Comprehensive Plan 2025

Gouldsboro, Maine



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Executive Summary

Gouldsboro's 2025 Comprehensive Plan proposes a vision of the Town's future and suggests ways to realize it. It reflects the views of public opinion survey respondents, public forum participants, committee volunteers, Planning Board members, Town staff and elected officials.

The Plan is designed to satisfy the requirements of Maine's Growth Management Act, which dictates much of its structure and format. Compliance with the Act will qualify the Town for preferred status in many State competitive grant programs.

The Plan does not have the force of law. It formulates goals for the Town and recommends strategies to achieve them, but the Plan's effectiveness will depend on implementation by community members, Town staff, and elected officials.

[A few sentences describing each chapter will follow.]

Introduction

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to propose a vision of Gouldsboro's desired future and to suggest ways of realizing it. The vision presented in this Plan is informed by the views expressed by residents in the Public Opinion Survey conducted in 2022 and by input gathered during multiple public meetings.

One of residents' most consistent, prominent concerns was preserving Gouldsboro' rural, small-town character. Balanced against that are concerns with jobs, housing affordability, the schools and the effects of climate change, among many others.

Maine's Growth Management Act dictates much of the structure and format of the Plan. Each chapter begins with an inventory and analysis of the Town in the required areas such as water resources, marine resources, economy, housing, transportation, public facilities and services, existing land use and future land use. Each chapter ends with a table articulating overall Town goals for that area, objectives and strategies for reaching those goals, parties responsible for implementing the strategies, and timeframes.

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan does not have the force of law. Its recommendations, such as that we take action to keep Jones Pond free of invasive aquatic species or that we address climate-related road vulnerabilities, can be key to obtaining State or other grant funding. However, actual implementation of these projects will still require approval of the Select Board and, in the case of such matters as new or revised ordinances or items affecting the Town budget, a Town Meeting vote.

It is significant the Plan does not recommend land use zoning for Gouldsboro. We are required to identify "growth areas" in the Plan, but it is recommended that development there be encouraged with incentives, rather than enforced with prohibitions. Note that districts designated as growth area are where our ordinances permit development of Workforce housing.

Once this plan has been accepted by the state, the hard work of implementation can begin. It is the implementation that will enable Gouldsboro to realize the vision presented here.

Vision Statement

The Town of Gouldsboro seeks to support a vibrant, sustainable and connected community that celebrates its working waterfront, rural heritage, and arts community, and protects its natural resources consisting of woodlands, wetlands, plants, animals, and exceptional scenic views.

People will want to live here and will be able to afford to do so. Once here, they will have access to employment opportunities that make it possible to stay here.

With the help of its citizens, the Town aims to achieve the following goals: expand the local economy, sustain local fishing and farming, foster the arts, and encourage excellence in schools. To help make these goals achievable, the Town will develop ways to ensure that living here is affordable and will make prudent, planned investments in its infrastructure.

Because of its vulnerability to climate change, the Town will prioritize addressing vulnerabilities identified in its *Climate Vulnerability and Assessment Action Plan.*

Gouldsboro's future will be defined by its history, rural geography, exceptional natural resources, and its citizens.

Chapter A: Historical & Archaeological Resources

1 Purpose

Historical and archaeological resources are vital elements of a community's identity. A comprehensive plan must identify important historical and archaeological resources not only for the sake of the historical record, but also to preserve the present-day value of the town's identity and character while encouraging tourism. Specifically, this chapter:

- Presents a brief history of Gouldsboro;
- Describes its historical and archaeological resources;
- Assesses threats to these resources, and
- Assesses the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve these resources.

2 Key Findings & Issues

The growth and resilience of the Gouldsboro Historical Society since the previous comprehensive plan was updated highlights the community's support and concern for the history and legacy of the town. Gouldsboro has a large diversity of historic and prehistoric sites (i.e., those predating European settlement) along its salt and freshwater shores. While the Town has many buildings of historic interest, only four are on the National Register of Historic Places. There are many other places that may be eligible for listing. Gouldsboro has generated many published histories, but to date there is no systematic and comprehensive inventory and evaluation of all its historic structures and sites. There is no specific program for widespread public recognition and preservation of these resources.

3 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

While more information has been gathered on historic and archaeological resources since the last plan was prepared, further research on sites is needed. Otherwise, there is the risk of sites being unknowingly altered or damaged due to the lack of adequate information. Given the many older homes in town, there is the potential of more buildings being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

83% of respondents felt that Historic Buildings and Museums were either important or very important cultural resources. 88.6% responded that the Town should support research, documentation and preservation of historical and archeological sites and artifacts.

5 History of Gouldsboro

In this section, the history of Gouldsboro is presented, starting with the earliest human inhabitants, and continuing through the development of what has evolved into the present Town of Gouldsboro.

5.1 Pre-Colonial History

Indigenous people known as Paleoindians, began living on the Gouldsboro peninsula after the ice age (10-11,000 years ago). They were initially from west of the Hudson River. At that time and forward the climate was warming rapidly; as hunters, gatherers, and fishers they enjoyed herds of caribou, deer, moose, mastodon and even swordfish from the Gulf of Maine. Approximately 3,500-4,000 years ago the climate began cooling, the amplitude of the tides began to increase. Over time the sea level was rising rapidly, and the Maine coastline moved farther inland. About 3,000 years ago the Susquehanna migration started bringing people into the area from the Susquehanna River Valley and as far south as the Savanna River; they brought with them new cultures and new tool-making skills. They established camps, or small villages on the coast. Along the coast today, the evidence of many small settlements has been documented by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). A second influx of people from southern New England occurred around 1,700 BCE. These Algonquin speakers used different tools, natural resources, and land use patterns, which distinguish them from earlier inhabitants. From this second migration arose numerous tribes known collectively as the *Wabanaki,* or "people of the dawn land". There are 28 such camps, or small villages and historical sites within the confines of Gouldsboro.

5.2 European Exploration and Early Settlement

The history of European settlers in Maine and New England is a complex subject and better pursued in detail in other sources. As a summary, European seafarers probably visited the Maine coast earlier than the first written records of the 16th and 17th centuries but by the end of the 16th century, France and England started documented in-depth exploration and initiated settlements along the coast of New England. Throughout the end of the 16th century and to the mid-17th century France, England and their various Native American allies faced off militarily. Early French settlement in Maine and Maritime Canada focused on trapping and trading efforts, while early English settlers were primarily involved in fishing on the Grand Banks. England won out after the Seven Year War ended in 1763, giving England France's New England and Canadian territories. Massachusetts acted quickly and assumed control of the former French land from the Penobscot River to Nova Scotia.

English settlements began springing up after the French & Indian wars in 1763 and England took possession of France's former North American territories. A few people of European descent were probably living in what was then called Township 3, prior to 1763. At the time, Township 3 was part of Lincoln County, one of just three established counties in Maine. The boundaries of Gouldsborough (original spelling) were surveyed in 1763; today they are much the same (minus Winter Harbor which seceded in 1895 plus portions of Steuben which were annexed in 1845 & 1870).

Early white settlers saw the potential to create a thriving town with development opportunities. The forests would provide lumber and hunting, the streams would provide transport for logs and power to run sawmills, plus opportunities for fishing. Harvesting trees for the mills would leave open spaces for agriculture and housing construction. Furthermore, the new town was already on the established shipping route between Boston and Halifax.

Three of those white settlers applied for, and received, land grants in 1764 to develop these opportunities. Francis Shaw, Robert Gould and Nathan Jones, all of Boston became the new proprietors. However, only Jones, along with his family moved to the area where he stayed until his death. Several of Shaw's children took up residence and raised their own families.

The forecasted opportunities didn't work out well for the proprietors. As much as two-thirds of the land in the Gouldsborough Plantation proved to be unsuitable for farming. The Revolutionary War with coastal blockades curtailed shipping. Of significant impact was the four-year depression that followed the Revolutionary War. Both Gould and Shaw died. The settlement languished. Much of the land was eventually conveyed to William Bingham, a Philadelphian who already owned two million acres of land in Maine.

In February 1789, Township 3 became the incorporated Town of Gouldsboro recognized by the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, of which Maine was a part. Later that same year, the new County of Hancock was incorporated and included part of Lincoln County. Gouldsborough then became part of the new county. In 1790, the first U.S. Census was taken and showed Gouldsborough to have a population of 267.

In 1794, William Bingham hired General David Cobb, who had fought under George Washington in the Revolutionary War, as his agent. Cobb was charged with laying out roads, guarding against timber trespass, building mills, bringing in settlers and eventually developing the town into a city. The first road into the town was designed and constructed by Cobb; today portions of that road bearing his name are still usable.

Maine achieved statehood in 1820, and General Cobb left Gouldsborough. Cobb's envisioned city had not materialized. Instead, the population was just 559 people, and they were living in several villages within the town. Each of the villages were self-contained and connected by a network of Cobb-designed roads.

Between 1800 and 1900, shipping and shipbuilding became major industries. In 1893 telephone service was installed by New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. At the time, Gouldsborough was a stop on the Shore Stage Line but by 1900 steamboat and railway service became available seven miles away at Hancock. The "Bar Harbor Express" rail line ended its run at the Waukeag Ferry dock. The ferry serviced the Frenchman Bay area.

As a result of an uneven coastline, Gouldsborough developed into many historically separate fishing villages, summer colonies and communities, including Birch Harbor, Prospect Harbor, South Gouldsborough, West Gouldsborough, Summer Harbor, Wonsqueak Harbor, Bunker's Harbor, Chicken Mill, Jones Pond, Westbay, and Corea. Each of the villages generally had its own grammar school, church, general store, a mill and a post office. Some villages had inns and livery stables for travelers. Map A-1 of Prospect Harbor in 1881 includes a store and post office, school, church, and business establishments as well as homes.

Traveling salesmen included itinerant dentists, photographers, peddlers, artists, and theatrical troupes. The occupations of the village inhabitants included farmers, fishermen, lumbermen, carpenters, shipbuilders, seafarers, and tradesmen. Coastal freighters supplied stores with year-round goods. Sawmills provided barrel staves and long lumber; gristmills produced flour. The

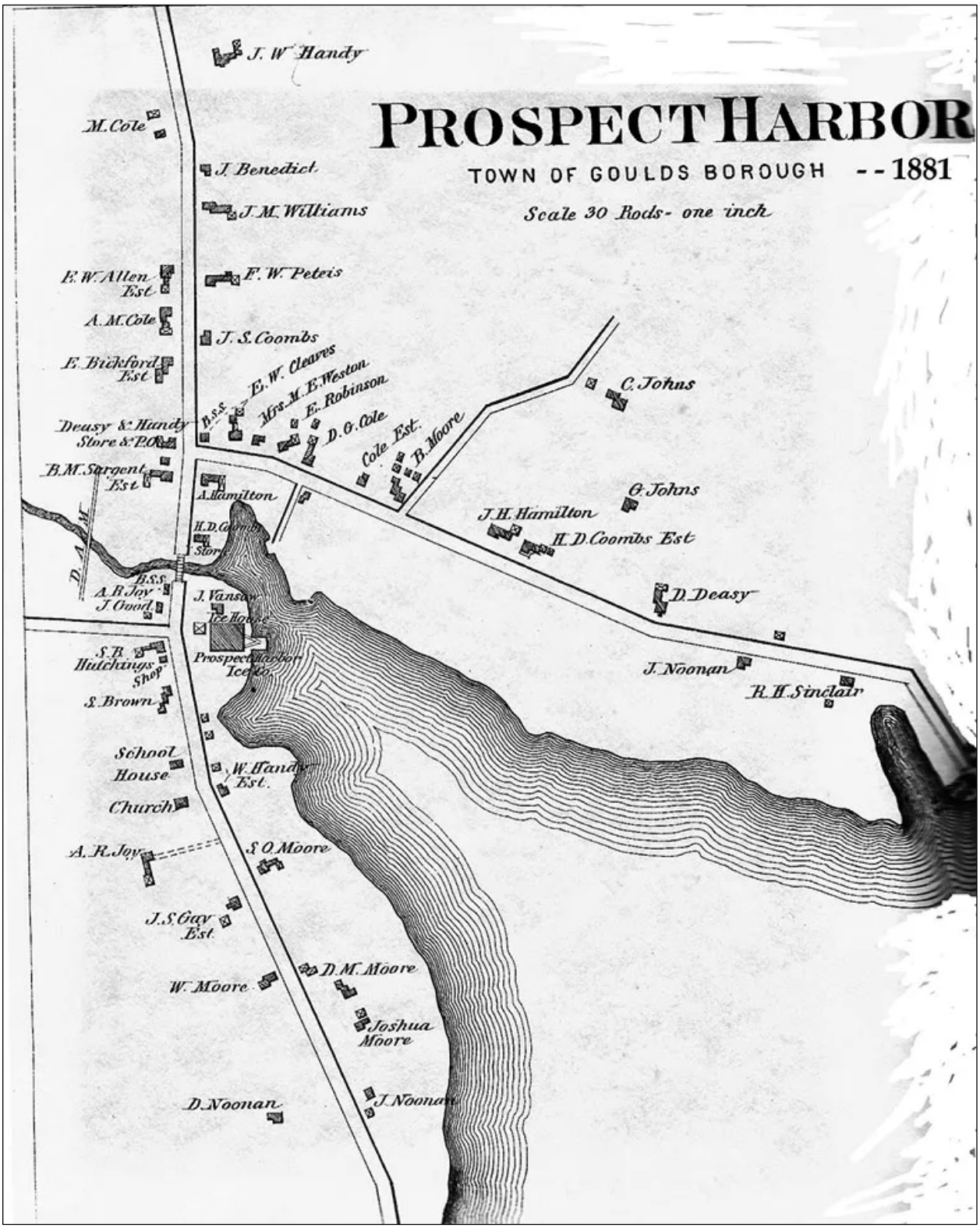
mills were variously powered by water, steam, or tides. The distinction of these villages remains today, one example of how historic patterns of settlement are still evident in the community.

Silver was discovered in 1879 in the West Bay area of Gouldsborough and four mines were soon opened along the vein. One of the mines was operated as a driven shaft at the end of an open cut. Today the shaft of this mine has been filled in, but the cut can still be seen from Guzzle Road. The prosperity from the mining operations was short-lived: By 1881 the population increase of 116 that occurred during the silver boom reversed itself.

In 1887 the Legislature changed the spelling of the town name from Gouldsborough to Gouldsboro. Gouldsboro never had its own high school, instead it paid tuition to other schools for its students. In 1952 Gouldsboro, along with several other towns, built a consolidated high school in East Sullivan. In 1956, a consolidated grammar school was opened on Pond Road. The new grammar school combined the separate village schools and made busing necessary for the first time. In 2009 a new grammar school was opened in Prospect Harbor and the earlier schools closed. In 2022 the original consolidated high school was replaced by a newly constructed school on the same property.

In 1983 the Town built a new Community Center adjacent to the grammar school. The Center replaced the old Town House, which had served for more than a century as a place to conduct Town business and hold Town meetings. The old Town House was subsequently deeded to the Gouldsboro Historical Society (GHS) to serve as a museum devoted to the history of the Town. The GHS has since acquired an additional building in town which was then modified to store digitized Town records dating back to its founding in 1789; all the old handwritten records have now been digitized and cataloged by a team of dedicated volunteers.

Map A-1: Prospect Harbor



Source: Schoodic National Scenic Byway

6 Archaeological and Historic Sites

6.1 Pre- Colonial Archaeological Sites

A common definition of an archaeological site or "site" means a location where there exists material evidence of the past life and culture of human beings. Gouldsboro is fortunate to have two well defined pre-European historic sites. A common archaeological site is a shell heap, or midden. These human generated shell piles offer valuable insight into the lives of New England's early people.

Gouldsboro is home to the Taft Point midden. (Table A-1). Taft Point is one of a few sites in Maine with archaeological evidence of Wabanaki habitation, as well as predecessor peoples dating back to the Archaic period. Archaic Period sites date to 3,000 years ago or older. The hunter gathers of these periods tend to winter along the coast eating shellfish and other marine foods where they went inland during warmer periods following game and fishing opportunities along the numerous rivers and streams. Eventually exposure to the Iroquois peoples from the West spurred the adoption of agriculture, which cushioned seasonal food and resource supplies.

Table A-1: Tally of Taft Point Artifacts

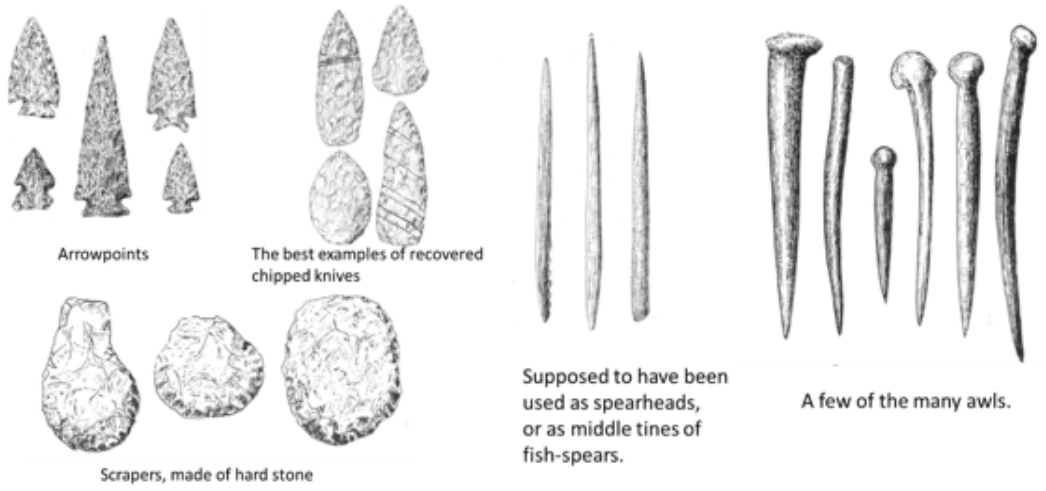
Relative distribution of artifacts at Taft Point	Lowest Horizon of black humus	Lowest Horizon of shells & fire dirt	Upper Horizon of shells & fire dirt
Plummets	59	1	0
Hammerstones	36	5	15
Slate points	12	3	0
Adzes	8	22	7
Grooveless axes	2	8	7
Knives			
large	11	5	1
small	13	18	12
Arrowheads			
straight stemmed	23	1	0
notched	21	52	43
Scrapers			
large	19	7	0
small	13	63	44
Projectile points (stone)	8	10	0
Drills	3	9	6
Bodkins	0	21	6
Needles	0	3	6
Awls	3	10	20
Projectile points (bone)	2	0	0
Harpoons			
large	11	2	2
small	0	16	7
(moose and deer bone)	0	4	0
Flakers (antler)	6	9	3
Beaver teeth (artificially sharpened)	27	53	38
Bone beads	7	0	0
Stone ornaments	8	1	0
Pottery	0	35%	65%

Source: Abbe Museum

Gouldsboro is also home to the Jones Cove Shell-Heap located in West Gouldsboro. The Jones cove midden provides an excellent example of a Wabanaki related midden. An archaeological dig at Jones Cove midden was undertaken in 1928.

Several interesting features were exhibited. It was plain to be seen that the surface of the ground upon which the shells were piled was uneven and that the hollows, particularly, were well filled with very dark dirt in which could be detected ashes, charcoal, crumbling shells, disintegrating bone fragments, and occasional stone arrow points scrapers, and "flint" chips. No bone tools were found in this bottom stratum. Fire-blackened stones, arranged in a crescent or maybe a circle, told of an old-time fireplace as old at least as old as the beginning of the shell-heap which covered it. Several other fireplaces were unearthed during the digging, and evidence of fires—charcoal and calcined bones and shells—were not uncommon in various parts of the heap (Abbe Museum).

Figure A-1: Tools Founds at the Jones Cove Site



Source: The Jones Cove Shell-Heap at West, Gouldsboro, Maine, Walter B. Smith, Sherman Publishing Co., Bar Harbor, Maine (1929)

Figure A-2: Items found at the Jones Cove Midden (Abbe Museum)

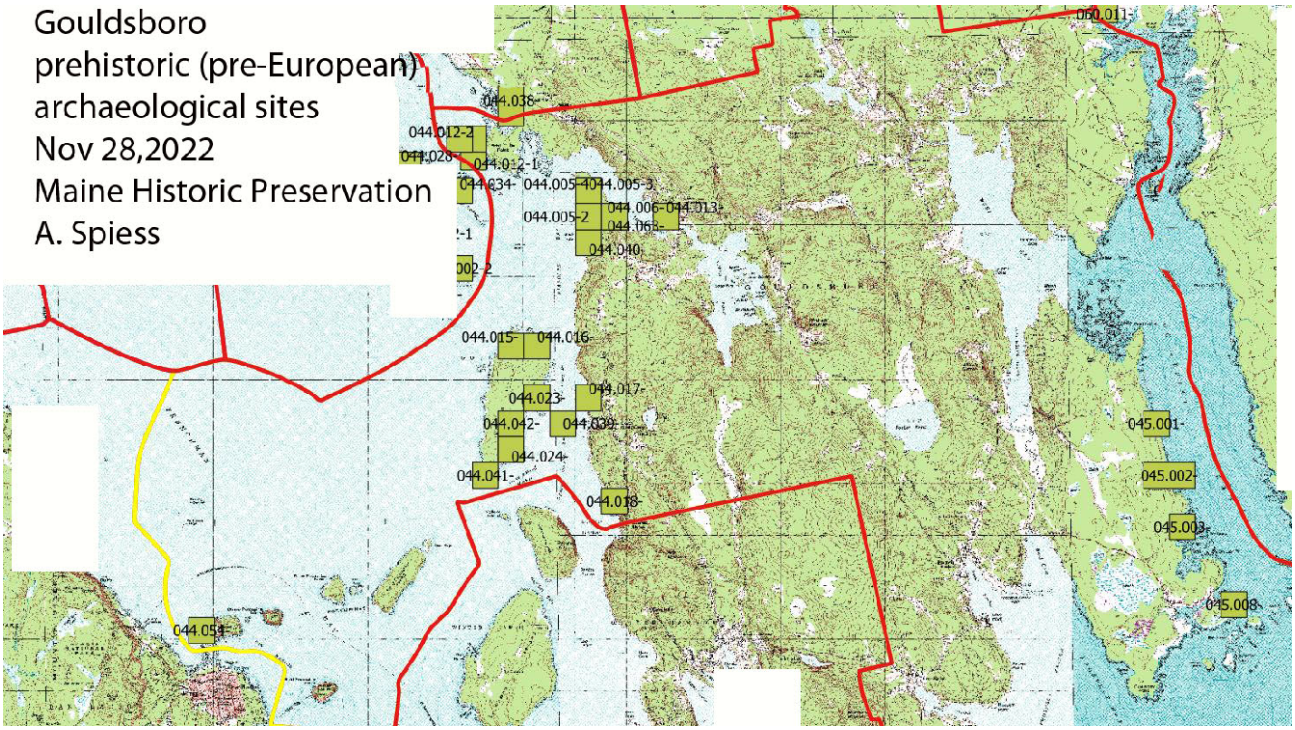


Source: Abbe Museum

6.2 Official Historic Sites

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) has been very active identifying historic and prehistoric sites (see Map A-2). The term prehistoric refers to sites which pre-date written history. MHPC has researched many sites including early Native-American sites. All these sites are along the Gouldsboro shoreline. The artifacts recovered during the digs have been removed to the Abbe Museum for display and safe storage.

Map A-2: Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites Gouldsboro



Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Table A-2 identifies what was found at each of the sites in Map A-2. MHPC recommends that additional surveys for significant pre-historic sites continue, especially in the Prospect Harbor and Birch Harbor areas.

Table A-2: Listing of MHPC Known Prehistoric Sites Gouldsboro

Site Number	Type
044.005-1	Retouched flake & flakes from test pit. Core on beach
044.005-2	Flakes & bone from test pits
044.005-3	Flakes, fishbone, mammal bone, charcoal.
044.005-4	Numerous flakes and bone, especially fishbone
044.006	Stone tools, bone tools, grindstone, fauna, ceramic
044.012-1	Stone & bone tools, grindstone, fauna, ceramic.
044.012-2	
044.012-3	
044.013	Stone & bone tools, grindstone, fauna, ceramic, scrapper
044.015	No cultural remains. Rich in shell incl. mussel.
044.016	2 proj. pt frags, potsherds, bone & variety of shell
044.017	Proj. point, stemless w/basal thinning, fishbone, flakes
044.018	One flake
044.023	Site could not be located
044.024	Midden on small island, one of pair
044.039	None
044.040	Ceramic period stemmed biface (Smith PC). Many flakes
044.041	None
044.042	None
044.043	1 pp frag (tri w basal thinning), 1HS, flakes in bank
044.044	
044.054	
044.055	
044.063	Quarry reduction debitage
045.001	
045.002	
045.003	Thin deposit of shell
045.008	Midden almost destroyed by house construction

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Gouldsboro also has many post-European settlement archeological sites. **Error! Reference source not found.** lists those sites MHPC deems important.

Table A-3: Summary of Historic Archaeological Sites, Gouldsboro

Site Number	Name	Type
ME173-001	Ash's Point Fort	Not Historic Site
ME173-002	"Wreath"	Wreck, bark
ME173-003	"Waldron Holmes"	Wreck, schooner
ME173-004	"Jane Ingram"	Wreck, schooner
ME173-005	"Castilian"	Wreck, schooner
ME173-006	"Helena"	Wreck, vessel
ME173-007	"Hamilton"	unidentified wreck, schooner
ME173-008	"E.T. Russell"	Wreck, gas screw

Site Number	Name	Type
ME173-009	"Thetis"	Wreck, oil screw
ME173-010	"William G. Edie"	Wreck, schooner
ME173-011	"Wawenock"	Wreck, gas screw
ME173-012	"Louis A. Surette"	Wreck, schooner
ME173-013	Ash's Point Quarry	Quarry, granite
ME173-014	Schieffelin Point boat	Unidentified wreck, boat
ME173-015	Schieffelin Point barn	Outbuilding, barn
ME-173-016	Schieffelin Point water tower	Water tower
ME173-017	Schieffelin Point camp?	Domestic, camp
ME173-018	I. Tracy/General David Cobb (?) house and farmstead	Domestic
ME173-019	Dike/Marsh Road	Dike
ME173-020	C. C. Perry (?) Dam	Dam
ME173-021	cellar	Domestic
ME173-022	George Foss	Domestic
ME173-023	Samuel Wood	Domestic
ME173-024	Smith	Domestic
ME173-025	Samuel Wood	Outbuilding
ME173-026	D. Bunker House	Domestic
ME173-027	Stave Island #6 & #7	Domestic
ME173-028	W. Woods Summer Residence and Fish House	Anglo-American Domestic
ME173-029	Rodick Homestead	Farmstead
ME173-030	Roddick Fish Processing Center	Fish House
ME173-031	Mount Desert Canoe Club	Resort
ME173-032	The Bungalow estate	Domestic, Summer House
ME173-033	Stave Island steam sawmill	Mill, Sawmill
ME173-034	Stave Island tidal sawmill	Mill, Tidal mill
ME173-035	Stave Island shipyard	Shipyard
ME173-036	J. A. Webster	Wreck, Schooner
ME173-037	Providence	Wreck, Schooner
ME173-038	Jones Pond Mills	Mill, Sawmill and Gristmill
ME173-039	Grand Marsh Dike/Road	Dike/road

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 2021

6.3 Historic Buildings

The following properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Prospect Harbor Light Station consists of a conical tower, a detached one-and-a-half-story frame keeper's house built in 1891. In 1905 an oil house was added. The building replaced a lighthouse that was erected in 1850. The keeper's dwelling, also known as Gull Cottage, was severely damaged in an accidental fire in June of 2022. The wooden lighthouse tower itself was unharmed. Restoration work in the cottage's exterior is planned. The U.S. Space Force currently controls the care and activities of the light station since it is located on their property.

Figure A-3: Prospect Harbor Light Station



West Gouldsboro's Union Church, which was erected between 1888-91, is a wooden frame building of unusual architectural character. Its eclectic, highly picturesque composition is particularly noteworthy when studied in the broader context of Maine's church architecture of the 1880s.

Figure A-4: West Gouldsboro Union Church, Route 186



The **West Gouldsboro Village Library** was completed in 1907 and is a one-story, three-bay Tudor Revival style building of handsome design. It features a tall rubble stone foundation that rises to the windowsills, stucco exterior walls and chimney surfaces, and a steeply pitched gable roof framing half-timbered peak. The library stands in a rural location adjacent to the West Gouldsboro Union Church. Ellis Soderholtz contributed to its design and construction.

Figure A-5: Wes t Gouldsboro Village Library, Route 186



Initially constructed about 1902 and enlarged at an indefinite time thereafter, the **Soderholtz cottage** is a rambling one-story masonry and frame building that overlooks Frenchman Bay. It was designed and occupied as a summer residence by Eric Ellis Soderholtz, a noted nineteenth century architectural photographer and twentieth century potter.

Figure A-6: C. E. Soderholtz Cottage, Route 186



6.4 Other Historical Sites

The village of Prospect Harbor is home to what was the last operational sardine cannery in Maine. It is also home to “Big Jim.” Big Jim is a 40-foot-tall sign depicting a Maine fisherman. Big Jim isn’t originally from Prospect Harbor. He was originally erected by the Maine Sardine

Council, first perched on the side of Route 1, just across the state line from New Hampshire just north of the Portsmouth Kittery Bridge over the Piscataqua River in the late 1950's.

It was relocated in the 1980s to the Stinson Sardine Factory. Stinson's added a can of Beach Cliff sardines to the sign. After Stinson's closure, a follow-on owner changed the sardines to a lobster trap. The Stinson man was originally made of wood until the 80's when a major storm hit and the lower half (i.e. the pants) blew off. This iconic 50 plus year old sign is part of Maine's and Gouldsboro's maritime history.

With the 2025 recent purchase of the prior Stinson facility, the new owners are aware of the history of this iconic statue. The latest plan is to ship "Big Jim" to the Penobscot Marine Museum temporarily for repainting and repairs and return him back to Prospect Harbor.

Figure A-7: Big Jim Signs - Prospect Harbor



6.5 Roadside America – Schoodic National Scenic Byway

The National Schoodic Scenic Byway runs from the Town of Hancock on Route 1 through a part of Gouldsboro and the Schoodic Peninsula on Route 186, as far as the town of Prospect Harbor. The Schoodic Peninsula is also home to part of Acadia National Park on the mainland, and covers the southern part of the peninsula which is shared with the town of Winter Harbor

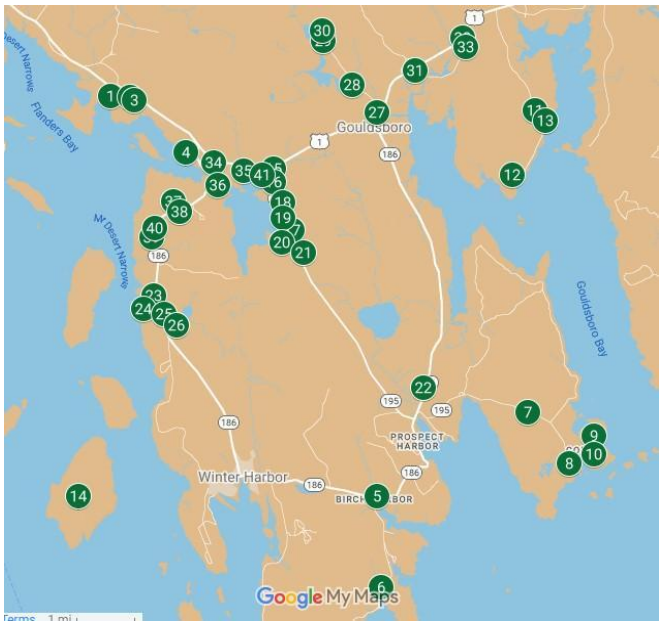
On the Schoodic National Byway, as it runs through Gouldsboro, there are several roadside locations with historic informational signs, as well as several historic buildings.

6.6 Cemeteries

Nothing provides a better glimpse into a town's history than its cemeteries. Gouldsboro has 41 cemeteries providing a stratified view into the former residents of the town.

The Gouldsboro Historical Society has organized an effort to help stabilize the Town's various cemeteries. Additional efforts would be greatly assisted by organized funding.

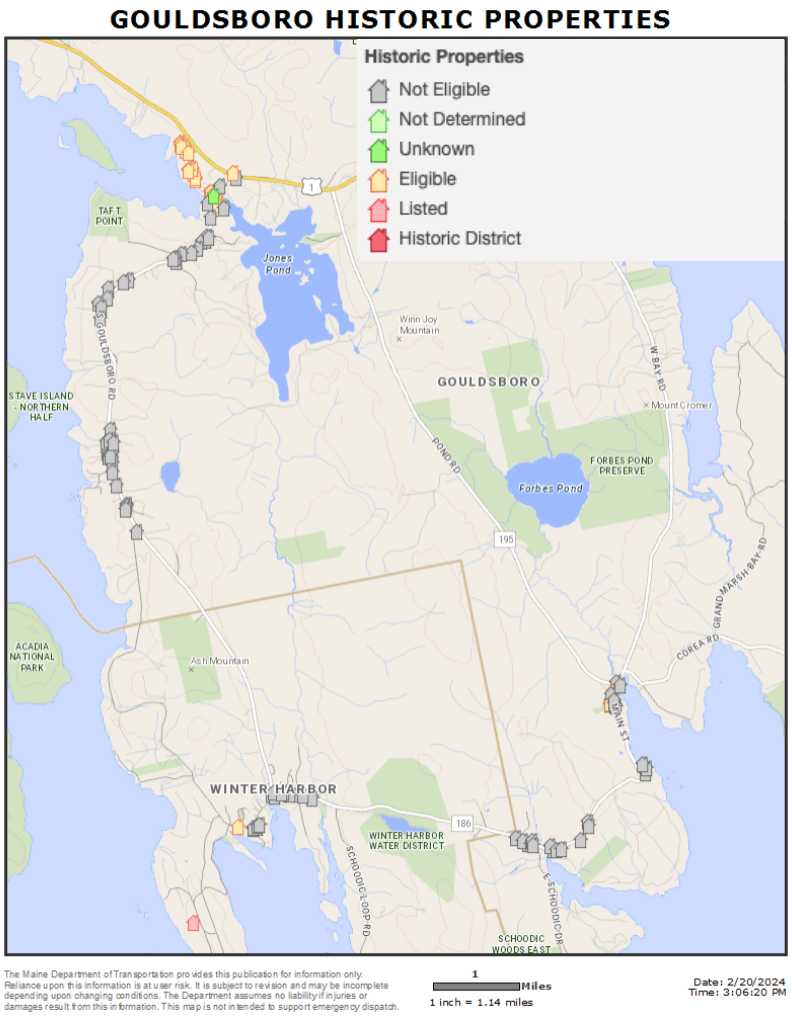
Map A-3:Gouldsboro Cemeteries Listing



Source: Gouldsboro Historical Society

- A.B. Bunker Cemetery (23)
- Alexander Nutter Cemetery (13)
- Alfred Young Cemetery (17)
- Ashe Point Cemetery (35)
- Beech Hill Cemetery (38)
- Bunker Family Monument (1)
- Bunker Memorial Cemetery (26)
- Bunker-Robbins Cemetery (40)
- C. Bunker Cemetery (24)
- Capt. Higgins Monument (6)
- Capt. Joseph & Abigail Stevens (33)
- Corea Cemetery (7)
- Crowley Island Cemetery (10)
- David Sargent Cemetery (25)
- David Young Monument (8)
- Goodwin Cemetery (2)
- Gouldsboro Point Cemetery (11)
- Hill Cemetery (4)
- Hillcrest Cemetery (18)
- Hillside Cemetery (5)
- Hodgkins-Wallace Cemetery (3)
- Ironbound Island Cemetery (14)
- John Pherson Cemetery (41)
- Joy Cemetery (21)
- Lakeview Cemetery (36)
- Mill Pond Cemetery (9)
- Nathan Jones Monuments (15)
- Nathan Martin Cemetery (16)
- Nathaniel Shaw Cemetery (12)
- Orcutt Cemetery (19)
- Prospect Harbor Cemetery (22)
- Robert Ash Cemetery (28)
- Rolfe- Woodworth Cemetery (20)
- Samuel Libby Cemetery (31)
- Sargent Cemetery (39)
- Taft Cemetery (37)
- Thomas Workman Cemetery (32)
- Tracy-Rolfe Cemetery (30)
- West Bay Cemetery (27)
- Whitaker Cemetery (29)
- William Wood Cemetery (34)

Map A-4: Gouldsboro Historic Properties



Source: MaineDOT

7 Threats to Historic and Archaeological Resources

7.1 Threats

Gouldsboro faces the same threat to its historical architecture and archaeological sites as every seaside town in Maine. Moisture, weather, and decay are always constant threats. Further inappropriate repairs, reuse, demolition for other uses, and fire provide a wide spectrum of threats. Restoring or rehabilitating historic buildings to maintain an acceptable historic presentation is expensive and usually out of the reach of most homeowners. It is also possible that owners of parcels or buildings may not know or fully appreciate the historical significance of their holdings.

Historic archaeological sites are also under the constant threat of being plundered or attacked by souvenir hunters. Sea level rise is a rapidly emerging additional threat to the continuity of existing sites and hinders the identification of undiscovered sites. Challenges due to climate

change will continue. The Gouldsboro Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan has begun planning for these challenges. More will be required.

7.2 Assessment of Adequacy of Protection

Gouldsboro has few protections to mitigate threats to historic or archaeological sites. The Planning Board could unknowingly approve a development application. This threat could potentially be minimized if a professional historical survey of the Town could be completed. The language of the town ordinances has been updated but further clarification would probably be prudent. According to MHPC, no professional surveys have been conducted that could further identify potentially significant resources. A future survey should focus on resources associated with the Town's maritime, agriculture, residential and industrial heritage, particularly those connected with the earliest Euro-American settlements of the 17th and 18th centuries.

MHPC also recommends a comprehensive survey be conducted to further identify historic homes or buildings that could qualify for National Register listing. At the present time just four are marked: Prospect Harbor Light Station, West Gouldsboro Union Church, West Gouldsboro Village Library, and the Eric Soderholtz Cottage. It is believed there are many more qualified and they should be identified as a part of the on-going plan to enhance Gouldsboro's historical image. A building's listing on the National Register generally will increase its value.

The best practice, by MHPC for protecting the ancient middens sites, is by not broadcasting the exact locations to people who would not have a scientific interest in visiting a site. Most sites are on private property.

The Gouldsboro Historical Society is a very active membership organization with a governing board of directors. It is housed in the former town offices building where it has created a museum of historical and archeological artifacts important to the town's growth. The museum is open to the public on certain scheduled days. The society presents discussion programs several times a year to the attending public, engaging speakers qualified on varying topics of historical interest.

The society coordinates with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and publishes a periodic newsletter describing topics and discussions of interest. In recent years the Society has continued an extensive program of digitizing historical records and is now the repository for all Gouldsboro's important town documents; this wealth of information is available to the public on its website. Additionally, the Society identifies and reviews sites and structures of historic significance and recommends action plans as funds become available.

8 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Gouldsboro desires to protect its key historical and archaeological resources from incompatible development and undertake measures to assure the long-term enhancement of its historical sites and structures.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeframe**
Incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as required by the State and update the site plan application and ordinances as needed.	Revies and amend, as necessary, land use and subdivision ordinances with this objective as part of the review process. Require developers to take appropriate measures to protect historic and archaeological resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Encourage preservation of key historical, scenic, and archaeological resources.	Review ordinance models that could be applicable in furthering this objective. Seek info from the Historical Society's ongoing work.	Planning Board, Historical Society	1 year
Create a consistent and documented inventory of historic and archaeological sites and structures.	Continue to support funding of the Historical Society to enable it to contract services to undertake this task.	Budget Committee, Historical Society, HCPC	2026 - Ongoing
Identify additional significant archaeological sites and historic properties for inclusion in National Register of Historic Places.	Working from the inventory and in consultation with owners and the State, develop applications for inclusion.	Historical Society	3-6 years
Protect historic and archaeological sites from climate change, including sea level rise, extreme heat, wind, and rain.	Conduct a survey using MHPC template or similar. Partner with Gouldsboro Coastal Resilience Committee	Coast Resilience Committee, Historical Society	2026 – 2028
Create sound measures to protect against disturbing potential archeological sites	Review of Shoreland & Subdivision Ordinance, update as needed	Planning Board	1-3 years

Policies
Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.
Strategies
For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.
Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.

Chapter B: Population & Demographics

1 Purpose

Population is a foundational data set guiding all aspects of a comprehensive plan. The understanding of the town's past, current and future population trends support many other aspects of the plan, such as housing, land-use and transportation. This information will help the town prepare for future municipal expenditures and investments. Specifically, this chapter describes Gouldsboro's population trends, describes how these recent trends relate to and contrast with Hancock County and the State, and reviews expected future population trends.

2 Key Findings & Issues

In 2023, Gouldsboro's median age stood at 56.7 years old, higher than Hancock County's median age of 49.1. Gouldsboro's median income ($61,518) was slightly lower than that of the Hancock County average of $64,149. The school age and workforce age population of Gouldsboro has decreased in proportion to the total population.

Gouldsboro's population had been on the rise with a population of 2,084 in 1998 before it dipped to 1,737 in 2010. It has since steadily declined to 1,703 in 2020 Decennial Census. School enrollment at the Peninsula Elementary School in 2013 was 201 students and has since declined to 136 students in 2021, before the Charles M. Sumner Learning Campus opened.

Sumner Memorial High School enrolled 235 Gouldsboro students in 2013. This number increased to 259 in 2021. The new Charles M. Sumner Learning Campus, which encompasses middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12), welcomed students for the 2022/2023 school year with enrollment at 180 for middle school students and 279 for high school students. This move expectedly dropped enrollment at the elementary school level, even with the introduction of Pre-K classes at each of the four RSU24 elementary schools.

3 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

The town had lost year-round population during the 1990s with household populations increasing by about 9%. The number of school aged children had decreased by about 29%, and there was a 58% increase in those aged 45 to 64. Gouldsboro's population is aging and has been attracting retirees and pre-retirees.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

The public opinion survey received 241 responses. 81% of respondents were year-round residents, meaning that approximately 11.5% of the community responded to the survey. The remaining respondents were seasonal residents. Further respondent demographic information is detailed below in Table B-1.

Table B-1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Age Bracket	**26-40**	**41-55**	**56-70**	**70+**
	5%	10%	18%	45%
Employment Status	**Self employed**	**Retired**	**Employed**	**Unemployed**
	21%	59%	16%	1%
Future Moves Based Over 1-5 years	**Become a year-round resident**	**Move out of town**	**Sell a vacant lot**	**Purchase land in Gouldsboro**
	6%	3%	3%	3%

5 Conditions and Trends

5.1 Historical Data and Projected Trends

Table B-2 shows how Gouldsboro's population has changed decade to decade and how it is expected to change In the next 25 years.

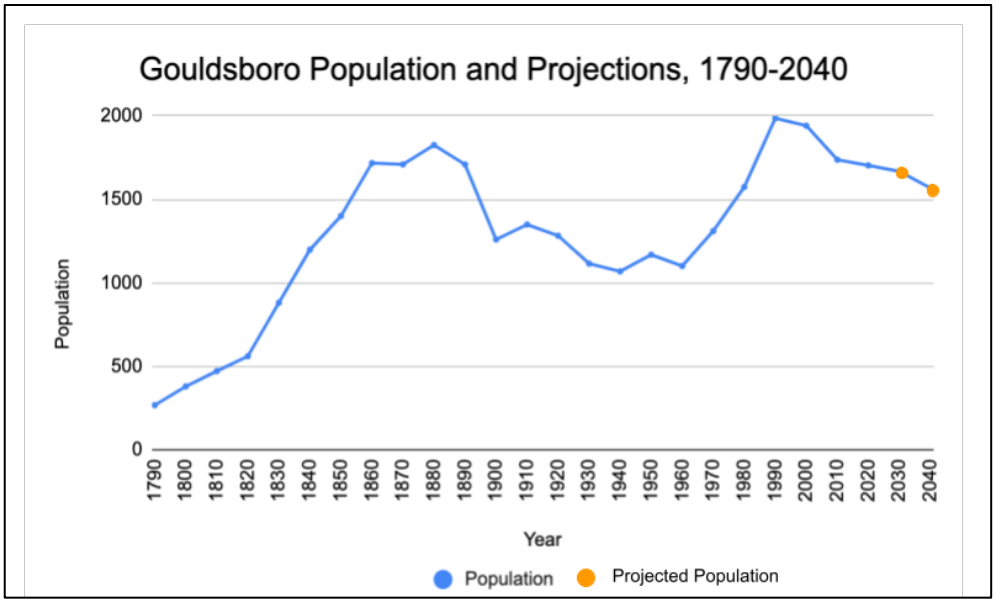
Table B-2: Gouldsboro Historical Population

Year	Population	% Change from Previous Decade
1790	267	-
1800	379	41.9%
1810	471	24.3%
1820	560	18.9%
1830	880	57.1%
1840	1,198	36.1%
1850	1,400	16.9%
1860	1,717	22.6%
1870	1,709	-0.5%
1880	1,825	6.8%
1890	1,709	-6.4%
1900	1,259	-26.3%
1910	1,349	7.1%
1920	1,282	-5.0%
1930	1,115	-13.0%
1940	1,068	-4.2%
1950	1,168	9.4%
1960	1,100	-5.8%
1970	1,310	19.1%
1980	1,574	20.2%
1990	1,986	26.2%
2000	1,941	-2.3%
2010	1,737	-10.5%
2020	1,703	-2.0%
2030	1,667	-2.1%
2040	1,567	-6.0%

Sources: US Decennial Census, Maine State Economist Population Projections

Between 2000 and 2020, the population of Gouldsboro decreased by 238. The numbers suggest that the population is showing a trend of decline (see Figure B-1); this trend is demonstrated further in the projected decrease of the Town's population to 1,567 residents in 2040.

Figure B-1: Historical and Projected Population, 1790-2040



Source: US Decennial Census, Maine State Economist

5.2 Age Characteristics

The Town's population in 2020 stood at 1,703, an approximate 2.0% decline in residents since 2010 and a 12.3% population decline since 2000. As shown in Table B-3, between 2000 and 2020 the 65-84 and 85+ age cohorts were the only groups to increase in population, indicating that the Town's population is also getting older in addition to smaller. Maine State Economist's population projections predict that Gouldsboro will continue to see a steady decline over the next decade; these projections show a decline to 1,667 residents by 2030 (-4.0% from 2020) and a continued decline to 1,567 residents by 2040 (-7.0% from 2030).

Table B-3: Age Distribution Trends

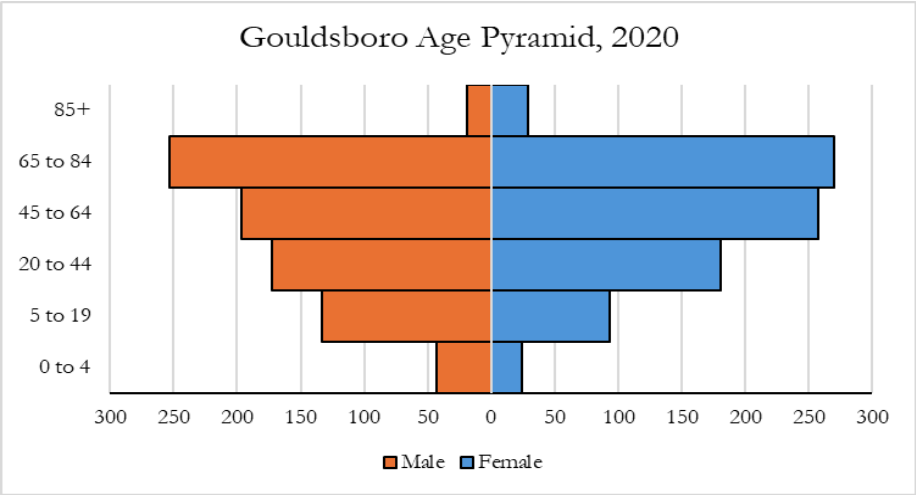
Age Cohort	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2020	% of Total	% Chg, 2010-20	% Chg, 2000-20
0 – 4	88	4.5%	87	5.0%	67	3.9%	-23.0%	-23.9%
5 – 19	342	17.6%	247	14.2%	226	13.3%	-8.5%	-33.9%
20 – 44	619	31.9%	391	22.5%	354	20.8%	-9.5%	-42.8%
45 – 64	556	28.6%	610	35.1%	485	28.5%	-20.5%	-12.8%
65 – 84	301	15.5%	365	21.0%	523	30.7%	43.3%	73.8%
85+	35	1.8%	37	2.1%	48	2.8%	29.7%	37.1%
Total	**1,941**	**100%**	**1,737**	**100%**	**1,703**	**100%**	**-2.0%**	**-12.3%**

Source: Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020

Figure B-2 shows the distribution Gouldsboro's residents by age and gender. For residents in their twenties or younger, males outnumber females. Between ages 20 and 44, the numbers of

people of each gender are similar. Between ages 45 and 65, the number of female residents is substantially greater than the number males. Beyond age 65 the numbers return to being more similar.

Figure B-2: Gouldsboro Age Pyramid, 2020



Source: 2020 Decennial Census

5.3 Household Size

According to 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the average household size in Gouldsboro is 2.2 people. Comparatively, the Town's average household size was 2.25 in 2010 and 2.31 in 2000. The estimated average household size for Hancock County in 2022 was 2.2, the same as it was in 2010 and a decline from 2.31 in 2000.

Time will tell whether this decrease in population or household size will continue. Smaller household sizes are significant as it could mean that more homes will be needed to serve the same number of people.

5.4 Projected Population

There is no reliable way to project population for a small town such as Gouldsboro, as it does not seem to follow the larger regional trends projected for Hancock County. The Maine State Economist has developed year-round population projections for all municipalities in the State through 2040 in 5-year intervals. According to those projections, Gouldsboro's population is expected to continue to decline as seen in Table B-4. Hancock County's population is projected to increase by 2030 before seeing a small decline by 2040; an over 1.1% population increase is projected for the County between 2020 and 2040. The State's population is projected to see an overall population increase of 3.1% by 2040.

Gouldsboro's population has the potential to increase beyond the latest projections as more people seek out areas of lower population density, provided they are able to work remotely or seek a retirement community. Access to broadband/fiber internet could become an important factor for the population of many rural towns.

The year-round population by age figures for Hancock County, Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro are shown on Table B-4. Both Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor are expected to decline in population in the coming years. These estimates represent an estimated 8.0% decrease in Gouldsboro's population between 2020 and 2040. A lack of housing and an aging population may be the most likely cause of the projected declining population.

