



AUBURN

2026 Comprehensive Plan

MOVING AUBURN FORWARD: **TOGETHER.**

City of Auburn, ME

Inventory and Analysis

August 27, 2025

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.....	11
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.....	33
Water Quality	34
Nutrient Control	37
Shoreland Zoning.....	37
Geology and Soils.....	38
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	59

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.....	112
Unemployment.....	112
Wages.....	113
Commercial Development and Growth Areas.....	114
Economic Development Financing Tools.....	115
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts.....	115
Challenges and Opportunities.....	117
Economic Trends and Outlook.....	118
Sources.....	119
Housing.....	120
Introduction.....	120
Housing Stock.....	120
Age of Housing Stock.....	121
Housing Types.....	122
Housing Development.....	123
Housing Tenure and Longevity.....	124
Vacant Housing.....	125
Affordability.....	126
Cost of Construction.....	131
Housing Production Needs.....	131

Recent and Proposed Housing Development.....	133
Affordable Housing.....	135
Homelessness.....	135
Challenges and Opportunities.....	135
Sources	136
Transportation.....	138
Introduction.....	138
Auburn Public Works Department.....	138
Engineering Division.....	140
Traffic Counts	143
Crash Data.....	144
Regional Transportation.....	145
Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.....	146
Rail and Air Transportation.....	149
Rail Transportation.....	149
Air Transportation	150
Challenges and Opportunities.....	153
Sources	153
Historic and Cultural Resources.....	155
Auburn History	155
Historic and Archaeological Resources.....	156
Prehistoric Archaeological Sites.....	156
Historic Archaeological Sites.....	156
Historic Properties.....	160
Historic Preservation in Auburn	163
Historic and Archaeological Resources.....	163
Adaptive Reuse	163

Incentives for Historic Preservation.....	164
Organizations Dedicated to Historic Preservation	164
Art and Culture Resources	164
Challenges and Opportunities.....	165
Sources	166
City Facilities and Public Services.....	167
City Departments.....	167
Police.....	168
Fire and Emergency Medical Services.....	169
Library	171
Schools and Educational Facilities.....	172
City-Owned Properties	173
Public Health	177
Youth and Young Adult Health	178
Community Services	179
CDBG/HOME	179
General Assistance.....	181
Homelessness.....	181
Other Community Support Services.....	183
Collaboration.....	183
Infrastructure	184
Public Sewer System	184
Public Drinking Water	186
Stormwater	192
Solid Waste Management	192
Septic Waste Disposal	193
Energy Infrastructure.....	194

Broadband..... 194

Solar 194

Challenges and Opportunities..... 195

Sources 196

Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan 198

 Fiscal Capacity in the Planning Context..... 198

 Revenue and Expenses..... 198

 Municipal Valuation and Mil Rate 200

 Revaluation 201

 Debt Capacity 201

 Capital Planning 202

 Challenges and Opportunities..... 203

 Sources 203

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 immigration, 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

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/>

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 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.

This analysis 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

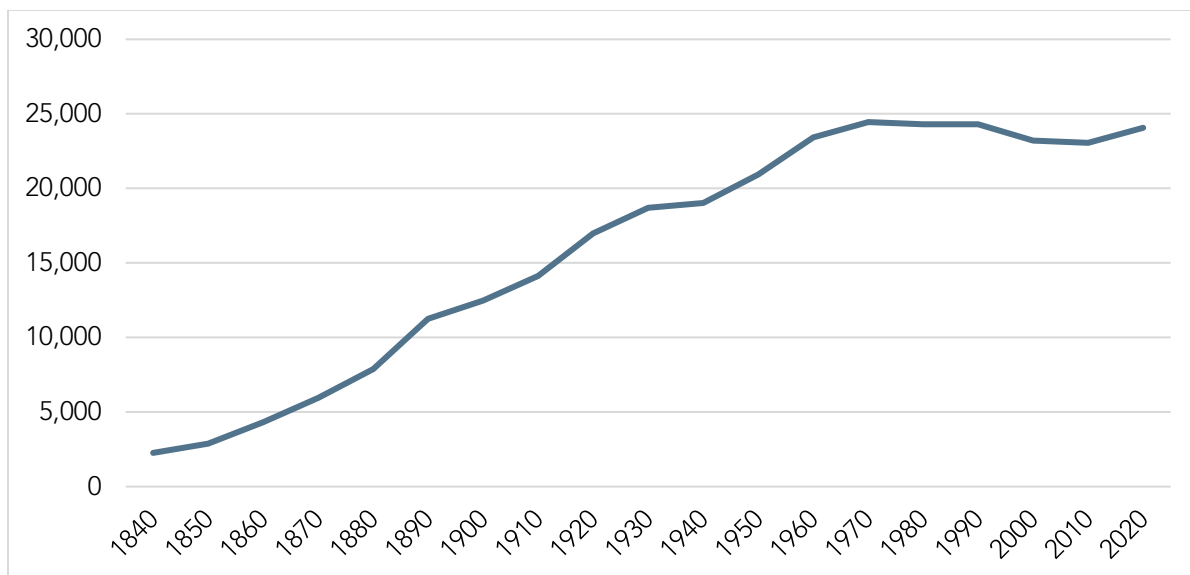
Introduction

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 2020, Auburn had a population of 24,061 residents, reflecting continuous growth. 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 – 2020



Source: Decennial U.S. Census, 1840 – 2020

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

	2010	April 1, 2020 Estimates Base	Population Estimate (as of July 1 of each year)					Percent Change	
			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.

³ <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/sites/maine.gov.dafs.economist/files/inline-files/Maine%20Population%20Outlook%20to%202032.pdf>

Table 1.2: Population Projections

Municipality	Population Observed	Population Projected				Total Percentage Change
		2022	2027	2032	2037	
	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042	2022 – 2042
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%

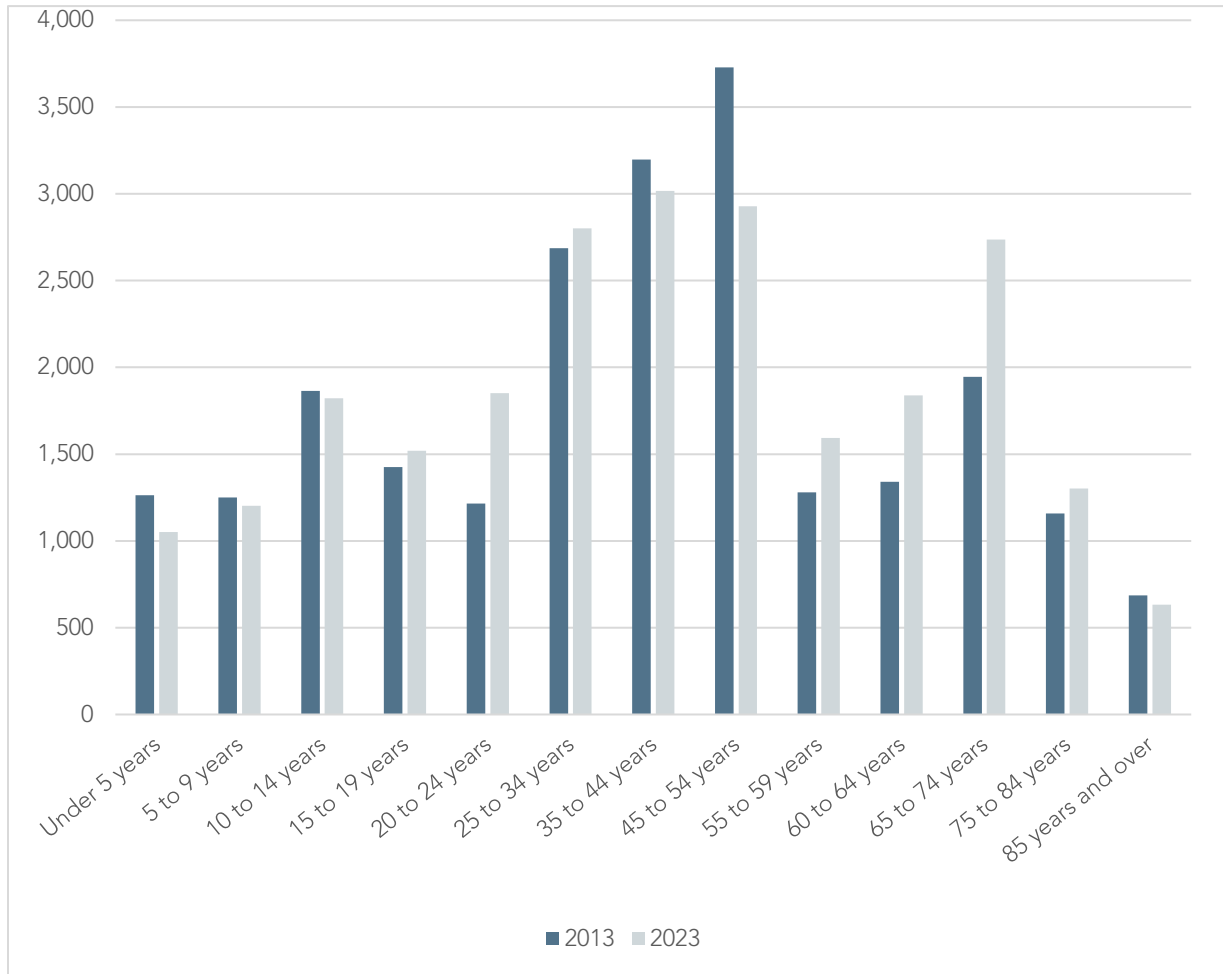
Source: Maine State Economist, Population Projections 2042

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

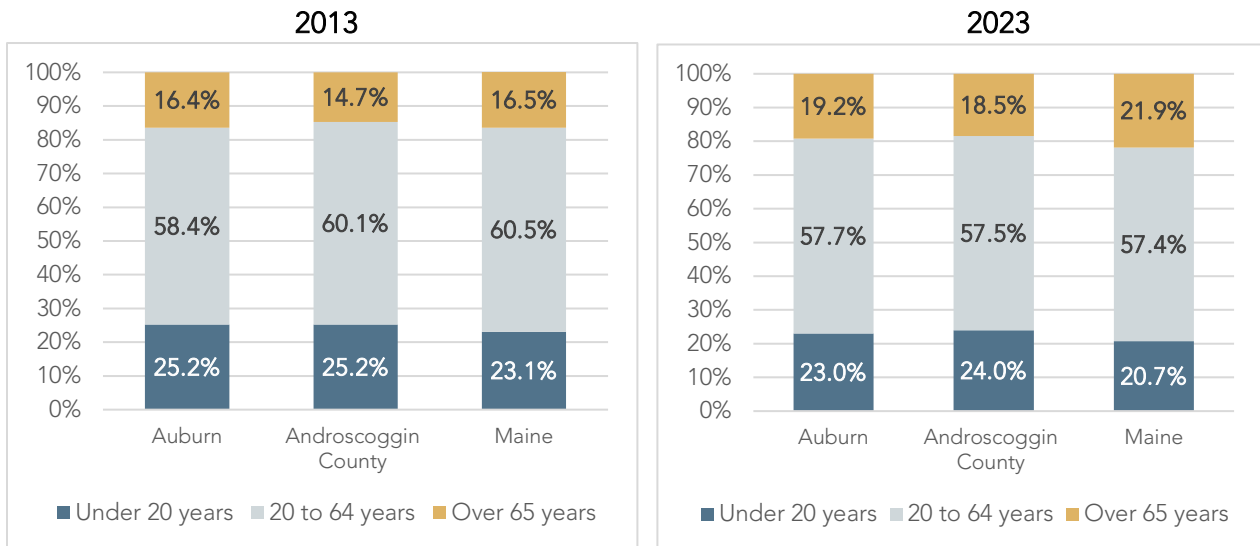
individuals ages 20 to 24 increased by 51.6%, the largest percentage increase in population of any age group.

Figure 1.2: Auburn Population by Age Category



Source: 2013 and 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

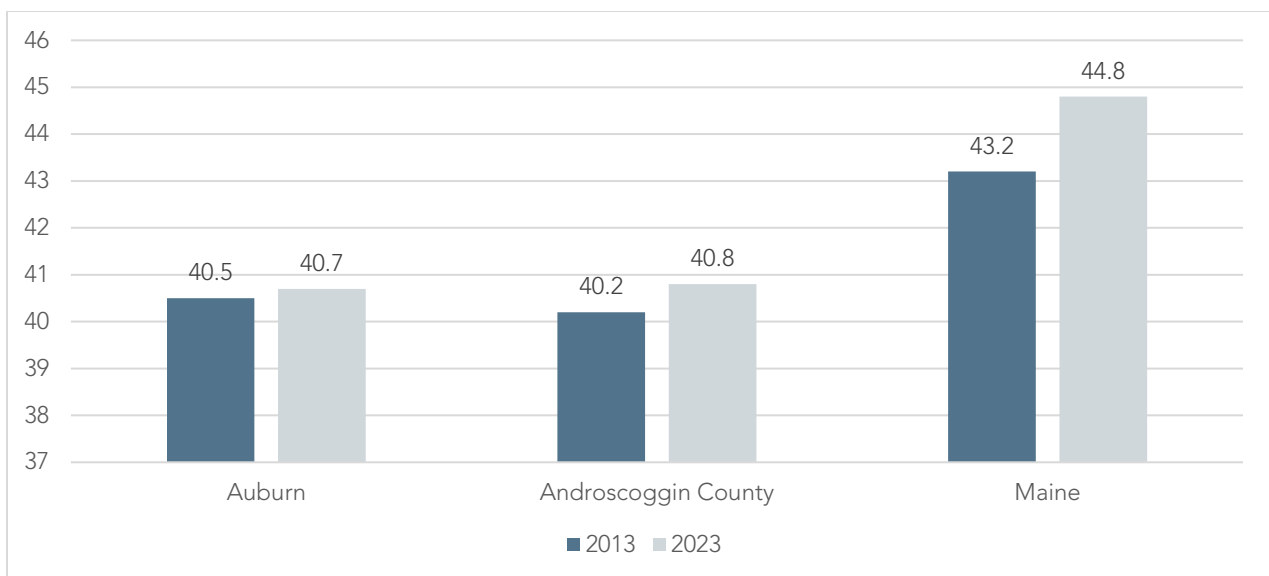
Figure 1.3: Regional Age Breakdown



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.

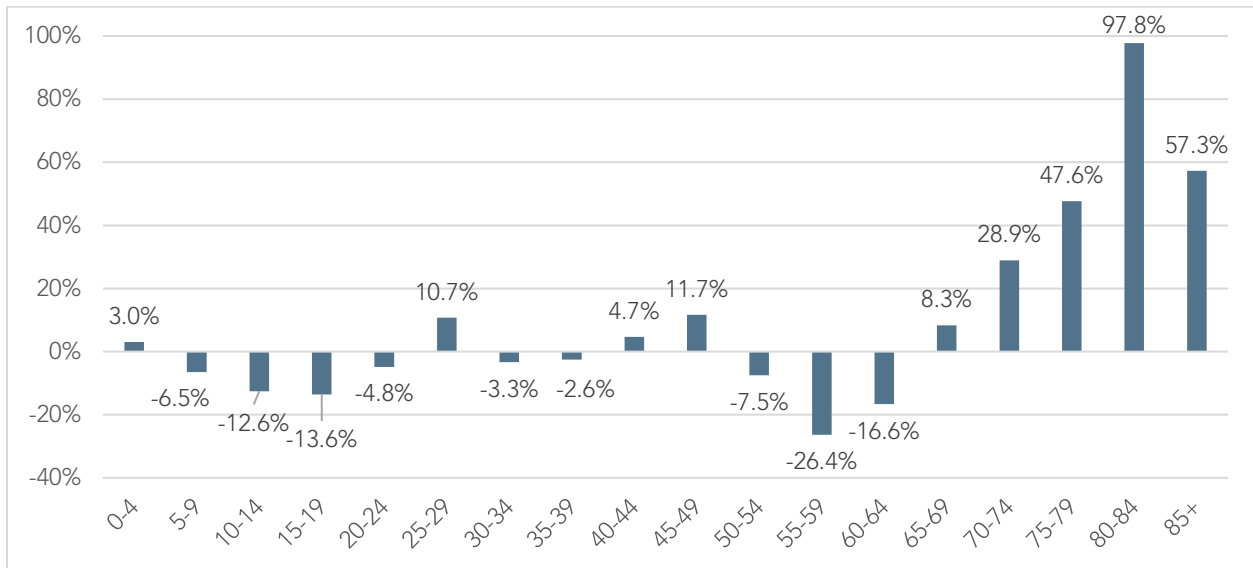
Figure 1.4: Median Age



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.

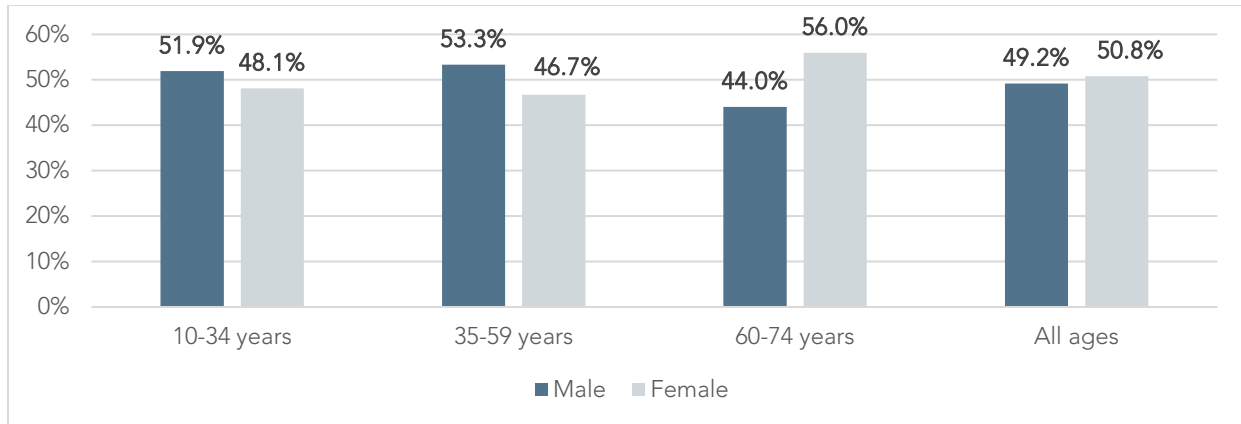
Figure 1.5: Androscoggin County Population Projections by Age Cohort, 2022 – 2032



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

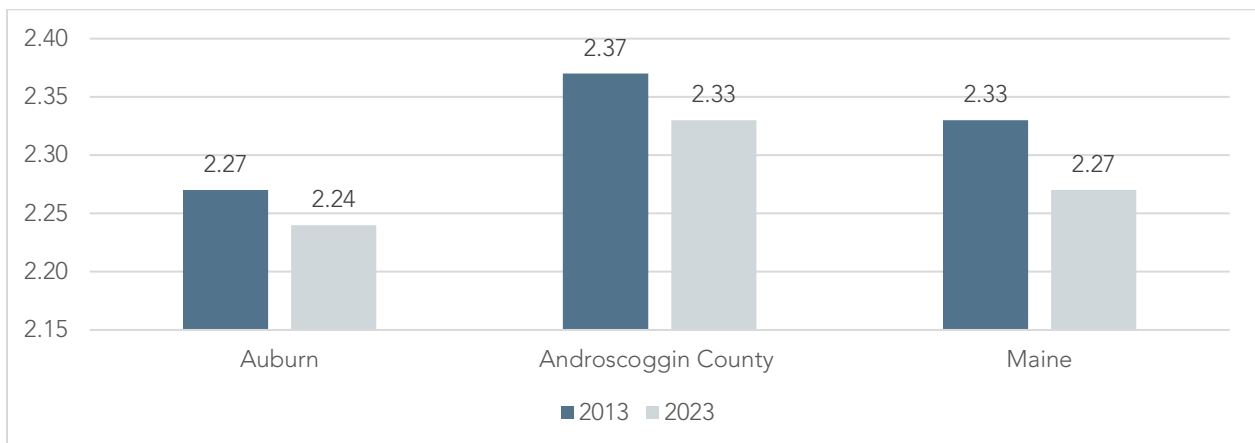


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Household Size

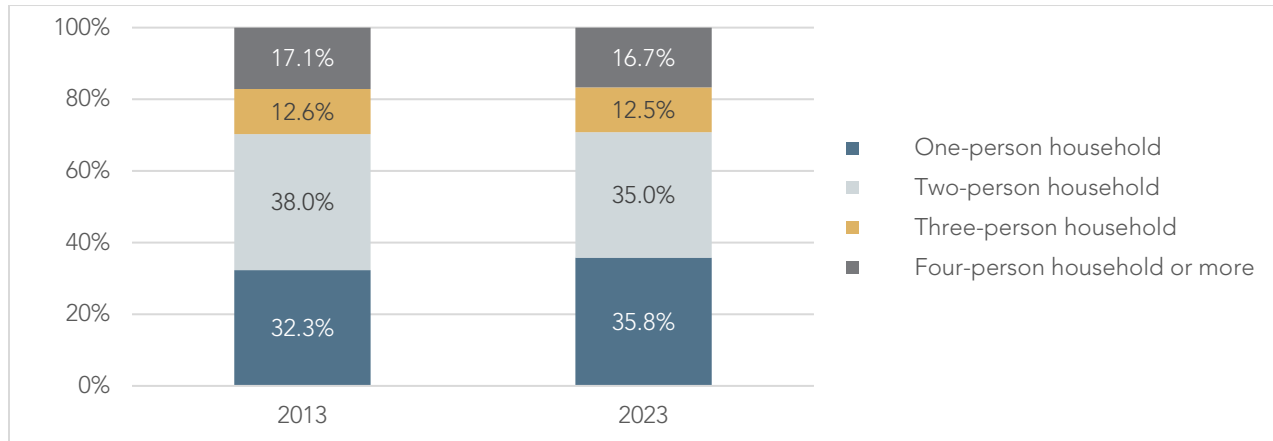
The average household size in Auburn has declined slightly from 2.27 in 2013 to 2.24 in 2023. Statewide, the decline in average household size was twice as large as in Auburn—.06 compared to .03, respectively. This is representative of the aging population, with a similar slight increase in single-person 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.

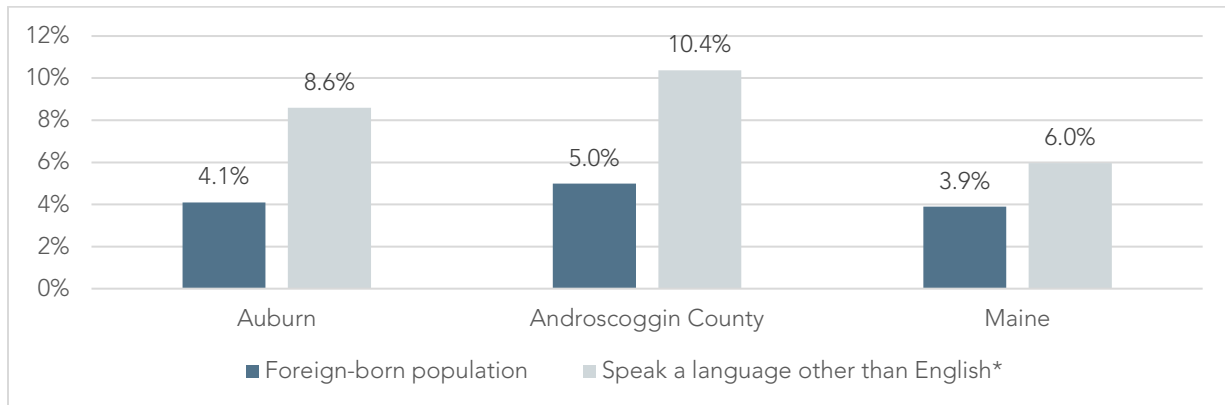
Table 1.3: Race and Ethnicity Over Time

	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.

