

## SECTION 3.1 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### Introduction

The history of Belfast has been shaped by the natural resources that supported the local and regional economy, including farming, fishing, forestry, commerce, and shipbuilding. Downtown Belfast is noted for its historical architecture. As a result of the fire in 1865 in which nearly the entire downtown was destroyed, an ordinance was passed prohibiting the construction of wooden buildings in the area. The resulting “brick” downtown has survived with little change. Downtown is an historic district, as are several residential areas with gracious homes of former ship owners and prosperous merchants. Historic resources, such as old homes, graveyards, mill sites, and old stone walls, are a valuable part of the City’s heritage. These resources establish community character and make Belfast unique. These resources help to create a feeling of community pride, encouraging us to preserve the best of our past. This chapter outlines the City’s history, identifies the known prehistoric and historic resources, and recommends steps for their protection.

### A. State Goal and State Coastal Policies

1. *To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1). *Are historic patterns of settlement still evident in the community?*

Yes, Downtown Belfast retains many historic commercial structures, much of the area located inside the Route One by-pass includes many historic homes, and the street grid pattern reflects early traditional city development and planning.

- (2). *What protective measures currently exist for historic and archaeological resources and are they effective?*

Belfast has a designated Historic District and individual historic buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Floodplain ordinance provisions (Chapter 78, Article 2) allow the reconstruction, rehabilitation, or restoration of historic structures located in flood zones. The definition of unreasonable congestion (Chapter 66) limits road improvements that would adversely affect an historic site.

The In-Town Design Review Ordinance provisions (Chapter 80) that were enacted in 2001 and updated in 2018 require, or strongly encourage, proposed new development and renovations of existing buildings to be compatible with existing [historic] development, and to positively contribute to the character of the community. Design standards are identified in the Ordinance. These provisions also prohibit or strongly discourage the demolition or removal of existing "noteworthy"

structures that have helped to shape and create the present character of the city.

Land use standards in shoreland zones (Chapter 82, Article III) require that for approval a project must be deemed to not adversely impact archaeological and historic resources as designated in the Belfast Comprehensive Plan. To help in this evaluation is the requirement (Chapter 82, Article V) that proposed development on or adjacent to sites listed on or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, be submitted to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for review and comment and that the City must consider that review before deciding on the application.

The plumbing code (Chapter 74, Article III) has exceptions to provisions for historic buildings when such buildings or structures are judged by the code official to be safe and in the public interest of health, safety and welfare regarding any proposed construction, alteration, repair, enlargement, restoration, relocation or moving of buildings.

In site plan review (Chapter 90, Article II), the code enforcement office must consider the following criteria during project review, "Aesthetic, cultural and natural values. The proposed development will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, archeological sites, significant wildlife habitat identified by the state department of inland fisheries and wildlife or the city as rare and irreplaceable natural areas or any public rights for physical or visual access to the shoreline." A similar provision is also found in the state-mandated subdivision review criteria (Title 30-A MRSA 4404) and is enforced through subdivision ordinance provisions.

In the provisions of Waterfront Mixed Use Zoning District and Waterfront Development Shoreland District (Chapter 102), the use of the In-Town Design Review Committee (Chapter 80) is required for contract rezoning proposals, so that projects in these areas are compatible with the City's historic architecture. The In-Town Design Review Ordinance was updated in 2018.

*(3). Do local site plan and/or subdivision regulations require applicants proposing development in areas that may contain historic or archaeological resources to conduct a survey for such resources?*

The site plan ordinance provisions and state subdivision review criteria require that projects not have an undue adverse impact of historic or archaeological sites (see above), however, a survey is not required, but is left to the discretion of the reviewing authority and the property owner. The subdivision ordinance has similar provisions to the site plan ordinance.

- (4). *Have significant historic resources fallen into disrepair, and are there ways the community can provide incentives to preserve their value as an historical resource?*

Most significant historic resources are in good to fair condition. Several residences that are located in the Historic District are in disrepair and warrant renovation. The City, in 2011, worked with Our Town Belfast (Belfast Main Street program) to make property owners aware of historic preservation tax credits (Federal and State) to reduce the costs to redevelop old buildings for new uses and maintain their historical appeal. To date, no property owner has chosen to use these tax credits.

- (5). *Is there an active historical society and does the community adequately support its efforts?*

Yes, there is an active historical society, the Belfast Historical Society and Museum. It receives revenue from grants and member dues. The City also contributes to the operation. The Society's public outreach includes informational presentations, walking tours of the downtown and the adjacent historic neighborhoods, the Museum in the Streets program, and collections available for research. The Society also has assisted City government on the range-way project and several of its members serve on the In-town Design Review Committee.

### **C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

- (1). *The community's Comprehensive Planning Historic Preservation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Office, or their designees.*

See the map titled Archaeological Resources for the general location of areas sensitive for prehistoric archaeology and for the one-kilometer areas within which a prehistoric or historic archaeological site is located. See the map titled Historic District (Downtown) for the Belfast National Register Historic District. Cemeteries are a cultural resource providing insight into the history of the community. Belfast's principal cemeteries are shown on the Public Facilities Map.

- (2). *An outline of the community's history, including a brief description of historic settlement patterns and events contributing to the development and character of the community and its surroundings.*

This summary is from the Belfast Historical Society and Museum and has been edited:

In the spring of 1770 Scots-Irish families from Londonderry, New Hampshire settled Belfast. Legend has it that the name Belfast, after the Northern Ireland city, was chosen by a coin toss. Fear of British attack led these original proprietors to abandon the settlement during the American Revolution, but they returned in the 1780s to build a vibrant, prosperous outpost that would become the market center for the outlying area.

Abundant timber, a gently sloping waterfront, and proximity to varied agriculture gave rise to shipbuilding and maritime commerce, with fortunes made in both. Hundreds of wooden sailing ships were built by local shipyards and, during the 19th century, as much as 30% of the male population was employed in the maritime trades.

In 1868, construction began on the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad, which connected Belfast to the Maine Central Railroad at Burnham Junction. Belfast merchants sold a variety of goods and steamship operators who provided transportation between coastal towns advertised “shopping excursions” to Belfast. Prosperous shipbuilders and merchants constructed the architecturally significant houses that dominate our residential neighborhoods today. Two disastrous fires consumed much of the downtown area in 1865 and 1873, but merchants rebuilt with brick, creating a pleasing and long-lasting commercial district. The Belfast Historic Districts, residential and commercial, are included on the National Register of Historic Places.

The city’s prosperity, built on shipbuilding and commerce in such unglamorous cargoes as hay, ice, apples, and fertilizer, began to fade as the 20th century unfolded. A four-story shoe factory dominated the industrial area, and Belfast became a blue-collar town. By the 1950s poultry, sardine and potato companies had set up processing plants along the waterfront. Belfast called itself the “Broiler Capital of the World” and each July, thousands came to eat barbequed chicken on Broiler Day.

In 1962 Route 1, which had come straight through downtown via High Street, was rerouted around the city and across a new bridge. Some saw the rerouting as the death knell for a once-vibrant shire town, but in hindsight, the bypass preserved the city’s heart and soul and in the 1980s a rebirth began. Public and private investment restored some of the past luster. The arts flourished, the railroad was briefly revived for tourist excursions, and the stately houses and commercial buildings were restored. In the early 1990s, USA Today named Belfast as one of America’s “culturally cool” communities. Today, Belfast is that rare combination of quiet small town with an active social and cultural life that is attractive to residents and visitors alike.

(3). An inventory of the location, condition, and use of any historical or archaeological resource that is of local importance.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has identified the following properties and districts as being listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

**Table 1-1 Historic Buildings in Belfast**

Name	Location
James P. White House	1 Church Street
Masonic Temple	High Street
First Church of Belfast	Church Street
Hayford Block	47 Church Street
Belfast Historic District	

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

A number of other buildings and sites have been identified as having historic value, including: Tide Water Grist Mill on Route 1, Little River Inn (1796) on Route 1, Wales Miller (1800) on Marsh Road, Otis (1800) on City Point Road, First Sawmill (1770) on Kaler Road, Pattershall (1800) on West Swanville Road, Harvey Way (1800) on Waldo Avenue Extension, R.R. Thompson House on Miller Street, Quimby House on Miller Street, Brewster House on Northport Avenue, M.L. Slugg House on Condon Street, Parsonage “Hearthside” on Old Searsport Avenue, and Stephenson Tavern (1800) on Route 1.

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), three prehistoric sites (numbers 40.2, 41.52, and 41.53) are located along the northeast shore of Passagassawaukeag Estuary/Bay. See the map titled Archaeological Resources.

There are nine historic archaeological sites in Belfast identified by MHPC.

**Table 1-2 Historic and Archaeological Sites in Belfast**

ID	Name	Type	Date
ME 034-001	"S.T. Co. No. 5"	wreck, barge	Nov 23, 1924
ME 034-002	Minister's Point Battery	military, battery	1863
ME 034-003	Little River Battery	military, battery	c.1863
ME 034-004	"E.S. Wilson"	wreck, schooner	1900
ME 034-005	"Mary Elizabeth"	wreck, schooner	1869
ME 034-006	"Maine"	wreck, schooner	1869
ME 034-007	C.P. Carter Shipyard	shipyard	1841-c.1899
ME 034-008	"Ida L. Small"	wreck, schooner	Jan 2, 1870
ME 034-009	Joseph Kaler Brickyard	Brickyard	1859
ME 034-010	C.P. Carter Shipyard Shipwreck	Wreck, ship	Potentially associated with Carter Shipyard

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

*(4). Identify local historical society and/or preservation organizations.*

The Belfast Historical Society and Museum (10 Market Street) is dedicated to the collection, conservation, preservation, and interpretation of artifacts relevant to Belfast history. The collections include vintage photographs, maps, postcards, interpretive displays and an extensive research archives and library. Monthly informative programs are held April through October and include guest speakers, slideshows, and discussions, and the Society regularly conducts informative walking tours of the downtown and adjacent residential areas. The Belfast Historical Society & Museum is a member of The New England Museum Association, Maine Archives and Museums and a contributing member to the Maine Memory Network.

*(5). A brief description of threats to local historic resource and to those of state and national significance as identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.*

The renovations of historic buildings may or may not be done in a historically sensitive manner. This threat is more likely for buildings that are privately owned and when those renovations are funded privately without guidance or oversight from state or federal agencies. City codes, particularly Chapter 80, In-town Design Review, encourage but do not mandate historically sensitive renovations. With the goal of encouraging the renovation and reuse of historic structures, demolition permits are required before historic structures can be razed (Chapter 80). Prehistoric sites along shorelines are subject to coastal erosion and with sea rise, may become submerged.

#### **D. Policies**

*(1). Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.*

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). For sites with identified potential for historical and archeological resources, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to look for and identify any historical and archaeological resources 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.
- (2). Through local ordinances, 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.

- (3). 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. Belfast will pursue the following MHPC recommendations:
  - Prehistoric Archaeological Sites: Survey needed along Belfast Harbor shoreline and Passagassawakeag River, and around lakes and ponds/marshes near sandy soils.
  - Historic Archaeological Sites: A professional survey for historic archaeological sites to focus on agricultural, residential, and industrial sites relating to the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the second half of the 1700s.
  - Historic Buildings/Structures/Objects: A comprehensive survey of Belfast's above-ground historic resources needs to be conducted in order to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- (4). Establish/maintain a fund for improvements to be made to city-owned buildings of historic value. Seek State and Federal grants to rehabilitate and maintain historic buildings and streetscapes, including but not limited to funding from Maine DECD, Maine DOT and non-governmental organizations.
- (5). Encourage the use of historic preservation tax credits by area residents, businesses, and property developers.

## SECTION 3.2 WATER RESOURCES

### Introduction

Water resources are vital to Belfast residents, the environment, and the economy. The sensible use of water resources will help ensure the physical health of residents, as well as the usefulness and value of properties. The purpose of this chapter is to help the City identify, manage and adequately protect its water resources, protect the health of residents and safeguard the local economy dependent on water resources. Note: for marine resources, see the Marine Resources Chapter.

### A. State Goal and State Coastal Policies

1. *To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1). *Are there point sources (direct discharges) of pollution in the community? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?*

There are several state-identified point sources of pollution from licensed discharges (five wastewater outfalls, four overboard discharges). See the map titled Water Resources for their locations. One of the state-identified wastewater outfalls has ceased operation; it once served Stinson's Cannery. Two wastewater outfalls are part of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. See the Public Facilities Chapter for information on pollution reduction from the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City has successfully pursued the elimination of two privately owned overboard discharges within the past twenty years. Also, the City has expended over \$10 million in public funds in the past twenty years to decrease the amount of infiltration and inflow into the City sewer collection system, which has had a direct impact on water quality issues associated with the two City outfalls for the wastewater treatment plant. Belfast believes it has taken significant steps to address point system discharges, and it is pursuing additional steps to further reduce existing infiltration and inflow into the sewer system, which the City feels is the most effective way it can further affect point sources of discharge.

- (2). *Are there non-point sources of pollution? If so, is the community taking steps to illuminate them?*

Runoff from rain falling on impervious surfaces, like buildings and pavement, can be expected from new development. In such runoff, pollutants occurring naturally like phosphorous and synthetic like petroleum products can be transported into

wetlands and water bodies. However, impervious surface percentage maximums, as set in shoreland zoning ordinance provisions, can limit the amount of runoff into water bodies. In especially sensitive areas, resource protection designations prohibit development. Best Management Practices during construction, including earthmoving, are referenced in the City Code. It is believed that shoreland zoning and related provisions are effective overall. However, with Maine coast experiencing increasing amounts of rainfall from more frequent storms, and storms which produce greater volumes of rainfall and for longer durations, Belfast, like many Maine municipalities, will need to re-examine existing stormwater regulations to ensure new and replacement stormwater systems have the capacity to manage stormwater flows in an environmentally sensitive manner.

(3). *Are point and/or non-point sources of pollution threatening groundwater supplies?*

The City is unaware of pollution threats to groundwater supplies overall. There are limited locations where pollution from underground oil storage tanks have been reported, and remediation/clean up has occurred when a spill was reported. Maine DEP records 66 facilities with oil storage tanks in Belfast, of which three facilities are near public water supplies and two are near private water supplies. See the next table for these facilities. No tanks are located on aquifers.

**Table 2-1 Belfast Underground Tanks near Drinking Water Sources**

Master Tank ID	Reg #	Tanks	Facility	Vol (gal)	Installed	Status	Status Date	Leak Detection
1513004	1513	4	Dutch Chev	1,000	1/1/1968	Abandoned	6/1/1990	Unknown
1824001	1824	1	Waldo County Jail	4,000	1/1/1974	Active	1/1/1974	
4282001	4282	1	Tallpines Rehab	5,000	3/1/1986	Active	3/1/1986	Manual groundwater sampling
15262004	15262	4	Big Apple	20,000	5/5/1997	Active	5/5/1997	Secondary containment with continuous electrical monitoring
20346001	20346	4	Belfast Variety Rt 52	13,000	8/17/2000	Active	10/25/2000	

Source: Maine DEP

*Note: None of these tanks was approved under State Site Law after September 2001.*

In 2019 the City of Belfast was awarded a \$300,000 Brownfields grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The City of Belfast will utilize this Brownfields Assessment funding to continue to implement and improve its existing comprehensive community-wide Brownfields Assessment Program which has been proactively identifying properties on which pollution threats may exist and helping property owners to abate any identified problems.

- (4). *Are public groundwater and surface water supplies and their recharge areas adequately protected? Are any public water supply expansions anticipated? If so, have suitable sources been identified and protected?*

The City believes that public water supplies and their recharge areas are adequately protected overall through the Watershed and Aquifer Protection District; zoning standards which were advocated by the Belfast Water District and which were enacted in the early 1990's. To date, no significant development has occurred within these overlay district areas, and the Water District has not identified any problems within its watershed. At present, no changes are proposed to the current regulatory standards. The City will rely upon the Water District to identify the potential need for other standards. No expansions of public water supply are anticipated. See C.5 below for the State assessment.

- (5). *What non-regulatory measures can the community take to protect or enhance water quality? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection?*

Non-regulatory measures to protect water quality include the education of business owners and homeowners on the proper storage and disposal of subsurface waste, solid waste, fertilizers, herbicides, and related chemicals, including recycling at the redemption center/transfer station. For example, signage has been installed to inform residents of watersheds boundaries and pavement markings have been installed near storm drains to remind us that stormwater along with any pollutants it carries end up in Belfast Bay. The City can encourage local and regional land trusts to pursue the protection of habitats abutting watercourses through conservation easements or through purchase.

The most significant measure the City has taken is to spend over \$10 million in public funds over the last twenty years to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant and to decrease infiltration and inflow into the City sewer collection system. Prior to this work many of Belfast's sewer mains were over 100 years old and in serious disrepair. The work has been very costly, but the City was very successful in decreasing the frequency and volume of pollutant discharges into the Bay. The City also has often used municipal and/or state funds to replace malfunctioning septic systems for those who cannot afford the cost of replacement.

- (6). *Do local road construction and maintenance practices and standards adequately protect water resources? Do public works crews and contractors use best management practices in daily operations (e.g. salt/sand pile maintenance, culvert replacement street sweeping, public works garage operations)?*

Local road construction, repair, and maintenance are done using Best Management Practices to minimize pollution. For example, the City manages the seasonal timing of road construction to avoid excessive amounts of movement of disturbed soil during the high flows of spring. The City and private developers are required to use other techniques such as the temporary mulching of exposed soil surfaces, temporary seeding, and installation of siltation fences, riprap, gravel-filled trenching or the use of siltation basins. City public works officials are trained in these practices and the Code Enforcement Office investigates the activities of private construction crews and individuals to ensure they adhere to these practices as well. Also, Public Works regularly sweeps City streets at the end of the winter season and when conditions allow during the winter season to minimize adverse impacts associated with the use of sand and salt on City streets.

- (7). *Are floodplains adequately identified and protected? Does the community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program? If not, should it? If so, is the floodplain management ordinance up to date and consistently enforced?*

Belfast participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. See the maps titled Flood Zones and Flood Zones (Downtown) for the location of flood zones in the community. The floodplain management provisions are up to date, they are consistent with state and federal requirements, and the City consistently enforces the standards.

- (8). *Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection?*

There are various opportunities to partner with local and regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection. This could include working with these groups to provide educational materials to landowners and developers as well as using data collected through regional efforts to contribute to the identification of key areas of water resource protection. These groups include the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition (based in Belfast), a group of organizations and individuals working to support conservation and stewardship of natural, scenic, historic, and public access resources of the Belfast Bay Watershed through research, community-building and education. It is affiliated with the Lower Penobscot Watershed Coalition. Regional and state natural resource organizations that can serve Belfast include the State of Maine Drinking Water Program (Augusta), Maine Rural Water

Association (Brunswick), Natural Resources Council of Maine (Augusta), and Coastal Mountains Land Trust (Camden).

**C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

(1). *The community’s Comprehensive Planning Water Resources Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Office, or their designees.*

See the map titled Water Resources for the locations in Belfast of national inventory wetlands by type, water bodies, stream classification, wetland boundaries (drainage divides), overboard discharges, wastewater outfalls, and aquifers of significant yield.

(2). *A description of each lake, pond, river, and stream including:*

- a. ecological, economic, and recreational values;*
- b. current watershed land uses;*
- c. threats to water quality or quantity;*
- d. documented water quality and/or invasive species problems*

See the next table for water body descriptions. See also the map titled Land Cover and map titled Zoning for current and permitted land uses adjacent to water bodies.

**Table 2-2 Water Body Descriptions**

Water body	Ecological, Economic, Recreational values	Current watershed land uses (surrounding water body)	Threats to water quality or quantity	Documented water quality and/or invasive species problems
Belfast Bay and Harbor	See the Marine Resources Chapter			
Belfast Reservoir #1	Water Supply	Forested	Development	None Known
Belfast Reservoir #2	Water Supply	Forested	Development	None Known
Belfast Reservoir Outlet	Water Supply	Forested	Development	None Known
Goose River	Hydropower,	Residential,	Run-off,	See Water

Water body	Ecological, Economic, Recreational values	Current watershed land uses (surrounding water body)	Threats to water quality or quantity	Documented water quality and/or invasive species problems
	Ecological , Water Recharge	Nonresidential	Development	Resources Appendix
Little River	Water Supply Recreation	Residential Forested Agriculture	Run-off Development	
Lower Mason Pond	Recreation	Residential	Development	None Known
Marsh Fork Stream	Water Quality	Forested, Residential	Residential Development	None Known
Passagassawakeag River	Ecological (Atlantic Salmon Habitat), Economic	Forested, Residential, Mixed Use/Developed	Wastewater outfalls, Overboard discharges	See Water Resources Appendix
Upper Mason Pond	Recreation	Forested, Wetlands, Clear-cut, Residential	Residential development, Hydropower levels	
Warren Brook	Water Quality	Forested & Residential	Minimal threats	None Known
Webster Brook	Water Quality	Forested & Residential	Minimal threats	None Known
Wescot Stream	Recreation	Forested & Residential	Residential development	None Known

Notes: The reservoirs no longer supply drinking water. All rivers and streams are Class B. All estuaries and marine waters are Class SB.

Statutory Definition of Class B waters: Class B shall be the 3rd highest classification.

- A. Class B waters shall be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water supply after treatment; fishing; agriculture; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, section 403; and navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat shall be characterized as unimpaired. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]
- B. The dissolved oxygen content of Class B waters may not be less than 7 parts per

- million or 75% of saturation, whichever is higher, except that for the period from October 1st to May 14th, in order to ensure spawning and egg incubation of indigenous fish species, the 7-day mean dissolved oxygen concentration may not be less than 9.5 parts per million and the one-day minimum dissolved oxygen concentration may not be less than 8.0 parts per million in identified fish spawning areas. Between April 15th and October 31st, the number of Escherichia coli bacteria in these waters may not exceed a geometric mean of 64 CFU per 100 milliliters over a 90-day interval or 236 CFU per 100 milliliters in more than 10% of the samples in any 90-day interval. [2017, c. 319, §g (AMD).]
- C. Discharges to Class B waters may not cause adverse impact to aquatic life in that the receiving waters must be of sufficient quality to support all aquatic species indigenous to the receiving water without detrimental changes in the resident biological community.

(1-A) For the purpose of allowing the discharge of aquatic pesticides or chemicals approved by the department and conducted by the department, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or an agent of either agency to restore resident biological communities affected by an invasive species, the department may find that the discharged effluent will not cause adverse impact to aquatic life as long as the materials and methods used do not cause a significant loss of any nontarget species and allow restoration of nontarget species. The department may find that an unavoidable, temporary loss of nontarget species does not constitute a significant loss of nontarget species.

(2) For the purpose of allowing the discharge of aquatic pesticides approved by the department for the control of mosquito-borne diseases in the interest of public health and safety, the department may find that the discharged effluent will not cause adverse impact to aquatic life as long as the materials and methods used provide protection for nontarget species. When the department issues a license for the discharge of aquatic pesticides authorized under this subparagraph, the department shall notify the municipality in which the application is licensed to occur and post the notice on the department's publicly accessible website. [2017, c. 319, §7 (AMD).]

Statutory Definition of Class SB waters. Class SB waters shall be the 2nd highest classification.

A. Class SB waters must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of recreation in and on the water, fishing, aquaculture, propagation and harvesting of shellfish, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation and as habitat for fish and other estuarine and marine life. The habitat must be characterized as unimpaired. [2003, c. 227, §7 (amd).]

B. The dissolved oxygen content of Class SB waters may not be less than 85% of saturation. Between April 15th and October 31st, the number of enterococcus bacteria in these waters may not exceed a geometric mean of 8 CFU per 100 milliliters in any 90-day interval or 54 CFU per 100 milliliters in more than 10% of the samples in any 90-day interval. The number of total coliform bacteria or other specified indicator organisms in samples representative of the waters in shellfish harvesting areas may not exceed the criteria recommended under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, United States Food and Drug Administration. [2017, c. 319, §12 (AMD).]C. Discharges to Class SB waters may not cause adverse impact to estuarine and marine life in that the receiving waters must be of sufficient quality to support all estuarine and marine species indigenous to the receiving water without detrimental changes in the resident biological community. There may be no new discharge to Class SB waters that would cause closure of open shellfish areas by the Department of Marine Resources. For the purpose of allowing the discharge of aquatic pesticides approved by the department for the control of mosquito-borne diseases in the interest of public health and safety, the department may find that the discharged effluent will not cause adverse impact to estuarine and marine life as long as the materials and methods used provide protection for nontarget species. When the department issues a license for the discharge of aquatic pesticides authorized under this paragraph, the department shall notify the municipality in which the application is licensed to occur and post the notice on the department's publicly accessible website. [2007, c. 291, §7 (AMD).][ 2017, c. 319, §12 (AMD) .]

*(3). A summary of past and present activities to monitor, assess, and/or improve water quality, mitigate sources of pollution, and control or prevent the spread of invasive species.*

Maine DEP monitors water quality on a regular basis. Maine DEP assessment of water quality near public and private water supplies is shown below. The City presently does not perform any testing of specific water bodies. Based on current testing, it appears that water quality levels are acceptable and that there are no significant levels of invasive plants in Belfast water bodies.

*(4). A description of the location and nature of significant threats to drinking water supplies.*

Public water supplies located in Belfast are shown in the next table.

**Table 2-3 Public Water Supplies in Belfast**

Public Water System(PWS) Name	PWS Type	Source Name	Source Type	PWS ID#
Belfast Water District	C	Jackson Pit Well GP 51'	WL	ME0090140
Piper Stream Mobile Home Park	C	125' Bedrock Well 11/1990 50 GPM	WL	ME0095560
Belfast Water District	C	Gp Wells - Smart Rd Well 47'	WL	ME0090140
Belfast Curling Club	NC	Dr Well	WL	ME0008779
County Rose Webbas Roadhouse (Bowens Tavern LLC)?	NC	Bedrock Well	WL	ME0021568
Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage Condos	C	*No Source Water Assessment	WL	ME0092433
Belfast United Methodist Church	NC	*No Source Water Assessment	WL	ME0092356

Source: Maine DEP Drinking Water Program

**Notes:**

*C = Community Water System: A public water system which serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.*

*NC = Non-Community Water System: A public water system that is not a community water system. There are two types of Non-Community Water Systems. These are: a.. Non-Transient, Non-Community Water Systems: A Non-Community water system that serves at least 25 of the same persons for 6 months or more per year and may include, but is not limited to, a school, factory, industrial park or office building, and b. Transient Non-Community Water Systems: A Non-Community water system that serves at least 25 persons, but not necessarily the same persons, for at least 60 days per year and may include, but is not limited to, a highway rest stop, seasonal restaurant, seasonal motel, golf course, park or campground. A bottled water company is a transient, non-community water system.*

Maine DEP has assessed public water supplies in Belfast. They rate the Belfast Public Water District future risk of chronic contamination as moderate; for Piper Stream Mobile Home Park the risk is high; and for the Belfast Curling Club the risk is moderate. The placement of land around these supplies into resource conservation through conservation easements or through resource protection zoning would improve these ratings and reduce the future threats to drinking water. At some point the City may need to work with the owners of the Piper Stream Mobile Home Park to install updated subsurface wastewater management improvements to reduce the risk of contamination, and/or to require the owner to purchase abutting

land to create a buffer zone around the Park.

The Maine DEP assessments are shown in the following tables.

**Table 2-4 Maine DEP Assessment**

Assessment for: <b>Belfast Water District ID ME0090140</b>
Location: Belfast, Maine
Date: May 1, 2003
Summary of the Data used in our Assessment
Public Water Supply Information
Well identification number: 90140201
Well type: Gravel well
Well description: Gp Wells - Smart Rd Well 47'
Overburden thickness (feet): 32
Wellhead protection radius around the well: 2500
Reported distance of land control around the well: 1000
Wellhead Protection Ordinance in effect: Yes
Risk Based on Well Type and Site Geology
Ranking:
Well type: Gravel well
Overburden thickness (feet): 32
Existing risk of contamination based on well type & site geology: Moderate risk
Existing Risk of Acute Contamination
Ranking:
Positive coliform test: No
Nitrate test greater than 5 ppm: No
Septic system within 300 feet of the well: No
Existing risk of acute contamination: Low risk
Future Risk of Acute Contamination
Future Ranking:
No legal land control or control status is unknown or legal control is less than a 150-foot radius around the well: No
Legal control of at least a 150-foot radius of property around the well: Yes
Legal control of at least a 300-foot radius of property around the well: Yes
Future risk of acute contamination: Low risk
Existing Risk of Chronic Contamination
Ranking:
Detection of Chronic Chemical Contaminant: No
Name(s) of Chronic Chemical Contaminant(s) Detected: No chronic chemical contaminants detected.
Total No. Potential Sources of Contamination within WHPA: 4

<b>Assessment for: Belfast Water District ID ME0090140</b>
Distance to nearest "Significant Potential Source of Contamination": 150 (feet)
Name of nearest "Significant Potential Source of Contamination": Monitoring well
Existing risk of chronic contamination: Moderate risk
Future Risk of Chronic Contamination - Land Ownership / Control
Legal control of Entire Wellhead Protection Area: No
Legal control of 2500 Phase II/V Waiver Radius: No
Future risk of chronic contamination: Moderate risk

**Table 2-5 Maine DEP Assessment**

<b>Assessment for: Piper Stream Mobile Home Park ID ME0095560</b>
Location: Belfast, Maine
Date: May 1, 2003
Summary of the Data used in State Assessment
Public Water Supply Information
Well identification number: 95560102
Well type: Bedrock well
Well description: 125' Bedrock Well 11/1990 50 Gpm
Overburden thickness (feet): 125
Wellhead protection radius around the well: 300
Reported distance of land control around the well: No data reported.
Wellhead Protection Ordinance in effect: No
Risk Based on Well Type and Site Geology
Ranking:
Well type: Bedrock well
Overburden thickness (feet): 125
Existing risk of contamination based on well type & site geology: Low risk
Existing Risk of Acute Contamination
Ranking:
Positive coliform test: No
Nitrate test greater than 5 ppm: No
Septic system within 300 feet of the well: No
Existing risk of acute contamination: Low risk
Future Risk of Acute Contamination
Future Ranking:
No legal land control or control status is unknown or legal control is less than a 150-foot radius around the well: Yes
Legal control of at least a 150-foot radius of property around the well: No
Legal control of at least a 300-foot radius of property around the well: No

<b>Assessment for: Piper Stream Mobile Home Park ID ME0095560</b>
Future risk of acute contamination: High risk
Existing Risk of Chronic Contamination
Ranking:
Detection of Chronic Chemical Contaminant: No
Name(s) of Chronic Chemical Contaminant(s) Detected: No chronic chemical contaminants detected.
Total No. Potential Sources of Contamination within WHPA: None reported
Distance to nearest "Significant Potential Source of Contamination": No distance data reported. (feet)
Name of nearest "Significant Potential Source of Contamination": No potential sources of chemical contaminants reported or no distance data reported.
Existing risk of chronic contamination: Low risk
Future Risk of Chronic Contamination - Land Ownership / Control
Legal control of Entire Wellhead Protection Area: No
Legal control of 2500 Phase II/V Waiver Radius: No
Future risk of chronic contamination: High risk

**Table 2-6 Maine DEP Assessment**

<b>Assessment for: Belfast Curling Club, ID ME0008779</b>
Location: Belfast, Maine
Date: May 8, 2003
Summary of the Data used in State Assessment
Well type: Bedrock Well
Well identification number: 8779101
Well description: Dr Well
Overburden thickness (feet): Unknown
Positive bacteria test result(s): No
Nitrate test result(s) greater than 5 ppm: No
Septic system(s) within 300 feet of the well: Yes
Animal feedlots/manure piles(s) within 300 feet of the well: No
Risk Based on Well Type and Site Geology
Ranking:
Well type: Bedrock Well
Overburden thickness (feet): Unknown
Existing risk of contamination based on well type & site geology: Moderate risk
Existing Risk of Acute Contamination
Ranking:
Positive coliform test(s): No

<b>Assessment for: Belfast Curling Club, ID ME0008779</b>
Nitrate test(s) greater than 5 ppm: No
Septic system(s) within 300 feet of the well: Yes
Animal feedlot(s)/manure pile(s) within 300 feet of the well: No
Existing risk of acute contamination: Moderate risk
Future Risk for Acute Contamination
Ranking:
Status of land control: The status of land ownership is unknown or it has been determined that the proprietor does not own or control all the land within 300 feet of this water supply source.
Future risk of acute contamination: Moderate risk

*(5). A summary of existing lake, pond, river, stream, and drinking water protection and preservation measures, including local ordinances.*

Shoreland/Waterfront Zoning: Belfast has adopted Shoreland Zoning provisions (Chapter 82 of the Belfast Code), which are intended to provide protection to shorefront areas, within a 250-foot area from the normal high water line of all tidal waters, identified freshwater wetlands that are 10 acres or more, the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, salt marshes, salt meadows, wetlands associated with great ponds, rivers and specified flood hazard areas. An area of 75 feet from the normal high water line is set for other water bodies including tributary streams. These shoreland zones include Resource Protection, Limited Residential, Urban Residential, General Development, Stream Protection, Stream Development, Manufactured Housing Community, and Waterfront Development. Beyond shoreland zoning, an Aquifer-Watershed Overlay District has been established to protect areas with aquifers that are used for public drinking water supplies by limiting development. See the ordinance provisions for more information on these standards and permitted uses.

Chapter 98 of the Belfast Code, Article VI Water Quality includes technical standards for the design of drainage systems including stormwater management of proposed developments and requirements for erosion and sedimentation control plans.

The Maine DEP has jurisdiction over freshwater wetlands and floodplain wetlands under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA)/Wetland Protection Rules and the Site Location of Development Act.

The Maine DEP subsurface wastewater disposal rules regulate the design and installation of septic systems in order to minimize the likelihood of contamination to groundwater and surface waters. The City Code Enforcement

Officer enforces these provisions.

#### **D. Policies**

- (1). To protect current and potential drinking water sources.
- (2). To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.
- (3). To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.
- (4). To minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.
- (5). To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). Amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate better quality stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:
  - a. Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations Title 38 MRSA §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502.
  - b. Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.
  - c. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program
- (2) Consider amending Official Shoreland Zoning Map that is part of Chapter 82, Shoreland Ordinance to ensure sensitive coastal and inland water resources are adequately protected.
- (4) Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards for ecologically sensitive, rural areas near water bodies .
- (5) Where applicable, develop an urban impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan that will promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation.
- (6) Work with the Belfast Water District to examine the need to enact revised public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.
- (7) Make water quality "best management practices" information available to farmers and loggers.

- (8) Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials, employees, and contractors.
- (9) Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect, and, where warranted, improve water quality.
- (10) Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.
- (11) Encourage conservation easements, especially in shoreland areas near drinking water supplies, and/or encourage the expanded use of resource protection districts for these sensitive areas.
- (12) Identify existing faulty septic systems (Code Enforcement Officer).
- (13) Encourage landowners to take advantage of cost share programs to bring septic systems up to code (Code Enforcement Officer, City Council).
- (14) Encourage the Belfast Water District to take proactive measures to protect permanently public drinking water supplies.
- (15) Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.

