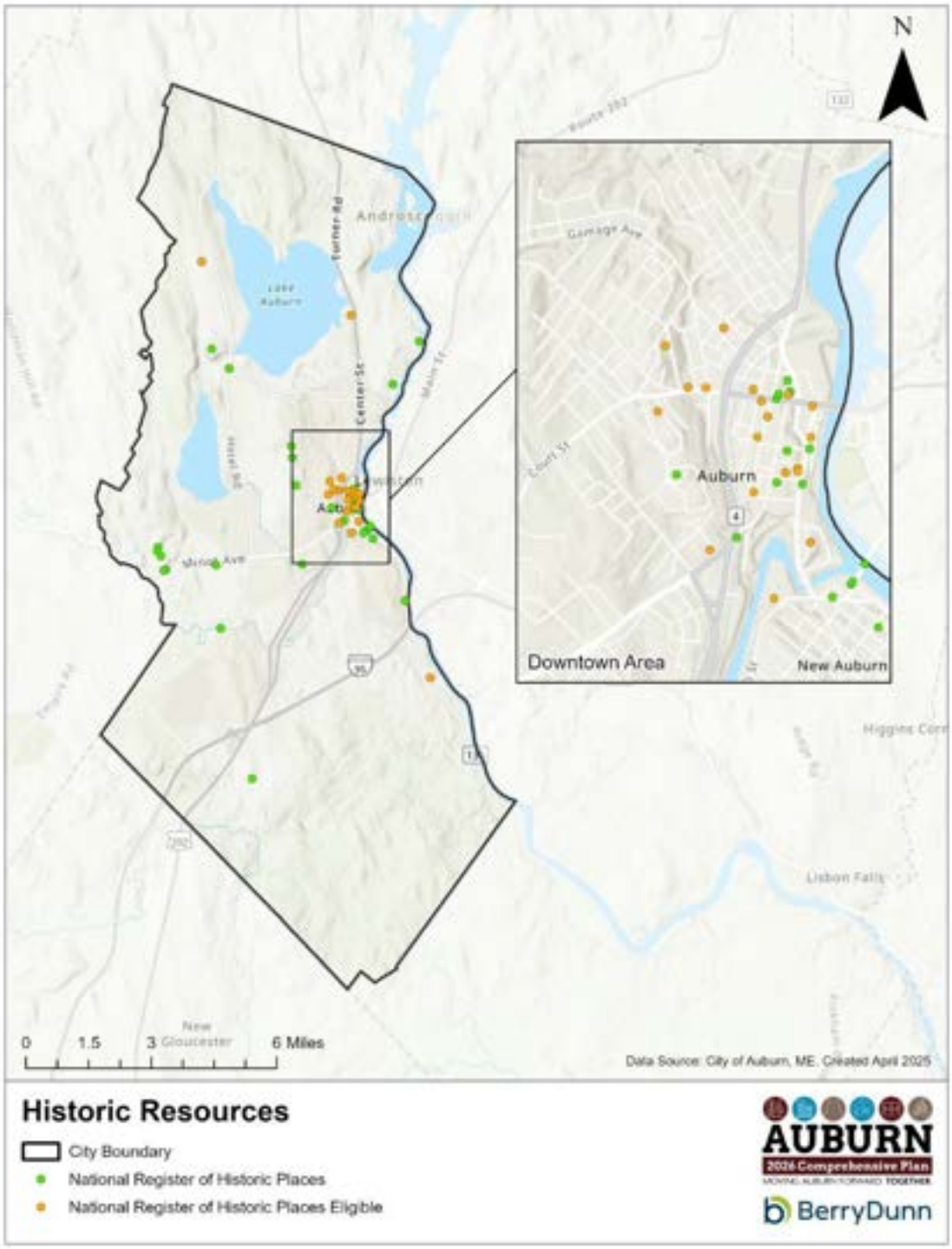
Property Name	Address
West Auburn School	740 West Auburn Road

Source: NRHP

An additional 60 structures in Auburn are determined eligible for the NRHP, as identified by MHPC surveys. Structures include a variety of single- and multifamily homes, industrial buildings, civic institutions, transportation corridors, farm and agricultural sites, and recreation sites.

MHPC identified the need for a comprehensive survey of Auburn's above-ground historic resources to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the NRHP.

Figure 9.3: Listed and Eligible Properties on the NRHP



Historic Preservation in Auburn

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Article XIV of the City's Zoning Ordinance outlines site plan submittal requirements to help ensure that projects are designed and developed in a manner that protects historic and archaeological resources, minimizes adverse impacts on adjacent properties, and fits the project into the existing fabric of the community.

The location of historic and/or archaeological resources must be noted on plan sets if the project will be located within identified historic or archaeological areas listed on MHPC maps (Figure 9.3). The ordinance outlines that developments shall include appropriate measures for protecting these resources, including modification of proposed designs, time of construction, and limiting the extent of excavation.

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse is a process by which buildings or structures can be repurposed for new uses while retaining their historic features. Adaptive reuse approaches are often used to preserve historic buildings or architecturally important structures in a community. Common examples of adaptive reuse include turning mill buildings into apartments or churches into community centers.

The City adopted an adaptive reuse ordinance in its zoning code that allows for a structure of community significance to be used for specific purposes regardless of zoning. Adaptive reuse of significant structures is permitted as a special exception, which requires approval by the Planning Board. The Planning Board will determine whether the structure and use will contribute to the preservation of a significant structure. Under the adaptive reuse ordinance, the following uses are considered for special exceptions:

- Bed and breakfast homes or inns
- Restaurants, diners, or cafes
- Art studios or galleries
- Performing arts centers
- Medical and dental clinics
- Office spaces
- Municipal or government uses
- Retail sales as an accessory use

Incentives for Historic Preservation

MHPC has several incentives for historic preservation projects. Properties listed on the NRHP or in locally designated historic districts are eligible for tax credit programs through MHPC. These include a Federal Tax Incentive Program for National Register-listed properties and three State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, which include a substantial rehabilitation credit, small project rehabilitation credit, and an affordable housing rehabilitation credit increase. These tax credits provide incentive for the rehabilitation of historic properties. Properties in locally designated historic districts are eligible for the state-level tax credit options. Additionally, there are several grants available through MHPC to make preservation projects more feasible.

Organizations Dedicated to Historic Preservation

Androscoggin Historical Society

The Androscoggin Historical Society (AHS) was formally established in 1923 with the goal of preserving and sharing the history of Androscoggin County. AHS maintains thousands of historic artifacts, the Knight House, and the West Auburn School. The Knight House and West Auburn School were formerly maintained by different organizations but were brought under the purview of AHS over the past decade. AHS relocated from the Androscoggin County Building in Auburn to 93 Lisbon Street in Lewiston in 2023 and has a goal of opening this location to the public six days per week in 2025.

Maine MILL

The Maine Museum of Innovation, Learning, and Labor (MILL) is a history and culture museum in in the Bates Mill Complex that curates collections, exhibits, programs, and events that capture how workers, industry, and culture have shaped the Lewiston-Auburn community. Maine MILL maintains more than 10,000 total artifacts, most of which were found in deserted mills in Lewiston and Auburn.

Maine Franco-American Genealogical Society

The Maine Franco-American Genealogical Society preserves records and provides connections to Auburn and Lewiston's French-Canadian heritage. The Franco-American Genealogical Society helps community members learn more about their ancestry and family history. Other organizations like the Maine Memory Network and the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine provide additional support to individuals seeking information on their family history.

Art and Culture Resources

Similar to historic resources, art and culture resources play an important role in shaping Auburn's social fabric and forming connection between community members. Auburn and Lewiston are home to art galleries, performing arts and theater spaces, heritage centers, and public art displays.

These organizations support community access to theater, music, live performances, and art exhibits. Organizations like the Auburn Community Concert Band, Community Little Theater, Franco-American

Heritage Center, Maine Music Society, the Public Theater, LA Arts, APL, and the Auburn School Department provide space and programming for performances, live events, and art installations. The Community Little Theatre is celebrating its 85th season of providing quality entertainment, educational opportunities, and community activities to residents and visitors. The theatre also holds the largest costume collection in Maine, with 80 years' worth of costumes available for rent or donation to theatre and school groups throughout New England. Additionally, the Donald M. Gay Performing Arts Center located at Edward Little High School is Maine's largest high school auditorium and is a premier venue in Maine for performances and events.

The City of Auburn also hosts a StoryWalk and several events throughout the year, including Auburn Lobster Festival, Blues and Brews Festival, and New Year's Auburn.

Access to art, culture, and historic resources enhance the community's shared identity, creates a sense of place, and supports social interaction and connection. These resources also play an important role in contributing to the local economy by supporting artists and local businesses as well as creating jobs. Public art, theater, and cultural events make Auburn more vibrant and livelier, enhancing Auburn as a destination for visitors from other communities.

Challenges and Opportunities

Historic resources face threats from neglect, inappropriate development, and demolition. The City has regulations in place to identify and protect known historic and archaeological resources during the site plan review process. However, there are no regulations in place to protect existing historic structures or properties from redevelopment or demolition. The City has identified the need to create new standards for historic preservation to build on its adaptive reuse ordinance.

The City's adaptive reuse ordinance provides an additional opportunity to preserve historic and important community structures. Adaptive reuse projects can help the City meet several goals, including preservation and expansion of target business types like restaurants, inns, or medical spaces.

MHPC and the City have identified the need for better mapping and surveying of historic assets. These include historic and archaeological resources in Auburn. These resources provide residents and visitors with educational opportunities, foster a sense of community, and develop a common identity.

As the City grows, it will be important to survey and identify historic and archaeological resources that have not been inventoried in order to protect these areas. Additionally, potential NRHP-eligible properties should be further evaluated by property owners and the City to support the preservation of these structures and provide access to MHPC incentives to help property owners maintain and renovate structures.

Auburn has several historic properties and archaeological sites located along major waterways and in flood-prone areas. These sites can be susceptible to erosion, flooding, and extreme weather events due to climate change. The historic materials or settings of historic properties may require specialized planning that is sensitive to the historic significance of the property. To preserve and mitigate damage to

historic properties, there are several adaptations that can be made to preserve these properties, including flood adaptation, gutter installation, property care guides, and weatherization upgrades.

Arts and cultural events also play an important role in shaping Auburn's community fabric and identity. The City and local organizations host performances, events, and exhibits. As Auburn grows and its demographic makeup shifts, it will be important to consider opportunities for enhanced public art, performances, and events to foster a sense of connection and belonging for community members of all ages and backgrounds.

Sources

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

MHPC CARMA Viewer

Arts and Culture in Auburn

Androscoggin Historical Society

Maine MILL

Franco Center

LA Arts

The Public Theater

Maine Music Society

L-A Community Little Theater

Auburn Public Library

Auburn Community Band

Auburn StoryWalk

Historic Resources and Climate Change

City Facilities and Public Services

City Departments

The City is comprised the following departments, some of which contain sub-groups:

- 9-1-1
- Business & Community Development
    - Public Health
    - General Assistance
    - Community Development
    - Business Services
- City Manager
- Communications & Community Engagement
- Economic Development
- Financial services
    - Accounting
    - Assessing
    - City Clerk & Tax
- Fire
- Human Resources
- Information Technology (IT)
- Police
- Public Services
    - Facilities & Energy
    - Engineering
    - Planning, Permitting, & Code
    - Transportation
- Public Works & Parks

- Recreation
- Sports Facilities
- School

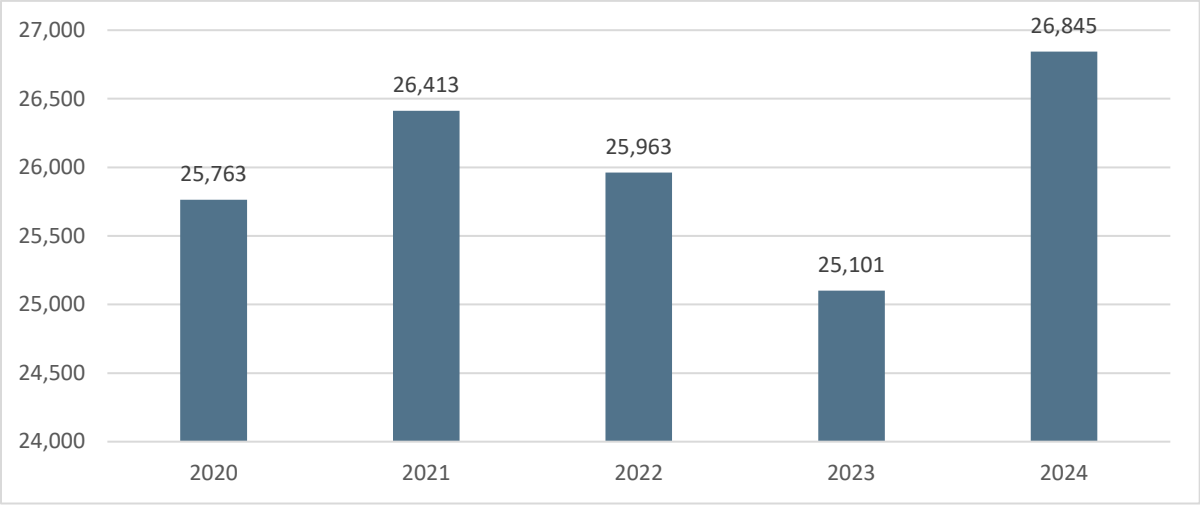
Police

The Auburn Police Department (APD) has 55 sworn officers (and six vacant positions) in four divisions—patrol, criminal investigations, support services, and professional standards. The department is led by the chief of police who oversees current operations and provides direction for the department. APD has two school resource officers, a K-9 program, a volunteers in police service (VIPS) program, and a proactive community enforcement (PACE) unit. In addition to typical patrol and safety responsibilities, the APD is also responsible for animal control and parking enforcement.

The APD is a nationally accredited law enforcement agency through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). In 2020, APD became the only agency in Maine to achieve Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation status through CALEA. In order to maintain accreditation, APD must demonstrate compliance with 461 core standards every four years.

In 2024, APD received 26,845 calls for service, an increase of 6.9% from 2023. While call volume has increased and was higher in 2024 than in the past few years, the type of calls has changed. There has been an increase in mental health calls, issues at group homes, and calls to respond to the needs of the City's unhoused population. At the same time, the number of criminal offenses and arrests have declined slightly in recent years.

Figure 10.1: APD Calls for Service



Source: Auburn Police Department

The significant increase in homelessness and mental health needs is a challenge for APD. The department coordinates with Spurwink's Project Support You (PSY) co-responders who assist with

responding to behavioral health- and substance use disorder-related emergency calls. The State's new dispatching protocol to divert some calls to the crisis lifeline and the City's new resource center will help with reducing calls and referring individuals to resources; however, more support is needed. The department would like to expand this effort to include mental health professionals on APD staff.

In addition to partnerships with social services organizations, APD works closely with the Lewiston Police Department and has mutual aid agreements with all municipalities in Androscoggin County and with the Maine Warden Service.

APD has expanded community outreach, including having a school resource officer (SRO) in the public schools, supporting and hosting community events, and engaging in community outreach through social media. The department is also involved with the CMCC criminal justice program, with some officers serving as program instructors.

The City is developing a new public safety building to house the police and fire departments. A facilities study completed in 2020 recommended a new facility for the City's public safety operations. The new facility will replace the Central Fire Station at 550 Minot Avenue and will be more accessible, provide necessary office and storage space, accommodate a diverse workforce, provide space for technical training needs, and will remedy current life and health issues for staff using the current facility.

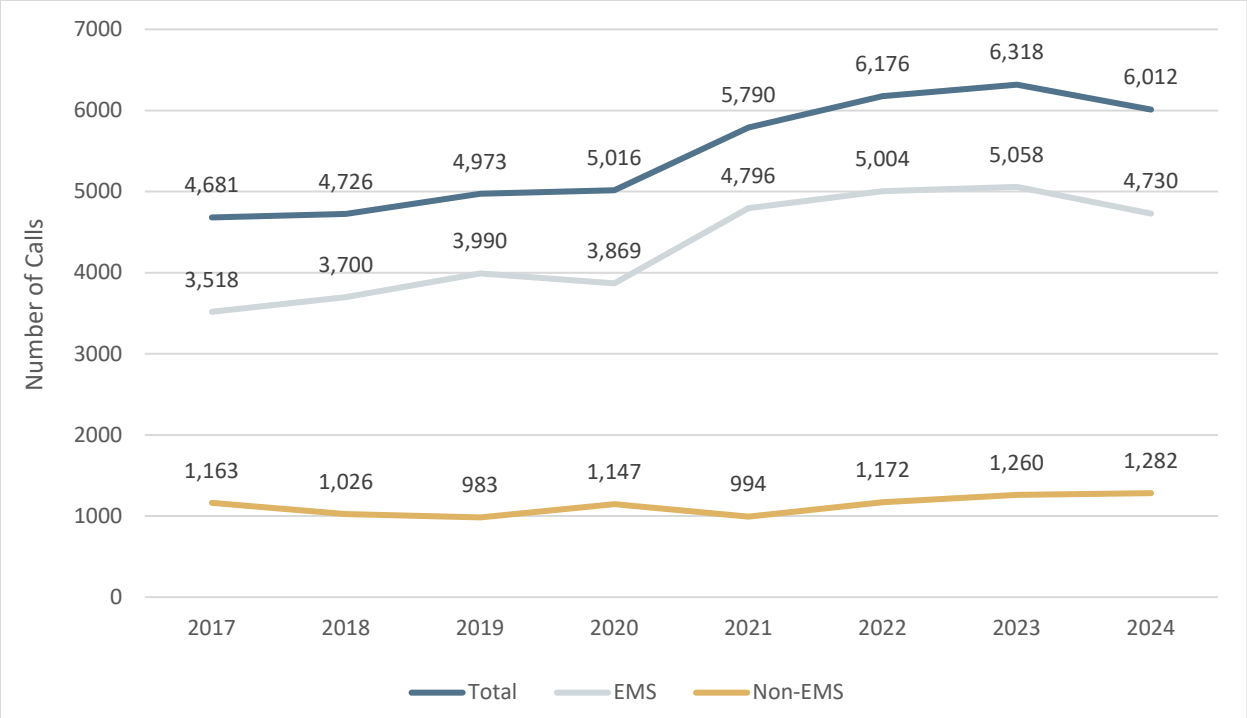
Staff retention is a challenge, similar to police departments across the state. Keeping up with competitive pay and the availability of affordable housing are key factors in staff recruitment and retention.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

The Auburn Fire Department is a full-time, career department that provides 24/7 fire and emergency medical services (EMS). This includes fire suppression, EMS, EMS transport, and fire prevention services. When fully staffed, the department has 64 members. The fire suppression and EMS division operates with four battalions staffed with 16 members. The department maintains a minimum staffing of 14 members during a shift. Six administrative staff and one fire prevention staff member operate out of Central Station.