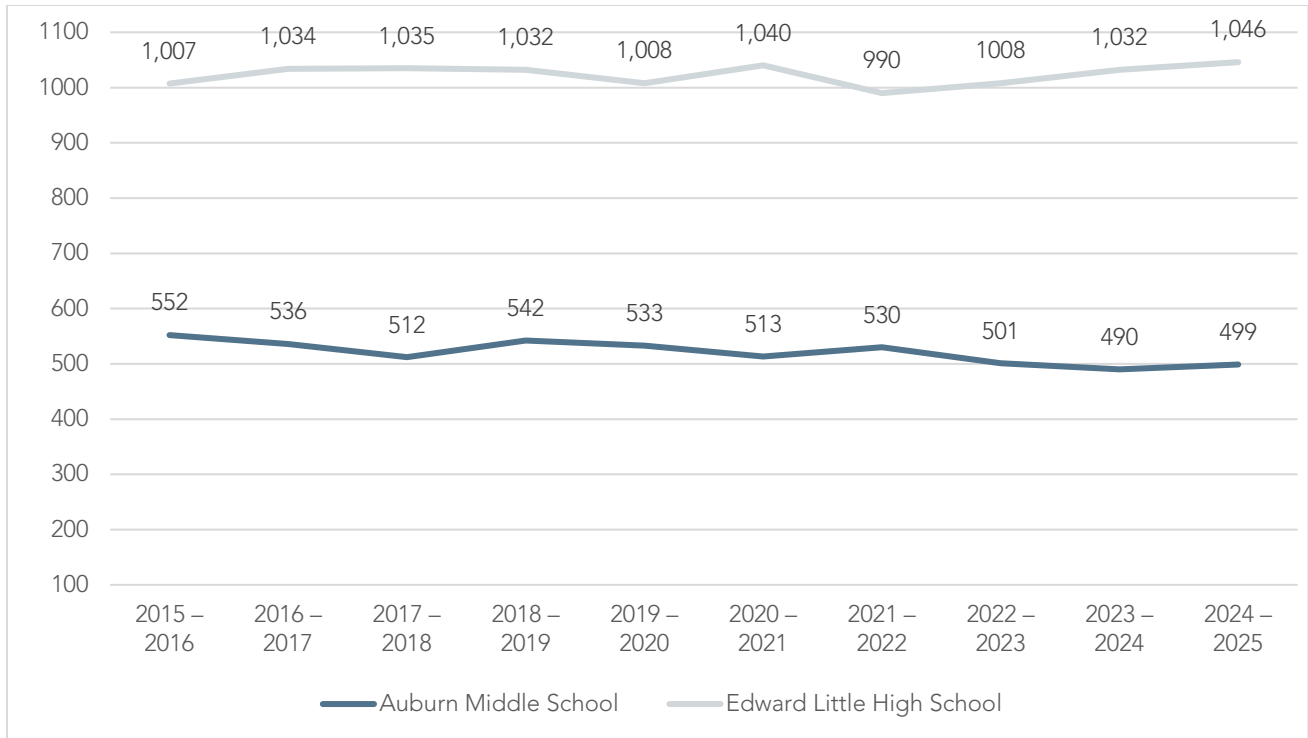
Education

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

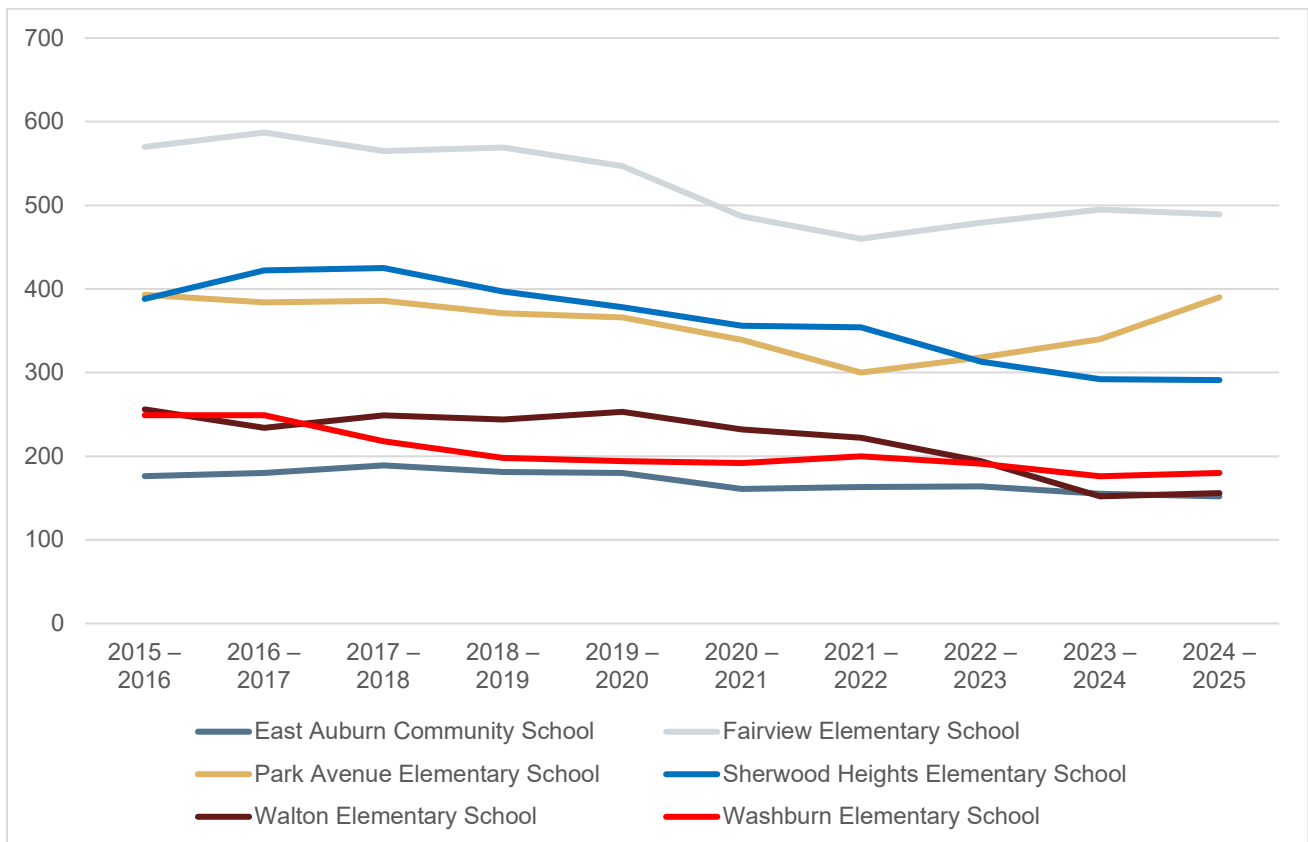
Table 1.10: Middle and High School Enrollment Data

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

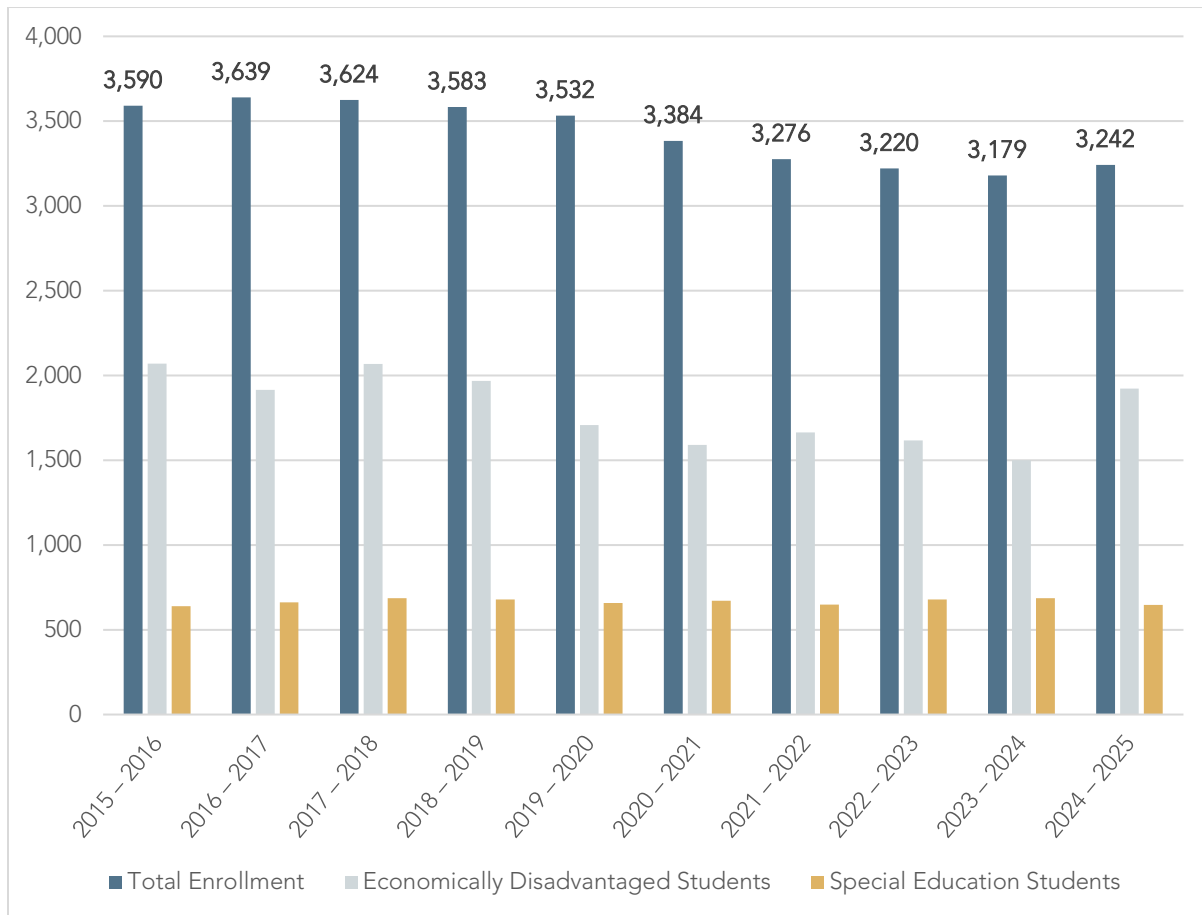
School Year	Fairview Elementary School	Park Avenue Elementary School	Sherwood Heights Elementary School	Walton Elementary School	East Auburn Community School	Washburn Elementary School
2015 – 2016	570	393	388	256	176	249
2016 – 2017	587	384	422	234	180	249
2017 – 2018	565	386	425	249	189	218
2018 – 2019	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.

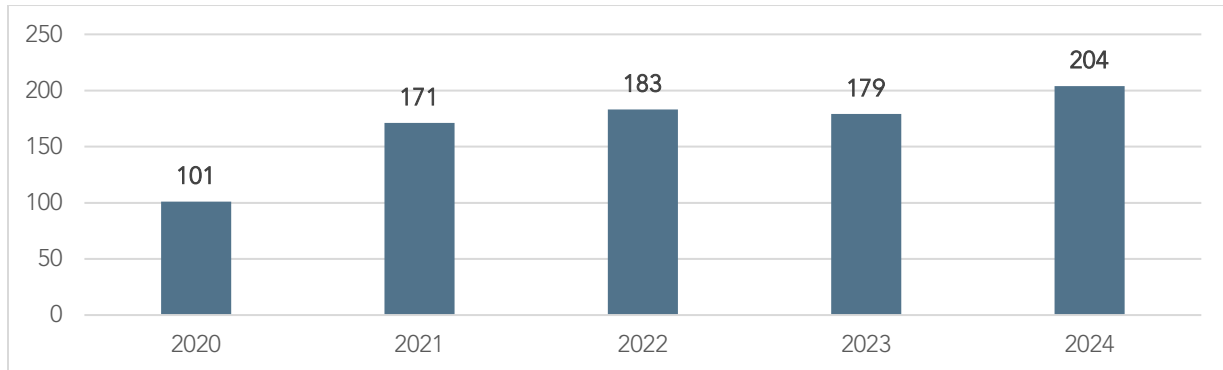
Figure 1.11: Publicly Funded Attending Students by School Year



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)

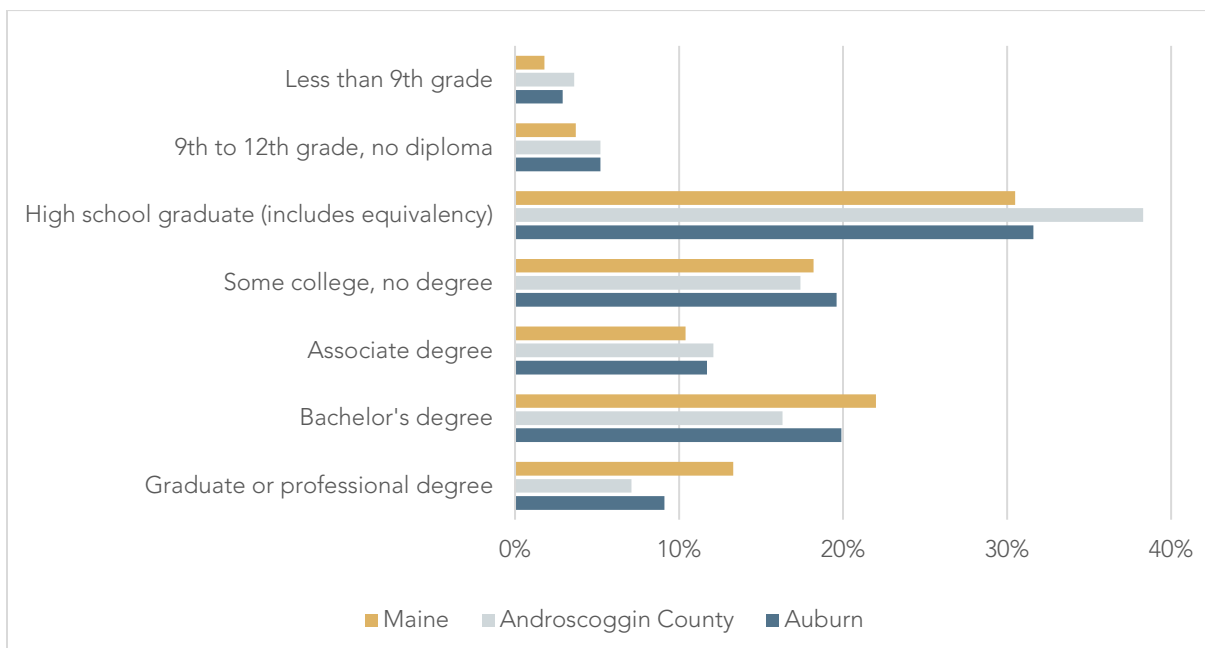


Source: Maine Department of Education

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

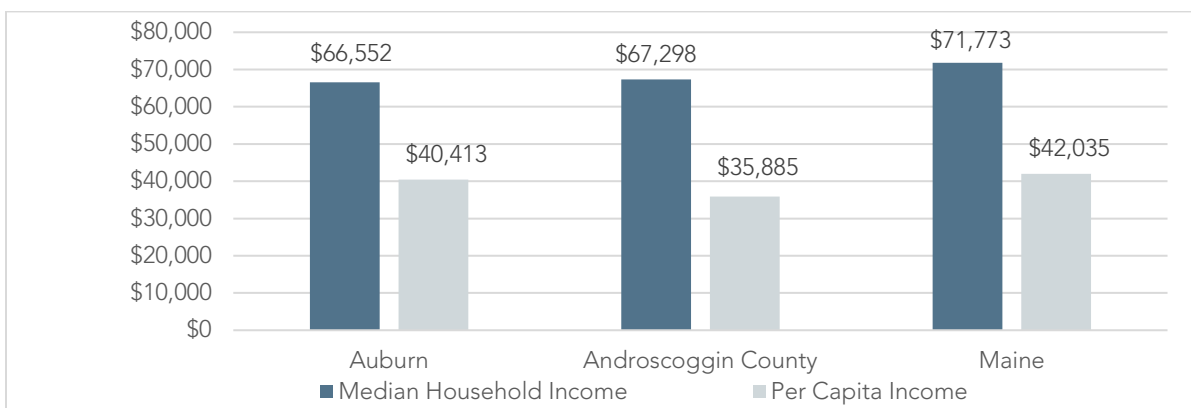


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Income and Poverty

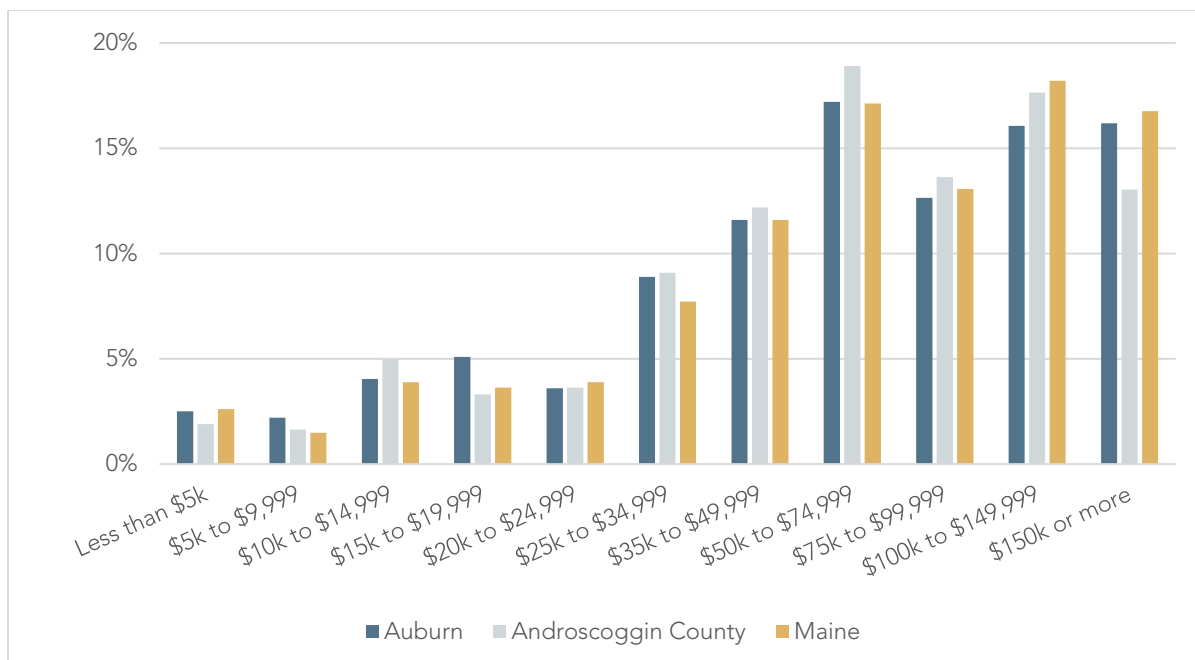
The median household income in Auburn has increased in the past decade but remains slightly below both county and state averages. In 2023, Auburn's median household income was \$66,552, compared to \$67,298 for the county and \$71,773 for the state. The City's household composition may partially explain 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.

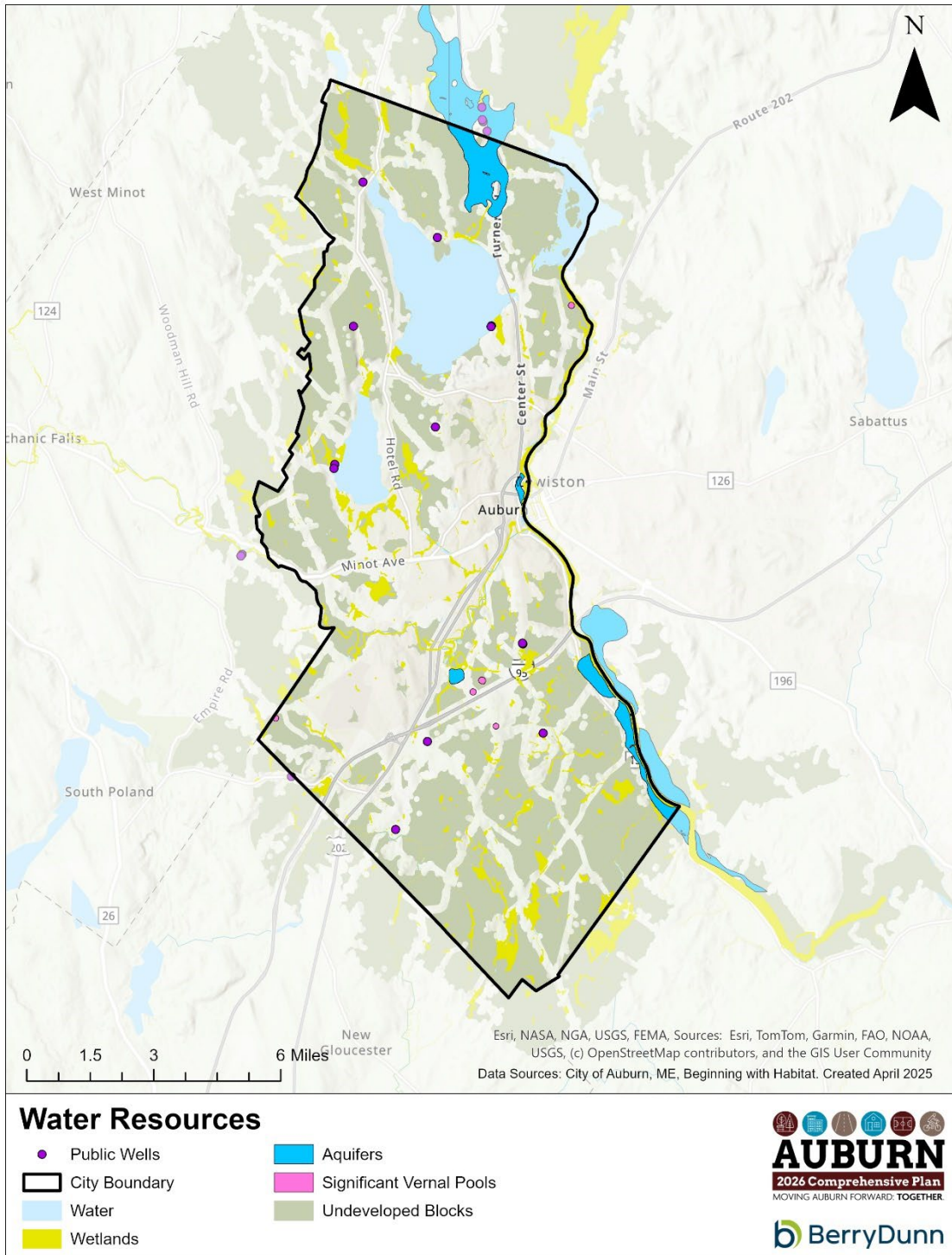
Anglers fishing the upper Androscoggin enjoy access to landlocked salmon, along with brook, rainbow, and brown trout. Sea-run Atlantic salmon, however, are federally protected and cannot legally be harvested anywhere in Maine due to their endangered status. Angling restrictions are aligned with the National 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.