## SECTION 3.3 CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

### Introduction

Critical natural resources are integral to the environment. The purpose of this chapter is to help the City identify, manage and adequately protect its critical natural resources, and safeguard the local economy dependent on these resources. Note: for marine resources, see the Marine Resources Chapter; for water resources, see the Water Resources Chapter. Critical Natural Resources are defined by the State as those areas in the community comprised of one or more of the following:

- Shoreland zone
- Multi-function wetlands (wetlands found to provide three or more wetland functions as depicted on the Wetlands Characterization Maps developed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife)
- Essential Wildlife Habitats and Threatened, Endangered, and Special Concern Species occurrences as depicted on maps prepared by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to the Maine Endangered Species Act
- Significant wildlife habitat as defined in 38 MRSA §480-B(10)
- Significant freshwater fisheries habitat
- Rare and exemplary natural communities, and rare plant occurrences as determined by the State's Natural Areas Program database
- Coastal sand dune systems as defined in the Natural Resources Protection Act 38 MRSA §480-B(1)
- Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas of Ecological Significance identified by the Beginning with Habitat Program of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Fragile mountain areas as defined in 38 MRSA §480-B(3);
- Coastal bluffs and coastal landslide hazards as depicted on maps prepared by the Maine Geological Survey
- Flood plains as depicted on Federal Emergency Management Agency flood hazard identification maps
- Areas designated as a National Natural Landmark pursuant to the National Park Service's National Natural Landmark Program (36 Code of Federal Regulation, Section 62).

### A. State Goal and State Coastal Policies

1. *To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.*

**B. Analyses and Key Issues**

- (1). *Are any of the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities? Are existing regulations sufficient to protect the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?*

Federal, State, and municipal regulations offer protection for most critical natural resources in Belfast, excluding large habitat blocks. Crucial to this protection, however, is ongoing monitoring to detect illegal activities and remediate where environmental damage has occurred. Funding at the Federal, State and municipal level is insufficient to ensure complete protection. Further regulatory protection at the municipal level may be warranted. Specifically, these areas within Belfast should be considered for additional protection through municipal regulation: areas with steep slopes (see the map titled Topography), forested wetlands, and select wetlands under 10 acres in size that have limited regulation by the Maine DEP. However, the use of conservation easements or purchases may be more tenable to residents and voters than regulations. As important, easements and conservation purchases almost always result in permanent protection while municipal regulations are subject to future amendments or repeal.

- (2). *Are local shoreland zone standards consistent with state guidelines and with the standards on adjacent shorelands in neighboring towns?*

The City's shoreland zoning ordinance provisions including waterfront districts are consistent with current State law and have been approved by the Maine DEP. The City specifically notes that it has worked cooperatively with the DEP to adopt shoreland regulations that vary from the state model regulations, including but not limited to the establishment of the Urban Residential Shoreland subdistrict, the Waterfront Development Shoreland subdistrict, the Stream Development Shoreland subdistrict and the Manufactured Housing Community Shoreland subdistrict. The above subdistricts better reflect existing development patterns in Belfast and are modeled on the premise that future development should be consistent with existing development. Also, Shoreland zoning districts of adjacent shorelands in the neighboring communities of Belmont, Morrill, Northport, Swanville and Waldo are consistent with Belfast's provisions for these border area shorelands.

- (3). *What non-regulatory measures can the community take to protect critical natural resources and important natural resources? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups?*

The City can work with non-profit, local, state, and national advocacy groups to acquire property in critical areas for conservation outright or with easements.

Specifically, the following areas should be considered for conservation:

- Areas along the Passagassawakeag River
- Areas within the Water Districts watershed
- Areas along the bay
- Additional areas along the Little River.

Partners could include Audubon Society, Land for Maine's Future Program (Augusta), Maine Coast Heritage Trust (Topsham, Rockport), Natural Resources Council of Maine (Augusta), and Coastal Mountains Land Trust (Camden).

The City can educate residents on the value of critical natural resources through outreach programs, conservation committee efforts, and in cooperation with local schools. Programs could describe the existing resources found locally, threats from pollution, and ways in which residents can reduce their own household waste through reuse, recycling and proper disposal.

*(4). Is there current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources?*

The Maine Farmland Trust and the Coastal Mountains Land Trust have sought the preservation of critical natural areas in and around Belfast, especially along ecologically sensitive water bodies and valuable wetland habitats. The City has worked with the Coastal Mountains Land Trust in the past on preservation projects.

*(5). In what other areas will protection of critical natural resources advance comprehensive plan policies (e.g. water resources, economy, recreation, agriculture, and forestry, etc.)?*

Protecting critical natural resources goes hand in hand with several of the key policies of the following chapters of this plan: Agriculture and Forestry, Economy, Land Use, Marine Resources, Recreation, and Water Resources. See those chapters for their specific policies and strategies. More generally, the protection of one resource, like water quality, often involves the protection of other resources that occupy the same geography, like natural habitats. Similarly, conserving wetlands, which absorb water runoff and attenuate flood flows, reduces the risk of flooding in already developed areas nearby.

### **C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

- (1). *The community's Comprehensive Planning Critical Natural Resources Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Environmental Protection and the Office, or their designees.*

See the map titled Habitats and Marine Resources for Essential Wildlife Habitats and Threatened, Endangered, and Special Concern Species, Significant wildlife habitat, Rare and exemplary natural communities, and rare plant occurrences. See the shoreland zoning map for the location of Shoreland/Waterfront Districts and Moderate and High Value Wetland Habitats. See the map titled Water Resources for the location of wetlands. See the map titled Coastal Bluff Stability for the coastal bluffs and coastal landslide hazards. See the maps titled Flood Zones and Flood Zones (Downtown) for the location of flood plains.

In Belfast, the Rambur's Forktail (a dragonfly) and the Bald Eagle are the only identified Rare Animals, with a rating of Special Concern. The American Chestnut is the only identified Rare Plant, with a rating of Special Concern. The state identifies one of these trees on Route 1. Two more are found on Kaler Rd. Atlantic Salmon Spawning and Rearing Habitat are identified on the Passagassawakeag River near and between the Route 7/137 and the Doak Rd crossings. Belfast has no state-defined Focus Area of Ecological Significance, no state-identified significant freshwater fisheries habitat, no fragile mountain area, and no National Natural Landmark.

- (2). *A map or description of scenic areas and scenic views of local importance, and regional or statewide importance, if available.*

Scenic views in Belfast focus principally on Belfast Harbor and Bay, as seen from public streets and public parks and landings. Other scenic areas include the upper reaches of the Passagassawakeag River, the Goose River and Upper and Lower Mason Pond, the Little River, particularly the area near Route 1 and the area near Outer Congress Street, and the numerous open fields and wooded areas that border many of the rural roads in Belfast. See the map titled Scenic Resources Scenic resources of Belfast Harbor and Bay are noted in the Marine Resources chapter of this plan as well. The Gateway 1 plan includes a scenic resources map of views from Route 1; see the map titled Belfast Detail of Gateway 1 Scenic Quality Assessment Section Four (Upper Bay and River). In the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, these areas were rated for scenic value [1-9, the higher the number the more scenic]:

- City Park [9]
- Little River Dam and Little River, looking toward the Bay [6]
- Upper Little River Dam and Brook [7]
- Route 52, at junction with Prescott Road (Greenlow Corner), looking toward Belfast [7]

- Doak Road Bridge [5]
- Head of Tide [6]
- City Point to Upper High Street [7]
- Goose River, adjacent to Swan Lake Avenue [7]
- Goose River, adjacent to Route 1 [7]
- Armistice Bridge [7]
- City Landing [8]
- Lower Main Street toward the Bay [7]
- Hayford Hill Area [8]
- Kirby Lake [5]
- Patterson Hill [6]
- Upper and Lower Mason Ponds [N/A]

Additional sites of high scenic value include:

- Steamboat Landing
- Harbor Walk
- Belfast Rail Trail
- Heritage Park
- Bridge to the boathouse

#### **D. Policies**

- (1). *To conserve critical natural resources in the community.*
- (2). *To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.*

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). Amend local shoreland zone standards to meet current state guidelines.
- (2). Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.
- (3). Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.
- (4). 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.
- (5). Through local land use ordinances, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent BwH maps and information regarding critical natural resources.

- (6). Adopt natural resource protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties and require their implementation by the community's officials, employees, and contractors.
- (7). Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical natural resources.
- (8). Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.
- (9). 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.
- (10). Obtain scenic easements from willing property owners for the preservation of scenic views as identified in this plan and to protect water views that can be seen from rangeways.
- (11). Conduct field surveys of state-mapped approximate deer winter areas and other habitats for accuracy in order to ensure appropriate regulation of these areas, as it is believed that some currently mapped habitats may be incorrect.
- (12). Encourage the construction and maintenance of trails and pedestrian/bicycling improvements to provide public access to critical natural resource areas.

## SECTION 3.4 AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

### Introduction

Farming is a significant land use activity, important to the economic well-being of numerous Belfast residents. Forestry is also a key land use. Open space is integral to Belfast's rural character and is important to Belfast's residents, who have over the years, indicated a strong preference for preserving the City's rural character. This chapter describes agricultural and forestry resources in Belfast and recommends steps for their protection.

### A. State Goal

1. *To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1). *How important is agriculture and/or forestry to the community and region? Are these activities growing, stable, or declining? Does the community support community forestry or agriculture? If so, how?*

Agriculture and forestry are more important to the community than the small number of those employed in these sectors might suggest. The market for local agricultural products is increasing and Belfast residents could likely support more activity in this sector. Sustainable forestry provides a small but useful supplemental income to large landowners, and helps reduce property tax valuations, allowing residents who work in the local economy or are on fixed incomes to remain in Belfast. Larger scale, traditional agricultural activities have declined, while specialized, small-scale and niche-farming activities have increased, like the raising of alpacas, organic and heirloom crops. Demand for hay is primarily for horse farms.

- (2). *Are farm and forest landowners taking advantage of the state's current use tax laws?*

In 2019, there were 1,034.45 acres in the Farmland Protection Program, down from 1,601.68 in 2009. In 2019, 1,524.33 acres were enrolled in the Tree Growth Program, up slightly from 1,515.2 in 2009. In 2019, there were 361.67 enrolled in the Open Space program, up from 271.77 enrolled in the Open Space Program in 2009. Those property owners participating in the farmland and tree growth tax programs are benefiting from reduced tax assessments based on the current (non-residential) use of their property or portions thereof. See figures in C.3 and C.4 below. It is estimated that additional farmland and woodlots might be eligible to

participate in these voluntary programs.

*(3). Has proximity of new homes or other incompatible uses affected the normal farming and logging operations?*

The rising value of land for residential uses and the increased valuation of land that could be converted to residential use have reduced the amount of land farmed and forested. Property tax is the primary source of revenue for municipal government services. Residential uses are often sought because of the increased property tax revenue that they will generate. Importantly, however, residential uses consume significantly more municipal services than do farming and forestry activities. Scattered residential development in formerly rural areas breaks up contiguous parcels and facilitates increased residential development. Farming has typically been small-scale; however, niche operations catering to specialized markets can still flourish. No industrialized forest operations (encompassing 500 acres or more per site) are found in Belfast. Voluntary tree growth designation is likely to continue. Although, limited amounts of forestry conservation easements in the City mean that the existing forestry activities may decline as scattered development in formerly rural areas increase.

*(4). Is the community currently taking regulatory and/or non-regulatory steps to protect productive farming and forestry lands? Are there local or regional land trusts actively working to protect farms or forest lands in the community?*

Many of the current zoning districts support agricultural and forestry uses, including the General Purpose A, General Purpose B, Residential Agricultural I, Residential Agricultural II, Protection Rural 1, Protection Rural 2, and much of the Residential Growth zoning district. In addition, many of the City's commercial zoning districts allow low scale agricultural activities and the City zoning regulations allow domestic chickens in urban residential neighborhoods.

The City's Future Land Use Plan that was adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan establishes the Rural Road Class 1 and Rural Road Class 2 zoning districts. These Road Class districts clearly allow and encourage agricultural and forestry uses, and allow home occupations at a scale that can support small agricultural, husbandry, forestry and similar uses. There are many large undeveloped rural parcels in Belfast, and at present, there is minimal pressure to redevelop these parcels for residential use. Most remain open field and forestry lands.

The Future Land Use Plan, like many current zoning districts, also recognizes that many areas in Belfast support a wide range of uses. For example, a furniture store located in the Route 3 Commercial zoning district also supports a horse stable. As such, it is recommended that agricultural activities be allowed in mixed

use/commercial zoning districts. The City also will consider policies similar to its domesticated chicken policy for urban areas.

The City is very supportive of non-regulatory steps to support farming and forestry including farmer's markets, working with the local chamber of commerce to help market agriculture products, and working with local school lunch programs to incorporate local goods. The City actively supports outreach and education on the importance of local farms and forestlands to local schools and the public.

Belfast has a long established food co-operative that has over 3,000 members and which offers locally grown foods, and access to a fish purchasing cooperative. In addition to providing a market for local farmers, the Co-op provides advocacy and education regarding healthy living and foods. In addition, in 2011, a group of residents broke ground on the Belfast Co-Housing and Eco-Village project, a 38 unit residential subdivision that features net zero energy housing, community gardens, and sustainable development. The housing development is clustered on 3 acres with over 40 acres of surrounding open space and fields. The Co-Housing and Eco-Village project is a significant accomplishment for its founders, particularly at a time when the housing market was very depressed. In 2018, the last unit offered for sale in the Belfast Co-Housing and Eco-Village project was sold. The City role in this project was to use local zoning standards that allowed this type of development.

The Maine Farmland Trust (located in Belfast) and the Coastal Mountains Land Trust work with landowners who wish to conserve their properties for the continuation of sustainable agricultural and forestry operations. See the map titled Public Facilities and Services for land under conservation easements.

*(5). Are there undeveloped parts of town in which prime farmland are prevalent? If so, how are these areas currently being used? How are they being protected?*

The map titled Farmland Soils shows the locations of prime farmland soils as defined by the USDA. These soils are found throughout the City. Within the US 1 bypass and along shorelines, these soils are in areas largely developed already. A few of the larger contiguous areas of these soils are found along portions of Route 3, Route 141 and crossing an interior portion of Crocker Rd. These areas are less developed. See the map titled Land Cover for uses, development patterns, and intensity. These areas allow for agricultural and forestry uses.

*(6). Are there large tracts of agricultural or industrial forest land that have been or may be sold for development in the foreseeable future? If so, what impact would this have on the community?*

See the map titled Land Cover for the locations of Cultivated Crops and Pasture/Hay in Belfast. Belfast does not have industrial forestland (encompassing 500 or more

acres per site). No significant farmland or woodlots are seen as vulnerable to conversion to residential use at this time. Several properties have been purchased recently to establish small-scale agricultural uses including, Daisychain Farm and Rising Up Farm.

*(7). Is clear-cutting an issue in the community? Is the clear-cutting related to normal woodlands management, or is it in preparation for land development?*

Clear-cutting has only arisen as an issue in Belfast twice in the past 15 years. Off the Route 1 bypass, about 30 acres were cleared on property adjacent to and under the same ownership as a mobile home park. Maine DEP fined the owner and they have paid restoration fees, which were likely in excess of the revenue made from the timber sold. The cleared lot has yet to be developed. Another 15 acres were cleared in 2012. Selective cutting has occurred as part of regulated woodlands management throughout the rural portions of the City. To date, clear cutting has not been a major concern.

*(8). Do local farmers and/or loggers take steps to minimize impacts on natural resources in the community? Do local farms participate in Natural Resource Conservation Service programs?*

The City can advise farmers and woodlot owners on best management practices and put these persons in contact with state officials for further guidance. Some local farms participate in the Natural Resource Conservation Service programs.

*(9). Does the community have town or public woodlands under management, or that would benefit from forest management?*

The community does not currently have town or public woodlands.

**C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

- (1). *The community’s Comprehensive Planning Agriculture and Forestry Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Agriculture, the Maine Forest Service, and the Office, or their designees.*

See the map titled Farmland Soils for the location of Prime Farmland soils (USDA defined) and soils categorized as Additional Farmland of Statewide Importance (State defined).

**Table 4-1 Waldo County Agricultural Sales**

Item/Year	1978	1982	1992	1997	2007	2017
All crops	\$1,257,000	\$1,850,000	\$2,796,000	\$2,796,000	\$5,002,000	\$8,479,000
Livestock/ poultry and their products	\$46,202,000	\$34,681,000	\$14,336,000	\$12,229,000	\$17,818,000	\$14,476,000
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$130,000	\$185,000	\$541,000	\$1,211,000	\$1,613,000	\$2,539,000
Fruits, nuts and berries	\$393,000	\$723,000	\$1,511,000	\$650,000	\$1,284,000	\$1,005,000

Source: USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1978 - 2017.

Notes: Most agricultural activity in the county occurs outside Belfast. All crops category includes nursery and greenhouse products.

**Table 4-2 Summary of Timber Harvest Information for City of Belfast**

Year	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of timber harvests
2001	499	19	0	518	13	31
2002	231	0	0	231	105	22
2003	120	0	0	120	6	16
2004	172	0	0	172	30	21
2005	142	0	0	142	5	10
2006	145	0	0	145	1	17
2007	362	156	15	533	30	20
2008	87	0	0	87	5	10
2009	69	0	0	69	6	8

Year	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of timber harvests
2010	135	22	3	160	1	13
2011	98	12	30	140	43	15
2012	211.5	50	15	276.5	0	16
2013	188	0	0	188	4	15
2014	145	0	0	145	2	13
2015	313	65	0	378	5	17
2016	160	100	0	260	0	15
Total	5,664.5	922	169	6,754.5	355	407

Source: Department of Conservation - Maine Forest Service

Notes: Data compiled from confidential year-end landowner reports to Maine Forest Service. To protect confidential landowner information, data is reported only where three or more landowner reports reported harvesting in the town.

(2). *A map and/or description of the community's farms, farmland, and managed forest lands and a brief description of any that are under threat.*

See the map titled Land Cover for the location of Cultivated Crops and Pasture/Hay areas. The open space provided by farming and forestry activities is important to the rural character that surrounds the Downtown and is found in backland areas away from the highway commercial development that is spreading along Route 1 and Route 3. Less than 2% of Belfast's residents worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining occupations in 2017. However, the public's attention on the value of locally raised healthy food has boosted the market for these commodities. Accordingly, grocery stores and supermarket chains are offering more local produce and related goods for sale in Belfast. Belfast's population could become a larger market for dairy and crops raised within Waldo County and nearby.

(3). *Information on the number of parcels and acres of farmland, tree growth, and open space enrolled in the state's farm, tree growth, and open space law taxation programs, including changes to enrollment over the past 10 years.*

In 1997, there were eight active farms in Belfast: one dairy farm, one dairy and sheep farm, and six general agriculture farms. There were 434.59 acres registered in Belfast under the States Farm and Open Space Law: 57.5 acres in crops, 365.09 acres in pasture, 4 acres in orchard and 8 acres in horticulture. All of this land is located in the rural area.

In 2019, there were 45 properties enrolled as farmland in Belfast. There were 1,034.45 acres in the Farmland Protection Program and 361.67 acres in the Open Space Program.

The increased acreage in crops, pasture, and horticulture from 1997 to 2019 is due to increased participation in the program, rather than an increase in farming activity.

The Tree Growth Tax Law Program allows for the assessment of forestland based on current use rather than market value as long as the land is managed for timber production and remains as forest.

In 1997, there were 2,130.6 acres registered in Belfast under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. All but 23.75 acres of this acreage are in rural locations. Most of this acreage is located on the west side of the City. In 2019, there were 1,524.33 acres registered in Belfast under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. Most of this acreage is in rural locations.

- (4). *A description of any community farming and forestry activities (e.g. street tree program, community garden, farmer’s market, or community forest), including identification of managing officials and/or organizations.*

**Table 4-3 Agriculture and Forestry Programs within Belfast**

Program	Occurs (Seasonally, Weekly, Monthly, etc.)	Organized/Managed (City, Non-Profit, Local Businesses, etc.)
Farmer’s Market	Year-round (weekly)	Farmers Market
Garden Club	Spring/Summer	Civic Group
School Farm	Spring/Summer	RSU 71

**D. Policies**

- (1). *To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.*
- (2). *To promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.*
- (3). *To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.*

**E. Strategies**

- (1). 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.
- (2). Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.
- (3). Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas to maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space and agricultural lands.
- (4). Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.
- (5). Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.
- (6). Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, and pick-your-own operations.
- (7). Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.
- (8). Protect existing agricultural areas from conflicts that may arise from new, adjacent land use activities. Consider the creation of agricultural buffers for new commercial developments abutting existing agricultural uses and/or an agricultural overlay district to protect existing agricultural activities by limiting or prohibiting conflicting land uses. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to include a provision requiring a 100-foot buffer strip between new residential or commercial development and active farmland. (Enacting a land use district or zone where agriculture is recognized as the primary use and where residential uses are limited or conditional can reduce property tax assessments based upon the current prevailing use rather than on the potential for residential use. Ever-increasing property taxes due to the potential for residential use are often cited as contributing to the loss of farmland.)
- (9). Publicize the availability of free and low cost professional assistance through the U.S. Conservation Service, U.S. Agricultural Stabilization, and Soil Conservation Service, State Service Foresters and woodlot management programs sponsored by the major paper companies. Make this information available at the City Office Building.
- (10). Publicize the availability of the Right to Farm and use state forest practice regulations, by including a mailing with tax bills and by developing and/or

- acquiring resource materials for further distribution. Also, make this information available at the City Office Building.
- (11). In the outside Rural Districts, strongly encourage land use development practices, such as cluster housing, that preserve agricultural and forestry resources and open space.
  - (12). Establish an open space fund, supported by donations, grants and, at the discretion of the City, tax penalties from the sale or change of use status of land which is currently tax exempt or subject to reduced taxation, such as land subject to the tree Growth Tax.
  - (13). Work cooperatively with local and county organizations and individuals who engage in agricultural and forestry oriented activities to promote such uses, such as a Community Supported Agriculture program, the Belfast Co-operative, the Farmers Market, the Farmland Trust and similar organizations.

## SECTION 3.5 MARINE RESOURCES

### Introduction

Access to the ocean and its abundant marine resources has been a staple of the coastal economy in the State of Maine for centuries. This ocean access has been described at a state level as the working waterfront. Past and present uses of the working waterfront in Belfast include, but are not limited to: commercial fishing, aquaculture, rail transportation, marine transportation, boat building and repair, and of course, recreational opportunities.

Citizens who participated in a community planning process called 'The Vibrancy Project' ranked the maintenance and protection of a real and friendly working waterfront as the highest priority measure to improve quality of life and commerce in the City. The purpose of this chapter is to help the City identify, manage and protect its marine resources and working waterfront features in order to safeguard the local economy that is dependent on these uses.

### A. State Goal and State Coastal Policies

- a. *To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.*
- b. *For coastal towns, the Growth Management Act requires that a local comprehensive plan address the state coastal management policies (38 MRSA §1801). These are:*
  - a. *To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation;*
  - b. *To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources;*
  - c. *To support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;*
  - d. *To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;*
  - e. *To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;*
  - f. *To protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and*

- national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs;*
- g. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development;*
  - h. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses; and,*
  - i. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime characteristics of the Maine coast.*

## **B. Analyses and Key Issues**

### *(1). Fishery resources/water quality*

- a. Is coastal water quality being monitored on a regular basis?*

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (Maine DMR) monitors water quality regionally. The City monitors water quality at the site of discharge of treated effluent from the sewer facility on a regular basis. Overall, water quality is recorded as being within healthful limits.

- b. Is there a local or regional plan in place to identify and eliminate pollution sources?*

Belfast, like many Maine communities, experienced problems with operation of its public sewer system, including occasional overflows of sewage into the coastal waters of Belfast Bay. Belfast's sewer system consists of 31 miles of sewer pipe, much of which are over 100 years old and in extremely poor condition. The City has taken very aggressive measures to address this pollution issue.

In 2000, the City contracted with its engineering firm, Olver Associates, to prepare a Sewer System Master Plan to abate problems associated with Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO). Since 2001, the City has completed many of the identified projects at a public cost of over \$10 million dollars to eliminate CSO's, upgrade the wastewater treatment plant, and significantly decrease the amount of infiltration into the City sewer system. Since then, Belfast, like most Maine communities, has experienced a significant increase in the annual amount of rainfall; however, the sewer improvements constructed have significantly reduced the number and intensity of overflows into the Bay. See the Public Facilities chapter and Capital Investment Plan in the Fiscal Capacity chapter of this plan for more information.

- c. Has closing of clam or worm flats threatened the shellfishing industry, and are sources of contamination known? Are sources point (direct discharge) or nonpoint sources?*

According to Maine DMR, there are a number of soft shell clam beds, both above and below the Route 1 Bridge. At one time, the beds below the bridge were open to depuration harvesting, but all of the clam beds are now closed due to pollution. DMR officials indicate that Belfast's shellfish areas provide marginal habitat and are not likely to be opened in the future, at least on the side of the harbor where the sewage treatment plant is located. While the City's tidal flats are closed to the harvesting of shellfish, they do provide important habitat for waterfowl.

Water quality can be degraded by many factors, resulting from natural occurrences, and human activity. Pollution can be classified by its origin. Point source pollution originates from a single point, such as an outflow pipe, overboard discharge including untreated wastes, from a residence, business, or factory. The Maine DEP, Bureau of Land and Water Quality lists three overboard discharges and five wastewater outfalls approved within Belfast. See the Water Resources Map for their locations.

*d. Are fishery resources being properly managed at local and regional levels?*

The City has few current concerns regarding how fishery resources are being managed at the local and regional level. DMR has instituted seasonal restrictions that affect when construction can occur in near-shore waters; however, the agency has exercised reasonable and locally desired flexibility in applying these standards to construction projects. Further, recreational fishermen have not expressed any significant concern regarding the condition of fishery resources that are subject to recreational fishing. Unfortunately, few salmon now enter Belfast Bay or the Passagassawakeag River and it appears that salmon will not become a significant local recreational fishery.

*(2) Coastal Land Use*

*a. Are traditional water-dependant uses thriving or in decline? What are the factors affecting these uses? If current trends continue, what will the waterfront look like in 10 years?*

Belfast Harbor, starting in the mid-1990's, has seen a dramatic increase in growth and activity. The amount of growth is similar to that experienced along much of the Maine Coast. While activity began to level off in 2008 - 2009 due to the large impact the economy plays in both the boating industry and shorefront real estate markets, the amount of activity in the harbor increased significantly in 2011 - 2012 with the development of the Front Street Shipyard, a major boat repair, refitting, storage and building operation. The arrival of the Shipyard combined with ongoing pressures on the harbor prompted the City, in 2011 - 2012 to prepare a new inner harbor management plan. The City Council adopted the plan and accompanying Ordinance amendments recommended by the Harbor Committee and the City and its Harbormaster to implement this plan. The harbor is a critical vibrant part of the community, and the management of

the harbor has been effective overall.

In 2019 there were 309 total moorings in Belfast Harbor. Recently, the establishment of moorings for riparian or shorefront owners, along with an increase in transient cruisers renting overnight moorings and dock space has put additional pressure on the amount of moorings available. There are also a large number of boaters from Islesboro, Castine, Northport and surrounding areas who come for lunch or stay for the day to enjoy the downtown or one of the many activities held on the waterfront. A cruise line brings ‘mini’ passenger ships into Belfast and the harbor is now among the top 10 in Maine for the number of cruise ship passenger visits per year.

There remains room for further development in the harbor, including setting additional moorings and expanding slip space and developing the inner harbor, however, any increase of substantial slip space in the outer harbor may largely depend on creating additional protection that would need to be provided by a breakwater or wave attenuator. The alluring assets of Belfast Harbor may be attributed to its wide diversity in users, including strong support in maintaining a working waterfront, fisheries and aquaculture.

*c. Is there a reasonable balance between water-dependant and other uses, and between commercial and recreational uses? If there have been recent conversions of uses, have they improved or worsened the balance?*

Due to increase in water temperatures impacting the lobster harvest, there has been some decline in commercial water-dependant uses in recent years. The increased demand in recreational boating has created an increased demand for moorings and slips in Belfast’s harbor.

*c. Is there a local or regional harbor or bay management plan? If not, is one needed?*

Belfast adopted an official management plan for the harbor in 1991 and an inner harbor management plan in 2011-2012. The City has been implementing provisions of the plans including approaches such as involving the Belfast Harbor Committee in the review of Shoreland Permits for marine facilities, establishing five respective management districts for the harbor and associated wharf line limits for marine facilities, and periodically amending the Harbor Operations Ordinance. In 2010, the City Council authorized the City to secure professional consulting services to prepare a downtown – waterfront plan. A key component of this planning effort involved examining use and development of the working waterfront area, including both public and privately owned lands, and the use of the Inner Harbor area. This effort lead to preparation and adoption of Ordinances for the Inner Harbor area, as well as the construction of an expanded commercial fisherman wharf that was completed in 2013.

*d. If the harbor is shared with other communities, is there cooperation in management of the harbor?*

Belfast Harbor is bounded entirely by the City of Belfast.

*e. What are the local dredging needs and how are they addressed?*

The Belfast Harbor channel is approximately 2 miles long from Steel Ledge to the bridge. The average depth of the channel is 12 feet 6 inches at mean low tide, and the average width of the channel is about 200 feet. The normal tide range is about 10 feet, and the channel is subject to a high level of siltation.

The last dredging in the harbor and channel occurred during the federal navigation project in 2003. Further dredging is not scheduled, although recent survey mapping from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers showed the west anchorage could be dredged in the near future, as it is filling in. It would be helpful to have further maintenance dredging done around the City Landing floats to accommodate deeper draft vessels. The dredging that has occurred to date has been funded through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the federal navigation project. Unfortunately the cost of such dredging exceeds the City's available resources.

### *(3) Coastal Access*

*a. Is adequate, protected access for commercial fishermen, aquaculturists, and recreational users available? Based on projections, will access, including support facilities such as parking and marine services, be adequate for the future? Are there opportunities for improved access?*

Current capacity of City owned facilities will be adequate to meet the anticipated demand of commercial fishermen and recreational users. Proposed improvements over the next 10 years to these facilities are aimed at enhancing public access, ensuring there are adequate support facilities for harbor operations, and providing needed maintenance to existing facilities. Belfast has numerous rangeways (rights-of way) to the shore that were inventoried and surveyed in 2010. Many rangeways have been improved to increase pedestrian access to the water front. Recently, art installations have been added along the rangeways to draw attention and increase use.

A key improvement to the waterfront was the 2013 expansion of the commercial fishermen's wharf at the City Landing. The commercial fishermen's wharf supports most of the local fishing fleet, primarily lobstermen.

See the Capital Investment Plan in the Fiscal Capacity chapter of this plan for more information. Maine DMR in consultation with aquaculture operators could determine the suitability of Belfast Bay for aquaculture uses.

*b. Are important points of visual access identified and protected?*

The Public Landing, Heritage Park, Thompsons Wharf, Steamboat Landing, and

Belfast City Park, have protected visual and physical access to coastal waters. An inventory of additional visual access points is recommended in this plan, including water views from the footbridge, Hayford Hill (Route 3), Little River/Goose River (Searsport Avenue/Route 1). Beyond publicly owned land, and land in conservation, such as that owned by the Coastal Mountain Land Trust along the Passagassawakeag River, other scenic views are not protected.

### C. Conditions and Trends

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

- (1). *The community's Comprehensive Marine Resources Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Conservation, and the Office, or their designees.*

See the map titled Habitats and Marine Resources for Maine DMR habitat information.

**Table 5-1 Marine Resource Licenses held by Belfast residents**

Type/Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2018	2019
Dealers	19	17	14	13	13	11	11	15
Harvesters	58	67	52	52	49	42	19	20

Source: Maine DMR

**Table 5-2 Total Lobster Trap Tags fished by Belfast residents**

Tags	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2018	2019
Total Tags	4,496	4,165	4,659	4,300	5,485	4,670	4,810	4,505

Source: Maine DMR

Maine DMR categorizes marine licenses as shown in the next table for Belfast residents.

**Table 5-3 Belfast Resident Marine Licenses**

Resident Licenses	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2018
Urchin Tender (30-day)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comm. Fishing /Crew	1	1	1	1	0	0	3
Comm. Fishing /Single	0	1	0	2	0	0	1
Comm. Shellfish	5	7	3	3	1	2	6
Lobster/Crab Non-Comm.	21	27	20	19	20	13	12
Lobster Meat Permit	3	3	3	2	2	2	0
Lobster Trans (Out-of-state)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Lobster Trans Supp.	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Lobster/Crab Apprentice	1	0	1	1	0	0	1

Resident Licenses	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2018
Lobster/Crab Class I	12	13	13	14	13	13	7
Lobster/Crab Class II	11	9	9	8	7	8	4
Lobster/Crab Class III	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
Lobster/Crab Over Age 70	5	6	3	3	2	2	4
Lobster/Crab Student	0	2	2	4	4	3	7
Marine Worm Digging	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Retail Seafood	17	15	12	11	12	10	0
Scallop –Diver	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Scallop –Non-Comm.	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Sea Urchin/Scallop Tender	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Seaweed	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Shellfish Trans Out-of-state	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Shellfish Trans Supp	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wholesale No Lobsters	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Wholesale No Lobsters, Supp	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Wholesale with Lobsters	3	4	3	2	2	2	0
Wholesale with Lobsters, Supp	2	3	2	2	2	2	0
Eel Pot/Hoop Net (EP)	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Elver 1 Fyke Net	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
Elver Dip Net (E0)	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Recreational Saltwater Registry (SWR)	--	--	--	--	--	--	4
Recreational Saltwater Fishing Operator (SWRO)	--	--	--	--	--	--	1

Source: Maine DMR

Maine DEP does not have fish samples from Belfast Bay. However, the following species are probably present.

**Table 5-4 Fishes and decapods found in the vicinity of Belfast Bay**

	Genus and species	Common Name
Decapods	<i>Crangon septemspinosa</i>	sand shrimp
	<i>Carcinus maenas</i>	green crab
Fishes	<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>	Threespine stickleback
	<i>Apeltes quadracus</i>	Fourspine stickleback
	<i>Pungitius pungitius</i>	Ninespine stickleback
	<i>Tautoglabrus adspersus</i>	Cunner
	<i>Cyclopterus lumpus</i>	Lumpfish
	<i>Myoxocephalus aeneus</i>	Grubby

	<i>Pholis gunnellus</i>	Rock gunnel
	<i>Syngnathus fuscus</i>	Northern pipefish
	<i>Microgadus tomcod</i>	Atlantic tomcod
	<i>Urophycis tenuis</i>	White hake
	<i>Psuedopleuronectes americanus</i>	Winter flounder

The City also notes that Mackerel & Stripers are in the River, and that both attract recreational fishing interest. Source: Maine DMR

The number of boats registered to Belfast residents is shown in the next table.