Table B-4: Projected Population through 2040

	2025	2030	2035	2040
Winter Harbor	425	408	375	340
Gouldsboro	1,691	1,667	1,626	1,567
Hancock County	56,140	56,707	56,698	56,092

Source: Maine State Economist

5.5 Educational Attainment

According to 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Gouldsboro's population has a smaller percentage of residents with bachelor's or graduate degrees than Hancock County or the State as a whole. The census showed that 91.8% percent of Gouldsboro residents aged 25 and older had a high school education or higher and 25.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Comparatively, 95% percent of those 25 and older in Hancock County had a high school education or higher while 36.6% held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table B-5: Educational Attainment: Gouldsboro, Region, County & State (>25 years old)

Degree Type	Gouldsboro		Hancock County		Maine	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Some High School, no diploma	110	8.2%	2,099	5.0%	55,098	5.7%
High School Diploma	611	45.5%	12,976	30.6%	310,778	31.9%
Some College or no degree	173	12.9%	7,870	18.6%	182,869	18.8%
Associate's degree	107	8.0%	3,933	9.3%	109,768	11.3%
Bachelor's degree	218	16.2%	9,856	23.2%	229,764	23.6%
Graduate or Professional Degree	124	9.2%	5,657	13.3%	141,794	14.5%
Total	**1,343**	**100%**	**42,391**	**100%**	**974,973**	**100%**

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5.6 Household Income

Gouldsboro's median household income in 2025 was $61,518 according to ACS 5-Year estimates. This amount was very similar to that of Hancock County ($64,149). The median income of owner-occupied units is noticeably higher than that of renter-occupied units, a trend that is similar at the county level. An estimated 23.7% of town residents earn between $75,000-$99,999; a similar percentage (22.6%) take in a household income between $25,000-$49,999. According to ACS 5-Year estimates 11.5% of Gouldsboro residents had an income below the poverty level in 2022, compared to 10.7% percent of the county as a whole.

Table B-6: Median Household Income

Income Bracket	Percentage of Residents
Less than $24,999	15.1%
$25,000 - $49,999	22.6%
$50,000 - $74,999	17.7%
$75,000 - $99,999	23.7%
$100,000 - $199,000	16.4%
$200,000+	4.5%

Source: 2025 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table B-7: Medan Household Income, Gouldsboro, and Hancock County

Median Household Income	Gouldsboro	Hancock County
All Occupied Housing Units	$63,750	$64,149
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	$76,250	$73,375
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	$45,875	$31,996

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

6 Seasonal Population

The seasonal fluctuation in Gouldsboro has traditionally been significant; like many other coastal Maine communities, short term , Campgrounds, RV Parks, and rental properties such as those found through Airbnb cater to summertime visitors. As the town changes and evolves, the impact of the seasonal population will become more apparent. It is difficult to gauge the increase of summer population as the town does not regulate Airbnb's or private rentals; however, the U.S. Decennial Census offers an indication of how many units are used seasonally. Table B-8 shows that according to the 2020 Decennial Census, 77% of the vacant units in Gouldsboro were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. This is a reduction from 81.6% of the vacant units in 2010 and approximately 92% of the vacant units in 2000, although still a noticeable amount.

If a decline in the Town's population continues as projected, the seasonal bump will become even more noticeable. There has been some concern from residents regarding this growing trend and possible additional strains on town services.

Table B-8: Vacant Units used for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use

	2000	2010	2020
Vacant Units for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	183	230	211
All Other Vacant Units	15	52	63
Total Vacant Units	198	282	274
Percentage of Vacant Units used for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	92.4%	81.6%	77.0%

Source: Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020

7 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Maintain Gouldsboro's rural character and maintain a stable or growing year-round population that includes people of diverse ages and wealth.			
Objective	Strategy	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
Ensure residents can remain in town for as long as possible, well into their senior years.	Support age-in-place policies and investments that provide facilities and services to support this need.	Select Board and/or designee(s)	Ongoing
Promote Gouldsboro as a place to live and actively seek out new residents and young families.	Work with local tourism and development agencies to reach a broad audience.	Select Board and/or designee(s)	Ongoing
Develop a year-to-year understanding of population changes in Gouldsboro.	Regularly review ACS and Census data, along with local sources of data to monitor population fluctuations	Select Board, Planning Board, HCPC	Ongoing
Ensure that all Gouldsboro residents have affordable access to the Internet and can use it to meet basic economic, health, and safety needs.	Monitor ongoing affordability of available Internet access options. Ensure that all residents have affordable opportunities to increase their Internet skills.	Peninsula Broadband Committee,	Immediate and ongoing, as needed and feasible
Promote childcare and early childcare education opportunities.	Work with local businesses, nonprofits, and community partners to explore childcare opportunities for residents with young children.	Select Board and/or designee(s), School Representatives	Ongoing

Policies
To support growth of Gouldsboro's year-round population with special attention to families with children.
Strategies
Track population changes with attention to age distribution.
Continue to support local educational opportunities.
Ensure that broadband access is available and affordable.

Chapter C: Economy

1 Purpose

An understanding of past, current and future potential trends in the local and regional economy is essential for assessing the town's future needs. Employment patterns will change due to factors such as the following: increasing numbers of at-home workers and telecommuters; changes in the region's employment opportunities; and changes retail service. As a result of these changes, transportation, telecommunication, and energy infrastructure will all be impacted and require adequate planning. Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes employment trends in Gouldsboro;
- Describes the local and regional economy; and
- Discusses the likely future economic activity and market changes that may impact Gouldsboro.

2 Key Findings & Issues

Self-employment continues to be an important component of Gouldsboro's economy. According to a University of Maine Report in 2012, *Profiles of 16 Eastern Maine Fishing Communities,* the self-employment rate was 18%. The 2022 ACS self-employment percentage was 28%. Though no accurate figures are available for Gouldsboro currently, the 2023 Census for Hancock County lists self-employment at 14.6%. Gouldsboro has a significant percentage of self-employed residents primarily in natural resource-based jobs.

Unemployment rates have been rising in recent years and are consistently higher than both the town of Winter Harbor and Hancock County. Other working residents must travel outside of Gouldsboro for employment as there are only roughly 12-15 businesses in Gouldsboro's that hire for employment.

The lack of public water and sewer, the cost of solid waste disposal, and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on roads are among other public facility and infrastructure needs that must be further addressed. It will also be important to support the marketing of marine products and help to ensure that existing marine-based businesses remain competitive. The long-term impact that climate change has on fisheries and marine-based industries remains a concern.

2.1 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

Gouldsboro had a higher proportion of persons employed in natural resource-based jobs than the county, but the percentage was declining likely due to a decline in the fishing industry at that time.

Unemployment rates had increased since the closure of the Navy facilities in 2002 and were higher than both the county and Town of Winter Harbor averages. Self-employment was an important part of the economy with about 25% of the labor force being self-employed.

2.2 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

Survey takers responded to the question "What type of development would you like to see in Gouldsboro during the next 10 years?" There was a notable amount of "yes" responses to more economic-related development such as restaurants and commercial trade, service, or retail businesses.

Table C-1: What type of development would you like to see in the next 10 years?

Survey Answer Choices	Yes	No
Development of any kind	32.1%	67.9%
Commercial (trade/service/retail)	75.7%	24.3%
Inns, Bed & Breakfasts, Hotels	67.0%	33.0%
Light Industry	71.0%	29.0%
Medical	81.7%	18.3%
Restaurants	85.2%	14.9%

Providing local jobs is one of the top priorities for many residents, with 89.5% of respondents believing it is important or very important to keep established business and industry in Gouldsboro. There is also significant support for promoting a strong economy that enhances quality of life.

Table C-2: Please rate the following economic goals for the Town?

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
Promote a strong economy that enhances quality of life.	43.1%	38.9%	13.0%	4.2%	0.8%
Create quality employment and opportunities for business ownership.	35.3%	41.1%	17.0%	4.6%	2.1%
Attract new businesses to town.	24.3%	36.4%	24.7%	11.7%	2.9%
Keep established businesses and industries in Gouldsboro.	62.6%	26.9%	7.6%	2.5%	0.4%

The impact of increased conversion of private homes to short-term rentals affects the local economy in terms of increased tourists as well as decreasing the housing available for potential workers. Sixty-two- point-one percent (62.1%) of survey respondents do not think the town needs to enact an ordinance limiting short-term rentals like the one in Bar Harbor. But the impact will need to continue to be monitored, particularly in the most popular locations like Corea where there are many tourists but few nearby businesses to supply their needs.

3 Recent Employment Trends

3.1 Employment & Unemployment

Gouldsboro's total civilian labor force (employed persons over 16 years of age) has declined roughly 17% between 2000 and 2022. This represents a much more substantial decrease than

Hancock County as a whole, which saw an approximate 1.5% decrease in this same period; the Town's 2022 count is comparable to the 1990 total civilian labor force, which was 680. Gouldsboro's unemployment rate in 2022 was slightly higher than that of Hancock County and consistent with most of the other towns in the same geographical area.

Table C-3: Gouldsboro, Hancock County, and Surrounding Area Employment Trends, 2022

	Gouldsboro	Winter Harbor	Sullivan	Sorrento	Hancock County
Civilian Labor Force	681	231	619	121	28,408
Employed	654	221	593	118	27,417
Unemployed	27	10	26	3	991
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	4.3%	4.2%	2.5%	3.5%

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research, and Information

Gouldsboro has historically had a high percentage of self-employed residents compared to Hancock County as a whole. According to 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, approximately 28.0% of Gouldsboro's civilian workforce was self-employed in their own unincorporated business, in contrast with 14.0% in all of Hancock County. This reflects the importance of self-employed individuals in fishing, construction, and small (and often home-based) businesses to the local economy. This high-level of initiative in the local labor force should be recognized in any economic development strategies. It should also be noted that in 1980, 31% of the labor force was self-employed in Gouldsboro. There was speculation that the decline in interceding decades might have been due to the decline in the fishing industry, although the resurgence of a higher proportion of self-employed residents may indicate ties to rebounding fisheries.

3.2 Employment by Sector

Table C-4 compares employment by industry sector for Gouldsboro and Hancock County. There is a significantly higher proportion of persons employed in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industry in Gouldsboro (22.8%) than in Hancock County as a whole (6.7%). This is indicative of the importance of natural resource-based employment to the local economy. It also represents a notable change from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, which reflected the education, healthcare, and social services sector as holding the single highest proportion of any jobs in Gouldsboro. These three workforce categories now comprise the second highest percentage of the Town's workforce (13%). The 2005 Comprehensive Plan note that local school consolidation (due to the decrease in enrollment resulting from the Navy base closure) likely drove down the number of education-related jobs.

Table C-4: Employment by Industry

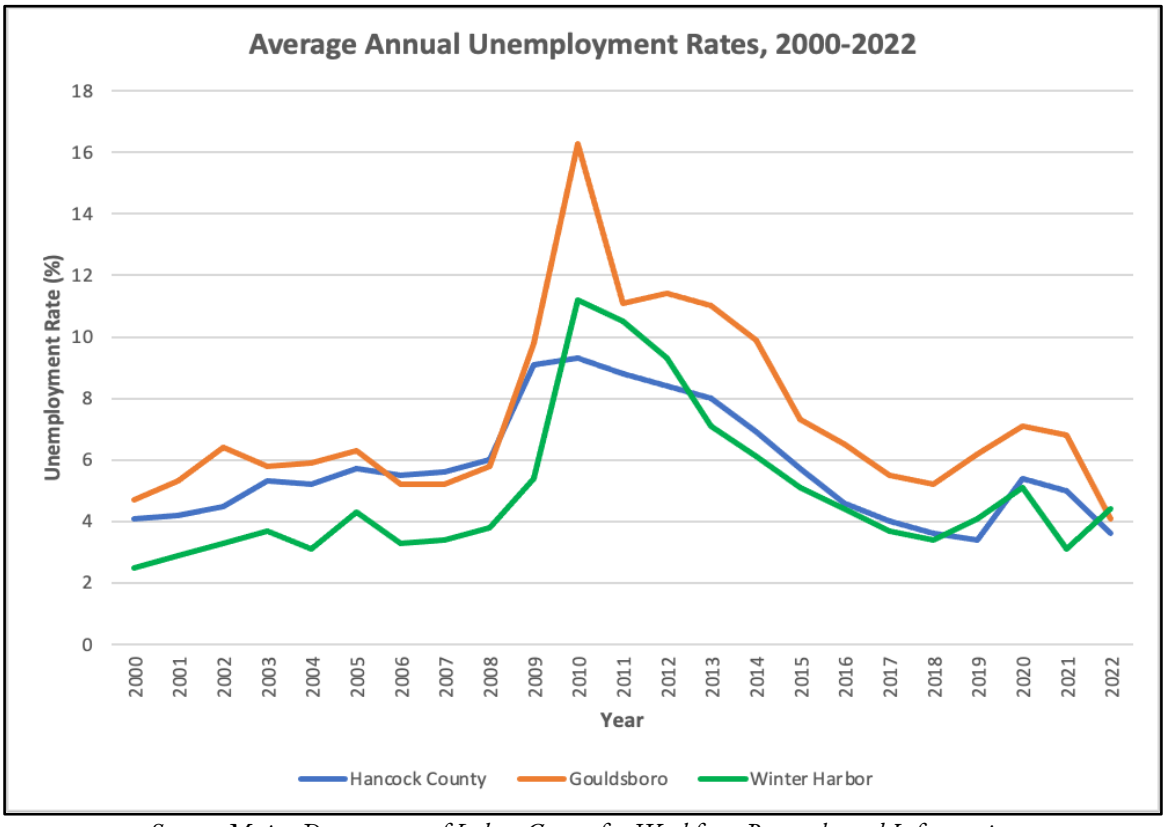
Industry	Gouldsboro		Hancock County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Mining	152	22.8%	1,882	6.7%
Construction	83	12.4%	2,312	8.3%
Manufacturing	62	9.3%	1,588	5.7%
Wholesale trade	21	3.1%	557	2.0%
Retail trade	27	4.0%	3,560	12.7%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	24	3.6%	1,272	4.5%
Information	0	0.0%	368	1.3%

Industry	Gouldsboro		Hancock County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	43	6.4%	1,478	5.3%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management services	53	7.9%	3,392	12.1%
Educational Services, Healthcare & Social Assistance	87	13.0%	6,969	24.9%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	42	6.3%	2,259	8.1%
Other Services, except Public Administration	55	8.2%	1,418	5.1%
Public Administration	19	2.8%	951	3.4%
Total	668	100%	28,006	100%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Average unemployment rates are shown in Figure C-1 for Gouldsboro, Winter Harbor and Hancock County as a whole. These data illustrate a gradual decline in the unemployment rate following the recession in the late 2000s until the rate increased towards the end of the 2010s, evident even before the employment effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also show that Gouldsboro maintains a consistently higher unemployment rate than Winter Harbor and Hancock County as a whole.

Figure C-1: Average Annual Unemployment Rate: Gouldsboro, Winter Harbor and Hancock County, 2000-2022



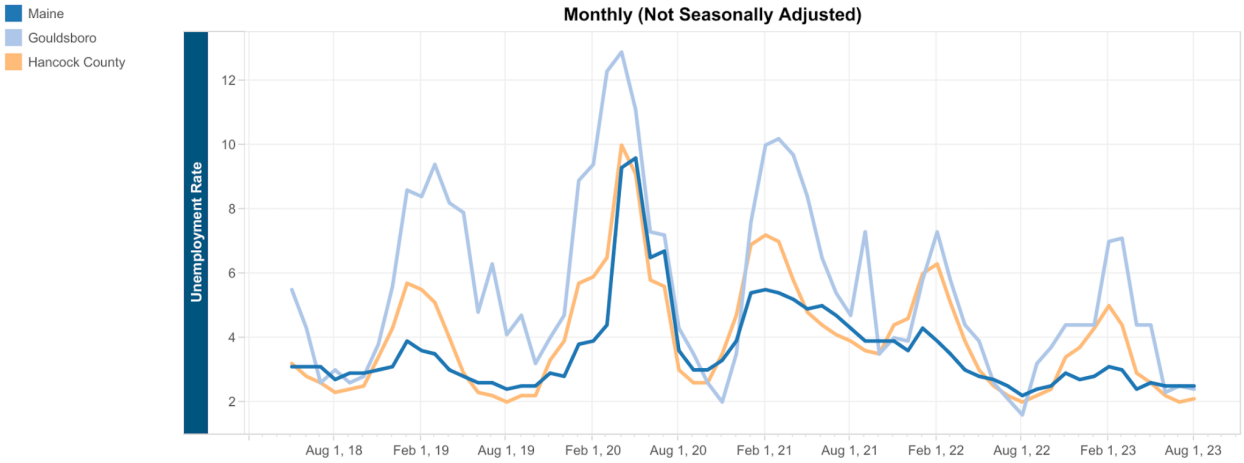
Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research, and Information

Figure C-2 compares seasonal unemployment rates for Maine, Hancock County and Gouldsboro from August 2018 to August 2023. Overall, unemployment typically rises in the winter and falls

during the summer. For most months during these years, Gouldsboro had a higher unemployment rate than the State or the County; however, with such a small number of people in Gouldsboro, any significant change in seasonal employment will have a greater impact on the overall unemployment rate in Gouldsboro than it will in larger communities.

The Schoodic Peninsula's geographic location brings advantages and disadvantages, but isolation makes it difficult for the area to compete. Geographically the locale offers protection and a distinct identity, but the peninsula's remoteness causes the area to experience a seasonal fluctuation in employment. A significant number of jobs are seasonal summer jobs that are lost during other parts of the year.

Figure C-2: Seasonal Unemployment at the Town, County and State Level, 2018-2023



Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research, and Information

3.3 Commuting Patterns

There is substantial commuting by Gouldsboro residents who work outside the home. The mean travel time for the journey to work increased from 23.7 minutes in 2000 to 34.9 minutes in 2022. An estimated 17.7% of workers traveled 60 or more minutes to work. The mean travel time in 2022 was 10 minutes longer than the 24.6 minutes for Hancock County as a whole.

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan predated the full closing of the Navy facilities, and it was assumed at that time that residents would be commuting in the future unless the Town were to undertake an aggressive economic development policy. The data suggests that there has been a significant increase in commute time since the Navy facilities closure. Gouldsboro is among the towns in Hancock County furthest from the larger hiring economy of Ellsworth.

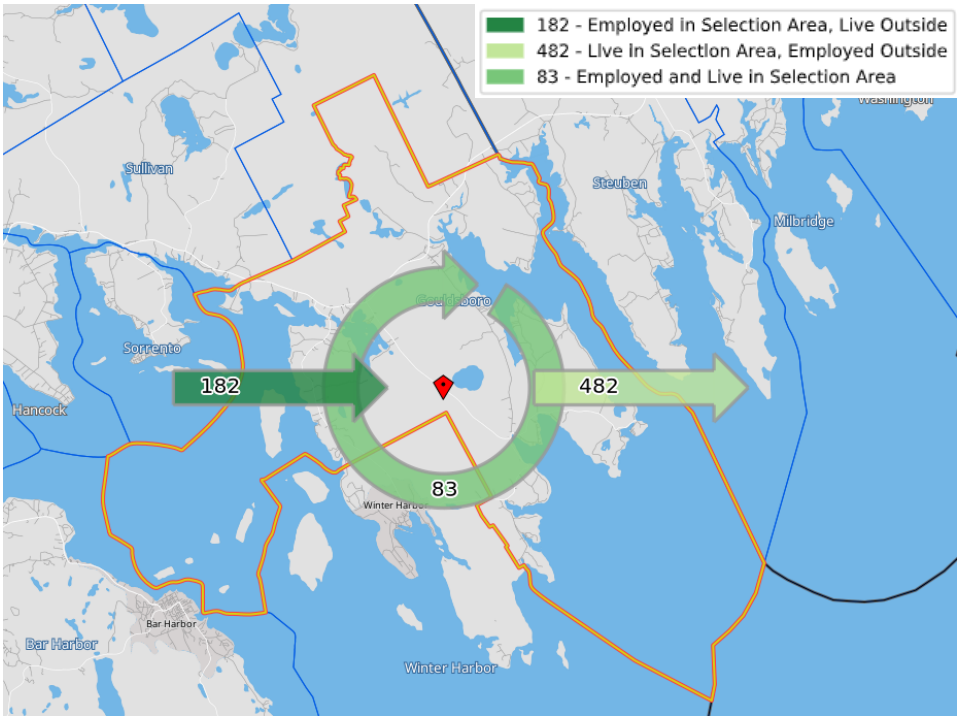
Commuting in and out of Gouldsboro involves people who might:

- Live outside of Gouldsboro and commute into Gouldsboro to work.
- Live in Gouldsboro and commute out of Gouldsboro to work.
- Live in Gouldsboro and commute to work in Gouldsboro.

As shown in Map C-1, the 2021 U.S. Census “On The Map” data indicate that 68.7% of those employed in Gouldsboro live outside of town limits. Almost 15% of residents stay in town for

work, while remaining 85% of Gouldsboro's working residents commute to areas outside of Gouldsboro for employment.

Map C-1: Gouldsboro Commuter Inflow/Outflow, 2021



Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2021

Table C-5 lists Gouldsboro's largest employers.

Table C-5: Top Employers in Gouldsboro

Employer Name	Employer Size
Eleanor Widener Dixon Clinic	20-49
Peninsula Grade School (RSU 24)	20-49
Bold Coast Seafood	15-20
Elscott Manufacturing	10-19
Springtide Seaweed LLC	10-19
Corea Coop	5-9
Downeast Mexican Takeout	5-9
Maine Coast Rehabilitation Services	5-9
Maine Natural History Observatory	5-9
Offshore Fuel	5-9
One Wing Publishing	5-9
Weaver Trust	5-9
Young's Market	5-9

Source: Maine Department of Labor's Center for Workforce Research and Information; Local phone calls

3.4 Employment and Current Economic Activity

Recently, there has been some new economic activity in Gouldsboro, such as a new upscale RV Campground on West Bay Road. The former Stinson/Maine Fair Trade property was acquired by local entrepreneurs who resold the facility in September 2025 to Bold Coast Seafood, another team of owners and managers native to Gouldsboro. They will open for lobster processing and plan to add crab and scallops. Currently they are providing freezer storage for Wyman Blueberries.

New small businesses, although slow to come to town, bind the community through local ties. Ben & Me Ice Cream has expanded and continues to be a successful addition, as has Seaside Landscaping. So have Watering Cove Studios/US Bells and Mc's Market.

Tourists continue to wander through the villages that make up Gouldsboro; they help new and established businesses along with seasonal rentals. Adding more small businesses would offer more options. Elsa's Inn, the Bluff House, Acadia's Oceanside Meadows Inn, and the Sunset House Bed & Breakfast offer local lodging. Albee's Shorehouse Cottages was recently purchased and renamed Rest-Ash-Oar. Local campgrounds offer another means of lodging and include West Bay Acadia RV Campground, Acadia East Campground, and the nearby Schoodic Woods Campground in Acadia National Park.

Schoodic Arts for All continues to be a needed presence within the community as well. It has grown from a two-week summer event to a year-round presence, reaching out more to the public with workshops and community events. The Gouldsboro Community Center has seen increased activity with a new committee hosting more community events such as father-daughter dances, Easter egg hunts, family movie nights, craft fairs, community yard sales, and more.

The "work-from-anywhere" professionals who require only a stable and fast internet connection are a new and growing segment of Gouldsboro's economy. Consolidated Communications rolled out its first Fidium Fiber product in early 2025 providing broadband to nearly the whole peninsula. This new segment has the potential to complement one of Gouldsboro's long-established economic mainstays: creative home-based enterprises.

Gouldsboro can build on these recent positive economic developments if it continues to develop and retain a mix of small, year-round businesses that offer a variety of well-paying jobs in the Town or within easy commuting distance. It should also concentrate on preserving important seasonal sources of employment, home occupations and local entrepreneurial activities.

4 Projected Future Employment Opportunities & Regional Issues

Gouldsboro's future economy will depend on a range of factors, including both local and regional demographics as well as changes in climate and technology. It will be important to support the marketing of marine products and help to ensure that existing marine-based businesses remain competitive. Retail and other industries in town that rely on brick-and-mortar storefronts will continue to compete with larger regional centers such as Ellsworth and Milbridge and will likely not be major employers in the future.

The long-term effects of climate change's impact on fisheries and marine-based industries remain to be seen. This diverse sector, whether shellfish or seaweed harvesting, etc., will be impacted by rising sea temperatures and increasing cycles of extreme weather events that may complicate the future of Gouldsboro's local economy.

The Town will also be in competition with other towns and regions that offer fiber optic Internet connectivity as telecommuting increases. The growth of tourism, especially since the opening of Schoodic Woods, has impacted Gouldsboro in terms of increased visitors and an increased demand for goods and services. While this presents an opportunity for tourist-related business, it also strains the Town's resources in other ways. For example, new demand for seasonal and short-term housing makes it more difficult for people who might live and work here to find and afford a place to live. Including Workforce/Affordable housing for future entrepreneurs and for their employees will be important. In addition, the lack of affordable and accessible childcare and early childhood education could also make it more difficult attract new residents and retain current ones.

5 Analysis

5.1 Historical Perspective

Between 1800 and 1900, shipping and shipbuilding became major industries in Gouldsboro. At the time, Gouldsboro was a stop on the Shore Stage Line but by 1900 steamboat and railway service became available seven miles away at Hancock. The "Bar Harbor Express" rail line ended its run at the Waukeag Ferry dock. The ferry serviced the Frenchman Bay area.

As a result of an uneven coastline, Gouldsboro developed into many historically separate fishing villages, summer colonies and communities. Each of the villages generally had its own grammar school, church, general store, a mill and a post office. Some villages had inns and livery stables for travelers. Traveling salesmen included itinerant dentists, photographers, peddlers, artists, and theatrical troupes. The occupations of the village inhabitants included farmers, fishermen, lumbermen, carpenters, shipbuilders, seafarers, and tradesmen. Coastal freighters supplied stores with year-round goods. Sawmills provided barrel staves and long lumber, and gristmills produced flour. The mills were variously powered by water, steam, or tides.

5.2 Local and Regional Economic Development Plans

Gouldsboro is located along the Schoodic National Scenic Byway. The Byway offers both residents and visitors a visual and recreational experience and an opportunity to contribute to the local economy. A Corridor Management Plan was first written for the Byway in 2000 to establish goals for infrastructure improvements, leveraging local resources and to maintain the quality of experience. The Plan includes various strategies for promoting and utilizing not only the economic assets along the Byway, but throughout the larger Schoodic region. Unofficial updates were made to the Plan in 2023.

No other local or regional economic development plans have been created in the last five years. In 2019, the State released "Maine 2020-2029 Economic Development Strategy, A Focus on Talent and Innovation," which was revised in 2024. The Town finished a housing needs

assessment by an outside consultant in July 2025, which highlighted the need for more affordable year-round units.

5.3 Attention to Gouldsboro's Working Waterfront

Over the past years, Gouldsboro has begun exploring approaches to zoning that encourage and protect small-scale working waterfront development. Gouldsboro should continue this process, including consideration of where new use of such approaches might encourage new working waterfront development instead of coastal residential development.

5.4 Village Centers

Gouldsboro's historical context provided for moderately dense habitation in the villages. The town has many historically separate fishing villages, summer colonies and communities including Birch Harbor, Prospect Harbor, South Gouldsboro, West Gouldsboro, Summer Harbor, Wonsqueak Harbor, Bunker's Harbor, Chicken Mill, Jones Pond, Westbay and Corea. The distinction of these villages remains today. Through the years, these villages have seen a decline in resources located within their centers as they have been forced to band together for economic reasons. While it is possible to take measures to improve the attractiveness of Gouldsboro's villages, the challenges of addressing the lack of public sewer and water system remain.

5.5 Areas Appropriate for Commercial or Industrial Development

The Town's Future Land Use map allows commercial and industrial development in select areas of the town. Industrial development is permitted in the upper northwest portion of Gouldsboro, north of Route 1 and south of Ashville Road, as well as in a separate area north of Route 1 and south of West Bay Pond.

Land allowing commercial development has a slightly larger footprint. This includes an area in the upper northeast portion of Gouldsboro, on both sides of Route 1 east of Chicken Mill Stream; on parcels of land along both sides of Route 1 east and west of the village of West Gouldsboro; and in an additional area along Route 1 and east of Jones Pond.

5.6 Adequacy of Existing Public Facilities to Support Economic Development

Gouldsboro does not have public water or sewer infrastructure in any of its villages. This limits the immediate potential for economic development in the various villages and service areas of the town. There will also be continued concerns with the ability to dispose of solid waste and recycling, and the costs associated with doing so, which could increase as additional businesses and services are developed. Police, fire and EMS services and medical facilities are deemed adequate to support economic and residential development. The condition of town roads is not of immediate concern; however, safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists are concerns that need to be addressed, and the lack thereof limits mobility opportunities for travelers.

5.7 Local and Regional Economic Development Incentives

The Town does not currently have any economic development incentives or economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts.

5.8 Use of Community Assets for Economic Growth

The Town has several existing businesses, services, recreational opportunities, and neighboring attractions and facilities that can be used as assets for economic growth. Preserves, natural areas, and the proximity to the Schoodic portion of Acadia National Park are a significant draw, and their location within or near the town can lead to additional time and money spent within town limits. Local inns and campgrounds encourage visitors to spend more than just a day. The Dorcas Library, Gouldsboro Historical Center, and local shops and restaurants are among additional locations for recreation, entertainment and revenue generation. The overall rural and coastal nature of the town itself is attractive to visitors and those that decide to call Gouldsboro home for part of or the entirety of the year. Developing a marketing strategy to promote the Town's assets, organizing community events at these locations, and partnering with the Schoodic Chamber of Commerce can be methods for further utilizing these assets and attractions for economic growth.

5.9 Defined Economic Priorities

Above, Section 3.4 summarized key characteristics of Gouldsboro's current economy, and Section 4 summarized projections for future employment opportunities from a local and regional perspective. Analysis of these summaries suggests attention to the following objectives:

- Support current businesses and attract new business opportunities.
- Encourage and support home-based businesses.
- Maintain an active, economically productive working waterfront.
- Support and encourage workforce housing.
- Prepare Gouldsboro for climate change impacts to fisheries and other potentially impacted businesses.

6 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Gouldsboro will work to support local economic enterprises and attract new residents to the area to retain as much economic capital in the town as possible.			
Objective	**Strategies**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Support current businesses and attract new business opportunities through actively researching and pursuing grants, loans, and other financial support, and identifying appropriate capital investment projects in Town.	Actively pursue Community Development Block Grant, USDA, State, and private sources of funding for applicable capital investments and opportunities.	Select Board, Town Manager	Immediate and ongoing.
	Seek support from non-profit organizations and other sources for part-time or temporary planning staff.	Select Board and/or Town Manager	Ongoing as opportunities emerge
Encourage and support home-based businesses that complement the quiet rural character of the Town.	Review current land-use ordinances, both local and state, to identify potential barriers to home business operations and propose ordinances changes to remove such barriers consistent with other planning policies and objectives.	Planning Board	Ongoing Initial review and recommendations complete in 2027.
Ensure that that the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Shoreland Zone Map reflect the Town's interest in protecting and developing its working waterfront.	Review the Shoreland Zoning Map to ensure that the locations of the CFMA and "General Development" districts reflect future plans for the Town's working harbors.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Prepare Gouldsboro for climate change impacts to fisheries and other potentially impacted businesses	Address municipal infrastructure vulnerabilities as internal and external funding is available to implement recommendations in Gouldsboro's *Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan* (2022). (See Chapter M: Climate Change Adaptation)	Select Board, Coastal Resilience Committee	Ongoing - continue the work on this objective that began in 2023.

Use regional collaborations and development corporations to grow Gouldsboro's economy and make it more resilient.	Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development and increased resilience.	Town Manager, Planning Board, and other town staff and committees.	Ongoing, including an annual summary and review of coordination activities and outcomes.

Policies
To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.
To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.
To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.
Strategies
If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).
Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.
If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)
Participate in regional economic development planning efforts.

Chapter D: Housing

1 Purpose

Gouldsboro's Comprehensive Plan will address several key housing issues. These include changes in conditions and needs as well as projecting future demands for housing throughout the community, including workforce housing and housing for an aging population. Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes recent trends in Gouldsboro's housing stock and discusses rental and owner housing affordability;
- Projects future housing needs, including short- and long-term housing needs;
- Describes emerging trends such as climate in-migration and increased short term rentals;
- Describes benefits that will accrue to Gouldsboro from a greater supply of available and Workforce/Affordable housing, and;
- Recommends ways to increase the supply of energy-efficient housing for multi-occupational and multi-generational community members.

2 Key Findings and Issues

The number of total housing units increased from 1,329 to 1,426 between 2000 and 2020; however, the number of occupied units decreased by 0.4% over this period. The vacant units were both seasonal and non-seasonal. Gouldsboro continues to be primarily owner-occupied, detached single-family homes.

The affordability of both rental and owner-occupied housing has continued to decline as the cost of purchasing and renting a dwelling has risen beyond the reach of many population groups. Housing costs rose above 30% of household income for many owner and renter households earning less than $35,000. Using Maine Housing's Homeownership Affordability Index, the affordability for owner-occupied housing in Gouldsboro has shifted from "affordable" (2010-2013) to primarily "unaffordable" (2014-2023).

With declining household sizes and an aging population, there is a need for more housing that serves the senior population. An estimated 6-10% increase in year-round affordable rental units would be a benefit to the community and could allow seniors to affordably downsize from their single-family residences thus creating space for younger families and other year-round residents.

3 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

The number of year-round homes had increased by 15% between 1990 and 2000, and the number of second homes increased by 14%. The median household incomes in 2002 were only 58% of the amount needed to afford the median-priced home. Housing affordability for homebuyers was considered a "serious problem." The Plan stated that there could be an

average of 12 new year-round homes and eight second homes built each year between 2000 and 2015.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

Maintaining the rural character of Gouldsboro was important to 95.8% of survey respondents and the necessity for more residential homes was identified as important by 75.8%. Survey results also showed that 46.1% of respondents thought that residential homes should be built anywhere in town, while 31.4% believed they should be built in designated areas.

5 Recent Housing Trends and Analysis

Gouldsboro's total number of housing units increased by 7.4% between 2000 and 2020 (see Table D-1). The number of vacant dwellings increased by nearly 19% in the last two decades, while the number of occupied units went down by 0.4%. The number of year-round homes increased by 15% between 1990 and 2000, a rate that was not replicated in the succeeding decades. Household sizes are decreasing, a trend that could continue given the aging of the town's population.

Table D-1: Change in Housing Units, Gouldsboro, 2000-2020

	2000	2010	2020	% Change, 2000-2010	% Change, 2010-2020	% Change, 2000-2020
Occupied	801	773	798	-3.5%	3.2%	-0.4%
Vacant	528	669	628	26.7%	-6.1%	18.9%
Seasonal	484	562	516	19.3%	-8.2%	9.6%
Non-Seasonal	44	107	112	91.1%	4.7%	100%
Total	1,329	1,442	1,426	8.6%	-1.1%	7.4%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2000, 2010, 2020

5.1 Housing Unit Type

Table D-2 show that, since 2000, there has been an estimated 12.6% increase in single-family units and a substantial estimated decrease in mobile homes. Overall, there has been an estimated 2.1% increase in total housing units between 2000 and 2022.

Table D-2: Dwelling Unit by Type

	2000		2022		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	% Change, 2000-2022
Single-Family	1,112	83.6%	1,252	92.3%	12.6%
Duplex/Multifamily	40	3.0%	43	3.2%	7.5%
Mobile Home	166	12.5%	62	4.5%	-62.7%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	12	0.09%	0	0%	-100%
Total Units	1,329	100%	1,357	100%	2.1%

Source: 2000 Decennial Census, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5.2 Tenure

The breakdown between rental and owner-occupied year-round housing is shown in Table D-3. According to 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, approximately 86% of occupied-homes were owner-

occupied and nearly 14% were renter-occupied in 2022. This is a lower percentage of rental units than in Hancock County as a whole. Most renter-occupied units are concentrated in the larger, service center communities of the county rather than in small towns such as Gouldsboro. The percentage of units in town that are owner-occupied has increased from 77.7% in 2000 to an estimated 86.4% in 2022.

Table D-3: Tenure of Occupied Year-round Housing

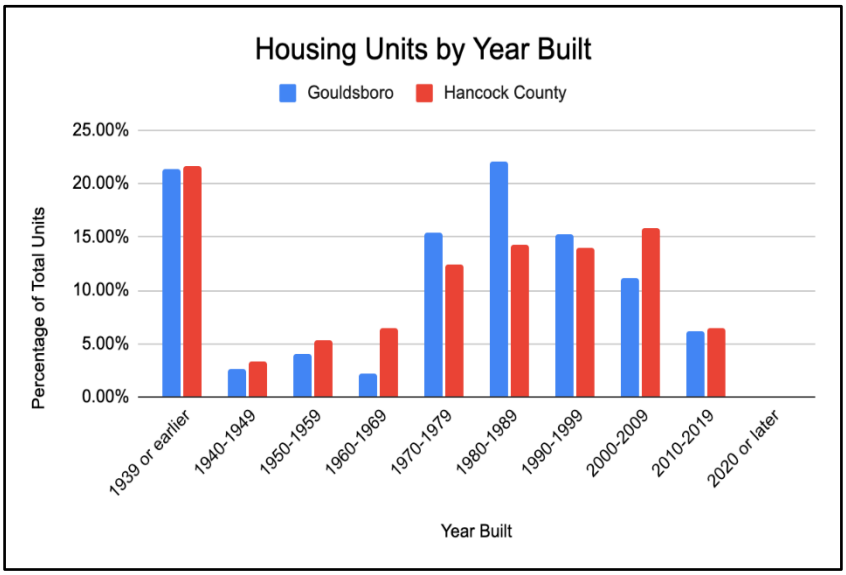
		2000		2010		2022	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Gouldsboro	Renter-Occupied	179	22.3%	122	15.8%	103	13.6%
	Owner-Occupied	622	77.7%	651	84.2%	655	86.4%
	Total Occupied Units	801	100%	773	100%	758	100%
Hancock County	Renter-Occupied	5,332	24.4%	6,202	25.6%	5,249	21.3%
	Owner-Occupied	16,532	75.6%	18,019	74.4%	19,411	78.7%
	Total Occupied Units	21,864	100%	24,221	100%	24,660	100%

Source: 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5.3 Age of Existing Housing Stock

Over 20% of Gouldsboro's housing stock was built prior to 1939. A similar boom in residential development occurred between 1980 and 1989, visualized in figure D-1 below. Approximately 17% of the town's housing stock has been built since 2000, most of that coming between the years 2000-2009.

Figure D-1: Gouldsboro Housing Units Built by Year



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5.4 Seasonal Housing

Table D-4 shows that according to the 2020 Decennial Census, 82.2% of the vacant units in Gouldsboro were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. This is a reduction from 2010 when 84% of the vacant units and from 2000 when approximately 92% of the vacant units

were seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. With such a significant number of vacant units being used seasonally or occasionally, a method for tracking the occupancy of these units could be useful in determining their impact on the availability of year-round residences, changes in the cost of residences, and the rate at which year-round residences are being converted to seasonal properties. To monitor short term rentals, it is recommended that they be registered.

Table D-4: Vacant Units used for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use

	2000	2010	2020
Vacant Units for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	484	562	516
All Other Vacant Units	44	107	112
Total Vacant Units	528	669	628
% of Vacant Units used for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	91.7%	84.0%	82.2%

Source: 2000, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census

5.5 Affordability

In terms of affordability, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition for Workforce/Affordable housing is "housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including utilities". The anecdotally reported experience in Gouldsboro is that housing costs are especially problematic for first-time home buyers and renters, low-paid workers, and individuals no longer in the workforce.

As seen in Table D-5, the median gross rent in Gouldsboro in 2022, according to 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates was $795 per month, compared to the $949 for Hancock County. Over 60% of the rent amounts in Gouldsboro fell into the $500 to $999 per month range, with nearly one quarter between $1,000 and $1,499. The median household income for renter-occupied units in 2022 was $45,875. Since 2022, rents have probably increased.

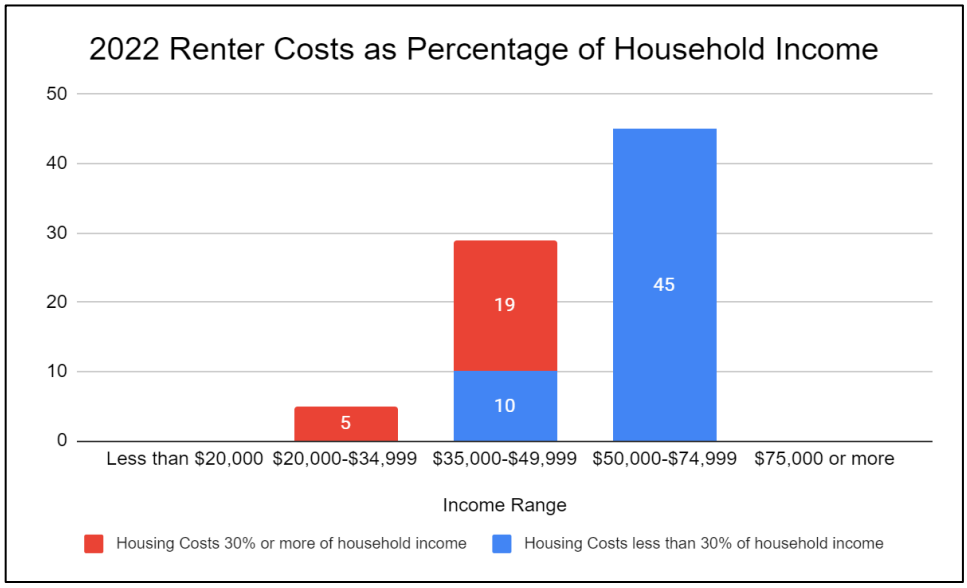
Table D-5: Gross Rent of Renter-Occupied Units, 2022

	Gouldsboro		Hancock County	
Monthly Rent	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
< $500	10	12.7%	891	9.5%
$500 to $999	50	63.3%	5,103	54.3%
$1,000 to $1,499	19	24.0%	3,307	35.2%
$1,500 or more	0	0%	693	7.4%
Total	**79**	**100%**	**9,397**	**100%**
No Cash Rent	24		366	
Median Gross Rent	$795		$949	

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure D-2 below shows that roughly two-thirds of the renters in Gouldsboro in 2022 with household incomes less than $50,000 were paying more than 30% of their income on rent and therefore did not have affordable rental housing. In contrast, all Gouldsboro residents with incomes greater than $50,000 were spending less than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Figure D-2: Gouldsboro Rental Housing Costs



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5.5.1 Value of Owner-Occupied Housing

The value of owner-occupied homes in 2000 and 2022 in Gouldsboro are compared in Table D-6. The data illustrate a trend of rising home values; the median value in Gouldsboro was estimated at $265,400 in 2022, more than double that in 2000. The estimated 2022 median home value in Gouldsboro was slightly higher than that of all of Hancock County ($250,900).

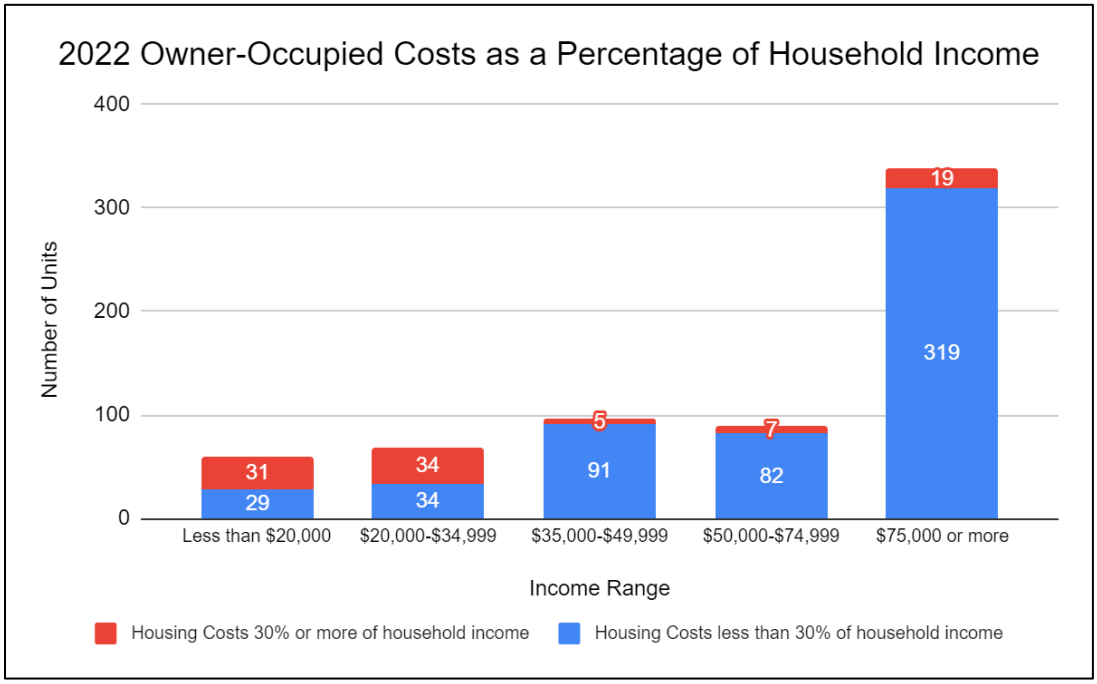
Table D-6: Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units in Gouldsboro, 2000 & 2022

Value	2000		2022	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than $50,000	14	3.6%	19	2.9%
$50,000 to $99,999	183	47.5%	39	6.0%
$100,000 to $149,000	87	22.6%	93	14.2%
$150,000 to $199,000	38	9.9%	119	18.2%
$200,000 to $299,999	39	10.1%	115	17.6%
$300,000 to $499,999	22	5.7%	127	19.4%
$500,000 to $999,999	2	0.5%	117	17.9%
$1,000,000-$1,999,999	0	0.0%	3	0.05%
$2,000,000 or more	0	0.0%	23	3.5%
Total	**385**	**100.0%**	**655**	**100%**
Median Value	$98,600		$265,400	

Source: 2000 Decennial Census; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates indicate that 14.7% of owner-occupied households in Gouldsboro were spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs. These housing costs include mortgage, utilities, property taxes and insurance. Over half (51.2%) of owner-occupied households earning less than $35,000 fell into this category, visualized in Figure D-3. At the county level, an estimated 21.9% of owner-occupied households spent 30% or more of their household income on housing costs in 2022.

Figure D-3: Gouldsboro Homeownership Housing Costs



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Maine Housing uses a "Homeownership Affordability Index" to estimate the housing affordability in the state's cities and towns. This index is based on the ratio of area median home prices to area median household income. An index of 1.0 or more indicates that incomes are sufficient to purchase the median-priced home. Table D-7 shows this index in Gouldsboro since 2010; years shaded in red have an index of less than 1.0 and homeownership was considered unaffordable, while the years shaded blue indicate affordability.

From 2010-2013 median income was higher than the amount required to afford a median-priced home; however, other than in 2016, homes in Gouldsboro have become increasingly unaffordable. In 2023 Gouldsboro had a "Homeowner Affordability Index" of 0.46, as 83.5% of Gouldsboro households were unable to afford the median-priced home in town. This is based on a median 2023 income of $67,053 and a median home price of $425,000. The "Homeowner Affordability Index" for Hancock County in 2023 was 0.51, with a countywide median income of $68,056 and a median home price of $405,000.

Table D-7: Gouldsboro Household Homeownership Affordability

Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home (Annual)	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home (Hourly)	Households Unable to Afford Median Home (%)	% of Homes Sold Unaffordable at Median Income	Total Homes Sold
2023	0.46	$425,000	$67,053	$147,242	$193,542	$70.79	83.5%	80.8%	26
2022	0.52	$410,040	$63,201	$122,656	$211,281	$58.97	77.1%	83.3%	36
2021	0.79	$290,250	$56,557	$71,836	$228,515	$34.54	60.2%	71.4%	42
2020	0.88	$274,000	$59,779	$68,049	$240,669	$32.72	59.0%	59.6%	47

Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home (Annual)	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home (Hourly)	Households Unable to Afford Median Home (%)	% of Homes Sold Unaffordable at Median Income	Total Homes Sold
2019	0.93	$225,000	$56,021	$60,443	$208,538	$29.06	55.8%	60.7%	28
2018	0.94	$175,000	$45,988	$49,156	$163,722	$23.63	53.6%	64.0%	25
2017	0.80	$204,950	$43,618	$54,722	$163,363	$26.31	63.1%	60.0%	20
2016	1.22	$150,000	$47,950	$39,366	$182,711	$18.93	37.7%	27.3%	22
2015	0.81	$230,000	$48,085	$59,435	$186,078	$28.57	61.4%	60.0%	20
2014	0.79	$208,250	$43,571	$54,833	$165,477	$26.36	62.2%	59.1%	22
2013	1.29	$127,500	$44,665	$34,491	$165,111	$16.58	41.4%	38.5%	13
2012	1.03	$162,500	$45,809	$44,473	$167,382	$21.38	48.4%	42.9%	14
2011	1.79	$93,500	$46,694	$26,095	$167,308	$12.55	23.3%	35.3%	17
2010	1.03	$150,000	$49,696	$48,304	$154,321	$23.22	48.4%	47.4%	19

Source: Maine Housing

5.6 Other Housing Issues - Substandard Housing

Substandard housing is not a major issue in Gouldsboro. In 2022, there were no households that lacked complete kitchen or plumbing facilities.

Table D-8: Substandard Housing in Gouldsboro, County, & State, 2022

Substandard Housing, Occupied Units	Gouldsboro	Hancock County	Maine
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	0	200	5,553
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0	164	3,314

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5.7 Local Regulations & Workforce/Affordable housing Policies

L.D. 2003, "An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions," generally referred to by its legislative tracking name of L.D. 2003, was signed into law by Governor Mills on April 27, 2022. The goal of the new law was to alleviate housing affordability issues in Maine by increasing housing opportunities. The Town updated its Land Use Ordinance be consistent with L.D. 2003 in 2024.

5.8 Projecting Future Needs

To assess the town's housing needs, the Select Board hired Camoin Associates to conduct an assessment. This 2024 study confirmed that there is more need for affordable workforce, family and senior citizen housing. It found the following:

- The main housing issues are cost and affordability.
- Housing is considered "cost burdened" when the housing costs exceed 30% of income.

- The median home sale price is unaffordable to all Area Medium Income (AMI) levels except those at 150% or more.
- Short term rentals have taken a large percentage of available housing. There is a lack of housing for key local employees.
- Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro need to add 40 units to maintain the current number of working-aged households over the next five years.

