

A. INTRODUCTION

Overview of Comprehensive Planning

The goal of municipal comprehensive planning is to protect home rule, promote the types of development that residents want, preserve the resources that residents value, support the local economy, and suggest cost savings for municipal facilities and services. This comprehensive plan was developed through the efforts of Machiasport residents. It brings together information from federal, state and local sources (including the Machiasport Maritime Plan) and presents suggestions for the town to consider based on the existing inventory of resources and trends in local and regional development.

A comprehensive plan is not an ordinance; its suggestions are advisory and non-binding. Any ordinances the town would like residents to consider must be voted on separately.

This plan is a vision and goal for the town to help plan for the future. The Comprehensive Plan Committee feels that the policies and goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan will encourage development in Machiasport that is consistent with the nature of our rural community. However, the town is not obligated to implement any of the policies listed in the plan. Any ordinances that are developed will not take effect until voted on by the townspeople at a Town Meeting. The Comprehensive Plan includes goals and objectives. It is not a law. The only constraint with respect to a future zoning ordinance is that it must be consistent with the plan (not including shoreland zoning). That does not mean that the town must enact zoning. It only means that if the town enacts zoning in the future it must be consistent with the plan.

This Comprehensive Plan is the product of many hours with a diverse group of individuals. The Comprehensive Plan Committee is composed of a cross section of Machiasport's population. It includes small business owners, town officials and interested citizens. In developing the plan, the committee and consultant received assistance and input from various town committees, the Fire Department, school official and the public at large. The Committee wishes to express their appreciation for this assistance.

Organization of the Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Machiasport's Comprehensive Plan is divided into 11 chapters each addressing a specific subject. A summary of each chapter is included below. For each chapter, the Comprehensive Plan recommends goals that are consistent with Machiasport's Community Vision Statement, existing town and state policies, and responses to the community survey. These recommended policies and strategies are included at the end of each chapter. A complete list of goals, policies and strategies recommended by the Comprehensive Plan Committee is included as *Appendix F. Plan Implementation*.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

Machiasport is defined by its maritime setting and heritage. On its shores are etched records of early contact of Native Americans and European explorers. In addition, Machias Bay saw the first naval engagement of the American Revolution. Its many miles of coastline (82 miles) provided an abundant herring fishery and continue to provide many points of access for commercial fishermen. Historic farms and a fort are still present as is the Libby Island Lighthouse which continues to guide ships in dangerous waters that cover dozens of shipwrecks.

Chapter B. History and Culture documents the status of historic and culture resource in Machiasport. Maritime culture and related resources are particularly prominent in the history and culture of Machiasport. This chapter provides policies for the protection of important historic and cultural resource with a focus on maritime resources.

Goal: Machiasport will preserve the cultural, historic and archeological resources of its maritime heritage for future generations.

POPULATION

The year round population in Machiasport was 1160 in 2000, a decrease of 0.5% since 1990. Overall, Machiasport's population has remained stable since 1980. The State Planning Office anticipates that Machiasport will experience little or no population growth over the next ten to 15 years. The total projected year-round population for Machiasport by 2020 is 1131. If present trends continue, the expected decline in year-round population will be off-set by an expected increase in the number (and percent) of seasonal summer residents. The town estimates that the seasonal population may equal for 50% to 60% of the year-round population by 2020. Machiasport also saw an increase in the number of household during the 1990's, despite declining population. If current trends continue, Machiasport can expect more than the 40 additional year-round households by 2020.

Median household income in Machiasport is lower than the state average, but higher than in Washington County and many surrounding communities. Machiasport saw rapid growth in median household income during the 1980's, followed by less robust growth in median household income during the 1990's. There is now a lower percentage of very low income earnings (those earning less than \$15,000) than in Washington County as whole; but greater than the statewide average. At the same time, Machiasport has a significantly lower percent of households earning more than \$50,000. This income distribution is indicative of a population composed largely of working class families; and speaks to demand for workforce housing in Machiasport. *Chapter C. Population* provides relevant statistics on Machiasport current population and populations projections over the planning period.

Goal: Machiasport will use complete and current information about its population when making administrative and policy decisions.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, RECREATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Municipally owned facilities in Machiasport include the Fire Station and Town Office, Liberty Hall, Buck Harbor Municipal Pier, the Post Office Building, the Town Garage and Fort O'Brien School. Overall, town-owned facilities are in good condition. There is a generally high level of satisfaction with town facilities and services. Since the previous comprehensive plan, the Town has made significant public investment in the Machiasport Volunteer Fire Department, the Buck Harbor Municipal Pier and exterior renovation of Liberty Hall. The Town anticipates completion of interior renovations within 5 years. Limited opportunities for outdoor continue to be an issue in Machiasport.