**Table 5-5 Boat Anchorage in Belfast**

Boat Length (ft)	2007	2019
10 to 20	52	32
21 to 30	26	130
31 to 40	15	75
41 to 60	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>238</b>

Source: Maine DMR

(2). *Coastal land use*

- a. *A map or description of current land use patterns along the shoreline and near coast area which differentiates water-dependent uses from other uses.*

See the map titled Land Cover for the locations of developed, forested, cultivated, and open areas along and near the coast. See the map titled Current Land Use for the existing zoning along and near the coast including waterfront zones. Most development along the coast is residential, not water dependent. Commercial uses and water dependent commercial uses are primarily located adjacent to downtown and along a stretch of shoreline that is about 3,500 lineal feet in length. Water dependent uses are found at and near landings, piers and wharfs, which are adjacent to downtown. It also is noted that little of the coastline in Belfast is well suited for significant water dependent commercial activities, and that all commercial fishermen operate out of the City’s harbor facilities and that no individual fisherman has their own dock.

- b. *A summary of current regulatory and non-regulatory provisions influencing land use patterns along the shoreline and near coast area.*

Floodplain Management: Belfast participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, and the City has adopted Floodplain Management Ordinance provisions (Chapter 78 of the Belfast Code). See the maps titled Flood Zones and Flood Zones (Downtown) for the location and types of flood zones. Special flood hazard areas are inundated by 100-year floods, i.e., less than a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year. Ordinance provisions limit

development in flood prone areas and require that the development that is allowed in these areas is suitably designed to withstand flooding. The City updated its Floodplain Management Ordinance and associated FEMA floodplain maps in 2015.

**Shoreland/Waterfront Zoning:** Belfast has adopted Shoreland Zoning provisions (Chapter 82 of the Belfast Code), which are intended to provide protection to shorefront areas, within a 250-foot area from the normal high water line of all tidal waters, identified freshwater wetlands that are 10 acres or more, the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, salt marshes, salt meadows, wetlands associated with great ponds, rivers and specified flood hazard areas. An area of 75 feet from the normal high water line is set for other water bodies including tributary streams. These shoreland zones include Resource Protection, Limited Residential, Urban Residential, General Development, Stream Protection, Stream Development, Manufactured Housing Community, and Waterfront Development. Waterfront Development districts include Waterfront I "A" Downtown, Waterfront Mixed Use, and Searsport Avenue Waterfront. Land use standards are defined for each zone. Waterfront districts allow marine and water dependent uses, in addition to a range of other mixed uses. The City notes that its Shoreland Ordinance provisions often vary from those identified in the State Shoreland Model Ordinance, and that the State Department of Environmental Protection has reviewed and approved all City Ordinance provisions. See the ordinance provisions for more information on these standards and permitted uses.

*(3). Harbor Management*

*a. A description of any local or regional harbor or bay management plans or planning efforts.*

Belfast has adopted harbor management ordinance provisions (Chapter 30 of the Belfast Code) to regulate marine activities within Belfast waters (harbor and bay). A City Council-appointed Harbor Advisory Committee provides recommendations to the City Council through the City Manager, and Harbormaster. This Committee also provides recommendations to the Planning Board in its review of proposed docks and piers that require permits in the shoreland zone. The City Council and City Manager appoint a Harbormaster who oversees the city's moorings, floats, docks, ramps, breakwater, channels, and adjacent municipal property and ensures that the public grounds maintenance division provides for their proper maintenance. As previously noted, the City Council, in 2012, adopted new provisions to regulate use of the inner harbor area. All Harbor Ordinances can be found in the City Code of Ordinances.

*(4). Coastal Access*

- a. *The location of facilities (wharves, boat ramps, pump-out stations, etc.), with a brief description of any regional or local plans to improve facilities.*

See the maps titled Public Facilities and Services for the location of harbor facilities. The primary harbor facilities include the Belfast City Landing, the Belfast breakwater, Young's Lobster Pound dock, Belfast Boat Yard, Maine Port Towboats Inc, the Consumer's Fuel Marina, and the newly established Front Street Shipyard.

City owned facilities on the waterfront include the City Landing, a launching ramp, a breakwater, and floats providing dock space for approximately 18 vessels. Water and electricity are available for visitors, and a building housing toilets and showers is adjacent to the City Landing. Recent improvements include increased dock space, upgrading of the launching ramp and trailer parking area, acquisition of land, which has been turned into a public park and Harbor Walk, and the provision of access to additional dinghy tie-up facilities. Floats moored off the breakwater permit docking of larger vessels. Over the next ten-year planning period, it is believed that current capacity of city owned facilities has been upgraded to meet anticipated demand. See the Capital Investment Plan in the Fiscal Capacity chapter of this plan for more information.

Young's Lobster Pound includes a wharf, which is used primarily for the processing and sale of lobsters on a wholesale basis. It is used secondarily as a restaurant. There are 200 feet of usable berthing space, a stone filled crib pier measuring 100 feet by 200 feet with an apron measuring 30 feet by 36 feet, an apron with a wooden deck on wooden pilings measuring 25 feet by 40 feet, and a ramp area that could be used for launching a boat. There are two stand-off ramps, one of which measures 10 feet by 30 feet, consisting of wooden pilings and a plank deck. The second ramp consists of similar construction and measures 6 feet by 30 feet. The facility includes a building measuring 36 feet by 76 feet, and a parking lot.

The Front Street Shipyard, which purchased the former Stinson Seafoods property in January 2011, has redeveloped the property as a boat repair, boat refitting, boat storage and boat building operation. The Shipyard officially opened in July 2011. The Shipyard features the largest marine travel-lift located north of Newport, Rhode Island, a 165 and 400 ton travel-lift. The Shipyard has constructed a new 22,400 square foot building that is 55 feet in height, to service and construct vessels, and a new 12,000 square foot building for boat storage. They also have retrofitted existing buildings on the site to create an additional 20,000+ square feet of inside storage, they have constructed a large outside storage area, and they have constructed marine floats. The Front Street Shipyard recently purchased Belfast Boatyard, which includes a rock-filled, timber crib pier with a deck measuring 10 feet by 200 feet on wooden pilings. The pier has no

ladders, but there are two catwalks extending down to the floats. There is a launch ramp and 14 floats measuring 10 feet by 20 feet. Included on the property are a workshop, an office, and storage building measuring 48 by 60 feet, with a capacity to store 7 large boats. There is an outside storage capacity for approximately 55 boats at this location and at an off-site non-shore location there is storage for an additional 200 vessels. Services include drinking water, electricity, a crane, and outdoor lighting. The arrival of the Shipyard has been a major addition to Belfast's working waterfront.

*b. A description of or map showing beaches and other access points used by the public with a brief description of their use, capacity, physical condition, and plans to improve, expand, or acquire facilities such as parking or toilets.*

See the maps titled Public Facilities and Services for the locations of boat launches and parks with water access.

There is one publicly owned swimming area, an in-ground pool at Belfast City Park. This Park features coastal beach access with 716 linear feet of shore frontage, a picnic area, tennis courts, a basketball court, a ballfield and a tot lot/playground. This park totals 18 acres, with parking for 30 vehicles near the shore and an additional 16 vehicles near the in-ground pool. The other publicly owned access to coastal waters is the dock and boat launch at the Public Landing/Launching Ramp in downtown. Parking for boat trailers is provided with 16 spaces. Both facilities are used regularly and most heavily in season. There are restroom facilities at both City Park and the Public Landing.

Over the next ten-year planning period, it is believed that current capacity will be adequate to meet anticipated demand in the upcoming years and most improvements will be geared toward upgrading existing facilities. Most improvements at the Public Landing similarly involve maintenance upgrades. A major improvement for the waterfront is the .75 mile long harbor walk project that provides greater connectivity between public and private properties and facilities along the waterfront that was completed in 2013. Belfast has numerous rangeways to the shore that have recently been inventoried and improved for pedestrian access. See the Capital Investment Plan in the Fiscal Capacity chapter of this plan for more information.

*b. An inventory of significant scenic access points along the shoreline, including current ownership (public/private) and any protection, if any.*

The Public Landing and the swimming area at the Belfast City Park have scenic views. Expansive scenic coastal views are also provided from the pedestrian bridge that crosses the harbor. In addition, there are three privately owned water access sites, including one on Belfast Bay (east side). The City has inventoried scenic shoreline views associated with its rangeways. The Northport/Belfast line includes a coastal view from Route 1 as does the Route 1

Bridge crossing the Passagassawakeag River.

#### **D. Policies**

- (1). To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality.*
- (2). To foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.*
- (3). To maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.*
- (4). To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve physical and visual public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.*

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).
- (2). Working with local residents and businesses, neighboring communities, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Marine Resources, develop an action plan to protect fishery habitats and identify and eliminate point and non-point source pollution.
- (3). Consistently enforce local shoreland zoning provisions and provide adequate training and resources to the code enforcement officer.
- (4). Inventory access points and develop a plan for addressing any identified needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, and swimming access) and their ongoing maintenance. Include necessary public improvements/upgrades in the Capital Investment Plan.
- (5). Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.
- (6). Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.
- (7). Implement any local or regional harbor or bay management plans, or work with neighboring communities to create a harbor management plan for shared resources.
- (8). Provide sufficient funding for and staffing of the harbormaster and/or harbor committee.

- (9). Inventory visual access points, viewsheds, and 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.
- (10). Consider purchasing rights of first refusal for access points or property of critical importance to marine, civic or recreation activities. Consider purchasing permanent easements or fee title to access points or property of critical importance to marine, civic or recreation activities (City Council) Long term.
- (11). Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate Low Impact Development standards.
- (12). Refine the pier and dock regulations to minimize the potential negative impacts of a proliferation of these structures in ecologically sensitive areas, or areas where navigation might be impeded.

## SECTION 3.6 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### Introduction

An important goal of a municipal comprehensive plan is to relate the demographics of a community with its economy, development and environment. Most of the chapters and the recommendations of this plan are dependent upon or strongly influenced by the size and composition of the City of Belfast’s current and forecasted population, both year-round and seasonal.

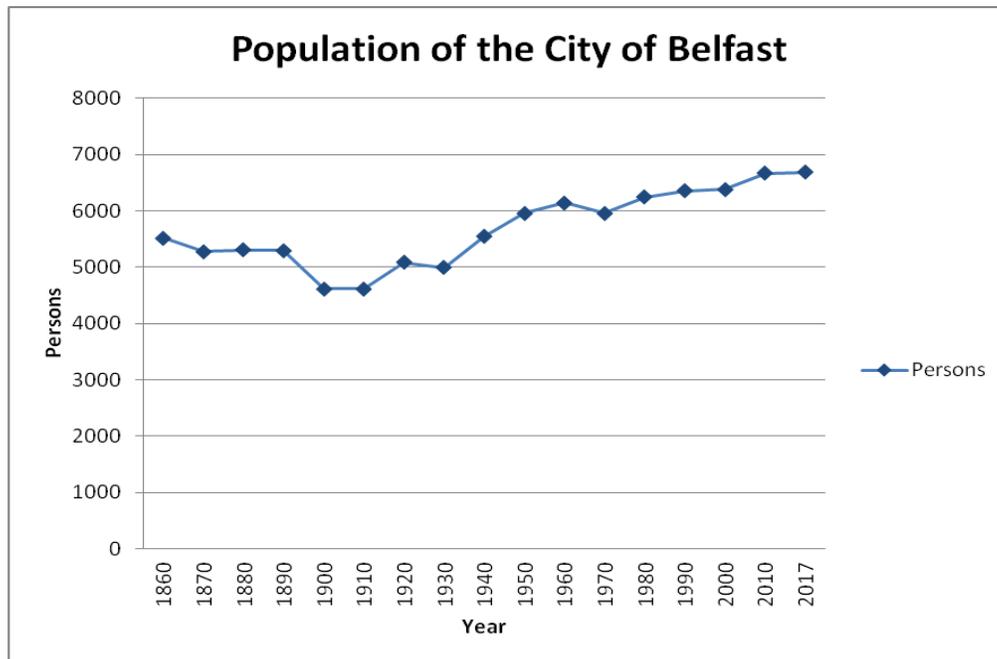
#### A. State Goals

*None required*

#### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1) *Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change?*

Belfast’s population growth has remained relatively consistent over the past 70 years (since 1950), with population ranging between 6,000 and 6,700. There have been periods of no growth and decline during the late 1800s, early 1900s, 1930s and in the 1960s. More recently, Belfast has experienced modest growth. In 2000, 6,381 people lived in Belfast, and according to the American Community Survey, by 2017 the population was estimated at 6,680 (See Table 6-1); a relatively small increase over seventeen years. Since 1960, Belfast’s growth rate has been outpaced by Waldo County, echoing trends of many regions, where outlying areas attract more new residents than do their service center communities.



Source: Census, ACS 5-year Estimate.

The proportion of school-aged children (5-17) has declined over the past two decades, as has the number of young adults (18- 44). The number of middle-aged persons (45-64) has increased, as has the number of retiree-aged persons (65+). Most of the growth seen in Belfast is the result of in-migration of new residents, rather than through natural increase (births to residents). See Tables 6-3a and 6-3b.

For planning purposes, Belfast's population is projected to decrease to 6,552 by the year 2036, as forecasted by the State Economist Office. By 2036, the State Planning Office forecasts that Waldo County will have 39,879 persons and the State's population will total 1,337,568, both increases from current population levels. See Table 6-4.

Changes in land use within Belfast including new year-round residential development will determine the actual population growth or decline in the City. The implications of changing population demographics include new demands for municipal services to support the aging population, workforce challenges, and funding. See the Public Facilities Chapter for more discussion and recommendations.

*(2) What will be the likely demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change and as a result of change among different age groups?*

If recent trends continue, the need for housing for the elderly, from independent living to assisted living facilities, will increase. The private sector has developed senior housing to meet the needs of more affluent retirees; the 2004 expansion of the Tall Pines facility is an example of such. Although no new construction of subsidized housing has occurred in Belfast since 2012, the City has pursued encouraging subsidized housing for low and moderate-income people. A 32 unit elderly housing project was constructed in 2002 by Volunteers of America, and in 2012, the 24 unit Goose River Elderly Housing project on Swan Lake. See the Housing Chapter for more information on housing trends and needs.

The demand for programs which service the aging population should increase with changes to the population. The presence of Waldo County General Hospital and its associated physicians is a critical resource for many residents, but particularly the elderly. See the Public Facilities Chapter for more information on services that are available through Waldo County General Hospital. See the Transportation Chapter for public transportation recommendations.

Although education comprises the largest single category of municipal expenditure, education is a function of the school system, and is not under the control of the municipal government. See the Public Facilities Chapter for recommendations on

education. See the Fiscal Capacity Chapter for a discussion on municipal revenues and expenditures, the local tax burden, and recommendations.

*(3) Does your community have a significant seasonal population, is the nature of that population changing? What is the community's relationship to and dependence on seasonal visitors?*

As a scenic, coastal community with a lively and historic downtown and active waterfront, Belfast experiences significant increases in seasonal populations and has hotels, motels and inns offering accommodations. Relative to some neighboring coastal communities, Belfast has a modest number of seasonal residences; about 216 in 2010. It is anticipated that this figure will increase in future years as Belfast has experienced an increase in commercial and seasonal visitor activity in the past 5 years. Also, new industrial/service developments such as the Front Street Shipyard may result in an increase in the number of seasonal residents. See the Housing Chapter for more information.

Belfast, like other communities, cannot predict how the tourist profile may change over the next ten years with any accuracy. That said, the number of seasonal events in Belfast has grown dramatically over the past 5+ years, as has the creative economy, which is perhaps best illustrated by the growth of Waterfall Arts, the Friday Night Artwalks, and the establishment of the Belfast Creative Coalition with the assistance of a Maine Arts Commission Grant. These developments, when coupled with our waterfront location, vibrant downtown, our location on Route 1, and our proximity to significant population centers in Maine all appear to be fueling an increase in short-term (1 day) and longer-term visitation by tourists. A very important component of such is the number of visitors from other Maine communities which like to visit Belfast.

Based mostly on anecdotal comment, it appears that quite a few residents of Belfast became interested in settling here after first visiting the community as a tourist. These residents are generally older individuals and families whose children have started families of their own. Empty nesters make up the largest group of new residents and also may continue to comprise a large portion of our tourism market.

In addition to accommodations, many restaurants and retail stores see much of their sales activity occur during the expanding tourist season and these businesses comprise a large portion of our local economy. Public services and finance and health care services, however, are the City's largest employment sectors. See the Economy Chapter for more information. Belfast is truly a destination, and the viability of this community depends upon maintaining and enhancing our offerings to seasonal visitors, while seeking at the same time to ensure that our traditional way of life and economy are not impinged or overrun; as has occurred in some of

Maine’s larger resort communities. See the Economy Chapter for discussion and recommendations.

- (4) *If your community is a service center or has a major employer, what additional effort does it have to make to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population?*

Belfast is a service center community and is the 'shire-town' and County seat for Waldo County. Many residents of surrounding towns frequently travel to Belfast to work, to recreate/socialize, to receive health care, to shop, and to use public services offered in Belfast that may not be offered in their town (e.g. library, swimming pool, dog park). Belfast's daytime population is much larger than its resident population, particularly because our 10 largest employers employ more than 3,500 persons. See the Economy Chapter for more information on employment, income and poverty within Belfast. Belfast, unlike many communities in the County, has its own police force and EMT/ambulance service, and its municipal offices are open five days/week. There also is an extensive sewer and water (fire protection) system. Collectively, these municipal services result in Belfast spending more per capita than neighboring communities. See the Public Facilities Chapter for more information. Belfast seeks to attract more jobs and businesses that benefit not only the City but also the region as a whole.

**C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

- (1) *The community’s Comprehensive Planning Population and Demographic Data Set (including relevant local, regional, and statewide data) prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.*

**Table 6-1 Total Population**

	Belfast	Waldo County	Maine
<b>1960</b>	6,140	22,632	939,265
<b>1970</b>	5,957	23,328	993,722
<b>1980</b>	6,243	28,414	1,125,043
<b>1990</b>	6,355	33,018	1,227,928
<b>2000</b>	6,381	36,280	1,274,923
<b>2010</b>	6,668	38,786	1,328,361
<b>2017</b>	6,680	39,280	1,330,158

<b>Change #</b>	540	16,648	360,893
<b>Change %</b>	8.1%	42.4%	28.2%

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 6-2 Average Household Size**

Average Household Size	1990	2000	2010	2017	Change #	Change %
Belfast	2.41	2.23	2.14	2.26	-0.15	-10.6%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 6-3a Belfast Age Cohort Breakdown**

Belfast Age Cohort Breakdown	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2017	% of Total	1990-2017 Change #
Under 5 years	415	6.5%	330	5.2%	370	5.5%	442	6.6%	27
5 to 9 years	395	6.2%	339	5.3%	387	5.8%	390	5.8%	5
10 to 14 years	471	7.4%	408	6.4%	355	5.3%	371	5.6%	-100
15 to 17 years	265	4.2%	256	4.0%	217	3.3%	145	2.2%	-120
18 and 19 years	157	2.5%	155	2.4%	118	1.8%	50	0.7%	-107
20 to 24 years	349	5.6%	325	5.1%	293	4.4%	299	4.5%	-50
25 to 29 years	356	5.6%	334	5.2%	358	5.4%	404	6.0%	48
30 to 34 years	436	6.9%	362	5.7%	350	5.2%	328	4.9%	-108
35 to 39 years	499	7.9%	384	6.0%	325	4.9%	384	5.7%	-115
40 to 44 years	491	7.7%	465	7.3%	395	5.9%	306	4.6%	-185
45 to 49 years	347	5.5%	539	8.4%	426	6.4%	400	6.0%	53
50 to 54 years	307	4.8%	513	8.0%	512	7.7%	265	4.0%	-42
55 to 59 years	336	5.3%	381	6.0%	547	8.2%	546	8.2%	210
60 to 64 years	351	5.5%	311	4.9%	553	8.3%	629	9.4%	278
65 to 69 years	345	5.4%	318	5.0%	417	6.3%	731	10.9%	386
70 to 74 years	267	4.2%	296	4.6%	284	4.3%	370	5.5%	103
75 to 79 years	255	4.0%	264	4.1%	261	3.9%	251	3.8%	-4
80 to 84 years	173	2.7%	183	2.9%	205	3.1%	195	2.9%	22
85 years and over	140	2.2%	218	3.4%	295	4.4%	174	2.9%	34
Total	6,355	100.0%	6,381	100%	6,668	100%	6,680	100%	325

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 6-3b Belfast Summarized Age Cohort Breakdown**

Belfast Summarized Age Cohort Breakdown	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2017	% of Total	1990-2017 Change #
0-19 years	1,703	26.8%	1,488	23.3%	1,447	21.7%	1,398	20.9%	-305
20-44 years	2,131	33.5%	1,870	29.3%	1,721	25.8%	1,721	25.7%	-410
45-64 years	1,341	21.1%	1,744	27.3%	2,038	30.6%	1,840	27.4%	499
65+ years	1,180	18.6%	1,279	20.0%	1,462	21.9%	1,721	26%	541
Total	6,355	100%	6,381	100%	6,668	100%	6,680	100%	325
Median Age	38.4	--	43.3	--	46.9	--	46.8	--	8.4

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 6-4 Projected Population**

Projected Population	Forecast Year 2036
Belfast	6,552
Waldo County	39,879
Maine	1,337,568

Source: Maine State Planning Office, 2016

**Table 6-5 Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment Persons 25 Years and Over	1990	2000	2009	2017
<b>% High School Graduate or Higher</b>				
Belfast	74.0%	82.0%	89.2%	95.2%
Waldo County	77.4%	84.6%	90.0%	92.9%
Maine	78.8%	85.4%	89.4%	92.1%
<b>% Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>				
Belfast	19.1%	29.1%	20.5%	42.6%
Waldo County	16.8%	22.3%	21.3%	30.3%
Maine	18.8%	22.9%	26.1%	30.3%

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 6-6 Belfast Race, Hispanic origin and Gender**

Belfast Race, Hispanic origin and Gender	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2017	% of Total	1990-2017 Change #
White	6,312	99.3%	6,225	97.6%	6,449	96.7%	6,589	98.6%	277
Black or African American	7	0.1%	18	0.3%	32	0.5%	81	1.2%	74
American Indian, Alaskan Native	22	0.3%	17	0.3%	30	0.4%	43	0.6%	21
Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	0.2%	19	0.3%	27	0.4%	8	0.1%	-2
Other race	4	0.1%	17	0.3%	13	0.2%	10	0.1%	6
Two or more races	NA	--	85	1.3%	117	1.8%	51	0.7%	NA
Total	6,355	100%	6,381	100%	6,668	100%	6,680	100%	325
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	27	0.4%	44	0.7%	78	1.2%	113	1.7%	86
Female (all races)	3,443	54.2%	3,405	53.4%	3,589	53.8%	3,719	55.7%	276
Male (all races)	2,912	45.8%	2,976	46.6%	3,079	46.2%	2,961	54.3%	49

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 6-7 Median Household Income**

Median Household Income	2000	2009	2017	Change #	Change %
Belfast	\$32,400	\$37,553	\$59,260	\$26,860	82.9%
Waldo County	\$33,986	\$41,697	\$50,162	\$16,176	47.5%
Maine	\$37,240	\$46,541	\$53,024	\$ 15,784	42.3%

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate

**Table 6-8 Percent of Households below Poverty**

<b>% of Households Below Poverty Level</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2017</b>
Belfast	13.2%	20.0%	15.1%
Waldo County	14.2%	15.1%	13.1%
Maine	11.5%	12.8%	11.1%

Source: Census, Rounded. ACS 5-year Estimate

*Population change (births and deaths):*

Births to Belfast residents between 2011 and 2018 totaled 1,377, while deaths totaled 1,286. Natural change (births minus deaths) accounted for a net increase of 91 persons. Accordingly, recent modest population gains are the result of people moving into Belfast, in addition to births to Belfast residents.

According to the 2010 Census, 84.8% of Belfast residents lived in the same house in 2009 as they did in 2005. That statistic was 87.2% for Waldo County residents and 85.6% for Maine residents.

*Seasonal population and anticipated trends:*

No State or federal statistics on seasonal population for Belfast are available. Based upon 216 seasonal/recreational housing units, as reported in the 2010 Census, and estimating non-resident household size at 2.26 persons, about 488 persons may stay in seasonal housing in Belfast. Assuming household size stays consistent, by 2036 and around 488 persons may stay in seasonal housing in Belfast, when combined with the year-round population forecast of 6,552 people, in 2036 Belfast may total 7,040 persons in season for extended stays. Shorter-term visitors are served by hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, and the like, with approximately 280 rooms/suites/cottages available, for an estimated capacity of 700 persons. That figure is likely to increase with the expansion of these facilities and with new facilities, some of which involve the conversions of the larger historic single-family homes to inns.

**D. Policies**

*None Required*

**E. Strategies**

*None Required*

## SECTION 3.7 ECONOMY

### Introduction

This chapter identifies and analyzes the local and regional economy, including employment sectors, businesses, employment rates, and retail sales. The goal of this chapter is to develop policies that expand the City's tax base, improve job opportunities for residents needing employment, and encourage overall economic well-being.

### A. State Goals

- (1). *Plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*
- (2). *Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1). *Where does the local population work and how does the community fit into the economic region (labor market area)?*

Belfast is the principal service center community for the labor market area and for Waldo County. Most of the region's jobs are located in Belfast. Accordingly, commute times for Belfast residents are noticeably lower than for the County as a whole, see Table 2-8a. The American Community Survey estimated in 2017 that about 40% of the City's labor force worked in management, professional, and related occupations. About one-fourth worked in sales and office occupations. The third largest category, service occupations, employed 18.2% of the population. See Tables 2-6, 2-8b and 2-8c.

- (2). *Who are the major employers in the region and what is their outlook for the future?*

In 2019, athenahealth remained the largest employer in Belfast with between 800-900 employees. Bank of America and Waldo County Healthcare, Inc. are the second largest employers in the City, with between 700-800 employees each.

Waldo County Healthcare, Inc., which operates Waldo County General Hospital, has remained a larger employer over the years and has invested in new office buildings and renovations. Medical and related occupations have remained strong, and are likely to increase with the aging of the City's population.

Several major new employers have decided to locate to Belfast in the last decade. These include: OnProcess Technology, a technology optimization business which now employs around 150-250 persons and the Front Street Shipyard, a boat repair, boat retrofit, boat storage and boat building business which purchased and redeveloped the former Stinson Seafoods site in 2011. Front Street Shipyard now employs between 50-150 persons. These new enterprises and several long-standing significant employers; Ducktrap River of Maine (100-249 employees), Mathew Brothers Company (100-249 employees), Penobscot McCrum (100-249 employees), and government services such as RSU 71, the City, and the County of Waldo; provide a strong major employer base for the community and region.

- (3). *Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?*

The Belfast economy, like most in the State, has experienced decreasing levels of unemployment since 2013. The rate of unemployment in the Belfast Labor Market area has been slightly less than in the State. The following table identifies the size of labor force, the number employed, the number unemployed, the unemployment rate for Belfast Labor Market, and the unemployment rate for the State. Overall, the size of the labor force in the Belfast Labor Market has grown by 195 workers in the past 6 years and the number of people employed in 2018 increased by 641 from 2013.

**Table 2-1 Unemployment and Work Force**

Date-3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Work Force – Belfast LMA	Employed – Belfast LMA	Unemployed – Belfast LMA	Unemployment Rate – Belfast LMA	Unemployment Rate - State
2018	14,682	14,269	413	2.9%	3.5%
2017	14,653	14,237	416	2.8%	3.3%
2016	14,562	14,072	490	3.4%	3.7%
2015	14,267	13,719	548	3.8%	4%
2014	14,369	13,645	724	5.0%	5.3%
2013	14,487	13,628	859	5.9%	6.3%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

The Belfast economy experienced a tremendous loss in 2005 when MBNA sold its operations to Bank of America. MBNA, more than any other employer, helped pull Belfast out of the economic malaise it suffered in the late 1980's when several major processing plants closed in Belfast. From 1995 to 2005 MBNA quickly grew into employing nearly 2400 persons in Belfast, the largest

of MBNA's operations in Maine. Fortunately, Bank of America remains a strong employer (about 700-800 employees). In late 2007 athenahealth purchased the former phase I MBNA campus and now employs about 800-900 people with similar skills to the former MBNA employees. This provided employment opportunities for some who lost positions when MBNA left. MBNA, Bank of America, and athenahealth have resulted in a significant increase in the amount of professional office and service employment sectors in Belfast.

Belfast has a diverse economy and its many employers offer employment opportunities for persons who are highly skilled to positions which require lesser skills. On the whole, employment opportunities in Belfast, like most areas of the State and country are requiring more specialized skills and greater educational training.

See the Housing Chapter for more information, including a discussion on business, industrial and residential property values.

- (4). *Does the community have defined priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans?*

The City seeks to maintain and enhance a diversified economic base, with expanding job opportunities in various sectors, with emphasis on employing local residents, graduates of local schools, and attracting new working-aged residents to the City and region. Diversity in employment opportunities could protect the city from downturns in specific sectors, as seen in the past with food processing and more recently with finance. Likewise, the City believes that residents should have access to a wide range of retail stores and services. Accordingly, the City has and will continue to seek to attract new businesses that can serve resident needs.

Despite setbacks associated with the recession that began in 2007 – 2008, the City is greatly encouraged by the development of several new significant employers in the past 10+ years; OnProcess Technology, athenahealth, and Front Street Shipyard. In addition, since 2014, 53 new businesses have opened in the downtown area; including restaurants, retail establishments, and several offices and service businesses. While most of these businesses have only several employees, collectively, they represent a major addition to the workforce. Continuing, Belfast's Creative Economy, the importance of which was highlighted in the 2006 Creating Vibrancy Report, is growing, which is consistent with the City's goal to encourage entrepreneurial development and the health of the downtown area.

- (5) *If there is a traditional downtown in the community, is it deteriorating or thriving? How is this affecting the community? How does the community use its unique assets such as recreational opportunities, historic architecture, civic events, etc. for economic growth?*

Belfast's traditional downtown, which is located adjacent to its working waterfront, has experienced significant additional business development in recent years. Few buildings, the upper floors as well as the lower floors, remain unoccupied. Upper floor development includes both residential apartments and professional office and service businesses. The amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic has increased, and many believe that Belfast is experiencing a parking problem in the downtown --- too much demand for too few spaces.

Growth in the downtown and the community's perception of the downtown and waterfront area has been spurred by the Front Street Shipyard's redevelopment of the former Stinson Seafoods property; a development which has had a transformative impact on the working waterfront and which has attracted additional business to the downtown. In addition, the community's decision to establish Our Town Belfast (Main Street program) has provided an invaluable resource to help organize downtown merchants and encourage additional events in Belfast. Further, the Belfast Creative Coalition, Waterfall Arts and the Friday Night Art Walks have provided support to the art community, encouraged more visitor traffic and generated excitement. Several of the larger new employers in the City, such as athenahealth and Front Street Shipyard, have cited the services and character of the downtown as one of the key reasons they chose to come to Belfast.

Belfast's downtown features many historic structures that are 100+ years old; most of which contribute greatly to the downtown's character. Downtown property owners and business owners have frequently had to adapt to shifting economic realities, such as in the 1960's when the Route 1 by-pass was constructed, and again in the 1980's when many of the manufacturing plants in the downtown permanently closed. At present, the downtown features a mix of traditional stores, such as a hardware store and a shoe store, as well as specialty shops, service businesses, a growing number and variety of eating establishments, and residential units (upper floors) for persons who want to live in the downtown. Downtown Belfast is a vibrant center for the City and the region.

- (5). *Are natural resource-based industries (including fishing, farming, or forestry) important in the community and, if so, are they growing or declining? What steps has the community taken to support these industries?*

Less than 2% of Belfast's residents currently work in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations. It remains important, nevertheless, that the City and region's environment be protected in order to allow a continuation of fishing and other marine based activities. Likewise, opportunities for forestry activities, as a way to augment the income of residents, must be done in a manner that sustains the forestry resources for future generations. Improper timber harvesting can negatively impact existing and prospective residents, through increased pollution runoff, degradation of groundwater drinking supplies and soil erosion. The City and area also appears to be experiencing a growing interest in agricultural operations, mostly small and/or specialized farms. Chase's Daily, a downtown restaurant, is an example of a business which uses its agricultural fields in Freedom, Maine for the menu and goods that they sell in downtown Belfast. See the Natural Resources Chapter for more information. Crucially, the tourism based economy could be threatened by degradation of our environment.

- (6). *Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, does the community want to foster this industry and what steps can it take to strengthen tourism?*

Tourism is an important part of our economy. Although less prominent than seen in communities to our south like Camden, tourism is a sector with promise for growth. Most believe that the amount of tourism in the community has grown significantly in the past decade, and that the community is poised to experience additional growth in the next 5 years and beyond. The City has worked with and funded the Chamber of Commerce and Our Town Belfast to enhance tourist-based businesses. Annual events and festivals are held to attract tourists and promote the creative economy, and the number of local events is growing. The development of the Front Street Shipyard, the collective efforts to focus on the Arts, and City's efforts to improve its downtown infrastructure, such as the reconstruction of the Armistice Bridge in 2006 and construction of the Belfast Harbor Walk in 2013, all contribute to the health of the tourism market. Continuing, Belfast is one of the top 10 ports in Maine for the number of cruise ship visitors per year, and we are experiencing an increasing amount of bicycle related tourism. Belfast has worked hard to establish a good environment for both residents and tourists and the community's efforts appear to be yielding results. Several tourism enhancing strategies are included in this plan.

- (7). *What role do/should home occupations play in the community, if any?*

Home occupations are allowed in all residential districts; in recognition of the value such businesses have in our local and regional economy. The adopted Future Land Use Plan proposes revisions to current standards governing home occupations in rural areas, with the intent of creating more opportunities for

home based businesses. Working from home for one's self or telecommuting to save transportation costs, is becoming increasingly popular. In 2017, about 8.3% of Belfast's resident labor force worked at home. Residents are more likely to remain in our community if the City affords them the opportunity to earn a better living through their own ingenuity. At the same time, City land use code provisions seek to protect the residential character of neighborhoods, by limiting those activities that could cause a nuisance or threaten the environment, and so would be better located in industrial and commercial districts.

- (8). *Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?*

The City has a business park and districts zoned for commercial, industrial uses, and aviation uses (Belfast Municipal Airport). Performance standards and design guidelines are in place as well, and include buffering for adjacent residential uses. The City has established a contract rezoning process to consider certain development applications. See the Land Use Chapter for more information and for recommendations.

- (9). *What types of public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, are needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?*

Public and private provision of sewer and water are described in the Public Facilities Chapter and are mapped. Opportunities for businesses to connect to these and other infrastructure like broadband (DSL, T1, wireless, and cable) and three-phase power are available in the commercial and industrial districts accessing Routes 1 and 3. Outside of these areas, broadband service is limited and can affect opportunities for business activity and home occupations that require internet connectivity. The City's intent is to use existing areas which feature public sewer and water as its prime growth areas to support non-residential development. To date, most larger employers have located in areas with existing services and public infrastructure. The City believes that modern facilities are available for new and expanding businesses, and are estimated to meet the need of the planning period (10 years) of this comprehensive plan as well as for future years. Belfast far surpasses its neighbors in the provision of public facilities.

**C. Conditions and Trends**

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1). The community's Comprehensive Planning Economic Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.

