

## A. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Whitneyville Comprehensive Plan.

This plan is a vision and goal for the town to help plan for the future of our community. The Comprehensive Plan Committee feels that the policies and goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan will encourage development in Whitneyville that is consistent with the nature of our rural community and help to promote redevelopment of our village.

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 Whitneyville residents. It brings together information from federal, state and local sources and presents suggestions for the town to consider based on the existing inventory of resources and trends in local and regional development.

*The 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.*

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 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 Whitneyville's population. In developing the plan, the committee and consultant received assistance and input from town committees and the public at large. The Committee wishes to express their appreciation for this assistance.

### **Organization of the Comprehensive Plan**

The town of Whitneyville's Comprehensive Plan is divided into 12 chapters – including this introduction – 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 Whitneyville's Community Vision Statement (see *Appendix A*), existing state policies and responses to the community survey. 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 D. Plan Implementation*.

### **Chapter B. Historic & Archaeological Resources**

Whitneyville's history is closely tied to its natural resources and its location on the Machias River. For a hundred years beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Whitneyville was a small but prosperous mill town. Local lumber mills profited from the availability of hydro-power and annual river drives – the last of which occurred in 1972. Although the historical and

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archaeological resources of Whitneyville have not been fully surveyed, they include several Native American sites and numerous historical structures, notably concentrated in the village.

**Goal:** *Whitneyville will preserve its cultural, historic and archeological resources for future generations.*

### Chapter C. Population

The year round population in Whitneyville was 220 in 2010. This is a 16% decrease since 2000. However, with such a small population size the decisions of a few families to move in to or out of town can affect the percentage rate of growth. Overall, Whitneyville's population has been relatively stable at around 250 people for the past century.

A map of population density based on the 2000 Census shows that most Whitneyville residents live "in town" – the traditional village area along Route 1A – with a small cluster of residents along Route 192. Most residents work or attend school in the neighboring service center community of Machias.

Since 1990, Whitneyville has experienced an increase in median age and a decrease in the number of school-aged children. School enrollment figures show that the decrease in school-aged children continued over the first decade of this century. Over the next 20 years, a continued increase in our elder population is anticipated. Over the past 30 years, demand for new housing in Whitneyville has been driven by decreasing household size rather than population growth.

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

### Chapter D. Public Facilities & Services

Existing public facilities in Whitneyville have been well maintained. With continued maintenance, existing facilities and services are projected to be adequate for the needs of Whitneyville's projected population over the next 20 years. Whitneyville pro-actively coordinates with neighboring communities to provide municipal services in the most efficient and cost effective manner. Maintenance of Whitneyville's public facilities also benefits from the dedicated service of citizen volunteers. Capital investment needs are detailed in the Capital Improvement Plan; see *Chapter K. Fiscal Capacity*.

**Goal:** *Whitneyville 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.*

### Chapter E. Recreation

There are a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in Whitneyville including a community baseball field and basketball court, public access to the Machias River, and multi-use trails. The

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Hillgrove Community Center hosts indoor recreational activities and community events. Additional recreational opportunities are available in the neighboring community of Machias. Recreational facilities and activities in Whitneyville benefit from the dedicated support of volunteers and private citizens. Facilities are – for the most part – well maintained; and with continued care should continue to serve the community’s needs over the planning period.

**Goal:** *Whitneyville will maintain existing facilities & expand recreational access for its citizens.*

### **Chapter F. Natural Resources**

Surface waters in Whitneyville include the Machias River, a number of streams and ponds, and one great pond, Six Mile Lake. Overall, the water quality in Whitneyville’s surface waters and aquifers is high. Threats to water quality in Six Mile Lake include poorly designed and malfunctioning septic systems and non-point source pollution from access roads and driveways. In order to maintain the high level of water quality presently observed, the town should adopt stormwater run-off performance standards and water quality protection practices for the construction and maintenance of public roads. Whitneyville has relatively extensive groundwater resources, but no public water supplies.

Whitneyville’s waters and forests support a wide variety of wildlife. Critical natural resources in Whitneyville include habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon, inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat, deer wintering areas and a bog ecosystem identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program. Natural resources in Whitneyville are protected through a variety of federal, state and municipal regulations and through public and private land conservation efforts. Existing regulatory and non-regulatory protections are largely sufficient to protect critical natural resources in Whitneyville.