Anticipated capital investments include completion of renovations at Liberty Hall, maintenance and upgrade to Bucks Harbor Municipal Pier, an expansion of the existing Town Office space, acquisition of a new brush truck for the Fire Department, development of a community recreation area near the Town Hall, and investments in roads and transportation infrastructure (see *Chapter H. Transportation*). Grant funding is available to assist with many of these investment. Budgetary information is presented in *Chapter J. Fiscal Capacity*. The locations of key public facilities are shown on *Maps 2: Public Facilities*.

Goal: Machiasport will plan for, finance and maintain an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate current and projected needs through the development, adaptation and implementation of a capital improvement program.

Goal: Machiasport will seek to make available a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities for all citizens, including access to public waters.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The most significant natural resources in Machiasport are marine resources, which are basis of the local economy. Machiasport extensive tidal flats and clean marine waters yield an abundance of inter tidal, marine and avian life. Extensive mud flats support clam flats and sea worms as well as wading waterfowl and shorebirds. Machiasport has many critical natural resources, most significantly wildlife habitat. Bald eagle and various shore bird and migrant bird species are found throughout the town. The Machias River and East Machias River, both of which flow through the north part of Machiasport, are rated as high value for their fresh water fisheries and among only a handful of rivers supporting Atlantic salmon young in the United States.

Surface waters in Machiasport are a number of rivers and streams. There are no great ponds (lakes) in Machiasport. Overall, the water quality in Machiasport's surface waters is high; but issues with water quality have been identified in the aquifer near Howard's Mountain. The Town continues to work with affected property owners and the Army Corp of Engineers to identify a solution.

Information on natural resources is necessary to protect environmentally sensitive areas, and to identify opportunities and constraints for development. The natural resources of

our town contribute greatly to our quality of life. They provide open space, habitat, and recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, ATV, horse back riding, snowmobiling, hunting, canoeing, hiking, and cross-country skiing; and are the basis of our natural resources based economy. Overall, existing regulations of critical natural resources are felt to be adequate. *Chapter E. Natural Resources* provides information on water resources, farm and forestry lands, and critical natural resources in Machiasport and establishes policies for their protection.

Goal: Machiasport will safeguard its forest resources from development which threatens those resources and preserve marginal open space whenever possible.

Goal: Machiasport will protect the quality and manage the quantity of the Town's water resources, watersheds and the Larabee Heath.

Goal: Machiasport will pursue the clean-up of the Howard Mountain water contamination and/or a suitable source of potable water for affected residents.

Goal: Machiasport will protect the Town's other critical natural resources including wildlife, offshore islands, scenic vistas, and other unique natural areas.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Machiasport is a rural town with a heavy dependence upon the ocean and other natural resources. The majority of businesses in town rely upon these resources or upon the two major employers, the Down East Correctional Facility and Atlantic Salmon of Maine. Nearly one in six workers are employed directly in natural resources industries. Education, healthcare and public administration (most located in neighboring Machias) also play an important role with nearly one in three worker finding employment in this sector.

Available statistic on employments, wages, and poverty describe a local workforce dominated by working class families. The nature of Machiasport's economy and its heavy reliance on natural resource-based industries also speaks to the important of home-based business and the informal economy. Efforts at local economic development should seek to build on relationships with surrounding communities; and should focus on job creation consistent with Machiasport rural character.

Infrastructure – and in particular the condition of Route 92 – is a significant issue for business development and development of retail and tourism-related businesses in Machiasport. The Town should work MDOT to seek roadway improvements as outline in *Chapter I. Transportation*. Machiasport should also work with private investors to seek development of a marina facility in Machiasport village and redevelopment of under-utilized public facilities as appropriate and in a manner consistent with the Town's Community Vision.

Goal: Machiasport will promote an economic climate that increases the number of jobs available locally.