**Table 2-2 Median Household Income**

Median Household Income	1999	2010	2017	Change %
Belfast	\$32,400	\$40,137	\$59,260	82.9%
Waldo County	\$33,986	\$41,524	\$50,162	47.5%
Maine	\$37,240	\$45,695	\$53,024	42.3%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-3 Percentages of Families below Poverty Level**

% of Families Below Poverty Level	1999	2010	2017
Belfast	10.0%	12%	11.1%
Waldo County	10.9%	11.6%	9.6%
Maine	7.8%	7.9%	8.4%

Source: Census, Claritas, Inc. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-5 Percentages of Individuals below Poverty Level**

% of Individuals Below Poverty Level	1999	2010	2017	Change %
Belfast	13.2%	NA	15.1%	14.3%
Waldo County	12.2%	12.4%	14.3%	17.2%
Maine	9.9%	10.7%	12.9%	30.3%

Source: Census, Claritas, Inc. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-5 80% Median Household Income**

80% Median Household Income (Low Income Category)	1999	2008 est.	2017	Change %
Belfast	\$25,920	\$32,494	\$47,408	82.9%
Waldo County	\$27,189	\$34,009	\$40,129	47.6%

Maine	\$29,792	\$36,041	\$42,419	42.3%
-------	----------	----------	----------	-------

Source: Census, Claritas, Inc. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-6 Belfast Occupation Type**

Belfast Occupation Type	2000		2010		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	988	33.2%	813	25.6%	1,157	40.9%
Service Occupations	410	13.8%	745	23.4%	515	18.2%
Sales and office occupations	888	29.8%	743	23.4%	737	26%
Construction, extraction, and natural resource	314	10.5%	502	15.8%	224	7.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	379	12.7%	377	11.9%	199	7%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-7 Belfast Means of Transportation to Work**

Belfast Means of Transportation to Work	2000		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Car, truck, or van; drove alone	2,244	77.8%	2,020	73.7%
Car, truck, or van; carpooled	295	10.2%	309	11.3%
Public transportation	7	0.2%	0	0%
Motorcycle	0	0.0%	--	--
Bicycle	21	0.7%	--	--
Walked	135	4.7%	130	4.7%
Other means	6	0.2%	55	2%
Worked at home	176	6.1%	227	8.3%
Total	2,884	100.0%	2,741	100%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-8a Commute Times**

Commute Times (In Minutes)	1980	1990	2000	2017	Change %
Belfast	12.7	16.3	20.2	17.9	59.1%
Waldo County	21.1	23.5	26.4	26.4	25.1%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-8b Communities in which Belfast Residents Worked**

Top 10 Communities in which Belfast Residents Worked (2014)	Persons	Percent
Belfast	1,218	49.1%
Bangor	122	4.9%
Augusta	80	3.2%
Camden	59	2.4%
Rockland	59	2.4%
Rockport	53	2.1%
Searsport	49	2.0%
Ellsworth	38	1.5%
Brunswick	33	1.3%
Portland	33	1.3%
Other Areas	735	28.80%
Total	2,479	100.00%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-8c Communities with Residents who Worked in Belfast**

Top 10 Communities with Residents who worked in Belfast (2014)	Persons	Percent
Belfast	1,218	18.60%
Searsport	292	4.50%
Swanville	190	2.90%
Lincolnton	164	2.50%
Stockton Springs	160	2.40%
Brooks	153	2.30%
Searsmont	147	2.30%
Northport	129	2.00%
Camden	127	1.90%
Bangor	122	1.90%
Other Areas	3,829	58.70%
Total	6,531	100.00%

Source: Census. ACS 5-year Estimate.

**Table 2-9 Unemployment Rate**

Unemployment Rate	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2018	Change %
Belfast	5.7%	5.3%	4.9%	5.0%	5.6%	3.0%	-48%
Belfast LMA	5.6%	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%	5.6%	2.7%	-52%
Maine	5.0%	4.6%	4.8%	4.6%	4.7%	2.9%	-42%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Note: Belfast LMA includes the municipalities of Belfast, Belmont, Brooks, Freedom, Islesboro, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Morrill, Northport, Searsport, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Swanville, Thorndike, Unity, and Waldo.

- (2). *A brief historical perspective on how and why the current economy of the community and region developed.*

Belfast has been and remains the largest service center community in Waldo County. Historically, residents of surrounding communities have chosen to work and shop in Belfast. That trend continues. The market for goods and services offered in Belfast extends well beyond the City’s borders and its population. Belfast’s economy has weathered the rise and fall of several once significant sectors, from maritime activities, fishing, shipbuilding, to food processing, and most recently financial services. Tourism including most prominently accommodations, retail stores, and to a lesser but growing extent, artisan crafts and fine arts, has had a steadily increasing importance to the local and regional economy. With the aging of Belfast’s long-time and new residents, the provision of medical and social services continues to grow as well.

- (3). *A list of local and regional economic development plans developed over the past five years, which include the community.*
  - Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: The economic impact of nonprofit arts & cultural organizations & their audiences in the Greater Belfast Area, ME. 2017. *Americans for the Arts.*
  - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. 2016. Eastern Maine Development Corporation.

- (4). *A description of the major employers in the community and labor market area.*

In 2019 athenahealth was the largest employer in Belfast and Waldo County.

The table below identifies the diversity of employment in Belfast, with several manufacturers, the school district, and a retailer (Hannaford) all having more than 100 employees. Overall, there are more jobs available in Belfast than there are persons over 18 years of age who are in the workforce; Belfast is a net importer of jobs. Most employers located outside of Belfast but within the Belfast labor market area operate businesses that employ less than 100 persons. The following table lists major employers in Belfast and in the labor market area.

**Table 2-10 Major Employers in the Belfast Labor Market Area**

<b>Belfast Labor Market Area Major Employers with 50+ Employees Each</b>				
<b>(Sorted by Size, then by Name)</b>				
<b>Company/Organization Name</b>	<b>Partial Address</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Employees</b>
athenahealth	Hatley Rd	Belfast	Health Services	800-900
Bank of America	Schoodic Dr	Belfast	Finance	700-800
Waldo County Healthcare, Inc.	Northport Ave	Belfast	Hospital	700-800
Pride Manufacturing Co LLC	10 N Main St	Burnham	Furniture-Manufacturers	250-499
RSU #71	173 Lincolnville Ave	Belfast	Schools	200-300
OnProcess Technology	Schoodic Dr	Belfast	Technology	150-250
City of Belfast	Church Street	Belfast	Municipal	150-250
Hannaford Supermarket & Phrmcy	Lincolnville Ave	Belfast	Grocery	100-249
Mathews Brothers Co.	Footbridge Rd	Belfast	Millwork	100-249
Ducktrap River of Maine	Little River Dr	Belfast	Seafood-wholesale	100-249
Penobscot McCrum, LLC	Pierce Street	Belfast	Manufacturing	100-249
Tall Pines	Martin Ln	Belfast	Nursing & Convalescent Homes	100-249
Genesis Health Care, LLC	2 Footbridge Rd	Belfast	Health Services	100-249
Hamilton Marine	US 1	Searsport	Marine equipment - supplies	100-249

Hidden Valley Camp	161 Hidden Valley Rd	Montville	Camps	100-249
Harbor Hill Ctr	Footbridge Road	Belfast	Nursing care	100-249
Robbins Lumber, Inc.	NA	Searsmont	Lumber	100-249
Unity College	Ghent Rd	Unity	Education	100-249
Belfast Co-op	High St	Belfast	Grocery	50-150
Front Street Shipyard	Front Street	Belfast	Boat Repair & Bldg	50-150
Belfast Area High School	Waldo Ave	Belfast	Education	50-99
Fair Haven Camps	81 W Fairhaven Ln	Brooks	Campgrounds	50-99
GAC Chemical Corp	Mack Point	Searsport	Chemicals-industrial	50-99
Irving Oil	Station Ave	Searsport	Oils-petroleum	50-99
Lane Construction Corp	190 Swan Lake Rd	Belfast	General Contractors	50-99
Leroy H Smith School	319 S Main Street	Winterport	Schools	50-99
Mt View High School	Mount View Rd	Thorndike	Education	50-99
Renys Department Store	Belfast Plz	Belfast	Retail	50-99
Sweetser	Sweetser Dr	Swanville	Social services	50-99
Troy Howard Middle School	Lincolnville Ave	Belfast	Education	50-99
Viking Lumber, Inc.	Searsport Ave	Belfast	Construction	50-99
Sequel Care of Maine	321 W Main St	Searsport	Counseling Services	50-99
Tarratine Golf Club	241 Golf Club Rd	Islesboro	Golf Courses	50-99
Xact Telesolutions	4 Clifford Cmns	Unity	Telephone Companies	50-99

Source: Maine Department of Labor, info USA 2019.

Note: Belfast LMA includes the municipalities of Belfast, Belmont, Brooks, Freedom, Islesboro, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Morrill, Northport, Searsmont, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Swanville, Thorndike, Unity, and Waldo.

- (5). A description of retail stores by type and how the composition has changed over past five or ten years.

Taxable sales are one of the few available indicators of the actual size, growth, and retail economic character of a region. Table 2-1 shows total taxable retail sales for Belfast for the third quarter of several years. All figures are in real dollars, not adjusted for inflation. From 2011-2016, total taxable sales in Belfast increased by 23.7%. The largest sector was Building Supply, comprising almost 20.3% of total taxable sales in 2016. This sector saw an increase of almost 33% during this six-year period. Percentagewise, Food Stores had the largest increase in sales, while Other Retail had the smallest increase. In 2016 Belfast's total retail sales comprised more than 82% of the total retail sales of Waldo County. Categories are defined after Table 2-13.

**Table 2-11 Belfast Retail Sales**

Belfast Retail Sales: 2011-2016							
Categories	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change %
Business Operating	\$4,413,021	\$4,540,110	\$5,078,216	\$5,239,223	\$5,098,778	\$5,656,717	28.1%
Bldg. Supply	\$25,046,622	\$27,341,668	\$26,534,210	\$30,050,157	\$31,943,869	\$33,239,741	32.7%
Food Store	\$21,952,177	\$23,065,734	\$23,724,923	\$24,612,652	\$25,267,016	\$32,263,631	46.9%
General Mdse.	\$19,031,206	\$19,034,959	\$19,201,905	\$19,507,721	\$19,911,327	\$20,494,165	7.6%
Other Retail	\$13,195,140	\$13,829,856	\$13,688,196	\$13,522,527	\$13,935,968	\$14,657,589	11%
Auto Transportation	\$25,265,575	\$25,154,649	\$27,816,221	\$29,390,461	\$30,701,843	\$29,411,296	16.4%
Restaurant	\$18,237,873	\$20,307,316	\$21,264,981	\$21,087,681	\$20,226,043	\$21,736,843	19.1%
Lodging	\$4,496,654	\$4,891,625	\$5,046,875	\$5,064,444	\$5,593,684	\$5,502,670	22.3%
Total	\$131,638,268	\$138,165,917	\$142,355,527	\$148,474,866	\$152,678,528	\$162,962,652	23.7%
Of which: <i>Consumer Retail Sales</i>	\$127,225,247	\$133,625,807	\$137,277,311	\$143,235,643	\$147,579,750	\$157,305,935	23.6%

Source: State Economist 2016

Notes: See Category descriptions below Table 2-13

**Table 2-12 Belfast Taxable Retail Sales**

Taxable Retail Sales - Quarterly (Thousands of \$)	2013-Q3	2014-Q3	2015-Q3	2016-Q3	2017-Q3	2018-Q3
<b>Belfast, Maine</b>						
Personal	\$51,389.40	\$53,605.90	\$55,296.40	\$58,322.80	\$58,915.70	\$63,864.10
Business Op	\$2,028.43	\$2,053.61	\$1,933.05	\$2,105.39	\$2,144.39	\$2,704.34
Building	\$9,113.09	\$10,328.50	\$10,337.00	\$10,403.00	\$11,100.20	\$1,4252.00
Food Store	\$9,003.95	\$9,138.18	\$9,124.80	\$11,608.00	\$11,247.10	\$11,687.50
General	\$5,707.67	\$6,140.89	\$6,245.74	\$6,326.47	\$6,750.07	\$7,009.24
Other	\$5,397.60	\$5,015.19	\$5,308.13	\$5,501.07	\$6,035.38	\$5,931.63
Auto Trans	\$8,859.26	\$9,258.01	\$10,287.30	\$9,597.99	\$8,824.81	\$9,246.91
Restaurant	\$8,526.10	\$9,030.60	\$8,597.99	\$9,386.57	\$9,468.59	\$10,186.90
Lodging	\$4,781.78	\$4,694.57	\$5,395.46	\$5,499.68	\$5,489.56	\$5,519.90
Rest and Lodg	\$13,307.90	\$13,725.20	\$13,993.40	\$14,886.30	\$14,958.10	\$15,706.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$118,115.00</b>	<b>\$122,991.00</b>	<b>\$126,519.00</b>	<b>\$133,637.00</b>	<b>\$134,934.00</b>	<b>\$146,139.00</b>

Source: State Economist 2018

Table 2-13 shows total taxable sales for Waldo County. From 2011 to 2016, total taxable sales in Waldo County increased by approximately 25%. The sectors that saw the largest change were “Food Store” and “Lodging”. These sectors saw an increase of almost 39% each during this six-year period. Percentagewise, Business Operating had the smallest increase in sales.

**Table 2-13 Waldo County Retail Sales**

Waldo County Retail Sales: 2011-2016							
Categories	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change %
Business Operating	\$8,130,000	\$7,926,000	\$8,958,000	\$8,580,000	\$8,122,000	\$8,417,000	3.5%
Bldg. Supply	\$27,854,000	\$30,239,000	\$29,503,000	\$34,079,000	\$35,291,000	\$36,812,000	32.16%
Food Store	\$28,467,000	\$29,815,000	\$31,006,000	\$31,907,000	\$31,996,000	\$39,533,000	38.87%
General Mdse.	\$19,896,000	\$20,015,000	\$20,309,000	\$21,335,000	\$21,886,000	\$22,738,000	14.29%
Other Retail	\$15,326,000	\$16,078,000	\$16,758,000	\$16,765,000	\$17,342,000	\$18,339,000	19.66%
Auto Transportation	\$29,421,000	\$29,539,000	\$32,439,000	\$34,433,000	\$36,292,000	\$35,511,000	20.70%
Restaurant	\$21,363,000	\$23,169,000	\$24,303,000	\$24,474,000	\$23,745,000	\$25,837,000	20.94%
Lodging	\$7,152,000	\$7,895,000	\$8,168,000	\$8,460,000	\$9,673,000	\$9,936,000	38.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$157,609,000</b>	<b>\$164,676,000</b>	<b>\$171,445,000</b>	<b>\$180,034,000</b>	<b>\$184,347,000</b>	<b>\$197,123,000</b>	<b>25.07%</b>
Of which: <i>Consumer Retail Sales</i>	<i>\$149,480,000</i>	<i>\$156,750,000</i>	<i>\$162,487,000</i>	<i>\$171,454,000</i>	<i>\$176,225,000</i>	<i>\$188,706,000</i>	<i>26.24%</i>

Source: State Economist 2016

Note: In Maine’s sales tax system, codings are by store type, not product. Thus, each store is coded into one of the store-type groups below depending on its

predominant product; i.e., furniture sold by a furniture store will be included in General Merchandise sales while furniture sold by a hardware store will be included in Building Supply sales.

- Consumer Retail Sales: Total taxable retail sales to consumers
- Total Retail Sales: Includes Consumer Retail Sales plus special types of sales and rentals to businesses where the tax is paid directly by the buyer (such as commercial or industrial heating oil purchases)
- Building Supply: Durable Equipment Sales, Contractors' Sales, Hardware Stores and Lumber Yards.
- Food Stores: All food stores from large supermarkets to small corner food stores. The values here are snacks and non-food items only, since food intended for home consumption is not taxed.
- General Merchandise: In this sales group are stores carrying product lines generally carried in large department stores. It includes clothing, furniture, shoes, radio-TV., household durable goods, home furnishings, etc.
- Other Retail: This group includes a wide selection of taxable sales not covered elsewhere. Examples are dry goods stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, sporting goods stores, antique dealers, morticians, book stores, photo supply stores, gift shops, etc.
- Auto: This sales group includes all transportation related retail outlets. Included are auto dealers, auto parts, aircraft dealers, motorboat dealers, automobile rental, etc.
- Restaurant/Lodging: All stores selling prepared food for immediate consumption.
- The Lodging group includes only rentals tax.

(6). *A description of any economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts or Pine Tree Zones, in the community.*

Belfast, in 2006, designated a Downtown/Waterfront TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District. Taxes assessed above the figure set on the date that the TIF was established can be used for improvements in this District, including infrastructure enhancements that will make the area more attractive for existing and new development, and will bring more consumers to the downtown. When the TIF was first established the City anticipated that the Belfast Bridge, LLC redevelopment project proposed for the former Stinson Seafoods site would generate considerable annual revenues to the TIF. Unfortunately, this project was unsuccessful and few dollars flowed into the TIF for its first 5 years. However, Front Street Shipyard's development of the same former Stinson Seafood's' site began generating revenues to the TIF in 2011. The City has used some of these new revenues to construct the Harbor Walk and other downtown improvements.

The City also established the Northport Avenue TIF district in 2005, mostly so the City could obtain revenues to pay the cost of a sewer extension to the Mathew Brothers manufacturing plant on Perkins Road; an approach which helped the company expand.

#### **D. Policies**

- (1). To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.*
- (2). To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.*
- (3). To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.*

### **ORGANIZATION**

**Goal: To provide an effective local and regional organizational structure to address economic development concerns.**

#### **Policies:**

- 1) Identify and work with appropriate organizations and interests to promote economic development in Belfast.
- 2) Promote and participate in the establishment and ongoing operations of a regional organization to address economic development concerns.

#### **Actions:**

- 1) Continue to participate in local, regional and state-wide efforts to address economic development concerns in Belfast. Local efforts include working with the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, Our Town Belfast (Belfast Main Street program) and Waterfall Arts, regional efforts are those such as the Midcoast Regional Planning Commission, and state-wide efforts are those such as the Maine Community Foundation.
- 2) Ensure City efforts to address economic development issues include persons who are actively involved in business enterprises and that their ideas and knowledge are sought in examining how the City should proceed.
- 3) The City should annually commit adequate resources to implement its preferred approaches to address economic development concerns. The Council decision to hire an economic development director in 2010 and the ongoing funding of this position is critical to the City's economic development efforts.

- 4) The City should identify and actively pursue potential state and federal grant programs, such as Community Development Block Grants, to address its economic development priorities.
- 5) The City should explore and if appropriate implement programs which can serve as good tools in encouraging economic development. The City's past decision to participate in the Midcoast Pine Tree Zone and the use of Tax Increment Financing are examples of such.

### **INDUSTRIAL & JOB CREATION DEVELOPMENT**

**Goal: Encourage the expansion of existing industrial/job intensive uses and provide opportunities for the attracting new industrial/job intensive development.**

Policies:

- 1) Actively pursue attracting 'green industry' development to Belfast (reference definition of 'green industry' below).
- 2) Ensure Belfast has sufficient areas that have needed infrastructure to support industrial and job intensive uses.

Actions:

- 1) Promote and encourage use of the Belfast Business Park for appropriate development.
- 2) Analyze the desirability and feasibility of creating an expanded or new business park to meet the near-term and long-term needs for economic development in Belfast.
- 3) Ensure the City has adequate 'tools' available so it can compete for economic development activities. Such tools include but are not necessarily limited to: public infrastructure, tax increment financing, Pine Tree Zone benefits, and such.
- 4) Target attracting Green Industry to Belfast. Green Industry can include businesses that:
  - are highly energy efficient
  - produce in a sustainable manner, with no/minimal pollution
  - manufacture components for the production of renewable energy\*, improving energy efficiency, electric or zero-emission vehicles, etc.
  - produce and/or use renewable energy\*

\* Note: Renewable energy is defined by leading climate and energy experts to include solar, wind, tidal, ocean current, and geothermal. These experts do not include biofuels, wood, and similar fuels in their definition of renewable energy. These so-called renewables consume resources that are used for other purposes, deplete soils, pollute, and lead to the elimination of more natural habitat, deforestation, including wetlands. They are already causing

shortages in other uses [and will cause more], and resultant price rises in other products. They also use much energy to produce them [for ethanol, more energy is used to create it than derived from it], they create other forms of pollution [wood smoke is carcinogenic and produces more greenhouse gases], and the focus on these pseudo-solutions serve to distract from the need to convert our planet to forms of energy that will sustain us into the future [as well as combat climate change].

- 5) Ensure there is an adequate amount of privately owned land which can be used for industrial and intensive job creation activities.
  - 6) Ensure that the working waterfront safeguards opportunities for marine oriented development, including but not limited to boat building, boat storage and repair.
- Zoning and land use regulations that the City adopts to implement its future land use plan should allow sites to be used for light manufacturing and similar uses.

### **DOWNTOWN**

**Goal: Support and strengthen Downtown's position as an important and economically viable center of cultural, government, and retail activity.**

#### **Policies:**

- 1) Promote downtown and the adjacent waterfront as a destination for residents and non-residents.
- 2) Promote the use, both residential and nonresidential, of the upper level floors of buildings in the downtown.
- 3) Promote and encourage new construction in the downtown and waterfront area to be compatible with existing development.

#### **Strategies:**

- 1) Provide good quality public infrastructure in the downtown area, with an emphasis on pedestrian connectivity and accessibility.
- 2) Ensure public infrastructure is constructed to handicap accessible standards and encourage private businesses and building owners to retrofit existing buildings to better meet handicap standards.
- 3) Strategically use funds acquired through the Downtown-Waterfront Tax Increment Financing District established in 2005 to upgrade and maintain public infrastructure in the downtown and waterfront area.
- 4) Analyze amending the Tax Increment Financing District program to allow building owners that make accessibility improvements to their buildings to benefit from property taxes assessed on their property. In particular, target the installation of

elevators in 3 plus story buildings in the downtown to encourage use of the upper floors.

- 5) Recognize the Belfast's downtown is part of state and nationally recognized historic district and require new development to be compatible with existing development.
- 6) Support the operations of Our Town Belfast (Main Street program) and cooperatively work with the organization and its members to strengthen the downtown area.

### **TOURISM & CREATIVE ECONOMY**

**Goal: Promote Belfast's tourism economy and strengthen its creative economy.**

Policies:

- 1) Promote Downtown Belfast and the adjacent waterfront as an area which is attractive as a tourist destination.
- 2) Promote the natural beauty of Belfast and its opportunities for active outdoor recreation as a means of attracting tourism.
- 3) Recognize and actively support the arts and creative economy as a way of encouraging entrepreneurial activity and encouraging tourism.

Actions:

- 1) Belfast should provide good quality infrastructure and services to support tourism activities. Pedestrian oriented facilities and high quality waterfront facilities are a key. The Belfast Footbridge constructed in 2006 and the 2013 construction of the Belfast Harbor Walk are examples of such.
- 2) Enhance the 'Emerald Necklace' and series of recreational trails in Belfast, and provide information regarding such, as a means of encouraging outdoor oriented tourism.
- 3) Work with and support the Chamber of Commerce, the Belfast Arts Group, New Year's By the Bay, Our Town Belfast and other local organizations to ensure regular and year-round festivals continue to encourage tourism and strengthen our creative economy. Encourage and support the development of a comprehensive tourism marketing plan for Belfast (as suggested in the Belfast Leadership Summit Report) and the implementation of this plan.
- 4) Improve the quality of the City of Belfast website and ensure it is linked with other appropriate websites as a means of providing better quality services and encouraging tourism.
- 5) Examine and implement ways of creating greater connectivity between east and west Belfast.
- 6) Support efforts of the Belfast Historical Society to promote the historical heritage of Belfast as a way of supporting tourism development.

- 7) Ensure local land use regulations allow opportunities for individuals to participate in the creative economy in appropriate zoning districts.
- 8) Offensive and excessive noises can adversely affect the quality of life in the community and tourism, thus the City should increase enforcement of existing local, state and federal laws which regulate noises associated with motor vehicles and motorcycles which use muffler systems that do not comply with applicable laws.

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Goal: To promote and strengthen Belfast's position as a commercial center for local residents and surrounding communities.**

Policies:

- 1) Identify appropriate locations for larger scale and smaller scale commercial activities.
- 2) Pursue land use regulations that ensure commercial development is compatible with the character of Belfast.

Strategies:

- 1) Encourage the development of a larger retail store on the so-called "Les Hills" property on Route 3, and ensure City zoning regulations allow development of a larger retail store.
- 2) Adopt land use regulations that will ensure that commercial development is compatible with the character of Belfast and reflects well on the community. The adoption of good quality performance standards is the key.
- 3) Adopt approaches that attempt to attract commercial development to core/central areas, shopping districts, rather than encouraging sprawling commercial activities.
- 4) Work with the Our Town Belfast and the Chamber of Commerce to promote Belfast as a location for commercial oriented development.

### TECNOLOGY

**Goal: To ensure high quality technological services are available through-out Belfast to serve the needs of residents, businesses and government.**

Policies:

Promote the delivery and expansion of technology services by the private sector in Belfast.

Strategies:

- 1) Analyze competitive advantage/disadvantage of the technology available for business and residents.
- 2) Pursue the most current technology infrastructure for Belfast.
- 3) Ensure reliable voice and broadband access to all of Belfast.
- 4) Ensure that technology enhancements are in place to encourage use of unused office space.
- 5) The city should market Belfast as a place that is well-connected and easy to work from.
- 6) Encourage WiFi.
- 7) Promote the Hutchinson Center as a tech-enabled center.
- 8) Ensure Belfast land use regulations consider the evolving needs of firms that provide technological services.

### OVERALL LAND USE

**Goal: To implement land use ordinances that reflect the desired scale, design, intensity and location of future economic development.**

Consistent with the land use plan included in this Comprehensive Plan, to attract, enhance, and support existing and future economic development while minimizing negative impacts associated with incompatible uses. Thus, the City should amend land use ordinances as necessary to include appropriate provisions regarding permitted and prohibited uses and to identify appropriate areas for commercial/nonresidential development.

## SECTION 3.8 HOUSING

### Introduction

Housing represents the major investment of most individuals. Property taxes provide the basis for funding Belfast municipal services and schools. With rising property values and assessments, affordable housing is an ongoing concern for many residents. Belfast effectively has two housing markets: high-priced seasonal, historic and waterfront homes, many of which are located within the Route 1 by-pass and near Route 1; and moderately priced housing inland. The moderately priced housing tends to be occupied by those who depend on the local and regional economy for their livelihood.

### A. State Goals

- 1. To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1) How many additional housing units, including rental units, will be necessary to accommodate projected population and demographic changes during the planning period?*

Belfast's population is projected to decrease from 6,680 in 2017 to 6,552 by the year 2036, as forecasted by the State Economist office. In 2017, the median household size was 2.26. Assuming the median household size stays consistent at 2.26 in 2036; Belfast appears to have an adequate supply of housing for the projected population. Belfast had about 398 vacant units (unoccupied housing units) in 2017. Between 2014 and 2017, the City of Belfast recorded 70 new housing units (Table 3-12).

In 2017, rental units accounted for more than 36% of the occupied housing stock. It is likely that the share of rental units will increase between 2010 and 2020. This is due to several factors, including but not necessarily limited to: the construction of government assisted affordable rental housing (over 100 units of such housing were constructed between 2000- 2010); homeowners constructing a rental unit along with their residence to assist them in paying mortgage costs; new housing projects such as the Belfast Cohousing (Eco-Village) project (36 - 40 units) on Tufts Road which consists entirely of duplex and multi-family units, partly because of energy costs; the establishment of rental housing in the upper floors of downtown buildings; and the need for more rental housing in Belfast. However, the 'gap' between income levels and the cost to construct new multi-family housing adversely affects a developer's ability to obtain sufficient rental income to support the cost of new construction. For planning purposes, it is forecasted that up to 45% of the new units in the next 10 to 20 years could be multi-family rental or ownership housing.

- (2) *Is housing, including rental housing, affordable to those earning the median income in the region? Is housing affordable to those earning 80% of the median income? If not, evaluate local and regional efforts to address issue?*

By State and federal definitions, housing is considered affordable if a household does not spend more than 30% of its monthly income on housing. In deciding whether to make mortgage loans, banks use similar definitions of affordability. From 2007 to 2018, those earning the median income in the region could not afford to buy the median priced home in Belfast. According to the MaineHousing, Belfast's median income earning households could afford only 56% of the median home sale price in Belfast and only 86% of the median home sale price in Waldo County (Tables 3-1 and 3-2). Of course, those in the low-income category, earning just 80% of the median household income, could afford even less. Information from the 2010 census corroborates information from the MaineHousing; with 53% of the population being identified as being unable to afford a median priced home. Tables 3-15 through 3-17 show the numbers and percentages of Belfast residents by income category.

Almost half (49.5%) of renters in Belfast could not afford the median rent charged for a 2-bedroom apartment (Table 3-5). This has resulted in the higher occupancy of some units (families sharing apartments) and the occupancy of substandard units for which lower rents are charged.

It is important to note the limitations of the Census and MaineHousing data. The housing sale data consists of sales through the real estate multiple listing service. Homes and property sold without a broker are not included, and tend to be lower priced than those sold through the multiple listing service. Sales of property to family members, along with the use of mobile homes, are ways in which residents have reduced their housing costs. In 2017 9.3% of the Belfast housing stock included mobile homes. Census and Sate data do not account for illegally occupied apartments and for units in which the rent collected is not reported.

It is widely understood that Belfast has a significant need for more affordable housing. MaineHousing, in 2017, estimated an additional 183 units of subsidized rental housing was needed at that time (Table 3-6). Further, the City's housing needs extend beyond low-income households eligible for subsidized housing. Those earning median and moderate (150% of median) incomes are in large part often unable to afford housing in Belfast, and choose to live in one of the communities in which property taxes are often lower. For a service center community to thrive, it must be an affordable place for a large portion of its workforce to reside within its borders.

The City has worked cooperatively with project developers and pursued Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to support the creation of affordable housing units for working families (workforce housing), the elderly, and those with special needs. Through these efforts over 100 affordable housing units were built between 2000 and 2013, including the following:

- Realty Resources, 38 unit project (workforce housing) on Ryan Road which opened in late 2007 (CDBG Public Infrastructure Grant funding);
- Volunteers of America, 32 units, elderly housing, on Congress Street, which opened in 2001 (CDBG Public Infrastructure Grant funding);
- Community Housing of Maine/CEI, a 6 unit housing project for persons with special that located on Midcoast Drive that opened in 2002;
- PenquisCAP, 24 units of workforce housing located on Patterson Hill which opened in 2002; and
- Group Home Foundation, 5 unit independent living project for persons with special needs that opened in 2009 (CDBG Housing Assistance funding).
- In July 2013, construction of the Goose River Partners elderly housing project located on Swan Lake Avenue was completed which added 24 units to the amount of affordable housing in the City.

In 2011 and 2014 the City obtained a CDBG Housing Assistance Grant which has provided funding to assist property owners to renovate rental units. Renovation efforts have focused on code compliance and energy concerns.

The City also notes that Belfast, as the regional service center for Waldo County, is often expected to provide more opportunities for affordable housing for the elderly, low/moderate income persons and persons with special needs, because other communities in the County lack medical and support services and the jobs that are available in Belfast. Despite all past and current efforts, it is generally acknowledged that regional affordable housing efforts have not kept pace with demand. Strategies to improve this are presented at the end of this chapter.

*(3) Are seasonal homes being converted to year-round use or vice-versa? What impact does this have on the community?*

Most housing units in Belfast have been constructed to a standard to qualify as a year-round home and have needed utility services. Unlike other Waldo County communities, Belfast has no significant lake or coastal 'communities' that serve mostly seasonal residents. While Belfast clearly experiences an increase in its summer population by seasonal visitors, most reside in houses that satisfy year-round standards and in traditional neighborhoods. The conversion of seasonal units to year-round units is not a significant issue in Belfast. The City believes that it does not need to consider adopting any specific measures to address this issue.

*(4) Will additional low and moderate income family, senior, or assisted living housing be necessary to meet projected needs for the community? Will these needs be met locally or regionally?*

It is anticipated, however, that with the aging of Belfast's, the region's and the state's population that additional senior and assisted units will be needed, both market rate

and subsidized. MaineHousing estimated, in 2017, 103 subsidized senior housing units were needed to meet need. See Table 3-6 for senior household figures. Given Belfast's service center function and proximity to health care facilities and the availability of municipal infrastructure like public water and sewer, it is likely that most of the region's needs for senior and assisted living facilities will be met within Belfast. Some elder care housing facilities are found in smaller Waldo County service centers, like Searsport and Winterport, as well. Also, as noted above, the 24 unit Goose River Partners elderly housing project, which received both Maine State Housing Authority and Rural Development Authority funding, completed construction in July 2013.

*(5) Are there other major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing?*

Belfast, since December 2010, has been required to enforce the state-wide building code, the MUBEC Code. Enforcement of this code has resulted in the City, for the first time, conducting building inspections of single family, two family and many accessory buildings. Prior to adoption of the MUBEC code, Belfast enforced the BOCA code only on multi-family and nonresidential development. This need to inspect most construction has resulted in a greater workload for the Code and Planning Department, however, it also has created the opportunity to ensure that new construction better satisfies building and energy code requirements.

The most frequent complaints that are brought to the attention of the Code Enforcement Officer involve rentals at multi-family rental units, such as inadequate heat and water, faulty electric and poor building standards. The second most frequent complaint involves nuisance concerns regarding how an abutter may maintain their property; uncontrolled trash and litter, too many abandoned vehicles, and stormwater problems. The Code Enforcement Officer routinely works with the aggrieved parties and often has been able to obtain voluntary compliance in addressing the issues. In limited cases the City has had to pursue legal action to resolve the complaint.

Several other concerns involve the use of older mobile homes (predating HUD 1976 standards), with concentrations of substandard housing in these areas, both mobile homes located on individual lots and in mobile home parks. Strategies to replace these homes are presented at the end of this chapter.

MaineHousing estimated in January 2019 that there were 1,215 homeless individuals in Maine, of which the last residences of 10 people were located in Waldo County. It is believed that this figure underestimates the homeless population in Belfast, which is difficult to measure due to the community's small size, fluctuations, and the transient nature of homelessness. It is noted that the local soup kitchen now regularly serves 60+ persons per day. While most of these persons are not homeless, it is indicative of the economic edges on which many live.

- (6) *How do existing local regulations encourage or discourage the development of affordable housing?*

Overall, Belfast's land use regulations support the creation of affordable housing. Smaller minimum lots sizes (7,500 square feet in certain residential growth areas) are allowed in locations served by water and sewer, as are multi-unit, multi-family structures. In 2010, the City also adopted flexible zoning standards to allow the development of small scale (less than 7 units) housing developments in rural areas (small subdivisions) provided the houses constructed satisfy affordability standards. These new regulations resulted in construction of three Habitat for Humanity house in Waldo County. The adopted Future Land Use plan recommends adopting similar provisions to encourage affordable housing in several of the City's urban zoning districts.