Gouldsboro's average household size has seen a decline since 2000, dropping from 2.31 down to an estimated 2.22 in 2022. With declining household sizes and an aging population, there may be a need for more housing that serves the senior population, which could involve building multi-family units. Traditionally, single-family homes have been the predominant housing type in Gouldsboro. The number of duplex and multi-family units has only increased by an estimated three units since 2000. There has been a substantial decrease in the number of mobile homes.

An estimated 6-10% increase in year-round affordable rental units would be a benefit to the community while not putting significant strain on the current infrastructure. Developing this type of housing could allow seniors to affordably downsize from their single-family residences, and in turn open their homes for younger families and other year-round residents.

6 Regional Affordable and Workforce Housing Initiatives

Housing programs and organizations that have been successful in increasing the opportunities for Workforce/Affordable housing have been established in surrounding communities. The Town can use these initiatives as a reference for future decision making, as well as partners for identifying and creating opportunities for affordable living.

- Island Workforce Housing is a non-profit in the Deer Isle/Stonington area. The mission of Island Workforce Housing is to create housing solutions in Deer Isle and Stonington that are permanently affordable to individuals and families working in these communities. Housing for these valued community members is a critical first step in securing the longevity of the economic development and civic health and well-being of the island. As its first project, Island Workforce Housing and the Island Heritage Trust acquired 27.5 acres of land on the Sunset Cross Road. The 13.4 acres upland was used to develop Oliver's Ridge, 10 units of rental housing for the year-round workforce, while the pond buffer (14.1 acres) will be conserved for public use.
- The Washington County Sustainable Housing Work Team prepared a 2014 plan, "A Regional Plan for Sustainable Housing in Washington County" with three objectives: supporting the most effective existing public/private partnerships; developing a better understanding of problems and solutions for an aging population and an aging housing stock; and sponsoring new strategies to create jobs while improving our housing stock and reducing our reliance on increasingly unaffordable ways of staying warm in the winter. This plan and its objectives can be used as guidance to form something similar for the Schoodic Region and/or Hancock County.
- In 1996, Cranberry Isles established a nonprofit Realty Trust to address their Workforce/Affordable housing issues. The Trust accepted federal HUD funds to help

purchase three properties. These properties' occupants must earn less than a maximum income, specified annually by the federal government.

- In Islesboro, another nonprofit organization, Islesboro Affordable Property (IAP), constructed an eight-unit project, the Ruthie James Subdivision. IAP owns the land and residents own the homes. IAP subsequently built and subsidized the sale of a single-family home. All in all, IAP has built or acquired at least 13 homes for rent. Most of its money is raised through private fundraising. Islesboro's comprehensive plan identifies five issues related to housing on the island.

Additionally, with help from the Hancock County Planning Commission, the towns of Gouldsboro, Sullivan and Winter Harbor jointly applied for a Municipal Housing Grant through the Department of Economic and Community Development in March 2024. As part of this application, funds were allocated to further study the development feasibility of a parcel of land adjacent to and east of Route 186 (West Bay Road) in the southern portion of the town. Between 30-40 acres of the parcel, owned by Maine Coast Heritage Trust, have been set aside for transfer to the town for housing development consideration with the remaining acreage to be conserved.

Other potential projects within this application include the promotion of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and home-sharing as Workforce/Affordable housing options, and the formation of a region-wide housing forum that would create the infrastructure for regular conversations and idea sharing about housing-related issues in the Schoodic Area. The Town is still waiting to hear the status of this application.

Also, in 2025, the Town amended its Land Use ordinance to make ADUs permittable in Gouldsboro, in compliance with state housing law.

7 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Encourage and promote affordable and workforce housing.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeframe**
Develop workforce housing.	Explore collaborations with neighboring towns to build workforce housing.	Town Manager, Select Board	Ongoing
Increase the supply of workforce housing.	Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade to be workforce housing.	Select Board, Planning Board	Ongoing
	Examine options within defined growth areas for manufactured homes, mobile homes, tiny homes and apartments.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Identify opportunities for regional collaboration.	Participate in regional coalitions, grants, and projects.	Town manager or designee.	Ongoing

GOAL: To determine a balanced approach to monitoring and, if necessary, managing short-term rental housing that meets workforce, year-round, and seasonal needs			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeframe**
Develop policies to monitor and, if deemed necessary, manage short- term rental housing.	Examine options for registering and, in other ways, gathering information about short term rental properties.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Collaborate with neighboring towns to identify effective strategies to manage short-term rental housing	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Track change in housing types, including short-term rentals, and start long & short-term rental data collection	Planning Board or its designee	Ongoing
	Identify policy options and report to Select Board.	Planning Board	Ongoing

Policies
To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality workforce housing, including rental housing.
To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
Strategies
Maintain, enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of workforce housing.
Create or continue to support a community workforce housing committee and/or regional workforce housing coalition.
Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).
Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade to be workforce housing.

Chapter E: Transportation

1 Purpose

A municipal transportation system that is accessible to people of all mobility levels is essential to building a thriving community; one where economic vitality, public health and social cohesion can flourish. The town's transportation infrastructure represents one of the most significant and costly systems to maintain, particularly given the vulnerabilities posed by climate change.

This section will discuss and analyze the major transportation issues facing Gouldsboro. Specifically, this chapter will:

- Identify and profile Gouldsboro's roadway and transportation systems in terms of extent, condition, and use
- Assess the adequacy of these systems to handle current and projected demands
- Consider transportation improvements that will be needed to adequately accommodate the demands generated by projected increases in development within Gouldsboro and Hancock County.
- Account for areas where sustainable transportation alternatives and long-term cost savings in infrastructure management may exist.

2 Key Findings & Issues

The rate of traffic has increased since the last plan was prepared, due mostly to the rise in the seasonal and tourist population. Due to the large size of the town (approximately 99 square miles), of which roughly 46.2 square miles is land, road maintenance costs remain a key issue. Identified problem areas include the intersections of Clinic Road and Route 1, Pond Road (SR 195) and Route 1, East Schoodic Drive, and Route 186, as well as areas on Corea Road and in Birch Harbor that are without shoulders or space to widen the roads. Safety is a concern for pedestrians and cyclists.

Gouldsboro does not presently face any serious traffic congestion issues; however, parking is inadequate in some places for larger events. The public transportation system for Gouldsboro is minimal, both during the summer season and year-round. There is no public system in place for transportation off the peninsula. Access to ride sharing services such as Uber and Lyft for shopping, medical appointments, and other recreation is very limited.

3 Key Findings & Issues from 2005 Plan

Gouldsboro did not face any major traffic issues in 2005. The 2005 plan noted no issues related to congestion. Road mileage has increased since 2005 due to private roadways being accepted as town-way roads, which increased road maintenance costs for Gouldsboro and the tax burden on residents.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

Results from the 2022 public opinion survey showed general satisfaction with the Town's maintenance of snow removal and sanding. The main transportation concern of the survey was regarding the safety of bike paths around town; over 40% said that the safety of bicycling on town roads is poor. When asked about the "planning and development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to improve the safety of these users" 40.4% of respondents ranked this as very important while 20.8% ranked it important. Along similar lines of thinking, over 50% ranked "planning and working toward creating a multi-use recreational trail system that connects with a larger network within the region" as either very important or important.

Less than half of the respondents believe that the condition of town roads is good, while 33.5% think they are in fair condition and 18.0% believe they are in poor condition.

5 Gouldsboro's Roads

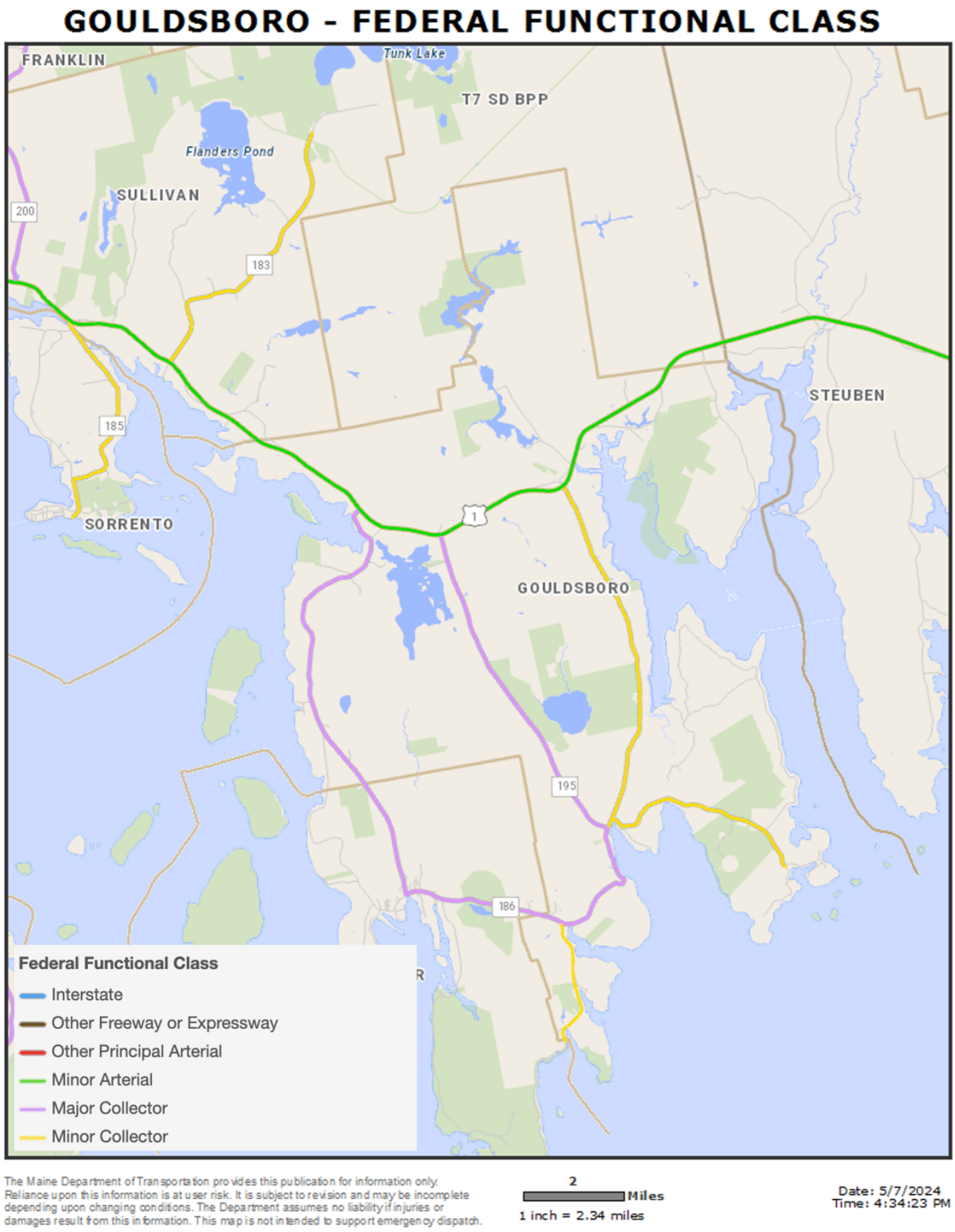
5.1 Classification of Roads

The Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT) has classification systems for all roads in the state based on the principle that the roads that serve primarily regional or statewide needs should be the State's responsibility and roads that serve primarily local needs should be a local responsibility.

The first of the two primary systems for classifying public roadway infrastructure is **Federal Functional Class** (FFC). FFC describes the functionality and geographical characteristics of public streets and highways based on the character of service they are intended to provide. This classification reflects how the highway provides the ability for transportation. The information below provides characteristics of FFC classes (arterial, collector, and local roads) as well as the number of miles of each class in Gouldsboro. These roads are visualized in Map E-1.

- Arterials – Roads that connect major settlements and are designed for high-speed travel with limited access points. Routes 1 and Route 95 are examples of arterial roads. Gouldsboro has one arterial road, Route 1 (7.28 miles)
- Collectors – Roads that support traffic within a town or group of small towns or disconnected neighborhoods. They are designed to accommodate moderate speeds, 35 – 45 mph, and a moderate traffic volume. Routes 186 and 195 are examples of collectors. Gouldsboro has 22.33 miles of collector roads.
- Local – Roads that are lightly traveled and comprise the network between residential areas and residential areas and downtowns. They are often narrower than the previous two road types and accommodate speeds under 35 mph. Most roads in Gouldsboro are classified as local roads. Development considerations are often influenced by road classification, especially when considering where to locate new development and what types. As Gouldsboro has mostly local roads, of which roughly 24.12 miles are maintained by the town, heavy industry and shipping would not be well suited to the travel patterns and character of the town on many of these roads. Gouldsboro has approximately 27 miles of town roads.

Map E-1: Federal Functional Classifications for Gouldsboro Roads



- Private Roads – Private roads are defined as roads that serve three or more dwellings. Currently the town of Gouldsboro has approximately 109 of these private roads. Roads serving two or fewer dwellings are defined as driveways, of which Gouldsboro has approximately 62. That would make approximately 117 roads in Gouldsboro that the town is not responsible for plowing or maintaining.

The second system for classifying public roadways is the **State Highway System**.

The State Highway System describes the type of service that a public street and highway is expected to provide, as well as the responsibility for maintenance. Table E-1: State Highway Classification Characteristics and Roadway Miles by Class displays State Highway System characteristics and roadway miles under this classification. Private roads are not classified in the FFC or State Highway System.

Table E-1: State Highway Classification Characteristics and Roadway Miles by Class

State Highway Classification	Description	Examples in Gouldsboro	Responsibility	Miles in Gouldsboro	% of Total Miles
State Highway	Connected routes through the State that primarily serve intra- and interstate traffic	U.S. Highway 1	Maine DOT is responsible for year-round maintenance	7.28	12.86
State Aid Highway	Connect local roads to the State Highway System and generally serve intercounty traffic movement	State Route 186, State Route 195	State aid roads are usually maintained by Maine DOT in the summer and by municipalities in the winter.	22.33	39.85
Town Ways	All other public roads not included in the State classification system; provide access to adjacent land		Municipalities or counties	27	47.72
Private	Roads that serve three or more dwellings. Roads serving two or fewer dwellings are defined as driveways			24	42.42
Total				**56.61**	**100%**

5.2 Road Maintenance Plan

In addition to local roads, the Town provides winter maintenance for an additional 30 miles of State Roads. These roads are Pond Road, Main Street, South Gouldsboro Road, West Bay Road, Corea Road, and East Schoodic Drive. Gouldsboro continues to struggle with maintaining roadways, specifically paving of roadways. The continually increasing high cost of paving makes it difficult to pave more than approximately a mile of roadway annually and impossible to get ahead (see Table E-2) This has been a topic of conversation at both the Town's Budget Committee meetings and Selectboard meetings. The town has approved increasing the paving budget from $150,000 in 2020 to $400,000 in 2025 with the understanding that this will be reflected in an increase in taxes, and plans to add from 1 mile to 2.5 miles annually.

Table E-2: Fiscal Year Paving Budgeting Over Time (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 24/25	FY 25/26
Paving Reserve	100K	100K	100K	50K	80K	150K	150K	200K	330K	300K	400K

MaineDOT manages several state routes in Gouldsboro, including U.S. 1, Route 186, and Route 195. In 2023, MaineDOT efforts in Gouldsboro and neighboring towns included:

- 2.60 tons of patch applied
- 51.9 Shoulder miles of mowing
- 4 emergency event responses
- 42.2 miles of striping applied
- 34.2 shoulder miles of sweeping
- 8 drainage structures cleaned
- 393.4 linear feet of brush removed
- 447 linear feet of backhoe ditching
- 261 linear feet of shoulder rebuilt
- 27 minor signs installed or maintained
- 3 drainage structures installed or replaced
- 40 linear feet of guardrail or fence maintained

5.3 Highway Corridor Priority

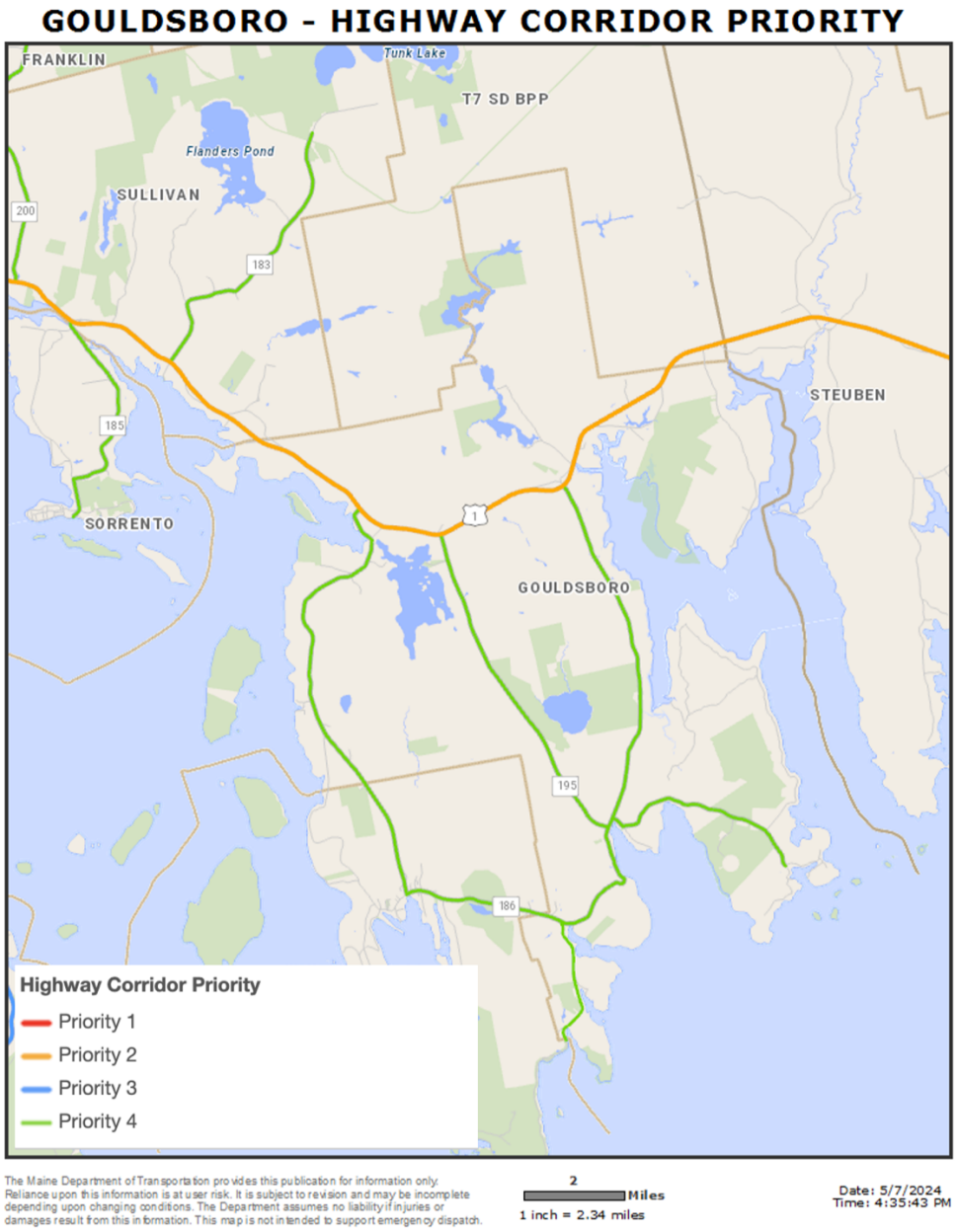
Another way that Maine DOT categorizes roads is its Highways Asset Management methodology. It represents an effort by Maine DOT to provide a fair, structured framework to prioritize programs and projects. There are two parts—the Highway Corridor Priority (HCP) and the Customer Service Level (CSL).

The first part of the method, the **Highway Corridor Priority (HCP)**, categorizes Maine's highway assets into five levels of priorities:

- Priority 1: Key arterials not found in Gouldsboro.
- Priority 2: High priority, non-NHS arterials. U.S. Highway 1 falls into this category.
- Priority 3: Remaining arterials and high-volume major collector highways. There are no Priority 3 roads in Gouldsboro.
- Priority 4: Remainder of the major and minor collector highways, and state aid system, in which road responsibilities are shared between the state and municipalities. State Routes 186 and 195 fall into this category.
- Priority 5: Local roads that are the year-round responsibility of Gouldsboro.

Map E-2 shows the HCP classifications for Gouldsboro's roads.

Map E-2: Highway Corridor Priority Classifications for Gouldsboro's Roads



5.4 Customer Service Level

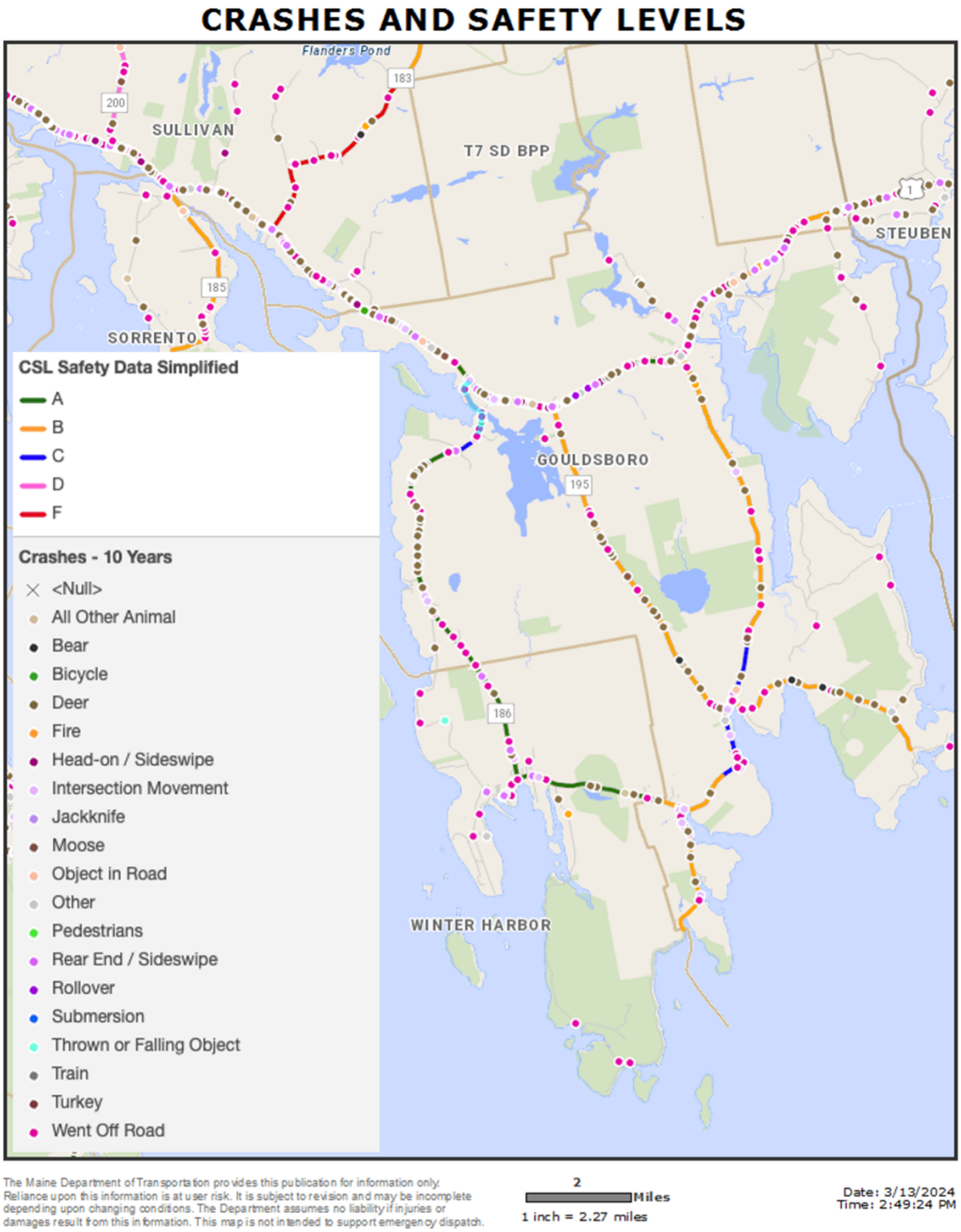
The second part of the method is determining the **Customer Service Level (CSL)** that measures Maine DOT managed highway assets (Priority 1-5) in three areas: (1) Safety, (2) Condition and (3) Serviceability, and grades them similar to a report card (A – F).

5.4.1 Safety

The factors that are included in the Safety evaluation are crash history, paved roadway width, pavement rutting, and bridge reliability. Map E-3 shows crash locations in Gouldsboro for the past 10 years and roadway safety levels. Many of the crashes on Route 1 involved animals, primarily deer, and going off the road was also common. Most of Gouldsboro's State roads are

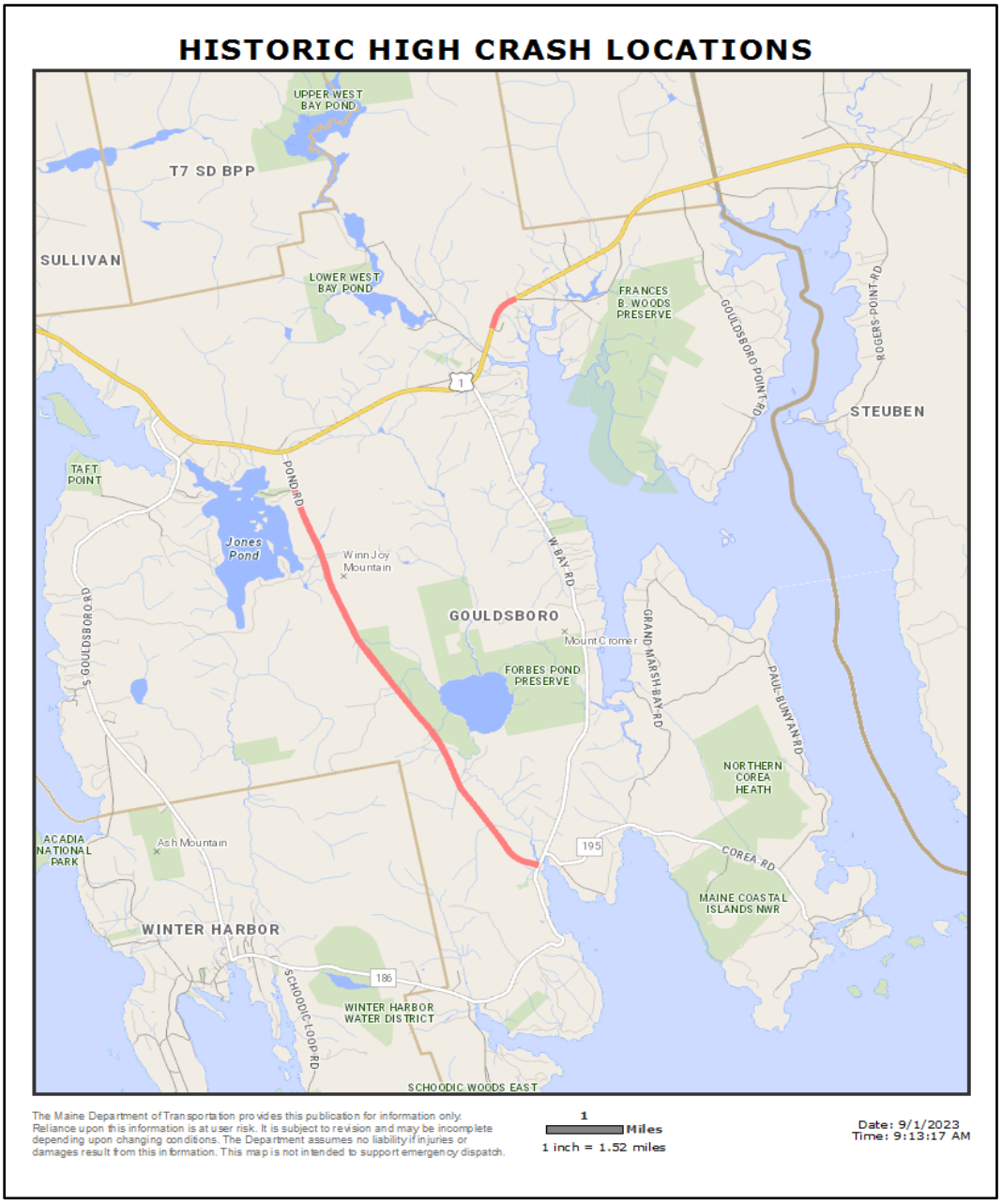
graded either an A or B for safety. Portions of Route 186 on South Gouldsboro Road and West Bay Road have a safety grade of C due to crash history and pavement width.

Map E-3: Crashes and Safety Levels



Another way that transportation engineers evaluate roadway safety is by looking at High Crash Locations (HCLs) and High Crash Location Segments. A High Crash Location is one that has a minimum of eight accidents over a three-year period and a higher-than-average rate of accidents when compared with similar intersections across the state. Zero HCLs were identified in Gouldsboro between 2021-2023. Historic HCLs are shown in Map E-4. The two locations are State Route 195, with 15 crashes;, and U.S. 1 between Chicken Mill Pond Road and West Bay Road, with eight crashes.

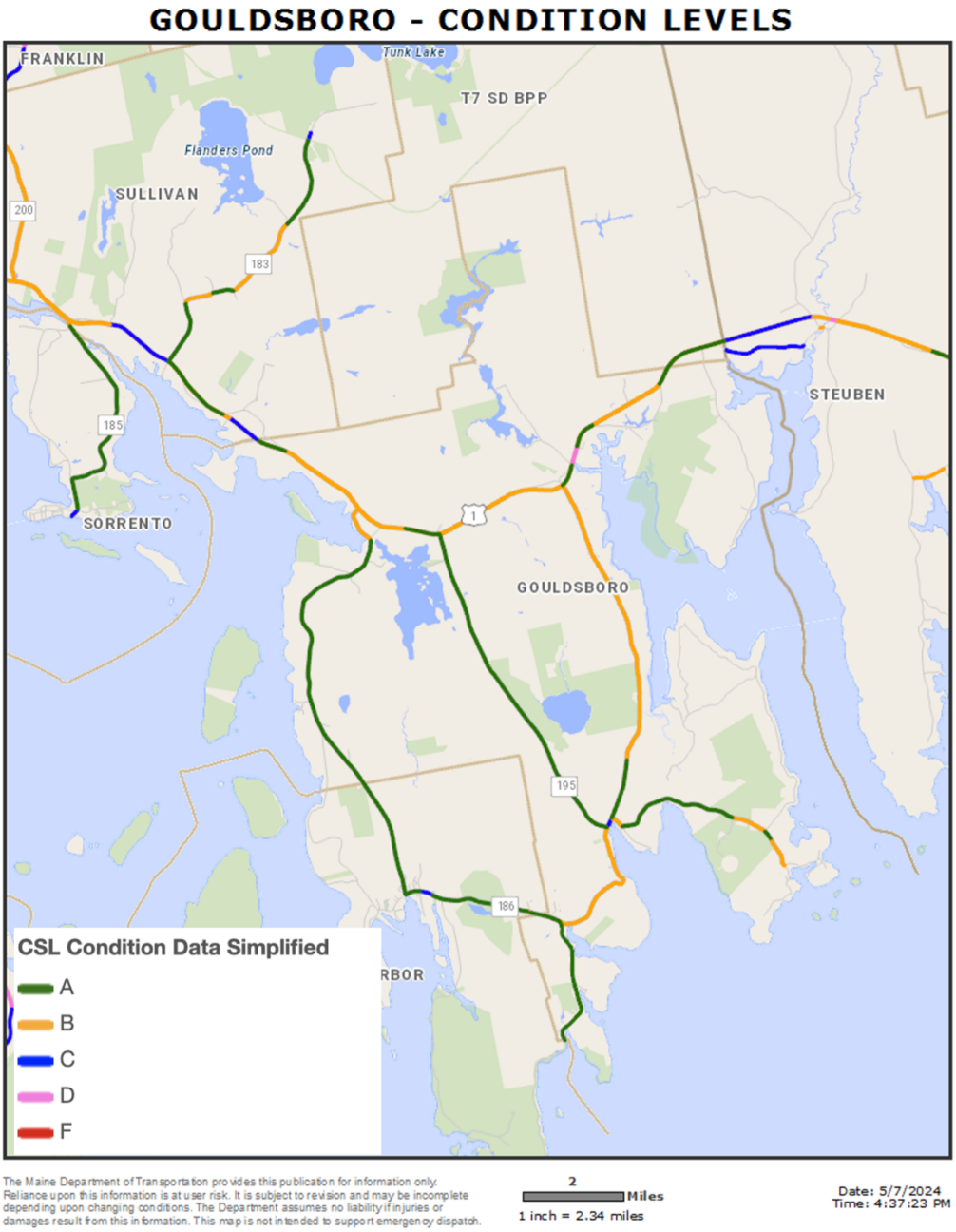
Map E-4: Historic Crash Locations



5.4.2 Condition

The second part of Maine DOT's Customer Service Level evaluation is Condition. This assessment is based on ride quality, pavement condition, roadway strength, and bridge conditions. As seen in Map E-5, Gouldsboro's arterial roadway, Route 1, is classified by the Maine DOT as being in Condition A. State Route 195/Corea Rd is classified as being in Condition C due to ride quality. Several portions of Route 1 are classified as being in Condition C due to ride quality and pavement conditions.

Map E-5: Gouldsboro Condition Levels

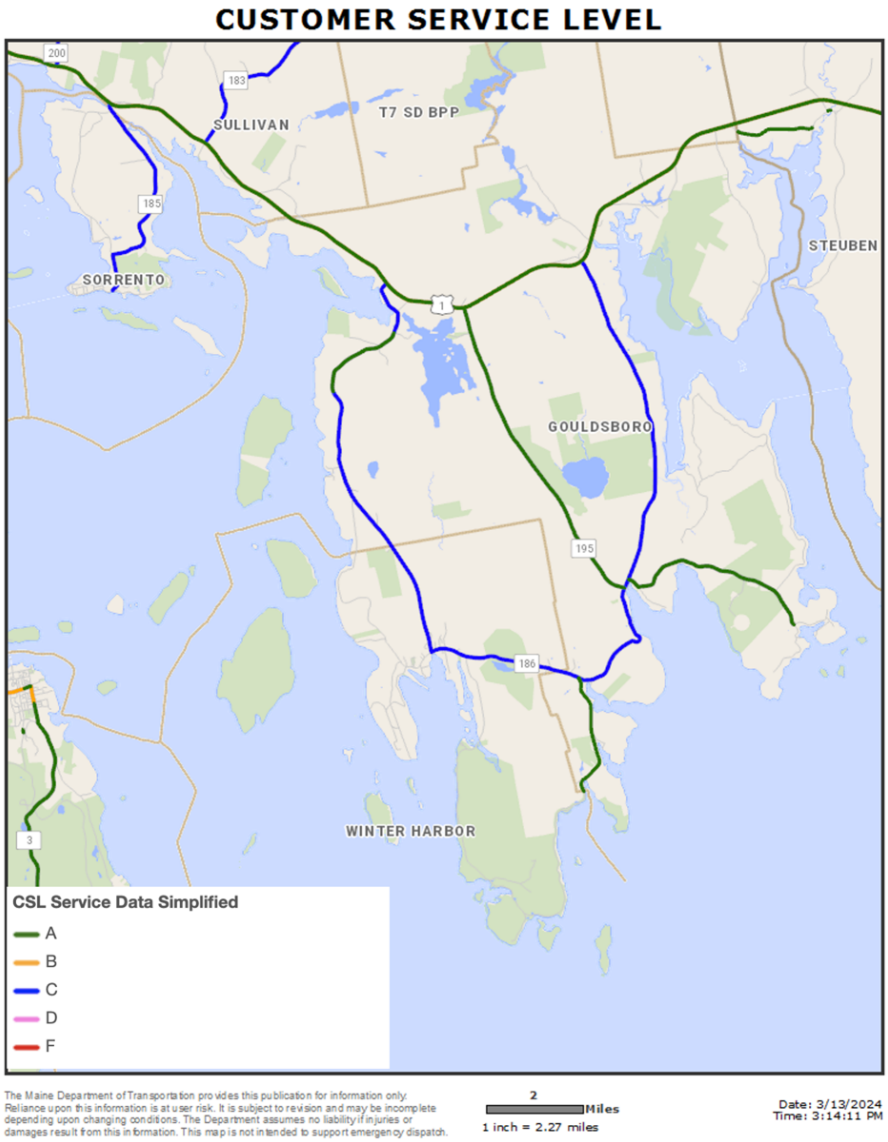


Several of Gouldsboro's smaller town roads are not shown on this map but are worth noting because of their poor condition. Route 1 IR 521 (Guzzle Rd) is classified as being in Condition C due to structural bridge issues. Portions of South Gouldsboro Rd are classified as being in Condition D and Condition F due to pavement conditions.

5.4.3 Service

The Service component of the Customer Service Level evaluation includes whether a roadway segment is posted during spring thaw to protect longevity, the weight load restrictions of any bridges, and degree of congestion/delay with specific consideration for peak summer months due to the potential impact on tourism. In terms of Customer Service Levels, portions of U.S. 1 and Routes 186 (S Gouldsboro Road) and 195 received A grades. Portions of Route 186 along both South Gouldsboro Road and West Bay Road received service grades of C (fair) due to road posting.

Map E-6: Customer Service Levels



5.5 Traffic Volumes

Maine Department of Transportation states that "traffic volumes are monitored on a continuous, year-round basis at permanent recorder sites located on major highways throughout the State." Using hourly counts, MDOT develops an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) figure for each location.

Traffic along Rt. 1 has doubled through most of Gouldsboro between 1979 and 2021. Traffic on Pond Road has nearly doubled but, interestingly, has been heavier heading south than north. Traffic on West Bay Road heading north out of Prospect Harbor has dropped greatly, while inbound traffic is relatively unchanged. Traffic volume undoubtedly varies by season.

Table E-3: Average Annual Daily Traffic

Location	1979	1996	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	% Chg. 79'-21'	% Chg. 09'-21'
IR 1015 (SUMMER HBR RD) S/O SR 186	153	230	230	200		200	210	37.3%	-8.7%
IR 1030 (COREA RD) S/O SR 195	343	360	260	300		300	260	-24.2%	0.0%
IR 1423 (CLINIC RD) SW/O US 1	598		1,050	890	810	760	1,110	85.6%	5.7%
IR 2176 (CROWLEY ISLAND RD) E/O IR 1030	290	270	320	390		360	390	34.5%	21.9%
IR 3160 (PAUL BUNYAN) NE/O SR 195 (COREA)			200			220	150		-25.0%
IR 521 (GUZZLE RD) NW/O US 1	161		210		180		190	18.0%	-9.5%
IR 521 (GUZZLE) NW/O IR 1038 @ BR# 5226			110		120		140		27.3%
IR 600 (E SCHOODIC DR) S/O SR 186	883	1,290	660	810	620	950		7.6	43.94
SR 186 (MAIN ST) S/O SR 195 (S JCT)	1,804	2,250	1,570	1,350	1,390	1,500	1,370	-24.1%	-12.7%
SR 186 (MAIN ST) W/O IR 600 (E SCHOODIC)	1,156	1,990	1,120	1,260		1,420	1,320	14.2%	17.9%
SR 186 (S GOULDSBORO RD) SW/O US 1			820		740	1,310	1,360	19.35	65.9%
SR 186 (WEST BAY RD) NE/O SR 195 (N JCT)	2,791	1,020	910	720	900	790	710	-74.6%	-22.0%
SR 186 (WEST BAY RD) SE/O US 1 (E JCT)	807	1,080	890	720		890	870	7.8%	-2.2%
SR 186 (WINTER HBR) SE/O IR 1015	1,140	1,870	1,180	1,470		1,610	1,760	54.4%	49.2%
SR 186 S/O IR 1423 (CLINIC RD)	1,318	2,200	1,600		1,760		2,080	57.8%	30.0%
SR 186 SW/O IR 1007 (YOUNGS FARM RD)				1,780	1,620	1,930	1,940		8.99
SR 195 (COREA RD) E/O SR 186	1,101	1,610		990	920	960	1,050	-4.6%	6.06
SR 195 (POND RD) NW/O SR 186 (MAIN ST)	628	860	1,180	870	940	1,040	1,030	64.0%	-12.7%
SR 195 (POND RD) S/O US 1	611	1,210	1,140	960	1,000		1,160	89.9%	1.8%
US 1 E/O SR 195 (POND RD)	1,800	3,210	3,320	3,360		3,370	3,920	117.8%	18.1%
US 1 NW/O IR 2185(BRADLEY FARM RD) (PW)	2,638	5,510	5,440	5,590	5,460	6,080	5,840	121.4%	7.4%
US 1 S/O IR 521 (GUZZLE RD)		3,600	3,600	3,560	3,490	3,920	4,210	16.94	16.9%
US 1 SE/O SR 186 (S GOULDBORO RD)		4,320	4,590	4,550		4,710	4,570	.044	-0.4%
US 1 SW/O IR 1471 (CHICKEN MILL) (N JCT)		3,310	3,510			3,740		12.99	6.55
US 1 SW/O SR 186 (WEST BAY RD)	2,061		3,340	3,340			3,930	90.7%	17.7%

Source: Maine Department of Transportation Definition of terms: SW =Southwest, SE = Southeast, SW/O = Southwest of, Se/O = Southeast of, NW =Northwest, N/O = North of S/O = South of, W/O = West of.

5.6 Bridges

There are five bridges in Gouldsboro. Two of these bridges are owned and maintained by the town: Ruebens Bridge and Guzzle Bridge. The remainder are owned and maintained by Maine DOT: Soules Bridge, Jones Pond Outlet Bridge and Prospect Harbor Bridge.

The bridge inventory and classification system of public bridges has been established by Maine DOT. Table E-4 includes a list of bridges, along with the year built, assessed condition, date of inspection and annual average daily traffic count (AADT) for each bridge.

Table E-4: Gouldsboro Bridge Classification and Inventory

Bridge Name	Owner	Year Built	Crossing	Deck Condition	Superstructure Condition	Substructure Condition	Date of Inspection	AADT
Ruebens Bridge	Town	1980 (Rebuilt 2003)	West Bay Stream	Satisfactory	Fair	Critical	5/9/2023	50
Guzzle Bridge	Town	1949	West Bay Stream	Fair	Fair	Fair	8/24/2022	140
Soules Bridge	MDOT	1927	West Bay Stream	N/A	N/A	N/A	5/17/2021	4,093
Jones Pond Outlet Bridge	MDOT	2012	Jones Pond Outlet	N/A	N/A	N/A	5/17/2021	2,051
Prospect Harbor Bridge	MDOT	1927	Prospect Harbor	Fair	Fair	Satisfactory	5/17/2021	1,981

Source: MaineDOT

MaineDOT defines the Federal Sufficiency Rating of a bridge as "a numeric indicator of the overall value of the sufficiency of the bridge." A rating will be from 0 (worst) to 100 (best). The FSR is computed with a federally supplied formula using an array of condition and inventory data and is used to identify bridges eligible for federal funding. This rating includes both structural deficiencies as well as functional obsolescence (width or weight capacity are below current design standards) and gives an overall value of the sufficiency of the bridge. Since functional obsolescence may account for a large portion of the rating, low sufficiency ratings (i.e., Ruebens Bridge) do not necessarily mean that those bridges are at risk of failure.

Table E-5: Federal Sufficiency Ratings of Gouldsboro Bridges

Bridge Name	Year Built	Federal Sufficiency Rating
Ruebens	1980 (reconstructed 2003)	4
Guzzle	1949	66.8
Soules	1927	65.1
Jones Pond Outlet	2012	97

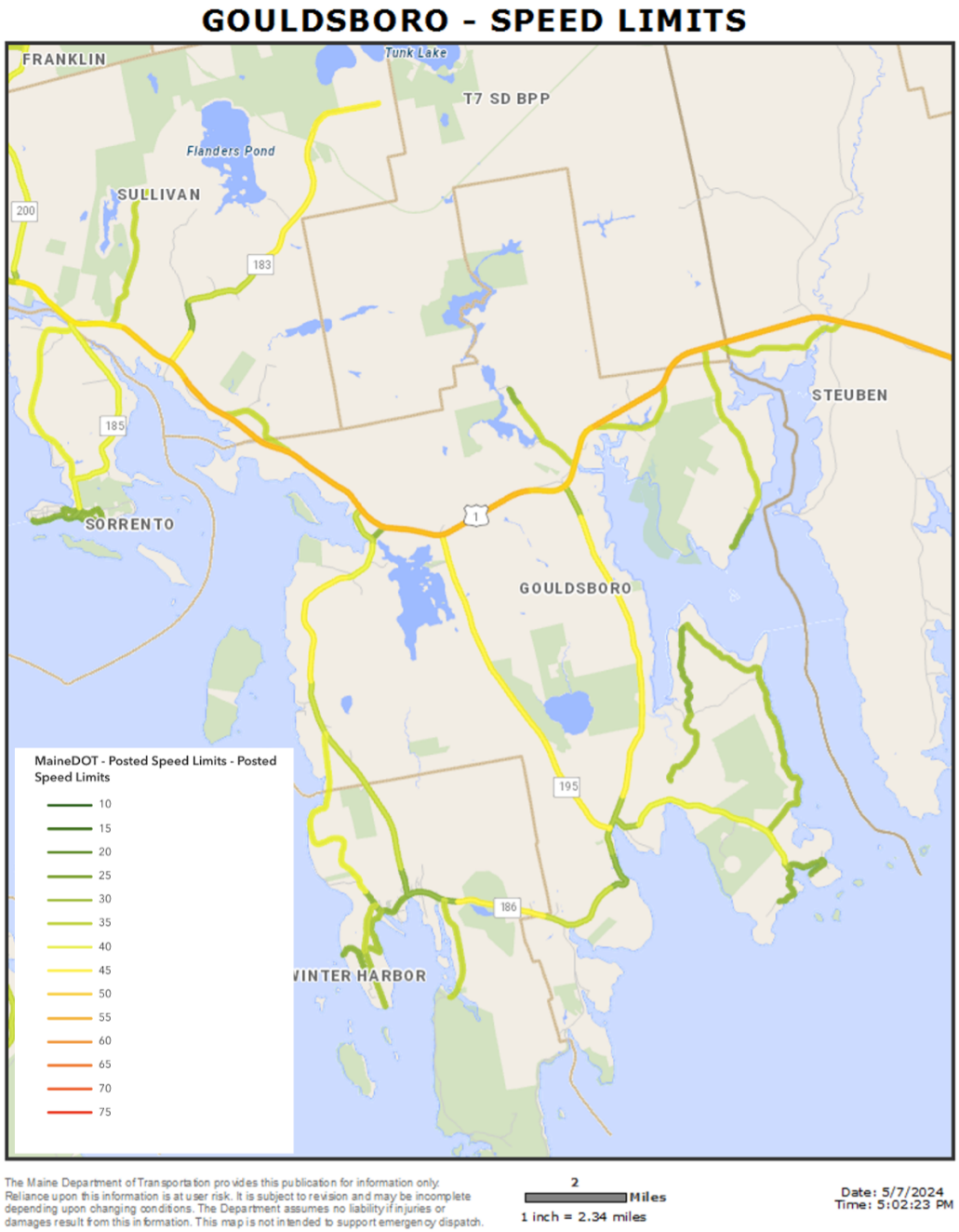
Source: Maine DOT

5.7 Speed Limits

U.S. Highway 1 has a posted speed limit of 55mph. Pond Road (State Route 195) has a speed limit of 45mph, as does portions of State Route 186 along West Bay Road and South Gouldsboro Road. Sections of State Route 186 drop to 35mph while local and private roads are typically lower speeds.

According to the Gouldsboro Chief of Police, in general people go too fast everywhere in town. The biggest problems are South Gouldsboro Road, Rt. 186 and Pond Road, Rt. 195, mostly from people coming onto the peninsula from Route 1. Speeding is also an issue around the town office and the Peninsula School, particularly when the speed limit drops to 15MPH during mornings and afternoons when school is opening/closing. Unless there is a visibly parked police cruiser, people go at least 10-20MPH over the limit.

Map E-7: Speed Limits



5.8 Major Traffic Generators

While the rate of traffic in town has increased since the last plan was prepared, Gouldsboro does not presently face any serious traffic congestion issues other than occasionally during the annual town meeting; there is an overflow of traffic from the parking lot and residents park along Pond Road. (Refer to Table E-3.)

Traffic generators include the Peninsula School, and also traffic related to the Schoodic Section of Acadia National Park (ANP), particularly on E. Schoodic as people leave the park. Recent data shows that visitors to the Schoodic district of ANP are up over 16% this year as people seek to get away from the crowds of MDI/Bar Harbor.

5.9 Parking

The Town of Gouldsboro maintains the following municipal parking areas:

- Municipal Office Building: 23 spaces
- Gouldsboro Recreation Center: 44 spaces
- Prospect Harbor lot: 9 spaces

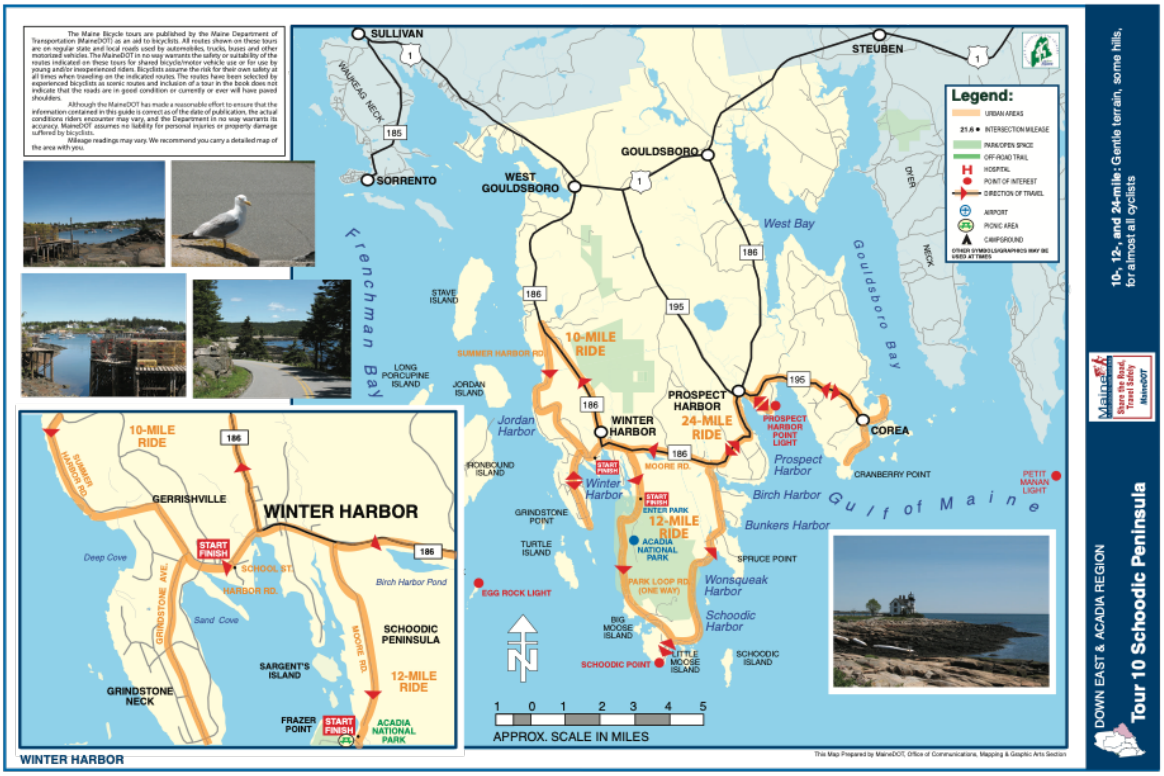
Parking at the municipal office building and the Gouldsboro Recreation Center is inadequate for hosting any large events. Parking along roads within Gouldsboro is dangerous as the road shoulders are not designed to support parking in key village areas.

