

Town of Wells, Maine Comprehensive Plan Update

Submitted To:

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee
Wells, Maine

Submitted by:

**Resilience Planning & Design LLC
1 Bridge Street, Suite 301
Plymouth, NH 03264**

May 2024

With Assistance from:

FB Environmental
rBouvier Consulting
Southern Maine Planning and Development
Commission

In Cooperation with:

Town of Wells Planning Department

Table of Contents

Part 1	Introduction	5
	Comprehensive Plan Purpose and Use	5
	Comprehensive Plan Organization	5
	Comprehensive Plan Adoption	6
	Comprehensive Planning Process	6
Part 2	Policies and Implementation Strategies	10
	Chapter 1 The Vision for Wells	10
	Chapter 2 Population Policies and Strategies	11
	Chapter 3 Natural Resources Policies and Strategies	13
	Chapter 4 Marine Resources Policies and Strategies	23
	Chapter 5 Historic and Cultural Resources Policies and Strategies	26
	Chapter 6 Existing and Future Land Use Policies and Strategies	29
	Chapter 7 Town Character and Appearance Policies and Strategies	43
	Chapter 8 Transportation and Circulation Policies and Strategies	49
	Chapter 9 Economic Development Policies and Strategies	55
	Chapter 10 Housing Policies and Strategies	59
	Chapter 11 Public Facilities Policies and Strategies	62
	Chapter 12 Open Space Policies and Strategies	66
	Chapter 13 Public Utilities Policies and Strategies	70
	Chapter 14 Fiscal Capacity Policies and Strategies	73
	Chapter 15 Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Policies and Strategies	75
	Chapter 16 Regional Coordination Policies and Strategies	85
Part 3	Implementation Program	87
	Land Use, Development and Resource Protection Implementation Program	87
	Capital Improvement Implementation Program	89
	Open Space/Land Acquisition and Protection Implementation Program	89
	Regional/Intergovernmental Cooperation Implementation Program	91
	Historic Preservation Implementation Program	92
	Town Character and Appearance Implementation Program	93
	Transportation and Circulation Implementation Program	94
	Economic Development Implementation Program	96
	Housing Implementation Program	97
	Public Facilities and Services Implementation Program	98
	Public Utilities Implementation Program	100
	Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation Program	101

Part 4	Capital Investment Strategy	105
Part 5	Appendices	112

Inventory and Analysis

1. Economics and Demographics
 - A. Population
 - B. Local Economy
2. Water Resources
3. Critical Natural Resources
 - A. Topography, Slope and Soils
 - B. Wetlands
 - C. Significant Wildlife & Fisheries Habitats
 - D. Scenic and Coastal Areas
 - E. Flood Hazards
4. Marine Resources
5. Transportation and Circulation
6. Housing
7. Historic and Archaeological Resources
8. Existing and Future Land Use
 - A. Forestry and Agricultural Land
 - B. Recent Development Patterns
 - C. Current Land Uses
9. Public Facilities and Utilities
 - A. Public Facilities
 - B. Public Utilities
10. Fiscal Capacity

Outreach Report

Maps

- Map 1 – Existing Land Use, as of June 2021
- Map 2 – Existing Zoning and Overlay Districts
- Map 3 – Natural Areas & Wildlife Habitats
- Map 4 – Freshwater Resources & Drainage Divides
- Map 5 – Marine Resources
- Map 6 – Soil Types
- Map 7 – 100-Year Floodplains, FEMA (Pending new data)
- Map 8 – Lands in Conservation Ownership or Current Use Taxation Programs
- Map 9 – Future Land Use Plan: Growth, Transitional, Rural, and Critical Rural Areas
- Map 10 – Developable Land
- Map 11 – Municipal Utilities

Part 1 -- Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Wells is a publicly adopted document that states what the citizens of Wells want to achieve for their community over the next decade, and how they intend to achieve it. What the citizens want to achieve is captured in the Vision and then further identified as “policies”, and the steps they will take together to make this vision a reality are known as “implementation strategies”.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURPOSE AND USE

The Comprehensive Plan’s purpose is to document the direction and actions needed in Wells to achieve the town’s vision for the future (*See Part 2 Chapter 1 for the Vision*). The Comprehensive Plan reflects a long-range (e.g., ten year) view of future issues and opportunities. Issues are identified, projected and options selected to set a course of action. These decisions are the basis for the policies and implementation strategies identified in this Plan.

The adopted Plan is used by citizens, elected officials, Town Committees, business investors, and others. They use it to help make daily decisions about the issues and opportunities that shape the Town’s physical, social and economic development. It is used to establish the legal foundation for several implementation programs and activities including, but not limited to the Town’s land use regulations. While the Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning ordinance, land use regulations must be consistent with the Plan.

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan’s purpose is to implement Maine Growth Management Act (M.R.S.A. Title 30-A, Chapter 187) and related state and regional development policies.

The Town of Wells maintains its rights to Home Rule per State Statutes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into four parts: Introduction, Policies and Implementation Strategies, Implementation Program, and Appendix.

Part 1: Introduction

This section describes the Plan’s purpose, use, planning process, and plan adoption.

Part 2: Policies and Implementation Strategies

This section addresses key issues facing the town and new opportunities and identifies implementation actions that will be pursued.

Part 3: Implementation Program

This section organizes the many implementation actions identified, assigns primary responsibility, and determines the level of priority.

Part 4: Appendix

This section includes background research and analysis on various community development issues that provide the basis for the identified policies and strategies.

The Comprehensive Plan is a living document. As town issues and opportunities change and decisions need to be made, the Plan must be reviewed and updated to reflect current policies and implementation programs. Therefore, comments and suggestions about the Comprehensive Plan are always welcome. The Town of Wells will establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to take the lead on these efforts upon adoption of this Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADOPTION

The Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the Citizens of Wells at a Town Meeting. Unlike other communities in the region, this is accomplished when the Comprehensive Plan is presented at the polls. In 2009 the Wells Town Meeting process became a secret ballot voting referendum rather than a traditional Town Meeting format. However, this process is still referred to as “town meeting”.

The first Comprehensive Plan was written in 1963. In the 1980’s a major effort was made to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan. It consisted of three volumes and was adopted November 5, 1991. A revision was adopted on November 3, 1993. The present Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002 and amended in 2003 and amended in 2005 with changes to allow for the new Transportation Center zone.

The plan adopted in 2002 was found by the Maine State Planning Office to be inconsistent with state Growth Management law. In response to these inconsistencies, the Town of Wells formed a Comprehensive Plan Improvement Task Force in 2003. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan was completed by this Task Force. In 2016 efforts to update the 2005 Plan were not approved by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and as a result were not presented for consideration by the citizens of Wells at the Town Meeting. A citizen initiated local ordinance titled Chapter 12 was adopted in 2019 to guide all future comprehensive plan update efforts in Wells, and to ensure that the 2005 Plan serves as the starting point. The Comprehensive Plan Update will be presented to the citizens of Wells for adoption at a Town Meeting.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Planning process is an open process that encourages citizen participation, and is informed by state, regional, and local data and resources. This process is guided by a Comprehensive Plan Update Committee in accordance with the locally adopted ordinance Chapter 12.

State Planning Requirements

The Maine Legislature adopted the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act in 1988 and the Growth Management Act. The act requires that each municipality in the state, except those under the jurisdiction of the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC), develop a local growth management program that guides the future growth of that community. The local growth management program must be consistent with State and regional goals and with the State’s coastal policies.

Under the act, the local growth management program consists of two parts:

1. The preparation and adoption of a comprehensive plan by the Town. This plan must comply with State requirements and must be reviewed by State and regional agencies prior to its final adoption.
2. The preparation and adoption of an implementation program that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and carries out the goals and policies set forth in the Plan. State and regional agencies must also review this program.

The State law requires that Wells update its Comprehensive Plan. This update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to fulfill that requirement.

Town of Wells Town Planning Program

Based on the Maine State Planning requirements, the Town of Wells Planning Program includes the following phases/planning activities that may occur simultaneously depending on the issues/opportunities facing the Town:

Phase I - Issue /Opportunity Research and Analysis

Phase II - Alternative Plan Evaluation and Selection

Phase III - Comprehensive Plan or Amendments Adoption

Phase IV - Implementation Development Plans, Projects and Programs

Phase V - Annual and Five-Year Capital Budgeting

Phase VI - Monitoring and Evaluation

The results of this planning process are a series of interrelated Town plans including:

Comprehensive Plan – The comprehensive, long-range (e.g., ten-year), general plan that contains general policies to guide the physical, social and economic development of the Town. The Comprehensive Plan is reviewed and updated as needed.

Development Plans and Programs – Short-range, specific plans and programs for an area of Town (e.g., Town Center or Harbor), or functional activity (e.g., Transportation and Circulation or Open Space Protection) prepared and adopted to implement adopted Comprehensive Plan policies. The Development Plans and Programs contain detailed design concepts and/or standards to guide the physical, social, economic development of the Town. In some cases, the Development Plans and Programs will need to be adopted by ordinance to provide the legal basis for implementing the Comprehensive Plan (e.g., the Development Plan for Transportation and Circulation for requiring street dedications, easements, etc.). In other cases, the Board of Selectmen or Planning Board may adopt Development Plans where they are providing a guide for development. Development Plans or Programs are prepared as needed and approved by the

Planning Board after a public hearing and updated as needed.

Site Plans – Specific plans for a site or parcel of land that an Applicant proposes to develop. Site Plans require detailed information about the land use, location, development, traffic and circulation, parking, appearance, landscaping, drainage, etc. as described in the Town Land Use Ordinance. These plans are reviewed for compliance, any applicable Development Plans or Programs, Federal or State regulations, and Town Ordinances. The Staff Review Committee or Planning Board may approve Site Plans after public meetings which may include a public hearing. Site Plans are prepared, submitted, reviewed and may be amended as needed.

Subdivision Plans – Specific plan for the legal division and development of a specific parcel of land. Subdivision Plans require detailed information about the street layout, lot size, grading, drainage, impact on water quality, and other information as described in the Town Subdivision Ordinance. These plans are reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, any applicable Development Plans or Programs, Town Ordinances and applicable State and Federal regulations. The Planning Board may approve subdivision Plans after a public hearing. Subdivision Plans are prepared and amended as needed.

Construction Plans – Specific working drawings with detailed specifications for the implementation of an adopted Development Plan, Site Plan or Subdivision Plan. These plans could be for the construction or development of a street, building, park, etc. The Office of Planning and Development reviews construction Plans and Development for consistency with approved Development, Site or Subdivision Plans and other applicable codes.

Comprehensive Plan Update Process

This update process was led by the Wells Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) created by the Board of selectmen as identified in Chapter 12. The CPUC was composed of an engaged group of citizen volunteers who provided their time, energy, and knowledge by guiding and informing the creation of this updated Comprehensive Plan. Assisted by Town Staff and the selected consulting team, this process was governed by Chapter 12, a local ordinance that now regulates the update process for the Wells Comprehensive Plan.

Summary of Public Participation

As part of this comprehensive planning process, the Town of Wells developed a public outreach and engagement plan, and the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee hosted public outreach activities to identify community issues that matter to residents and community members. These events and online activities provided opportunities to gather feedback from the public on important local issues. The summary of results obtained through these outreach efforts are included in the Appendix in a Public Outreach Summary Report. Outreach mechanisms included:

- Mailings, social media posts, and tabling at a community event
- A project website and public feedback form
- Monthly meetings open to the public with two public comment periods at each

- Community Forum Event #1 - focusing on land use change since 2005 and future visioning
- Community Forum Event #2 - focusing on existing conditions and community issues
- Alternative Survey Option - for those unable to attend the second community forum
- Focus Groups - focusing on policies, strategies, and actions for a variety of topics
- Public hearings prior to adoption

Part 2 – Policies and Implementation Strategies

Chapter 1 The Vision for Wells

This Vision for the Town of Wells was informed by the existing conditions analysis completed in 2021, and located in the Appendix of this Plan. It was then created with feedback and direction from the residents of Wells and the members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee. This Vision addresses the overall character of the town in terms of its natural, social and built environment while recognizing the changing economy and the realities of climate change that local leaders and residents are facing. The intent of the Vision is to help visualize the Town of Wells have a clear image to work towards through the many implementation actions identified in this Plan.

THE VISION FOR WELLS

As a historic coastal New England community, the Town of Wells contains valued natural resources including conserved forest lands, protected surface waters, an active harbor, a productive estuary supporting wildlife and fisheries, and several prized beaches. Over the past decade, Wells has worked to protect and steward this important network of natural resources while seeking to guide new development activity in ways that both preserve and enhance the community’s distinct character.

As the community continues to transition to new types of economic activity and away from the land-based industries it relied on in the past, Wells remains a highly desirable place to live and work because of its welcoming people, network of protected open spaces, history, and coastal location. Together, the citizens of Wells are working to embrace new residents and economic opportunities, while making the community more resilient to the changing climate and coastal hazards. This has been accomplished through both new land use regulations and infrastructure investments. These changes are now guiding and informing new business and housing opportunities that add value and reinforce the character of the community. Quality municipal services with an emphasis on health, safety and sustainability, and an interconnected transportation system also contribute to the quality of life for residents, and continue to attract seasonal visitors.

Chapter 2 – Population Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan’s Population Policies and Strategies section includes goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies related to the amount and timing of population growth. The Land Use Policies and Strategies then address the location and character of development to accommodate and regulate future population growth.

Wells’ population growth is shaped in part by regional and national growth trends. An understanding of population trends within a community is important for developing policies to accommodate change, and will help Wells establish an appropriate direction for the future. Wells’ population changes and characteristics are due in part to its geographic location. It is easily accessible from the Maine Turnpike, making it an attractive location for individuals to live in the town and commute to jobs in other communities. Businesses in Wells also provide employment opportunities for individuals that live elsewhere in the region. Wells’ waterfront location also makes it attractive to summer visitors who are a significant portion of Wells’ seasonal population. See Appendix A for recent trends and analysis related to the population and demographics of the community.

The population of Wells is increasing at a higher rate of growth than any other municipality in York County. From 2010 to 2020, the population increased by 26%. As the population of Wells increases it is also aging, and the median age of residents is now 52 years old. On top of this, the seasonal population in Wells is also increasing. The peak seasonal population of Wells is estimated to be 48,409, a 44% increase since 2004. These increases in seasonal and year-round population create a strain on infrastructure and over time change the character of Wells.

Goals

State Goal:

Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community, while protecting the State’s rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.

Wells Goals:

1. Manage the rate of residential and non-residential growth in a manner that maintains the Town’s network of open spaces and coastal community character and is consistent with the Town’s ability to accommodate it.
2. Provide opportunity for a variety of individuals to live in Wells including young families, seniors, and people of diverse backgrounds and income levels. While ensuring that these new housing units do not deter from the character and function of the community.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Ensure that residential growth is accommodated in suitable locations that are properly zoned, have appropriate environmental conditions and allow for provision of proper access and public services exclusive of water and sewer.
2. Continue to monitor and manage the rate of residential growth to ensure that such growth does not unduly strain public facilities and services and does not damage the environment.
3. Encourage the creation and growth of commercial establishments and services designed to serve resident populations with childcare, youth programs and activities, family-oriented activities and entertainment, and senior programming and support.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Direct the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board to monitor and create a legal means to regulate the rate of growth and development. This does not mean to stop all new growth; rather, it means to direct new growth to appropriate areas of the community and over time reduce the impact and rate of growth so that it more closely matches the rates of growth of surrounding communities.
2. Identify available, allowable, and appropriate growth management strategies for areas identified as growth and non-growth areas in this Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

Implementation Strategies

1. Establish a standing Growth Management Committee to review the tools available for managing growth in the Town of Wells on an ongoing basis and make recommendations to the Selectmen. The previous Growth Management Committee was sunsetted in 2008 and if re-established should monitor regional growth trends, research and provide examples of ordinances and other growth management techniques from surrounding communities, and consider the long-term capacity of Wells' municipal facilities and services.
2. Coordinate the growth and development related implementation strategies identified in this Comprehensive Plan to ensure that Wells also addresses other housing, development, natural resource, and land use objectives in keeping with the community's Vision for the future.

Chapter 3 - Natural Resources Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Natural Resources Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies related to the protection, conservation and development of Wells' natural resources. Natural resources for the purposes of this Plan include surface waters (including rivers, streams, ponds, estuaries, and coastal waters), wetlands, groundwater, wildlife and fisheries (and associated habitat), soils (including farmland soils), forestlands and timber, floodplains, and beaches (including sand dunes).

Natural resources contribute to defining a community's unique character. Wells' natural resources provide residents with a rich quality of life and many recreational opportunities. The continued presence of intact natural resources such as forests, farmlands, water bodies, and wetlands on the landscape is an integral component of Wells' distinct character, now and in the vision for the town's future. Protected natural resources mitigate the effects of visual and noise pollution from developed areas and transportation corridors. Natural resources are also an important consideration in estimating the Town's capacity for growth and development potential. Natural resources can provide both opportunities and constraints for growth. For example, steep slopes and wetlands are inappropriate for development while better drained, flatter areas are generally considered more suitable for development. The natural resource base of Wells is an important factor in determining local land use decisions.

See Appendix A for an analysis of Wells' natural resources, including critical resources. Critical natural resources are defined as natural resources with unusual and/or significant geological, biological, or hydrological features (Comprehensive Planning Manual: A Manual for Maine Communities). Under federal and/or state law, critical natural resources warrant protection from the negative impacts of development.

Goals

State Goal:

1. Protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas. (Growth Management Act)
2. 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. (Growth Management Act)

Wells Goals:

1. Work in collaboration with the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve Management Plan to address pressing local and regional management issues, including climate change and its impacts on coastal ecosystems and communities, development pressures, land use change impacts on coastal habitats, and water quality degradation. At the time of this comprehensive plan update, the current management plan is for 2019-2024, and will be updated regularly.

2. Assure the Town's natural features, including the marshes and wetlands, beaches, aquifers, critical wildlife habitats, and floodplains, that are truly environmentally sensitive areas and create a truly outstanding, but fragile, environment are protected from damage and preserved for future generations.
3. Enhance the Town's programs for protecting sensitive, natural resources through regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms.
4. Protect areas of Wells that are vulnerable to the increased flood risk accompanied by climate change impacts such as sea level rise and storm surge flooding, and enhance Wells' climate resilience by protecting and enhancing areas of the town that provide flood mitigation and floodwater storage
5. Support programs for acquiring key land areas of environmental concern to provide for the protection of these resources, while compensating the property owner.
6. Work cooperatively with federal and state environmental regulators to enforce regulations that protect the Town and region's natural resources.
7. Develop land use controls that encourage these areas to be protected and permanently set aside as land development occurs.
8. Protect the Branch Brook aquifer from potential sources of contamination by controlling land use in this area and maintaining the availability and quality of other existing and potential water supplies. Allow the removal of mineral resources such as sand and gravel in a manner which minimizes the impact on these areas and surrounding neighborhoods, provides for the reclamation of these sites, and protects the groundwater from contamination.
9. Protect, manage, and support natural resource-based enterprises such as sustainable forestry and agriculture.
10. Place high value on the protection and long-term management of and education about the Town's ecological systems including soils, surface and ground water, wetlands, beaches, natural vegetation, and wildlife. The natural environment should be used as a guide to manage future growth recognizing that Wells' natural systems provide opportunities and constraints for both conservation and development.
11. Assure ocean beaches continue to be a community resource.
12. Protect Wells against future climate threats to critical natural resources, marine resources, and freshwater resources.
13. Assure that natural resource conservation is not mutually exclusive of recreational usage and opportunity. The two should be collaborative.
14. Protect Well's skies against light pollution with the goal of creating dark skies.

15. Protect the Wells coastal marsh system's continued existence in the face of future inundation from coastal flooding and sea level rise by conserving adjacent upland for the purpose of future marsh migration.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

General

1. Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive areas and critical habitats in a manner that does not jeopardize the environmental value of their resource.
2. Ensure consistency of the Town's land use ordinances with the protection of Wells' natural resources and critical resources.
3. Allow the removal of mineral resources such as sand and gravel in a manner that minimizes the impact on these areas and surrounding neighborhoods, provides for the reclamation of these sites, and protects the groundwater from contamination.
4. Strictly enforce development regulations and setbacks aimed to protect natural resources, such as wetland and water course setbacks.
5. Consider population growth and increased development when planning for natural resource protection. Over-development can affect fragmentation of open space, threaten water resources, threaten wildlife habitat, cause tree removal, and impact wetlands, and as such, development and natural resource protection are linked.
6. Consider holding developers responsible for negative environmental impacts associated with building.
7. Promote and protect natural resource-dependent recreation opportunities (including walking, hiking, bicycling, kayaking, wildlife viewing, shellfish harvesting, and water-based activities), businesses, and industries with land use ordinances, open space rules, and natural resource protection planning. The balance between protecting and promoting natural resource access may also benefit from efforts to limit public and recreational access in some environmentally sensitive areas.