The City also has established areas in which Manufactured Housing is currently allowed and this type of housing is proposed to be allowed in many of the City zoning districts pursuant to the adopted Future Land Use Plan. The current Zoning Ordinance also permits congregate care units for the elderly, with no density limitations, in several zoning districts (growth areas with sewer and water services) and the adopted Future Land Use Plan recommends that this policy continue for many of the City's growth areas.

### **C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

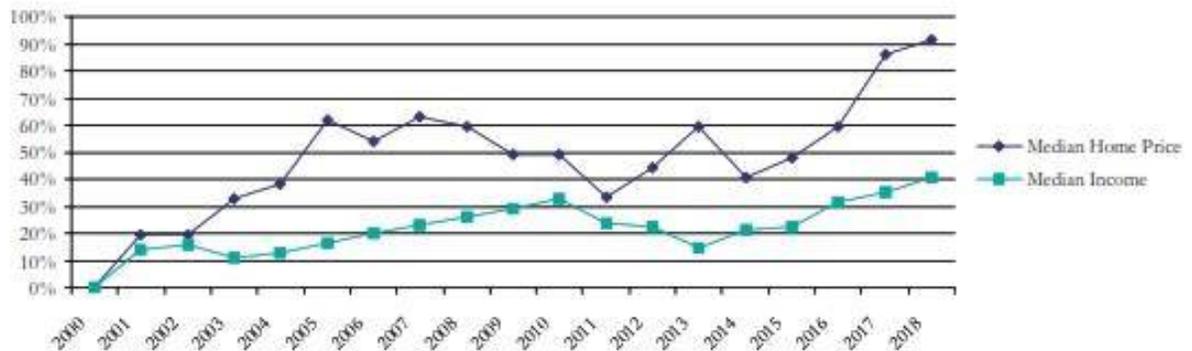
- (1) *The community's Comprehensive Planning Housing Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the MaineHousing, and the Office, or their designees.*



Homeownership Affordability Index		Median Home Price <sup>1</sup>	Median Income <sup>2</sup>	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	
Belfast, ME LMA Housing Market	<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>				
	2014	1.02	\$132,000	\$39,336	\$38,551	\$134,687
	2015	0.98	\$139,100	\$39,894	\$40,520	\$136,952
	2016	0.97	\$150,000	\$42,814	\$43,998	\$145,963
	2017	0.84	\$175,000	\$43,961	\$52,204	\$147,365
	2018	0.81	\$180,000	\$45,831	\$56,651	\$145,621
Belfast		0.56	\$237,000	\$42,927	\$76,880	\$132,332
Swanville		0.64	\$199,900	\$40,445	\$63,007	\$128,318
Searsport		0.65	\$176,000	\$38,543	\$59,493	\$114,024
Islesboro		0.66	\$315,000	\$62,500	\$95,414	\$206,338
Searsmont		0.68	\$220,000	\$48,373	\$70,868	\$150,167
Liberty		0.77	\$176,500	\$42,383	\$55,174	\$135,582
Northport		0.80	\$260,000	\$62,158	\$77,278	\$209,129
Belfast, ME LMA Housing Market		0.81	\$180,000	\$45,831	\$56,651	\$145,621
Maine		0.89	\$212,500	\$56,987	\$64,367	\$188,138
Thorndike		0.89	\$157,000	\$44,403	\$49,940	\$139,594
Stockton Springs		0.92	\$175,000	\$51,212	\$55,667	\$160,995
Monroe		1.15	\$144,000	\$51,923	\$45,161	\$165,560
Morrill		1.28	\$145,500	\$59,694	\$46,462	\$186,935

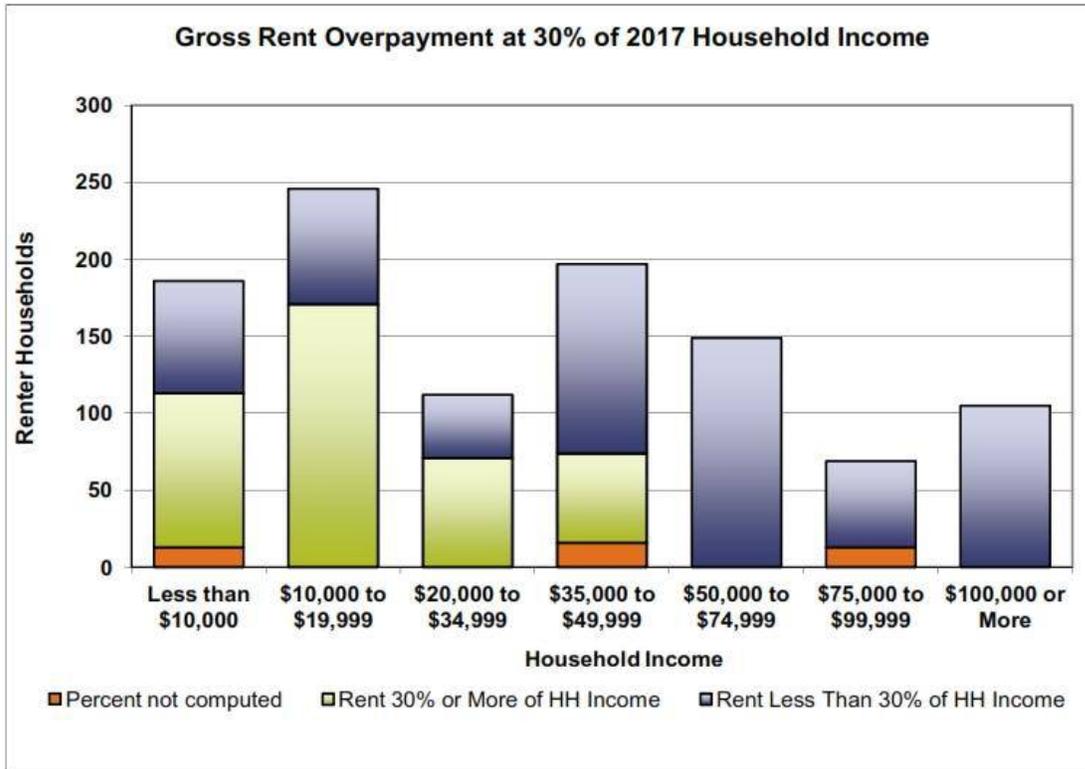
The Homeownership Affordability Index is the ratio of Home Price Affordable at Median Income to Median Home Price. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable - i.e., a household earning area median income could not cover the payment on a median priced home (30 year mortgage, taxes and insurance) using no more than 28% of gross income.

Relative Increases in Income and Home Price<sup>3</sup>

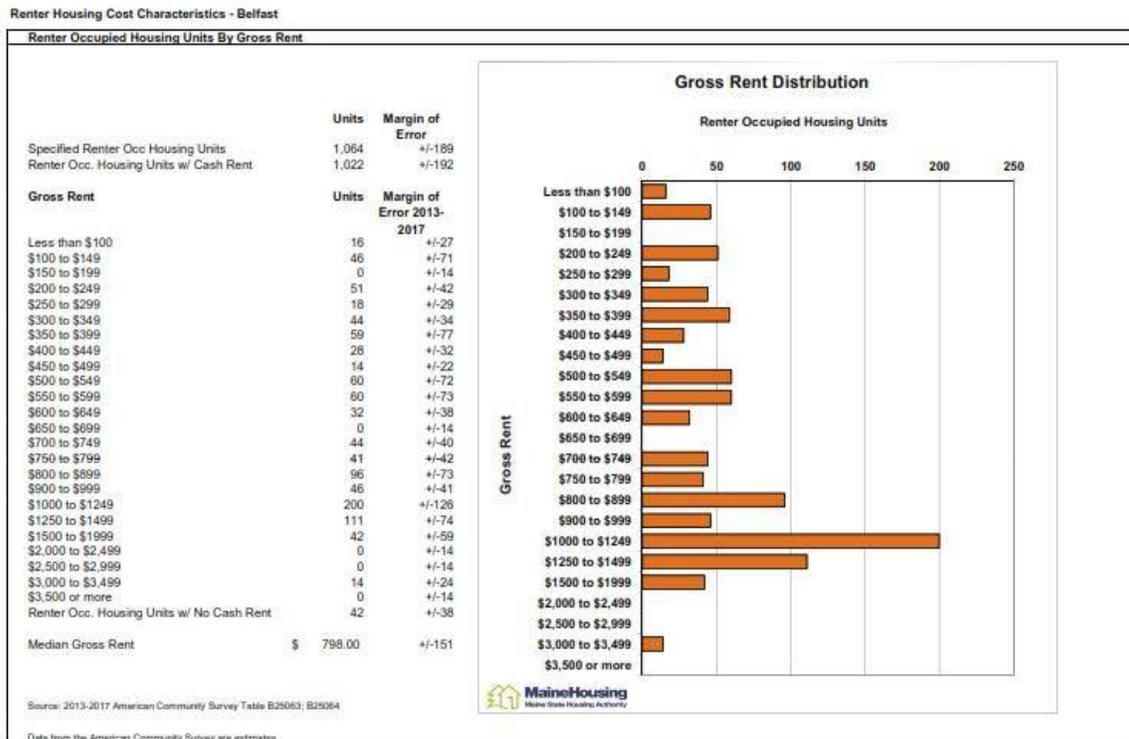


Source: MaineHousing

**Belfast Rental Housing Cost Characteristics**



Source: MaineHousing



Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-1 Affordability Index for Belfast**

Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
2014	0.65	\$191,000	\$38,815	\$56,710	\$124,578
2015	0.66	\$165,000	\$33,132	\$49,996	\$109,409
2016	0.67	\$184,600	\$37,700	\$56,481	\$123,445
2017	0.58	\$232,500	\$41,708	\$71,943	\$134,750
2018	0.56	\$237,000	\$42,927	\$76,880	\$132,332

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-2 Affordability Index**

Location	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
Belfast	0.56	\$237,000	\$42,927	\$76,880	\$132,332
Belfast, ME LMA Housing Market	0.81	\$180,000	\$45,831	\$56,651	\$145,621
Congressional District 2	1.05	\$150,000	\$48,290	\$46,046	\$157,311
Maine	0.89	\$212,500	\$56,987	\$64,367	\$188,138
Waldo County	0.86	\$180,000	\$48,225	\$56,223	\$154,394

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-3 Unattainable Homes as a Percentage of Homes Sold in 2018**

Location	Percentage of Unattainable Homes	Affordable Homes Sold	Unattainable Homes Sold
Belfast	87.2%	11	75
Belfast, ME LMA Housing Market	70.2%	99	233
Congressional District 2	47%	4,280	3,789
Maine	58.1%	7,534	10,440
Waldo County	65.4%	166	314

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-4 Households Unable to Afford Median Home in 2018**

Location	Percent of Households Unable to Afford Median Home Price	Number of Households Unable to Afford Median Home Price
Belfast	69.9%	2,190
Belfast, ME LMA Housing Market	58.3%	7,062
Congressional District 2	48.3%	133,732
Maine	56.3%	319,595
Waldo County	56.2%	9,619

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-5 Renter Households That Can't Afford the Average 2 Bedroom Rent in 2018**

Location	Percent of Households Unable to Afford Avg. 2BR Rent	Number of Households Unable to Afford Avg. 2BR Rent	Average 2 BR Rent (with utilities)	Income Needed to Afford Average 2 BR Rent
Belfast	49.5%	600	\$692	\$27,668
Belfast, ME LMA Housing Market (2017)	53.2%	639	717	\$28,691
Congressional District 2	61.6%	47,052	\$940	\$37,604
Maine	57.1%	92,560	\$998	\$39,919
Waldo County	67.3%	2,440	\$968	\$37,539

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-6 Housing Needs Summary in 2017**

Belfast	Family Units (55 and under)	Seniors Units (55 and over)
Number of Renter Households @ 50% AMI	176	221
Number of Subsidized Units Available	148	190
- Project Based	24	60
- Non-Project Based (Section 8 Vouchers)	32	21
Number of Affordable Rental Units Needed	80	103
Indicated Unmet Need %	54%	46%

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-7 Subsidized Rental Units Belfast**

Sponsor	Total	Family	Senior	Disabled
Housing Choice	67	20	19	33
Project Based	72	20	38	19
Total Units	176	39	91	56

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-8 Section 8 Vouchers Belfast**

Section 8 Vouchers Belfast	
MSHA	21
Total Units	21

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-9 Demographics**

Belfast	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change 2012-2017
Population	6,664	6,672	6,664	6,668	6,641	6,680	0.24%
Households	2,980	2,768	2,771	2,810	2,762	2,893	-0.97%

Source: MaineHousing

Note: See the Population Chapter for more demographic data, including population projections, gender and race figures.

**Table 3-10 Median Home Sale Prices Belfast**

Type of Home	2014 Median	2015 Median	2016 Median	2017 Median	2018 Median
All	--	--	--	--	\$237,000
Single Family	\$191,900	\$165,500	\$184,600	\$227,450	\$212,500
Condominium	\$220,000	None Sold	\$135,000	\$145,975	\$144,250
Mobile Home	\$49,750	None Sold	\$42,000	\$82,450	\$74,500

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-11 Average Rent (including utilities) Belfast**

Bedrooms	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change 2003-2007
0	--	--	--	\$508	\$509	NA
1	\$771	\$814	\$930	\$722	\$712	-8.2%
2	\$884	\$947	\$916	\$978	\$889	0.5%
3	\$1,079	\$1,163	\$1,166	\$1,203	\$930	-8.6%

Source: MaineHousing

**Table 3-12 New Houses in Belfast**

New Houses in Belfast					
New Homes	2014	2015	2016	2017	Totals
Total New	17	21	14	18	70

Source: City of Belfast

**Table 3-13 Age of Homes as of 2017**

Belfast	Owners		Renters		All Homes	
2014 or later	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2010 to 2013	98	5.4%	0	0.0%	98	3.4%
2000 to 2009	367	20.1%	279	26.2%	646	22.3%
1980 to 1999	575	22.7%	160	15.0%	575	19.9%
1960 to 1979	269	14.7%	150	14.1%	419	14.5%
1940 to 1959	69	3.8%	62	5.8%	131	4.5%
1939 or Earlier	611	33.4%	413	38.8%	1,024	35.4%
Totals	1,989	100%	1,064	100%	2,893	100%

Source: Census, MaineHousing

**Table 3-14 Households by Income**

Belfast	≤30% Extremely Low	≤50% Very Low	≤80% Low
2017 Households	515	837	1,249
Income	\$17,778	\$20,630	\$47,408
% of Total Households	17%	29%	43%

Source: MaineHousing

*Note: Income categories are based on percentages of the median income.*

**Table 3-15 Owner Households by Income**

Belfast	≤30% Extremely Low	≤50% Very Low	≤80% Low
2017 Households	225	452	698
Income	\$17,778	\$20,630	\$47,408
% of Total Households	7%	15%	24%

Source: MaineHousing

*Note: Income categories are based on percentages of the median income.***Table 3-16 Renter Households by Income**

Belfast	≤30% Extremely Low	≤50% Very Low	≤80% Low
2017 Households	190	344	488
Income	\$17,778	\$20,630	\$47,408
% of Total Households	6%	11%	16%

Source: MaineHousing

*Note: Income categories are based on percentages of the median income.***Table 3-17 Potential Homeowners: Renter Households by Income: Age 25-44**

Belfast	≤30% Extremely Low	≤50% Very Low	≤80% Low	≤150% Moderate
2007 Households	67	139	229	309
Income	\$12,112	\$20,187	\$32,298	\$60,560
% of Total Households	16.9%	35.1%	57.9%	78.1%

Source: MaineHousing

*Note: Income categories are based on percentages of the median income.*

*(2) Information on existing regional affordable housing coalitions or similar efforts.*

At present, there is no specific organization in Belfast that focuses on affordable housing issues. In the 1990's there was an informal group that met at the WaldoCAP offices to consider housing affordability concerns, and the City, in 2002 conducted a housing assessment using CDBG funds and established an affordable housing task force several years later. While there is ongoing interest and concern regarding the affordability of housing in Belfast, no specific advocacy group has been founded. Several regional organizations do address housing concerns, including WaldoCAP and Penquis CAP, as has the City, through its pursuit of CDBG grants to aid affordable housing projects.

*(3) A summary of local regulations that affect the development of affordable housing.*

Overall, city regulations support the creation of affordable housing. Smaller minimum lots sizes (7,500 square feet in certain residential growth areas) are allowed in locations served by water and sewer, as are multi-unit, multi-family structures. As previously noted, both current zoning ordinances and recommendations in the Future Land Use Plan identify standards that would encourage the construction of affordable housing in both rural areas and growth areas, allow manufactured housing in most sections of the City, and congregate and elderly housing is permitted with few density regulations. The City's goal is to use a series of regulatory approaches that support and stimulate the construction of additional affordable housing in locations and at densities that are appropriate for the community and which recognize the cost of construction.

---

#### **D. Policies**

- 1) To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- 2) To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including both ownership and rental housing.
- 3) To seek to achieve at least 10% of all housing built or placed during the next decade be affordable.
- 4) To support efforts that provide housing to at-risk targeted groups, such as the elderly, persons with special needs, and similarly situated persons.
- 5) To encourage and support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

#### **E. Strategies**

- 1) Enact or amend growth area land use regulations to ensure density, lot size, setback and similar standards encourage the construction of housing. These

measures may include but are not specifically limited to the following:

- 1.1. In residential areas within the Route One by-pass, an area comprised of existing neighborhoods and in which public sewer is often available, the minimum lot size should be  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre or less. Further, structure setbacks should be consistent with existing development patterns (Reference Future Land Use Plan).
  - 1.2. In areas located outside of the Route One by-pass in which public sewer is available, the minimum lot size should allow housing on appropriate sized lots, recognizing that access and traffic management is often a concern. Such lot sizes could be in the  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd acres size (reference Future Land Use Plan).
  - 1.3. Overall, allow greater density and focus new housing in areas that are within walking or easy driving distance of places of employment, places in which retail shopping and services are available, and places in which public facilities and services are present, including but not limited to schools. The proposed Residential 4 area qualifies as such an area (reference Future Land Use Plan).
  - 1.4. To assist in meeting the specific housing needs of the community's seniors, the City should allow congregate housing and elderly housing in appropriate areas that have access to public water and sewer. Further, the City should not use density standards (number of units per acre) as a significant factor in determining the suitability of a property for such housing.
  - 1.5. Maintain ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.
- 2) Examine and consider enacting approaches that allow multi-family housing (3 units or more per structure) and duplex housing (2 units per structure) in appropriate land use areas.
- 2.1. Consistent with provisions in many current zoning districts, the City should continue to allow the construction of a duplex on the same size lot as a single family dwelling, provided there is adequate sewage capacity and on-site parking. This approach has and should continue to create opportunities for a homeowner to construct an accessory apartment (Reference Future Land Use Plan).
  - 2.2. City should establish an area within the Route One by-pass that allows the construction of new multi-family housing, and at densities that encourage the construction of such (Reference

- Future Land Use Plan).
- 2.3. City should consider increasing the density (number of units) at which multi-family housing can be constructed in zoning districts which allow this type of use. Current zoning often establishes a maximum of 6 units per acre. This density likely is too low to encourage the construction of a significant amount of new multi-family housing. (Reference Future Land Use Plan).
  - 2.4. City should continue its current regulation that allows and encourages residential units to be constructed above non-residential uses on the upper floors of buildings in the Downtown Commercial zoning district. This approach includes not identifying a maximum density standard (number of units/acre) and often not requiring on-site parking (Reference Future Land Use Plan).
  - 2.5. City should examine the feasibility of allowing an owner occupied house that is located in a residential growth area to construct two accessory apartments in the house (total of 3 units), provided the property has public sewer and adequate on-site parking. The focus would be accessory apartments, particularly 1 bedroom units, and would include new construction and the conversion of existing houses. It is critical that any such construction satisfy all applicable building codes.
- 3) Consider approaches that allow greater density in residential growth and mixed use growth areas if at least a portion of the housing units that are constructed address affordable housing needs.
- 3.1. In urban areas, such as most of the area located within the Route One by-pass, the City should consider the adoption of standards that would allow the construction of single-family and two-family housing at greater densities than is now recommended for these areas in the Future Land Use Plan, provided at least a portion of the units qualify as affordable housing. If this approach is implemented, key issues would include but are not necessarily limited to: the size and topography of the property; the character of neighboring development; opportunities to provide good quality connectivity for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians; and the provision of usable open space. The suggested approach likely would work best for vacant lots which are at least one acre in size.
  - 3.2. In rural areas, including those located within the proposed Outside Rural area identified in the Future Land Use Plan, the City should consider allowing small housing clusters to encourage the construction of affordable housing, and adopting standards that

would govern such projects. Such housing clusters would allow houses to be constructed on smaller lots and at greater densities than for typical homes. Potential standards would address issues such as but not necessarily limited to: the maximum size of a cluster (7 units recommended in the Future Land Use Plan); requiring all units to be served by a single road that accesses onto a City road; allowing the new access road to remain a gravel surface and to be a lesser width than current City requirements; and to address how natural areas and open space would be retained and incorporated into the project.

- 3.3. The City should consider supporting 'green based' housing by allowing such housing to be constructed at greater densities (number of units/acre) and by allowing more flexibility in the number of units constructed per structure, particularly if such a project supports the establishment of affordable housing. This approach could be applicable in both urban and rural locations.
- 4) The City should examine the desirability of the City committing public resources, including but not limited to tax dollars, to assist in the construction of affordable housing.
  - 4.1. The City should consider supporting approaches that would allow tax acquired land and/or buildings to be used to assist in the construction of affordable housing. This would involve a public review of all properties acquired through City foreclosure on a tax lien to determine if it would be appropriate to use this property for an approach that would support affordable housing.
  - 4.2. The City should consider the use of tax increment financing to encourage the construction of workforce and affordable housing. The goal would be to encourage the construction of ownership housing consistent with low-moderate income guidelines adopted by the State. If the City chooses to implement tax increment financing as an approach to encourage construction, it will be critical that the City examine the short-term and long-term public benefits and costs of this approach for the respective housing project which would qualify for this program, and that the proposed project involves providing ownership housing that will remain within affordable ranges for the long-term.
  - 4.3. The City should consider financially participating in the cost of extending public sewer service to areas that are intended to function as a housing growth area. The Future Land Use Plan identifies portions of the proposed Residential 2 and Residential 4 areas as ones in which this approach may be appropriate.

- 5) Create or support a community based affordable housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.
  - 5.1. Support efforts of local based organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Group Home Foundation and WaldoCAP that are involved with trying to construct new affordable housing, rehabilitate existing housing units, and assist persons that need housing.
  - 5.2. Continue to work with regional, state-wide and national organizations which have constructed affordable housing projects in Belfast, including housing projects which have often targeted persons with specific needs, to increase the availability of affordable housing in Belfast. These organizations include but are not limited to PenquisCAP, Volunteers of America and Coastal Enterprises.
  - 5.3. Continue to work cooperatively with private developers which have used funding sources such as Maine State Housing Authority bonding to construct and operate affordable housing projects in Belfast, with the goal of increasing the availability of affordable housing in Belfast. Realty Resources has constructed and now operates several such projects in Belfast, including Seaside Estates (Ocean East Housing project) and the Birches.
  - 5.4. Explore the desirability and feasibility of developing a local housing authority to better address how to provide housing to support local needs. This effort could include but is not necessarily limited to: establishing a new public authority, partnering with the Waldo County Commissioners, and/or partnering with an existing housing authority.
  - 5.5. Support efforts that assess the need for affordable housing in the greater Belfast area, and identify strategies to address the needs that area identified.
- 6) Consistent with Policy # 5, to maintain and promote affordable housing from government grant program opportunities, the City will:
  - 6.1. The City should welcome and encourage participation in government programs, including but not necessarily limited to: Maine Department of Community and Economic Development Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Maine State Housing Authority funds, USDA Rural Development funds and loans, Waldo County housing programs, Penquis CAP funds, Home Repair Network, mobile home replacement, housing rehabilitation loans (single family and multifamily), Low Income

Housing Tax Credit, home buyer education, and other programs for the construction of subsidized workforce housing within the City, and other grants to homeowners for improvements to energy efficiency, safety and habitability.

- 6.2. The City should seek active participation from residents who live in unsafe, substandard housing to help them improve the condition of their housing and their neighborhoods through the use of state and federal grants and loans, and with in-kind municipal assistance or assistance via a non-profit organization.
- 7) To augment the supply of workforce housing, the City should consider approaches such as the following:
- 7.1. The City should explore and consider approaches implemented in other communities to provide affordable rental units for employees involved in industries that often rely upon seasonal, transient or per diem employees. Such industries could include but are not necessarily limited to: agriculture and food processing, resort and tourist facilities, construction, and health care. A potential approach that warrants consideration is to allow group homes or boarding homes in appropriate areas. If this approach is implemented, it will be critical that such homes be well managed.
  - 7.2. The City should investigate encouraging alternative approaches to housing ownership, such as cooperative housing, as an approach to encourage affordable housing. This type of housing shares costs and is owned and governed by an association composed of the housing occupants themselves. This combines certain aspects of home ownership with rentals. It is probably most successful when there is a group of dedicated people who share the philosophy of this type of housing. Such a project is being initiated currently in Belfast (Eco-Village on Tufts Road) and if successful may prove to be a model.
- 8) Designate a location(s) in the growth area in which mobile home parks/manufactured housing communities, are allowed pursuant to 30-A MRS §4358(3)(M). One such area that has been identified is the portion of the proposed Swan Lake Avenue Mixed Use area that is served by public sewer (Reference Future Land Use Plan). Additional areas may be appropriate for this type of use, and this issue should be further explored as the City pursues implementation of its Future Land Use Plan.
- 9) Identify areas in which manufactured housing (mobile homes) is allowed in addition to stick-built housing. The Future Land Use Plan (reference Plan) often provides direction regarding areas which are appropriate for manufactured housing. Further, as the City pursues implementation of this

Plan, the City should consider areas that are and are not appropriate for manufactured housing, as well the adoption of construction standards which could result in such housing being more compatible with existing housing.

## SECTION 3.9 RECREATION

### Introduction

The natural resources of Belfast and the region provide numerous outdoor recreational opportunities like hiking, hunting, horseback riding, ATV, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and sailing. Open space includes Belfast Bay and associated coastal areas, rivers and streams, athletic fields, parks, farms, forestlands, wetlands, and ponds, many of which are described in the natural resources chapters of this plan. The City's goal is to preserve, strengthen and advance public recreation opportunities. The City should seek to provide a comprehensive range of recreational uses including open space, water access and recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of the community's diverse population.

### A. State Goal for Recreation

- 1. To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

Belfast should look to maintain existing facilities and services and should consider opportunities for new facilities and programs. The City should be bold in this effort, and should not limit its approaches to methods used in other towns and cities.

- (1). Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community?*

Yes, existing facilities, in general, can meet the projected needs of the community over the next ten years. Allocating sufficient resources for the ongoing maintenance of all facilities is crucial.

- (2). Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable?*

Upgrades or enhancements are recommended and many are planned for in the following city park facilities:

- Belfast City Park (20 acres): Lighting; buried electrical service; road paving; grading of baseball field; pool bathhouse rehab; walkway repaired continued and enhanced; rehab restrooms; re-line and re-surface the pool.
- Kirby Lake (the Muck) (3 acres): Ongoing trail maintenance.
- Skate Park (skateboards): Re-design and upgrade.
- Sportsman Park (21 acres): Entrance sign/marker; trail development.

- Steamboat Landing (2.4 acres): Water service for event vendors; drinking fountain.
- Wales Park (1.5 acres): Ramp and/or steps for entrance off Congress Street.
- Walsh Field Recreation Area (Ballfields, Dog Park, Little River Trailhead): Sidewalk and parking lot repair or replacement.

(3). *Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?*

Yes, see the section Condition and Trends in this chapter for a listing of city-owned and permanently conserved facilities and the map titled Recreation.

(4). *Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements?*

The City has worked with area land trusts, particularly the Coastal Mountain Land Trust, regarding the preservation of open spaces and access. The City also has aggressively pursued retaining public ownership of long established 'rangeways' that provide public access to coastal areas. Continuing, the City has worked cooperatively with Friends of Belfast Parks to maintain and fund improvements to many of the City's parks. While the City has not established a specific open space fund, the City has often committed taxpayer revenues to benefit public access and recreation. For example, in the mid-1980's the City created Heritage Park, in 1999 the City worked with MBNA to establish Belfast Common and Steamboat Landing Park, in 2008 the City purchased additional land to expand the size of Belfast Common, in 2010 the City purchased the former Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad right-of-way to create the Rail Trail, and in 2014 established Park on Main. The City has adopted policies and Ordinances to help guide its activities, and recognizes that future amendments to such may be needed.

(5). *Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies? Is the type of access compatible with the protection of public drinking water sources?*

Yes, there is public access to the major water bodies in Belfast. Drinking water is supplied through groundwater wells, not surface waters. Accordingly, recreational access to surface waters does not threaten public drinking water sources.

The City owns or controls multiple access points to the water. These are either rangeways or Rights-of-Way. The City routinely maintains most of these access points and is systematically working to make desired improvements. The City has recently made significant improvements to the preservation of rangeways for pedestrian use and access to the water.

(6). *Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?*

Yes, in general, trails are maintained regularly by public or private efforts.

The City maintains walking paths located within its parks, including waterfront walkways. The City also maintains the Armistice Bridge (the original Route 1 Memorial Bridge), which provides pedestrian access over the Passagassawakeag River to connect the east and west sides of Belfast. In general, recreational trails outside parks are maintained by private entities. No known conflicts exist.

(7). *Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?*

A few property owners post their land to restrict hunting, for privacy or for other reasons, but this has not resulted in public complaints to date.

### **C. Conditions and Trends**

(1). *The community's Comprehensive Planning Recreation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Conservation, and the Office, or their designees.*

This data set has been incorporated and updated in the Belfast Comprehensive Plan map titled: Recreation.

(2). *A description of important public and private active recreation programs, land and water areas (including hunting and fishing areas), and facilities in the community and region, including regional recreational opportunities as appropriate, and identification of unmet needs.*

The following publications are available: "Belfast City Rangeways: Public Shore Access (City of Belfast); "The Green Emeralds of Belfast" (Friends of Belfast Parks); "Belfast, In-town Nature Trail" (Hartdale Maps) and "Walk & Bike Belfast" (Hartdale Maps); "Trails" (Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition); "Belfast City Park Arboretum"; "Hills to Sea Trail" (Waldo County Trails Coalition); "Labyrinth Walk" (Phineas P. Quimby Labyrinth). These describe public recreational areas in the community. Programs designed to bring in visitors, families and friends are identified each year in annual reports and publications. The Coastal Mountains Land Trust also has trail maps and publications describing natural area and activities.

(3). *An inventory of any fresh or salt water bodies in the community determined locally to have inadequate public access.*

None known. Belfast has an extensive system of City owned and maintained rangeways and public parks that support public access to Belfast Bay. The City notes that unlike many Maine communities there are few significant fresh water bodies (large ponds) in Belfast.

- (4). *A description of trail systems, trail management organizations, and conservation organizations that provide trails for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, or hiking. Include mapped information as available.*

(see # C. 2 above)

- (5). *A map or list of important publicly-used open spaces and their associated facilities, such as parking and toilet facilities.*

(see # C.2 above and list of local land trusts in C-6 below)

See the map titled Recreation. There are a number of recreational facilities in Belfast, which are available to the public:

- Armistice Bridge (reconstructed in 2006)/Pedestrian Footbridge (Formerly known as the Veterans Memorial Bridge): This renovated span (about 800 feet in length) crossing the Passagassawakeag River provides scenic views of the harbor and downtown, and provides connectivity across the River between the east and west sides of Belfast.
- Belfast Area High School (recently renovated): This facility has an indoor swimming pool with spectator seating and a gymnasium, and is surrounded by 20 acres, which accommodate 1,320 feet of running track, as well as baseball, football, field hockey, and soccer fields.
- Belfast City Park: This is a 20-acre municipal park with a 10,479 square foot outdoor pool with dressing rooms, baseball field, a full basketball court, two tennis courts, an innovative playground, benches, four pickle ball courts, restrooms, concession stand, and picnic tables with grills adjacent to them.
- Belfast Common: Dedicated in 1999, this park is on the former site of a poultry processing plant. People fly kites, walk dogs, picnic, sunbathe, and, in the winter, go sledding. An amphitheater provides a beautiful spot for concerts and is popular for outdoor events and weddings.
- East Belfast School: This 3-acre area has a soccer field and a playground. The facility also has an indoor gymnasium.
- Eleanor Crawford Park: This is a very small, triangular shaped park with benches and a flower garden.
- Waterfall Arts Building (Former Governor Anderson School): This 5-acre site includes baseball, football and softball fields, swings, and an outdoor ice rink. There are 50 parking spaces available.
- Heritage Park: This area is adjacent to the boat launching ramp and public landing. The location of the Come Boating! shed and dock. It provides an unobstructed view of the harbor and upper Penobscot bay, and is equipped with picnic tables and benches for the use of the public. It also supports public events.

- Kirby Lake (The Muck): This is a half-acre area which is used for ice skating during the winter months. The area is lit where skaters can put on their skates and there are picnic tables and benches. This is a popular location for bird watching.
- Public Landing Ramp: This is a 1.5-acre area, which includes a paved boat launch ramp and the Harbor Master's Office. It is bordered by floats, which provide temporary docking space for boaters using the ramp, a parking area, and toilet and shower facilities. Fuel and water are available at the adjacent public landing.
- Skateboard Park: This site has paved surfaces and ramps for skateboarding.
- Sportsman Park: This is a 21-acre site with a stream for fishing and areas for dogs to be off-leash. Future development of its wooded setting could include walking trails, cross-country ski trails, and other outdoor recreation activities.
- Steamboat Landing: In 1999, MBNA donated a portion of its waterfront property to the City. A gazebo is used for weddings, concerts, poetry readings, and picnics. The City also owns the Boathouse at the park which it uses for public events and rentals to public and private parties. The park has picnic tables and benches, kayak launch and rack, and is used for several events, such as Belfast Wienerfest, Maine Celtic Celebration, Belfast Arts in the Park, and Harborfest. The Harbor Walk also runs through the park.
- Wales Park: This two-acre plot of open space. There is a picnic shelter, benches, grills and swings and a slide for children.
- Walsh Field Recreation Area: Includes A) Dog Park - Open in 2008, this park was created by the Friends of Belfast Parks and members of the community as a gift to the City, its dog owners, and their dogs. B) Little League Baseball Field; C) Softball Field and D) Little River Trailhead developed and maintained by the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition.
- Park on Main: A pocket park on Main Street in downtown with a picnic table chessboard, shady area, and a flower garden.
- Kayak Launching Area: Located at the Upper Bridge East Rangeway.
- Rail Trail: A 2.2 mile multi-use path that runs within the rail corridor along the upper stretches of the Passagassawakeag River.
- Harbor Walk: A path that connects the Belfast waterfront between the Armstice Bridge and the Boathouse at Steamboat Landing.
- Rangeways: 12 rangeways are located throughout the City that provides public access to the water and scenic views of the Bay.
- 4-Seasons Recreation Area: Part of the former City-owned ski area was re-opened in 2010 with areas for sledding, tubing and snowboarding. The Passy Greenway Trail traverses the area. This site has a parking area.