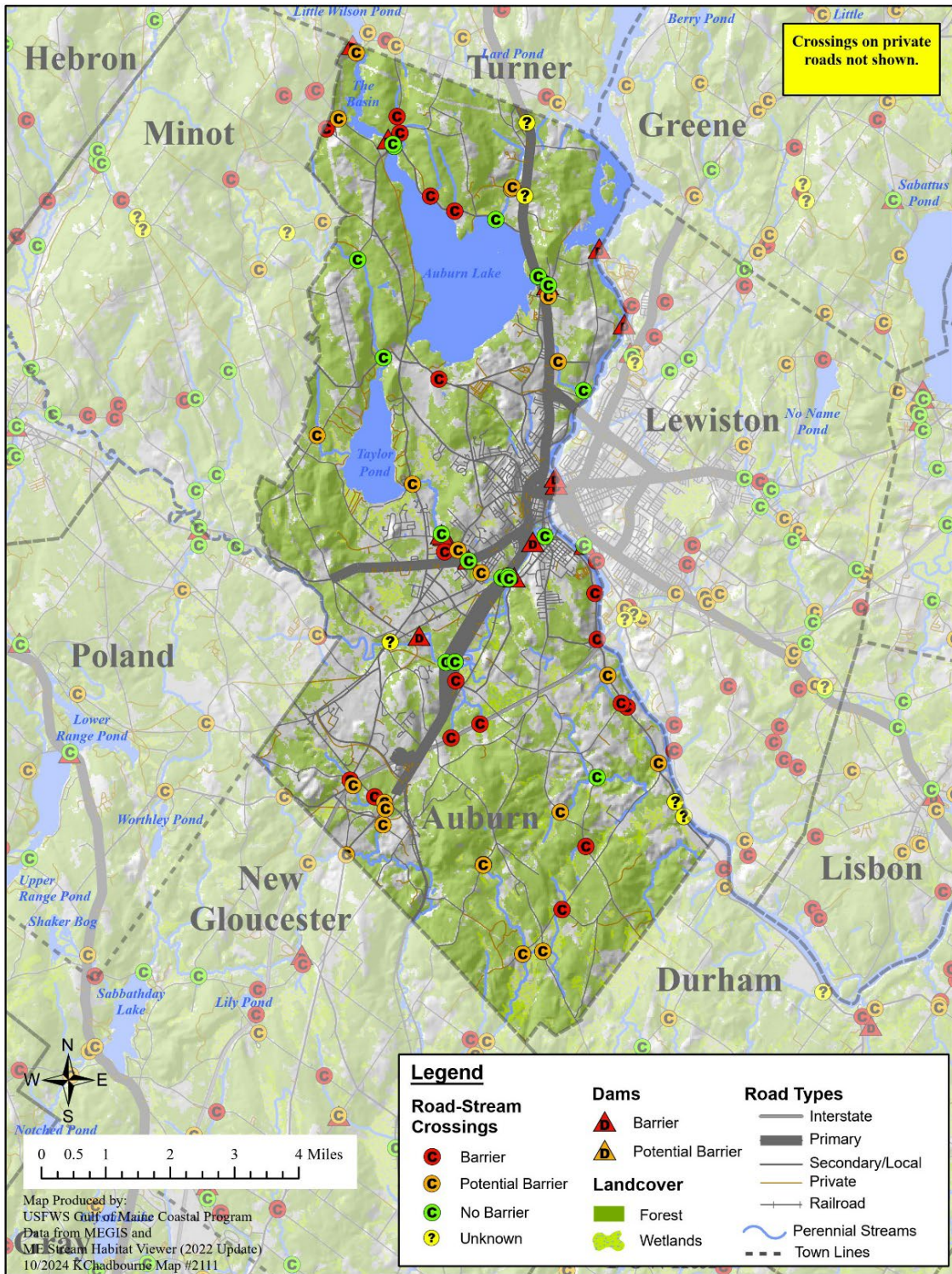
Figure 2.1: Water Resources Map



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)

Name	Site ID	Waterbody Association	HUC 12 Watershed	Coordinates
Barker Mill Upper	D1079	Little Androscoggin River	Taylor Pond-Little Androscoggin River	(44.07881, -70.23487)
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.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Facilities position - EL geothermal system & energy credits - Hydro system & energy credits - NSBA rink floor replacement, "cube" system - Full Plates/Full Potential grant - Composting pilot at Sherwood Heights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brightly Energy Manager - Composting in Auburn schools
Station 2: Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salt Brine & Cirrus systems - New road cameras - Brightly Asset Management implementation - Pollinator garden - Apparel Impact - Solid waste, recycling, organic waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EV charging stations at Library, NSBA & PAL
Station 3: Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive solar permitting ordinance - Tracking solar & heat pump permits - Ag/resource protection - Taylor Pond Overlay District - Lake Auburn Watershed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. Chlorophyll 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.

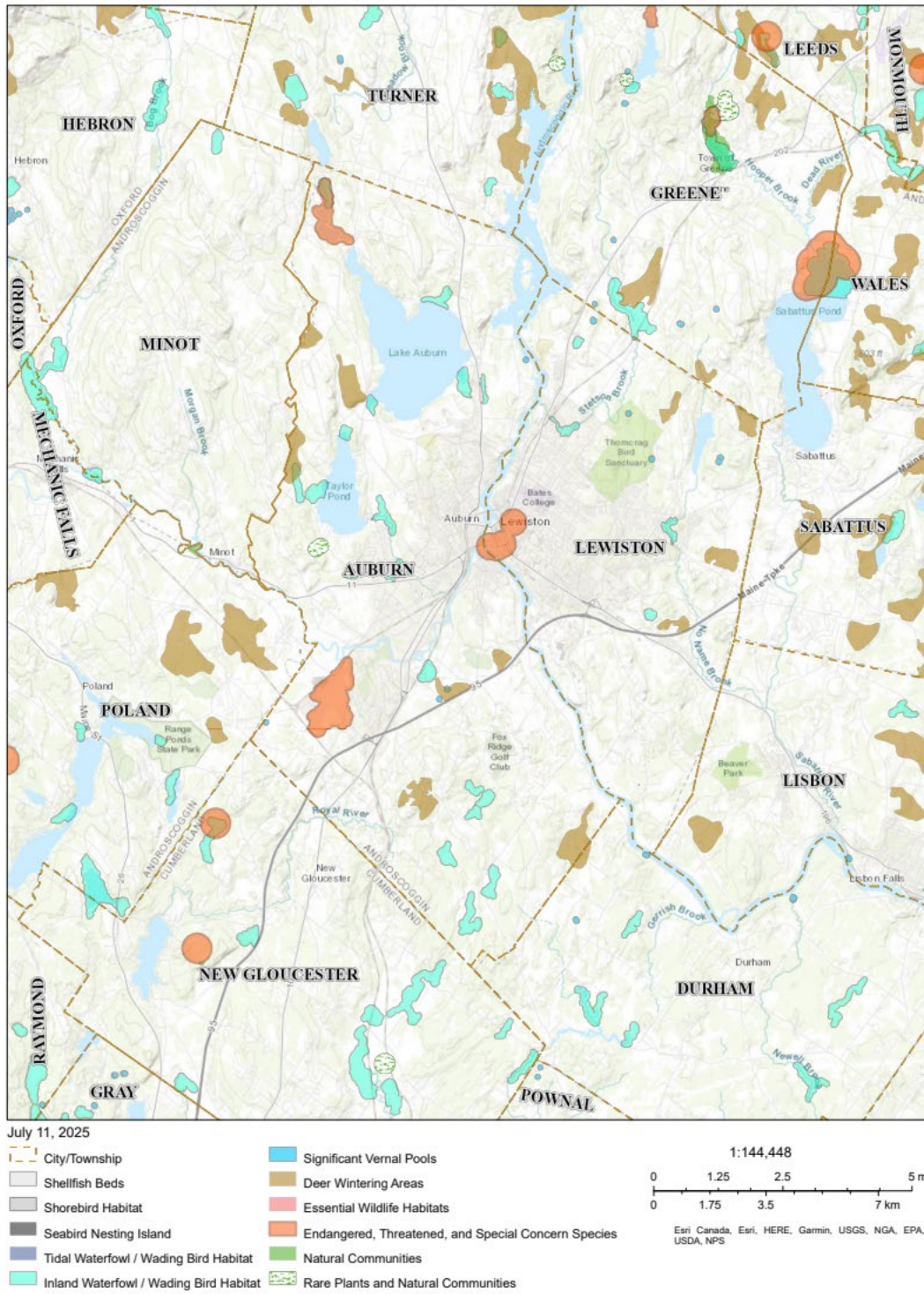
Critical Habitat

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

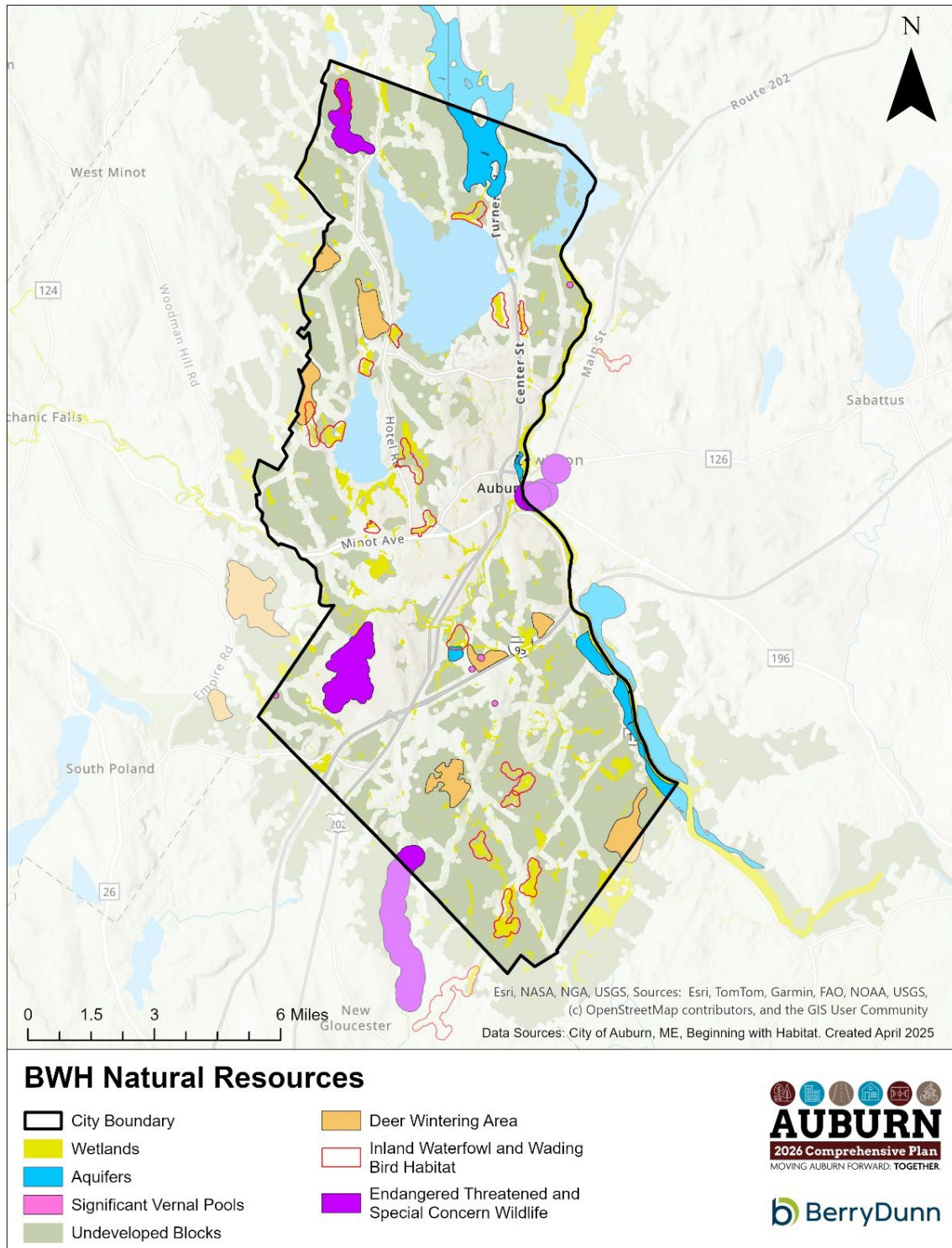


Auburn has approximately seven deer wintering areas, which are identified and protected by the MDIFW. These areas are crucial for deer survival during harsh winter conditions and are protected under Maine’s Natural Resource Protection Act. In Auburn, any development or land use change within these designated 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.

Agriculture State 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 Fund - 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.

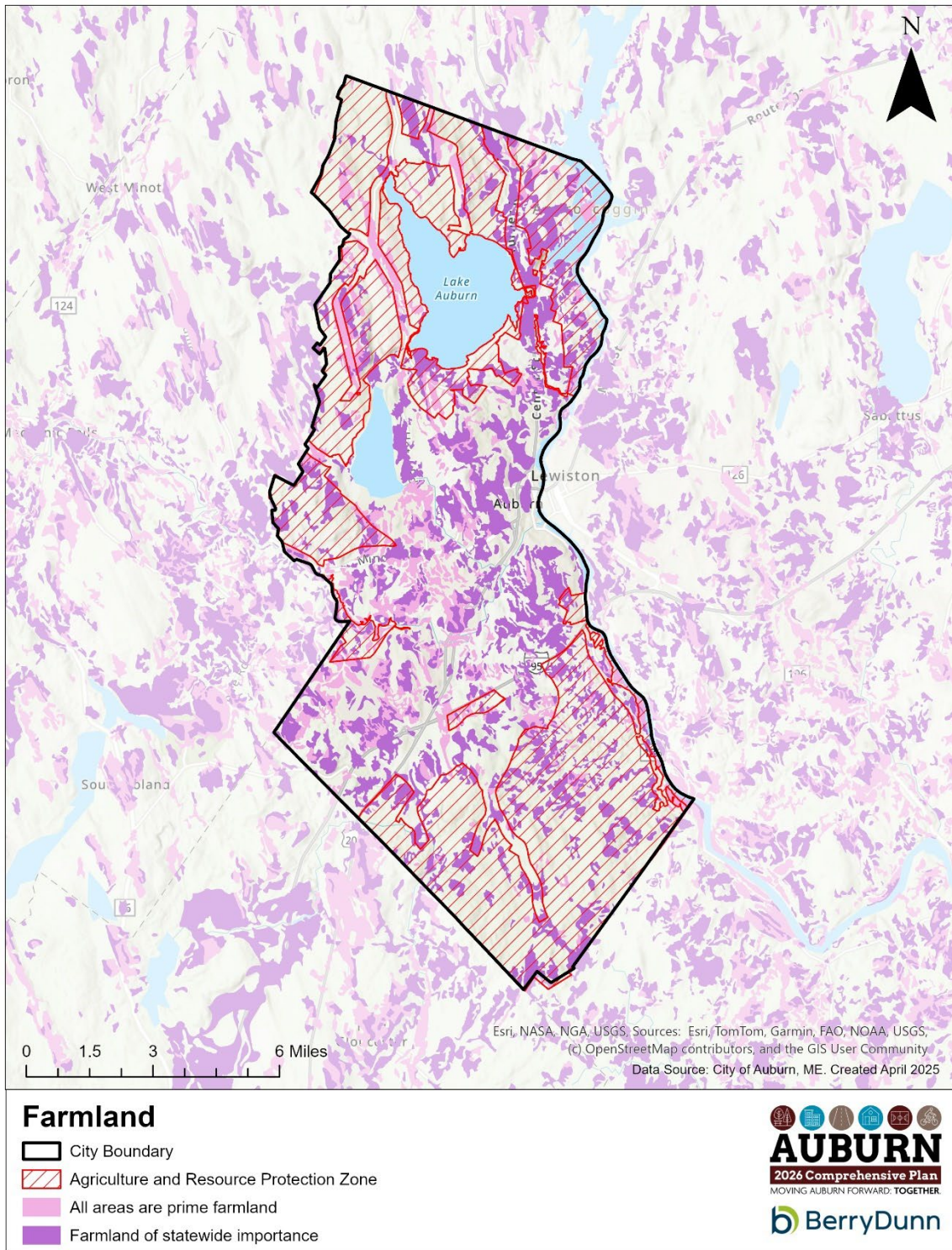
Federally, The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides additional loan and grant programs for farmers. These programs include farm loans, housing assistance, beginning farmer and rancher programs, livestock insurance, marketing improvement programs, specialty crop block grant programs, organic 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
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, St. Mary’s Nutrition Center, 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 St. Mary’s Nutrition Center, 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 (DAFC) 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. BMPs 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 LACFB.

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.

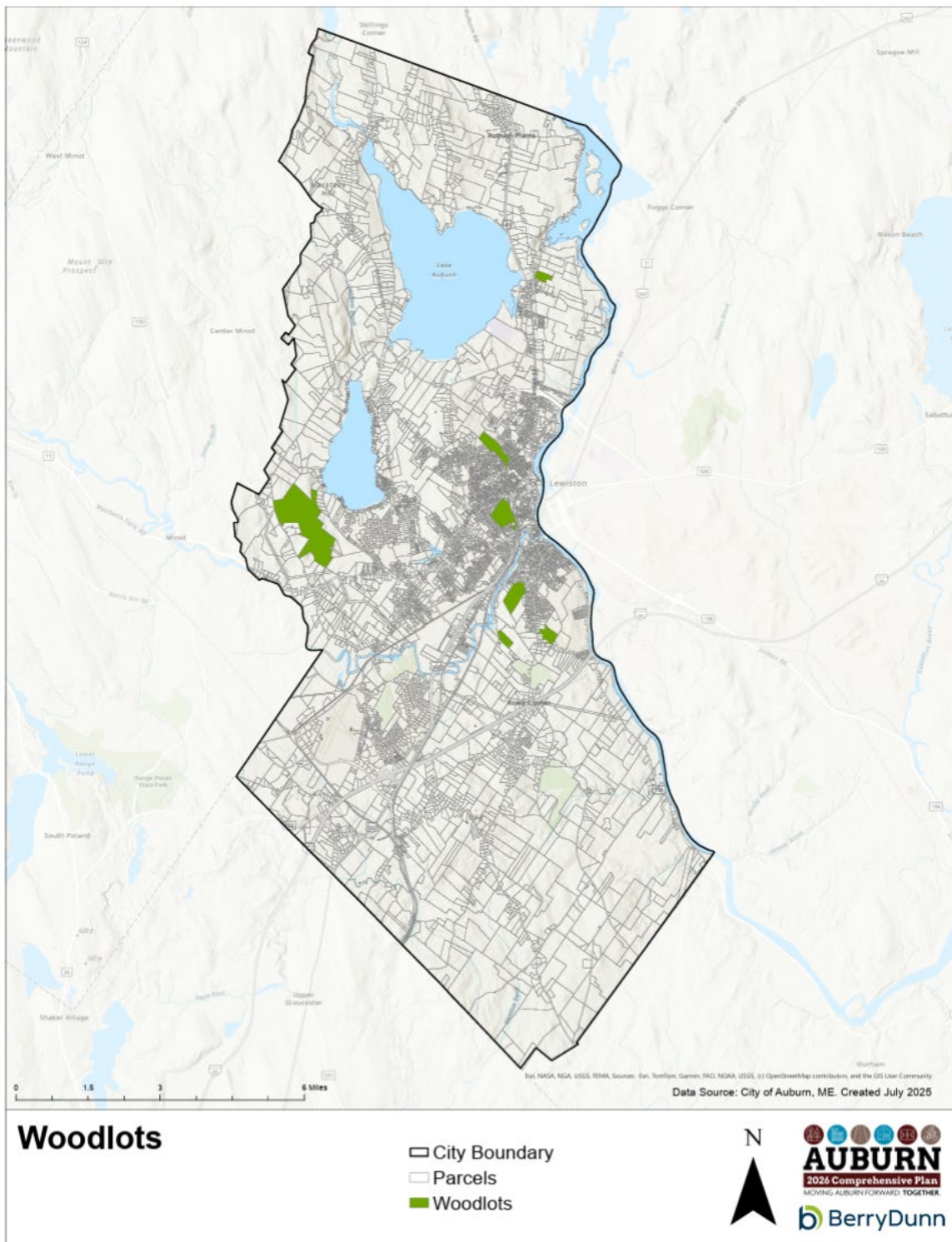
Auburn has seven public woodlots outlined in the 2019 Public Woodlot Management Plan, listed in Table 3.5, below:

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 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

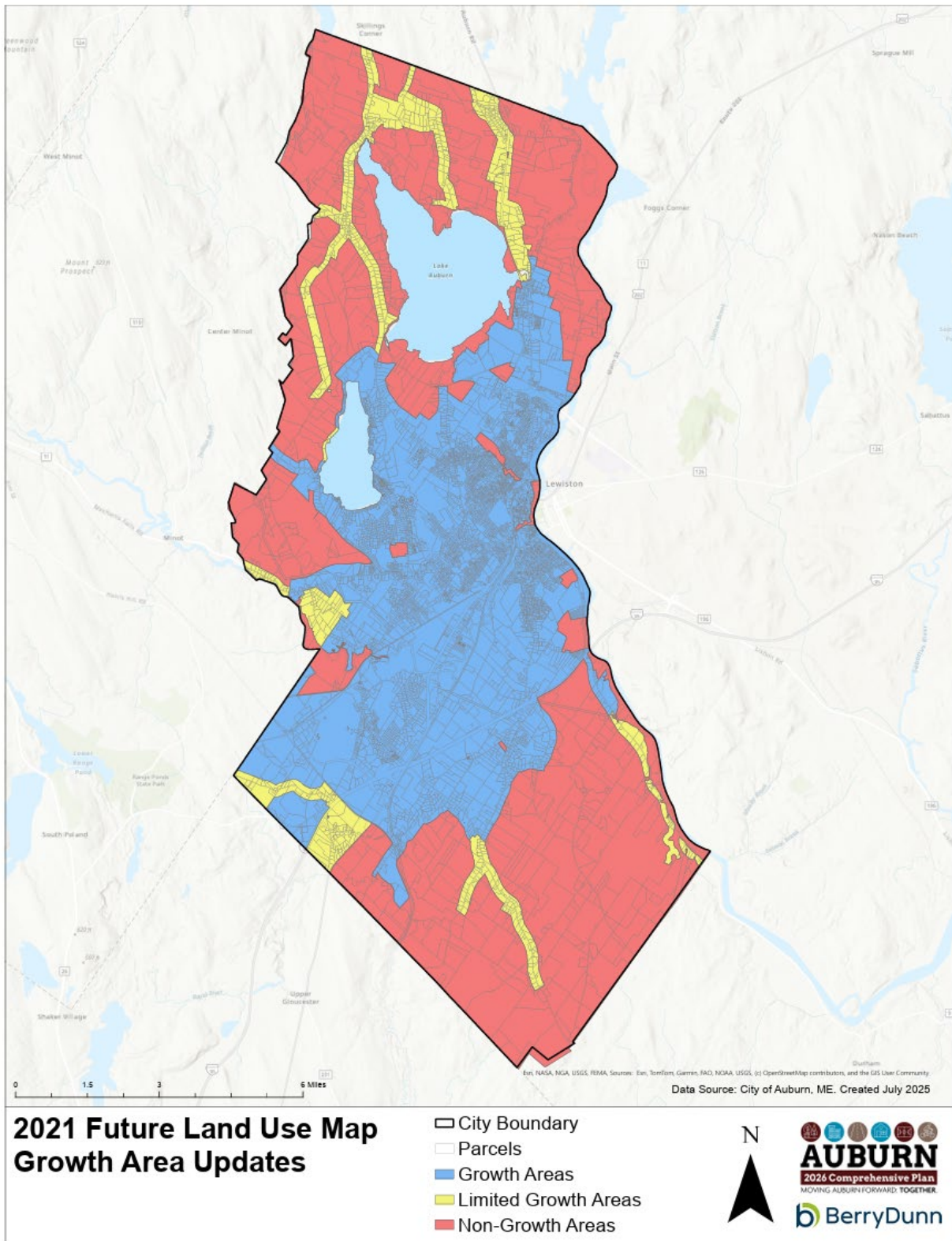
developed or contain undeveloped land, where only a moderate amount of development is preferred.