Beaches

1. Ensure public access to the beaches for both residents and tourists while protecting the livability of the beach neighborhoods.
2. Manage the beaches in cooperation with property owners to control overuse, provide necessary facilities, and promote a wholesome family environment.
3. Maintain and protect the physical quality of the beach systems through activities such as cleaning, stabilization, and sand replenishment.

4. Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and local transit access to the beaches.
5. Create appropriate transportation links between the Harbor, Wells Beach, and Drakes Island, such as ferries and water taxis.

Groundwater

1. Protect the quality of the groundwater in the Branch Brook Aquifer and in the Town's other sand and gravel aquifer areas that can be used for high volumes of domestic use by implementing and enforcing regulations that control the use, handling, and storage of hazardous materials.
2. Protect the quality of the groundwater in areas not served by public water and sewer by ensuring existing chemical limit standards set by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection are enforced and ensuring proper inspections of all septic system installations. Examples of such chemicals include nitrates and PFAS compounds.
3. Proactively support the state in addressing any PFAS contamination that is found to have occurred in Wells due to historic spreading of sewage residuals and other biosolids, or through septage spreading.

Surface Waters

1. Protect surface water quality by aggressively managing non-point source pollution including stormwater discharge.
2. Cooperate with surrounding communities and environmental non-profit groups to minimize the potential for surface water pollution by inappropriate uses or activities.
3. Establish a long-term water quality monitoring program of surface waters in the Town to better understand threats to surface waters and identify action items needed to protect and/or restore water quality. Establish monitoring sites along Branch Brook, Depot Brook, Green Brook, Merriland River, Stevens Brook, and Webhannet River.

Wetlands

1. Protect and maintain the valuable functions of tidal and freshwater wetlands by minimizing the impact of development and allowing appropriate uses such as low impact recreation, wildlife habitat, and limited, controlled timber harvest.
2. Ensure protection of high value wetlands including vernal pools, through regulatory and non-regulatory implementation programs and place high value on these resources when designating growth and rural areas in Wells.
3. Protect land adjacent to wetlands, especially coastal wetlands, to allow marsh migration due to increased coastal flooding and sea level rise.

Soils

1. Base the density of development in areas outside public water and sewer service on the assimilative capacity of soils to accommodate onsite wastewater systems.

Wildlife and Fisheries

1. Ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of Wells' valuable wildlife habitat and fisheries through the use of regulatory strategies and outreach to governmental and non-profit organizations involved with natural resource protection and management.
2. Protect large habitat blocks to provide core habitat blocks that provide undisturbed habitat conditions required by many of Maine's species.

Floodplains

1. Collaborate with regional and state agencies, neighboring municipalities and states, and other key partners to develop proactive actions to address projected climate change-induced flood vulnerabilities and areas of resilience.
2. Guide future development away from flood-prone areas.
3. Manage floodplain areas to ensure the safety and welfare of those individuals with properties in such areas.
4. Maintain and update comprehensive community flood hazard management policies and strategies (see Chapter 15 and the Appendix).
3. Ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of Wells through the use of regulatory strategies and outreach to governmental and non-profit organizations involved with natural resource protection and management.

Education

1. Work with schools and the community to promote education of environmental sciences and ecology.
2. Use the Fenderson Wildlife Commons and other locations for environmental education opportunities for students and the public in conjunction with the Wells Conservation Commission.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Existing Land Use, Subdivision, Floodplain Management, Hazardous Waste, Septage Effluent Disposal, and Solid Waste Ordinances.

Implementation Strategies

General

1. 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.
2. Through local land use ordinances, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include the consideration of information regarding critical natural resources as part of the review process.
3. Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources and incorporate planning for increasing severity of climate impacts.
4. Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.
5. 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.
6. Develop a long-range climate action plan for the Town of Wells that addresses natural resources (freshwater, marine, wildlife habitat, access to recreation, etc.), and plans for mitigating the effects of climate change. The plan should include reducing Wells' carbon footprint, improving seawalls where appropriate, controlling erosion, addressing limits to coastal development, reducing pollution, encouraging smart designs of infrastructure.
7. Conduct regular investigations into the threats of climate change within the Town, especially along river/stream courses, marsh side, and frontal beach landscapes. Utilize the Town Engineer, professional expertise, and collaboration with neighboring towns. The results of said investigations will inform avoidance and mitigation planning efforts.
8. Enhance public stewardship and public education on importance of Town natural resources.

Beaches

1. Appoint a Committee to recommend specific implementation programs to ensure public access to beaches, manage beach use, protect the physical quality and create transportation links.
2. Establish a graphic inventory of all sand dunes to accompany the state sand dune boundaries file and update as new data becomes available. Ensure that any landowner with property on a sand dune obtain any necessary State permits prior to obtaining any local permits.

Groundwater

1. Revise the Aquifer Protection District of the Land Use Ordinance to incorporate a two- tiered zone for the Branch Brook Aquifer based on maps prepared by the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Wells Water District (KKWWD) and adopt use and quality standards as identified in the Aquifer Protection section of the Land Use Policies and Strategies.
2. Extend aquifer protection zone around Branch Brook using groundwater modeling rather than a surface water buffer. Use the 200-day and 2500-day travel zones to establish the buffer.
3. Continue to work with the KKWWD to acquire key parcels of land with high value for ground water protection and aquifer recharge through fee simple acquisition or conservation easement.
4. Amend the Aquifer Protection provisions of the Town's Land Use Ordinance to ensure that there is sufficient protection of the groundwater in the Town's sand and gravel aquifer areas. Where appropriate implement and enforce regulations that control the use, handling, and storage of hazardous materials in these areas.
5. Establish a program to ensure there is proper inspection of all septic system installations and monitor the performance of septic systems in/or adjacent to Resource Protection and Conservation Areas.
6. Maintain the current buffer around surface water bodies and wetlands in the Land Use Ordinance to prohibit septic systems and other uses with the potential to contaminate both the groundwater and the groundwater/surface water interface.
7. Enact public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms as necessary.

Surface Waters

1. Continually integrate the State of Maine Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Protection, as may from time-to-time be revised, into the local land use regulations.
2. Ensure the Town shoreland zoning ordinance complies with Maine DEP guidelines.
3. As necessary, revisit and revise local subdivision and site plan review regulations, to require current low impact development standards, stormwater management, erosion and sediment control and landscaping Standards consistent with: (1) Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (title 38 M.R.S.A §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502). (2) Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds. (3) Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.
4. Continue local subdivision and site plan review regulations to provide for municipal inspection and enforcement of:
 - Erosion and sediment control plans.

- Post-construction maintenance and operation plans, particularly for major developments or developments deemed by the Planning Board to have potential negative impacts to valuable natural resource or Resource Protection Areas.
5. When and where applicable, develop an urban impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan to promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation.
 6. Continue the cooperative relationship with the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve to expand the water quality monitoring program with annual monitoring results and analysis made available to the Town.
 7. Establish a process with adjacent communities to ensure the maintenance of water quality standards for surface waters that occur in more than one community such as Branch Brook, the Merriland River, and the Ogunquit River.
 8. Ensure that the water quality of Ell Pond is not degraded by working with the Town of Sanford to implement a consistent set of standards for water quality protection.
 9. Amend Town ordinances to require a timber-cutting plan and permit.
 10. Work with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to integrate water quality protection into their daily operations including the storage of sand and salt, culvert replacement, street sweeping, and garage operations.
 11. Adopt or enhance water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties that require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.
 12. Obtain a description of each pond, river, and drinking water supply with the description of ecological value, threats to water quality or quantity with specific location(s) of threats, and documented water quality, a summary of present and past monitoring activities, and/or invasive species problems from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and/or the Department of Environmental Protection.
 13. Work with the Wells Sanitary District to minimize pollution discharges through upgrading existing public sewer systems and the wastewater treatment facility.
 14. 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 Maine DEP, Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Maine Woodland Owners. Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species if applicable.
 15. Rezone watercourse setbacks to increase the capacity of said features to accommodate greater rain volume and more frequent storm events, as the threat of storm surges increases due to climate change.

16. Negotiate greater protections of watercourse in the Branch Brook, Merriland River, and Webhannet River watersheds by purchasing development rights and easements from willing landowners to extend protection beyond regulatory ordinances.
17. Consider regulating the use of chemicals, such as fertilizer and pesticides, that threaten the Town's water quality.
18. Improve access for fishing, kayaking, and canoeing in Wells.

Wetlands

1. The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will review and assess the quality of current wetland management within Wells and, if deemed appropriate, propose guidelines for a local wetland regulation. If appropriate, base the regulation upon a classification system that incorporates hydrology, vegetation and wildlife and a definition that is consistent with current state and federal wetland regulatory programs. Consider no longer counting wetlands in the assessment of land for minimum lot requirements in new subdivisions, in order to prevent legal development of access roads through other wetlands. Report these findings to the Board of Selectmen and ensure that any definitions be consistent with current state and federal wetland regulatory programs.
2. Establish a program to identify, prioritize and protect high value freshwater wetlands and land containing vernal pools. Protection should occur through regulation, education and cooperation, purchase, or conservation.

Wildlife and Fisheries

1. Identify and protect through the timber harvesting plan and permit, site plan and subdivision approval process, those areas of land designated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) as "significant wildlife habitat. These areas should be revised based on MDIFW updates and revisions of these habitat areas and performance standards.
2. Review the appropriateness of currently designated buffers along rivers and streams in the Town's Land Use Ordinance to maintain the quality of these areas for wildlife and fishery habitat.
3. Within areas of Wells designated as Rural Use, seek to maintain large parcels of unfragmented lands and to ensure that wildlife habitats are connected by travel corridors through both regulatory and non-regulatory means.
4. Require all applications for subdivision, site plan review and timber harvesting to investigate and map the presence of any significant wildlife habitat and habitat for state rare or endangered species that may not have been previously mapped, such as vernal pool areas of the Tatic Hills that provide habitat for Blanding's and spotted turtles and as established by the State of Maine on the site. Obtain necessary state approvals as a condition of subdivision plan and /or site plan approval.
5. Work cooperatively with Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve to manage and protect high value habitat and areas for significant habitat and rare and endangered species.

6. Work with landowners with high value habitats on their property to protect these areas through education and cooperation, conservation and easements or purchase through a land holding entity.

Forest and Farmland Resources

1. Update the Town ordinances to ensure a timber-cutting permitting is in compliance with the State of Maine Forest Service regulations.
2. Work with forest and agricultural landowners to improve adaptive capacity and ability to respond to fluctuating water demands, especially as may result from predicted climate change impacts.
3. Amend Town land use ordinances to protect prime farmland soils.
4. Include agricultural and forestry operations into Town economic development planning efforts.
5. Continue to safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.

Floodplains --See Chapter 15-Flood Hazard Mitigation Polices and Strategies

1. Continue to manage the use and development of the Town's inland flood hazard areas in accordance with state and federal standards.
2. Update current flood hazard standards and maps to be consistent with federal guidelines and the recommendations of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Polices and Strategies.

Chapter 4 - Marine Resources Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Marine Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies related to marine resources and the waterfront environment.

The marine environment of Wells covers most of the eastern portion of the Town extending inland as far as Route 1 and stretching along the Atlantic Ocean for over five miles from Kennebunk on the north to Ogunquit on the south. The majority of the oceanfront is characterized by a system of barrier sand dunes and beaches. Behind this dune system lies an extensive area of marshland fed by the Little River, Merriland River, Webhannet River, Ogunquit River, and numerous coastal streams. The water, plant and wildlife resources of this area are discussed in detail in the Natural Resources Policies and Strategies.

Goals

State Goal:

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.

Relevant State Coastal Policies:

1. Promote the maintenance, development, and re-vitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation. (Coastal Management Policy)
2. Enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources. (Coastal Management Policy)
3. 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. (Coastal Management Policy)

Regional Goal:

Continue to partner with state and federal agencies and neighboring communities, and other key regional partners, to implement timely dredging and beneficial reuse of dredged material to support coastal resilience and beach nourishment.

Wells Goals:

1. Continue to assure public access to the beaches and Harbor in Wells while managing and maintaining these resources in the best interests of the community and adjacent landowners.
2. Work cooperatively with the State to manage and regulate the use of critical sand dune areas.
3. Assure the Wells Harbor remains a viable resource since the harbor plays an important role as both an economic and recreational resource for the Town.

4. Protect and restore recreational fishing and shellfishing in the Town's coastal waters and estuaries.
5. Prepare and plan for the inevitable impacts of climate change on Well's marine resources through specific measures such as seawall improvements, limiting coastal development, higher boardwalks and piers, and revegetating shorelines.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Continue to assure the quality of the living environment in beach neighborhoods by managing the activities of beach goers, enforcing private property rights, and controlling access and parking.
2. Continue to manage the beaches in cooperation with private landowners to ensure this resource can be used in a manner that allows for maximum use by the beach goers while minimizing the impact to private property owners and protecting the natural plant and wildlife habitats that enhance the value of the beach.
3. Continue to protect the plant and wildlife habitat associated with the beach/dune and estuarine systems to ensure survival of the state's endangered and threatened species.
4. Continue to support the dredging of the harbor to maintain it as a suitable mooring area while minimizing the negative ecological impacts of dredging on recreational fishing and shellfishing opportunities.
5. Control parking and support facilities in the harbor and beach areas to allow continued use of the area for commercial and recreational boating and marine uses.
6. Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in state or federal clean marina/boatyard programs.
7. Protect, maintain, and, where warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Existing Land Use ordinance.

Implementation Strategies

1. Update as necessary the local Harbor Management Plan that addresses harbor location and use issues, jetty issues, marine resource protection, adjacent land use and public access. The updated plan should become a part of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Maintain the graphic inventory of all sand dunes on the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) and update, as new data becomes available. Ensure that any landowner with property on sand dunes obtain any necessary state permits prior to obtaining any local permits.

3. Continue to work with appropriate state agencies and the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve to manage non-point source pollution into the harbor and estuary to ensure appropriate water quality levels for shellfish harvesting and other marine recreation activities.
4. Maintain public access to the beaches, harbor and waterfront of Wells.
5. Public access to beaches should be carefully addressed to limit overcrowding of natural resources while also improve access points through ensure safety of stairs, making more handicap options, creating better bike access to beaches, better shuttling access to beaches, transportation for seniors to beaches, resident parking for beaches, and better sidewalks (such as on Mile Rd).
6. Reduce pollution impacting marine resources.
7. Limit coastal development and building. Establish guidelines for beach use for tourists, promote/enforce rules, monitor beaches.
8. Improve water-based recreational businesses and improve kayak access and public boat launches. Promote inland based water recreation activities to tourists as an alternative to the beach.
9. Continue to maintain Wells Harbor as an active harbor that provides access, service and mooring facilities for both commercial, marine-related vessels and recreational boats.
10. Continue to work with the Department of Marine Resources and the DEP to ensure the viability of the recreational shellfish-harvesting program and prohibit any commercial harvesting.
11. Continue to work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical, accessible, and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks.
12. 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.

Chapter 5 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Historic and Cultural Resources Policies and Strategies section describes the goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies related to Wells' historic and cultural assets. The Town of Wells has a rich history –its historic buildings, archaeological sites, railroad, maritime history, and more have attracted residents and visitors to the community and have helped shape the character and identity of the Town. The Town has 18 sites that are on the National Register of Historic Places and a number of other state and locally significant historic properties as well. Wells also has several unique historic sites that have cultural and ecological value including the Wells Reserve at Laudholm, and the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. See Appendix A for additional details on Wells' historic and cultural resources.

Goals

State Goal:

Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

Regional Goal:

Create an awareness of the importance of identifying and preserving historic and archaeological resources.

Wells Goals:

1. Identify, map, protect, and share significant historical and archaeological resources.
2. Preserve, protect, and maintain the quality of Wells' historical, cultural and archaeological resources while respecting and protecting landowner rights.
3. Educate Town citizens and visitors about Wells' historic and archaeological resources not just as individual buildings or sites, but as resources in a geographic, social and economic context.
4. Document and protect historic and cultural sites as the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise become more apparent.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Preserve and promote the historical and cultural character of Wells including historic buildings, sites and landscapes as well as roadways and natural features of historic and cultural significance.

2. Identify, document and protect the Town’s archaeological and pre-historical resources.
3. Ensure that development along the Route One corridor, in the central area of Wells (Route 1 and 109), and within other identified growth areas occurs in a manner that is consistent with and complementary of the historical character of the community.
4. Provide educational opportunities for residents and visitors that “tell the story” of Wells history, including appropriate signage and markers at mill sites, shipyard sites, etc.
5. Encourage owners of historic properties to apply for National Register status.
6. Ensure that new development respects the Town’s historic and archaeological resources.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells’ standards to guide development:

1. Existing Land use Regulations.

Implementation Strategies

1. Seek Local Government Certification with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in order to be eligible for matching grants related to preservation planning and cultural resource protection.
2. Re-establish and maintain the Wells Historic Preservation Commission to assist with implementation of these actions and collaborate with the Historical Society.
3. Continue to identify and document historic and archaeological resources for the purposes of building a written and photographic record that can be used to maintain and protect these valuable community resources. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has noted that a comprehensive survey of Wells’ historic above-ground 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. Identify scenic historic landscape resource areas including agricultural lands and fields, rock walls, and other features that should be preserved as important cultural viewsheds.
5. Manage the “Gateways” or major roadway entrances into the Town of Wells to protect their historic community character and ensure that any new development is consistent with this character.
6. Continue and enhance the education and outreach program for both the residents and visitors to Wells about the Town’s historic and archaeological resources. Annual historic walks, walking and driving tours and education resources are examples.
7. Work with public and private groups to establish a permanent heritage trail that would

include map and permanent markers for specific historic properties.

8. Encourage more property owners to place their properties on the National Register of Historic Places.
9. Strengthen requirements in the Land Use Ordinance regarding proximity to and impacts on historic and archaeological resources. For known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, use the local land use ordinances to require developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
10. Adopt or amend the land use ordinances to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.
11. Adopt design standards for all commercial zoning districts that are modelled after the existing design standards for the northern portion of the Route 1 Corridor and informed by the vision and purpose of each zoning district.

Chapter 6 Existing and Future Land Use Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies to guide the location, intensity, and quality of land use in Wells over the next ten years. According to the State Economist the population in Wells could reach 13,582 by 2038. To address this potential growth the Future Land Use Plan (Map 9) accounts for recent development trends, projections, the availability of infrastructure, and the Town's commitment to natural resource protection. The intent of this Future Land Use Plan is to guide the new residential and non-residential development primarily to the identified growth and transitional areas. The Town will also continue to support non-regulatory approaches to land conservation to ensure that additional natural resource areas are protected.

Goals

State Goal:

1. Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.
2. Safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.

Wells Goals:

1. Growth does not exceed the capacity of municipal facilities and services.
2. Wells has a balanced pattern of land use that respects its diverse natural, cultural and historic resources.
3. Guide growth that is respectful of the Town's village, rural and beach/waterfront areas.
4. Growth management strategies should be employed to ensure growth is compatible with meeting a goal to reduce carbon emissions.
5. Impact of new growth on environmental, open space and fiscal resources is minimized.
6. The identities of the Town and its neighborhoods are maintained and enhanced.
7. Wells plays a role in achieving statewide climate change action goals such as enacting energy efficient building codes and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Promote a general pattern of development that maintains and enhances the land use, character, and living environments of the Town including the high-density beach/waterfront area, the Route 1 mixed-use corridor, the suburban style neighborhoods and the farm and forest rural areas. To accomplish this policy the Town will:
 - a. Identify areas for growth that would include residential areas and areas for mixed-use development where public infrastructure can service a higher density of development;
 - b. Restrict development in critical rural areas, near sensitive resource areas, and in areas prone to natural hazards;
 - c. Encourage commercial and industrial uses in appropriate locations;
 - d. Preserve tourism-related industry along Route 1;
 - e. Preserve beach/waterfront residential neighborhoods
2. Protect and enhance Wells' small-town rural character by ensuring that new development is consistent with the character of the Town, promotes amenities that reinforce the Town's character, protects the scenic value of the Town's beaches, marshes, rivers and rural roads, and protects historic areas of the Town.
 - a. Development guidelines should be consistent with enhancing long term sustainability of natural resources, and addressing energy efficiency and renewable energy for heating and electricity.
3. Consider a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to accommodate and control growth while protecting the Town's rural character and sense of community.
4. Monitor and manage the impacts of residential growth to ensure that such growth does not unduly strain public facilities and services or have an adverse impact on natural resources or critical natural resources. This includes studying alternative methods of managing growth and financing public improvements required by new growth, such as: a differential growth cap, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Impact Fees and other innovative planning tools such as Tax Increment Financing.
5. Encourage higher standards for infrastructure development in the Town's commercial and municipal center in the Route 1/109 area such as complete street designs.
6. Direct growth into areas designated in the Future Land Use Plan as growth or transitional areas.
7. Manage residential development outside of village areas to assure it is consistent with the character of Wells by:
 - a. Adopting and revising land use regulations that recognize the capacity of natural and

- man-made systems within the Town;
 - b. Restricting development in areas where public facilities such as water, sewer, and roads are not available or are not adequate to service the development unless the services are upgraded; and
 - c. Requiring provision of open space and recreational lands as part of new, large subdivisions that are commensurate with the size of the development and that optimize opportunities to connect with town wide and regional open space and recreational resources.
8. Work with the Maine DOT to complete a comprehensive corridor study of land use and transportation for Route 1.
 9. Direct business and industrial growth and expansion to locations that minimize impact to the Town's natural and historical environment and adjacent neighborhoods by adopting and implementing guidelines for landscaping, buffering, building design, lighting, and parking.
 10. Identify specific areas that could be zoned or re-zoned to accommodate light industrial or business development based upon the suitability of the area and access to arterial roadways.
 11. Assure the long-term protection of land that is in forestry or agriculture through both regulatory and non-regulatory means.
 - a. Forest and land protection goals should include the benefit of carbon sequestration.
 12. Continue to protect, manage, and enhance the Town's open space and resource conservation areas.
 13. Establish new and implement existing master plans for Town-owned lands to determine their most appropriate long-term uses.
 14. Monitor and support state climate action goals and action items and enact changes to land use and development policies and regulations that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as energy-efficient building codes.
 15. Designate distinct "critical rural," "rural" and "growth" areas based on the guidelines of Maine's Growth Management Act.