There are also private health and recreational establishments that are available to Belfast residents. They include the Bay-Area Fitness, Belfast Dance Studio, the Game Loft, Waterfall Arts, Come Boating, Curling Club, and the YMCA. The YMCA opened its

new facility in 2001 (including a walking track, gymnasium, and weight room) and its indoor pool in 2009. The City provides an annual subsidy to the YMCA, which allows income eligible residents to become YMCA members at no cost or at a reduced rate.

(6). *A list of local and regional land trusts in the area.*

- **Coastal Mountains Land Trust (active in region):** [www.coastalmountains.org/](http://www.coastalmountains.org/)  
The City has active agreements with this Land Trust.
- Forest Society of Maine: [www.fsmaine.org/](http://www.fsmaine.org/)
- Maine Audubon: [www.maineaudubon.org/](http://www.maineaudubon.org/)
- **Maine Coast Heritage Trust (active in region):** [www.mcht.org/](http://www.mcht.org/) The City has an easement agreement with the Heritage Trust to manage City owned Heritage Park.
- **Maine Farmland Trust (active in region):** [www.maineFarmlandtrust.org/](http://www.maineFarmlandtrust.org/) The Maine Farmland Trust also has offices in downtown Belfast.
- New England Forestry Foundation, Inc.: [www.newenglandforestry.org/](http://www.newenglandforestry.org/)
- Northeast Wilderness Trust: [www.newildernesstrust.org/](http://www.newildernesstrust.org/)
- Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association: [www.sheepscot.org/](http://www.sheepscot.org/)
- Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance: [www.swlamaine.org/](http://www.swlamaine.org/)
- The Nature Conservancy in Maine:  
[www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/maine/](http://www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/maine/)

#### **D. Policies**

Many policies are dictated by city ordinance. See Section 38 in the City Code of Ordinances for Parks and Recreation codes. Section 38-32 specifies the purpose of the Commission.

- (1). *To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.*
- (2). *To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.*
- (3). *To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and to work with nearby property owners to address concerns.*

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). *Develop/Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or town official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.*
- (2). *Include any capital needs identified for recreation facilities in the Capital Investment Plan. Explore the use of Federal and State money to fund expenditures for outdoor recreation.*

- (3). *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. Give particular attention to the need for City-owned cross-country skiing and nature study areas, and City-owned walking/jogging paths along Belfast Harbor.*
- (4). *Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.*
- (5). *Provide education 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.*
- (6). *Continue to maintain and improve the system of snowmobile trails throughout the City's rural area. Inventory trails, natural areas, and open space corridors in Belfast.*

## SECTION 3.10 TRANSPORTATION

### Introduction

A safe and dependable transportation system is the lifeline of every community. This chapter details the current condition and usage of Belfast's transportation system. The City's main goal is to plan for the efficient maintenance and improvement of the transportation system so it can accommodate and well serve existing and anticipated development.

### A. State Goal and the Sensible Transportation Policy Act

1. *To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*
2. *Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA §73)*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

#### (1). *Roads, Bridges, Sidewalks, and Bicycle Routes*

- a. *What are the transportation system concerns in the community and region? What, if any, plans exist to address these concerns?*

1. *Safety:*

See the Transportation Network Map for high crash locations where eight or more crashes have been reported within a three-year period. In 2015, Maine DOT reported four intersections and one road section as high crash locations in Belfast. These were the section of Church Street between Beaver Street and Spring Street, the intersection of Head of the Tide Road and West Waldo Road, Belmont Ave/Route 3 ramp coming off Route 1 south, High Street ramp coming off Route 1 north, and Route 7 ramp off Route One bypass. In 2006, the City, in coordination with Maine DOT, HNTB (traffic consulting firm) and the Federal Highway Administration, conducted a transportation safety audit of Route 1 as a supplement to the Gateway 1 strategic planning process. See the Safety Audit report for a full list of observations and specific recommendations. Many of the observations from the 2006 Safety Audit are still relevant today including:

- c. Intersection improvements should receive the highest priority. More specifically:
  - a. Congress Street and Route 1 – MDOT constructed improvements to this intersection in 2007. It appears

that the improvements have addressed some key safety issues, however, the City believes that additional improvements are warranted. For example, for northbound traffic, there is no lane for through traffic if a vehicle is turning left onto Congress Street by the Business Park and another vehicle is turning right onto Congress Street by the Tall Pines facility. Further, there is no signal light at the intersection.

- b. Lincolnville Avenue/Rte 52 and Route 1 – In 2009, long awaited pedestrian improvements were constructed. The City, however, believes the intersection requires additional improvements, particularly for traffic on the westerly side of the intersection.
- c. Belmont Avenue/Rte 3 and Route 1– Significant improvements were constructed to this road in 2005, however, the City believes that additional improvements are needed to the current on and off ramp system for the intersection.
- d. Swan Lake Avenue/Rte 141 and Route 1 – The City and MDOT constructed initial pedestrian oriented improvements to this intersection in 2010 through a \$120,000 traffic calming grant. In 2012, the City worked directly with MDOT to conduct a follow-up Safety Audit that focused specifically on the Route 1/Route 141 (Swan Lake Avenue) intersection. In 2013 the City used a \$100,000 traffic calming grant to make additional pedestrian oriented improvements to the intersection, including a pedestrian signal. The City, however, believes that the long term approach is to reconstruct the intersection and that a roundabout could be a productive way to address current and future traffic volumes.
- d. Enhance navigation signs, guide signs, and warning signs.
- e. Adjust street name signs and/or replace with larger signs for better visibility for drivers and for emergency response.
- f. Access management strategies:
  - a. Limit curb cuts by consolidating separate entrances that are close together, and regulating requests for new entrances.
5. Install Maine Uniform Traffic Control Device compliant crosswalk warning signs.
6. Coordinate impact fees charged by State and City for needed transportation improvements resulting from proposed development.

7. Add dedicated bike lanes, marked on roadway, shoulder or paths off of Route 1 that provide linkages to East Coast Greenway project and which encourage and support bicycle use in Belfast.
8. Examine if it is appropriate to establish greater consistency in traffic speeds along the Route 1 corridor in Belfast, including the by-pass area.

Beyond Route 1, longstanding safety concerns exist for other state and municipal roads. The volume and traffic along Route 52 presents ongoing concerns. Other key concerns regarding state routes include: speed of traffic on Route 141/ Swan Lake Avenue; and the lack of a viable emergency vehicle route if the Memorial Bridge is congested.

### *2. Traffic speed:*

A concern which has often been voiced by residents for numerous City roads, particularly rural roads, is the speed of traffic, which people have stated has lessened their quality of life. In addition, the poor quality of initial construction (particularly a poor road base) of many local roads results in chronic problems for the City in trying to maintain a substandard road. The City faces high maintenance costs for such roads, but City lacks the funds to reconstruct most roads.

See the Transportation Posted Speeds and Compact Area Map for the speed limits of state and city roads. Speeding is of concern on Routes 1, 3 and 141 especially. Ongoing enforcement is costly. The City, in 2009 and 2013, constructed traffic calming improvements at the Rte 141/Rte 1 intersection. Further, the City has received numerous requests from local residents to consider the reduction of traffic speeds on the road on which they live. Examples of such requests in past years include but are not necessarily limited to: Doak Road, Stephenson Lane, Woods Road, Miller Street, High Street and Swan Lake Avenue. An additional concern is City interest in MDOT examining the desirability of establishing more consistent speed limits for Route 1.

### *3. Congestion and travel delay:*

The Belfast Comprehensive Plan map titled Transportation Network shows the customer service level (CSL) of State and local roads in Belfast. CSL is a measure of safety, condition and service. The lowest CSL found in Belfast is on Route 52 extending southwest from Route 1 into Northport. This road is rated as a

Level D on an A-F scale, indicating the level of safety, condition, and service of the road. The CSL takes into account crash history, paved roadway width, pavement rutting, bridge reliability, pavement condition, roadway strength, bridge condition, ride quality, posted road or bridge, and congestion. Congestion at the following locations has been noted by residents and municipal officials: Route 1 and Route 52, Route 1 and Route 141, Route 1 and Route 3, and Route 1 and Congress Street.

*4. Travel volume and type:*

The Belfast Comprehensive Plan maps titled Transportation Network Traffic Volumes show factored annual average daily traffic volumes at key points on state, state aid and municipal roadways in Belfast from 2020. The Route 1 bypass, serving the purpose for which it was built, has a higher volume than local downtown streets.

*5. Traffic problems caused by such things as road and driveway locations and design, road maintenance needs, traffic control devices, growth patterns, and lack of transportation options:*

Road maintenance is an ongoing effort and municipal budgets are stretched as the cost of such maintenance increases much faster than the costs of other goods and services, due principally to the costs of petroleum and petroleum-based products like asphalt. The state and federal match for such work has always been important and has become even more crucial to maintain safe roadways. The City has worked with property owners to maintain the safety and mobility (traffic flow at the posted speed) of roadways by addressing access management within the urban compact boundary. New entrances and driveways are approved in accordance with access management goals while balancing private property rights to allow for the use of properties abutting roadways.

The City understands that encouraging growth within and near the in-town area will reduce transportation costs and auto-dependency. The City's minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet for most of the area located within the Route 1 by-pass underscores its efforts to encourage dense growth in areas near services. This area also features an existing system of interconnected streets that create multiple ways for a person to travel to their destination. In addition, the City has encouraged most larger scale employers and retail development to occur in the area immediately adjacent to

the Route 1 by-pass. At the same time, there is concern about the amount of congestion that might develop in these areas from new development.

Current state access management rules apply to all state roads located outside of the urban compact area, and to the Pitcher Road. The City has cooperatively worked with MDOT in the implementation of these rules, and recognizes that good quality access management rules are warranted to improve public safety and manage traffic. That said, the City is concerned that current MDOT rules and the implementation of such may conflict with the City's intent to allow greater development in some areas, such as along Searsport Avenue.

The City's current access management standards are less strict than the state standards. That said, the City believes it has often been effective in managing the number of curb cuts on state roads located within the urban compact area, including efforts to reduce the number of curb-cuts at existing businesses when they apply for new permits. The City also recognizes that it should review its current access management standards to ensure its standards well address public safety needs, while also allowing appropriate types of development.

Belfast and the surrounding communities lack effective alternative transportation options in comparison with more densely developed communities in other areas of the State. There is no daily, City-wide bus service for all residents, and public transportation options are very limited. Thus, residents are largely dependent on their privately-owned vehicles for daily trips to work, stores and elsewhere. Reference section B.3. for a description of current public transportation services.

*6. Lack of transportation links between neighborhoods, schools, recreation, shopping, and public gathering areas:*

Much of the densely developed area located within or near the Route One by-pass has a well established system of neighborhood blocks connected by sidewalks and streets. The area features most of the City's parks, two of its schools, and the downtown retail and service area. Outside of the bypass, Belfast is accessible primarily by roadways. Much of the development in these areas occurs linearly along the adjacent road. There are few neighborhoods and even fewer connecting roads/streets and sidewalks. That said, the City has worked to use both City and MDOT monies to install

pedestrian oriented improvements on Route 1 to foster greater connectivity and to provide safer routes to the City schools located outside of the bypass.

The City believes that parking is generally adequate for current and projected future use at most schools, recreation, shopping and public gathering areas. Some downtown parking lots require improvements, and there likely always will be a need for more parking near the harbor in the summer, but on the whole, the City does not feel that Belfast has a significant shortage of parking. Municipal parking lot locations and capacity are noted in C.3. (below), and this public parking augments the onsite parking provided at shopping and other locations. Current and recommended pedestrian and bicycle routes are noted in both sections B.8. and C.2. Concern for improving the safety of these routes has helped shape the recommendations in this chapter. Residents in general, especially children and the elderly, should be able to get around portions of the City without depending exclusively on motor vehicles.

*7. Closed or posted bridges or roads:*

There are no closed bridges or roads. The City, however, routinely posts seasonal weight limits on many of its roads in the early spring when such roads are most susceptible to damage because of 'break-up' and a poor road base.

*8. Pedestrian and bicycling safety.*

Belfast has devoted increasing attention and resources to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety in the past 20 years. Two of the premier projects are the reconstruction of the Armistice Bridge (Footbridge) across the Passagassawakeag River which the City completed in 2006 at a cost of \$3.6 million (\$2.6 million in City funds), and the Harbor Walk project which created connectivity along the Belfast waterfront between the Armistice Bridge and the Boathouse at Steamboat Landing; a project which was completed in 2013 at a cost of \$1.6 million (\$800,000 in City funds).

In 2010, the City also purchased the former right-of-way owned by the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad. In 2016 the City completed construction of the Rail Trail, a 2.2 mile multi-use path within the rail corridor, which runs along the upper stretches of the Passagassawakeag River. In addition to the Harbor Walk and Rail Trail projects, the City has made improvements to key intersections, extended and reconstructed sidewalks and explored

avenues to foster greater pedestrian and bicycle use to increase connectivity.

In 2008 the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition and Belfast Trails prepared a report entitled *The Vision for Pedestrian, Biking, and Hiking Mobility in Belfast*, which identified pedestrian and bicycling safety concerns and which was produced at the request of the Belfast Vibrancy Committee. Key concerns included: Route 1 crossings at Route 52, Belmont Ave/Route 3, and Route 141; all of which are heavily used pedestrian and bicycle routes that connect downtown Belfast with key destinations outside the bypass. As noted in the report, “We view them as critical because they are the most lacking in infrastructure and planning in terms of safety relative to their high rate of pedestrian use (or potential use) and because they involve routes and intersections with heavy auto traffic.” This report helped spur actions on several of the most critical projects, and prompted the City Council to appoint and designate a Pedestrian, Biking and Hiking Committee to regularly advise the Council.

Key concerns identified in the above Vision report and how the City has addressed the request are identified below:

- a. Route 52: (Destinations: Bank of America, Walsh Ball Field, Little River Community Trail, YMCA, Troy Howard Middle School).

Status: In 2010 community members, the City, and MDOT implemented a Safe Routes to School project which enhanced pedestrian access across Route 1 at the Route 52 intersection. It featured adding a no turn on red signal for vehicles, a pedestrian activated signalized crosswalk on Route 1 and a duratherm cross-walk.

- b. Route 1 and 141 area: (Destinations: East Side School, East Side businesses on Route 1, Patterson Hill/Robbins Rd. residential community)

Status: In 2010 the City used a MDOT Traffic Calming grant to make initial improvements to the Route 1 and Route 141 intersection to enhance pedestrian safety. Improvements included relocating the cross walk to the north side of the intersection, installing a duratherm crosswalk, installing pedestrian activated warning signals, and similar improvements. In 2013, the City, with the assistance of a Traffic Calming grant, made additional improvements to benefit pedestrians, with much of the focus on the initial

section of Route 141, including extending the sidewalk on Route 141 and relocating the crosswalk on that road. .

#### Sidewalks and Crosswalks

Many of the City's existing sidewalks are in poor condition and require reconstruction rather than only resurfacing. However, the City has seen increased support for improving sidewalks and crosswalks in recent years. The City Council has more than doubled funding for sidewalk improvements and construction in recent budgets.

General recommendations regarding sidewalks:

- Mark all crosswalks prominently with high visibility cones for a longer portion of the year (i.e. not just in summer).
- Inventory condition of all sidewalks (and identify problems for wheelchair access)

#### 9. Light pollution

Lighting standards are included in the Belfast Code of Ordinances. The City now controls all streetlights and is in the process of installing LED lights throughout. The intention is to have energy efficient lighting that provides adequate, high quality lighting while minimizing light pollution.

- b. What conflicts are caused by multiple road uses, such as a major State or U.S. route that passes through the community or its downtown and serves as a local service road as well?*

Routes 1 and 3 are major State routes that serve a large volume of through traffic. See the Transportation Map for these figures. These roads also serve for local commerce in Belfast. These different uses can create conflicts, especially in regards to speed. The installation of traffic signals at key intersections on Route 3 (Belmont Ave & Main Street) has helped regulate traffic. Enforcement of posted speeds is crucial. The limited use of traffic calming measures in some areas of Route 1, particularly along Searsport Avenue, have been or are being implemented. A sizable portion of Belfast's business activity is located downtown, not on Routes 1 or 3.

Conflicts in Belfast also occur between how the City and State may view use of a road. The main area of conflict appears to be Searsport Avenue (Route 1). Belfast extended public sewer service to this area in the mid-1990's and views Searsport Avenue as an area which can

support significant development. In contrast, it appears that MDOT would prefer the City limit the amount of development along much of Searsport Avenue. At present, few use conflicts occur westerly of Crocker Road on Route 3, and the main concerns on state roads, such as Routes 52, 137, and 141, appear to be the speed of traffic in areas which often support residential development.

*c. Upon review of state and regional transportation plans, State transportation plans that should be reviewed include Maine DOT's 20 Year Long Range Plan, its 6 Year Plan and its most recent Biennial Capital Work Plan. What are their impacts on your current and future community plans? What actions can the community take to address identified impacts?*

MDOT's Long Range Transportation Improvement Plan provides general goals for the maintenance and improvement of the state transportation system to meet the need of residents and businesses. These goals are in agreement generally with the Belfast Comprehensive Plan. There are no Belfast specific projects or impacts included in this plan; however, a lack of adequate funding to preserve and enhance the state transportation network will impact Belfast along with many other Maine communities over the next twenty years. The community will need to lobby Maine DOT directly for adequate transportation investments in Belfast and the region.

The 2019-2021 Maine DOT Work Plan includes these projects in Belfast:

- Belfast, pedestrian facility improvements along Route 1, Route 52, Chestnut Street, Bayview Street, and Mechanic Street. \$614,143.
- Belfast Municipal Airport, safety and infrastructure improvements that may include obstruction removal – Phase 2, runway 33. \$221,450.
- Belfast, Poor Mills Road, Sheldon Bridge replacement over Goose River, located 0.89 of a mile east of Shepard Road. \$715,000.
- Belfast, Goose River Bridge replacement over Goose River, located 0.15 of a mile east of Mitchell Street. \$2,355,000.
- Belfast, Waldo Avenue, painting bearings and beam ends on the Waldo Avenue Bridge over Route 1. Located 0.05 of a mile northwest of Field Street.

*d. Do local road design standards support the community's desired land use pattern? If growth areas are located on arterial highways Arterials or highways that are intended to provide long-distance connections between towns and regional centers. Volumes of*

*traffic typically range from 5,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day. Arterials are divided between “principal” and “minor” arterials. How will growth in these areas affect the ability of the arterial to safely and efficiently move traffic?*

The proposed major land uses (see the Land Use Chapter of this plan) including the mixed use/growth along US 1 in East Belfast and along portions of the US 1 bypass, and the area labeled ‘encourage new residential’ along the bypass, will incorporate access management controls along state roadways, shared entrances/ driveways, and new internal street networks that avoid dead-end subdivision roads wherever possible. In following these strategies, the City seeks to maintain the mobility, capacity and posted speeds of US Route 1 and Route 3. That said, potential conflicts may arise, particularly with respect for Searsport Avenue (Rte 1) because the City believes this area is well-suited for additional development. Overall, the City seeks to encourage patterns of development that do not degrade the capacity of the overall road network. For example, the City hopes to concentrate future larger retail development into the area near the Routes 1 and 3 intersection that is presently used for intense retail and office development, but in doing such, the City also recognizes that road improvements will be needed.

*e. What is the community’s schedule for regular investments in road maintenance and improvement? How are Maine DOT Urban-Rural Initiative Program (URIP) funds used to off-set municipal road improvement costs.*

The City Department of Public Works performs a wide variety of tasks associated with maintaining, and in some cases, upgrading its extensive network of City roads. For example, the City regularly resurfaces City roads on a 10 – 12 year schedule, and typically replaces culverts every other scheduled road resurfacing, about every 20 – 25 years. The City regularly maintains open drainage swales adjacent to the road, repairs and extends sidewalks, installs warning signage, sweeps many of the streets, and grades several remaining roads which have a gravel surface.

*f. What concerns does your community have regarding its policies and standards for design, construction, and maintenance of public and private local roads and bridges?*

The City is concerned that all roadways and bridges that are constructed be well engineered and built to last so that potential damage from flooding and adverse weather and use can be minimized. Substandard design or construction will result in higher costs to

taxpayers and/or subdivision associations for repair and remediation. Road damage from flooding, adverse weather conditions and from use, especially heavy trucking activity, requires that roads be built to appropriate standards, including sufficient sub-bases, drainage systems and grading. While this may cost more in development costs upfront, it will reduce costs for the taxpayers, residents, and business owners, all of whom depend on the road network, in the long term. To that end, the City has adopted and enforced good quality road construction standards through implementation of its subdivision and site plan regulations, and the City Council will only accept a road for public ownership if it is engineered and construction of the road is inspected by City engineer to determine compliance with City requirements.

(2). *Parking*

a. *What are the parking issues in the community?*

Parking is generally sufficient in most parts of the City. The City owns and maintains 2 large public parking areas (60 – 100 vehicles each), an additional 4 smaller public parking lots, and a significant amount of designated on-street public parking in its downtown and waterfront areas. While this is a significant amount of parking, there are concerns that the increased amount of growth which has occurred in the downtown in the past several years, and an increase in the number of major events may lead to temporary shortages in the amount of parking. At present, there is no cost (no meters) to use any City parking space or facility.

Most issues associated with the use of existing public parking areas fall into the category of a nuisance rather than a crisis. Examples of these conflicts are as follows:

- Employees of downtown businesses and offices park in on-street parking spaces rather than the off-street parking lots which limits the amount of parking readily available to customers. In 2012 the City revised its parking ordinance, increased enforcement and worked cooperatively with Our Town Belfast (local Main Street organization) and local business owners to address this concern and it appears that these efforts have helped to lessen problems.
- There often is a conflict between short-term and longer-term users at the limited amount of parking near the City harbor.
- There is more public parking along lower Main Street than upper Main Street.
- Periodic events which involve a significant amount of customers can

overburden the amount of public parking available in a select area, including events such as the call for jury duty at the Superior Court House.

- Similar to many communities, there is not enough parking to support a major event, which results in the need to use off-site satellite parking lots and the transport of people to the event.
- b. *Do local parking standards promote development in desired areas or do they drive it to outlying areas?*

Belfast believes it has adopted progressive parking standards which support attracting small scale development to its downtown and working waterfront area. For example, Belfast does not require any on-site parking in much of the downtown area, and the Planning Board has the authority to grant reductions in the amount of on-site parking required in other areas in the downtown and along the working waterfront. Also, through the contract zoning provisions the City has adopted for some uses, larger-scale proposals could have some flexibility regarding the amount of parking provided to complement existing, traditional downtown development patterns.

Clearly, there also is market demand to locate retail, office and job creation activities outside of the downtown area. Certain retail facilities want to locate directly on Routes 1 or 3 to take advantage of the large volume of through-traffic, some of which make brief stops at these facilities on their way to destinations beyond Belfast. Belfast believes the amount of parking it requires is consistent with industry norms. Further, the City restricts the maximum amount of parking which can be provided on a site and its standards encourage the use of shared parking. The City updated its parking standards in 2010, and these standards can be found in its Code of Ordinances, Chapter 98, Technical Standards Article VIII. Parking and Loading Facilities).

- c. *How do local ordinances consider safety related to parking lot layout and circulation for vehicles, pedestrians and all other users?*

Safety of vehicles and pedestrians is one of the stated purposes of the parking and loading facilities section of the Belfast Code; reference Chapter 98, Technical Standards, Article VIII, Parking and Loading Facilities. To that end, specific standards to ensure clearly defined entrances and adequate parking and space for circulation patterns are included in this ordinance provision.

- d. *What community investments are needed to expand or improve parking?*

The City, in 2010, commissioned the development of a master plan for its downtown and waterfront area which examined realistic approaches

the City could implement to increase the amount of on-street and off-street parking in this area. A recommendation of this study which has now been completed was the construction of improvements to the Cross Street/Miller Street/Spring Street area which created an additional 35 on-street parking spaces. This project was funded by a \$500,000 CDBG Grant, which was matched by City funds.

*(3) Other Modes of Transportation:*

- a. *What transit services are available to meet the current and future needs of community residents? If transit services are not adequate, how will the community address the needs?*

WaldoCAP (Community Action Partners) – Waldo County Transportation provides the Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH), a limited scheduled shuttle-style bus route service around Belfast. The DASH operates Monday through Friday from 8AM to 12PM and 1PM-5PM. Fares range from \$2.00 one-way to \$50.00 for a monthly pass.

WaldoCAP also operates a bus route service between Belfast and shopping venues in other towns. Twice monthly trips are made from Belfast to Waterville with stops in Waldo, Brooks, Knox, Thorndike, Unity and Burnham. Twice monthly trips are made from Belfast to Augusta with stops in Belmont, Morrill, Searsport, Montville, Liberty and Palermo. Twice monthly trips are made from Belfast to Rockland with stops in Northport and Lincolnville. Weekly trips are made from Belfast to Bangor, with stops in Searsport, Stockton Springs, Prospect, Frankfort, and Winterport. Weekday trips are made between Belfast and Searsport. Once a week trips are made from Belfast to these communities Troy, Unity, Thorndike, Freedom, Knox, Jackson, Belmont, Brooks, Waldo, Swanville, Liberty, Morrill, Monroe, Montville, Winterport, Frankfort, Palermo, Prospect, Stockton Springs, and Searsport. Trips three times a week are made from Belfast to Lincolnville Center, Lincolnville Beach and Northport. Fares for all these trips are \$3.50 or less. Waldo CAP also offers door-to-door transportation to Belfast from all towns in Waldo County and is available for grocery shopping, personal business and medical appointments for low-income families. This service requires an application process. Waldo CAP provides transportation by bus, van or automobile for MaineCare members to medical appointments for clients that cannot arrange their own medical transportation. Medical transportation is provided by agency and or volunteer drivers.

Concord Coach (Trailways) offers daily service on their Maine Coastal Route between Orono and Logan Airport. In addition to Belfast, other key stops include Bangor, Rockland, Portland and Boston.

The frequency of scheduled bus service is not sufficient for most individuals to be able to partake on a regular basis, as would be required for commuting to work daily. The community's relatively small total population and its dispersed location of residents and of workplaces inhibit public transportation to some extent. However, with an aging population and rising fuel costs, public transportation may become a more feasible future option. Service between the in-town area and local stores, such as Hannaford and Reny's, may prove feasible. Strategies to address this need are presented at the end of this chapter.

- b. *If the community hosts a major transportation terminal, such as an airport, rail, or ferry terminal, how does it connect to other transportation systems?*

The Belfast Municipal Airport (KBST) is located at the edge of the Airport access road off of Lower Congress Street near the Route 1 intersection (see the Transportation Network map). The Airport offers a range of services to charter services and private aircraft, however, there are no scheduled carriers that offer flights between Belfast and other locales. As such, the Airport is a significant facility, but it is not a critical part of the transportation system for most residents. Information regarding the Airport is provided below.

The Airport, which is adjacent to the Belfast Airport Business Park has a paved runway 4,002 feet long and 100 feet wide, Runway 15-33. It is lighted and open 24 hours a day. Aviation fuel services are available. Tie downs are available. There are about twenty t-hangars currently at or under construction. The Fixed Base Operator (FBO) is Maine Scenic Airways. According to the FAA, in 2019 there were about 15 aircraft based on the field, and an average of 27 aircraft operations daily, of which 60% were general aviation, 20% transient general aviation, and 20% air taxi. An Airport Layout Plan Update was published in 2008 and the City is working to implement the plan and is constructing a new runway 15 partial parallel taxiway and a runway 33 bypass taxiway.

The City has made a significant number of improvements to the airport in the past 5 years. Athenahealth, one of the City's major employers, is particularly interested in the use of private jets, as is the Front Street Shipyard (major boatbuilder) which opened for business in 2011. Strategies from the plan recommended for implementation are presented at the end of this chapter.

- c. *If the community hosts any public airports, what coordination has been undertaken to ensure that required airspace is protected now and in*

*the future? How does the community coordinate with the owner(s) of private airports?*

Belfast has zoned the Belfast Municipal Airport (a municipal airport) and land around the airport as either Business Park-Airport District or Airport Growth District. Within both of these districts, aviation uses are permitted, there are structure height limitations, and residential uses are prohibited. Also, the Future Land Use Plan that has been adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan recommends that the current Airport Growth zoning district be replaced by an Airport Overlay District which can be used to better manage uses and activities which could conflict with the airport. The land use regulations the City has established for the areas surrounding its Airport are consistent with FAA guidelines. There are no private airports in Belfast.

*(4) Coastal Communities only:*

*a. What land-side and water-side transportation facilities are needed?*

The City of Belfast has an authentic working waterfront. The waterfront supports two boat building operations (Front Street Shipyard established in 2011 and French & Webb established in the 1990's), a tugboat operation (serves Mack Point), three private marinas, two public marinas, a cadre of small restaurant and retail operations, and three public parks (Steamboat Landing, Heritage Park, and land near the Armistice Bridge). The establishment of the Front Street Shipyard, which purchased and redeveloped the former Stinson Seafoods property in 2011, has had a transformative impact on the waterfront, including use of the Inner Harbor area. The Shipyard has the largest marine travel-lifts (165 and 400 tons) located north of Newport, Rhode Island.

Unfortunately, the amount of area which can be used for the working waterfront is very limited. There is only about 2,500 lineal feet of shore land which has the water depth to support significant marine development, and the deeper waters only occur on the westerly side of the River. This area is framed by the Armistice Bridge to the north, and the Steamboat Landing area to the south. The lack of additional land underscores the need for the City to obtain maximum beneficial use of on-shore public and private lands in this area, and to wisely use its inner harbor to support commercial fishing and working waterfront uses.

Belfast, like many smaller coastal harbors, needs float and docking facilities that can support larger private and commercial vessel operations. For example, while Belfast is now among the top 10 ports in Maine regarding the number of cruise ship passengers per year, the size

of a cruise ship that may call on Belfast is limited by our current docking facilities. Further, more dock space is needed for transient vessels, and the Harbor Committee would like to install better quality fuel facilities. The 2013 construction of an expanded commercial fisherman's wharf has helped address the needs of a small but active commercial fishing fleet (mostly lobsters), however, more area is needed land-side to support operations of the public harbor.

- b. *How does the community protect access to facilities for island travelers, currently and in the future?*

There are no regularly scheduled ferry services provided from or to Belfast.

- c. *How do the community's land use regulations mesh with Maine DOT, regional, and local objectives for marine transportation facilities?*

The City enforces its state-approved shoreland zoning and floodplain management ordinance provisions. In 2004 the City worked with the Maine Dept Environmental Protection to overhaul its shoreland and zoning regulations for its working waterfront. The City's regulations allow intense use of the working waterfront area; for example, 100 percent lot coverage, no setback from the high water mark and flexibility on structure height. The City regularly advises applicants to insure compliance with applicable state and federal regulations relating to development of marine transportation facilities. Further, the City has routinely worked with the Maine DOT, Maine Dept of Conservation, and Army Corps of Engineers regarding the construction of marine facilities, and to have the ACOE conduct a maintenance dredge of the Belfast Harbor channel.

(5) *Environmental and Cultural Considerations:*

- a. *What, if any, environmental degradation caused by state or local transportation facilities or operations (e.g. wildlife mortality, habitat fragmentation, erosion, groundwater contamination, non-point source pollution) is occurring?*

The City is unaware of any significant environmental degradation from state or local transportation facilities or operations. If such degradation is occurring the City would work with the state and facility operators to reduce or eliminate such pollution consistent with applicable laws.

- b. *What are the community's objectives for preserving or protecting important identified or designated scenic, historic, or cultural resources adjacent to transportation facilities?*

Transportation projects in historically sensitive areas should be designed in a context sensitive manner that preserves the historic qualities of the areas whenever possible. Most of the City's downtown is designated as a Historic District and a portion is designated as a Commercial Historic District. These districts are on the National Register of Historic Places. Further, the City, through its In-town Design Review Ordinance, has established a permitting process that applies to new construction, renovation of the exterior of an existing structure, or the demolition of an existing structure to ensure such development is compatible with the existing character of buildings in the surrounding area. Continuing, the Belfast Planning Board, through its Subdivision and Site Plan Ordinances, has the authority to consider "aesthetic, cultural and natural values" in its review of an application.

- c. *How does the community address any transportation-related noise concerns?*

State law sets noise level limits for motor vehicle operation, motor vehicle engines and exhaust, and vehicle sound systems. Enforcement is the responsibility of the police. Violations are traffic infractions. Two nuisance issues which warrant additional attention are noise generated by motorcycles with no mufflers or illegal mufflers, and jake brakes associated with truck traffic.

- d. *What steps can the community take to encourage development to occur in a manner that minimizes transportation-related environmental impacts such as habitat fragmentation and/or vehicular CO2 emissions?*

The City can and has encouraged housing development in areas close to existing public and private services, so that residents can choose to walk rather than drive, and so that public transportation with fixed-routes becomes more practical at sufficient development densities to provide adequate ridership levels. In rural portions of the City, the use of conservation subdivisions/cluster can help to preserve habitats by setting aside ecologically sensitive but developable land into permanent conservation. See the Land Use Chapter of this plan.

*(5). Land Use:*

- a. *How do existing and proposed major transportation facilities complement the community's vision?*

Aside from the WaldoCAP bus service, there are no major transportation facilities in Belfast, nor are any proposed. Improvements to bike and pedestrian pathways have been a priority of the City in recent years. Existing facilities would be enhanced with development as proposed in the Land Use Chapter of this plan.

- b. *How do local land use plans and decisions affect safety, congestion, mobility, efficiency, and interconnectivity of the transportation system?*

The City's adopted future land use plan recommends encouraging denser residential development and more intense non-residential development in the following areas: areas located within the Route 1 by-pass, such as the downtown area; in areas immediately adjacent to the Route 1 by-pass, such as the Belfast Business Park and the area that supports Bank of America, athenahealth and most of the City's larger retail establishments; and adjacent to Searsport Avenue (Rte 1 on eastside). These areas have existing services and are more likely to attract development.

The Belfast Planning Board, through its existing land use ordinances, particularly its site plan, subdivision plan and technical standards ordinances, must consider factors such as safety, congestion and mobility in its review and approval of a development permit. The City's ordinance includes access management standards and the Board often uses the services of the professional traffic consultant to analyze traffic impacts.

- c. *How do existing land uses and development trends support or inhibit cost effective passenger transportation systems and the efficient use of freight rail systems?*

Densities within many areas located inside the Route 1 by-pass are quite high, often 7,500 square feet for single family and two family residential units, and there are no density limits in the downtown commercial zoning district. These are sufficient densities to foster public transportation and, through the allowance of mixed uses within downtown, promote walking from home to stores and such. Unfortunately, Belfast's relatively small population, about 6,714 persons, impedes development of a good quality public transportation system. Also, there are no freight rail lines in Belfast, and there does not appear to be any demand for rail freight. See the Land Use Chapter of this plan.

- d. *Does the community have in place, or does it need to put into place, access management or traffic permitting measures? How do these measures correlate with Maine DOT's access management program and regulations for traffic permitting of large development?*

Belfast has adopted access management standards; reference Chapter 98, Technical Standards, City Ordinances. The Belfast Planning Board applies these standards in its review of applications for a subdivision, site plan, and use permit. At present, City standards are not as strict as MDOT access management standards, however most streets to which

these standards apply support different volumes and speeds of traffic than are typical of most state roads. That said, Belfast intends to review and refine its current access management standards when it pursues implementation of its future land use plan.

