

A. VISION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The town of Perry chose to update its 1993 Comprehensive Plan to update relevant statistics and to incorporate better digital mapping information. The town cooperated with the neighboring town of Pembroke in the effort by sharing in the matching funds required by a Community Planning Grant that Pembroke was eligible to receive from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Public Participation Summary

Community members were consulted throughout the process through a town wide (resident and non-resident) survey and on-going invitations to participate in monthly meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee that spanned a 2 year period.

The results of the survey are summarized in Chapter L – Town Survey Results and written comments are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix A – Town Survey and Written Comments. Survey input informs policy development in each chapter throughout the document.

A vision statement for the town was generated from the collective input provided by the survey, particularly written comments, and the development of the plan.

Town of Perry Vision Statement

While the Comprehensive Plan criteria rule requires that a town prepare a vision “that reflects the overall community’s vision” the town of Perry does not have such a single vision. While most envision a future with many similarities to the present, the divisions over what are acceptable forms of new development are highly polarized. This stems from the debate and opposite positions expressed in the past several years over the suitability of LNG facility development in the region.

Throughout the process, the majority of the comprehensive plan committee sought to reach agreement on how to best approach those issues where the survey results and actual election results are in conflict. Our goal as a committee was to create a working document that accurately reflects the views of a majority of voters so that the plan can be approved and we can move forward as a community.

Second home development and tourism related businesses are part of the economic mix and this is anticipated to continue. Another part of the polarization noted above however is expressed through assertions that these sectors are insufficient to provide growth and employment to retain young people or their families. The designation of several potential commercial/industrial areas is an effort to ensure sufficient opportunity for a wide variety of future development and employment in the town.

Route 1 will continue as both “Main Street” for the village and as the most important transportation corridor in the town and the coastal region of eastern Washington County. Perry will seek to cooperate with neighboring towns and with Maine DOT to add shoulders, turn-outs and passing lanes to increase mobility along the corridor while also regulating access to minimize conflicts and ensure the safety of freight and commuters.

Both Pembroke and Perry recognize the benefit they derive from the Port of Eastport and the contribution they can make toward its viability. Accordingly each town has designated future potential Commercial/Industrial districts at the junction of the currently exempt rail corridor and roads with the two towns. Regional transportation plans anticipate that the portion of the Calais Branch rail corridor that has the greatest viable chance of returning to rail service is somewhere between the Port of Eastport and the city of Calais. Accordingly, any one of the Commercial/Industrial districts that intersects with the rail corridor in either town may provide a warehousing and marshalling yard for freight that is shipped by truck from Eastport to reach the rail system.

The village center will continue to be the center of civic life where residents obtain access to local public and commercial services. An attempt to combine municipal and administrative services with the neighboring towns of Pembroke and Charlotte did not pass muster with voters in 2008. However the need for improved facilities and better storage of municipal records remains. Discussions with the town of Pembroke may yield a scaled down cooperative arrangement over the next decade.

The most significant natural resources of Perry are protected through the minimum regulation required by the mandatory shoreland zoning guidelines and the purchase or conservation of unique properties by State Agencies and private land trusts. Lobstering and clamming remain as significant sources of income for many. Perry will continue to support waterfront access points to Cobscook and Passamaquoddy Bays to ensure access to this resource. The Boyden Lake Watershed which is partially located in Perry serves as the primary water supply for the Passamaquoddy community at Pleasant Point and the city of Eastport. The Passamaquoddy Water District is exploring the option of obtaining future water supplies from other groundwater sources.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a community with the information and a process to make choices about its future. The town of Perry has involved its resident and non-resident community members extensively in the development of this plan. It has also made use of extensive resources available through the US Census, several agencies of state government, the Washington County Council of Governments and geographic information system (GIS) mapping. The document will serve the town for a 5 to 10 year time horizon and, as a living document, will be revised and updated as new information and understanding develops. ***The following summarizes each section of the document and readers are directed specifically to the Policies and Implementation Strategies chapter for greater detail about the choices Perry is making about its future growth and development.***

History

The history of Pembroke and Perry is based upon the natural resources that drove the local and regional economy, including logging, shipbuilding, canning, fishing and more recently, tourism. Many current residents can trace their families back to the town's early days. Both towns enjoy many of the benefits from our past. Each town seeks to maintain a link to its heritage and support for development that retain the scale and appearance of the town as well as preserve its historic character.