Critical Rural Areas

Critical rural areas encompass areas in the community that contain valuable natural, historic or visual resources that are in need of a higher level of protection.

Rural Areas

Rural areas include areas of the community that:

- a. Consist of large, contiguous open spaces, farmland, and forest land;
- b. Are relatively free of sprawling and strip development along roads; and
- c. Are not physically suitable for accommodating future high density

residential or commercial uses.

Growth Areas

Growth areas include areas in one of three categories:

1. Developed Areas – Areas that are essentially built out and will only experience incremental or infill growth in the foreseeable future.
2. Existing Growth Areas - Areas already designated as residential, commercial or industrial zones on the existing zoning map that have some capacity for future growth.
3. Transitional Areas – Areas that are not part of established residential, commercial or industrial areas on the existing zoning map that:
 - a. Are located in proximity to existing residential or commercial areas of Wells;
 - b. Are physically suitable for development or redevelopment;
 - c. Contain sufficient area to accommodate planned growth and development; and
 - d. Enable a compact, clustered, rather than sprawling, pattern of development.

16. Recognizing that the Eastern Trail should be completed during the life of this Plan, encourage the connection of the Eastern Trail to Route 1.
17. Explore opportunities to develop a downtown district with density of residential units and services associated with a traditional downtown.
18. Consider measures to consider the needs of year-round residents to balance year-round population and tourists.
19. Plan for where to focus economic and commercial development in the town. Important components to include in the plan include how to support local businesses, where industrial use is allowed, where commercial land use should be focused, and how to create more year-round economic opportunities.
20. Support affordable housing and/or the rehabilitation of low-income and moderate-income properties through land use code provisions.
21. Support senior housing for Wells' senior population through land use code provisions.
22. Consider the connectivity of land and trails among land use areas in Wells and fund conservation opportunities accordingly.
23. Consider sustainable transportation connectivity among land use areas in Wells and fund conservation and/or transportation projects accordingly.
24. Protect historical and archaeological resources through land use code provisions.

25. Continue to support the level of commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure, especially in growth areas.
26. Continue to establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.

Definition of Land Use Districts by Type

The following table lists districts classified as non-growth and growth areas in the Future LandUse Plan.

Non-Growth Areas		Growth Areas		
Critical Rural Areas	Rural Areas	Developed Areas	Existing Growth Areas	Transitional Areas
CR 1 – Fenderson Wildlife Commons	R1 – Rural Area Previously Defined	BB – Beach Business	RA – Residential A	T1 – Moody
CR 2 – The Heath/West Brook Corridor	R2 – Chapel Road Rural Extension	RB – Residential Beach	RC – Residential/ Commercial	T3 – Burnt Mill
CR 3 – Tatnic Hills/Mt. Agamenticus Area	DR – Developed Rural	RD – Residential Drakes Island	H – Harbor	T5 – Crediford Limited Commercial
CR 4A – Branch Brook Aquifer Travel Time <200 days		RD - Community College	GB – General Business	T6 – Limited Industrial
CR 4B – Branch Brook Aquifer Recharge Area		RD -Hobbs Farm	LI – Light Industrial	T7 – Downtown District
CR 5A – Webhannet River Corridor			QM – Quarry Manufacturing	
CR 5B – Merriland River Corridor			TC – Transportation Center	
CR 5C – Ogunquit River Corridor				
CR 5D – Lower Branch Brook Corridor (not in Recharge Area)				
CR 6 – Existing Resource Protection Districts				
CR 7 – Existing Conservation Lands				
CR 8 – Subdivision Open Space				

Tools to Define Rural and Critical Rural Areas

The Town of Wells wants to protect its rural and critical rural areas in ways that respect the rights of property owners. As such, the base minimum lot size of 100,000 square feet (2.30 acres), or 40,000 square feet if located east of the Maine Turnpike and connected to public sewer will remain intact throughout the Town's rural areas (Town Code, Chapter 145, Article V, 145-30). Instead of increasing the base lot size, there are four mechanisms being suggested to control the character of growth in the rural areas of Wells:

1. Stronger standards for clustering and open space preservation in rural subdivisions in areas where preservation of large undeveloped blocks is a priority. Stronger clustering standards would limit the visual and environmental impacts of development in such key areas of Wells.
2. In areas where protection of water resources is a priority, wetland areas will be excluded from lot sizes, so the 100,000 square foot minimum will apply to a net lot size and not the gross lot size.
3. In areas with key water resources, land uses and septic systems will be limited to mitigate negative impacts on these resources.

Maine's Growth Management Program (GMP) is a set of guiding regulations that were implemented to encourage orderly growth and growth planning. The program requires municipalities to form a comprehensive plan that includes defined section criteria and policy development based upon state goals. A comprehensive plan must include an actionable implementation strategy section. These guidelines are meant to assist with the uniform and controlled growth at the state, region, and town levels moving forward and allow for some level of standardization in comprehensive plans between municipalities. The states GMP requirements were used as a guide in the updating of the 2005 Wells Comprehensive Plan (Maine State Growth Management Program 2020).

Critical Rural Areas

In all critical rural areas, the base minimum lot size of 100,000 square feet will be kept intact. However, as discussed above, growth will be limited and controlled in these areas through a mix of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms. The suggested Critical Rural districts and provisions for each are listed below.

Critical Rural 1 – Fenderson Wildlife Commons

Geographical Description – The area surrounding the Fenderson Wildlife Commons property, stretching from the growth area along Route 109 to the Perkins Town area. This area encompasses a large and contiguous block of mostly undeveloped land that abuts mostly undeveloped land in the Town of Sanford.

Land Use Standards

- Maximum lot coverage: 20%
- Encourage 50% open space preservation for all new residential subdivisions
- If property to be developed abuts an existing open space, the new open space must abut it

- No new roads will be accepted by the Town of Wells
- No private roads may result in the connection of two or more existing public or private roads
- Vegetated buffers must be maintained along existing public and private roadways

Critical Rural 2 – The Heath/West Brook Corridor

Geographical Description – An area beginning at the Wells Heath property along Routes 109 and 9A stretching along the West Brook Corridor into Perkins Town and along the proposed trail corridor connecting the Heath with Fenderson Wildlife Commons. This district includes a mostly undeveloped corridor running several miles from the North Berwick town line to Route 109.

Land Use Standards

- Maximum lot coverage: 20%
- Encourage 50% open space preservation for all new residential subdivisions
- If property to be developed abuts an existing open space, the new open space must abut it
- No new roads will be accepted by the Town of Wells
- No private roads may result in the connection of two or more existing public or private roads
- Vegetated buffers must be maintained along existing public and private roadways

Critical Rural 3 – Tatnic Hills/Mt. Agamenticus

Geographical Description – A series of undeveloped backland areas located south of Route 9 and west of Hiltons Lane. This area contains several unfragmented blocks of habitat land, some of which abut other unfragmented blocks in the Town of South Berwick.

Land Use Standards

- Maximum lot coverage: 20%
- Encourage 50% open space preservation for all new residential subdivisions
- If property to be developed abuts an existing open space, the new open space must abut it
- No new roads will be accepted by the Town of Wells
- No private roads may result in the connection of two or more existing public or private roads
- Vegetated buffers must be maintained along existing public and private roadways

Critical Rural 4A – Branch Brook Aquifer Travel Time <200 days

Geographical Description – The portion of the Branch Brook Aquifer Recharge Area with a contaminant travel time of less than 200 days. This area includes the most critical locations in Wells for protection of groundwater, as Branch Brook is the public drinking water source for the Town (as well as for Kennebunk and Kennebunkport).

Land Use Standards

- Developed portion of cluster developments are prohibited within the shoreland setback and aquifer protection district.
- Wetland areas deducted: 100%
- Maximum lot coverage: 10%
- Require 400-foot septic system setback from Branch Brook

- Require 250-foot building setback from Branch Brook
- Establish controls over the use, handling, and storage of chemical or petroleum products
- Prohibit fuel sales
- Prohibit animal husbandry or agricultural uses that produce animal wastes

Critical Rural 4B – Branch Brook Aquifer Recharge Area

Geographical Description – The balance of the Branch Brook Aquifer Recharge Area that lies outside the 200-day contaminant travel time zone.

Land Use Standards

- Developed portion of cluster developments are prohibited within the shoreland setback and aquifer protection district.
- Wetland areas deducted: 100%
- Maximum lot coverage: 10%
- Establish controls over the use, handling and storage of chemical or petroleum products
- Prohibit fuel sales
- Prohibit animal husbandry or agricultural uses that produce animal wastes

Critical Rural 5A – Webhannet River Corridor

Geographical Description – A corridor along the Webhannet River stretching from the estuary, across Route 1 and west to the Boston & Maine Railroad right-of-way.

Land Use Standards

- Developed portion of cluster developments are prohibited within the shoreland setback and aquifer protection district.
- 250-foot building setback (200' under current zoning)
- Wetland areas deducted: 100%
- Maximum lot coverage: 10%

Critical Rural 5B – Merriland River Corridor

Geographical Description – A corridor along the Merriland River, stretching from the estuary to Route 109 where it joins the Heath/West Brook Critical Rural Area.

Land Use Standards

- Developed portion of cluster developments are prohibited within the shoreland setback and aquifer protection district.
- 250-foot building setback (200' under current zoning)
- Wetland areas deducted: 100%
- Maximum lot coverage: 10%

Critical Rural 5C – Ogunquit River Corridor

Geographical Description – A corridor along the Ogunquit River from the estuary to the South Berwick town line.

Land Use Standards

- Developed portion of cluster developments are prohibited within the shoreland setback and aquifer protection district.
- 250-foot building setback (200' under current zoning)
- Wetland areas deducted: 100%
- Maximum lot coverage: 10%

Critical Rural 5D – Lower Branch Brook Corridor (not in Recharge Area)

Geographical Description – A corridor along Branch Brook beginning below the Aquifer Recharge Area (at about where Route 1 crosses Branch Brook), running to the estuary.

Land Use Standards

- Developed portion of cluster developments are prohibited within the shoreland setback and aquifer protection district.
- 250-foot building setback (200' under current zoning)
- Wetland areas deducted: 100%
- Maximum lot coverage: 10%

Critical Rural 6 – Existing Resource Protection Districts

Geographical Description – The existing RP district areas in Wells. Many of these areas fall within the borders of the newly defined Critical Rural areas but others, especially the Merriland, Webhannet and Ogunquit River estuaries are outside the Critical Rural areas. The purpose of these districts is to protect and preserve fragile environmental areas from intrusions that would upset ecological systems or pose as public health and safety problems (Town Code, Chapter 145, Article V, 145-32).

Land Use Standards

- Development is already severely restricted using present standards

Critical Rural 7 – Existing Conserved Lands

Geographical Description – The existing conserved lands in Wells. These include Town-owned lands managed for conservation, Town-owned conservation easements, as well as land trust properties and easements conserved in perpetuity.

Land Use Standards

- Development is already severely restricted under deeds or easements of conservation lands

Critical Rural 8 – Existing Subdivision Open Space

Geographical Description – The existing lands under subdivision open space in Wells. These lands are required to be held as open space, undeveloped, by Wells subdivision regulations.

Land Use Standards

- Development is already severely restricted by subdivision regulations

Rural Areas

All areas located outside of growth areas and critical rural areas will remain as standard rural areas to preserve the open, rural character of the land that correspond with the Town's existing Rural (R) zoning district. The dimensional and use standards already in place for the R district are recommended to remain intact. However, stronger standards for clustering in subdivisions are recommended to better protect the character of these areas.

The existing R district will be reduced in size by the proposed Critical Rural and Transitional Areas. The only location where the R district is proposed for expansion is for a forested parcel located on the north side of Chapel Road that is currently in the RC district. This area is one of the few large parcels located east of the Turnpike that is registered as Tree Growth in the Current Use Taxation program. Also, its location between York County Community College, the Route 1 corridor and the Town Hall/High School area makes it a potential future area for trails and green space.

The Developed Rural area comprises the Perkins Town section of Wells. While no changes are recommended to land use standards in this area, it was designated as such to recognize the fact that substantial suburban-scale development has already taken place here.

Developed Growth Areas

These areas correspond with the current boundaries of the Residential Beach (RB), Residential Drakes Island (RD) and Beach Business (BB) zoning districts. Although these areas are identified as growth areas, the supply of undeveloped land is extremely small, thus limiting the possibility of future growth. The existing dimensional and use standards for these three districts are recommended to remain the same to retain the intended New England family resort character and provide lodging facilities and other services to tourists and residents (Town Code, Chapter 145, Article V, 145-22-25).

Hobbs Farm in the Rural District, identified in 2005 as a Transitional Area, is now built out and has been changed to a Developed Growth Area.

The Community College area in the Rural District, identified in 2005 as a Transitional Area, is now built out and has been changed to a Developed Growth Area.

Existing Growth Areas

Existing Growth Areas correspond with established, non-rural zoning districts in Wells that have capacity for future growth. The purposes of Existing Growth Areas range from medium-density residential development to commercial or industrial uses (Town Code, Chapter 145, Article V, 145-21-29). No changes are recommended for the standards of these districts. There are seven existing zoning districts that fall within the Existing Growth Area definition:

1. Residential A (RA)

2. Residential/Commercial (RC)
3. Harbor Commercial (Harbor)
4. General Business (GB)
5. Light Industrial (LI)
6. Quarry Manufacturing (QM)
7. Transportation Center (TC)

Existing dimensional and use standards for all of these districts are recommended to remain intact. In the two mixed-use areas (RC and GB), clustering will be encouraged, allowing residential development to occur on lots as small as 10,000 square feet for one-family dwellings provided the density standards for the underlying zone are met (Town Code, Chapter 145, Article V, 145).

Transitional Areas

Transitional areas are locations that are presently zoned for rural uses and densities that the Future Land Use Plan suggests become areas that are redesignated to accommodate future residential, commercial, or industrial uses (as appropriate for each area). Recommended changes in these areas concern minimum lot size, lot coverage and other dimensional standards, as well as allowable uses.

There are six suggested Transitional Areas described below.

Transitional Area 1 – Moody

Geographic Description – Includes all areas south of Route 9B and east of the Maine Turnpike that are currently in the Rural (R) zone, with the exception of the area abutting the Ogunquit River, that is recommended to be part of Critical Rural Area 5C.

Land Use Standards – This area has already seen substantial residential development. Improving access in this area is a priority as well, with a particular need to encourage road connections among new and existing residential developments in order to reduce traffic on Route 1. The following recommendations are made for this area's land use standards:

- Encourage pedestrian connections among new and existing residential developments
- Require water and sewer line extensions for new developments
- Coordinate with developers to facilitate locations of new roads
- Maintain 20% lot coverage but allow an additional 5% for pedestrian facilities
- Reduce minimum lot size from 100,000 to 40,000 square feet with public water and sewer
- Allow a mix of residential and business uses

Transitional Area 3 – Burnt Mill

Geographic Description – Contains the area located just south of the Merrilland River and east

of the Maine Turnpike that is currently zoned Rural Residential (R).

Land Use Standards – This corridor has access to the Route 1 corridor and is already located adjacent to developed residential, commercial and industrial areas. As with the Moody area, alternative means of automotive and pedestrian access are needed in this area to support future growth. The following recommendations are made for this area’s land use standards:

- Encourage pedestrian connections among new and existing residential developments
- Require water and sewer line extensions for new developments
- Coordinate with developers to facilitate locations of new roads
- Maintain 20% lot coverage but allow an additional 5% for pedestrian facilities
- Allow a mix of residential and business uses

Transitional Area 5 – Crediford Limited Commercial

Geographic Description – A strip of land located on the west side of Crediford Road (Route 9A), adjacent to the Wells Heath property. This area includes several former gravel pits now owned by the Town of Wells.

Land Use Standards – This area is proposed for a potential business park and other limited commercial development. Its location adjacent to the Wells Heath makes it less suitable for intensive commercial growth, so development in this area will need to be restricted somewhat. To develop this area to its full potential, extensions of water and sewer lines would be necessary. However, this area is located more than a mile from the end of existing utility lines, and extending lines may prove to be very difficult. The following recommendations are made for this area’s land use standards:

- Allow a mix of residential, business and civic uses
- Enact strong access management standards to limit the number of curb cuts on Crediford Road (Route 9A).
- Restrict impacts of lighting in this area on the Wells Heath
- Require that parking facilities are designed in ways that limits their stormwater runoff and that minimizes visual impacts
- *Assuming the use of wells and septic tanks:*
 - Increase maximum lot coverage from 20% to 30%
 - Maintain existing minimum lot size of 100,000 square feet
- *If public water and sewer services are available:*
 - Increase maximum lot coverage from 20% to 40%
 - Reduce minimum lot size to 40,000 square feet

Transitional Area 6 – Limited Industrial

Geographic Description – A narrow area located adjacent to the existing LI zoning district, just to the south of the town landfill and just to the west of the Maine Turnpike.

Land Use Standards – This area is located between the town landfill and a recently-approved residential development. It has environmental constraints, particularly in regard to the availability of drinking water. To ensure that this area balances economic potential with environmental constraints, the following recommendations are made for this area’s land use standards:

- Allow limited light industrial uses that produce only minor environmental impacts
- Prohibit all residential uses
- Prohibit the drilling of subsurface wells for drinking water
- Ensure proper buffering from adjacent residential properties

Transitional Area 7 – Downtown District

Geographic Description – A district along Route 109 and Route 1 extending from the Wells Town Offices in the west, to the public library in the south, to the post office in the north, with the eastern boundary being the parcels along the eastern frontage with Route 1.

Land Use Standards – This area is designated as a downtown for the purpose of encouraging density of residential development and services appropriate for a traditional downtown. If rezoned, this district could include such potential changes to development restrictions as reduced road and lot line setbacks, lot coverage requirements, and lot size requirements.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells’ standards to guide development:

1. Existing Town Land Use and Subdivision Ordinances and the desired uses and land use guidelines noted above.

Implementation Strategies

1. Amend the Wells Land Use Ordinance consistent with the Land Use Policies, desired uses and land use guidelines.
2. Establish a program to identify, select and prioritize appropriate lands in critical rural areas for open space protection and possible acquisition.
3. Work with the Wells Conservation Commission, State and Federal entities and private land trust and conservation organizations to assemble a database of parcels suitable for protection based upon guidance policies established by the Conservation Commission. The parcels should focus on Town Natural Resource, Land Use, and Transportation goals, such as establishing protected lands for salt marsh migration due to rising sea levels or parcels that will provide sustainable transportation links such as bike paths or pedestrian commuter paths.
4. Maintain, and enhance where possible, the scenic views and corridors along the easterly side of Route 1 that incorporate coastal waters and marshes.
5. Work with owners of agriculture and forestry lands so they are aware of, and kept up to date with, Maine “current use” programs and encourage the donation or sale of land or conservation easements to the Town or conservation organizations.

6. Manage the development of public infrastructure and facilities in a manner that limits development pressure in rural and critical rural areas.
7. Develop an open space plan for the Town of Wells.
8. Encourage the participation and comments from the conservation commission on public and private plans for open space.
9. Continually assess existing and future Town-owned lands based upon conservation, recreation, and facility needs.
10. Update ordinances regarding floodplains following the release of updated FEMA maps in 2022.
11. Direct the Selectboard to consider traffic congestion, water resources, and development rates in planning for future growth.
12. If water and sewer services are extended beyond I-95, no change in residential density should be allowed.
13. Continue funding of the Land Bank to acquire open space to sustain public recreation, resources conservation, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat.
14. Initiate a town wide discussion relating to the use of depleted gravel pits. Examples of hypothetical use include areas for appropriate businesses, to be set aside for recreational purposes, or replanted/vegetated to enhance the ecological function of this open space.
15. Continue to meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
16. Continue to provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.
17. Continue to track new development in the community by type and location and report this activity in the annual report.
18. Work to direct new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
19. Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate the implementation of this Plan in accordance with Section 2.7, and as identified in Part 3 of this Plan.

