

A Comprehensive Plan for Houlton, Maine

Adopted by the Houlton Town Council on: _____

Town Council:

Paul J. Cleary, Chairman

Walter Goodrich, Sec.

Dr. Paul Romanelli

Carl Lord, Jr.

Gerald Adams

Nancy Ketch

Susan Tortello

Town Manager:

Douglas R. Hazlett

Planning Board Members:

Jeffrey Alling, Chairman

Elizabeth Childers

Norene Foster

Gerry Berthelette

Walter Goodrich

Michael Blanchard

Michael White

Special thanks and acknowledgment to the members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee and others who contributed their valuable time and effort:

Susan Tortello
Don Keiser
Gabe Goodwin

Jon McLaughlin
Patrick Crowley
Town Department Heads

Michael Blanchard Elizabeth Childers
Brian Longstaff-Consultant Kay Bell

This report was prepared, in part,
through the technical assistance of:

Northern Maine Development Commission

302 Main Street, PO Box 779
Caribou ME 04736

498-8736 1-800-427-8736 Fax: 493-3108

Houlton Comprehensive Plan

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Introduction

Comprehensive Planning is a structured method of identifying community resources and needs, and then establishing goals, policies, and strategies to address those needs in a manner that will allow for responsible future growth within the community, while at the same time making it a better place to live.

The State's Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988, as amended, established a cooperative program of comprehensive planning and land use management among the municipalities, regional councils, and the state. The focal points of the Act are:

1. The establishment of state goals to provide overall direction and consistency to the planning and regulatory actions of the municipalities, and the state;
2. The establishment of technical and financial assistance programs through the State's Office of Community Development and regional council to encourage and help local communities develop comprehensive plans; and
3. The establishment of a process for the review of the comprehensive plans by the State Planning Office and regional council, if desired, to ensure that Plans are consistent with the Comprehensive Planning Act.

The Houlton Comprehensive Plan addresses, category by category, the past and present resources (the "Inventory"), analyzes recent trends, and identifies potential problem areas. It provides an overall community profile in categories such as transportation, public facilities and services, natural and cultural resources, housing, land use, the local economy, and the Town's fiscal capacity.

The Goals, Policies, and Strategies portion in each section addresses specific policy recommendations that relate the findings of the inventories to the state, regional, and local goals. It also presents the implementation strategies of the Plan in tabular form, providing an outline of those programs, activities, and regulations that Houlton will undertake in the future to ensure that the state, regional, and local goals are met.

In total, the Comprehensive Plan serves as an important policy document for the Town. In sum, the Plan is a carefully researched statement of what the municipality currently "looks" like, and provides vital direction about what it should look like. The individual chapters are inextricably linked to one another, and the usefulness of the entire document is much greater than the sum of its individual parts. As such, the Plan should serve as an important reference for the Town over the next several years.

At the same time, some conditions can change, and the goals of the community may evolve as well. Therefore, the Plan will be revisited periodically by the Planning Department and Planning Board to ensure it contains up-to-date information, valid analyses and, if necessary, modified Goals Policies and Strategies to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains consistent with the State's goals and continues to address the needs of the community.

Summary of Findings - Houlton Comprehensive Plan

Demographics

Houlton has undergone significant demographic changes over the last 100 years. The population steadily increased in the early to mid-1900's, peaked in 1950, but has decreased into the early 21st century as projected. If projections prove to be accurate, a steady decline in population will continue through 2010, until it reverses around 2015. The loss of population has implications for schools, public facilities and services, and housing in Houlton.

Houlton must continue to monitor the effects of an aging population on the public services offered. The Town must also monitor the trend towards a smaller school-age population, smaller class sizes, and rising per pupil costs. The increase in the number of elderly residents and the concurrent decrease in the school-age population will have an effect on the size, financing, and number of offerings in school, recreational, cultural, and community programs. Health service programs will also have to expand to meet the needs of the aging population. In addition, the trend towards decreasing household size may have implications for the types of housing that are needed within the Town (i.e., homes with fewer bedrooms).

Educational attainment is important to Houlton's chances for economic, social, and civic future. Although data indicates a reduction in the number of persons achieving a college degree since the last census, the establishment of the Houlton Higher Education Center should positively impact higher education attainment in the next 10 years and beyond. The community and region must continue to encourage higher aspirations and educational goals within the school age population, and enable responsive delivery of curriculum to meet those aspirations.

Land Use

Houlton has an attractive future for its employment opportunities, for its dual urban and rural qualities of living, and for outdoor recreation and leisure-time activities. Land use is regulated through townwide zoning, the historic district ordinance, shoreland zoning ordinance, floodplain management ordinance, subdivision regulations, and the building code. Together, these regulations ensure the Town's overall quality of life and its regional business climate is protected.

About 60% of all parcels (% of the total parcels) in Houlton are developed as residential, and within the "village" area, nearly 79% of the parcels are residentially developed. Another 22% of the total parcels in Houlton are undeveloped residential lots, indicating that there is ample area to accommodate residential growth should it occur.

There is ample land for commercial and industrial development as well. However, commercial development pressure is beginning to be a concern in the North Street area near the I-95 intersection. Houlton is taking steps to limit the potential for future sprawl through regulatory and no-regulatory measures.

In addition to sensible management of commercial growth on North Street, the most pressing issues that the town needs to address with respect to land use are the accommodation of more affordable housing in the urban districts, and the conservation of valuable farmland in the rural districts. The current zoning ordinance and associated standards will need to be reviewed and revised to meet the land use goals aimed at successfully addressing these issues.

Transportation

Houlton's transportation networks provide access within the community, and link it with the surrounding region. Excellent regional highway access is provided by I-95, US Route 1, state routes 2 and 2A, and the Trans-Canada Highway. However, the town is working hard to force the long needed rebuild of Route 2A from the intersection with Route 2 to the urban compact zone, a project that has been deferred by Maine DOT as a cost cutting measure.

Transportation networks in Houlton involve five modes, including roads/highways, trails, rail, the airport, and telecommunications. Houlton is actively involved in planning for several of these networks through a variety of committees and initiatives: Houlton's Roads 2000 Committee develops strategies to maintain and rebuild the Town's roads and sidewalks, Houlton Town officials strongly support the eventual development of an transload facility as recommended by the Regional Planning Organization, and the Airport Advisory Committee makes recommendations for the development of the Houlton International Airport. In addition, given Aroostook County's remote location, Houlton continues to take the lead in adopting and promoting remote telecommunications technologies.

Three issues that the town will need to address in during the planning period are:

- The growing congestion on North Street;
- The degradation of the Montreal Maine & Atlantic rail service and infrastructure;
- Pending decisions regarding the final alignment of the limited access highway to decrease travel time from locations north of Houlton to the interstate system.

There is no easy resolution to any of these issues, but Houlton's future will be impacted significantly depending on the outcome of each.

Public Facilities and Services

As a regional service center for southern Aroostook County, Houlton has a fairly complex municipal administration and offers a diversity of public facilities and services to its residents. Municipal departments providing these vital facilities and services have identified their capital facilities needs, which have been budgeted for in the fiscal capacity section of the Plan. Public services, health care services, and social and human services agencies also enjoy a strong presence in this regional center.

In this new planning period, Houlton must seek out partnerships with neighboring communities to continue to effectively and efficiently deliver the cadre of services expected by the citizenry of

the greater Houlton area as the cost for these services cannot be borne by the Houlton taxpayers alone.

Several issues face Houlton as they enter the new planning period.

- Tightening regulatory changes are likely to impact the Houlton Water Company's sewerage treatment facility, which uses 1970's technology to meet 21st Century regulations.
- The results now show that energy deregulation has failed to bring cheaper electric rates to the consumer through increased competition from energy suppliers. New strategies are needed not only at the local level, but at the regional, state and national level as well.
- The Local Schools, Regional Support initiative proposed by the current administration in an effort to consolidate school districts and save money will have far reaching and largely unknown impacts if enacted. Houlton is slated to be one of four regional school centers under that plan, and therefore needs to be actively engaged in the debate.
- Fire protection and emergency response services will not be impacted by growth, but will need to be maintained by fewer tax payers if projected population decrease is accurate.
- Aging stormwater, sewer and water infrastructure is being replaced during planned street reconstruction projects, but some areas may need to be replaced faster than street rebuilds will occur.

The comprehensive plan includes strategies aimed at addressing and prioritizing these issues.

Fiscal Capacity

In Houlton, as in most other Maine towns, the demands of providing services evolve from the requirements of the federal and state levels down to the municipal level. This ultimately places the burden of funding many required services on the Town's number one revenue source: the property tax.

Revenues and Expenditures

Revenues in Houlton increased by only 4% over the past four years, while expenditures increased by 5.7%, fueled by reallocations of employee benefits from line item to department budgets, necessary capital improvements, and an increased budget for Roads 2000 projects. State Revenue Sharing increased by 10% during that period, but most of the increase occurred from 2004 to 2005 and has remained flat the last 2 years. Over the next six years the Town of Houlton will have a need for capital expenditures of \$1,592,800. These costs will be addressed through a combination of current year budget capacity including the annual capital reserve allocation of 0.5 mils, Roads 2000 allocation of 1 mil, and/or short term borrowing, the town should be able to maintain a favorable revenue- to-debt service ratio, as it has over the last 7 years.

As the people of Houlton considered recommendations to make capital improvements and/or upgrade public services during this planning process, they also considered their ability to finance those improvements. The Town has maintained its financial health while making some major fiscal improvements. The Town has also studied its fiscal capacity to meet future needs through public expenditures and other fiscal policies.

The implementation of Tax Incremental Financing Districts in those areas of town most likely to see retail and/or industrial development will allow the town to incent future economic development through the use of Credit Enhancement Agreements, shelter new growth in assess value in these districts from county and school assessments, and earmark captured tax value on the incremental investments for the purpose of infrastructure needs within the district.

Local Economy

Houlton is the economic center of the Houlton Labor Market Area (LMA), and is integral to the economic functioning of the LMA. The region has long-standing agricultural and forestry traditions, and Houlton should protect landowner rights to continue these uses through appropriate zoning measures.

As a service center community and county seat, it is understandable that the highest number of jobs were found in the education, health and social services sector, with retail trade and manufacturing sectors following in second and third highest employment sectors. Recent annual unemployment data indicates that unemployment rates in Houlton have been relatively high compared to the State, but comparable to those of Aroostook County. The median household income for Houlton in 1999 was \$26,212. This is slightly lower than the Aroostook County median household income of \$28,837 and is significantly lower than the State of Maine median of \$37, 240.

Canadian retail activity in Houlton has increased from abysmal lows in the mid to late 1990's, but the value of the Canadian dollar is not fixed, making reliance on Canadian shoppers risky. Additionally, any increase in retail activity could be threatened by the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which requires all citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from within the Western Hemisphere. Future impacts from the WHTI once implemented, should be carefully monitored.

The Town's downtown Market Square District is a distinctive traditional village commercial district that contains many unique historic buildings and established businesses. Houlton has recently completed a Downtown Revitalization Plan to fully improve upon and utilize the downtown for economic and cultural benefit as part of its overall economic Regional Economic Development and Strategic Marketing Plan, completed in 2004.

As previously mentioned, the Town's role as a transportation hub should be fully capitalized on, but the eventual selection of a limited access highway alignment could have significant impact on how successfully Houlton can accomplish that goal. The Town must make every effort to follow any proposals related to this potential project, and should provide continual input into the planning process at every opportunity possible.

Houlton will also take steps to enhance its "Creative Economy" through collaboration with local artisans, micro-enterprises, and home-based businesses. As a regional cultural center, Houlton already contains many of the building blocks identified as essential in bolstering this form of economic development.

Housing

According to data supplied by the Maine State Housing Authority, over 30% of the area householders were 65 years or older with over half of those householders falling in the low income bracket. Only about 20% of the home sales from 2001 to 2005 in Houlton were affordable to very low income families, but approximately 45% were affordable to low income families. During the same time, the median home price rose by 56% in the Houlton housing market area. Housing affordability is and will remain an important issue over the new planning period. The town will utilize tools such as Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing to encourage new affordable housing opportunities.

Houlton's wonderful stock of older and architecturally significant homes was deteriorating prior to the last planning period, but the situation has changed as many of these older homes have been purchased and rehabilitated over the last 10 years. The town should remain vigilant in proactively assisting in the upkeep of these significant residential structures through housing rehabilitation programs, revolving loan funds, and other means as necessary.

Natural Resources

Agriculture and forestry are important parts of the community's economy. The Town's prime farmlands should be managed with good conservation practices since this valuable cropland is important to the community's future welfare. Future land use proposals that might conflict with the efficient operation of the Town's major farming units should be carefully analyzed, and acceptable alternatives considered. Based upon current land use patterns and resource constraints, development does not appear to be impacting Houlton's forests, although there is a perception that woodlots could be better managed. The Town must encourage and support efforts to make farms profitable in order to reduce the pressure to sell off valuable farmland to non-agricultural users to replace lost income from farming.

Houlton is fortunate to have excellent ground and surface water resources. The Town has extensively mapped sand and gravel deposits which have an excellent groundwater yield potential. Groundwater resources are adequate to meet existing and future demand. The Houlton Water Company has developed aquifer protection measures in the form of a Drinking Water Protection District and Ordinance to ensure that the McPartland Well in Carys Mills is protected. The Town will continue to work with the Houlton Band of Maliseets, the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition, and others to implement conservation practices, management systems, and technical assistance recommendations contained in the Meduxnekeag River Watershed Protection Plan/Environmental Assessment to improve and protect the river's water quality and fisheries habitat.

Houlton has considerable amounts of good habitat for wildlife, including two deer winter habitats, seven waterfowl and wading bird habitats, seven rare plant and animal communities, and one critical area. Hazard areas include the floodplain areas of the Meduxnekeag River and its major tributaries as well as areas of steep slopes, such as those associated with the Houlton-Littleton Esker Segment. Municipal officials will implement strategies aimed at preserving valuable habitat through collaboration, outreach, and appropriate regulatory measures.

Cultural and Historic Resources

There are a number of area attractions in and around Houlton that make it a unique place to live and do business in. The Town is also fortunate to host numerous festivals, events, community organizations, and churches that draw people in the community closer together. Recreation resources include organized activities in the Town, such as organized activities of the Parks and Recreation Department, and outdoor recreational resources throughout the region, such as snowmobiling and hiking.

Scenic resources within Houlton include Drake's Hill and Garrison Hill, both of which are located in the eastern portion of the Town and provide (or provided) panoramic Town views. The Town may wish to restore or at least protect the view from Garrison Hill. In addition, the Town is actively pursuing further development of the River Front Park, providing enhanced access to the Meduxnekeag River on property it currently owns.

The Town is the oldest in the County, and also has a rich Native American tradition. Many of the Town's historic buildings remain, and 10 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are several other locally important sites within Town that should be protected. In addition, there are several known prehistoric archaeological resource sites in the Town that need to be protected. This plan contains strategies that outline both regulatory and non-regulatory measures to accomplish a higher level of protection of these resources.

Demographics

Introduction

Demographic analysis and projections are the basic elements of any comprehensive plan; all other components of the plan depend on the current and projected population. The information generated from the demographic projections enhances the capacity of the Town to prepare for the impact of future growth on such things as land uses, housing demand, public services, and economic development.

According to the 2000 US Census, the population of Houlton was 6,476 people. Statistical data contained in the following sections uses the 2000 US Census data for the Town. Following 2000, statistics are gathered from the Maine State Planning Office and the University of Southern Maine, Center for Business and Economic Research 2002 Long Range Employment and Population Forecasts which are based on the statistical model, REMI (Regional Economic Model, Inc.). The REMI model will be used for State and County population statistics and projections whenever possible.

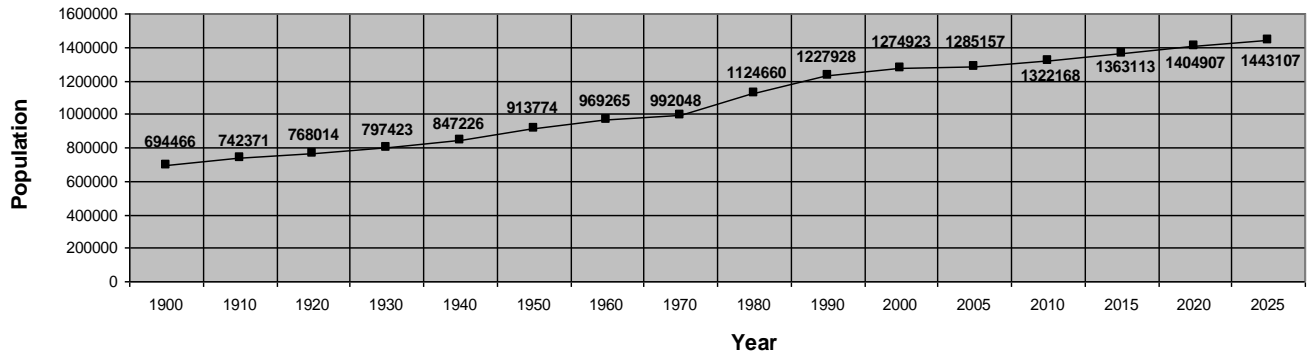
The demographic information included in this subsection encompasses the following: permanent population, age and sex of population, educational attainment, occupations of population, total number of households, household size, and household income. Also included in this subsection is an analysis of the data presented. The first portion of this section includes an assessment of the Maine population, Aroostook County population and the population of communities located in the Southern Aroostook area. The following comparative communities used in the assessment include: Hodgdon, Littleton, Ludlow and New Limerick. These communities will frequently be used to compare regional statistics versus local data.

The analysis which follows is an approximation of future growth, no projection or estimate can be exact because there are many independent variables which could affect the final estimates, such as an industry closing down or, for that matter, a very large industry relocating in Town. Therefore, the projections are intended to reflect the general direction and size of changes. Changes in age groups should be viewed with the same importance as the total change in population.

State of Maine

As depicted in the following graph, Maine has experienced a steady rise in the population level since the turn of the twentieth century. Since 1970, the state has increased in population by 239,000 persons in 1990, an increase of 24.0 percent. US Census data is used until the year 2005 for State and County figures. In 2005, a population of 1,285,157 is projected for the State. In the year 2010 the population of the state is projected at 1,322,168, and 1,363,113 for the year 2015. Projections indicate Maine's population will be 1,443,107 by year 2025. Additional data indicates that none of the growth since 1970 occurred in Aroostook County. Aroostook County, even with its vast areas of open land and the largest land area for potential growth, experienced a population decline.

State of Maine Population, 1900-2025

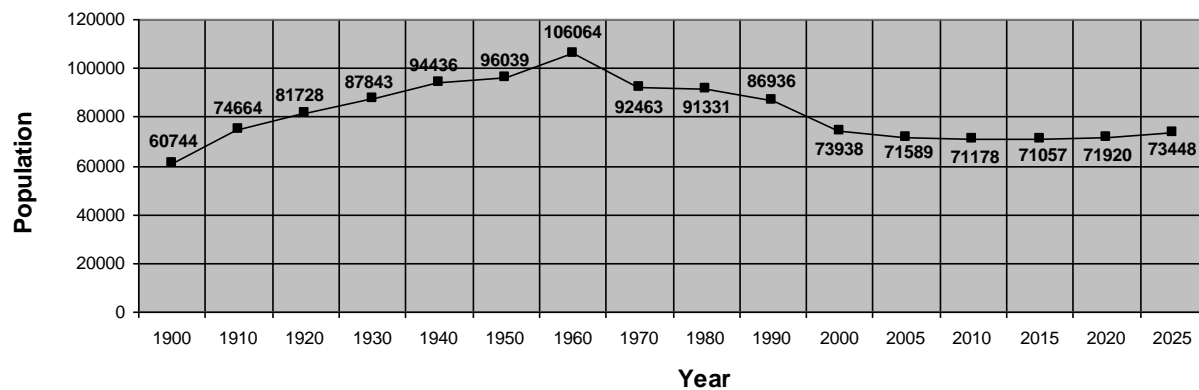


Source: US Census and University of Southern Maine, Center for Business and Economic Research 2002 Long Range Employment and Population Forecasts

Aroostook County

From the turn of the century until the 1960's, the population of Aroostook County was on a steady rise, from 60,744 people in 1900 to 106,064 in 1960. However, since 1960 the population of Aroostook County has been slowly declining from this peak with a population of 73,938 in 2000, closely paralleling the 1910 population. The County is expected to decrease until 2020 and will nearly reach year 2000 figures by year 2025. These most recent projections are significantly lower than projections developed a decade ago.

Aroostook County Population, 1900-2025 (in thousands)



Source: US Census and University of Southern Maine, Center for Business and Economic Research 2002 Long Range Employment and Population Forecasts.

Sub-Regional Population

Comparing the 1990 US Census to the 2000 US Census, Houlton lost 444 people, resulting in a total population of 6,476. Figures also show that the communities of Hodgdon, Littleton, Ludlow and New Limerick lost population from 1990 to 2000. Projections indicate that by the

year 2010, losses will stabilize and Littleton and New Limerick will actually see slight population increases. The projected population figures for 2010 and 2015 indicate that Houlton and neighboring towns will lose fewer residents than the County. Some of Houlton's past population loss may be attributed to a segment of the population relocating to surrounding communities due to lower taxes and land value. This trend may also be reflected in the increases projected for some of the comparative regional communities from 2000 to 2010. However, the trend sees a reversal as increases are projected for all the comparative towns by 2015.

Regional Population and Projections, 1980-2020

Town	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020	% Change 80-90	% Change 90-00	% Change 00-10	% Change 10-15	% Change 15-20
Hodgdon	1,084	1,270	1,240	1,238	1,267	N/A	17.16	-2.36	-0.16	2.34	-100.00
Houlton	6,766	6,613	6,476	6,322	6,502	N/A	-2.29	-2.04	-2.38	2.85	-100.00
Littleton	1,009	956	955	973	1,002	N/A	-5.25	-0.10	1.88	2.98	-100.00
Ludlow	403	431	402	395	406	N/A	6.95	-6.73	-1.74	2.78	-100.00
New Limerick	513	536	523	532	550	N/A	4.48	-2.43	1.72	3.38	-100.00
Aroostook	91331	86936	73938	71178	71057	71920	-4.81	-14.95	-3.73	-0.17	1.21
Maine	1124660	1227928	1,274,923	1322168	1363113	1404907	9.18	3.83	3.71	3.10	3.07

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 US Census, Maine State Planning Office and University of Southern Maine, Center for Business and Economic Research 2002 Long Range Employment and Population Forecasts.

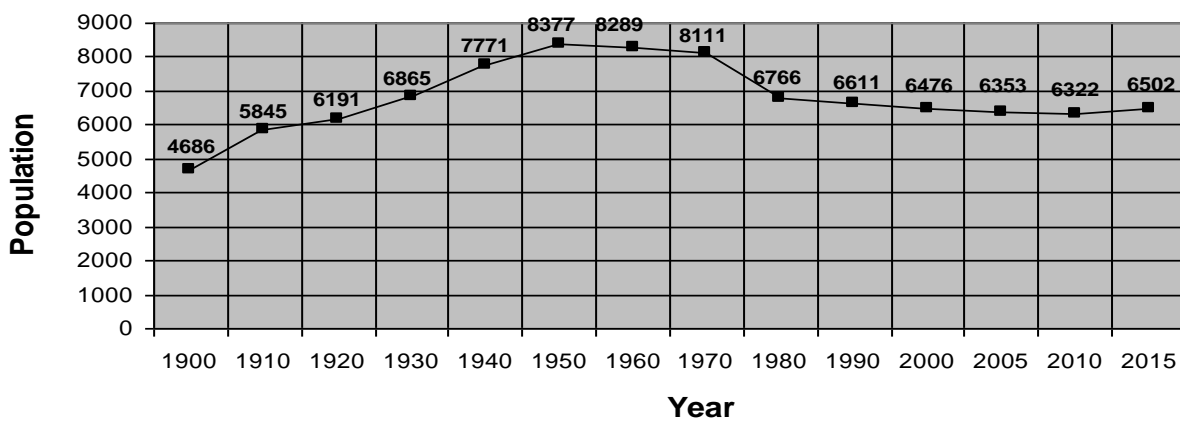
In projecting population numbers, even the smallest loss can significantly skew statistical data. Since the next US Census count will be in the year 2010, statistical projections appear either optimistic or pessimistic in regards to proposed industries moving in or out and their projected effects on population. Houlton's "quality of life," rich cultural heritage, access to neighboring Canada, and location as a business and commerce center, make it an attractive place for people and families to live.

Houlton Population

The graph below illustrates the historical changes in the Town's population level for the last 90 years, including projections out to 2015. Similar to Aroostook County, Houlton's peak population occurred in 1950, when the Town's population reached 8,377. The growth began when the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad came to Houlton. This development is reflected in the largest charted increase in the population that occurred between 1900 and 1910, when the Town gained 1,159 additional people. Other industries/areas that grew rapidly during this time period by the presence of the railroad were agriculture, lumbering, and the development of several inventions. From 1900 to 1950, the population increased by 78.76 percent. The population continued to grow and peaked in 1950. Since that peak, the overall population declined steadily to a level of 6,613 in 1990. The greatest decrease occurred between 1970 and 1980, when the population decreased by 1,345 people. This decline was attributed to the closing of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Engineering Shop in 1972 and the closure of Ricker College in 1977. Overall decline during the years after 1950 is attributed to several factors. A decline in the

potato industry occurred, not only due to mechanization, but several bad crop years. The lumbering industry also declined and the Atlas Plywood Company closed resulting in the loss of 150 to 200 jobs. Other factors include the loss of secondary businesses, the closing of Ricker College, and the younger age group population looking for greater economic opportunities elsewhere. In 2005, the population is projected at 6,353 and in 2010, at 6,322. A decrease of 2.38% is projected from 2000 to 2010. However, the time period in which projections are developed can create a trend toward optimistic or pessimistic data. Also, current statistics do not reflect potential industries or businesses moving into the area or the trend of population migration to surrounding communities with a perceived lower cost of living.

Houlton, Population Changes and Projections, 1900 to 2015



Source: US Census and Maine State Planning Office

Houlton Population Changes, 1970-2015

The following table details Houlton's population level since 1970 and gives percentage changes in accordance with these figures. As shown, the Town has experienced a 16.58 percent decrease in its population from 1970 to 1980, which is the largest percentage decrease in any decade for the displayed time periods. In contrast the County only experienced a 3% decrease during the same period. Another factor to consider is that Maine experienced an increase in population of 27.04 percent between 1960 and 1990. However, this increase is insufficient to offset the out-migration that has and will continue to affect northern Maine. Population decline continued between 1990 and 2000 with a 2.07% decrease for Houlton, while the County experienced a 15% loss, due largely to the base closing at Loring. Between 2000 and 2005, a slowing trend of population loss will occur with a 1.90% decrease. Between 2000 and 2010, Houlton will experience a 2.38% decrease in population for the decade. It should be noted that neighboring communities are projected to lose fewer residents over the same time period. A segment of Houlton's population may not necessarily be out migrating, but rather relocating in the surrounding communities that have lower mil rates and perceived less costly living expenses. Projecting out to 2015, Houlton begins to see growth, but the County is expected to continue losing population. The State population growth slows and stabilizes by 2015.

Houlton, Population Trends, 1970-2015

Year	Houlton	Aroostook	Maine
1970	8,111	94,078	992,048
1980	6,766	91,331	1,124,660
1990	6,613	86,936	1,227,928
2000	6,476	73,938	1,274,923
2005	6,353	71,589	1,285,157
2010	6,322	71,178	1,322,168
2015	6,502	71,057	1,363,113
% Change 70-80	-16.58	-2.92	13.37
% Change 80-90	-2.26	-4.81	9.18
% Change 90-00	-2.07	-14.95	3.83
% Change 00-05	-1.90	-3.18	0.80
% Change 05-10	-0.49	-0.57	2.88
% Change 10-15	2.85	-0.17	3.10

Source: US Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, Maine State Planning Office and University of Southern Maine, Center for Business and Economic Research 2002 Long Range Employment and Population Forecasts.

Proportional Make-Up of Houlton Population by Age Groups

For the purposes of evaluation and to indicate the movement and distribution of age groups over the years, ages are broken down into five groups. They are: 0-4 years old, pre-school age; 5-17 years old, school age; 18-44 years old, child-bearing age; 45-64 years old, working age; and 65+, retirement age.

Houlton Population by Age Group, 1980-2000

Age Group	1980	1990	2000	% change 1980-1990	% change 1990-2000	% change 1980-2000
0-4	620	425	381	-31.45	-10.35	-38.55
5-17	2095	1,226	1,155	-41.48	-5.79	-44.87
18-44	2801	2,449	2,145	-12.57	-12.41	-23.42
45-64	1601	1,301	1,418	-18.74	8.99	-11.43
65+	994	1,210	1,377	21.73	13.80	38.53
Total Population	8111	6,611	6,476	-18.49	-2.04	-20.16

Source: US Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000

0-4 Pre-School Age Group, which includes Head Start and Pre-K students, experienced a decrease in population between 1980 and 1990 of 31.45% and a decrease of 10.35% between 1990 and 2000. The tendencies toward smaller families and the exodus of a portion of the child-bearing population have contributed to this situation. Between 1980 and 2000, the Pre-School Age Group decreased by 38.55 percent, second only to the 5 to 17 age group.

5-17 School Age Group, referred to as the School Age Group, is comprised of children and adolescents. Similar trends have affected this age group as with the 0-4 age group (that is, smaller families and population exodus). After experiencing a decrease of 41.48% between 1980 and 1990, the trend slowed between 1990 and 2000 to 5.79 percent. Between 1980 and 2000, the School Age Group experienced a decrease of 44.87 percent. Since this age group experienced

the highest decrease of the age group categories, declining enrollment has created funding and programming issues within Houlton's school district (SAD #29 consisting of grades K through 12).

18-44 Child-Bearing Age Group experienced a decrease of nearly 24% between 1980 and 2000. The first segment of this population group could continue to experience a decrease due to out migration. However, the last segment of this population group could experience an increase due to changes in the status of the family. These changes include mature children leaving home and the subsequent move (return) to northern Maine of middle-aged adults seeking a quality of life and a return to their ancestral roots.

45-64 Working Age Group, a segment of the population known as the Working Age Group, experienced a decrease of 18.74% between 1980 and 1990, but rebounded slightly with a 9% increase in 2000. Between 1980 and 2000, this group experienced the lowest decrease at 11.43% indicating that once roots have been established, this age group tends to stay put.

65+ Retirement Age Group referred to as the Retirement Age Group, increased significantly by 21.73% between 1980 and 1990 and showed another, less dramatic increase of 13.80% between 1990 and 2000. Between 1980 and 2000, the Retirement Age Group experienced the only increase at 38.53 percent. This is important as it illustrates the dramatic "graying" of our population, which in turn would indicate a greater emphasis on elderly services, health care, and housing.

Projected Proportional Make-Up of Houlton Population by Age Groups

The following table contains projected figures from the Maine State Planning Office forecast done in 2005 showing the proportional make-up of Houlton's population in five-year intervals out to the year 2020. This forecast differs from the previous data in this section, but the coverage may also not be as comprehensive.