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%

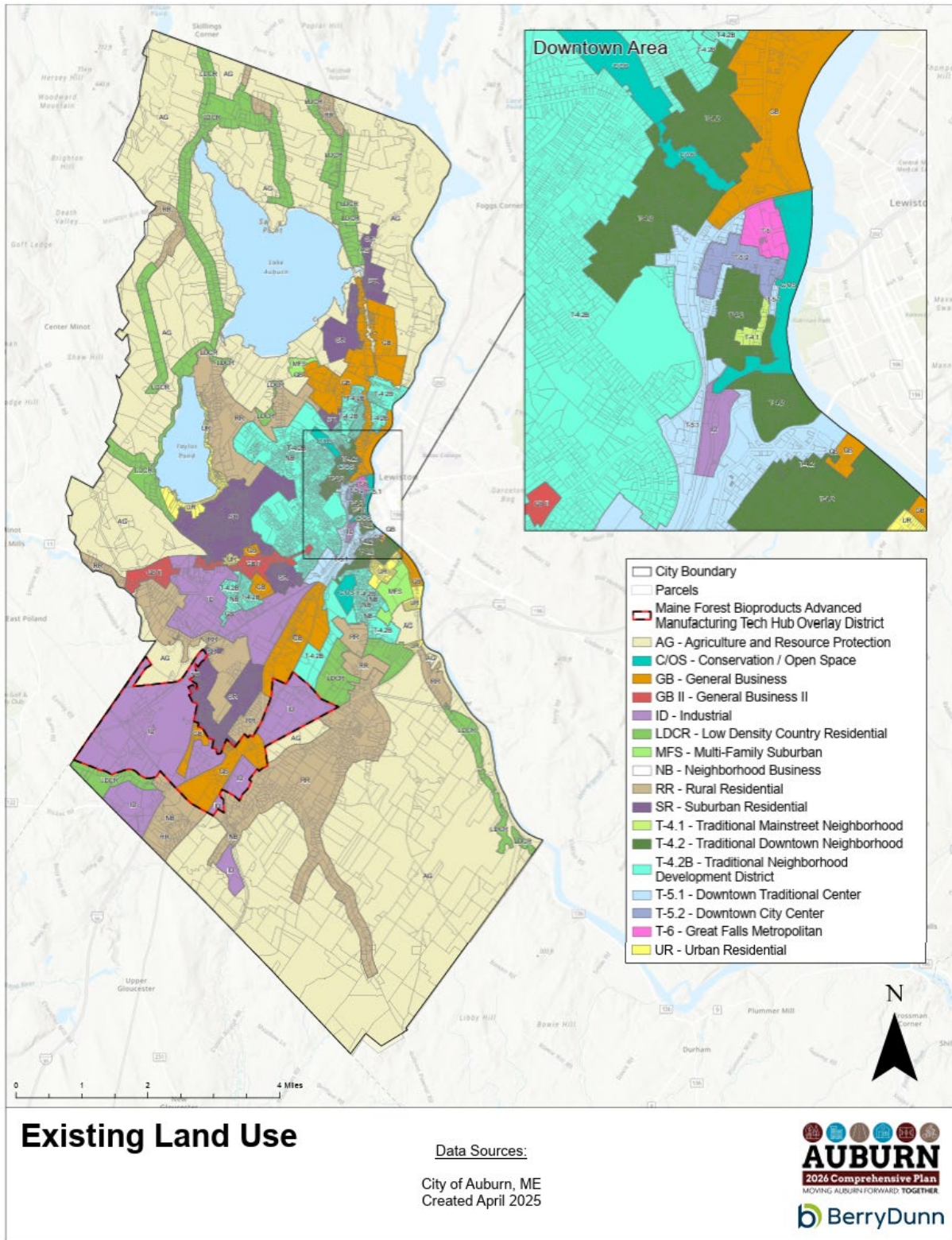
District Title	Classification	Short Title	Total Area	Percentage
Low-Density Country Residential	Resource/Residential	LDCR	2,778	7.09%
General Business	Commercial	GB	1,998	5.10%
Suburban Residence	Residential	SR	1,800	4.59%
Urban Residence	Residential	UR	359	0.92%
GB II	Commercial	GB II	318	0.81%
Multifamily 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:

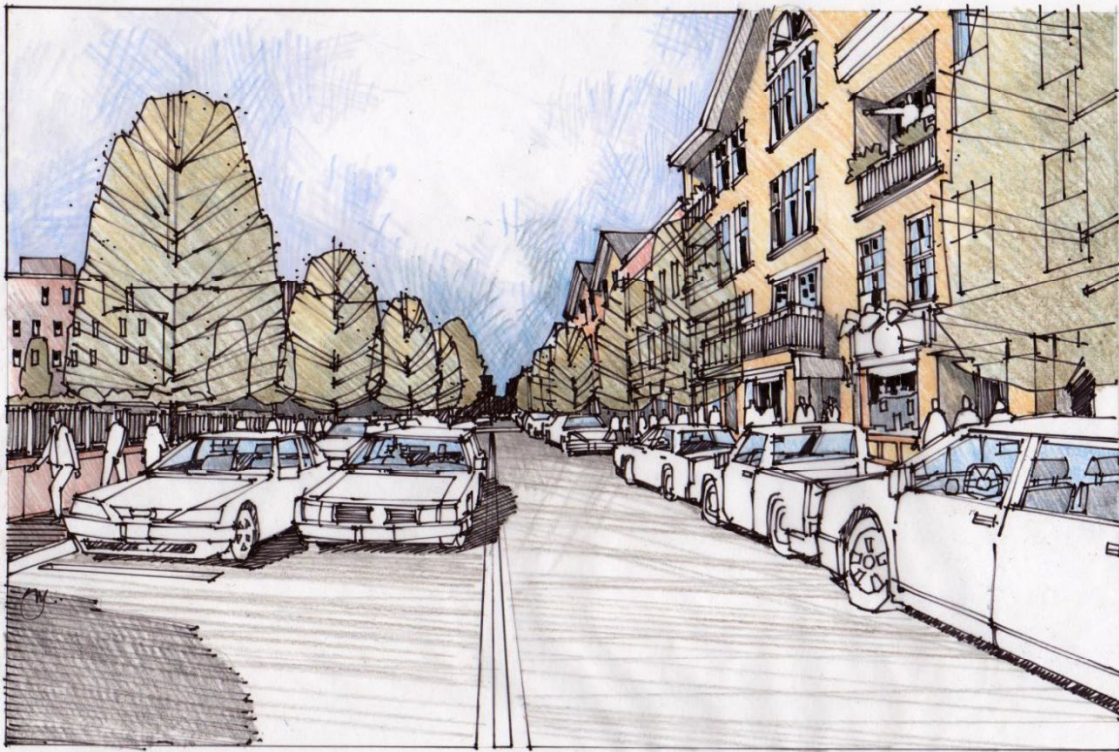
- Rural Residence Low-Density Country Residential Suburban Residence Multi-family Suburban
- Urban Residence
- Manufactured Housing Overlay District
- Planned Unit Development (PUD-R and PUD-RR by special use approval)

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

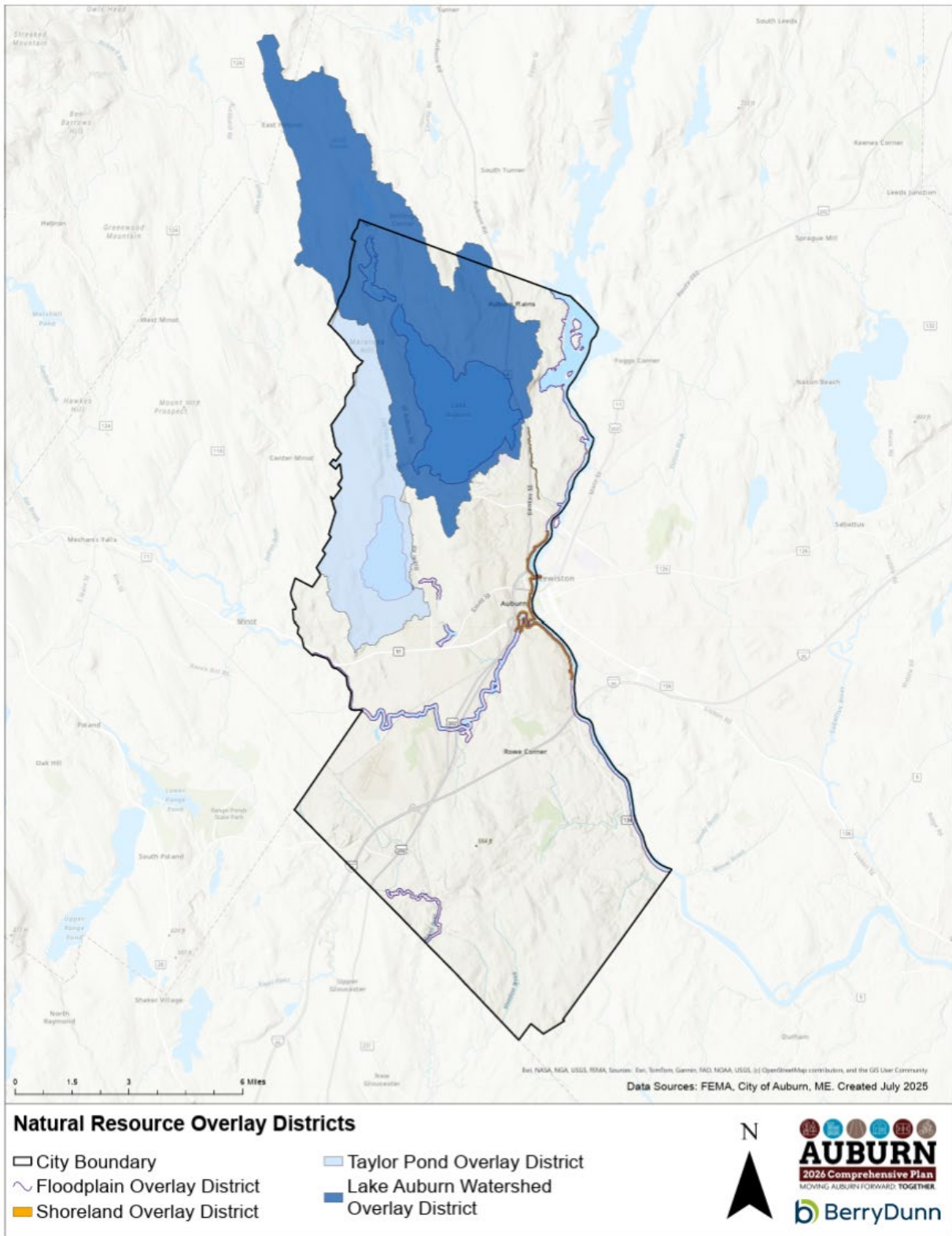
Auburn has several overlay zones designed to protect critical natural resources either through restricting new development or by creating additional standards for uses and construction to minimize impacts. These overlays include:

- **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

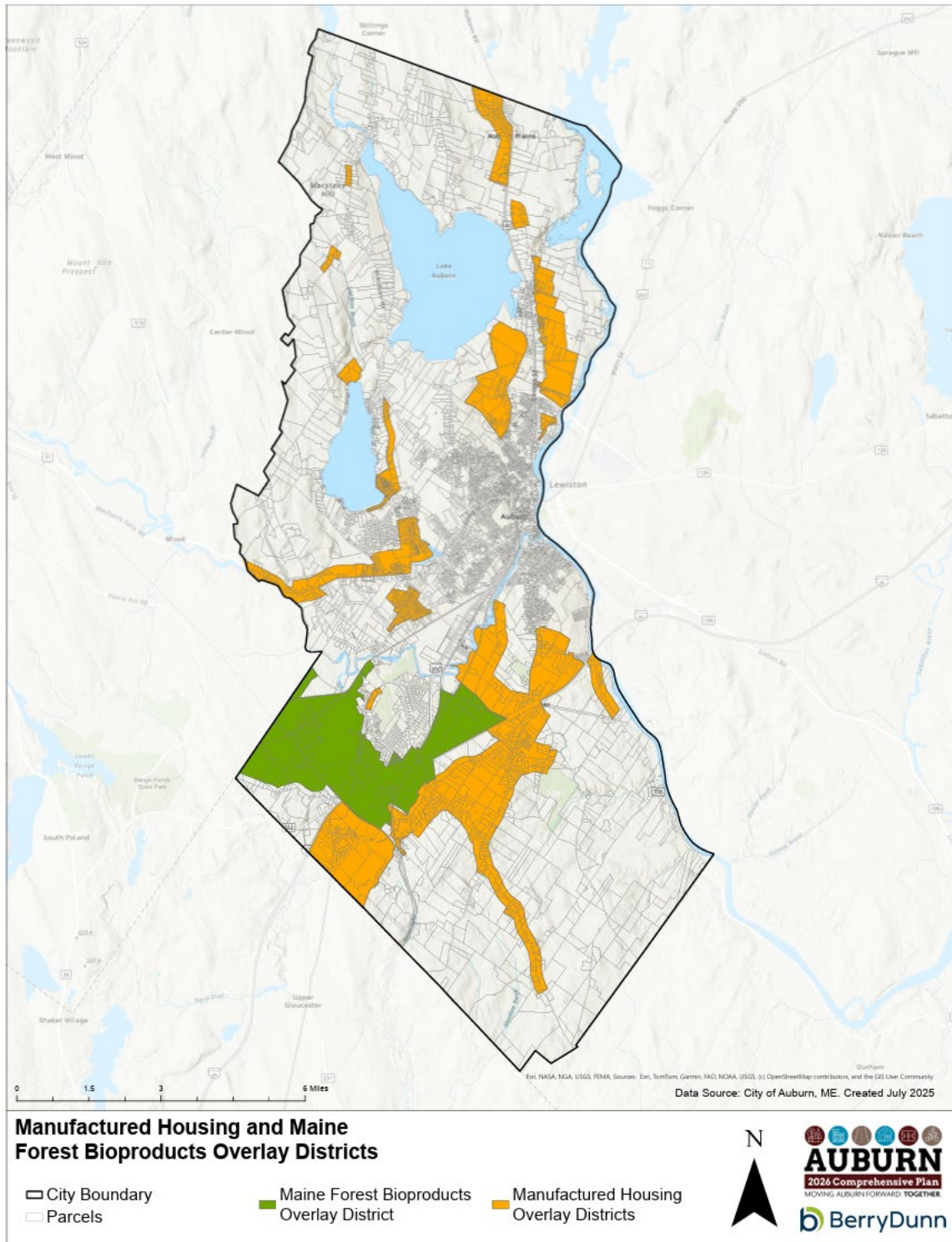


Auburn has two additional overlay districts that address key building products and development intentions.

- **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 four 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.

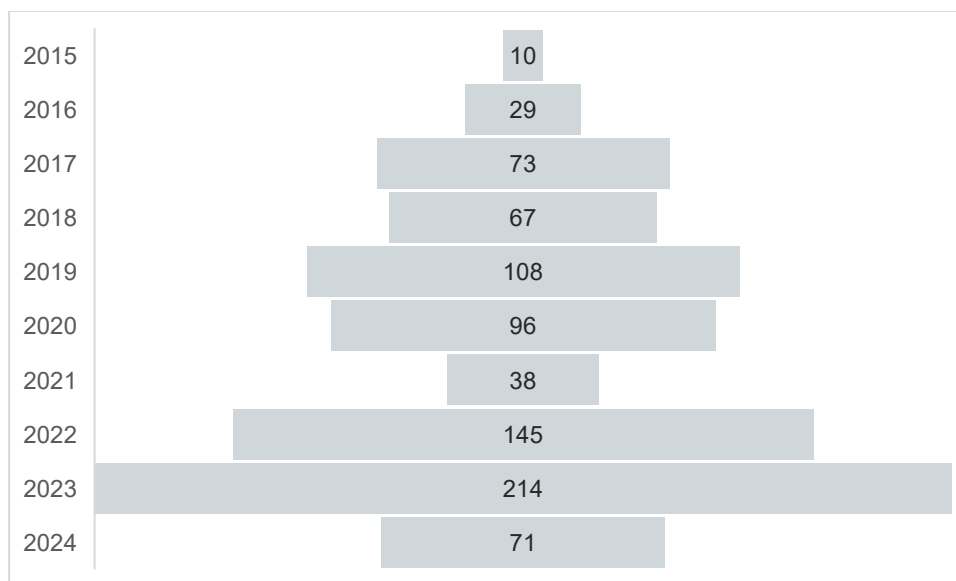
⁴ Housing Legislation LD 2003 - Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission

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

Ten-Year Permitting Totals	
Electrical	5,572
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.

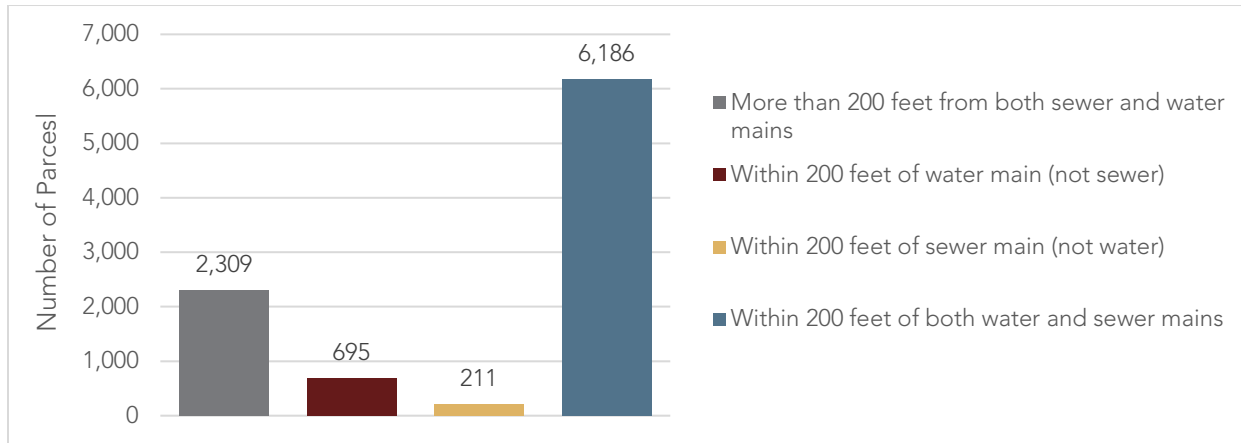
Challenges and Opportunities

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 more than 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.

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 Statutes 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 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

⁵ A New Gateway to Auburn

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	8

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Enrollment	2,402	2,652	3,737	3,558	5,052	5,302*

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.3: 50+ Trips

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	10	6	12	13	13	14
Total Enrollment	283	233	811	1,024	906	191*

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	11
Total Enrollment	1,095	522	1,720	1,651	1,549	0*

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.6: Adult Leagues

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	7	5	15	14	14	14
Total Enrollment	680	420	1,660	1,460	1,390	920*

Source: City of Auburn

Table 5.7: Youth Leagues

	2019/2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Programs	19	21	18	18	18	18
Total Enrollment	805	1,000	984	716	614	370*

Source: City of Auburn

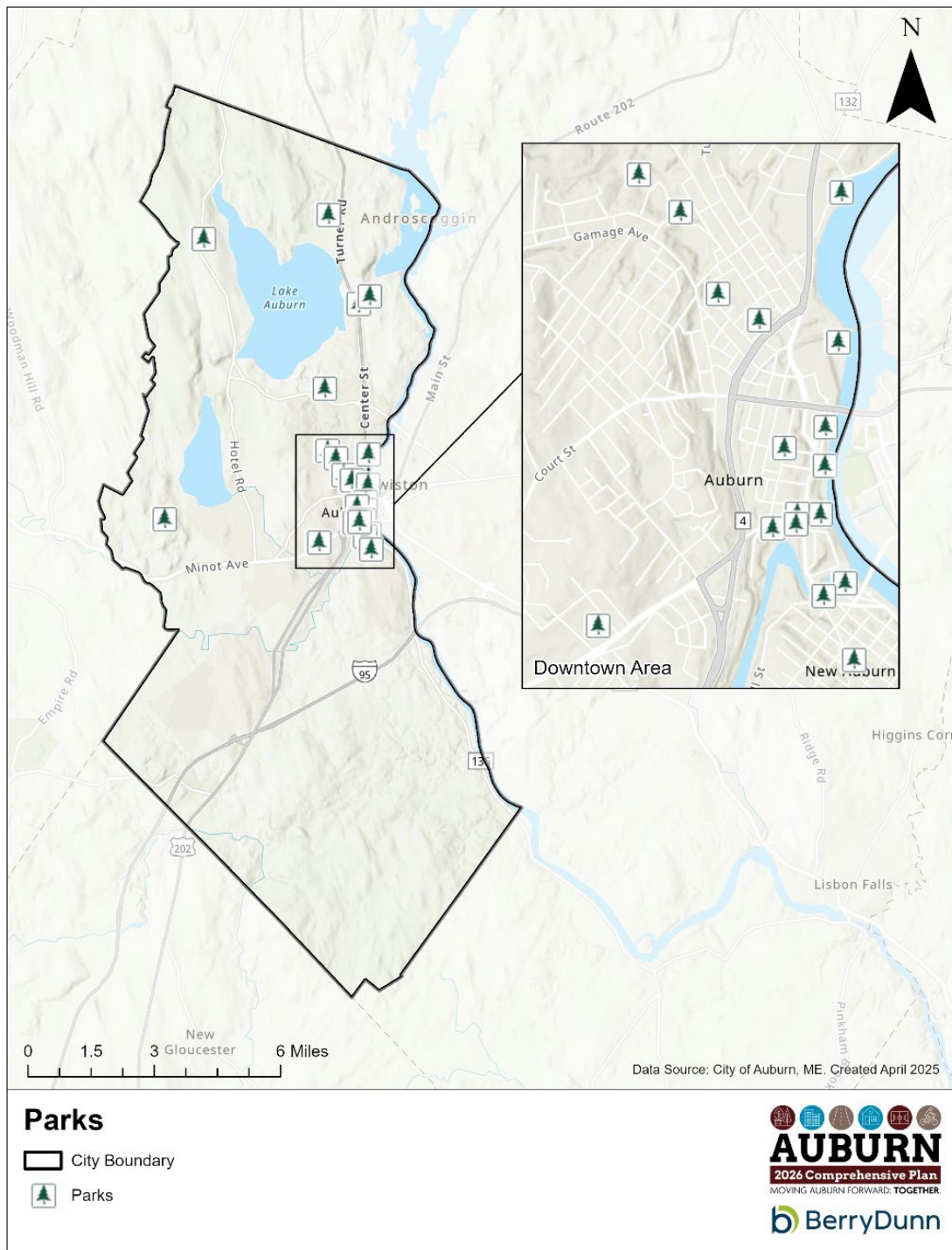
Since 2019, there has been a significant increase in demand for senior and age-friendly programs. Enrollment in these programs has roughly doubled since 2021. As Auburn's

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.