The department responds to more than 6,000 calls per year. The number of non-EMS calls has remained fairly consistent in recent years, totaling 1,282 in 2024. The City saw a significant increase in the number of EMS calls beginning in 2020. The department began providing emergency medical transportation (ambulance service) in 2015. Prior to 2020, the department averaged between 3,500 and 4,000 EMS calls per year. Since 2020, it has averaged between 4,700 and 5,100 EMS calls per year.

Figure 10.2: Fire and EMS Calls for Service



Source: Auburn Fire Department

Staff respond to calls out of three stations: Central Station (Engine 3), Engine 2, and Engine 5. The City is building a new Engine 2 Station, currently on South Main Street, in New Auburn. Daily, the Department staffs two engines, one quint (arial device), two ambulances, and a Chief Officer/command unit. Most staff members are certified firefighters and EMS providers, 26 of which are paramedics. It is now a requirement for all new staff to be fire and EMS certified to the paramedic level.

The department has mutual aid agreements with surrounding municipalities, including Lewiston, Durham, Minot, New Gloucester, Poland, Turner, Gray, Paris, Buckfield, Norway, and Oxford. Through Maine's State Mutual Aid Agreements, the department will respond to additional communities if needed. The department is also part of a regional hazmat response team.

Staff reported that current and planned facility upgrades meet their needs. The City is in the process of building a new station on South Main Street and a new public safety building. The Engine 5 Station was built in 1974 and does not need to be replaced; however, upgrades are needed to meet the needs of a modern fire department, including separate male and female facilities.

Similar to APD, the fire department has partnered with Spurwink to embed behavioral health specialists in response units. Specialists provide case management support and enhance mental health response capabilities. This is currently a pilot program, and the department would like to expand this program to include full-time behavioral health specialists on staff.

Similar to fire departments across the state, Auburn has experienced challenges hiring and retaining staff members. Staff reported that the department has not been fully staffed since 2020. This was attributed to pay disparity between Auburn and other municipalities, difficulty finding candidates who meet certification and training requirements, and early retirements. The department has been working with the fire science programs at the Auburn School Department and SMCC. These programs provide opportunities for students to learn more about the department's operations and pathways to pursue paramedic and fire certifications through school programming.

The department reported it is near capacity for EMS response and services. A priority for the department will be to improve recruiting efforts and expand its capacity to respond to the increased need for EMS.

Library

The Auburn Public Library is a nonprofit entity serving the City of Auburn, the Town of Minot, and the region. APL has been an important community resource since the 19th century. The current library building was completed in 1904 and has been expanded several times to meet the growing needs of the community. The most recent expansion was completed in 2006 to accommodate a computer lab, private study rooms, a children's program room, and two public meeting rooms. Since then, APL has also added a Teen Space (2011) and the CREATE! Media Lab (2012).

In fiscal year (FY) 2024, APL had 83,739 visits and offered 909 programs. While total in-person visits declined from 2023 to 2024, the number of website visits increased 11% (157,525 in FY 2024), and the total number of cardholders increased 13% to 7,425. APL currently has 20 staff. In addition to the general collection lending and reference services, APL offers a variety of programs for people of all ages, including story times, summer reading programs, book clubs, teen programs, senior college in the community programs, and author talks. Programs are supported by numerous community partners—including nonprofit organizations, businesses, and educational institutions—to offer classes, guest speakers, resource connections, career services, and other programs.

In 2024, APL launched two new podcasts, one geared toward an adult audience and one focusing on children's books and reading recommendations. These podcasts are intended to engage listeners and promote the library's resources. A new online magazine, *Shelf Life*, was first published in 2023 and is also intended to expand engagement with the community.

In FY 2024, 79% of APL's funding came from the City of Auburn. This is a slight decline from FY 2023 (82%). Other revenue sources include contributions/donations (10%), endowment/investment (6.5%), fees and charges (3%), and the Town of Minot (1.5%). As operational costs increase, maintaining adequate funding to support the current level of service and adjusting to the community's changing needs will be a priority for the library and the City.

Schools and Educational Facilities

The Auburn School Department comprises six elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative school, which serve students in Auburn and surrounding communities. The Auburn School Department is funded through local property taxes and state contributions in line with the Maine Department of Education (DOE) school funding policies. Saint Dominic Academy, a pre-K – 12 private school, is also located in Auburn.

The Auburn School Department recently completed construction on the new Edward Little High School, which includes new classrooms and instruction areas, athletic fields, facilities for vocational programs, and a performing arts center. The department works with the Lewiston Regional Technical Center to provide vocational programs for students.

Auburn School Department staff reported an increase in students who are economically disadvantaged, including students experiencing homelessness and students facing food insecurity. Schools have food pantries to support students and families in accessing food. The department has also experienced an increase in the number of students needing English Language Learner (ELL) courses and support. The schools have a multi-lingual coordinator (MLL) to support student and adult education needs.

The Auburn School Department is creating a school facilities master plan to guide future capital investments and plan for the best use of existing school facilities. The department—with oversight from the School Committee and Facilities Subcommittee—will determine feasible scenarios for space renovation, evaluate potential school consolidation scenarios, and determine best use of space to support student learning and construction.

Table 10.1, below, outlines the year that public school facilities were constructed in Auburn.

Table 10.1: Schools by Year Constructed

School	Year Constructed
Edward Little High School	2023
Auburn Middle School	1999
Washburn Elementary School	1969
East Auburn Community School	1961
Sherwood Heights Elementary School	1997
Fairview Elementary School	1963
Walton Elementary School	1920
Park Avenue Elementary School	2005
Franklin Alternative School	1920

Source: City of Auburn

CMCC is also located in Auburn and offers 43 programs of study, including in-person and 100% online instruction programs. The State currently provides in-state residents with access to free community college education. City departments, including fire and police department staff members, regularly work with CMCC to provide instruction and hands-on opportunities for students. The Auburn School Department also works with CMCC to provide dual enrollment opportunities where students can take CMCC classes to work toward a college degree while in high school.

City-Owned Properties

The City is responsible for the maintenance and operations of public facilities and properties in Auburn. Properties are located throughout the City, and include natural areas and parks, public safety buildings, and other civic buildings. The City maintains 52 buildings or structures. This data comes from the City Assessor's database, and some ages given may be estimates. This list includes garages, schools, warehouses, maintenance shops, gymnasiums, offices, libraries, a parking garage, bus terminal, club houses, and recreation buildings. The average age of structures is Auburn is 56 years old. The map of City-owned properties, Figure 10.3, also includes unimproved lots, parks, or other properties that do not contain buildings.

Table 10.1: List and Age of City-Owned Buildings.

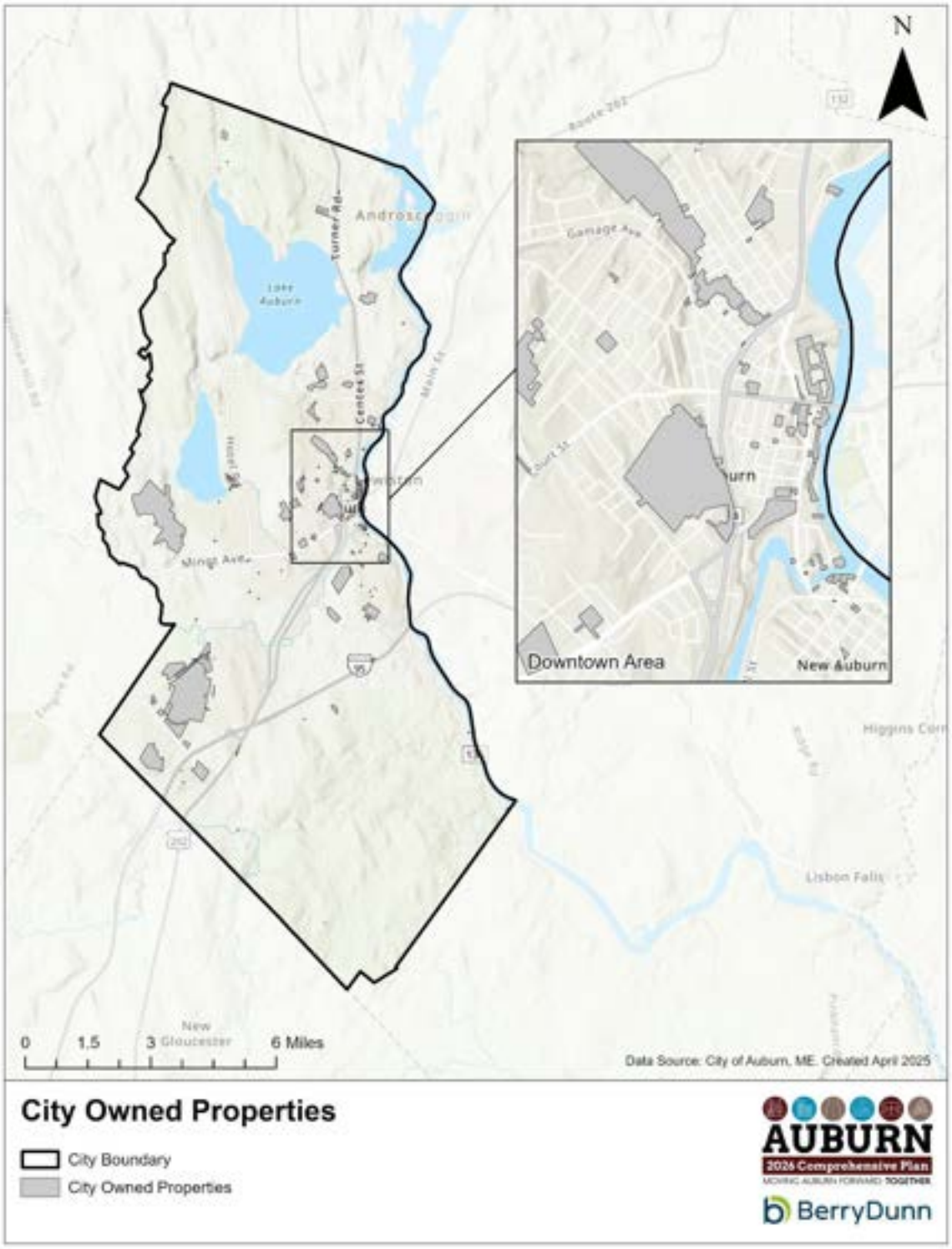
Location	Building Type	Year Built
114 FISH HATCHERY RD	0CAP - CAPE COD (SF)	1900
75 CONSTELLATION DR	0CNT - CONTEMPORARY (SF)	1985
38 FALCON DR	0MOB - MOBILE HOME (SF)	2011
15 ANDREW DR	0MOB - MOBILE HOME (SF)	2011
550 MINOT AVE	0RAN - RANCH (SF)	1955
277 MAIN ST	23 - AUDITORIUM	1889
33 INDUSTRY AVE	30 - GARAGE	1969
115 NORTH AUBURN RD	30 - GARAGE	2022
20 LIBRARY AVE	38 - R/M SHOP	1900
49 SPRING ST	38 - R/M SHOP	1900
296 GRACELAWN RD	38 - R/M SHOP	1951
296 GRACELAWN RD	43 - WAREHOUSE	2002
32 DUNN ST	46 - CHURCH/SYN	1900
550 MINOT AVE	48 - FIRE STAT	1973

Location	Building Type	Year Built
180 SOUTH MAIN ST	48 - FIRE STAT	1952
651 CENTER ST	48 - FIRE STAT	1978
43 SECOND ST	51 - GYMNASIUM	1930
0 PETTENGILL PARK	51 - GYMNASIUM	1993
48 PETTENGILL PARK RD	51 - GYMNASIUM	1993
20 LIBRARY AVE	53 - LIBRARY	1900
49 SPRING ST	53 - LIBRARY	1900
161 PARK AVE	58 - SCHOOL	2005
23 HIGH ST	58 - SCHOOL	1920
112 MAIN ST	59 - UTIL BLDG	2002
233 LEWISTON JUNCTION RD	71 - OFFICE	1994
121 MILL ST	71 - OFFICE	1964
60 COURT ST	71 - OFFICE	2003
GREAT FALLS PLZ	BUSTERM - BUS TERMINAL	2016
94 NINTH ST	CLUB - CLUBHOUSE	2001
106 SMALL RD	CLUB - CLUBHOUSE	1970
0 PETTENGILL PARK	CLUB - CLUBHOUSE	1990
48 PETTENGILL PARK RD	CLUB - CLUBHOUSE	1990
15 ANDREW DR	CLUB - CLUBHOUSE	1961
32 SHERWOOD DR	EDUC - EDUCATION	1997
435 MINOT AVE	EDUC - EDUCATION	1963
92 MARY CARROLL ST	EDUC - EDUCATION	1920
38 FALCON DR	EDUC - EDUCATION	1999
77 HARRIS ST	EDUC - EDUCATION	2023
35 LAKE AUBURN AVE	EDUC - EDUCATION	1969
15 ANDREW DR	EDUC - EDUCATION	1961
24 CHESTNUT ST	ELEM - MULTI PURPOS	
114 FISH HATCHERY RD	ELEM - MULTI PURPOS	1900
60 COURT ST	PGAR - PARKING GARA	2002

Location	Building Type	Year Built
1208 TURNER ST	RDV - RESEARCH & D	2012
0 PETTENGILL PARK	REC - REC	1920
0 PETTENGILL PARK	REC - REC	1998
48 PETTENGILL PARK RD	REC - REC	1920
48 PETTENGILL PARK RD	REC - REC	1998
985 TURNER ST	RINK - SKATING RINK	2013
296 GRACELAWN RD	WHS - WAREHOUSEHS	2019
67 KITTYHAWK AVE	WHST - TRANSIT WHSE	1995

Source: City of Auburn

Figure 10.3: City-Owned Facilities



Public Health

Auburn is committed to improving public health through various community initiatives, and it benefits from several healthcare facilities that provide a wide range of services. The Auburn Public Health division, part of the Business and Community Development Department, works to address social determinants of health (SDoH), such as education, housing, access to nutritious food, healthcare, and safe neighborhoods, to improve overall health and well-being for all residents. In collaboration with Healthy Androscoggin, a coalition dedicated to health equity in the county, the department focuses on ensuring all residents have equal opportunities to lead healthy lives. This includes initiatives to improve cultural competency among healthcare providers and expand access to care for diverse populations.

Auburn's healthcare infrastructure is robust, with several facilities offering a variety of medical services. Located less than 3 miles away, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center in Lewiston is a 233-bed acute care hospital that provides emergency services, mental healthcare, urgent care, and specialized treatments. Additionally, Auburn Medical Associates, a St. Mary's Health System division, offers coordinated, patient-centered care, including family medicine and other specialized services stemming from behavioral and mental health to vascular surgery. Also, in Lewiston, the Central Maine Medical Center serves the region with comprehensive medical services, including emergency care, surgery, and outpatient services. Auburn also hosts NorDx, a regional diagnostic testing and laboratory services provider, and Auburn Dental Associates, which offers general and preventive dental care.

The Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), a collaborative effort among local healthcare organizations, identified several critical health priorities for the county in its 2022 report. These priorities include mental health, substance and alcohol use, SDoH, and access to care. These issues have only worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 report also highlighted the leading causes of death in the county (heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, unintentional injury, and Alzheimer's disease), closely aligned with statewide trends, emphasizing the need for continued public health initiatives to address these challenges.

As Androscoggin County's population ages, loneliness and social isolation have become increasingly concerning, particularly among older residents and those living alone. At the county level, initiatives are underway to address these issues. One notable program is AndroPEERConnects, launched by the Androscoggin Telehealth Department, which aims to provide regular video and audio check-ins for homebound patients, offering companionship and helping to reduce feelings of isolation. As these programs evolve, it is crucial that social isolation remains a key focus in public health discussions statewide.