Houlton's Estimated Future Population by Age Group, 2000-2020

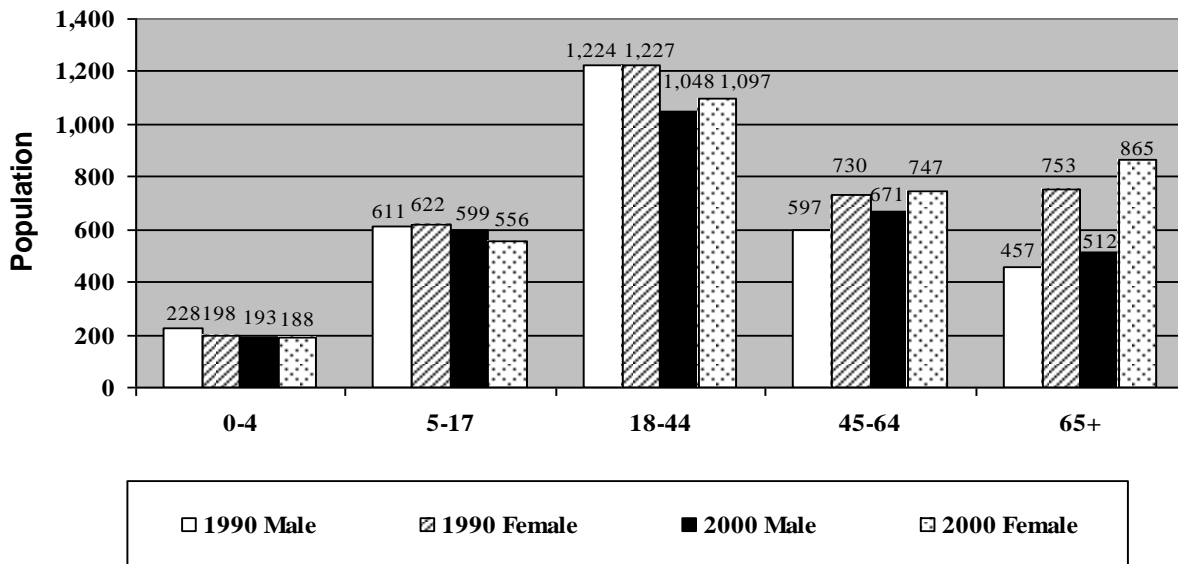
Age group	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	% Change 2000-2020
0-4	376	352	346	331	296	-21.3%
5 to 17	1147	1022	891	823	774	-32.5%
18-29	798	866	856	716	584	-26.8%
30-44	1345	1190	1038	1020	1005	-25.3%
45-64	1422	1681	1765	1654	1454	2.3%
65-79	916	907	923	1015	1102	20.3%
80+	472	494	501	491	476	0.8%
Totals	6476	6511	6319	6050	5691	-12.1%

Source: Maine State Planning Office Town Age Forecast Summary, December 2005

The age groups in the table above are broken down into some additional brackets, but the trends are similar to the previous table in that pre-school, school age, and child bearing groups continue to lose numbers while the working and retirement age groups continue to see modest gains at least through 2015. Projections indicate that the declining school enrollment situation will not

improve as Houlton is expected to see a 30% loss in this age group from 2000 to 2017, while similar losses will be seen in neighboring MSAD 29 communities as well. The needs of the elderly will also continue to require careful consideration in all aspects community planning.

Houlton Male and Female Populations



Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

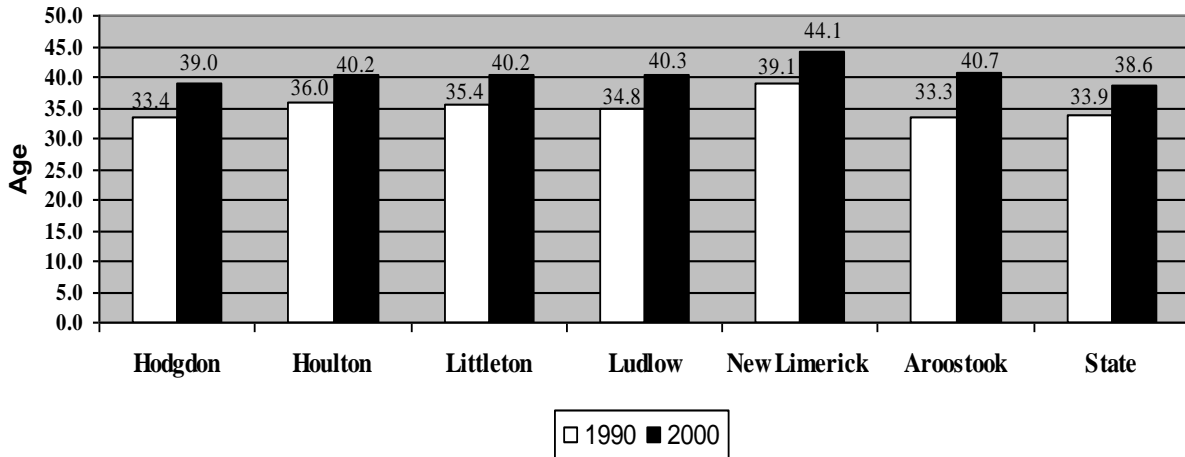
The above graph shows population levels for males and females in Houlton for the 1990 and 2000 Census years. In the 0-4 age group, males outnumbered females in 1990 and 2000. In the 5-17 age group, females outnumbered males in 1990, but males outnumbered females in 2000. Females outnumbered males in both decades in the remaining age groups with a widening margin corresponding to the increase in age.

Regional Median Age

The following chart lists the median age of Houlton and other regional communities. Unlike the mean or average age, which can be affected by extreme values either high or low, the median age is significant in that it is the "middle age" of all the persons in the community. In 1970, Houlton's median age was approximately 27 years of age. By 1980, the median age had increased to 32 years of age. The 1990 US Census gives Houlton's median age as 36, which was the third highest median age of any of the regional communities used in the comparison. In 2000, Houlton's median age increased to 40.2 years, staying the third highest of the five comparison communities. In 1980, Houlton's median age was four years older than that of the County and two years older than the State. In 1990, the Town's median age was three years older than the County and two years older than the State. By 2000, Houlton was slightly younger than the county median and only 1.6 years older than the State figure. The median age in Houlton has shifted as a segment of the younger age population has decreased as reflected in the 1990 and 2000 US Census. This is due in part to the decline and mechanization of the

agricultural and the lumber industries and out migration. In comparison with the other communities in the region, one can see very similar occurrences as the median age increased in every community during the same time period.

Regional Median Age, 1990 and 2000



Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

Population 25+ Years Educational Attainment

According to the 2000 US Census, 77.3 % of Houlton’s population 25 years and over achieved the level of high school graduate or higher. In the 1990 US Census, 70.9 percent of persons 25 years of age and older were high school graduates or higher in Houlton. With this improvement, the percentage of high school graduates or higher was greater than that of the Aroostook County figure of 76.9 percent. However, it was still below the State of Maine figure of 85.4 percent. It should be noted that the percentage of high school graduates or higher over the age of 25 increased between 1970 and 1990 by 14.4 percent. In 1990, 16.6 percent of Houlton’s adults 25 years of age or older had a bachelor’s degree or higher, but in 2000 that figure dropped slightly to 16.3 percent.

Educational Attainment of Population Age 25+, 1990 to 2000

	Year	25 Years or Older Population	Years of Education						
			<9th	9 to 12	HS Grad	Some College	Associates	Bachelor's	Grad Degree
Hodgdon	1990	813	73	68	385	105	62	93	27
	2000	807	44	77	346	214	41	62	23
Houlton	1990	4,326	646	611	1579	485	283	516	206
	2000	4,512	497	529	1656	786	308	566	170
Littleton	1990	615	123	59	295	69	39	22	8
	2000	650	58	71	306	106	31	61	17
Ludlow	1990	275	32	67	93	40	10	27	6
	2000	282	14	32	160	55	17	2	2
New Limerick	1990	369	36	35	150	78	23	30	17
	2000	388	38	38	155	90	20	37	10
Aroostook	1990	55,738	9,027	7,176	20,086	8,789	3,713	4,963	1,984
	2000	51,439	5,802	6,066	19,799	8,893	3,345	5,544	1,990
State	1990	795,613	70,153	98,307	295,074	127,799	54,928	100,788	48,564
	2000	869,893	47,183	80,105	314,600	165,111	63,934	129,992	68,968

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

Houlton Employment and Unemployment

Houlton has had significant fluctuations in its civilian labor force since 1990. After a peak in 1992 with 3,192 in the labor force, Houlton's labor force has generally declined. Although there have been small gains from year to year, Houlton dropped to a 15-year low in 2001 with a labor force of 2,672. The labor force increased from 2001 to 2005 when it reached 2,741 workers. Despite the peak in 1991, Houlton has lost 200 civilians in the labor force since 1990. According to the Maine Department of Labor, "Labor force gains in the next 10 years will probably come from those aged 25 and over, much of this increase will be accounted for by females and older workers, as the youth population is projected to decline." The suggestion that youth labor will play a less significant role in Houlton's labor force is substantiated by population projections for the younger age groups which show significantly less school age children for the next 15 years. Also, Houlton's older age groups will increase in population, thereby filling the potential shortfall of young workers. Those aged 45 and over are projected to increase in numbers and this group may choose, should a worker shortfall occur, to prolong their working years or to come out of early retirement to increase their income levels.

Houlton Employment and Unemployment, 1990-2005

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)	Aroostook Unemployment Rate (%)	Maine Unemployment Rate (%)
2005	2,741	2,548	193	7	6.7	4.8
2004	2,735	2,570	165	6	6.2	4.6
2003	2,762	2,582	180	6.5	6.1	5
2002	2,730	2,597	133	4.9	5.2	4.4
2001	2,672	2,557	115	4.3	4.4	3.7
2000	2,704	2,601	103	3.8	4.1	3.3
1999	2,784	2,619	165	5.9	5.4	3.9
1998	2,925	2,711	214	7.3	7.1	4.5
1997	3,009	2,769	240	8	8.9	5.1
1996	3,065	2,769	296	9.7	9.2	5.2
1995	3,150	2,832	318	10.1	10.3	5.8
1994	3,184	2,849	335	10.5	10.9	6.4
1993	3,102	2,801	301	9.7	9.8	6.6
1992	3,192	2,851	341	10.7	10	7.1
1991	3,157	2,829	328	10.4	9.5	7.6
1990	2,941	2,700	241	8.2	6.9	5.3

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services

The lowest unemployment rate shown above for Houlton was 3.8% in year 2000 while the highest unemployment rate occurred in 1992 at 10.7 percent. Houlton's unemployment rate has remained higher than the State unemployment rate for the entire 16-year period. However, Houlton's unemployment rate was lower than the County's in 8 of the 16 years shown and has not differed by more than one percent since 1990. This closely paralleled the County's and State's highest unemployment rates for the period examined.

Comparison of Households

The number of households and household size in Houlton for the years 1990 and 2000 reflects a recent trend at the local and State level of an increase in the number of households. Houlton also reflects the trend at the local, county and State level of a decrease in family size between the years 1990 and 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of households in Houlton increased by 3.6 percent. The comparative communities of Hodgdon, Littleton, and New Limerick also experienced an increase in the number of households between 1990 and 2000. The county and town of Ludlow experienced a decrease both in number and size of households. Houlton is projected to experience a decrease in the number of households over the next two decades. This decrease in household size could, in part, be attributed to the mechanization and decline of agriculture and the lumber industry.

Comparative Number and Size of Households

Area	Number of Households			Household Size		
	1990	2000	% Change 90-00	1990	2000	% Change 90-00
Hodgdon	434	462	6.5%	2.9	2.66	-8.3%
Houlton	2,584	2,677	3.6%	2.45	2.29	-6.5%
Littleton	336	371	10.4%	2.85	2.57	-9.8%
Ludlow	152	150	-1.3%	2.83	2.68	-5.3%
New Limerick	205	223	8.8%	2.56	2.35	-8.2%
Aroostook	31,366	30,356	-3.2%	3	2.36	-21.3%
Maine	465,312	518,200	11.4%	2.75	2.39	-13.1%

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

Median Household Income

The following table is based on a statistical data from the 2000 US Census, which was the only available data to calculate Houlton's distribution of household income. In 2000, the median household income for Houlton was \$26,212 and the per capita income of individuals was \$14,007. In Houlton, 33% of all households were in the less than \$15,000 category. However, 16% of all households were in the \$25,000 to \$34,999 category and 18% were in the \$35,000 plus category. Houlton's median household figure was below the 2000 US Census figure for the State of Maine, which lists the median household income for the State as \$37,240. Houlton's median household income is also below the 2000 Aroostook County figure of \$28,837. The most recent (2003) figures from the Office of Research and Planning at Maine State Housing Authority place Houlton's median household income at \$27,769 and Aroostook County at \$30,991. It is important to note that the gap between State median income and that of Houlton has worsened since the last Census in 1990. The distribution of household income in 2000 is listed as follows:

Houlton Median Household Income, 2000

Median household income: \$26,212

Income	Households	Percent
<\$15,000	874	33%
\$15,000-24,999	401	15%
\$25,000-34,999	418	16%
\$35,000-49,999	469	18%
>\$50,000	514	19%
Total	2677	100%

Source: US Census, 2000

Demographic Analysis

Houlton has undergone significant changes in demographic trends over the last 90 years. At the turn of the century the Town's population was at a level which would increase and peak in 1950 with 8,377. The greatest increase in population occurred between 1900 and 1910 with a 24.73 percent increase. The increase in population until after 1950 was fueled by the rise of the agricultural and lumber industries. However, after 1950 and continuing into the 1990's, Houlton's population has continued to decline, paralleling the same trend in Aroostook County after 1960.

Although a number of factors may have actually influenced the decline in population, the local perspective suggests two main reasons. First, a decline in family size in Houlton followed the national trend as indicated by a 16.04 percent drop between 1980 and 1990. The second factor influencing the drop is attributed to the increases in mechanization of the farming industry and industry in general. The transition of harvesting potatoes from tractor-pulled lag diggers, which relied exclusively on hand-pickers, to tractor-drawn mechanical harvesters, which operate with substantially less laborers, provides an example of such mechanization. The resulting need for large volumes of capital to remain competitive in the industry affected smaller family farms and the number of farms dwindled. As a result, many younger people found greater economic opportunity and higher-paying jobs outside the area.

In Houlton a trend of decreasing population is projected to continue into the year 2010 and possibly beyond depending on the source of population projections used. A population of 6,502 is projected for the year 2015 as forecast by the Center for Business and Economic Research in 2002, representing a net gain over the 2000 census figure. The birth rate, death rates, and migration patterns for Houlton from which the projections have been derived may prove to be accurate. However, if the factors considered change, the projections could prove to be inaccurate.

Houlton residents enjoy the conveniences that exist with living in a center of business and commerce. It has easy access to even larger population centers, yet retains the quality of life found in a smaller community. These attributes could possibly attract additional population in the future depending on possible industries and/or businesses moving into the area. Additional population growth in Houlton may be stimulated by encouraging small-scale commercial and industrial growth that creates a range of income opportunities. Another favorable method for encouraging growth is planning for tourism development and the development of recreation areas.

Educational attainment is an important issue and should be monitored closely. Data indicates a slight reduction in those persons 25 years and older that achieved a bachelor's degree from the 1990 to the 2000 US Census. However, since the 2000 US Census, the Houlton Higher Education Center has been established as an educational resource for both traditional and non-traditional students. The center has been successful in bridging the educational gap that was left when Ricker College closed two decades ago, and will undoubtedly help southern Aroostook residents realize aspirations for a higher level of education by accommodating those persons that

might otherwise find it difficult to continue educational pursuits due to social, logistical or economic reasons.

Finally, the Town must monitor the effects of an aging population on the public services which it offers. It must also monitor the trend towards a smaller school age population, resulting in smaller class sizes. A smaller school age group combined with an aging population and out migration can have an effect on school, recreational, cultural, and community programs, as well as the funding for these. An aging population will create a need to expand programs for the elderly, such as walking programs, shopping excursions, and social activity. Public transportation may eventually need to be improved to provide regular service with sheltered bus stops and posted schedules.

Land Use

Introduction

The land use section is one of the most important components of the comprehensive plan. From past and present land uses, the location and amount of land available and suitable for particular purposes can be determined. For this Plan, the planning program inventoried agricultural and forest lands, soil types and characteristics, natural resources, transportation networks, housing needs, demographics, the local and regional economy, and public facilities and services. These inventories are then analyzed and reflected in a Land Use Plan. Implementation of the Land Use Plan is eventually accomplished by revising existing land use regulations and by developing new ones.

Since the comprehensive plan is a long-range guide for the growth and development of Houlton, it cannot be too specific or too rigid. It has to be flexible and able to adapt to unforeseen changes and demands. An overall framework is provided herein to make intelligent and informed land use decisions within which adjustments can be made based on inevitable changes.

Houlton is located in Southern Aroostook County and is comprised of approximately 23,168 acres, or 36.2 square miles. The Town contains both urban and rural areas. Due to the lack of developable land with frontage on existing roads in the urban area, new residential development is primarily taking place in the Town's more rural areas. The Town would like to curb this trend and focus residential development within and adjacent to the existing urban area.

The Town functions as a regional center and shares a common border with four towns. Houlton is surrounded to the north by Littleton, to the west by Ludlow and New Limerick, and to the south by Hodgdon. The Canadian border of New Brunswick forms the eastern boundary of the Town.

Land Use Regulations

Townwide Zoning Ordinance

Houlton first adopted a townwide zoning ordinance in 1966, and has amended the ordinance several times since. The Town is divided into nine land use districts which are shown on a two-part official map set entitled "Urban Zoning" and "Rural Zoning." The map set is also dated 1966, as amended. These maps are located in the Code Enforcement Office in the Town Office Building on Water Street. Land use districts and their current purposes and uses include:

- **Low-Density Residential District (R-1)** - to provide a zone within the urban area in which the principal use of the land is for single-family and two-family dwellings, together with recreational, educational, and religious facilities which will encourage the development of well-rounded neighborhood living. Also included in this district are adjacent open areas where similar residential growth appears likely. Any future development which does not perform a neighborhood function, or which would interfere with the character of the district is prohibited.

- **Permitted uses** include single and two-family dwellings, private garages, non-commercial greenhouses and workshops, private non-commercial stables, public and private schools, churches, public facilities, customary home occupations and certain professional offices where operations can be provided with no more than one person in addition to the resident, public utility/communications facilities, and agriculture excluding the commercial raising of livestock or poultry.
 - **Uses allowed by Special Exception** include establishments that furnish goods and services for the neighborhood but do not detract from the livability of the area, nursery schools, nursing homes, medical facilities, and certain licensed social and health care facilities.
- **General Residential District (R-2)** - to provide a zone encompassing most of the older, more densely built-up residential neighborhoods located within convenient reach of downtown business facilities. This district is intended to consist of the multi-family or apartment-type dwellings likely to be needed by the community and designed to facilitate orderly change from low-density to medium-density residential development, although single-family dwellings will probably continue as the predominant use. Due to its transitional character, certain semi-public, institutional, and other transitional uses are permitted. This district, however, is basically residential and should be kept free of extensive commercial intrusion.
 - **Permitted uses** include those in the R-1 as well as multi-family dwellings, boarding houses, and non-profit fraternal organizations.
 - **Uses allowed by Special Exception** include those in the R-1 and commercial or semi-public recreational facilities.
- **Transitional Residential District (R-3)** - to provide a buffer zone to effect and facilitate the orderly and logical transition from a residential to a business zone. The purpose of this district is to relieve those transitional areas of the difficulties special to them and to permit the development of businesses in harmony with the residential character of the district. The district encompasses those sections of the Town where the obvious trend is toward the establishment of businesses rather than single-family and two-family dwellings. This district, ordinarily located along numbered state and federal highways or other roads designated as major streets, is intended to provide the necessary flexibility needed to encourage the establishment and growth of those businesses likely to be needed by an expanding community.
 - **Permitted uses** include those permitted in the R-1 and R-2 Districts, business offices, banks, nursing homes/health care facilities, churches, retail establishments furnishing goods and services that do not detract from the general livability of the immediate area, and nursery schools.
 - **Uses allowed by Special Exception** include semi-public/private fraternal institutions, veterinary hospitals; institutions of a religious, educational, charitable, or philanthropic nature; research facilities, motels, hotels, and public/governmental facilities.
- **Residential-Business District (RB)** - to permit the development of commercial, business and professional offices in harmony with the residential properties within the district. This district is intended to provide the necessary flexibility needed to encourage the establishment

and expansion of those uses likely to be needed by an expanding community and encompasses that section of North Street as indicated on the Houlton Zoning Map. In addition to the performance standards of this district, all proposed uses within the "RB" District shall conform to the 18 standards and sub-criteria contained in the Houlton Design Review Ordinance.

- **Permitted uses** include single-family, two-family, and multi-family residential dwellings; business and professional offices; home occupations, and commercial uses which do not detract from the aesthetic nature or general livability of the immediate residential area.
 - **Prohibited uses include** any use not allowed as a permitted use.
- **Rural Residence and Farming District (R-F)** - to provide a zone in which the principal use of the land is for agriculture, forestry, rural-type residence and customary associated uses. Large lots, with ample space between buildings, are required as a means of reducing fire hazards, and also to provide sufficient areas for both private water supply and septic disposal systems on the same lot. Other purposes of this district include conservation of natural resources and reduction of soil erosion.
 - **Permitted uses** include agriculture provided no building for dairy, poultry or livestock is constructed moved or enlarged to within 75' of the side or rear property lines; single-family dwellings, multi-family dwellings, and single mobile home lot as defined; churches, medical facilities, and institutions of a religious, educational, charitable, or philanthropic nature; nursing homes and social care facilities as licensed by the State of Maine provided they are located on a major street and all buildings are located at least 40' from the side and rear lot lines; radio/television transmission stations/towers/studios; boarding and riding stables; veterinary hospitals and kennels; public utility, transportation, and communication facilities; roadside stand for sale of produce with the provision of at least 5 off-street parking spaces; semi-public facilities and grounds; US Customs/Customs brokerage establishments.
 - **Special Exceptions** include sawmills/logging operations; agricultural product storage or processing facilities; cemeteries; junkyards and automobile graveyards; removal or processing of earth materials; mobile home parks; travel-trailer (RV) parks; general store; arts/crafts studio or sales; drive-in theaters.
 - **Central Business District (B-1)** - to provide a zone in which the principal use of the land is for pedestrian-oriented commercial uses to which the public requires direct and frequent access. This district is intended to encourage the concentration of commercial development to the mutual advantage of both consumers and merchants. Any uses which interfere with pedestrian access or create heavy truck traffic, offensive noise, heat, glare, vibration, or other objectionable influences or hazards, are prohibited.
 - **Permitted uses** include any retail or service business activity performed mainly indoors including the incidental manufacture of products sold at retail on the premises provided the manufacturing does not occupy more than 50% of the total floor area and employs no more than 5 persons on a single shift; business/professional offices, banks/financial institutions; public utility, passenger transportation, and communication facilities; indoor recreation and amusement facilities; public/governmental facilities; business signs;

- schools; hotels, motels, dwellings; newspaper and commercial printing facilities; semi-public and private clubs, fraternal organizations and institutions; churches.
- **Uses allowed by Special Exception** include any retail use involving outdoor sales, service or storage such as gas stations, building supplies, automobiles, trucks and other vehicles, farm machinery, boats, trailers, mobile homes, trees, shrubs and other nursery products; outdoor recreation and amusement facilities.
 - **Prohibited:** automobile graveyards and junkyards.
- **Highway Business District (B-2)** - to provide a district in which the principal use of the land is for establishments offering accommodations, services, or supplies to motorists, and in which vehicular access and parking is of primary importance. Also compatible with this district are certain specialized uses such as retail outlets, extensive commercial amusements, and service establishments which, although serving the entire town and its trade area, do not and should not locate in the central business district. This district, ordinarily located along numbered state or federal highways or other roads designated as major streets, is intended to encourage the grouping together of those businesses which are most advantageously located outside the downtown area and to help control commercial sprawl along the highways.
 - **Permitted uses** include any use permitted in B-1 district; any retail involving outdoor sales, service or storage except for automobile graveyards and junkyards; outdoor recreation/amusement facilities.
 - **Uses allowed by Special Exception:** veterinary hospitals or kennels.
 - **General Industrial District (I-1)** - to provide a zone in which the principal use of the land is for industry and associated uses. Certain open areas favorably situated with respect to transportation and containing other factors conducive to industrial development but not in conflict with residential neighborhoods or businesses, are also included. This is for the purpose of reserving suitable land for the expansion of existing industry and location of new industry, and enhancing economic development and employment opportunities.
 - **Permitted uses** include industrial operations that comply with Federal and state standards regarding water and air pollution as well as proof that any proposed new activity will not injure present and prospective industrial development in the District; businesses customarily serving such industries; public utility, transportation or communications facilities; warehouses, truck terminals, and storage facilities; bulk oil/fuel stations; research facilities; residential uses limited to functions such as watchmen, caretaker, janitorial quarters.
 - **Uses allowed by Special Exception:** Junkyards and automobile graveyards
 - **Airport Development District (A)** - to provide a zone to ensure the continuation and development of air transportation and to allow maximum flexibility for proper and compatible land use as defined in the Airport Development Plan (now known as the Houlton International Airport Master Plan) most recently updated in 2002.
 - **Permitted uses** include those described in the Airport Development Plan¹ and any uses permitted in the R-3, I-1, and R-F Districts as are proper and compatible with the uses set

¹ No specific land uses are listed in the most recent Airport Development Plan – 2003. This will be addressed under “Preliminary Changes to Townwide Zoning Identified” later in this section.

out in the Airport Development Plan and other controls for the safety and operation of the airport.

➤ **Special Exceptions:** None

On May 13, 1996, the Houlton Town Council approved two recommendations, including not to extend Runway 5-23 in the immediate future and to continue a project to clear FAA-defined surfaces and approaches. With the approval of these recommendations and the future identification of any airspace incursions via Photogrammetric Survey, it will be possible for the Town to make any necessary changes to the Airport Development District boundaries *and* to create a meaningful overlay district to protect navigable airspace from unwanted encroachments. The Town currently regulates land uses in airspace within the runway approach surfaces in Article VI, Sec. 40 of its zoning ordinance. However, the approach standards in this section are outdated and are no longer relevant.

The Town should maintain navigable airspace free and clear of obstructions by limiting the allowable height of objects within airspace defined under current Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77 and other applicable airspace surfaces as defined in the United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPs). The Town should also promote airport-compatible land uses adjacent to the airport outside airport property, and should discourage nearby residential development which is incompatible with the airport in terms of noise and perceived safety, which may be implemented by expanding the existing airport development district and/or creating an overlay district that would ensure compatible land use in critical areas at the airport. All zoning measures developed will be in accordance with Land Use Compatibility Guidelines, State of Maine's Continuous Aviation System Plan, 1994, and the subsequent update completed in 2005. Other documents published by the FAA should also be reviewed to ensure compatibility between the airport and surrounding land uses including Advisory Circular 150/5190-4A – A Model Zoning Ordinance to Limit Height of Objects around Airports.

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages use a matrix to illustrate existing spatial and dimensional standards for the five residential districts and four non-residential districts under Houlton's current zoning ordinance.

Dimensional Requirements	Existing R-1	Existing R-2	Existing R-3	Existing R-B	Existing R-F
Minimum Lot Size:	Dwellings: 10,000 ft2 for the first unit; 2,000 ft2 for each additional unit; All other uses: 12,000 ft2	Dwellings: 7,500 ft2 for the first unit, plus 1,500 ft2 for each additional unit; All other uses: 7,500 ft2	Dwellings: 10,000 ft2 for the first unit, plus 1,500 ft2 for each additional unit; All other uses: 20,000 ft2	Dwellings-10,000ft2 for first unit; 1,500 ft2 for each additional unit; All other uses: 20,000 ft2	Multi-family dwellings-20,000ft2 for first unit; 3,000 ft2 for each additional unit; All other uses: 20,000 ft2
Minimum Lot Frontage at ROW:					
Minimum Lot Width:	100'	75'	100' - dwellings; 150' all other uses	100' - dwellings; 150' all other uses	100'
Maximum Building Area:	30%	30%	30%	40%	25%
Maximum Impervious Surface:				40%	
Principal Building					
Front (From ROW):	35' on a major street, 20' on all other streets	25' on a major street, 15' on all other streets	35' on a major street, 20' on all other streets	Avg. of adjacent; max 35'	30'
Side (Each):	15'	10'	25'	15'	15'
Rear:	15'	10'	25'	35'	15'
Maximum Height:	35'	35'	35'	35'	35'
Accessory Building					
Front (From ROW):	35'	25' on a major street, 15' on all other streets	35' on a major street, 20' on all other streets	Except as otherwise noted within the ordinance, rear and side; setbacks for accessory uses or structures shall be 50% of the requirements for the principal structure, except in no case shall the setbacks be reduced to less than 5 feet.	30'
Side (Each):	10'	10'	25'		15'
Rear:	10'	10'	25'		15'
Maximum Height:	35'	35'	35'		35'
Other Requirements					
				Accessory uses or structures are prohibited in the front yard; >Maximum floor space of accessory uses or structures shall be 1000 ft2.	

Table 2 Existing Commercial and Industrial Zoning – Town of Houlton				
Dimensional Requirements	Existing B-1	Existing B-2	Existing A	Existing I-1
Minimum Lot Size:	Dwellings: 6000 s.f. for first unit; 1000 s.f. for each additional unit; All other uses: no minimum	40,000 SF	There are no existing space or height requirements except as limited by controls for the safety and operation of the airport and required by The Airport Development Plan	40,000 SF
Minimum Lot Frontage at ROW:	Min. 20'	Min. 20'		Not specified
Minimum Lot Width:	Dwellings: 65 ft.; All other uses: no minimum	200'		200'
Maximum Building Area:	Not specified	Not specified		Not specified
Maximum Impervious Surface:	Not specified			
Principal Building				
Front (From ROW):	None	Major street = 40'; Minor street = 25'		Major street = 40' Minor street = 25'
Side (Each):	None required – 10' if provided	15'		15'
Rear:	10'	15'		15'
Maximum Height:	45'	75' (sprinklered); 50' (not sprinklered)		75' (sprinklered); 50' (not sprinklered)
Accessory Building				
		(Not specifically listed – assumed the same as principal building)		(Not specifically listed – assumed the same as principal building)
Front (From ROW):	None	Major street = 40' Minor street = 25'		Major street = 40' Minor street = 25'
Side (Each):	None required – 10' if provided	15'		15'
Rear:	10'	15'		15'
Maximum Height:	Not specified	75' (sprinklered); 50' (not sprinklered)		75' (sprinklered); 50' (not sprinklered)
Other Requirements				
			Also need to refer to and comply with Article VI - Airport Approach Zone – in existing ordinance.	

EXISTING ZONING MAP

BACK of MAP

URBAN AREA EXISTING ZONING MAP

Preliminary Changes to Townwide Zoning Identified

There are several general problems with the existing zoning ordinance and map which should be addressed. These problems include the following:

- The existing ordinance has residential and commercial/industrial districts but does not clearly delineate growth and rural areas through intent and purpose, permitted uses, or differential in dimensional standards.
- The manner in which the ordinance describes uses permitted in each district is cumbersome and confusing; a land use matrix will be developed to clarify and expand on types of land uses and in what districts they will be allowed.
- Although clustering and open space preservation have not been a serious concern in Houlton to date, there are no specific measures that encourage clustering and/or open space preservation in the ordinance that would help drive these issues in the future.
- There are no specific standards or procedures that encourage development in growth areas and discourage growth in rural areas.
- The existing ordinance makes it difficult to locate affordable or denser housing, including mobile homes and mobile home parks, within the Town's urban area. New mobile home lots within the Town must meet all requirements of RF district lots. Where mobile homes are allowed, there is a general lack of infrastructure, including roads, public water, and public sewer. As a result, mobile homes (as well as much of the new residential development in general) are locating in rural areas, and are putting unwanted pressure on active farmland. Therefore, the Town will revise its zoning ordinance to clearly allow affordable housing in locations within the urbanized area.
- The Town's zoning map was created in 1966 and has been amended as needed. As a result of the map's age and numerous amendments, there are several inaccuracies or changes that are not reflected on the most recent map versions available. In addition, the two parts of the map do not match up due to past amendments. Therefore, the Town should officially update and replace the map to reflect all amendments and corrections as part of the implementation phase.
- Other more specific problems with the ordinance and map are addressed in the Land Use Plan and the Goals, Policies, and Strategies sections of this Plan.
- References such as the one in the Airport Development District that refers to the Airport Development Plan (now known as the Houlton International Airport Master Plan) are confusing and often inaccurate.