The Town does benefit from the Bunkers Harbor Bike Trail Access Parking within the Schoodic section of Acadia National Park, which affords easy parking for biking and hiking access to the eastern section of the Schoodic section of the park.

5.10 Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure

Gouldsboro has almost no dedicated pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connecting major locations, such as the school, store and parks. Creating such connections is a challenge because in many of the areas where infrastructure is desirable the roads are very narrow and have no shoulders. These conditions impact residents' ability to safely walk and cycle, particularly in the winter months and at night. There is a short stretch of sidewalk in the Village of Prospect Harbor supporting the Peninsula School, the Town Office, and the Dorcas Library. Despite the infrastructural limitations, many residents and visitors engage in walking and bicycling for recreation. In seasonal months Gouldsboro's roads are popular for bicycle tourists, particularly along the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway and the Schoodic National Scenic Byway. Explore Maine suggests 10, 12 and 24-mile bicycle loops in the Schoodic Area; the 24-mile loop takes cyclists through the villages of Corea and Prospect Harbor.

Map E-8: Explore Maine Schoodic Area Bicycle Tours



Without proper planning and adjustments to the current infrastructure, increased access by non-motorized users to the transportation system can lead to higher chances of motorist-pedestrian and motorist-cyclist crashes. The Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM) has several potential options that may be applicable in Gouldsboro. These range from temporary installations that do not impact road geometry to educational programming for the local schools and community groups. Addressing pedestrian and cyclist safety will be an important topic for the Town to consider as more non-motorized users access the transportation system. Increasing opportunities for residents to safely access walking and biking will be an investment in the health outcomes of all residents.

As noted above, connecting any major locations in town would be difficult as roads are narrow, have no shoulders and the main roads through town are state owned. An addition of bike lanes would address the pedestrian/cyclist's safety concerns from Birch Harbor, along Main Street and onto Corea. Further promotion of the Island Explorer bus service is an additional way to alert cyclists about safely accessing paths and trails at destinations in the area that are served by this bus service.

5.11 Public Transportation, Airports & Rail Service

Gouldsboro has very limited public transportation available. Downeast Transportation operates a once daily round-trip bus service from Milbridge to the Jackson Lab location on Mount Desert Island; this includes a scheduled stop in Gouldsboro at Young's Market on U.S. 1, at both 5:55 a.m. and 4:25 p.m., Monday-Friday. Downeast Community Partners provides limited services for eligible clients referred by Maine Department of Health and Human Services on a demand

response basis. Transportation is provided through a combination of accessible vehicles with drivers and volunteers that utilize their own vehicles. West's Transportation is another option for area residents; this is a fixed-route and demand response public transportation service to communities within Washington County and eastern portions of Hancock County. Other organizations such as Friends in Action offer transportation to and from medical appointments, as well as to other destinations; these services involve pre-arranging rides and in some cases are only available to qualified individuals.

Bangor offers year-round bus connections to Portland and Boston via Greyhound Bus Lines and Concord Coachlines. The Island Explorer bus service is available from mid-June to mid-October, stopping only in Birch Harbor with a restricted route to Winter Harbor and the Schoodic portion of Acadia National Park.

The closest airports are in Bangor and Trenton. Bangor International Airport has regular direct flights to major US airports. The Bar Harbor-Trenton Airport in Trenton offers regular service to Boston and other regional cities on the east coast of the United States. Municipal airports for private use are located in Blue Hill and Stonington.

Since the closing of the Verso Mill in Bucksport, freight rail service has discontinued to much of Hancock County. There is no passenger rail service in Hancock County, although there is a short-distance scenic railroad ride in Ellsworth that operates from May to October. The nearest public ferry services do not include Gouldsboro. The Bar Harbor-Winter Harbor Ferry, which also connects the Mount Desert Island and Schoodic Peninsula sections of Acadia National Park, operates seasonally out of Winter Harbor. There are no known private boat services available for Gouldsboro.

5.12 Local Transportation & Mobility Issues

Parking remains an important local issue along with road maintenance and repair. As mentioned before, access to mobility service is a current and future necessity for many Gouldsboro residents. This need will only increase as Gouldsboro's population continues to advance in age. Accomplishing Gouldsboro's age-in-place goals will require alternative means of mobility for elderly and impaired residents. Alternative mobility support is also complemented by a popular understanding of, and demand for, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, connectivity and, more importantly, safety.

6 Analyses

6.1 Community and Regional Transportation Concerns

Although Gouldsboro is a coastal community with tidal waters, there is no public boat transportation other than the Bar Harbor/Winter Harbor Ferry, which departs from Winter Harbor at 10:00 am and runs every two hours until 6:30pm but is only available during the summer months through September. Town ferry service is not needed as the Bar Harbor/Winter Harbor Ferry is only minutes away from Gouldsboro.

Hancock County and the surrounding region could also face capacity issues with electric vehicle infrastructure. As more motorists are switching to fully electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV), demand will increase for charging opportunities. Towns and regions that are poised to provide this service early may have a competitive advantage over others for tourism revenue and attraction of potential future residents. Along with fiber Internet, EV infrastructure will be an important component for future development in the region.

6.2 Road Conflicts

While state roads do run through the town's villages and developed areas, there are no significant conflicts. Traffic volume does increase seasonally; however, roads have accommodated this increase through these areas. Over the past 10 years zero High Crash Locations have been identified.

6.3 Relevance of State and Regional Transportation Plans

The State of Maine has several transportation plans that may have relevance for Gouldsboro. The Long-Range Transportation Plan Update 2050 "will convey Maine DOT's vision for a multimodal transportation system that not only provides for safe and efficient travel throughout the state but also supports a high quality of life and economic opportunity in all of Maine's villages and communities."

Also underway is the Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025. Maine DOT is particularly interested in looking at new models and approaches for providing public transportation more efficiently and effectively in Maine's rural areas like Gouldsboro.

A Statewide Active Transportation Plan, created by Maine DOT, includes an assessment of Highway Corridor Priority 3 and 4 roads throughout Maine, such as Routes 186 and 195 in Gouldsboro, to highlight shoulder-enhancement opportunities in rural areas. The Town can work with Maine DOT to encourage public participation and prioritization of enhancements.

Towns are also regularly included in MaineD OT's Three-Year Work Plan; however, there are no town-specific items listed in the 2024-2026 Work Plan.

6.4 Parking Standards

The Town has a Parking Ordinance, adopted in 1997 and last revised in 2019. The ordinance does not regulate where or how parking can be developed, but rather where and when it is not allowed. As part of the town's Site Plan Review Ordinance the "location and dimensions and materials to be used in the construction of proposed driveways, parking... must be provided." Parking layout and design standards are also provided in section 6.6 of this ordinance. Parking areas in the Shoreland Zone are defined in the town's Shoreland Ordinance. Overall, there is no discouragement of developing parking in village or downtown areas.

6.5 Land-Side or Water-Side Transportation Facilities

The Town does not operate any land- or water-side transportation facilities. There are several boat launch and carry-in boat access points throughout the town that recreational and other users have access to. Public access points include Gouldsboro Point, Prospect Harbor, Bunkers Harbor and South Gouldsboro. There are no access points in Corea or Birch Harbor.

6.6 Local Access Management

Regarding access for new nonresidential and three-family or more residential development, section 6.2 of the Town's Site Plan Review Ordinance states that "vehicular access to the site must be on roads which have adequate capacity to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the development." Additionally, section 6.3 of this ordinance, "Access to the Site", section 6.4, "Accessway Location and Spacing" and section 6.5, "Internal Vehicular Circulation" provide additional guidelines and standards.

The town's Subdivision Ordinance provides standards for access control, including access design for subdivisions entering onto U.S. 1 and other standards including for various levels of traffic volume, layout, and construction.

6.7 Local Road Design Standards

Standards for roads and driveways in the shoreland zone are defined in Section 15, H. of the town's Shoreland Ordinance. They apply "to the construction of roads and/or driveways and drainage systems, culverts, and other related features". Design and construction standards for streets are also present in Article X, Section C, 6. of the town's Subdivision Ordinance. These standards have been established to support the community's desired land use pattern; however, they have no specific mention of design standards for bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The Subdivision Ordinance does state that "sidewalks shall be installed at the expense of the subdivider where the subdivision abuts or fronts onto a major street and at such locations as the Board may deem necessary".

6.8 Subdivision Roads

Regarding the layout of dead-end streets in the town's Subdivision Ordinance, Article X, Section 5., C, d. states that "In the case of dead-end streets, where needed or desirable, the Board may require the reservation of a twenty (20) foot wide easement in the line of the street to provide continuation of pedestrian traffic or utilities to the next street."

Minimum design and construction standards are also defined for all private streets for a subdivision. Article X, Section 6., h. states that "A dead-end street or cul-de-sac shall not exceed three thousand (3,000) feet in length and shall be provided to a suitable turn-around at the closed end. When a turning circle is used, it shall have a minimum outside curb radius of sixty-five (65) feet."

There is additional language in the ordinance about the overall layout and the design and construction of subdivision streets in addition to other standards. One of the criteria for granting application approval is that it "will not cause unreasonable highway or public road congestion or unsafe conditions with respect to the use of highways or public roads existing or proposed."

7 Climate Change Impact

Climate change is increasingly at the forefront of transportation planning concerns, particularly where sea level rise and extreme weather events are projected to damage and undermine many roads in coastal Maine.

Gouldsboro's 2022 Vulnerability Assessment and Action plan identified roads that are highly vulnerable to damage by sea level rise and storm surges. Town Way roads on this list include Crowley Island Road on the causeway linking Crowley Island to the rest of Corea, Corea Road where it joins Cranberry Point Road and Francis Pound Road, and Bunker Pound Road at the top of Bunkers Harbor. Each of these areas was submerged, inundated by waves, and impassable during the January 10, 2024, storm. Developing and implementing mitigation plans for each of these areas should be an immediate priority.

State Aid Highways on this list include Main Street in Prospect Harbor on the west edge of the harbor and Corea Road where it intersects with Grand Marsh Bay Road at Sand Cove. Mitigation actions at both of these points are essential because loss of these roads would interfere with access to emergency services. In particular, loss of the highway at Sand Cove would cut the entirety of Corea off from emergency services. Since these are State Aid Highways coordination with Maine DOT will be necessary. Communication with Maine DOT should begin immediately.

See the Climate Change Adaptation chapter for more information.

8 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Ensure that a safe, convenient, well-maintained, economically feasible transportation system is available to all residents and visitors.			
Objectives	**Strategy(ies)**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Create a five-year plan for all town roads	Contract for a comprehensive, objective assessment of all town roads, and shoulders.	Road Commissioner, Town Manager, Select Board	By the end of 2027
Address drainage problems along roads	Build and maintain a list of locations with drainage issues and work toward correcting the problems.	Road Commissioner	Immediate and ongoing
Maintain road pavement on all town roads	Continue to pave at a rate of up to 2.7 miles per year. Continue to replace all metal culverts on roadways prior to paving so that the culverts, identified ditches and drainage issues are taken care of before paving. (See Fiscal Capacity and Capital Improvement Plan chapter.)	Road Commissioner	Immediate and ongoing
Optimize winter salt-sand application for economy and safety.	Monitor salt-sand application and mixture at different locations to find an optimal balance of economy and safety.	Road Commissioner	Immediate and ongoing
Establish a safe parking area along Corea Road (SR195) at Sand Cove Beach	Collaborate with Maine DOT and other agencies to design a safe parking zone at Sand Cove Beach and to get the work done	Road Commissioner, Town Manager, Select Board	Immediate until work is complete
Improve safety and increase storm resilience at the Corea Road – Francis Pound Road junction.	Elevate Corea Road two feet at the stream crossing before the junction and replace the culvert with a bridge. (See the Climate Change Adaptation chapter.)	Coastal Resilience Committee, Road Commissioner, Town Manager, Select Board	2026-2028
Improve safety and increase storm resilience across the Crowley Island Causeway.	Elevate Corea Road two feet at the center point on the Causeway. (See the Climate Change Adaptation chapter.)	Emergency Plan Coordinator, Road Commissioner, Town Manager, Select Board	2026-2028

Policies
To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.
To increase the transportation system's levels of safety and resilience in the face of rising seas and increasingly severe storms.
Strategies
Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.
Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.
Address town road vulnerabilities identified in Gouldsboro's 2022 Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan

Chapter F: Public Facilities

1 Purpose

A town's future growth can be constrained or catalyzed by the public facilities and services available. This chapter provides a thorough analysis and understanding of current conditions for Gouldsboro and potential future needs and issues. This chapter:

- Identifies and describe Gouldsboro's public facilities and services, and
- Assesses the adequacy of these services to handle current and projected demands.

2 Key Findings & Issues

Gouldsboro has experienced challenges in recent years with staff turnover in the town office, public safety, and infrastructure positions. To address issues with continuity and service delivery the town is working to strengthen systems for finance, facilities, and public services while addressing community concerns over safe and efficient transportation. It has been noted that municipal buildings require repairs and updates and departments should be reviewed annually with long term goals, costs, funding sources, and timelines. Additional priorities include solid waste and recycling, last formally addressed in 2005, and the maintenance of the town's extensive but aging road network.

3 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

The 2005 Plan noted that law enforcement facilities were overcrowded. (Update - as of 2022, a separate facility was constructed using local resources that now accommodates the constable staff and equipment in fire station No. 2.)

The 2005 Plan also noted that the fire department was facing a shortage of volunteers and the loss of assistance from the Navy and suggested that the Town should consider greater cooperation with Winter Harbor. (Update - the fire department is still facing a shortage of volunteers. Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor have entered into a mutual cooperation model in fire coverage. In the summer of 2025, Gouldsboro appointed Winter Harbor's fire chief as its deputy, and Winter Harbor did the same with Gouldsboro's chief. Training and fire response will be more integrated.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

76.4% of respondents believe that they are getting good value for their tax dollars in Gouldsboro while 23.6% believe they are not. Table F-1 summarizes responses for individual facilites and services.

Table F-1: Survey Responses Regarding Public Facilities and Services

Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Safety of Bicycling on Town Roads	3.4%	13.8%	32.6%	43.1%
Condition of town roads	4.6%	42.7%	33.5%	18.0%
Emergency Medical Services	33.1%	34.3%	12.1%	2.1%
Fire Protection	50.4%	35.3%	1.7%	0.4%

Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Library Services (not town owned)	52.5%	30.4%	9.6%	2.5%
Police Protection	46.4%	40.2%	5.4%	0.4%
Parks & Recreation	22.3%	44.1%	24.8%	2.1%
Snow Removal (contracted)	30.8%	43.2%	15.8%	1.7%
Stormwater Management	10.2%	30.1%	28.4%	11.0%
Recycling/Trash Collection (contracted)	24.3%	32.6%	30.1%	11.3%

5 Town Government

5.1 Current Conditions

Gouldsboro has a town meeting form of government with a governing body of five elected Select Board members. Gouldsboro employs a Town Manager, a Code Enforcement Officer that also acts as the Superintendent of Infrastructure, three Deputy Town Clerks, all serving as full-time employees, a Treasurer who is part-time, as well as a part-time Assessor's Assistant. Other town employees include the police department, fire department and EMS staff.

5.2 Current & Future Adequacy

Gouldsboro has experienced a population decline of 12.3% since 2000. Although Maine State Economist projects additional population decline, any future housing and economic development in the town could change this trajectory. A population increase would help with the Town's tax base but could place increased strains on town staff. Any increased regulation, whether state or local, would also place a greater burden on the Code Enforcement Officer and other town officials. Regional sharing or multi-town cooperation might be both financially and logistically beneficial to Gouldsboro in the future, and to this end, Gouldsboro regularly participates in meetings with other area towns to explore options.

The Town provides its community with a website (https://www.gouldsborotown.com/) where services are listed as well as departments, boards, committees, meeting dates and minutes as well as other aspects of town government and community information about Gouldsboro. Other services include notary services, motor vehicle, ATV, boat and snowmobile and trailer registrations, and fishing and hunting licenses.

6 Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling

6.1 Current Conditions

Gouldsboro provides a weekly curbside solid waste collection service. Town residents purchase $1.25 trash bags stickers which are affixed to each bag/can being picked up. The town waste contractor previously transported the town's waste to the Penobscot Energy Recovery Company (PERC), a waste-to-energy facility located in Orrington, Maine. See Table F-2 for yearly tonnage. The PERC facility closed in 2023 and was eventually sold at auction. Eagle Point Energy Center, who purchased the business, has announced tentative plans to restart operations in 2025. In the meantime, solid waste is being transported to the Juniper Ridge landfill in Old Town. The town also operates a transfer station that receives and temporarily stores demolition and bulky waste.

Statewide, municipal solid waste recycling reached 36.7% in 2016, far short of Maine DEP's goal of 50%. Few Maine towns in the Downeast area have had municipal recycling programs since the 2019 closure of Coastal Recycling in Hancock and the 2020 closure of the Fiberight facility in Hampden. The Town-operated transfer station recycles scrap metal, appliances, and rubber tires. Plastics represent the greatest volume of potentially recyclable materials entering the general solid waste stream. Waste disposal in landfills and incinerators could be greatly lessened if recycling services were available, and it is likely that Gouldsboro community members would respond favorably to this opportunity. Any successful recycling program would be best implemented as a regional effort.

Table F-2: Gouldsboro's Waste Tonnage per Year

Year	Transfer Station Tons	PERC Tons	Total
2017	415	451	866
2018	399	441	840
2019	429	442	871
2020	436	447	883
2021	384	460	844
2022	280	477	757
2023	353	445	798
2024	373	436	809

Source: Gouldsboro Solid Waste Committee

Septic systems in Gouldsboro are privately owned and property owners are responsible for the pumping and disposition of septic solid wastes. The septic service companies are responsible for properly disposing of any solid waste that is removed from the septic systems. There is no public sewer system; this does not prevent the community from accommodating projected population changes.

6.2 Current & Future Adequacy

It is anticipated that Gouldsboro will face increasing costs associated with solid waste management. Currently there are no recycling options for Gouldsboro.

In a rural town like Gouldsboro, backyard composting is one way where residents can divert some of their waste from the municipal waste stream. The Gouldsboro transfer station accepts yard waste that is burned off. One company, Maine Organics in Ellsworth, composts industrial level shellfish wastes or other bulk compostables. This service is provided on a contract basis and is not available to Gouldsboro residents.

Solid waste disposal costs could also be lessened by local actions and regulations. These include lessening dependence on plastics, diverting household compostables through a community composting organization, and through regional approaches to cost sharing the transportation of recyclable materials.

7 Fire Protection

7.1 Current Conditions

The Gouldsboro Volunteer Fire Department (GVFD) serves Gouldsboro, Township 7, and mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities. The average response time to a fire is 11 minutes, with the furthest reaches of town being almost 20 minutes away. The department is dispatched by the Hancock County Regional Communications Center.

Facilities: Presently, there are three fire stations in Gouldsboro. Station 1 is attached to the Town Office in Prospect Harbor (see Figure F-1). All stations have a backup generator. Station No. 2 also houses the police department. Currently the three facilities adequately house all of Gouldsboro's current fire-fighting equipment.

Table F-3: Gouldsboro Fire Department Facilities

Facility	Address	Year Built	Square Feet
Station No. 1	59 Main Street, Prospect Harbor	1993	4,154
Station No. 2	4 Williams Brook Road, Gouldsboro	1991	2070
Station No. 3	6 Walters Road, Gouldsboro	1991	2,070

Figure F-1: Gouldsboro Town Office, Fire Station No. 1



Photo Credit: Deb Bisson

Staffing: Gouldsboro has an all-volunteer fire department with 14 members. Members receive a modest stipend from the town. For fiscal year 2026 the town budget allocated 95,000 costs for the Fire Department. Operating an all-volunteer company is increasingly difficult because of complex regulations that govern fire departments. Firefighting training and other matters demand considerable time that many volunteers do not have. As of 2019, there were 14 volunteers in the department; seven of these are available to respond to calls during the day and six members are qualified to perform interior attack. Sustaining enough volunteers is an issue of critical importance. The Town may need to consider a paid force that is a shared resource between multiple towns.

Response: The Fire Department responds to a variety of types of calls each year, including, but not limited to structure fires, chimney fires, forest fires, grass fires, vehicular accidents, ambulance calls, miscellaneous rescue calls, and fire alarms. Calls for service are shown in

Table F-4. The average response time is 7-10 minutes. In addition to fighting fires and the other types of services, the department sponsors fire prevention programs at the Peninsula Elementary School. Fire permits for town residents are now issued by the Fire Chief, the Town Clerk, and online from the State.

Table F-4: Gouldsboro Fire/EMS Department Activity, 2016-2022

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ambulance Transports	197	103	119	151	155	197	279	251	228
Non- Transports	58	72	64	56	61	58	87	47	137
Motor Vehicle Incidents	11	7	13	15	11	11	26	26	13
Structure Fire Incidents	2	5	4	9	6	2	2	3	4
Fire Alarm Incidents	27	19	12	33	8	27	47	31	26
Wildfire Incidents	3	1	4	3	3	3	24	40	8
Rescues	1	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	0
Other/Smoke Investigations	9	11	4	5	6	9	6	2	9
Mutual Aid incidents	8	3	14	14	16	8	16	23	52
Service Calls	24	22	24	7	9	24	4	34	73
Totals	340	259	259	296	278	340	495	458	550

Source: Gouldsboro Volunteer Fire/EMS Department

Equipment: The current inventory of vehicles is shown in Table F-4. The department's current equipment is adequate for the present time. With the limited life span of capital equipment and the significant cost to replace the equipment the town will continually face the need for significant amounts of money when equipment needs to be replaced. The cost of replacement and repair costs are also challenging for the Town's budget. Furthermore, some manufacturers no longer provide parts, and sourcing required parts for repairs can be challenging for a department with an aging fleet.Table F-5

Table F-5: Gouldsboro Fire/EMS Equipment Inventories

Year	Vehicle Type	Condition	Years Left of Service
1988	Ford F250 Truck	Fair	2
1991	Ford Louisville Fire Truck	Fair	2
1992	Ford 800 Ferrara Pumper	Fair	1
1995	Ford E350 Rescue Type III	Fair	5
1999	International 4900	Fair	5
2004	Freightliner M2106 Fire Truck	Fair	5
2009	Navistar Fire Truck	Fair	10
2014	Chevrolet Ambulance Schoodic 52	Fair	2
2018	Chevrolet 1500271 4 WD DBL PU	Prime	3
2025	Ford Ambulance Schoodic 24	Excellent	5

Source: Gouldsboro Fire Chief, August 2023, Andi Both, Schoodic EMS October 2025

7.2 Current and Future Adequacy

The current department services are deemed adequate. The department indicates that water supplies throughout town are generally adequate for firefighting; however, required

subdivision fire ponds are becoming overgrown. Subdivisions need to be held accountable and pond access must be maintained. While no emergency vehicle access problems have been reported on town roads, the department does periodically experience poorly marked houses and overly narrow private driveways. This is a problem with both summer and year-round dwellings. There is a need for paid clerical assistance to effectively deal with increased paperwork and regulatory compliance. This clerical activity is not easily assumed by the volunteer members of the fire department. A paid, part-time position would address this need.

Another challenge is the cost of replacement equipment. See the Fiscal Capacity and Capital Improvement Plan chapter for more information.

8 Law Enforcement

8.1 Current Conditions

The Gouldsboro Police Department started as a volunteer community watch in the 1970s. It has evolved to its current state of being a full-time service police department for the Town of Gouldsboro, comprising three patrol officers; one full-time and two part-time. Full-time officers must meet the same training requirements as all other municipal and county police departments in the State of Maine. Emergency services contract with the Hancock County Regional Communications Center for dispatch of the Gouldsboro Police and Fire Departments and Schoodic Ambulance Service (a division of Gouldsboro Fire Department). In 2019, the Gouldsboro Police Department handled over 1,000 calls for service and made over 630 traffic stops. Officers are outfitted with in-car cruiser video camera systems and body cameras. The police department is housed at Gouldsboro Fire Station No. 2. Gouldsboro's police department is served by the Hancock County Regional Communication Center, which is the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for emergency dispatch services (911).

Table F-6 : Gouldsboro Police Calls for Service by year

Year	Total Number of Calls
2018	927
2019	1055
2020	879
2021	681
2022	814

Source: Gouldsboro Police Dept Records

Troop J of the Maine State Police is responsible for providing professional, full-service law enforcement services to Hancock and Washington Counties through two resource-sharing agreements that promote cooperation and maximize the effectiveness with limited law enforcement resources in rural areas. Their main office is located in Ellsworth and a field office in Jonesboro. The Town also relies on mutual aid support from the Town of Winter Harbor and from the Hancock County Sheriff's Department.

8.2 Current & Future Adequacy

The current department services are deemed to be acceptable, though at minimal levels. Maintaining a small police force in a rural setting is challenging. Training is a constant challenge

as well as identifying the optimum schedule for officers on staff. Enforcement of moving vehicle laws, such as speed limits and hands-free regulations, continues to be an issue. Partnering with regional, state and federal law enforcement partners for educational opportunities continues to be an avenue that results in low department impact. The department is synchronized with the Hancock County Emergency Management Agency for the identification of upcoming training venues.

9 Emergency Medical Services

9.1 Current Conditions

Schoodic EMS is a subunit of Gouldsboro Fire, licensed at the basic level or permitted at the premedic level. The primary service areas include Gouldsboro, Winter Harbor, and parts of Township 7. The service also provides mutual aid in Hancock and Washington counties. The Town of Gouldsboro oversees Schoodic EMS. Currently, the department has eleven personnel: three drivers, four EMTs, two AEMTs, and two paramedics. The department utilizes a 6am-6pm day shift with personnel at the station from 8am-4pm, paid hourly, as well as a 6pm-6am night shift, stipend-based pay, with the personnel being on call from home or at the station. The "on-duty" crew has two personnel scheduled to provide 24/7 coverage. The Director of EMS is a full-time employee that works a minimum of 40 hours per week between ambulance calls and administrative tasks. There is one full-time EMT and the rest of the roster are per diem employees. The department attempts to fill all the shifts according to the availability of the team members. If necessary, the director will cover shifts as needed.

The department has two ambulances, SCHD 24 and SCHD 52 (see Table F-5). The ambulances are staged at Station 1, 59 Main St Prospect Harbor, ME. There is also a "fly car", SCHD 1, to provide ALS (advanced life care) back up for our BLS crew or to provide ALS intercept for mutual aid services. Schoodic EMS has provided mutual aid to Ellsworth, Sullivan, Franklin, Hancock, Cherryfield, Steuben, and Milbridge. Schoodic EMS has started performing inter-facility transfers beginning September 2025. This diversifies revenue for the service as interfacility transfers are billable calls.

In addition to utilizing mutual aid with neighboring services, Schoodic EMS can utilize LifeFlight of Maine for critical patients. LifeFlight of Maine (whose parent organizations are Central Maine Healthcare and Northern Light Health, and its aviation operator Seven Bar Aviation) provides critical care air transport throughout Maine. Most of their transport routes (85%) are from small hospitals in rural areas to large hospitals. However, they do provide scene landings for critical patients in a 911 emergency setting.

9.2 Current & Future Adequacy

The department's equipment is deemed to be acceptable. Gouldsboro EMS operates two Type III ambulances, a 2025 and a 2014 (see Table F-5). Following the loss of an ambulance in a fire, the 2025 model was purchased new in December of 2024. SCHD 24 has roughly 50,000 miles. The 2014 model, SCHD 52, has over 200,000 miles. It is expected there is less than one year remaining in its service life. Type III ambulances are cutaway vans with an integrated modular ambulance body. The replacement cost of one ambulance is estimated to be $300,000.

Schoodic EMS has three cardiac monitors. There are two Lifepak 15s. These are both refurbished/used units. One is currently scheduled to be repaired and the other one is in Schoodic 24. The third unit is a Lifepak 12, which was loaned by Sorrento Fire Department. The Lifepak 12 is a 2006 model and is used as a backup unit on Schoodic 52. The newest model of Lifepak is the Lifepak 35. It would be ideal to upgrade our cardiac monitors in the near future to better support our needs as a rural service. The better resourced we are with personnel and equipment, the better we are able to provide care during long transport times/distances.

The major foreseeable expenses in the near future include a new ambulance, cardiac monitor, growing payroll expenses with inflation, and affording the increasing cost of medical supplies. The department expects to meet financial needs through grants, donations, billable calls (emergent and interfacility), and tax-payer funding.

10 Education

10.1 Current Conditions

Gouldsboro's school age educational requirements are met by Regional School Unit (RSU) 24, which serves nine communities along the Downeast coast of Maine. Specific communities served are Eastbrook, Franklin, Gouldsboro, Mariaville, Steuben, Sorrento, Sullivan, Waltham, and Winter Harbor. According to Maine Department of Education enrollment data, 178 students from the Town were enrolled in 2023 and in 2024 there were 159. (See Table F-7.) This is a decrease from 190 in 2020 and the ten-year high of 199 students from the Town in 2014.

The RSU24 district contains 5 schools with a total of 822 students as of October 2024. There are 4 Pre-K-5th grade Elementary Schools, and 1 Middle-High School. The district's minority enrollment is 10%. Also, 33.8% of students are economically disadvantaged. Cave Hill Elementary, located in Eastbrook, has a population of 59 students. Ella Lewis Elementary, located in Steuben, which is a remote rural setting, has a population of 74. The Mountain View Elementary located in Sullivan, a distant rural setting, has a population of 147 while the Peninsula Elementary School is in Prospect Harbor, another rural setting, has a population of 83 students. Sumner Memorial Middle School population is currently 180, while the High School enrolls 279 students.

Table F-7: Student Enrollment from Gouldsboro

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Students from Gouldsboro	199	189	195	187	179	183	190	157	179	178	159

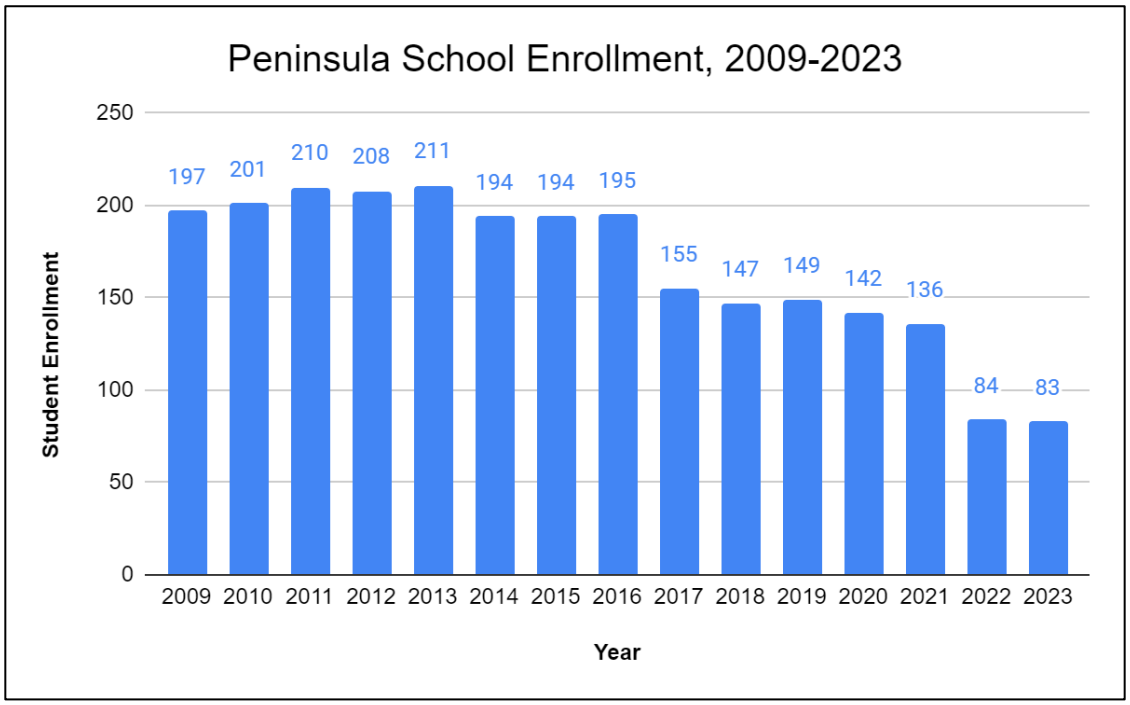
10.1.1 Elementary Education

The elementary school serving Gouldsboro is the Peninsula School, located at 71 Main Street in Prospect Harbor. Peninsula School has 13 classrooms and six intervention spaces. The square footage of the Peninsula School is 37,791. It has a 5,632 square foot gymnasium that has an occupancy rating of 981. The gym is used for assemblies, holiday concerts, PE classes, basketball games, ceremonies and has also hosted town meetings.

Peninsula School's 2023 enrollment was 83 students, grades PK-5 with a student-teacher ratio of 5 to 1. According to state test scores, 87% of students are at least proficient in math and 87% in reading.

Figure F-2 shows that student enrollment at Peninsula School has fluctuated in recent years as a result of home school instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic and the opening of the Charles M. Sumner Learning Campus, which relocated grades 6-8 from Peninsula School to this new facility.

Figure F-2: Peninsula School Enrollment Trends



Source: RSU 24 (includes students from Winter Harbor)

**Grades 6-8 transitioned to Charles M. Sumner Learning Campus in 2022*

10.1.2 Middle and High School

The Charles M. Sumner Learning Campus is a combined middle and high school campus, serving more than 500 students in grades 6-12. The campus, which opened in 2022, consists of a 103,000 square foot building that replaced the 1950s-era Sumner Memorial High School. The campus is in the Town of Sullivan on US Route 1. The campus features air-source heat pumps, energy recovery ventilation, and Variable Refrigerant Flow HVAC systems units, allowing the new building to perform with an anticipated Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of 32, which is significantly below the national EUI median score of 48.5. The school provides a state-of-the-art learning campus with shared 21st century learning environments, including a new Learning Commons, Maker Spaces, and Materials Labs. Collaboration spaces adjoin most classrooms, allowing for breakout, self-directed learning, and project-based programs.

10.1.3 Other Educational Organizations/Groups

RSU 24 Adult Education (RSU 24 AE) serves the communities of Eastbrook, Franklin, Gouldsboro, Mariaville, Sorrento, Steuben, Sullivan, Waltham, and Winter Harbor. RSU 24 AE provides a spectrum of courses for residents past the normal school age. Courses include:

- Business & Skills Training
- College Transitions
- Computers & Technology
- High School Completion
- Literacy
- Personal Enrichment

Of particular benefit to Gouldsboro residents are the Certified Nursing Assistant and Certified Residential Medication Aide certification courses.

The Gouldsboro community is also served by Healthy Acadia, a 501c3 nonprofit organization that works on a broad range of community health initiatives that help Hancock and Washington counties to thrive. Since 2001, Healthy Acadia has worked to identify priority health needs and to address root causes. They convene and facilitate numerous collaborative community efforts with shared leadership from many sectors to develop plans and take action to improve health and wellbeing, and to rapidly respond to critical and emergent health needs in local communities.

Gouldsboro, as well as the rest of the Schoodic Region, is supported by the Schoodic Institute. Schoodic Institute is Acadia National Park's primary partner in science and education. Portions of the park are included within the boundaries of the town. It supports scientific research of importance to the park, provides professional development for teachers, and trains a new generation of stewards who will help conserve our natural and cultural heritage.

Schoodic Arts for All (SAFA) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with its headquarters located in Winter Harbor and maintains facilities in both Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro. Its initial emphasis was an arts festival to bring some traffic through Winter Harbor. More than 20 years later, SAFA has grown to offer year-round workshops and performances, After School Art Club for area schools and homeschool groups, Summer Art Camp, and hosts several art-related community groups. SAFA inhabits three historic buildings, two in Winter Harbor and one in Gouldsboro. The Gouldsboro facility is a two-story art studio that has been fully equipped with pottery wheels and kilns. In 2018, Schoodic Arts for All was named the Best Community Organization in the inaugural Maine Arts Awards.

10.2 Current & Future Adequacy

The physical plants of the elementary school and of the middle/high school are in superior condition and will serve the needs of the community for decades to come. No construction or expansion is anticipated during the planning period. However, population fluctuations and regionalization of services will impact school operations significantly over the next 10 years and beyond. Student enrollment over the next decade will be dependent on these factors. In addition, many rural schools face staffing shortages and a problem retaining qualified educators and staff. This leads to increased teaching staff turnover that affects quality of instruction and

impacts school culture. If fewer people choose education as a career choice, schools, including Gouldsboro, will face issues of staffing and operations. Staffing and operation issues are also affected by the higher-than-county-average housing costs in Gouldsboro and the relatively low wages paid to public school educators in Maine.

11 Public Works

11.1 Current Conditions

The management of road maintenance and other public works duties are the responsibility of the Superintendent of Town Infrastructure. The Superintendent of Infrastructure coordinates road repairs and support services, primarily provided by contractors and is Gouldsboro's sole Public Works employee. The Town currently has a 6,500 square foot salt/sand storage shed, as well as two additional buildings that were previously owned and operated by Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT).

The Town does not maintain a public water or sewer system. Each individual lot owner is responsible for obtaining their own potable water source as well as providing sewage disposal systems in accordance with county and state requirements. Currently all storm waters are directed via ditching and or culverts to streams that drain directly into the ocean or other bodies of water located within the town's boundaries.

11.2 Current & Future Adequacy

Road salt and sand costs often fluctuate seasonally. Additionally, the cost of repaving has increased significantly in recent years. This, combined with the fact that most of the Town's roads are in fair to poor condition, present a significant future cost to the Town, which has limited resources. In the past, road repairs consisted for the most part of hot topping over existing roads. This does not address narrowness, limited shoulders, sharp curves, exposed hazards, pavement drop-offs, steep slopes, and limited clear zones along roadsides. In recent years, the town set a goal of paving three miles of roads per year to put them on a ten-year repaving schedule. In addition, for Fy26 funds were approved to hire an outside consultant to perform a complete assessment of all town roads.

With no municipal water or sewage treatment system, the Town is restricted in its ability to support future residential or industrial growth. This impacts its ability to support housing or to invite in acceptable industrial developments. The development of multiple residential housing options is particularly restricted. Also, the Town needs to ensure that adequate building lot sizes are maintained in order to support individual septic or sewer systems to not have an impact on groundwater resources.

12 Town Office

12.1 Current Conditions

The current Town Office, within the public service building, was constructed in 1950 and consists of 2,000 square feet. Major rooms include 560 square feet of office space for the Select Board, Secretaries, and Code Enforcement Officer; a 730 square foot meeting room and voting

area; and 300 square feet of offices for the Town Clerk and Treasurer, respectively. Other rooms include the vault, bathrooms, kitchen, and general egress areas.

12.2 Current & Future Adequacy

The current Town Office meets current minimum needs. The Town's meeting room is a small space that can seat approximately 30 people. The room is not conducive to supporting any type of communication technology such as video conferencing. The Town Office is further constrained by a significant lack of parking; The municipal office building has 23 spaces. While this amount can accommodate most town Selectmen and committee meetings, events that attract larger crowds result in overflow to the neighboring Methodist Church or even along Main Street, which can pose safety risks.

13 Library

13.1 Current Conditions

The Dorcas Library is not operated by the Town. It was started informally by the Dorcas Society of Prospect Harbor in 1932, who constructed the cottage that houses the library today. In 1932, the library started with two rooms, one where the members of the Dorcas Society did their quilting and the other where the library was located. The library was started when the members decided to donate their own books and let people in the community come borrow them. In 1956 a children's room was added and in 1978 a large, new Harbor View room was added to the back of the building. The library subsists off on donations; the Town has historically donated money to assist in library operations. The Dorcas Library Association officially incorporated and is a non-profit [501c3] organization with an all-volunteer Board of Trustees. Library board members served as officers and library directors of the organization until 2015, when the first paid library director was hired. In 2018, the library hired an additional librarian.

13.2 Current & Future Adequacy

The library meets most standards and guidelines from the Maine State Library Association, and no future upgrades or changes are required at this time.

14 Community Centers

14.1 Current Conditions

In 1983 the Town built the Gouldsboro Recreation Center, a 6,448 square foot building adjacent to the grammar school, which has since been closed. The building is an open structure that hosts many of the Town's government and recreational events. It features 44 parking spots that can handle most minor events. The Gouldsboro Recreation Center is further discussed and described in Chapter G (Recreation & Health).

The Town's Prospect Harbor Women's Club building is located at 61 Main Street in Prospect Harbor. The building serves as a seasonal meeting place. It has a 2,400 square foot common room and has an attached kitchen. The building is not used during the winter months. An

assessment of this building is being conducted in Fall 2025 to determine necessary upgrades and costs.

Figure F-3: Prospect Harbor Women's Club



Photo Credit: Deb Bisson

14.2 Current and Future Adequacy

The Gouldsboro Recreation center has been well-maintained and serves well as the site of town elections, exercise and recreation programs, and special events. Its acoustics are not adequate for public meetings. However, the Peninsula School gymnasium provides the Town with a satisfactory alternative for town meetings and other public programs.

15 Community Medical/Health Facilities

15.1 Current Conditions

Northern Light Health operates the Eleanor Widener Dixon Memorial Clinic, located on Clinic Road in Gouldsboro. The clinic supports family and geriatric medicine and employs four medical professionals: two specialized in family medicine, one specialized in geriatric medicine and one in osteopathic medicine. There is also a physical therapy practice at the clinic. Northern Light Health is the most expansive, integrated health care system in Maine. It comprises ten member hospitals, including Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital, a facility located in Ellsworth. It is the closest full-service hospital to Gouldsboro.

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.

15.2 Current & Future Adequacy

Table F-6 lists hospitals and other healthcare facilities that serve Gouldsboro along with their travel distance in miles. While closer emergency medical services would always be more beneficial, the healthcare facilities within proximity of the Town and the services needed to adequately provide for residents appear adequate.

Table F-8: 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

Source: Norther Light Health, Google Maps

16 Water

16.1 Current Conditions

There is no publicly owned water system in Gouldsboro that serves a residential area. Four wells are listed as public water supply wells by the Maine Drinking Water Program. These wells serve the school, two restaurants, and a campground. Currently there are no major problems in Gouldsboro with ground water supply.

16.2 Current & Future Adequacy

Gouldsboro residents and businesses depend on individual wells for their water supply. If a moderate rate of growth should happen, or population decline as projected proves to be correct, current drinking water supplies should be adequate for the near future. ~~P~~otential problems would be threats to individual wells from contamination, drought, or from the potential addition of high usage industrial water users. There is no foreseeable likelihood of needing to develop a municipal water system. There would be a benefit to a well-organized regional approach to well water testing.

17 Sewage and Stormwater Management

17.1 Current Conditions – Sewage

As noted above, Gouldsboro does not have a public sewage system. Residences and other buildings use on-site sewage management, typically septic systems.

17.2 Current Conditions – Stormwater Management

The Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance states that "all new construction and development shall be designed to minimize storm water runoff from the site in excess of the natural predevelopment conditions". It goes on to state that existing natural runoff control features should be maintained where possible, and that stormwater runoff control systems must be

maintained as necessary. Stormwater runoff procedures and design guidelines are also addressed in the town's Site Plan and Subdivision ordinances.

17.3 Current & Future Adequacy

As with the Town's current reliance on private wells rather than a public water system, if growth is moderate or the population declines as projected, current sewage and storm management practices and management should be adequate for the near future, and there is no foreseeable likelihood of needing to develop a town-wide sewage system.

18 Street Tree Program

Gouldsboro does not have a street tree program. The Shoreland Ordinance does provide regulations for hazard trees, storm-damaged trees, and dead tree removal.

19 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Advance the health, safety, and welfare of Gouldsboro by ensuring the provision of government services in a fiscally responsible manner.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Mitigate the amount of waste entering the solid waste stream and reduce municipal costs for garbage disposal.	Increase inter-town cooperation to explore alternative options and methods for solid waste disposal.	Select Board, Town Manager, HCPC	Ongoing
Ensure that plant and equipment required for road maintenance keep pace with evolving needs for road maintenance, repairs, and regulations.	The Road Commissioner will work with the Town Manager to communicate all needs for upgraded or equipment and plans for major road improvements, beyond annual maintenance, are included in capital improvement plan.	Road Commissioner, Town Manager, Budget Committee, Select Board	Ongoing
Minimize the cost of road maintenance and improvements	Establish partnerships with local municipalities to utilize bulk purchasing when feasible. For example, undertaking joint paving projects with neighboring towns.	Select Board or designees	Ongoing
Ensure law enforcement services are available and adequate for all residents of Gouldsboro while not becoming an overly burdensome tax expense.	The Police Chief will work with the Town Manager to communicate all needs for upgraded or additional facilities, equipment, or training to ensure that these needs are included in capital improvement plan.	Police Chief, Town Manager, Budget Committee, Select Board	Ongoing
Ensure fire protection and emergency services are available and adequate for all residents of Gouldsboro while not becoming an overly burdensome tax expense.	The fire department and Schoodic EMS will work with the Town Manager to communicate all needs for upgraded or additional facilities, equipment, or training to ensure that these needs are included in capital improvement plan.	Gouldsboro Volunteer Fire Department, Schoodic EMS, Town Manager, Budget Committee, Select Board	Ongoing
Ensure efficient ways to communicate with the Gouldsboro Community including ensuring that the Town website continues to be an important resource	Investigate options for upgrading the website for ease of use and maintenance as well as broader capabilities.	Select Board, Town Manager, Staff	Immediate & Ongoing
	Utilize the Town Facebook page for meeting info/community news etc.	Town Manager	Immediate & Ongoing

Policies
To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.
To maintain timely, accurate communication with Gouldsboro residents.
Strategies
Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics and include them in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.
Explore opportunities for regional purchasing and contracting.
Explore options for regional delivery of local services.

Chapter G: Fiscal Capacity and Capital Improvement Plan

1 Purpose

This section presents information on Gouldsboro's ability to pay for the services it provides for Its residents and businesses. It also looks ahead to identify potential future infrastructure projects and the Town's capacity to pay for them. Specifically, this chapter will:

- Examine trends in such fiscal areas as valuation, taxes, expenditures, and capital projects funding.
- Identify anticipated capital investment needs and anticipated funding mechanisms.
- Evaluate the Towns's ability to borrow to pay for capital investments.

2 Key Findings & Issues

Property taxes in Gouldsboro are vital in funding local services such as public schools, road maintenance, and emergency services. The median tax rate is 1.23%, significantly higher than both the Maine state median and the U.S. national median of 0.99%. Local government entities set these rates annually, and they can vary significantly across different communities. Each year, Gouldsboro estimates its required budget to maintain services for the upcoming fiscal year. Education generally accounts for a significant amount of the Town's expenses. Maintenance, including paving of Town roads has continued to increase due to inflation adjustments. Gouldsboro has approximately $????? Of valuation that is exempt from real estate taxation. In terms of debt, Gouldsboro's debt load is approximately ??% of the statutory limit.

3 Public Opinion Survey Results

Survey results show 76.42 % feel that they are receiving good value for their tax dollars while 23.58% feel that they are not. Respondents also showed support for police protection services with 46.44% rating it as excellent and 40.17% as good. Fire protection services showed 50.42% as excellent and 35.29% as good. Respondents supported Town facilitation to more public access to salt water and the shoreline at 72.46% while 65.65% would like to see tax dollars which support expanded access to freshwater resources.

4 Condition and Trends

4.1 Valuation and Tax Assessment

Gouldsboro raises money to fund the budget though various mechanisms, but the assessment of property taxes is the principal source of funding. The tax rate is determined each year by considering the total valuation of all property in the community and the amount of money needed to fund the budget. Some exemptions or partial exemptions may include homesteading, farmland use, open space, and tree growth.

The assessed values of Gouldsboro properties depend on both local and state assessments

- **Local Valuations**: Local valuations determine the amount of tax paid on individual properties relative to all properties in the Town. The goal of the local valuation is to distribute the locally approved tax burden fairly within the community. The Town assessor establishes property values for tax commitment purposes by adjusting for construction or removal activities that are expected to alter a property's value.
- **State Valuations**: The State of Maine estimates the total fair market value of all the taxable property in each municipality. The state valuation's goal is to ensure fair distribution of state-controlled financial obligations and benefits. The state valuation assumes uniform assessment at 100% of current market value, adjusting for year-to-year changes in the real estate market. The State Valuation process takes about 18 months to complete and therefore can lag actual market values and municipal assessments by about two years.

The local valuation and state valuations can differ because local valuation is often at less than 100% of market value. The state requires municipalities to keep the town-wide assessed value to market value ratio at no less than 70% and no more than 110%. Town-wide revaluation of properties is the preferred way of keeping the ratio above 70%. Since revaluation through a town-wide assessment takes time and is costly, a short-term solution is to raise the value of all properties by a uniform percentage to bring the local valuation back into the permitted range. Table G-1 shows the State vs. Local valuation, tax commitment, tax rate and certified ratio for Gouldsboro over the past 10 years.