Beyond loneliness, the Maine Shared CHNA 2022 report highlights additional pressing concerns raised by community members, including high poverty levels, inadequate housing and transportation resources, food insecurity, and a shortage of childcare services. These factors exacerbate health challenges and underscore the need for comprehensive, community-driven solutions.

Youth and Young Adult Health

The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) is a biennial collaboration between the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Department of Education. The survey has been conducted since 2009 and seeks to identify youth health trends through direct surveys of 5th – 12th graders.

Maine has some of the highest heavy drinking rates among young adults (age 18 – 24) in the U.S. In 2021, nearly one in 10 young adult Mainers qualified as heavy drinkers and one in four reported binge drinking in the past month. Illicit drug (other than cannabis) use has declined in recent years but remains among the highest in the nation. The Maine State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) reported that Mainers age 18 – 25 have lower perception of harm related to using substances. In 2020, nearly one in three young adult Mainers qualified as having a substance use disorder – the third highest rate in the country.

Maine SEOW reported that housing insecurity is a risk factor for substance use. Individuals may use substances to cope with the stress and trauma associated with housing instability. High school students who reported they did not usually sleep at their parent's/guardian's home or school housing were 13 times as likely to have ever used cocaine, nine times as likely to have ever used methamphetamine, and eight times as likely to have misused prescription drugs in the past 30 days. Studies have shown that there are higher rates of substance use among individuals that have experienced trauma, including both housed and unhoused individuals.

In 2021, MIYHS responses indicated that more than one in three (about 19,300) Maine high school students reported feeling sad or helpless for at least two weeks in a row in the previous year; rates have steadily increased from 2011 (23%) to 2021 (36%).

High School Students

Data collected through the MIYHS found that 39% of students go to a physical education class at least one day in an average school week. Nearly half of students were active for at least 60 minutes per day, five out of seven days in a week. Roughly 57% played on at least one sports team in the past year, and 19% walked, rode, or rolled to school (weather permitting) at least one day per week.

Related to nutrition, two out of three students ate fruit less than one time per day, and one in two students ate vegetables less than one time per day. One out of four students drank at least one sugar-sweetened beverage a day.

About 80% of students reported that they use social media for more than two hours a day, and 77% have over three hours of screen time per day. Roughly 28% of students get at least eight hours of sleep per night.

Nearly 1 in 3 students have used cannabis at least once, and 19% of students tried cannabis before age 13. More than half of all students have tried alcohol, with 27% who have tried alcohol reporting that

they drank alcohol before the age of 13. Roughly 36% of students binge drank (five or more drinks in a row) within 30 days of the survey.

Middle School Students

Data collected through the MIYHS found that 70% of students go to a physical education class at least one day in an average school week. Nearly half of students were active for at least 60 minutes per day, five out of seven days in a week. Roughly 67% played on at least one sports team in the past year, and 27% walked, rode, or rolled to school (weather permitting) at least one day per week.

Related to nutrition, one in two students ate fruit less than one time per day, and one in two students ate vegetables less than one time per day. One out of four students drank at least one sugar-sweetened beverage a day.

About 74% of students reported that they use social media for more than two hours a day, and 71% have over three hours of screen time per day. Roughly 47% of students get at least eight hours of sleep per night.

Roughly 9% have used cannabis at least once, and 22% of students tried cannabis before age 11. Roughly 16% of all students have tried alcohol, with 39% of students who have tried alcohol reporting that they drank alcohol before the age of 11.

Community Services

The City of Auburn supports a diversity of programs and services to address the needs of the community. These include City programs, state and federal programs or initiatives administered by the City, and private/nonprofit run programs and services for which the City provides some financial, staff, facility, or coordination support. Community development initiatives range from direct support services to individuals, to infrastructure projects, to public health campaigns.

CDBG/HOME

The Lewiston-Auburn MSA is a CDBG entitlement community. As such, the MSA is provided annual grants on a formula basis from HUD to invest in providing decent housing, expanding economic opportunity, revitalizing neighborhoods, and making other improvements to community facilities and services. Both cities also qualify for formula funding through HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, which provides funding for affordable housing development and renter and homeowner assistance programs. As a requirement of the CDBG Entitlement Program and HOME Program, Lewiston and Auburn must develop a five-year consolidated plan. Each city administers its own CDBG program, and Auburn administers the HOME program for both cities. The most recent plan is for the 2020 – 2024 review period. The cities have been granted an extension to complete a new five-year consolidated plan, which will be informed by the Auburn Comprehensive Plan once completed.

Auburn receives roughly $550,000 per year in CDBG funds, and the HOME consortium receives approximately $490,000 per year split between Auburn and Lewiston. In addition, there are funds that

come into both programs each year from repayment of loans made in prior years, or from funds otherwise reprogrammed.

The City and region have experienced significant changes since the 2020 – 2024 consolidated plan was developed that have an impact on CDBG goals. Auburn's four high-priority goals of the 2020 – 2024 consolidated plan are: (1) provide safe and affordable housing; (2) promote economic opportunities; (3) improve public infrastructure and facilities and eliminate blight; and (4) provide essential services. While these goals are still relevant to the needs of Auburn, some of the specific challenges related to these goals have changed since 2020, including a dramatic increase in housing costs and decline in affordability, an increase in homelessness, and new funding sources for community development programs.

Some recent and ongoing initiatives that the City has initiated to address the community development goals include the following:

- A new Auburn PAL Center to support expanded youth services (in progress)
- Auburn Resource Center at 121 Mill Street to house nonprofit partners providing housing and social services
- Infrastructure improvements to enhance pedestrian safety
- Business loans to support economic stability
- Establishment of six new TIF districts to fund infrastructure projects
- Funding for programs and services that support the City's low- and moderate-income residents

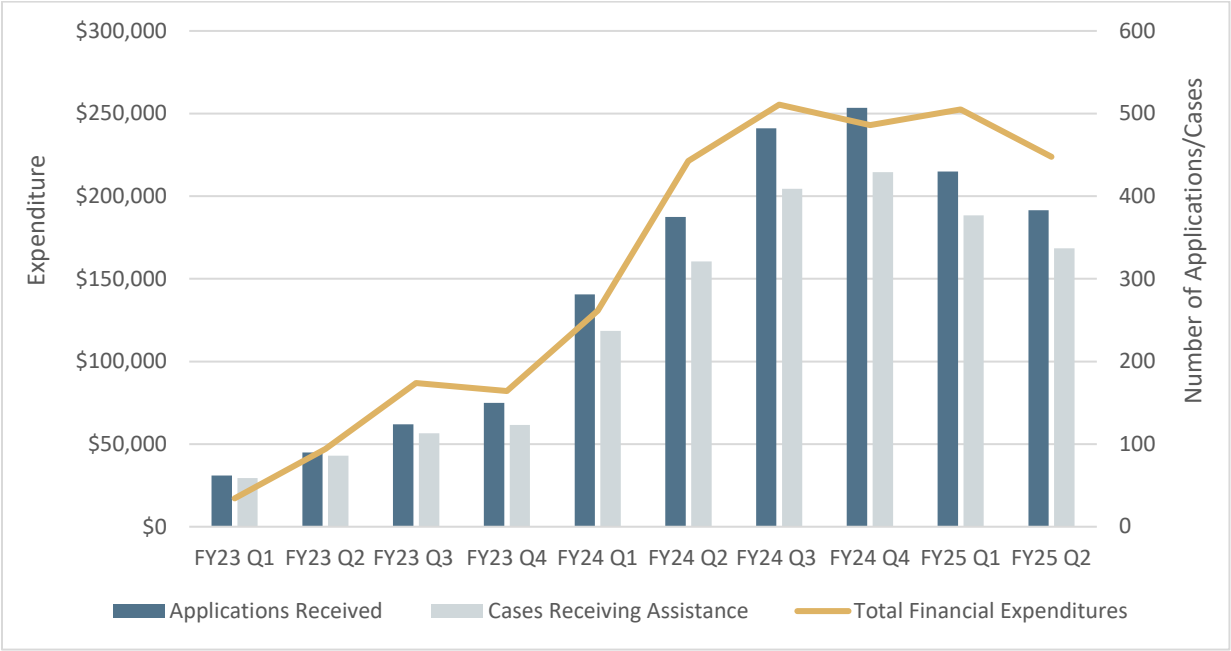
Data analysis (e.g., housing, demographics, economic analysis) and community input through this comprehensive planning process will inform the next five-year consolidated plan, along with public input through the recently completed 2025 community development survey. Of the 787 community development survey respondents, nearly half (48.9%) spend more than 30% of their household income on rent and utilities. Not surprisingly, affordable housing is the top priority for respondents, with 54.1% selecting this as one of three top priorities for the City to focus on. Respondents also rated Auburn as a "poor" place to shop (21.3%), to seek entertainment (38.1%), to visit (36.6%), and to recreate (22.2%), indicating opportunities for targeted economic and community development to improve the City's position as a regional center and destination.

General Assistance

Through the State's General Assistance (GA) program, the City serves families and individuals who qualify for support for basic needs like utility bills, food, prescriptions, medical expenses, and housing. The program provides a specific amount and type of aid for defined needs for eligible residents. Municipalities are required to administer a GA program to serve all eligible residents in accordance with state law. The State allocates funding to communities and reimburses municipalities for a portion of the

cost of the program. Like other communities in Maine, Auburn has experienced a significant increase in GA requests since the COVID-19 pandemic. To keep up with demand for services, the GA program has increased to three full-time staff. Both the number of requests and the total expenditure have increased substantially since FY 2023. This fiscal year (2025), the program is starting to see a slight reduction in requests, although numbers are still much higher than they were in FY 2023. From Q2 of FY 2023 to Q2 of FY 2025, the number of applications received increased 326%, the number of cases receiving assistance increased 292%, and the total financial expenditure on GA requests increased 375%.

Figure 10.4: Auburn GA Trends by Quarter



Source: City of Auburn, Business and Community Development Department

Homelessness

In March 2024, the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness was formed. The committee was charged with assessing the current state of homelessness in Auburn and identifying a strategy and priority initiatives that the City could address in partnership with other organizations in the region. The committee developed and issued the Addressing Homelessness in Auburn, Maine, report in February 2025.

The report outlined the current state of homelessness in the City, noting that 214 people were identified in Androscoggin County as experiencing homelessness during HUD's point-in-time count in January 2024. This number is considered to be a minimum, with many more people accessing services through the region's providers and others who may not have had any interaction with City or nonprofit services.

The point-in-time count is conducted in January each year. The count often includes a survey issued by volunteers to gather information about people experiencing homelessness in a particular geography on

the night of the point-in-time count. This data is used to track trends in homelessness, inform policy decisions related to homelessness, and identify gaps in services that may exist in a community. As noted above, there are some limitations to this count, notably that the total number is the minimum number of people believed to be experiencing homelessness in a particular geography.

In comparison, the 2020 point-in-time count estimated 51 people experiencing homelessness in Androscoggin County. The report established a vision for a collaborative and data-driven approach, reinforcing the importance of regional coordination and partnerships in implementing solutions. Recommended approaches to addressing homelessness include a combination of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery initiatives.

Auburn and Lewiston work closely together to help address homelessness in both communities. City staff reported that unhoused residents often move between the two cities, requiring a coordinated approach to best support residents.

The City is in the process of establishing the Auburn Resource Center. This facility will provide a central location for community members to access social services, including services for the City's unhoused residents. An existing vacant building at 121 Mill Street is being rehabilitated to house the center.

In 2024, the City worked with Preble Street to expand the Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Program to Lewiston-Auburn. The RRH program is located at 982 ½ Sabattus Street in Lewiston. RRH is an evidence-based and housing first intervention designed to help individuals quickly exit homelessness and not become homeless again in the future. The program is a short-term, housing first intervention that focuses on housing identification, move-in support, and rental assistance. Each participant works with a caseworker to create an individualized housing plan with the goal of obtaining permanent housing as quickly as possible. In its first year, the program had a goal of serving 30 households and 35 individuals.

The housing first model is an approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness. The model has shown that stable housing allows residents to have stability, support, and services to help them become permanently housed, find employment opportunities, access mental health and medical services, and find stable financial footing.

There are currently no permanent overnight homeless shelters in Auburn; however, Save Voices (located in Auburn) provides shelter and support services for victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking. Three nonprofit facilities in Lewiston offer emergency overnight shelter. New Beginnings provides emergency housing and support for youths ages 12 to 19. Hope Haven Gospel Mission and St. Martin de Porres Residence provide emergency shelter and support for unhoused adults. The Drop-In Center, opened in 2022, is open two days per week and offers meals and resources for those who are unhoused. The Drop-In Center reopened in a new, larger facility at 121 Mill Street in 2025.

Other Community Support Services

Within the Business and Community Development Department, the Public Health division promotes health and wellness through City-led initiatives and connecting residents to public health resources. The

department also manages several other community programs including grocery delivery and a lead abatement program. The City coordinates with many external agencies and nonprofit organizations that provide other services to the community, including food pantries, older adult services, youth programs, homelessness assistance, support for victims of domestic violence, and business development initiatives.

The APD established the Auburn Police Activities League to provide horizon-broadening experiences for at-risk youth and to help reduce youth involvement in crime in Auburn. The current PAL Center was completed in 2013 and provides educational and athletic activities and mentorship opportunities for children after school and during the summer. It also helps to support outreach between police officers and the City's youth. The City is in the process of building a new PAL Center, which will include a full-sized gymnasium, commercial kitchen, teen room, bathrooms, storage, and estimated to be completed in September 2025.

Auburn is an AARP-Certified Age-Friendly Community. The goal of this program is to make communities more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive for people of all ages. In support of the City's goal to become more age-friendly, Auburn has a senior center, providing programs, activities, and services for older adults. Other organizations also provide services to seniors, including legal services, transportation assistance, and recreation programs. The City's Age-Friendly Community Committee works to promote and enhance efforts to create a livable community that supports residents in staying connected to the community through active participation.

Collaboration

Auburn works closely with Lewiston's Economic and Community Development Department to address homelessness, administer federal funding, and work on other community development initiatives. The City also works closely with dozens of nonprofit organizations. Auburn maintains subrecipient agreements for a variety of community initiatives funded through federal grant programs and monitors work under these funds.

Infrastructure

Public Sewer System

The City's public sewer system consists of 23 wastewater pump stations and more than 135 miles of pipe, servicing more than 5,400 residential, commercial, and industrial customers within Auburn. The City's system is managed by the Auburn Sewerage District, a quasi-municipal utility that was formally organized by the Maine Legislature in 1919. The fiscal and operational decisions of the district are made by a seven-member board of trustees appointed by the mayor and Auburn City Council. The Auburn Sewerage District coordinates closely with Lewiston through the Lewiston-Auburn Clean Water Authority (LACWA). All wastewater collected by the Auburn Sewerage District is conveyed to the LACWA facility in Lewiston for treatment. This collaboration ensures efficient management and treatment of wastewater for both cities.

Wastewater is transported by gravity flow through inverted siphon pipes beneath the Androscoggin River to the LACWA Treatment Facility. The facility handles an average daily sewage flow of 8 million gallons per day but can treat up to 32 million gallons per day during wet weather. As the name suggests, the facility treats wastewater from both Auburn and Lewiston. The treatment plant began operations in 1974 with upgrades over the years. A significant wastewater treatment project is underway to construct a new 2.1-million-gallon combined sewer storage tank and a parallel treatment plant optimization project that improves efficiency and capacity by 20% to treat up to 38 million gallons per day. The projects aim to manage sewage and stormwater overflow during heavy rainfall, preventing untreated combined sewage from entering the Androscoggin River. These projects are expected to be completed in 2026. LACWA also provides septic and holding tank waste treatment services for 26 area communities, including the unsewered portions of Lewiston and Auburn.

The City's GIS database includes approximately 2,800 sewer line segments, with installation years available for about half. The average installation year is 1983 and the median is 1988. About 24% of the segments are more than 50 years old, and about 2%, mostly older sections, have been lined. ASD has not done any cement lining of old mains since 2011. Projects since 2011 have been replacement projects to eliminate old cast iron and galvanized mains.

The Auburn Sewer District's Fiscal Sustainability Plan (FSP) includes capital improvements for pump stations, siphons, and collection systems. The FSP outlines projects in recommended implementation timeframes of 0 – 5 years and 5 – 10 years. These are summarized in the table below.

The FSP also outlines capital project funding sources, including local revenue generation through structured sewer user rate increases and state and federal grant programs.