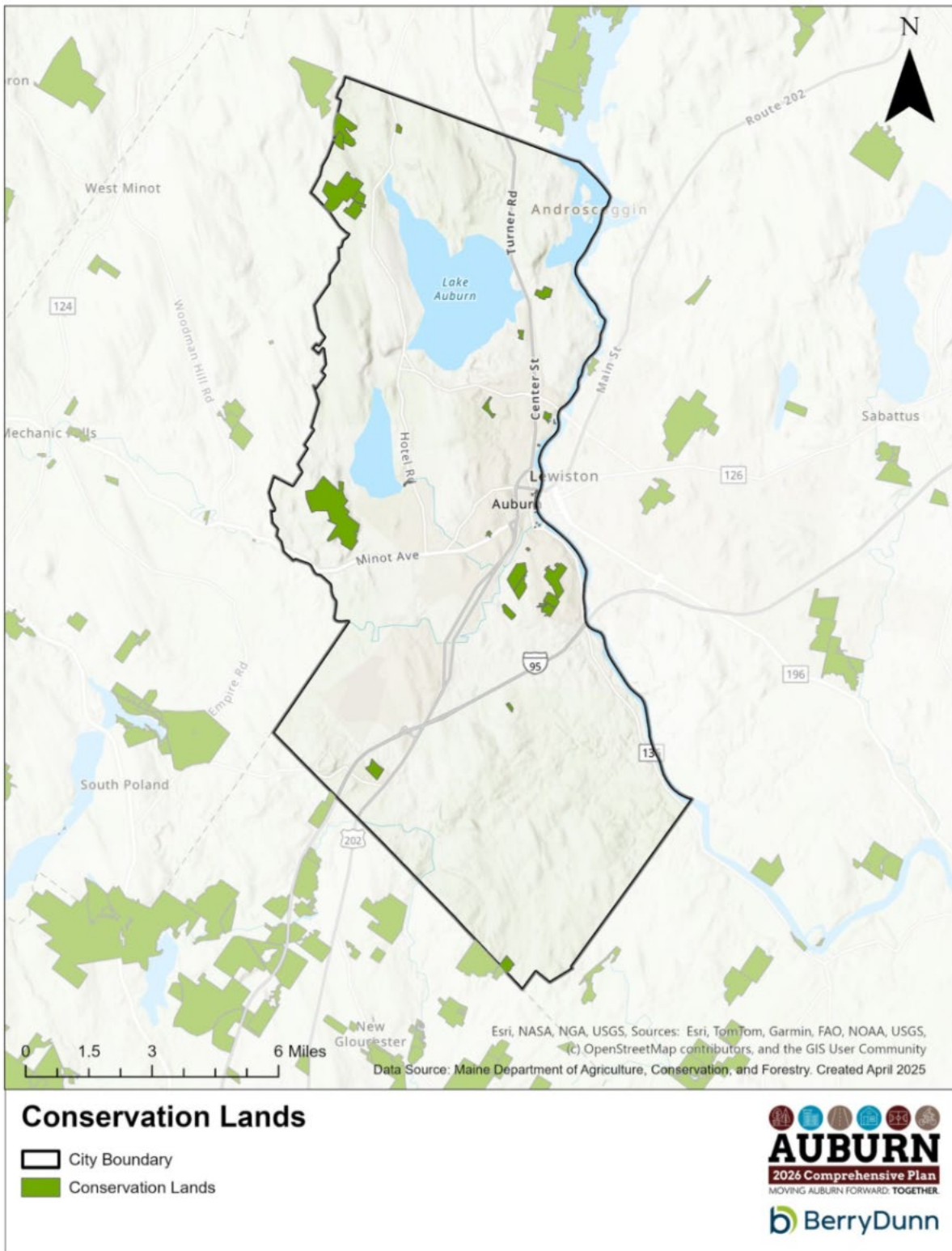
The Sherwood Forest Conservation Area is a 78-acre property managed by the Androscoggin Land Trust (ALT) in partnership with the City of Auburn. It features 2.1 miles of trails and is open

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

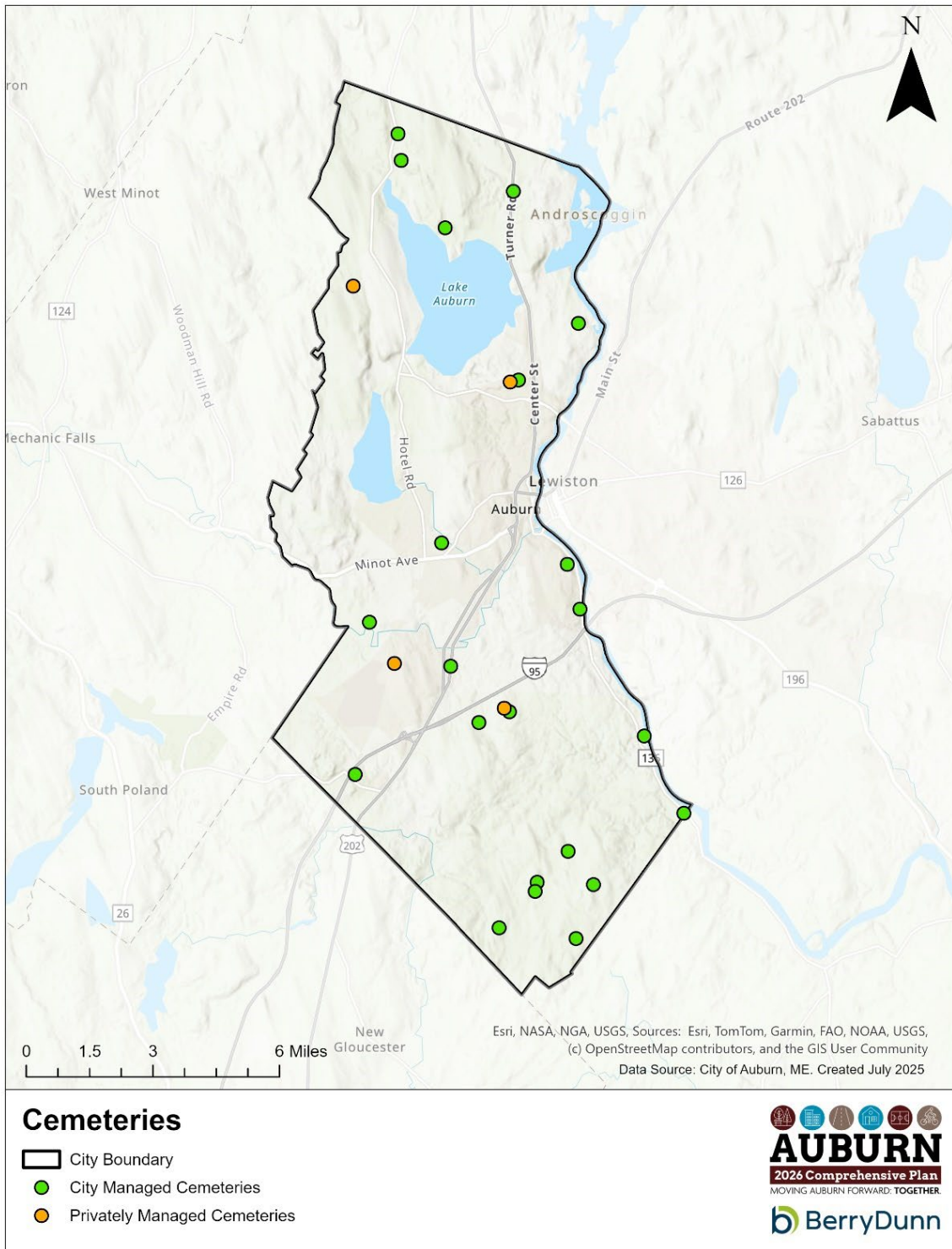
On its website, the City of Auburn lists 18 cemeteries for which it is responsible. Of these, Oak Hill Cemetery is the only one with available lots. The City's parcel data highlights four additional cemeteries that are managed by the City, as well as five privately managed cemeteries.

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.

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

Company	Industry/Business Category	City	Employees
Hannaford Bros Co.	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (Except Convenience Retailers)	Lewiston	1 to 500
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

Company	Industry/Business Category	City	Employees
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 Sector	2023 Employment	Five-Year Job Growth Percentage	Location Quotient
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 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

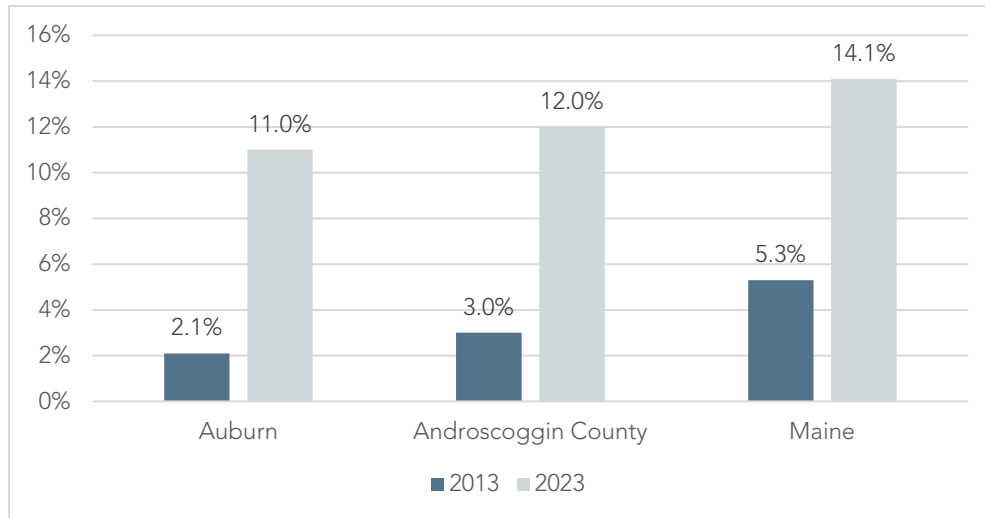
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (*BerryDunn estimate)

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.

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%

⁶ Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. January 2025. *Why People Move to Maine: A Study of Recent Migrants*. Wallace Economic Advisers, LLC.

Industry	Number	Percent
Education	13	14.77%
Electrical	3	3.41%
Energy	1	1.14%
Environmental	2	2.27%
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%

Location	Number	Percent
Gray	1	1.14%
Kennebec County	1	1.14%
Kennebunk	1	1.14%
Kingfield	1	1.14%
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

Degree Programs	Degrees Awarded
Physical Fitness Specialist	8
Plumbing and Heating	37
Police Operations	24
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%

Industry Sector	Employees	Percentage
Public Administration	414	2.6%
Other Services (Excluding Public)	410	2.5%
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%

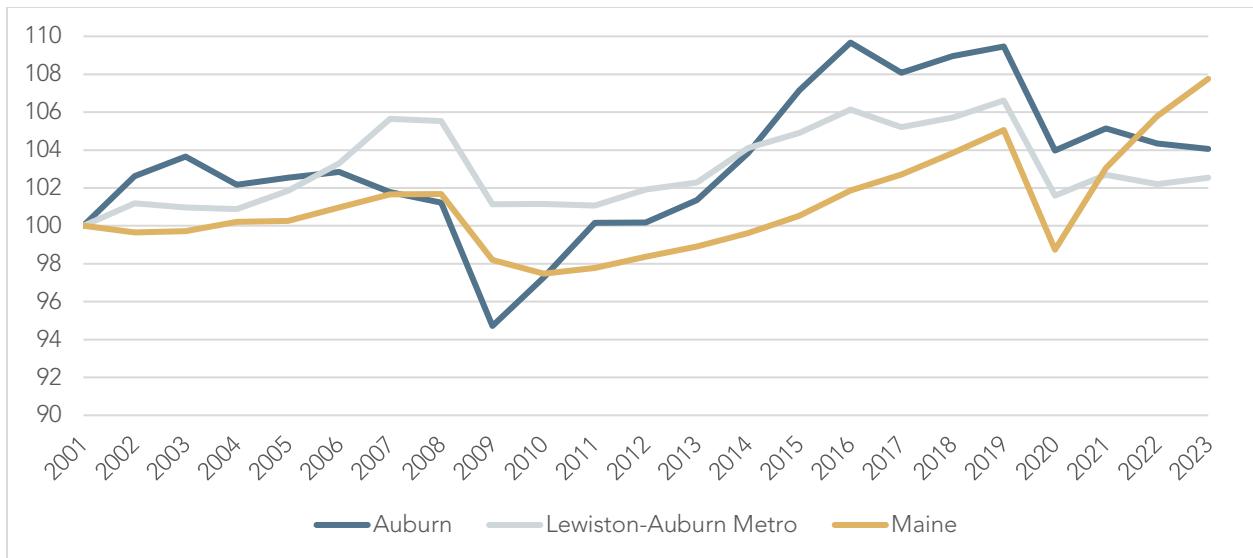
Source: Maine Department of Labor

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)



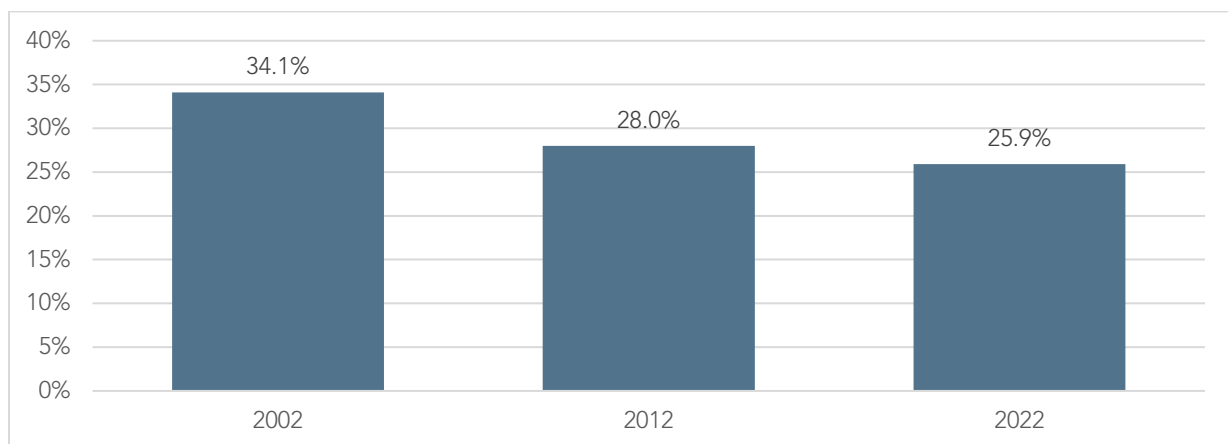
Source: Maine Department of Labor

Commuter Patterns

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%
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

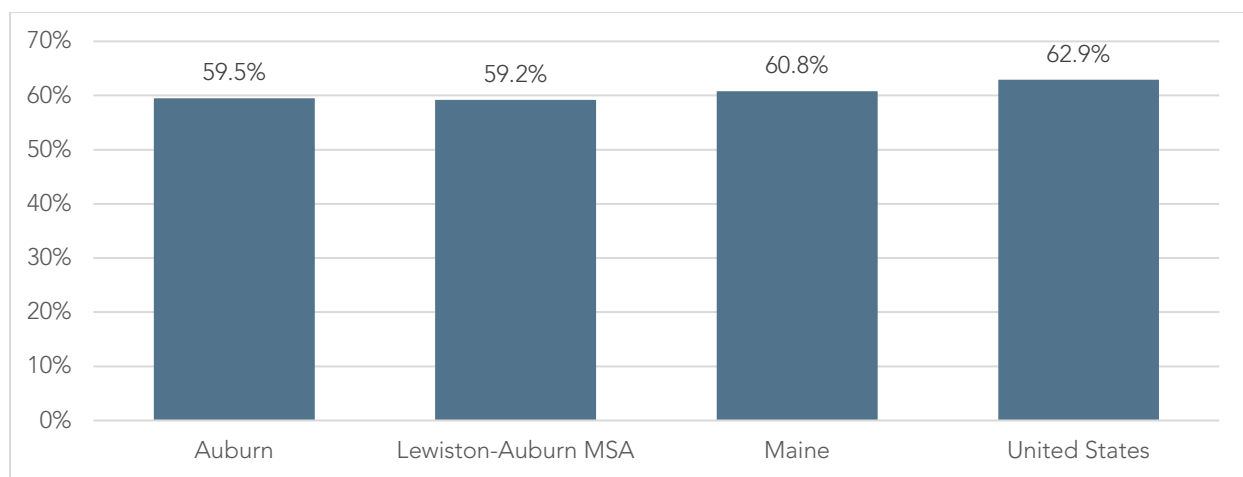
City or CDP	Count	Share
Auburn City, ME	2,701	25.9%
Lewiston City, ME	2,603	25.0%
Portland City, ME	638	6.1%
Augusta City, ME	317	3.0%
South Portland City, ME	290	2.8%
Bath City, ME	197	1.9%
Westbrook City, ME	181	1.7%
Brunswick CDP, ME	148	1.4%
Bangor City, ME	128	1.2%
Yarmouth CDP, ME	93	0.9%
All Other 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

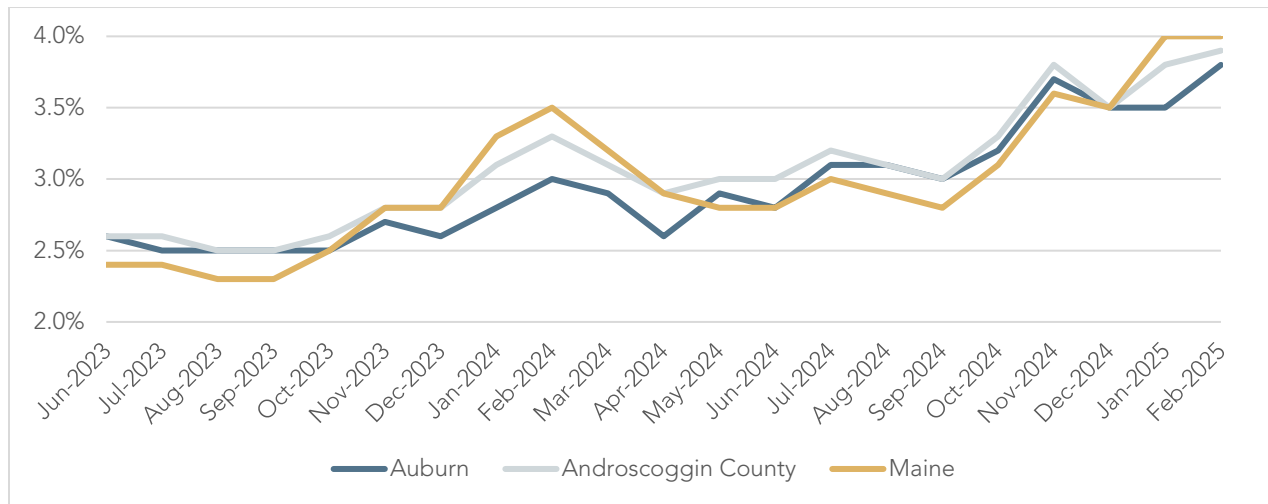


Source: Esri

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.

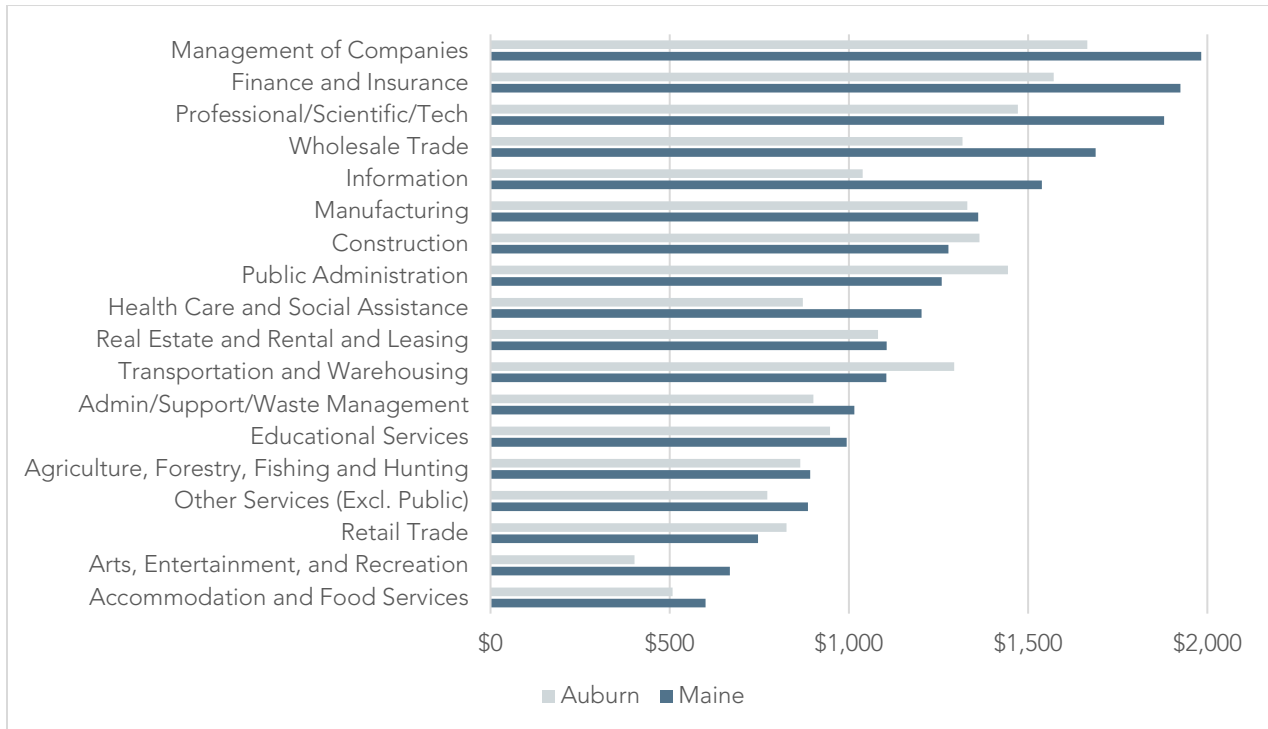
Auburn’s low unemployment rates (below 4%) across the observed period indicate economic stability and strength. Consistent alignment with regional and state figures indicates Auburn benefits from broader regional economic conditions. Higher unemployment rates in winter (e.g., February 2025: Auburn 3.8%, 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
#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 2025, the Auburn's 18 TIF district encompass 1.6% of the City's total land area, which is well under the maximum of 5%; however, the valuation of properties within TIF districts, at 8.7%, exceeds the maximum threshold, limiting the City's ability to create new TIF districts until some active districts expire or become inactive.

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.

Sources

City of Auburn

Esri GIS Software for Mapping and Spatial Analytics

LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, "A Recent Innovative History of the Androscoggin Region"

Lewiston-Auburn Economic Growth Council

Lewiston, Maine | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, *Why People Move to Maine: A Study of Recent Migrants*, January 2025

Maine Department of Labor Center for Workforce Research and Information

Sun Journal, "Lewiston and Auburn post strong building permit numbers for 2024"

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Census Bureau

Housing

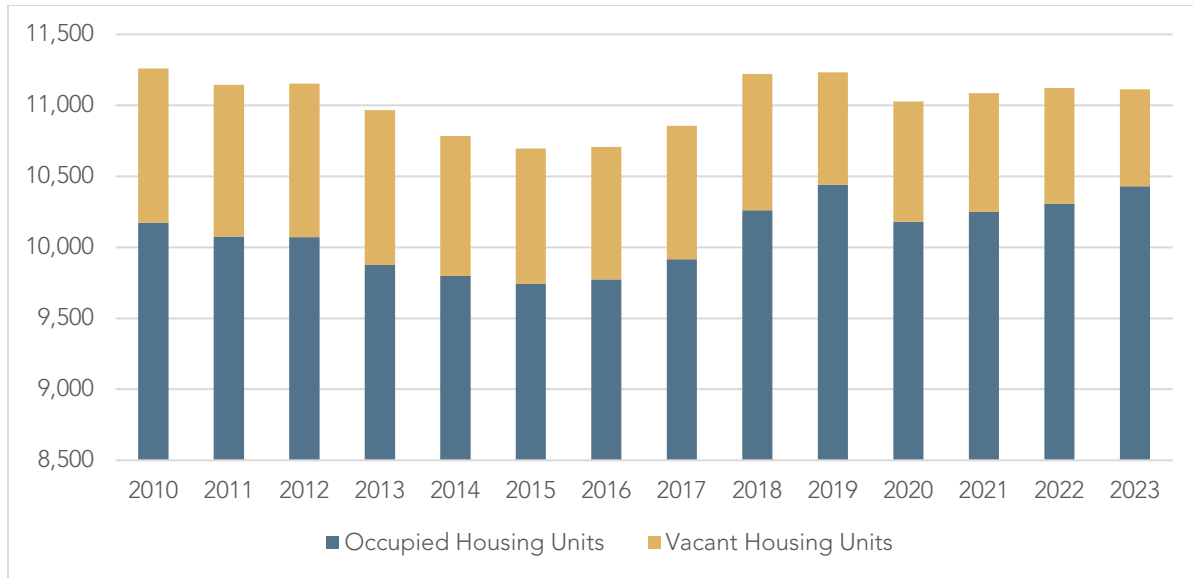
Introduction

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)

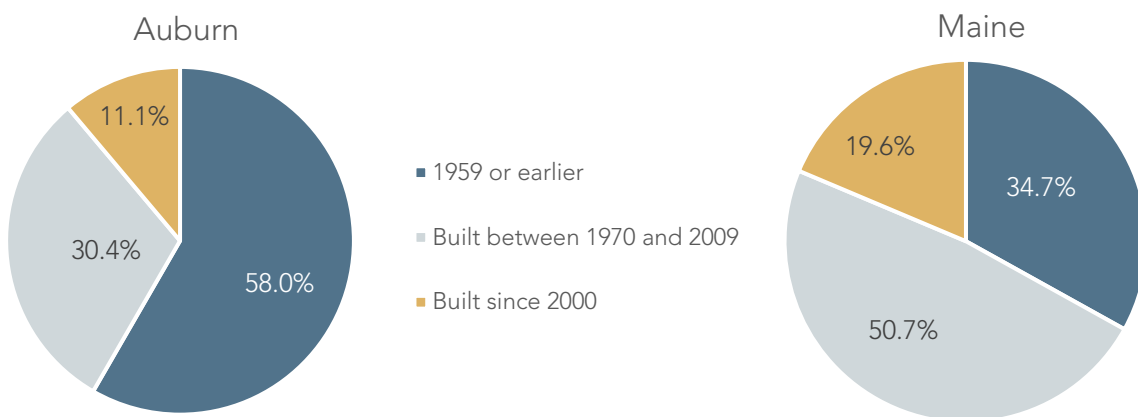


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

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.