Table G-1: Gouldsboro State and Local Valuations, Tax Commitment and Tax Rate 2015-2025

Year	State Valuation	Total Local Valuation (total real & personal)	Tax Commitment	Tax Rate	Certified Ratio
2025	$706,000,000	$428,363,820			
2024	$592,800,000	$592,800,000			
2023	$488,900,000	$431,574,680	$6,007,520	0.01392	94%
2022	$463,400,000	$428,363,820	$5,247,457	0.01225	96%
2021	$447,600,000	$428,160,300	$4,388,643	0.01025	100%
2020	$437,350,000	$422,289,600	$4,412,926	0.01045	100%
2019	$416,700,000	$420,481,100	$4,267,883	0.01015	100%
2018	$403,550,000	$417,750,300	$3,843,303	0.00920	100%
2017	$412,300,000	$417,357,100	$3,714,479	0.00890	100%
2016	$407,500,000	$415,435,200	$3,630,912	0.00874	100%
2015	$396,600,000	$414,685,600	$3,504,093	0.00845	100%

4.2 External Assessments

External assessments absorb a large portion of the financial resources that Gouldsboro raises through property taxes. Using data from FY 2024, ending June 30, 204, Table G-2 shows that most of the funds raised through property tax assessments are used to pay external assessments for education and county services.

Table G-2: Impact of External Assessments on Funds Available for Other Uses

	Amount	% of Property Tax Revenue
Property Tax Revenue	**$ 6,132,851**	**100%**
Less:		
Education Assessment (RSU 24)	3,785,239	62%
County Assessment	230,655	4%
Funds available for other uses	**$ 2,116,957**	**35%**

5 Capital Improvement Plan

5.1 Background information and history

Gouldsboro has long used "reserve funds" to accumulate the money required for larger capital purchases over several years. For example, when the Town knows that it will need to purchase a vehicle in five years, it can ask voters to approve putting a fifth of the expected purchase price into a reserve fund over five years so that the money is on hand when needed for the purchase. Reserve funds allow the Town to spread out payments for capital investment over time, rather than paying interest on a loan or burdening taxpayers with a single, large impact in one year.

The FY 2024 audit reported the balances for 17 reserve funds, each setting aside money for a different future use. Late in calendar year 2024 and in early 2025, the Town Manager and others in leadership positions began to recognize the need to think about all these separate funds as parts of a single, overarching plan because:

- Added together, yearly contributions to reserves made up a large part of the budget.
- These seventeen or more contributions needed to be considered together, as part of a single five-year plan, rather than as so many separate savings accounts.
- The Town needed a way to establish reserves for potential future expenses that were more complicated than setting aside money each year for one-fifth the cost of a vehicle. For example, it needed to begin making sure that it had money to respond to climate impacts or funding opportunities that were almost certain to emerge, but at times that could not be predicted precisely. Put another way, it needed to begin thinking in terms of risk management as well as saving for well understood future expenditures.

5.2 The FY2026 – FY2030 Capital Improvement Plan

In planning for and building the FY 2026 budget, the Select Board, Budget Committee, and other committee chairs participated in a series of meetings aimed at creating Gouldsboro's first Capital Improvement Plan. Table G-3 presents the five year, FY2026 – FY2030 part of the plan. The Town also developed a ten-year plan. The five and ten year plans will be reviewed and updated every year as part of the budgeting process.

Table G-3: Gouldsboro Capital Improvement Plan FY2026-FY2030

		FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	5-Year Total
Ambulance Reserve (81-01-90-01)							
Ambulance, new						250,000	250,000
Chief's truck, new					60,000		60,000
Replace AEDs		10,800					10,800
Ambulance Reserve Expenditures		**10,800**	**0**	**0**	**60,000**	**250,000**	**320,800**
Annual Contribution		**63,000**	**63,000**	**63,000**	**63,000**	**50,000**	**302,000**
Balance	27,163	79,363	142,363	205,363	208,363	8,363	
Buildings & Grounds Reserve (97-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Fire Station #2/Police Station reshingle		20,000					20,000
Fire Station #3 reshingle		20,000					20,000
Town Office vault upgrade			15,000				15,000
Workshop/storage area for Public Works				30,000			
Women's Club building		20,000					20,000
B&G Reserve Expenditures		**60,000**	**15,000**	**30,000**	**0**	**0**	**105,000**
Annual Contribution		**20,000**	**20,000**	**20,000**	**10,000**	**10,000**	**80,000**
Balance	**112,154**	72,154	77,154	67,154	77,154	87,154	
Cruiser/Academy Reserve (94-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Academy costs			6,000				6,000
Cruiser for Chief, new w/upfit			72,000				72,000
Cruiser for Sgt. new w/upfit						72,000	72,000
Cruiser for officer, new w/upfit				72,000			72,000
Cruiser/Academy Reserve Expenditures		**0**	**78,000**	**72,000**	**0**	**72,000**	**222,000**
Annual Contribution		**43,000**	**43,000**	**43,000**	**43,000**	**43,000**	**215,000**
Balance	**54,757**	97,757	62,757	33,757	76,757	47,757	
Fire Equipment Reserve (90-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Class A Pumper Tanker, new				400,000			400,000
Air packs		18,000	18,000	18,000			54,000
Utility truck, new						100,000	100,000
Fire Equipment Reserve Expenditures		**18,000**	**18,000**	**418,000**	**0**	**100,000**	**554,000**
Annual Contribution		**100,000**	**100,000**	**100,000**	**70,000**	**70,000**	**440,000**
Balance	**164,800**	246,800	328,800	10,800	80,800	50,800	
Harbor Reserve (87-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Prospect Harbor ramp					*100,000*		*100,000*
Prospect Harbor breakwater							*0*
Cameras for Prospect Harbor pier		*8,000*					
South Gouldsboro wharf		0					0
Harbor Reserve Expenditures		**8,000**	**0**	**0**	**100,000**	**0**	**108,000**
Annual Contribution		**50,000**	**50,000**	**50,000**	**50,000**	**50,000**	**250,000**
Balance	**64,147**	106,147	156,147	206,147	156,147	206,147	
Jones Pond Reserve (89-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Jones Pond trails upgrade				8,000			8,000
Jones Pond cabin, rehab or demo			*50,000*				*50,000*
Jones Pond Reserve Expenditures		**0**	**50,000**	**8,000**	**0**	**0**	**58,000**
Annual Contribution		**10,000**	**10,000**	**10,000**	**10,000**	**10,000**	**50,000**
Balance	24,205	34,205	(5,795)	(3,795)	6,205	16,205	
Legal Reserve (95-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Other professional services		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Legal services		30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	
Prof. Services Reserve Expenditures		**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**175,000**
Annual Contribution		**15,000**	**30,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**150,000**
Balance	67,845	47,845	42,845	42,845	42,845	42,845	
Revaluation Reserve		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Property Revaluation				200,000			
Revaluation Reserve Expenditures		**0**	**0**	**200,000**	**0**	**0**	**200,000**
Annual Contribution		**70,000**	**67,000**	**63,000**	**0**	**0**	**200,000**
Balance	0	70,000	137,000	0	0	0	

Gouldsboro Capital Improvement Plan FY2026-FY2030 (cont'd)

		FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	5-Year Total
Paving Reserve (84-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Annual Paving projects		400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	2,000,000
Road assessment		35,000					
Paving Reserve Expenditures		**435,000**	**400,000**	**400,000**	**400,000**	**400,000**	**2,035,000**
Annual Contribution		**435,000**	**400,000**	**400,000**	**400,000**	**400,000**	**2,035,000**
Balance	385,024	385,024	385,024	385,024	385,024	385,024	
Public Works Reserve (88-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Tractor with backhoe and attachments ($68K)		14,424	14,424	14,424	14,424	14,424	72,120
Trailer ($17k)		3,606	3,606	3,606	3,606	3,606	18,030
3/4-ton truck w/plow ($80k)		16,970	16,970	16,970	16,970	16,970	84,850
Public Works Reserve Expenditures		**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**35,000**	**175,000**
Annual Contribution		**37,000**	**37,000**	**37,000**	**37,000**	**37,000**	**185,000**
Balance:	30,361	32,361	34,361	36,361	38,361	40,361	
Transfer Station Reserve (85-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Replace gate at transfer station		6,000					6,000
Transfer Station Reserve Expenditures		**6,000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6,000**
Annual Contribution		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Balance:	78,204	72,204	72,204	72,204	72,204	72,204	
Coastal Response (new fund) (91-01-90-01)		**FY2026**	**FY2027**	**FY2028**	**FY2029**	**FY2030**	**5-Year Total**
Emergency backup/(known unknowns)		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Emergency backup (unknown unknowns)		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Permanent repair of Crowley Island Rd.		15,000					15,000
Cranberry Pt. junction repair		25,000	100,000				125,000
Raise approach road to Bunkers Harbor							*0*
Coastal Response Reserve Expenditures		60,000	120,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	240,000
Annual Contribution	**0**	**75,000**	**105,000**	**100,000**	**100,000**	**100,000**	**480,000**
Balance	0	15,000	0	80,000	160,000	240,000	

	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	5-Year Total
Net Total Annual Expenditures	**667,800**	**751,000**	**1,218,000**	**650,000**	**912,000**	**4,198,800**
Net Total Annual Contribution to Reserves	**918,000**	**925,000**	**921,000**	**818,000**	**805,000**	**4,387,000**
Cumulative Reserve Balance	**1,258,860**	**1,432,860**	**1,135,860**	**1,303,860**	**1,196,860**	

6 Analyses and Policies

7 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Advance the health, safety and welfare of Gouldsboro by ensuring providing government services in a fiscally responsible manner.			
Objective	Strategy	**Responsible Party (ies)**	**Time Frame**
Establish and maintain a Capital Improvement Plan.	Update Plan annually to reflect changing objectives as appropriate.	Town Manager	Ongoing
Maintain and fund capital reserve accounts for anticipated major expenditures.	Annually review reserve account balances and adjust as appropriate	Select Board, Town Manager, Budget Committee	Ongoing
	Explore grant and bond funding options as appropriate for projects.	Select Board and/or Town Manager	Ongoing
Seek grant funding whenever possible for local projects and land acquisition.	Identify local projects for which match funding may be appropriate.	Select Board and//or Town Manager	Ongoing
	Set aside reserves as per town vote.	Town Manager/ accountant	Ongoing
Reduce residents' property tax burden	Continue with LD1 revenue limitations unless voters specifically approve otherwise.	Select Board	Ongoing
Explore further sharing of service with peninsula towns (including resources for workforce housing)	Remain active in local and regional municipal organizations	Select Board	Ongoing
Begin a town-wide property revaluation in FY2028.	Create and fund a reserve fund for this purpose.	Select Board	2026-2030

Policies
To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.
To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.
To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.
Strategies
Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.

Chapter H: 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:

- Describes current health and recreational resources in Gouldsboro;
- Assesses the current and future long-term adequacy of these resources; and
- Predicts whether the availability of open spaces for public access and recreation will be threatened by future growth and development.

2 Key Findings & Issues

As the Town's population continues to age, consideration is needed to consider 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 a venue for occasional events. Improvements are also needed to the playground at Jones Pond Park. Gouldsboro's Town Park, created in 2017, has been a great addition to Gouldsboro's community and the hope is 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 of increasing concern as more landowners are posting "no trespassing" signs. Access to water for pleasure craft and the availability of limited moorings in harbors is also a growing concern for residents. The Town needs safer pedestrian and bicycle access on local roads, and an active transportation network that is interconnected. There is also a need for improved recreational programming for senior citizens and improved access for all abilities in natural areas.

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 it 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

Survey results establish that walking is a notable activity for Gouldsboro residents as 92.7% of respondents said that they walk as a recreational activity with 72.8% participating in kayaking or canoeing, which is why access to water bodies is important for town residents. Sixty-two-point 5 percent of respondents engage in picnicking or cooking outdoors, and nearly half (47.0%) participate in bicycling as a recreational activity. Eighty six point seven percent 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. Over 70% support the Town facilitating more public access to salt water and the shoreline, and 62.6% support the Town creating more public boat ramps and launches.

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. 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.

5 Current Recreation Resources

The Town owns several recreational facilities. Jones Pond, which offers public access to boating, swimming, a small beach, and a picnic area; and the Community Recreation Center, which is utilized for many events , as well as rented out for various needs. Over the past few years, residents have shown increasing interest in using Gouldsboro's Town Park in Prospect Harbor for a variety of purposes including musical events, plays, meetings, and just as a place to sit, eat lunch, and read.

There is a small private campground on U.S. Route 1 and an upscale RV Park off West Bay Road. The privately owned beach at Sand Cove in Corea is utilized by locals and tourists. Other recreational resources are the nearby Schoodic portion of Acadia National Park, hiking trails at the Forbes Pond Preserve managed by Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Schoodic Woods Campground, Donnell Pond and Maine Public Reserve Lands, and the Down East Sunrise Trail.

While Gouldsboro residents have 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 hosts different activities and groups.

Table H-1: Recreation Resources & Facilities for Public Use

Facility	Owner	Facilities/Activities
Peninsula School	RSU 24	Playground, ball fields
Jones Pond	Town	Swimming, boating, picnic area, beach
Gouldsboro Recreation Center	Town	Baseball field, indoor facilities
Gouldsboro Town Park	Town	Gazebo, open space
Prospect Harbor Women's Club	Town	Indoor building use
Taft Point Reserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Hiking, hunting, ocean access,
Day Ridges Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Hiking, paddling, water access
Francis B. Wood Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Birding, hiking
Corea Heath Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Birding, hiking
Forbes Pond Preserve	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Birding, hiking, fishing, paddling
Stave Island	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Camping, hiking
Corea Bog Walk	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Walking/hiking
Salt Marsh Trail	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Walking/hiking

Source: Town of Gouldsboro, Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

6 Adequacy of Gouldsboro's Recreational & Health Resources

The 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 H-2. 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. Goldsboro 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 to residents. The Town's Recreation/Community Center does have an indoor basketball court.

Table H-2: State of Maine Guidelines for Parks and Recreation Services

	Present in Gouldsboro
I Administration	
1. Parks & Recreation Committee	Y
II Leadership	
1. Summer Swimming Instructor	N
2. Summer Recreation Director	N
III Public Programs	
1. Swim Instruction	N
2. Supervised Playground	N
3. Senior Citizens Club	N
4. Skiing Instruction	N
5. Ice Skating	N
6. Community-wide Events-though the Community Rec Center	Y
7. Arts & Crafts Programing-collaborate with Schoodic Arts for all	Y
8. Evening Adult Education	N
IV Public Facilities (Including School)	
A) Outdoor Facilities	
1. Community Recreation Area: 12 – 25 acres	Y
2. Softball/Little League Diamond	Y
3. Basketball Court - Indoor	Y
4. Tennis Court	N
5. Multi-purpose field	Y
6. Ice Skating	N
7. Playgrounds	Y
8. Horseshoe	N
9. Shuffleboard	N
10. Picnic Areas w/Tables etc.	Y
B) Indoor Facilities	
1. School Facilities Available to Public	Y
2. Gym or Large Multipurpose Room	Y
3. Auditorium	Y
4. Public Library	Y

Source: Recreation & Open Space Planning Workbook

7 Open Space

7.1 Inventory of Open Spaces

Table I-1 shows where the recreational open spaces are in Gouldsboro. Grand Marsh and Corea Heath are Maine Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance.

Chapter I: 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 A:

Natural Resources.

Table I-1: Public Access - Open Spaces and Access to Water Bodies

Public Access Area	Facility	Owner	Location
Recreation Area/Boat Ramp	Jones Pond	Town	Recreation Road
Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem	Grand Marsh	-	Prospect Harbor/Corea
Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem	Corea Heath	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Prospect Harbor/Corea
Carry-in Boat Access	West Bay Pond	Town	Guzzle Road
Carry-in Boat Access	Forbes Pond	MCHT	Two points along Pond
Boat Ramp	Prospect Harbor Wharf	Town	Main Street
Boat Ramp	South Gouldsboro/Bunkers Cove	Town	Shore Road
Boat Ramp	Gouldsboro Point	Town	Gouldsboro Point Rd

1.1 Inventory of Water Bodies and Adequacy of Access

Presently boat ramps and carry-in boat access locations allow public access to Jones Pond, Forbes Pond, West Bay Pond, Prospect Harbor, Bunkers Cove, and Gouldsboro Point. Other water bodies do not have convenient public access. Bodies of water within and surrounding Gouldsboro include the following:

- Forbes Pond
- Jones Pond
- Lily Pond
- Little Pond
- Lower West Bay Pondies
- West Bay Pond
- Flanders Bay
- Frenchman Bay
- Gouldsboro Bay
- Corea Harbor

1.2 Mechanism to Acquire Important Open Spaces and Access Sites

Several of the town's open space and public access sites are owned or managed by the conservation organizations Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Frenchman Bay Conservancy. Others are owned by the Town. The Town will continue to partner with these organizations in conserving and acquiring open space in Gouldsboro.

1.3 Trail Systems

Gouldsboro residents have access to many hiking trails through conservancies and land trusts as shown in Map I-1.

Map I-1: Gouldsboro Hiking Trials



One of the largest is the Forbes Pond Preserve, an undeveloped, 927-acre property acquired by Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT). There is also the Frances Wood Preserve, which has a 1.8-mile trail network and includes an observation deck. The 68-acre Taft Point Preserve and Salt Marsh Trail is another option for hikers, which is preserved by Frenchman Bay Conservancy and has a 1.5-mile trail. Corea Heath is another great option to explore and is a National Wildlife Refuge. The Day Ridges Preserve loops through cedar swamp and by a beaver pond as well as a gravel road to check out Lower West Bay Pond.

Gouldsboro residents also have access to the nearby Schoodic Section of Acadia National Park's many trails and bike paths. These include Schoodic Head and Buck Cove Mountain Trail, School Head Trail, Lower Harbor Trail, Frazer Creek Bike Path Loop, Schoodic Woods to Blueberry Hill, Acadia East Trail, and Wonsqueak Bike Path. Many of these locations offer biking, paddling, climbing, skiing and more in addition to hiking with hand curated trail maps and detailed driving directions for visitors to get to the locations. Many of Gouldsboro's trails and conserved lands offer trails on the shore for exceptional views and hiking experiences. Existing trails are well

maintained by owners of the properties and use is conflict-free. There is a need for improved accessibility to all natural areas.

1.4 Potential Threats & Impacts to Open Spaces

Changes in land ownership, whether for private use or development, could impact this important aspect of Maine life. Some residents may be fearful of allowing traditional public access to their land out of liability concerns, which can result in posting “no trespassing” signs. 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 landowners may be unaware of the law and its protection from liability claims.

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 and other activities, hunting is still only permitted on private lands or where designated acceptable by the State.

2 Local & Regional Issues and Future Needs

Locally, the Town needs safer pedestrian and bicycle access on local roads, and an active transportation network that is interconnected. There is a need for improved recreational programming for senior citizens and improved access for all abilities in natural areas; between 2000 and 2020 the 65-84 and 85+ age cohorts were the only groups to see an increase in population. Additionally, basketball facilities need upgrades, and some minor repairs are needed on the community recreation center, as well as needed ongoing repairs for the Prospect Harbor Women’s Club, which serves as a larger community meeting place and occasional events. The Town also needs a better system for disseminating information regarding programs, facilities, locations, and schedules.

Increased usage of regional recreational facilities can potentially result in increased traffic and maintenance costs. Waste being left in public and natural areas is another issue that presents additional costs to the municipalities that host such facilities, as well as to the private organizations that own them. Improved informational signage with contact information, along with providing additional waste receptacles could help reduce the amount of waste left behind.

3 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: 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.			
Objective	**Strategies**	**Responsible Party (ies)**	**Timeline**
Maintain and improve access for recreational facilities and resources for all ages and abilities.	Work with local land trusts, conservation groups, and affiliated organizations to identify and seek funding to support upgrades to Americans with Disabilities Act standards.	Select Board, designees, Recreation Committee	Ongoing
	Locate historic roads and trails no longer in use for improvement and public access.	Land Trusts/Historical Society/volunteers	Ongoing
	Continue to identify and partner with other organizations to preserve open space, as appropriate	Select Board or designees	Ongoing
	Continue to maintain public access to waterbodies for recreational use.	Select Board	Ongoing
Monitor, change, update, or improve recreational facilities and services based on changing needs of Gouldsboro.	Create a 5–10-year plan for recreational facility and property upgrades or expansion that is integrated into the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.	Recreation Committee, CEO, Select Board	Within 5 years
	Work with Maine Coast Heritage Trust and landowners to identify, expand and publicize kayaking/canoe access points.	Recreation Committee	Ongoing
	Work with local land trusts and conservation organizations to develop a town-wide map of walking and biking trails.	Recreation Committee	Ongoing

Policies
To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.
To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major public access point to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with property owners to address concerns.
Strategies
Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.
Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
Work with local land trusts or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.

Chapter J: Marine Resources

1 Purpose

It is important that a Comprehensive Plan provides a thorough analysis of the town's strong dependence on fisheries-related employment and must address critical marine resource issues.

Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes Gouldsboro's current coastal marine resource areas, facilities, and water-dependent uses and changes since the last comprehensive plan update
- Assesses the adequacy of existing facilities and public access points to handle current and projected use demands
- Assesses the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve coastal marine resource areas and water-dependent uses
- Anticipates and prepares for climate change impacts on marine infrastructure,

2 Key Findings and Issues

Marine resources contribute in meaningful ways to Gouldsboro's economic and recreational activities. The local fishing community, which has flourished in the past, is now facing serious challenges that include climate change, international tariffs, the potential threat of diseases spreading and threatening local waters, and adverse impacts due to reduced access to ocean-based livelihoods. With increased storm frequency and intensity, there will likely be increased risk from pollution runoff to intertidal harvesting and economic activity, making water quality monitoring, and stormwater management increasingly important.

Gouldsboro took a strong stand in recent years to protect against unwanted industrial-scale aquaculture farming and paved the way for other towns to do likewise. Other concerns that warrant consideration and review include working waterfront access, parking, and harbor plan review. Gouldsboro residents want to maintain the quality of existing marine resources and continue to promote the preservation of the town's heritage fishing community by assessing and repairing harbor infrastructure as needed.

In October 2025, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) released its American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment,[1] which found that the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock is not depleted but has declined 34% since peak levels in 2018, and overfishing is occurring. The report notes that "In the GOM/GBK stock, recruitment and spawning stock biomass estimates have declined in recent years from record highs. Recent exploitation is just above the exploitation threshold, indicating overfishing is occurring." Maine Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Carl Wilson urged caution in interpreting this report[2] and emphasized the importance of input from the Maine lobster industry. In the

[1] https://asmfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/pr27AmLobsterBenchmarkStockAssmt.pdf

[2] https://www.maine.gov/dmr/news/thu-10302025-1200-statement-dmr-commissioner-asmfc-american-lobster-benchmark-stock-assessment

context of this Comprehensive Plan, the takeaway is that the fishery is changing and Gouldsboro should continue steps it is already taken to provide opportunities for its fishermen to diversify their income streams from the sea.

3 Key Findings and Issues from 2005 Plan

The Plan stated that Gouldsboro had an abundance of marine resources, but that data suggested a decrease in marine resource-based employment. Another issue was limited public access to the shore, inadequate parking, docking facilities, and other limitations to public access. There was also a demand for additional moorings. The plan stressed the importance of a Comprehensive Harbor Management Plan to anticipate future growth and ensure adequate infrastructure for a working waterfront.

The 2005 plan indicated the community's wishes to protect and enhance its marine resources in a way that ensures usage by all residents and taxpayers while avoiding any harm to long-term viability. Important issues included improving marine access for commercial fishing interests and the public, the need to dredge harbors with minimal impact on sensitive marine resources, and constructing a breakwater in Prospect Harbor. Marine water quality, ways to minimize any threats, water dependent uses, shellfish restoration, and preserving the fishing community were discussed and implementation strategies were suggested.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

Increasing parking at saltwater access locations ranked as important for residents, with 62.3% of respondents in favor, and 65.7% support expanded access to freshwater resources. Gouldsboro residents are concerned about protecting all water resources, whether fresh or saltwater, ponds, streams, rivers and shoreline. Residents overwhelmingly do not approve of any large-scale aquaculture leases or operations within the town. Table J-1 summarizes other survey results

Table J-1: Opinion Survey Results.

Question	Yes	No
Do you support large-scale aquaculture leases and operations within Gouldsboro?	8.2%	91.8%
Support the Town dredging harbors to allow for more moorings and safe passage of larger vessels?	29.8%	70.2%
Support the Town facilitate more public access to saltwater and the shoreline?	62.3%	37.7%
Support creating more public boat ramps and launches?	62.6%	37.4%
Should the Town encourage more commercial fishing?	42.4 %	57.6%

5 Marine Resource Inventory

5.1 Shellfish

5.1.1 Shellfish Landings

Softshell Clam is the only species managed by Gouldsboro's shellfish committee. Additionally, Table J-2 tracks Gouldsboro softshell clam landings and dollar values from 2007 to 2022.

Table J-2: Historic Maine Fisheries Data on Annual Softshell Clam Harvest in Gouldsboro

Year	Pounds	Value
2007	42,871	$53,464
2008	61,118	$77,889
2009	82,657	$101,720
2010	92,720	$112,318
2011	122,534	$173,014
2012	109,806	$156,268
2013	106,693	$159,867
2014	83,906	$156,623
2015	85,634	$203,472
2016	75,675	$152,601
2017	43,932	$69,036
2018	60,223	$102,900
2019	52,275	$124,338
2020	41,352	$97,475
2021	42,202	$132,445
2022	10,175	$28,789

Source: Gouldsboro Shellfish Committee

5.1.2 Shellfish Safety

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) conducts regular and ongoing monitoring of water quality to determine where fishery and harvest closings are necessary. Several Gouldsboro areas are currently closed to shellfish harvesting due to bacterial contamination from a point source of pollution[3]. This is to be expected, as there are ten identified overboard discharge sites in Gouldsboro. Six are in Birch Harbor and four in Corea. An overboard discharge (OBD) is a discharge of treated wastewater generated at residential or commercial locations directly into Maine's rivers, streams and the ocean, rather than being conveyed to sewage treatment facilities. Most OBDs in Maine are associated with residential dwellings and small commercial operations along the coast. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has regulated OBD permits since the 1970s for properties that do not have access to sewer lines or land suitable for septic system installation. The number of OBD permits decreased by 50% from 1987 to 2010. OBDs can negatively impact water quality, which can have consequences for wildlife and for fisheries (This and more information can be found at https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/wd/OBD/index.html and at https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/wd/OBD/ip_obd.pdf).

Therefore, the Department of Marine Resources closes shellfish growing areas in a buffer area around an OBD as a precaution. See Table J-3 for a summary.

[3] See Shellfish Harvesting Area Classification – Notification of Changes August 25, 2023, Growing Area EJ, Schoodic Point to Dyer Point https://www.maine.gov/dmr/sites/maine.gov.dmr/files/closures/EJ.pdf

Table J-3: Prohibited Shellfish Harvesting Areas

Growing Area	Acreage
P2. Sand Cove (Gouldsboro) west of a line beginning at the eastern tip of Sampson Point running southwest to the opposite shore forming the south side of an unnamed cove.	0.49
P3. Corea Harbor (Gouldsboro): South and west of a line beginning at the east tip of Youngs Point then running southeast to the west tip of Sheep Island; and north of a line beginning at the west tip of Sheep Island, running southwest to the southern tip of an unnamed point of land forming the western mouth of Corea Harbor.	66.1
P4. Prospect Harbor (Gouldsboro): west of a line beginning at the most southeastern tip of Pettees Point, running north to the USCG navigational aid "Gong 3" (east of Clarks Ledge), then running northwest to an unnamed point on the west shore of Inner Harbor approximately 767 yards south of the mouth of Forbes Stream.	116.37
P5. Shark Cove (Gouldsboro): northeast of a line beginning at a red-painted post at the northwest mouth of Shark Cove, running southeast to a red-painted post on the southeast mouth of Shark Cove.	21.03
P6. Birch Harbor (Gouldsboro): northwest of a line beginning at the eastern tip of an unnamed point on the southwest shore of Birch Harbor located approximately 600 yards south-southeast of the Rt. 186 bridge running northeast to another unnamed point on the north shore approximately 467 yards southeast of the Rt. 186 bridge.	16.05

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources

5.1.3 Shellfish Conservation

Other areas are closed periodically for reseeding or other conservation purposes as determined by the Town Shellfish Committee. The closed areas thus change periodically and may have changed by the time this document is printed.

The total intertidal acreage closed, because of pollution is approximately 220. These numbers may have changed since last reviewed in March 2024. The total intertidal area in the Town of Gouldsboro is approximately 3,458 acres and the total intertidal clam habitat is 1,964 acres.

Gouldsboro shellfish conservation and restoration work involves more than conservation closures that typically rotate through harvest areas on a seasonal basis. Harvesters licensed to dig in Gouldsboro are required to complete ten hours of conservation time each year to qualify for license renewal. Conservation time includes reseeding clam flats, placing brush on flats to improve natural clam settlement, shellfish surveys, and other conservation work as required.

For almost a decade, the Gouldsboro Shellfish Committee has reseeded clam flats with juvenile clams with shell lengths ranging from 12mm to 18mm. Up until recently, the committee also placed nets over seeded areas during the growing season to protect seeded areas and then removed the nets in the fall. Recently, the committee has had some success with seeding without use of nets,which reduces the amount of labor involved in flat restoration.

For five years, up until last year, Gouldsboro experimented with growing its own clams in its “Clam Lab.” The goal of this experimentation has been to produce much larger quantities of

seed clams relatively inexpensively. This operation, supported by grant-funded interns, succeeded in developing increasingly productive and economical procedures for small scale clam culture as documented on the Gouldsboro Shore website (www.gouldsboroshore.me). However, the operation encountered difficulties due to unusually high numbers of small green crabs coming into the nursery operation through the sea water circulation system. Comparison of results with other, similar systems in different locations suggested that the lab's location in Bunkers Harbor may have contributed to the green crab problem. Bunkers Harbor is home to a lobster buying and bait sales operation that results in substantial lobster and bait materials in the water near the water intake for the lab, making the site nearly ideal for green crabs.

5.1.4 Regional Collaboration

The January 2024 destroyed parts of the lab operation, leading to a shutdown in 2024 and 2025. As 2025 closed, Gouldsboro was working with the Frenchman Bay Regional Shellfish Committee (Ellsworth, Trenton, Lamoine, Franklin, Sullivan, Hancock, and Sorrento) to explore moving and restarting the clam nursery operation in Taunton Bay, where the large tidal flows keep the water well aerated and relatively free of waste from lobster operations. If the move is successful, the clam nursery operations costs and benefits will be shared regionally.

Gouldsboro is also notable for being the first town in Maine to institute a 4-inch upper limit on the size of harvestable clams. The rationale behind the limit is that large clams are produce significantly greater amounts of clam spat than smaller clams. The Maine Shellfish Advisory Council is aware of the change, and the DMR's Eastern Region scientist is assisting Gouldsboro in monitoring its impacts of this change.

5.2 Lobster and Other Species

According to DMR data, there were 58 marine resource harvester licenses issued in Gouldsboro during 2022. Table J-4 summarizes the licenses held in Gouldsboro by type.

While Gouldsboro residents may hold licenses and harvest elsewhere, the only species that have been hauled into Gouldsboro ports in recent years are American lobster, Jonah crab, soft-shell clam, elvers, and sea scallops. By far the most lucrative fishery in Gouldsboro is the lobster catch. According to preliminary DMR data, the total weight of lobster brought to port in Gouldsboro and South Gouldsboro in 2019 and 2020 was 761,838 pounds, with a value of $3,208,397.90. In 2009-2010, the lobster catch in these two ports was 739,795 pounds, worth $2,065,817. Although fisheries tend to ebb and flow in abundance and market share, these data suggest that the lobster fishery remains robust and important and is becoming more lucrative.

Table J-4: 2022 Harvester Licenses by Type

License Type	Number
Commercial Fishing Crew (CFC)	2
Commercial Fishing Single (CFS)	6
Commercial Shellfish (CS)	6
Commercial Shellfish +70 (CSO)	1
Elver 1 Fyke Net (E1)	1
Lobster/Crab +70 (LCO)	1

Lobster/Crab Apprentice (LA)	2
Lobster/Crab Class 1 (LC1)	3
Lobster/Crab Class 2 (LC2)	3
Lobster/Crab Class 3 (LC3)	7
Lobster/Crab Non-Commercial (LNC)	3
Lobster/Crab student (LCS)	6
Marine Worm Digging (MWD)	6
Menhaden Commercial (MENC)	1
Menhaden Non-Commercial (MENR)	2
Quahog Mahogany (QM)	1
Recreational Saltwater Fishing Operator (SWRO)	1
Recreational Saltwater Registry (SWR)	1
Scallop Diver (SDI)	1
Scallop Dragger (SD)	2
Sea Urchin Diver (SUH)	1
Seaweed (SW)	1
Total	**58**

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources

Gouldsboro is somewhat unusual in that it is located at the dividing point between State Lobster Zones A and B. South Gouldsboro harbor, opening onto Frenchman Bay, is in Zone B; the rest of Gouldsboro is in Zone A. Table J-5 summarizes catch data reported for all of Gouldsboro (both Zones) from 2015 to 2020 in terms of weight, value, trips made, and number of harvesters.

Table J-5: Reported Catch at the Ports in Gouldsboro and South Gouldsboro, 2015-2020

Species	Total Weight (lb.)	Total Value ($)	Total # Trips	Total # Harvesters
Crab Jonah	3,567	1,924	13	5
Scallop Sea	10,802	1,347,15	126	26
Clam Soft	359,092	749,820	3,634	173
Elver	910	1,446,714	752	230
Lobster American	3,138,844	10,525,266	7326	168

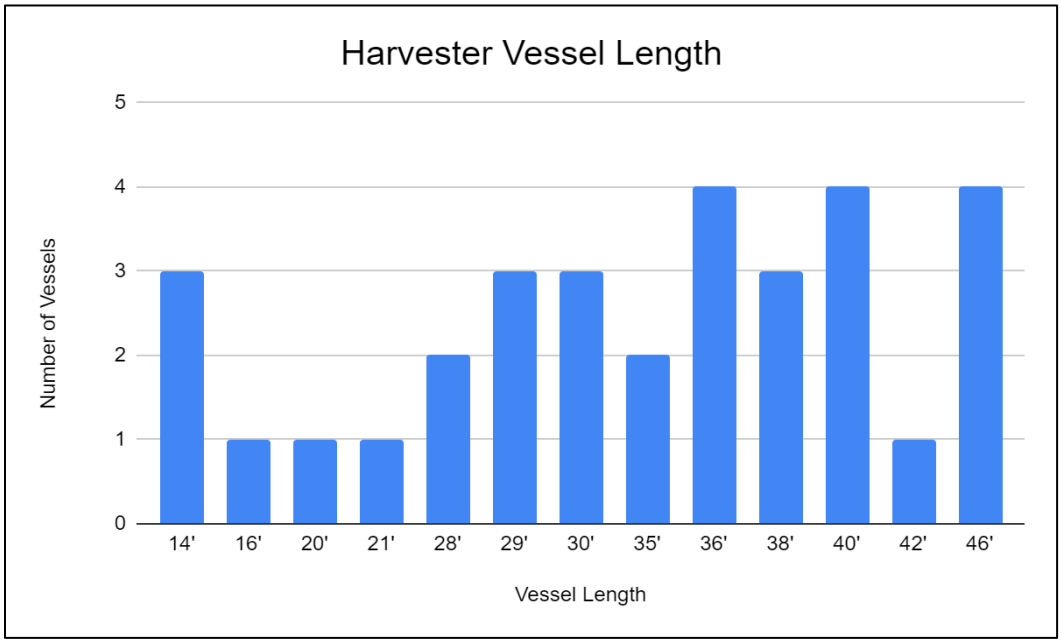
Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources

As noted at the outset of this chapter, such large dependence on lobster is a source of economic risk to fishermen and to the community.

5.3 Fishing Vessels

Error! Reference source not found. illustrates Gouldsboro harvester vessels by length. Vessel lengths were not reported for 26 vessels. Table J-7 summaries the types of vessels operating out of Gouldsboro along with the number of owners.

Table J-6: 2022 Harvester Vessel Length



Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources
Note: Excludes 26 vessel lengths not reported

Table J-7: Documented Vessel Owners in Gouldsboro, 2022

Type of Vessel Owners	# of Owners
Recreational Boats	6
Commercial Fishing Boats	34
Freight Barges	0
Passenger Boats	0
Other Vessels	0
Total	**40**

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources

5.4 Aquaculture

5.4.1 Large Scale Finfish Aquaculture

According to the Department of Marine Resources, Gouldsboro was the first town in Maine to impose a moratorium specifically on large-scale finfish aquaculture in November of 2021 with other coastal communities following suit. As the Town reviews its ordinances, the Planning Board continues its work on creating a large-scale finfish licensing ordinance. There are concerns within the community about the impact on the environment, including chemical and biological pollution, transmission of disease and parasites to migrating fish, fecal matter unsustainable feeds, and competition for coastal space.

5.4.2 Small Scale, Locally Owned Aquaculture

In contrast to large scale, fin fish aquaculture, Gouldsboro has been supportive of small, locally owned operations. Springtide Seaweed, operating out of South Gouldsboro harbor, is one example of locally owned aquaculture in Gouldsboro. Springtide harvests and processes kelp and other seaweed products. As noted in Chapter C: Economy, it is one of Gouldsboro's larger

employers with between 10 and 19 employees. On the other side of Gouldsboro, in Corea, Joe Young's Schoodic Sea Farm sells fresh oysters at a local farmers market and directly at the farm. Schoodic Sea Farm also provides oysters to Corea's Lunch on the Wharf.

5.5 Elvers

Elvers remain one of the most valuable species harvested in Maine. Despite a decrease in per-pound value of more than $1,500 in 2021, Maine's elver fishery rebounded on the strength of a per pound value in 2023 of more than $2,000. The overall landed value of more than $16 million was an increase of more than $10 million over the previous year. More than 2,600 people applied to the lottery for a 2022 harvester license for one of only 13 available spots resulting from licenses not renewed in 2020 and 2021.

5.6 Harbors, Marinas, and Other Public Access to the Coastal Shore

Public access points include Gouldsboro Point, Prospect Harbor, Bunkers Harbor and South Gouldsboro. There are no access points in Corea or Birch Harbor. Parking continues to be inadequate at all points. The previous harbor master believed there was a need for dredging to add additional piers, floats, and other docking facilities, and this needs to be on the list of priorities to research for the future of Gouldsboro.

The Town has a three quarter-acre, shorefront parcel on Lighthouse Point Road that opens onto Prospect Harbor's eastern short for pedestrian water access by shellfish harvesters and others. The small, half-tide ramps and parking areas at Bunkers Harbor, South Gouldsboro, Gouldsboro Point and West Bay Stream continue to be inadequate.

There are approximately 150 moorings in town. Gouldsboro's Harbor Master has updated the mapping of the number of mooring locations within Gouldsboro. Corea has 42, Gouldsboro Bay 10, Bunkers Harbor 20, Prospect Harbor 29, South Gouldsboro 20 and Flanders Bay 10.

The Town's Harbor Management Ordinance was adopted in 1984 and last revised in 2025. It governs "all maritime activities on and within the tidal and inland waters located within the boundaries of the Town of Gouldsboro." There are standards and procedures for wharves, docks, piers, floats and ramps as well as for moorings and the operation of vehicles.

Currently there is no local or regional harbor management plan. The 2005 Plan stated that a comprehensive harbor management plan needs to be undertaken, and that it should address harbor access and use, parking and mooring plans. It was also recommended in the 2005 Plan that a harbor management plan examine overall use and industry trends while considering the environmental impacts of harbor improvements.

6 Adequacy of Access

The Town has made some minor repairs to piers in recent years and plans to continue discussions towards its goal of providing better public access to the coastal shore for its citizens and visitors. The Town has opened the three-quarter acre Town-owned lot on Lighthouse Point Road, which includes a parking area for public access. The Town will continue to investigate the potential development of other feasible access points.

Gouldsboro has been notably active and visible in attending to loss of shore access for shellfish harvesters. Working with the Shellfish Committee, Gouldsboro's Coastal Resilience Committee mapped the existing access areas and, working with the Shellfish Warden, began working toward protecting existing areas and, with help from local land trusts, identifying new ones.

One new approach to protecting "on-foot" access for shellfish harvesters involves creating a limited-term, renewable license agreement for shore access that Gouldsboro developed with help from Maine Coast Heritage Trust[4]. The agreement is between the Town and property owners providing the access. With a map, the agreement identifies where access is permitted and other constraints that the owners want to place on access. Importantly, it puts the Town, its Shellfish Warden, and its Shellfish Committee between the property owners and the shellfish harvesters. If the property owners have a problem with harvester activities, they simply notify the town rather than having to find and deal with harvesters.

7 Water-Dependent Uses

Water-dependent uses are defined as those uses that require direct access to coastal waters and cannot be located away from these waters. These would include fishing operations and piers as well as seafood processing, including lobster, clams, rockweed, kelp, mussels, horseshoe crab, and marine worms, which are all significant contributors to Gouldsboro's economy and must be considered. Water dependent businesses also include marine transportation companies, commercial fishing, and charter boats which require infrastructure located on or adjacent to water to maintain their operations.

Gouldsboro's Shoreland zoning Ordinance provides a balance between water-dependent and other uses, as well as for commercial and recreational uses. In 2025, the town approved a revised zoning change for a vacant parcel zoned as Commercial Fisheries to General District Development with added restrictions to keep the site as a working waterfront. This change allows commerce, keeping with the scale and balance of the town.

The town of Gouldsboro has a municipal interest in the conservation, beneficial use and effective management of its coastal resources, including Coastal Waters and Coastal Wetlands. The Town has passed the Industrial-Scale Finfish Aquaculture Licensing Ordinance pursuant to the enabling provisions of Article VIII, Part 2, of the Maine Constitution, the provision of Title 30-A.M.R.S § 3001(Home Rule), the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, Title 30-A.M.R.S. § 4301, ***et seq***., and title 38-A §§ 1-13 (Harbor Masters).

8 Effectiveness of Existing Measures

8.1 Preserving Marine Resources

The primary way that marine resources are protected in Gouldsboro is through its State-required Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, last revised in August of 2023. Gouldsboro may also want to review its current treatment of water quality concerns, such as storm water runoff

[4] Zoellick, Bill, Pauline V. Angione, Emily Farr, Ada Fisher, Jessica G. Joyce, B Lauer, Marissa McMahan Ph.D., Michael Pinkham, and Vicki Rea. "Getting to the Shore on Foot: Sustaining Harvester Access." Maine Policy Review 32.2 (2023) : 100-103, https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol32/iss2/16.

from development, and revise ordinances to call for stricter attention to erosion and sedimentation prevention in new subdivisions. Site plan review procedures could stress standards for the extent of impervious surface and drainage.

Vegetative clearing and the construction of large homes have altered the view of the shorefront from the water. Recently, the Town's Code Enforcement Officer has been successful in enforcing compliance with existing shoreland zoning standards. Continued attention to the impact of shoreland development is essential.

Overall, it is becoming more difficult for Gouldsboro and other coastal towns to retain their fishing heritage. The high price of shoreland, competition for public access, and federal fishing restrictions are making fishing more challenging. One specific measure that could be considered is a shoreland zoning restriction to protect water-dependent uses from being converted to residential use. There is currently no such protection in our Town.

8.2 Adapting to Climate Change

As part of Gouldsboro's implementation of recommendations by the Maine Climate Council, Gouldsboro has committed to manage 1.5 feet of relative sea-level rise (SLR) by 2050, relative to the year 2000, and 3.9 feet of SLR by the year 2100. In practice, Gouldsboro has already experienced storm events that resulted in more than 3.9 feet of effective sea-level increase and is now planning for 3.9 of SLR in designs for municipal harbor infrastructure. Town ordinances and the Planning Board's Site Plan Review procedures should be modified to reflect the expectation that shoreland infrastructure must be designed and built to be resilient in storm surges that are at least as large as those we have already experienced.

As described in Chapter N: Climate Adaptation, Maine's climate is getting wetter, with more high-intensity precipitation. By State law, shellfish harvesting areas are closed automatically when rainfall in an area exceeds two inches in 24 hours, or one inch in sensitive areas, in order to prevent the risk of food poisoning from consuming bacteria shellfish. Shellfish harvesters have already noticed that long rain closures have become more frequent.

9 Regional Marine Resource Collaboration

Gouldsboro has emerged as a leader in addressing problems related to shore access, shellfish management, and responding to the threats of rising seas and stronger storms and storm surge. Articles in *Maine Policy Review*[5] from Gouldsboro and about Gouldsboro demonstrate the Town's interest in sharing what it is learning with other communities. Given the challenges of managing shore access and threats to working waterfronts caused by demographic and climate change, collaboration between small rural communities, particularly neighboring communities, is essential.

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[5] Ibid.

Freer, Rachel, Karen H. Bieluch, and Michael Cox. "The Impact of Maine's Municipal Shellfish Management on Clam Harvester Motivation to Participate in Resource Conservation." Maine Policy Review 34.1 (2025) : 95-102, https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol34/iss1/12

Zoellick, Bill, James F. Fisher, and Janna Richards. "From Resilience Planning to Action: Small Towns and Big Costs." Maine Policy Review 34.1 (2025) (in press)

10 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Support stewardship of Gouldsboro's marine resources and protect its working waterfront.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Protect, maintain, and when warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality.	Promote strict enforcement of existing and new town ordinances that affect marine water quality.	Harbor Master, CEO	Ongoing
	Engage in strict enforcement of municipal, state, and federal regulations regarding overboard discharges on land and from all vessels including but not limited to commercial vessels and recreational vessels.	Harbor Master, Harbor Committee	Ongoing
	Engage in strict enforcement of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.	CEO	Ongoing
	Review and update ordinances to ensure water quality is protected in marine watersheds through standards that consider storm water runoff, extent of impervious surfaces, and other non-point sources of pollution.	Planning Board	Within 3-5 years of plan approval - Ongoing
Protect harbors from incompatible development.	Review relevant ordinances to ensure sufficient protections	Planning Board	Ongoing
Prevent water-dependent uses from being converted to residential use.	Review relevant ordinances to ensure sufficient protections	Planning Board	Ongoing
Maintain and where possible, improve harbor facilities.	Identify needs for additional or improved recreational and commercial access including parking, boat launches, fishing piers and swimming access.	Harbor Committee, Harbor Master	Ongoing
Protect and improve public access to marine resources.	Maintain up-to-date maps and records of shore access points; work with local land trusts to expand the number of access points.	Shellfish Warden, Shellfish Committee, Harbor Committee	Ongoing
Make waterfront infrastructure more climate resilient	Identify areas vulnerable to sea level rise and storm damage; seek external funding support for design work and construction to improve resilience	Coastal Resilience Committee and Harbor Master	Ongoing

Policies
To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality.
To foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.
To maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.
To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.
Strategies
Enforce relevant ordinances.
Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).
Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.
Support and implement of local harbor management plans.
Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks.
Plan for rising seas and larger storms.

Chapter K: Water Resources

1 Purpose

This chapter presents an overview of Gouldsboro's water resources with special attention to the Town's drinking water. Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes the characteristics, uses, and quality of Gouldsboro's significant water resources;
- Predicts and considers potential negative impacts to water quality caused by future growth and development as well as climate change;
- Assesses the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve significant water resources.

2 Key Findings and Issues

Gouldsboro residents depend primarily upon drilled bedrock wells for their drinking water, and this normally provides adequate water for domestic use. There are no known gravel aquifers supporting Gouldsboro wells. Lack of information on groundwater resources, first mentioned in the 1993 plan and again in the 2005 plan, remains a major concern for Gouldsboro. Because there is no public water system, future development depends on finding adequate ground water supplies. The Town does not have an estimate of the size and location of those supplies. If new residential or commercial places substantial new demands groundwater resources, groundwater availability may become a growth limiting factor.

While most water resources within 250 feet of the shore, rivers, certain streams, and great ponds are protected by shoreland zoning, there is no zoning of inland areas. Currently there are mostly anecdotal reports of problems with wells in Gouldsboro, ranging from saltwater intrusion to problems with concentrations of iron, manganese or arsenic, or problems with acidity. The prevalence of these problems is unknown. A comprehensive survey of existing wells would provide valuable information for planning future growth. Further in-depth studies would help ensure adequate ground water supplies for Gouldsboro.

The lack of town-wide zoning limits the Town's ability to prevent certain uses from locating in vulnerable areas and causing harm to water resources. For example, there are no municipal ordinances prohibiting a commercial establishment with large areas of impervious surface from locating in watershed areas. There are, however, state standards that regulate developments of one or more acres of impervious surface or five acres or more of disturbed area. The Planning Board approved an amendment to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, approved by voters in December 2023, that requires property owners to obtain a permit for septic system repairs. This will make the Town aware of defective septic systems and ensure that corrective action is taken in a timely manner.

Gouldsboro's flood plain map was last revised in September of 2020.

2.1 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

The 2005 Plan noted that Gouldsboro took several measures between 1993 and 2003 to protect its water resources. This included enactment of a Site Plan Review Ordinance and revisions to the Subdivision Ordinance to include detailed phosphorus management standards. Both ordinances address storm-water run-off and nonpoint source pollution. These provisions are essentially those contained in the model 1996 subdivision ordinance standards developed by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission.

In 2005, there were no publicly owned water systems, but there were four public water systems as defined by the Maine Drinking Water Program, including wells serving Peninsula School, a campground, a commercial establishment, and a major employer.

The Town identified existing overboard discharges as the only known point source of pollution to water resources and was at the time collaborating with DEP to address these. The 2005 plan identified the town sand pile and former US Navy properties (and other handlers of hazardous waste), stormwater runoff and motorboats as possible contributors of nonpoint source pollution to water resources.

Additional threats and considerations identified in the 2005 Plan included the existence of privately owned dams impacting water levels of public water resources, and the coordination with neighboring towns for protection of water resources that cross municipal boundaries. The plan also identified the need for a comprehensive study of the Town's groundwater resources, especially in more densely settled areas. Ensuring that future development protects quality and quantity of groundwater, about which little was known, was considered a key water resource issue facing the town.

The Town identified the need to take steps to ensure it has an adequate supply of groundwater as the town continues to grow.

2.2 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

The survey indicates that the responding residents hold protecting water resources as a high priority. Almost 80% of the respondents felt there should be more water quality monitoring and that a plan to reduce or/remediate pollution sources should be developed. A similar number (76%) responded that protecting groundwater was very important; 74% ranked protecting rivers and streams as very important; and 68% ranked protecting wetlands as very important. Respondents were split almost evenly when asked about the quality of the Town's stormwater management: 40% felt storm water management ranked as excellent or good, whereas 39% felt it was fair to poor.