- e. *How do the community's local road design standards support the type of village, suburban, or rural land use patterns the town wants?*

Belfast has five street design categories based upon the use and volume of a proposed roadway (Urban Lane, Rural Lane, Residential Street, Collector Street, Industrial/Commercial Street) (See Article III, Street Design Standards, Chapter 98, Technical Standards. This approach supports appropriate road design based upon the proposed use and the existing conditions of the site and the neighborhood in which the proposed street will be located. Also, the City Planning Board routinely allows minor streets, 16 feet of travel width with 2 feet paved shoulders, for lots which serve less than 7 housing units.

- f. *Do planned or recently built subdivision roads (residential or commercial) simply dead-end or do they allow for expansion to adjacent land and encourage the creation of a network of local streets? Where dead-ends are unavoidable, are mechanisms in place to encourage shorter dead-ends resulting in compact and efficient subdivision designs?*

Belfast has experienced little to no subdivision development in the last 10 years. Of the few subdivisions, most approved or constructed subdivisions used a dead-end road and few provided opportunities for connection to adjacent land or encouraged the creation of a network of local streets. That said, in most such subdivisions, there was no realistic opportunity or value associated with requiring greater connectivity.

### **C. Conditions and Trends**

(Minimum data required to address state goals)

- (1). *The community's Comprehensive Planning Transportation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Transportation, and the Office, or their designees.*

This data set has been incorporated and updated in the Belfast Comprehensive Plan maps titled: Transportation Network, Transportation Network (Downtown), and Transportation Posted Speeds and Compact Urban Area.

- (2). *Highways, Bridges, Sidewalks, and Bicycle Routes:*

a. *Location and overall condition of roads, bridges, sidewalks, and*

*bicycle facilities, including any identified deficiencies or concerns.*

The Transportation network map shows the locations roads and bridges. Similar to roads owned by the State of Maine, nearly all City streets are paved, however, the sub-base for many of these roads is inadequate which leads to frequent and long-term maintenance problems. In short, such roads are usually in reasonable condition during the warmer months, but suffer frost heaves and similar problems in the winter. The City has reconstructed several of its major streets located within the Route 1 by-pass, such as Front Street from Main Street to Pierce Street, Miller Street and Northport Avenue; however the total number of streets and rural roads which warrant reconstruction dwarf the available funds. As such, the City commits to regular maintenance of its streets.

The City also has committed significant local monies to maintaining its bridges. In 2006, the City completed reconstruction of the Belfast Footbridge, which was the original MDOT Rte 1 bridge, at a cost of nearly \$3.6 million. In 2009, the City reconstructed the culvert bridge on Oak Hill Road, and it also regularly replaces culverts.

Lastly, see B. 8, above, for recommended pedestrian improvements to address safety concerns. Sidewalks are located along many of the roads within the downtown and area within the Rte 1 by-pass.

- b. *Identify potential off-road connections that would provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods, schools, waterfronts and other activity centers.*

The City has undertaken several in the last 5+ years to examine how to achieve better connectivity through-out the City. In 2006, the City completed reconstruction of the Belfast Footbridge across the Passagassawakeag River. In 2013 the City constructed the Belfast Harbor Walk project along .75 mile of its working waterfront with a total cost of \$1.8 million. In 2009 – 2010, the City used MDOT monies to construct pedestrian crossing improvements at the Rte 1/Rte 52 and Rte 1/Rte 141 intersections. In 2016 the City completed construction of the Rail Trail, a 2.2 mile multi-use path within the rail corridor, which runs along the upper stretches of the Passagassawakeag River.

Continuing, the City Council, in 2009, established a Pedestrian, Biking and Hiking Committee, and their recommendations are included in this Chapter. The Council also charged the City Parks and Recreation Committee with identifying options for preservation and development of the City's range-ways, most of which provide public access to the coast. The City has begun implementing a range-way management plan which has included public art installations and pedestrian-way identifiers

to preserve the use of these coastal access points.

Further, the City has focused on connectivity both in-town and regionally, connecting pedestrians to recreation, cultural, and scenic routes within the City in addition to connecting the local trails to neighboring trail systems and communities. Museum in the Streets is an example of a local program developed and implemented by the Belfast Historical Preservation Society that connects recreation with cultural and educational programs. A few examples of regional connectivity of trails include:

#### Connecting trails

This section describes trails (either existing or envisioned) that connect the City of Belfast with other trail systems, other communities, or other destinations outside the immediate City. We envision initiative, funding and maintenance for these trails to come from other organizations, such as the BBWC, Coastal Mountains Land Trust. Support from the City would be in the form of cooperation in planning, letters of support for funding, and acknowledgment of the value trails bring to the community.

1. Rail Trail to City Point Bridge
2. Little River Trail (Belfast River Water District to Stover Preserve via Little River Community Trail, Troy Howard, and the Hutchinson Center)  
This trail forms a ring around Belfast, from the Little River Water District to the Stover Preserve on the Passy River at Doak Rd.
3. East Coast Greenway, an interurban pedestrian and bicycle route connecting the entire East Coast, from Florida to Maine and the Maritimes
4. Maine Birding Trail: Belfast is part of the Maine Birding Trail (see [Mainebirdingtrail.com](http://Mainebirdingtrail.com))
5. Inter-town trail connectors for hiking and skiing
  - a) Moose Point State Park and Searsport
  - b) Frye Mountain
  - c) Durham State Forest & Northport
  - d) Hurds Pond
6. Passagassawaukeag Canoe Trail and Goose River Canoe Trail

- c. *Identify major traffic (including pedestrian) generators, such as schools, large businesses, public gathering areas/activities, etc. and related hours of their operations.*

Major Traffic Generators	Hours of Operation
Waldo County General Hospital	24 hours per day
Bank of America/Athena Health Care	7 AM – 6 PM
High School	7 AM – 2 PM
Middle School	7 AM – 3 PM
Elementary Schools	7 AM – 3 PM

In addition to traffic associated with the above schools and employers, there are a number of public events that occur mostly in the summer that result in additional congestion. Further, overall summer traffic is much heavier than winter traffic.

- d. *Identify policies and standards for the design, construction and maintenance of public and private roads. Identify the location of private roads and assess their potential to become public roads.*

The City has an adopted standard which it uses to determine if a newly constructed street can become a City owned road. This standard is consistent with good quality road construction standards and includes standards such as but not limited to: 18 inches of road base, 4 inches of asphalt, 20 feet of travel width with 3 feet gravel shoulders and such. Unfortunately, most current City roads were constructed prior to the adoption of the above standards and most do not satisfy current requirements. The City regularly maintains all City streets, including any accompanying stormwater and sidewalk improvements.

There are about 150 privately owned roads in Belfast. Many of the roads are unpaved, less than 500 feet in length and serve only 3 – 6 houses. Other private roads, however, are paved and serve a significant number of residences. For example the streets in the Crosby Manor Estates project will ultimately serve about 60 units, the Tara Mews Subdivision about 26 units, and the Oceans East Housing Project about 38 units. Some of these roads are associated with major condominium or affordable housing projects, while others, such as Bowling Green Lane and Birch Street serve single family residential subdivisions. In most larger and recent developments, the City required establishment of a homeowners association to maintain the private road. For a sizable number of the private roads that serve smaller projects, which often were initially developed through the exempt division of property

provision, there is no homeowners association, which can lead to poor road maintenance and problems for emergency vehicles to reach all residences.

In the case of most private roads, there is little likelihood that the adjacent homeowners could successfully request that the City accept the road unless they made significant and costly improvements at their expense to satisfy City road acceptance standards. In recent years, several neighborhood associations have proposed that the City accept their street in its current condition, however, the Council refused to do such because the road was substandard.

It is noted that the City Assessor’s office maintains a current list of all public and private roads in Belfast.

*(3). Parking:*

- a. *List and locate municipal parking areas including size, condition, and usage.*

Municipal Parking Lots Name/Location	Spaces	Condition	Use
Washington St	@ 95 paved	Fair	Heavy
Cross St	@ 28 Paved	Fair	Moderate
Beaver St	@ 60 Paved	Good	Heavy
Steamboat Landing (2 areas)	@ 45 Paved	Good	Moderate
Belfast Commons	@ 16 Paved	Excellent	Moderate
Belfast Harbor	@ 40 Paved	Good	Heavy/Seasonal

*Other Modes of Transportation:*

- a. *List and locate all airports within or adjacent to the community and describe applicable airport zoning and airspace protection ordinances in place.*

See B.3.b. above.

- b. *Identify inter-local, fixed route, commuter, and demand response bus or van services, including private or public operator information and local government involvement.*

See B.3.a. above.

*(4). Coastal Communities:*

- a. *Location of current and potential seaport terminals. Identify whether seaport terminal is of local, regional, or state significance, its ownership/management and use (type and quantity/frequency of goods shipped in or out). List land-side and water-side facilities associated with port.*

There are no current or potential seaport terminals in Belfast.

- b. *Identify public ferry service and private boat transportation support facilities including related water-side (docks/piers/wharves) and land-side (parking) facilities.*

There are no current or potential public ferry services in Belfast. Two small cruise ship lines, however, now call on Belfast during the summer months, and there is some interest from larger cruise ship lines. In addition, there are boat charter rentals in Belfast, including sailing and motorized tour boats that regularly provide excursion tours during the summer months.

*(5). Environmental and Cultural Considerations:*

- a. *Location of evacuation routes identified in an emergency response plan, if applicable.*

Route 3 is identified as an evacuation routes in the FEMA-approved Waldo County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Route 3 would serve as the principal evacuation route inland, while Route 1 would serve as the south or northeast evacuation route.

- b. *Identify areas with transportation related noise concerns.*
- c. *Identify areas where inappropriate lighting affects transportation safety.*

An area identified in the Route 1 Safety Audit that MDOT conducted with City representatives in 2006 was the Route 1/Route 137 exchange. The concern was inadequate lighting. Concern also has been raised regarding inadequate lighting for both pedestrians and motorists on Starrett Drive. A lack of lighting on Front Street was addressed during the reconstruction of Front Street. Belfast has a policy of not installing street lights on most rural roads, except at intersections where streets connect. Belfast has gained control of street lighting throughout the City. Led lights

have been installed to increase energy efficiency and cost savings.

2. *Identify and describe scenic, historic, or cultural resources within or adjacent to transportation facilities that the community wants to protect, such as street trees, covered bridges, etc.*

Belfast's downtown has significant historic resources, as reflected in the designation on the National Register of Historic Places; see the map titled Belfast Historic District/Belfast Commercial Historic District. Accordingly, transportation infrastructure improvements in this area including sidewalk treatments and street lighting, among other investments, should be in keeping with the historic character of the downtown.

3. *Known locations with opportunities to restore habitat connections disrupted by a transportation facility owned and maintained by the community.*

The City is unaware of any City road which has had a major impact on disrupting a significant wildlife habitat area as identified on the IF&W habitat maps. Most identified habitat areas in Belfast are located in areas in which there are no publicly owned roads. One potential area is near the intersection of Smart Road and Achorn Road which is identified as waterfowl habitat, however this is a minor road crossing. The City's main approach will be to ensure that new road construction, both public and private, considers habitat related concerns.

(6). *Land Use:*

- a. *Identify current local land use management strategies (such as access management, zoning, density, and minimum lot size standards) that enhance or detract from the safety and efficiency of the transportation system (including highway, air, bus, bike, pedestrian, marine, and rail services.)*

The City has addressed this concern in its response to other issues in this plan. Overall the City would note the following:

The City Future Land Use Plan encourages denser residential development and more intense non-residential development in areas in which public services are located. The Future Land Use Plan also encourages mixed used development in many of these areas.

The Future Land Use Plan, particularly in areas located within the Route 1 by-pass, typically allows minimum lot size requirements of 7,500 square feet with 60 feet of street frontage for single family and two family houses. In addition, in areas in which multi-family housing it to be allowed, density can approach 15 or so units per acre, and the City

does not apply density standards to elderly housing and congregate care facilities.

The City has adopted Subdivision, Site Plan, Zoning, Shoreland, Floodplain, Technical Standard and Building Regulation Ordinances to assist in managing impacts associated with new development or the redevelopment of existing sites. The City also employs professional staff to assist the Planning Board in the administration of these Ordinances. Belfast notes that it adopted its first Zoning Ordinance in 1934, and that it is accustomed to performing reviews of minor and major development projects. The City's standards clearly address transportation and traffic concerns, as well as requiring sidewalks and bicycle facilities when appropriate.

The City Future Land Use Plan lays out how the City intends to address future development in Belfast.

#### **D. Policies**

- (1). To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
- (2). To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.
- (3). To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.
- (4). To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).
- (5). To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). Capital Improvements Plan. Develop or continue to update a prioritized five year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation system facilities that reflects community, regional, and state objectives.
  - a. Prepare and update a multi-year road improvement program to include maintenance, upgrading and rebuilding priorities by

year, as well as costs for these projects, for all roads.

- (2). Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.
  - a. Gateway One. The City was an active participant in the Gateway One Planning project. MDOT, however, defunded this project in 2010 which adversely affected the implementation of its recommendations, particularly on a region wide scale. The City, however, will examine recommendations identified in the Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan (2009) and determine if implementing such recommendations may benefit Belfast.
- (3). Belfast Safety Audit. The City should examine recommendations in the Belfast Safety Audit conducted jointly with MDOT and FHA (Federal Highway Administration) staff in 2006 and identify recommendations that it wants to pursue implementing. The City also will examine recommendations in the 2012 Safety Audit for the Route 1 and Route 141 intersection and seek to implement desired improvements.
- (4). Ordinance Amendments. Enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:
  - a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA §73).
  - b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 MRSA §704. The intent is to maintain and improve traffic flows, and improve safety. In most cases, future land use ordinance provisions should be in harmony with access management performance standards set in current state regulations for state and state aid roadways.
  - c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 MRSA §704-A.
- (5). Ordinance Amendments. Enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and site plans and for public and private roads, as appropriate, to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections. Further, the Belfast Planning Board, in its review of development applications, shall consider how such projects affect future street and transit connections.
- (6). Traffic Speeds. The City should work cooperatively with MDOT to address citizen concerns regarding the speed of traffic in the community. Concerns include but are not limited to:

- Examining the desirability of establishing greater consistency in the traffic speed limits posted for Route 1, particularly from the jug handle to Rte 141.
  - Examining the desirability of reducing current posted speed limits for rural roads, recognizing the condition and lay-out of the road, the amount of development on the road and its use.
- (7). Agency Interaction. Work with the Maine DOT, as appropriate, to address deficiencies in the system or conflicts between local, regional, and state priorities for the local transportation system.
- (8). Elderly and Disabled Transit Options: Work with Waldo Community Action Partners – Waldo County Transportation Office and other providers to better meet the needs of elderly and disabled residents, who lack their own transportation, by providing carpools, van/jitney, to stores and services in Belfast and other communities.
- (9). Pedestrians and Bicycles: The City will welcome opportunities to promote pedestrian and bicycle safe options by creating walking and bicycling paths. Through public participation the City will prioritize potential projects, and then seek CDBG infrastructure funds, Maine DOT Enhancement funds, and other sources in combination with City funds to connect and extend existing paths and create new paths where best suited, and in agreement with landowners. Public support for these project proposals will be obtained before the City commits resources. Also, include sidewalk repairs and maintenance in the proposed Five Year Capital Improvements Program.
- (10). Pedestrians and Bicycles: Maintain a Pedestrian, Biking and Hiking Committee as recommended in the *Vision for Pedestrian, Biking, and Hiking Mobility in Belfast (2008)* report, This group will continue to:
- Further refine this vision and clarify priority projects
  - Identify specific information needs (e.g. research sidewalk conditions, intersection use, bicycle route use, disability access needs, etc.)
  - Coordinate a way for students (through Service Learning) or other volunteers (BBWC members, Senior College, or interested individuals) to research that information.
  - Publicize the work of the committee and recruit interested individuals to help with specific mobility projects.
  - Work with the City to implement simple, immediate low-cost improvements, such as setting out crossing cones for a longer season.

- The Mobility Committee would be the primary “engine” for implementing a mobility vision for the City. It would work with the City Council to ensure that the vision is implemented in a coordinated way, that decisions are based on good information, and that the vision evolves as needed.
  - Identify factors that enhance or detract from the pedestrian’s or bicyclist’s experience, such as excessive noise, and identify approaches the City could implement to address these concerns.
- (11). Airport: Continue to work with the Maine Department of Transportation Air Transportation Division to ensure that Federal and State funds continue to be made available to the City for the maintenance and improvement of the airport, in accordance with the State’s Airport Systems Plan and the City’s Airport Master Plan. Further, examine the desirability of extending the length of the current runway to support jet traffic that will benefit area employers.
- (12). Parking: Investigate the desirability of establishing a Capital Reserve Account for purchasing and developing additional parking facilities and if warranted, providing for yearly contributions to the fund in the Capital Improvements Program. A priority area is additional parking at or near the waterfront.
- (13). Parking. City should examine opportunities to create joint use parking arrangements with the owners of private parking lots for the purpose of benefiting the public by making additional parking available. Although there were limited opportunities for such arrangements in the past decade, the need for such may increase as growth occurs in the downtown and waterfront area.
- (14). Noise Abatement. It is recognized that excessive vehicle noise is a violation of the law and that this form of pollution is both a public safety and quality of life issue. Vehicular noise from motorcycles and vehicles with illegally modified exhaust systems can cause exaggerated startle responses and reactions that can lead to accidents, hypertension, ear damage, anxiety and similar disorders; and always irritation, disturbances and fright in both people and pets. Such noise can also damage tourism. It is recommended that the Belfast Police Department change from passive enforcement (police enforce following receipt of a specific complaint) to proactive enforcement (police initiate enforcement upon witnessing excessive noise emission).

- (15). Capital Project. MDOT, in cooperation with the City, should examine the feasibility of installing a 'diverging diamond' interchange as a potential option to address current and future traffic volumes and safety at the Route 1 and Route 3 intersection. ( Note – a 'diverging diamond' is a specific type of intersection configuration that has been used in Europe and is now being constructed in several states, including but not limited to Springfield, Missouri, Alcoa, Tennessee, and Utah County, Utah, and is being considered by transportation officials in 20 additional states).

## SECTION 3.11 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### Introduction

The City of Belfast provides a range of facilities and services for its citizens. The Water District owns and operates the water supply system and the School District operates the school system. The single largest expenditure is for education. This chapter describes existing public facilities and services, and the extent to which they adequately meet the City's needs today and have the available capacity to serve Belfast for the next ten years. The goal of this chapter is to plan, finance, and maintain an efficient system of public facilities and services that will accommodate the City's future needs. See the Public Facilities Map for the location of these facilities within Belfast.

### A. State Goal

- 1. To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*

### B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1). Are municipal services adequate to meeting changes in population and demographics?*

Municipal services include emergency services, fire, police and EMT, city government administration, public works (road, storm sewer, public sewer and parks) recreation, public library, and sewer services, and others. The Belfast Water District provides public water services. Even more broadly, the term includes management and operations of actual facilities such as buildings, park and recreation areas, the city hall itself, and such. The modest decline in the population projections for Belfast during the planning period of ten years, suggests that the City will be able to handle the needs of residents and businesses without having to increase service provision, especially where current demand is below supply, like water and sewer. However, the aging of the population and expectations for improved services like ambulance and road maintenance might encourage the City to invest more in these areas.

- (2). In what ways has the community partnered with neighboring communities to share services, reduce costs and/or improve services?*

Belfast has both formal and informal agreements with surrounding towns for fire protection and emergency (ambulance) services, and the Belfast Police Department works cooperatively with the Sheriff's Office at County. Belfast shares the following facilities with residents of neighboring communities:

- Belfast Library is open to non-residents, who are charged a higher membership

fee than residents.

- Belfast's Parks, such as City Park, Heritage Park, Steamboat Landing Park and the Dog Park are open to residents and non-residents alike, and typically no fee is charged.
- Belfast Harbor and City Landing, including moorings and a launch ramp. Fees for residents and non-residents are very similar.

(3). *If the community has a public sewer system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? How is the sanitary district cooperating in the development of the comprehensive plan and related ordinances, as required by law (38 MRSA Section 1163-A). How is the sanitary district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as required by (38 MRSA Section 1163)*

The City of Belfast Wastewater Treatment System consists of 31 miles of gravity sewer lines and force mains, 18 pump stations, and a 1,490,000 gallon per day secondary wastewater treatment facility.

The City has been aggressively replacing old leaking undersized sewers with new watertight sewers that are sized to carry flows for the next century. Several wastewater-pumping stations have been upgraded, with the most recent (2012) project occurring along Front Street. The City has also been removing excess groundwater and precipitation flows from the sewer system with the goal of eliminating the two combined sewer overflow (CSO) points.

The City’s history of investing in its environmental infrastructure is paying off. The City has been able to extend the life of its present treatment facility instead of building a new plant. In the long run, this will save millions of dollars as compared to the cost of a new plant. Water quality in Belfast Harbor continues to improve and the treatment plant consistently produces a fully compliant effluent. While the City’s unseen wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure improvements are not the most visible sign of the community’s recent growth, the City’s aggressive focus on these capital improvements are the foundation upon which much of the new growth has been built.

**Table 11-1 Sewer System Excess Flow Areas**

Excess groundwater excess			
Infiltration/Snowmelt storm water inflow			
Location (Area)	GPD	GPD/Inch of rain	Work Performed
Vine/High/Waldo Ave	180,000	95,000	Future Upgrade
Miller St. side street	170,000	95,000	Future Upgrade
Main Street	80,000	50,000	System Upgraded

Glenview Lane	110,000	50,000	System Upgraded
North Ocean Street	50,000	35,000	System Upgraded
Washington/Green Street	50,000	25,000	Future Upgrade
Penobscot Terrace	90,000	10,000	System Upgraded
Mayo Street	60,000	40,000	Future Upgrade
TOTALS	790,000	400,000	

CSO abatement efforts over the past 20 years have reduced CSO flows from a historical average of 382,000 gallons/year to an average of 159,000 gallons/year the past four years. The treatment plant's design capacity is 1,000,000 GPD (Peak Hourly 3.8 MGD). There are approximately 1,475 users of the sewer system (1,200 residential and 275 commercial).

Recent sewer extensions have been few and limited in size, partly because most areas for which 'growth' is targeted have access to public sewer, and at present, there is limited need to extend existing lines to facilitate additional growth. As noted above, most City work and expenditures have focused on upgrading existing sewer lines to address infiltration and inflow concerns. Recent projects have included:

- The City initiated design services for sewer modifications in the Salmond/Cedar Street areas. This work included a short section of sewer replacement on Northport Avenue. Construction of the project began in 2006 and was completed in 2007. In all, about 4,000 LF of sewer was replaced at a cost of about \$1,100,000.
- The previously designed Fahey Street sewer was added to the open Salmond/Cedar Street sewer project's contract. Work on Condon Street was also added. Construction of this line was completed in 2007. About 2,500 LF of sewer line was replaced at a cost of about \$420,000.
- In 2007, the City updated its sewer maps to reflect sewer system modifications that had been completed as part of the CSO master planning process.
- In 2007 and 2008, the City conducted an updated Sewer System Evaluation Survey (SSES) study to assess the current condition of its sewer system as a result of the recent sewer improvements that had been conducted.
- In 2009 and 2010, the City completed the design and construction of the peak flow capacity upgrade at the wastewater treatment plant. The plant's peak hourly flow capacity was increased from 2.40 MGD to 3.8 MGD by adding new influent pumps and a larger chlorine contact reactor. The cost of this project was about \$1,650,000.
- In 2011, the City completed sewer rehabilitation work in the Glenview Lane/Penobscot Terrace areas. This included the replacement of old leaking sewers over a distance of 1,000 LF. The City also completed about 3,600 LF of sewer rehabilitation on the North Ocean Street area. The total cost of this

work was about \$1,000,000.

- In 2012, the City completed sewer improvements on Front Street to modify the hydraulics of the Miller Street CSO inlet. This project cost about \$230,000.
- In 2013 and 2014, the City initiated a flow gauging study of its sewer system to assess the results of its previous CSO abatement work, to determine the remaining sources of excess flows, and to update the present CSO Master Plan. The cost of this work has been about \$10,000.
- In 2015 through 2017, the City completed the design and construction of about 2,400 LF of sewer along Front Street and Washington Street cross-country. The sewer system related cost(s) of this project was about \$708,000.
- In 2017, the City conducted cleaning and video analysis of sewer piping on Mayo Street, Field Street, Court Street and High Street.
- In 2018 and 2019, the City initiated a flow gauging study of its sewer system to assess the results of its previous CSO abatement work, to determine the remaining sources of excess flows, and to update the present CSO Master Plan. The cost of this work has been about \$10,000

The City typically has paid most costs associated with the above extensions and has recovered only a small percentage of the improvement costs through the assessment of connection and impact fees. The Future Land Use Plan suggests that future sewer extensions should focus on infill areas within existing growth areas, such as the Lincolnville Avenue/Alto Street area (existing residential on small lots) and if the demand for residential development increases, the Waldo Avenue area; reference Residential 4 area identified in the Land Use Plan.

*(4) If the town does not have a public sewer or water system, to what extent is this preventing it from accommodating current and projected growth?*

The City operates a public sewer system and the Belfast Water District operates the water system. Overall, both services are available to areas that need these services; areas which support dense residential development and intense nonresidential development; larger retail stores (e.g. Downtown, Hannaford and Reny's), large public facilities (e.g. Troy Howard Middle School and Belfast High School), large office complexes (e.g. BOA and athenahealth), industrial development (e.g. Mathew Brothers and Ducktrap Seafoods) and denser residential development such as occurs inside the Route 1 bypass and in some areas on the eastside. Public water is available to all of the above areas. Also, water service is available to some areas in which sewer is not available, such as along sections of Swan Lake Avenue located westerly of the Back Searsport Road (end of line terminates at the intersection of Swan Lake Ave and the Back of Searsport Road), mostly because this is the route that public water is provided from the District's groundwater wells.

Most areas in which public water and sewer is not available rely upon on-site septic and water. In most cases, the density of existing development and desired future development is quite low, a 1.5 to 2 acre lot size, and most intense nonresidential uses are prohibited, and on-site services can be used to support such development. That said, there are some isolated problems, including several mobile home parks located in rural areas. The cost of providing sewer and water to these isolated areas does not warrant the service extensions, and the provision of public services to these areas would cause growth to occur in areas which the City considers as rural areas. Overall, Belfast has provided public services to areas in which there is sufficient land area to support anticipated growth for at least the next 10 – 20 years.

*(4). Are existing stormwater management facilities adequately maintained? What improvements are needed? How might cumulative impacts from future development affect the existing system(s)?*

Overall stormwater management facilities are in adequate condition, and the Public Works Department regularly maintains the existing system. Our facilities include stormwater management basins and filtration or other treatment systems such as detention ponds, culverts, and/or vegetated swales. Also, when the City has upgraded an existing public sewer line or extended public sewer to an area it also has improved existing stormwater facilities, and Public Works systematically replaces culverts during road overlay projects. That said, changes in the number, duration and intensity of major rainfall events in the past 10 years has or is expected to cause problems with the capacity of current City facilities. Lastly, the most frequent concern abutting property owners typically raise during Planning Board review of a proposed development involve managing stormwater. In the Future Land Use Plan it is recommended that the City consider amending current Ordinance provisions to better address stormwater management concerns, including greater use of low impact development standards.

*(5) How does the community address septic tank waste? What issues or concerns are there with the current arrangements?*

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance and disposal of septic waste. Several private services which 'pump' private septic wastes contract with the City sewer treatment plant for processing this waste. Also, Moore's Septic operates a DEP and City permitted privately owned facility on the Back Searport Road to dry and spread solids pumped from subsurface systems. The current system generally works well, however, some individual property owners do not regularly maintain their system which may lead to a system failure. Most current system failures are isolated events and typically occur when a system reaches its anticipated life expectancy. When a failure occurs the City requires the property owner to replace the system. In cases in which the property owner cannot pay the cost, the City has

used small system grant funds that may be available through the DEP and City revenues to help pay replacement costs.

- (5). *If the community has a public water system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? How is the water district/supplier cooperating in the development of the comprehensive plan and related ordinances? How is the water system extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?*

The Belfast Water District is governed by a quasi-municipal Board of Trustees, which is directly responsible to the State of Maine Public Utilities Commission. The Water District is a self-supporting utility. The City's water supply is provided by two underground wells on the east side of the Passagassawakeag River. One of the wells, dug in 1950, is located near the juncture of Smart Road and Achorn Road. The other well, dug in 1965, is located near Jackson Pitt, just off Route 141 in Swanville. The water quality of these wells is excellent and requires only fluoridation. The City's aquifer overlay district, established in the early 1990's at the request of the Water District, protects the aquifer in Belfast, which is the source for these wells. The Water District continues to maintain the Little River Reservoir as a back-up water supply. In 2018, about 628,521 gallons per day were pumped on average. In 2019 that figure was about 657,123 gallons per day, which is below the estimated capacity of the system. Replacement of aging waterlines has reduced significantly the loss of water within the distribution system itself. The extension of the water system based on need has been in keeping with the policies of the comprehensive plan. Like sewer extensions, water extensions have been few and limited in size. Also, public water service typically is available to areas the City has targeted as growth areas.

- (6). *What school improvements, including construction or expansion, are anticipated during the planning period? What opportunities are there to promote new residential development around existing and proposed schools? What steps will be taken to promote walking and bicycling to school?*

In the fall of 2019 Regional School Unit 71 opened the newly renovated Belfast Area High School. The renovations cost \$7.6 million and consisted of multiple new facilities including classrooms, bathrooms, locker rooms, cafeteria, a math and special education wing, and a renovation of the pool.

The Regional School Unit (RSU) 71 consists of the following schools:

1. Belfast Area High School
2. Bcope (Belfast Community Outreach Program in Education)
3. Captain Albert W. Stevens School

4. Gladys Weymouth School
5. East Belfast School
6. Ames Elementary
7. Kermit Nickerson
8. Troy A. Howard Middle School
9. Belfast Adult Education

Six of the RSU 71 schools are located in Belfast (Belfast Area High School, Bcope, Captain Albert W. Stevens School, East Belfast School, Belfast Adult Education and Troy A. Howard Middle School). Additionally, Belfast is home to the University of Maine Hutchinson Center, River School Belfast, Waterfall Arts, and Cornerspring Montessori School.

Under current regulations, and with some vacant parcels nearby, new residential development is possible around most of these schools located in the City. The Belfast Area High School and Captain Albert W. Stevens School are located within the Route 1 bypass and are within walking distance of existing residential neighborhoods. Sidewalks and pathways serve these schools. In 2010, the City worked with MDOT Safe Route to School funds to construct improvements to pedestrian crosswalk improvements at the Route 1/Route 52 intersection; an improvement which enhanced walk-ability to this school. While very few students walk to the Eastside Elementary School, the City also has constructed pedestrian improvements to the Route 1/Swan Lake Avenue intersection.

*(7). Is the community's emergency response system adequate? What improvements are needed?*

Belfast's emergency response system is the method by which the City responds to police, fire, medical and other emergencies. Police, fire and ambulance services are adequate. The City uses capital reserve funds to which it makes annual contributions to purchase needed upgraded and replacement equipment for the above services. The City uses paid staff to provide EMT services and provides such services to Belfast and many surrounding communities. A detailed list of recommended improvements is included in the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) within the Fiscal Capacity Chapter of this plan.

*(8). How well is the solid waste management system meeting current needs? What is the community doing to reduce the reliance on waste disposal and to increase recycling. What impact will projected growth during the planning period have on system capacity? What improvements are needed to meet future demand? What efforts have been or will be undertaken regionally to improve efficiency and lower cost?*

In 1992, the City established a new recycling center and transfer station at the Business Park. The city operates the transfer facility and has a contract with a private vendor to haul some of the waste to the Penobscot Energy Recovery Company incinerator in Orrington. In recent years the City has worked to increase its recycling rate. Private companies also contract with some residents to collect their waste at curbside, and most businesses contract with private companies to collect and dispose of their solid waste. It is anticipated that the system's current capacity will be able to handle projected growth during the ten-year planning period.

*(9). How do public facilities and services support local economic development plans? What improvements are needed in the telecommunications and energy infrastructure?*

Both large and small-scale businesses require basic public services, roadway access, water/sewer connections and the like. In the current economy, access to markets far beyond Belfast is essential for many as well. Internet and telecommunications infrastructure in Belfast was significantly improved with the arrival of MBNA. Although MBNA downsized and was acquired by Bank of America, much of that infrastructure (telecommunications and three-phase power) capacity remains in place for new tenants of the commercial and office park facilities in Belfast, like athenahealth, Inc. While reasonable quality cell phone service is now available in most areas of Belfast, an ongoing concern in many rural areas is the quality and availability of good quality internet service. As of 2019, there are approximately 40 households in Belfast that are considered underserved for broadband (meaning they do not meet the 25/3 mbps ratings considered the minimum standard for broadband speed).

*(10). Does the community have a public health officer?*

Yes, it is currently the Fire Chief.

*(11). Are local and regional health care facilities and public health and social service programs adequate to meet the needs of the community?*

Waldo County General Hospital (WCGH) is a non-profit Critical Access (25 bed) Hospital, part of the Coastal Healthcare Alliance (CHA) along with Pen Bay Medical Center (99 beds, Rockport) and the MaineHealth System. Additionally, Mental Health Services are provided through MaineHealth. The local and regional facilities are currently adequate to meet the needs of the community.

*(12). What other public facilities, such as town offices, libraries, or cemeteries, are*

*nearing their respective capacities? How will these facilities accommodate projected growth?*

Most current public facilities have the capacity to satisfy anticipated growth. In 2001 the City purchased a former bank building on Church Street and relocated the police station from City Hall to this facility, and subsequently renovated City Hall to provide better customer services. A major expansion of the Belfast Free Library also occurred in 1999 – 2000.

The City completed construction of a new public works facility in 2019. The facility is located at 54 Crocker Road. The City purchased the 35 acre property in 2017. Total construction cost of the new facility was about \$6.5 million. The project included a new garage, a sand/salt shed, and accompanying laydown areas. The site also includes a 5 acre solar field, owned by the City. The solar field, combined with the solar installation at the former landfill on Pitcher Road and panels located on the Fire Station, result in a the City off-setting about 85% of its electronic generation needs.

*(13). Does the community have, or need, a street tree or other tree planting and maintenance program?*

Currently, Belfast has a maintenance program for street tree plantings, which is overseen by the City Council and Public Works Department. The City has an ordinance regarding the preservation of street trees.

*(14). Are the community's priorities for funding needed improvements reflected in the capital investment plan?*

Yes, within the budgetary constraints of taxpayers, anticipated user fees, grants and municipal bonding, see Capital Investment Plan (CIP) in the Fiscal Capacity Chapter of this plan.

*(15). To what extent are investments in facility improvements directed to growth areas?*

Most public facilities (police, fire, schools, city hall, sewage treatment,) are located within the designated growth areas, many in or near Downtown Belfast, and so funding for their improvement benefits those growth areas. The only current public facilities not located in a growth area are several City Parks, such as Sportsman Park.