Table 10.2: Auburn Sewerage District Identified Projects

Project Name/Description	Estimated Project Cost	Recommended Implementation Timeframe
PS Project 1: W-7 Pump Station West Road	$67,600.00	0-5 years
PS Project 2: Washington Street Pump Station Replacement	$1,361,000.00	0-5 years
PS Project 3: Evergreen Pump Station Improvements	$400,000.00	5-10 years
PS Project 4: Moose Brook Pump Station Improvements	$750,000.00	5-10 years
PS Project 5: Worthley Brook Pump Station Improvements	$7,500.00	5-10 years

Project Name/Description	Estimated Project Cost	Recommended Implementation Timeframe
S Project 1: Newbury Street Siphon	$50,000.00	0-5 years
S Project 2: Mill Street Siphon	$50,000.00	0-5 years
S Project 3: Riverside Drive Siphon	$50,000.00	0-5 years
S Project 4: West Shore Road Siphon	$50,000.00	0-5 years
S Project 5: Bobbin Mill Drive Siphon	$50,000.00	5-10 years
S Project 6: Fair Street Siphon	$50,000.00	5-10 years
S Project 7: Stetson Road Siphon	$50,000.00	5-10 years
CS Project 1: Dunn Street Sewer Replacement	$1,219,000.00	0-5 years
CS Project 2: Grove & Vernon Streets Sewer Replacement	$888,000.00	0-5 years
CS Project 3: Turner Street Sewer Rehabilitate and Replacement	$1,875,000.00	0-5 years
CS Project 4: Minot & Towle Streets Sewer Replacement	$3,005,000.00	0-5 years
CS Project 5: CCTV Capital Improvement Projects	$591,000.00	0-5 years
CS Project 6: Taylor Brook Interceptor Sewer Rehabilitate	$1,815,000.00	5-10 years
CS Project 7: Minot Avenue Sewer Replacement	$5,301,000.00	5-10 years
CS Project 8: St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad Sewer Rehabilitate and Replacement	$2,543,000.00	5-10 years
CS Project 9: Barker Mill Trail Interceptor Sewer Rehabilitate	$462,000.00	5-10 years

Public Drinking Water

Auburn's drinking water is managed by the Auburn Water District, which was established in 1920 to provide potable drinking water and fire protection services to the community. Lake Auburn serves as the primary drinking water source for both Lewiston and Auburn, servicing approximately 39,000 residents. Lake Auburn is protected by the LAO by regulating land use activities within the watershed. Due to its high water quality, Lake Auburn has earned a waiver from the EPA's filtration requirements. Even though it has this waiver, the drinking water still undergoes several treatment processes to help ensure water remains safe for consumption. These steps include screening, ultraviolet light treatment, disinfection, pH adjustments, fluoridation, and corrosion inhibition. The treatment process for Lake Auburn's water occurs at the Lake Auburn Water Treatment Facility and is managed by the Auburn Water District. The treated water is pumped through a distribution system consisting of approximately 135 miles of water main and 556 fire hydrants. The system also includes three storge reservoirs and a standpipe, providing a combined storage capacity of 7.4 million gallons. The Auburn Water District jointly manages the water supply from Lake Auburn with Lewiston's Water Division. The districts have redundant transmission mains and river crossings to help ensure a reliable water supply to both cities. The district treats and delivers more than 1 billion gallons of drinking water annually.

In 2023, the Auburn Water District and the Auburn Sewage District completed studies to evaluate opportunities to extend both water and sewer capacity in New Auburn and along the Washington Street Corridor.

Water expansion zones are located in two zones. Zone One encompasses the area east of Washington Street North to the Little Androscoggin River and the extension of the water main on Washington Street North, south to East Hardscrabble Road. Zone Two encompasses the extensions of Broad Street, South Main Street, and Riverside Drive and their connections to via Vickery Road, Witham Road and Hackett Road.

Extending sewer service into the New Auburn area can be achieved with four different sewer shed areas: Vickery Road Sewer Extension, Prospect Hill Sewer and Pump Station, Broad Street Sewer and Pump Stations, and Witham and Hacket Road Sewer and Pump Station. Extending sewer service along the Washington Street corridor has been broken into three sections: North End Sewer, Little Androscoggin River Crossing, and South End Sewer.

In 2024, LACWA announced construction on a wastewater expansion project to improve water quality and health of the Androscoggin River. The project is expected to increase Lewiston's and Auburn's treatment capacity by 20% and offer a 2.1 million gallon 'combined sewer overflow' (CSO) tank. The CSO tank provides a place for sewer and stormwater overflow to go during flood and severe wet weather events.

The City's GIS database includes approximately 3,500 segments of water mains, with recorded installation years available for about 1,500 segments. Among these, the average installation year is 1985 and the median is 1990, suggesting that much of the system has been in place for decades. Roughly 38%

of the segments are over 50 years old. Roughly 3% of the system, primarily the oldest segments, have been relined to extend the life of these mains. AWS has not done any cement lining of old mains since 2011. Projects since 2011 have been replacement projects to eliminate old cast iron and galvanized mains.

The Auburn Water District's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) developed in 2022 states that ferrous metal water main has a life expectancy of 100 years. As a result, the CIP states that a minimum of 1% of a water system's piping should be replaced each year.

According to the 2020 Auburn Water District Annual Report, the Auburn water system contains approximately 142 miles of pipe, therefore the District should be replacing a minimum of 1.4 miles of pipe each year. The District currently budgets to replace two miles of pipe a year, which exceeds the recommended industry standard of 1% replacement rate/year. The CIP includes budget forecasting level cost estimates, which are revisited annually during the capital budgeting process for the upcoming year.

The CIP outlines short-term projects (2022 – 2026), intermediate projects (2027 – 2031), and long-term projects (2032 – 2036). Table 10.3 below outlines short-term and intermediate-term projects. These projects encompass segments on the streets listed below. Replacement projects have a separate start and end point for pipe replacement located within each street.

Table 10.3: Auburn Water District Short- and Intermediate-Term Projects

Project Year	Street	Cost Estimate	Justification
2025	Whitney Street	$120,000	Large main looping Project
2025	Dennison Street	$193,750	Replace 90+ year old pipe and looping, high break main
2025	Whitney Street	$56,250	Replace galvanized pipe, improve hydraulics
2025	Yankee Way	$87,500	Replace galvanized pipe, improve hydraulics
2025	Yankee Way	$37,500	Replace galvanized pipe, improve hydraulics
2025	Mason Street Service line	$8,750	Replace galvanized pipe, improve hydraulics
2025	Third Street	$625,000	6" Cast Iron in poor condition
2025	Towle Street	$225,000	High break main
2025	Towle Avenue	$250,000	High break main
2025	2" off Hillcrest Street	$37,500	Replace galvanized pipe

Project Year	Street	Cost Estimate	Justification
2025	Forest Avenue	$312,500	Replace galvanized pipe and looping project
2025	Jesse Avenue	$56,250	Replace galvanized pipe
2025	Broadview Avenue	$687,500	High break main
2026	Sixth Street	$212,500	Highly tuberculated and restricted, leak in 2010
2026	Sixth Street	$175,000	6-inch cast iron
2026	Seventh Street	$137,500	Replace galvanized pipe and 90+ year old pipe
2026	Charles Street	$93,750	Replace 90+ year old pipe
2026	Grant Street	$56,250	Cast Iron Pipe adjacent to James Street project
2026	Eighth Street	$187,500	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2026	Burns Street	$62,500	Cast iron pipe
2026	Bearce Street	$62,500	Cast iron pipe
2026	Temple Street	$75,000	Cast iron pipe
2026	Ninth Street	$450,000	Replace 90+ year old pipe
2026	James Street	$287,500	100+ year old pipe, 6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2026	Shepley Street	$150,000	100+ year old pipe
2026	Shepley Street	$287,500	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2026	Beckett Street	$112,500	100 year old pipe
2026	Carroll Avenue	$412,500	100+ year old water main and 6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2026	Tenth Street	$200,000	90+ year old pipe
2027	Stetson Road and North River Road	$975,000	Looping, improves hydraulics
2027	Minot Ave	$412,500	90+ year old pipe
2027	Minot Avenue	$1,620,000	80+ year old pipe

Project Year	Street	Cost Estimate	Justification
2028	Webster Street	$200,000	90+ year old pipe
2028	Washington Street	$2,790,000	Improve flow to Hardscrabble Reservoir, High break main
2028	Washington Street North Branch	$68,750	100+ year old pipe
2029	Myrtle Street	$106,250	Looping project and stub of 1936 water main
2029	Spring Street	$237,500	90+ year old pipe
2029	Pleasant Street	$550,000	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2029	Chestnut Street	$162,500	90+ year old pipe
2029	Josslyn Street	$37,500	90+ year old pipe
2029	Undercliff Road	$175,000	75+ year old pipe
2029	Center Street	$1,590,000	High break main
2029	South Main Street	$150,000	Large Main Looping
2030	Wedgewood Road	$250,000	Looping
2030	Madison Street	$412,500	Replace 80+ year old pipe
2030	Minot Avenue	$250,000	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics, High break main
2030	Monroe Street	$143,750	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2030	Linden Street	$143,750	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2030	Park Avenue	$562,500	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2030	Park Way	$68,750	80+ year old pipe
2030	Jefferson Street	$262,500	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2030	Hotel Road	$775,000	High break main
2031	Western Promenade	$425,000	6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics, cast iron pipe
2031	Beacon Street	$187,500	90+ year old pipe

Project Year	Street	Cost Estimate	Justification
2031	Spring Street	$237,500	Looping Project and 6-inch unlined cast iron water main, improve hydraulics
2031	Lake Auburn Avenue	$405,000	Large Main Looping Project
2031	Hotel Road	$600,000	Low C value
2031	Library Avenue	$50,000	Replace galvanized pipe
2031	Chicoine Avenue/Val View Drive	$1,000,000	High break main

Stormwater

Stormwater in Auburn discharges and runs into several local water bodies, including Lake Auburn, Taylor Pond, the Little Androscoggin River, and the Androscoggin River. Stormwater runoff is generated when rain or melting snow flows over land or impervious surfaces like roads, rooftops, and parking lots instead of infiltrating (soaking) into the ground. This runoff can pick up pollutants such as trash, chemicals, oils, nutrients, and dirt, which can then be carried into streams, lakes, and groundwater. Stormwater pollution is the leading cause of water quality problems in the State of Maine.

The City of Auburn is required to create a five-year stormwater management plan as part of its MS4 Permit. Auburn's last MS4 permit was renewed in 2022. The MS4 program is regulated under the Clean Water Act, and the permit looks to manage and reduce stormwater runoff pollution. As part of this permit, Auburn is required to and has actively created a public education and outreach program, engages residents in processes related to stormwater management, identifies and eliminates illicit discharges, constructs and enforces site runoff controls, implements post-construction stormwater management, and exercises municipal practices to reduce pollution from City operations.

Auburn's stormwater infrastructure includes 95 miles of storm drainage pipes, 115 culverts, 90 miles of open channel ditches and conveyance, and more than 5,000 manholes and catch basins. In addition to citywide efforts as part of its MS4 commitments, special attention is paid to the Lake Auburn watershed in order to help ensure stormwater runoff does not impact the drinking water supply. The LAWPC provides stormwater assessments at no cost to evaluate properties for runoff pathways and erosion. The Lake Auburn Watershed Management Plan includes strategies and BMPs to reduce nutrient loadings and stormwater runoff.

Solid Waste Management

Auburn's solid waste management system includes curbside trash collection, recycling, and a waste-to-energy facility operated by Maine Waste-to-Energy as well as a range of special programs to address other waste. Maine Waste-to-Energy is a private organization that provides safe and responsible waste

management but does not offer collection or hauling services. It manages the Auburn facility, located at 110 Goldthwaite Road, that processes more than 72,000 tons of trash per year.

The facility converts trash into renewable energy, reducing landfill volumes and greenhouse gas emissions. The facility serves as the transfer station and serves more than 30 local municipalities throughout Southern Maine. Since 2023, the facility accepts household bulk waste year-round if brought in by residents. Materials such as furniture, mattresses, air conditioners, tires, rugs, metals, propane tanks, and appliances are accepted free of charge. Wood waste, construction debris, sheetrock, and shingles are accepted for a fee. The facility will not accept household hazardous waste.

The City of Auburn offers curbside trash and recycling collection through a contract with Casella. Casella provides curbside waste collection and biweekly recycling collection. Once Casella moves to an automated collection, recycling collection will become weekly. The City began a new five-year contract with Casella beginning on July 1, 2025. Auburn residents are also able to take recyclables to the Auburn Public Works site at 296 Gracelawn Road.

Both solid waste and recycling are collected, but Auburn's recycling is primarily processed at the ecomaine facility in Portland. The recycling facility in Portland is Maine's largest single-sort recycling facility. It processes around 40,000 tons of single-sort materials every year, including paper, cardboard, plastics, metals, and glass.

The Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments organizes a regional household hazardous waste collection program on the third Saturday of each month, May through October, at the Environmental Depot located at 424 River Road in Lewiston. Without a collection and disposal program, household hazardous waste, such as paints and solvents, pesticides and herbicides, cleaning products, automotive products, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and medications can accumulate and pose safety and environmental concerns.

The City has a Food Waste Composting Program that is free for residents. Beginning on July 1, 2025, residents can participate in the Garbage to Garden program. The five-year contract includes weekly organic waste collection at 21 City and school facilities. Prior to July 1, 2025, the Auburn Department of Public Works and New Auburn Fire Station were the two drop-off locations. In 2024, the City Council charged the SNRB to evaluate Auburn's solid waste management system, including how household waste is collected, processed, and disposed of. The report developed by the SNRB was included as an appendix in both the solid waste and composting RFPs developed in 2025. The report prepared general recommendations, domestic trash recommendations, recycling recommendations, and food waste program recommendations.

Septic Waste Disposal

There are various regulations to help ensure septic systems comply with environmental standards to protect water quality and public health. The Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules are state-level regulations that govern the design, installation, and maintenance of septic systems throughout

Maine. Auburn's Zoning Ordinance includes provisions related to septic systems, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas like the Lake Auburn watershed. The Lake Auburn watershed Septic System Ordinance includes specific requirements within the watershed that dictate depth to limiting factor, disposal field installation, and a financial and technical assistance program to help homeowners comply with inspections and maintenance requirements. Homeowners with septic systems typically hire private septic service companies for regular pumping, disposal, and maintenance of tanks. Wastewater management policies require haulers take septic waste to the LACWA Treatment Facility for processing and treatment to help ensure it meets environmental standards before being released or repurposed.

Energy Infrastructure

Electricity is provided to residential, commercial, and industrial customers in Auburn by Central Maine Power (CMP). It services more than 636,000 customers in Southern Maine through both traditional power plants and renewable energy sources. The City promotes energy efficiency through various educational programs and incentives that encourage residents and businesses to adopt energy-saving practices and technologies. Natural gas service is provided by Northern Utilities, offering an alternative energy source for heating and industrial processes. In addition, Auburn is part of the Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program, which promotes the revitalization of former industrial sites to transition to renewable energy technologies. In 2024, Auburn was announced as one of six communities to receive technical assistance through the Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program. Auburn's project focuses on business attraction and industrial growth by developing a cohesive vision near the Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay.

Broadband

The majority of Auburn is covered by high-speed broadband service. Auburn's broadband infrastructure is part of a larger statewide initiative to help ensure Maine residents have access to reliable high-speed internet. Auburn has made significant strides in expanding broadband coverage, but there are still some areas that may experience limited or no broadband access. According to the Federal Communication Commission's National Broadband Map, while most of Auburn is covered by various internet service providers, there can be pockets, especially in more rural or less densely populated areas, where broadband access is limited. The Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) is actively working to address these gaps and extend high-speed internet to underserved areas.

Solar

The City's zoning ordinance outlines provisions for solar energy generating systems. The ordinance applies to all solar energy generating systems except for the following:

- Systems for municipal use
- Building-integrated and roof-mounted solar systems (permitted in all zones by right)
- Non-structural, like-kind repair of existing solar systems that do not expand the current system

- Ground-mounted solar intended to satisfy the electricity needs of a lot's principal use, provided the owner or operator completes FAA requirements within the airport overlay zone.

The AGRP has separate requirements related to solar energy generating systems listed under **Chapter 60, Article IV, Division 2 – Agriculture and Resource Protection District, Sec. 60-145(d) of the City's zoning ordinance.** Once 1% of the AGRP - estimated at **200 acres** - has been developed into solar energy generating systems, the Planning Board must determine whether additional projects would materially alter the district's land use stability. At this time, the City remains below the 1% threshold.

As of June 2025, a total of approximately 75.03 acres of solar development in the Agriculture and Resource Protection District have either been built or are currently approved and active (i.e., not expired). This includes 54 acres of constructed solar systems and 21.03 acres of solar systems that have been approved but not yet built.

Several earlier approvals have since expired without construction and are not included in this total.

Challenges and Opportunities

The needs of Auburn's most vulnerable residents continue to become more acute as housing and living costs rise, and more residents are cost-burdened and at risk of or experiencing homelessness. In addition to a significant increase in GA requests, GA expenditure is also rising due to increased rents, higher energy costs, and other living expenses that may be covered by GA. While the City has experienced new housing development in recent years, there is a need for housing to serve low-income households and housing and services to support the unhoused population. Since many of the services accessed by vulnerable populations are provided by nonprofit organizations and regional agencies, coordination among these groups is critical to improving efficiency and expanding capacity to meet the changing needs of Auburn residents. The City anticipates that the Auburn Resource Center (currently in progress) will help to support coordination and collaboration among service providers and with City staff.

The City has also seen an increase in police and EMS calls in recent years. Staff reported a significant number of behavioral health-related calls. Both APD and the Auburn Fire Department have partnered with Spurwink to provide behavioral health support when departments respond to calls. Both departments reported this program has been successful to date. Moving forward, departments would like to examine the feasibility of having full-time behavioral health support in Auburn.