Chapter 7 – Town Character and Appearance Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Town Character and Appearance Policies and Strategies describe the goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to what the citizens of Wells want their Town to look like and how to achieve this as an aspect of the Vision for Wells. The policies address the character and appearance of the Town in terms of its natural, social and built environment for specific geographic areas. They address the protection of scenic areas and vistas, as well as guidelines for new development, buildings, landscaping and other features that affect the Town's function, character and appearance.

The outreach and engagement opportunities during this comprehensive planning project identified an awareness by residents that Wells is changing. This change is a result of the growth and development activity experienced over recent decades. Residents voiced a shared concern that aspects of the Town's rural and small-town appearance have been lost, and the implementation actions identified in this Plan should address this shift. Looking forward, Wells will strive to retain and restore its distinct community character through context sensitive design requirements and infrastructure projects that reinforce the look and feel of the Town. Future zoning discussion will encourage the same in an effort enhance the character and appearance that residents and visitors are seeking.

Goals

State Goal:

1. Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing sprawling development patterns.
2. Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.
3. Preserve the state's historic and archeological resources.

Wells Goals:

1. Preserve and restore the distinct character of the community, including the rural feeling created by mature trees, fields, and natural areas; and the social environment west of Interstate 95; and the coastal feeling with its classic architecture to the east of Interstate 95.
2. Retain open space and natural areas throughout the community.
3. Assure that new development is in character with traditional New England architecture, is of

a scale and intensity that is compatible with the existing character of Wells, and reinforces the vision and purpose for the zoning district it is within.

4. Promote those amenities which foster small town neighborliness such as local businesses, places for people to gather and meet, sidewalks, tree-lined roads, and a sense of community and security.
5. Protect the scenic quality and ecological integrity of the Town along the beaches, marshes, rivers, main roads, and in areas with outstanding scenic beauty.
6. Enhance citizens' awareness of the land and its resources as part of the community of Wells.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

General

1. Preserve the Town of Wells' historic, traditional New England seacoast and rural community character and appearance. The character and appearance that evolves from the variety of traditional New England Colonial and Victorian architectural styled wood homes, buildings, barns or barn-like buildings that give Wells, Maine its unique character (herein referred to as the "Traditional New England Style" or "Wells Maine Style"), and both the coastal and rural upland forested landscapes.
2. Encourage the use of cluster design in new subdivisions in appropriate areas to preserve open space. Link these neighborhoods to each other and the central area via pedestrian /bicycle paths that promote off road movement and preserve corridors of open space that reduce fragmentation of wildlife habitats.
3. Preserve scenic vistas especially toward the seacoast from Route 1, and along other scenic corridors including Routes 9, 109, and town roads in rural areas.
4. Pursue the burying of existing overhead utilities especially in the central area, along Route One, within important viewsheds, and elsewhere where feasible.

Business Development – Business Areas

1. Encourage the development/installation of public and business-oriented buildings, landscaping, signs, lighting, benches, paving materials, and other elements that shape the character and appearance of Wells to reflect the Traditional New England Style.
2. Pursue the adoption of a form-based code to guide future development activity. The focus of this type of zoning ordinance is on the location, size, and appearance of buildings and their relationship with public roadways and the streetscape. It is also a user friendly and visual regulatory tool, and would reinforce the objectives of this Plan.

Business Advertising and Signs

1. Promote a Town-wide business marketing and signage program in conjunction with the

Chamber of Commerce and local business owners and the Amtrak marketing program to attract more business and improve advertising while reducing signage.

2. Provide for on-site local highway-oriented signs for business identification. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local business owners to minimize on-site signs wherever possible; particularly along commercial corridors. Reducing redundant signs on buildings and in on-site free-standing locations will make the business and scenic environment better for business, better for public safety and save an unnecessary business expense.
3. Encourage signage that reflects the Traditional New England Style.
4. Encourage highway-oriented sign messages to be brief, clear, and simple so that driving safety is enhanced.
5. Develop a policy to limit State Department of Transportation off-site signs to only businesses not located on State numbered highways and to only the blue and white business identification signs.

Landscape Architecture – Business Areas and Scenic Corridors

1. Landscaping should be used to reinforce the farm, upland forest, and seacoast appearance that exists in Wells, Maine, e.g. the Traditional New England Style. Landscaping plans should use native trees (birch, maples, pines etc.); shrubs and ground cover vegetation in informal, rural farm and forest-like designs and patterns. This particularly applies along rural scenic corridors (e.g., Route 109 and 9) west of the Turnpike.
2. Along the commercial corridors east of the Maine Turnpike (Routes 1 and 9/109), maple or other trees that create spectacular fall color for citizens and tourists' enjoyment will be planted as street trees and on-site in informal patterns.
3. Along rural scenic corridors (Route 9 and 109 west of the Maine Turnpike), existing native trees and other plant material will be preserved or enhanced with similar plant materials. Building setbacks and buffers will preserve existing landscaping, and building site clearing should be minimized. Parking shall be located to the rear of buildings or screened from the public way by natural landscaping materials including trees, shrubs, earth berms, and rocks.
4. On other streets, street trees will be planted consistent with a Development Plan for Landscaping and Street Trees.
5. In all Town areas, where possible, rock walls will be preserved and constructed to reflect the Traditional New England Style character.
6. From the intersection of Routes 109 and 9 east, and along Route 1, where possible:
 - a. Public sidewalks will be designed to be accessible and aesthetically pleasing and use a material that reflects a native rock or similar paving appearance.
 - b. Street curbs will be constructed of granite.
7. Native Maine granite and other rock is encouraged in building construction, walls, planters,

etc. too.

8. All onsite utilities will be located underground.
9. Over time, all overhead utility lines along Route 1, 9, and 109 in the defined Town Center Area and other growth areas will be located underground where feasible.
10. Design public space to maximize its appeal and access for recreation, gathering, picnicking and enjoyment.

Rural Areas and Neighborhoods

1. Protect and enhance the character and appearance of the remaining rural areas. When rural lands are subdivided, they shall use the cluster design concept and the developed portions will be screened from view.
2. New business development including multi-family housing with three or more units shall reflect the Traditional New England Style in architecture, signs, streetlights and other “built” features. These areas will be designed so they are linked to other neighborhoods and to the Town Center by pedestrian and bicycle pathways, open spaces, and scenic local and collector streets.
3. Farm houses, barns or barn-like buildings existing as of 1915 will be protected via an incentive program.

Beach Areas and Neighborhoods

1. Protect and enhance the character and appearance of beach areas and neighborhoods. As each of these areas strive to become more resilient to rising sea levels and coastal hazards they should identify ways to reduce vehicular traffic, provide more public access, and conserve ecologically critical areas – open space areas for recreation and natural wildlife habitat.
2. New business development including multi-family housing with three or more units shall reflect the Traditional New England Style in architecture, signs, street lights and other “built” features.

Scenic Rural Corridors

1. Protect and enhance the scenic quality of local streets and highways through natural or naturally appearing landscaped forested and rural areas as scenic rural corridors.
2. Parking shall be located to the rear of buildings or screened from the public way by natural landscape materials including trees, shrubs, earth berms and rocks.

Route One Corridor and Identified Growth Areas Within

1. Using the architectural standards in place north of Route 109, encourage efforts along Route One that increase the character and appearance of commercial business and the scenic appeal by reinforcing the traditional New England Style character and appearance. It will be aimed to increase business and economic development, increase safety, increase appeal and

increase value. It will:

- a. Require a unified building placement and appearance featuring the Traditional New England Style.
- b. Promote increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic via new sidewalks and pathways between destinations.
- c. Encourage increased landscaping including maple street trees for fall color and pines for year-round evergreen foliage, and consider sight distances.
- d. Require new benches, street lights, and other streetscape amenities that reflect the Traditional New England Style.
- e. Encourage signs that are low, use brief simple messages and are consistent with the Traditional New England Style.
- f. Promote an improved and expanded Wells trolley service.
- g. Encourage less traffic; coordinated access and parking; and traffic turn-a-rounds to keep business in Wells.
- h. Promote Town “gateway entrances” at the north and south ends of the Post Road featuring distinctive landscaping.
- i. Require underground utilities where feasible over the long term.

Wells Transportation Center

1. Continue to encourage the development/redevelopment of this area to serve travelers (tourists, residents, and others) at this transportation gateway to the Wells community. Promote traditional New England style architecture and building appearance through flexible design standards incorporating a mix of design and façade methods. This would require a change in the water/sewer requirement currently identified in the zoning ordinance.

Route 109 east of the Turnpike

1. Encourage the protection and enhancement of Route 109 east of the Turnpike to Route 1. Protect and enhance the current scenic, rural/forested landscape and feature Traditional New England-Wells Maine Style mixed-use development along a corridor that links the Wells Turnpike Center to Route One via vehicular, trolley, bicycle and/or pedestrian circulation.

Town Signs and Entrances

1. Encourage the development of a standard design for Town Entrance signs that reflects the Traditional New England Style and branding for Wells
2. Support the installation of Town Entrance signs at strategic locations.

Standards

1. To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells’ standards to guide development:
 - a. Existing standards in the Land Use Regulations.
 - b. Continue to develop and adopt new standards in the land use regulations for commercial buildings, landscaping, signs, lighting and other elements that shape Town

character and appearance to reflect the traditional New England, Maine Wells Style.

Implementation Strategies

1. Adopt Town Character and Appearance design standards for all commercial zoning districts that can be used to evaluate site plan, sign and subdivision applications and Town Development Plans required to implement the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Initiate a street tree planting and green infrastructure implementation program for Routes 1 and 9/109.
3. Initiate a street curb and sidewalk improvement program for all town owned and maintained roadway corridors.
4. Initiate a study to determine the feasibility of an underground utilities program for Routes 1 (Post Road Antiques and Arts Corridor) and 9/109 east of the Turnpike in conjunction with all of the utilities currently located on the poles and the Maine Department of Transportation.
5. Adopt a Development Plan for the Route 1 Corridor that includes a form-based code, access management plan, and streetscape standards to guide future development activity.
6. Adopt a Development Plan for Route 109 east of the Turnpike including a form-based code, access management plan, and streetscape standards to guide future development activity.
7. Continue to implement and expand upon the Development Plan for the Wells Transportation Center.
8. Adopt a standard design for Town Entrance signs that reflect the Traditional New England- Style and branding for Wells.
9. Adopt a standard design for Wells' historical markers.
10. Adopt an ordinance to prohibit the placement of merchandise in building setbacks.

Chapter 8 – Transportation and Circulation Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Transportation and Circulation Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to the transportation system in Wells. Many of the transportation related issues identified in 2005 (congestion, vehicle crashes, needed intersection upgrades, the need for more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, etc.) persist today and have become even more apparent as growth has continued. However, Wells is well served by transportation options such as the Downeaster, Shoreline Explorer, and the soon to be completed Eastern Trail which are all unique assets. Looking ahead, the transportation system in Wells is in need of a connected pedestrian and bicycle network to achieve its goals for an accessible multi-modal transportation network.

Access management and traffic calming measures along the major roadways in Wells will reduce congestion and will be more achievable through the adoption of a Complete and Green Streets Policy and the related design standards. This will ensure that all future roadway upgrades incorporate all modes of travel and incorporate green infrastructure improvements that address stormwater management, air quality, and other environmental concerns while also improving the travel experience for all modes. Wells must also consider the impact of sea level rise on its transportation infrastructure and address the initial six miles of roadway that are forecast to be impacted most severely.

The land use, housing, and economic objectives identified in this Plan must also be coordinated with the transportation and circulation needs identified here to ensure there is a positive relationship. With these changes in place the transportation system in Wells will complement the land use objects and future vision articulated in this comprehensive plan.

Goals

State Goal:

Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate growth and economic development.

Wells Goals:

1. Promote a safe and sustainable transportation system that is consistent with the character of each neighborhood through which it passes.
2. Encourage and enhance alternative modes of travel including pedestrian and bicycle traffic along all major roadways in Wells, and in off-corridor locations when possible.
3. Improve and enhance the transportation network through the coordination of state, regional and local planning.

4. Plan for and promote the management of the roadway network to better manage and resolve congested areas such as the Route 1 Corridor.
5. Promote the identified growth areas along the Route 1 Corridor and elsewhere as “Main Streets” or “Village” development areas within the Town of Wells.
6. Address the access management and traffic calming needs through a comprehensive corridor study.
7. Encourage public/private cooperation in financing necessary improvements to the transportation system.
8. Encourage the selective improvement of Route One to eliminate safety and operational problems while improving its role as the spine of the community as opposed to a major regional traffic artery.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. In cooperation with Maine Department of Transportation (DOT), ensure that planned transportation improvements and enhancements are safe, efficient, and reflect or enhance each particular area, result in the creation of “Complete and Green Streets”, and complement the effected neighborhoods.
2. Adopt a Complete Streets and Green Streets Policy to incorporate pedestrian sidewalks, walkways and bicycle lanes and vegetation into transportation project designs when local or state roadway improvements are being implemented. This is especially important on Routes 1, 109. and 9 to improve the transportation system for all modes of travel.
3. Ensure that state, regional and local transportation planning officials are aware of the Town’s transportation deficiencies and needs by:
 - a. Participating in the Region 6 Regional Needs Assessment process.
 - b. Documenting the need for specific improvements.
 - c. Establishing priorities for transportation improvements.
 - d. Identifying the projects in the Town’s Capital Improvement Program.
 - e. Initiating a new US Route 1 Corridor Study with MDOT.
 - f. Implementing the findings in the Route 109 corridor study..
4. While maximizing the efficiency of the state and local roadway network, encourage local businesses, transportation users and civic organizations to financially participate in the cost of transportation enhancement and improvements.
5. Ensure that the Wells Transportation Center is truly an inter-modal passenger transportation center by ensuring the necessary infrastructure is available and then encouraging passenger rail, commuters, tourists, taxis, car shares, limousines, trolley service, walkers, scooters and bicyclists to use the facility.

6. Ensure that the Central Area (Route 1/109 intersection and vicinity), the Route 1 Corridor, and the major roadways that connect to the coast provide opportunities for appropriate multi-modal linkages using sidewalks, trails and bicycle paths.
7. Recognize the important impact that transportation decisions have on the Town's land use patterns, ensure that future transportation improvements are consistent with the Town's land use policies and give special consideration to maintaining or enhancing the character of established neighborhoods and historic villages.
8. Encourage safe and appropriate access management techniques are identified and implemented along both US Route 1 and Maine Route 109.
9. New development and redevelopment along Route One and other major roads shall occur in a manner, which minimizes the cumulative impacts on the road network while providing safe access to these parcels.
10. Strive to reduce the seasonal congestion on state and local roadways by:
 - a. Identifying off-street parking opportunities adjacent to Route 1 and the identified "village" areas.
 - b. Encouraging residents and tourists to use off street parking coordinated with the trolley system, the park and ride facility and rideshare programs.
 - c. Creating incentives for the development of local public and private transportation systems that reduce the need to use an automobile locally.
11. Continue to investigate suitable methods for traffic calming, particularly in the summer months, in the more densely developed areas east of Route 1.
12. Encourage the planning and implementation of a pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure network in as much of Wells as is practical.
13. Consider alternatives to ease the traffic congestion on Route 1.
 - a) Mile Road/College Drive extension
 - b) Turnpike entrance between Moody and Ogunquit.
 - c) Connector road between Moody and Exit 19 area
14. Encourage a reduction in traffic speed on Route 1, Route 109, and Chapel Road.
15. Continue to ensure that any road accepted by the Town as a public roadway meets the Town standards and specifications for public roads.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. See existing land use regulations including the requirements for Town Streets and Sidewalks.

Implementation Strategies

Cooperation with the Maine DOT

1. Work closely with the MDOT on the implementation of the Route 109 Improvement Program between Exit 19 and the High Pine area through design and construction. The Town completed the Route 109/9 Corridor Study that specifically recommended that this portion of the Corridor maintain its existing rural character. It will be necessary to cooperate with MDOT to ensure that the implementation is consistent with the goals and recommendations of this corridor study. Some intersection improvements are needed at: Dodge Road, Route 9B, Willie Hill Road, including the intersection at Bears Den.
2. Work with MDOT to initiate a corridor study of Route 1 to identify infrastructure improvements, access management opportunities, and to coordinate the changes in local land use regulations needed to reinforce the future of this corridor and the integration of the identified growth areas.
3. Work cooperatively with the state to ensure that there is proper planning and implementation of projects that address key roadway locations, bridges that need attention and high accident locations throughout the community.
4. Maintain, enact or amend local land use ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:
 - a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73);
 - b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and
 - c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.

Regional Transportation Planning

5. Participate in the MDOT Regional Needs Assessment process in order to coordinate local transportation planning with the regional and State effort and to become aware of funding and program opportunities.
6. Support and coordinate with York County Community Action (YCCA) on regional transit solutions.
7. Identify locations in Wells and funding opportunities for establishing additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

8. Amend local regulations and standards to provide sufficient or additional right-of-way for raised sidewalks, bicycle paths, landscaping, access management, and other priority transportation issues.

Roadway Improvement Program

9. Prepare and fund a roadway improvement program with priorities for inclusion in the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This process will provide formal notice to all concerned regarding the Town's intention for future roadway improvements.
10. Continue to study alternative routes to ease congestion on Route 1 such as the turnpike exit between Wells and Moody.
11. Build the connection between College Drive and Mile Road.
12. Continue the firm policy ensuring that all roads accepted as public Town roads be built and constructed to the Town's roadway standards, and foster transportation-efficient growth patterns that provide for future street and transit connections.
13. The Route 1 Corridor is in need of signal upgrades to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Alternative and Multi-modal Transportation

14. Adopt a municipal Complete and Green Streets Policy.
15. Continue to participate in the Shoreline Explorer planning process to evaluate and improve trolley service to adequately meet the needs of the community and the region.
16. Provide screened off street parking adjacent to Routes 1 and 109, and coordinate these parking facilities as part of the access management solutions for these corridors.
17. Encourage residents and tourists to use the Shoreline Explorer in conjunction with the off-street parking areas, the park n' ride facility, and rideshare programs.
18. Consider the use of private mass transit.
19. Establish a Trails and Pathways Committee to prepare a Development Plan and design standards for Pedestrian and Bicycle pathways and trails based on existing regional and local data, and plans. Said pedestrian /bicycle paths will be for non- motorized vehicles (i.e., no ATV, 4 wheelers, minibikes, etc.)
20. Have the Planning Board or an established Trails and Pathways Committee, at the Selectmen's discretion, review local or state roadway improvements to ensure compliance with the locally adopted Complete and Green Streets Policy, and where possible connect existing trails in Town

and eventually connect with the Eastern Trail. As part of this planning, identify appropriate locations for pedestrian sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage to enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming. This will enable better connection of the western side of town with the Route 1 corridor, and should also parallel the Route 1 corridor. This will provide an alternative, healthy means for residents in western Wells to shop and work while providing coastal residents with a means for reaching the conservation areas in the west.

21. Request the Trails and Pathways Committee monitor and identify other ways Wells can improve connectivity, safety, and zero-carbon transit options.
22. Continue to investigate and implement seasonal traffic calming measures in high density residential and commercial areas, especially adjacent to and east of US Route 1.

Wells Transportation Center

23. Encourage users of alternate transportation modes to use the Wells Transportation Center by providing them with the necessary infrastructure to access the Center, and amenities such as covered bicycle storage and charging facilities.
24. Plan for the expansion of the rideshare/vanpool facilities as the usage increases.
25. Work to implement improved pedestrian and bicycle connections along Route 109 to the Route 1 Corridor

Route 109 Corridor (East of Exit 19)

26. As the central area of Town develops, plan for appropriate multi-modal linkages using sidewalks, trails and bicycle paths.
27. Develop a comprehensive sidewalk, bike lane, and streetscape program that is specific to this corridor and reinforces the municipal Complete and Green Streets Policy.

Chapter 9 – Economic Development Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan’s Economic Development Policies and Strategies section describes the goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to economic development in Wells. The local economy in Wells has been in transition away from agriculture, forestry, and fishing as major industries for some time, and this change continues today. Only a small percentage of Wells residents are now employed within the Town in any sector, and the majority of working residents commute to workplaces in nearby York, Portland, Ogunquit, and Kennebunk. This means that workers from surrounding communities are commuting into Wells to fill these jobs.

The local economy in Wells is directly tied to the transportation system and other required infrastructure. With no current village or downtown area established, businesses primarily locate along Route 1 and other roadways where the necessary infrastructure is available. As a result, the local economy is tied to the land use and infrastructure changes that result from this Comprehensive Plan. Given the broad community concerns related to growth and development in Wells, the identified need for housing options for all residents, and the desire for a more walkable area(s) with a downtown or village feel this presents new opportunities for the community to pursue. Identifying, zoning, and investing in the infrastructure for “village” development areas will accommodate higher density development and redevelopment opportunities and a mix of uses currently lacking in Wells.

Goals

State Goal:

Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and economic well-being.