Population

The population of both Pembroke and Perry has decreased over the very long term, with recent increases seen in the past three decades. A variety of projections indicate that population will remain level with the year 2000. In addition our population is aging. The median age of the population in both towns increased by 3-5 years between 1990 and 2000. The older segments of the population (number of residents aged 65 or above) has increased in Pembroke (from 16 to 19 percent) while it has decreased in Perry (from 13 to 11 percent) between 1990 and 2000. During the same time, Pembroke remained essentially level in the number of school-aged residents of 5-17/19 years old while Perry saw an increase in the number of school-aged residents of 5-17/19 years old. However the inclusion of 18 and 19 years olds in the 2000 census when they were not counted as school-aged in the 1990 census inflates the apparent increase in Perry.

Both towns have seen a decrease in the average household size. Numbers of retiree and perhaps single parent households are increasing. There is a seasonal influx of approximately 600 people. Changes in economic activity and land use, including new year-round residential and commercial or industrial development, will determine actual population growth over the next ten to fifteen years. It is anticipated that seasonal property owners who choose to stay year round and retirees will account for some of the future increases in population. More information on household composition, the housing stock and recent building permit activity is provided in the chapter on housing. A slight to modest population increase is most likely to occur over the next ten-year period.

Natural Resources

Pembroke and Perry currently offer protection to their natural resources with locally adopted shoreland zoning regulations and subdivision regulations. These ordinances will be updated to be consistent with the requirements of state and federal regulations and to ensure that Pembroke and Perry retain their character as maritime towns. Protecting public shore and water access and maintaining a healthy balance between development and natural resources is crucial for future economic development. Water quality will be protected and improved through the continued educational, research and regulatory efforts of the town and local resource management agencies. Investments will be made in infrastructure that improves both shellfish harvest opportunities and drinking water quality. Maritime industries, both traditional and new, will be supported through access for commercial fishing, regulatory districts that support maritime activities and research into ways to diversify aquaculture and other marine trades.

Economy and Employment

Pembroke and Perry are small communities primarily dependant on regional sources of employment. Most residents rely on wage and salary income and retirees compose a comparable part of the population to the county as a whole. The top two sectors of employment for both towns are 'Education, health and social services' and 'Manufacturing'. In Pembroke there are two sectors sharing the third highest proportion of employment 'Retail trade' and 'Construction', whereas in Perry the third highest sector of employment is 'Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, mining'.

Both the median household income and the per capita income in Pembroke is lower than in the County as a whole, a reflection of the high number of low to moderate income families. While the median household income for Perry is higher than that for Washington County, the per capita

income in Perry is only slightly higher than in Washington County indicating the presence of a high number of dependants per household.

With an aging population, the size the workforce continues to decrease. Living in a rural area limits employment opportunities and increases the costs of commuting to the service centers where many of the newly created jobs are located. Local government should strive to encourage and maintain development that will better employ residents. Growth needs to be channeled to areas of town capable of handling development while incurring minimal cost to the municipality.

Housing

Affordable housing is often defined as not costing more than 30% of household income. The data reviewed suggest that the cost of housing in both towns is not affordable for about 40% of the people in the community. In 2006, the median home sale price was **\$120,000** in the Calais Housing Market, while the median income was \$29,730 in this housing market and the median income in Pembroke was \$27,566 and in Perry was \$32,188. The home price that could be afforded at the housing market median household income of \$29,730 was \$86,920. Thus those with incomes at the median cannot afford to purchase homes of the median sale price and those with lower incomes, approximately 40% percent of households in both towns, are losing access to the housing market.

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 both towns. 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. Future ordinance provisions will not preclude the development of mixed use and affordable housing opportunities.

Recreation, Scenic Resources and Open Space

Pembroke and Perry have many recreational opportunities because of the vast natural resources of the Town and the region, and a few municipal recreational facilities. Some of the Town's most important recreational resources rely on waterfront access, which we should seek to maintain and improve for recreational and commercial marine activities.