Auburn's population is aging. The City will likely have to adapt some services to better meet the needs of aging residents, including increased EMS capacity, recreation programming, and opportunities to foster community connection. Across the state, concerns of loneliness and social isolation have become increasingly concerning, especially for older adults living alone. High poverty levels, inadequate housing and transportation resources, food insecurity, and a shortage of childcare services can also exacerbate health challenges across the City and region.

The City maintains a strong capital improvement program and continues to plan for ongoing maintenance for facilities and infrastructure. All of the City's infrastructure projects that are currently being completed are within the growth area. Increased costs for services, such as construction and road maintenance, have created challenges in budgeting for capital investments and in prioritizing investments based on new financial realities.

Sources

2020 – 2024 Lewiston/Auburn Consolidated Plan

Addressing Homelessness in Auburn, Maine – Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness

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Auburn Community Development Survey, 2025

Auburn Department of Engineering

Auburn Fire Department

Auburn Police Activities League

Auburn Police Department

Auburn Public Library

Auburn Public Works Department

Auburn Sewerage District

Auburn Water District

Auburn Sewage District

Central Maine Power

City of Auburn Code of Ordinances

Community Development Action Plan, 2024

Consolidated Annual Performance Report, City of Auburn, Program Year 2023

Ecomaine

Federal Communication Commission, National Broadband Map

Healthy Androscoggin

Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay

Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission (LAWPC)

Lake Auburn Water Treatment Facility

Lewiston-Auburn Clean Water Authority (LACWA)

Lewiston-Auburn Communications

Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA)

Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey

Maine State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup Young Adult Survey

Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment

Maine Waste-to-Energy

Preble Street Rapid Re-Housing Program

Northern Utilities

St. Mary's Health System

What is Housing First – National Alliance to End Homelessness

Climate Change

Introduction

Auburn, like much of Maine, faces a growing range of natural hazards that are being intensified due to climate change. Flooding, severe storms, extreme heat, drought, and wildfires all pose risks to the City's residents, infrastructure, and natural systems. As temperatures rise and precipitation patterns shift, these hazards are expected to become more frequent and severe, leading to heavier rainfall, stronger storms, increased flooding, and heightened stress on local ecosystems.

However, not all Mainers experience these impacts equally. Climate vulnerabilities are shaped by exposure to climate risks, sensitivity to those risks, underlying social vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity, and the ability for individuals or communities to respond and recover.

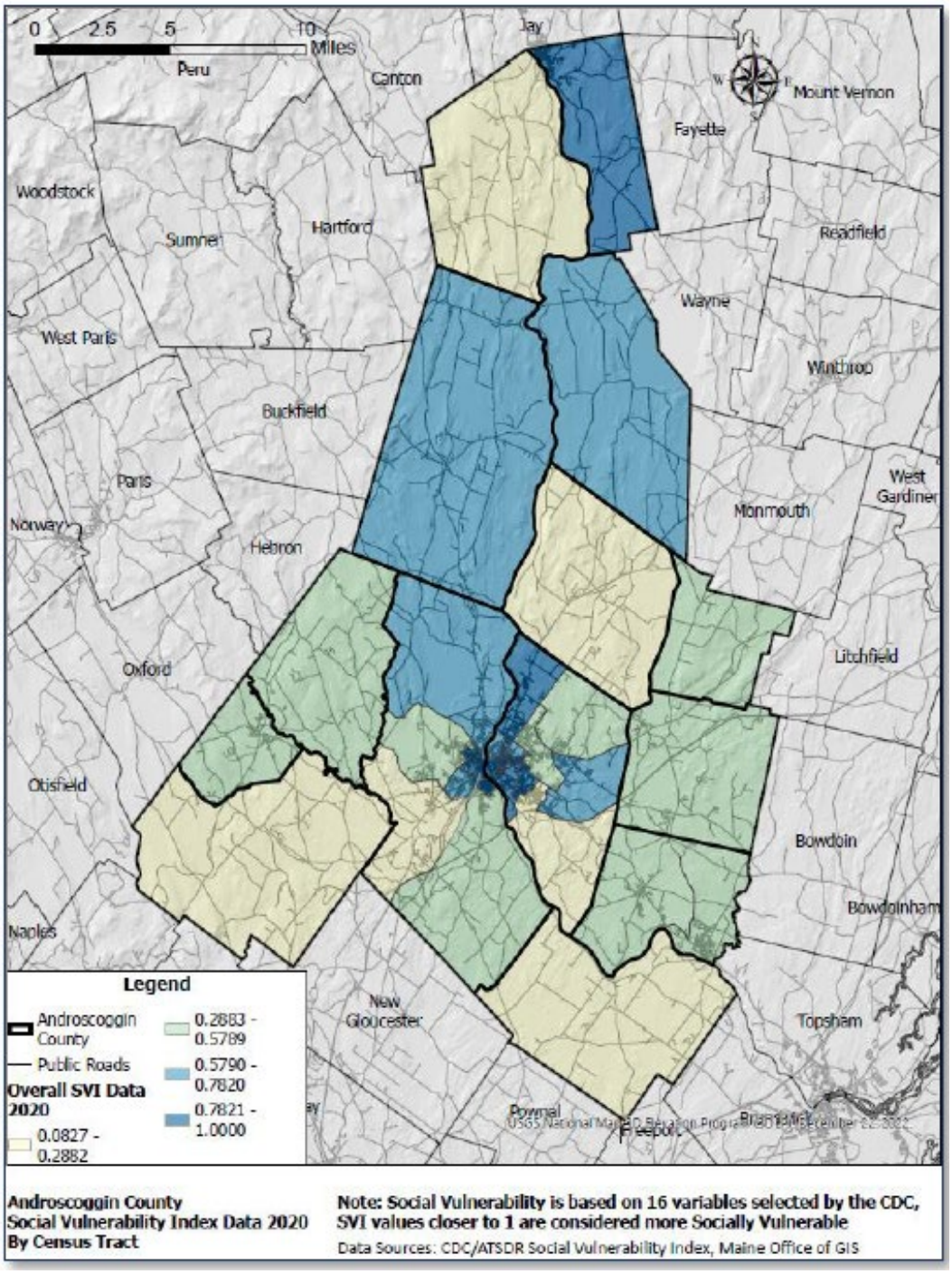
The Maine Climate Council (MCC) Equity Subcommittee report (2023) defines vulnerable populations as those "disproportionately burdened by existing social inequities or who lack the capacity to withstand new or worsening burdens," (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change

and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 58). These vulnerabilities may be linked to factors such as age, health, race, income, English proficiency, or capacity. Vulnerabilities can be more pronounced in low-income, rural, or tribal communities (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change

and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 58). Communities in Maine, particularly those with fewer resources, face greater challenges in preparing for and recovering from natural hazards.

In Androscoggin County, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2020 Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) indicates that overall vulnerability in the county is medium-high, with parts of Auburn showing high social vulnerability (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-47). This highlights the importance of tailoring climate adaptation and emergency planning efforts to meet the needs of residents facing the highest risk.

Figure 11.1: SVI in Androscoggin County



Source: Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024)

Auburn's challenge is not only to reduce damage from natural hazards in the present moment, but also to strengthen long-term resilience by managing natural resources wisely, protecting ecosystems such as wetlands and forests, and promoting climate-smart growth. Moreover, building resilience through equity ensures that all residents, regardless of background or circumstance, are included in the City's efforts to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

This chapter provides an overview of the natural hazards that Auburn experiences and their potential impact on the community. Each section focuses on specific hazards such as flooding, extreme heat, or drought, describing the hazard's local or county-level relevance and current and projected trends. The chapter concludes with implications of climate change for sustainability and equity as it pertains to public health, housing, the economy, agriculture freshwater resources, forests and forestry, and biodiversity.

This chapter heavily draws on the *Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine* (2024), which offers detailed, evidence-based analysis of statewide climate trends, projections, and vulnerabilities. Natural hazard data are pulled from the *Androscoggin County 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan*, which provides regional and town-by-town data on natural hazards and community risks specific to the county. This chapter does not substitute as a localized climate change vulnerability assessment or climate action plan for the City of Auburn.

Flooding

The National Weather Service defines flooding as an overflow of water onto land that is typically dry. This occurs when rising water from a natural or constructed waterway, such as a river, stream, or drainage ditch, floods surrounding areas. Different types of flooding in Auburn are possible. This includes beaver dam flooding, dam failure, flash flood, ice jam, lake flooding, riverine, and urban. The Androscoggin River serves as the primary waterway in Androscoggin County, supported by several major tributaries, including the Nezinscot River, Dead River, Martin Stream, Sabattus River, and Little Androscoggin River. Notable lakes and ponds within the county include Lake Auburn, Sabattus Pond, and the Range Ponds (Upper, Middle, and Lower) (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-4, B-5).

Floods are described in local studies by how far the water spreads and their likelihood of occurrence. These studies use historical records to estimate the chances of flooding at different levels. In the U.S., the main standard for flood planning is the "1-percent annual chance flood," which is set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the government agency that manages flood risk and disaster response. This "1% annual flood" is also called the base flood or "100-year flood," meaning there is a 1% chance it will occur in any given year. Homes, businesses, and critical facilities in areas identified as flood-prone, or designated flood zones, face this level of risk each year (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-9). Auburn has attempted to reduce development in flood-prone areas by participating in the National Flood Insurance Program and adopting local floodplain regulations.

Most flooding in Androscoggin County occurs between December and May and results from snowmelt runoff and/or heavy rain events that can erode and wash out roads (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-5). River flooding is particularly common in spring, driven by snowmelt and the potential for ice jams (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-5). Low-lying areas are also vulnerable to flooding due to poor natural drainage, while urban areas and locations with extensive impermeable surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, face increased flood risk from inadequate stormwater drainage.

Flooding can result in loss of life, property damage, and disruptions to communication, transportation, utilities, and community services; it can also harm crops and livestock, create health risks from contaminated water supplies, and cause significant business losses and interruptions (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-5). Flood waters can contain a variety of hazards including building debris, hazardous chemicals, wastewater effluent (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-10). When floodwater levels fall, they can leave behind sediment, debris, and pollutants that contaminate farmland and residential areas (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-5, B-10). Cleaning up and restoring these areas can take a long time and require significant effort even after the flood has passed.

Socially vulnerable populations may have difficulty evacuating during floods because they may not have a car or rely on public transportation, which can be disrupted; they may also have insufficient funds or lack the physical ability to relocate if their homes are badly damaged (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-12). Limited broadband coverage may create challenges circulating information about potential upcoming natural disasters. Homes that aren't properly protected can develop mold and mildew after flooding, and homeowners may not have flood insurance, increasingly the difficulty of recovering financially (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-12).

The stress and sleep loss from these challenges can weaken the immune system, increasing the risk of illness. Floodwater can also carry chemicals, debris, and wastewater, contaminating food and water supplies. Since most homes in Androscoggin County rely on well water, wells exposed to floodwater may need to be disinfected because floodwaters can contain harmful contaminants.

Climate Change Effects on Flooding

Flooding in Maine may increase due to climate change, as more intense rainfall events are expected in the coming years. Since the 1950s, Maine has seen one to two more days per year with two inches or more of rain and two to three more days with at least one inch (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 8). Historical data shows that statewide annual precipitation has increased by about six inches since 1895, and extreme precipitation events rose by 74% between 1948 and 2011 (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 30).

Figure 11.2: Statewide Mean Precipitation Rankings

Statewide Mean Precipitation Rankings

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Calendar Year Jan–Dec	47th Driest	44th Driest	15th Wettest	5th Wettest	-
Winter DJF	56th Wettest	48th Wettest	64th Driest	15th Wettest	39th Wettest
Spring MAM	58th Driest	24th Driest	48th Wettest	44th Driest	-
Summer JJA	15th Driest	55th Driest	38th Wettest	**1st Wettest**	-
Fall SON	54th Driest	32nd Wettest	19th Wettest	41st (tied) Wettest	-
Freezing Season NDJFM	60th Driest	50th Driest	52nd Driest	29th Wettest	15th Wettest
Growing Season MJJAS	**1st Driest**	45th Wettest	39th Wettest	**2nd Wettest**	-
Water Year Oct–Sep	32nd Driest	43rd Wettest	45th Wettest	6th Wettest	-

Record | Bottom 10% | Bottom 33% | Normal | Top 33% | Top 10% | Record

2020-2024 Precipitation Rankings. Source: Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 28.

A precipitation modeling study for the Northeast found that dry periods become drier and wet periods become wetter (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 32). Annual peak streamflows have grown over the past century, and warm, low-flow periods may become longer. Future changes are uncertain; peak flows may increase with heavier precipitation or decrease with higher temperatures and less snow (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 186).

Studies in New England and New York show that on the wettest days, about half of the day's rainfall can fall in 3 hours or less (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 27). While future trends for these short, heavy storms are still unclear, recent record-breaking storms have already prompted communities to prepare for extreme rainfall events.

River flooding is expected to rise as heavy rain events become more frequent. Short, intense bursts of rainfall, sometimes several inches in just a few hours, can occur during thunderstorms, tropical storms, or strong winter storms and are often worsened by local terrain. When several inches of rain fall in just a few hours, drainage systems, such as culverts, often cannot handle the water, leading to floods.

Flooding and higher water temperatures in Maine's rivers and streams can impact fish and other wildlife. More frequent and intense floods can erode stream banks, reshape channels, spread invasive species, and increase sediment in rivers, (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 184).

Severe Summer Weather

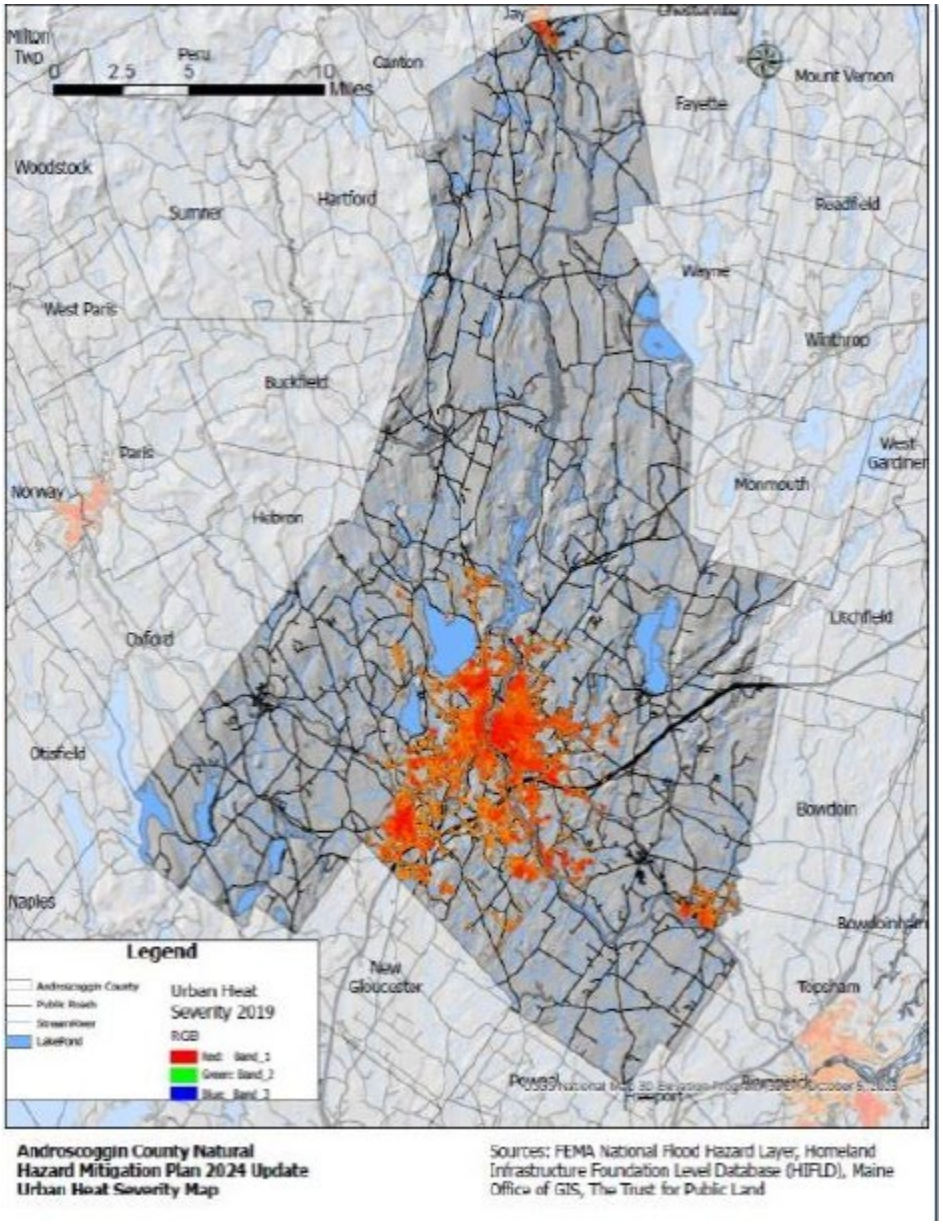
Severe summer weather includes hurricanes, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, microbursts, and extreme heat.