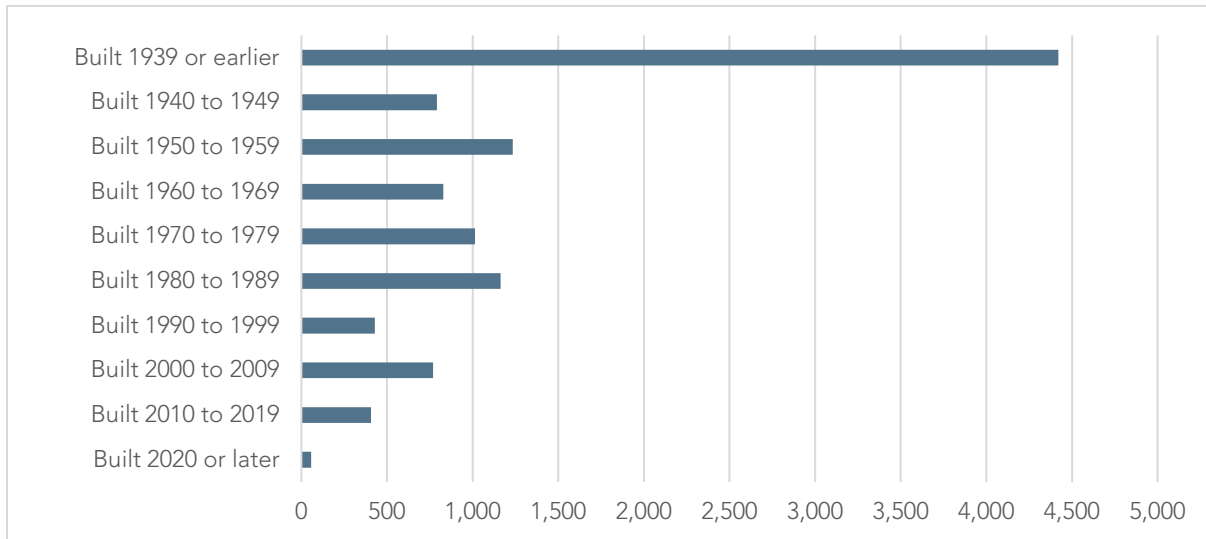
Figure 7.2: Housing Stock by Year Built Comparison



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

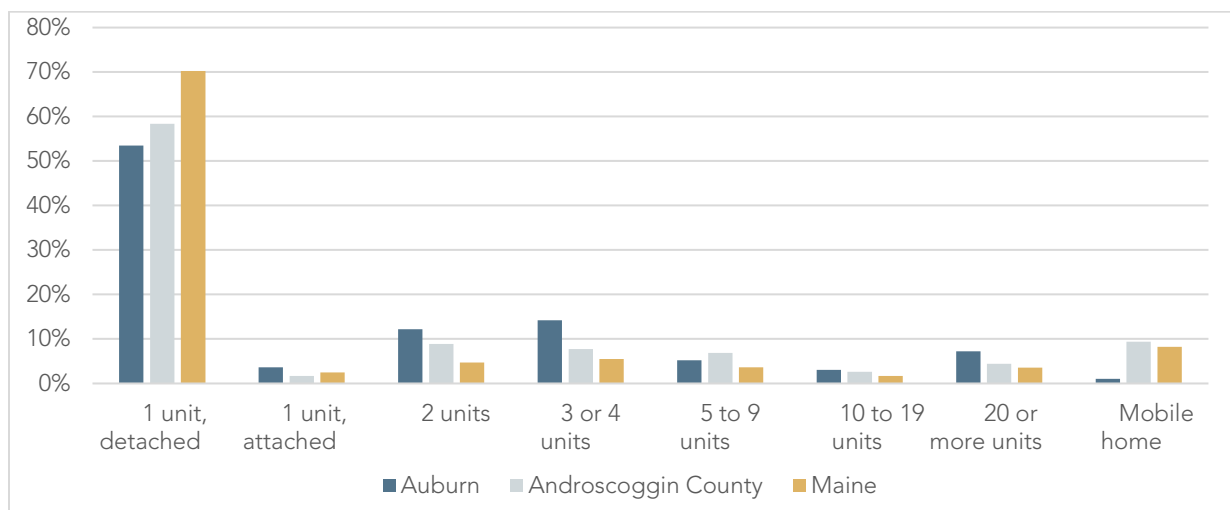


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

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.

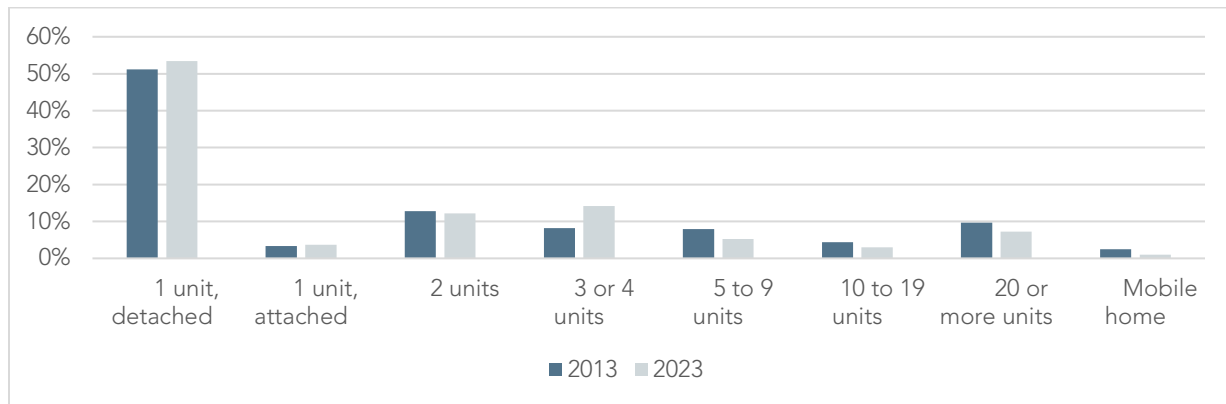
Figure 7.4: Percentage of Housing Units by Type



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

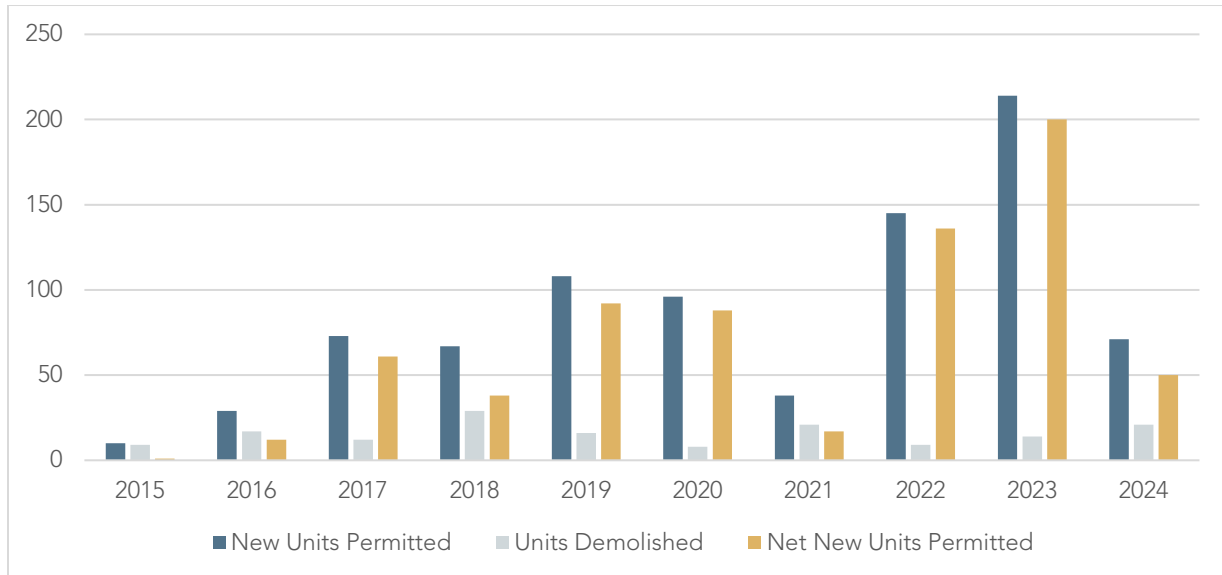


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

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	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
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.

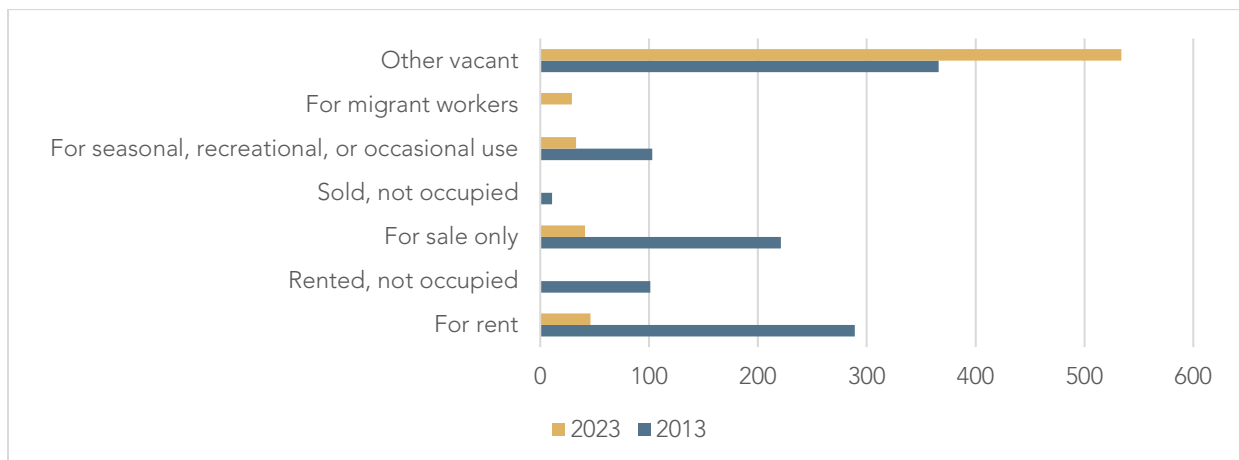
Most STR properties in the Lewiston-Auburn submarket are entire-home rentals (61%), while the remaining 39% are single-room accommodations within a home. The market skews heavily toward occasional use (as opposed to units rented out year-round as STRs): roughly three out of four listings are available 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

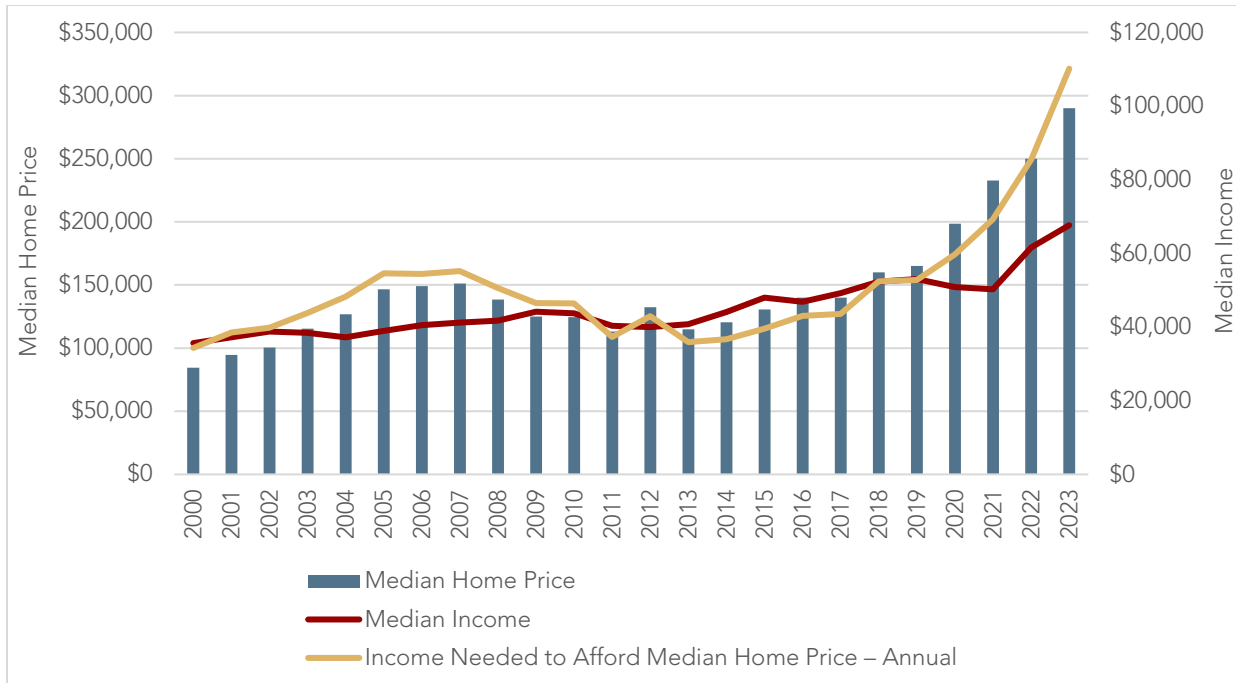


Source: 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

Affordability

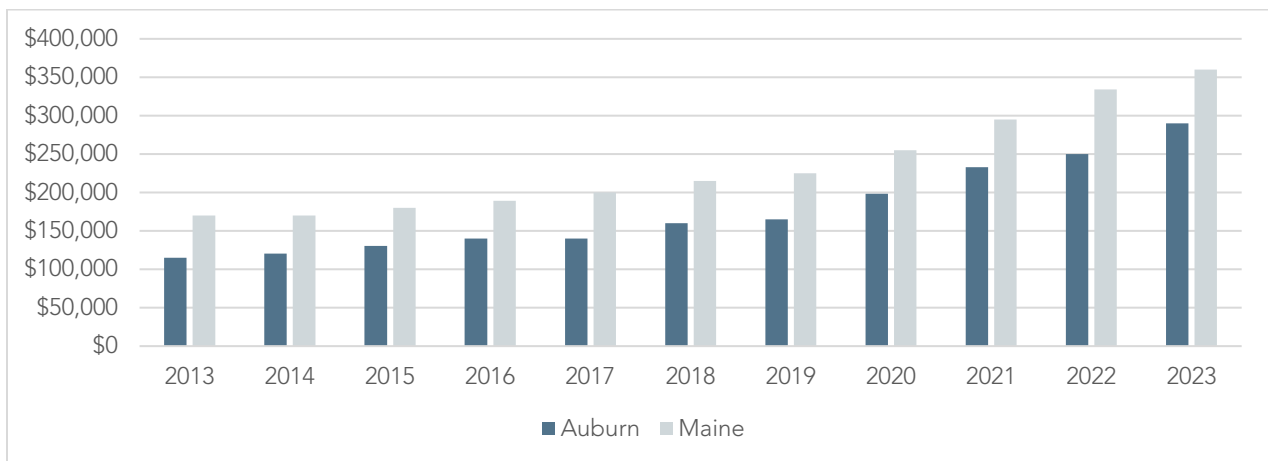
The City, like other communities in the state and region, has experienced a significant rise in housing costs in recent years. While the City’s median home price (\$290,000 in 2023) remains substantially lower than the state’s (\$360,000), the community has seen an increase of more than 150% in the median 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

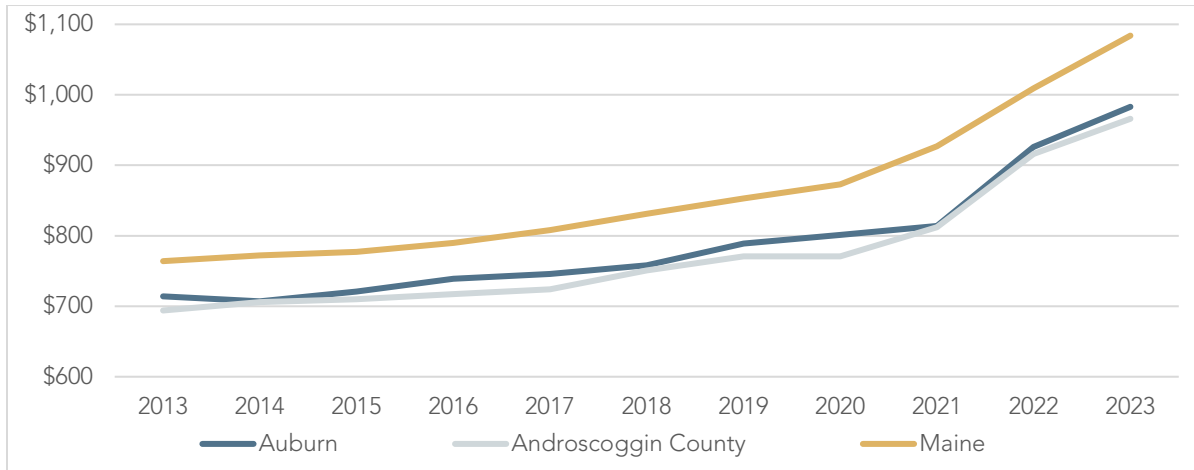
Figure 7.9: Change in Median Home Price



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.

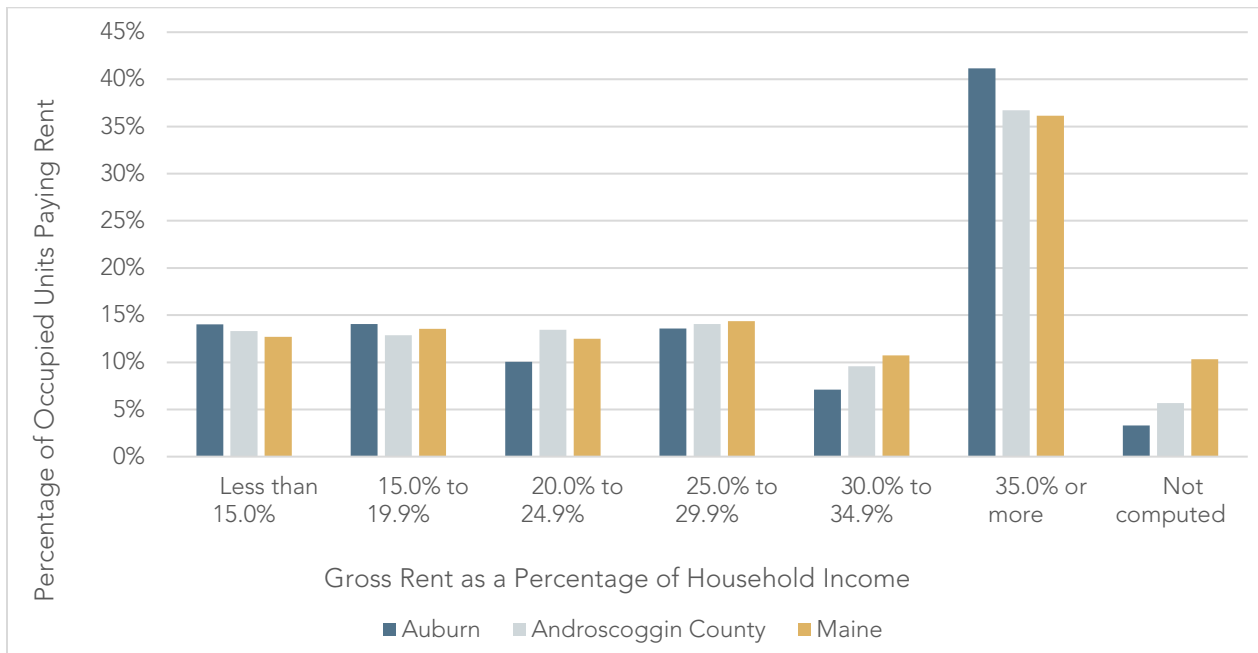
Figure 7.10: Median Rent



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.

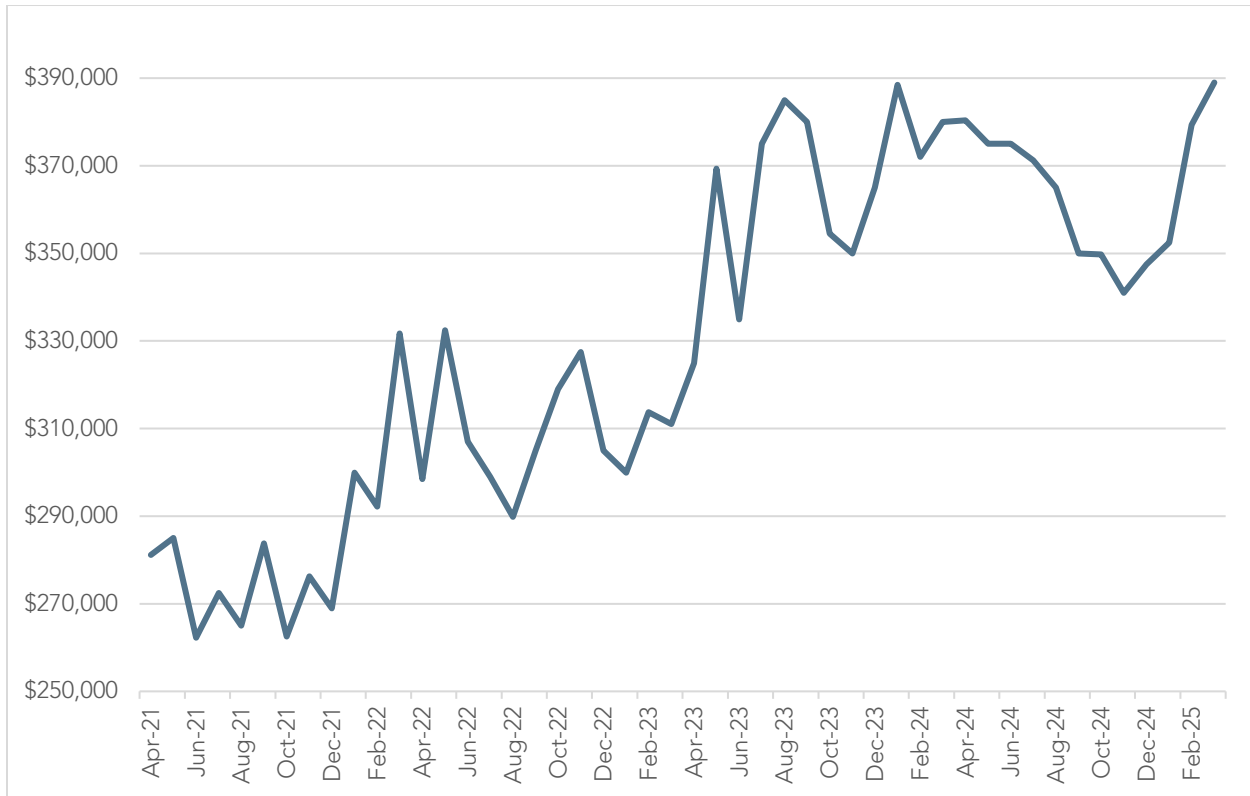
Table 7.3: Tenure by Housing Costs and Household Income

	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.

