

## Land Use Plan

The land use plan for Easton is one of the most important components of the Plan. Examining past and present land use has been used to determine the location and the amount of land available for particular purposes. Since the Plan and its goals, policies and strategies are a long-range guide for the growth and development of Easton, it cannot be too specific or rigid and has to be flexible and able to adapt to unforeseen changes and demands. The Planning Board inventoried agricultural and forest lands, soil types and characteristics, natural resources, transportation networks, housing needs, demographics, local and regional economy, and public facilities and services. These inventories were then analyzed and put into a land use plan.

1. Growth Areas: The **Growth** areas are "generally" defined as: those portions of the Town located in the village areas, along Center Road, Station Road, and West Ridge Road.

Growth areas should be designed with the following criteria:

1. Have, or can efficiently obtain, public facilities and services.
2. Have natural characteristics suitable for development.
3. Are large enough to accommodate the expected growth over the next 10 years.
4. Are large enough to accommodate a variety of housing types.
5. Must be limited to a size and configuration that encourages compact rather than sprawling development.

2. Rural Areas: The **Rural** area is defined as those areas outside of the "Growth" area.

As mentioned previously, the majority of Easton's land area is rural, outside of the downtown (growth) area. The principal use of this large land area should be for agriculture, forestry, rural type residence, and associated uses. Land use ordinances developed for rural areas by municipal officials should limit the number of, size of, and type of commercial businesses allowed in these rural areas. Other specific purposes of this area should include conservation of natural resources, reduction of soil erosion, and the encouragement of appropriate recreational land use. Rural areas should be designed to:

1. Include important agricultural and forestlands.
2. Include large areas of contiguous, undeveloped land used by wildlife, for resource protection, and for outdoor recreation.
3. Include important natural resources and scenic open spaces.
4. May have very low densities of development interspersed among fields and woodlands.
5. Should not include areas in which a significant portion of the community's development is planned to occur.
6. Areas that have significant green or open spaces.

The "Growth and Rural" areas for Easton have been designated in past comprehensive plans. The Planning Committee has not changed the growth and rural areas for the town. It should be

noted that these areas are fluid and could expand and contract based upon growth pressure and the intent of the land use ordinance.

### **Industrial Growth Area**

Industrial growth has occurred in Easton and may grow in the future. This area is described as potential future industrial sites because of existing land uses as well as potential growth of present industry and creation of additional commercial and industrial development that services those industries. The Local Economy section identifies the importance and growth potential of the natural resource based industry to the future of the community. Designating this area as an Industrial area is consistent with the vision of Easton as a place with diverse job opportunities and residential areas with convenient access to employment.

This area consists of portions of Station Road, Richardson Road, and the Cleaves Road. There is favorable topography and areas of prime soils. However there are also some floodplains, wetlands that need protection and may limit growth. The transportation system includes frontage on Station Road, Richardson Road, and Cleaves Road as well as the Maine Northern Railway. There is ample land available for additional rail siding and interior access road.

### **Regulatory Measures**

Easton does not have a strong history of land use regulations. The Town administers Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Management Ordinances which meet the State's minimum requirements and are updated on a regular basis. Easton's Planning Board, both past and present, have made strong and conscious efforts not to change district boundaries or land uses within the ordinances.

The following are the provisions for land use regulation development strategies for the implementation program. The Town will draft a Land Use Ordinance that contains three districts. These include:

### **Growth Area**

#### Village District (V)

The Village District allows expansion of the historic pattern of village uses, with a mix of medium density residential uses and small scale, low intensity commercial, industrial and institutional uses. The density and intensity of uses reflect the desire not to provide centralized sewer or water service within the next ten years. The Village District is designed to be attractive, well maintained and highly desirable for residential living, with public facilities and services in close proximity. This area is pedestrian friendly and contains public space for community interaction and events. Nonresidential uses will be complementary to residential uses and provide convenient access to commercial and public goods and services. Design and performance standards will include provisions to buffer residential uses from undesirable effects of nonresidential uses. Dimensional standards will be flexible enough to allow for creative development designs that will help re-establish a village character in keeping with the

community's vision. Village uses should be sensitive to the topography and natural resources of the area, particularly wetland habitat associated with Prestile Stream.

### Industrial District (I)

The Industrial District's principal use of the land is for industrial purposes and for commercial and business uses commonly supplemental to or associated with industrial uses. The ordinance will provide minimum controls on those uses which, by virtue of their size or external effects (waste discharge, noise, glare, fumes, smoke, dust, odors, or auto, truck, or rail traffic) could otherwise create nuisances or unsafe or unhealthy conditions. There is no minimum lot size within the identified industrial district.

