

## **Chapter G: Recreation and Health**

### **1. Purpose**

A community's quality of life is an important factor for most people deciding on a place to live and is often related to the growth and development of a town or area. This section contains an inventory of current recreation and health facilities and an analysis of how these may be affected by future change and growth. Specifically, this chapter will do the following:

- a. describe current health and recreational resources in Gouldsboro;
- b. assess the current and future long term adequacy of these resources; and
- c. predict whether the availability of open spaces for public access and recreation will be threatened by future growth and development.

### **2. Key Findings & Issues**

Improvements are needed to the playground at Jones Pond Park. As the town's population continues to age, consideration is needed to consider other recreational facilities for the aging population. Some minor repairs are needed on the community recreation center, as well as ongoing repairs for the Prospect Harbor Women's Club which serves as a larger community meeting place and occasional events. The newer Town Park has been a great addition to Gouldsboro's Community and hopes for it to become more widely utilized by residents. Gouldsboro must continue to find ways to allow access to both saltwater and freshwater bodies for residents. Access to private parcels for recreational use is a building concern as more land owners are posting "no trespassing" signs. Access to water for pleasure craft, the availability of limited moorings in our harbors seem to be a growing concern for residents.

### **3. Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan**

Gouldsboro does not appear to face any serious deficiencies in its recreational facilities. Improvements are needed to the playground area at Jones Pond. The town's population continues to age and is likely that trend will continue. The town may want to facilitate conversations with the public regarding recreational facilities for the aging population.

### **4. 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results & Supplementary Survey Data**

Survey results establish that walking is a notable activity for Gouldsboro residents as 92.7% said that they walk as a recreational activity. 72.8% participate in kayaking or canoeing, which is why access to water bodies is important for town residents. 62.5% of respondents engage in picnicking or cooking outdoors, and nearly half (47.0%) participate in bicycling as a recreational activity.

86.7% of those that completed the survey believe that community centers are either important or very important and over 60% feel the same way about sports facilities and gyms.

Overall, respondents support investment in active transportation infrastructure. When asked about the Town planning and working towards creating a multi-use recreational trail system that connects with a larger network within the region a combined 53.1% ranked this as important or very important, 24.5% thought this is somewhat important and nearly 20% thought this is not important. When asked about planning and development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to improve safety of users over 60% ranked this as either important or very important, 20.8% said somewhat important and 16.7% said not important.

## 5. Current Recreation & Health Resources

**Table G-1: Health Facilities**

Summary of Health Facilities	Location	Miles	Emergency Room/Medicine
Eleanor Widener Dixon Memorial Clinic (Northern Light Primary Care)	Gouldsboro	In town	No
Milbridge Medical Center (out of county)	Milbridge	10.4	No
Convenient MD	Ellsworth	20.6	No
Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital	Ellsworth	21.5	Yes
MDI Hospital	Bar Harbor	38.1	Yes

Table G-1 lists hospitals and other healthcare facilities that serve Gouldsboro along with their travel distance in miles. Northern Light Primary Care in Gouldsboro, formerly known as Eleanor Widener Dixon Memorial Clinic, is the lone medical facility in town. The clinic employs four medical professionals: two specialized in family medicine, one specialized in geriatric medicine and one in osteopathic medicine. Residents can access additional primary care facilities and two full service hospitals with emergency care within 40 miles. The closest emergency medical center is Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital in Ellsworth, just over 20 miles from the Town. Ellsworth is also home to some of the nearest nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

There are additional resources for optimized health in Gouldsboro outside of traditional medical facilities. Blessing Hands of Maine operates out of Gouldsboro and serves Hancock, Washington and Penobscot counties by providing in-home services to aging adults with disabilities. These include everyday activities of daily living, household tasks and general companionship. The Eastern Area Agency on Aging offers a variety of wellness, nutrition and lifestyle programming for area senior citizens while Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County enhances the lives of those

experiencing or associated with life-altering illness.

**Recreation Resources & Facilities:**

Town owned recreational facilities in Gouldsboro include playground facilities at the Peninsula School, a play area (with intention of installing new playground equipment). Jones Pond which is also town owned has public access which includes boating, swimming and picnic area and a small beach. The Community Recreation Center is utilized for many events organized by a small committee, as well as rented out for various needs. For more information regarding boat launching refer to the Marine Resources Chapter.