MARINE RESOURCES

Chapter G. Marine Resources summarizes and reproduces findings from the Machiasport Maritime Plan. The importance of commercial fisheries to Machiasport cannot be overestimated. Protecting public shore and water access and maintaining a healthy balance of the industry and natural beauty is crucial especially in light of the rate of coastal development. Machiasport currently offers protection to its maritime natural resources with locally adopted shoreland zoning regulations, land use and subdivision regulations. *Machiasport Maritime Plan* recommends reviewing the existing marine districts to ensure that they protect the rights of marine and commercial marine related activities while accommodating some residential development. The town will seek to ensure that traditional use of lands and access to water are protected as development pressures increase over the planning period. Ordinances will be updated to be consistent with the minimum requirements of state and federal regulations as is mandated.

Goal: Machiasport will preserve for future generations the marine resources that are vital to Town ecology, support local fisheries, and contribute significantly to the Town's heritage and quality of life.

HOUSING

Affordable housing is defined as not costing more than 30% of household income. The data reviewed suggest that affordable housing generally available for moderate and low income residents in Machiasport.

Existing land use ordinances do not impose significant costs on the cost of building homes and the majority of people live in owner-occupied single-family housing. The desire for vacation homes on waterfront properties by non-residents has raised the value, and assessment, of many properties in town. There is a range of new housing in town, with mobile or manufactured homes often utilized. The percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline further while the percentage of homes owned by retirees - both those from away and natives - will increase. Significant housing issues in Machiasport include the prevalence of older housing units within the town's housing stock.

Goal: Machiasport will encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for its residents.

TRANSPORTATION

Machiasport has 24 miles of roadway, made up of 12 miles of state roads, and 12 miles of local roads. Most of Machiasport's local road are in fair condition or better. Due to the pattern of development, Machiasport has a relatively largely number of culverts; the Town anticipates that a significant proportion will need to be replaced over the planning period. Machiasport should start budgeting now for the cost of these replacements. Guard rails on a section of the East Side Road are also need to improve safety.

The major traffic flows in Machiasport, though are found state roads (Route 92 and Route 191). In general, the condition of state road in Machiasport (and in particular Route 92) is poor. The Town has identified five locations where roadways improvements are needed to enhance safety. Bike and pedestrian facilities, transit services and public parking facilities in Machiasport are currently limited or non-existent.

There are no known environmental concerns associates with the operation of transportation facilities in Machiasport; however, there are several identified community issues associated with multiple roadways uses of Route 92 as it passes through Machiasport village. The Town has identified an existing public right way that could accommodate an extension of the Old County Road. This proposed transportation improvement would by-pass Machiasport village, eliminating two sharp corners and enhance freight access to Buck Harbor. The Town should work with MDOT to see if the proposed extension may serve as a re-alignment for the portion of Route 92 passing through the village. This investment represents a strategic opportunity for transportation improvement that will also serve other community goals as expressed in the *Community Vision Statement* and *Future Land Use Plan*.

***Goal:** Machiasport will encourage, promote and develop efficient and safe transportation facilities that will accommodate our town's anticipated growth and economic development.*

FISCAL CAPACITY

Between 2003 and 2007, municipal general fund revenues and expenditures increased from \$1,189,635 to \$2,081,579. During that time, education showed the greatest dollar expenditure increase, an increase of over \$700,000, followed by Highway expenditure which grew by more than \$260,000 in the same period. Over all, expenditure grew by 100% over this period. In contrast to the increase in expenditures, property tax revenue only increased 26% percent between 2002 and 2006. The remainder was made up by an increase in intergovernmental revenue (from \$174,000 in 2003 to \$844,000 in 2007); and by the Town's ability to draw on municipal reserves.

Capital investment in Machiasport are financed through general taxation, borrowing and by pursuing state and federal grants. The town has established several reserve accounts in anticipation of capital investment. The Capital Investment Plan summarizes anticipated capital expenses over the planning period.

***Goal:** Machiasport will plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*

LAND USE

The Town has undergone limited increased residential growth in outlying areas over the past twenty years, primarily along the shore. Limited commercial growth has, for the most part, occurred in and near Bucks Harbor.

The Town has made some efforts to place some control on unrestricted development through compliance with the State mandated subdivision law and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Some changes in local land use regulations will be necessary to address concerns raised in this comprehensive plan and any new state requirements. This chapter outlines a future land plan for Machiasport that will encourage development consistent with Machiasport's rural character.

Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of Machiasport while protecting the Town's character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development of sprawl.

APPENDICES**Appendix A. SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

The Self-Assessment Checklist is submitted to the State Planning Office as an Appendix to the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Machiasport in accordance with Chapter 208: Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule. Explanations are provided in the space provide for elements that have been determined by the community to be not applicable.