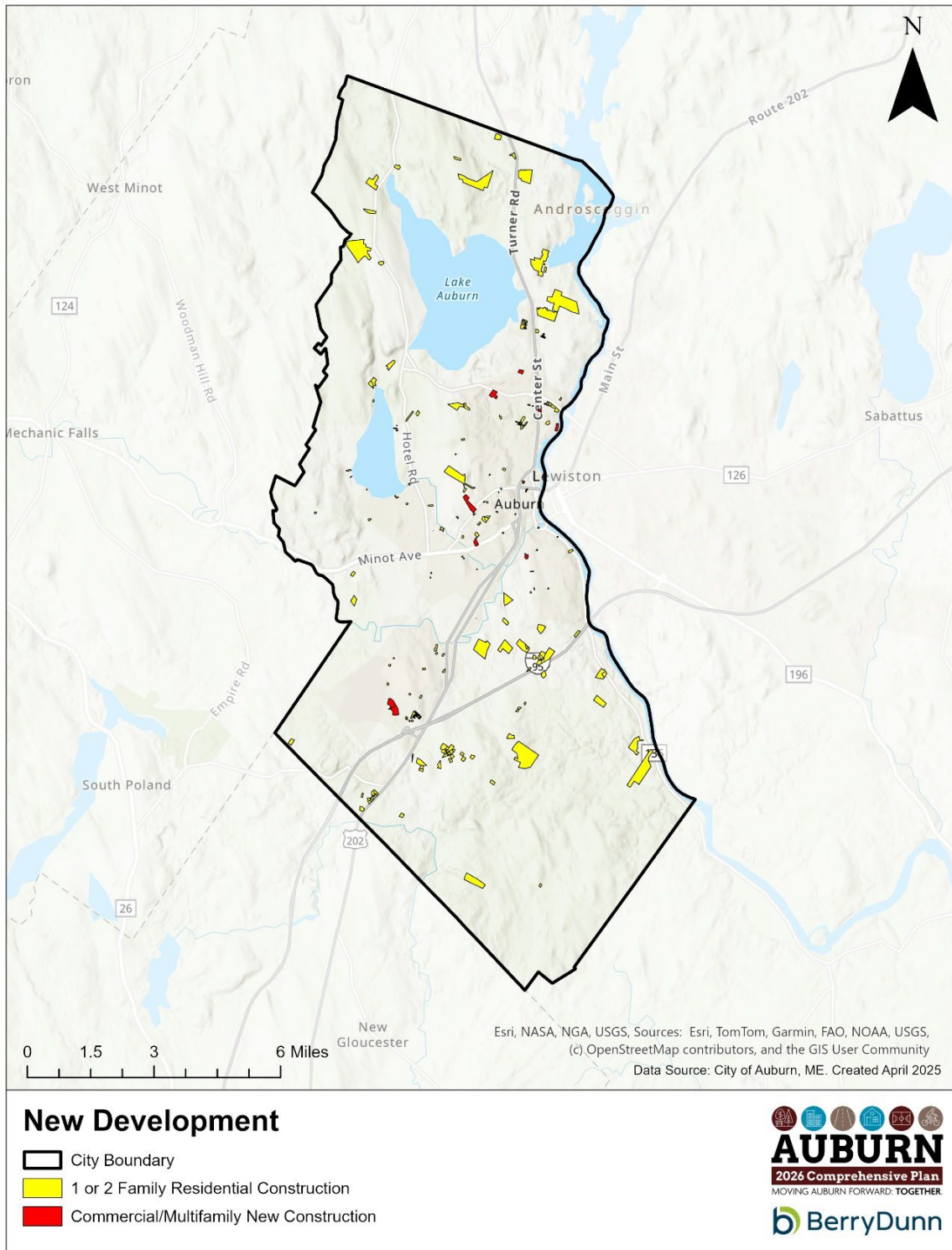
Other projects recently approved or under review by the Planning Board, but not yet under construction include the following:⁷

- 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.

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⁸ City of Auburn. *Housing Need in Auburn, Maine: City of Auburn Housing Study*. May 2025. HR&A Advisors.

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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.

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.

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.

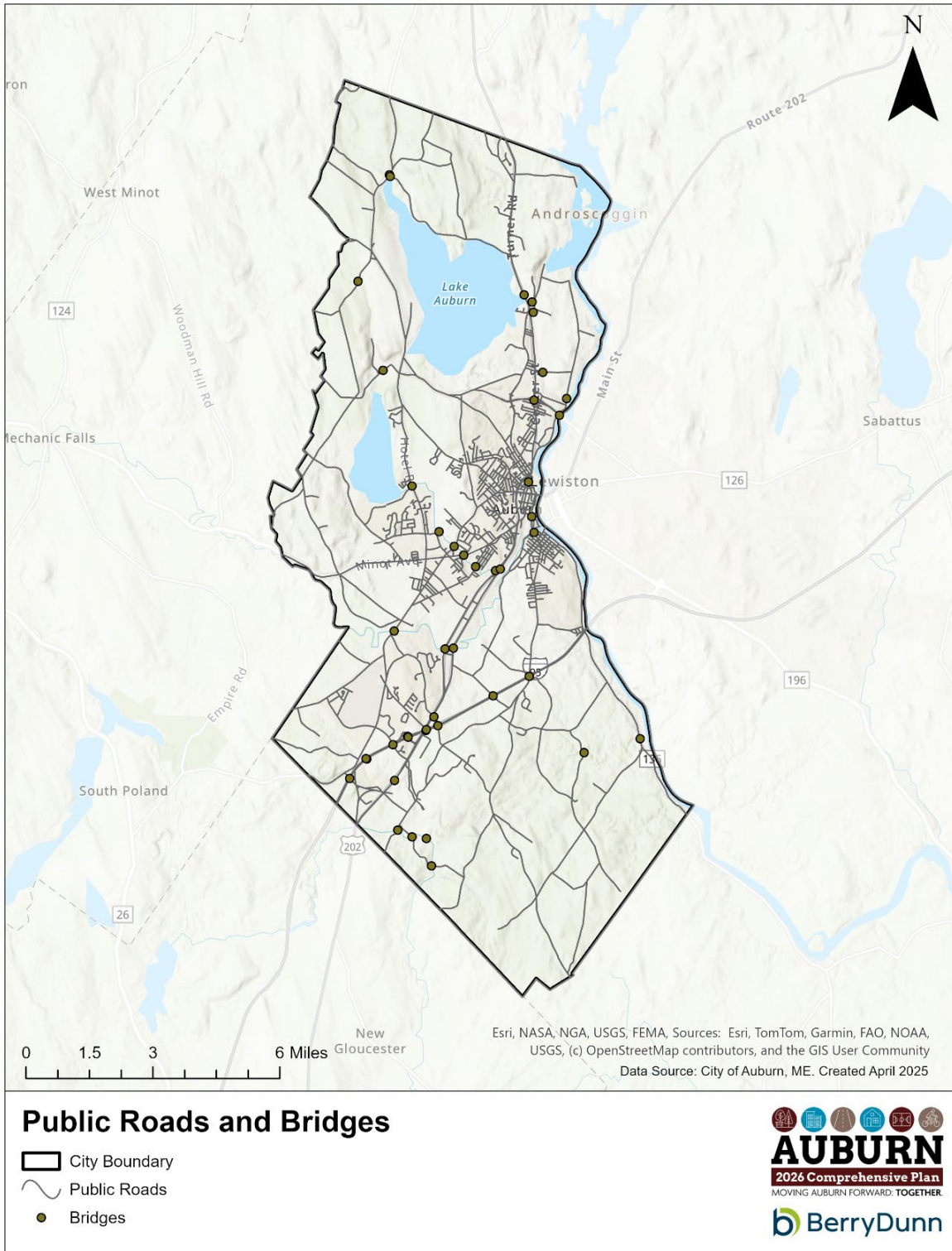
The **APW** is currently the only public works department in Maine accredited by the American Public Works Association (APWA). This accreditation recognizes excellence in the agency's operations and management and reflects the agency's commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. This prestigious 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 highest on Thursdays and Fridays, with low numbers from 7

⁹ MaineDOT. n.d. "Public Crash Query Tool." *Maine Department of Transportation*. Accessed April 4, 2025. <https://mdotapps.maine.gov/mainecrashpublic/>

p.m. to 5 a.m., increasing from 5 a.m. to 2 a.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.

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 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

¹⁰ Ibid.

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.

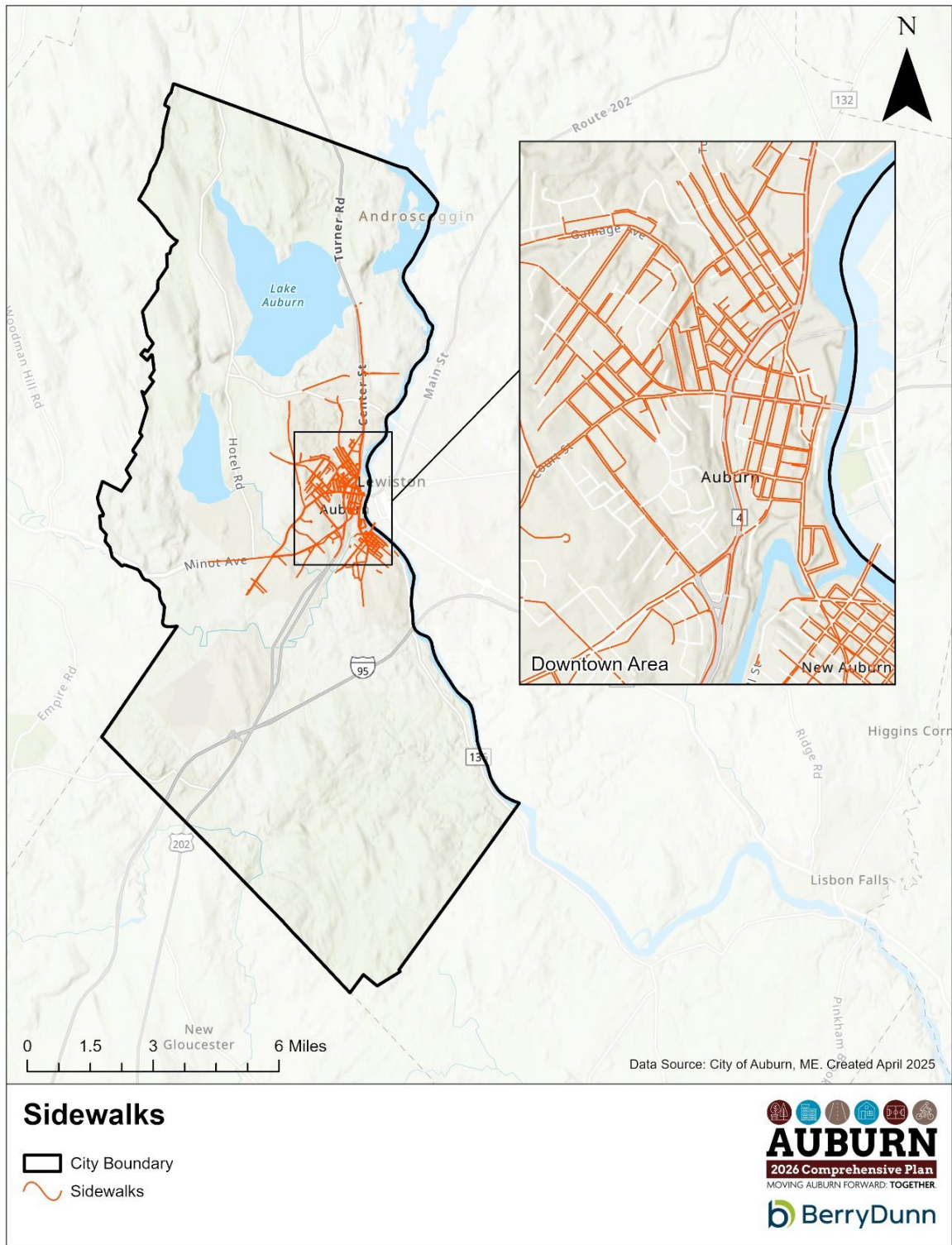
Auburn is making strides with infrastructural improvements and tackling existing challenges through projects like the 2023 Reconstruction Project on Second Street and Dunn Street. This initiative included road and sidewalk reconstruction, enhanced lighting, utility upgrades, and intersection realignment. 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.

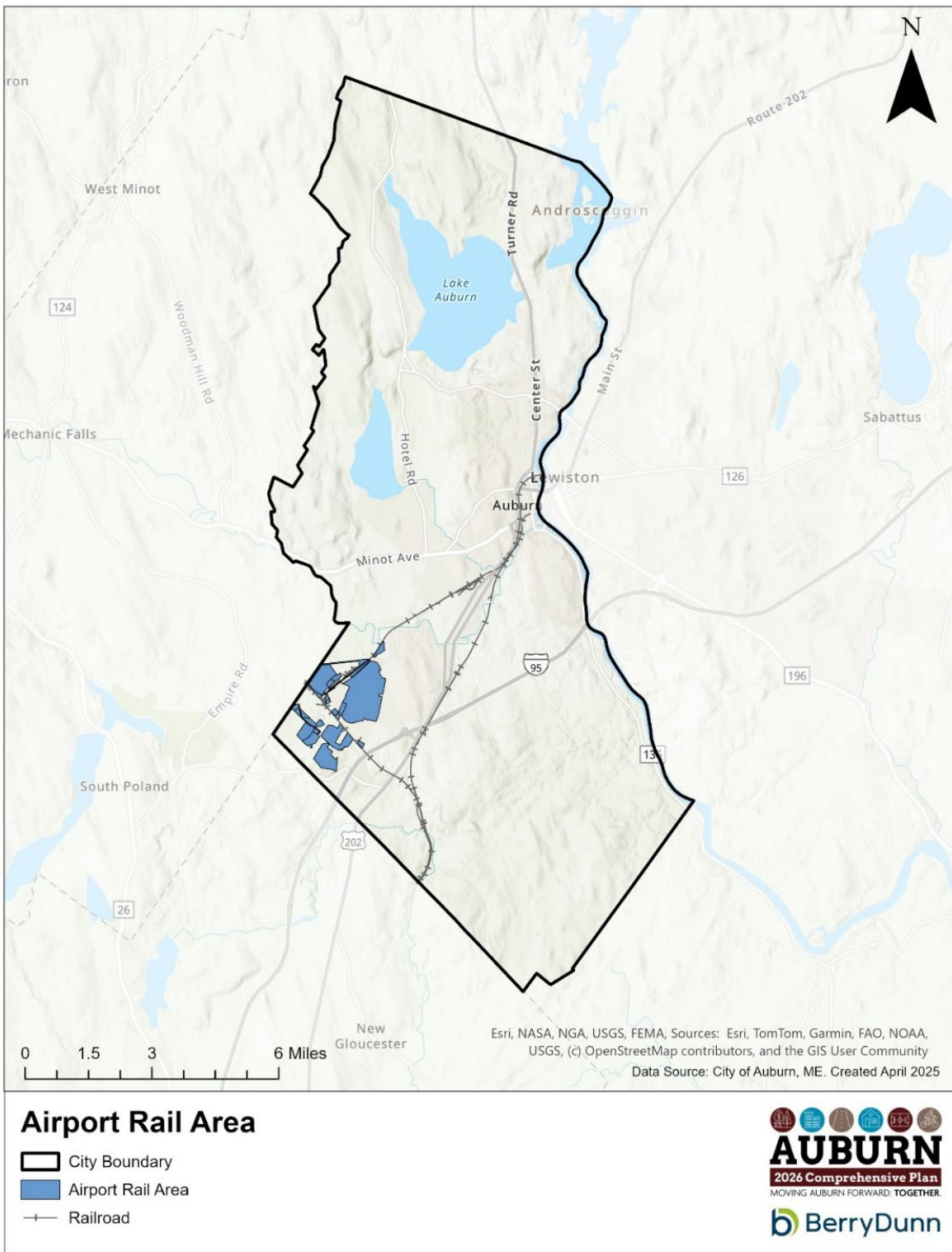
Supporting the long-term viability of KLEW will require integrated land use, transportation, and economic development policies, as well as continued attention to mitigating impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

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.

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Pan AM Southern (PAS)

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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, Wabanaki 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

¹¹ 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/>

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/>

toward downtown.¹⁴ Because of this, 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.

¹⁴ Megan Phillips Goldenberg and Ken Meter. November 29, 2017. "Summary of Significant Events in Protecting Agricultural 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

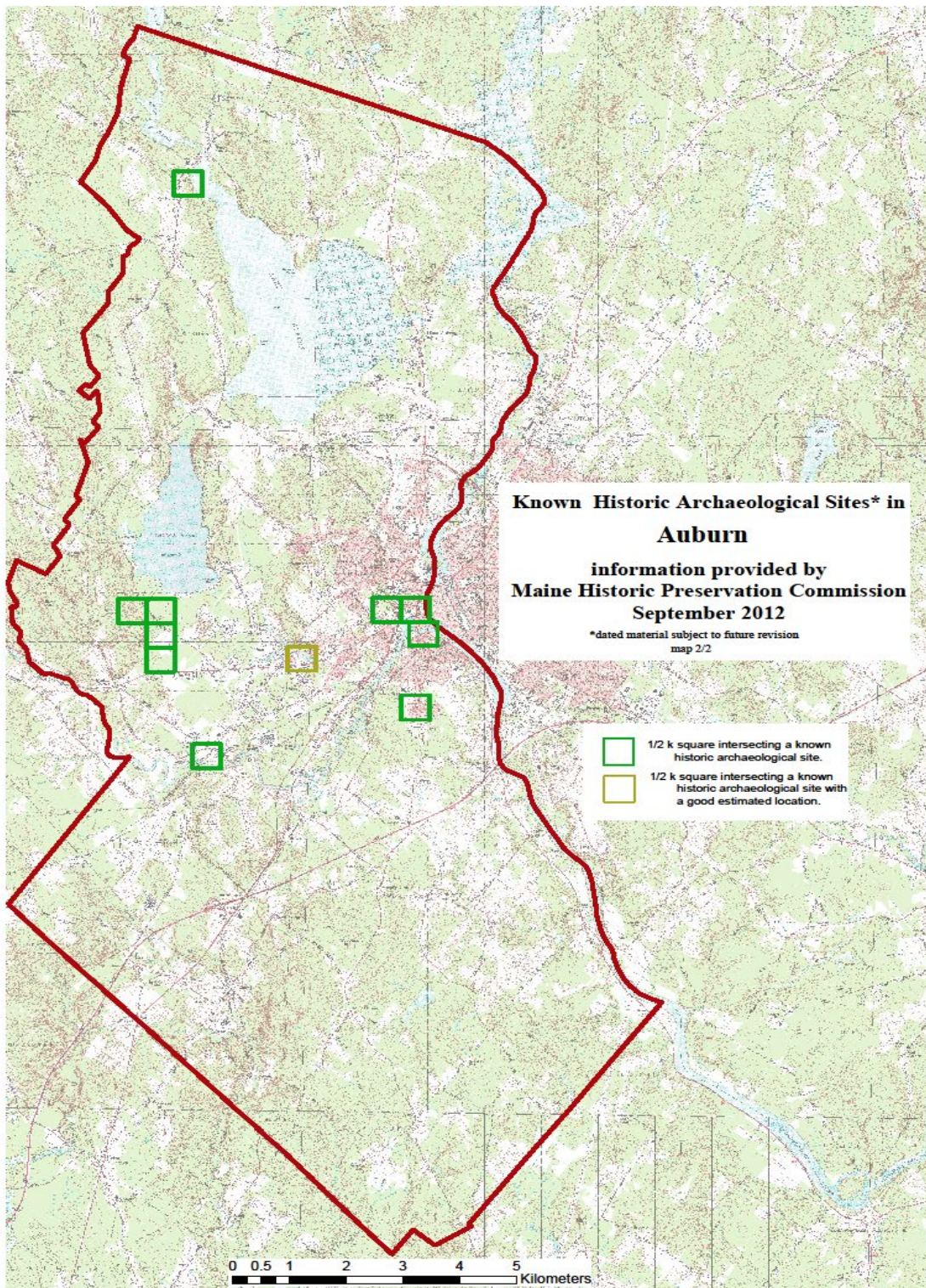
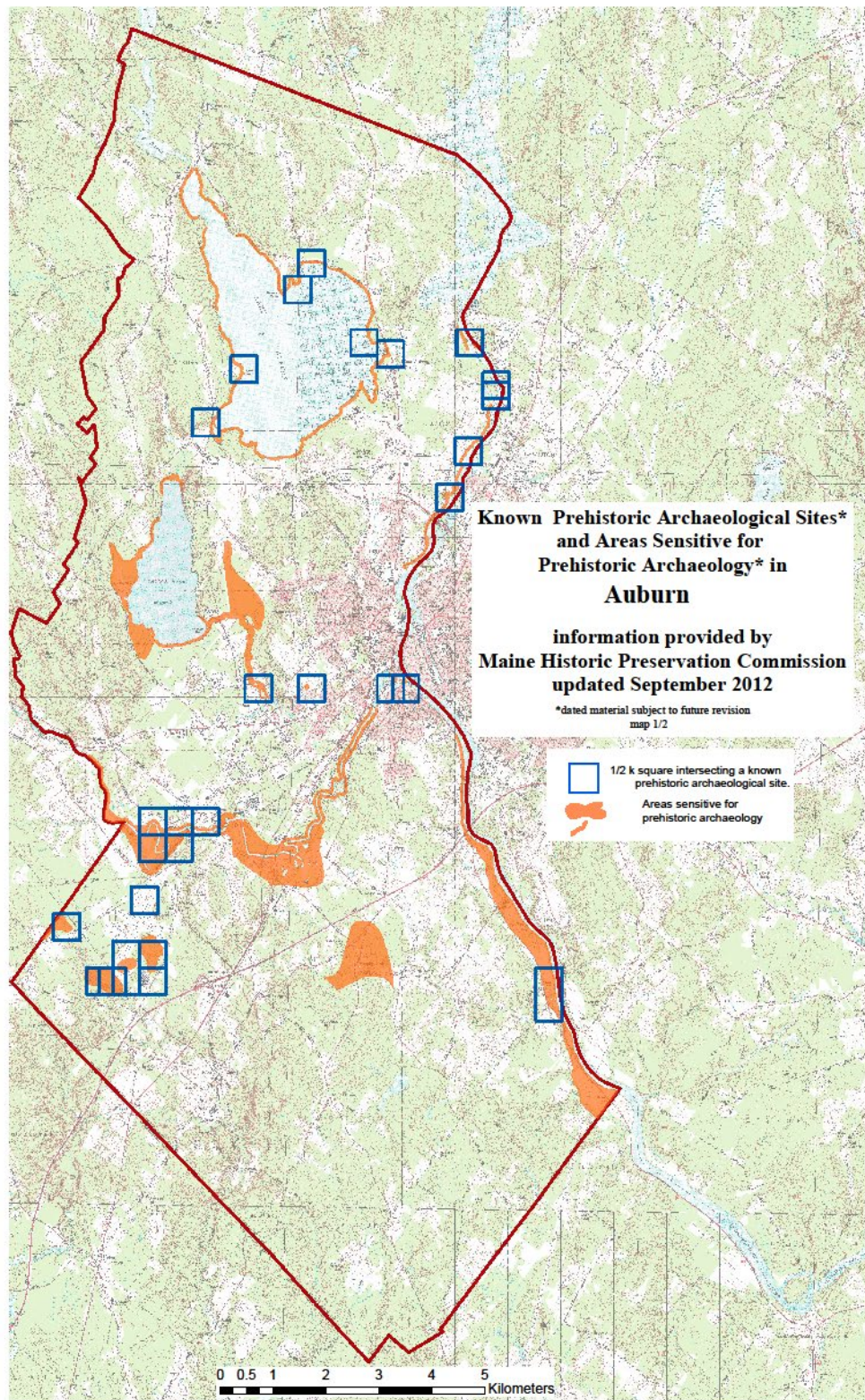


Figure 9.2: Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites



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 Pleasant 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