Regional Goals:

Goals identified in the 2021 Southern Maine Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy are:

1. Celebrate the region as New England’s leading place to live, raise a family, work and visit.
2. Strengthen the area’s diverse, dynamic and thriving economy.
3. Develop and attract a highly skilled and inventive workforce that embraces cutting edge technologies in the cultivation of traditional industries and manufacturing companies.
4. Recognize the critical significance of quality of life by preserving our historic downtowns, mills and farms, promoting our culture and the arts, and managing our natural resources including our coastline, inland waters, and forests.
5. Provide and emphasize recreational, art, and cultural opportunities. Southern Maine is home

to a diverse network of trails which are a substantial resource to the region and its economy.

Wells Goals:

1. Improve Wells' economic climate by promoting investment, revenue generation, and year-round, good quality job opportunities. This will be accomplished by working to retain existing businesses while encouraging the development of new diverse small businesses and industries that are consistent with and reinforce the community's distinct character.
2. Identify, regulate, and invest in a village area for higher density pedestrian friendly development activity. This should include a mix of uses including year-round mixed income housing units above and adjacent to commercial uses.
3. Provide suitable areas for low-impact businesses that provide access to major transportation resources such as the Maine Turnpike.
4. Continue to allow small-scale, neighborhood commercial enterprises in appropriate areas west of the Route 1 corridor.
5. Foster home occupations and cottage industries that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
6. Enhance and encourage tourist-related activities and small-scale development that are consistent with the character and scale of the community and the image of Wells as a family resort area, especially in the Route 1 Corridor/Beach Business Area.
7. Protect natural resource-based business and industry while minimizing both environmental degradation and impact to adjacent property owners.

Policies

To achieve these goals, consistent with the Land Use goals and policies, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Promote Wells and its resources to companies who would be compatible with the Town's existing community vision and environment.
2. Provide opportunities for land and access to encourage development of new business or expansion of existing businesses in appropriate areas as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
3. Foster the establishment and expansion of small-scale local businesses that serve the tourist dependent economy in the Route 1 Corridor and Beach Business areas while addressing known transportation conflicts.
4. Provide necessary infrastructure improvements such as access management, off street municipal parking, sidewalks, and public restrooms in the identified higher density "village" areas along the Route 1 Corridor, and near Beach areas.

5. Provide specific recommendations through outreach and educational programs, and regulatory incentives, to businesses and property owners along the Route 1 Corridor as to how the corridor can become more visually attractive and functional.
6. Continue to support the viability of Wells' working landscapes and the remaining forestry, agriculture and fishing industries through land protection, education, and by discouraging residential and commercial development in areas surrounding these uses.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Refine the Wells land use regulations to reflect these identified goals and policies.
2. Ensure future infrastructure upgrades identified in the capital improvement planning process reinforce the desired future land use pattern and address the needs of the local economy.

Implementation Strategies

1. Establish a non-profit economic development corporation whose responsibility would be to market Wells and its resources to companies who would be compatible with the Town's existing character, scale and market. Financial support will need to be provided to this organization for this level of marketing and coordination.
2. Complete a comprehensive Route One Corridor study in coordination with Maine DOT. As the primary commercial district in Wells, and the largest generator of transportation and congestion related concerns this corridor needs a plan that addresses coordinated infrastructure and regulatory changes.
3. Review and amend local land use regulations to ensure they reflect the desired location, scale, and design of future development. These regulations must also address the connection to the local transportation network, and articulate how to best integrate new development activity in Wells over time. This should include the identification of "village" areas to serve as higher density mixed-use growth areas, and areas for lower density development and open space protection.
4. Identified "village" growth areas will require zoning changes and planned infrastructure improvements over time. Other tools such as Tax Increment Financing districts should be evaluated in conjunction with these changes.
5. Identify areas in Town that would be suitable for future wholesale commercial, research and development or low-impact businesses such as Transitional Area 5 (the Crediford Road area). These areas should have good access to the local and regional highway network and be consistent with the Land Use goals and policies.
6. Identify and attract companies that would be suitable for Wells and would also complement the existing business environment. Such businesses could take advantage of Wells'

environmental resources as tourist attractions and could include bicycle/kayak touring, small restaurants, personal service establishments, business service and repair, and arts and crafts-type shops.

7. Participate in the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) for technical and financial assistance.
8. Continue to support the exploration of ecologically oriented tourist opportunities.
9. Continue to support the farmers' market community and other types of "pop-up" markets and events. This should include regular programming and activity at the Wells Harbor Community Park to draw people to this wonderful area of the community without the need for permanent structures or development.

Chapter 10 – Housing Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan’s Housing Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to housing in Wells.

The Town of Wells housing stock has developed over the past 150 years. Consequently, there exists a rich variety of housing that includes historic homes, older villages, farmsteads, beach and waterfront cottage and homes and a small number of multifamily units. The Town’s greatest density of housing occurs east of the Maine Turnpike and is quite rural west of the Turnpike. In coastal areas some of the homes, and the infrastructure that supports them, are at greater risk from coastal hazards and sea-level rise.

Housing affordability continues to be a concern in Wells. Median rent has increased 64% in the past 10 years and 74% of renter households are unable to afford median rent for a 2-bedroom housing unit. Median home prices have increased 93% since 2014. As a result, the affordable housing gap has increased significantly. The housing mix in Wells is still predominantly single-family homes, although the percentage of multi-family homes has been slowly increasing. 83% of occupied housing in Wells are owner occupied, while the remaining 17% of units are renter occupied. Between 2004 and 2020, Wells also experienced an increase of 1,700 seasonal units, an increase of 36%, the bulk of which were cottages and campground spaces. Short-term rentals are a growing concern with up to 800 stays recorded per month.

As Wells works to provide opportunities for a variety of housing units to be constructed, including more affordable workforce housing, it is important to understand the impact that lot size and infrastructure have on unit cost. Larger lots increase housing costs and consume open space. The cluster subdivision provision is an important tool for balancing the development of new homes and the protection of open space. Identifying places for higher density housing such as multi-family structures and mixed-use developments is also important. The privatization and cost of infrastructure (roads, fire ponds, etc.) required is also deserving of some evaluation and conversation in the years to come.

Goals

State Goal:

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

Regional Goal:

To encourage a diversity of affordable housing throughout the region.

Wells Goals:

1. Continue to address the housing supply and affordability gap, and work toward a goal of at least 10 percent of homes constructed in Wells are affordable for low and moderate-income households, including both families with children and the elderly.

2. Ensure that the quality and location of new residential development provides a good living environment for all residents.
3. Promote the development of a range of housing unit types to meet the needs of all residents.
4. Address renewable energy goals through educational campaigns.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Provide opportunities for the construction of a wide range of housing types at a variety of densities to allow for a diversity of people in the Town.
2. Consider a variety of techniques to ensure that there is a range of housing, at a range of densities, that is affordable to low and moderate-income households.
3. Continue to allow housing for the elderly, and explore allowing higher densities than other types of housing through a density bonus program if a percentage of the units are designated as affordable and the facility can be served by public water and sewer.
4. Continue to allow for the construction of eldercare facilities such as congregate housing and assisted living facilities at appropriate densities provided that the character of these facilities is appropriate to Wells.
5. Encourage both non-profit and for-profit developers of affordable and special needs housing to pursue developments in Wells.
6. Encourage and promote efforts to support the creation of adequate workforce housing that will support the community's and region's economic development.
7. Ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.
8. Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Amend Land Use Ordinance as needed.
2. Partnerships with non-profit and for-profit developers of affordable and special needs housing.

Implementation Strategies

1. Adopt and follow the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) definitions of affordability for York County and continue to update affordability targets as new MSHA data are available.
2. Review existing land use regulations to determine if they allow for adequate opportunities to create housing for the senior population and for households needing access to affordable housing units.
3. Review the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to ensure that housing density is consistent with the Land Use Plan resulting from this Comprehensive Plan, addresses the opportunity for multi-family and higher density residential developments in the identified Growth Areas of the community, and is consistent with the capacity of municipal services to these new or redeveloped sites.
4. Collaborate with housing-related organizations in the region, to support efforts to provide diverse housing for all citizens, including affordable and workforce housing.
5. Adopt or revise provisions in the land use to provide greater opportunities for the rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income properties.
6. Provide opportunities for mixed use buildings that include housing, in commercial areas of the community.
7. Work with York County Community College and the development community to pursue a student housing development in the vicinity of the college.
8. Host a work session and evaluation with land use boards, municipal staff, developers, and Home Ownership Associations to discuss how infrastructure is currently being constructed and managed in Wells.
9. Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.
10. Evaluate the impact and potential benefits of seasonal housing units and short-term rentals, and identify how to best regulate these uses in Wells.
11. Allow mobile homes in areas that are zoned for single-family housing and in parks that are consistent with state laws and requirements.

Chapter 11 – Public Facilities and Services Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan’s Public Facilities and Services Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies related to the public facilities and services in Wells including fire, police, schools, parks and open space. Municipal department heads and staff, school district staff, and representatives of the utilities were instrumental to the updating of this section of the comprehensive plan. Since 2005, the Town of Wells has continued to make significant investments in its municipal structures and facilities, and many of the facility needs identified in 2005 have been addressed through renovations and new construction. The Town of Wells and its municipal departments are forward thinking, and plan for future capital improvements and investments while anticipating emerging trends.

In the years ahead, if asset management plans have not been developed for all municipal structures, they should be created to ensure efficient tracking of maintenance needs and major upgrades. The school population has declined slightly since 2005, but the district’s projects slow and steady growth in the years to come and recent investments in the school facilities will accommodate this growth.

Goals

State Goal:

Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth, economic development, and resource protection as outlined in the Vision.

Wells Goals:

1. Promote a pattern of growth and development that allows for a cost-effective delivery of services, that is consistent with the needs and fiscal capacity of the Town.
2. Continue to ensure that police, fire and rescue services are adequate to meet the public health and safety needs of the residents of Wells as the community changes over time and the population fluctuates seasonally.
3. Program public facility improvements through a Capital Improvement Program that is based upon the policies and actions of this Comprehensive Plan Update.
4. Continue to ensure municipal facilities incorporate energy efficient construction and renewable energy systems.
5. Strive to provide high quality educational facilities and programs that meet the needs of students in collaboration with the Community School District.

6. Continue to encourage educational programs for all ages that incorporate a variety of community resources including conservation lands, historic resources, community facilities and local business. This should include collaborating with the Community School District.
7. Ensure adequate planning to mitigate civil emergencies including the realities of climate change.
8. Continue to assure the Wells Harbor remains a viable economic and recreational resource for the Town.
9. Develop asset management plans for all municipal facilities to anticipate capital improvement planning.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Ensure a pattern of growth and development that discourages sprawl, is consistent with the policies on land use and identified growth areas, and provides a cost effective and efficient delivery of services consistent with the needs of Wells.
2. Efficiently maintain and enhance the Town's public facilities and services to provide for the health and safety of the Town's residents, while also ensuring the health and safety of municipal employees and volunteers.
3. Continue to encourage public/private cooperation in planning for, and financing, improvements to theTown's public facilities.
4. Continue to encourage regional solutions, when possible, through cooperative agreements with adjacent communities and regional organizations if reduced cost and improved services can be realized.
5. Continue to ensure that all students have the opportunities to receive the best possible and affordable education so they acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to make a positive contribution to the community through collaboration with the Community School District.
6. Promote sustainable resource use by all Town departments, in their day to day operations and in the construction and maintenance of municipal facilities.
7. Adopt guidelines for all future municipal facility investments to ensure they incorporate energy efficient construction and renewable energy systems.
8. Continue to encourage multiple uses of community facilities, for greater efficiency, to the greatest extent possible.
9. Continue to support the dredging of the harbor to maintain it as a suitable mooring area.

10. Develop expanded parking, shuttling, and support facilities to provide additional transportation options for those engaging in commercial and recreational boating, other marine uses. A similar effort should be made to address beach access alternatives.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Fire ponds shall be developed within half a mile of new development when allowed, and an alternative means of fire protection may be provided if not possible.
2. A Five-Year Capital Investment Planning process will continue to be implemented.
3. Land Use Regulations.
4. Asset Management Plan.

Implementation Strategies

General

1. Program public facility improvements through a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is based upon the policies and actions from this Comprehensive Plan, anticipated growth and changing demographics, and an appropriate system of priorities.
2. Locate new public facilities within or adjacent to identified growth areas in Wells when feasible.
3. Establish regular communications with Wells Sanitary District and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District to coordinate their efforts with land use and municipal service planning in Wells, and continue to require capacity letters during the review of development applications.
4. Establish regular communications with the School Board.

Municipal Offices

5. Monitor the space needs of Town Hall and consider future expansion and new ways to provide access as the need arises to ensure high quality and efficient level of service.
6. Continue to review the needs of all community facilities to determine the need for replacement or additions including, but not limited to: fire substations, police station, highway department and recreational facilities.
7. Utilize asset management plans to monitor all Town-owned properties and resources to ensure that there is a rational basis for capital maintenance, repairs and acquisition.
8. Continue to work with the Community School District on educational programs that use a variety of community resources including conservation lands, historic resources, community facilities and local businesses.

9. Continue to the inter-department/inter-board newsletter to communicate appropriate information among the Town departments and Town committees and commissions.
10. Continue to conserve the Town's financial and environmental resources through group purchasing and waste reduction and recycling.
11. Work directly with the businesses and community groups of Wells to determine areas where cost sharing for municipal facilities and services may be appropriate.
12. Conduct a municipal staffing analysis to determine future staff needs by department or changes in how services are provided as the population grows and demographics shift over time

Fire Protection

13. Continue the program of installing dry hydrants.
14. Adopt a specific development plan for fire protection addressing issues such as staffing needs, volunteer fire fighting resources, fire ponds, dry hydrants and response times.

Parks

15. Adopt a specific development plan for parks and recreation facilities addressing issues such as maintenance of current facilities, the acquisition of new facilities, and programming, and encourage the tracking of programs to meet Town needs. Include the many recreational trails within the open space areas of the community and the organizations managing those recreational resources.

Public Lands

16. Continue to plan and manage publicly owned lands to meet Town needs consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and where possible maximize their asset and environmental resource value.

Chapter 12 – Open Space Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan’s Open Space Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to open spaces for agriculture, forestry, public congregation and recreation, wildlife habitat, and water resource protection.

Goals

State Goal:

1. Safeguard the State’s agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources. (Growth Management Act)
2. Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters. (Growth Management Act)

Wells Goals:

1. Work actively to retain the rural character of Wells as defined, in large measure, by its open land, marshes, fields, farms, and woodlands.
2. Conserve ample open space, to protect, preserve and maintain our natural resources including the ecological integrity of native plant and wildlife species.
3. Promote and expand neighborhood conservation areas and parks throughout the Town such as Fenderson Wildlife Commons to protect public access for traditional outdoor recreation and to protect critical wildlife habitat.
4. Promote environmental education opportunities and produce public information materials related to Wells’ natural history and the benefits of protecting open space areas.
5. Minimize conflicts between natural-resource based industries and outdoor recreational uses.
6. Encourage the connection of large blocks of conserved open space with open space corridors or “greenways” that allow recreators and wildlife to travel from block to block.
7. Identify and provide open space and recreation opportunities to all geographic areas of Wells.
8. Provide open space for upward migration of coastal landforms and habitats, such as sand dunes, beaches, and salt marshes, in response to sea level rise.

Policies

To implement these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Identify key land areas that contribute to Wells' rural character and work with the landowners to preserve the qualities of these areas through support of creative uses and exploring conservation options.
2. Encourage the continued use of lands for forestry and recreation with special attention to financial incentives to property owners to maintain their land's open character including State programs for current use assessment and other cooperative approaches.
3. Provide access to open spaces that meet various public recreational needs such as parks in built-up village areas, ensuring that all geographic areas of Wells are served by open spaces, and support greenways for biking and hiking paths as human and wildlife corridors connecting neighborhoods and large blocks of conserved land.
4. Work with local outdoor clubs and individual landowners to encourage the availability of public access to open land with the consent and cooperation of landowners to preserve traditional outdoor uses such as snowmobiling, hunting, and cross-country skiing.
5. Promote the use of clustering techniques that require significant land area to be set aside as open spaces.
6. Protect open space including critical wildlife habitat areas including vernal pools.
7. Maintain information necessary for decision-making related to the protection, development, or use of the open areas whether publicly or privately owned, including open marshlands, swamps and other wetlands such as vernal pools, beaches, uplands, fields, and farmland related to the proper protection, development, or use of the open areas.
8. Coordinate conservation activities with land owners and other preservation groups, such as the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District, Great Works Regional Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the State, to leverage existing funding for open space in areas of mutual concern such as the Great Heath and the Tatnic region.
9. Coordinate Town planning and Conservation Commission activities to protect and promote open space.
10. Continue to promote and strengthen the Wells Land Bank fund, a unique resource that allows Wells to invest in open space as opportunities arise.
11. Ensure that cluster subdivision rules are effective in preserving open space that is useful for a combination of values such as recreation, wildlife habitat, scenic value, etc. while still allowing for practical building and development in appropriate areas.
12. Continue to encourage the connection of new open space lands to adjacent protected open

space to create greenway corridors.

Standards

To guide the implementation of these policies, the Town of Wells has the following standards in place:

1. Wells Town Code, Chapter 145, Land Use Ordinance, § 145-49 Residential cluster development.
2. Wells Town Code, Chapter 202, Subdivision of Land

Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to support the Conservation Commission's use of the Town of Wells' Land Ranking System to identify and prioritize lands with significant wetlands, groundwater sources, scenic view sheds, wildlife habitat, agriculture and forestry uses, outdoor recreation, and other values; and to make recommendations for their protection through the development of an open space plan. The plan will contain input from community recommendations to identify large land tracts throughout the Town within which a conservation area of significant size could be located.
2. Employ the classification system for existing and future Town owned lands for the purposes of conservation, recreation and facility needs.
3. Continue to fund the Town's Land Bank Fund to provide for adequate public open space in the Town of Wells.
4. Charge the Conservation Commission to work with land owners and other reservation groups such as the KKW Water District, Great Works Regional Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, and the State and Federal Government to leverage existing funding for open space in areas of mutual concern such as Fenderson Wildlife Commons, the Great Heath, the Tatnic Region, and upland areas adjacent to sand dunes, beaches, and salt marshes that may serve as migration areas in response to sea level rise.
5. Continue to have the Conservation Commission review and comment on public or private plans involving open space areas identified via natural resource data, as high value wildlife habitat, before the Town's reviewing authority makes any decision on the plan.
6. Continue to have the Conservation Commission review foreclosed properties and other land proposed for public auction to determine its suitability for retention as conservation land.
7. Work with landowners with high value habitat to protect these areas using tools such as acquisition, education, collaborative management, as well as economic incentives such as Tree Growth, Open Space and Critical Habitat Programs.
8. Produce public education and outreach materials that inform the public about their conservation options and the natural history of Wells.
9. Use Fenderson and other Wildlife Commons for environmental education opportunities for the students of the Wells/Ogunquit School District and the public.

10. Use up-to-date State Inland Fisheries and Wildlife maps of wetlands and Threatened and Endangered species (See Appendix) as well as open space priorities as identified by the Wells Conservation Commission, when evaluating subdivision applications. In the event the proposed subdivision is in an area where such resources exist, the Conservation Commission will make recommendations for the building and open space locations.
11. Work with the KKWWD to acquire key parcels of land with high value for ground water protection through fee simple acquisition or conservation easement.
12. Assign to the Implementation Committee the responsibility to review and assess the quality of current wetland management and regulations within Wells including consistency with state and federal laws and regulations, and, if deemed appropriate, establish guidelines for a local wetland regulation.
13. Establish a program to continue to identify, prioritize, and protect high value freshwater wetlands including vernal pools.
14. Periodically evaluate the subdivision rules and the results of existing cluster subdivision projects, to determine whether the existing rules are successfully preserving valuable open space.

Chapter 13 - Public Utilities Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Public Utilities Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to the public utilities systems in Wells including water, sewer, telephone/data, cable, electricity and gas. In 2020, the Wells Sanitary District (WSD) completed a Climate Adaptation Plan to inform and guide the plans for infrastructure and operations changes. The Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District (KK&W) is also nearing completion of major upgrades to the metering system, and will soon be able to gather daily meter readings remotely. Continued communication and collaboration with WSD, KK&W, other public utilities, and adjacent communities is a priority to ensure informed management and investment in municipal facilities and services.

Goals

State Goal:

Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public utilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth, economic development, and resource protection as outlined in the Vision.

Wells Goals:

1. Strictly protect the Wells portion of the Branch Brook Aquifer and Watershed.
2. Work cooperatively with the water and sewer districts to provide appropriate levels of service to meet current needs, as well as future needs, in the Town's growth areas.
3. Work cooperatively with the water and sewer districts to restrict and minimize extension of water and sewer service into those areas of Wells that are designated as low growth or rural areas.
4. Continue to communicate and coordinate with the management of both the Wells Sanitary District and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District on planned infrastructure changes, resource protection efforts, and climate impacts to ensure consistency with land use planning and other municipal services.
5. Work cooperatively with providers of utilities such as telephone/data, cable, gas and electricity to ensure the type, location, size, scope, quality and accessibility are consistent with the growth, land use, design, community character and other policies of this Plan to meet the needs of the community.
6. Work with all utilities in coastal portions of the community to ensure that infrastructure improvements address the realities of climate change and sea-level rise, and are coordinated with municipal infrastructure investments and the provision of services.