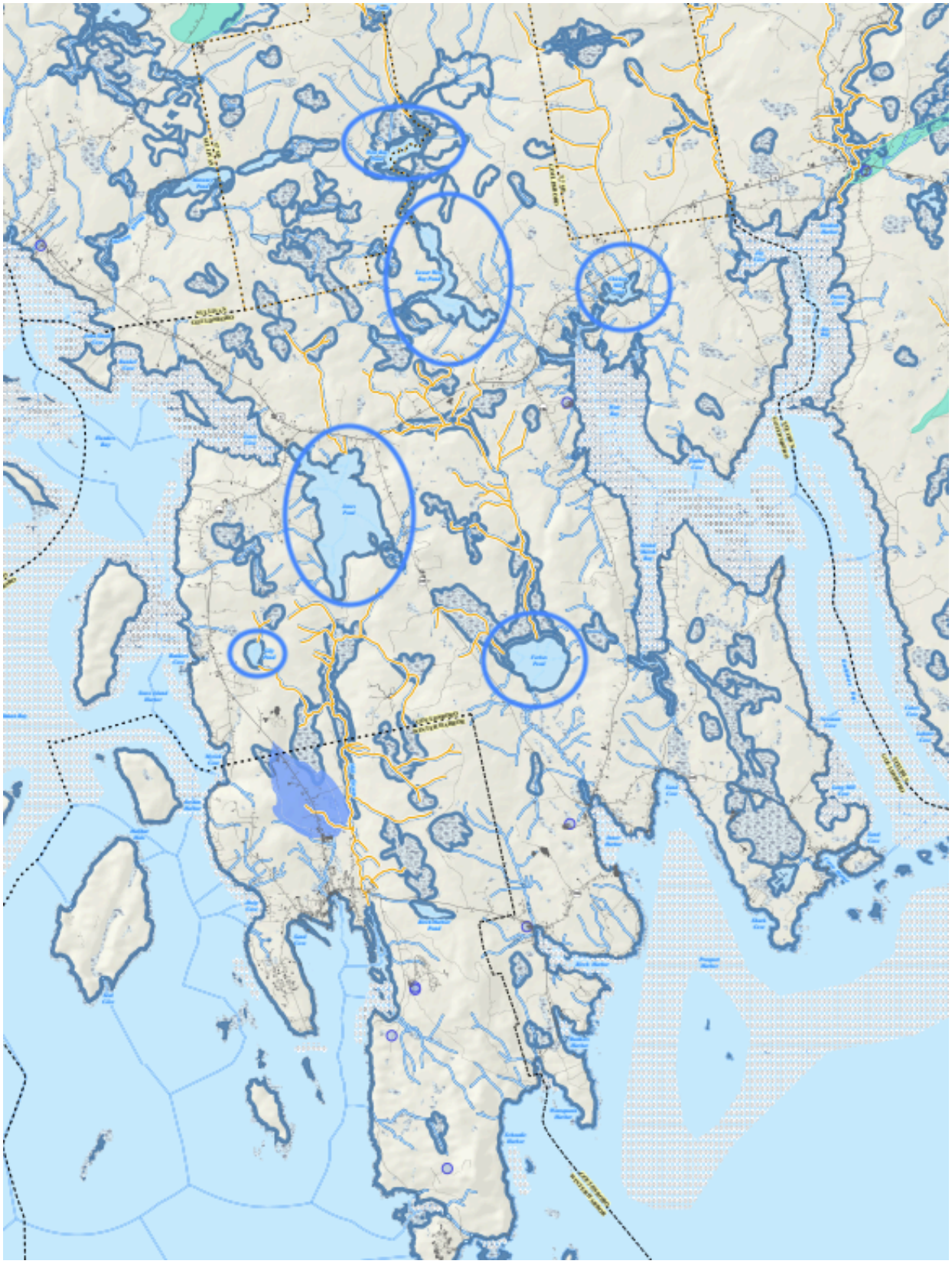
3 Surface Water Resources

3.1 Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams & Watersheds

Map K-1 provides an overview of Gouldsboro's freshwater resources, and Figure K-1 provides a legend for the map. There are five Great Ponds (naturally made freshwater ponds greater than 10 acres in area) that are partially or entirely located in Gouldsboro, and one that is man-made (Chicken Mill Pond). Blue ovals surround the six Great Ponds.

Map K-1: Gouldsboro's Water Resources

(Map legend is on next page)

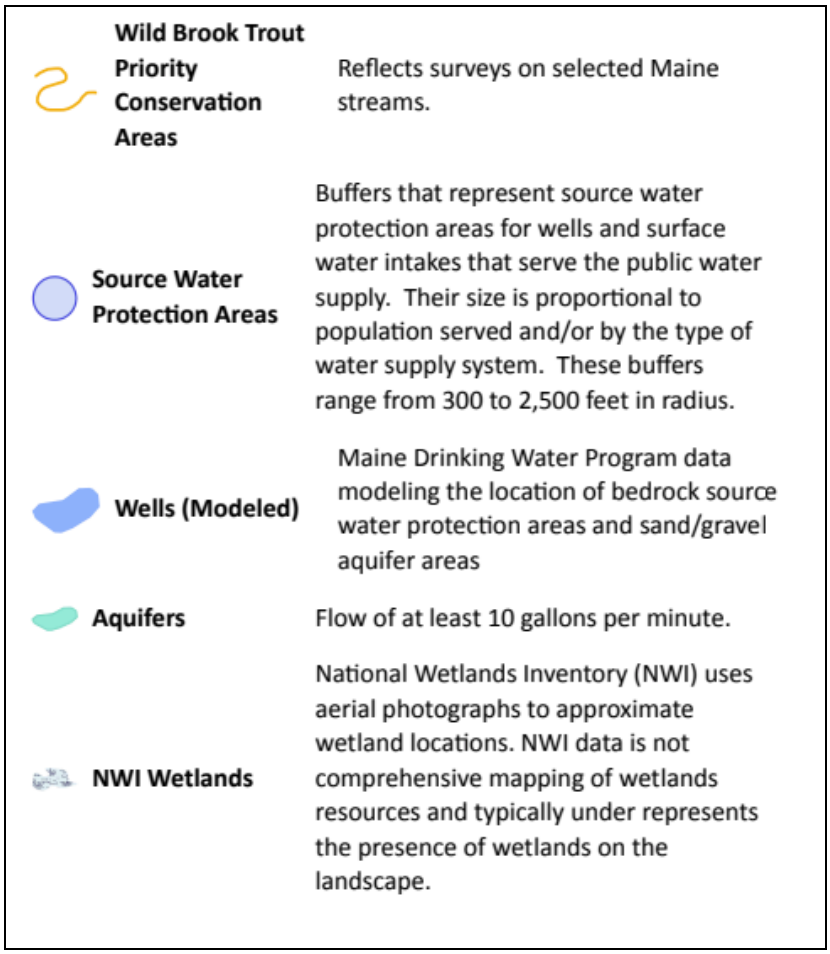


The original, zoomable version of this map is available on the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) website. Using the online version makes it possible to see map details. If that link is out of date or if you are viewing this Comprehensive Plan on paper, the most recent version may be available under the "Beginning with Habitat" section under "Programs and Resources" on the MDIFW site.

Water quality and species habitat in and around Great Ponds are protected by state laws and the National Resources Protection Act. The smaller ponds on the map do not have such protection. Protecting pond water quality is important because the ponds recharge the water stored in the bedrock.

A pond's watershed is all the land area and streams that drain into the pond. The wetlands surrounding a pond (the blue, stippled areas on the map) are especially important to the health of the pond and the quality of the water.

Figure K-1: Legend for Map J-1



Gouldsboro's Great Ponds share several watersheds with adjoining towns. (See Table K-1.) Consequently, water quality protection for some ponds may be best addressed in cooperation with those communities.

All of Gouldsboro's freshwater ponds have susceptibility to phosphorus loading and other contaminants that have been identified by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) as an important factor in water-body quality. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element that clings to soil particles and organic matter. For this reason, soil runoff and sedimentation are the single biggest source of pollution to freshwater bodies in Maine. Increased phosphorus runoff into a lake can cause excessive algae growth which can impair lake water quality. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has not identified any Gouldsboro ponds or other water sources as being threatened or impaired. Also, no invasive species have been reported found in any of the ponds in Gouldsboro.

Table K-1: Characteristics of Gouldsboro's Ponds

Name	Area (acres)	Perimeter (miles)	Mean Depth (feet)	Max Depth (feet)	% 500-m buffer covered by impervious surface	Trophic State* (chlorophyll-a)	Elevation (feet)	Watershed Towns
Forbes Pond	192	2.3	7	11	0.2%	<=7 ug/L	20	Gouldsboro
Jones Pond	462	8.1	15	48	2.9%	<=7 ug/L	53	Gouldsboro, Sullivan, T7SD
Lily Pond	19	0.7	12	22	0.2%	<=7 ug/L	102	Gouldsboro
Chicken Mill Pond	17	1.8	4	7	NA	<=7 ug/L	<10	Gouldsboro
Lower West Bay Pond	120	5.5	unknown	unknown	1.0%	<=7 ug/L	30	Gouldsboro, T7SD
West Bay Pond	226	7.5	5	10	0.0%	<=7 ug/L	31	Gouldsboro, T7SD
Total	**1,036**							

*__Trophic states__ are based on lake fertility, specifically the productivity or "nourishment" in a waterbody. More fertile lakes have more nutrients and therefore more plants and algae. **Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic:** <=7 ug/L Chlorophyll-a) Describes a waterbody of low to moderate biological productivity and higher transparency or clarity. **Eutrophic to Hypereutrophic** (>7-30 Chlorophyll-a): A well-nourished waterbody, very productive, supporting a diverse array of organisms. Usually, low transparency is due to high algae and chlorophyll-a content.

Sources: The Nature Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust:Lakes Stewards of Maine

MDEP standards for the level of protection are advisory only but can be used as a planning guide for allocating or limiting development in the watershed. Gouldsboro and many other communities have taken measures to regulate phosphorus runoff resulting from residential development and related activities in their watersheds.

Gouldsboro also contains numerous streams that supply the ponds. Some streams also flow through other towns as shown in Map K-1. They include Chicken Mill Stream, Dike Brook, Fred Ashe Brook, Libby Brook, Meadow Brook, Mill Stream, Nails Brook, Roaring Brook, Tucker Brook, Whitten Parritt Stream, and Forbes Stream.

3.2 Threats to Surface Water Resources

There are two types of pollution that threaten surface water: point source and nonpoint source. Point source pollution is attributable to a specific source such as a pipe discharging into a stream. Nonpoint source pollution (NPS) doesn't come from a single source. Nonpoint source pollution or polluted stormwater runoff often comes from several diffuse sources within a watershed. Stormwater runoff is water that doesn't soak into the ground during a rainstorm and flows over the surface of the ground until it reaches a stream, lake, estuary, or the ocean. Stormwater runoff often picks up polluting hitchhikers such as soil, fertilizers, pesticides, manure, and petroleum products. Therefore, NPS is hard to track or quantify, but should be assumed to exist. It can be reduced through education and

participation in programs like LakeSmart, an education and outreach program that rewards homeowners who manage their land to protect water quality.

Previously there was a point source in Gouldsboro that discharged into the ocean. As of September 4, 2021, the former Maine Fair Trade lobster facility in the village of Prospect Harbor operated under Maine Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MEPDES) permits 001A and 002A authorizing the discharge of treated process wastewater and flow through sea water directly into Prospect Harbor. Currently, in October of 2025, the property is owned by Bold Coast Seafood, LLC and there is no discharge of treated process wastewater.

3.3 Access to Surface Water Resources

Upper West Bay Pond can be accessed by a paddler's trail starting at the Day Ridges Preserve, which was developed and is managed by Frenchman Bay Conservancy. In 2016, Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) acquired the first of four parcels that comprise the Forbes Pond Preserve. Funding came from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) program. MCHT's acquisition of the Forbes Pond Preserve opened an additional opportunity for access to this freshwater pond. The addition of the Preserve significantly added to the Town of Gouldsboro's freshwater recreational resources. Jones Pond is accessed by Recreation Road and is available to the public for boat launching, swimming and as a recreation picnic area. This recreation area is managed by the Town.

4 Groundwater Resources

Note that the only deep blue shaded area on Map K-1 (indicating the bedrock source of a public well) is in Winter Harbor, which has a public water supply. Gouldsboro residents and businesses depend on individual wells for their water supply. Drilled bedrock wells generally yield about 10 to 50 gallons per minute (GPM). Normally, a well yielding about 1 to 5 GPM is considered sufficient for domestic use.

There are three types of wells commonly used in Maine: drilled bedrock wells, drilled overburden wells, and dug wells/springs. Of the three types, drilled bedrock wells are by far the most common source of drinking water for homes in Gouldsboro.

Four privately owned wells are listed as public water supply wells by the Maine Drinking Water Program. These wells, detailed in Table I-2 and identified by small, blue-shaded circles in Map K-1, serve the school, two restaurants, and a campground. Currently there are no major problems in Gouldsboro with ground water supply; however, ground water resources are vulnerable to climate and weather and new developments that might create problems for existing wells. Meanwhile, the State of Maine has no records of contaminants exceeding the regulated limits for these wells.

Table K-2: Public Water Systems in Gouldsboro Listed in the Maine Drinking Water Program

Public Water System Name	PWSID	Operating Category	Water System Type	Source	Source Type
Bunkers Seafood and Spirits	ME0010426	VSWS	NC (non-community)	100' BR Well, 6-15-1989 @ 7GPM	WL (well)
The Pickled Wrinkle	ME0022922	VSWS	NC	300' Bedrock Well, 1993 @ 38GPM	WL
RSU 24/Peninsula Elementary School	ME0092395	VSWS	NTNC (non-transient, non-community)	200' Bedrock Well, 2010 @ 100 GPM	WL
West Bay Acadia RV Campground	ME0092754	-	NC	400' BR Well, 2-17-2020 @ 20GPM	WL

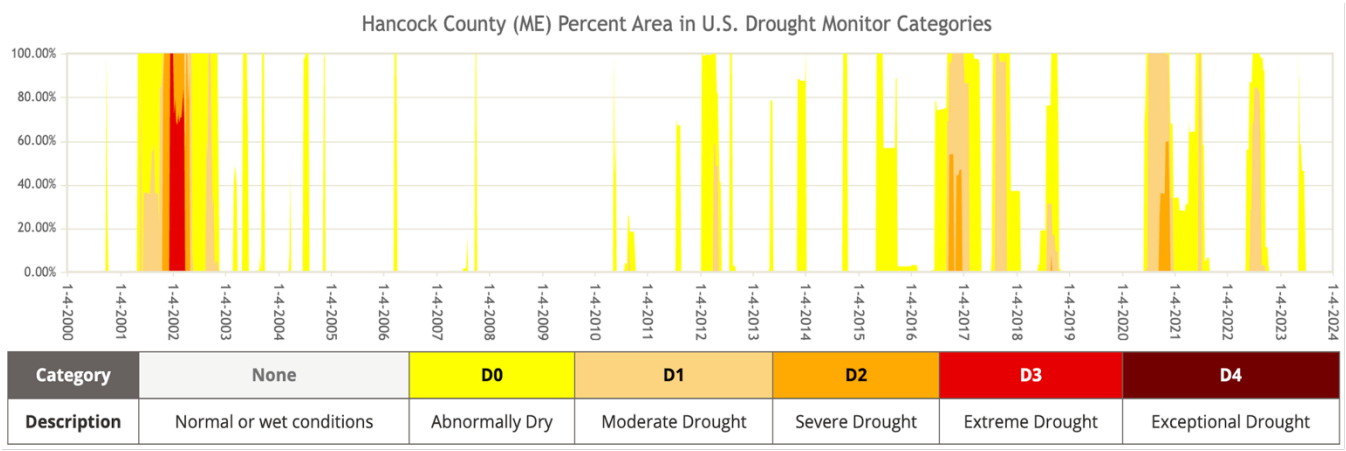
Source: Maine Drinking Water Program (https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/imt/documents/PWSbyCounty.pdf-2024)

MDEP has rated Gouldsboro's groundwater as GW-A. This is the highest MDEP groundwater water quality classification, and it signifies groundwater that can be used for public water supplies.

4.1 Threats to Groundwater

Given the low incidence of nonpoint source pollution in Gouldsboro, and the overall low density of the population, the groundwater supply is generally considered safe. Downeast Maine has experienced several periods of drought since the last comprehensive plan update. Because Gouldsboro residents and businesses primarily rely upon individually drilled bedrock wells, local water supplies are especially sensitive to drought conditions that can reduce aquifer recharge. With more than 50 miles of coastline, private coastal wells face risks of saltwater intrusion and depletion. The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Drought Task Force is activated by MEMA and the US Geological Survey to assess and monitor during periods of drought. Figure K-2 illustrates the drought conditions from 2000 through 2023 in Hancock County. Droughts are still considered one of the biggest potential threats to Gouldsboro's groundwater supply.

Figure K-2: Hancock County Droughts, 2000-2023



Source: U.S. Drought Monitor, 2024

In addition to the threat of drought, there are other potential contaminants of concern for Gouldsboro residents. Table K-3 list the percentage of wells in Gouldsboro that exceeded state guidelines for seven different water contaminants.

Table K-3: Percent of Gouldsboro Wells that Exceed State Guidelines for Selected Analytes

Arsenic	Chloride	Fluoride	Manganese	Nitrate	Nitrite	Uranium
2.3%	1.8%	3.7%	11.4%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Maine CDC Maine-Tracking Network, using data from Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory, 2023

Although Maine no longer maintains its own Maximum Exposure Guidelines (MEGs) for most contaminants in private well water, it does have specific guidelines for radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in some well water. The Maine MEG for radon in drinking water is 4,000 pC/L (picocuries per liter). For all other contaminants the state follows the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standards listed bellow:

- Arsenic: 10 ug/L (micrograms per liter)
- Chloride: 250 mg/L (milligrams per liter)
- Fluoride: 2 mg/L
- Manganese: 0.3 mg/L
- Nitrate: 10 mg/L
- Nitrite: 1 mg/L
- Uranium: 30 ug/L
- Combined PFAS (per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances): 20 ng/L (nanograms per liter), as mandated by a 2021 state law for public water supplies. For private wells with PFAS, the state recommends testing and potential treatment. The EPA has also established enforceable limits for six types of PFAS in public drinking water, which may be referenced by private well owners.

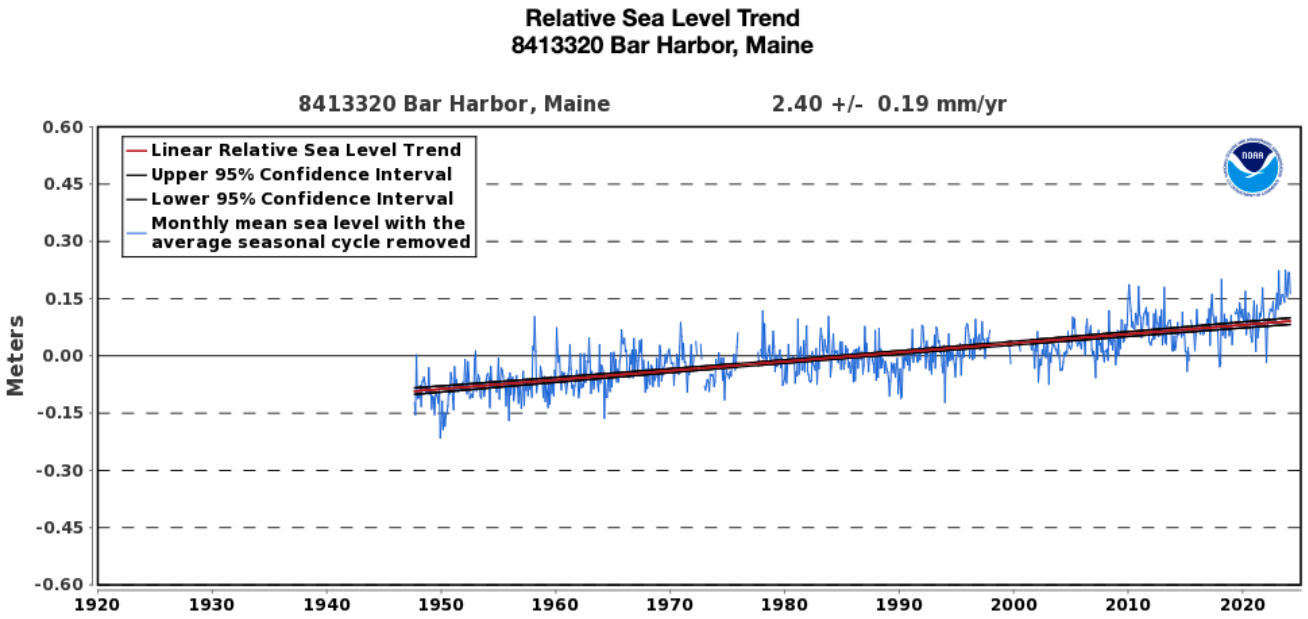
The State of Maine recommends that well water should be tested once a year for bacteria and nitrates and every five years for arsenic, fluoride, uranium, radon, lead, and manganese. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAS) are also of potential future concern. Currently there is no indication of contamination; however, there also has been very little testing for it within the town.

4.2 Climate Change Considerations

The Natural Resources Defense Council document, "Climate Change and Water Resource Management: Adaptation Strategies for Protecting People and the Environment," notes that global warming is predicted to not only increase the frequency and intensity of droughts, but to also increase the frequency of intense rainfall events that increase stormwater runoff and the associated pollution of surface water supplies. As described in the preceding sections both drought and increasingly intense storms have the potential to decrease Gouldsboro's water quality.

As a coastal community, sea level rise is another climate change impact with the potential to negatively impact groundwater quality. Figure K-3, shows the relative see level trend at the Bar Harbor tide gauge. As the sea level rises, it is more likely to find its way into groundwater. Drought and more severe storms make saltwater intrusion more likely. When the water table drops in a drought, its height relative to the sea is even lower. Increases in storm intensity drive more sea water up onto the shore. Increased demand of water as Gouldsboro grows also drops the water table, making saltwater intrusion more likely.

Figure K-3: Sea Level Change Over the Past 50 Years in Bar Harbor



Source: https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?id=8413320

4.3 Future Adequacy of Gouldsboro's Water Resources

With moderate population growth, or population decline as projected for Gouldsboro, current drinking water supplies should be adequate for the near future. In addition to drought, potential problems might be contamination of wells or competition for water from industrial high users.

If Gouldsboro unexpectedly experiences more than moderate growth, groundwater availability may be a limiting factor. Similarly, if Gouldsboro chooses to concentrate population growth (e.g., for workforce housing) groundwater availability may be a limiting factor at particular locations.

5 Adequacy of Existing Measures to Preserve Significant Water Resources

Gouldsboro's current measures to protect water resources consist of the Shoreland Zoning, Land Use, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Ordinances. The current Site Plan Review Ordinance has standards to against water pollution, assure adequate sewage disposal, and manage storm water drainage protect for future projects. Both the Site Plan and the Shoreland Zoning ordinances restrict clearing grading and construction within specific distances of wetlands streams and coastal waters. The town's floodplain management ordinance incorporates FEMA flood maps helping to reduce pollution from flood damaged structures and contaminated runoff.

Gouldsboro maintains its public works building and town sand/salt piles and replaces culverts as needed. The town continues annual street sweeping as well as vegetation cutting on the sides of town roads. The town's public works crews and contractors make every effort to apply best management practices to protect water resources during salt/sand pile maintenance, culvert replacement, street sweeping, public works garage operations, and in other town activities.

6 Regional Issues

There are no immediate regional groundwater resource issues facing Gouldsboro. The Town does not share any sand and gravel aquifers with surrounding towns. Given the projected moderate population decline, there is no foreseeable likelihood of needing to develop a municipal water system. There would be a benefit to a well-organized regional approach to well water testing.

Gouldsboro shares watersheds of some ponds with adjoining towns. The protection of these ponds would involve coordination with other communities in the watersheds.

Gouldsboro has partnered with Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Frenchman Bay Conservancy, and local advocacy groups that have established preserves within the town. The missions of these groups include promotion of healthy and sustainable lands, waters, and ecosystems and to mitigate the impact of climate change on the coast. These efforts enhance the Town's measures to protect water resources.

7 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Protect Gouldsboro's current and future drinking water resources, educate residents about the importance of well water monitoring, and improve the quality of Gouldsboro's surface waters.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Groundwater Protection	Review and, as necessary, adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with: • Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502). • Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds. • Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.	Planning Board	Immediate, ongoing
	Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.		
Pollution Source Management	Ensure Town ordinances include adequate provisions to manage point and nonpoint pollution.	Planning Board, CEO	Immediate, ongoing
Protect habitat in sensitive streams and ponds delineated by the MDEP.	Work with land trusts, property owners, and Acadia National Park to maintain and, if necessary, create a resource protection buffer around habitats delineated by MDEP.	Select Board, Planning Board, HCPC	Ongoing
	Provide information about protecting Jones Pond from aquatic invasive species at the boat launch.	Town Manager, CEO	Immediate, ongoing
Ensure that all residents know have access to information about water quality monitoring and wellhead protection.	Use the town website to provide links to Maine CDC information about water testing for private wells and wellhead protection.	Town Manager	Within a year from plan adoption

Policies
To protect current and potential drinking water sources.
To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality as needed.
To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.
Strategies
Review and amend local ordinances as necessary.
Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide links to information about private well water quality testing and management on the Town website and in the Town office.
Provide information about protecting Jones Pond from aquatic invasive species at the boat launch.

Chapter L: Natural Resources

1 Purpose

This chapter provides analyses and a detailed overview of the Town's natural resources and addresses issues related to wildlife, fish habitats and other important ecological systems. Development on or near the locations of these resources could negatively impact natural systems as well as quality-of-life issues such as: clean drinking water, protection from flooding, and clean air. Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes Gouldsboro's critical natural and scenic resources;
- Assesses the effectiveness of existing efforts to protect and preserve these resources;
- Predicts future impacts to these resources by growth and development.

2 Key Findings & Issues

Gouldsboro benefits from its clean environment and wealth of natural resources that provide a variety of habitats for plants and animals that perform many vital ecosystem functions. The quality of life provided by the local and regional plant and animal diversity, and by a rich diversity of interesting and beautiful ecosystems and habitats. The intertidal zones offer important wintering and migrating habitat for numerous shorebird and duck species. Upland areas support various mammals and include two important wintering areas for deer. There are several major wetlands, including Gouldsboro Grand Marsh, a focus area of statewide significance, and Corea Heath, an excellent example of an unusual bog ecosystem with plant communities that are uncommon for the region. The Town also benefits from numerous preserves and ponds. Both Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) and Frenchman's Bay Conservancy (FBC), own and manage hundreds of acres within Gouldsboro to conserve natural habitats.

As in any coastal community, Gouldsboro's natural resources are at risk from shoreline development and climate change. As demonstrated in the Public Opinion Survey, residents support protecting Gouldsboro's wildlife habitats and forestlands. While the Town does comply with Maine State requirements for shoreland protections, Gouldsboro has an opportunity to build on residents' interest in protecting the Town' natural resources by exploring additional steps and tools to protect and benefit from the Town's unique and valuable natural gifts.

3 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

Among the Town's rare natural resource features were several bald eagle nesting sites. There were also several unique coastal ecosystems including one of the few areas of Jack Pine located at Corea Heath. Due to improved mapping, it is now easier to identify natural resource areas.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

Respondents were asked about the importance of protecting various natural resources in Gouldsboro. Over 86% of all respondents stated that protecting air quality, preserving existing farmland, preserving existing forest land, protecting groundwater, protecting rivers and

streams, protecting wetlands and wildlife habitat, and protecting scenic views were either important or very important.

5 Gouldsboro's Natural Resources

5.1 Wetland Areas

Wetlands are one of the most critical natural resources for any community and provide many important ecosystem services. They often serve as aquifer recharge areas, allowing underground water supplies to be recharged. They provide crucial habitat and breeding grounds for birds and other wildlife such as amphibians, reptiles, and insects. Wetlands are an important part of nature's drainage system since they hold storm water, help with shoreline stabilization, and provide water filtration and treatment. Areas that have experienced extensive filling of wetlands often face increased flooding problems.

There are several major salt and freshwater wetlands in Gouldsboro, as shown in Map K-1: Gouldsboro's Water Resources in the preceding chapter on water resources. (Note that if you are reading this in electronic for, clicking on the map number or name should take you to the map.) The wetlands are the shaded and stippled areas. On land, the freshwater wetlands are have dark blue boarders.

Gouldsboro's Grand Marsh, located just to the right of the center in Map K-1, is an excellent example of a Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem. It is a 135-acre Salt Hay Saltmarsh bisected by a tidal creek that empties into the narrow Grand Bay. Tidal marsh vegetation occurs in north to south bands, with low marsh types dominated by salt marsh cordgrass near the creek and high marsh types near the uplands. Blackgrass, seaside plantain, and salt-meadow cordgrass dominate here in broad areas of high marsh.

This area of Gouldsboro is also home to rare native plants such as Pickering's reed bent-grass, screwstem, and swarthy sedge. Bands of vegetation are not continuous and are punctuated by open water pannes (small saltwater pools) and creek branches. Although this tidal marsh is not as large as some others in the East Coastal region, it is in very good condition, with very little to no evidence of past ditching that characterizes many salt marshes in Maine. Moreover, the adjacent uplands are intact. The marsh is mapped as both Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat and Shorebird Feeding and Roosting Habitat.

Corea Heath is an approximately 250-acre Coastal Plateau Bog that abuts Route 195 near the village of Corea. It is the wetland that that takes up the central portion of the Corea peninsula, visible in the lower right quadrant of Map K-1. Managed partly by Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC) and partly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it is an excellent example of a Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem, a peatland in which the surface is raised above the surrounding terrain, with the bog perimeter sloping sharply to mineral soil. The raised surface is flat or undulating, generally with few to no trees, and usually features extensive lawns of deer-hair sedge. Black crowberry and baked apple-berry are also characteristic. Corea Heath is a rare and exemplary natural community due to its large size, circular shape, well-developed concentric patterning, and raised central treeless plateau with evident marginal slopes.

Corea Heath supports several species of rare plants as well as stunted jack pine trees. Though not rare, this species is very uncommon in a peatland setting in Maine. A large portion of Corea Heath, especially in the southern half, is characterized by well-defined ridge and depression relief. The hollows, some of which retain surface water for long periods, contain dwarf shrubs, deer-hair sedge, lichen, and mud-bottom areas. The ridges support a similar variety of species including stunted black spruce, black crowberry, and peat mosses.

The Schoodic portion of Acadia National Park, located at the tip of the Schoodic Peninsula, is outside of Gouldsboro's town boundary but is, with Gouldsboro, an important part of the Schoodic Peninsula ecosystem. It is home to rare animals such as harlequin duck; rare plants such as blinks, fragrant cliff wood-fern, marsh felwort, Pickering's Reed bent-grass and screwstem; and rare and exemplary communities of Downeast Maritime shrubland, Jack Pine Woodland and Open Headland.

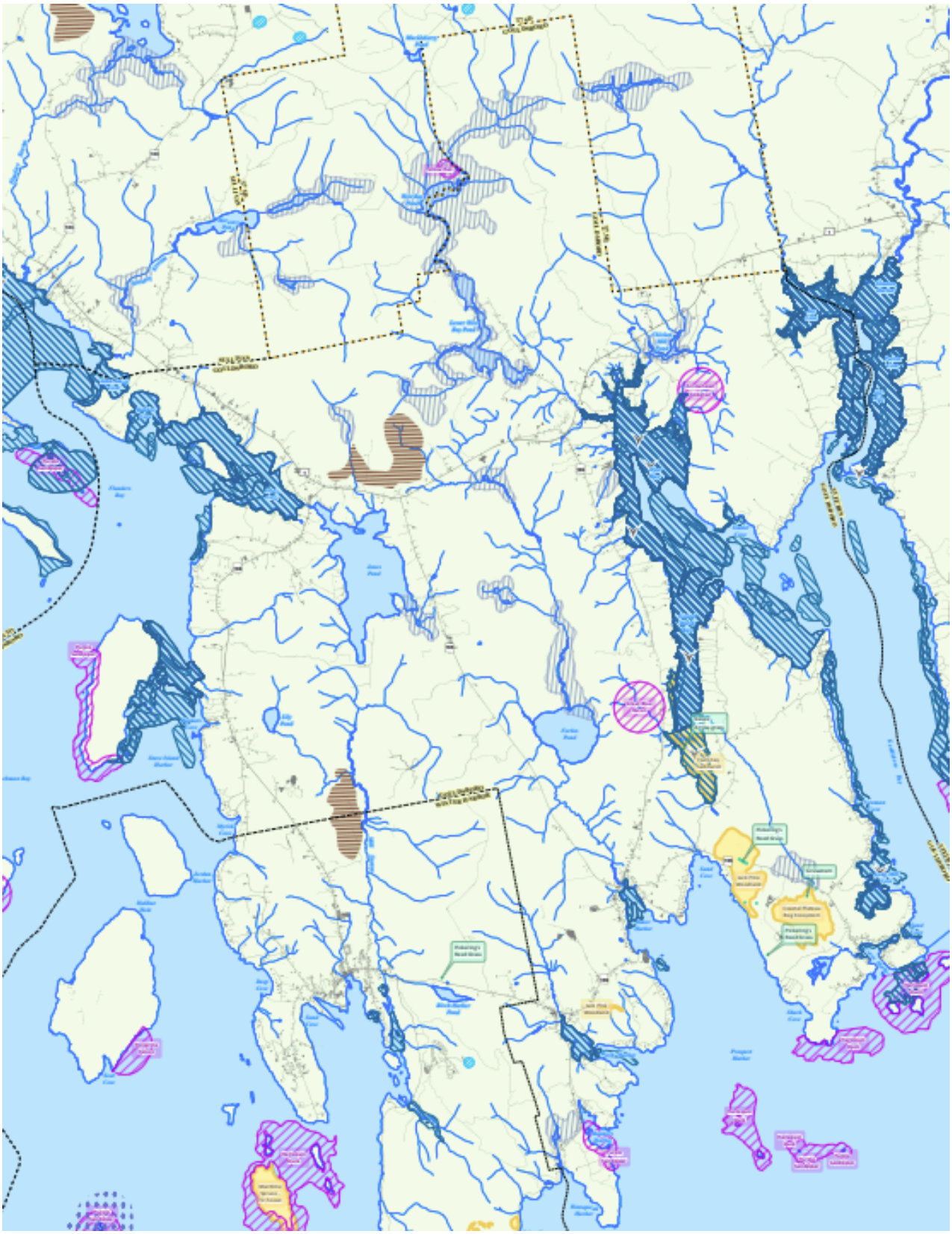
5.2 Wildlife Habitats

Map L-1, on the following page, show the locations of different kinds of wildlife habitats in Gouldsboro. Figure L-1, the legend explaining the meaning of the map's markings, is on the page following the map. The original, zoomable version of this map is available on the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) website. Using the online version makes it possible to see map details. If that link is out of date or if you are viewing this Comprehensive Plan on paper, the most recent version may be available under the "Beginning with Habitat" section under "Programs and Resources" on the MDIF&W site.

Gouldsboro has a diverse array of wildlife habitats. The inshore and tidal zones are important wintering areas for waterfowl and sea ducks. In winter and early spring common species include bufflehead, common goldeneye, American black duck, three scoter species, common loon, two merganser species, and greater scaup. In late spring, summer, or fall, freshwater and tidal areas are home to common loon, osprey, bald eagle, kingfisher, terns, gulls, great blue heron, other wading birds, a variety of migrant shorebirds, cormorants, three merganser species, beaver, muskrat, and river otter. Less common but present in this area are harlequin duck, and black-crowned night-heron.

The upland environment, which includes mature forests, supports deer as well as the occasional black bear or moose. Bears and moose are few, however, due to fragmentation of coastal habitat by roads, residences, and other development. Other animals commonly found in upland areas include ruffed grouse, wild turkey, American woodcock, snowshoe hare, red fox, coyote, porcupine, raccoon, and gray or red squirrel. Less common species include ring-necked pheasant, short-tailed weasel, and fisher. The Maine Natural Areas Program found two significant deer wintering areas in the town. As of 2023, Gouldsboro has two bald eagle nesting sites, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS) and Maine Ecological Services.

Map L-1: High Value Plant and Animal Habitats in Gouldsboro



Also found throughout the area during the warm months are a vast array of other bird species in the following families: raptor species such as hawks, vultures and owls, sparrows, woodpeckers, finches, flycatchers, thrushes, blackbirds, swallows, corvids, and other mixed passerines.

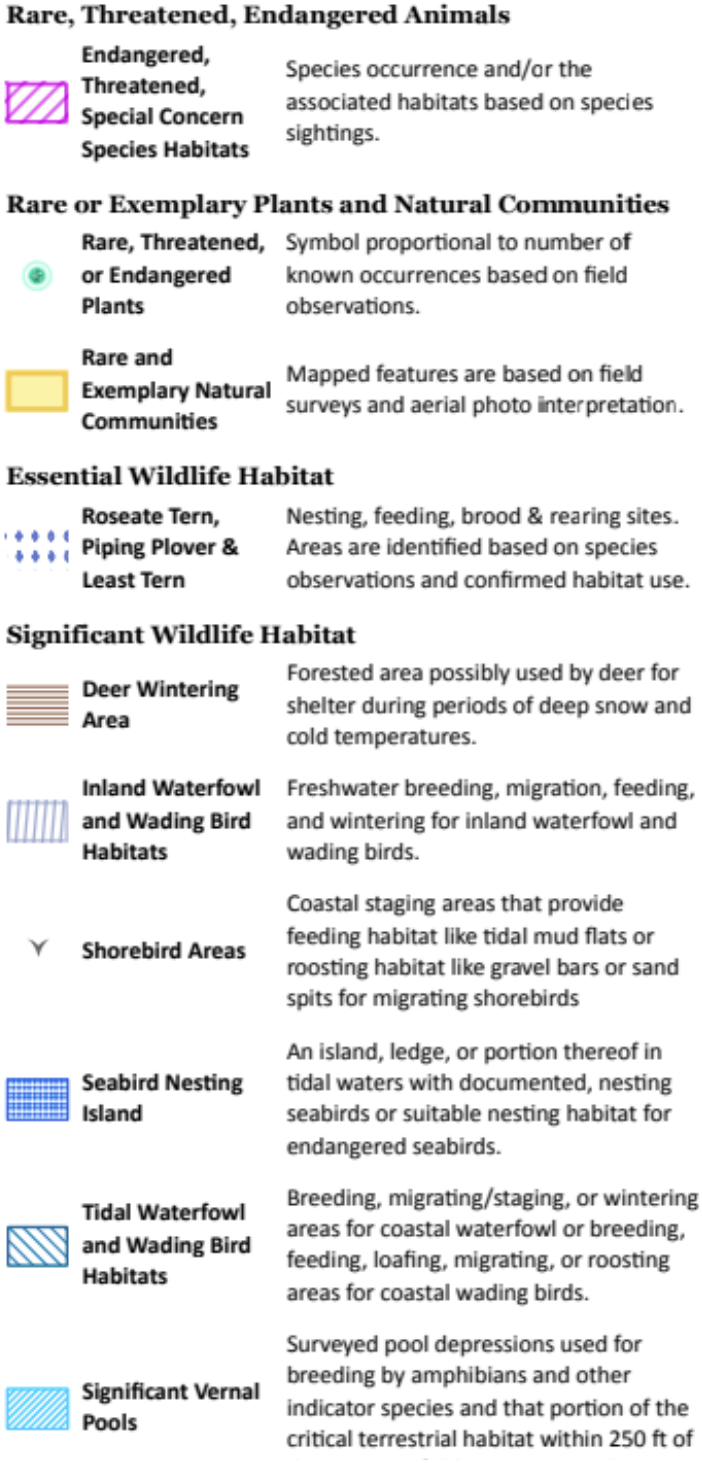
Forbes Pond Preserve (in the center of Map L-1), is a 980-acre preserve with wildlife-rich wetland habitats. Gouldsboro's Grand Marsh, described above, serves as wintering grounds for the state-threatened harlequin duck. Corea Heath, also described above, is a wildlife refuge.

5.3 Fisheries Resources

Fresh Water: MDIFW currently stocks Jones Pond with rainbow and brown trout. Gouldsboro provides parking and public access to Jones Pond for boating and fishing. Upper West Bay and its tributaries provide brook trout, eel, white sucker, minnows, gold shiners and ninespine stickleback. Forbes Pond Preserve will continue to be managed for its self-sustaining population of fish and is well known for large-mouth bass and northern pike.

Salt Water: Gouldsboro is a working waterfront community. Lobsters, scallops, crab, mussels, and clams are among the common species. Striped bass, bluefish, and winter flounder are other popular saltwater species.

Figure L-1: Legend for Map K-1



5.4 Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats

Nearly the entire shoreline of the focus area of West Bay has been mapped as high and moderate value Tidal Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat and defined as Significant Wildlife Habitat under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). This area provides

important intertidal habitat for maintaining viable wading bird and waterfowl populations. Waterfowl (ducks, geese, swans) and wading birds (herons, egrets, bitterns, ibises, coots, moorhens and rails) require certain types of tidal wetland habitat for feeding, roosting, nesting and brood rearing. Several areas have also been mapped as 'Shorebird Areas' for important feeding and resting sites for shorebirds making long migrations.

5.4.1 Changes to Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats

Changes in land use in[6] these areas may threaten important species and habitats. Gouldsboro's Grand Marsh, referenced frequently in the preceding paragraphs as a unique, essential habitat for wildlife, is already undergoing change as sea level rises and storms become more severe. These changes will continue and may accelerate over the next twenty years. If Grand Marsh Bay and other Gouldsboro marshes are blocked from migrating inland, the habitats described above will be lost. Preventing this requires that Gouldsboro considers marsh migration patterns as it considers new shoreline development.

Protecting ecologically important habitat requires knowing where they are. An inventory should be conducted by interested citizens under the guidance of the Maine Natural Areas Program and in collaboration with Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Other Endangered, Protected or Critical Species

5.5 Rare and Endangered Plants and Animals

The Town is also home to the plant and animal species listed in Table L-1 that have been identified as threatened or of Special Concern.

Table L-1: Species that are Threatened or Of Special Concern

Taxa	Species	Conservation Status
Plants	Screwstem	Threatened Species
	Pickering reed bent grass	Threatened Species
	Gaspe arrow grass	Species of Special Concern
Birds	Great blue heron	Species of Special Concern
	Harlequin duck	Threatened Species
	Purple sandpiper	Species of Conservation Need
	Yellow rail	Species of Special Concern
Invertebrates	Arrowhead spiketail	Species of Special Concern

Map L-1 identifies the habitats that support rare and endangered species.

6 Scenic Resources

Gouldsboro offers a blend of stunning natural beauty, with scenic views from many public roads and hiking trails. Portions of the Town are also located along the Schoodic National Scenic Byway. Some of these scenic resources are owned by conservation organizations and are publicly accessible. Several were identified in HCPC's Scenic Assessment Inventory and Analysis

[6] https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/gouldsboro_grand_marsh_focus_area.pdf

and are listed in Table L-2. Some of these areas are water views (e.g., Prospect Harbor, Corea Harbor), but some are blocks of land that also serve as conservation areas. Table L-2 lists the acreage for these areas

Table L-2: Gouldsboro's Scenic Resources and Conserved Areas

Name	Ownership	Access	Acreage
Jones Pond	Town	Public	13
Taft Point Reserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	73
Francis B. Wood Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	420
Corea Heath Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	603
Maine Coastal Islands NWR	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Public	1,083
Forbes Pond Preserve	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Public	1,489
Stave Island	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Public	461
Day Ridges Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	301
West Gouldsboro Woods	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Private	402
Lower West Bay Pond	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Private	345
Joy Bay Water Access	MDIFW	Public	50
West Bay	Town	Public	
Sand Cove Beach	Private	Public use	
Sand Cove – Young's Point	Town	Public	
Prospect Harbor	Town	Public	
Corea Harbor	Town	Public	
Cranberry Point	Private	Private	
		Total Acreage	**5,240**

Gouldsboro also has one of the finest dark skies in the northeast, with spectacular views of the Milky Way, the Perseids Meteor Shower and surrounding planets in our solar system. Section 13 of the Town's Land Use Ordinance specifies lighting standards intended to preserve enjoyment of the night sky. It is important that contractors and property owners are made aware of this ordinance when applying for a building permit.

7 Conserved Lands and Undeveloped Habitat Blocks

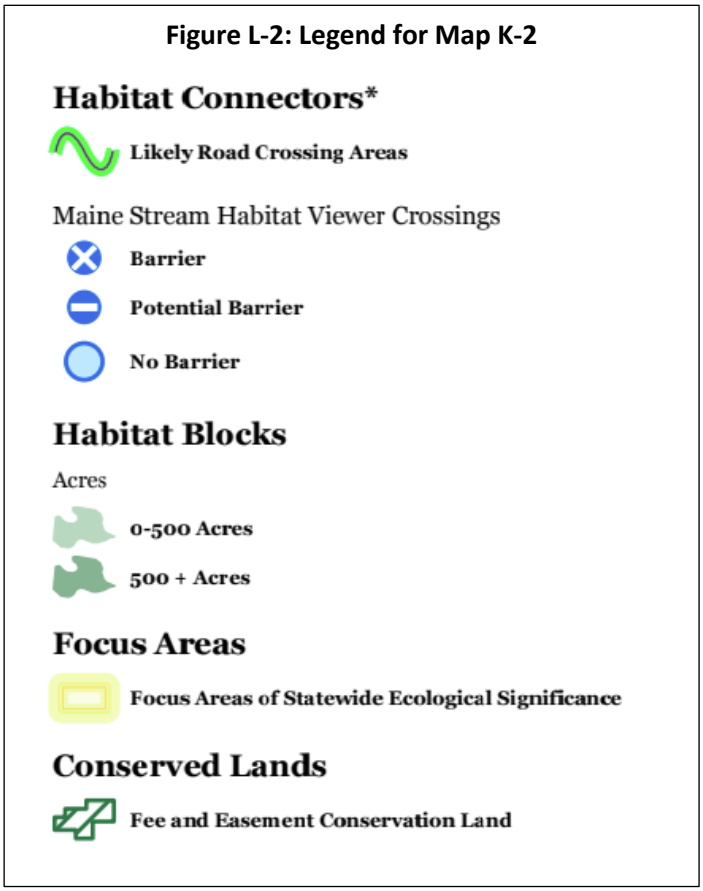
On the next page, Map L-2 shows the locations of conserved lands in Gouldsboro. Figure L-2, the legend explaining the meaning of the map's markings, is on the page following the map. The original, zoomable version of this map is available on the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) website. Using the online version makes it possible to see map details. If that link is out of date or if you are viewing this Comprehensive Plan on paper, the most recent version may be available under the "Beginning with Habitat" section under "Programs and Resources" on the MDIF&W site.

Map L-2: Conserved Land and Undeveloped Habitat



Conserved blocks of land are marked with diagonal green lines. The larger blocks (greater than 500 acres) are shaded a darker green. The most striking takeaway from this map is that a large proportion of the land in Gouldsboro is conserved. A second important takeaway is that many of the conserved blocks are relatively close together. That proximity make is easier plants and wildlife to move between the conserved areas without having to cross developed property. As explained in the legend, the blue circles, some filled with an X or a horizontal line, mark the locations of barriers and potential barriers to wildlife movement.

Figure L-2: Legend for Map K-2



!n general, larger habitat blocks are more resilient and able to recover from impacts caused by human activities and climate change. Larger and better-connected blocks are more likely to be able to support more complex ecosystems and larger animals such as Moose. The quantity, connectivity, and diversity of the conserved habitats in Gouldsboro are part of what make it unique, important from a wildlife conservation perspective, and attractive to human visitors and potential residents.

8 Analysis

The preceding sections describe and document the unusually rich natural and scenic resources in and around Gouldsboro. These natural riches have drawn people to this area for generations and continue to do so today. For many residents, the natural and scenic resources are why they came here and stayed here. It is essential that the Town's policies, enacted in its ordinances, recognize the need to serve as a steward of these resources.

8.1 Potential Threats to Gouldsboro's Natural and Scenic Resources

8.1.1 Shoreland Development

Many of Gouldsboro's natural and scenic resources are along the shores of the ocean and the ponds in the Town. These are also parts of Gouldsboro that are under the most development pressure, especially since the COVID pandemic. Shoreland home prices have risen quickly over the past five years, with much of the price pressure coming from out-of-state seasonal visitors and investors interested buying properties that can be used as short-term rental businesses.

8.1.2 Climate Change

As described in the preceding chapter on water quality, climate change is predicted to result in increasingly intense droughts more frequent severe storms. (See Chapter K:4.2.) These changes

will not only affect water quality, but will also put stresses on habitats, changing them so that they may be less hospitable to some species and more attractive to other, perhaps more invasive ones. Much of the research being conducted at the Schoodic Institute, located at the tip of the Schoodic Peninsula in Acadia National Park, focuses on documenting and understanding these changes.

Climate change also brings sea level rise. The Maine Climate Council suggests that communities prepare for a 1.5-foot increase (over year 2000 levels) by 2050. Salt marshes such Gouldsboro' Grand Marsh (see section 5.1) are at risk of being lost to sea level rise if development along their edges block the marsh's migration inland.

8.1.3 Limited Planning and Enforcement Capacity

Most of Gouldsboro's planning is led by volunteers. Its Code Enforcement Officer also serves as the Road Commissioner and the Supervisor of Town Infrastructure. Planning and enforcement objectives must be in a realistic relationship to capacity.

8.2 Protecting Gouldsboro's Natural and Scenic Resources

Gouldsboro has a Shoreland **Z**oning Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Land Use Ordinance, and Site Plan Ordinance. Accompanied by state and federal regulations, these town ordinances provide a basic framework for protecting critical and natural resources in Gouldsboro. Map L-3 is Gouldsboro's Shoreland Zoning Map.

8.2.1 Consistency of Gouldsboro's Shoreland Zoning Standards with State Guidelines

Gouldsboro's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and its amendments were approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection most recently in 2025. In several respects, it establishes standards that are higher than required by State law.