Transportation

Transportation linkages in Pembroke and Perry consist of US Route 1 which traverses the two towns in a north-south travel corridor although the actual road orientation is east-west through the two village areas. Route 214 connects the center of Pembroke to the town of Charlotte to the north and Route 190 connects Route 1 from the center of Perry to the port and city of Eastport. Both towns will designate future potential commercial/industrial districts at the junctions of roads and the exempt rail corridor to allow for any future rail service or for a warehousing and marshalling yard to connect the port of Eastport to the rail corridor.

Pembroke, Perry and the entire region are reliant on Route 1 as the primary means of transportation movement. Local roads should provide safe, reliable access to work, school, stores, and residences. Overall, roadways in Pembroke are in fair condition and roadways in Perry are in fair to good

condition. Given limited funding and the significant expense, each town has done a noteworthy job of maintaining its roads. Continued proper and affordable maintenance of the road network in both towns is in the interest of all residents.

Since MDOT has a jurisdiction over the roads supporting the highest volume of traffic in Pembroke and Perry, each town will continue to communicate and cooperate with the department. Both towns have a paving schedule for paved roads and require all private roads serving new development to be constructed to specific standards.

Public Facilities and Services

Through proper maintenance and investment, Pembroke and Perry's public facilities and services have remained in good condition overall. Each town has prepared a Capital Improvement Plan as further discussed in the fiscal capacity section. Previously, they have provided reserve accounts for many necessary items. Prudent management decisions at the local level have prevented each town from being forced to make large capital investments within one tax year. However, there are issues that do need to be addressed to eliminate possible future repercussions.

Fiscal Capacity

As indicated by the figures, both Pembroke and Perry have done very well in managing their finances over the last five years and the mil rate has remained within a consistent range. In the past, the town has budgeted for capital improvements through the use of grant funds and local revenues. The town has also designated funds for building maintenance. A Capital Investment Plan is now proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Each town has kept funds in surplus in the past to cover capital improvements and will now formally create a capital investment reserve account with some of these funds.

Land Use

Pembroke and Perry experienced considerable residential development pressure during the 1990s. Local building permit data and real estate sales in the past 2-3 years indicate that this may be remaining constant in Pembroke and continuing to increase substantially in Perry. Each town has used public survey input, public referenda, and extensive public meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee to plan for a future and develop a land use plan. This plan is intended to protect the character of each town and to direct residential, commercial, industrial and maritime activities to appropriate areas. It also seeks to support economic activity in the fishing industry and with a mixture of activities necessitated by seasonal and diverse rural livelihoods.

Town Survey

A combined survey that was mailed to all residents and non-residents of Perry and Pembroke in July-August of 2007 is reproduced in Appendix A. There were 581 surveys mailed to all resident households and non-resident property owners. A total of 132 surveys were returned, a 23% response rate. The survey included an incentive for the chance to win \$100 gift certificate at a local vendor of the winner's choice for all completely filled out survey forms.

There were many responses to the four open ended questions at the end of the survey as well as other written comments throughout the survey. All of the written responses are reproduced in Appendix A.

The survey asked some basic demographic questions to establish how closely respondents reflected the population as a whole. We found that survey respondents reflect a greater proportion of men than exist in the general population and are more heavily weighted to the opinions of those over 50 years of age. In Perry, a full one-third (42) of the respondents were seasonal residents. Respondents have lived in Perry all or most of their lives with an average length of residency of 26.2 years for year round residents and 19.5 years for seasonal residents.

A full summary of all survey results is provided in the survey results chapter including an additional analysis of the Perry survey results and election data prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Regional Coordination

Pembroke and Perry have a long history of cooperation with each other and with several other towns in the region. This activity is strongest in the sharing of public facilities and municipal services as the cost savings are often most clearly realized in these areas. Both towns are very active on regional committees and authorities dealing with solid waste, emergency response, watershed management and economic development. These activities will continue with a strong emphasis on regional transportation policy and infrastructure development.

Map Disclaimer:

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