Policies

To implement these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Promote a pattern of growth and development that discourages sprawl, is consistent with the policies on land use and identified growth areas, and provides a cost effective and efficient delivery of services consistent with the needs of Wells. To the greatest extent possible, the water and sewer service area boundaries, both existing and projected, should be coordinated with the Town's growth area boundaries as identified in this Plan.
2. Continue to support the use of impact fees by the water and sanitary districts to fund enlargement and expansion of their systems.
3. Retain, and where appropriate, reconfigure the Branch Brook Aquifer Protection District as a strategic means for protecting the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District's public water supply.
4. Encourage regional solutions, when possible, through cooperative agreements with adjacent communities and regional organizations if reduced cost and improved services can be realized.
5. Continue to actively collaborate with the Towns of Sanford and Kennebunk on the most appropriate methods for protection of the Branch Brook Watershed and aquifer.
6. Work cooperatively with the water, sewer, gas, electric, telephone, cable and other utility companies in the planning and development of facilities to ensure that residents are properly serviced and that they are aware of the growth area designations as well as other land use policies of this Plan.
7. Maintain a high level of quality of the Town's ground and surface waters, and protection of private property, through the proper management of wastewater and stormwater from residential, commercial and community sources.
8. Continue to explore and implement methods to reduce, re-use and re-cycle Town waste.
9. Ensure that the location and installation of utilities are consistent with the Town's appearance and character goals and policies.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Land Use Regulations

Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to communicate with the Wells Sanitary District and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District to ensure that they are aware of the growth area

designations and other land use policies of this Plan, and that land use planning in Wells is informed by the realities each organization is facing

2. Continue to utilize the Branch Brook Aquifer Protection District and other initiatives to protect the Town's water supply.
3. Cooperate with the Towns of Sanford and Kennebunk to adopt policies and programs, including the securing of easements, to protect the Branch Brook watershed and aquifer.
4. Continue to review the Town's land use regulations to ensure the quality of the ground and surface waters are protected through the proper management of wastewater and stormwater from residential, commercial and community sources.
5. Continue to explore and implement methods to reduce, re-use and re-cycle Town waste including the composting of organic materials.
6. Continue to work with wireless, cable and data utility system providers proactively to ensure state of the art facilities are available for residents and economic development.

Chapter 14 – Fiscal Capacity Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Fiscal Capacity Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to the Town's fiscal capacity to accommodate growth while providing the necessary facilities and services required by the community. Currently, the tax rate in Wells is relatively low compared to surrounding municipalities. General government expenses have increased 55% in the past 5 years, and debt service expenditures have increased 67%. Overall, the Town has a very modest level of debt.

Goals

State Goal:

Plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Wells Goal:

Finance new and expanded facilities in an orderly manner consistent with the needs and fiscal capacity of the Town.

Policies

To achieve these goals it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Continue to finance existing and future municipal facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.
2. Use an annual formal capital improvement planning process that considers the Town's capital requirements as well as coordinates with other districts such as the school, water and sewer districts.
3. Continue seeking alternative means to supplement Town revenues and reduce dependence on the property tax for its annual operating and capital budgets. This may include grants available to assist the funding of capital investments within the community.
4. Ensure that the design and construction of municipal buildings and other infrastructure investments consider energy conservation and community resilience.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. Capital Improvement Planning Process

Implementation Strategies

1. Request the Budget Review Committee work to identify alternative sources of revenue other than property taxes.
2. Update and implement the Capital Improvement Plan.
3. Consider the feasibility of evaluating the fiscal capacity of the Town at year end, and projecting the Town's fiscal capacity for at least three years.

Chapter 15 – Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Policies and Strategies

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan’s Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards, and implementation strategies related to managing flood hazards.

Purpose and Background

The Town of Wells, Maine prepared this Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Plan (hereafter referred to as the Plan) because the Town historically has experienced flood-related damage. The Town is also likely to experience increased damage in the future as flood hazards become more severe with climate impacts, including sea level rise, more frequent and intense precipitation events, and storm surge. The following factors contributed to that decision:

- History of coastal flooding and beach erosion in Wells
- Number of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policies and claims
- Number of repetitive flood losses in Wells
- Projected climate change impacts

Flooding

As mentioned, this Plan was prepared for the Town due to the recurring flooding events throughout the community as well as the number of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) insurance claims. In September of 1936, February of 1978, August of 1991 (Hurricane Bob) and October of 1991 (unnamed storm), the Town of Wells experienced serious flooding and sustained damage along Atlantic and Ocean Avenues, Webhannet Drive and along the Webhannet River and the Merriland River and other rivers and streams. The effects of the October 30 – 31, 1991 storm, which was a 100-year flood event, included flooding on Drake’s Island, Moody Beach and Ocean Avenue. The storm flooded both sides of Ocean and Atlantic Avenues, damaging approximately 450 homes. The storm caused inland damage along the Bragdon Road and Branch Road/Mildram Road areas. Businesses, residential units, streets, bridges, other structures and public facilities suffered damage. In more recent years, Wells has experienced significant flooding and damage from a number of coastal storm events. Notable storms, as well as conditions and impacts associated with sea level rise, are referenced in Appendix A, Chapter 3, Section E. Flood Hazards.

The Town considers this Plan to be a critical tool in minimizing future flood damage and adverse impacts on residents, visitors, infrastructure, and the economy.

Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation

Hazard mitigation means any action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural hazards. Hazard mitigation is not a one-time event, but rather an on-going process designed to identify hazards and to propose ways to reduce or eliminate dangers and

risks associated with the hazards. Hazard mitigation planning allows towns to address current and future flood risk in near-term decision-making. It is not only essential for protecting people, property, natural resources, and the local economy, it is also a wise investment of limited municipal funds. The National Institute of Building Sciences found that for every one dollar invested in hazard mitigation, communities save six dollars in avoided future disaster costs.

Hazard adaptation means responding to the impacts of a hazard, such as flooding, or decreasing vulnerability of something (*e.g.*, a roadway, private house, or municipal building) to the effects of a hazard. Elevating a home in a flood prone area is an example of adaptation. Adequate planning for flood hazards requires both mitigation and adaptation strategies. Strategies should be designed to be flexible to allow for changes in local conditions as well as shifting flood hazards in order to most effectively protect people, property, and the natural environment and increase community resilience to coastal hazards.

Nationally, the U.S. Government, including the U.S. Congress, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the NFIP are concerned with the extensive amount of damage caused by both coastal and riverine flooding and the consequent amount of federal disaster assistance. As a result, the federal government has encouraged states and municipalities to prepare a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify ways to reduce the risk from flooding and perhaps eliminate flood hazards. In some communities where flooding conditions are significant, disaster assistance in the future may not be available unless a community prepares and follows a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan. Such a plan provides the community with a pathway to receive federal assistance for implementation activities designed around specific mitigation projects.

Flood mitigation and adaptation planning involves a technical analysis of the existing conditions relating to the flooding conditions and a review of alternative strategies that are practical, realistic and achievable for the Town. The strategy provides the Town with direction as to preferred actions the Town can take to reduce and prevent damage to property, life and natural resources and thus enhance the overall quality of life for residents and visitors to Wells.

Flood hazard mitigation and adaptation techniques can vary, but may include:

- ▶ More restrictive development standards designed to reduce the risk from flooding in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and areas vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise.
- ▶ Land use plans that discourage or prevent public and private investments in floodplains and areas vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise.
- ▶ Priority mitigation projects such as acquisition, relocation, flood retrofitting, drainage improvements and seawall protection.
- ▶ Flood retrofitting improvements to residential buildings.
- ▶ Public education efforts that stress the benefits of using coastal natural resources to buffer the effects of coastal storms, surges, and sea level rise.
- ▶ Public education efforts geared to property owners as to the actions they can take to protect themselves and their property from flood damage.

Plan Benefits and Implementation

Several benefits accrue to the Town from participation in a flood hazard mitigation planning program. The primary benefit is to encourage public safety by reducing damage to personal

property and harm to residents and visitors. Examples include retrofitting homes so that they are flood resistant and retrofitting bridges so damage is lessened. Mitigation and adaptation activities can reduce storm impacts including the cost of post-disaster clean up and recovery.

Formal adoption and implementation of the Plan enables the Town of Wells to secure additional credit points in the NFIP sponsored Community Rating System (CRS). The Town currently does not participate in the CRS, but did in the past. The CRS recognizes the community's efforts that go beyond the minimum NFIP requirements of flood plain management by reducing the flood insurance premiums for property owners located in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). The discounts provide an incentive for the Town and the property owners to become involved in new flood mitigation activities and flood plain planning and preparedness activities.

FEMA recently updated the NFIP methodology used to determine flood insurance premiums through the implementation of a new pricing methodology called Risk Rating 2.0. The methodology is aimed at developing insurance rates that are actuarially sound, equitable, easier to understand and better reflect a property's flood risk. For some flood insurance policy holders, that means an increase in their annual premium payment. As of May 2021, Wells had the greatest number of NFIP flood insurance policies in effect as well as the highest insurance premium prices of not only all communities in York County, but in the entire state of Maine. Since 1978, Wells property owners have filed the greatest number of NFIP flood insurance claims of all municipalities in the entire state, and the number of claims is nearly double that of the York County community with the second highest claim number. Additionally, Wells property owners have the 3rd highest payment amount for flood insurance claims in the entire state. As sea levels continue to rise, precipitation events become more intense, and storms occur more frequently, costly damage to homes will not only continue, but intensify, and more properties and people within Wells will be at risk of flooding.

Preparation and implementation of the Plan increases the Town of Wells' opportunities for additional federal assistance including FEMA's pre-disaster Flood Mitigation Assistance Program and its post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The Maine Emergency Management Agency provides a priority in its grant programs to communities who have prepared a comprehensive and well-designed Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan. Pre-planning activities enable the post-disaster and recovery efforts to operate in a smooth and efficient manner. In addition to building support for implementation activities, the Plan advances the community outreach and public education component of the flood mitigation effort.

Plan Scope

The scope of this Plan includes the entire land area contained within the boundaries of the Town of Wells, Maine. The Plan pays special attention to the Little River, Ogunquit River, Webhannet River, Merriland River, Wells Bay and the coastal areas of Wells. The effective Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and the accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), prepared for the Town of Wells by the Federal Emergency Management Agency was used for the preparation of the Plan. Additionally, maps depicting the inundation extent of sea level rise projections and storm surge were considered in the development of the Plan to ensure it addresses both existing and future flood hazards. While this Plan addresses flooding concerns in Wells, Maine, the Town recognizes the benefits of coordinating floodplain management activities with its neighboring communities.

Policies and Implementation Strategies

The Comprehensive Plan's Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Policies and Implementation Strategies section describes the goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to mitigating and adapting to flood hazards in Wells. Integrating flood risk, climate change considerations, and coastal flood resilience strategies into municipal planning, policies, expenditures, and infrastructure decisions will help to protect people, physical infrastructure, and public investments. Future development should be guided away from flood-prone areas and redevelopment should incorporate flood risk reduction measures to protect people and property.

Goals

State Goal:

Each municipality shall prevent inappropriate development in natural hazard areas, including floodplains and areas of high erosion. (Maine Growth Management Act)

Growth Management Program Goals:

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.
2. To plan for the effects of the rise in sea level on buildings, transportation infrastructure, sewage treatment facilities and other relevant state, regional, municipal or privately held infrastructure, property or resources.

Wells Goals:

1. Identify and protect existing populations, buildings and facilities, which are at risk due to potential flooding conditions associated with existing and future flood hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge.
2. Reduce the potential damage to both private and public property due to flooding conditions associated with existing and future flood hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge.
3. Identify specific land use policies, projects and programs that will mitigate and reduce future flood related damages and adapt to future flood conditions, including sea level rise and storm surge.
4. Recommend specific actions the Town should take to mitigate and reduce damages caused by coastal and riverine flooding, storm surge, and sea level rise.
5. Continue to Qualify the Town of Wells for federal flood mitigation grant assistance, which can assist in the Plan's implementation.
6. Involve local officials, affected property owners and the general public in the Plan's preparation so that broad acceptance is achieved.
7. Conduct a public education and outreach program to inform the public about the risks

associated with development in the floodplain and areas vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise.

8. Conduct an education and outreach program to inform the public about climate change-related flood hazards and associated impacts to Wells through work with partners such as the Wells Reserve.
9. Protect and preserve the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains and coastal areas subject to existing and future flood hazards.

Policies

To achieve these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Ensure that an accurate inventory of the properties located in the Special Flood Hazard Area is completed and maintained.
2. Conduct an inventory of properties and infrastructure located in areas subject to sea level rise and storm surge impacts based on the scenarios recommended for planning purposes by the Maine Four-Year Plan for Climate Action.
3. Review the Town's local land use regulations on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with the latest National Flood Insurance Program and any other requirements and reduce hazardous floodplain risks.
4. Review the Town's land use regulations to identify opportunities for incorporating measures and standards that increase the resilience of development to flooding and provide enhanced flood risk reduction for areas vulnerable to future flood hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge.
5. Provide incentives for property owners in the floodplain area and areas vulnerable to existing and future flooding, including sea level rise and storm surge, to properly floodproof their properties and to make their properties more flood damage resistant.
6. Ensure that improvements to existing public investments are built to minimize potential damage from existing flooding and future flood hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge, through proper stormwater management and floodplain management practices.
7. Identify flood hazard mitigation and adaptation projects in consultation with local, state and federal officials, property owners and the community at large.
8. Identify and seek assistance from federal, state and local sources for flood hazard mitigation and adaptation projects.
9. Educate property owners in the floodplain and areas vulnerable to future flood hazards,

including sea level rise and storm surge, and the community at large about the risks of building in those areas and techniques to reduce the risks.

10. Examine the potential for financial incentives to landowners in the floodplain area and areas subject to future flooding, including sea level rise and storm surge, through state or federal programs for maintaining their property in open space.
11. Discourage new public and private investment in the floodplain and areas vulnerable to future flooding, including sea level rise and storm surge, that would encourage growth in those areas.
12. Partner with neighboring municipalities to assess and address flood hazards and undertake flood adaptation and resilience planning initiatives and projects.

Standards

To achieve these policies, the following are Town of Wells' standards to guide development:

1. See existing Wells Floodplain Management ordinance.

Implementation Strategies

Planning

Continue the Flood Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation review to ensure the standards remain current.

Prevention

Prevention activities include planning and zoning, open space preservation, floodplain development regulations, stormwater management, drainage improvements and pre-disaster mitigation activities.

Land Use Planning Activities

1. Identify local and state policies, programs and practices that directly or indirectly promote growth and development in the Special Flood Hazard Area and areas subject to future flood hazards and increase the potential for coastal damage due to flooding conditions. Once these policies and programs have been updated, recommend policy and regulatory changes that will discourage growth and development in the Special Flood Hazard Area and areas vulnerable to future flood hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge.
2. Work with local, state, and federal conservation organizations such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify, acquire, and conserve parcels in the Special Flood Hazard Area and those in areas vulnerable to future flood hazards that have the potential to reduce the risk from flooding.
3. Consider the inclusion of floodplain management and sea level rise criteria as the Town

formulates its open space strategy for management and acquisition of open space lands to promote conservation of areas vulnerable to flooding.

4. Continue to amend the Town's Floodplain Management Ordinance (Chapter 115) to be consistent with State requirements after the Town has adopted the new Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).
5. Continue to encourage the Town's land use ordinances to include flood resilience measures and standards and direct development away from areas that are vulnerable to existing and future flood hazards.
6. Continue to encourage the Town's land use ordinances to promote land conservation and protection of open space, especially for subdivisions and large developments.
7. Continue to support the Conservation Commission in the implementation of the land bank program to support land conservation, especially in areas vulnerable to existing and future flood hazards and areas that can support landward migration of critical natural resources, such as saltmarshes, to address the impacts of climate change.

Stormwater management and drainage improvements

8. Periodically update the inventory of all culverts, bridges, and stormwater infrastructure components to determine their adequacy to handle the 100-year flood event i.e., determine their capability to provide for the efficient runoff of peak stormwater discharge and to prevent localized flooding conditions.
9. Seek the assistance and cooperation of landowners to gain access to drainage ways so debris can be removed to improve drainage. Because the existing drainage ways have become plugged over time and there is a 1 to 1 ½ feet change in elevation, some coastal areas experience minor and, on occasion, moderate flood conditions. This should restore to some degree the drainage system function.
10. Initiate a regular program to clean out and maintain existing catch basins on public lands or rights-of-way so that they can retain an adequate amount of water during periods of peak discharge.
11. Continue to ensure that all proposed developments have an acceptable stormwater retention plan and drainage plan as part of the subdivision and site plan review process.
12. Adopt regulations for stormwater management and ensure they account for climate change and expected increases in precipitation frequency and intensity.
13. Collaborate with others to utilize the reports from recent coastal flooding projects, including the New England Climate Adaptation Project, and the Tides, Taxes, and New Tactics project to assess

the impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, and more frequent and intense precipitation events on stormwater infrastructure.

14. Continue to require future developments to employ low impact development measures for stormwater management.
15. Continue to use Stream Smart principles when designing culvert upgrades and replacements for municipal projects.
16. Investigate establishing a municipal fund to support infrastructure improvements that enhance the community's resilience to coastal and flood hazards.

Property Protection

17. Property protection activities include relocation, acquisition, demolition, building elevation, flood retrofitting, retrofitting and insurance. The Town should consider focusing its initial efforts on repetitive loss properties.
18. Conduct a flood hazard audit and analysis of repetitive loss properties located on Atlantic and Ocean Avenues, Webhannet Drive, and other flood-prone areas of town to determine how the risks can be reduced.
19. Identify residential and commercial properties in the Special Flood Hazard Area and areas vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise that would be appropriate candidates for structural improvements such as elevation and retrofitting to reduce the risk of flood damage.
20. Work with property owners within the floodplain to identify loan programs for floodproofing or other appropriate mitigation activities for structures located within the Special Flood Hazard Area.
21. Work with FEMA, conservation groups, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Program, other appropriate partners and property owners to identify and pursue opportunities to purchase properties repeatedly damaged by flood hazards and conserve them as open space.

Natural Resource Protection

(Natural resource protection includes dune stabilization, beach nourishment, wetland protection, and erosion and sediment control measures and best management practices.)

22. Continue to seek engineering assistance to review the Town's practice of relocating sand to the eroded beach area at the beginning of Laudholm Beach at the northeastern part of Drake's Island.
23. Continue to work with state and federal partners to evaluate the feasibility of beach nourishment through the beneficial reuse of dredged material where appropriate.
24. Continue to assess how Wells' beaches and other coastal resources will be impacted by sea level rise and increasing erosion.

25. Continue to work with regional, state, and federal partners to investigate opportunities to protect natural resources and areas that provide natural flood mitigation benefits.
26. Continue to preserve and protect natural wetland and coastal waterbody buffers through zoning, regulatory setbacks for development and land conservation.

Emergency Services

(Emergency services include flood warning, flood response, critical facilities and public health and safety maintenance.)

27. Continue to review and update the Town's local Emergency Response Plan. Since the Plan was first prepared, changes in land use have occurred with new commercial and industrial development, and in the emergency planning context, such as the flood warning notification system, the Code Red Program, the updated evacuation plans and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). An updated Emergency Response Plan should reflect these changes.
28. Conduct a tabletop flood response drill once a year to test the notification and communication procedures, the responders' knowledge of their procedures and the extent of local resources such as sandbags, barricades, generators and shelters.
29. Complete evacuation route signage.

Structural Projects

(Structural projects include seawalls, floodwalls and beach nourishment.)

30. Continue to repair and improve the seawalls along town owned property.
31. Continue to monitor the results of the recently completed beach nourishment.

Public Information and Engagement

The Town should continue education and engagement efforts regarding flood hazards facing Wells and flood mitigation and adaptation. Public engagement includes information campaigns, education and outreach programs, community discussions, and technical assistance.

32. Initiate public information and engagement activities including providing:
 - a. FIRM map information
 - b. Sea level rise and storm surge hazards, impacts, and community vulnerability information
 - c. Technical assistance on the floodplain regulations and flood mitigation activities
 - d. Information at the library
 - e. Outreach projects
 - f. Real estate disclosure

- g. Environmental education
 - h. Flood mitigation actions that property owners can implement to protect their homes and businesses.
 - i. Coordination with adjacent communities.
 - j. Opportunities for residents and property owners to share their flood hazard knowledge, concerns, and experiences, as well as ideas for flood adaptation and mitigation activities, with town officials.
33. Prepare a public information brochure that describes in detail the comprehensive nature of the Town's floodplain management program, flood resilience, and sea level rise adaptation activities.
34. Continue to use the community cable access program to publicize the Town's floodplain management programs and sea level rise adaptation and resilience efforts.