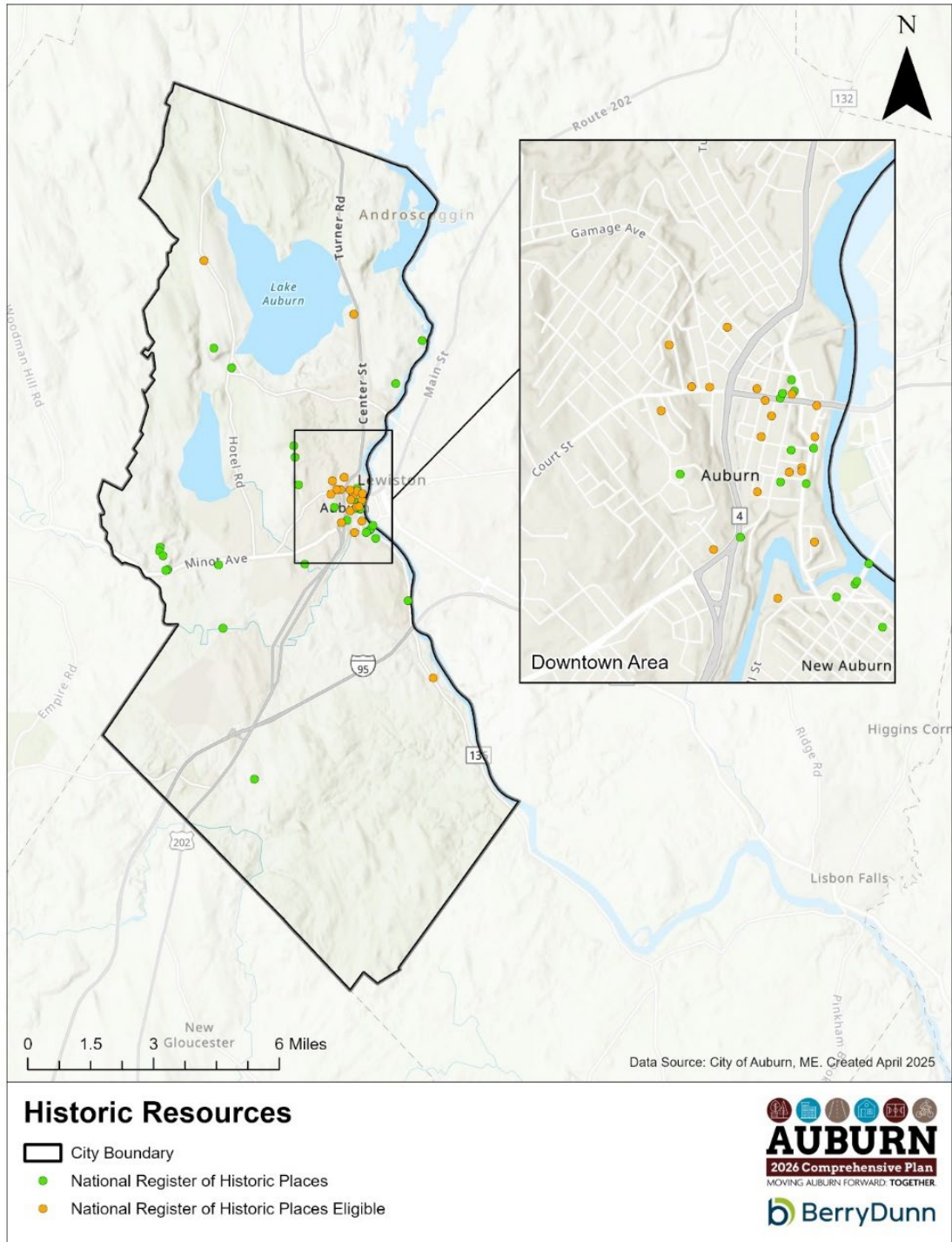
Property Name	Address
West Auburn School	740 West Auburn Road

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 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

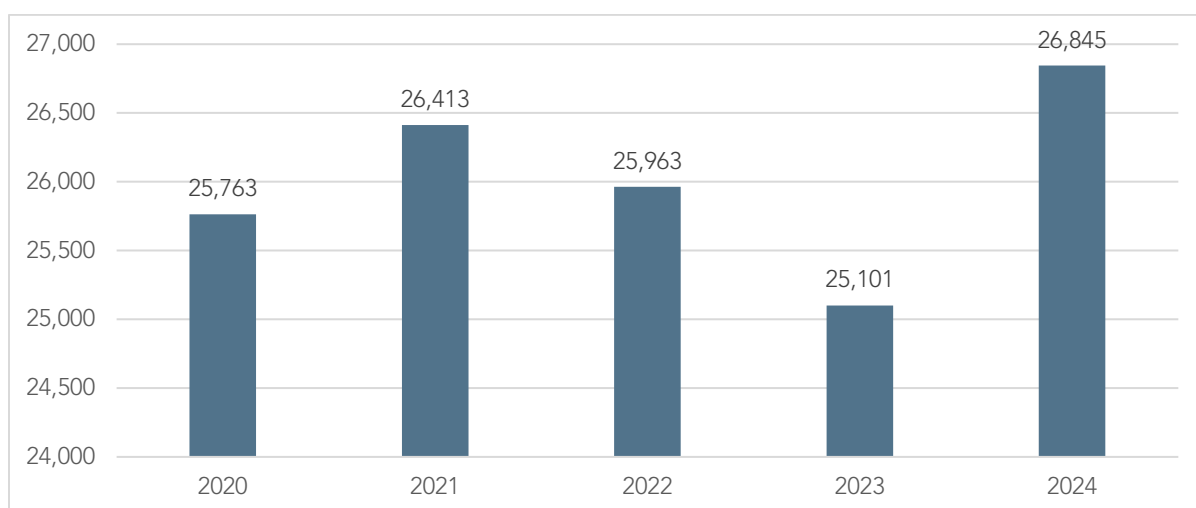
Police

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.

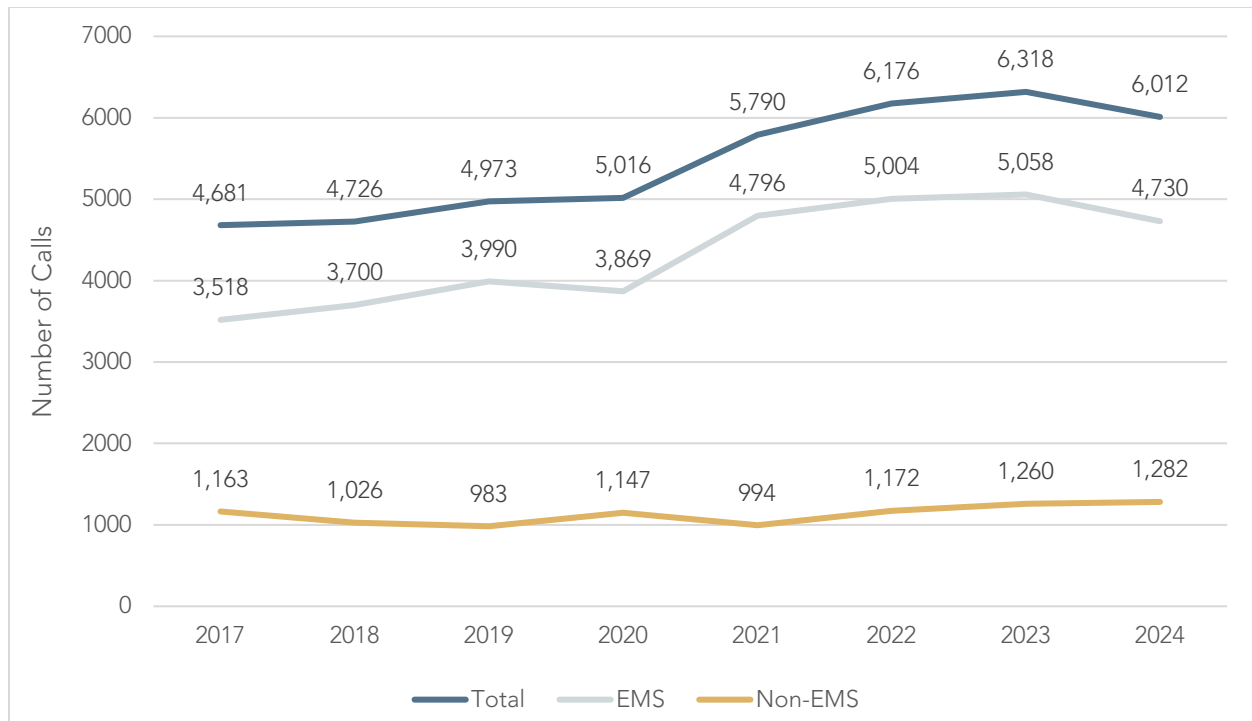
Staff retention is a challenge, similar to police departments across the state. Keeping up with competitive pay and the availability of affordable housing are key factors in staff recruitment and retention.

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 (aerial 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

School	Year Constructed
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 in 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.

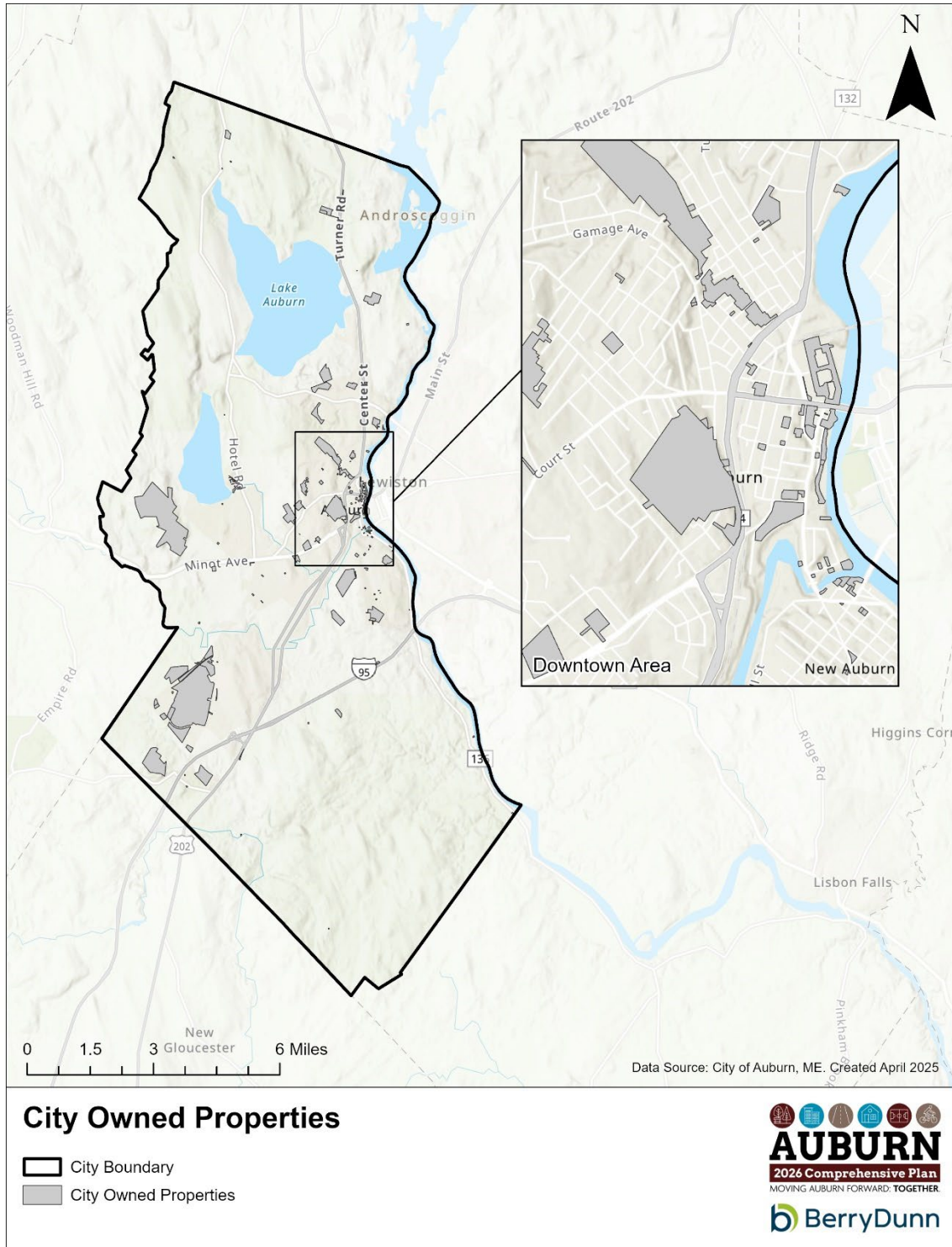
Location	Building Type	Year Built
114 FISH HATCHERY RD	0CAP - CAPE COD (SF)	1900
75 CONSTELLATION DR	0CNT - CONTEMPORARY (SF)	1985
38 FALCON DR	0MOB - MOBILE HOME (SF)	2011
15 ANDREW DR	0MOB - MOBILE HOME (SF)	2011
550 MINOT AVE	0RAN - RANCH (SF)	1955
277 MAIN ST	23 - AUDITORIUM	1889
33 INDUSTRY AVE	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

Location	Building Type	Year Built
296 GRACELAWN RD	43 - WAREHOUSE	2002
32 DUNN ST	46 - CHURCH/SYN	1900
550 MINOT AVE	48 - FIRE STAT	1973
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	

Location	Building Type	Year Built
114 FISH HATCHERY RD	ELEM - MULTI PURPOS	1900
60 COURT ST	PGAR - PARKING GARA	2002
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:

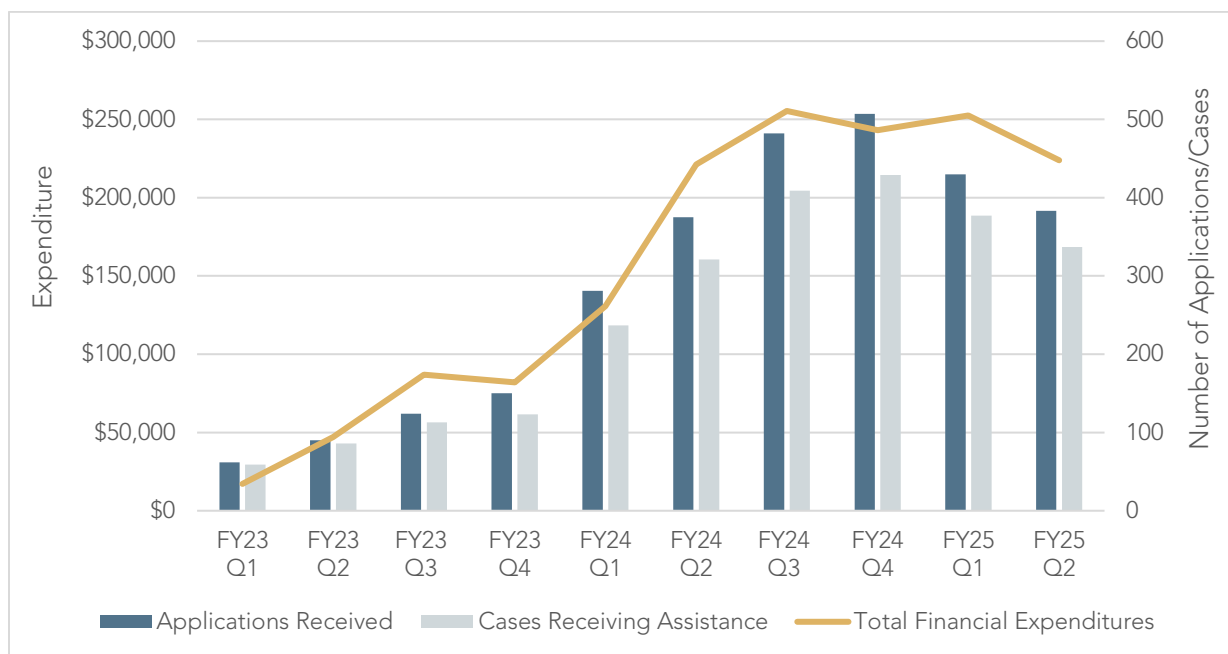
- A new Auburn PAL Center to support expanded youth services (in progress)
- Auburn Resource Center at 121 Mill Street to house nonprofit partners providing housing and social services
- Infrastructure improvements to enhance pedestrian safety
- Business loans to support economic stability
- Establishment 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
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

Project Name/Description	Estimated Project Cost	Recommended Implementation Timeframe
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 storage 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 Hackett 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.

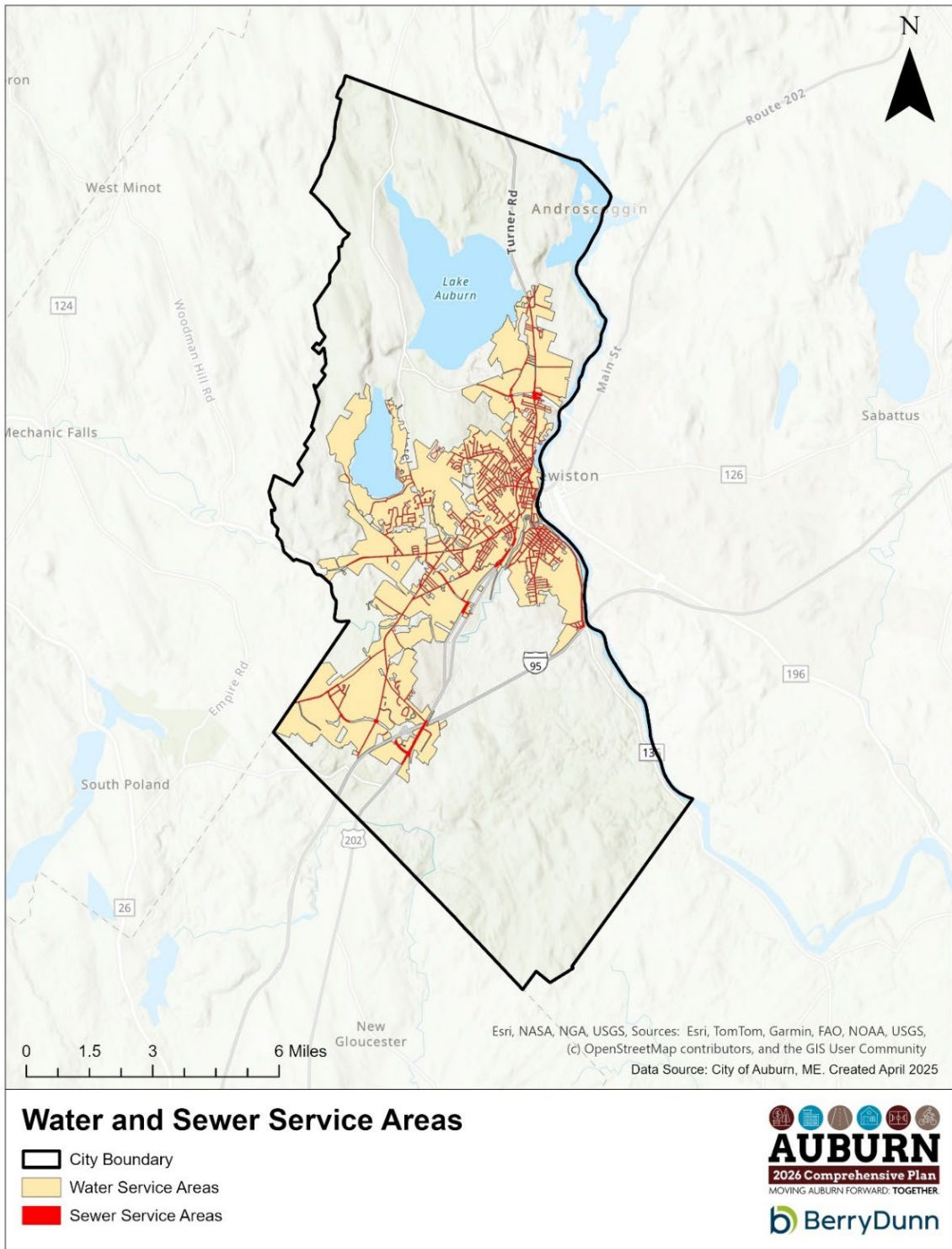
Table 10.3: Auburn Water District Short- and Intermediate-Term Projects

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
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

Project Year	Street	Cost Estimate	Justification
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
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

Project Year	Street	Cost Estimate	Justification
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
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

Figure 10.5: Water and Sewer Service Areas



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. 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 Business and Community Development Department

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

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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

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.

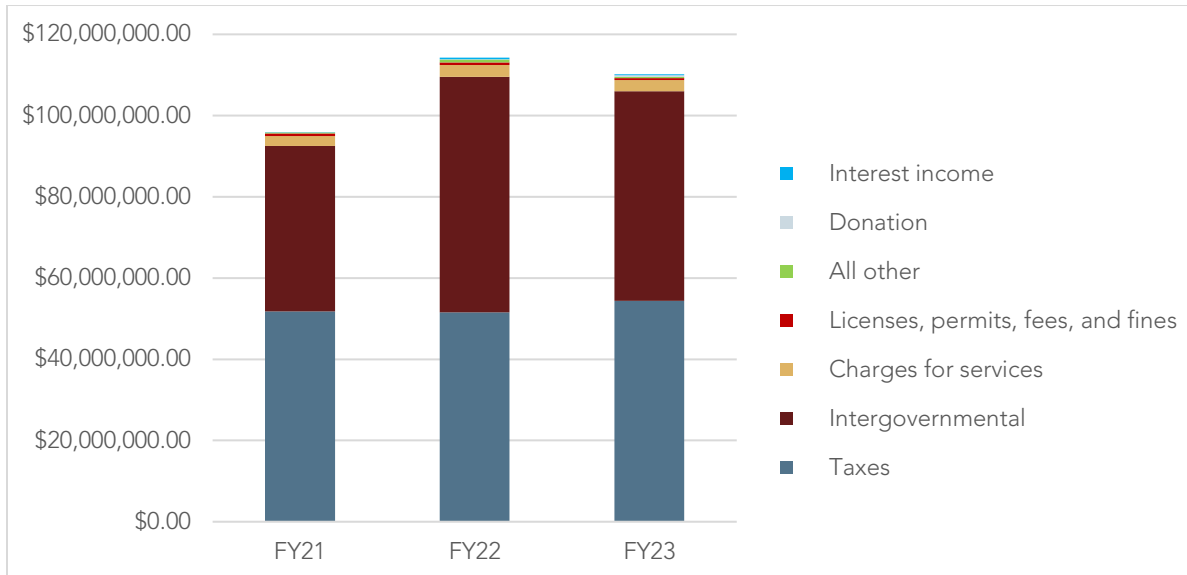
The City's annual budget serves as the principal financial planning and control tool. The City utilizes its annual operating and capital budget development process as the primary strategic tool that helps guide the City to realize all elements associated with regulatory and strategic goals and objectives. 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 11.1: 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 11.1: Municipal Expenditure

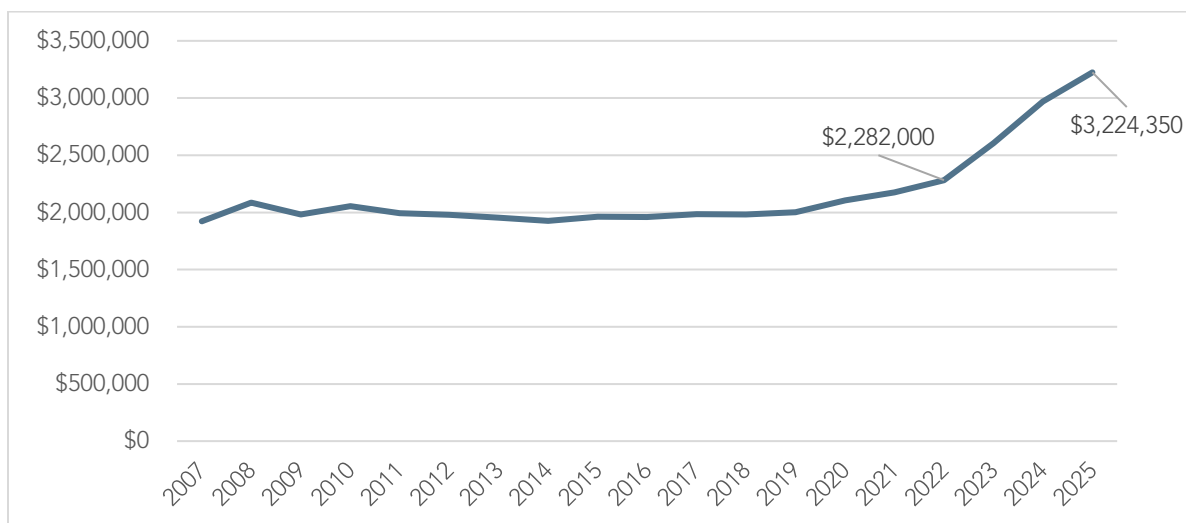
	FY 2023	FY 2022	FY 2021
General government	\$11,946,944	\$11,563,886	\$11,131,004
Public safety	\$11,461,619	\$10,850,253	\$10,497,535
Health, welfare, and recreation	\$2,044,326	\$1,737,165	\$1,680,073
Public works	\$6,822,438	\$6,045,400	\$5,608,516
Other agencies	\$4,649,304	\$4,196,458	\$3,942,717
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 11.2: 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 11.2: 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

City Name	Avg. Home Value	Homestead Exemption	Taxable Value	Mil Rate	Est. Tax Bill
Scarborough	\$668,256	\$25,000	\$643,256	\$15.97	\$10,273
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 visiting 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 new debt should generally reflect projects and purchases that support comprehensive plan properties. The table below highlights historical debt service requirements.

Table 11.3: 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 11.4: Projected Capital Investment Breakdown

Category	Percentage of Projected Capital Investment
1 Planning and Permitting	2.6%

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>

Category		Percentage of Projected Capital Investment
2	Facilities Investments and Purchasing	82.9%
3	Fire	2.1%
4	Police	1.1%
5	Public Works	9.4%
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.

Sources

City of Auburn Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports 2021 – 2023

Maine Revenue Service