Historic District Ordinance

Houlton has established a Historic District Ordinance within its downtown area to promote the preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic sites and structures for the education, welfare, and pleasure of the Town residents. The Ordinance specifically establishes as Town goals the preservation, protection, rehabilitation, and enhancement of historic sites, structures, and districts, and the maintenance of uniform architectural styles, sympathetic with the character of the District. Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness for building construction, additions, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration within the District must be reviewed by

the Planning Board. If approved, successful applicants submit the approved certificate to the Building Inspector, who issues the appropriate permit. District boundaries are contiguous with the Market Square Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings within the District are listed in the Historic and Cultural Resources chapter.

The term “appropriateness” as it exists in the Historic District Ordinance has been found to be somewhat vague and problematic during Planning Board review of proposed projects in the District and needs to be more clearly articulated through photographic examples or other means.

Shoreland Zoning

Houlton’s code also incorporates shoreland zoning, which was adopted by the Town on July 13, 1992 and subsequently approved by the State Department of Environmental Protection. Shoreland zoning districts include: resource protection (RP), Limited Residential (LR), Limited Commercial (LC), General Development (GD), and Stream Protection (SP). To simplify the shoreland zoning requirements of each district, the ordinance includes a table listing a variety of land uses and compares them to the five zoning districts for compatibility. The five districts are officially identified on the Town’s Official Shoreland Zoning Map and are summarized below.

- **Resource Protection District (RP)** - This district includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values.
- **Limited Residential District (LR)** - This district includes those areas suitable for residential and recreational development.
- **Limited Commercial District (LC)** - This district includes areas of mixed, light commercial and residential uses, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, which should not be developed as intensively as the General Development District. This district includes areas of two or more contiguous acres in size devoted to a mix of residential and low-intensity business and commercial uses. Industrial uses are prohibited.
- **General Development District (GD)** - This district includes areas of two or more contiguous acres devoted to commercial, industrial, or intensive recreational activities, or a mix of such activities and areas otherwise discernible as having patterns of intensive commercial, industrial, or recreational uses.
- **Stream Protection District (SP)** - This district generally includes all land areas within 75 feet of the normal high-water line of a stream.

Shoreland Zoning waterbodies listed in the ordinance within the Town include: Jordan Pond; the Meduxnekeag and South Branch of the Meduxnekeag Rivers; the B Stream; and Brown, Dog, Moose, Pearce, Callaghan, Cook, Deasey, Hidden, McSheffrey, Porter Settlement, Nickerson Lake, and Smith Brooks. In addition, 11 wetlands are also regulated under the ordinance. The ordinance applies within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of any Great Pond or river, within 250 feet of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, and within 75 feet of the normal high-water line of a stream. In addition, it applies to any structure built on, over, or abutting a dock, wharf, or pier, or other structure extending beyond the normal high-water line of a waterbody or within a wetland. The Town intends to adopt the revised State guidelines as amended May 1, 2006 for inland communities with no tidal waters who wish to have the Maine Forest Service administer and enforce timber harvesting standards within the Shoreland Zone.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

The Town of Houlton enacted its Floodplain Management Ordinance on April 29, 1991 to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. The Ordinance establishes a Flood Hazard Development Permit system and review procedure for development activities in the designated flood hazard areas of Houlton. Designated flood hazard areas along the Meduxnekeag River, Pearce and Brown Brooks, and the B Stream are identified in “Flood Insurance Study - Town of Houlton, Maine, Aroostook County,” dated August 19, 1991 and prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Essentially, the Ordinance requires that all projects planned in areas of special flood hazard as identified on FEMA maps be preceded by a Flood Hazard Development Permit, which must be obtained from the Building Inspector. The Town has not updated this ordinance since 1991, but plans to do so in 2007 using the model developed and provided by the Maine Floodplain Management Program to comply with recent National Flood Insurance Program amendments.

Flood Hazard Development Permits granted by the Building Inspector in Houlton incorporate specific development standards listed in the Ordinance. Permits for projects located within regulated floodways are not granted unless it can be demonstrated that the base flood discharge will not increase. Where the floodway is not determined, no permit will be granted unless it can be demonstrated that the cumulative effect of the project will not increase the base flood elevation by more than one foot. These requirements are designed to ensure that floodplain management measures are appropriately applied in flood hazard areas.

Sand and Gravel Aquifer Overlay District

The Town does not currently have zoning measures in place to protect the aquifer used for the Town’s drinking water source. The Houlton Water Company has completed a study consistent with the State’s wellhead protection program, which identifies the aquifer boundaries and determines the well’s zone of influence within the aquifer for the purpose of regulating land uses within areas critical to wellhead protection. The Houlton Water Company has design measures to protect the aquifer, and is working with the Town Council to incorporate these measures into a Drinking Water Protection Ordinance that will be implemented as an overlay zone. The Comprehensive Planning Committee supports the adoption of this overlay district to regulate activities over those portions of the aquifer necessary to safeguard the Town’s drinking water supply from potential contamination and anticipates the ordinance to be in place by summer of 2007.

Subdivision Regulation

The Town has enacted “Subdivision Regulations of the Town of Houlton, Maine” to assure the comfort, health, safety and general welfare of the people, to protect the environment, to secure equitable handling of all subdivision plans by providing uniform procedures and standards for observance by both the sub-divider and Planning Board, and to provide for the orderly development of a sound and stable community. The subdivision regulations apply to the division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more lots within any five-year period. The Town’s

subdivision regulations were adopted in the 1970's and, as such, need to be updated in order to conform to state and local dimensional standards, requirements, and regulations. The regulations should also become an ordinance so they have more legal backing.

In addition to revising and updating the subdivision regulations, the Town is also interested in establishing impact fees that would be imposed upon determination that the proposed subdivision would create a financial burden for the tax payers in order to upgrade or install public infrastructure necessary for the proposed development. Impact fees would require that new development pay for its fair share of necessary public facility investments such as sewer and water systems when such investments have not been included in the town budget. All fees collected would be set aside in a dedicated fund for the sole purpose of infrastructure development related to new development.

Building Code

The Town has enacted a "Building Code" to regulate the construction, alteration, renovation, demolition, equipment, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of buildings and structures; to provide for the issuance of permits and the collection of fees; and to provide penalties for the violation of the code. The Code is in compliance with 14th edition of the BOCA National Building Code (1987), but this code is now revised and reissued under the International Code Council as the International Building Code (IBC) – 2003 edition. The State of Maine has adopted a customized version of this code, which all communities must use when updating or adopting a code for the first time. Houlton will adopt this code as part of the implementation of this comprehensive plan. The town also has adopted by reference, the BOCA Property Maintenance Code to provide better enforcement of property maintenance issues that impact health, safety and welfare of property owners and their neighbors. This code has also been reissued under the International Code Council as the International Property Maintenance Code – 2003 edition, which Houlton should adopt along with the IBC.

Site Design Review Ordinance

In 1991, Houlton adopted a design review ordinance for the area along North Street, between I-95 and Union Square. The ordinance is intended to encourage the continued use of existing historically or architecturally important buildings, prevent inappropriate alterations of buildings of historic value, assure that new buildings are contextually appropriate, assure that changes to contemporary buildings and new construction do not detract from adjacent buildings, provide protection for residential property owners not included in the zone, and prevent visual changes which would devalue or have other detrimental effects on existing commercial or residential property within or adjacent to the district. The ordinance requires that all proposed development along North Street be preceded by design certificate approval from the Planning Board. Design certificate applications are reviewed by the Board for consistency with 12 design guidelines. All projects above and beyond ordinary replacement, regardless of size or significance, must comply with the ordinance and, since this is an area of significant growth pressure, many requests have been considered by the Planning Board in recent years. The Town is also in the process of expanding PB review to commercial buildings and signage north of I-95 as well, and is assessing

the standards for any necessary amendments needed to address the type of development likely to occur in that area.

Building Permit Activity

The number of building permits issued in Houlton has fluctuated from a low of 154 permits in 2004, to a high of 197 permits in 2002. The most recent data available is for 2005, when 196 permits were issued. Construction of residential units (excluding mobile homes) spiked in 2002 and 2005 while construction of mobile homes have stayed relatively constant. While there is no general trend of increase or decrease discernible, the overall low volume in residential permit issues is telltale of low new housing demand within the Town. The most noticeable trend is in new non-residential permit activity with a remarkable increase from 2001 to 2005, indicating economic activity in the commercial sectors. Residential additions/alterations from 35 in 2001 to 75 in 2005 are also noteworthy. This trend may be due, in part, to new and existing families finding it more affordable to improve their existing homes rather than to upgrade by purchasing larger homes or building new ones.

Building Permit Activity, 2001-2005

Activity	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
New Residential					
Single- and multi-family, excluding mobile homes	3	24	7	3	28
Mobile homes	6	3	1	5	4
New Nonresidential	0	3	6	7	27
Additions/Alterations					
Residential	35	48	58	81	75
Non-residential	33	24	24	28	18
Garages and Carports	55	29	29	14	21
Miscellaneous	27	55	19	9	8
Demolition and Razing	6	11	14	7	15
Yearly Total	165	197	158	154	196
Estimated Cost of Construction (MM\$)	\$1.9	\$3.4	\$3.4	\$3.4	\$5.3

Source: Town of Houlton, Annual Reports

Houlton Existing Land Use

The following section describes the existing land uses in Houlton in 2006-2007. According to Houlton's tax assessor, there were 3,297 lots in Houlton in 2006. The data was derived from property records and GIS data and is based on primary land use, which does not reflect or consider numbers of units per lot. Where there are multiple land uses on a particular lot, only the primary land use was tabulated. For instance, where commercial land uses include an upstairs apartment, the land use is considered commercial for purposes of this study. The land use categories are:

- Residential** - Includes all areas in use for residential purposes. This includes single-family, two-family, multi-family, and mobile homes.
- Commercial** - Includes all retail businesses and services. In Houlton, there is a large amount of land area, especially in the urban area, devoted to commercial land use.
- Industrial** - Includes land uses devoted to railroads, warehouses, shipping facilities, and food processing. Houlton has an industrial park located at the airport.
- Public** - Includes churches, parks, recreation areas, cemeteries, and public buildings.
- Vacant** - Includes undeveloped, non-agricultural, un-forested property.
- Agricultural** - Includes agricultural cropland and dairy farms.
- Forest** - Includes all forest land, including plantations.

Residential Land Use

Residential land use makes up 59.5% of the lots in Houlton. A large number of these lots are small, contain single-family residences, and are located within the urban area.

Residential Land Use, 2006

Land Use	Number of Lots	% of Res. Type	% of Lots
Single-Family	1,730	88.2	52.5
Multi-Family	231	11.8	7.0
Total Residential	1,961	100.0	59.5

Source: Houlton Tax Assessor, 2006

The residential lots outside the urban area are scattered throughout the Town, and many are located adjacent to agricultural or forested property along established roads. The majority of these rural residential lots are not on public water or sewer. Such low-density residential development is not cost-effective for the Town, particularly in terms of snow removal, fire and police protection, and school busing. The lack of developable residential sites in town with access to an existing street and/or sewer and water is a major factor that forces new residential development into the more rural areas zoned Rural-Farm (R-F), which is a zone intended to protect agriculture, forestry, rural-type residences, and customary associated uses. Since the R-F zone is also designed to encourage the conservation of natural resources and the reduction of soil erosion, large-scale sprawling residential development is not normally a compatible use in this zone.

The Town will consider innovative methods to assist developers in overcoming the aforementioned lack of access or infrastructure within undeveloped portions of R-1 and R-2 Districts to promote residential growth away from the Rural Residence and Farm District. The recent creation of Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing (AHTIF) allows a community to allocate a portion of the increased property tax revenue generated by new residential development over a set period of years to help make the housing affordable. Revenues can be used to offset certain development costs thereby enhancing return on investment and encouraging a higher level of affordable housing to be developed in an area suitable for growth.

At the same time, the AHTIF benefits the community by protecting it from decreases in state revenue sharing and education subsidies, and increases in county taxes, that otherwise would occur with increased taxable value. Density bonuses and other alternatives will also be considered for future implementation if they can be used effectively².

Village Area Land Use

The village area was defined by the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) for this plan as the area between I-95 on the north, a line connecting and extending from Evergreen Lane and Varney Avenue on the south, a line connecting and extending from Hillview Avenue and Willard Street on the east, and the Meduxnekeag River on the west. This area contains 1,759 lots.

Village Area Land Use, 2006

Land Use	Number of Lots	% Village Area Type	% of Total
Residential	1,386	78.8	42.0
Commercial	191	10.9	5.8
Industrial	3	0.2	0.1
Public	19	1.1	0.6
Institutional	60	3.4	1.8
Vacant	100	5.7	3.1
Total Village Area	1,759	100.0	53.4

Source: Houlton Tax Assessment records, 2006

Houlton’s village area includes 53.4% of the total number of town parcels. This also includes Houlton’s Historic Downtown, which is used primarily for commercial, retail, and professional service activity. Residential land use makes up 78.8% of the lots in the village area, followed by commercial at 10.9% and undeveloped/vacant at 3.1%. Many of the “undeveloped/vacant” lots are associated with approved subdivisions located along the southern edge of the village area in the R-1 district. Very few of these lots are located within areas zoned R-2, however, indicating little room for higher-density residential development in the village area. Therefore, Town officials should consider making more property available for higher-density residential development as close to the village area as possible to efficiently accommodate public services. When this is accomplished, more residential growth can be encouraged in the R-1 and R-2 zones, effectively reducing pressure on the more rural locations.

Another positive factor in the Village is the recently completed Downtown Revitalization Plan that identifies opportunities and implementation strategies to invigorate and improve Houlton’s Historic Downtown. The plan is discussed in greater detail in the Local Economy section of the Comprehensive Plan.

² Density bonuses, Transfer of Development Rights and other methods promoted by the State Planning Office have often been ineffective in accomplishing growth management according to various reports and studies found at <http://www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/pubs/>

Commercial Land Use

Based on information provided by the tax assessor, there are 332 commercial properties within the Town, representing 10.1% of all parcels. While these parcels are scattered throughout the Town, the largest majority are located in the downtown B-1 District (39%). New commercial development is occurring within the Town, primarily along North Road (with development also occurring along Bangor Street and Military Road) since the Market Square/downtown area is constrained by existing residential development.

The lack of sewer and water systems along North Road north of the I-95 interchange requires that commercial establishments locate on large lots capable of supporting on-site septic and water systems. Commercial strip development, with little development off the North Road (behind road-front sites), has been the result. However, in an effort to both direct growth that is likely to occur because of the desirable location for new business and to offset any associated financial burden from such new development, Houlton created the North Street Tax Increment Financing District (NSTD) to capture incremental new tax revenues generated from real property improvements by businesses expanding or locating to the District. The NSTD area includes 456 acres representing 1.98% of the Town's acreage with approximately 230 acres also located within the federally designated Aroostook County Empowerment Zone. The NSTD development program commits revenues to future water and sewer infrastructure so that development can be clustered for efficiency, eliminating the need for large lots, and also to help design and implement better access management to promote back lot development and reduce the stripping out of this segment of U.S. Route 1 thus controlling unwanted sprawl. It also commits a portion of the revenues to Downtown improvements to help mitigate negative impacts on the downtown from retail business development in the NSTD.

While many agricultural and forestry land uses are indeed businesses, these are not included as commercial properties in this Plan.

Industrial Land Use

Houlton's Industrial Park is conveniently located at the Houlton International Airport, near the intersection of I-95 and the U.S. Canadian border. The Park has approximately 50 developable acres, with additional property available if necessary. Sewer, water, and three-phase power are all provided to this industrially zoned park. Current Park tenants include: Smith & Wesson, Ward Log Homes, Beals Aircraft, and CYMCO. The Town has assisted in the development of the park, and provides ready assistance to new and expanding companies through Pine Tree Development Zone benefits and the Airport Industrial Park Tax Increment Financing District.

There are two other industrially zoned areas within the Town that can be developed based on existing zoning. One area is located along Bangor Street (US Route 2A) and includes the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railroad property which contains numerous vacant buildings. There is room available for development in this district and it is also a designated Pine Tree

Development Zone that provides various tax incentives for qualified businesses. However, Brownfield potential may make development problematic. The other area is located in the southwest section of the Town and includes railroad property and Tate & Lyle. While there is room available for development in this latter zone, it is not serviced by public water and sewer.

The 162 individual parcels of industrial property in Houlton represent 4.9% of all Town parcels.

Public Land Use

Most of Houlton’s public property is located within the village area. Public land uses include local, county, and state government offices, schools, churches, recreation areas, and cemeteries. Based on information provided by the tax assessor, there are 105 parcels of public land. This reflects 3.6% of all parcels within the Town. The newest addition to this category is the Riverfront Park located on the banks of the Meduxnekeag River, and which forms the backdrop for Gateway Crossing Pedestrian Bridge constructed and dedicated in 2005.

Public Land Use, 2006

Land Use	Number of Lots	% of Public Type	% of Total Lots
Public Parks	4	3.8	0.1
Public Buildings	68	64.8	2.1
Churches	19	18.1	1.0
Cemeteries	6	5.7	0.2
Public Schools	8	7.6	0.2
Total Public Uses	105	100.0	3.6

Source: Houlton Tax Assessor, 2006.

Other Land Use

The chart below provides a summary of “other” land uses in Houlton. This category represents 27% of all parcels within the Town. The actual coverage of this land use within the Town is significantly larger, however, as these tracts of land tend to be much larger than residential or commercial tracts. While agriculture and forest lots comprise only 7.5% of the lots, they dominate rural sections of the Town due to their large size (see existing land use maps).

Other Land Use, 2006

Land Use	Number of Lots	% of Other Type	% of Total Lots
Undeveloped residential	726	83.0	22.1
Institutional	69	7.9	2.1
Utility	14	1.6	0.4
Agricultural	33	3.8	1.5
Farmland	17	1.9	0.5
Forest/Tree Growth	15	1.8	0.4
Total Other Uses	874	100.0	27.0

Source: Houlton Tax Assessor, 2006.

Houlton GIS

Houlton invested in a geographic information system (GIS) in 2005 in order to better track and update information about land use, utilities, public infrastructure, natural features and population. The linked expert system will allow users to retrieve public information, such as assessment data. It will also eventually assist users in stepping through Town review procedures, such as subdivision review. The core components of the system include high resolution orthoquad aerial photography and digital data sets that can be incorporated into a searchable features menu so that custom mapping can be overlaid onto the aerial photos for a number of uses and audiences. When training is completed, many of the Town offices, such as the tax assessor, code enforcement, and community development, will benefit from this system. Since some Town information may change with time (such as land use and assessment data), the Town may wish to periodically update the system to ensure that it remains current and useful. With proper management and planning, the system will place Houlton at the forefront of GIS technology within the County, and will effectively allow the Town to streamline and update its information at will.

Land Use Analysis

Houlton has an attractive future for the urban *and* rural quality of life it has to offer, and for employment, recreation and leisure-time opportunities. The Town contains an urban downtown area, developed residential, commercial, and industrial areas that surrounds the downtown, and large outlying areas that have retained much of their rural character, despite the current residential development pressures. The maps of current land uses in Houlton and the information about development pressures will allow the municipality to effectively maintain existing land uses and prepare and plan for future land uses by prioritizing those areas of the community which are best suited for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and public uses. The Town has also identified other areas where little or no growth should occur, such as areas not served and not serviceable by public water and sewer, prime forest lands, prime agricultural lands, wetlands, areas of endangered natural resources, aquifers, etc.

Moderate portions of the land have been developed in Houlton, although there is ample land for additional growth. However, it is important to target future growth in specific areas able to accommodate development in order to preserve existing rural resources within the Town. There has been an increase in the past several years of residential and commercial development outside of the traditional village area, and this has begun to place pressure on existing agricultural land. This could eventually lead to added expenses for the Town in terms of utilities, public facilities and services, and busing costs. Therefore, the Town will implement strategies to promote development near the existing urban core.

The Town will identify appropriate locations for affordable housing opportunities. There is no room for affordable housing within the village area as narrowly defined here. However, there appears to be some space adjacent to the village area, perhaps to the east. This will require

further study to determine the extent and nature of available and developable land closest to the urban center. Mobile home parks are considered an important type of affordable housing, and should be allowed in R-2 Districts in the future, with incentives given to mobile home park developers who will extend existing infrastructure (including roads, sewer, and water systems) in conformance with HUD standards. Affordable housing locations would ideally have or be near easy access to public water and sewer systems, and would therefore facilitate relatively high density development. Houlton should also be prepared to participate in promoting growth where appropriate through measures such as an Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing policy and program as well as density bonus provisions within the land use ordinance so that developers can realize a better return on investment as compared to developing in areas where the Town would rather limit growth.

Commercial development pressure is occurring outside the traditional urban area, particularly along North Road north of the I-95 interchange. This commercial development is occurring almost exclusively along the main highway, with little depth of development since access roads are not provided behind existing frontage. In addition, commercial lots are necessarily large since no public water and sewer are available and on-site systems must be provided. The combination of development along the main highway and large lots has created a low-density commercial strip leading from the developed area of the Town, northward. This sprawl is inefficient, creates traffic hazards, and attracts some shoppers out of the downtown area. The Town has studied the feasibility of providing water and sewer along this portion of Route 1. As a result, the Town has adopted as its long-range goal the provision of water and sewer lines from the B Road, northward, along US Route 1. The Town has and will continue to carefully consider its commercial development goals and utilize measures such as more stringent access management standards and Tax Increment Financing to affect back lot development as a better alternative to sprawl along US Route 1. These efforts will work in concert with those promoting downtown Market Square, the businesses located there, and the attraction of new stores where vacancies exist. Services should be extended to the Currier Road only when there is a proven need. It may be possible that *both* the US Route 1 commercial area and downtown can thrive, assuming each area carves out a distinct commercial niche drawing on their own unique strengths.

Town officials will also monitor the number of vacant commercial buildings in the downtown area as part of the Downtown Revitalization Plan, which provides a well thought out roadmap for future economic development in Houlton's Historic Downtown.

Residents and Town officials have an excellent opportunity to plan for the future through the preparation, adoption, and implementation of this Plan. Through preparation of the plan, residents must decide what they want their Town to look like in the next 10 to 20 years. There is a strong potential for growth in the rural area with the general movement of people out of the urban area. The Town will attempt to guide development to areas where public services can be provided to protect rural areas. A wise and thoughtful approach to zoning will protect rural land uses and help maintain the character of the Town.

Town officials will also develop specific access management strategies and requirements as part of the zoning ordinance to help the community avoid additional traffic problems caused by

uncontrolled strip development along major roadways, especially US Route 1 – North Street. The Town's access management strategies along US Route 1 will also be carefully examined and considered for other road corridors Townwide to avoid any increase in sprawling development along these corridors that could have serious impacts on traffic flow, speed, tax dollars, and public safety.

Although the comprehensive plan cannot provide detailed solutions for all of the community's land use issues, it does identify many of the basic resources, facts, and local concerns so that the Town's leaders, along with the residents, can have better information for future decision-making on some of the Town's most pressing land use matters.

The use of this planning document can contribute to an improved quality of life for Town residents. Help is available from many local and outside sources to assist with carrying out detailed actions to solve specific problems, such as: the Northern Maine Development Commission, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Maine Departments of Environmental Protection and Transportation.

Houlton Growth and Rural Areas

The process of designating growth and rural areas, and of creating a proposed land use plan, is a step toward zoning ordinance changes. Some rural communities do not yet have townwide zoning and may continue to resist townwide zoning, even if it is based on a thoughtful Plan. There is no hard-and-fast rule about what percentage of the community's development should be directed into growth areas over the next 10 years, but the expectation is that a distinctly larger amount of development will happen within the designated growth area than outside of it.

Growth areas are typically a small part of a town's total acreage. The actual amount will vary from town to town, depending on how much development is projected. Present development (including commercial activity) probably does not consume more than 5-10 percent of the acreage in a typical town. However, as Houlton is the county seat and is one of the more populated towns in the region, its land area is somewhat more developed than the typical Northern Maine town.

Enough land needs to be included in the town's growth areas to provide future lot and home buyers with a choice and to allow the housing market to function. How much land should be in the growth area should be the planning committee's and the townspeople's decision. It should represent a relatively small percentage of the town's total acreage and it should be configured in a way that discourages sprawl. For example, a growth area that is stripped along the length of the town's major roadways would be unacceptable because it would not encourage compact growth.

With these guidelines for designating rural and growth areas in mind, consideration has to be given to the characteristics of each area.

Growth Areas:

1. Have, or can efficiently obtain, public facilities and services.
2. Have natural characteristics suitable for development.
3. Are large enough to accommodate the expected growth over the next 10 years.
4. Are large enough to accommodate a variety of housing types.
5. But, must be limited to a size and configuration that encourages compact rather than sprawling development.

There also may be different shades of rural areas and each must be considered in planning where development should and should not occur.

Rural Areas:

1. Include important agricultural and forest lands.
2. Include large areas of contiguous, undeveloped land used by wildlife, for resource protection, and for outdoor recreation.
3. Include important natural resources and scenic open spaces.
4. May have very low densities of development interspersed among fields and woodlands.
5. But, may not include areas in which a significant portion of the community's development is planned to occur.

The "Growth and Rural" areas for Houlton have been designated on the Proposed Land Use Map. It should be noted that these areas are fluid and could expand and contract based upon growth pressure and the intent of the zoning ordinance.

1. The "Growth" area is "very generally" defined as those portions of the Town shown on the Proposed Land Use map as non-RF (Rural-Farm) districts. This includes the area along North Road to Currier Road; the traditional village or urbanized area in the center of the Town and extending to and including the airport and Calais Road (US Route 1) south to the town line; and a separate existing industrial area in the southwest quadrant of the Town.
2. The "Rural" area is defined as that area outside the "Growth" area, generally encompassing the Town's RF District.

Houlton Future Land Use Plan

The Land Use chapter is one of the most important components in Houlton's Comprehensive Plan. Since the Plan and its land use policies are a long-range guide for the growth and development of Houlton, ultimately the Plan should not be too specific or rigid; instead, it must be flexible and able to adapt to unforeseen changes and demands.

The Houlton Comprehensive Plan includes inventories of agricultural and forest lands, development constraints, soil characteristics, natural resources, transportation networks, housing

needs, demographics, the local and regional economy, and public facilities and services. These inventories are analyzed and synthesized into the Future Land Use Plan. Houlton will implement the Plan through the strategies set forth in this section.

Houlton's community character has been defined in large part by its unique cultural history, function as the county seat, established developed areas, and surrounding rural area. This contrast between the urban/developed areas and the surrounding rural area is a product of the Town's original settlement patterns and its subsequent growth into a regional center. Unlike many other Maine communities, Houlton's unique historic character, buildings, and traditions have not been eroded by development, and therefore should be preserved to the extent possible.

More recent development in the rural portions of Houlton, however, has affected the Town's rural character. Partly due to a lack of developable land in the urban area that is accessible to roads, water, and sewer, the resulting sprawl places additional demands on public services such as police and fire, and also puts unwanted pressure on farmers who are told their agricultural practices, such as fertilizing, are incompatible with the new rural residential development. The Town wishes to slow this rural development pressure by encouraging development within and adjacent to parts of the Town that are already developed. Since growth has already outdistanced utilities in certain areas, the Town must prioritize and plan to meet the existing and immediate future needs by directing development to the urban growth area.

Unlike many other Maine communities, Houlton's unique historic character, buildings, and traditions have not been eroded by development, and therefore should be preserved to the extent possible.

With this in mind, the following land use ordinance development strategies were created as part of this Plan, and will be important for the implementation program:

1. Amend and update the Zoning Ordinance to:
 - A. Allow and create standards for the optional use of cluster development and density bonuses in areas served or that are able to be served by public water and sewer (also see F and P, below). Cluster development provides denser, often more affordable housing, and also preserves open/green space. Cluster development can also be used in rural subdivisions to preserve wildlife habitat, productive farmland, and forest resources. Require developers of 10 or more acres to submit two sets of sketch plans for initial review: one for conventional development and one for cluster development to compare and assess which is most appropriate for the location, features, and desired outcome for the Town and the developer.
 - B. Limit growth to areas that currently provide or have easy access to sewer and water systems within the growth area, whenever possible.

- C. Encourage development in areas of the Town that are environmentally suitable and which currently support development, and discourage development in areas which are unsuitable for development due to poor soils or other environmental constraints.
- D. Draft new or update existing requirements and performance standards. They should include:
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Development on prime agricultural and forest soils and near critical wildlife habitat and critical natural resources | 15. Bed and breakfasts |
| 2. Access to lots, with emphasis on access management | 16. Campgrounds and tenting grounds |
| 3. Air emissions | 17. Extractive industries |
| 4. Buffer areas | 18. Home occupations |
| 5. Clearing of trees by waterbodies not protected by shoreland zoning | 19. Hotels and motels |
| 6. Glare | 20. Kennels and veterinary hospitals |
| 7. Landscaping | 21. Manufactured housing |
| 8. Off-street parking | 22. Outdoor Wood Boilers |
| 9. Satellite receiving dishes | 23. Professional offices in residential districts |
| 10. Signs | 24. Recreational and amusement facilities |
| 11. Soil erosion controls | 25. Renting rooms and apartments |
| 12. Stormwater management | 26. Restaurants |
| 13. Animal husbandry | 27. Scenic areas |
| 14. Automobile graveyards and junkyards | 28. Schools, churches, fraternal organizations, and non-profit clubs. |
| | 29. Telecommunications towers |
| | 30. Windmills |
- E. Update the requirements and performance standards for mobile homes and mobile home parks.
- F. Offer density bonuses to subdividers who wish to cluster, preserve areas of significant natural character or open space, or provide affordable housing (also see A and P).
- G. Review the currently permitted land uses in each district and make changes as necessary in a Land Use Chart to meet the intent and purpose of each district.
- H. Establish, if investigations reveal significant plant species, a Resource Protection District for those species noted in the Maine Natural Heritage Program.
- I. Incorporate the Development Constraints Map of this Plan as part of the development review procedures.
- J. Develop an administrative framework to facilitate the review of development proposals by the appropriate Town departments and staff.

- K. Incorporate an aquifer protection overlay district based upon the Houlton Water Company's recent delineation of aquifer boundaries under the State's wellhead protection program, Phase I and II study. Protection measures in the District will include specific performance standards and setbacks to maintain safe and healthful environmental conditions; prevent and control water pollution; protect spawning grounds, fish, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitats; control building sites; provide visual and physical points of access to waters and areas of natural beauty; and protect and maintain the quality of aquifers and surface waters. The overlay zone shall be superimposed over the underlying zone(s) and land uses shall be subject to the requirements of both the underlying and the overlay zones. Measures will be designed so as to not "take" economic value from properties overlying the aquifer, but rather to regulate continuing land uses to protect water quality. The Houlton Water Company is fortunate to own a good deal of land around its two well sites (the Water Company owns 100 acres at one site and 30 acres at the other), and does not anticipate that any existing land uses outside Water Company property will be adversely affected by regulation.
- L. Review and amend outdated residential lot sizes and setbacks to encourage development within the urban growth area.
- M. Convert the eastern part of the large R-1 District in the urban area's northeast quadrant to R-2 to allow higher-density residential development. Also, convert part of the abutting R-F property along Foxcroft Road to R-2 where some residential development has already taken place. However, development should only be encouraged if public water and sewer is provided to this area. Maps of existing water and sewer mains should be provided to the Planning Board to assist in development review.
- N. Review and draft standards to regulate noise levels appropriate to the time of day, location, and where churches, businesses, and etc. abut residential development.
- O. Amend the zoning ordinance to allow mobile homes in R-2 Districts consistent with HUD guidelines, with special incentives such as density bonuses for mobile home park developers (also see A and F, above).
- P. Revise allowed uses in B-1 Districts to re-focus this district as a center of business. Also, reduce setbacks within B-1 Districts.
- Q. Alter the R-F District to incorporate larger lot sizes and maximum density limits; add an explicit statement that the continued right of farmers to farm without interference by residential property owners is protected.
- R. Update/create the Airport Development District (A) to protect navigable airspace from encroachments and alert underlying property owners of the additional restrictions. Also, alter the existing conventional Airport District as necessary to include the airport property and all FAA-defined safety areas.