Chapter 16 – Regional Coordination Policies and Strategies

The Comprehensive Plan’s Regional Coordination Policies and Strategies describe goals, policies, standards and implementation strategies related to regional coordination. These regional coordination efforts are intended to manage the shared resources and infrastructure in Wells and the surrounding communities. This includes but is not limited to surface waters, aquifers, coastal resources, housing opportunities, and transportation facilities. Given the demand on transportation infrastructure, the need for a range of housing solutions, and the impact of development and sea-level rise on resources regionally Wells will benefit greatly from this regional collaboration.

Goals

State Goal:

Cooperate with local, regional and federal agencies and organizations to continually improve planning and resource management.

Wells Goals:

Coordinate with Federal, State regional and local agencies and organizations to continually improve the planning and management of Wells and the many resources within while meeting civic needs.

Policies

To implement these goals, it is the policy of the Town of Wells to:

1. Work with appropriate Federal, State, regional and local agencies and organizations to implement the goals, policies, and implementation strategies related to the land use, transportation, housing, natural resources, economic development, marineresources and other issues addressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Strategies

1. Continue the cooperative relationship with the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve to expand the water quality monitoring program.
2. Work with adjacent communities to maintain or improve water quality standards for surface waters that occur in more than one community. Specifically, work with the Towns of Sanford and Kennebunk to undertake policies and programs for the protection of the Branch Brook watershed and aquifer.
3. Ensure that the water quality of Ell Pond is not degraded by working with the Town of Sanford to implement a consistent set of standards for water quality protection.

4. Work cooperatively with US Fish and Wildlife, the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department, and other local, State and Federal agencies to manage and protect high value habitat and areas for significant habitat and rare and endangered species while addressing the realities of climate change and its impact on these resources and other infrastructure in Wells.
5. Continue to work with the Department of Marine Resources, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to ensure the viability of the recreational shellfish harvesting program and prohibit any commercial harvesting.
6. Actively participate with the Maine Department of Transportation on all active projects in Town while advocating for a comprehensive US Route 1 Corridor Study.
7. Work cooperatively with the MDOT to ensure that there is proper planning and implementation of all projects in Wells, and that a “complete and green streets” approach is incorporated.
8. Participate in the MDOT Regional Needs Assessment process in order to coordinate local transportation planning with the regional and State efforts, and to become aware of funding and program opportunities.
9. Establish an ongoing dialogue with all utility providers to ensure that they are aware of the growth area designations, sea-level rise projections, complete street policies, and the other policies established in this Plan.
10. Work cooperatively with other Towns to help implement the regional Eastern Trail system.
11. Participate in regional approaches within York County that address housing choice and the creation of workforce housing options that fit with the Visions of the communities involved. Continue to advocate for change to toll policy to alleviate the impact on local and regional roadways (i.e. Post Road, Route 1).

Part 3 – Implementation Program

The Comprehensive Plan’s Implementation Program describes how the goals, policies and standards will be implemented; when they will be implemented and who is responsible. The Implementation Program consolidates the implementation strategies for each topic area found in Part 2. The intent of this section is to ensure coordination across the many topics and needs addressed in this planning document. Wells is committed to the holistic implementation of this Plan, and that will require the ongoing coordination of municipal boards, committees, and professional staff throughout the implementation phase of this planning process. Our goal is to periodically (at least every five years) evaluate the following:

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

The Implementation Program is organized into the following categories:

- a. Land Use
- b. Capital Improvement
- c. Open Space/Land Acquisition and Protection
- d. Regional/Intergovernmental Cooperation
- e. Historic Preservation
- f. Town Character and Appearance
- g. Transportation and Circulation
- h. Economic Development
- i. Housing
- j. Public Facilities and Services
- k. Public Utilities
- l. Flood Hazard Mitigation

In addition, a responsible party is assigned to each action and a priority is given to each action—*Ongoing* indicates these efforts are underway; *Immediate* is to occur within the next 1-2 years; *short term* is to occur in the next 2 to 4 years and *long term* is to occur within the next 4-10 years.

Land Use Implementation Program

Action	Responsibility	Priority
1. Amend the Wells Land Use Ordinance consistent with the Land Use Policies, desired uses and land use guidelines.	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) / Planning Board	Ongoing

2. Establish a program to identify, select and prioritize appropriate lands in critical rural areas for open space protection and possible acquisition.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
3. Work with the Wells Conservation Commission, State and Federal entities and private land trust and conservation organizations to assemble a database of parcels suitable for protection based upon guidance policies established by the Conservation Commission. The parcels should focus on Town Natural Resource, Land Use, and Transportation goals, such as establishing protected lands for salt marsh migration due to rising sea levels or parcels that will provide sustainable transportation links such as bike paths or pedestrian commuter paths	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
4. Maintain, and enhance where possible, the scenic views and corridors along the easterly side of Route 1 that incorporate coastal waters and marshes.	Planning Board	Ongoing
5. Work with owners of agriculture and forestry lands so they are aware of, and kept up to date with, Maine “current use” programs and encourage the donation or sale of land or conservation easements to the Town or conservation organizations.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
6. Manage the development of public infrastructure and facilities in a manner that limits development pressure in rural and critical rural areas.	Selectboard	Ongoing
7. Develop an open space plan for the Town of Wells.	Conservation Commission / Planning Board	Ongoing
8. Encourage the participation and comments from the conservation commission on public and private plans for open space.	Selectboard	Ongoing
9. Continually assess existing and future Town-owned lands based upon conservation, recreation, and facility needs.	Selectboard / Conservation Commission	Ongoing
10. Update ordinances regarding floodplains following the release of updated FEMA maps in 2022.	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) / Planning Board	Short
11. Direct the Selectboard to consider traffic congestion, water resources, and development rates in planning for future growth.	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) / Planning Board	Ongoing
12. Aside from health and safety considerations do not extend sewer and water services west of I-95 which would increase development and reduce lot sizes.	Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) / Planning Board / Selectboard	Ongoing
13. Continue funding of the Land Bank to acquire open space to sustain public recreation, resources conservation, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat.	Selectboard / Conservation Commission	Ongoing

Capital Improvement Implementation Program

1. Program public facility improvements through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) based upon the Comprehensive Plan's policies, implementation programs and an appropriate system of priorities.	Capital Improvement Program Committee	Immediate-Ongoing
--	---------------------------------------	-------------------

Open Space/Land Acquisition and Protection Implementation Program

1. Continue to support the Conservation Commission's use of the Town of Wells' Land Ranking System to identify and prioritize lands with significant wetlands, groundwater sources, scenic view sheds, wildlife habitat, agriculture and forestry uses, outdoor recreation, and other values; and to make recommendations for their protection through the development of an open space plan. The plan will contain input from community recommendations to identify large land tracts throughout the Town within which a conservation area of significant size could be located.	Selectboard	Ongoing
2. Employ the classification system for existing and future Town owned lands for the purposes of conservation, recreation and facility needs.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
3. Continue to fund the Town's Land Bank Fund to provide for adequate public open space in the Town of Wells.	Selectboard	Ongoing
4. Continue to support the Conservation Commission to work with land owners and other reservation groups such as the KKW Water District, Great Works Regional Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, and the State and Federal Government to leverage existing funding for open space in areas of mutual concern such as Fenderson Wildlife Commons, the Great Heath, the Tatnic Region, and upland areas adjacent to sand dunes, beaches, and salt marshes that may serve as migration areas in response to sea level rise.	Selectboard	Ongoing
5. Continue to have the Conservation Commission review and comment on public or private plans involving open space areas identified via natural resource data, as high value wildlife habitat, before the Town's reviewing authority makes any decision on the plan.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
6. Continue to have the Conservation Commission review tax foreclosed properties and other land proposed for public auction to determine its suitability for retention as conservation land.	Selectboard	Ongoing

7. Work with landowners with high value habitat to protect these areas using tools such as acquisition, education, collaborative management, as well as economic incentives such as Tree Growth, Open Space and Critical Habitat Programs.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
8. Produce public education and outreach materials that inform the public about their conservation options and the natural history of Wells.	Selectboard / Conservation Commission	Ongoing
9. Use Fenderson and other Wildlife Commons for environmental education opportunities for the students of the Wells/Ogunquit School District and the public.	Recreation Department	Ongoing
10. Use up-to-date State Inland Fisheries and Wildlife maps of wetlands and Threatened and Endangered species (See Appendix) as well as open space priorities as identified by the Wells Conservation Commission, when evaluating subdivision applications. In the event the proposed subdivision is in an area where such resources exist, the Conservation Commission will make recommendations for the building and open space locations.	Planning Board	Ongoing
11. Work with the KKWWD to acquire key parcels of land with high value for ground water protection through fee simple acquisition or conservation easement.	Conservation Commission / Selectboard	Ongoing
12. Assign to the Implementation Committee the responsibility to review and assess the quality of current wetland management and regulations within Wells including consistency with state and federal laws and regulations, and, if deemed appropriate, establish guidelines for a local wetland regulation.	Selectboard	Immediate
13. Establish a program to continue to identify, prioritize, and protect high value freshwater wetlands including vernal pools.	Planning Board	Ongoing
14. Periodically evaluate the subdivision rules and the results of existing cluster subdivision projects, to determine whether the existing rules are successfully preserving valuable open space.	Planning Board	Ongoing

Regional/Intergovernmental Cooperation Implementation Program

1. Continue the cooperative relationship with the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve to expand the water quality monitoring program.	Town Manager / Planning Staff	Ongoing
2. Work with adjacent communities to maintain or improve water quality standards for surface waters that occur in more than one community. Specifically, work with the Towns of Sanford and Kennebunk to undertake policies and programs for the protection of the Branch Brook watershed and aquifer.	Selectboard	Ongoing
3. Ensure that the water quality of Ell Pond is not degraded by working with the Town of Sanford to implement a consistent set of standards for water quality protection.	Selectboard	Long
4. Work cooperatively with US Fish and Wildlife, the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department, and other local, State and Federal agencies to manage and protect high value habitat and areas for significant habitat and rare and endangered species while addressing the realities of climate change and its impact on these resources and other infrastructure in Wells.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
5. Continue to work with the Department of Marine Resources, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to ensure the viability of the recreational shellfish harvesting program and prohibit any commercial harvesting.	Shellfish Commission	Ongoing
6. Actively participate with the Maine Department of Transportation on all active projects in Town while advocating for a comprehensive US Route 1 Corridor Study.	Selectboard	Ongoing
7. Work cooperatively with the MDOT to ensure that there is proper planning and implementation of all projects in Wells, and that a “complete and green streets” approach is incorporated.	Selectboard	Ongoing
8. Participate in the MDOT Regional Needs Assessment process in order to coordinate local transportation planning with the regional and State efforts, and to become aware of funding and program opportunities.	Selectboard	Ongoing
9. Establish an ongoing dialogue with all utility providers to ensure that they are aware of the growth area designations, sea-level rise projections, complete street policies, and the other policies established in this Plan.	Selectboard	Ongoing

10. Work cooperatively with other Towns to help implement the regional Eastern Trail system.	Selectboard	Ongoing
11. Participate in regional approaches within York County that address housing choice and the creation of workforce housing options that fit with the Visions of the communities involved. Continue to advocate for change to toll policy to alleviate the impact on local and regional roadways (i.e. Post Road, Route 1).	Selectboard	Ongoing

Historic Preservation Implementation Program

1. Seek Local Government Certification with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in order to be eligible for matching grants related to preservation planning and cultural resource protection.	Selectboard / Historic Preservation Committee	Ongoing
2. Re-establish and maintain the Wells Historic Preservation Commission to assist with implementation of these actions and collaborate with the Historical Society.	Selectboard	Immediate
3. Continue to identify and document historic and archaeological resources for purposes of building a written and photographic record that can be used to maintain and protect these valuable community resources. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has noted that a comprehensive survey of Wells’ historic above-ground resources needs to be conducted in order to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.	Selectboard	Ongoing
4. Identify scenic historic landscape resource areas including agricultural lands and fields, rock walls, and other features that should be preserved as important cultural viewsheds.	Selectboard / Historic Preservation Committee	Ongoing
5. Manage the “Gateways” or major roadway entrances into the Town of Wells to protect their historic community character and ensure that any new development is consistent with this character.	Selectboard	Ongoing
6. Continue and enhance the education and outreach program for both the residents and visitors to Wells about the Town’s historic and archaeological resources. Annual historic walks, walking and driving tours and education resources are examples.	Historic Preservation Committee	Ongoing
7. Work with public and private groups to establish a permanent heritage trail that would include map and permanent markers for specific historic properties.	Historic Preservation Committee	Long

8. Encourage more property owners to place their properties on the National Register of Historic Places.	Historic Preservation Committee	Long
9. Strengthen requirements in the Land Use Ordinance regarding proximity to and impacts on historic and archaeological resources. For known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, use the local land use ordinances to require developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Planning Board	Long
10. Adopt or amend the land use ordinances to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.	Planning Board	Long
11. Continue to utilize design standards for all commercial zoning districts that are modelled after the existing design standards for the northern portion of the Route 1 Corridor and informed by the vision and purpose of each zoning district.	Planning Board	Long

Town Character and Appearance Implementation Program

1. Work on Town Character and Appearance design standards for all commercial zoning districts that can be used to evaluate site plan, sign and subdivision applications and Town Development Plans required to implement the Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Board / CPIC	Short
2. Continue a street tree planting and initiate a green infrastructure implementation program for Routes 1 and 9/109.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
3. Initiate a street curb, sidewalk, and paved shoulder improvement program for all town owned and maintained roadway corridors.	Selectboard	Ongoing
4. Adopt a Development Plan for the Route 1 Corridor that includes access management plan, and streetscape standards to guide future development activity.	Planning Board / CPIC / Selectboard	Short
5. Adopt a Development Plan for Route 109 east of the Turnpike including access management plan, and streetscape standards to guide future development activity.	Planning Board / CPIC / Selectboard	Short
6. Continue to implement and expand upon the Development Plan for the Wells Transportation Center.	Planning Board / Selectboard	Short

7. Adopt an ordinance to regulate the placement of merchandise in building setbacks.	Planning Board / Planning Staff	Short
--	---------------------------------	-------

Transportation and Circulation Implementation Program

1. The Town completed the Route 109/9 Corridor Study that specifically recommended that this portion of the Corridor maintain its existing rural character. It will be necessary to cooperate with MDOT to ensure that the implementation is consistent with the goals and recommendations of this corridor study. Some intersection improvements are needed at: Dodge Road, Route 9B, Willie Hill Road, including the intersection at Bears Den.	Selectboard	Ongoing
2. Work with MDOT to initiate a corridor study of Route 1 to identify infrastructure improvements, access management opportunities, and to coordinate the changes in local land use regulations needed to reinforce the future of this corridor and the integration of the identified growth areas.	Selectboard	Ongoing
3. Work cooperatively with the state to ensure that there is proper planning and implementation of projects that address key roadway locations, bridges that need attention and high accident locations throughout the community.	Selectboard	Ongoing
4. Maintain, enact or amend local land use ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.	Planning Board	Ongoing
5. Participate in the MDOT Regional Needs Assessment process in order to coordinate local transportation planning with the regional and State effort and to become aware of funding and program opportunities.	Selectboard	Ongoing
6. Support and coordinate with York County Community Action (YCCA) on regional transit solutions.	Selectboard	Ongoing
7. Identify locations in Wells and funding opportunities for establishing additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure.	Selectboard	Ongoing
8. Amend local regulations and standards to provide sufficient or additional right-of-way for raised sidewalks, bicycle paths, landscaping, access management, and other priority transportation issues.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
9. Prepare and fund a roadway improvement program with priorities for inclusion in the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This process will	Selectboard	Ongoing

provide formal notice to all concerned regarding the Town's intention for future roadway improvements.		
10. Continue to seek alternative routes to ease congestion on Route 1 such as the turnpike exit between Wells and Moody.	Selectboard	Ongoing
11. Continue the firm policy ensuring that all roads accepted as public Town roads be built and constructed to the Town's roadway standards, and foster transportation-efficient growth patterns that provide for future street and transit connections.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
12. The Route 1 Corridor is in need of signal upgrades to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
13. Adopt a municipal Complete and Green Streets Policy.	Selectboard	Short
14. Continue to participate in the Shoreline Explorer planning process to evaluate and improve trolley service to adequately meet the needs of the community and the region.	Selectboard	Ongoing
15. Continue to encourage residents and tourists to use the Shoreline Explorer in conjunction with the off-street parking areas, the park n' ride facility, and rideshare programs.	Town Manager	Ongoing
16. Consider the use of private mass transit.	Town Manager	Ongoing
17. Prepare a Development Plan and design standards for Pedestrian and Bicycle pathways and trails based on existing regional and local data, and plans. Said pedestrian /bicycle paths will be for non- motorized vehicles (i.e., no ATV, 4 wheelers, minibikes, etc.)	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
18. At the Selectmen's discretion, review local or state roadway improvements to ensure compliance with the locally adopted Complete and Green Streets Policy, and where possible connect existing trails in Town and eventually connect with the Eastern Trail. As part of this planning, identify appropriate locations for pedestrian sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage to enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming. This will enable better connection of the western side of town with the Route 1 corridor, and should also parallel the Route 1 corridor. This will provide an alternative, healthy means for residents in western Wells to shop and work while providing coastal residents with a means for reaching the conservation areas in the west.	Selectboard	Short
19. Continue to investigate and implement seasonal traffic calming measures in high density residential and commercial areas, especially adjacent to and east of US Route 1.	Selectboard	Ongoing

20. Encourage users of alternate transportation modes to use the Wells Transportation Center by providing them with the necessary infrastructure to access the Center, and amenities such as covered bicycle storage and charging facilities.	Town Manager	Ongoing
21. Plan for the expansion of the rideshare/vanpool facilities as the usage increases.	Town Manager	Long
22. Work to implement improved pedestrian and bicycle connections along Route 109 to the Route 1 Corridor	Selectboard	Ongoing
23. As the central area of Town develops, plan for appropriate multi-modal linkages using sidewalks, trails and bicycle paths.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Ongoing
24. Develop a comprehensive sidewalk, bike lane, and streetscape program that is specific to this corridor and reinforces the municipal Complete and Green Streets Policy.	Selectboard / Planning Board	Long
25. Continue to request updates on the timing of repairs or replacement of all critical transportation infrastructure maintained by the Maine DOT, Maine Turnpike Authority, Boston and Maine Railroad, and others.	Town Manager	Ongoing

Economic Development Implementation Program

1. Establish a non-profit economic development corporation whose responsibility would be to market Wells and its resources to companies who would be compatible with the Town's existing character, scale and market. Financial support will need to be provided to this organization for this level of marketing and coordination.	Selectboard	Long
2. Complete a comprehensive Route One Corridor study in coordination with Maine DOT. As the primary commercial district in Wells, and the largest generator of transportation and congestion related concerns this corridor needs a plan that addresses coordinated infrastructure and regulatory changes.	Selectboard	Short
3. Review and amend local land use regulations to ensure they reflect the desired location, scale, and design of future development. These regulations must also address the connection to the local transportation network, and articulate how to best integrate new development activity in Wells over time. This should include the identification of "village" areas to serve as higher density mixed-use growth areas, and areas for lower density development and open space protection.	CPIC / Planning Board	Long
4. Identified "village" growth areas will require zoning changes and planned infrastructure improvements over time. Other tools such as Tax Increment Financing	Selectboard	Long

districts should be evaluated in conjunction with these changes.		
5. Identify areas in Town that would be suitable for future wholesale commercial, research and development or low-impact businesses such as Transitional Area 5 (the Crediford Road area). These areas should have good access to the local and regional highway network and be consistent with the Land Use goals and policies.	CPIC	Long
6. Identify and attract companies that would be suitable for Wells and would also complement the existing business environment. Such businesses could take advantage of Wells' environmental resources as tourist attractions and could include bicycle/kayak touring, small restaurants, personal service establishments, business service and repair, and arts and crafts-type shops.	Town Manager / Economic Development Committee	Ongoing
7. Participate in the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) for technical and financial assistance.	Selectboard	Ongoing
8. Continue to support the exploration of ecologically oriented tourist opportunities.	Selectboard	Ongoing
9. Continue to support the farmers' market community and other types of "pop-up" markets and events. This should include regular programming and activity at the Wells Harbor Community Park to draw people to this wonderful area of the community without the need for permanent structures or development.	Selectboard	Ongoing

Housing Implementation Program

1. Adopt and follow the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) definitions of affordability for York County and continue to update affordability targets as new MSHA data are available.	CPIC	Short
2. Review existing land use regulations to determine if they allow for adequate opportunities to create housing for the senior population and for households needing access to affordable housing units.	CPIC	Ongoing
3. Review the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to ensure that housing density is consistent with the Land Use Plan resulting from this Comprehensive Plan, addresses the opportunity for multi-family and higher density residential developments in the identified Growth Areas of the community, and is consistent with the capacity of municipal services and state statute to these new or redeveloped sites.	CPIC	Short
4. Collaborate with housing-related organizations in the region, to support efforts to provide diverse housing for all citizens, including affordable and workforce housing.	Selectboard	Ongoing