The fairly new Town Park has been steadily gaining interest for various uses by local residents. There is a small private campground on U.S. Route 1 and an upscale RV Park off the West Bay Road. The privately owned beach at Sand Cove in Corea is utilized by locals and tourists. Other recreational resources are the nearby Acadia National Park, Blackwoods Campground, Donnell Pond and Maine Public Reserve Lands and the Sunrise ATV Trails. While Gouldsboro residents traditionally had informal access to many private properties for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities, there has been some posting of land in recent years. This appears to be due in part to damage to property from ATV's and to a lesser extent, snowmobiles.

Schoodic Arts for All offers many programs throughout the year including the Last Friday Code House and various concert series, arts and crafts, workshops and more. The Dorcas Library has been a source for gatherings, research materials and books. The library has acquired the building directly across the street that will host different activities and groups in the future.

**Table G – 2: Recreation Resources & Facilities for use**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Managed by/Activities</b>
Peninsula School	<i>RSU 24 / Playground / Ballfields/Soccer Field</i>
Jones Pond	<i>Gouldsboro / Recreation/swimming/boating/picnic</i>
Gouldsboro Recreation Center	<i>Gouldsboro / Baseball Field/Indoor Facility</i>
Gouldsboro Town Park	<i>Gouldsboro / Gazebo/Open space</i>
Prospect Harbor Women's Club	<i>Gouldsboro / Indoor building use</i>
Taft Point Reserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy
Day Ridges Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy
Francis B Wood Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy
Corea Heath Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy
Forbes Pond Preserve	Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Corea Bog Walk	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Salt Marsh Trail	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## 6. Adequacy of Gouldsboro’s Recreational & Health Resources

Adequacy of recreational resources is evaluated by means of State criteria that establish what resources a town of Gouldsboro’s size should have, supplemented by the subjective opinions of the residents themselves. The State standards are detailed in Table F – 3. As all towns are different State standards are best considered as guidelines, and the local populace is the final judge of Gouldsboro’s recreational and health resource adequacy. Gouldsboro benefits from regional cooperation in health and recreation. While the town does not have many local athletic facilities, the Ellsworth YMCA offers some recreational uses for free to residents as long the town continues the business relationship with them. The Recreation/Community Center in Gouldsboro does have an indoor basketball court.

## 7. Open Spaces

### Inventory of Open Spaces:

The town does not currently have an open space but some conservancies and land trusts have purchased parcels of land and established trails for public use.

Table G-3 shows where the recreational open spaces are in Gouldsboro. It is important to note that this chart shows only the publicly accessible open space. It does not include private property that is enrolled in the open space tax incentive program or under conservation easement. A tally and map of the acreage under those programs is found in Chapter J.

**Table G – 3: Public Access**

Public Access Area	Facility	Owner	Location
Recreation Area	Jones Pond	Town	Recreation Road
Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem	Grand Marsh		Prospect Harbor/Corea
Carry-in Boat Access	West Bay Pond	Town	Guzzle Road
Boat Ramp	Prospect Harbor Wharf	Town	Main Street
Boat Ramp	South Gouldsboro	Town	Shore Road
Boat Ramp	Gouldsboro Point	Town	Gouldsboro Point Rd.

**Potential Threats & Impacts to Open Spaces:**

The previous comprehensive plan discussed the lack of public transportation services to exercise activities and a discussion for a needed exercise facility in the area. Since the 2005 plan was written, there has been an abundance of private land that has been acquired by local land trusts and conservation organizations for public use. While this may provide future protection for public access with regards to cross-country skiing, biking, hiking trails etc, hunting is still only permitted on private lands or where designated acceptable by the State. Changes in land ownership, whether for private use or development, could impact the important aspect of Maine life. Some Maine residents may be fearful of allowing traditional public access to their land, out of liability concerns which cause them to post “no trespassing” signs. Maine has a somewhat unique set of laws, borne out of our hunting tradition. Unlike most other states, Maine operates under an implied permission structure, meaning that if land is not posted it is legal to use the land. The Landowner Liability Law protects the landowner for injury that occurs on their property unless the landowner is charging a fee for that use. Newer land owners may be uneducated with the law and do not realize that they would not be liable.