Appendix B. EXEC. SUMMARY OF THE MACHIASPORT COMP. PLAN, 1996

This appendix reproduces the Executive Summary form the 1996 Machiasport Comprehensive Plan. A full copy of the plan is on file in the Town Office.

Appendix C. COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The Community Vision Statement summarizes Machiasport's desired future community character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns and its role in the region. The Community Vision Statement was developed at a public meeting held in January 2009 and attended by Machiasport residents. The Community Vision of Machiasport in 2025 describes a community where neighbors continue to know each other and family friendships often go back generations; where fisheries and seafood processing continue to be a valued part of the Town's heritage and the economy. And where growth occurs in a manner consistent with Machiasport overall rural character, as well as the unique attributes of Machiasport several villages and hamlets.

Appendix D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

This appendix summarizes the public participation process used by the Machiasport Comprehensive Plan Committee to solicit public participation in developing the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4324. The public participation process included regularly schedule public meetings, coordination of the marine resource chapter

with the Harbor Management Committee, a public Visioning Session and a public opinion survey.

Appendix E. COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

This appendix compiles the results of the public opinions survey distributed to Machiasport residents in the January 2009. Surveys were mailed to Machiasport residents from a list that combined registered voters and property owners; additional copies of the survey were made available at the Town Office. The survey was also made available online through the Washington County Council of Governments' website. The Comprehensive Plan Committee received 80 responses (a response rate of approximately 20%). All of the responses are reproduced in this appendix.

Appendix F. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This appendix brings together the all of the recommended goals, policies and strategies included in the Comprehensive Plan. It prioritizes how each implementation strategies will be carried out and identifies the responsible party.

Appendix G. EVALUATION MEASURES

This appendix established evaluation measures that describe how the Town of Machiasport will periodically (at least every five years) evaluate the following:

- A. The degree to which future land use plan strategies have been implemented;
- B. Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas;
- C. Location and amount of new development in relation to community's designated growth areas, rural areas, and critical resource areas
- D. Amount of critical resource areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

Appendix H. REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

As a rural community, community life in Machiasport both affects and is affected by what happens in neighboring communities where Machiasport residents shop, play and find employment. In addition Machiasport shares responsibility for management of natural resources, including rivers and bays with neighboring communities.

The Town of Machiasport actively coordinates with neighboring communities on a broad range of issues. This appendix summarized regional coordination efforts undertaken by the Town of Machiasport for shared resources and facilities, including but not limited to lakes, rivers, aquifers, and transportation facilities; and reproduces recommended policies and strategies for continue regional coordination from relevant sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix I. COLLISIONS, 1996 – 2006

The appendix includes a series of maps that graphically represent the locations of automotive collisions by category that occurred in Machiasport between as 1996 and 2006, as reported to the Maine Department of Transportation.

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1: <i>Location</i>	<i>After Chapter A. Introduction</i>
Map 2: <i>Public Facilities and Services</i>	<i>After Chapter D. Public Facilities</i>
Map 3: <i>Topography & Floodplains</i>	<i>After Chapter E. Natural Resources</i>
Map 4: <i>Soils Classification</i>	<i>After Chapter E. Natural Resources</i>
Map 5: <i>Water Resources</i>	<i>After Chapter E. Natural Resources</i>
Map 6: <i>Critical Habitat</i>	<i>After Chapter E. Natural Resources</i>
Map 7: <i>Land Cover</i>	<i>After Chapter E. Natural Resources</i>
Map 8: <i>Marine Resources</i>	<i>After Chapter G. Marine Resources</i>
Map 9: <i>Transportation</i>	<i>After Chapter I. Transportation</i>
Map 10: <i>Current Land Use</i>	<i>After Chapter K. Land Use</i>
Map 11: <i>Proposed Land Use</i>	<i>After Chapter K. Land Use</i>

Map Disclaimer:

The information used to create the maps in this Comprehensive Plan has been derived from multiple sources. The map products as provided are for reference and planning purposes only and are not to be construed as legal documents or survey instruments. WCCOG provides this information with the understanding that it is not guaranteed to be accurate, correct or complete; that it is subject to revision; and conclusions drawn from such information are the responsibility of the user. Any user of the maps accept same AS IS, WITH ALL FAULTS, and assumes all responsibility for the use thereof, and further agrees to hold WCCOG harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of the maps.