### **Rural Areas**

#### The Farm and Residential District (FR)

The Farm and Residential District supports and maintains natural resource-based land uses, with the highest priority being the preservation of large tracts of forest and agricultural land, and the most important and sensitive natural resources. This district should also include large expanses of undeveloped backland not easily accessed by existing public roads. Very low-density residential, low-intensity outdoor recreation and natural resource-based or associated uses may also be permitted. Land uses that are significant traffic generators or require high levels of access to public services or facilities should be restricted. Preservation of rural character, scenic beauty, open space and significant natural resources is a very high priority within this area.

The Land Use Ordinance will include:

- Creation of three districts
- Legal Provisions
- Dimensional Requirements
- Mobile Homes
- Wellhead Protection
- Automobile Graveyards and Junk Yards
- Definitions
- Building Permit application

## FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

### State Goal

To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.

### Local Goal

Encourage development in a manner that allows the cost effective and efficient use of our system of facilities and services and that helps support job creation and population growth.

### POLICY

Coordinate the implementation of the Town's future land use strategies with other local and regional planning efforts.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop a land use ordinance, creating three (3) districts, that guides land uses pursuant to the land use plan.	Planning Board	2016-2017
Update the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance as necessary and required.	Planning Board	On-going
Update the Floodplain Management ordinance with the assistance of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Update, if necessary, the Floodplain Management maps.	Planning Board	2017
Develop a building permit system.	Planning Board	2017
Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MaineDOT's Capital Work Plan, Long Range Plan, and NMDC's regional transportation efforts.	Town Officials	2016 and On-going
Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process at the county level.	Town Officials	2017
Implement local strategies described in the hazard mitigation section to enhance preparedness, response and reduce risks to persons and property.	Planning Board, Town Officials	2016 and on-going
Work with the Towns of Fort Fairfield and Mars Hill to ensure consistent shoreland zoning standards for the protection of the Prestile Stream watershed.	Planning Board	2016 and on-going
Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and Safety education through the Department of Conservation's Recreational Trail Program and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.	Town Officials	On-going

## POLICY

Prioritize support for new development to the designated focus areas through financial investment in needed infrastructure.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Commit up to 75 percent of Easton's capital improvements expenditures into the designated growth area.	Town Officials	2016 and On-going
Assist land owners in the growth area that have vacant land for residential uses make that land attractive for future residents. This may include the assistance with road construction, sidewalk and access considerations, or other programs.	Town Officials	2016 and On-going
Apply for CDBG, Industrial Rail Access Program, and other funds for the revitalization of village area buildings and rail lines.	Town Officials	2016 and On-going
Develop a gateway program in the community making the first impression of Easton a positive impression.	Town Officials and MaineDOT	2017-18
Seek funding for sidewalk and storm drain replacement or reconstruction in the more heavily populated area of the community and residential subdivisions	Town Officials	2019
Develop a diverse recreation program that appeals to a wide range of audiences.	Recreation Dept. and Town Officials	2016 and On-going
Enhance buffering, tree planting, and landscaping between commercial, industrial, and residential land uses.	Town Officials	On-going
Construct gateways to the Industrial area that directs heavy truck traffic away from the village area and onto the Richardson Road.	Highway Dept.	2016
Inventory present telecommunications infrastructure in Easton and attempt to determine future needs of potential business and industry.	Town Officials and Planning Board	2016-17
Provide tax incentives to businesses wishing to locate in the downtown.	Town Officials	2016 and On-going
Work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to identify plots of land that qualify for organic farms.	Town Officials Planning Board	2018
Market vacant farmland that qualifies as organic farmland to potential users.	Town Officials	2016

When possible, in accordance with the Capital Investment Plan, initiate public investment in parking and/or road construction and acceptance, in combination with availability of grant funding.	Town Officials and Planning Board	2016 and on-going
On a continuing basis, provide the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) with the tools, training and support necessary to enforce the local ordinances and ensure that the CEO maintain current certification in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. § 4451.	Town officials and Code Enforcement	On-going
Evaluate implementation of the Plan every 3-5 years by a checklist of strategies implemented, location and value of public infrastructure investment, reporting of development trends and identification of measures that protected critical natural resources.	Town officials and MaineDOT	2019 and then On-going