5. Adopt or revise provisions in the land use to provide greater opportunities for the rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income properties.	CPIC	Ongoing
6. Provide opportunities for mixed use buildings that include housing, in commercial areas of the community.	CPIC / Selectboard	Ongoing
7. Work with York County Community College and the development community to pursue a student housing development in the vicinity of the college.	CPIC	Ongoing
8. Host a work session and evaluation with land use boards, municipal staff, developers, and Home Ownership Associations to discuss how infrastructure is currently being constructed and managed in Wells.	Selectboard	Ongoing
9. Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.	Planning Board / CPIC	Ongoing
10. Evaluate the impact and potential benefits of seasonal housing units and short-term rentals, and identify how to best regulate these uses in Wells.	Selectboard	Short
11. Allow mobile homes in areas that are zoned for single-family housing and in parks that are consistent with state laws and requirements.	Planning Board / CPIC	Short

Public Facilities and Services Implementation Program

1. Program public facility improvements through a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is based upon the policies and actions from this Comprehensive Plan, anticipated growth and changing demographics, and an appropriate system of priorities.	Selectboard	Ongoing
2. Locate new public facilities within or adjacent to identified growth areas in Wells when feasible.	Selectboard	Ongoing
3. Establish regular communications with Wells Sanitary District and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District to coordinate their efforts with land use and municipal service planning in Wells, and continue to require capacity letters during the review of development applications.	Selectboard	Ongoing

4. Establish regular communications with the School Board.	Selectboard	Ongoing
5. Monitor the space needs of Town Hall and consider future expansion and new ways to provide access as the need arises to ensure high quality and efficient level of service.	Selectboard	Ongoing
6. Continue to review the needs of all community facilities to determine the need for replacement or additions including, but not limited to: fire substations, police station, highway department and recreational facilities.	Selectboard	Ongoing
7. Utilize asset management plans to monitor all Town-owned properties and resources to ensure that there is a rational basis for capital maintenance, repairs and acquisition.	Selectboard	Immediate
8. Continue to work with the Community School District on educational programs that use a variety of community resources including conservation lands, historic resources, community facilities and local businesses.	Selectboard	Ongoing
9. Continue to the inter-department/inter-board newsletter to communicate appropriate information among the Town departments and Town committees and commissions.	Town Manager	Ongoing
10. Continue to conserve the Town's financial and environmental resources through group purchasing and waste reduction and recycling.	Town Manager / Selectboard	Ongoing
11. Work directly with the businesses and community groups of Wells to determine areas where cost sharing for municipal facilities and services may be appropriate.	Town Manager	Ongoing
12. Conduct a municipal staffing analysis to determine future staff needs by department or changes in how services are provided as the population grows and demographics shift over time	Town Manager	Ongoing
13. Continue the program of installing dry hydrants.	Fire Chief / Planning Board	Ongoing
14. Adopt a specific development plan for fire protection addressing issues such as staffing needs, volunteer fire fighting resources, fire ponds, dry hydrants and response times.	Selectboard / Fire Chief	Ongoing
15. Adopt a specific development plan for parks and recreation facilities addressing issues such as maintenance of current facilities, the acquisition of new facilities, and programming, and encourage the	Recreation Committee	Short

tracking of programs to meet Town needs. Include the many recreational trails within the open space areas of the community and the organizations managing those recreational resources.		
16. Continue to plan and manage publicly owned lands to meet Town needs consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and where possible maximize their asset and environmental resource value.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing

Public Utilities Implementation Program

1. Continue to communicate with the Wells Sanitary District and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District to ensure that they are aware of the growth area designations and other land use policies of this Plan, and that land use planning in Wells is informed by the realities each organization is facing	Selectboard / Town Manager	Ongoing
2. Continue to utilize the Branch Brook Aquifer Protection District and other initiatives to protect the Town's water supply.	Selectboard	Ongoing
3. Cooperate with the Towns of Sanford and Kennebunk to adopt policies and programs, including the securing of easements, to protect the Branch Brook watershed and aquifer.	Selectboard	Ongoing
4. Continue to review the Town's land use regulations to ensure the quality of the ground and surface waters are protected through the proper management of wastewater and stormwater from residential, commercial and community sources.	Selectboard	Ongoing
5. Continue to explore and implement methods to reduce, re-use and re-cycle Town waste including the composting of organic materials.	Solid Waste Committee	Ongoing
6. Continue to work with wireless, cable and data utility system providers proactively to ensure state of the art facilities are available for residents and economic development.	Selectboard	Ongoing

Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation Program

<p>1. Identify local and state policies, programs and practices that directly or indirectly promote growth and development in the Special Flood Hazard Area and areas subject to future flood hazards and increase the potential for coastal damage due to flooding conditions. Once these policies and programs have been updated, recommend policy and regulatory changes that will discourage growth and development in the Special Flood Hazard Area and areas vulnerable to future flood hazards, including sea level rise and storm surge.</p>	<p>Planning Staff / Code Enforcement Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>2. Work with local, state, and federal conservation organizations such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify, acquire, and conserve parcels in the Special Flood Hazard Area and those in areas vulnerable to future flood hazards that have the potential to reduce the risk from flooding.</p>	<p>Planning Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>3. Consider the inclusion of floodplain management and sea level rise criteria as the Town formulates its open space strategy for management and acquisition of open space lands to promote conservation of areas vulnerable to flooding.</p>	<p>Planning Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4. Continue to amend the Town’s Floodplain Management Ordinance (Chapter 115) to be consistent with State requirements after the Town has adopted the new Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).</p>	<p>Planning Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>5. Continue to encourage the Town’s land use ordinances to include flood resilience measures and standards and direct development away from areas that are vulnerable to existing and future flood hazards.</p>	<p>Selectboard / Planning Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>6. Continue to encourage the Town’s land use ordinances to promote land conservation and protection of open space, especially for subdivisions and large developments.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>7. Continue to support the Conservation Commission in the implementation of the land bank program to support land conservation, especially in areas vulnerable to existing and future flood hazards and areas that can support landward migration of critical natural resources, such as saltmarshes, to address the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>Selectboard</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>8. Periodically update the inventory of all culverts, bridges, and stormwater infrastructure components to determine their adequacy to handle the 100-year flood event i.e., determine their capability to provide for the efficient runoff of peak stormwater discharge and to prevent localized flooding conditions.</p>	<p>Public Works</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

9. Seek the assistance and cooperation of landowners to gain access to drainage ways so debris can be removed to improve drainage. Because the existing drainage ways have become plugged over time and there is a 1 to 1 ½ feet change in elevation, some coastal areas experience minor and, on occasion, moderate flood conditions. This should restore to some degree the drainage system function.	Public Works	Ongoing
10. Initiate a regular program to clean out and maintain existing catch basins on public lands or rights-of-way so that they can retain an adequate amount of water during periods of peak discharge.	Public Works	Ongoing
11. Continue to ensure that all proposed developments have an acceptable stormwater retention plan and drainage plan as part of the subdivision and site plan review process.	Public Works	Ongoing
12. Adopt regulations for stormwater management and ensure they account for climate change and expected increases in precipitation frequency and intensity.	Selectboard	Short
13. Collaborate with others to utilize the reports from recent coastal flooding projects, including the New England Climate Adaptation Project, and the Tides, Taxes, and New Tactics project to assess the impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, and more frequent and intense precipitation events on stormwater infrastructure.	Planning Staff	Ongoing
14. Continue to require future developments to employ low impact development measures for stormwater management.	Planning Staff	Ongoing
15. Continue to use Stream Smart principles when designing culvert upgrades and replacements for municipal projects.	Public Works	Ongoing
16. Investigate establishing a municipal fund to support infrastructure improvements that enhance the community's resilience to coastal and flood hazards.	Public Works / Selectboard	Short
17. Property protection activities include relocation, acquisition, demolition, building elevation, flood retrofitting, retrofitting and insurance. The Town should consider focusing its initial efforts on repetitive loss properties.	Planning Staff / Code Enforcement Staff	Ongoing
18. Conduct a flood hazard audit and analysis of repetitive loss properties located on Atlantic and Ocean Avenues, Webhannet Drive, and other flood-prone areas of town to determine how the risks can be reduced.	Planning Staff / Code Enforcement Staff / Public Works	Ongoing

19. Identify residential and commercial properties in the Special Flood Hazard Area and areas vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise that would be appropriate candidates for structural improvements such as elevation and retrofitting to reduce the risk of flood damage.	Planning Staff / Code Enforcement Staff	Ongoing
20. Work with property owners within the floodplain to identify loan programs for floodproofing or other appropriate mitigation activities for structures located within the Special Flood Hazard Area.	Code Enforcement Staff	Ongoing
21. Work with FEMA, conservation groups, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Program, other appropriate partners and property owners to identify and pursue opportunities to purchase properties repeatedly damaged by flood hazards and conserve them as open space.	Selectboard	Ongoing
22. Continue to seek engineering assistance to review the Town's practice of relocating sand to the eroded beach area at the beginning of Laudholm Beach at the northeastern part of Drake's Island.	Selectboard	Ongoing
23. Continue to work with state and federal partners to evaluate the feasibility of beach nourishment through the beneficial reuse of dredged material where appropriate.	Selectboard	Ongoing
24. Continue to assess how Wells' beaches and other coastal resources will be impacted by sea level rise and increasing erosion.	Selectboard	Ongoing
25. Continue to work with regional, state, and federal partners to investigate opportunities to protect natural resources and areas that provide natural flood mitigation benefits.	Selectboard	Ongoing
26. Continue to preserve and protect natural wetland and coastal waterbody buffers through zoning, regulatory setbacks for development and land conservation.	CPIC	Ongoing
27. Continue to review and update the Town's local Emergency Response Plan. Since the Plan was first prepared, changes in land use have occurred with new commercial and industrial development, and in the emergency planning context, such as the flood warning notification system, the Code Red Program, the updated evacuation plans and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). An updated Emergency Response Plan should reflect these changes.	Fire Chief	Ongoing
28. Conduct a tabletop flood response drill once a year to test the notification and communication procedures, the responders' knowledge of their procedures and the extent of local resources such as sandbags, barricades, generators and shelters.	Fire Chief	Ongoing

29.	Complete evacuation route signage.	Fire Chief	Ongoing
30.	Continue to repair and improve the seawalls along town owned property.	Selectboard	Ongoing
31.	Continue to monitor the results of the recently completed beach nourishment.	Selectboard	Ongoing
32.	Initiate public information and engagement activities including providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FIRM map information b. Sea level rise and storm surge hazards, impacts, and community vulnerability information c. Technical assistance on the floodplain regulations and flood mitigation activities d. Information at the library e. Outreach projects f. Real estate disclosure g. Environmental education h. Flood mitigation actions that property owners can implement to protect their homes and businesses. i. Coordination with adjacent communities. j. Opportunities for residents and property owners to share their flood hazard knowledge, concerns, and experiences, as well as ideas for flood adaptation and mitigation activities, with town officials. 	Code Enforcement Staff	Ongoing
33.	Prepare a public information brochure that describes in detail the comprehensive nature of the Town's floodplain management program, flood resilience, and sea level rise adaptation activities.	Code Enforcement Staff	Ongoing
34.	Continue to use the community cable access program to publicize the Town's floodplain management programs and sea level rise adaptation and resilience efforts.	Selectboard	Ongoing

Part 4 - Capital Investment Strategy

Introduction

A “Capital Investment Strategy” highlights the capital investments needed to manage growth in Wells. It is not a formal capital improvements program (CIP), but it will serve as a guide to future capital expenditures that relate to the Town’s growth. It is to be updated annually and contains in its appendix a Five-Year CIP.

In addition to the major investments identified in this section, the Town also faces other smaller, ongoing capital expenditures. For example, it must continually replace and maintain vehicles and equipment or address other existing deficiencies that are unrelated to growth. This chapter does not address those “as needed” items and instead only deals only with items needed to accommodate growth or to meet the policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Two major capital items -- public water and public sewer – are the responsibilities of separate, independent districts. The Town’s capital investments therefore are free of these items except to the extent that the Town itself wishes to initiate the extension of one of the systems for its own purpose (such as to support economic development). However, as stated elsewhere in this Plan, coordination between the Town and the utilities is important to the success of the Plan. The Town is fortunate to have a good working relationship with both the Wells Sanitary District and the KK&W Water District.

The Wells / Ogunquit Community School District (CSD) was formed in 1980 through the vote of both communities as a part of the State Legislature action to allow Ogunquit to separate from the Town of Wells. The ownership of the school facilities was turned over to the CSD at that time. New facilities are bonded through a vote of the two towns and debt retirement is the responsibility of the Towns of Wells and Ogunquit through the CSD statutory funding formula.

It also should be noted that a capital investment item, as opposed to capital expenditure that typically would be found in an operating budget, usually involves a large expenditure paid for over time or with the help of outside funds. Financing over time does not necessarily mean borrowing. It may involve a reserve fund or a tool such as tax increment financing. But, frequently, the best way to finance a capital investment is through borrowing. Wells has a very modest level of long-term debt relative to its borrowing capacity. Debt obligations in Fiscal Year 2020 amounted to about 1.05% of the total municipal valuation. As of June 30, 2020, the total amount of long-term debt carried by the Town of Wells was \$16,213,148. In addition to the Town’s debt, Wells owes a much higher level of debt to the Wells-Ogunquit Consolidated School District. As of June 2020, the CSD’s total outstanding debt level was \$22,948,385 (\$22.25 million in principal, \$723,385 million in interest). Of the total amount, Wells’ current share is set at 78.77 %. This is pegged to present levels of enrollment and property valuation and changes each year as the two variables change. At the current level, though, Wells’ obligation is estimated to be \$18.04 million. Adding together Town and School debts, the total debt level of the Town of Wells as of June 2020 is \$34,289,590, or 1.05% of the Town’s total property valuation.

Each of the capital investments derived from the Comprehensive Plan is rated by priority. The rating system is:

- **In Progress:** First priority. This indicates that the project is already underway to some degree.
- **Urgent:** Second priority. The improvement is required to address an immediate public health or safety problem, to comply with a governmental regulation or mandate, or to complete an important, unfinished project. Failure to address the problem or mandate would hinder the Town's ability to accommodate expected growth.
- **Necessary:** Third priority. The project is not needed to solve an immediate public health or safety problem but should be undertaken in the near future.
- **Growth Dependent:** Fourth priority. The project gives the Town the ability to accommodate expected growth and would enhance the community's quality of life, but the improvement can wait until other more pressing projects are finished and additional funds are available.
- **Desirable, further study required:** Fifth priority. The project would allow for ideal operations given the projected growth, but can be deferred without detriment to delivering the basic services.

Capital Investments

This section outlines the capital investment needs by department for the Town of Wells. All cost figures expressed here only account for cost of buildings and facilities and do not include any potential land costs.

1. Public Works

Garage:

The existing public works garage on Route 9 (North Berwick Road) was built in 2011. Not all the equipment fits in the new building, and the building is not easily expandable. The current facility does not have a room large enough to allow for an area sufficiently large enough to get the entire staff together for health and safety training. Although, there are other facilities in the Town to accommodate a meeting such as this.

Priority Rating: Desireable, further study required

Sand and salt shed:

The town has an updated salt storage facility. Routine maintenance is performed on the metal roof, but it will need replacement in 5 years.

2. Flood Hazard Mitigation

The Public Works Department has identified flood problem areas in Wells:

- Mile Road
- Eldridge Road

- Furbish Road at Stevens Brook
- Tatnic Road
- Ocean Avenue
- Branch Road at the Merriland River
- Bourne Avenue
- Coles Hill at the Merriland River
- Webhannet Drive
- Atlantic Avenue
- Drakes Island Road
- Island Beach Road

Problems include flooding, the undermining of roadways, erosion and inadequate drainage capacity. Specific improvements have not been identified, however, the Town has 3 On Call Engineering firms to develop engineered solutions and obtain the proper Federal and State permits for construction. According to the current Public Works Director the Webhannet south seawall will be reconstructed as a FEMA disaster project. The project will be designed with sea level rise and storm surge consideration. The engineering consultant will also provide an assessment of the rest of the walls, north and south to determine expected life. The side slopes of Mile Road were damaged in the Halloween storm last year, and the town is working with FEMA to create a project, including mitigation, to replace the stone armor along both sides of the road. This project will also consider storm surge and sea level rise.

To address these problems, the Town needs to make a number of capital investments. These are described below.

Stormwater management and drainage improvements: .

The town needs a complete inventory and condition assessment of the drainage systems, with particular consideration of how the ocean outfalls will function with climate change. Individual watersheds need a hydraulic study to evaluate capacity for the current storm data. There are many private systems tied into the town’s drainage that reduce the capacity of the public drainage.

Priority Rating: Necessary

Property Protection: The Town adopted a Flood Hazard Mitigation plan in 2001. One of the Plan’s key recommendations was to take action to protect properties in Wells that are known to suffer repetitive losses from flooding, so as to avoid future losses. These protection activities may include relocation, acquisition, demolition, building elevation, floodproofing, retrofitting and insurance. There are seven such properties that have been identified in the Town, located on Atlantic Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Webhannet Drive.

Priority Rating: Necessary

Structural Projects:

The town has recently completed a high-level engineering assessment of major infrastructure elements. None of the infrastructure elements are in danger of imminent failure, but several are in need of immediate attention. The proposed budget included a bond to finance

construction/reconstruction. The engineering is already underway, including permitting.

Priority Rating: Urgent

3. Transportation

Road reconstruction and paving. The town has a pavement management system and at an annual investment of approximately \$900,000 a year the pavements in town will stay as good as they currently are. Traditionally, the Town has invested above this threshold, so the pavements are improving, any improvement to the drainage, horizontal or vertical alignments are done before, or with the paving. and the pavement techniques result in the most effective, longest lasting improvements.

Priority Rating: Necessary

Route 1 improvements:

The Town has included funding in FY2023 for a study of the Route 1 corridor with Maine DOT, including a land use component. Implementation of strategies identified in the study will be critical to ensuring successful travel along Route 1. There is funding available for implementation in the Island Golf reserve account.

Priority Rating: Desirable, further study required

Sidewalk Master Plan: The most recent sidewalk master plan only includes the sidewalks along Route 1 and Route 109. Creating a town-wide sidewalk plan should be a goal in the next ten years. This should be done in conjunction with an active transit master plan that includes bicycle passage as well. Future sidewalk construction based on this Plan should be timed with roadway upgrades or reconstruction projects.

Priority Rating: Necessary

4. Harbor and Marine Resources

Harbor Dredging: The Town, with the Army Corps of Engineers have submitted to the State of Maine an application to allow it to undertake maintenance dredges to the outer harbor area over a period of 10 years. The Town will be eligible for a full dredge of the harbor in 2023 if the monitoring reports indicate that the prior full dredge did not cause environmental harm to the marsh area surrounding the harbor. Support for this is crucial for a viable and stable harbor.

Priority Rating: Necessary

5. Recreation and Historic Preservation

Eastern Trail Development: A significant portion of the Eastern Trail, a planned regional trail, is designated for Wells. An abandoned rail bed that is currently used for a gas pipeline is slated for Wells' portion of this off-road trail stretching from Kittery to South Portland. The estimated cost to develop the Wells segment of the Eastern Trail is estimated at \$4 – 6 Million. To date the Town of Wells has contributed funding for this project annually. Since 2004 this totals more than \$85,000.

Priority Rating: Desirable

Land Bank:

The Town of Wells, led by the Conservation Commission's efforts, has established a robust and active land acquisition program that is funded annually through taxation.

Priority Rating: Necessary

6. Library

The Wells Public Library opened in 1978 with a 5,000 square foot space. In 1993, the first addition was completed giving the library greatly expanded children, young adult and circulation areas. A second addition was completed in 2018, adding a community room, a quiet study area and staff workspace for a total of 15,000 square feet. Space is currently adequate to meet the needs of the town residents, but an enlarged teen area and several small 2-3 person study/meeting rooms, as well as space for collection expansion should be considered in future growth plans.

Priority Rating: Growth Dependent

Summary of Capital Investment Strategy

The following matrix expresses all of the identified capital investment needs of the Town of Wells and displays their priority levels to the Town. These items and their estimated costs are based on preliminary input from various heads of Town departments, and represent current anticipated construction costs.

No.	Item	Est. Cost	Priority Level
Public Works			
1.	Public Works facility needs study	\$30k	Necessary
2.	New Sand and Salt Shed roof	\$50k	
Flood Hazard Mitigation			
1.	Hardening of infrastructure for sea level rise and storm surge	Unknown	Necessary
Transportation			
1.	Various Road Reconstruction/Paving	\$900K	Necessary
2.	Route 1 Corridor Study	Unknown	Desirable, further study required
3.	Sidewalk Master Plan	Unknown	Necessary
Recreation and Historic Preservation			
1.	Eastern Trail Development/Maintenance	Unknown	In Progress
2.	Land Bank	Unknown	Necessary

Note: This table presents a compilation off potential capital investments that may be needed by the Town of Wells. No projects on this list will be funded without Town Meeting approval.

Part 5 - Appendices