These types of weather patterns can damage public safety facilities, reducing their ability to respond to emergencies. Tornadoes, strong thunderstorms, and hurricanes can block roads with fallen trees and damage critical infrastructure, further limiting emergency response capabilities. Strong wind gusts from severe thunderstorms can break tree branches or even uproot trees, while heavy rain can cause localized flooding in urban areas or places with poor drainage. Extreme heat will raise the cost of cooling office buildings (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-13, B-14). Although there are no formal probability studies for severe summer storms in Maine, the state's location and climate make it reasonable to expect heightened risk for severe storms each summer (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-18).

Extreme heat events can lead to more cases of heat-related illness, especially among socially vulnerable populations who have limited access to cooling centers (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-21). In the U.S., extreme heat has been the leading weather-related cause of death over the past 30 years, according to the National Weather Service (National Weather Service, Weather Related Fatality and Injury Statistics). This puts extra strain on already extended health and social service agencies. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that older adults are more vulnerable to heat-related health issues; this is a particular concern in Androscoggin County, where urban areas like Lewiston and Auburn can experience amplified heat stress (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-13, B-19). Heatwaves can lead to heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and dehydration, and often strain power grids due to increased demand for air conditioning. Heatwaves can also exacerbate drought conditions and contribute to wildfires.

An urban heat island (UHI) happens when cities and developed areas face greater heat than nearby natural areas. Buildings, roads, and other infrastructure hold heat, and human activities like traffic and industry add extra warmth. Areas with more trees and green spaces stay cooler, while places with lots of concrete and asphalt get hotter. UHIs can put people at risk from extreme heat and increase energy use as more air conditioning is needed to stay cool.

Figure 11.3: Urban Areas in Androscoggin County.



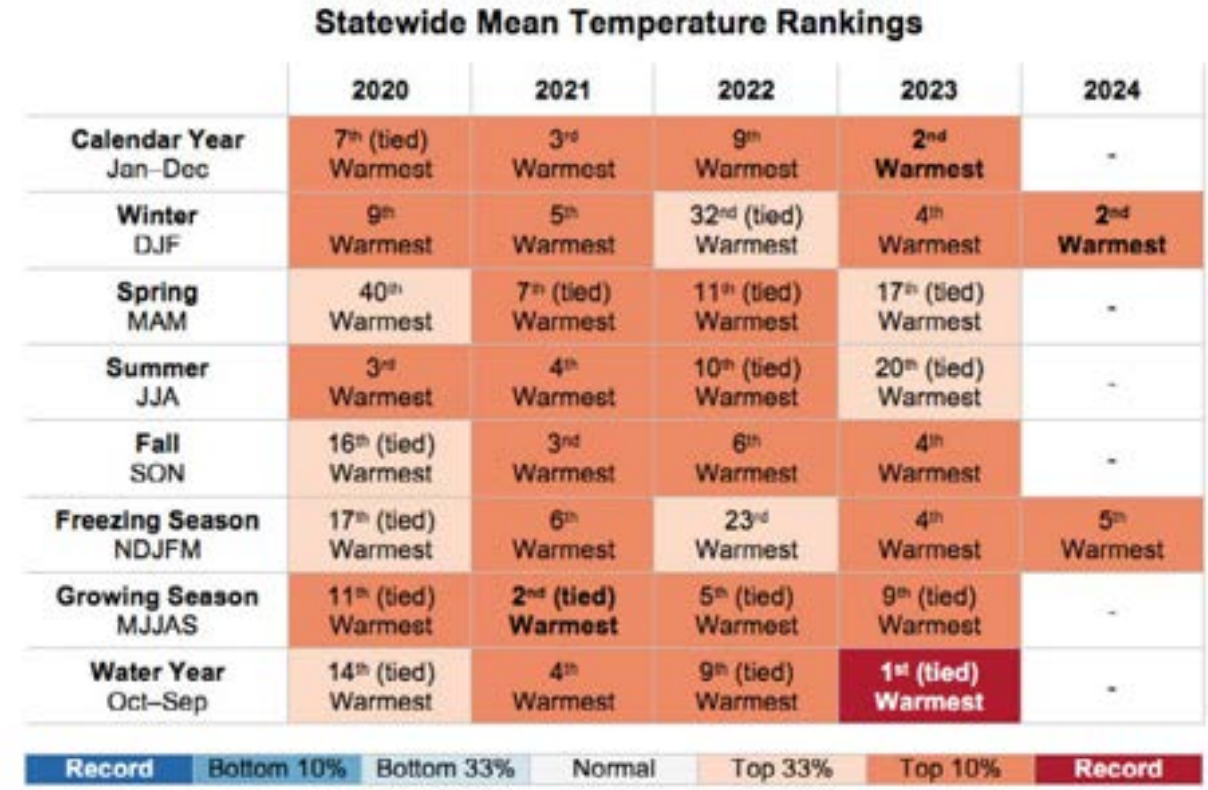
Source: Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024).

Socially vulnerable populations may also struggle to evacuate during extreme summer weather, such as flash floods or microbursts, because they may not own a vehicle or rely on public transportation, which can be disrupted (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-21). Severe summer storms can damage roads, bridges, and communication towers, disrupting deliveries of food, fuel, medical supplies, water, and electricity (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-21).

Climate Change Effects on Severe Summer Weather

Since 1895, Maine's statewide mean annual temperature has increased by approximately 3.5°F (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 30).Climate projections indicate that this warming trend will continue, with temperatures expected to increase by an additional 2–4°F by 2050 and as much as 10°F by the end of the century (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 9). Winter has experienced the most pronounced changes, warming by about 5°F (2.8°C) compared to a century ago, making it the fastest warming season in the state (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 34). Correspondingly, Maine's warm season between 2010 and 2023 is now about two weeks longer, while winters are roughly two weeks shorter compared to the 1901–2000 historical baseline (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 8). The growing season has also lengthened by approximately 1two weeks since 1950 (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 8).

Figure 11.4: Statewide Mean Temperature Rankings



2020-2024 Temperature Rankings. Source: Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 28.

As temperatures rise, Maine is projected to experience more frequent and prolonged periods of extreme heat. Certain populations are particularly vulnerable to these changes, including the state's aging population, children, outdoor workers, and individuals living in urban heat islands that lack sufficient cooling infrastructure (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 9). Current data show that men, middle-aged adults, and those who work outdoors already experience higher rates of heat-related illness, suggesting that these groups may face even greater risks as the climate continues to warm (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 9).

The ecological impacts of warming are also significant. Earlier onset of ice-out conditions on Maine's lakes and ponds leads to a longer open-water season, allowing water temperatures to rise earlier and stay warm longer. This creates stressful or even lethal summer conditions for cold water fish species, such as brook trout and landlocked salmon (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 18). Additionally, harmful algal blooms (HABs) in Maine's lakes and ponds are projected to increase, driven by warmer temperatures and changing nutrient dynamics. Climate change, in combination with human activities, is also altering lake water quality across the state. Factors such as road salt use, increased dissolved organic carbon from climatic warming, and recovery from acid rain are

changing lake chemistry, reducing water clarity, and degrading overall ecosystem health (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 18).

Together, these trends highlight how Maine's climate is undergoing rapid transformation, with broad implications for public health, ecosystems, and the state's natural and cultural identity.

Figure 11.5: Maine Statewide Mean Annual Temperature Cycle

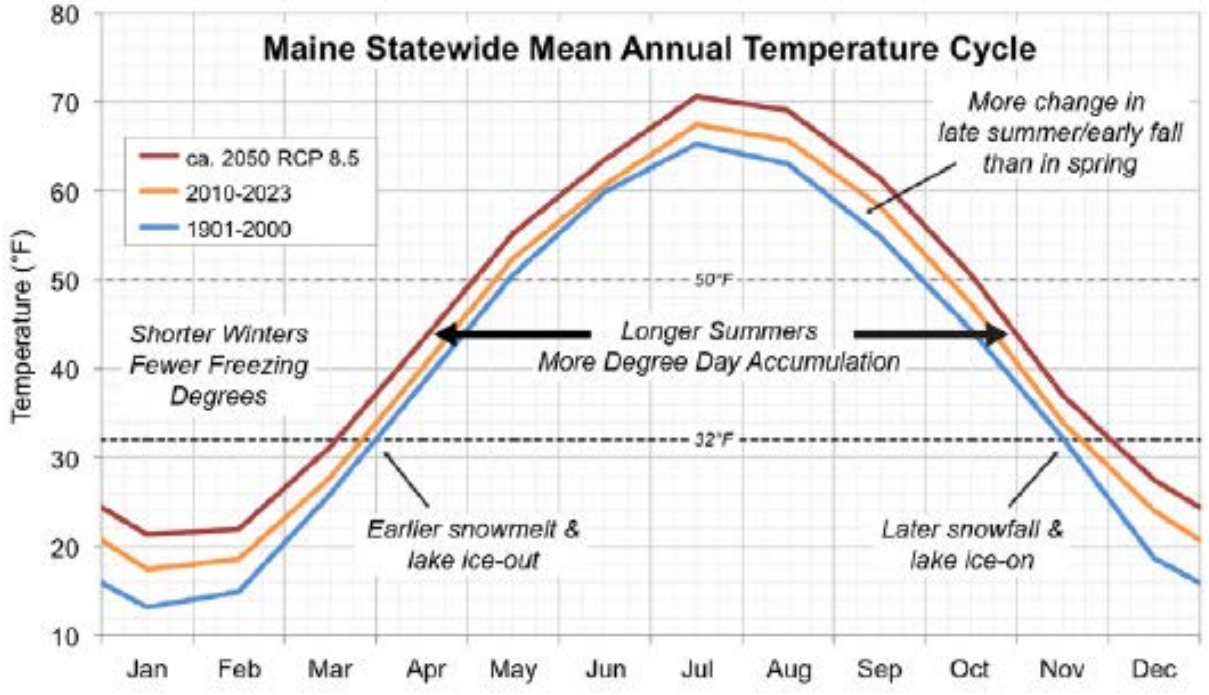


Figure 4. Maine statewide mean annual temperature cycle based on monthly climatologies for 1901–2000, 2010–2023 (from NCEI, 2024a), and 2041–2050 RCP 8.5. The RCP 8.5 projected temperature time series is from a multi-model ensemble mean of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project version 5 (CMIP5) (Taylor et al. 2012), downloaded from the KNMI Climate Explorer (KNMI, 2024). Horizontal dashed lines marking freezing = 32°F (0°C) and growing season = 50°F (10°C) thresholds are marked for reference. This figure shows how warming drives changes in the relative length of the seasons by plotting monthly temperature means for different climate periods (e.g., 1901-2000) and comparing the resultant sine waves to a 32°F (0°C) datum.

Source: NCEI

Severe Winter Weather

Severe winter weather includes blizzards, heavy snowstorms, ice storms, Nor'easters, sleet storms, and extreme cold. The most damaging winter storms in Androscoggin County are blizzards and Nor'easters, which can overwhelm snow removal and cause widespread power outages (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-22). Given Androscoggin County's location and climate, it is reasonable to expect heightened risk for severe winter storms in the county each year (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-26).

During severe winter storms, public safety teams may struggle to respond because roads can be dangerous or blocked by downed trees and power lines. Extreme cold can also limit their work if they do

not possess proper protective gear and can freeze water pumps, fire hoses, and drain electronic equipment batteries (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-28).

Severe winter weather can damage homes, businesses, and industrial properties, leading to economic losses from lost jobs and closed businesses. Extreme cold also raises heating costs. Power outages during storms can force businesses to close, and even those that stay open may see fewer customers, adding to economic losses from snow removal and repairs. Severe winter storms can damage transmission infrastructure, leading to disruptions in electricity, internet, and drinking water services. Buildings in rural areas are more at risk during severe winter storms if they are located too close to nearby trees, making them vulnerable to falling branches or trees. Severe weather can cause crop loss for farmers, and a loss of power and generator failure may put livestock at risk (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-28).

Many homes in Androscoggin County were built before the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC), and their potentially poor insulation may leave residents more vulnerable to extreme cold (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-27). Older buildings may also struggle to support heavy snow and ice during long winter storms. According to the Androscoggin County Hazard Mitigation Plan, approximately 10,000 housing units in Auburn were built prior to the adoption of MUBEC in 2010 (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-27).

Snow and ice buildup can bring down power lines, causing homes and businesses to lose electricity and heat. Socially vulnerable groups, especially the young and elderly, are most at risk from extended loss of heating (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-29). Extreme cold can also increase cases of cold-related illnesses like hypothermia, particularly among unhoused populations, putting extra pressure on already extended health and social service agencies.

Climate Change Effects on Severe Winter Weather

In recent decades, Maine has experienced a trend toward shorter winters characterized by more intense precipitation events. This shift suggests that while the state may experience fewer winter storms overall, the storms that do occur are becoming more severe (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 18). Warmer temperatures are transforming the nature of winter precipitation, leading to less snow and more rainfall, including frequent rain-on-snow events (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 34). These changing patterns not only reshape the state's winter landscape but also alter the timing and duration of seasonal transitions such as lake ice-out, which now occurs earlier in the year.

Storm systems that form in the mid-latitudes, known as extratropical cyclones, are projected to become stronger as the climate continues to warm, even though their overall frequency remains uncertain (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 39). Recent examples, including the powerful southeaster storms of December 2023 and January 2024, as well as major windstorms in fall 2017 and 2019, have raised concern about the increasing intensity and destructive potential of these winter weather systems (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 37). The

combination of warmer air temperatures and greater moisture in the atmosphere creates conditions conducive to heavier precipitation and stronger winds, posing mounting risks to coastal and inland communities alike. Shorter and warmer winters also have cascading effects on Maine's ecosystems. Reduced snowpack and increased rainfall influence soil structure, plant growth, and hydrological processes across the landscape. For instance, greater winter rainfall and rain-on-snow events can accelerate the export of nutrients from terrestrial to aquatic systems, potentially leading to nutrient loading in lakes and rivers while masking the extent of pollutant runoff (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 34). Diminished and less stable snow cover further affects soil insulation, microbial activity, and groundwater recharge, altering ecological balance and watershed health. These interconnected changes illustrate how Maine's shifting winter climate is challenging to both natural systems and human resilience.

On the other hand, despite the overall warming of the climate and winters in Maine likely growing warmer on average, climate change has the potential to contribute to an increase in extreme cold weather events (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 50).

Wildfire

A wildfire is an unplanned and unwanted fire that burns in natural areas. It can be started by people, escape from controlled burns, or occur for other reasons. There are two types of wildfires: wildland—any non-structure fire, except prescribed fires that occur in a wildland—and wildland-urban interface (WUI)—a fire that occurs in an area that has structures located in an otherwise undeveloped wildland (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-30).

Wildfires are rare in Maine, but the state is still at risk because of its dense forests, homes built in the WUI, limited wildfire prevention awareness, and few firefighting resources (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-35). While Maine doesn't have a typical dry season like some fire-prone states, history shows that large wildfires can happen during droughts. Much of Androscoggin County is at risk of wildfire due to its nearby forests and grasslands. Fires are most common in spring, when melting snow dries out vegetation and creates fuel for fires. According to the Androscoggin County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the largest fires on record in Androscoggin County occurred in October 1947, which burned a combined total of 1,430 acres of land in Auburn, Durham, and Livermore Falls (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-31).

Wildfires can create large amounts of smoke and ash, leading to poor air quality in nearby areas. Major fires can even affect air quality hundreds of miles away (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-36). Smoke from wildfires in Canada and the Western U.S. and increased aeroallergens, such as pollen, are impacting air quality in Maine. Vulnerable groups, such as older adults, children, and people with preexisting health conditions, are most at risk from the effects of wildfire smoke (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-36).

Wildfires can destroy homes, businesses, and industrial buildings, causing job losses and business closures. Damage to transmission infrastructure from wildfires can also cause interruptions in the delivery of utilities such as electricity, internet and drinking water. They can also damage crops, leading to farm losses. Most farms in Androscoggin County are in rural areas within the WUI, making them especially vulnerable to wildfires (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-36).