**C. Conditions and Trends**

*Minimum data required to address state goals:*

(1). *Location of facilities and service areas (mapped as appropriate)*

See the maps titled Public Facilities and Services and Public Facilities and Services (Downtown).

**Table 11-2 Municipal Property**

MUNICIPAL PROPERTY	
City Hall	71 Church Street
Fire Department	Belmont Avenue
City Garage	Congress Street
Airport	Congress Street
City Dump (closed)	Pitcher Road
Pollution Abatement Plant	Front Street
Public Works	54 Crocker Road
Parking Lot	Cross Street
Hayford Block Parking Lot	Church Street
Belfast Free Library	High Street
Parking Lot	Washington St
Wales Park	Congress Street
Legion Park	High Street
Parking Lot	Front Street
Boathouse at Steamboat	Front Street
City Park	Northport Ave
Transfer Station	Business Park
Police Station	Church Street
Belfast Common	Miller Street
Belfast Skate Park	Washington Street
Eleanor Crawford Park	High Street
Four-Season recreation Area	High Street
Heritage Park	Main Street
High Street Ice Rink	High Street
Kirby Lake	Miller Street
Sportsman's Park	Sheppard Road
Steamboat Landing	Front Street
Walsh Field Recreation Area	Route 52

**The Belfast Business Park**

The Belfast Airport Business Park is owned by the City of Belfast, and the Belfast City Council negotiates all sales. The Park is located on Congress Street, adjacent to the

Belfast Municipal Airport, south of U.S. Route 1. The Park is made up of two sections, which are separated by the airstrip. The North Phase of the Park was completed in 1984 and is comprised of 18 acres of industrially zoned land. This section is serviced by municipal water and sewer, as well as three-phase power. The South Phase of the Park was constructed several years after the North Phase and has similar services. A redemption center and the City Transfer Station also is located in this phase. The City has 5 lots which it owns in this area, each of which is about 1.5 acres in size. The City's goal is to attract 'job creation' enterprises to the Park. Current tenants include Coastal Helicopters, Ducktrap River of Maine, Easterly Wine, GEO, Kids Unplugged, Larrabee Brothers Plumbing and Heating, Maine Maritime Products, Tidewater Oil, and United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service.

(2). *General physical condition of facilities and equipment;*

See below.

(3). *Capacity and anticipated demand during the planning period*

See below.

(4). *Identification of who owns/manages the systems;*

See below.

(5). *Estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities; and*

See below and the Capital Investment Plan in the Fiscal Capacity Chapter.

(6). *The following information related to each of these public facilities and services:*

a. *Sewerage and/or Water Supply – Identify number and types of users, and percent of households served.*

There are approximately 1,475 users of the sewer system (1,200 residential and 275 commercial). The largest non-residential/commercial users are Bank of America, Ducktrap, Waldo County General Hospital, and the public school system. The U.S. Census estimates that Belfast had 3,291 housing units in 2017. Using this figure, about 36% of housing units in Belfast are connected to the sewer system. A greater number of residential units have public water.

b. *Septage – Identify any community policies or regulations regarding septage collection and disposal.*

The City enforces the State Plumbing Code regarding subsurface waste in the City Code. Chapter 62, Utilities, of the City Code identifies how septage waste can be treated at the sewage treatment plant.

c. *Solid Waste – Describe the community's solid waste management system. Identify types and amounts of municipal solid waste and recycled*

*materials for the past five (5) years.*

In 1992, the City established a new recycling center and transfer station. The City has contracted to haul waste to the Penobscot Energy Recovery Company incinerator in Orrington. Solid waste and recyclables are collected at the Belfast Transfer Station, which is located off Little River Drive in the Belfast Industrial Park. Non-Recycled Household Trash is charged \$3.50 per 30-gallon size bag. The following materials are accepted without charge for recycling: OCC/Mixed (paper/cardboard), cans, ONP (newsprint, magazines, etc.), CPO (colored and office paper), glass, HDPE (plastic containers), scrap metal and used motor oil. For a charge, these materials are accepted: tires, refrigerators/Freon, appliances, electronic waste, brush, and wood. Demolition Debris disposal is charged at \$170.00 per ton. In 2008, the top four recyclable categories for Belfast: Cardboard (OCC) 352.9 tons, Mixed News/Mag 218.1 tons, Leaf/Yard 160.5 tons, and White Goods (appliances) 126.4.

*d. Stormwater Management – Identify combined sewer overflows. For Municipal Separate Stormwater System (MS4) communities, describe plan and status of the major goals of the MS4 requirements.*

Belfast's combined sewer overflows (CSO) have been reduced to include: Condon Street CSO and Miller Street CSO. A continued reduction through stormwater/sewer separation is recommended for these areas. The City's wastewater discharge license contains a compliance schedule for CSO abatement. See the Capital Investment Plan of the Fiscal Capacity Chapter of this plan for anticipated CSO abatement projects. The City has been actively addressing CSO issues over the last decade and has remediated about half of the excess flow areas. Belfast is not an MS4 community.

*e. Power and Communications – Availability of electricity (including 3-phase power), telephone, Internet (including broadband), and cable within the community.*

Electricity, telephone, and broadband internet are available throughout Belfast. The Bank of America (former MBNA facility) has T1 internet access and three-phase power, as do the Belfast Industrial Park.

*f. Emergency Response System – Describe fire, police, and emergency/rescue facilities and equipment. Include average call response times for different services and dispatch location with number of communities served (Public Safety Answering Point, or PSAP) staffing, and training needs; and E911 addressing management system (addressing officer, ordinance, reporting*

system).

### **Fire Protection**

There is one full time Fire Chief in Belfast along with 32 part time, paid fire fighters. The Department, which serves Belfast and Swanville residents, averages approximately 130 calls per year with a fire response time average of two minutes during the day and four to six minutes during the night. Once fire fighters are hired by the Department, they receive in-house training. In fact, all the fire fighters employed by the Department receive monthly training which consists of a one and a half hour to two-hour program on various subjects.

The Fire Department is located on Belmont Avenue. The City, in 2012, expanded the Fire Station so it could better accommodate the new ladder truck and the number of ambulances. The Department has two pumper trucks, two tank trucks, an aerial truck with a 100-foot ladder, a brush truck to fight grass and woodland fires, an equipment truck, and a Jaws of Life vehicle.

### **Police Protection**

The Belfast Police Department serves the City with the following staffing:

- (1) Chief
- (4) Sergeants
- (1) Detective
- (8) Patrol Officers
- (1) School Resource Officer
- (1) Administrative Assistant
- (5) Reserve Officers
- (1) Receptionists
- (1) Summer Parking Enforcement Officer (10 weeks only)

Dispatching services are provided by Waldo County for police, fire, and ambulance services with full time civilian dispatchers. In 2019, the Police Department handled over 7,455 calls for service in the City of Belfast. Response times are minimal due to the department's central location and there have been no complaints concerning response times. There are no formal mutual aid agreements with any town or other law enforcement agency.

The Police Department owns seven vehicles.

The Police Department is located in its own building at 112 Church Street.

This move from occupying space in the City Hall basement was made in 2000 – 2001 to better accommodate the needs of both the Police Department and the City administration. The Police Department is facing no major problems and the size of the force is adequate to meet the needs of the City at this time. Training is a constant requirement every year. Each officer is required to complete forty hours of training every two years. Half of that training is mandated and chose by the State. The other half is elective training that is required to be related to the law enforcement profession. Any time a senior officer leaves the department, a new officer will replace him/her. This can require the new officer to have to attend the eighteen-week basic police school at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. There is no way for the Department to project how many officers may have to be sent in a ten-year planning period of this plan.

**Ambulance Service**

Ambulance service is provided by the City of Belfast to Belfast, Belmont, Morrill, Northport, Swanville and Waldo residents. The Fire Chief is in charge of the ambulance service. There are currently sixteen Emergency Medical Technicians on call. EMT’s are paid on a per call basis. The City owns three ambulances, which run approximately 1,200 calls per year.

*g. Education – Identify school administrative unit. Include primary/secondary school system enrollment for the most recent year information is available and for the ten (10) years after the anticipated adoption of plan. Describe the extent and condition of pedestrian and bicycle access to school facilities.*

The school administrative unit RSU 71 is composed of Belfast, Belmont, Morrill, Searsmont, and Swanville.

**Table 11-4 Enrollment RSU 71**

Grades/Year	2011*	2012*	2013*	2014*	2015	2016	2017	2018
Elementary (PK-8)	1,655	1,584	1,503	1,445	1,015	1,027	985	1,009
Secondary (HS 9-12)	772	748	698	727	514	487	509	491
Total	2,427	2,332	2,201	2,172	1,529	1,514	1,494	1,500

Sources: State of Maine Department of Education, RSU 71

*\*Note: 2011-2014 enrollment numbers based off RSU 20 which includes Edna Drinkwater School, Frankfort Elementary School, Searsport District High School, Searsport District Middle School, Searsport Elementary, and Stockton Springs Elementary School in addition to RSU 71 schools listed below.*

Within Belfast are the following schools (shown on the public facilities maps):

1. Belfast Area High School
2. Bcope
3. Captain Albert W. Stevens School
4. Cornerspring Montessori School (private school)
5. East Belfast School
6. Montessori School (private school)
7. The School at Sweetser (Not part of RSU 71)
8. Troy A. Howard Middle School
9. University of Maine Hutchison Center

The Belfast Area High School and Captain Albert W. Stevens School are within walking distance of existing residential neighborhoods. Sidewalks and pathways serve these schools. There are adequate shoulders for bicycle travel to these schools as well. Pedestrian improvements have been made for the Troy Howard Middle School. (See the Transportation chapter for specific sidewalk and bike lane recommendations.)

*h. Health Care - Describe major health care facilities (hospitals, clinics) and other providers serving the community. Identify public health and social services supported by the community through municipal subsidy.*

Waldo County General Hospital (WCGH) is a non-profit Critical Access (25 bed) Hospital, part of the Coastal Healthcare Alliance (CHA) along with Pen Bay Medical Center (99 beds, Rockport) and the MaineHealth System. WCGH offers a range of medical services, including Emergency Room, renal dialysis, an inpatient hospice unit, state of the art radiological services and oncology services.

Services include:

- Anesthesiology
- Audiology
- Bone and Joint Healthcare
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Cardiopulmonary
- Cardiovascular Medicine
- Dental Care
- Diabetes Care
- Dialysis
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- General Surgery
- Geriatric Care
- Home Health & Hospice
- Intensive Care Unit

- Laboratory Services
- Neurology
- Nuclear Medicine
- Obstetrics/Gynecology
- Oncology/Hematology
- Occupational Healthcare
- Orthopedics
- Palliative Care
- Pediatrics
- Physical Medicine
- Physical Therapy
- Radiology
- Rheumatology
- Sleep Disorders Laboratory
- Speech Therapy
- Sports Medicine
- Surgery
- Urology
- Voice And Swallowing

Additional patient services are available from Maine Medical Center in Portland (WCGH Tertiary referral center) and Northern Lights Medical Center in Bangor. Mental Health Services are provided through MaineHealth. Penobscot Shores, a subsidiary of WCGH, provides assisted living.

*i. Municipal Government Facilities and Services – Describe facilities and staffing for municipal administrative, enforcement, and public works operations.*

See 6f above for the staffing of police, fire and ambulance services. General municipal administration employs 17 persons full-time year round, and 2 persons part-time. Public works employs 13 persons full-time year round, and uses part time and seasonal employees to help maintain the roads in winter and the parks in the summer.

See 6f above for the facilities of police, fire and ambulance services. General municipal administration staff and facilities are housed in City Hall, located on Church Street. Public Works staff, equipment, and facilities are located on Congress Street.

The City Hall provides adequate space for current and anticipated staffing needs for the ten-year planning period of this plan. A potential need is for

off-site storage of records.

The Public Works facility(ies) is in relatively poor condition and needs to be upgraded. In 2013, the City will step up its search for a new location for the public works facility and identify how to pay costs to construct needed new facilities. Anticipated needs are noted in the strategies section of this chapter and in the Capital Investment Plan.

#### **D. Policies**

- (1). *To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.*
- (2). *To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.*

#### **E. Strategies**

- (1). Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics. See the Capital Investment Plan in the Fiscal Capacity Chapter.
- (2). Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas. The one exception may be the Public Works garage.
- (3). Explore options for regional delivery of local services, and work cooperatively with adjacent communities to consider opportunities for regional service delivery.
- (4). Review the extent of development in the City, its impact on City services and facilities, as well as the impact on the character of the City, and where appropriate or needed, implement impact fees. The only impact fee the City currently uses involves connection to the municipal sewer system and the amount of this fee has not been increased for nearly 20 years. Also, other impact fees may have limited value to Belfast because there the amount of development is not sufficient to warrant the collection and use of impact fees.
- (5). Encourage local sewer and water districts to coordinate planned service extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.
- (6). Continue to support the Belfast Water District to work with Swanville and Searsport for the mutual protection of the aquifer, and to monitor any potential impacts from the Swanville dump/transfer station on the quality of the ground water. Continue to review water quality of the ground water. Continue to review water quality tests with District officials (City Council and Code Enforcement Officer) Ongoing.

- (7). Request Water District input on any development proposals that might result in substantially increased water supply demand to ensure that the City can either stay within the sustainable annual yield of the aquifer indefinitely, or utilize other water supply sources. Request that Water District officials notify the City of similar proposals in adjacent communities that might substantially affect the annual sustainable yield (Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board) Ongoing.
- (8). Continue current efforts to expand the capacity of the treatment plant, to separate storm and sanitary sewers (City Council) Long Term.
- (9). Periodically meet with school officials to consider school facility needs, including building and recreation needs, to review plans for additional growth and development, to consider population data and projections, and to review plans for increasing school capacity (City Council or Duly Authorized Representative) Long Term.
- (10). Purchase additional land or transfer existing, City-owned land for cemetery use. Provide for adequate maintenance of cemeteries (Cemetery Committee) Long term.
- (11). To maintain municipally owned properties, plan for their long-term maintenance and upgrade, ensure that City public facilities and service needs are evaluated annually for possible budgetary adjustments to guarantee planned preparation for future needs (City Council) Long Term.
- (12). Continue the current practice of using capital reserve funds to assist in the replacement and purchase of equipment for the Police, Fire and Public Works Department.
- (13). Evaluate charging differential user fees for city services and facilities depending upon the residency status (Belfast year round, Belfast seasonal, and full time resident of another community) of the user.
- (14). Explore the use of Tax Increment Financing to assist in the construction of desired public facilities in targeted areas. The Downtown Waterfront TIF established in 2005 and the Northport Avenue TIF also established in 2005 were good approaches to assist in the construction of needed improvements.
- (15). Target future sewer extensions to areas located within designated growth zones, and to infill areas.
- (16). Continue past and current efforts to upgrade existing sewer facilities to address infiltration and inflow concerns and continue the past and current practice of addressing stormwater improvements when sewer improvements are constructed.

## SECTION 3.12 FISCAL CAPACITY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

### Introduction

Planning and policy decisions must take into account a municipality's ability to make necessary expenditures and the impact that this spending will have on taxpayers. The primary funding source for municipal government is property tax revenue. In order to maintain a consistent mil rate year to year, City government must operate in a fiscally responsible manner. Large fluctuations in the tax rate can discourage economic development and spark public outcry. Although the priorities of the City may change from one election year to another, stable municipal finances are always a fundamental responsibility of local government. It is important for Belfast to handle diligently all yearly expenditures while at the same time planning for the City's long-term objectives. As is the case with any business, the physical assets of Belfast must be properly maintained through capital reserve accounts to protect the City's continued economic health. The format of this chapter follows the State Comprehensive Plan Criteria Rule as amended in August 2011.

### A. State Goal

- 1. To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*

### B. Analyses

- (1) How will future capital investments identified in the plan be funded?*

Capital investments will continue to be funded through capital reserve funds supported by property tax revenues citywide, funds obtained through the use of targeted tax increment financing districts (such as the existing Downtown-Waterfront TIF), intergovernmental revenues (State aid), grants and loans from Federal, State and private sources, and from municipal bonds.

- (2) If the community plans to borrow to pay for capital investments, does the community have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds?*

The community has sufficient borrowing capacity. In fiscal year 2018, total municipal debt was below the statutory limits as set forth in Title 30-A MRSA Section 5702. The City has often used its bonding capacity to pay for major projects, such as but not limited to: upgrades to the public sewer system and wastewater treatment plant, the reconstruction of the Armistice Bridge, and the construction of the Harbor Walk project.

- (3) Have efforts been made by the community to participate in or explore sharing capital investments with neighboring communities? If so, what efforts have been made?*

As noted in the Public Facilities and Services Chapter, the City does cooperate with neighboring communities, multi-community quasi-municipal organizations and with Waldo County in the provision of services (public education, fire department mutual aid, and municipal solid waste management). The most significant regional service is education, with RSU 71 servicing Belfast, Belmont, Morrill, Searsmont, and Swanville. The City also contracts with a facility in Camden (Knox County) to provide animal shelter services.

### C. Conditions and Trends

*Minimum data required to address State goals:*

- (1). *Identify community revenues and expenditures by category for last five (5) years and explain trends.*

**Table 12-1 Revenues and Expenditures for Last Five Fiscal Years**

Actual Revenues and Expenditures for Fiscal Years ending June 30 <sup>th</sup>	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change
<b>Services/Fees</b>	\$2,822,471	\$3,401,437	\$2,719,915	\$3,061,366	\$3,205,362	13.5%
<b>Operating Grants/Contributions</b>	\$292,144	\$311,492	\$321,435	\$310,193	\$285,070	-2.4%
<b>Capital Grants/Contributions</b>	\$40,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	87.5%
<b>Property Tax</b>	\$14,420,366	\$15,212,480	\$15,816,396	\$16,025,483	\$16,272,586	12.8%
<b>Excise Tax</b>	\$954,221	\$985,363	\$1,034,106	\$1,114,213	\$1,149,122	16.9%
<b>Intergovernmental – Other</b>	\$650,077	\$742,616	\$965,218	\$848,912	\$956,379	47.1%
<b>Other</b>	\$1,189,011	\$506,166	\$5,897,949	\$3,056,500	\$1,007,901	-15.2%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$20,368,290</b>	<b>\$21,234,554</b>	<b>\$26,830,019</b>	<b>\$24,491,667</b>	<b>\$22,951,420</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>General Government</b>	\$2,179,487	\$2,307,164	\$3,209,117	\$2,612,375	\$2,910,928	33.5%
<b>Protection</b>	\$2,351,534	\$2,557,762	\$2,553,316	\$2,839,093	\$2,898,365	23.2%
<b>Public Works</b>	\$2,600,730	\$2,677,606	\$2,398,432	\$5,376,198	\$3,057,858	17.5%
<b>Social Services</b>	\$190,875	\$208,214	\$510,402	\$306,597	\$245,124	28.4%
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	\$263,015	\$341,839	\$280,792	\$287,900	\$292,931	12.6%
<b>Library</b>	\$511,755	\$514,190	\$528,891	\$523,952	\$517,637	1.15%
<b>Cemeteries</b>	\$100,855	\$85,377	\$168,793	\$143,497	\$145,365	44%
<b>Education</b>	\$9,160,661	\$9,804,003	\$9,969,316	\$10,015,476	\$9,925,620	8.3%
<b>County Tax</b>	\$1,420,463	\$1,374,077	\$1,376,367	\$1,400,761	\$1,451,862	2.2%
<b>Interest on Debt</b>	\$176,974	\$166,387	\$175,267	\$38,577	(\$68,591)	-138.7%

<b>Unclassified</b>	\$434,665	\$666,226	\$406,623	\$712,723	\$467,660	7.5%
<b>Sewer Department</b>	\$839,833	\$861,641	\$899,678	\$907,429	\$960,529	14.3%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$20,230,847</b>	<b>\$21,564,486</b>	<b>\$22,476,994</b>	<b>\$25,164,578</b>	<b>\$22,804,288</b>	<b>12.7%</b>

The top two revenue sources remained the same from 2014 through 2018. The top two sources were services/fees and property taxes. During this period, overall total revenues increased by 12.6% and total expenses increased by 12.7%. Within that total, property taxes collected increased by 12.8% while excise tax increased by 16.9%. Services/Fees revenues increased 13.5% and capital grants/contributions increased by 87.5%. General government expenses increased by 33.5%. Protection expenses increased by 23.2% and social services expenses by 28.4%. Education, public works, central government, and public works were the four top expense sources in 2014 and 2018.

- (2). Describe means of funding capital items (reserve funds, bonding, etc.) and identify any outside funding sources.

Capital investments are funded through capital reserve funds supported by property tax revenues citywide, intergovernmental revenues (State aid), grants and loans from Federal and State sources, and from municipal bonds. The City has two tax increment financing districts: the Downtown-Waterfront and Northport Avenue, both of which target the construction of public improvements in the respective catchment areas. Non-governmental (outside) funding sources have recently included gifts (e.g. Range-Way improvements), donations (e.g. Dog Park and Friends of Belfast Park), and capital funds from donors (e.g. Enk fund). Capital items funded through capital reserves are shown in the next table.

**Table 12-2 Capital Reserves**

<b>Capital Reserves</b>	<b>Balance July 1, 2017</b>	<b>Balance June 30, 2018</b>
Communication Equipment	\$3,624	\$3,650
Ambulance	\$45,869	\$46,194
Assessment	\$894	\$901
Cemeteries – Land Development	\$7,964	\$8,022
Cemeteries – Equipment	\$18,285	\$18,412
Cemeteries – Maintenance	\$7,748	\$7,802
Personnel Reserve	\$93	\$96
Downtown Development	\$76	\$77
Fire Equipment	\$52,996	\$53,363
Harbor Improvement	\$5,256	\$5,263
Highway – Highway Equipment	\$39,977	\$40,268
Highway – Road Construction	\$6,802	\$6,852
Highway – Culvert	\$28,557	\$28,757

Police Equipment	\$9,694	\$9,763
Recreation – City Park	\$92,220	\$78,479
Recreation – George Black	\$4,133	\$4,163
Ruth Greenlaw	\$375	\$378
Footbridge Capital	\$55,100	\$55,483
Transfer Station Equipment	\$11,456	\$11,538
Airport	\$115,475	\$4,663
Airport Maintenance	\$13,085	\$6,275
Planning Equipment	\$10,408	\$10,481
Waterfront/Thompson Warf	\$3,595	\$3,617
Ambulance Training and Development	\$2,318	\$2,525
Cable TV Equipment	\$15,420	\$15,528
City Clerk Office Equipment	\$4,458	\$3,808
Assessing Office Equipment	\$3,560	\$8,585
Finance Office Equipment	\$6,993	\$8,864
Energy Savings Cap	\$--	\$24,268
City Manger Equipment	\$513	\$517
Boathouse Maintenance	\$9,860	\$3,928
Park Equipment	\$1	\$1
Future Land Purchase	\$21,069	\$21,216
Fuel Price	\$10,230	\$10,301
Sidewalk Capital	\$14,252	\$21,414
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$632,356</b>	<b>\$517,151</b>

The following major projects have been funded through bonding since 2010:

- Waterfront Walkway (2013): \$800,000
- Front Street/Maskers (2016): \$2,150,000
- Public Works/Solar (2019): \$8,600,000

Belfast has received Federal and State grant funding for the following major capital projects since June of 2010:

- Brownfields Assessment Grants in 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2019 in amounts totaling \$1.3 million used for the assessment of hazardous substance and petroleum of contaminated sites.
- Brownfields Cleanup Grants in 2014 and 2019 in amounts totaling \$600,000 and a Brownfields Revolving Loan Grant of \$50,000 used for remediation and clean up of the following sites:
  - 45 Front Street
  - 45 Congress Street

- 26 High Street
- CDBG Housing Assistance Grant (2011) - \$300,000 for the renovation of multi-family housing.
- CDBG Downtown Revitalization Grant (2012) - \$500,000 for streetscape and infrastructure improvements and on street parking.
- CDBG Economic Development Grant - \$200,000 for Front Street Shipyard improvements to former Belfast Boatyard waterfront facility and the purchase of custom paint booth.
- CDBG Micro-Enterprise Assistance - \$150,000 for micro-enterprise and business façade grants.
- EDA Public Works Grant (2013) - \$1,900,000 for the reconstruction and enhancement of Front Street.
- CDBG Housing Assistance Grant (2014) - \$500,000 for the renovation of multi-family housing.
- Maine Department of Conservation Recreational Trail Grant (2015) - \$35,000 for the Passy Rail Trail development.
- CDBG Economic Development Program (2015) - \$800,000 use to assist in the location of OnProcess Technology in Belfast.
- ConnectME Authority Community Broadband Planning Grant (2017) - \$15,000 used to assist in the planning process for community broadband.
- MEDEP Forgivable Loan – received to pay for climate adaptation plan for the wastewater system.
- Efficiency Maine Trust (2012) - \$10,000 used for electric vehicle charging stations.
- FAA (2018) – Grant of \$3,395,344 for airport improvement.
- Additional funding from FAA and MaineDOT over the last 10 years in the amount of \$5,263,500.44 used for the expansion of Aircraft parking apron, Airport master plan updates, preparation of Obstruction Removal Analysis and Environmental Assessment, tree clearing, and the construction of the parallel taxiway.

*(3). Identify local and State valuations and local mil rates for the last five (5) years.*

**Table 12-3 Local and State Valuations and Local Mill Rates**

Valuations / Mil Rate	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change
<b>Municipal Total Valuation of Belfast</b>	\$705,786,800	\$714,284,500	\$717,379,800	\$709,000,550	\$757,596,300	7.3%
<b>State Valuation of Belfast</b>	\$833,550,000	\$797,600,000	\$814,550,000	\$830,150,000	\$828,300,000	-0.63%
<b>City Mil Rate</b>	.02080	.02165	.02240	.02290	.02190	5.2%

- (4) *How does total municipal debt (including shares of county, school and utility) compare with the statutory and Maine Bond Bank recommended limits on such debt?*

Title 30-A MRSA Section 5702 contains a limitation on the amount of debt that municipalities may incur. A municipality cannot issue debt (for purposes other than school, storm or sanitary sewer, energy facility or for municipal airports) that would exceed 7.5% of the municipality’s last full State valuation. The statute contains additional limits for school, storm or sanitary sewer, energy facility and for municipal airports. There is an overall debt limit for all types of debt of 15% of the municipality’s last full State valuation. The City Charter references the State law regarding the amount of debt which the City may borrow. The City has not exceeded the statutory limit.

At June 30, 2018, the statutory limit for the City was \$128,175,000. The City’s outstanding long-term debt of \$6,486,760 at June 30, 2018 was within the statutory limit.

**D. Policies**

- (1). *To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.*
- (2). *To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.*
- (3). *To reduce Maine’s tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.*

**E. Strategies**

- (1). *Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.*

**F. Capital Investment Plan**

*The comprehensive plan must include a capital investment plan that:*

- (1). Identifies and summarizes anticipated capital investment needs within the planning period in order to implement the comprehensive plan, including estimated costs and timing, and identifies which are municipal growth-related capital investments;*
- (2). Establishes general funding priorities among the community capital investments; and*
- (3). Identifies potential funding sources and funding mechanisms.*

For (1) through (3), see the next table titled Belfast Capital Investment Plan Summary 2013-2023.

### **Purpose and Definition of Capital Investment Plan**

Planned growth and a diverse mix of land uses within the City is an important aspect of fiscal planning. The purpose of a capital investment plan (CIP) is to establish a framework for financing needed capital investments. A CIP guides budgeting and expenditures of tax revenues and identifies needs for which alternative sources of funding such as loans, grants or gifts will be sought.

Capital investments include the repair, renewal, replacement or purchase of capital items. Capital investments differ from operating expenses or consumables. The expense of consumables is ordinarily budgeted as operations. Capital investments generally have the following characteristics: they are relatively expensive (usually having an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more); they usually do not recur annually; they can last for a long time (often having a useful life of three or more years); and they result in fixed assets. Capital items can include equipment and machinery, buildings, real property, utilities and long-term contracts and are funded through the establishment of financial reserves.

Capital investments are prioritized each year in the budget process based on the availability of funds and the political will of the community. A complete CIP describes expected yearly investment and allows for both changes in priorities and reduction of available funds. The CIP is intended to prevent a large capital investment from occurring in a single fiscal year. The unexpected purchase of a sizeable investment can overburden the tax rate and cause large fluctuations in tax bills from year to year. The annual provision for eventual replacement of capital investments depends on the useful life of the capital investments. It is important that capital investments be financially accounted for each fiscal year, minimizing later expenses.

For the purposes of this plan, the total costs have been recognized with an indication of the expected period for each item that is desired based on priority ratings. Each year

any necessary changes will be made to the CIP and it will be included in the annual budget. Each year the Budget Committee will review the funding requests and make a recommendation for City Council review.

### **Priority Rankings Used in the Capital Investment Plan**

The capital investments identified below were assigned a priority based on the listed rating system. Logically, “A” investments would be implemented prior to “B” and so on. Lower priority items may be funded ahead of schedule if higher priority items have already been funded or are prohibitively expensive, or if other sources of revenue (such as donated funds) become available. In order to fund capital investment projects it is necessary to begin to identify funding sources and set aside funds in advance of the projected time of funding.

- A. Immediate need. A capital investment rated in this category would typically remedy a danger to public health, safety and welfare.*
- B. Necessary (Needed), to be accomplished within two to five years. A capital investment rated in this category would typically correct deficiencies in an existing facility or service.*
- C. Future investment or replacement, to be accomplished within five to ten years. A capital investment rated in this category would be desirable but is of no urgency. Funding would be flexible and there would be no immediate problem.*
- D. Desirable, but not necessarily feasible within the ten year period of this comprehensive plan.*

Projects referenced in this comprehensive plan and existing reserve accounts are the basis for this capital investment plan and have been incorporated into the table below. As well, State and Federal mandates necessitating some of these projects have been noted in the table. The need for each project is noted in parentheses.

**Table 12-4 City of Belfast Capital Investment Plan Summary 2013-2023**

Comprehensive Plan Chapter/City Dept.	Anticipated Item and (Need)	Estimated Cost	Priority	Responsible Party (ies)	Possible Funding Sources
Public Facilities / Sewer –Wastewater Treatment	Sewer line replacement on Front Street (2018)	\$800,000	Completed	Wastewater Treatment Facility – City Council	Reserves/Grants/Bonds/Loans
Public Facilities / Sewer –Wastewater Treatment	Upgrade Wastewater Treatment Plant to enhance energy efficiency and treatment options	--	In-progress	Wastewater Treatment Facility – City Council	Reserves/Grants/Bonds/Loans
Public Facilities / Sewer –Wastewater Treatment	Improvements to two key pump stations and replace Mayo Street Sewer	--	Needed	Wastewater Treatment Facility – City Council	Reserves/Grants/Bonds/Loans
Public Facilities / Police Department	In-car video systems (need to be replaced every 3 to 5 years)	\$15,000 (for 3)	Needed	Police Department– City Council	Reserves
	Patrol Car (one replacement per year)**	\$27,000	Needed		Reserves
	Detective Car (one replacement per year)**	\$27,000	Needed		Reserves
	Firearms (over ten years)	~\$5,000			Reserves
Public Facilities / Police Department	Facility upgrades to address building maintenance concerns	No budget specified at this time.	Needed	Police Department– City Council	Reserves
Recreation & Public Facilities - Public Works	Sidewalk Upgrades	\$60,000/yr	Annual-Needed	Public Works - Council	City Funds

Public Facilities & Transportation - Public Works	New pedestrian improvements on Wight Street, about 2,700'. Part of a larger street reconstruction project.	\$2.1 Million (total project cost)	Needed – 2021/2022	Public Works - Council	City, TIF Revenues
Public Facilities - Public Works	Road Maintenance Repave existing roads every 10 - 12 years & Stormwater improvements	@ \$300,000/year	Annual-Needed	Public Works - Council	City Funds & State Revenue Sharing
Public Facilities & Transportation - Public Works	Front Street Reconstruction (2018) Replacement water and sewer service, new underground storm sewers, reconstructed road, more on-street parking, new street lighting.	\$3.2 million	Completed	Public Works - Council	Water District funds, EDA grant, City & Sewer Reserve, TIF Fund
Public Facilities - Economic Development	Harbor Walk project (2015)	\$1.6 million	Completed	Public Works - Council	MDOT, CDBG, Maine CLF, City TIF Funds
Public Facilities - Economic Development	Construct Streetscape Improvements at Cross/Miller/Spring Downtown Revitalization Included improvements to Belfast Common. (2017)	\$1.1 million	Completed	Council	CDBG, City TIF Funds

Public Facilities - Economic Development	Washington Street redevelopment project. Reconstruct Washington Street with new sewer, storm sewers, replacement water line, on-street parking, street lighting, road construction sidewalks.	\$1.3 million	Needed (projected completion 2022)	Council & Public Works	City, TIF Revenues
Public Facilities - Economic Development	Construction of additional section of Harbor Walk to connect Heritage Park to Steamboat Landing Park.	\$400,000	Needed (projected completion 2021)	Public Works - Council	City TIF Funds
Public Facilities - Economic Development	Redevelopment of Belfast Yards	Budget not specified.	Needed - future	Council	
Public Facilities - Economic Development	Redevelopment of former Public Works Facility on Congress street for housing.	Budget not specified	Needed- future	Council	Public/Private Partnership
Public Facilities	Energy Efficiency Improvements to City buildings	\$200,000 - \$400,000	Immediate	Council	City funds
Public Facilities	Fire & EMS Services Equipment Replacement Such as Ambulances (10 year)	\$150,000 - \$400,000	Needed - Future	Council & Fire Dept	Reserves
Public Facilities	Shoreline Stabilization to preserve existing facilities – two projects completed in 2019/2020, four additional sites identified.	\$75,000- \$90,000 per project	In-progress	Council	

Recreation	Park Improvements (10 year). Upgrades to City Parks	\$300,000 - \$500,000	Needed-Future-Desired	Council & Parks & Rec	City Friends of Parks
Recreation	Construction of Belfast Rail Trail (2017).	\$500,000 (Construction) \$200,000 (right-of-way purchase)	Completed	Council & Parks & Rec	City, CMLT
Marine Resources	Regularly replace floats - Upgrade Thompson Wharf - Fuel Services	\$400,000 - \$800,000	Needed-Future	Council & Harbor Comm	City, Reserves & Grants
Energy Efficiency	City solar projects including Public Works solar field, former landfill, and panels on the Fire Station.	\$1.5 million	Completed	Council & Public Works	
Energy Efficiency	Conversion of CMP lights in City to LED lights owned by the City (2019).	--	Completed	Council & Public Works	
Energy Efficiency	Energy efficiency upgrades to City buildings.	--	On-going	Council & Public Works	
Broadband	Expand broadband service to all property owners in Belfast.	\$6 million	Needed – future	Council & City Broadband Committee	

*\*Additional Information Regarding CSO Abatement Work can be found in the Public Facilities and Services chapter.*

*\*\*The City is exploring the use of hybrid vehicles for the Police Department, which could result in the need to purchase replacement vehicles at a faster rate than noted here.*