**Table G – 4: State of Maine Guidelines for Parks and Recreation Services**

				<b>Present in Gouldsboro</b>
<b>I Administration</b>		1500-2000	2000-2500	
	1. Parks & <b>Recreation Committee</b>	Y	Y	y
<b>II Leadership</b>				
	1. Summer Swimming Instructor	Y	Y	N
	2. Summer Recreation Director	Y	Y	N
<b>III Public Programs</b>				
	1. Swim Instruction	Y	Y	N
	2. Supervised Playground	Y	Y	N
	3. Senior Citizens Club	Y	Y	N
	4. Skiing Instruction	Y	Y	N
	5. Ice Skating	Y	Y	N
	6. Community-wide Events-though the Community Rec Center	Y	Y	Y
	7. Arts & Crafts Programing-collaborate with Schoodic Arts for all	Y	Y	Y
	8. Evening Adult Education	Y	Y	N

IV Public Facilities (Including School)				
	A) Outdoor Facilities			
	1. Community Recreation Area: 12 – 25 acres	Y	Y	Y
	2. Softball/Little League Diamond	Y	Y	Y
	3. Basketball Court - Indoor	Y	Y	Y
	4. Tennis Court	Y	Y	N
	5. Multi-purpose field	Y	Y	Y
	6. Ice Skating	Y	Y	N
	7. Playgrounds	Y	Y	Y
	8. Horseshoe	Y	Y	N
	9. Shuffleboard	Y	Y	N
	10. Picnic Areas w/Tables etc.	Y	Y	Y
	B) Indoor Facilities			
	1. School Facilities Available to Public	Y	Y	Y
	2. Gym or Large Multipurpose Room	Y	Y	Y
	3. Auditorium	Y	Y	Y
	4. Public Library	Y	Y	Y
V. Finance				
	A) Minimum \$6.00 per capita for part-time programming	Y	Y	N

*Source: Recreation & Open Space Planning Workbook*

## **Local & Regional Issues**

### **Local Issues:**

The following local issues were identified for recreational and health in Gouldsboro:

- Need for safe and comfortable pedestrian/bicycle access
- Local roads more suitable for biking and walking
- Interconnected walking/biking trail network
- Improved basketball infrastructure – indoor and outdoor
- Improved recreational programming for senior citizens
- Improved access for all abilities in natural areas
- More information and better dissemination of information regarding programs, facilities, locations, and schedules.

**Regional Issues:**

Increased usage of regional recreational facilities will result in increased traffic problems and maintenance costs. There is already too much litter being left in natural areas and public areas. This includes garbage, human waste and pet waste, which are both health hazards. Controlling this problem presents additional costs to the municipalities that host such facilities, as well as to the private organizations that own them. It is very difficult to stay on top of this issue. Better signage with a phone number to call when a visitor notices a problem could help, as could more waste receptacles and regular clean out in areas where the problem cannot be resolved by “carry in/carry out” signage; however, in-town waste receptacles may be a haven for residents to dump trash in lieu of purchasing trash tags.

**8. Goals & Objectives**

<p><b><u>Goal:</u> To provide a range of health and recreation activities to persons of all ages and abilities within the financial means of the town, and partner where appropriate with other organizations to meet current and future needs.</b></p>			
Objective	Strategies	Responsible Parties	Timeline
<p>Improve access for all ages and abilities to various recreational facilities and resources.</p>	<p>Work with local land trusts, conservation groups and affiliated organizations to identify and seek funding to support Americans With Disabilities Act (1990) design standards.</p>	<p>Select Board, designees, Recreation Committee, Historical Society</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>
	<p>Locate historic roads and trails no longer in use for improvement and</p>	<p>Possibly a volunteer group/committee appointed by the select board</p>	<p>Within 3 years/ongoing</p>

	public access.		
Monitor, change, update, or improve recreational facilities and services based on changing needs and wishes of Gouldsboro residents.	Select Board/CEO to create 5-10 year plan	Select Board/CEO	Immediate and ongoing
	Work with Maine Coast Heritage Trust and landowners to consider possible re-establishment of Kayaking/Canoe access within town	Select Board/Town Manager/appoint volunteer group	Within 5 years
	Work with local land trusts and conservation organizations to develop a town-wide map of all walking and biking trails.		
Encourage and expand community gardening opportunities in Gouldsboro to address food insecurity and promote socialization and exercise.	Establish a garden and landscape committee, possibly as part of the Agriculture Committee (see Chapter J).	Select Board or their designees, USDA Cooperative Extension Service	Immediate and ongoing.
Improve access to healthcare facilities and appointments through senior mobility and	See Chapter D, Transportation.		



rideshare programs.			
Improve access to telemedicine for residents.	See Chapter I, Broadband.		
Improve access to age-in-place and home care services.	See Chapters B, C, and D.		