- S. To the extent possible, shift zoning district boundaries between R-F and more intensely developed districts to conform to property boundaries.
 - T. Extend the existing B-2 District on Bangor Road slightly to the southwest to include the Scottish Inn.
 - U. Rezone the part of the existing B-2 District north of Currier Road to R-F to recognize that, although it is an area in transition, the area is not appropriate for dense highway business development and is not appropriate to receive public water and sewer (due to a low density of development and higher costs associated with the uphill gradient). This change in zoning will simply acknowledge the mix of residential and commercial development that has already occurred there, but also recognize the potential of this corridor to be selected as a limited access North-South highway extension. By limiting the amount and density of future development within this segment, it will be less costly to expand the roadway for this use and prevent a by-pass option around Houlton from the south.
 - V. Update the Town’s zoning maps to be consistent with the revised ordinance.
 - W. Expand the R-1 District on south end of Court Street to accommodate additional low density development in back lots adjacent to existing R-1, including a recently approved subdivision.
2. Draft site design criteria or update existing criteria, either as a stand-alone ordinance or as part of the townwide zoning ordinance. Such criteria are currently applied along North Street only. The new criteria:
- A. Should include, but not be limited to, performance standards on a townwide basis for:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traffic safety and access management 2. On-site parking 3. Signage 4. Stormwater management 5. Landscaping 6. Soil conservation and erosion control 7. Environmental impact 8. Toxic and hazardous material storage 9. Critical natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Standards for Home Occupations 11. Historic, prehistoric, and archaeological resources 12. Driveway and new roadway access 13. Groundwater quality/quantity impact 14. Floodplain management 15. Freshwater wetlands 16. Snow removal 17. Sewer and water 18. Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat protection 19. Air quality/odorous impacts
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 - B. Will encourage a variety and diversity of commercial and industrial types in appropriately zoned areas.

- C. Will require developers to demonstrate need for a North Road location north of I-95 for any proposed commercial development.

- 3. Update the Subdivision Regulation to an ordinance to be consistent with zoning and to comply with all state requirements and laws. The Subdivision Ordinance will include:
 - A. Standards for the review of:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Air and water pollution 2. Water supply 3. Soil erosion 4. Traffic control 5. Sewage disposal 6. Solid waste 7. Environmental 8. Historic, prehistoric, and archaeological resources 9. Conformance with Town land use regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Impacts on surface water quality (phosphorus) 11. Impacts on ground water quality and quantity 12. Floodplain management 13. Freshwater wetlands 14. Storm water management 15. Financial and technical capacity 16. Other required guidelines
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 - B. Encourage a diversity of commercial/industrial uses, and affordable housing types.

 - C. Establish specific procedures or standards for reviewing new non-residential subdivisions.

 - D. Include standards stipulating detailed site information, such as a high-intensity soil survey for large subdivisions, whenever feasible, for evaluating the suitability of the soils to accommodate specific types of construction.

- 4. Critical Natural Resources

Houlton will use Beginning with Habitat and the Maine Natural Areas Program resources to investigate, inventory, and map any of the species of plants or exemplary natural communities that may exist in Houlton. If findings warrant, protection methods, such as the creation of a special Resource Protection District in the zoning ordinance, owner contact, newspaper articles, buffers, and land use standards will be developed on a case-by-case basis. These standards will be drafted in the subdivision ordinance, townwide zoning ordinance, and site design review criteria for critical resource protection.

5. Historical and Archeological Resources

Standards will be developed within the subdivision ordinance, townwide zoning ordinance, and site design review criteria for the identification, assessment, preservation and protection of state and locally identified significant historical and archeological sites, separate from or as an addendum to the Market Square Historic District Ordinance. A committee will be formed to review existing data for archeological significance. Based upon their findings, additional standards for protection and preservation will be drafted for inclusion in the various land use regulations. Such wording could take the following format:

Any proposed land use activity involving structural development or soil disturbance on or adjacent to sites listed on, or eligible to be listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by the Planning Board, shall be submitted by the applicant to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and to the Houlton Historical Society for review and comment, at least twenty (20) days prior to action being taken by the Board. The Board shall consider any comments received from the Commission and Society within the twenty (20) day review period prior to rendering a decision on the application. The development shall include appropriate measures for protecting these resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, timing of construction, or limitation on the extent of excavation.

6. Houlton will explore the need to revise the Building Code in compliance with International Code Council revisions and State of Maine rule making for the International Building Code and other ICC family of codes.

Land Use Policies and Implementation Strategies

State Goal: *To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community and region, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.*

Land Use Policies

Policy	Corresponding Strategy
A. Develop and adopt land use standards that encourage compact, efficient development with proper access to public facilities and services, and discourages sprawl.	1-3,7,8,10,11,14,15
B. Promote land use regulation and actions that safeguards the environment, and protects existing agriculture and forest resources, and other natural resources.	1-4,6-13,16
C. Promote land use regulation that accommodates affordable housing within the urban growth area.	1,2,5,7,8,10,11,13
D. Promote appropriate industrial and commercial development in areas of town with access or potential access to public utilities and services.	1,3,7,8,10,11,13
E. Promote land use regulation that is compatible with development at Houlton International Airport.	1,7,8,10,11,18
F. Protect the traditional urban and rural characters and quality of life in Houlton.	1,7,8,11,12,13,17

Land Use Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
1. Amend and update the townwide zoning ordinance and maps as indicated in the Houlton Land Use Plan section of this document.	PB, TC	2007
2. Update the subdivision regulation to an ordinance (see: Houlton Land Use Plan).	PB, TC	2008
3. Revise or update site design review criteria for North Street and expand criteria to other districts (see: Houlton Land Use Plan).	PB, TC	2008
4. Periodically review and update the Town's building code and property maintenance code so it remains consistent and current with International Code Council revisions and State adopted changes.	CEO	2007 On-Going
5. Continue to update and enforce the shoreland zoning ordinance as amendments to State guidelines are completed.	CEO	2007 On-Going
6. Require Planning Board to oversee any revision of this Plan, as required by law, including relevance of existing data, policies and strategies.	PB, TC	On-Going

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
7. Implement measures to control type, scale, location, character, and arrangement of new development as means to positively influence potential impacts and direct growth within and adjacent to urban core.	PB	2008 On-Going
8. Ensure Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals adhere to provisions of Town's land use ordinances and regulations, and attend ongoing professional development workshops dealing with land use regulation and review.	CEO, PB, TM ZBA, TC	On-Going
9. Adopt standards in land use ordinances that protect the character of Houlton as defined in the Cultural and Historic Resources section of the comprehensive plan.	PB, TC	2007
10. Inventory and map all trees bordering streets in Market Square, including their ownership, approximate age, quality, historical, or other importance. Identify areas that lack trees. Establish a maintenance and beautification program that includes planting trees and follows guidelines included in the Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan - 2005.	PWD, PRD, Civic Groups DTC	2008
11. Require buffer strips between differing land uses, with burden of providing buffers placed on new development as detailed in Design Review Ordinance.	PB	On-Going
12. Establish and adopt a system of impact fees for new development that would require developers to "pay their own way," in part or in full, for infrastructure such as roads, traffic control devices, sewerage, and/or public water extensions when proposed development requires substantial upgrades, or is to be located in an area not designated for growth, or when cost benefit is prohibitive to the town.	CDP, PB, HWC, CEO	2008-2009
13. Consult with Maine Natural Areas Program and Beginning with Habitat for a map of any existing plant species critical for protection. Create a Resource Protection District to protect unique plant species.	PB, MFS, IF&W, DEP, Civic Groups	2008
14. Develop standards in land use regulations for preservation and protection of identified archeological, prehistoric, historic resources, separate from or as an addendum to the Market Square Historic District.	PB, TC, CDP	2007
15. Zone for continued use and protection of HIA and its surrounding land uses. To include minor adjustments to the existing Airport Development District (A) to encircle only the airport proper, plus FAA-defined ground areas, such as the RPZ. This would also include creation of a new overlay zone to protect navigable airspace above and surrounding the airport from encroachment.	PB, ADC, CDP, TC	2008
16. Ensure that any anticipated tax revenues generated from proposed development within TIF Districts are considered in offsetting identified access management or infrastructure improvements made necessary by the proposed development so as not to discourage appropriate growth or encourage inappropriate development.	PB, CDP, TM	2007 Ongoing
17. Develop an Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing Policy to determine thresholds for scale, location and type of residential development that Town would support through AHTIF district designation.	CDP, TM w/ NMDC	2008
18. Promote creative use of Community Development Block Grants, Federal Empowerment Zone Designation and other programs such as Downtown Fund from North Street TIF revenues to enhance Historic Downtown improvements for buildings and infrastructure.	CDP, TM, DTC w/ /NMDC	2008 Ongoing
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM		
19. Maintain existing dialogue with Meduxnekeag watershed organizations and Houlton Band of Maliseets to ensure participation in policy development regarding regional land use and associated environmental issues, particularly for protection of water resources and aquifers.	TM, PB	On-Going

Key					
ADC	Airport Dev. Committee	IF&W	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	PRAB	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
BC	Budget Committee	LIB	Cary Library	PWD	Public Works Department
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MFS	Maine Forest Service	R2C	Roads 2000 Committee
CDP	Community Devt & Planning.	MDOT	Maine Dept. of Transportation	SAD	School Admin. District
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	MWC	Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TA	Tax Assessor
DEP	Dept. of Env. Protection	NMDC	N. Maine Devt Commission	TC	Town Council
DTC	Downtown Committee	PD	Police Department,	TM	Town Manager
HHS	Houlton Historical Society	PB	Planning Board	TO	Town Officials
HWC	Houlton Water Company	PRD	Parks & Recreation Department	ZBA	Zoning Bd. of Appeals

BASE MAP

BACK of BASE MAP

PARCEL BASE MAP

BACK of PARCEL BASE MAP

URBAN AREA PARCEL MAP

BACK of URBAN AREA PARCEL MAP

PROPOSED ZONING MAP

BACK of PROPOSED ZONING MAP

URBAN AREA PROPOSED ZONING MAP

BACK of PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Transportation

Northern Maine Overview

Roads and Bridges

There are 1125 miles of roadway in northern Maine not including the interstate system. Of that roadway, approximately 35 percent is 50 or more years old. Since the early 1960's new road construction in Maine has been on a steady decline.

The condition of the existing roadways in northern Maine, and the rest of the state, had deteriorated at an alarming rate in the 1990s. In May 2000, the 119th legislature enacted a law that required the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to present annual budgets that will result in the improvements of the rural arterial highway system to modern design standards within 10 years. This represents the most ambitious highway program undertaken by MaineDOT. According to MaineDOT, Region 5 has 205 miles of National Highway System/Principal Arterial mileage of which 16.4 miles (8 percent) are considered deficient. In addition, there are 174 miles of minor arterial (18% deficient), and 488 miles of major collector (32% deficient). MaineDOT estimated that the cost of removing all of the backlog projects in Region 5 could exceed \$87 million. MaineDOT defines deficient as needing to bring the condition of the road to modern safety standards and adequate structural capacity.

Houlton is the northern terminus for the Interstate 95 system in the United States, before it connects with the Trans-Canada Highway System (Route 2) in New Brunswick, Canada. Along with the Trans-Canada Highway, all of these routes provide the necessary infrastructure to serve forest products industries, agricultural industries connect population centers, encourage tourism, and to provide access to and from Canada. These various highways also provide vital connections to the remainder of Maine, New England, and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada.

There are 351 bridges in the northern Maine area. Of the 351 bridges, 74 percent are the responsibility of the state, 15 percent are town, 8 percent are city, and 1 percent is the responsibility of the Maine Forest Service. There are 334 rural bridges and 17 urban bridges. 227 bridges need no improvements at this time, 43 are in need of replacement, 30 need to be widened, and 41 need to be rehabilitated.

Freight Routes

In 2001, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and MaineDOT designated certain routes in the region as heavy haul truck routes. Heavy haul truck routes are a highway network that carries the most significant heavy haul truck traffic into and out of the region. Heavy haul trucks are those with three or more axles. Routes designated in the southern Aroostook area include: Route 11 (Fort Kent to Sherman), Route 1 (Fort Kent to Danforth), Route 2 (Houlton to Molunkus), and Route 2-A (Houlton to Macwahoc).

Airports

Maine is broken down for aviation planning purposes into eleven (11) regions. Region 11, which covers all of Aroostook County, has four (4) system airports. These airports include: Northern Maine Regional, Northern Aroostook Regional, Caribou Municipal, and Houlton International.

Northern Maine Regional Airport

The Northern Maine Regional Airport (NMRA), located in Presque Isle, is one of only three Class One certificated airports in the State. The airport has two large paved runways measuring 7,440' x 150' and 5,994' x 150'. NMRA has been designated an economic development airport and provides Aroostook County with daily commuter flights as well as scheduled flights operated by a number of overnight freight companies. Principal facilities on the airport include an air terminal building, a general aviation terminal and hangar facility, a crash rescue and maintenance building, and an office and hangar complex. NMRA offers a full line of aviation services including air charter, aircraft maintenance, flight instruction, fuel services, aircraft deicing, and on-call customs and agricultural clearance services. The facility offers a full instrument landing system (ILS) and a variety of additional current technology navigational aids. The airport, although not currently used on a regular basis by larger commercial jet aircraft, has the capacity to handle such craft.

Houlton International Airport

Houlton International Airport (HUL) is a general aviation airport located adjacent to the Canadian border and serves the southern Aroostook and Woodstock N.B. areas. The airport has one 5,016' paved runway (5-23), plus a 500' long stopway at the southerly end, and a second 5,000' paved runway (1-19). The airport has been designated as an "economic development airport" in the State Aviation Systems Plan; included in this plan are recommendations for a 500' runway extension and full precision instrument approach capability. Several navigation aids are available: Very High Frequency Omni Range/Distance Measuring Equipment (VOR/DME), Runway End Identifier Lights (REIL), Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI), and Precision Approach Patch Indicator (PAPI). Global Position Satellite (GPS) approach procedures are published. An Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS) has been installed. One hundred (100) octane and jet fuel are available, as are major air frame and power plant repair, and full Fixed Base Operator (FBO) services including on demand charter. Twenty-four hour on-call US customs service is available. Canadian Customs pre-clearance services have been initiated. While it is doubtful that the airport will see regularly scheduled passenger service there is a successful airplane maintenance business located there and officials are actively seeking to initiate cargo service.

HUL serves as a base for the US Border Patrol for both fixed wing and helicopter operations. This base serves the border between the United States and Canada as well as operations along Maine's coast. As part of the town's emergency management planning activities, HUL has been identified as one to the few airports in the southern Aroostook, Washington, County, northern Penobscot county area that can be utilized as a staging area.

The airport contains several unique features and assets that set it apart from other airports. A prisoner of war (POW) camp was located at the airport during World War II that housed German and Russian prisoners (to be discussed further in the Historic section). As such, the site has been identified as a State Historic site which has complicated the redevelopment of the airport. Town officials are seeking to make available approximately 89 acres of land located adjacent to the historical site so that development efforts will not impact the important and protected historical area. Town officials estimate that \$25,000 will be needed to complete deed searches and other legal work for the procurement of this property.

Additionally, the airport contains one of the few remaining original metal control towers from the WWII era. Town officials are seeking investors to move the tower from its present location and refurbish it to its original condition. Cost estimates, while preliminary, are set at \$100,000.

According to the Airport Manager, the following capital investments are needed at the airport. These projects will be included in the town's Capital Investment Plan and provided to the MaineDOT as municipal solicitations for their Capital Work Plan are requested.

1. 2007- Complete Apron resurfacing- Part of Capital Work Plan
2. 2009- Run-way resurfacing.
3. Fencing around airport to eliminate safety issues.
4. Airport master plan revision (partial)
5. Purchase 89 acres of land for industrial uses and protect historic sites.
6. Precision Instrument Approach Designation for run-way 5-23. This project includes completing a runway obstruction survey (2007), removing airspace obstructions, acquiring additional aviation easements, and the installation of high intensity lighting.

Radar Facilities

The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) operates a long-range radar facility (ARSR 4) on the Albert Road in Caribou. The radar has an operational radius of 250 miles and services air traffic from airports located in Presque Isle, Caribou, Houlton, and Frenchville. There are two full-time and one part-time federal staff located at the site that oversees the day to day operation.

There is a Doppler weather radar system in Hodgdon which indicates areas of active precipitation and fills a previously existing gap in the nationwide coverage of weather service. The local TV and radio weather sources use the reports and advise people (travelers) of weather conditions.

Rail

Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic (MMA) purchased 436 miles of Class 2 main and branch rail lines from the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad (BAR) within Maine. The Ashland branch was upgraded to main line status and is used primarily to transport forest products. The two largest customers, Irving Woodlands in Nashville Plantation and Fraser Paper in Madawaska, remain its important base in this industry. Lumber traffic, fed by the Pinkham and Levesque mills in the

Ashland area, add to the traffic. Two wafer board mills, Louisiana Pacific in New Limerick and J.M. Huber in Easton, represented additional base.

In order to become a more viable transportation provider in the region, MM&A needs to invest in its infrastructure. There are sections of the main line where trains can only travel at 5 to 10 miles per hour due to poor track conditions and other locations where derailments have occurred on a regular basis. MM&A receives approximately \$1 million annually from MAINE DOT for infrastructure improvements. Most of this funding is being spent between Brownville and Jackman.

MM&A has had difficulty in meeting the needs of the region. Shippers have cited such issues as waiting for cars that sometimes never arrive, inability to supply the types and volumes of cars requested or needed, and a general lack of responsiveness from the provider to the customer. Rail is a key component in the region's economic development plan and one that could greatly enhance the region's economic development potential especially if fuel prices continue to climb. However, shippers have shifted to more reliable alternative shipping modes because of these problems, which exacerbate the issue of declining rail service by reducing revenues for MM&A. If these issues could be resolved shippers have expressed a willingness to utilize rail again.

Intermodal Facilities

Presque Isle Industrial Council operates an intermodal facility located in the industrial park. This facility enables cargo containers to be transferred to train flatbeds via a piggy packer. Since the economy of northern Maine is based on natural resources, which tend to be high volume and low value, this facility opens new opportunities for economic growth and enhances the ability of northern Maine farmers and manufacturers to ship products throughout the United States. Intermodal facilities will allow rail users and freight haulers the opportunity for dedicated train service to southern Maine and other parts of New England. Rail lines connect with another intermodal facility located in southern Maine. This facility is underutilized due in part to the rail issues previously mentioned, but efforts to increase volume through the facility are supported by Houlton and the region.

Public Transportation

Aroostook Regional Transportation System (ARTS)

The Aroostook Regional Transportation System provides general public transportation throughout Aroostook County through combined funding from MaineDOT, Department of Health and Human Services, and collected fares. Services are provided for each town in the County at least once a week to the nearest commercial center. Services are available to all members of the general public on an on-call basis from the outlying towns to the commercial center and pick-up services are available in-town to the elderly and handicapped only. Fares are charged to members of the general public and half fare is charged to the elderly and handicapped. Medicaid clients going to Medicaid covered services and the elderly and handicapped going to a medical appointment ride for free. Services are provided to individuals with special needs who attend daily work or rehabilitation programs. These daily runs are also

available to the general public, but no deviation from the special runs can take place due to time limitations. Schedules are posted at all town offices in the County.

Cyr Bus Lines

Through State subsidy, Cyr Bus Lines provides daily regional bus service from northern Maine to Bangor and points south with connections to the major national bus lines. The northern most pick-up point for the bus line is in Caribou. Detailed information on schedules and fares is available at www.cyrbustours.com.

Taxi Service

Two taxi services are located in the Houlton area; Houlton Cab and Shiretown Taxi in Linneus. Both services operate 1-2 passenger cars and predominantly use a flat rate fee schedule that increases proportionately with travel distance away from Houlton's village center.

Shiretown Senior Transport

Shiretown Senior Transport provides transportation to Houlton area senior citizens who need rides to attend medical appointments as far away as Bangor. The service is run by senior volunteers who are paid a dollar amount based on mileage to help defray their expenses. There is a fund in place for seniors who need transportation but are unable to pay. The service is important to the health of senior citizens in the community as it transports an estimated 60-75 seniors each year.

Strategic Investments

In 2006, MaineDOT with assistance from NMDC and the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) identified and prioritized strategic transportation investment needs along transportation corridors of regional significance. The goal is to focus on transportation investments that will benefit the entire region, can begin within the next 10 years, and be part of the MaineDOT's Long Range Plan. Transportation investments may include, but may not be limited to, projects and needs that would not be expected to be funded through traditional transportation funding or programs.

The following four (4) investments were identified by the RPO as being regionally significant and transcend all of the transportation corridors in the region:

- Completion of projects listed in the Aroostook County Transportation Study (Environmental Impact Statement)
- Upgrades to the Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic rail system including infrastructure, service, and intermodal facilities.
- Increasing weight limits on Interstate 95 from 80,000 to 100,000 pounds.
- Implementation of the Air Service Redevelopment Plan at the Northern Maine Regional Airport which includes seeking regional jet service and improved air service (pricing and increased frequency).

The following investments are specific to the Houlton or southern Aroostook area and were included in the Long Range Plan.

- Construction of service road(s) paralleling US Route 1 north of Houlton in the TIF District/Empowerment Zone.
- Improvements in the rail line from Oakfield to Houlton (including sidings/intermodal facility development)
- Houlton International Airport Master Plan assistance (e.g. Major runway surface and lighting improvements, new hangar, Navaid upgrade, etc.)
- Reconstruct un-built (not built to State standards) sections of the Route 2 and 2-A corridors to ensure an efficient movement of freight and people throughout the region.

Houlton's Road System

The road system in Houlton links residents of the community with the rest of Maine, Canada, and beyond. During the summer there are 60.43 miles of roadway maintained in Houlton, with 0.29 miles seasonal. During the winter 73.96 miles of the roads are maintained. In total, according to the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) figures, Houlton has 75.43 miles of roadway. They are generally in good condition for present levels of traffic with the roads in the worst condition being State routes. With continued routine maintenance, the scraping back of the shoulder build-up, and the cleaning of the ditches, the life of the roadway surface can be prolonged and save the Town money. As continued development pressure occurs, transportation systems, design, construction, and maintenance are assessed and rated through the use of a Road Surface Management System (RSMS) program and other methods to prioritize reconstruction and maintenance needs.

Funding for local projects is obtained from several sources, these include:

- Roads 2000 Reserve Account. To financially support the work of the Roads 2000 Committee (See: below), in August 1994, the Town Council passed an ordinance which stipulates "The Town of Houlton ordains the establishment of a Roads 2000 Account. Said account shall be funded by an annual appropriation of One (1) mil to the Town tax base until the Roads Recovery Program has been completed".
- The Urban-Rural Initiative Program (URIP), which consists of both the Rural Road Initiative and the Urban Road Initiative, municipalities receive regularly scheduled payments from DOT for capital improvements to local roads and rural State Aid minor collector roads. Rural Road Initiative funds are distributed at the rate of \$600 per year per lane mile for all rural state aid minor collector roads and all local roads located outside urban compact areas as defined in section 754, except that the rate is \$300 per year per lane mile for seasonal town ways. Since July 1, 2000 funds may be used only for capital improvements. "A Capital improvement" means "any work on a road or bridge that has a life expectancy of 10 years or restores the load-carrying capacity". Urban Road Initiative funds are distributed at the rate of \$2,500 per year per lane mile for summer maintenance performed by the municipalities on state and state aid highways in compact areas. For each lane mile beyond the second lane on a highway with more than two lanes, municipalities also are reimbursed at the rate of \$1,250 per lane mile for summer maintenance in the compact area. In addition, Urban Road

Initiative funds are distributed at the rate of \$1,700 per year per lane mile for winter maintenance performed by the municipalities on state highways in compact areas regardless of the number of lanes. These funds may be used only for maintenance and improvements of public roads.

Roads and Classifications

Public roads in Maine are classified by MaineDOT into three functional classifications based on the needs served by those roads. They are arterial, collector, and local roads.

Arterial Roads

These are roads that MaineDOT defines as the most important in the state. These are designed to carry significant high-speed long distance traffic. When improvements or upgrades are necessary to these roads, substantial Federal funding is usually available. There are 22.32 miles of arterial roadway in Houlton (14.57 miles rural and 7.75 miles urban). They are: I-95 (6.18 miles), and Routes 1 (6.27 miles), 2 (6.46 miles), & 2A (3.41 miles). US Route 1 and Interstate 95 are also part of the National Highway System in Maine.

Collector Roads

Roadways that collect and distribute ("feed") traffic to arterial roads are called collector roads. As a general rule, they serve places of lower population density. The collector roads in Houlton are: Foxcroft Road (4.46 miles), White Settlement Road (2.15 miles), Walker Road (0.33 miles), Nickerson Lake/New Limerick Road (0.76 miles), Ludlow Road (3.22 miles), Highland Avenue/Mechanic Street/Washburn Street (0.55 miles), and B Road (4.34 miles) with a combined length of 15.81 miles (13.82 miles rural and 1.99 miles urban). The State provides routine maintenance to these roads, and the Town has the winter responsibility for plowing and sanding the roads and the numbered routes within the Urban Compact Area.

Local Roads

Local roads are roads that the MaineDOT defines as all roads not in the first two categories. These roads are maintained by the Town for local use and provide service to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic. There are 50.69 miles of local roads (27.85 miles rural, 0.29 miles seasonal and 22.55 miles urban).

Roads 2000

According to the MaineDOT, Houlton has 75.43 miles of local roads, which includes Houlton Airport. In January 1993, the Houlton Town Council formed a citizen's advisory group to be known as the Roads 2000 Committee. This Committee was formed for the purpose of working with the Public Works Director to develop a strategy that not only would routinely keep the better roads in good condition on an as-needed basis through periodic resurfacing in accordance with the Town's Pavement Management Plan, but would also lay out a schedule for rebuilding the substandard roads. In many cases, these poorer roads have never been constructed or were built to "horse and buggy" standards that no longer are adequate for today's traffic. While the committee has not been actively meeting since 2005, it has recently been resurrected and tasked to complete a comprehensive assessment in 2007 of all local road conditions, and prioritize them for future upgrading.

Potential Problem Areas

The following problem areas have been identified as potential trouble spots or issues and should be addressed in the context of this comprehensive plan through the drafting of policies and implementation strategies designed to eliminate these problems. These areas include:

1. **Traffic Lights/Congestion** - Traffic lights in Town are adequate for current needs. The Planning Committee discussed the need for improved mobility on the entire length of North Street (US Route 1) with a particular focus on traffic management at Putnam Avenue/North Street intersection that serves as a primary access point to Houlton Regional Hospital, where it can be difficult to make a left turn from and onto the north bound lane due to a steady stream of southbound traffic.
2. **Drainage/Flooding** - There are several locations at stream crossings or low areas that annually flood out or are washed away, thereby causing unsafe conditions. These problems are especially noticeable on Bangor Street from the intersection of Route 2 and 2A southwest to the urban compact line on Route 2A. This section of road was scheduled to be reconstructed as a MaineDOT project with local funding share, but was deferred in 2006 due to State budget reductions. The Town has attempted to reinstate the project because the road is in terrible condition. Pavement surface had deteriorated due to poor drainage and heavy axle loads that use the road because of weight limitations on I-95. The Town views Route 2A as a major access route to and from Houlton. The road carries a large volume of heavy haulage vehicles for logging and manufacturing industries from Houlton to Lincoln as well as school traffic heading for Houlton's elementary and middle schools on South Street. Both the municipal public works and local MaineDOT garages are also located within this road segment. The road is subject to flooding during heavy rain leading to further deterioration, and has a significantly high accident ratio including fatalities. At present, efforts to reinstate the project have been unsuccessful, but are continuing. Maine's Federal delegation is looking into sponsoring a bill to fund the project or at least increase State funding to help MaineDOT move the project from deferred to active status. There are a few other locations where flooding and poor drainage are especially noticeable including Pearce Brook/Green Street bridge area, Hovey Road and Cook's Brook area, and Ridgeway Street.

3. **Signage** - The Planning Committee discussed signage in Town and identified the need for overhead lane signs at all traffic lights and additional, improved signage around the Wal-Mart/Shop-n-Save intersection, and the general signage in the Market Street area. Signage in the Market Square area was addressed in the Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan completed in 2005 by Kent Associates and several enhancements were identified to reduce confusion for visitors and more adequately promote Houlton's Historic Downtown District. These strategies will be included for implementation in this Plan. Better signage was identified by the CPC as needed at; the four-way intersection of Main Street and Market Square; at the Bangor Street intersection; and at the Willard Street intersection with Military Street ("Y").
4. **Snow Drifting** - Snow drifting has been identified as a minor problem area on the Porter Settlement Road, Cleveland Road, Foxcroft Road near Fitzpatrick's Potato House, beyond the Maliseet Housing Authority's Foxcroft Road facility, Smyrna Street (Route 2), Drew's Lake Road, and Ludlow Road beyond the Callahan Road. Trees could be planted along the ROW or on adjacent property with owner approval in areas with excessive roadway drifting. A 30' buffer strip of staggered trees, 20-50' from the roadway could help prevent drifting (and add to the aesthetics of the areas).
5. **High Crash Locations** – According to the MaineDOT, there are four (4) high crash locations in Houlton. These have been identified on the Transportation map located at the end of this section. All four (High Street, Water Street, Bowdoin Street, and Lincoln Street) are located at intersections with state and local roads. Town officials will work with the MaineDOT to determine why these intersections have such high accident rates and work towards mutually agreeable solutions. It is anticipated that all traffic studies and engineering that may be required for these intersections will be provided by MaineDOT as they are located within the Urban Compact.
6. **Other Issues** – another issue that is becoming increasingly problematic is the continued practice of road surface overlays without removal of existing surface layers. Each year the public works department oversees a street resurfacing program, which includes 1-2 inches of additional new surface and requires that catch basins grates, manhole covers and water shutoffs be raised accordingly. However, the curb elevations remain the same and drainage is often affected to point that catch basins no longer function properly. Pavement milling is an expensive but necessary component of future resurfacing projects, and will have to be budgeted accordingly. This will significantly impact the number and length of paving projects that the town will be able to afford. However, the milled pavement can be reused in road base and surface mixtures, and Houlton may realize some savings by aggregating milling needs with neighboring communities to offset contractor mobilization costs and increase volume.

Speed Limits

Speed limits have been identified on the Transportation Map located at the end of this section. For the most part speed limits within the urban compact area are 25 mph and increase as one moves away from the more populated area of the community. Town officials need to be aware that as development occurs and is encouraged along arterials and major collectors, such as Route 1, 2 and 2-A that traffic impacts can have a detrimental impact to the economic development

potential in that area. Town officials have taken steps, as evidenced by the North Street TIF District, to help mitigate potential impacts of development on the transportation system. At the present time, development does not appear to be impacting traffic in other areas.

North Street Tax Increment Financing District

Aware that projected growth in this area could potentially have adverse traffic impacts, Town officials have designated portions of North Street as a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. This program is designed to assist in promoting and managing growth that is planned or likely to occur along North Street. Currently, Ivey's Motor Lodge has added 14 new units and intends to develop a conference center within the next five years. There are several other projects in the feasibility and planning stages that will likely occur within the district in the next few years with anticipated aggregate investment of \$14 million.