**Goal:** *Whitneyville will protect and preserve the natural resources on which its economy and quality of life depend.*

### **Chapter G. Agricultural and Forestry Resources**

Blueberries, wreath production and timber harvesting are the major agricultural and forestry uses in Washington County. These uses are all present in Whitneyville and support a significant number of jobs in the local economy.

Whitneyville also has a number of smaller scale agricultural producers. Small farms in Whitneyville and surrounding communities are supported by a local farmers market and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs. The extent of soils rated as prime farmland in Whitneyville is limited, but soils rated as highly productive for forestry uses are extensive throughout the community.

**Goal:** *Whitneyville will preserve the agricultural and forestry resources that support its rural economy.*

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### **Chapter H. *Economy & Employment***

Whitneyville is a small rural community. There is a growing cluster of manufacturing and industrial businesses along Route 1, however most Whitneyville residents work in nearby communities especially Machias. As a result, trends in regional employment have a significant impact on Whitneyville's economy.

Whitneyville's economic development goals include encouraging further development of larger scale businesses in the parts of town where they already occur. The Town would also like to see redevelopment within the village. The town is working with regional economic development partners to address these and other issues.

**Goal:** *Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and the overall well being of Whitneyville.*

### **Chapter I. *Housing***

Housing in Whitneyville is dominated by single family houses, including a mix of owner-occupied and rental units. Mobile homes make up a higher percentage of Whitneyville's housing stock as compared with neighboring communities.

Overall, there appears to be an adequate supply of affordable housing in Whitneyville. Affordable housing is defined as not costing more than 30% of household income. The most significant housing issue in Whitneyville is substandard housing. This issue is largely related to the age of Whitneyville's housing stock (32% of units were built prior to 1939).

**Goal:** *Whitneyville will encourage affordable, decent housing options for its residents.*

### **Chapter J. *Transportation***

There are just under 10 miles of public roads in Whitneyville. This includes 1.4 miles of state highway, 5.2 miles of state aid roads, and just over 3 miles of town roads. The Town's E911 database lists an additional 3 miles of privately-owned residential roads and 9 miles of private unpaved roads, which are mostly woods roads.

Traffic is generally light throughout Whitneyville. Major traffic flows are limited to the state highway. US Highway 1 carries the highest volume with an average annual daily traffic load of around 4,200 vehicles. Virtually all vehicle traffic on US Highway 1 is through-traffic. Route 1A and Route 192 each carry an average annual daily traffic load of approximately 1,000 vehicles. Traffic volume is slightly higher in the village resulting from local traffic. Although the traffic volume is lower than on Route 1, the local impact of traffic on Route 1A and Route 192 is greater because these roads pass through residential areas.

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

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### **Chapter K. Fiscal Capacity**

Between 2006 and 2010, Whitneyville's municipal expenses have varied between \$360,000 and \$600,000. The greatest source of annual volatility in the town's budget is education costs, which have declined over the last five years from around \$475,000 in 2006 to just over \$200,000 in 2010. Core municipal expenses over the last five years have varied between \$120,000 and \$160,000. The single largest source of municipal revenue in Whitneyville is intergovernmental revenue, most of which is directed toward education. The amount of money raised through property taxes has declined slightly, from \$197,000 in 2006 to \$189,000 in 2010.

The town of Whitneyville anticipates modest growth in the property tax base over of the next few years, with additional revenue coming from taxes on new commercial development and business equipment. However, the town has not conducted a revaluation in over 10 years. The current municipal valuation is less than 70% of the state valuation. The town should conduct a revaluation.

Whitneyville has laid out a modest Capital Improvement Plan that reflects the town's fiscal constraints and summarizes anticipated capital expenses over the planning period. Capital investments in Whitneyville are financed through general taxation, the use of capital reserve accounts and by pursuing state and federal grants. To date, the town of Whitneyville has remained within LD1 spending limits.

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

### **Chapter L. Land Use**

Over the last ten years, Whitneyville has experienced limited residential growth and only one major new commercial development: a manufacturing facility along Route 1. A major concern of the town of Whitneyville is encouraging redevelopment within the traditional village area in a manner that is consistent with the existing pattern of development while preserving the rural character of our community. Whitneyville currently has limited land use controls, most notably Shoreland Zoning. The Future Land Use Plan recommends developing a locally written zoning ordinance to provide the Planning Board with appropriate review standards for new development.

**Goal:** *To encourage growth and development in appropriate areas of Whitneyville while protecting the Town's character and making efficient use of public services.*

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#### **Map Disclaimer:**

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