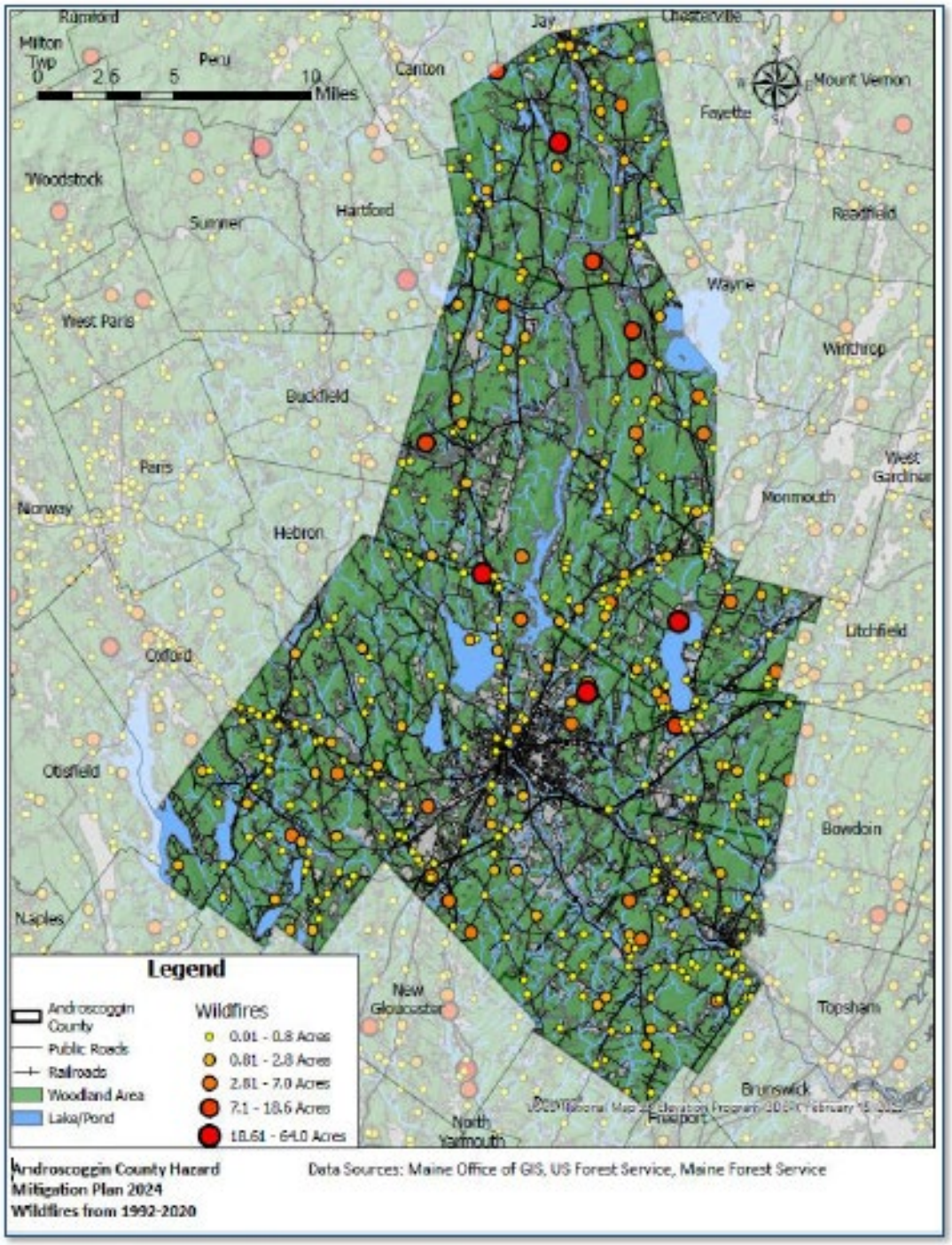
Moreover, because much of Androscoggin County lies within the WUI, most new construction has taken place in these areas, increasing wildfire risk. Many homes in these rural parts of the county are located near forests and fields, making them more vulnerable to wildfire damage (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-35).

Climate Change Effects on Wildfire

Climate change is expected to make wildfire conditions worse in the Northeast because of warmer temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, and more frequent drought conditions. These environmental changes are likely to extend the length of the fire season and create conditions more conducive to ignition and rapid fire spread. As summers become hotter and drier, the potential for vegetation to dry out increases, heightening the likelihood of wildfires even in areas that have historically been too wet or cool to sustain them. Despite this, the Northeast is predicted to be less fire-prone than the rest of the USA and Canada (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 199).

Although the overall probability of large-scale, catastrophic wildfires in Maine remains relatively low under most projected climate scenarios, the risk is not negligible. The state's extensive forests, many houses in close proximity to forests, less wildland-fire-fighting infrastructure compared to other states, and potentially longer dry periods, mean that even a small shift in temperature and precipitation could elevate wildfire potential (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 200). Consequences of increased wildfires could be severe, resulting in widespread forest loss, threats to human safety, and long-term ecological and economic damage. Thus, despite the low likelihood of catastrophic wildfire, the potential magnitude of such an event underscores the importance of proactive forest management, community preparedness, and continued investment in fire prevention and response planning as Maine's climate continues to warm.

Figure 11.6: Wildfires from 1992 – 2020



Source: Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024)

Drought

According to the Androscoggin County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Androscoggin County normally receives about 42 inches of rain each year (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-37). Any lower amount would be considered the beginning of a drought, defined as a prolonged period with less than 85% of normal precipitation. Despite being considered a "wet state," droughts have occurred in Maine. Since 2012 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has included Androscoggin County in nine disaster designations for drought (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-38).

Both water quality and supply become concerns during droughts, especially when dry conditions last a long time. About half of Maine residents rely on private wells for drinking water, making them more vulnerable to problems like wells running dry or water quality declining (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 55). According to the Androscoggin County Hazard Mitigation Plan, more than 50% of the homes in Androscoggin County receive their drinking water from wells (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-41). Many of these wells are hand dug which can be especially vulnerable to drought conditions.

People who rely on private wells for drinking water, especially in rural areas, are more vulnerable to drought because they have limited control over local water conditions. During a drought, a "dry well" occurs when the water table drops below the level of the well's pump or intake, stopping water flow. Prolonged droughts can lower groundwater levels, leaving wells unable to provide enough water for drinking, irrigation, or other needs until the water table recovers. Drought conditions can cause HABs to occur on bodies of water, lowering water quality (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 55). Municipal water systems that rely on surface water intake, including Auburn, would also face less supply and more risk of contamination.

Drought is the number one risk factor for the state's agricultural economy; Maine's farmers lost more than $32 million in crop yield between 2001 and 2002 during a severe drought (Androscoggin County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, B-40). Firefighters may have to respond to more wildfires due to dry vegetation caused by a drought.

Climate Change Effects on Drought

Flash droughts, shorter winters, and reduced snowpack are increasingly affecting aquifer recharge across Maine, raising the likelihood of summer droughts. These rapid-onset droughts occur when high temperatures and low soil moisture coincide with a lack of sustained rainfall, leading to sudden and severe water deficits. As the state's winters continue to warm and snowpack declines, less meltwater is available to replenish groundwater in spring, compounding the risk of water shortages later in the year (National Integrated Drought Information System).

Future drought conditions in Maine remain uncertain, as long-term data do not yet show a consistent increase in drought frequency (Maine Won't Wait 2024, 24). Furthermore, precipitation patterns are becoming more variable and less predictable. More of Maine's rainfall now arrives in short, intense

bursts rather than steady snow or light rain, which causes water to run off quickly rather than infiltrating the soil to recharge aquifers. This shift in precipitation dynamics increases the likelihood of "flash droughts," short but severe dry periods like those experienced in 2020 and 2022 (National Integrated Drought Information System). Winters are also becoming wetter but with less snow, a phenomenon known as "snow drought," which further limits snowmelt-driven groundwater replenishment and may have contributed to those recent drought events (National Integrated Drought Information System).

A 2021 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) study modeled drought conditions across the country and found a concerning link between increasing drought severity and higher population exposure to unsafe levels of arsenic in groundwater (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 55). In Maine, this means that prolonged or more intense droughts could exacerbate water quality issues by concentrating naturally occurring contaminants as aquifers dry out. Together, these findings highlight that while Maine's overall drought frequency is uncertain; the combination of shifting precipitation patterns, reduced snowpack, and groundwater vulnerability presents growing risks for both water availability and public health.

How Climate Change Affects Various Sectors

Climate change is and has the potential to reshape every aspect of life in Maine, from the health of its people and ecosystems to the strength of its economy and infrastructure, and Auburn is no exception. As a growing City in south-central Maine, Auburn faces a unique intersection of risks and opportunities tied to the state's changing climate. Rising temperatures, more frequent extreme weather, and shifting precipitation patterns affect not only the natural environment but also public health, housing, local industries, and the overall quality of life. For Auburn, understanding these connections is essential for planning a resilient future, one that protects residents' well-being, sustains the local economy, and preserves the area's natural resources.

Considering how climate change influences mental health, public health, housing, the economy, agriculture, freshwater systems, forests, and biodiversity is vital for informed local decision-making. Each of these areas is deeply interconnected: extreme weather and environmental stress can harm mental and physical health; rising housing and energy costs can heighten social vulnerability; and disruptions to agriculture, forestry, and ecosystems can affect local livelihoods and environmental stability. By identifying how these challenges manifest in Auburn, whether through increased flood risk, degraded water quality, heat-related illnesses, or ecological loss, the community can better prepare, adapt, and protect its residents and natural assets.

Much of the information in this section is drawn from the *Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine* (2024), developed by the Maine Climate Council's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. This report provides the most up-to-date understanding of how climate change is affecting Maine's environment, economy, and communities. It synthesizes current research, long-term climate data, and model projections specific to Maine, offering a scientific foundation for understanding regional trends and vulnerabilities.

Mental Health

Climate change can have serious effects on mental health, and the impact varies depending on a person's exposure to climate events, existing mental health conditions, access to emergency and mental health services, and social support. Children, adolescents, women, and Indigenous people may be especially at risk (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 9).

Mental health can be affected in two main ways: directly, from experiencing climate hazards like storms or floods, which can worsen anxiety, depression, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and indirectly, through stress or worry about current and future climate threats. Throughout Maine, access to mental health services is limited, making it harder for people to get the support they need.

Physical Health

Extreme weather events can seriously affect physical health. Certain populations are especially at risk, including older adults, people living alone, and lower-income residents, who may face greater harm from climate impacts like flooding and power outages.

Insects are also a growing concern in Maine, as milder winters and longer, warmer growing seasons may increase deer ticks in northern areas and allow lone star ticks to establish in southern and coastal regions. Tick survival depends on suitable habitats, such as forests near homes, and the presence of hosts like white-tailed deer. Warmer temperatures and longer growing seasons can also extend the active season of treehole mosquitoes, increasing the risk of eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEEV) (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 9).

Drinking water is also vulnerable to climate impacts, particularly during flooding or drought (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 55). Heavy rainfall can wash bacteria into water sources, increasing gastrointestinal illnesses, while rising temperatures and higher carbon dioxide levels contribute to more HABs and reduced surface water quality (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 55). Recent storms and periods of drought have raised concerns about wastewater discharges and water quality in Lake Auburn, which supplies drinking water to Lewiston and Auburn.

Housing

Housing security in Maine, especially for low-income and rural residents, can be strained by high fuel and electricity costs, as well as people moving into the state due to climate impacts (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 11). Heating and cooling costs make up a large part of utility bills, which can be a major burden for low-income households. Energy insecurity and climate hazards can also increase the risk of homelessness for those already struggling with housing. Long-term solutions to high heating costs include improving building insulation and energy efficiency, which can be more cost-effective over time.

Increased migration to Maine may put extra pressure on available housing, requiring careful planning to anticipate these impacts (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 62). At the same time, more residents could drive up housing prices and boost municipal and state tax revenues, which can help address these challenges and support economic and workforce development.

Economy

Climate change affects the economy in many ways, worsening the effects of natural disasters, thus creating significant costs for businesses and households. It is expected that climate change will bring new or higher expenses, affect jobs, income, and quality of life, but it may also create new opportunities. Governments and civic institutions may need to expand or adapt existing programs to help communities cope with these changes.

Agriculture

Climate change threatens food security in Maine, where about 10% of the population already faces food insecurity. Rising food prices, partly driven by climate impacts, hit economically disadvantaged residents the hardest, often forcing them to buy lower-quality or smaller quantities of food (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 10).

Crop production could be limited if extreme weather events like heat waves and droughts become more frequent (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 15). Weather variability is already reducing crop yields and causing economic and health impacts in the state.

Warmer temperatures and potentially longer growing seasons may also offer new opportunities for Maine agriculture by increasing production and crop options (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 15). However, these benefits come with risks: longer seasons can increase heat stress and water demand for crops, or cause frost damage if plants bud early and then face late spring cold (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 140). Higher winter temperatures may also let pests survive year-round or allow new pests, diseases, or weeds to establish. Gains from longer, warmer seasons could be reduced or lost if extreme weather events like heat waves, droughts, or frost damage harm crops (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 140). Farms can also serve as a contributor to climate mitigation by storing carbon through sequestration (Maine Won't Wait 2024, 31). These working lands provide environmental, economic, and recreation benefits.

Figure 11.7: Increasing Growing Season Duration in Maine

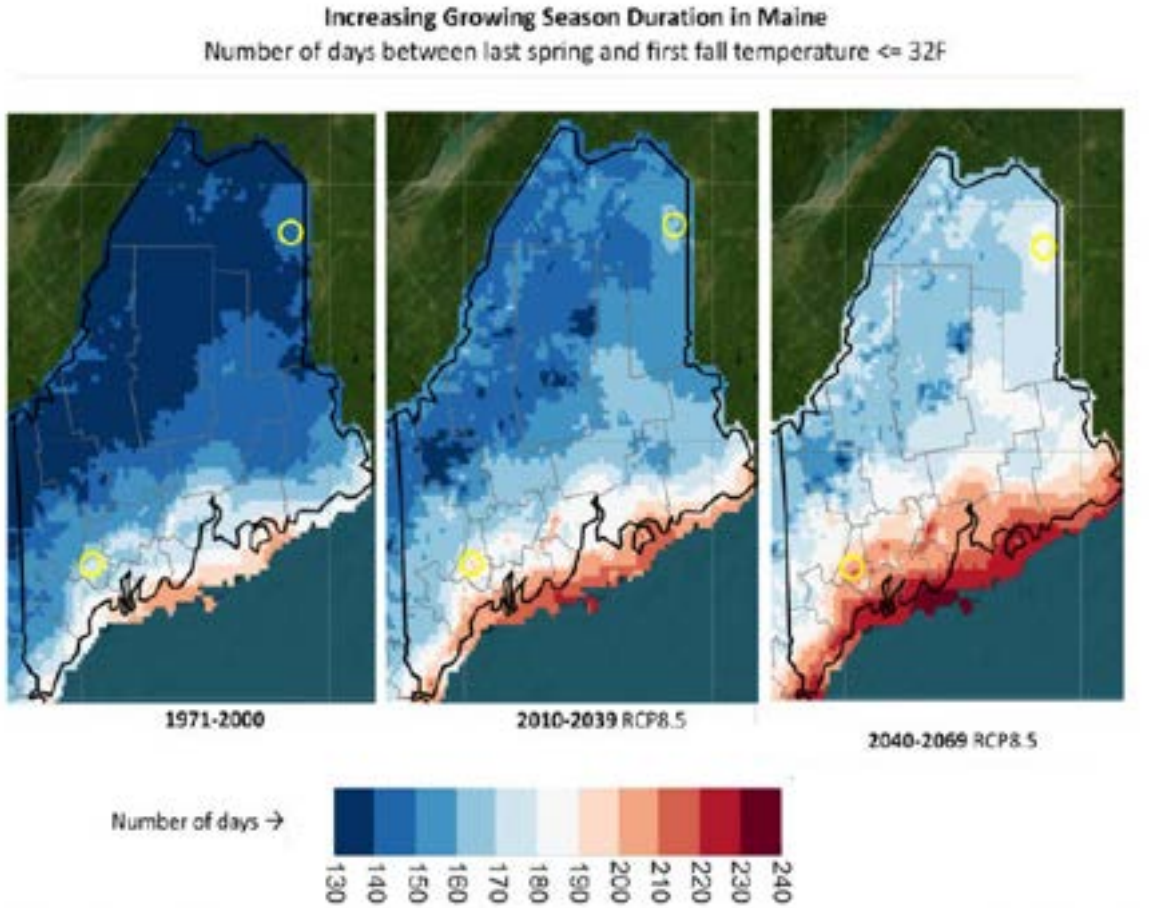


Figure 3. Increase in duration of Maine growing season from 1971–2000 (historic) to 2010-2039 and 2040–2069 using the high emission scenario (RCP8.5). Yellow circles mark the location of Lewiston in southern Maine and Presque Isle in northern Maine. Modified from Climate Toolbox (Hegewisch & Abatzoglou, 2024).

Source: Climate Toolbox (modified)

Freshwater

Maine's wetlands are rich in biodiversity and some of the highest quality in New England, but they remain at risk from development and climate change. Since the 1780s, Maine has lost up to 20% of its wetlands, making conservation critical to protect these ecosystems (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 183).

In rivers and streams, more frequent and intense floods can erode banks, reshape channels, spread invasive species, and increase sediment in other areas. Freshwater fish, especially cold-water species, are vulnerable to warming water and lower summer flows (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 166). Earlier ice-out in lakes leads to longer open-water seasons, increasing

water temperatures and stressing fish during summer (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 185).

Climate change, human activities, and air quality changes are also affecting Maine's lakes. Rising dissolved organic carbon, warmer water, and reduced acid deposition are altering lake habitats, with effects influenced by lake depth (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 186). Other climate-related impacts on rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands include higher temperatures, shorter ice cover, longer open-water seasons, more stormwater runoff carrying nutrients, increased harmful algal blooms (HABS) and toxins, and higher bacterial contamination in swimming areas. These changes can harm sensitive plant and animal species, reduce oxygen in deep water, threaten human and animal health, impact water-based businesses, and lower shoreline property values and associated tax revenue.

Forests and Forestry

Climate change is affecting Maine's forests in several ways. More frequent winter freeze-thaw cycles are making it harder to schedule and carry out forest harvesting, which is typically done on frozen soils (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 197). This can limit wood production, force harvesting under less ideal conditions, and affect the forest's ability to store carbon.