As stated previously, North Street in Houlton is also a segment of Route 1 and is classified by MaineDOT as a retrograde arterial. This classification requires that additional measures be taken improve the safe flow of traffic as new development occurs, and the Town desires to encourage development utilizing existing side streets and access roads whenever possible to help meet that mandate. There are over 400 acres suitable for development, with over 200 acres situated in the federally designated Aroostook County Empowerment Zone.

Tax increment financing will allow Houlton to play an important role in the process of business development by creating a mechanism to expedite a return on the upfront costs of real property improvements, as well as defraying costs associated with public infrastructure upgrades to serve those facilities, including public water and sewer, utility service installations, and access management for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This project is also listed in MaineDOT's Long Range Plan as a Strategic Investment that had regional implication.

Gateways

The entrance to a community provides an important first impression to the resident and visitor alike. In the recent past, the Town of Houlton has worked hard to beautify and revitalize its downtown. Houlton also has several major transportation corridors located within the community. These corridors are used by visitors to the region and town officials should consider applying for funding to enhance the gateways to Houlton. When available, Gateway funding can provide the framework for making a positive first impression as visitors and residents enter the community. Town officials may wish to consider looking at developing gateway projects, possibly in partnership with community-based organizations and private entities, on Route 1 near the Littleton and Hodgdon town lines, Route 2 westbound from the border crossing and on Interstate 95 to the north and south of the Houlton exits.

Town officials had applied for a signage grant through the Maine Tourism Marketing Program. The purpose of this application was to place signage on Interstate 95 that directs visitors to Houlton's restaurants, shops, arts, and entertainment establishments. This project was proposed for both the north and south bound lanes with additional information located that the exits. While unsuccessful in 2005 this project supports the town's downtown revitalization efforts and should

be further pursued. The estimated cost of the project is between \$20,000 and \$27,000.

Access Management

The 119th Maine Legislature approved LD 2550, An Act to Ensure Cost Effective and Safe Highways in Maine. The purpose of the act is to assure the safety of the traveling public and protect highways against negative impacts of unmanaged drainage. The law is intended to ensure safety, manage highway capacity, conserve state highway investment, enhance economic productivity related to transportation; and conserve air, water, and land resources. The Access Management Program for Maine includes Access Management Rules and Corridor Planning and Preservation Initiatives.

The Act specifically directs MaineDOT and authorized municipalities to promulgate rules to assure safety and proper drainage on all state and state aid highways with a focus on maintaining posted speeds on arterial highways outside urban compact areas. The law also requires that the rules include standards for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of safety hazards along the portions of rural arterials where the 1999 statewide average for driveway related crash rates is exceeded. Those rural arterials are referred to in the rules as "Retrograde Arterials". U.S. Route 1 in Houlton is considered to be a retrograde arterial from the Pea Viner Road extending 3.75 miles north to Littleton at the Bartlett Road.

Major state corridors in Houlton that fall under the rules include:

- Route 1
- Route 2
- Route 2-A

In addition, the following state aid roads fall under the rules:

B Road	Foxcroft Road	Ludlow Road
Lake Road	Walker Road	White Settlement Road

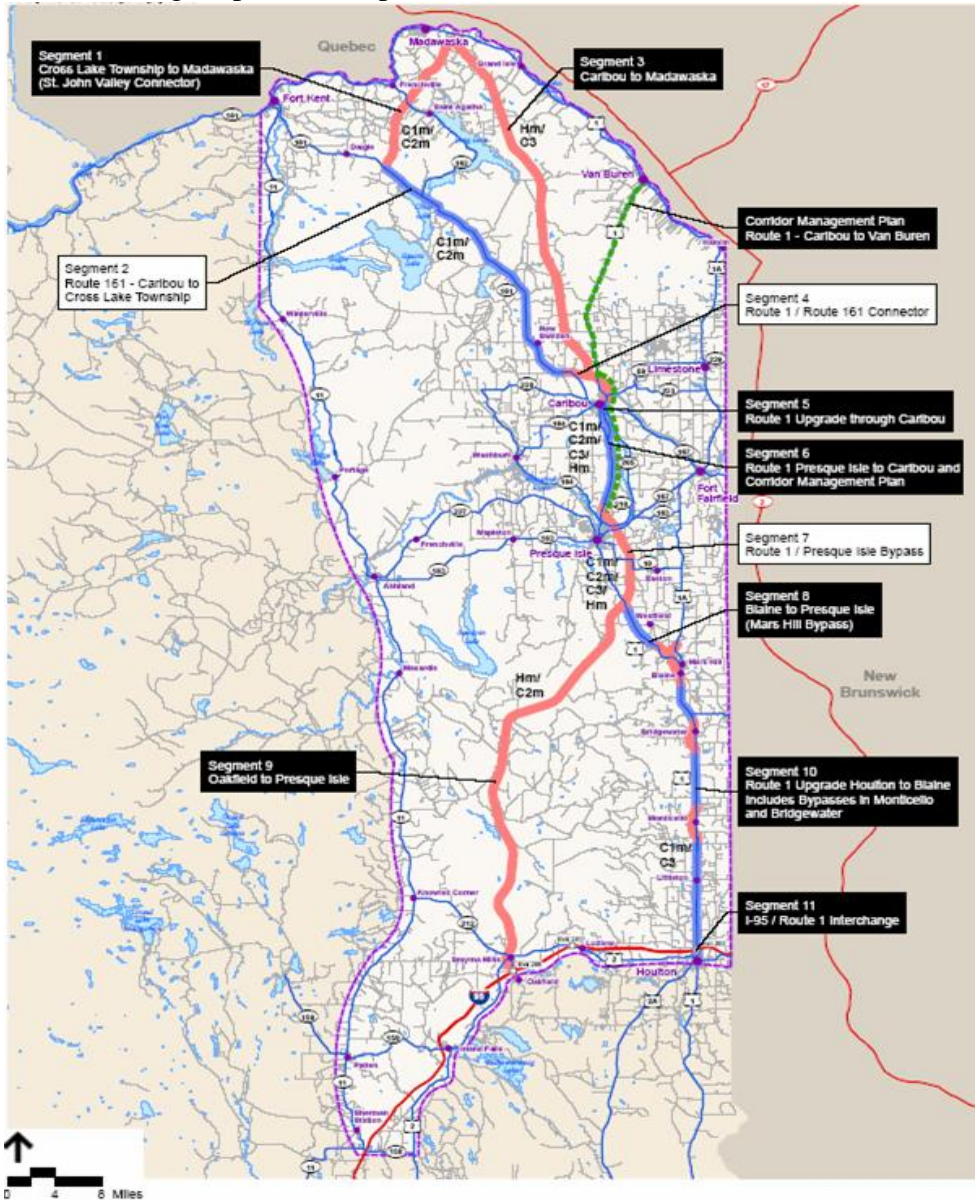
Aroostook County Transportation Study

The Maine Department of Transportation has submitted a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) to the Federal Highway Authority that is designed to improve the transportation system in northeastern Aroostook County. Presently there are four corridors under consideration of this study. The most specific alignments are located in the central Aroostook area with no specific north-south corridor from the St. John Valley to I-95 being identified at this time. According to MaineDOT, it could take decades to design, acquire permits, and secure funding to build a new 90-100 mile corridor with the potential for many things to change during that time frame that would require a new EIS be developed. MaineDOT plans to phase construction of a new North-South corridor during the time period. The Federal Highway Authority is expected to issue a Record of Decision (ROD) in early 2007.

Houlton, however, is located near the southern terminus of one of the corridors identified in the EIS. Since it is highly unlikely that any construction will be completed during the 10-year planning period of this plan, Houlton has the opportunity to plan for the eventual alignment of a

new corridor within the community. Town officials should be working with MaineDOT to ensure that the town’s desires are addressed.

The following map indicates potential corridors discussed in the SDEIS.



Source: Maine Department of Transportation, 2006

In 2004, the Town of Houlton hired PolicyOne, a research firm from Portland to examine the impacts to Houlton of the proposed alignments of a new road. PolicyOne determined that the primary effects to Houlton are due to the diversion of northbound traffic that would use Rt. 1 north of the downtown. While many potential corridors have been analyzed, there are two alternatives for new highways that are of particular concern to Houlton due to diversion of traffic. This diversion could occur by building a new limited access highway from Smyrna to Westfield, or by building a new limited access highway parallel to Rt. 1., heading north from Houlton. The problems associated with traffic diversion are avoided with the simpler option of

upgrading existing Route 1. The following conclusions were derived by PolicyOne and accepted by the Town Council.

- The preferred alternative identified by the DEIS for the proposed Aroostook County highway does a poor job in meeting the project purpose and need for bolstering the economic development in Aroostook County. Despite estimated costs of more than \$415 million dollars, the effectiveness of the proposed new highway in spurring job creation is marginal. Investment of this magnitude in other economic development efforts in Aroostook County has the potential to create many more permanent jobs than any new highway could create by slight reductions in trucking times.
- Improvements in travel time associated with the new highway options are modest and only benefit northern Aroostook companies, while southern Aroostook companies experience little or no benefit and are better served by the existing Rt. 1. The proposed new highways produce little or no gains in traffic safety, reliability or efficiency relative to upgrades of the existing Rt. 1.
- The modest gains in travel time experienced by truck traffic from northern Aroostook are outweighed by the significant potential economic impacts to highway dependent businesses in southern Aroostook. In addition to economic losses, there will likely be other impacts to downtown areas from Houlton to Mars Hill as traffic dwindles and town centers cease to be central gathering places.
- When comparing the new highway alternatives to the proposed upgrade of Rt. 1 north, the new highway alternatives would produce significant negative impacts to Houlton's highway dependent businesses. The potential loss of sales to Rt. 1 businesses in Houlton is 2 to 5 times larger than any gains incurred County-wide.

PolicyOne also made the following recommendations:

- It is clear from a review of the DEIS that the proposed highway improvements provide marginal benefits to the County while imposing significant costs on the highway-dependent economy in Houlton. Yet the Aroostook County Transportation Study is the result of many years of effort by community leaders in the County to reduce the isolation of the region and reverse the decline in population and economic growth. These are issues that Houlton is also concerned about and wishes to remedy, though in different ways than the alternatives selected in the study.
- In fact, with I-95, Houlton has seen the reality of a new four-lane highway that leads from its doorstep to all the major markets in the south. The highway by itself has not proved to be a solution to Houlton's economic problems, though it has certainly brought more traffic to Houlton's highway businesses. Economic development is more complex than "build it and they will come". Many other actions are needed to grow the local economy, and transportation improvements should be directly linked to economic development efforts in the region.
- If economic development is the goal of the Aroostook County Transportation Study, then efforts should be focused on identifying transportation improvements that do more than provide small improvements in travel time for truck traffic from the northern part of the County. The DEIS addresses the needs for local north-south highway improvements, while ignoring the steady growth in cross-border traffic. Aroostook County has become the crossroads for commercial transportation from the Maritimes, and all indications are that this role will grow in importance in the future. Further work on this highway project

should look at the economic benefits of improving connections with New Brunswick and the adjacent provinces.

- The DEIS also focuses exclusively on vehicle traffic while ignoring the vital but precarious role of rail transportation in the County, including connections to maritime shipping terminals in Maine and New Brunswick. Gas prices are likely to increase in the future as global demand grows, and the County needs a long-term transportation strategy that provides more than one transportation option for moving products to and from the County.
- Since transportation is a central part of Houlton's economic development strategy, the town is supportive of efforts to improve County transportation network. This support does not extend to new highway options that are detrimental to Houlton's economy and provide very modest benefits to the County. Of the three options, upgrades to existing Rt. 1 make the most sense economically to southern Aroostook as well as the County as a whole. If massive investments are to be made in improving the County's road network, then these improvements should benefit southern Aroostook as well as the northern part of the County. They should provide significant economic benefits and job creation potential, not just save a few minutes travel time. They should ensure that County firms have multiple transportation options should energy costs spiral upward. And finally, they should ensure that the County benefits from the steadily increasing cross-border traffic, and play a central role as the transportation crossroads for northeastern U.S. and Canada.

Bridges

There are 30 structures under this definition, which run the gamut from culverts to major bridges such as the North Street (a.k.a. Colonel Hume) Bridge. The responsibility for maintenance and repair also varies from full State responsibility for major bridges to shared responsibility between the state and Houlton, and full responsibility by the Town for the rest. The bridges are in good condition, except for the Morningstar Road and Smith Road culverts that are in need of work.

Trails

Old logging roads, railroad rights-of-way, and trails serve as cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and snowmobile trails in the winter; hiking and nature trails during the non-winter months; and access for fire control year round. The continued maintenance of these trails for recreation and transportation pursuits will enhance recreational and transportation programs and economic development in the area.

There are approximately 75 miles of State supported snowmobile trails in the Houlton area. These include: ITS 83 (north-south) and ITS 86 (east-west) and 81A, 81B, 87, and 87A. ITS 86 runs from just south of Houlton to just west of Route 11 for and ITS 83 from just south of the west end of West Road in Monticello. The other feeder trails in the area are fully maintained by the Snowmobile Clubs, these include: 81A, 81B, 87, and 87A which also have services provided in the area. Trail 87 has international connections with Woodstock and Fredericton, New Brunswick. Under a State grant, Houlton receives funds to cover 70% of the maintenance cost of this portion of the State System. The actual maintenance is performed by a local Snowmobile

Club under contract to Houlton. The State funds come from the gas tax and snowmobile registrations.

Houlton's business community has, until recently, been isolated from the potential benefit of the snowmobilers due to lack of accessible trail routes to business districts. However, much work has been done under the guidance of the Houlton Parks and Recreation Department to solve this problem by providing trail access to these businesses. Additional development is necessary. As noted, there has been interest and concern voiced on the use of snowmobiles in Houlton. The first interest is to continue to maintain a safe and efficient trail system and provide services for trail users through a cooperative effort of land owners, town officials, and the snowmobile club. Maintaining the trails would assist in removing undesirable snowmobile traffic from local roads, provide incentives for small scale economic development, and establish a public dialogue (participation) on other issues of concern.

Houlton is seeking a Recreational Trails Program grant to build an ATV/snowmobile bridge across the Meduxnekeag River near the I-95 overpass over the river. Such a bridge will accomplish at least four desirable objectives:

1. Allow easier access for recreational riders to Houlton rather than bypassing the community.
2. Eliminate the unsafe and illegal practice of crossing I-95 lanes in order to cross the river.
3. Eliminate the undesirable practice of ATVs fording the river and causing erosion and sedimentation problems for one of Aroostook County's regionally significant water bodies.
4. Help promote economic vitality in Houlton by enabling recreational riders to access business establishments located on US Route 1 north of the I-95 exits (and conversely, enabling people to "park and drop" their vehicles at these same establishments and access the trail system.)

Houlton, because of its location, would benefit from the year-round use of trails as recreational and transportation resources. In addition, with proper and compatible trail development and tourism promotion, small scale year-round economic development could be realized. Issues which should be reviewed by this plan include, among others; compatible use of the trails; alternative trails for incompatible uses; need for additional trails or connectors; full-time trail maintenance; and private property rights.

Sidewalks

There are approximately 14 miles of sidewalks in Houlton that are in fair to good condition. Improving the overall condition of sidewalks is part of the Road 2000 Committee's agenda and sidewalk paving is included in the Town's yearly budget. The committee and Houlton Planning Board will work cooperatively to identify areas where additional sidewalks or existing repairs are needed. In 2006, Houlton applied for Enhancement Funds through MaineDOT that would repair or construct sidewalks throughout the community. If funded the project will include:

1. Re-evaluate existing sidewalks to finalize the degree of rebuild required. Virtually entire existing 14 miles will require at least an overlay. Some of the system (approx. 2.76 miles) will require some degree of rebuilding (removal of existing base and proper build up).
2. Design and rebuild 2.76 miles of existing sidewalk.
3. Preparatory work in accordance with 1 and 2 above, including removal and re-setting of curbs, drainage, removal of inadequate base material and ADA compliance work.
4. Placement of fresh asphalt (1.75 to 2.0 inches) sidewalk (and curbs where none exists) in the existing sidewalk system.
5. Final design of new sidewalk sections consisting of a 2300 foot section at the intersection of I-95 and US Rte 1, and other smaller sections totaling approximately 5000 feet near the Regional Hospital and in the residential core area of town.
6. Excavate, lay gravel base, compact and re-grade base and place new asphalt in the new sections cited in items 5 above.

Parking

Parking in the downtown and the three shopping areas on North Street appears to be adequate at this time. As part of a larger downtown revitalization plan, a consultant suggested that the parking area located behind the Square be remarked and reconfigured. Since this suggestion is part of a larger document, and since parking has been deemed adequate at this time, this is not a high priority project for Houlton. As other projects are completed town officials will seek funding for the completion of this project.

There are certain time periods when parking may occur on the roadway shoulders, such as at the churches during Sunday services and during peak user hours at public buildings. This should be monitored by the Town and additional parking planned when appropriate. If additional commercial or industrial development were to take place, the location, type, dimensions, and quantity of the parking on those lots should be reviewed.

Handicapped parking is available at the Town Office, the schools, library, at strategic locations in the downtown (Market Square), the shopping centers, and post office. There is an adequate number of handicap parking spaces located at the Hospital.

Concern was raised by the CPC on the issue of accidents in the parking lots, especially at Wal-Mart and the shopping center. The MaineDOT does not maintain statistical data on these accidents. During the implementation phase of this Plan, this issue should be reviewed in more depth to determine if certain design and construction standards need to be revised or drafted.

Biennial Capital Work Plan FY 2006-2007

The Biennial Capital Work Plan is a dynamic document, and projects listed within may change over the next two fiscal years to reflect both the readiness of projects for construction, and changes in the fiscal resources available to support Maine's transportation program. The CWP for 2006-2007 includes twelve (12) projects in Houlton:

- White Settlement Road: 6.3 miles of maintenance paving; cost = \$122,000; no local match required
- Route 2-A: 1.63 miles of highway improvements; cost = \$3.3 million; local match required
- Airport Road Bridge Improvements: Cost = \$225,000; no local match required.
- North bound bridge on I-95 improvements: Cost = \$140,000; no local match required.
- South bound bridge on I-95 improvements: Cost = \$140,000; no local match required.
- Bangor Street: 0.22 miles of highway resurfacing; cost = \$139,000; no local match required
- Route 1: 0.03 miles of preventative maintenance; cost = \$100,000; no local match required.
- Route 1: Highway resurfacing; cost = \$65,000; no local match required.
- Route 2: 1.04 miles of preventative maintenance; cost = \$154,000; no local match required.
- Route 1: 0.1 miles of highway resurfacing; cost = \$62,000; no local match required.
- Route 2-A: 0.18 miles of highway resurfacing; cost = \$62,000; no local match required.
- Houlton Airport: Apron reconstruction and expansion; cost = \$793,000; \$19,000 local match required.

Houlton should continue to submit any potential future projects to MaineDOT for inclusion in the next 6-year plan. Typical projects could include rail crossing improvements, pedestrian enhancements, landscaping and curbing, or general road surface and structural improvements

Transportation Analysis

Houlton is a transportation hub for Aroostook County and contains transportation systems of regional and statewide significance. Roads have been the top priority in transportation planning in the region for many years and Houlton has been extremely proactive in its pursuit of maintaining a safe and efficient road system and is more advanced in thinking and programs than many communities in Maine. One of the major north/south corridors serves also as Houlton's Main Street with reduced speed limits, a variety of traffic types, business, and industry, pedestrians, and bicyclists utilizing the corridor. As a result traffic is oftentimes congested in these areas making it difficult for through traffic to reach destinations in a timely manner.

Town officials have recognized that unrestricted access to this arterial roadway, in particular Route 1 can ultimately result in traffic congestion and safety problems. Officials also have recognized that growth has occurred along North Street and are encouraging infill development in this area. However, they have also recognized that Route 1 is strategically important to the region and have begun to take steps to protect the capacity of the route through the development of a TIF District that will help fund service roads and pedestrian friendly crosswalks in that area.

The North/South Transportation Study which began in early 1999 has not yet been completed. This study was designed to be an economic development study as this region does not have the congestion or traffic problems normally associated with environmental impact statement. The completion of this plan will allow the region to work within the present funding system and seek alternatives for additional funds to complete identified priority highway segments. Town

officials are aware that by-passing Houlton may not be in the town’s or the region’s best interest. Town officials need to be watchful of the eventual outcome of this study and continue to articulate Houlton’s position to the MaineDOT and FHWA.

Houlton International Airport is also an asset that if developed to its full potential could have a significant positive impact on the region. While it is doubtful that the airport will ever see regularly scheduled air service there is the potential for cargo and freight, air maintenance, charter service, and serve as a homeland security base of operations. This airport contains a wealth of infrastructure that is not found north of Bangor. Town officials should continue to seek funding to update and maintain the infrastructure at the facility.

As stated previously, MM&A also has gained the reputation of not meeting the needs of the region. However, it is a key component in the region’s economic development plan one that could greatly enhance our economic development potential especially if fuel prices continue to climb. Town officials may want to assist MM&A through the Industrial Rail Access program (IRAP) in which \$2 million is used to improve access to the line. This is matched with \$2 million from other sources. This program can provide much needed funding to assist business and industry with the development of sidings and other access options.

Transportation Policies and Implementation Strategies

Houlton’s Transportation Goal

- *Develop a safe, affordable, and efficient transportation system consistent with Houlton’s proposed land use plan.*

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

Transportation Policies

Policy	Corresponding Strategy
A. Promote development, construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and use of roads and bridges.	1-9
B. Promote development, improvement, and maintenance of air facilities and services.	10-12
C. Promote development, improvement, and maintenance of rail facilities and services.	13-14
D. Encourage land uses that correspond to and compliment the priority designation of Routes 1, 2 and 2-A as regionally significant corridors.	15-16
E. Promote development, improvement, and maintenance of alternative modes of transportation (i.e. trails, bikes, telecommunications, walking).	18, 22
F. Improve the town’s economic development opportunities through the development and maintenance of safe, user-friendly transportation facilities and services.	20-21
G. Work with surrounding communities to improve and enhance the region’s transportation system.	22-26

Transportation Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
1. Continue to work annually with MaineDOT to ensure adequate financing, maintenance, upgrading, and traffic flow on the local, collector, and arterial roadways.	PWD; TM; CDP	Ongoing
2. Continue to develop a 5-10 year comprehensive plan for repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and signs.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP	2008
3. Continue to submit transportation projects to MaineDOT, and/or other state or federal agencies, for inclusion into programs such as Biennial Capital Work Plan (CWP), Six-Year Plan, Enhancement, and Long Range Plan.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP	Annually
4. Construction of service road(s) paralleling US Route 1 north of Houlton in the TIF District/Empowerment Zone.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP	2010-2011
5. Seek the reconstruction of unbuilt (not built to State standards) sections of the Route 2 and 2-A corridors to ensure an efficient movement of freight and people throughout the region.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP	2008-2009
6. Re-mark and reconfigure the parking area located behind Market Square.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP	2009
7. Address identified problem areas and issues including: a. North Street traffic patterns and access b. Bangor Street reconstruction out to urban compact c. Flooding and drainage problems on Green Street, Hovey Road, and Ridgeway Street. d. Signage improvements at Wal-mart/Ludlow Road, Market Square/Bangor St., Main St. /Military St. /Willard St. intersection. e. Snow drifting on Porter Settlement, Cleveland, Foxcroft, Route 2, Drew's Lake, and Ludlow Roads. f. Pavement milling needed to preserve curb line and drainage function on town streets.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP; PB	2007-2009
8. Work with MaineDOT to recognize that Route 1 and Main Street play a dual role as both the "spine" of the downtown and as a state highway moving through traffic north and south. The Town should work to assure that the local role is the predominant role for the road.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP; PB	2008
9. Review road maintenance, tree cutting, snow-plowing, and related activities and recommend changes as appropriate in order to enhance the preservation of visual resources and to maintain and support pedestrian movement in the downtown area.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP; PB	2008
10. Develop a formal policy relative to the improvement of Town roads and bridges. This policy shall emphasize the Town's desire to retain its rural character, establish reasonable access strategies, cover policies and general standards for maintenance of bridges and both paved and unpaved roads, the plowing of sidewalks, and spelling out the protection of community and individual property from damage and encroachment.	PWD; R2C; TM; CDP; PB	2008

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
11. Seek funding and complete the following capital investments at HUL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Complete Apron resurfacing- Part of Capital Work Plan B. Run-way resurfacing. C. Fencing around airport to eliminate safety issues. D. Airport master plan revision (partial) E. Purchase 89 acres of land for industrial uses and protect historic sites. F. Precision Instrument Approach Designation for run-way 5-23. This project includes completing a runway obstruction survey (2007), removing airspace obstructions, acquiring additional aviation easements, and the installation of high intensity lighting. 	TM; ADC; CDP	2007-2009
12. Seek investors to move the control tower from its present location and refurbish it to its original condition.	TM; HHS; CDP	2008
13. Seek to initiate cargo air service or other aviation related services.	TM; ADC	2007-Ongoing
14. Work with surrounding communities to encourage improvements in the rail line from Oakfield to Houlton (including the construction of sidings/intermodal facility development).	CDP; TM; NMDC; MDOT	2007-Ongoing
15. Seek funding for the upgrade of the rail facilities in Houlton.	CDP; TM; NMDC	2007-2009
16. Ensure that Growth Management Plan supports land uses that do not contradict primary function of these corridors.	CDP; PB; TM	2007
17. Seek Recreational Trails Program grant to build an ATV/snowmobile bridge across the Meduxnekeag River near the I-95 overpass.	CDP; PRD	2007
18. Develop and maintain a sidewalk improvement program for the downtown and its associated neighborhoods to enhance pedestrian environment, create opportunities to walk to retail and service uses, and to connect the schools, public buildings, recreation areas, and residential neighborhoods; by evaluating the existing system of sidewalks for their condition, identifying the needs of residents, establishing priorities for improving and maintaining existing sidewalks and installing new walks, and develop a program for sidewalk improvements which can become part of the Town's CIP	CDP; TM; PWD; MDOT	2007-2009
19. Encourage more and better transportation systems and facilities to increase tourism and tourism development.	CDP; TM; PB	2007-2009
20. Seek funding for the development and maintenance of transportation signage that informs visitors of downtown amenities and also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Add signage and other design improvements at major gateways to the downtown including I-95 and Union Square b) Work with MDOT to erect informational signage at the approaches to the Route 1 Houlton exit, and on the exit ramps c) Design and construct informational/directional signage at identified downtown gateways d) Develop a plan for improvements to Union Square e) Build on the “walkability” of the downtown with additional improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. River Loop Trail, pedestrian crossings/intersections, walking tours, etc.)³ 	CDP; TM; PB	2007-2009

³ Strategies C-G from the Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan - 2005 by Kent Associates; Action Plan Summary, Phase I.5

Strategy		Responsibility	Year
21. Seek Enhancement Funds through MaineDOT that would repair or construct sidewalks throughout the community. If funded the project will include:		CDP; TM; PWD; MDOT	2007- 2009
a) Re-evaluate existing sidewalks to finalize the degree of rebuild required. Virtually entire existing 14 miles will require at least an overlay. Some of the system (approx. 2.76 miles) will require some degree of rebuilding (removal of existing base and proper build up).			
b) Design and rebuild 2.76 miles of existing sidewalk.			
c) Preparatory work in accordance with 1 and 2 above, including removal and re-setting of curbs, drainage, removal of inadequate base material and ADA compliance work.			
d) Placement of fresh asphalt (1.75 to 2.0 inches) sidewalk (and curbs where none exists) in the existing sidewalk system.			
e) Final design of new sidewalk sections consisting of a 2300 foot' section at the intersection of I95 and US Rt 1, and other smaller sections totaling approximately 5000 feet near the Regional Hospital and in the residential core area of town.			
f) Excavate, lay gravel base, compact and re-grade base and place new asphalt in the new sections cited in items 5 above.			
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM			
22. Encourage the completion of projects listed in the Aroostook County Transportation Study (Environmental Impact Statement). Continue to articulate Houlton's position that by-passing the community is not in the best interest of the town and the region.		TM; TC	Ongoing
23. Encourage upgrades to the Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic rail system including infrastructure, service, and intermodal facilities.		TO; NMDC	Ongoing
24. Work with the congressional delegation in their efforts increase the weight limits on Interstate 95 from 80,000 to 100,000 pounds.		TO; PWD; NMDC	Ongoing
25. Support the implementation of the Air Service Redevelopment Plan at the Northern Maine Regional Airport which includes seeking regional jet service and improved air service (pricing and increased frequency).		TM; TC; ADC	Ongoing
26. Establish an open dialogue with the communities along Routes 1, 2, and 2-A to address maintenance, planning priorities, curb cuts, access management, and impact of development.		CDP; TM; NMDC	2007- 2008
Key			
ADC	Airport Dev. Committee	IF&W	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
PRAB	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board		
BC	Budget Committee	LIB	Cary Library
PWD	Public Works Department		
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MFS	Maine Forest Service
R2C	Roads 2000 Committee		
CDP	Community Devt & Planning.	MDOT	Maine Dept. of Transportation
SAD	School Admin. District		
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	MWC	Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition
TA	Tax Assessor		
DEP	Dept. of Env. Protection	NMDC	N. Maine Devt Commission
TC	Town Council		
DTC	Downtown Committee	PD	Police Department,
TM	Town Manager		
HHS	Houlton Historical Society	PB	Planning Board
TO	Town Officials		
HWC	Houlton Water Company	PRD	Parks & Recreation Department
ZBA	Zoning Bd. of Appeals		

TRANSPORTATION MAP

BACK of TRANSPORTATION MAP

Public Facilities and Services

The Public Facilities and Services portion of the Comprehensive Plan includes an assessment of capital facilities and public services necessary to support future growth and development, to protect the environment, health, safety and welfare of the people of Houlton, and to explore the costs of these facilities and services.

The inventory of public facilities and services examines the facilities and services provided by the Town of Houlton. The inventory includes information describing the facility and geographical service area, and the condition, usage, and capacity of the facility. In addition, if the facility or service is provided outside the Town limits, it will be included in this inventory. The inventory includes the following: water supply; sewage facilities; solid waste facilities; public safety; energy facilities; communications; health care; culture; education; recreation; cemeteries; and the general municipal administration and services.

The analysis of the public facility and service needs includes an estimate of the current demands and a projection for future facility and service needs required to meet the projected demand.

Municipal Administration and Services

The Town of Houlton, with approximately 6,476 residents, is located at the crossroads of US Route 1 and I-95 and serves as a major commercial border crossing to Canada, a direct link to the Trans-Canada Highway, and contains an international airport. Houlton is the Aroostook County Seat, also known as the “Shiretown”, and as such, houses many County agencies and services in addition to the customary municipal variety.

Municipal Administration

The Municipal Administration of Houlton consists of elected, appointed, and administrative officials, as outlined below:

Elected Town Officials

Elected Town officials include the Town Council, including the Council Chair and Secretary, Directors of the Houlton Water Company, Trustees of Cary Library, Directors of School Administrative District No. 29, and the Board of Budget Review, as outlined below:

Town Council

Houlton has a Town Council-Town Manager form of government, with the Town Council Meeting acting as the Legislative vehicle. Seven members are elected to the Council for staggered three-year terms, with a two-term maximum. Town Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month in the Town office building, second floor.

Council members must be qualified voters of the Town and live in Houlton during their term of office. All meetings are open to the public unless in accordance with State law. Votes by the Councilors are completed by roll call.

Chair of the Town Council

The Chair of the Town Council is elected for a one-year term from among the elected members at the organizational meeting, which is held not later than the second business day after the election. The Chair serves at the pleasure of the Board, presides at the meetings of the Council, and votes only to break a tie or in the event that any proposed council action shall receive one vote less than the number of affirmative votes required for passage, and then can only vote for issues, not against. The Chair is recognized as the head of the Town government at all ceremonial functions, but does not have any administrative duties.