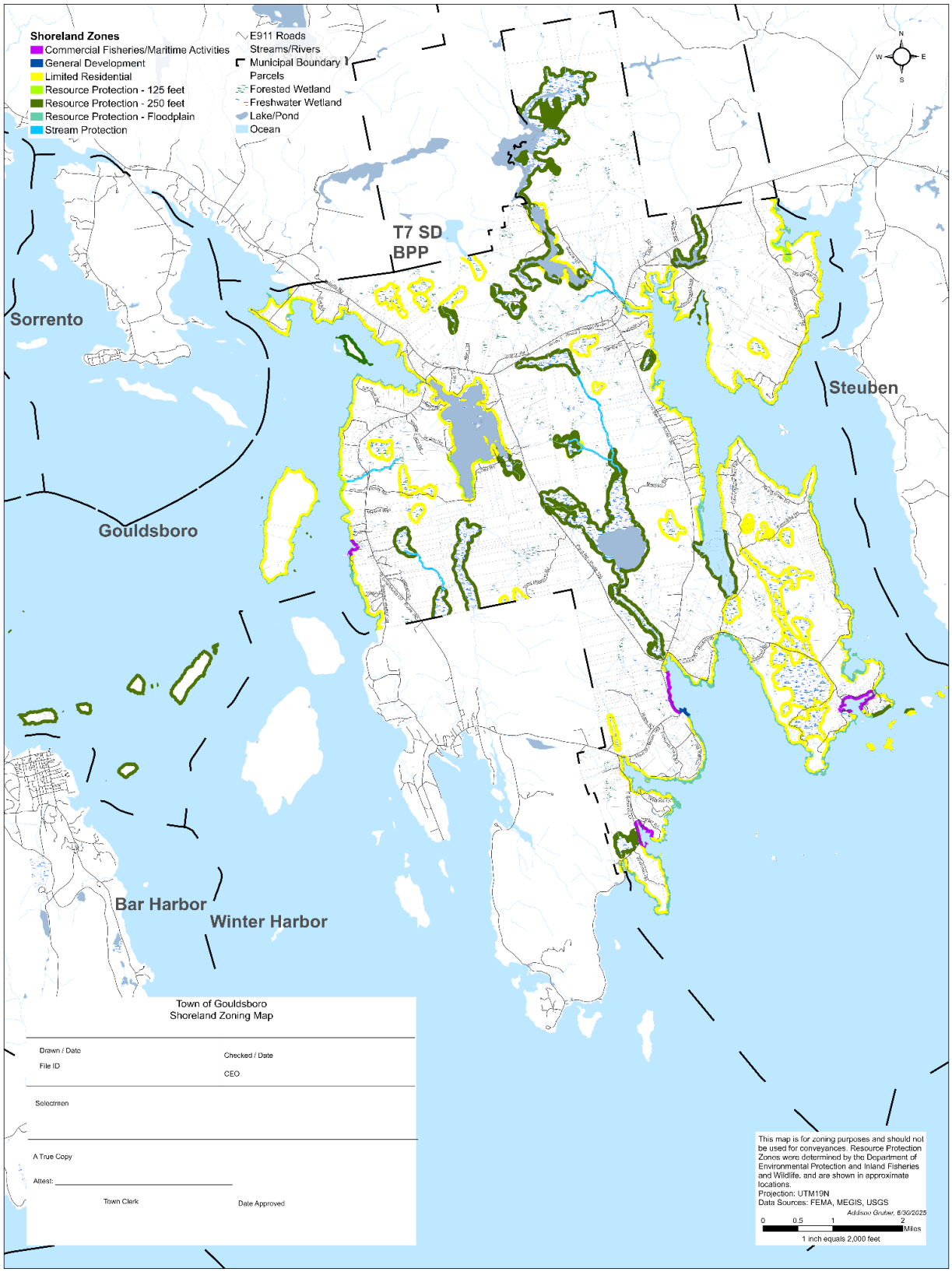
8.2.2 Increasing the Protection Afforded by the Shoreland Zoning Standards

Portions of the shoreland zone are presently zoned as "Resource Protection." These include areas around wetlands, ponds and coves as well as stretches on bays and the open ocean. The restrictions in the Resource Protection district offer a high level of protection for natural resources located along the shoreline. However, there are locations in Shoreland Zones, adjacent to Resource Protection districts, that are not zoned as Resource Protection. This limits the effectiveness of the State's shoreland statute to prevent negative environmental consequences, such as algae blooms, because of run-offs and other pollutants that enter waterways and water bodies.

To provide more complete protection of Gouldsboro's natural resources, restrictions could include larger minimum lot sizes and stricter setback standards in critical areas that are identified in this plan or in the future as high-value natural resources are discovered.

Greater protection could also be provided by revisions to the Town's Subdivision Ordinance. These could involve creative lot-layout patterns such as clustering. Often, it is possible to make minor changes in the location of lots in a subdivision to minimize the disruption of views from a neighboring property or public roads. Also, the initial subdivision application to the Planning Board could include a requirement that any important habitats identified by MDIFW be noted.

Map L-3: Town of Gouldsboro Shoreland Zoning Map



8.2.3 Protecting “At Risk” Natural Resources

The High Value natural resource area that is most at risk in the next decade is the Gouldsboro’s Grand Marsh, highlighted in several locations in this chapter. The Grand Marsh is identified as a “Rare and Exemplary Natural Community” on Map L-1 and, on Map L-2, identified as a location threated by a potential habitat barrier. The habitat barrier is Grand Marsh Bay Road, which cuts across the southern end of the marsh as illustrated **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**. This photo was taken looking north toward the Grand Marsh when the tide was out. When the tide is in, water in Grand Marsh Bay covers all the salt-hay saltmarsh, coming down to Grand Marsh Bay Road, which cuts through the center of this picture. The photo shows how the culvert under Grand Marsh Bay Road separates that marsh ecosystem north of the road from the pond and shrub south of the road. If the road and culvert were not there, Grand Marsh would extend into the lower part the photo.

If tidal flows cannot cross Grand Marsh Bay Road as sea level rises, portions of the marsh will be at risk of “drowning” and no longer serving as a marsh. This is a complicate situation, since the road is privately owned and is an important access point to a subdivision. As described in Chapter N: Climate Adaptation, this area is also a “High Vulnerability” area with regard to life safety.

Figure L-3: Grand Marsh Bay Road Blocking Grand Marsh Migration



9 Regional Issues

Gouldsboro, along with neighboring towns and the larger region, continues to face challenges associated with climate change and sea level rise that will affect natural resources and vital habitat areas. Some existing and potential negative impacts include projected tidal marsh migration; changes to tree stands and tree-stand migration; other plant species migration (invasive species such as giant purple loosestrife); non-native insect introductions to Maine (emerald ash borer, brown tailed moth, tick populations moving further north); non-native shellfish (green crab, zebra mussel); increased vector-borne illnesses such as equine encephalitis, Powassan virus, West Nile virus; and even the pernicious norovirus.

Gouldsboro is actively engaged in regional habitat and resource protection efforts in collaboration with Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Hancock County Planning Commission, and the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park.

10 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Protect Gouldsboro's natural resources, including critical habitats and scenic views; approach resource protection regionally.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party (ies)**	**Timeline**
Conserve critical natural resources	Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Work with partners (e.g., Local land trusts) to work with landowners owning critical resources to pursue conservation options.	Select Board, Planning Board	Ongoing
	Participate in regional planning and management efforts to conserve important shared natural resources (e.g., John Small Cove, Joy Bay)	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board	Ongoing
	Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Anticipate threats to critical natural resources.	Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.	Planning Board	Within 3-5 years, Ongoing
Encourage conservation easements in places with critical habitats and natural resources.	Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.	Planning Board, HCPC, MCHT, FBC	Ongoing
	Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.	Planning Board, Town Manager	Ongoing
Address regional issues and threats	Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.	Planning Board	Ongoing

Policies
To protect critical habitats and other natural resources.
To approach this work collaboratively with neighboring communities.
Engage property owners in achieving natural resource protection.
Strategies
Ongoing review of land use, subdivision, site plan review, and other ordinances to ensure that they protect critical habitats and other natural resources.
Proactively address natural resource threats.
Utilize expertise and other assistance from local land trusts
Collaborate with other towns and regional organizations.

Chapter M: Agriculture and Forestry

1 Purpose

Gouldsboro's principal planning goal regarding its agricultural and forest resources is to ensure that the Town has the regulatory tools and knowledge in place to ensure that it can conserve those resources in the face of development pressure. The chapter provides and overview Gouldsboro's Agricultural, Forest, and Open Space Resources with particular attention to ther benefits to humans, such as ecosystem services, drinkable water, and productive soils, farmlands, and timber lands. Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes the extent of Gouldsboro's farms and forest land;
- Quantifies land held in the open space tax incentive program
- Considers the risk that these resources will be threatened by growth and development; and
- Assesses how well current protective measures preserve important lands for farming and forestry production.

2 Key Findings & Issues

The number of parcels added to Maine's Open Space and Farmland "current use" tax incentive programs has increased significantly since completion of the 2005 plan. However, while the acreage in Open Space tax classification increased, the acreage in Farmland tax classification declined. The number of parcels in the Tree Growth tax program, as well as total acreage in that program, also declined.

Climate change poses potential long-term challenges to farming and forestry. Changes in temperature and weather patterns (including periods of drought and increased heat on the one hand, and increased precipitation and flooding on the other), will result in changes to what grows here and which species are at risk. Other climate-related threats include development pressures from people seeking a cooler climate and invasive plant, animal, and insect species. With climate change making agriculture difficult in other parts of the county, coupled with potential population growth, conservation of Gouldsboro's existing *and* potential farmland could become important to local food security.

3 Key Findings & Issues from 2005 Plan

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan described the challenges of keeping farming and forestry sustainable in Gouldsboro, attributing them to several factors. It stated that residential subdivision activity has meant that several small woodlots are no longer being actively managed for their timber. Selective harvesting of coastal lots, which have shallow soils, had resulted in increased blowdowns. Demand for timber products was changing rapidly; and long-term planning of woodlots was lacking.

The Plan stated that the Town was heavily forested at the time of publication, with 71% of the town's acreage having medium to very high productivity ratings. Historical aerials taken by the USDA attest to this. Concern was expressed over various forest pests and some timber

harvesting practices. It stated timber farming was mostly for pulpwood and very few saw logs were cut.

The 2005 plan also stated that Gouldsboro was not a major farming community despite past efforts to revitalize Hancock County agriculture, for example through programs to assist beginning farmers. Farming in 2005 was a minor part of the overall Gouldsboro economy.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

Survey results indicated that most respondents strongly supported preserving and continuing farming and forestry traditions. Seventy-nine percent were in favor of continued agriculture or forestry-related development in Gouldsboro in the next 10 years, and 86% indicated they believed preserving existing agricultural land is either important or very important. Additionally, nearly 96% of respondents indicated maintaining the 'rural character' of Gouldsboro is important.

Over 49% of respondents were in favor of zoning for agricultural and forestry-related land use in designated areas, while almost 31% of respondents said it should occur anywhere without regulation.

Approximately half felt it was extremely or very important to have a climate change plan, while 23% rated it somewhat important and almost 29% rated it as not so important or not important at all.

5 All Agricultural Resources

5.1 Historic Information

Gouldsboro was first settled in the area now called West Gouldsboro, which became Gouldsboro's first village and was originally called the Gouldsboro Plantation. Gouldsboro was incorporated in 1789. The Gouldsboro census of 1790 shows Thomas Frazer as owning and operating a salt works company that sold salt to passing ships at what is now called Frazer Point.

Although many researchers believed that Gouldsboro records were lost in the 1883 fire at the Old Town House, somewhere records did survive and were microfilmed in 1950 and stored at the Maine State Library. The town's 19th century economy consisted of a flour mill, two grist mills, a shingle mill, a spool-lumber mill, a sawmill and a lobster canning establishment. There were also eight incorporated companies. Gouldsboro consisted of twelve public school houses with a population in 1880 of 1,824. The 19th century community was a town of working fishermen, farmers, and summer visitors. Early farming was sustainable; mostly for individual household sustenance and neighborly exchange, with a focus on hay and cattle and livestock that provided milk, meat, manure, leather, and the means for transportation and hauling. Cattle, horse and oxen moved rocks and plowed farmers' fields, especially in the northern villages from Asheville to Gouldsboro Point. Farmwives kept kitchen gardens and flocks of poultry for eggs and meat.

Agriculture was a basic fact of life, necessary for family and community sustenance. From 1850-1870 land cleared and cultivated for agricultural use varied from an average of 23-40 acres per farm, comprising an estimated 19%-33% of the town's total acreage. Most small farmsteads had pigs, cows, made butter and produced potatoes for the market. Smaller scale production farming began in the area once the nearby region was largely self-sufficient.

Forest land was lost, and stream flow was disrupted but hills were soon reforested, as degraded pastures grew back up to spruce, fir and pine. Too much farming pushed the land to its limits; Maine was farming 6.5 million acres in the 1880s. The landscape across much of Maine during that period was basically devoid of trees, except for orchards. Land was often cleared right up to the banks, streams, ponds and oceans. Pastures were often over-grazed, and crops worked with little regard for soil conservation. As a result, topsoil was depleted and waterways were despoiled, leaving little land suitable for farming.

5.2 Current Conditions

Crops and products from Gouldsboro include vegetables, fruits, small-scale home-based operations informally selling maple syrup, and chicken and duck eggs.

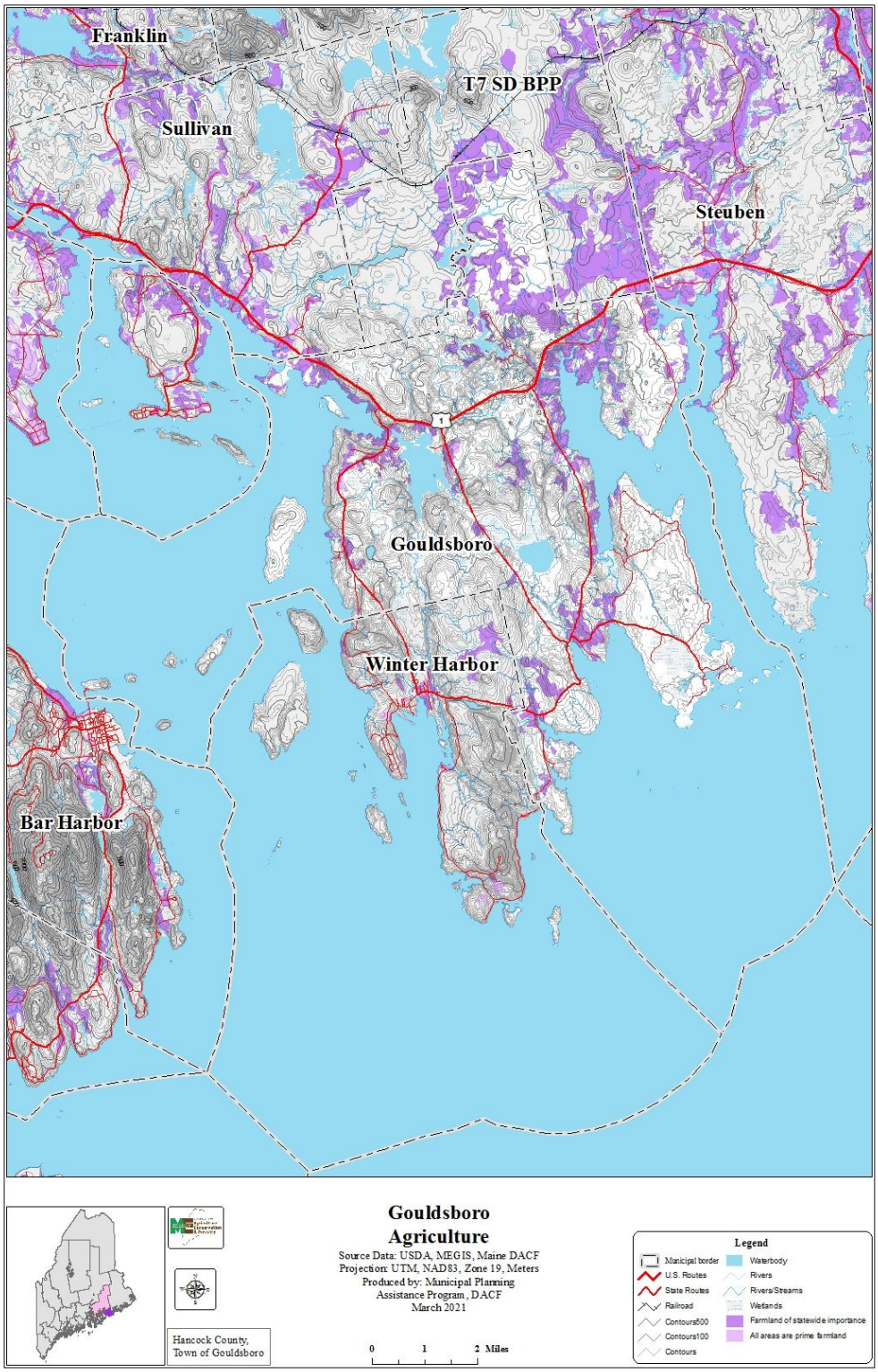
The Farmland and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36 of Maine Revised Statutes, Sub-section (§§) 1101-1121) provides tax incentives for property owners who have parcels over five acres that meet certain conditions, such as providing a minimum income of $2,000 from agricultural production. State records from Maine Revenue Services (Table M-1) show that while Gouldsboro's acreage enrolled in the Farmland tax incentive program has fluctuated, the total amount has more than tripled since 2009, reaching 111 acres in 2022. The number of parcels enrolled has risen from one in 2009 to five in 2022.

Table M-1: Change in Farmland Taxation Parcels in Gouldsboro

Year	Number of Parcels	Farmland Acres	Valuation Farmland
2009	1	30	$6,900
2010	1	52	$12,000
2011	1	52	$12,000
2012	1	26	$5,980
2013	5	113	$69,100
2014	5	113	$69,100
2015	4	49	$11,270
2016	4	93	$49,300
2017	4	113	$69,100
2018	4	93	$49,110
2019	5	93	$49,100
2020	4	93	$49,100
2021	4	93	$49,100
2022	5	111	$71,400

Sources: Maine Revenue Service, 2009-2022, Gouldsboro Tax Assessor, 2022

Map M-1: Gouldsboro Agriculture



Source: USDA, MIGIS Maine DACF –March 2021

5.3 Agricultural Lands in Gouldsboro

In 2022, in all of Hancock County, agricultural lands made up only 60,238 acres, or 4%, of the 1,500,800 acres of total land area in the county.[7] This part of Maine lacks large tracts of contiguous, productive farmland. The best soils for farming are patchy and scattered. Additionally, much of the land is either mountainous, covered in forest, or marshy.

Agricultural lands in Gouldsboro are the purple shaded areas in Map M-1. As in the rest of Hancock County, they are patchy, scattered, and make up a small portion of the overall land area.

6 Forestry Resources

Gouldsboro is predominantly forested. Forests provide important ecological benefits, including temperature modulation, carbon storage, recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat. Farms and forests are connected across our landscape here in Maine. Most importantly, the forests protect water, both quantity and quality, crucial for private water supply, healthy streams and lakes, and coastal marine ecosystems. Preserved forests are also useful for recreation and tourism in Gouldsboro. As illustrated in Map M-2, Gouldsboro's forests are a mix of temperate deciduous and northern coniferous species.

Map M-2: Gouldsboro Land Cover

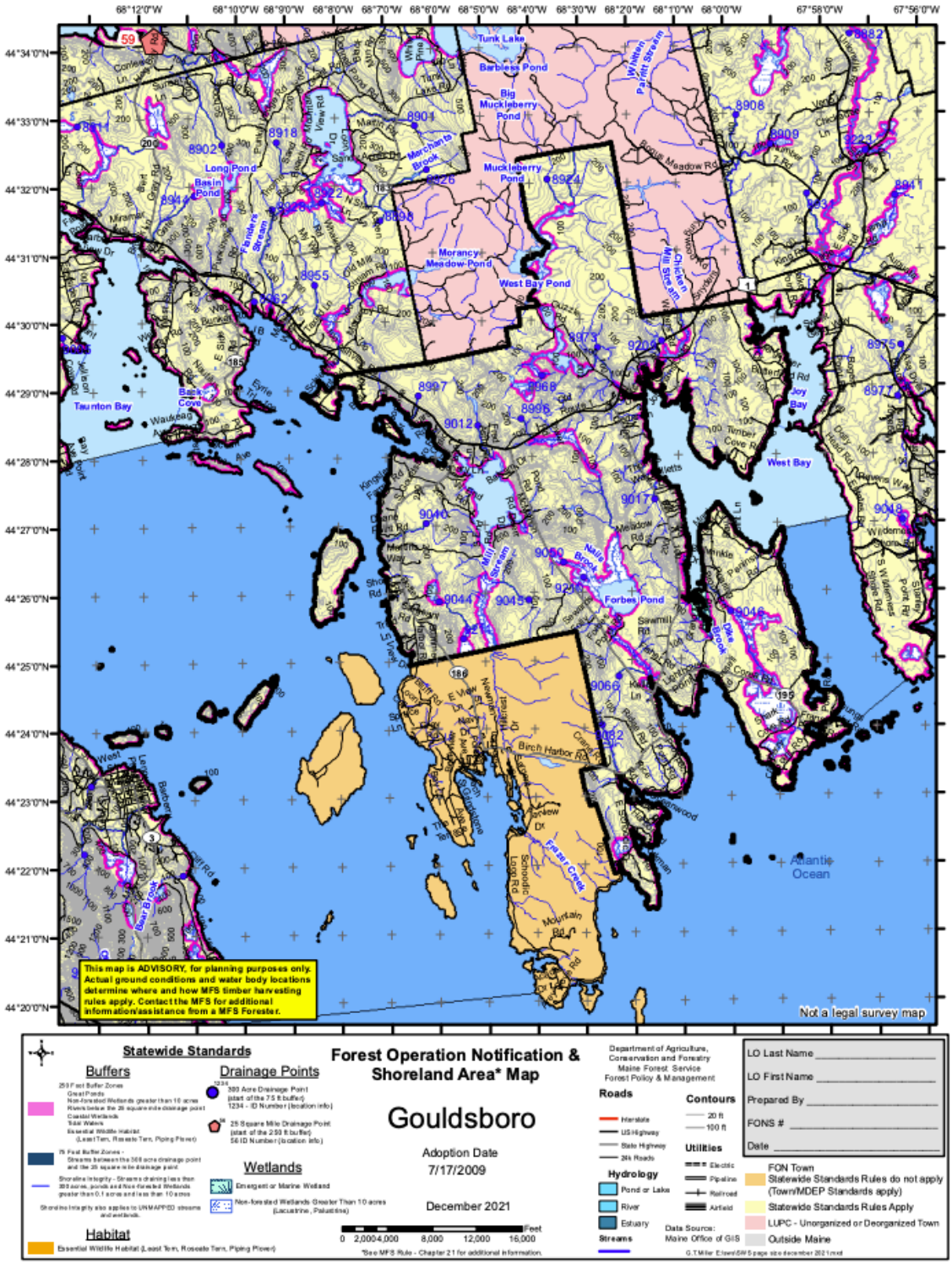


Source: U.S. Geological Survey (2021)

[7] USDA AgCensus https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Maine/cp23009.pdf)

Ground condition and water body locations determine where and how MFS timber harvesting rules apply as shown on Gouldsboro's Forest Operation Notification & Shoreland Area Map, Figure K-4 below.

Map M-3: Gouldsboro Forest Operation Notification & Shoreland Area Map



Source: Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry-Maine Forest Service, August 2021

6.1 Forestry Resource Threat Analysis

Gouldsboro has not experienced large-scale clearcutting of its forests within recent decades. Particularly vulnerable are abandoned farmland and old forest clear cuts that have grown rapidly into even-age stands of softwoods now reaching or past maturity and subject to insect damage. This has resulted in some timber stands subject to blowdowns, which are not only unsightly but also a fire hazard. Individual landowners are faced with a serious and costly management problem on these parcels. Climate change also poses potential future threats to forest resources. These include an increase in invasive species, increased pathogenic diseases, and new types of insect infestations. Sustained high heat events due to climate change weaken species adapted to colder year-round climates.

Given recent development trends, it is likely that some smaller woodlots will be subdivided into residential lots. Larger parcels more viable for commercial forestry are less likely to be subdivided. A possible threat to Gouldsboro's forests may be over-harvesting. Presently, the town has no timber harvesting standards in its ordinances and staff reductions at the Maine Forest Service have meant that there is less technical assistance available to local landowners to assist them in the management of their properties.

7 Use of Tax Incentives to Protect Farms, Forests, and Open Space

The Farm and Open Space Act provides an open space classification that can be used to protect forests and other areas by providing for tax valuation based on the land's current use as open space rather than its highest and best use. There are no minimum parcel size requirements or income metrics. However, the property must meet conditions of providing a public benefit. The list of such public benefits that qualify a parcel for open space classification is available on the Maine Revenue Services website. The amount of the tax benefit depends on how the land is classified:

- Ordinary Open Space - 20% reduction
- Permanently Protected - 30% reduction
- Forever Wild - 20% (cannot be combined with Managed Forest)
- Public Access - 25% reduction
- Managed Forest - 10% reduction (cannot be combined with Forever Wild)

If property met all of the above requirements, the owner would see a cumulative reduction of up to 95% on the classified land. If a tax benefit has been granted, there are financial penalties for withdrawing the land from the program.

7.1 Tree Growth Tax Program

Table M-2 summarizes Tree Growth Taxation Parcel information from 2009 to 2022. As of 2022 there were 13 parcels held in Maine's Tree Growth Taxation program. Although this is a 50% reduction in the number of parcels and plots from 2009, the total overall acreage in the Tree Growth program has only decreased by 16% in the past decade in this timeframe.

The Tree Growth Tax program was enacted into law in 1972 to help Maine landowners maintain their property as productive woodlands, and to broadly support Maine's wood products

industry. Enrollment requires that landowners have at least 10 acres managed primarily for production of commercial forest products, and that landowners adopt a professionally prepared Forest Management and Harvesting Plan. There are tax penalties for withdrawing the land from the program. Not all forest land is held in Tree Growth taxation, which assesses land at its value as forest rather than at its developed value.

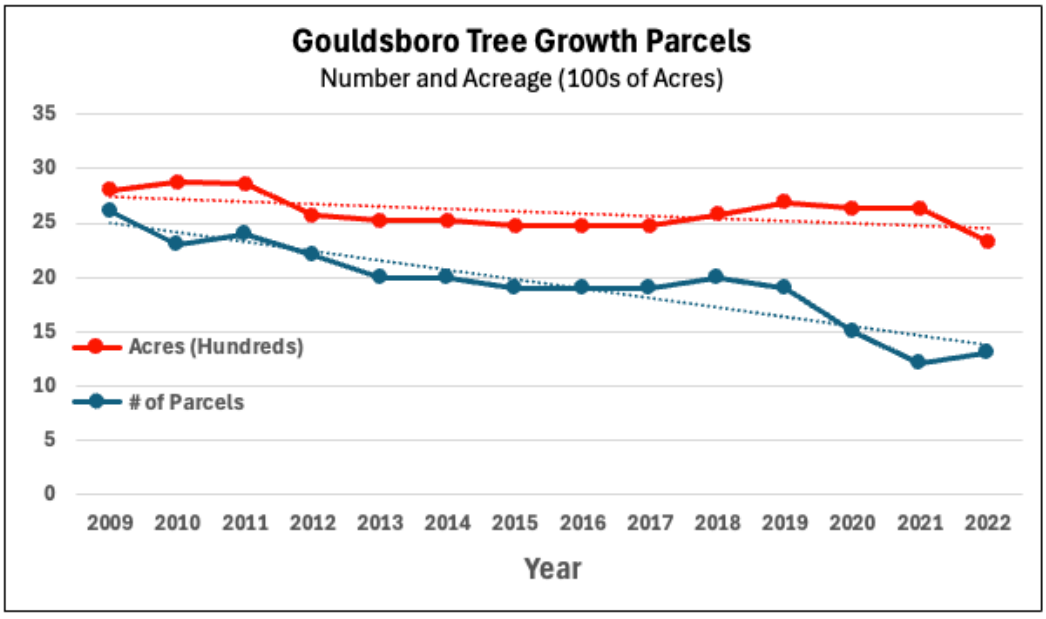
Table M-2: Tree Growth Parcels in Gouldsboro (Acres)

Year	# of Parcels	Softwood	Mixed Wood	Hardwood	Total
2009	26	1,014	1,339	449	2,801
2010	23	981	1,709	183	2,872
2011	24	953	1,747	158	2,859
2012	22	911	1,555	100	2,567
2013	20	848	1,506	163	2,518
2014	20	838	1,524	155	2,517
2015	19	663	1,668	145	2,476
2016	19	661	1,666	144	2,472
2017	19	661	1,666	144	2,472
2018	20	703	1,771	105	2,580
2019	19	877	1,691	118	2,687
2020	15	970	1,542	118	2,631
2021	12	970	1,542	118	2,631
2022	13	819	1,365	145	2,329

Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, 2009-2022

Figure M-1 presents these same data graphically, showing that even though the number of tree growth parcels decreased by about 50% from 2009 to 2022, the total acreage operating under the Tree Growth Tax Program, though decreasing some (about 17%), was relatively unchanged. (The dotted lines are the linear trendlines.)

Figure M-1: Changes in Gouldsboro Tree Growth Parcels, 2009 - 2022



Understanding how the substantial decrease in the number of parcels fits together with the smaller change in acreage requires a more detailed look at the land transactions between 2009 and 2022 to understand whether the decrease in Tree Growth parcels is related to development pressures.

As in most rural Maine towns, some Gouldsboro landowners may occasionally harvest timber commercially on their land. The Maine Forest Service keeps track of commercial harvests as part of the Forest Practices Act. This law largely prevents "liquidation harvesting" (clearcutting with an intent to sell the land afterward), encourages practices that promote regeneration, and generally protects the health of the forest, an important resource for the state. To implement this law, the Maine Forest Service requires various permits and keeps track of harvest by municipality. Table M-3 shows the recorded harvest for Gouldsboro from 2000-2018 and is interesting because it might shed light on the question of whether the decrease in the number of Tree Growth parcels reflects development pressure. If forests are being harvested to clear land for development, such action might show up as both (1) a clearcut harvest and (2) a change in land use in Table M-3. There are a few instances of that in the table, but not many. Unfortunately, Table M-3 does not cover the 2021 to 2022 period where, in Figure M-1, we see a noticeable drop in Tree Growth acreage. Since Gouldsboro was seeing a significant real estate boom in the post-COVID area, it is possible that some conversion from forest to new housing was taking place at that time.

Table M-3: Summary of Timber Harvest Information for Gouldsboro (Acres), 2000-2018

Year	Selection Harvest	Shelterwood Harvest	Clearcut Harvest	Total Harvest	Change of Land Use	# of Active Notifications
2000	516	0	0	516	5	39
2001	334	0	0	334	0	21
2002	365	0	0	365	2	20
2003	164	0	0	164	0	15
2004	475	0	0	475	20	17
2005	86	65	0	151	0	18
2006	241	15	0	256	0	21
2007	192	90	0	282	5	20
2008	256	3	0	259	0	17
2009	368	0	0	368	0	20
2010	220	30	23	273	0	14
2011	136	60	0	196	0	13
2012	335	155	0	490	0	7
2013	135	0	0	135	25	4
2014	101	0	0	101	0	8
2015	67	0	143	210	0	6
2016	85	0	244	329	0	8
2017	283	173	159	615	4	19
2018	90	0	8	98	0	13
Total	**4,449**	**591**	**577**	**5,617**	**61**	**300**
Average	**234**	**31**	**30**	**296**	**3**	**16**

Source: Maine Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

7.2 Farmland and Open Space Programs

In the Farmland program, the property owner is required to have at least five contiguous acres in their parcel of land. The land must be used for farming, agriculture or horticulture and can include woodland and wasteland. Additionally, the parcel must contribute at least $2,000 gross income from farming activities each year. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry prepares a valuation guideline for municipalities, which results from studies based on suggested values using a correlation from income stream and market data attributable to agricultural enterprise. If the property no longer qualifies as farmland, then a penalty will be assessed. Table M-4 shows that in Gouldsboro, the numbers of parcels and acreage enrolled in both the Farmland and Open Space programs have increased since 2009.

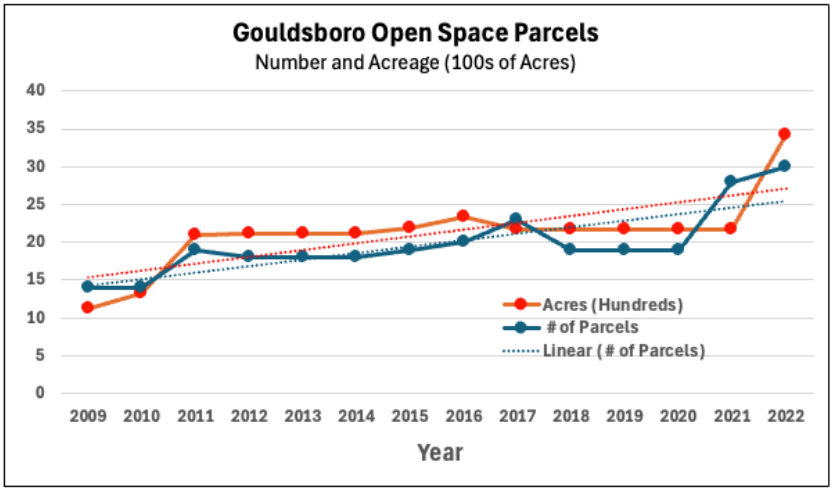
Table M-4: Open Space, Tree Growth & Farmland Tax Incentive Program Acres, 2009-2022

	Farmland		Open Space		Tree Growth	
Year	# of Parcels	Acres	# of Parcels	Acres	# of Parcels	Acres
2009	1	30	14	1,120	26	2,801
2010	1	52	14	1,331	23	2,872
2011	1	52	19	2,097	24	2,859
2012	1	26	18	2,117	22	2,567
2013	5	113	18	2,117	20	2,518
2014	5	113	18	2,117	20	2,517
2015	4	49	19	2,180	19	2,476
2016	4	93	20	2,338	19	2,472
2017	4	113	23	2,173	19	2,472
2018	4	93	19	2,173	20	2,580
2019	5	93	19	2,173	19	2,687
2020	4	93	19	2,173	15	2,631
2021	4	93	28	2,173	12	2,631
2022	5	111	30	3,422	13	2,329

Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, 2009-2022

The increases in the number and acreage of Open Space partials are significant (twice the number of parcels and three times as much Open Space acreage), as illustrated in Figure M-2.

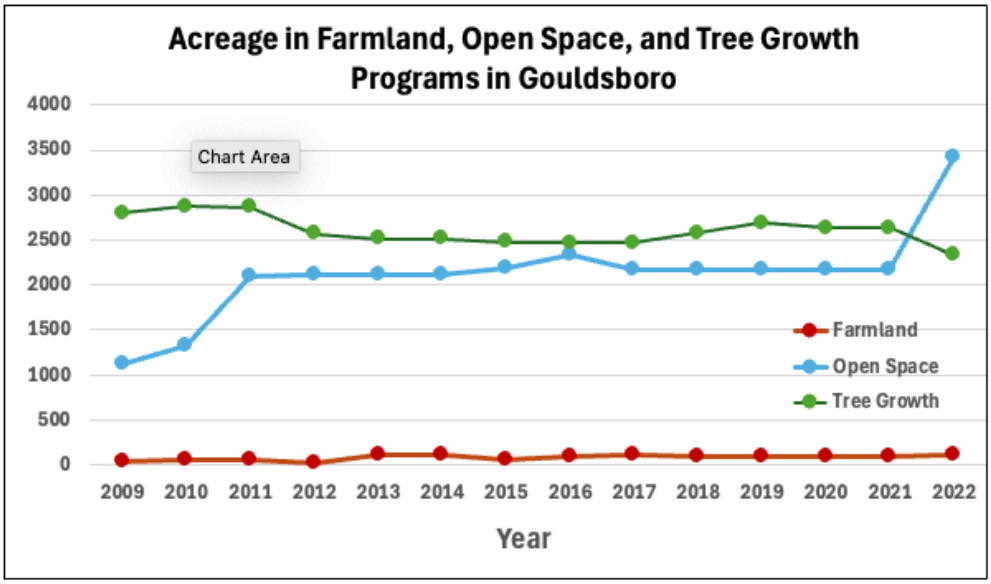
Figure M-2: Changes in Gouldsboro Open Space Parcels, 2009 - 2022



7.3 Acreage in All Tax Incentive Programs

Figure M-3 brings the tables and graphs on the preceding pages together to compare acreage across the Farmland, Open Space, and Tree Growth programs. As noted earlier, Gouldsboro's soils are more suited to growing trees than crowing crops, and that is reflected in the relative sizes of these protected acreages.

Figure M-3: Acres Enrolled in Farmland, Open Space and Tree Growth Programs, 2009-2022



Although the Farm, Open Space, and Tree Growth property tax programs offer some protection to Gouldsboro's farms and woodlots, there is no guarantee that land will not be withdrawn from these classifications and sold for development. Gouldsboro's land use ordinances have some measures in place that contribute to their protection. Town ordinances include Shoreland zoning standards for timber harvesting and standards for the retention and preservation of its natural beauty. There are similar standards in the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances.

8 Measures to Protect Farmland, Forest Land and Open Space

Since Gouldsboro does not have town-wide zoning, the only protections for farm, open space, and forested areas are the provisions in Shoreland Zoning, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision oridinances noted above. Apart from that and the tax incentives described in the preceding section, market forces and commitments to conservation by individual property owners determine how Gouldsboro's land is used.

Darthia Farm is an example of a farm protected through individual conservation commitment. It is managed under an easement with Frenchman Bay Conservancy. It was one of the first properties they put under easement in 1993 and is restricted for public use, meaning the owners still retain their property and can restrict access on their working farm. Another parcel of land was put under easement in 2020 by Maine Coast Heritage Trust; that parcel is noted as a working forest. No other land trust parcels have known conservation restrictions.

Some towns have enacted farm and forestry districts in which requirements for relatively large lot sizes and other density limitations are combined with the use of cluster development to support modest population growth while also preserving open spaces and a community's rural character.

Other communities have worked with local land conservation groups to encourage the donation or sale of conservation easements to protect productive farm and forest lands from development. Yet other communities have town forests or manage other woodlands that provide income and habitat for flora and fauna. Currently, Gouldsboro has no public woodlands under management.

Gouldsboro could more actively pursue regulatory and non-regulatory steps to protect farming and forestry lands. Local and regional land trusts are not primarily involved in working to protect productive farming and forestry lands. Their principal concerns are to preserve land for aesthetic, recreation and habitat value.

Gouldsboro has had several community conversations with the assistance of Healthy Acadia, regarding the potential of community gardens on the peninsula and has access to several towns with farmer's markets as well as several community farms that sell to the public.

9 Other Conserved Lands Providing Open Space

The preceding sections have focused on privately owned lands that qualify for tax reductions under the State's tax incentive programs. These properties are not Gouldsboro's only open space resources contributing to the Town's "rural character" values by survey respondents. Other properties in Gouldsboro, owned by the federal government or non-profit organizations also contribute to Gouldsboro's scenic beauty and the recreational opportunities that it provides. Table L-2, in the preceding chapter on Gouldsboro's Natural Resources, list many of these properties. Taken together, they comprise 5,240 acres, which is 17.5% of Gouldsboro's land area (29,549 acres).

10 Climate Change

Climate change increases uncertainty for farmers and foresters. The Maine Climate Council's 2020 report, *Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine*, summarizes climate change's principal impacts on Maine agriculture as:

- Longer growing season and northward shift in plant hardiness zones
- Early Spring Warm-up Increases Frost/Freeze Risk
- More Frequent or Intense Heat Waves
- More Frequent Intense Downpours
- More Frequent and Longer Dry Spells

The same Climate Council study reports that change in temperature, growing season, and increased drought will, when impacting forests, result in:

- Transition from spruce-fir forest to hardwoods
- Increased tree mortality due to migration of pests because of warmer winters

- Overall increased fire risk

As with farming, the key take-away for planning purposes is that farming and forestry operations should expect change and some economic stress. This, combined with rising property values, could make it more likely farms and forests are converted to residential use.

11 Regional Issues

As with all neighboring towns in Hancock County, threats from climate change and invasive plant and animal species are on the rise. Towns on the Schoodic Peninsula will need to coordinate to protect vital forest habitats and canopy covers so as not to create large habitat gaps that ultimately undermine the wider biodiversity of the region. Protection of farmland is also a regional issue, which is likely to become even more important for local food security.

12 Summary

Even though Gouldsboro's farms use just over 100 acres of Gouldsboro's 29,459 acres of land area, they make a substantial contribution to the Town's "rural character" valued by its residents. The other two agricultural land categories eligible for tax incentives, Tree Growth and Open Space, occupy 2,349 and 3,422 acres, respectively. Considered together, the area of all agricultural lands participating in tax incentive programs is 5,862 acres, or about 20% of Gouldsboro's land area.

As noted above, although tax incentive programs offer some protection to Gouldsboro's farms woodlots and open space, there is no guarantee that land will not be withdrawn from these classifications and sold for development.

Gouldsboro's Shoreland Zoning, Subdivision, and Site Plan Review ordinances include provisions that address timber harvesting and protection of natural beauty, but without zoning outside the Shoreland Zone, woodlands and open space can be developed and converted to other uses.

As described in preceding chapters, Gouldsboro is unlikely to face substantial population growth. However, real estate trends over the past five years show that an increasing number of people are interested in purchasing or building seasonal retirement and short-term rental properties that could displace woodlands and open spaces. Commercial development also has the potential to replace forests and farmland.

The planning board could gain a better understanding of the likelihood and scope of potential development of agricultural lands designing a working session to explore such scenarios and the changes in Town ordinances that would be needed to manage such threats.

13 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Preserve lands suitable for agricultural and forestry uses and promote increased local agricultural activity			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Revise land use ordinances to support farm and forest preservation.	Research similar towns and their approaches to find appropriate models for Gouldsboro.	Planning Board	Immediate and ongoing
	Consider possible development scenarios that might displace agricultural lands and explore changes Land Use, Subdivision, and Site Plan Review ordinances that would provide the Town with more management options in such scenarios	Planning Board	Over the next five years
	Consider amending ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments adjacent to lands protected by agricultural tax exemptions to maintain areas with farmland soils or forests as open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Planning Board	Over the next five years
Safeguard lands with prime farmland soils and large parcels with high quality forestland.	Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Encourage landowners to utilize current use taxation programs.	Town Manager, CEO	Ongoing
Support and protect local agriculture and forestry industry in Gouldsboro	Ensure “right to farm” and “right to harvest timber” policies are in place to limit nuisance complaints by existing potential development.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Continue to permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations	Planning Board	Ongoing

Policies
To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.
To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.
Strategies
Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.
Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.
Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.
Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.
Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.
Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.

Chapter N: Climate Adaptation

1 Purpose

As a coastal community heavily reliant on its working waterfront for a significant portion of its economic activity, Gouldsboro is vulnerable to the effects of sea level rise (SLR), larger coastal storms, increased shoreline flooding and erosion, and other climate-related impacts. This chapter describes recent storm events that have shaped Gouldsboro's approach to climate adaptation, the steps that Gouldsboro has already taken to address its vulnerabilities, current Maine-based scientific thinking about future climate-related challenges, and Gouldsboro's adaptation goals and objectives for the next 5 to 10 years.

2 Recent Events

An extraordinary storm on June 9, 2021, brought climate change risks into a new, sharper focus in Gouldsboro. The storm dropped more than 6 inches of rain on the hills above Prospect Harbor in a little over an hour. Water flowed from the tops of the hills into gullies that converged into streams, and then into a torrent. The force of the water and the debris it picked up tore out the culverts under State Route 186 in Birch Harbor and washed them into the harbor. The washed-out road cut Gouldsboro in half for three weeks.

Figure M-1. Birch Harbor Bridge, June 2021



Photo Credit: Natasha Fouch

In January 2024, a strong winter storm coming from the southeast pushed a four-foot storm surge into Gouldsboro's Corea Harbor, Prospect Harbor, and Bunkers Harbor. Peak storm winds in mid-morning coincided with the morning high tide. At twelve feet, the tide was not unusually high for this area, but the huge waves running over four feet of storm surge on top of the twelve-foot tide resulted in substantial damage to all three harbors. Figure M-2 shows that the causeway connecting Crowley Island to the rest of Gouldsboro and emergency services was

impassable. Across the harbor, the road connecting Cranberry Point residents to emergency services was under four feet of water, as shown in Figure M-3. In Prospect Harbor and Bunkers Harbor, boats were tossed up on the shore as shown in Figure M-4.

Figure M-2. The Crowley Island Road causeway on January 10, 2024, at 10:17 AM. (Brett Ciccotelli)



Figure M-3. The Junction of Corea Rd., Cranberry Point Rd., and Francis Pound Rd. under four feet of water on January 10, 2024. What appears to be shorefront property is actually a roadway intersection. (photo: Melissa Rodgers)



Figure M-4. FV Lord Byron on shore in Prospect Harbor, January 10, 2024. (Tim Fisher)



3 What Gouldsboro Has Done

3.1 Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan

Gouldsboro and its leadership were aware that the sea was rising and getting warmer. Equally important, big winter storms, which once brought winds from the northeast ("Nor'easters"), were increasingly blowing from the southeast directly into many of Gouldsboro's harbors. In May 2021, before experiencing the damage illustrated above, the town submitted a successful proposal to the Maine Coastal Program to hire FB Environmental to prepare a climate vulnerability assessment and action plan. FB Environmental delivered the *Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan* in October 2022 and joined the town in an afternoon workshop at Peninsula School in Prospect Harbor in May 2023 to present the assessment and plan. The workshop was an open-house event with a come-when-you-can format. Seventy people participated, adding their personal observations about local climate vulnerabilities. The average participation duration was approximately 1.5 hours.

Table M-1 lists the locations identified as "Highest Priority" in the 2022 FB Environmental report based on:

- Extent of inundation under 1.6 feet of SLR and 3.9 feet of SLR or during 100-year storm events.
- Severity of impacts to infrastructure.

Events since that meeting have demonstrated the accuracy and value of the Vulnerability Assessment: Many of the locations identified as highly vulnerable experienced substantial damage and economic loss in the January 2024 storm.

Table M-1. Highest priority vulnerabilities along Gouldsboro's coast. (From the 2022 Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan)

Location	Description
Corea Harbor Marina, Docks, and Working Waterfront	Corea Harbor is a highly vulnerable area. The harbor includes working waterfront (commercial fishing docks, Lobster Coops, lobster pounds, and fishing infrastructure), restaurants & tourism and some residential properties. This infrastructure is at risk of inundation during a 100-year storm event, 1.6+ feet of SLR, or Category 1-2 hurricanes. Increased SLR at 3.9 feet and 8.8 feet scenarios (or Category 3-4 hurricanes) creates deeper floodwaters and further inland inundation in Corea Harbor, threatening more properties and roads.
Corea Road	At 1.6 feet of SLR, Corea Road will experience nuisance flooding at the least, with potential for dangerous washouts, unsafe driving conditions, and damage occurring. During a 100-year storm event, portions of Corea Road will be flooded. With increasing SLR at 3.9 feet projections, Corea Road will be inundated by 2-8 feet of water, rendering it unpassable. The following locations along Corea Road are highest priority because they will leave portions of the town inaccessible to services: • The Corea Road - Grand Marsh Bay Road intersection is projected to be flooded during a 100-year storm event and has two cross culverts that may be unable to accommodate increased tidal flows under SLR scenarios greater than 3.9 feet. This area is very important to plan for resilience because inundation, damage, etc., would cut off this eastern peninsula of Gouldsboro from emergency services. • Corea Road prior to the intersection with Cranberry Point Road and Francis Pound Road is projected to be flooded during a 100-year storm event or by 3.9 feet SLR, rendering Cranberry Point inaccessible. Francis Pound Road would also be inaccessible.
Crowley Island Road Causeway	Crowley Island Road leading out to Youngs Point is projected to be flooded during a 100-year storm event or by 3.9 feet SLR, rendering Crowley Island Road/Youngs Point inaccessible. Under 8.8 feet of SLR, much of the front side of the island (southeast) will be inundated.
Grand Marsh Bay Road	Similar to Corea Road, Grand Marsh Bay Road is within the 100-year floodplain, and with increasing SLR at 3.9 feet projections, it will be inundated by 2-6 feet of water in the deepest locations, rendering it impassable at the southern tip of the long marsh. This location is a high priority because when flooded, in combination with Corea Road, the entire eastern peninsula of Gouldsboro will be inaccessible. At 8.8 feet of SLR, this portion of Gouldsboro to the east would effectively become an island.
Main Street	A culvert located on Main Street along the west edge of Prospect Harbor would be affected by a 100-year storm event with increased waves along the coast. Culverts that are undersized for storm events can cause flows to back up or cause road washouts. This stretch of Main Street will also be affected by SLR greater than 3.9 feet, including buildings in this area.

Bunker Pound Road	Bunker Pound Road is expected to experience up to 2 feet of flooding under SLR of 1.6 feet, with the extent of the road underwater increasing under 3.9 feet SLR and greater. While this road is relatively short, it should still be considered by the town for climate resiliency actions, as there are residences and working waterfront infrastructure that will be impacted.
Clinic Road Bridge	The Clinic Road Bridge that passes over the Jones Pond outlet to Jones Cove is within the 100-year floodplain. Damage or impassibility of the bridge due to SLR would limit accessibility to Winter Harbor. This bridge is not projected to be at risk from SLR.
Guzzle Road	Two important bridges on Guzzle Road - one over West Bay Pond's outlet and one that crosses over the northern tip of the pond - are within the zone flooded by a 100-year storm event. Flood events may cut off access to Guzzle Road and limit access to numerous residences.
Redding Road	Redding Road will be inundated by SLR of 1.6 feet as it crosses the tidal marsh associated with Tucker Creek. While there are only a few residential properties located beyond the point of inundation, the depth and extent of the inundation will increase at 3.9 feet SLR or greater. This effort will likely need to be resident-led as it is a private road.

3.2 Community Resilience Partnership; Coastal Resilience Committee Formation

During the fall of 2023, Gouldsboro joined Maine's Community Resilience Partnership and formed the town's Coastal Resilience Committee (CRC). The committee's charter and role within the town's organizational structure reflect Gouldsboro's holistic approach to coastal and climate resilience. Climate change impacts all aspects of town activities, including harbors, roads, emergency services, land use, planning, and town finances. Consequently, the CRC works collaboratively with town staff, including the Harbor Master, Code Enforcement Officer, and Town Manager, as well as with other committees and the Planning Board. In these interactions, the CRC serves as a liaison between the town and State initiatives and funding opportunities.

Unlike the town's Planning Board and Harbor Committee, the Coastal Resilience Committee does not develop or enforce town ordinances. Town staff, as well as other town boards and committees, are responsible for these tasks. The CRC exists to facilitate work by town committees, boards, and staff regarding coastal and climate change, connecting it to state and federal programs. The goal is to support the development of well-coordinated, internally coherent approaches to climate adaptation across all the town's programs and activities.