Maine forests are also facing pressure from non-native pests, pathogens, and invasive plants, although more projections are necessary to better understand impacts (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 175, 198). These changes can lead to tree loss, altered forest composition, reduced productivity, and ecosystem instability. Such impacts affect the forest products industry and reduce the forests' capacity to capture and store carbon (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 201). Overall, the main climate-related threats to Maine's forest industry include pests and diseases, extreme precipitation, changes in forest composition, invasive species, and reduced forest productivity.

While Maine's forests are vulnerable to and affected by climate change, the state's forests and wood products are "a net carbon sink, and are the largest contributors to the state's carbon neutrality target" and therefore key to protect (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 200).

Biodiversity

Climate change is expected to cause significant species loss and shifts in where species live. Protecting a variety of landscapes, especially connected and resilient areas, can help conserve biodiversity. Severe disturbances, like clearcutting or insect infestations, can temporarily turn forests from carbon sinks into carbon sources if the damage is severe enough.

Many of Maine's species are already being affected by climate-driven changes in habitats and ecosystem structure. Some species may face population decline, while others, like the northward-expanding Eastern Bluebird, may increase (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024,

171). Boreal Chickadees are negatively impacted by rising summer temperatures and more variable winter precipitation (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 171).

Currently, habitat loss and overexploitation have caused far more species extinctions than climate change directly, but climate impacts are expected to become a more direct and immediate cause of future extinctions, varying by species and location (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 170). Insects, which are key to many ecosystems, are shifting their flight periods in response to changing temperatures. Amphibians that rely on vernal and ephemeral pools are also affected, with warmer winters and springs altering their emergence, activity, and reproduction (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 173). Freeze-thaw events in late winter and spring are adding new stress.

Over the past 50 years, natural systems have been changing at an unprecedented and accelerating rate, leading to major biodiversity losses and reduced ecosystem health (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 174). Climate warming is driving local species extinctions, higher temperatures, and the spread of invasive species, with Maine's river shores and floodplains being particularly vulnerable.

Non-native species are defined as plants or animals living outside their natural range, often introduced by humans. This can occur either on purpose, with farming or landscaping, or by accident, through trade or travel. Not all non-native species cause problems, but invasive species, a harmful subset, can disrupt ecosystems, harm the economy, or affect human health. They can spread quickly, compete with native species, alter habitats, damage farmland, limit recreation, and interfere with forest growth. Climate change is expected to increase the spread of invasive species in the Northeast (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 174).

Maine's river shorelines and floodplains, like those along the Androscoggin River, are especially vulnerable. Increased flooding and development along waterways can carry plant fragments downstream, helping invasive species like Japanese Knotweed establish new colonies (Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024, 174). Floods disturb soil and riverbanks, creating ideal conditions for invasive species to outcompete native plants and further degrade watershed areas.

Conclusion

Climate change presents both significant challenges and critical opportunities for Auburn's future. As the city continues to grow, its ability to recognize and respond to rising temperatures, intensifying storms, and evolving environmental conditions will shape the health, safety, and prosperity of its residents. By proactively addressing these impacts on public health, housing, local industries, and natural resources, Auburn can build a more resilient, adaptable community. Ultimately, preparing for a changing climate is not just about mitigating risks, it is also about ensuring that Auburn remains a vibrant, sustainable place to live for generations to come.

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Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan

Fiscal Capacity in the Planning Context

The City's fiscal capacity, and thus its ability to provide adequate levels of high-quality services, largely depends on creating and maintaining a diverse economic environment supported by residents, the local business community, employment centers, and—especially in the case of the City—comprehensive plan priorities. Therefore, fiscal capacity, land use, economic development, and capital investment are inevitably intertwined. The City can help cultivate interdependence between economic needs and residential needs through land use, infrastructure investment, and fiscal policies that complement and support the City's neighborhoods, commercial partners, built environment, and natural environment, thus helping ensure the expansion of the City's fiscal capacity into the future.

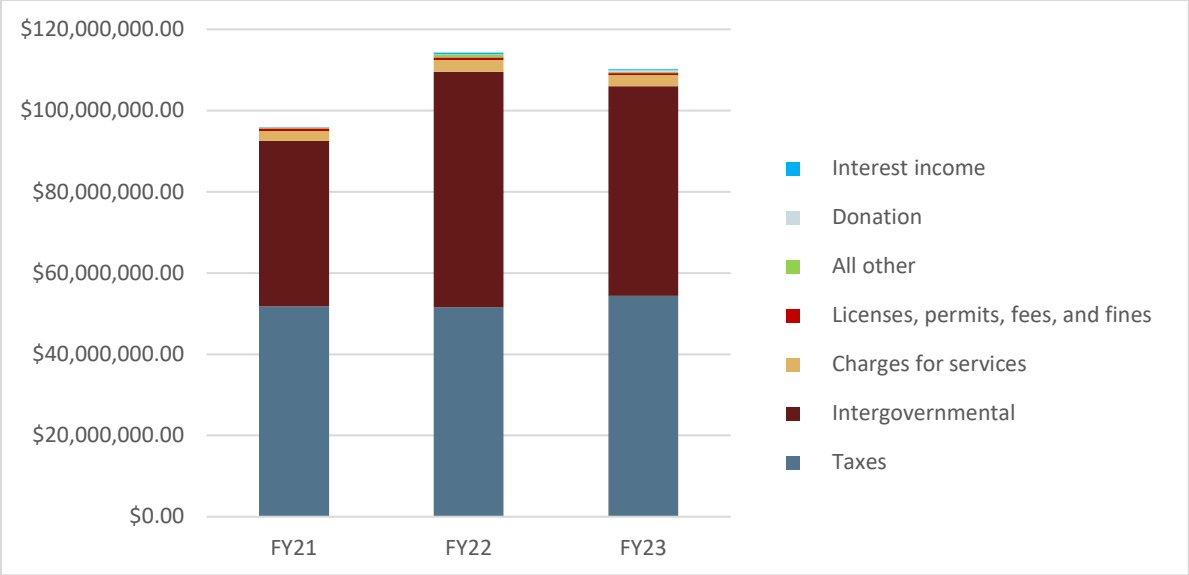
The City's annual budget serves as the principal financial planning and control tool. The City utilizes its annual operating and capital budget development process as the primary strategic tool that helps guide the City to realize all elements associated with regulatory and strategic goals and objectives. In order for the City to realize and implement the core components laid out in the comprehensive plan and strategic plans, it will need to lay out a fiscally responsible road map into the future to do so. To that end, a five-year financial forecast should be developed for the City's general fund and applicable special fund operations (enterprise and utility funds would be excluded from this analysis) to help guide the City and provide revenue and expense projections and estimates. The forecast should include key assumptions and trends identified related to revenues and expenditure over the next five FYs, specific to the Auburn community.

Furthermore, consideration of applicable comprehensive plan priorities should also inform the five-year financial forecast as well as other budgetary assumptions that would address financial needs and priorities related to day-to-day service delivery and other City-wide initiatives. The forecast should attempt to balance priorities with issues of affordability and reality. The financial forecast model developed should provide a thorough analysis of existing funding practices, sources of funds, and funding levels for both day-to-day service delivery, capital investments, and comprehensive and strategic plan priority investments and also identify barriers to long-term funding needs in certain scenarios.

Revenue and Expenses

To establish a baseline for measuring fiscal capacity growth, it is necessary to understand the City's core revenue-generating capacity. For FY 2023, roughly 50% of revenue came from property taxes, a slight increase in percentage from FY 2022. FY 2023 saw an increase in intergovernmental funds and a slight decrease in charges for services.

Figure 12.1: Municipal Revenue Sources



Source: City of Auburn Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports 2021 – 2023

Municipal expenses have increased in recent years. Most of these cost increases cannot be avoided. Costs for road maintenance, equipment and vehicles, and salaries for public employees have all increased with inflation and are essential budgeted expenses. In addition, rising costs for larger capital expenses require long-term planning to help ensure the City has adequate facilities and equipment to continue effectively serving residents and visitors. The City has an annual CIP that is reviewed and approved along with the annual budget.

Table 12.1: Municipal Expenditure

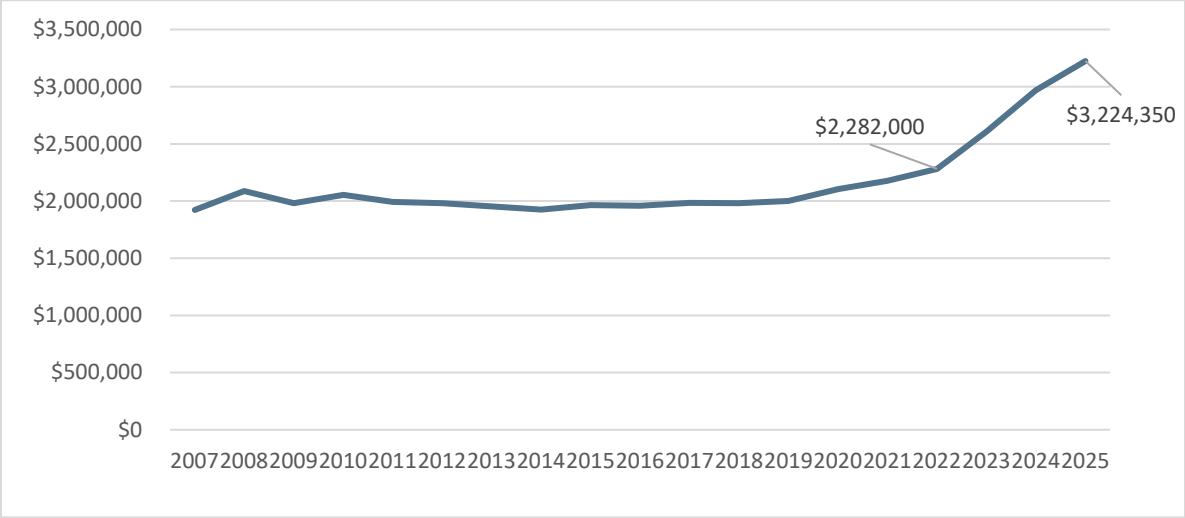
	FY 2023	FY 2022	FY 2021
General government	$11,946,944	$11,563,886	$11,131,004
Public safety	$11,461,619	$10,850,253	$10,497,535
Health, welfare, and recreation	$2,044,326	$1,737,165	$1,680,073
Public works	$6,822,438	$6,045,400	$5,608,516
Other agencies	$4,649,304	$4,196,458	$3,942,717
Education	$56,874,309	$49,233,405	$48,947,314
Unclassified	$229,135	$259,406	$230,726
Debt service	$8,394,862	$7,746,543	$7,615,817
Total Expenditure	$103,038,370	$91,632,516	$89,653,702

Source: City of Auburn Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports 2021 – 2023

Municipal Valuation and Mil Rate

Maine Revenue Services calculates an annual valuation of all taxable property. The State valuation represents the full equalized value of all taxable property in Auburn. Like other communities in the state, Auburn experienced a large increase in total valuation since 2022. In 2025, the City's state-assessed total valuation was $3,224,350, an increase of 30% from 2022. State valuation values are used to calculate state allocations for education, revenue sharing, and apportioning county taxes.

Figure 12.2: Auburn Total Valuation



Source: Maine Revenue Sources

The mil rate is used to calculate property taxes based on assessed value of the property. The rate is the tax payable per $1,000 of assessed value. Municipalities determine the mil rate based on the approved budget and the amount of property tax revenue needed to meet the budget divided by the total valuation of property within the City. As property valuation has increased, the mil rate has decreased.

In 2024, the City examined the mill rates of Auburn compared to comparable cities and towns, including Lewiston, Scarborough, Westbrook, Saco, South Portland, Biddeford, and Bangor. Each of these cities has a similar population and similar mix of residential, commercial, and industrial properties. Between these comparable communities, Auburn had the second lowest mill rate. Bangor had a lower mill rate than Auburn.

Table 12.2: 2024 Property Tax Comparison

City Name	Avg. Home Value	Homestead Exemption	Taxable Value	Mil Rate	Est. Tax Bill
Lewiston	$348,900	$18,750	$330,150	$31.77	$10,489
Scarborough	$668,256	$25,000	$643,256	$15.97	$10,273

City Name	Avg. Home Value	Homestead Exemption	Taxable Value	Mil Rate	Est. Tax Bill
Westbrook	$511,250	$25,000	$486,250	$16.68	$8,111
Saco	$525,399	$25,000	$500,399	$14.75	$7,381
South Portland	$517,460	$25,000	$492,460	$14.14	$6,963
Biddeford	$510,886	$25,000	$485,886	$14.22	$6,909
Auburn	$318,969	$23,250	$295,719	$22.25	$6,580
Bangor	$282,127	$25,000	$257,127	$18.55	$4,770

Revaluation

Auburn's Assessing Department is in the process of completing a full, city-wide revaluation. The previous revaluation was phased in between 2006 and 2007. This includes all vacant and improved residential, commercial, and industrial lots, as well as parcels in the AGRP. A revaluation is the process of conducting data collection (including inspections) and market analysis to equalize the values of all properties within a municipality for the purpose of a fair distribution of the tax burden.

The revaluation process began in fall 2024 and is estimated to take about three years to complete. The Assessing Department, in coordination with contracted revaluation firm KRT Appraisal, will be vising each property in Auburn. Inspections began on February 3, 2025.

As part of the revaluation effort, the City held three informational meetings from August to November 2024 to share information about the process and provide a platform for residents to ask questions.

The State's constitution outlines that all properties should be assessed as close as possible to its market value to create an equitable distribution of the total tax burden. The City's Assessing Department noted that for several years, real estate sales have been rising above the levels of assessed property values, and the revaluation process is an effort to bring assessed values closer to a property's market value.

Debt Capacity

Debt service requirements are analyzed through the lens of realistic revenue capacity to fund service payments on issued and projected debt as well as through the lens of the comprehensive plan. For example, The Strong Towns Strength Test, of which recommended maximum debt levels are a core component, recommends that a city government should spend no more than 10% of its locally generated revenue annually on debt service.[15] The financial model and subsequent five-year financial forecast to be developed should include existing debt as well as proposed new debt inputs. Proposed

[15] Charles Marohn, June 1, 2020, "We're in the End Game Now for Small Towns." *Strong Towns.* Accessed April 2025, https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/6/1/were-in-the-endgame-for-small-towns

new debt should generally reflect projects and purchases that support comprehensive plan properties. The table below highlights historical debt service requirements.

Table 12.3: Historical Debt Service Requirements

Category	FY 2021 Debt Service	FY 2022 Debt Service	FY 2023 Debt Service
Existing Debt	$7,615,817	$7,746,543	$8,394,862
Debt Service Percent	7.9%	6.7%	7.6%
Additional Capacity ($)	$1,972,001	$3,786,820	$2,624,691
Additional Capacity (%)	2.1%	3.3%	2.4%

Source: City of Auburn

Despite the additional borrowing capacity estimated through the lens of the Strong Towns 10% ratio ceiling, to advance larger and more complex capital investments and comprehensive plan initiatives, a general obligation (GO) bond may need to be secured. A GO bond is a common type of municipal bond secured by a local government's pledge to use legally available resources, including tax revenues, to repay bondholders. Most GO pledges include a pledge to levy a property tax to meet debt service requirements.

Capital Planning

The City plans capital investments related to education, City departments, and City facilities. It is evident that the City continues its commitment toward community-centric investments balanced with current capital plan requests, which remain focused on addressing aging infrastructure and promoting strategic economic development. Additional efforts should include projected revenue and expenses associated with comprehensive plan initiatives and impact estimates to overall citywide revenue and expense annually to assist the City with prioritizing and sequencing capital investments and service enhancement initiatives. Overall, percentages of projected capital investment over the next five FYs should be linked to a comprehensive plan priority. The following table highlights the percentage of projected capital investments and/or request types over the next five FYs.

Table 12.4: Projected Capital Investment Breakdown

Category		Percentage of Projected Capital Investment
1	Planning and Permitting	2.6%
2	Facilities Investments and Purchasing	82.9%
3	Fire	2.1%
4	Police	1.1%
5	Public Works	9.4%

Category		Percentage of Projected Capital Investment
6	Recreation and Sports Facilities	0.4%
7	Other	1.5%

Source: City of Auburn

Though capital requests have been submitted and prioritized for FY 2024, the City should continue to undertake a thorough analysis of capital requests and identified capital needs as part of the annual budget development process and continuously throughout the year, adjusting as needed. Given future financial forecast results, it is estimated that the majority of the capital requests submitted, and subsequently approved, will provide sufficient support to continue moving forward with comprehensive plan initiatives and maintaining an adequate infrastructure and continued investment in service delivery enhancement with minimal impact to rate payers.

Challenges and Opportunities

As costs for goods, equipment, and labor have continued to rise, municipalities have been increasingly challenged to continue providing services at the same level without burdening taxpayers. The City also has a significant amount of state and federal grant funding. Currently, there is uncertainty surrounding the availability of federal funds, which could impact the City's fiscal environment.

The City has used TIF, CDBG, and HOME funding for economic development and housing projects and some infrastructure improvements. Strategically directing new growth to these districts could help Auburn further leverage TIF financing tools to support needed infrastructure and community development initiatives. The City has not explore opportunities for capital investments sharing with neighboring communities.

Sources

City of Auburn Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports 2021 – 2023

Maine Revenue Service