Houlton Water Company Board

The Houlton Water Company, which supplies water, sewer, and electric services within the Town, is overseen by a six-member elected Board of Directors. A president of the Board is selected from among its members, who each serve staggered three-year terms. The Board, which meets on the third Tuesday of every month, is responsible for setting policies and for general oversight of the Houlton Water Company. The Board does not hold staff positions with the Water Company.

Trustees of Cary Library

There are five Trustees of Cary Library, all of whom are elected for five year terms. A Chairman is elected from among the five Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for the supervision of all operations of the Cary Library.

Directors of School Administration District No. 29

SAD#29 has a Board of 13 Directors including 8 from the Town of Houlton. The towns of Littleton, Monticello, and Hammond Plantation are also represented. Each Director serves for a staggered three-year term. Directors from other towns within SAD No. 29 also serve on the Board. The Directors, who meet on the first Monday of every month, are responsible for overseeing the policy and activities of the school district.

Board of Budget Review

There are nine members on the Board of Budget Review. A Chairman is elected from among these members, who serve on the Board for staggered three-year terms. The Board meets as needed and is responsible for making budget recommendations to the Council.

Appointed Town Officials

Appointed Town officials include the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, the Board of Assessment Review, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Airport Development Advisory Committee, and the Community Development Advisory Board.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals is comprised of seven members. All members serve staggered three-year terms. The board is responsible for variances and appeals to the Townwide Zoning Ordinance, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Code Enforcement Officer's decisions, and all Special Exceptions unless specifically stated in the ordinance.

Planning Board

There are seven members on Houlton's Planning Board including one non-resident member seat. Members are appointed by the Town Council and serve five-year terms. Responsibilities include directing and overseeing the Comprehensive Planning process funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, facilitating and interpreting land use ordinances such as the Houlton Zoning and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, reviewing subdivision proposals, and drafting recommended changes to land use ordinances.

Board of Assessment Review

The Board of Assessment Review is comprised of seven members who are appointed by the Town Council for staggered three-year terms. The Board meets as needed. The Board is responsible for arbitration of taxpayer appeals and has the authority to abate/change assessments in the light of said appeals.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is comprised of seven members, each of whom serve staggered three-year terms. The Board meets (monthly, except for July and August) and is overseen by a chairman. The Board is responsible for reviewing the policies and activities of the Department of Parks and Recreation, and provides recommendations on Parks and Recreation Department activities.

Airport Advisory Board to the Town Council

The Airport Advisory Board makes planning recommendations for the Houlton International Airport. The Committee meets as needed, and also forms subcommittees as needed to address airport issues.

Community Development Advisory Board

This board oversees the activities of the Town's Community Development Department.

Administrative Officials

Houlton is fortunate to have an array of talented administrative officials directing its day-to-day and future activities. These officials are numerous and include those listed below:

Town Manager

The Town Manager is hired for an indefinite term. The Town Council fixes the Town Manager's compensation. The Manager is chosen solely on executive and administrative qualifications and does not have to be a resident of the Town or State at the time of appointment.

The Town Manager is responsible for the administration of the Town government under the direction of the Town Council. The Manager appoints all department heads, who are also confirmed by the Council; directs and supervises the administration of all departments, offices, and agencies; attends all Town Council meetings; sees that all laws, provisions, and acts of the Council are executed; prepares and submits the annual budget, annual capital program, and annual financial and administrative reports to the Council; performs such duties as the Council may require and makes such recommendations concerning the affairs of the Town; assists insofar as possible the residents and taxpayers; and administers practices, powers, and responsibilities granted by State Law. The Town Manager's other duties include working with various Town organizations and committees.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is responsible for: posting official notices and advertisements; maintaining liaisons with Town departments and the general public; maintaining and preparing official documents; supervising elections; issuing licenses and permits (such as hunting, fishing, marriage, and dog); recording various documents (deaths, births, marriage); supervising the collection of excise taxes; and preparing reports. All work is performed in accordance with local ordinances and state and federal laws.

Assessor

The Assessor is responsible for setting the mill rate annually; assisting in tax relief applications for the State Bureau of Taxation's, Town's, and Department of Human Services' programs; and maintaining the Town's valuation book, aerial photographs, and property tax maps.

Town Treasurer

The Town Treasurer is responsible for the day-to-day handling and oversight of all moneys collected by the Town. Other duties include: the maintenance of all Town accounts, cash management, receipt of all incoming moneys, investment of Town funds, the cash flow analysis for operating funds, and assisting in the budget process as necessary. The treasurer is appointed annually.

Police Chief

Houlton's police chief is hired by the Town Manager and confirmed by the Town Council. The chief is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Houlton Police Department, placing warrants, enforcing Town and state ordinances, developing annual department budgets, maintaining records and reports, and monitoring license and incident reports. The work is performed in accordance with Town ordinances and state laws. Work performance is reviewed through records, observation, and reports.

Economic /Community Development Director

The Grant Writer is appointed by the Town Manager, and is responsible for maintaining liaisons with various state and federal agencies; coordinating projects with other agencies; preparing and administering the departmental budget; monitoring project budgets; preparing grant proposals, applications, and contracts; preparing reports such as grant progress and performance, housing

assistance plans, financial assessment, and project budget; conducting special projects and studies, such as economic development activities as requested by the Town Manager; and performing related work as required, such as providing service to the Planning Board, Comprehensive Planning Committee, the Airport Committee, the Southern Aroostook Development Corporation and other community organizations.

Public Works Director

The Public Works Director is responsible for planning and budgeting current and long-term road construction projects, paving, culvert replacement, major road ditching, and winter sand and salt preparation. The Director is also responsible for the daily supervision of the crew, normal equipment and road maintenance, and for directing and coordinating the daily activities of the department's staff. The Director is also responsible for maintaining roads, maintaining the areas around the municipal buildings, and, on occasion, overseeing special projects such as building removal and construction. Other responsibilities include: maintaining all highway vehicles; designing, preparing, and drawing plans and specifications and estimates for construction projects; supervising field engineering and survey work; insuring implementation and/or compliance with federal and state regulations relative to the department; and managing the department's budget. The Public Works Director reports to the Town Manager.

Fire Chief

The Fire Chief is responsible for training, administering and supervising fire fighting and fire prevention activities; maintaining and budgeting for all department equipment and property; extinguishing fires; protecting life and property; removing fire hazards within the Town; and has the authority to assume command of all fire scenes. The Fire Chief is also the Director of the Ambulance Service and, as such, oversees the provision of emergency care. Work is reviewed through discussions of problems and policies under the supervision of the Town Manager.

Parks and Recreation Director

The responsibilities of Houlton's Recreation Director include developing, implementing, and administering the Town's recreational program. The responsibilities also include planning the department budget and controlling expenditures, promoting interest in the recreation program, evaluating recreational needs, activities, and facilities and making recommendations for changes, preparing news releases and publicity for program activities, preparing records for personnel and equipment needs, directing the maintenance and upkeep of Town parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas, managing and maintaining the Millar Civic Center, and training volunteer help. The Recreation Director reports to the Town Manager.

General Assistance Administrator

The General Assistance Administrator is appointed annually by the Town Manager and is responsible for dispensing welfare assistance, taking applications, interviewing clients, determining eligibility, maintaining a liaison with and making referrals to various local, state, and federal agencies; maintaining detailed account and client records; supervising and directing the department's activities; making reports; and providing other necessary assistance. The General Assistance Administrator reports to the Town Manager.

Code Enforcement Officer and Plumbing Inspector

Houlton's Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) is appointed annually by the Town Manager. Responsibilities include enforcing municipal codes and other applicable state and federal ordinances; reviewing all plans submitted with building permit applications; issuing building permits; inspecting buildings and other structures for structural safety, fire safety, sanitation, and other standards; enforcing rules and regulations and initiating legal action in relation to Town codes and ordinances; analyzing Town codes and ordinances and making revision suggestions to the Planning Board; attending meetings of the Planning Board (when requested) and the Board of Appeals; investigating complaints of violations of land use laws; and keeping a complete record of all transactions of the office. CEO's are certified through the Maine State Planning Office.

The Plumbing Inspector is appointed annually by the Town Council and is responsible for reviewing plumbing plans and inspecting buildings and other structures for compliance with the State plumbing code, issuing permits, and investigating possible violations.

Cemetery Superintendent

The Cemetery Superintendent is accountable for the maintenance of Evergreen Cemetery, Soldier's Cemetery, and the Bray and Presbyterian Cemetery.

Librarian

The Librarian is hired by the Board of Trustees, and is primarily independent of the Town Manager and Town Council, except in the area of maintenance. The Librarian is responsible for the operation of the Cary Library, including planning, coordinating, and operating all aspects of the library; preparing and administering the budget, and directing overall maintenance of the facilities; planning and coordinating cultural and educational programs with surrounding communities and the state.

Health Officer

The Health Officer is responsible for public health activities, including health education. The Health Officer's work includes investigating complaints of health-related problems and coordinating investigations with appropriate town officials; and maintaining records and preparing reports as required. The Health Officer for the Town of Houlton is hired as an independent employee, who is paid under the General Assistance budget.

Tax Collector

The Tax Collector is appointed by the Town Manager and is responsible for collecting and recording Town funds. The work involves tax collecting, accounting, and reporting for taxes received; placing liens; and billing. Work is completed in accordance with applicable laws and follows generally accepted accounting practices. The work is reviewed through observation, verification, internal audit, and fiscal audit.

Animal Control Officer

The Animal Control Officer (ACO) is responsible for the apprehension, detainment, and transfer of cats and dogs to the Houlton Animal Shelter, or veterinarian if injured. The ACO is also responsible for trapping and relocation of nuisance animals when reported, and to collect and dispose of deceased animals that have been left in the roadways. Additional duties include

enforcement of the State Statute for dog licensing, and filing case reports with the Houlton Police Department.

Municipal Services

Municipal Buildings

Houlton's Town Office is located at 21 Water Street. The building is brick, was built in 1906, and houses offices of the Town Manager, Assessor, Treasurer, Code Enforcement Officer, Plumbing Inspector, Clerk, Economic/community Development Director, General Assistance Administrator, and Tax Collector. The building was renovated in 1977 when the Fire and Police Departments moved to a new facility on Military Street.

Other Town buildings include the Recreation Center on Main Street, John A. Millar Civic Center in Community Park, the fire/ambulance and police stations on Military Street, Cary Library on Main Street, the Public Works Garage on Bangor Street, the Airport Terminal Building at the Houlton International Airport (see Transportation chapter), and the White Building, which houses the Chamber of Commerce and Museum, on Main Street. These facilities are discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities

Pickup of residential solid waste is provided by Pine Tree Waste, Inc., a private hauler under contract with the Town of Houlton. Waste is collected weekly at a cost of about \$30 per month for curbside service, or residents may dispose of their waste on a pay-per-throw basis at the transfer station at a cost of around \$2.00 for a 25-pound bag. Terms of the contract require the private hauler to be responsible for regular collection, transportation, and disposal of residential refuse; special collection of yard and wood waste, bulky waste, construction and demolition debris, and stable matter; a disposal option for commercial and industrial wastes; recycling program to meet State of Maine requirements; and preparation and submission of reports as required under Maine statutes and regulations. Also under terms of the municipal contract, all of the Town's residential waste must go to the private hauler's transfer station. Houlton closed its municipal land fill on October 17, 1995.

Pine Tree Waste, Inc. (PTW) operates a recycling center designed for storing and processing corrugated cardboard, newspapers, office/computer paper, plastics (Pete #1 and 2), metal cans, clear glass, and magazines, but is only one of the contractors handling the Town's recycling program. A central location at the solid waste transfer station is provided for residents to drop off their recyclables. There are no past figures on recycling volumes in Houlton, but the Southern Aroostook Region, consisting of seven communities, has consistently increased the volume of recycled waste over the last 4 years averaging better than 1100 tons. The adjusted recycling rate has fluctuated around 30% over that same period. Currently, PTW takes nearly all solid waste to Tri-Community Landfill (TCL) in Fort Fairfield over 50 miles away. TCL is a regional association that provides municipal solid waste disposal and recycling services to its member municipalities. The new landfill at TCL has an expected closure year of 2023. The facility also accepts construction and demolition debris and provides an area for the storage of

bulky waste items, including metals/white goods, wood waste, and tires. There is also a regional recycling center located at the landfill. The recycling center processes and markets all recyclable materials brought directly to the facility or collected through the drop-off igloos provided at satellite areas.

The generators of both bulky waste and municipal solid waste are responsible for the cost of transporting the waste to TCL. This is accomplished primarily through commercial haulers, although bulky waste is more likely to be directly hauled to the facility by residents.

Table 3 Southern Aroostook Recycling Report, 2003

	Recycled Tons	Waste Diversion	Incinerated Tons	Landfilled Tons	Totals
Recyclables	1657.80	-	-	-	1657.80
Office Paper	43.47	-	-	-	-
Cardboard	1125.84	-	-	-	-
Old Newspaper	419.27	-	-	-	-
Tin Cans	42.92	-	-	-	-
Plastics	20.76	-	-	-	-
Universal Waste	5.54	-	-	-	-
Municipal Solid Waste			186.43	2799.31	2985.74
Bulky Waste & Recycle					-
Metals	268.51	-	-	-	-
Leaves & Yard	23.00	-	-	-	-
Tires	37.40	-	-	-	-
Wood	133.82	-	-	-	-
Bulky Totals	462.73	-	-	-	462.73
Commercial Totals	-	-	3372.38	-	3372.38
Grand Totals	2120.53		3558.81	2799.31	8478.65

Source: Maine State Planning Office, 2003 * Individual materials may not add to total due to rounding.

Houlton Water Company

The Houlton Water Company (HWC) is a municipal utility owned by the Town of Houlton. HWC is chartered by the Maine State legislature to supply electricity, water, wastewater, natural gas, and broadband telecommunications. HWC supplies electricity to the Towns of Houlton, New Limerick, Linneus, Hodgdon and Ludlow, water to the Town of Houlton and Hodgdon and wastewater to the town of Houlton.

The HWC is governed by a six member board of directors elected by the citizens of Houlton. The board of directors retains the services of a General Manager to administer the affairs of the HWC. Electric rates and operations are regulated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Water rates are regulated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission and operations are regulated by the Maine Drinking Water Program. Wastewater operations are regulated by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Electric Service

As required by the 1997 State of Maine legislation, electric restructuring began on March 1, 2000. HWC provides electric customers within the Houlton region with transmission and

distribution delivery services. Energy is available through a competitive provider or through the HWC “Standard Offer” service. The Standard Offer energy has been supplied by WPS Energy Services for the last several years and HWC has a contract with WPS for Standard Offer energy at 5.387 cents per kWh until February 28, 2008. HWC has serious concerns about the cost of energy after the existing Standard Offer contract expires for the following reasons:

- Rising oil prices
- Lack of competition for the small northern Maine customer base
- Lack of an electric transmission connection to the U.S. grid
- Proposed legislative mandates that impose additional cost on energy

HWC is responsible for transmission and distribution to Town residents as well as to portions of neighboring Hodgdon, Linneus, Ludlow, and New Limerick. Through HWC’s diligent efforts, utility rates for residential, commercial, and industrial customers alike have remained some of the lowest rates in all of New England.

Water Supply

The Houlton Water Company is responsible for supply, transmission, storage, and distribution of water to Houlton and a portion of Hodgdon. HWC provides water service to approximately 1,945 customers, with the remaining households dependent on individual wells. The public water system’s supply is from two groundwater well sites at Cary’s Mills and Hodgdon. The newer Hodgdon well site is the primary source, and can sustain a flow of 700 gallons per minute (gpm). The Carys Mills (so named McPartland Wells) have a pumping rate of 500gpm. An old emergency supply source from the “B” Stream is no longer viable and has hence been disconnected from the system.

Supply: As reported in *Interim Technical Review of the Water and Wastewater Systems for the Houlton Water Company* (January 2002), water usage has decreased over the past 11 years and, in , averaged 700,000 gallons per day (gpd), which is well below the computed system capacity of over 1,000,000 gpd. The decrease in usage is a direct result of the Water Company’s efforts to tighten the system and repair major leaks, and indicates there is adequate capacity through the foreseeable future.

Transmission: The transmission system consists of 12” pipes between the Hodgdon well site and storage facilities at Foxcroft Road and Reservoir Hill. According to *Interim Technical Review of 1996*, the weak link in the entire transmission system was between Cary’s Mills and the Scottish Inn, where there was no second pipe to provide full system redundancy. During the summer of 2000, the last remaining weak link was eliminated with a new transmission main.

Storage: Improvements in the Water Company’s storage system have recently been made. These improvements include a new 1,000,000 gallon in-ground concrete tank which is set 24” below an existing steel tank. A third underground tank (concrete) with a storage capacity of 500,000 gallons is located at the airport. Together, these three tanks can supply the system when the pumps are turned off, provide uniform water pressure, and adequately supply water during fire emergencies.

Distribution: The distribution system is typically upgraded by the Houlton Water Company, who works closely with the Town as a matter of course during roadway reconstruction projects. The

last major system expansions occurred along North Street and along Foxcroft Road. A small extension was added on Reservoir Hill to serve some residential development. At the end of 2006, there were 1,945 water system customers.

The *Interim Technical Review* of 1996 identified few concerns associated with water quality and consumption. According to that report, water quality is “good to excellent” although wellhead protection remains an important concern. In addition, the authors of that report felt the Town’s resident population is on a gradual upswing, and that water system demand may actually increase, albeit at a slower rate of growth than that of the population. As an active leak detection system has led to recent decreases in Town-wide water consumption, water consumption rates will appear to hold steady in the future. Therefore, meeting future levels of demand is not a concern.

The aforementioned report also identified four future system needs, including increased redundancy of the transmission system between the Scottish Inn and McPartland Wells at Carys Mills, continued replacement of old undersized distribution pipes as need arises, renovation of the McPartland Wells pump stations, and looping the Town with a 12-inch diameter water main. The new water main should be considered over the next 10 to 15 years, with the Water Company acquiring the necessary easements in the intermediate years. To date the transmission line between Carys Mills and the Scottish Inn has been built, the McPartland Wells pumping station has been renovated and HWC presented and the Town of Houlton approved a well head protection ordinance.

The average residential customer bill in 2006 for drinking water was \$203.00 per year. The last rate increase was implemented in February 1998 and the water system continues to operate with a net surplus.

Wastewater

The Houlton Water Company (HWC) is responsible for collectors, interceptors, and treatment of wastewater in Houlton, serving 1,707 sewer system customers at the end of 2006.

Collection: Collection pipes generally range from 8 to 12 inches in diameter according to the *Interim Technical Review- 2002*, and there is approximately 21 miles of collector piping of which roughly 33 % has been refurbished since 1987. The remaining collector piping is old clay tile pipe that will need to be replaced over the next 25 years. Similar to the water distribution system, wastewater collection pipes are typically replaced or upgraded during roadway reconstruction projects as a matter of course, but the pace of replacement will need to be quickened in order to prevent excessive instances of complete failure in years to come. HWC has an ongoing Infiltration / Inflow (I/I) program, approved by the Maine DEP, which identifies sewer pipe to be replaced on an annual basis. The sewer system was most recently extended to the Maliseet Housing project, with gravity collectors and two pump stations between the collection pipes to the interceptors.

Interceptors: Interceptor pipes generally range from 15 to 30 or more inches in diameter. A 30-inch reinforced concrete interceptor was constructed in 1991 along the Meduxnekeag River. According to the *Interim Technical Review*, other sections of the existing interceptor may need to be replaced to reduce infiltration. In 1998 approximately 700' of 16" and 12" interceptor pipe were replaced along Pearce Brook, and the remaining sections were replaced in 2002. Only about 20% of the interceptor system is left to be replaced.

Secondary Treatment Plant: HWC's treatment plant is a conventional activated sludge plant, which typically treats 900,000 gpd, with wide variations between 350,000 gpd to 9,000,000 gpd. The plant's design capacity of 1,500,000 gpd may be exceeded for short periods of time without taxing the system. Given this, the treatment plant has excess capacity to serve additional customers in the future. This excess capacity could be assured, however, through the separation of greater volumes of stormwater from wastewater.

The HWC adds Ferric Chloride to activated sludge to tie up phosphorous, which is later removed and spread. During the winter, HWC freeze dries its sludge in thin layers, accumulating to about six feet in overall thickness. In the spring, the de-watered sludge that remains is easier to truck than unfrozen sludge, and the process reduces the volume of alum sludge in the treated product. The sludge is spread at Department of Environmental Protection-licensed spreading sites.

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the wastewater treatment facility was recently renewed in 2005 by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP). The new permit requires more analysis of wastewater, sludge handling controls, and additional toxicity testing, including phosphorous and ammonia as well as toxicity testing. In addition, HWC has an ongoing Infiltration / Inflow (I/I) program, approved by the MEDEP, which identifies sewer pipe to be replaced on an annual basis.

The *Interim Technical Review* of 1996 identified concerns associated with wastewater treatment, and concluded that treatment levels and testing would continue to be concerns. The report also identified three general improvements, including providing new collector pipes along North Road to Route 1 north and Bangor Road to Route 2A south, and replacing the old domes over the clarifiers. In 1998 the domes on the clarifiers were replaced.

The average residential customer bill for wastewater in 2006 was approximately \$360.00 per year. The last rate increase was implemented in April 2005, in order to keep operating with a surplus.

Residents in outlying areas rely on on-site sewage disposal. There are known faulty on-site septic systems in Houlton, and Town officials are working with the MEDEP to identify and repair those systems through the Small Community Grant program.

Septage Disposal

According to state law, septic tanks must be pumped by a licensed pumper. Small amounts of septage from Houlton residences are spread at MEDEP-licensed septage disposal sites managed by the Department of Public Works. Under MEDEP regulations, licensed sites may receive up

to 65,000 gallons per acre per year. Houlton accepts septage from New Limerick, Linneus, and Ludlow, since Cary now has a licensed site and accepts Hodgdon's septage. In 2005, there was 26,500 gallons spread on the Houlton site. In 2006, approximately 15,250 gallons were spread in Houlton, with 2,750 coming from New Limerick; 1,500 gallons from Linneus; 1,000 gallons from Ludlow; and 10,000 gallons from Houlton.

Sludge Disposal

As stated previously, sludge from the sewage treatment plant is spread during the spring, summer, and fall months. HWC is concerned about the plant's ability to meet proposed phosphorous limits that may go into effect in the future.

Stormwater Drainage and Management

The Houlton Public Works Department oversees the maintenance and replacement of storm drainage system components. Generally, aged storm drains and catch basins are replaced as a matter of course whenever street reconstruction projects are undertaken. Curbing is added when necessary to control stormwater runoff. Catch basins are cleaned annually, and rims are adjusted as street paving overlays are applied. The major outfalls are found on the banks of the Meduxnekeag River adjacent to Market Square, River Street, and Mill Street, and at of Pearce Brook on Bangor Street. The catch basin system provides a level of pre-treatment as sediment suspended in the stormwater is afforded a chance to settle before being discharged through the outfall to the river. The outfalls are constructed so as to prevent direct discharge into the rivers or streams.

The Houlton Band of Maliseets conducts periodic monitoring of the Meduxnekeag, and relays to the Town any findings that indicate a problem. These coordinated efforts have helped locate and repair leaks from sanitary sewer into storm drains in two different locations in the recent past, helping to protect water quality. The HBMI monitoring process will continue to be utilized in conjunction with the department's ongoing maintenance of catch basins and drain line replacement for the planning period.

The Public Works Department maintains stormwater management infrastructure data superimposed on a set of tax map sections enlarged on a photocopier. These maps are not electronically or digitally reproducible, and are not tied to Houlton's GIS database files. The information could easily be damaged, destroyed and lost. It is also cumbersome to search, analyze, and update. Significant resources need to be committed for data entry and GIS utilization so that this data can be effectively backed up, updated and efficiently shared with other departments and agencies involved in project planning and emergency management activities.

Police Protection

Houlton's municipal Police Department is located in the Ambulance/Fire and Police Department building located on Military Street. The building was constructed in 1977 when those departments outgrew the Town Office building on Water Street. The new building is in good condition, but is currently undergoing a new window replacement program, and a new efficient heating system to be completed in 2007.

There are 17 personnel in the police department including 11 full-time officers, four dispatchers, one secretary, and one chief. The Police Department is charged with the responsibility for the protection and well-being of life and property in Houlton. Officers and staff are hired by the Town Manager consistent with the municipal hiring plan. The Department is occasionally called to the international border crossing to assist US Customs officials with arrests, for locally enforceable offenses.

Table 4 Houlton Police Activity 2005-2006

Activity	2005	2006
Abandoned Motor Vehicle	6	3
Assist Citizen	88	135
Assist Other Agency	85	156
BOLO	8	2
Building/Property Check	36	42
Disabled Motor Vehicle	20	24
Escort/Transport	21	27
Fire - Alarm	3	5
Fire – Public Service	1	0
General Information	5	18
Hazard	15	16
HWC Call	6	10
Inspections	1	0
Liquor Law Violation	10	12
Medical Emergency	51	56
Medical Transfer	16	14
Public Relations	37	35
Property – Lost/Found/Safekeeping	117	117
9-1-1 Hang Up	156	165
Serve Restraining Order	45	90
Death Investigation	6	3
Sex Offender Registration	17	41
Serve Summons/Subpoena	125	217
Traffic Control	7	6
Traffic Signal Trouble	7	10
Serve Warrants	51	84
Welfare Check	50	74
Total	990	1363

Source: Houlton Police Department Records

County Sheriff's Department

The County Sheriff's Department is headquartered in Houlton along with the Aroostook County Jail and is available to respond to local and regional calls as needed.

State Police

Maine State Police has a significant presence with Houlton as the base of operations for Aroostook County. The State Police has jurisdiction over I-95 and at the Houlton port of entry, and also assists the local police and County Sheriff as needed. The new Troop F Barracks on Darcie Drive was constructed in 1998 and houses the northern-most public safety answering point (PSAP) for enhanced 9-1-1 service to receive and direct calls to the appropriate emergency response agencies including the County Sheriff Department, Houlton Police Department, and Houlton Fire/Ambulance Department.

Crime

According to the Maine Department of Public Safety, the crime rate for the Town of Houlton in 1994 was 44.81 crimes per 1,000 people. This is higher than Maine’s 1994 crime rate of 32.95 per 1,000 people, but it also represents a significant decrease from Houlton’s 1992 crime rate of 55.48 crimes per 1,000 people.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Under the umbrella of the DHS, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and U.S. Customs Service maintain a port-of-entry at Houlton. The nearest comparably sized town on the Canadian side of the border is Woodstock, New Brunswick. The border crossing connecting Houlton to Woodstock provides the key link between I-95 and Route 1 in Maine and the Trans-Canada Highway in New Brunswick. As such, the Houlton crossing is one of the busier in northern Maine, and is one of only two commercial ports of entry into the U.S. in northern Maine, making the Houlton port an important trade gateway between the two countries. The U.S. government has increased staffing levels since the 9-11 terrorist attack, and there are now over 50 full-time and 10 part-time inspectors at the border. At least one booth is staffed in the primary inspection area at all times, with INS and Customs officials alternating in this capacity. During the busier summer months, two inspection booths are staffed as necessary.

Of the airports in Maine where Customs and Immigration and Naturalization Services are normally available, only one, Houlton International Airport, provides 24-hour, seven-day-a-week on-call service on a non-overtime basis.

Annual Border Crossings at Houlton, Maine

Border crossing volume dropped significantly from 1995 to 2000, but that trend has begun to reverse itself in the last 3 years. The earlier drop off was attributed to the weak Canadian dollar and the institution of the Canadian Goods and Services Tax (GST). The increasing differential in the U.S. and Canadian dollars made Canadian goods and services more internationally competitive, but also made U.S. goods less attractive to Canadian buyers. As a result, fewer Canadians crossed the border to shop in the U.S. In addition, the GST Canadians pay on US goods upon returning to Canada has further dampened cross-border traffic. Recently though, the Canadian dollar has been stronger and certain products such as gasoline, have been less expensive for Canadian customers to purchase in Maine. The following table shows cross border traffic figures from October 2004 to September 2006. The increase in number of cars and passengers is an indicator that more cross border shopping is occurring.

Table 5 Traffic statistics for Houlton Area Port 2004 - 2006

	October 2004-September 2005	October 2005- September 2006
Cars	294464	315907
Trucks	123327	109527
Busses	186	229
Passengers	858047	884380

Source: Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Customs/Border Protection

In addition to the U.S. government presence at the border, there is one privately run duty-free store, offering specialty goods, including gifts, alcohol, and some food products, that are sold free of tax or duty to travelers directly leaving the country. Given U.S. Customs mandates, the stores are located at or near the border's "point of no return" to ensure that all products sold at the store are exported to the other country. In addition, there are U.S. Customs mandates linked to length of stay in Canada that limit visitor tax and duty-free purchases.

Fire Protection

The Houlton Fire Department is comprised of 30 employees, including 8 full-time and 22 paid call firefighters. The fire chief is one of the 8 full-time employees. The chief works a 40-hour week, but is on-call around the clock. The remaining full-time firefighters work 24-hour shifts, with 48 hours off between shifts. Under this arrangement, two full-time firefighters are on duty at all times. All firefighters are also subject to call back in the event of an emergency.

Ambulance Service

The Fire and Ambulance Department, located within the Fire/Ambulance and Police Building on Military Street, provides ambulance service to area residents. The Department is municipally-run, and provides region-wide service to the following municipalities: Amity, Cary, Hammond, Hodgdon, Houlton, Linneus, Littleton, Ludlow, Merrill, New Limerick, Oakfield, and Smyrna. The Department includes both full-time and on-call employees certified as paramedics and EMTs. It responded to 1,487 calls in 2005, including 1,021 emergency calls, 245 out-of-town requests, and 221 calls that did not require transport. Ambulance Department needs are identified in Table 5.

Table 6 Houlton Fire Calls, 2003-2005

Type	2003	2004	2005
Grass/Brush	4	9	5
Chimney Fires	10	22	6
Car Fires	12	10	9
Stove or Furnace Fires	6	1	6
Structure Fires	12	23	9
False Alarms	23	36	21
Electrical	4	4	4
Motor Vehicle Accidents	33	46	49
Other	25	8	17
Total	124	136	126

Source: Houlton Fire Department

The total number of calls that the Houlton Fire Department responded to between 2003 and 2005 remained relatively the same, but motor vehicle accidents increased each year.

The following table is an inventory of Houlton’s fire equipment:

Table 7 Houlton Fire Department Equipment, 2005

Equipment	GPM	Storage Capacity (gal.)	Age
401 Smeal Pumper Truck	1,500	1,000	1999
402 MetalFab Pumper/Tanker	1,250	3,000	2003
405 International Pumper	1,000	1,000	1975
406 Smeal Ladder Truck 1051	1,250	500	1994
407 GMC Tank Truck	750	2,800	1980
408 Dodge Brush Truck	250	300	1952
409 Dodge Rescue Truck	NA	NA	1993
Ford Pickup	NA	NA	1996

Source: Chief, Houlton Fire Department

The Houlton Fire and Ambulance Department will need to replace some of its equipment in the future. Replacement needs include the following.