3.3 Recent and Current Proposals and Projects

One way that the CRC supports the town is by writing proposals related to climate adaptation and then assisting in managing the projects that get funded. Often, the proposed projects aim to implement the recommendations outlined in the *Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan*. Other projects emerge from collaborations with the Planning Board and Harbor Committee, focusing on climate adaptation along Gouldsboro's working waterfront. The following sections describe the CRC's climate adaptation work since its inception in January 2024.

3.3.1 Corea Road at Sand Cove

The CRC began its work by preparing a proposal delivered to the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) in February 2024 that would fund a scoping study to develop and evaluate alternatives to the current design and placement of Corea Road at Sand Cove. The goal was to make the road less vulnerable to flooding and damage from sea level rise and storm surge, thereby mitigating the risk of loss of community lifelines due to road closure or damage.

The 2022 *Vulnerability Assessment* ranked flooding along Corea Road at Sand Cove, where Corea Road and Grand Marsh Bay Road intersect, as one of the highest-impact vulnerabilities. Severe flooding, or worse, loss of Corea Road at this point, would cut off the entire Corea peninsula from emergency services, impacting 284 housing units in the village of Corea and the adjoining subdivision. It would also sever access to the Corea Lobster Coop, which provides a substantial portion of Gouldsboro's economic activity.

As it runs by Sand Cove, Corea Road is not a town road but is part of State Route 195. The proposal sought collaboration from the MDOT in undertaking the scoping study. The MDOT responded by explaining that, although the proposed project was of merit, the MDOT cannot fund work related to its own roads. MDOT also expressed willingness to write a letter of support if Gouldsboro sought funding from other sources.

The CRC intends to continue seeking funding for the scoping project while maintaining communication with MDOT. Because the life-safety and economic issues that would follow from the loss of Corea Road at Sand Cove are so significant, this project should remain among Gouldsboro's climate adaptation objectives

3.3.2 Town Road Vulnerabilities Around Corea Harbor

The high-priority vulnerabilities listed in Table M-1 also include the Crowley Island Road causeway and the area along Corea Road near its junction with Francis Pound Road and Cranberry Point Road. Figures M-2 and M-3 show that both locations experienced severe flooding during the January 2024 storm. In March 2024, Gouldsboro's Coastal Resilience Committee submitted a proposal to address these vulnerabilities to Maine's Community Action Grant program. The initial project plan was to develop three conceptual designs for each location and then use a combination of community input and design analysis to select two preferred alternatives. However, it was quickly evident that only the lowest cost designs would be financially feasible. In addition, Federal Emergency Management Agency funds became available to repair and raise the Crowley Island Road causeway. Consequently, the town restructured the project to focus only on the flooding at the Corea/Francis Pound/Cranberry Point Road junction. As of the end of 2025, the town has a permit-level design to raise the road and replace a culvert with a bridge and is in the process of completing the permit submission process. Securing funding for construction is a near-term objective.

3.3.3 Harbor Climate Mitigation and Resilience Planning

The January 2024 storms exposed vulnerabilities in the town's harbors, particularly those facing the south or southeast. In May 2024, the Coastal Resilience Committee submitted a successful proposal to the Maine Coastal program to undertake climate adaptation and mitigation planning for Prospect Harbor, Bunkers Harbor, and South Gouldsboro Harbor. With support

from the proposal, thirty-two residents, most of them fishermen, met in May 2025 to identify top investment priorities for town investment in new or improved municipal harbor infrastructure. The top priorities they identified are:

- **Prospect Harbor**: A ramp to facilitate hauling boats in advance of severe storms.
- **Bunkers Harbor**: Reorienting the existing launch ramp to move it away from a privately owned wharf, make it usable over more of the tidal range, and create space for a town-owned float.
- **South Gouldsboro**: Repair or replace and reopen access to the jetty next to the town launch ramp, now closed due to erosion from storms. Ensure that it can support light trucks for use in loading and unloading boats.

The town and consultants hired with funds from the grant explored the feasibility of these actions and identified additional questions that harbor stakeholders will explore in a meeting in November 2025.

4 Probable Future Climate, Storm, and Sea Level Trends

The Maine Climate Council's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee published a report titled *Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update*[8] that provides an overview of how Maine's climate is changing:

- **Maine's climate is getting warmer**. The past five years in Maine (2020-2024) ranked among the ten warmest on record, with 2024 being the hottest year since record keeping began.
- **Maine's climate is getting wetter, with more high-intensity precipitation**. Maine now receives 1–2 additional days per year with 2+ inches of precipitation, and 2–3 more days per year with 1 inch of precipitation.
- **Maine is experiencing more extremes, from hourly and daily weather fluctuations to monthly and seasonal climate variations**. Dry periods will continue to become drier, and wet periods will continue to become wetter.
- **As temperatures rise, the warm season is becoming longer, while the winter season shortens and snow and ice decline**.
- **Winter storms are projected to become more intense, but their frequency remains uncertain.**
- **Winter storms are projected to become more intense, but their frequency remains uncertain.**
- **Sea level is 7.5 inches higher than it was in early 20th-century Maine, and the rate of sea level rise has nearly doubled over the past 30 years.** Record-high sea levels were measured along the coast in 2023 and 2024.

[8] MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp. (https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/STS_2024_digital.pdf)

The 2024 report recommends that communities commit to managing for an intermediate SLR scenario of 1.5 feet by 2050 and 3.9 feet by 2100 (over a baseline year of 2000). Looking further ahead, they recommend that communities prepare for an intermediate SLR scenario of 1.5 feet by 2070 and 3.9 feet by 2120.

5 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Protect life safety and critically important infrastructure by planning and implementing climate adaptations that keep pace with or exceed the rate of climate change.			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party (ies)**	**Timeline**
Make travel to Crowley Island less vulnerable to interruption by sea level rise and storms.	Using funds from FEMA, rebuild the causeway to Crowley Island, replacing the road base and elevating the road approximately 2 feet in the central area across the causeway.	Emergency Plan Coordinator, Town Manager, Road Commissioner	2026
Make travel across the Corea/Francis Pound/ Cranberry Point Road junction less vulnerable to interruption by sea level rise and storms.	Seek funding for final design and construction.	Coastal Resilience Committee (CRC), Road Commissioner, Town Manager	2026 - 2027
Address the Corea Road vulnerability at Sand Cove.	Seek funding for a scoping study to explore alternative approaches to reducing vulnerability and continue communication with Maine DOT.	CRC	Ongoing
Explore implementing climate adaptation ideas for harbor infrastructure emerging from the 2025 harbor stakeholder meetings.	Seek funding for next-stage design and feasibility studies. Depending on feasibility outcomes, seek funding for design, permitting, and construction.	CRC, Harbor Master, Harbor Committee	2026 - 2027
Keep the vulnerability assessment and action plan up to date.	Review and update the plan every five years or more frequently as needed.	CRC	Ongoing, starting in 2027 or sooner.

Ensure that relevant ordinances reflect climate vulnerabilities and adaptation plans.	Strengthen coordination between the Planning Board and the Climate Resilience Committee. Involve CRC when the Planning Board revises Land Use, Subdivision, Site Plan, and Shoreland Zoning ordinances.	Planning Board, CRC	Ongoing
Ensure that the town's Capital Improvement Plan reflects future climate adaptation investments and includes a sufficient reserve to match funding opportunities as they emerge.	CRC participation in the Capital Improvement Plan and budgeting process.	Town Manager, CRC, Budget Committee	Ongoing

Policies
To prioritize projects that protect life safety and critically important infrastructure.
To prioritize CRC coordination with town staff, boards, and other committees.
Strategies
Regular CRC participation in Select Board meetings.
Regular CRC communication with the Town Manager, Harbor Master, CEO, Planning Board, and other committees.
Regular communication and engagement with state agencies and other potential sources of climate adaptation funding.
Coordination and cooperation with the Hancock County Planning Commission and other regional planning and climate adaptation organizations.
Regular, periodic review of the vulnerability assessment.

Chapter O: Existing and Future Land Use

1 Purpose

A future Land Use Plan is a core Comprehensive Plan component that will guide Gouldsboro's future decisions on zoning, land preservation and public investments over the next decade. Implementation of this plan will be coordinated with LD 2003 to increase workforce housing opportunities by studying zoning and Land Use Restrictions along with any other state mandates. This law provides regulations for areas within a community that are designated Growth Areas and non-growth areas.

This section discusses current and potential future land use patterns in Gouldsboro. An understanding of past and current land use trends is particularly important in determining how Gouldsboro could potentially grow in the future. Specifically, this chapter:

- Summarizes the amount of developed and undeveloped land in terms of estimated acreage and location
- Explores the potential for new development in the next decade and Gouldsboro's capacity to absorb the growth; and
- Discusses measures that Gouldsboro may want to consider for managing residential and non-residential growth.

2 Key Findings & Issues from the 2005 Plan

Most new developments had occurred along the shore. Other parts of town that were not considered prime for development might be developed in the future. There was concern regarding development of shorefront properties that could threaten the working waterfront as marine-dependent uses are replaced by residential and non-marine-related uses.

The combination of poor soils and limited infrastructure made it difficult for Gouldsboro to accommodate concentrations of high-density development. These limiting factors meant that the town needs to take a creative approach in designating growth areas.

Per the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, only 24% of new construction from 1990 to 1991 occurred in the villages, demonstrating that they were not particularly successful as growth areas. Most new developments had taken place either adjacent to the shore or along major highways. Issues the town faced were continued development along major highways and the shoreland zoning areas.

The 2005 Plan found that the villages needed enhancements and suggested that the Town work with the MaineDOT Local Roads Center for assistance in conducting street assessments as part of the overall road improvement program and to include these road projects in the capital improvement program.

3 Key Findings and Issues in 2025

Gouldsboro has remained rural, a result of both history and preference. Thus far the Town's land use and development, as pursued by its inhabitants, has preserved the rural and scenic

nature of the Town, and enabled a strong sense of community supported by vital ongoing economic and cultural activities. Maintaining the working waterfront continues to be seen as vital to the community.

Gouldsboro's population has been declining over the past 25 years and that trend is expected to continue. The recent arrival of broadband connectivity for most of the Town may have the potential to slow the decline of Town's population both because current residents might be able to stay and because work from home opportunities might result in new arrivals.

Residential development continues in the Town's shoreland zone and much of that development is intended for seasonal and often short-term use. Residential development has also continued along major transportation routes in the interior areas including, U.S. 1 and along Routes 195 (Pond Road) & 186 (West Bay Road, Main Street and South Gouldsboro Road). Development away from the coast tends to be less seasonal.

The village enhancements envisioned in 2005 have been spotty. For example, in Prospect Harbor, a new Town Park, the new elementary school, and growth in the Dorcas Library's facilities and programs have brought new activities to this village. On the other hand, in 2005, Prospect Harbor supported a delicatessen that served as a social gathering place. Plans to reestablish such a facility have not come to fruition.

Housing is increasingly expensive and not affordable for residents with incomes at the median level. This leads to concerns about the ability of long-time residents to stay and about the Town's ability to attract new year-round residents. Future land use plans need to include areas appropriate for workforce housing development.

Most of the land in Gouldsboro is not well suited for development, limiting the Town's development options to a relatively small portion of the Town's. The lack of public water and sewar systems limits the ability to support denser development in much of the Town.

4 2022 Public Opinion Survey Results

The community survey respondents want to ensure that future growth fits with Gouldsboro's character and charm. Public forums and conversations also expressed the community's concern for preventing overregulation of land development in Gouldsboro. Table O-1 summarizes participants' responses about the types of development they would like to see in Gouldsboro over the next 10 years.

In addition to the results in this table, respondents thought that "preserving existing agricultural land should be a priority for Gouldsboro" as 47.3% noted this as very important and another 38.9% felt it was important. Other notable areas in which results favored "very important" as the majority response included preserving existing farmland (52.5%); preserving existing forest land (58.6%); protecting rivers and streams (74.3%); protecting scenic views (66.3%); protecting wetlands (67.9%); and protecting wildlife habitats (67.8%). 95.8% of survey respondents think that "maintaining the rural character of Gouldsboro is important".

When asked where it is appropriate for certain land uses to occur, only 3.0% believe that "development of any kind" should be allowed anywhere; 45.3% feel that it should take place in designated areas while 15.5% said close to village centers and 23.7% said nowhere.

Table O-1: "What type of development would you like to see in Gouldsboro during the next 10 years?"

Type of Development	Yes	No
Restaurants	85.1%	14.9%
Medical	81.7%	18.3%
Agriculture/Forestry	79.1%	20.9%
Commercial (trade/service/retail)	75.7%	24.3%
Residential	75.8%	24.2%
Light Industry	71.0%	29.0%
Inns, Bed and Breakfasts, Hotels	67.0%	33.0%
Offices	52.2%	47.8%
Gas Stations	34.4%	65.6%
Development of any Kind	32.1%	67.9%
Large Scale Aquaculture	8.2%	91.8%
Heavy Industry	5.8%	94.2%

Survey results showed that 62.61 % of respondents feel it is very important and 26.89% feel it is important to keep established businesses and industries in Gouldsboro. An overwhelming 90.79% do not support large scale aquaculture leases and operations within Gouldsboro. Also, 60.5% of survey respondents do not think that the current land use controls, such as shoreland zoning and site-review ordinances, provide enough protection. When asked if the Town should consider town wide zoning, the town seems to be divided on this topic with 50.0% percent saying yes, 40.0% saying no and 10% saying "other" with additional comments.

5 Existing Land Use

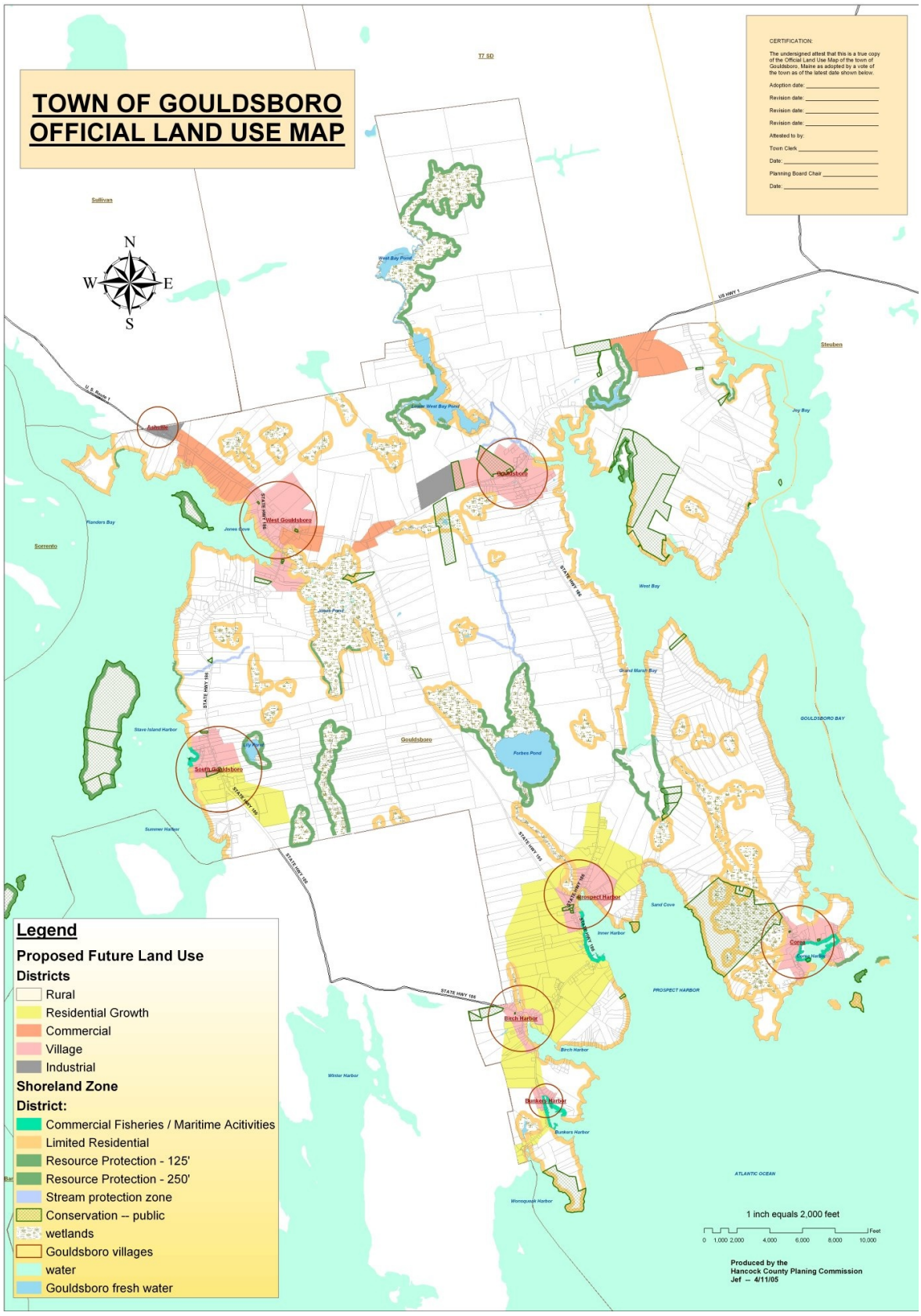
Gouldsboro is still a predominantly rural town with a total area of approximately 99.0 square miles, of which roughly 46.2 square miles (29,568 acres) are land, and 52.8 square miles are water. Map O-1 shows the land uses as defined in the 2005 plan. The map's legend is on the following page in Figure O-1. The 2005 land use map is still a good representation of land use in 2025 except for conservation land use. As described in the Natural Resources chapter (see Map L-2) several large, important parcels have been conserved since 2005.

5.1 Overview

Gouldsboro's land use pattern continues to be rural in nature and low-density. In recent years, the seasonal portion of the total population has increased significantly. With the popularity of rural Maine as a destination vacation area, this trend could continue.

Gouldsboro's land use plans separate the Town into districts that are illustrated in Map O-1 and described below.

Map O-1: Existing Land Use Map – from 2005 Plan Update



5.2 Villages

The Town has defined eight village areas: Gouldsboro, West Gouldsboro, Ashville, South Gouldsboro, Prospect Harbor, Corea, Birch Harbor, and Bunkers Harbor. Residents of these villages prefer that they remain as village areas and do not favor more growth but favor more village restoration. With the passing of the Maine Housing Legislation LD 2003, which allows accessory dwelling units on lots with existing single-family homes, more growth is expected.

Gouldsboro's historical context provided for moderately dense habitation in the villages. When created, these rural villages followed a land use pattern common to many rural New England and Maine villages and towns. Each village provided social life and interaction and typically included a school, a church, a post office and one or more retail stores, and possibly small community centers.

Figure O-1: Caption for Map N-1



Through the years, these villages have seen a decline in resources within their centers and have banded together for economic reasons. The Community Center on the Pond Road is the main meeting place for events and voting and is also an emergency shelter for the area. Mc's Marketplace Gouldsboro market serves several villages. Young's Market remains open on Route One and serves several other Town villages.

While it is possible to take measures to improve the attractiveness of Gouldsboro's villages, the challenges include addressing the lack of a public sewer and water system remain. Given the town's reliance on wells and the density of homes in the village areas, there is a limit to the kinds of development and develop density that the villages can support.

5.3 Industrial

Industrial development is permitted in the upper northwest portion of Gouldsboro, north of Route 1 and south of Ashville Road, as well as in a separate area north of Route 1 and south of West Bay Pond in the upper central portion of the town.

5.4 Commercial

Land allowing commercial development has a slightly larger footprint. This includes an area in the upper northeast portion of Gouldsboro, on both sides of Route 1 east of Chicken Mill Stream; on parcels of land along both sides of Route 1 east and west of the village of West Gouldsboro; and in an additional area along Route 1 and east of Jones Pond.

5.5 Residential Growth

Residential Growth districts are areas adjacent to some of Gouldsboro's Village districts that are intended for a greater of residential housing than found in the Village districts. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan defined Residential Growth districts as areas for "moderate density residential uses" that are "restricted to single-family residential, accessory apartments, and home occupations." With the passage of LD 2003 (see below) and consequent changes in the Town's Land Use ordinance, the restriction to single-family residential housing has been removed. Residential Growth districts can now include multi-family housing.

5.6 Rural

The rural district is all the land on Map O-1 that is not shaded. This area contains most of the conservation lands in Gouldsboro (see Map L-2). Most of it is not suitable for development as explained Section 7, below.

5.7 The Shoreland Zone

Gouldsboro' coast continues to be a popular attraction for visitors to Maine and for those seeking year round homes, seasonal homes, or retirement homes. Despite a projected sea level rise, new development and repurposing of existing properties and buildings on the coast continues.

Development in this Zone is managed according to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates coastal development factors such as setbacks from the shoreline and riparian zones, how much timber can be harvested in, and the size of houses and buildings in settings designated as "Resource Protection" (RP). Shoreland Zoning is described in more detail below in subsection 6.3.2 of this chapter.

6 Other Current Land Use Considerations

6.1 Routes 195 & 186:

State Routes 195 & 186 are the only collector routes through the town. State Route 186 is a sixteen-mile-long state highway serving the town, running in a half-loop from U.S. Route 1, south and east along the southern coast to Winter Harbor and then returning to US 1. State Route 195 is also part of Maine's system of state highways, running entirely in Gouldsboro for a length of 8.09 miles. It travels from an intersection with Corea Road and Crowley Island Road in Corea to an intersection with U.S. Route 1. Development, primarily single-family residential, is scattered along these highways, which also run through several of the Town's village centers that contain additional commercial development and town services.

6.2 Recent Construction Activity

Gouldsboro Building issued a total of 111 permits for new dwelling units between 2017 and 2024. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic Gouldsboro experienced more real estate turnover in 2020 and 2021. Property owners may be tempted to subdivide larger parcels into small subdivisions in the near term as the market demand increases. Additionally, the popularity of short-term online rental services has increased the repurposing of existing structures and the building of new structures for additional income from short-term rentals.

Table O-2: Gouldsboro Building Permits, 2017-2024

Year	New Homes	Home Additions	Garages	Decks/ Porches	Sheds	Other	Totals
2017	10	4	6	15	9	28	72
2018	11	10	13	11	20	13	78
2019	10	19	5	11	13	38	96
2020	16	7	4	7	-	23	57
2021	11	8	11	17	-	50	97
2022	28	15	17	16	-	52	128
2023	9	4	3	7	8	15	46
2024	16	10	8	15	16	45	110

Source: Gouldsboro Town Office 2025

*New homes include new construction modular homes, mobile homes

*Some years, sheds may have been categorized under other.

*Other permits may consist of groundwork, stairs, fill, foundation work, ramps, antennas, lean-tos, ripraps or other miscellaneous.

6.3 Current Land Use Regulation in Gouldsboro

Gouldsboro does not presently have town-wide zoning. Its major land use ordinances that regulate development are the Land Use, Shoreland, Site Plan, and Subdivision ordinances.

6.3.1 Land Use Ordinance

The Land Use ordinance set standards for a minimum lot size and sets building permit standards. The minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet as established by Title 12 M.R.S.A., Section 4807-A. It does not restrict what land uses may locate where in town, nor does it differentiate between zones.

The Land Use Ordinance also requires:

- A 75-foot setback from the normal high-water line of coastal waters and other waters, except as provided below.
- A 100-foot setback from the normal high-water line of great ponds and rivers classified GPA.
- 15-foot setbacks from all abutting properties.

- A 5-foot setback from edge of right-of-way when right-of-way can be readily established, or 35-foot setback from the centerline of the road when right-of-way cannot be readily established, unless superseded by MaineDOT setbacks.
- For fire safety, no occupiable building shall have window tops exceeding 36-feet in height as measured from the lowest final grade immediately proximate to the building's foundation with final structure height not to exceed forty-feet at the peak.

6.3.2 Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

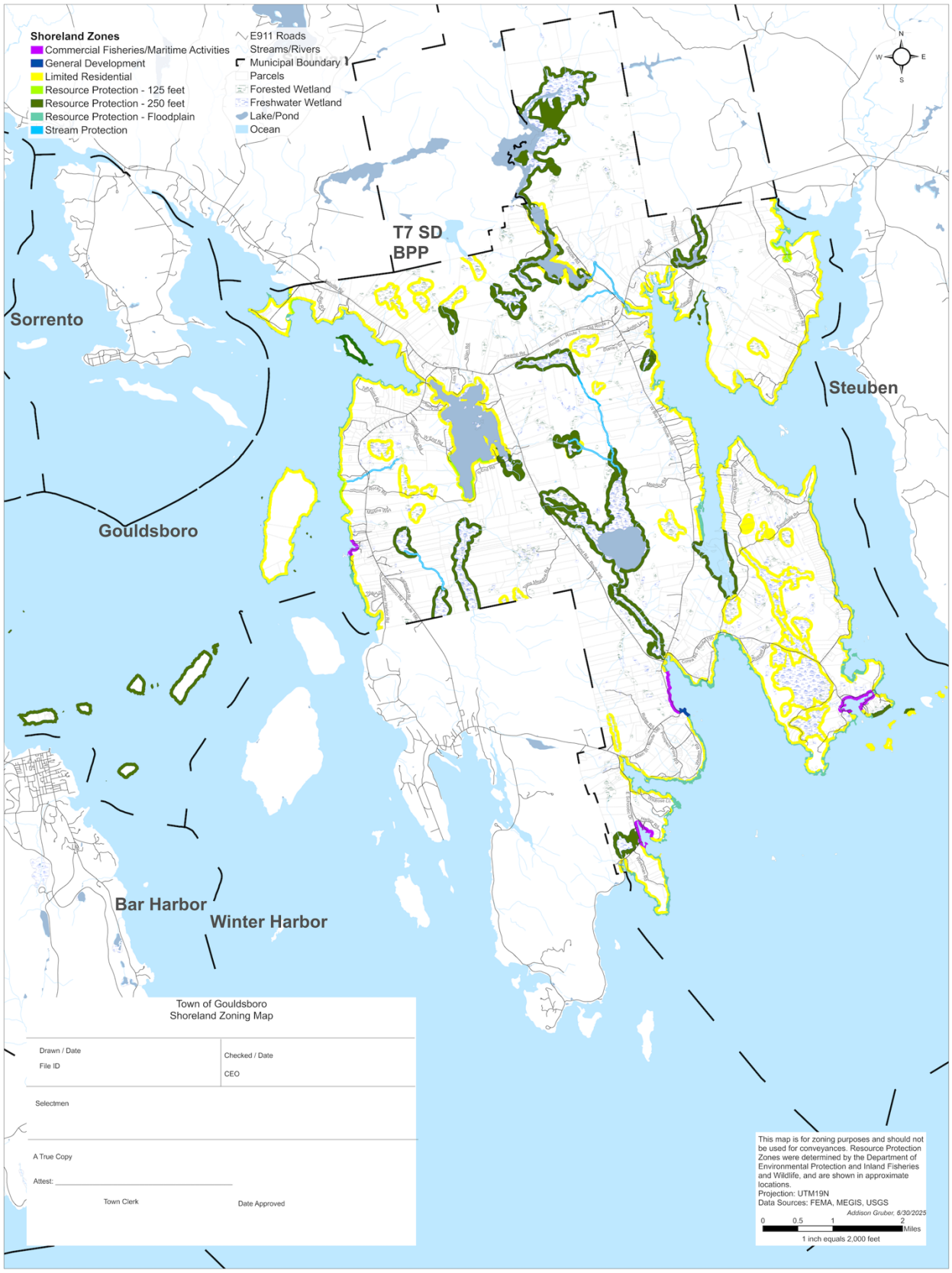
Different restrictions apply in the Shoreland Zone. The Shoreland Ordinance specifies the kinds of activities that are permitted in each of the established districts: Resource Protection (RP), Limited Residential (LR), Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities (CFMA), General Development (GD), and Stream Protection (SP). Map O-2 shows the zone locations. The most recent change (2025) by the Planning Board was creating a General Development District for the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Minimum Lot Standards in the Shoreland Zone are:

Table O-3: Shoreland Zone Minimum Lot Standards

		Minimum Lot Area (Sq. Ft.)	Minimum Shore Frontage (ft.)
a)	**Residential Dwelling per Unit**		
	Within the Shoreland Zone Adjacent to Tidal Areas	40,000	200
	Within the Shoreland Zone Adjacent to Non-tidal Areas	40,000	200
b)	**Governmental, Institutional, Commercial, or Industrial per principal structure**		
	Within the Shoreland Zone Adjacent to Tidal Areas, Exclusive of Those Areas Zoned for Commercial Fisheries and Maritime Activities	40,000	200
	Within the Shoreland Zone Adjacent to Tidal Areas Zoned for Commercial Fisheries and Maritime Activities	NONE	NONE
	Within the Shoreland Zone Adjacent to Non-tidal Areas	60,000	300
c)	**Public and Private Recreational Facilities**		
	Within the Shoreland Zone Adjacent to Tidal and Non-tidal Areas	40,000	200

Map O-2: Gouldsboro's Shoreland Zones



The Town has been gradually strengthening its ability to regulate development. A recent amendment to the Shoreland Ordinance in December 2023, requires all subsurface sewage disposal systems to conform with the State of Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and that any person performing septic repair within the shoreland zone must obtain a septic repair permit from the local plumbing inspector.

6.3.3 Site Plan Review

The site plan review ordinance allows the planning board to manage the impacts of commercial and other large-scale development in the shoreland zone. There is no authority to control uses outside of the shoreland zone.

6.3.4 Floodplain Management

The town's Floodplain Management Ordinance was last amended in June 2016. The town has chosen to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and has agreed to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. Areas of special flood hazard are identified within the Ordinance and permit review standards, development standards in areas of special flood hazard, and other guidelines are established by the Ordinance, which is consistent with state and federal standards.

6.3.5 LD 2003

"An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions," generally referred to by its legislative tracking name of LD 2003, was signed into law by Governor Mills on April 27, 2022. This law is designed to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to housing production in Maine, while preserving local ability to create land use plans and protect sensitive environmental resources.

6.3.6 Administrative Capacity

Gouldsboro employs a Town Manager, a Code Enforcement Officer who also acts as the Superintendent of Infrastructure, three Deputy Town Clerks, all serving as full-time employees, a Treasurer who is part-time, as well as a part-time Assessor's Assistant. Other town employees include the police department, fire department and EMS staff.

Capacity to manage the Town's land use regulations is determined as adequate for the time being. The Planning Board meets regularly. Any increased regulation, whether state or local, could place a greater burden on the Code Enforcement Officer and other town officials. Regional sharing or multi-town cooperation might be both financially and logistically beneficial to Gouldsboro in the future.

7 Restrictions on Development

7.1 Tax Incentives and Permanent Restrictions

As described in the preceding chapter, lands receiving tax incentives related to their use in farming, forestry, and as open space are restricted from development while participating in that tax incentive program. As of 2022, lands participating in these programs totaled 5,862

acres, or about 20% of Gouldsboro's land area. As described in Chapter M:7.3, lands can be withdrawn from these programs and sold for development.

Land and easements owned by land trusts or the federal or state government have more permanent protection. They are summarized in Table O-4 and account for 5,227 acres, which is about 17.5% of Gouldsboro's land area.

Table O-4: Conserved Lands Protected from Development

Name	Ownership	Access	Acreage
Taft Point Reserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	73
Francis B. Wood Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	420
Corea Heath Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	603
Maine Coastal Islands NWR	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Public	1,083
Forbes Pond Preserve	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Public	1,489
Stave Island	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Public	461
Day Ridges Preserve	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Public	301
West Gouldsboro Woods	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Private	402
Lower West Bay Pond	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Private	345
Joy Bay Water Access	MDIFW	Public	50
		Total Acreage	**5,227**

It is possible that some limited development could occur on some of these parcels. Conversely, it is likely that other land that is not listed here has development restrictions through private restrictive covenants and conservation easements.

7.2 Soil Suitability

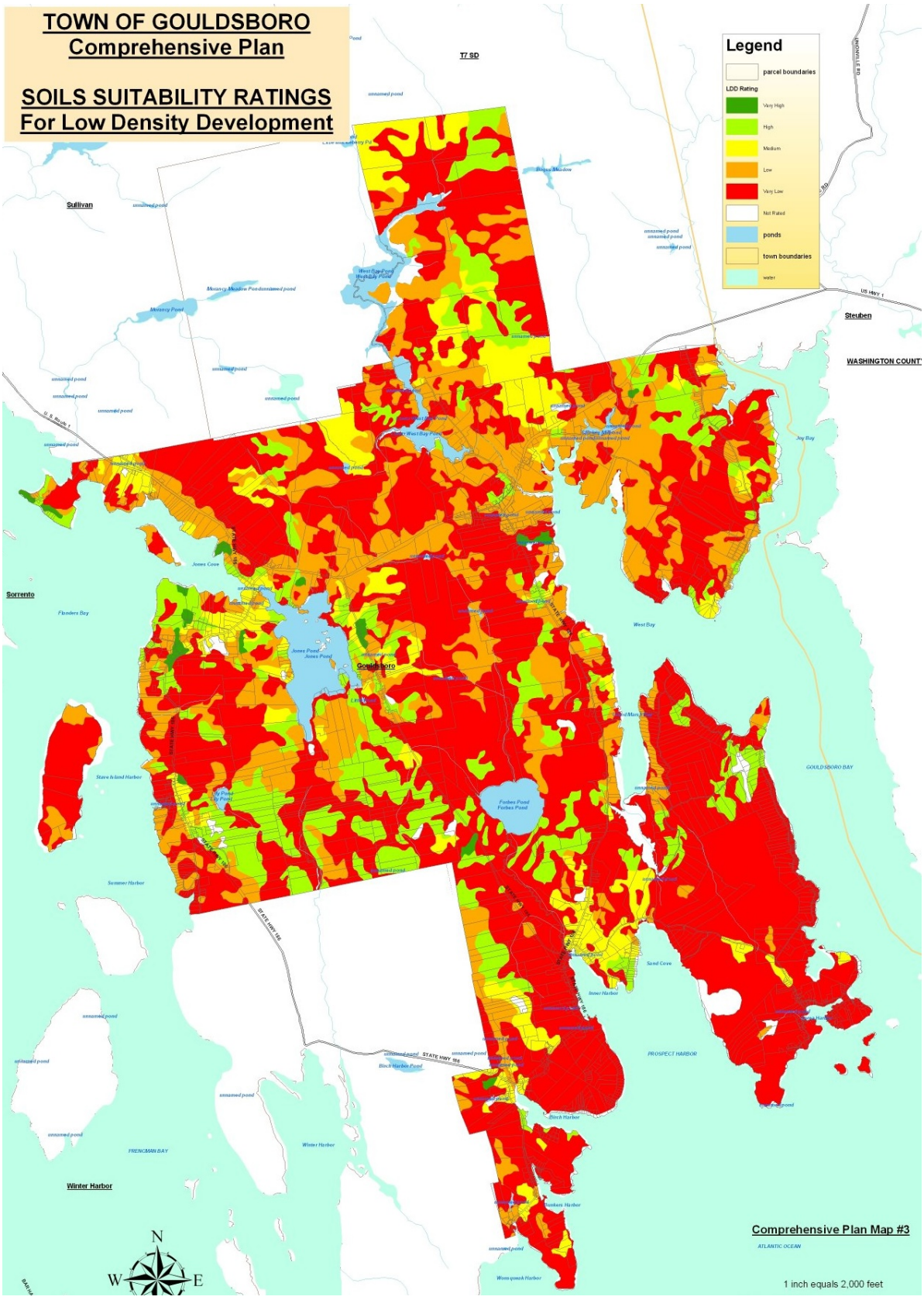
Map O-3 shows where the soils in Gouldsboro are suitable for low density development. The legend is hard to read at this size, but the key thing to know is that orange areas have low suitability for low density development and the red areas have very low suitability. Comparing this with Map O-1, which shows the locations of Gouldsboro's different land use districts, it is clear that much of the developed land in Gouldsboro is built on very unsuitable soils. This is obvious to anyone who lives here. Homes along the coast are built on areas that consist of granite, large rocks, and sand.

The overall unsuitability of Gouldsboro soils for low-density, let alone high-density develop is one reason why the Town has always been sparsely developed. The soils place a significant, non-negotiable constraint on the scale and density of future development.

7.3 Natural Resource Co-occurrence

GIS mapping provides towns with a way to identify areas where different natural resource attributes coincide to result in areas that are especially valuable to wildlife and wild plant communities. Map O-4 shows the areas in Gouldsboro where natural resource attributes co-occur to create especially rich wild habitats.

Map O-3: Soil Suitability Ratings



Map O-4: Natural Resource Co-Occurrence in Gouldsboro



The green shading in Map O-4 indicates locations where natural resource attributes come together to create places that provide good habitats for wildlife and wild plant communities. The deeper the green, the greater the value as a natural resource. The areas that are shaded tan or light brown the places most suitable for development from a natural resource protection standpoint. Survey responses were consistently, strongly clear in affirming the Town's natural resources as a defining characteristic of the Town's identity and an essential element in its vision of future development.

7.4 Implications

Gouldsboro is what it is because it is where it is. It is a place with thin soils and rapid changes in elevation that make development difficult, expensive, and impactful. The combination of woodlands, valleys, streams, and wetlands that define its character are so unique and valuable that land along its boundary has become a National Park. The characteristics that make development challenging are the same characteristics that draw people to this place.

Consequently, is a poor location for intensive or extensive population growth or commercial development. Over the past decade, Gouldsboro's population has trended downward, a trend that is predicted to continue, which means that find room for more people does not need to be a central goal in the Town's planning. However, as described in the Population, Economy, and Housing chapters of this document, finding space for and developing workforce housing does need to be in the plan.

8 Future Development in Gouldsboro from 2025 – 2035

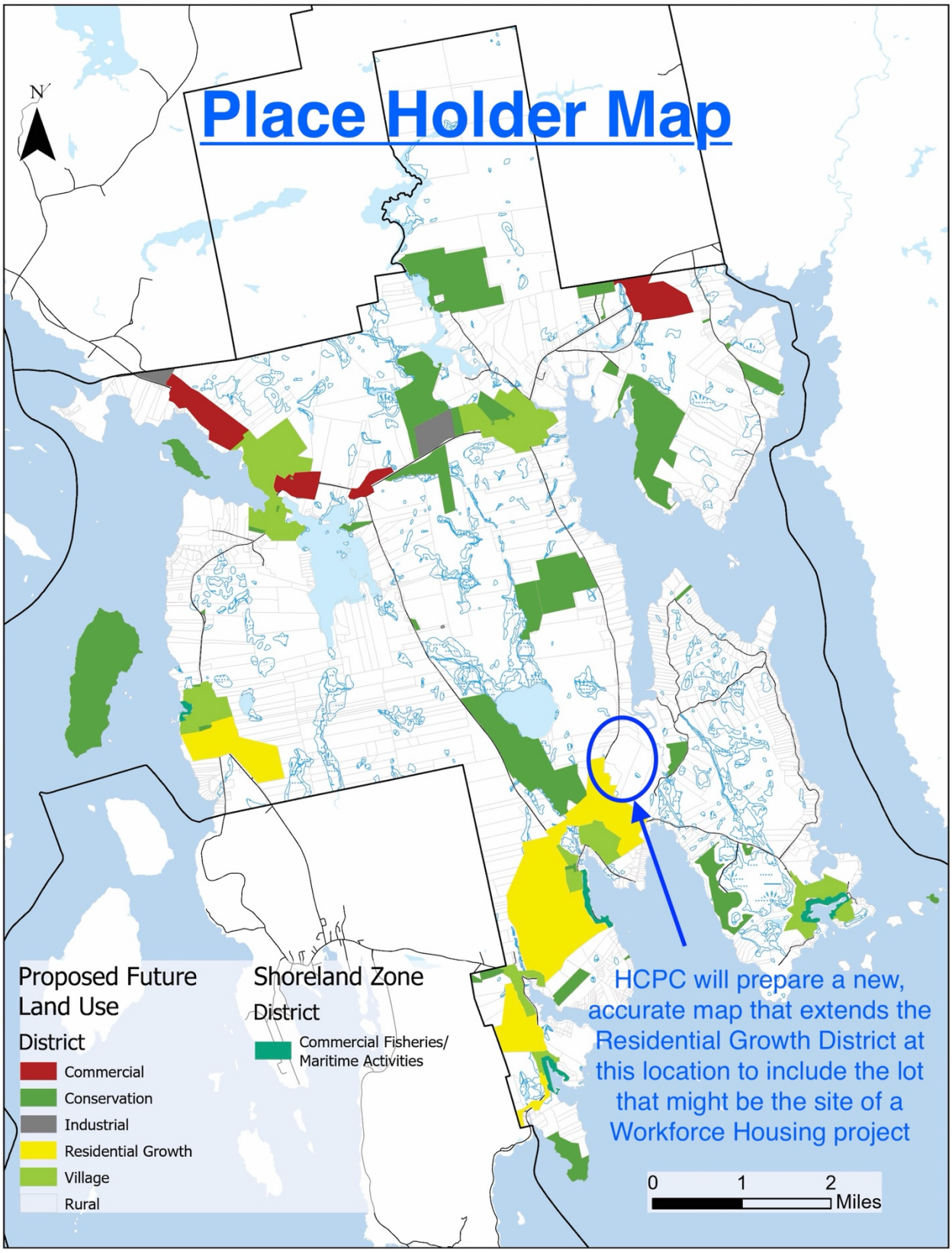
Map O-5 shows the planned locations of land use districts over the next decade. The intended uses for different land use districts are as described above in section 5, "Existing Land Use." Importantly, Residential Growth districts permit multi-family housing.

Comparison of the plans for future land use in Map O-5 with the 2005 land use plan in Map O-1 will reveal that the location and size of most of the land use districts is unchanged. The notable exception is in the size of the Residential Growth district adjacent to the Prospect Harbor Village. The overall lack of change, together with the expansion in the Residential Growth category, reflect the constraints and needs described above in section 7.4.

Areas away from villages, shoreland areas and other areas that are not commercial, and industrial or residential growth should remain designated as rural areas. The primary use allowed in these areas will be single family dwellings, accessory units, agriculture and forestry. Other permitted uses include operations dependent upon natural resources such as sawmills, farm stands and mineral extraction, as well as home occupations.

The Commercial district along the Route 1 corridor is another area where the Town hopes to encourage growth.

Map O-5: Future Land Use 2025 – 2035



The remaining acreage outside the Growth Area is rural, defined by larger blocks of habitat, conserved land and other natural features. Maintaining natural resources and habitat, such as forests, wetlands and the plants and animals native to the area, is valued and important to members of the community.

To preserve open space, the use of cluster developments is recommended for subdivision of five or more units in designated rural areas. Subdivision in rural areas should have an average density of five acres per unit, while individual lot sizes could be as small as one acre.

9 Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL: Retain the current rural small-town character and quality of life without placing an undue on burden on taxpayers while creating Workforce Housing opportunities..			
Objective	**Strategy**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Timeline**
Implement the Land Use Plan	Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate board and officials.	Planning Board, Town Manager	Ongoing
	Include in the Capital Improvement Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.	Town Manager, Budget Committee	Ongoing
	Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Ensure that local ordinances are consistent with the Land Use plan	Review existing Land Use, Subdivision, Site Plan, and other ordinances for consistency with the Plan	Planning Board	Ongoing
Keep abreast of land use trends, challenges, and development opportunities at the Town and regional level.	Track new development in the community by type and location.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	Revise building permit application form to improve development tracking capabilities.	CEO, HCPC	2026-2027
	Update digitized parcel maps based on the Maine GeoLibrary standards. Create a plan to ensure parcel maps are regularly updated.	Planning Board, HCPC	2026-2027
Protect the rural character and historic land use patterns of Gouldsboro	Review ordinances to ensure that they provide the tools needed to achieve this objective.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Participate in regional collaboration	Meet with neighboring communities and regional agencies to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.	Planning Board	Ongoing

Policies
To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.
To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.
To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.
To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.
To protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.
Strategies
Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate board and officials.
Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to: a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development; b. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and c. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources. d. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed.
Include in the Capital Improvement Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.
Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.
Track new development in the community by type and location.
Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan in accordance with Future Land Use Plan narrative.

Chapter P: Implementation and Evaluation Program

Gouldsboro's 2025 Comprehensive Plan addresses local, regional, and global issues that the Town will face in the coming ten years. Each chapter contains broad goals (desired outcomes), specific objectives (measurable milestones on the way to those goals), strategies (methods for achieving those objectives), a responsible party (who will implement the strategy), and a time-frame (when it will start and when it will be completed).

The Plan is a tool for supporting decision making by elected and municipal officials. It is a guide to assist the Select Board, Town Manager and various committees to establish annual work plans for Town departments and to prioritize capital expenditures, investments and improvements to the Town's public facilities. The success of the Plan is contingent upon it being actively used in day-to-day Town operations.

To monitor implementation of the Plan, an annual meeting will be held that includes members of the Select Board, the Planning Board, various committees, and the community. The findings will be published in the Annual Town Report.

The Growth Management Act, Title 30-A, Chapter 187 of the Maine State Statutes, requires that progress on the Plan be evaluated, at a minimum, every five years to determine the following:

1. The degree of implementation of Future Land Use strategies;
2. The percent of capital investments dedicated to the growth areas defined in the Future Land Use Plan;
3. The location of new development relative to the established growth areas; and
4. The amount of critical natural resources, waterfront and recreation and open spaces protected through the acquisition of property, conservation easements and other methods available to Deer Isle.

These four mandated requirements will serve as guidance for the annual meeting and metrics to measure implementation.

Chapter Q: Regional Coordination Summary

Each chapter in Gouldsboro's Comprehensive Plan identifies regional coordination challenges and opportunities pertinent to the chapter topic. These are either located within a subsection labeled Regional Issues or embedded within the Goals and Objectives subsection. This section summarizes the most important areas of ongoing and recommended regional cooperation.

1 Relationship with the Town of Winter Harbor

Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor share the Schoodic Peninsula as well as a great deal of history. Long ago, Winter Harbor was one of Gouldsboro's many villages. Both Fire Departments respond to Schoodic Peninsula fire emergencies pursuant to a mutual aid agreement. The Chief for each department serves as Assistant Chief in the other department. Schoodic EMS, based in Gouldsboro, answers all calls Winter Harbor. Both police departments collaborate closely. Both communities send their students to Peninsula School in Gouldsboro. Numerous non-governmental organizations serve the entire peninsula, including Northern Light's Eleanor Widner Dixon Memorial Clinic in Gouldsboro, the Acadian Community Woman's Club, and Schoodic Arts for All. Both towns depend on and contribute to the peninsula economy.

2 Coordination with Other Nearby Municipalities and Organizations

The Schoodic Area Chamber of Commerce is made up of local people in the Schoodic area from the communities of Franklin, Gouldsboro, Sorrento, Sullivan, Winter Harbor, Steuben, Milbridge, Cherryfield and surrounding areas working together to promote our businesses, organizations, and activities.

The Schoodic Area League of Towns (SALT) is a joint governmental association that promotes regional development and infrastructure issues for the six towns on the Schoodic Peninsula: Gouldsboro, Sorrento, Sullivan, Winter Harbor, Franklin, and Steuben.

3 County Government and Organizations

Hancock County provides essential services to Gouldsboro through the Sheriff's Office and the Hancock County Emergency Management Agency, along with support on certain economic development issues.

Gouldsboro is a member of Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) and works with HCPC to address issues related to economic development, climate change resiliency technical assistance and various kinds planning assistance. This provides the Town with a central location for regional coordination and integration with planning efforts by other towns in Hancock County, the Downeast Region and throughout the State of Maine.

Tourism is an increasingly important component of the local and regional economy. It is supported through regional cooperation efforts through Downeast Acadia Regional Tourism (DART) and the Maine Office of Tourism.

4 Federal and State Government

Gouldsboro interacts with federal and state governments and agencies in a variety of ways in the daily operations of the Town. These include statutory requirements, grants, programs and services.

A large portion of Gouldsboro work on climate change adaptation has been funded though state programs including the Community Resilience Partnership, the Maine Coastal Program, and the Maine Municipal Planning Assistance Program in the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has supported many of these state programs

The Town also maintains a relationship with the State through its the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) on fisheries and coastal and water quality issues. Gouldsboro has worked closely with DMR on shellfish conservation; its Shellfish Warden serves as the chairman of the DMR's Shellfish Advisory Council.

Gouldsboro consults the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) coastal development projects. On transportation issues, Gouldsboro consults with Maine Department of Transportation (MEDOT). The State Police provide policing and protection to the Town as well.

The Maine Climate Council's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has been an invaluable resource in shaping Gouldsboro's Coastal Resilience work.

As noted in this plan's Marine Resources chapter, Gouldsboro is active in sharing what has done and learned about coastal issues with others across the state though articles published in *Maine Policy Review*.

Chapter R: Community Engagement Summary

In December of 2020, the Select Board instructed the Planning Board to form a subcommittee to guide the Town of Gouldsboro through the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan. The committee formed in early 2021, created committee procedures, code of conduct & ethics expectations, reviewed the previous goals and inventory & analysis chapters from the 2005 plan.

Covid hindered initial progress -but the committee began meeting twice monthly and focused on community engagement strategies and prioritized public outreach.

Outreach Methods

Newspaper – Several Articles after being interviewed, on Comprehensive Plan's purpose, updates and community outreach events.

Community Survey – An in-depth community 9-page survey was created and sent out to residents via the Town Newsletter in April of 2022 with a deadline for submission on May 16th, 2022 (6 weeks). A survey link was made available on the town website through survey monkey as well. (Copies were also available at the town office). Flyers were distributed and posted in several locations throughout town.

Public Outreach Session - held July 17, 2022

- Family friendly
- Refreshments
- Survey results presented
- Comp Plan Chapter tables with questions and answer boards for community input
- One on one conversations with community members

Public Outreach & informational Session (held @ Dorcus Library) - Nov 4, 2023

Facebook – *encouraged community input, questions and comments*

- ***Mini surveys***
- ***Updates***
- ***Meeting info***
- ***Survey results*** page created for updating, meetings, survey results, input, comments etc.

Email – Gmail account was created for community members to ask questions, send information etc.

Town Newsletter – used to inform the community of;

- Progress & updates
- Meetings
- Public outreach sessions
- Survey procedures and dates

Annual Report – *u*sed to inform the community each year the following;

- Explanation of what the Comprehensive Plan is and how it is utilized
- How the plan progressed during the year
- How information/data is compiled for the plan
- The Town's Vision

Town Website – posted working Comprehensive Plan document for public perusal

Flyers – used for public outreach events

Original committee flyer theme of "Pulse of the People" utilized the Town's iconic fisherman sign for impact. Flyers were distributed around town at pertinent locations, local markets, churches, library, and village post offices

Town Sign – used for posting meeting dates and times as well as public outreach gatherings.

P***lanning Board & Selectman Meetings*** -

- Comprehensive Plan Committee updates given at Planning Board Meetings 2x per month
- Comprehensive Plan Committee updates given at Selectmen Meeting occasionally