Table 8 Houlton Fire and Ambulance Department Equipment Needs

Equipment	# Needed	When Needed	Estimated Cost
Half-Ton Truck Replacement	1	2007	\$35,000
Brush Truck	1	2007	\$35,000
Ambulance	1	2009	\$130,000
Pumper/Tanker	1	2009	\$250,000
Ambulance	1	2012	\$145,000

Source: Houlton Capital Reserve Account, 2006

Public Works

Houlton maintains approximately 60.43 miles of road in the summer and 73.96 miles of road in the winter, all of which are located within the Town boundaries. The Town maintains all the roads within the urban compact, local roads outside the urban compact, and the airport. The State generally maintains the roads outside this area. To properly maintain its roads, the Town must have heavy equipment adequate to ensure that roads are cleaned in the winter and that general maintenance is carried out in the warmer months. Houlton maintains the following equipment:

Table 9 Houlton Public Works Equipment List & Replacement Schedule

ID#	Equipment	Year	Replace	Est. Cost
316	IH 2554 dump/plow/sander	1992		
318	Ford L-8000 dump/plow/sander	1986		
319	Ford L-8000 w/ Swenson SS hopper body sander	1985		
320	Western Star plow/sander/dump (used)	1994		
321	Peterbilt (used)	1988		
322	IH S2600 dump/hauler (used)	1983	2007	\$15,000 (used)
323	GMC Wheeler (used – purchased 1995)	1985	2007	\$15,000 (used)
324	IH 2574 dump/plow/sander	2002		
325	Oshkosh plow/sander	2000		
326	Volvo dump/plow/sander (used)	1990		

ID#	Equipment (continued)	Year	Replace	Est. Cost
332	IH 2010A water tanker (used HFD)	1975		
334	SMI 8300 snow blower (used military)	1978		
335	Blanchet HS 108 snow blower	1995		
336	U-1700 Unimog with Blanchet B-96 snow blower	1987		
337	Kodiak CR3D blower	2002		
339	Crafco kettle mod. BC220 200 gal. ring hitch	1984	2009	\$35K (new)
342	Ingersol Rand air compressor	2000		
345	Holder C-500 sidewalk blower/broom (used)	1990	2009	\$45K/\$104K
346	Johnson J3000 sweeper (used)	2003		
351	AC645 3-YD 4WD loader	1968	2007	\$25K - \$35K
352	JD624H 3-yd 4WD loader/plow/wing	2001		
353	Champion 716A grader/wing	2000		
354	IH TD8E crawler/dozer	1979	2008	\$83K or Refurb.
356	JD310C backhoe	1988	2008	\$115K or Refurb.
358	CAT 938F 3.25-yd 4WD loader/plow/wing	1995		
360	Reed Screen All RD 40B (used)	1990		
371	GMC pickup	2001		
372	Chevrolet pickup	2002		
373	Ford 1 ton dump truck	1994		
374	Ford 1 ton dump truck w/ lift gate	2000		
375	Ford 1 ton dump truck (used)	1983	2007	\$15,000 (used)
377	IH 1824 flat body truck (used)	1981		
378	Ford L-8000 dump w/Stetco basin cleaner (used)	1991		

Source: Houlton Public Works Department 2007

The Houlton Public Works Department is facing replacement of some of its equipment in the near and intermediate future. The Town of Houlton does not presently have a formal equipment replacement plan, but rather deals with replacement on a priority basis as the annual budget allows. It would serve the town well to replace equipment once it has reached 10 to 15 years of age while it still has trade-in worth. Value and dependability decreases and the costs to maintain the Department's equipment increase once the equipment reaches the end of its life cycle. Ideally, it would be nice to add 10 years to the vehicle's year column for lighter equipment replacement, and 15 years to the heavy equipment for the larger more durable pieces.

The Town garage was constructed in 1953 to house the Public Works Department and the MSAD #29 school buses. According to the Public Works Department, the garage is 17,500 square feet in area, and has a central three-bay door for the shop, one door for a parts room, and 18 doors for parking bays. All in-season Public Works Department vehicles are housed inside, thereby eliminating cold weather starting problems.

Building improvements, mostly done over time during the 1990's and into 2000's, have included the replacement of all 21 bay doors with foam-insulated steel; a multi-compartment fuel tank; energy-efficiency improvements including siding, insulation, boiler upgrade, roof replacement, overhead fan installation, locked thermostats, and fluorescent lighting); automated dispensing system of gasoline and diesel fuel (1992); and new above-ground lift (1995). The Public Works Department has identified future building improvement which would require connecting the floor drains to the Town sewer or treatment facility. All floor drain connections should be evaluated for compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

permit requirements, as applicable. That process has been done. In 2002 several floor drains were sealed off entirely to satisfy recommendations of DEP and the NPDES study.

The garage grounds are large enough to allow stockpiling of about 7,000 CY of winter sand and outside inventories of culverts, curbing, catch basins, etc. In addition, there is a combination salt shed/storage building on site.

Street Lights

Houlton is fairly well covered with street lights. In the 1980's, however, the Town Council requested that about half the lights be removed in order to reduce costs and, as a result, Town streets are less well lighted than they were at one time. Presently, all lights are maintained by the Houlton Water Company, and are being gradually converted to high pressure sodium. The Town pays the Houlton Water Company for lighting out of the protection account.

Education – Maine School Administrative District #29

Education comprises a large portion of the Town's budget. This is typical of many small towns. Houlton, like many other Maine communities, has experienced an increase in per pupil expenditures. This increase is partly due to higher heating and busing costs, and required compliance with federal and state program guidelines. However, MSAD #29 had the 32nd lowest K-12 per pupil cost of all Maine school administrative units in 2005-2006.

The School Department (MSAD #29) is comprised of four buildings, including the Wellington Elementary School, Houlton Elementary School, Houlton Southside School, and Houlton High School. MSAD #29 covers four towns, including Hammond, Houlton, Littleton, and Monticello. MSAD #29 also offers adult education courses. In addition to the schools listed below, there are a variety of private preschool providers in Houlton as well as a Head Start program sponsored by the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP).

Wellington Elementary School

Wellington Elementary School is located in Monticello. The 16,000 square foot building was constructed in several stages. The original (central) classroom wing was built in 1951 and the multipurpose room (gymnasium) in 1966. The west wing, toilet rooms, and ramp were added in 1982. Wellington has 5 classrooms, a Special Education Room, a Gym/multipurpose room with stage, a Kitchen, several storage rooms, and a small Library.

Houlton Elementary School

Houlton Elementary School, which was constructed in 1971, serves children in grades K through 3. The building is located on a 48-acre site, and includes a cafeteria/gym, approximately 18 regular classrooms, a library/media center, atrium, and special education and vocal music areas. Instruction includes Title I and Migrant programs. There are 24 professional and 13 support staff persons working at the building, with additional shared staff, including physical education, classroom music, and school nurse teachers.

Houlton Southside School

The Houlton Southside School, which was opened in 1993, serves children in the “middle” grades 4 through 6. The building is located on the same site as Houlton Elementary School, and includes a cafeteria and stage, a small gymnasium, 15 classrooms, music area, and special education areas. The building meets all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There are 20 professional and 10 support staff persons working at the building.

Houlton High School

Houlton High School, which was initially constructed in 1950 and expanded in 1964, serves children in grades 7 through 12. The building is located on an approximately 95-acre site, and includes a 450-seat auditorium, a large gymnasium and cafeteria, approximately 30 regular classrooms, plus instructional areas for science labs, business education, library/media area, computer writing lab, industrial arts/technology, special education, and home economics. The regional vocational facility for grades 11 and 12 is located adjacent to the high school (see next section). There are 50 professional and 10 support staff persons working at the building. In recent years, the school has undergone several phases of renovation activity to remedy accessibility, indoor air quality, structural, and cosmetic issues. There is currently a fund-raising effort underway for a future Community Arts Center expansion to the music wing of the school.

Southern Aroostook Vocational Education

Southern Aroostook Vocational Education operates a center in Houlton. The program serves five high schools (including Houlton High School), which together comprise Maine Vocational Region 2. The Houlton center is located adjacent to the high school, and offers programs of study in the following areas: computer systems technician, food preparation service, transportation mechanic (2 programs of study), and health occupations (CNA specialty). In addition, there is a cooperative education program to promote important job skills, an alternative education program, and daycare for students enrolled in the alternative education program. There is also a truck driving program for adults only. Total enrollment in Southern Aroostook Vocational Education programs is approximately 350 students per year.

Greater Houlton Christian Academy

The old Lambert School building on School Street was acquired and remodeled, and in September 1996, the doors to the new GHCA were opened. The enrollment jumped to eighty students in kindergarten through twelfth grades. In September 2002, a 4 year old kindergarten was started thus completing a pre-school through grade 12 educational program with a current enrollment of about 200 students. In June of 2003, Headmaster Mark B. Jago began leading the faculty toward readiness for accreditation with the Association of Christian Schools International. GHCA is currently pursuing candidate status for accreditation with ACSI as of September of 2005.

The Houlton Higher Education Center

This new facility designed and constructed in 2000, and combines off-campus programs for both the Maine University and Community College systems, as well as SAD#29/70 Adult Education services, to southern Aroostook students. University College at Houlton is an off-campus center of the University of Maine System, and offers access to the courses and degrees of the seven university campuses. Students enjoy personalized support services designed to give beginners a

great start in college and advanced students the tools they need to stay on course. Professionals and trained peer advisors assist students with admission and financial aid, placement testing, course registration, book orders, the online library catalog, computer conferencing, e-mail and much more.

School Enrollment

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 1,479 persons three years of age and over who were enrolled in school, which are just 17 fewer than in 1990. Of that total, 137 were enrolled in Pre-school, 77 in Kindergarten, 663 in elementary school, 412 in high school, and 190 were enrolled in post-secondary education.

School Year	Wellington School	Littleton School	Houlton Elementary School	Houlton Southside School	Houlton High School	Total District
1999-2000	73	76	352	239	617	1,357
2000-2001	89	**	357	285	604	1,335
2001-2002	83	**	395	272	573	1,323
2002-2003	70	**	373	287	579	1,309
2003-2004	65	**	380	281	563	1,289
2004-2005	59	**	377	300	562	1,298
2005-2006	56	**	362	298	566	1,282
2006-2007	64	**	386	276	576	1,302

Source: MSAD #29 Office of the Superintendent; ** Closed School, consolidated in Houlton Elementary School

Data projections given to MSAD #29 in 1999 underestimated the current enrollment by 150 to 200 students. As a result, projections have been adjusted based on the current number of Pre-K students (lower than actual figures as not all Pre-K students enroll in MSAD #29 programs), which should equal the lowest estimated student enrollment figure. Table 9 illustrates that if the base of 84 students remains constant, then the district could expect a 7% decrease through 2017, well below Aroostook County projections that forecast a 20% decline in student population within the next 15 years. MSAD #29 has experienced a 4% decline in the past eight years in which it has reported enrollment to the State.

The District completed a Major Capital Improvements Assessment in 1999, which was based on the underestimated enrollment projections mentioned earlier. The assessment indicated that the Wellington School in Monticello would likely be closed through internal consolidation. This would only make sense when enrollment drops to a level that precludes the need to expand the Houlton Elementary School. However, the stable enrollment has had the opposite affect and there are no immediate plans to close the Wellington School.

Currently, a proposal called the *Local Schools – Regional Support Initiative (LSRS)*, is being considered by State law makers. If LSRS is implemented as proposed, it would consolidate as many as 4 existing southern Aroostook, northern Penobscot and Washington County school districts into a regional center in Houlton. It is unknown how this might impact facility needs and capital improvements throughout affected districts in this new Region #4.

Table 11 MSAD#29 Enrollments, 2007-2017

MSAD #29 2006 – 2007		10 YEAR PROJECTED ENROLLMENT										
		2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2010 2011	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 2017	
Pre-K	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Kindergarten	87	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 1	103	87	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 2	90	103	87	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 3	86	90	103	87	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 4	84	86	90	103	87	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 5	91	84	86	90	103	87	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 6	101	91	84	86	90	103	87	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 7	101	101	91	84	86	90	103	87	84	84	84	84
Grade 8	99	101	101	91	84	86	90	103	87	84	84	84
Grade 9	108	99	101	101	91	84	86	90	103	87	84	84
Grade 10	105	108	99	101	101	91	84	86	90	103	87	84
Grade 11	72	105	108	99	101	101	91	84	86	90	103	84
Grade 12	91	72	105	108	99	101	101	91	84	86	90	84
District Totals	1,302	1,295	1,307	1,286	1,262	1,247	1,230	1,213	1,206	1,206	1,204	1,204
Change in students from Previous Year		-7	12	-21	-24	-15	-17	-17	-7	0	-2	

Source: MSAD #29, 2007

Cemeteries

There are three public cemeteries in Houlton, including the 79-acre Evergreen Cemetery on County Road, the two-acre Soldier’s Cemetery on the White Settlement Road, and the three-acre Bray and Presbyterian Cemetery on Foxcroft Road. There is also one Catholic cemetery (St. Mary’s Cemetery, behind St. Mary’s Church on Military Street). At the public cemeteries in 2004, there were a total of 59 internments, and 14 new lots issued. In 1994, the Evergreen Cemetery was expanded to include approximately 20 acres on the north side of the existing cemetery.

Industrial Park

Houlton’s Industrial Park is conveniently located at the Houlton International Airport, near the intersection of I-95 and the U.S. Canadian border. The Park has approximately 50 developable acres, with additional property available if necessary. However, the park is located at the former World War II airbase and German POW camp, which has been determined by the State Historic Preservation Commission to be a site of historical significance. This may make future development problematic. As stated in other sections of the plan, Houlton is working with FAA to obtain a release of approximately 89 acres south of the current park to resolve any potential constraints associated with historic preservation of the POW camp. Sewer, water, and three-phase power are available to park tenants, who currently include Smith & Wesson, Ward Log Homes, Beals Aircraft, and CYMCO. The Town owns the former Houlton International building, and plans to use it for business attraction or expansion efforts. Houlton continues to participate in the development of the park, and provides ready assistance to new and expanding companies.

Parks and Recreation

The Department office is housed in the Gentle Memorial Building (Rec. Center), which was constructed in 1952. This building also has a gym, locker rooms, game room, stage, and two lounges. The Rec. Center has open gym and game room hours, which begin after harvest break and continue through to the end of April vacation. According to the Town's list of Capital Projects, the building is scheduled for maintenance and repair in the year 2007 through 2009. Repair work will include replacing the gym floor and all exterior doors. The building was re-roofed with new metal in 2005.

The John A. Millar Civic Center was built in 1999. This facility replaced the older arena which collapsed in 1998. The Civic Center contains a full sized refrigerated ice rink with a 200' by 85' ice surface. It features seating for 450 people in the bleachers, and 3,260 people overall when the ice is not in place. Meeting rooms, dressing rooms, a heated viewing room and a staffed kitchen are also available.

Community Park is located on Randall Avenue, near the high school. The park includes a playground, picnic area, tennis courts, little league, softball and baseball fields; horseshoe pits, and log cabin that can be reserved in advance for public use. The tennis courts were rebuilt in 1998. In 1998, a dedicated Soap Box Derby Hill was completed and commissioned adjacent to Millar Civic Center, and a skate park was added near the playground in 2003. Community Park is also home to the Houlton Agricultural Fair, which is operated by an independent board of directors. The Fair committee rents three buildings and contracts with the Town for use of others during the Fair.

The Parks and Recreation Department also oversees Monument Park, Pierce Park, Garrison Hill, the Meduxnekeag River boat launch area, Riverfront Park, Union Square, and a backup softball field at the airport.

The Parks and Recreation Department has the following equipment:

Table 12 Houlton Parks/Recreation Department Equipment & Replacement Schedule

Equipment	Year	Condition
Dodge Van – 12 Passenger (Director)	1997	Replace ASAP
Dodge Pickup (Maint. Foreman)	2001	Replaced 1986 pickup
John Deere Gator	2004	Replaced Utility Turf Vehicle
John Deere 1145 Mower	1998	Replaced 1986 Toro
Utility Turf Vehicle	1987	OK – Used as back up for Gator as needed
John Deere 955 Tractor	1994	Replacing in 2007
Olympia	2003	Replaced 1964 Zamboni (sold to Old Town)

Source: Houlton Department of Parks and Recreation,

The Department plans to update some of this equipment in the near future to ensure the continued maintenance of its grounds and programs.

Houlton is fortunate to have access to a wide range of recreational facilities. However, the one facility the Town is currently lacking is a public pool. There have been at least 3 separate efforts to create a public pool in the past, and most recently in 2001, when the town was left an endowment to help construct a pool, contingent on the town electing to proceed within a given time frame. Location, size, ongoing maintenance costs, and liability issues were too onerous to gain Council's approval of the project at that time, and the endowment period was allowed to lapse. It is likely the issue will surface again at some point, but with escalating tax burdens and declining population, a public pool will not be a priority for Houlton.

Cary Library

The Cary Library is located in Monument Park in a granite building constructed in 1903. The building was later expanded in 1969 to more adequately accommodate the collection, which now includes 45,811 volumes, with cassettes, video tapes, DVD's, records, and periodicals also available. In 2006, the library circulated 61,270 volumes and had 6,983 patrons. The library, which has a children's room, employs three full-time and two part-time staff persons. In addition to circulating and maintaining its collection, the library also conducts a weekly story hour, offers interlibrary loan privileges, provides a primary library for Houlton Higher Education Center, conducts a summer reading program for children in grades K-6, and circulates a video tape and DVD collection. Improvements to the Children's Library, including new lighting and flooring, repairs to and repainting of walls, and the installation of air conditioning, were privately funded. Considerable volunteer effort is engaged in Genealogy data cataloging and other activities. The Library also provides Internet access with 12 public computers available. Recent upgrades including new doors at the front entrance, and handicap-accessible restrooms have made the Library more accessible. The library still needs handicap access to the Children's Library on the second floor, and when completed will make the Library compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Other needs include re-pointing of masonry and replacement of the heating plant. The Town is currently in the process of a multi-year boiler replacement program that will address the last item.

Houlton Historical and Art Museum

The Houlton Historical and Art Museum is located on the upper floor of the White Building in Monument Park and is selectively open in the summer as funds allow and for school and other interested groups as requested. The Museum was founded in 1939 and contains local historical artifacts and a collection from the old Ricker College. The museum, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, lacks adequate space to properly display its collection, but will gain space when the Chamber of Commerce, which shares first floor space, finds a new location. Essential maintenance and repairs, including painting, replacing lattice-work, and replacing window sashes and frames, are identified in the Town's Capital Projects to be completed in the next few years.

Houlton Humane Society

The Houlton Humane Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation which has owned and operated an animal shelter located on the Callaghan Road. A new \$300,000 energy efficient shelter is being built and when completed, will continue to provide contract services to 26 southern Aroostook towns, providing temporary housing for stray and abandoned animals. The

Humane Society also provides no interest loans to assist in the cost of spaying and neutering domestic pets; has an active education program providing speakers and printed materials to southern Aroostook schools; sponsors a weekly column in The Houlton Pioneer Times offering helpful tips on pet training and health as well as highlighting available animals for adoption; and has an active website at <http://houltonanimalshelter.bravehost.com/> through which shelter pets can be viewed, programs researched, gifts purchased and links to other pet care sites explored. Three (3) full time employees staff the facility seven days a week with the shelter being open to the public Monday through Saturday.

County Government

Houlton is the capital of Aroostook County and, as such, is home to several county offices, most of which are located in the County Court House. County offices include the jail, registry of deeds (on Court Street), registry of probate, the district attorney's office, emergency management office, sheriff's department (with another office located on Court Street), and superior and district courts.

State Government

Houlton hosts a variety of state offices, including the State Police Barracks and Maine Drug Enforcement Agency on North Road, the Department of Human Services, the State Motor Transport Service, the Maine Department of Labor Career Center on Military Street, the State Highway Maintenance Lot / Garage on Bangor Road, the Corrections Department, Probation Parole Office, and the Department of Mental Health & Mental Retardation branch office, and the Maine Revenue Service branch office on Water Street.

Federal Government

Several federal offices are located in Houlton, including the Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Services, Farmers Home, and Natural Resources Conservation Commission; US Post Office, US Justice Department: Border Patrol and Immigration and Naturalization Service, US State Department: International Boundary Commission, US Treasury Department: Customs Investigations Office at the Port of Entry, the US Department of Transportation: Airways Facilities Sector, and the Army National Guard: Recruiting & Retention and 1st BN 152nd Field Artillery on Pleasant Street.

Other Services

Television

Houlton is served by WAGM-TV Channel 8 in Presque Isle with a 60,000 ERP (effective radiated power) video and 6,000 ERP audio. There are no exact viewership figures or estimates specifically for Houlton. WAGM's total service area includes: Houlton to the South with a microwave facility in Linneus; the St. John Valley in the North with translators in Allagash, St. Francis, St. John, and Madawaska; Western New Brunswick to the East; and the Ashland, Portage Lake, and Eagle Lake to the West. There are an estimated 31,100 homes in the service

area. It is also estimated that 30,604 (98%) of those households have television sets, 16,220 (53%) of those households have more than one set, 18,362 (60%) are cable subscribers, and 23,259 (76%) are VCR households.

In addition, there are four networks whose signals (non-cable) are also received in Houlton, including CHSJ Channel 6 (St. John, New Brunswick), WMEM Channel 11 (Public Broadcasting-MPBN-University of Maine System), WAGM Channel 8 (Presque Isle), and CKLT Channel 29 (Halifax, New Brunswick).

Cable Television

Polaris Cable Services provides a full range of cable entertainment choices to the residents of Houlton. There are currently 2,241 subscribers in the Houlton/Hodgdon area, and 4,842 subscribers in the entire service area, which extends from West Enfield to Bridgewater. A variety of cable packages are available, including basic, premium, and digital choices. Add-on channels, such as HBO, Cinemax, Disney, Showtime, and the Movie Channel, are available at additional cost, either individually or in a package. In late 1995, Houlton Cable expanded to include Vista Communications. Cable internet service was added in 2004, and is available wherever T.V. cable service is provided. No additional expansions to the service area or new viewing options are planned at this time.

Radio

Houlton has two radio stations: WHOU (100.1 MC) and WREM (710 KC). In addition, several radio stations are located within the Houlton listening area and throughout northern Maine.

Newspapers

Houlton is served by the Houlton Pioneer Times, a weekly newspaper issued on Wednesdays throughout the greater Houlton region. In addition, the Bangor Daily News maintains an office in Houlton, and reports daily on newsworthy local events in its Aroostook County edition. Two weekend papers: The Bangor Daily News, Weekend Edition and the Maine Sunday Telegram round out local print news coverage.

Telecommunications

Verizon provides telephone service to Houlton. There are 2,774 housing units in Houlton, with exchanges crossing into other towns. Therefore, it is difficult to obtain exact service numbers. Verizon also offers high-speed broadband DSL to both residential and commercial users, but coverage is not yet townwide. There are currently 2 local wireless high-speed broad band providers in Houlton: Pioneer Wireless and Aroostook Internet, but again, service is dependent upon line of sight to relay towers and not necessarily available townwide. There are several dial-up ISP's for residential or business customers. Houlton High School has an ATM connection and video conferencing capability that can connect multiple sites for long distance learning or other functions. There is also video conferencing capability at Houlton Regional Hospital and the Houlton Higher Education Center.

Aroostook County is 100 percent digital, meaning that touch-tone service is an option to every County resident. Several inter-state long distance services are available in Houlton at various price points for different subscriber packages.

Health Care Services

Houlton Regional Hospital

The Houlton Regional Hospital (HRH), located on 20 Hartford Street, was established in 1972 with the consolidation of the Aroostook General Hospital (1903), which was established by Dr. Thomas S. Dickinson and was the first hospital north of Bangor, and the Madigan Memorial Hospital (1940), which was established through a bequest by Albert W. Madigan. The consolidation of these two hospitals allowed the tradition of excellent health care begun by the two smaller hospitals to continue. Today, Houlton Regional Hospital continues to provide state-of-the-art medical services and enhanced outpatient services.

HRH services a wide geographic area and a population of approximately 20,000 people. The hospital is licensed for 25 acute beds and 28 skilled nursing / nursing home beds. Services are typical of those of an acute care hospital and include a 24 hour physician covered emergency room, comprehensive medical/surgical services and a multitude of out-patient services, including pulmonary and cardiac rehabilitation, physical, occupational and speech therapy to name a few.

The hospital facility is spacious and offers the latest equipment in all areas of the hospital. HRH employs over 350 people with a total payroll of approximately \$14 million and is the largest employer in the area.

The HRH medical staff is well trained and most have practiced in the community for years. Full time physician services include internal medicine, gynecology, obstetrics, family practice, urology, ENT, general surgery, ophthalmology surgery, pediatrics, orthopedic surgery, and radiology. Part-time physician services include neurology, endocrinology, pediatric endocrinology, physiatry, podiatry, and a pacer clinic.

Other Houlton Health Care Facilities

There are other public and private health care services and facilities in Houlton, such as the new 15,000 square foot medical arts building at the hospital, Visiting Nurses of Aroostook, Hospice, the Company Doc, Aroostook County Action Program's medical offices and Preventive Health Program, as well as the Aroostook Mental Health Center on Mill Street, and Katahdin Valley Health Center on Bangor Street.

There are numerous private health care providers and facilities with offices in Town, including dentists, optometrists, and chiropractic clinics.

Community Living Association

The Community Living Association, formerly known as the Southern Aroostook Association for Retarded Citizens, provides services for the care and training of the developmentally disabled. The Association serves approximately 100 people in Southern Aroostook County through its eight homes and five day programs, including pre-school. The Association is run as a non-profit organization by a governing body of a Board of Directors. It employs approximately 220 people.

Nursing Homes

Although there are no public nursing homes, there are several private nursing homes located in Houlton. These include Madigan Estates Nursing Home on Military Street, which also includes an Alzheimer's Unit, and an assisted living complex. Other establishments include Gardiner Nursing Home on Holland Street, Crest View Manor on Calais Road, and a variety of private boarding houses.

Social and Human Service Agencies

A major service provider in Aroostook County is the Aroostook County Action Program, or ACAP, with administrative offices in Presque Isle and satellite offices in Fort Kent, Houlton, and Madawaska. In addition, there are a number of other social service programs and facilities in Aroostook County.

Other service agencies and programs include the American Red Cross, programs and services for battered spouses and children, The United Way of Aroostook, Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, programs and services for developmentally disabled persons, disabled assistance, Helping Hands for Children and Families (educational), services and programs for the elderly, mental health services, religious organizations, gay-lesbian-bisexual services, youth services and the Maine Department of Human Services, which operates a referral service and has the latest information on State programs.

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (AAAA)

One in seven (7) residents in Aroostook County is over the age of 65 and this will likely increase in the next 10 years. Agencies that provide services to the aging are facing a challenge to develop community systems of care to meet the needs of the Town's older residents.

Located at 33 Davis Street in Presque Isle, The Aroostook Area Agency on Aging (AAAA) is a private non-profit corporation created in 1973, and is owned by the older citizens of Aroostook County. There is a nineteen (19) member volunteer Board of Directors responsible for policy making, planning programs and services, funding, establishing service priorities, and evaluating programs. The staff consists of an Executive Director and 66 workers who provide the help needed to solve the problems encountered by people age 60 and older. As an Area Agency on Aging, they are linked with a network of aging services that reaches every community in America. The goal of the Agency is to make it possible for persons 60 and older to remain in their homes longer and more comfortably. To meet that goal, the Agency provides the following services: Senior Information and Assistance, Legal Help, Insurance Counseling, Educational Programs, In-Home Care, Meals, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Transportation (see: Aroostook Regional Transportation System), and Housing.

Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.

The Aroostook County Action Program Inc. (ACAP) is a private, non-profit corporation operated by and for the citizens of Aroostook County, to create maximum self-sufficiency and eliminate poverty. Self-sufficiency occurs when an individual is capable of providing for their own needs on a long-term basis.

It is the mission of ACAP to act as a catalyst to make the entire community and its institutions more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor by mobilizing all existing local, State, Federal, public and private resources. Furthermore, it is the mission of ACAP to actively seek out and eliminate all policies, practices, and procedures that discriminate against low-income individuals and families, no matter where they occur.

Formed as the result of a merger of two smaller organizations on June 1, 1972, the Central Aroostook Action Program and the St. John Valley Action Council, ACAP offers a variety of services responding to problems and concerns of Aroostook County. ACAP has served the needs for over 20,000 families in the County, linking them not only to ACAP programs, but also to the multitude of area services.

Through the six divisions which encompass thirty programs and with a budget of approximately \$11 million, ACAP provides a variety of services in the area of health, pre-school, employment and training, housing, special services, and administration. With the addition of indirect services, such as outreach activities, case management, and referrals, ACAP offers a comprehensive approach to meeting human needs.

Public Facilities and Services Analysis

As a service center community and county seat, Houlton is challenged to provide a relatively high level of public service to its residents and business community. Whether they are tax-paying or tax exempt, most establishments within the community depend on emergency services, good roads, sewer, water, and power. Many of the smaller neighboring communities rely on the programs and services that Houlton provides whether they are free or require user fees.

Houlton has partnered regionally on many successful projects, including the Houlton Higher Education Center, Houlton International Airport Master Plan, and the Regional Economic Development and Marketing Strategy. Due to forecasts of declining and aging population, health and safety mandates, and escalating costs of maintaining services and facilities, it will be necessary for Houlton to continue to seek out partnerships with neighboring communities to accomplish more effective and efficient program and service delivery in the future.

Public Water and Sewer

Population growth or the lack thereof is not expected to have any impact on public water and sewer. However, regulatory changes will continue to challenge wastewater treatment infrastructure and procedures, and commercial growth north of the I-95 overpass on North Street is expected to result in possible extension of service at some point within the next 10 years. The North Street TIF District will help offset the costs for these upgrades. With the Drinking Water Protection Ordinance in place, the McPartland Wells are better protected, leaving only the issue of a small number of malfunctioning individual residential subsurface wastewater disposal systems within the recharge area to resolve. Otherwise, Houlton Water Company is well positioned to accommodate any unanticipated increase in growth within the planning period.

The treatment plant facility is in first rate condition due to excellent operations, an on –going preventative maintenance program, and timely replacement of capital equipment. Maintaining the existing operating, engineering, and financial policies should assure the facility is in quality condition for the next 30 years. The driving force that will pressure a major rebuild, expansion, or a new plant will be the continued tightening of regulations by the Maine DEP and EPA. The existing plant is 1970’s technology design attempting to meet twenty first century regulations. Continued ratcheting down of the regulations will eventually out distance the capability of the plant. The waste water plant is usually relicensed on a revolving 5 year basis. The last round of licensing was completed in February 2005, and theoretically the plant will be relicensed in 2010. With each round of licensing, it becomes more difficult for the plant to meet the new requirements because of changing regulations. It is difficult to predict at what point the existing plant will be unable to meet the regulatory requirements. Many variables will drive the issue such as the timing and stringency of regulatory changes, environmental politics, available funding, and evolving science and technology.

Electric Power Supply and Distribution

Although Houlton has enjoyed very competitive electric rates over the last decade, the future may not be as favorable. One issue is the lack of competition, which exactly the opposite of what was supposed to occur as a result of deregulation that began in March, 2000. Aroostook County is not directly connected to southern Maine and New England power grid, but is indirectly connected through the New Brunswick Power system with very little firm capacity. Competition could be vastly improved either through the creation of additional firm capacity with a south to north direction in the NBP system, or through a direct power transmission line in Maine. Central Maine Power and Maine Public Service are sponsoring a study to determine the economic feasibility of constructing a transmission line from Houlton to Haynesville to connect northern Maine with the rest of the state. The results of the study should be available in the later part of 2007. The Houlton Water Company is participating in the review of the findings and will then be able to either support or oppose the recommendations of the study when completed.

Another initiative that is being undertaken in 2007, involves legislation initiated by HWC entitled L.D 742, An Act Concerning Wholesale Purchases by Consumer Owned Transmission and Distribution Utilities, which has the potential to benefit the electric customers of the HWC by providing an economic tool to encourage competition resulting in lower electric cost.

If enacted, this legislation would allow HWC to aggregate customers and stabilize load to reduce a great deal of the uncertainty that load serving entities face when bidding on standard offer. L.D 742 limits customers from coming and going from standard offer service and provides assurance of a constant revenue stream for the utility and the load serving entity. The increased customer stability should lower cost and encourage other load serving entities to submit bids. This would also be particularly attractive to renewable or green energy ventures such as biomass and wind energy, looking to establish generation facilities in the area.

Public Education

Educational services will face new challenges if the Governor’s proposed *Local Schools, Regional Support* (LSRS) Initiative is enacted by the legislature. LSRS would consolidate

Aroostook County's 21 school districts into 4 regional centers, with Houlton becoming **Region # 4**, covering: Amity, Bancroft, Cary Plantation, Crystal, Danforth, Dyer Brook, Hammond, Haynesville, Hersey, Hodgdon, Houlton, Island Falls, Linneus, Littleton, Ludlow, Merrill, Monticello, Moro Plantation, Mount Chase, New Limerick, Oakfield, Orient, Patten, Sherman, Smyrna, Stacyville, Weston. Houlton's schools do not face overcrowding issues, but rather repair, maintenance, and mandated upgrade costs while enrollment decreases. This directly impacts the amount of school funding the district receives and in turn makes it difficult to keep up with these project costs. It is unclear if LSRS would provide enough property tax relief to keep up with repair and maintenance on the older school buildings in the area. It would be beneficial for the communities making up Region#4 to begin a proactive dialogue on the impacts and effects of LSRS to be prepared when and if it is implemented. It is clear that consolidation will need to happen in one form or another in order to gain control on educational spending.

Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services

Most of the recent residential development has occurred outside of the urban compact and growth areas. This is likely due to the lack of undeveloped property in close proximity to the village center and the desire to locate in less densely populated rural areas. If future residential growth was imminent, this might pose a concern with regard to response times for fire suppression, medical emergency, and law enforcement personnel. However, Houlton's transportation network allows excellent response times even to the more rural locations with very few exceptions. As projections indicate a 12% loss in population from 2005 to 2020, growth will not have much to do with the Town's ability to maintain service. However, it may become difficult to maintain the current level of service and equipment if there are fewer taxpayers to pay for it.

Stormwater Drainage System

The current stormwater drainage/management system is effectively controlling urban sedimentation and water borne pollutants of Houlton from entering the Meduxnekeag River and its tributaries. The water quality monitoring efforts of the Houlton Band of Maliseets have resulted in the identification and mitigation of contamination sources. The network of catch basins and drainage piping are upgraded as part of all street reconstruction projects, and curbing is also added where necessary to redirect stormwater runoff into the system away from areas where erosion could occur.

The Town of Houlton will seek out funding resources to gather and update stormwater management infrastructure data such as type, size, location, and elevation information on pipe inverts and catch basin rims from paper files into a digital database that is GIS compatible. This will allow the department to track and schedule catch basin maintenance, system component replacements, as well as to locate components in winter when necessary to control street flooding during thaw periods. The GIS enabled data can be queried for planning and emergency management/spill containment efforts, and shared with engineers in road street reconstruction projects to reduce design costs.

Public Facilities and Services Policies and Implementation Strategies

The Public Facilities and Services chapter of this Plan includes an assessment of capital facilities and public services necessary to support future growth and development; to protect the environment, health, safety, and welfare of the people of Houlton; and to explore the associated costs of those facilities.

The inventory examined the facilities and services provided by/to the Town and included information describing the facility and service area, and the responsibility, condition, usage, and capacity of each facility. The facilities and services discussed include: water supply, sewage facilities, solid waste facilities, public safety, energy facilities, communications, health care, education, recreation, cemeteries, and Town administration and services. Town government is responsible for providing many of these facilities and services to meet the needs of the public. The responsibility is both a burden and an opportunity since the provision of these facilities and services is costly, but at the same time can be used to guide the growth and development of the Town.

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

Therefore, Houlton should continue to provide suitable public facilities and services to meet the needs of the residents, and should use the provision of facilities as a means for guiding growth.

Public Facilities and Services Policies

Policy	Corresponding strategy
A. Encourage participation from all municipal and non-municipal public utility and service providers in planning for future capacity, associated costs, and ability of existing systems to accommodate projected growth or loss in population.	2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18
B. Administratively and financially support the necessary functions of municipal departments, including: the Police, Fire, Ambulance, Public Works, Cemetery, and Parks and Recreation Departments.	1 3, 5, 12, 16
C. Plan any new or improved public facilities and services in locations that promote development in growth areas and discourage growth in rural areas.	1-3, 5, 6, 10, 14-17
D. Promote inter-municipal and regional solutions to more efficient and cost effective delivery of public services.	7-11, 13-19
E. Promote a regional educational system that is flexible, cost effective, and responsive to the changing needs of both traditional and non-traditional students so they may excel in their chosen areas of interest.	4, 10, 11, 15

Public Facilities and Services Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
1. Determine if impact fee regulations to assess fees to fund necessary capital improvements directly related to new development should be drafted and implemented.	PB, TC	2008
2. Request meetings with non-municipal utility and service providers, including solid waste and recycling, and telecommunications to ensure continued planning for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Future capacity, associated costs, and the ability of existing systems to accommodate additional growth or population decreases Service area boundaries, with provisions for extending boundaries when necessary. Cost-effective and ecologically sound practices for compostable waste. 	CDP, TM, HWC	2008 On-Going
3. Require that developments that may create an unreasonable demand on Town services be built in stages, consistent with the planned extensions of public facilities and services, or pay impact fees (see #1).	PB, CDP, HWC, CEO	2008 On-Going
4. Work with educators to create a method of obtaining input from students on future planning considerations regarding public facilities, services, and recreational opportunities. Sponsor a guest speaker on the topic of planning for students.	SAD, CDP, NMDC	2008- 2009
5. Continue to plan and budget for necessary replacements of equipment and repair of buildings, as needed, by the various municipal departments.	BC, TM, TC, TO	2008 On-Going
6. Survey portions of Town not connected to public water and sewer systems and continue to apply for DEP's Small Community Grant program whenever faulty septic systems are identified.	CDP, CEO	2009
7. Support continued operations of Cary Library, including financial support, to the extent possible.	LIB, TC, BC, Civic Groups	2008 On-Going
8. Expand the volunteer effort to make the necessary repairs to the Houlton Historical and Art Museum as well as to staff the museum so it may remain open more regularly.	HHS	2008- 2010
9. Continue to support recreational and social programs for children and adults.	PRD	2008 On-Going
10. Support continued and open dialogue with the SAD on programs, funding, LSRS/consolidation, and capital projects through semi-annual joint meetings of the Council, Planning Board, and School Board.	SAD, TM, CDP	2008 On-Going
11. Continue to support a community educational system which allows both young people and adults to excel in their chosen areas of interest through existing school programs that emphasize educational achievement for the entire community.	SAD	On-Going
12. Establish a Town Government Study Committee to periodically review and update the Houlton Town Government study completed in 2000. The Committee should measure outcomes from recommendations that have been implemented, and prioritize remaining recommendations for implementation or removal. The Committee should present its findings to the Town Council, publicize the findings, and offer appropriate support including the need for professional assistance in updating the study.	TM, TC, TO	2009
13. Cultivate local contacts with media sources by routinely submitting meeting notices, post-meeting articles, and a list detailing accomplishments to promote public interest and awareness. Encourage local media to publish a complete community calendar including annual events and festivals. Follow up on all contacts.	TM	2008 On-Going

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
14. Encourage Houlton Water Company to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adequately plan for the future, continue to assess the needs of the electric, wastewater, and water systems annually and continue to commission an engineering assessment every five years b. Keep the town informed of priority public sewer replacement needs so that town can assist HWC in seeking out financial resources such as grants to help defray replacement costs. c. Act on identified solutions to malfunctioning septic systems near McPartland Wells recharge zone on Bangor Road when opportunity arises. d. As part of the public education program, articulate electric, wastewater, and drinking water priorities and concerns to neighboring communities businesses, and community leaders to foster regional cooperation e. Help the Town assess water and sewer connectivity to currently undeveloped lots within the growth area as they are considered for potential development projects. f. Continue to work with watershed protection groups such as Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition to secure cooperation to minimize point and non-point source pollution. 	HWC, CDP, DEP, CEO	2008 On-Going
15. Continue to work with service providers to prepare the community for technological advancements in products and services for telecommunications including high-speed broadband internet access, video conferencing, etc., particularly for rural and home-based small business enterprises.	CDP, PB, TO, SAD	On-Going
16. Expand GIS utilization throughout municipal departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seek funding during annual departmental budget process to complete stormwater infrastructure data (and eventually all departmental data) conversion from paper or other incompatible format to digital GIS enabled database format; b. Initiate GIS training and utilization within all applicable municipal departments to make full use of Houlton’s original investment in GIS system. c. Incorporate HWC infrastructure data into municipal GIS database 	TM, PWD, BC, TC	2008-2012
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM		
17. Sponsor a meeting with Town officials and adjoining towns to identify and reinforce shared programs and opportunities for cooperation. Expand cooperative purchasing and explore joint resolutions.	TM, SAD, HWC	2008 annually
18. Continue to pursue least-cost options for solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling; work with regional entities and local service provider to increase recycling volumes and remove recyclables from MSW stream.	TM, CDP	2009 On-Going
19. Support initiatives aimed at stabilizing or lowering energy costs to HWC customers, such as LD742, and the Haynesville transmission line connection to the New England power grid.	TM, TC, HWC	2007 On-going
Key		
ADC Airport Dev. Committee	IF&W Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	PRAB Parks & Rec Advisory Board
BC Budget Committee	LIB Cary Library	PWD Public Works Department
CC Chamber of Commerce	MFS Maine Forest Service	R2C Roads 2000 Committee
CDP Community Devt & Planning.	MDOT Maine Dept. of Transportation	SAD School Admin. District
CEO Code Enforcement Officer	MWC Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TA Tax Assessor
DEP Dept. of Env. Protection	NMDC N. Maine Devt Commission	TC Town Council
DTC Downtown Committee	PD Police Department,	TM Town Manager
HHS Houlton Historical Society	PB Planning Board	TO Town Officials
HWC Houlton Water Company	PRD Parks & Recreation Department	ZBA Zoning Bd. of Appeals

Fiscal Capacity

Introduction

In Houlton, as with most other Maine towns, the demand of providing services devolves from the federal and state levels to the municipal level. This ultimately places the burden of funding these services on a town's number one source of revenue: the property tax. Over the past five years, Houlton has been successful in managing its' surplus to protect against reductions in State and Federal funding., and using it to stabilize its tax rate, while implementing needed projects and equipment purchases.

As the people of Houlton consider recommendations to make capital improvements and/or upgrade public services during the comprehensive planning process, they must also consider their ability to finance these improvements. This chapter will show that the Town has maintained its financial health while making some major fiscal improvements. It will also analyze the Town's fiscal capacity to meet future needs through public expenditures and other fiscal policies.

Houlton's Municipal Finances

The following table lists generalized revenues and expenditures over the past five years. The table also calculates the difference between revenues and expenditures for each year, and identifies deficit and surplus years.

Revenues

The table shows a 4.0% percent increase in total revenue from 2004 to 2007. The mil rate, 25.50 in 2004, dropped to 18.5 in 2006, with State Revenue Sharing accounting for 11.5% of the 2004 revenues and 12.1% in 2007. Over this same time period Local Road Assistance funds have been similarly stable, account for 1.2% to the total 2004 revenues and 1.5% of the 2007 revenues.

Expenditures

Municipal expenses have increased between 2004 and 2007, by 5.7%. Municipal expenses have exceeded expenditures during all four years examined. The largest annual expenditure for Houlton is education and accounts for 24.0% of the total expenditures in 2007. This is followed by the police protection at 14.0%. Debt service during this time period remained stable, going from 2.9% in 2004 to 3.0% in 2007.

Table 13 Revenues and Expenditures Summary

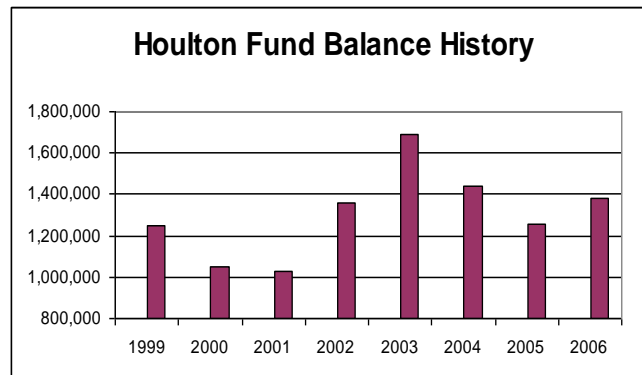
	2004 BUDGET	% Of TOTAL	2005 BUDGET	% Of TOTAL	2006 BUDGET	% Of TOTAL	2007 BUDGET	% Of TOTAL	INCREASE
REVENUES:									
PROPERTY TAXES	\$ 4,442,500	59.0%	\$ 4,261,005	57.0%	\$ 4,311,005	56.3%	\$ 4,361,005	55.7%	\$ (81,495)
EXCISE TAX	\$ 704,000	9.4%	\$ 729,000	9.8%	\$ 729,000	9.5%	\$ 779,000	10.0%	\$ 75,000
REVENUE SHARING	\$ 862,700	11.5%	\$ 944,441	12.6%	\$ 945,000	12.3%	\$ 950,000	12.1%	\$ 87,300
LOCAL ROAD ASSIST	\$ 92,300	1.2%	\$ 92,300	1.2%	\$ 95,000	1.2%	\$ 116,000	1.5%	\$ 23,700
HOMESTEAD REIMBURSE	\$ 282,800	3.8%	\$ 175,469	2.3%	\$ 175,469	2.3%	\$ 180,000	2.3%	\$ (102,800)
INTEREST	\$ 99,000	1.3%	\$ 182,400	2.4%	\$ 182,400	2.4%	\$ 182,400	2.3%	\$ 83,400
FIRE & EMS CONTRACTS	\$ 202,939	2.7%	\$ 194,375	2.6%	\$ 174,233	2.3%	\$ 176,000	2.2%	\$ (26,939)
AMBULANCE INCOME	\$ 450,000	6.0%	\$ 540,000	7.2%	\$ 650,000	8.5%	\$ 700,000	8.9%	\$ 250,000
CIVIC CENTER RENTAL	\$ 89,000	1.2%	\$ 89,000	1.2%	\$ 91,500	1.2%	\$ 91,500	1.2%	\$ 2,500
OTHER	\$ 299,220	4.0%	\$ 264,382	3.5%	\$ 300,207	3.9%	\$ 290,770	3.7%	\$ (8,450)
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 7,524,459	100.0%	\$ 7,472,372	100.0%	\$ 7,653,814	100.0%	\$ 7,826,675	100.0%	\$ 302,216
EXPENDITURES:									
ADMINISTRATION	\$ 324,840	4.3%	\$ 326,977	4.1%	\$ 537,935	6.9%	\$ 553,540	6.8%	\$ 228,700
ASSESSING	\$ 51,077	0.7%	\$ 58,250	0.6%	\$ 75,805	1.0%	\$ 79,473	1.0%	\$ 28,396
PROTECTION	\$ 519,041	6.9%	\$ 556,640	6.6%	\$ 390,111	5.0%	\$ 416,399	5.1%	\$ (102,642)
POLICE	\$ 838,748	11.1%	\$ 838,761	10.6%	\$ 1,158,515	15.0%	\$ 1,139,626	14.0%	\$ 300,878
FIRE	\$ 357,094	4.7%	\$ 370,381	4.5%	\$ 503,323	6.5%	\$ 503,122	6.2%	\$ 146,028
AMBULANCE	\$ 387,046	5.1%	\$ 436,325	4.9%	\$ 598,211	7.7%	\$ 634,697	7.8%	\$ 247,651
HEALTH & S.S.	\$ 39,820	0.5%	\$ 39,670	0.5%	\$ 32,270	0.4%	\$ 33,265	0.4%	\$ (6,555)
CODE ENFORCEMENT	\$ 55,851	0.7%	\$ 60,741	0.7%	\$ 65,326	0.8%	\$ 70,791	0.9%	\$ 14,940
GRANT WRITER	\$ 46,758	0.6%	\$ 46,651	0.6%	\$ 63,401	0.8%	\$ 65,726	0.8%	\$ 18,968
CEMETERIES	\$ 42,700	0.6%	\$ 45,599	0.5%	\$ 55,779	0.7%	\$ 55,359	0.7%	\$ 12,659
PUBLIC BUILDINGS	\$ 25,075	0.3%	\$ 29,524	0.3%	\$ 31,400	0.4%	\$ 34,405	0.4%	\$ 9,330
PUBLIC WORKS	\$ 652,362	8.7%	\$ 700,939	8.2%	\$ 924,468	11.9%	\$ 933,942	11.5%	\$ 281,580
PARKS & RECREATION	\$ 361,857	4.8%	\$ 393,224	4.6%	\$ 485,048	6.3%	\$ 504,133	6.2%	\$ 142,276
AIRPORT	\$ 27,460	0.4%	\$ 26,256	0.3%	\$ 15,136	0.2%	\$ 15,850	0.2%	\$ (11,610)
PLANNING BOARD	\$ 3,925	0.1%	\$ 3,860	0.0%	\$ 3,820	0.0%	\$ 4,350	0.1%	\$ 425
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$ 769,572	10.2%	\$ 912,090	9.7%	\$ 33,208	0.4%	\$ 42,590	0.5%	\$ (726,982)
DEBT SERVICE	\$ 217,049	2.9%	\$ 236,421	2.7%	\$ 236,421	3.1%	\$ 241,181	3.0%	\$ 24,132
OTHER AGENCIES	\$ 157,154	2.1%	\$ 142,432	2.0%	\$ 145,884	1.9%	\$ 179,742	2.2%	\$ 22,588
TAX ABATEMENTS	\$ 12,000	0.2%	\$ 28,500	0.2%	\$ 12,000	0.2%	\$ 12,000	0.1%	\$ -
SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$ 504,015	6.7%	\$ 411,172	6.4%	\$ 231,220	3.0%	\$ 410,331	5.0%	\$ (93,684)
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 5,393,444	71.7%	\$ 5,664,413	68.1%	\$ 5,599,281	72.3%	\$ 5,930,522	72.7%	\$ 537,078
COUNTY TAX	\$ 220,000	2.9%	\$ 226,710	2.8%	\$ 224,927	2.9%	\$ 265,080	3.3%	\$ 45,080
SAD #29	\$ 2,100,000	27.9%	\$ 2,025,173	26.5%	\$ 1,925,000	24.8%	\$ 1,960,000	24.0%	\$ (140,000)
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 7,713,444	100.0%	\$ 7,916,296	100.0%	\$ 7,749,208	100.0%	\$ 8,155,602	100.0%	\$ 442,158

Source: Town of Houlton financial reports

Undesignated Balance

Houlton has an undesignated fund balance account. This account is utilized for emergency expenditures as deemed necessary by the town council, and is the cash flow used by the town to avoid excessive tax anticipation borrowing. In each of the past six years the town has used the undesignated fund balance account to compensate for the difference between revenues and expenditures in order to minimize the impact to the mil rate.

Houlton Undesignated Balance, 1999 - 2006



Municipal Finances, Percent Change 2004 - 2007

The following tables lists the percent change in revenues and expenditures each year and then calculates the percent change over the past four years. The tables do not include the undesignated fund balance for each year. The table illustrates that changes in many categories of revenues and expenditures can have yearly fluctuations. For example, State Revenue Sharing had a four year change of 10.1%, but was driven by a 9.5% change between 2004 and 2005.

Table 14 Houlton Revenues 2004 to 2007

	<u>2004-2005</u>	<u>2005 - 2006</u>	<u>2006 - 2007</u>	<u>2004 - 2007</u>
TAXES-REAL ESTATE	-4.1%	1.2%	1.2%	-1.8%
EXCISE TAXES	3.6%	0.0%	6.9%	10.7%
INTEREST/EARNINGS	84.2%	0.0%	-2.6%	79.4%
FEES	0.6%	0.0%	-4.2%	-3.6%
LICENSES/PERMITS	-16.7%	0.0%	-2.0%	-18.3%
SALES PROCEEDS	-42.9%	0.0%	-75.0%	-85.7%
UNCLASSIFIED	20.0%	58.0%	-17.7%	56.0%
RENTALS	-40.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%
REVENUE SHARING	9.5%	0.1%	0.5%	10.1%
TREE GROWTH REIMB	23.1%	0.0%	-37.5%	-23.1%
SNOWMOBILE REGIST	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
VETERANS EXEMPTIONS	-24.0%	0.0%	-21.1%	-40.0%
HOMESTEAD REIMBURSE	-38.0%	0.0%	2.6%	-36.4%
LOCAL ROAD ASSIST	0.0%	2.9%	22.1%	25.7%
ADMINISTRATION	0.0%	4.5%	20.0%	25.4%
ASSESSING			-66.7%	
POLICE	35.0%	25.4%	-5.9%	59.3%
FIRE	9.9%	4.9%	-0.6%	14.6%
AMBULANCE	12.8%	13.8%	7.2%	37.6%
HEALTH & HUMAN	0.0%	-28.0%	0.0%	-28.0%
CODE ENFORCEMENT	-26.1%	229.4%	-32.1%	65.2%
CEMETERIES	-13.3%	0.0%	16.9%	1.3%
PUBLIC WORKS	400.0%	0.0%	-20.0%	300.0%
WASTE DISPOSAL	55.9%	-51.3%	-2.4%	-25.9%
PARKS & RECREATION	1.2%	3.4%	5.6%	10.6%
GARAGE	-77.2%	-51.9%	0.0%	-89.0%
TOTAL REVENUES	-0.7%	2.4%	2.3%	4.0%

Source: Town of Houlton financial reports

On the expenditure side, the percentage changes are impacted in 2004 to 2005 by the reallocation of employee benefits from a single line in the budget to each department where the personnel are located. Aside from this, the largest gains are in capital improvement projects for 2007 and roads for 2007 where additional funding was required to update the town's infrastructure.

Table 15 - Houlton Expenditures 2004 - 2007

	<u>2004 - 2005</u>	<u>2005 - 2006</u>	<u>2006 - 2007</u>	<u>2004 - 2007</u>
ADMINISTRATION	0.7%	64.5%	2.9%	70.4%
ASSESSING	14.0%	30.1%	4.8%	55.6%
PROTECTION	7.2%	-29.9%	6.7%	-19.8%
POLICE	0.0%	38.1%	-1.6%	35.9%
FIRE	3.7%	35.9%	0.0%	40.9%
AMBULANCE	12.7%	37.1%	6.1%	64.0%
HEALTH & S.S.	-0.4%	-18.7%	3.1%	-16.5%
CODE ENFORCEMENT	8.8%	7.5%	8.4%	26.7%
GRANT WRITER	-0.2%	35.9%	3.7%	40.6%
CEMETERIES	6.8%	22.3%	-0.8%	29.6%
PUBLIC BUILDINGS	17.7%	6.4%	9.6%	37.2%
PUBLIC WORKS	7.4%	31.9%	1.0%	43.2%
PARKS & RECREATION	8.7%	23.4%	3.9%	39.3%
AIRPORT	-4.4%	-42.4%	4.7%	-42.3%
PLANNING BOARD	-1.7%	-1.0%	13.9%	10.8%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	18.5%	-96.4%	28.3%	-94.5%
DEBT SERVICE	8.9%	0.0%	2.0%	11.1%
OTHER AGENCIES	-9.4%	2.4%	23.2%	14.4%
TAX ABATEMENTS	137.5%	-57.9%	0.0%	0.0%
PROJECTS	41.1%	-100.0%		-68.2%
ROADS 2000	-0.2%	-7.2%	33.3%	23.5%
CAPITAL RESERVE	-49.3%	-25.4%	132.8%	-12.1%
CAPITAL PROJECTS	-23.3%	-100.0%		-100.0%
COUNTY TAX	3.1%	-0.8%	17.9%	20.5%
SAD #29	-3.6%	-4.9%	1.8%	-6.7%
GRAND TOTAL	2.6%	-2.1%	5.2%	5.7%

Source: Town of Houlton financial reports

Property Valuation and Taxes, 2001-2005

Houlton's primary source of revenue is from property taxes. The following table indicates the annual percent changes and five-year average of the Town's total valuation, property taxes, and mil rate from 2001 to 2005. The tax rate remained constant for the first 4 years, but as anticipated, it dropped dramatically as a result of the town's revaluation, which was completed in 2005. The tax rate is expected to increase slightly over the next few years to address some of the priority capital projects such as heating plant upgrades in several of the town facilities. Town officials expect to stabilize the mil rate once these projects have been completed. The average mil rate for the five-year period was 25.05 mils, but will be significantly lower over the next 5 years.

The recent revaluation adjusted Houlton's total valuation upward by 39.3% in 2005. The average total valuation for the five-year period was \$176,393,960.

Year	Total Valuation	%Change	Property Taxes	%Change	Mil Rate	%change
2001	\$161,356,700		\$4,154,935		25.75	
2002	\$162,115,400	0.5%	\$4,417,653	6.3%	27.25	5.8%
2003	\$162,859,200	0.5%	\$4,437,921	0.5%	27.25	0.0%
2004	\$165,299,000	1.5%	\$4,380,424	-1.3%	26.50	-2.8%
2005	\$230,189,500	39.3%	\$4,258,506	-2.8%	18.50	-30.2%
Avg.	\$176,363,960	10.4%	\$4,329,888	0.7%	25.05	-6.8%

Source: Maine Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summaries, Houlton Tax Assessor, 2006

Valuation Ratio to State Valuation, 2001-2005

The next table represents the State's Valuation in comparison to the Town's valuation of itself. Educational Funding, Revenue Sharing, and other programs are administered to the municipality based on the State Valuation.

The Town's valuation as a percentage of the State's full value increased from 94.67% in 2004 to 128.63% in 2001. Prior to that year, the certified State rate had remained constant and well above the range acceptable to the State. The revaluation was necessary to accurately reflect a robust increase in market values between 2000 and 2003.

Year	Assessed Value by Town	Municipal Tax Rate	Assessed Tax by Town	Cert. Rate by State	Cert. Full Value by State	State Full Value Rate
2001	\$161,356,700	25.75	\$4,154,935	93.48%	\$172,600,000	25.25
2002	\$162,115,400	27.25	\$4,417,653	93.12%	\$174,100,000	26.70
2003	\$162,859,200	27.25	\$4,437,921	93.78%	\$173,650,000	26.15
2004	\$165,299,000	26.50	\$4,380,424	94.67%	\$174,600,000	-
2005	\$230,189,500	18.50	\$4,258,506	128.63%	\$178,950,000	-

Source: Houlton Tax Assessor, 2006

Per Capita Taxes, 2001-2005

Using the 2000 US Census population figure for Houlton of 6,476 and yearly property tax data, it is estimated that the property tax spending per capita experienced an increase of 24.9% from 2001 to 2005. By comparison, the last comprehensive plan showed a 48.96 % change from 1990 to 1994. The following table indicates that the average total property tax levy for the Town for the five-year period was \$4,329,888 and the average spending per capita for the same time period was \$668.61.

Table 18 - Houlton Per Capita Tax 2001-2005		
Year	Property Tax Levy	Per Capita Tax
2001	\$4,154,935	\$641.59
2002	\$4,417,653	\$682.16
2003	\$4,437,921	\$685.29
2004	\$4,380,424	\$676.41
2005	\$4,258,506	\$657.58
Average	\$4,329,888	\$668.61
% Change 2001-2005	24.9%	

Source: 2000 US Census and Houlton Tax Assessment Records

Projected Property Valuation and Taxes, 2006-2010

The next chart projects Houlton's property valuation and taxes over the next five years. Projections are based on past trends and should not be used as predictions, but rather as guidelines in mapping the Town's financial capabilities. The chart uses the net figure for Property Taxes. This is the Town's amount needed to be raised to meet the budget. This figure is then calculated by a municipal formula to arrive at the mil rate.

In reviewing the years 1999 to date as a basis for future predictions, recent history shows an average annual increase of .84% in the local total taxable valuation. Utilizing that percentage, the total valuation is projected to increase by 3.4% during the 5-year period. The average yearly change in total valuation from 2006 to 2010 is 0.84%, and the average valuation for the 5 years would be \$237,387,020.

Again, in reviewing the years 1999 to date as a basis for future predictions, recent history shows an average annual increase of 1.40% in the property taxes. Utilizing that percentage, the total property taxes projected would increase by 5.7% from 2006 to 2010, with an average property tax for the 5-year period of \$4,441,121.

Based on the projections for taxable valuation and property taxes, the tax rate projections would result in a 0.5% increase each of the 5 years with the average being 18.70 mils. Assuming a constant rate of increase in property taxes of 2.0 percent per year after 1996, and an average tax rate of around 24.42, Houlton's projected total valuation will rise accordingly. These figures could change if Houlton experiences economic growth in the near future.

Table 19 - Houlton Projected Property Valuation and Taxes, 2006-2010						
Year	Total Valuation	%change	Property Taxes	%change	Tax Rate	%change
2006	\$233,432,300	-	\$4,318,498	-	18.50	-
2007	\$235,393,100	0.84%	\$4,378,957	1.40%	18.60	0.5%
2008	\$237,370,400	0.84%	\$4,440,262	1.40%	18.70	0.5%
2009	\$239,364,300	0.84%	\$4,502,426	1.40%	18.80	0.5%
2010	\$241,375,000	0.84%	\$4,565,460	1.40%	18.90	0.5%
Avg.	\$237,387,020	0.84%	\$4,441,121	1.40%	18.70	0.5%

Source: Houlton Tax Assessor, 2007

Projected Municipal Finances and Capital Equipment Purchases and Needs, 2008 - 2014

Houlton’s capital equipment and physical plant needs over the next six years are projected in the tables below. The first table represents the capital needs for town owned buildings.

Town of Houlton Capital Plan - Buildings				
<u>Building</u>	<u>Immediate</u>	<u>Within 3 Years</u>	<u>3 to 6 Years</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Town Office	\$ 41,000	\$ 44,700	\$ 5,000	\$ 90,700
White Building	\$ 18,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,000
GMB	\$ 118,600	\$ 254,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 387,600
Town Garage	\$ 33,800	\$ 100,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 149,800
Fire & Police	\$ 55,100	\$ 102,400	\$ 15,000	\$ 172,500
Civic Center	\$ 28,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 48,000
Airport Hangar	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000
Airport Terminal Building	\$ 1,800	\$ 14,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 22,800
Houlton International	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Amphitheater	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500
Park Craft / Day Care Bldg	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 400
Park Babe Ruth Building	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Park Tool Shop	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Park Exhibit Hall	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ 3,500
Fair Office	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ 3,500
Ward Donated Building	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000
Cary Library	\$ 35,000	\$ 17,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 152,000
Cemetery Maintenance Bldg	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 388,200	\$ 549,100	\$ 178,000	\$ 1,115,300

The second outlines Houlton’s need for capital expenditures on equipment.

2006 Capital Plan - Equipment Needs			
	<u>Immediate Need</u>	<u>Within 3 Years</u>	<u>3 to 6 Years</u>
<u>Public Works</u>			
Used Wheeler Dump/Plow (2) to replace two 21 year old units	\$ 40,000		
Used or Rebuilt Backhoe		\$ 50,000	
Mower for Airport		\$ 7,800	
Replace 1968 AC Loader with 1995 CAT Loader - Replace 1995 with new	\$ 163,000		
Used Salt Sand Truck		\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Used Dump Plow/Sander to replace 1986 Ford			\$ 60,000
One Ton Dump Truck to replace 1978 unit			\$ 34,000
TOTAL	\$ 203,000	\$ 72,800	\$ 109,000
<u>Cemetery</u>			
Replacement Mower	\$ 9,000		
TOTAL	\$ 9,000	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Police</u>			
Replacement Mobil Video Equipment		\$ 18,000	
TOTAL	\$ -	\$ 18,000	\$ -
<u>Fire</u>			
Used Vehicle for Chief (\$25,000 + \$5,000 retrofitting)	\$ 30,000		
TOTAL	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Parks & Recreation</u>			
Replace 1998 Mower	\$ 15,700		
Replace 1994 Tractor		\$ 20,000	
Bunker Rake for Ball Fields			\$ 11,000
Trade rec van for a used 10 passenger		\$ 7,000	
TOTAL	\$ 15,700	\$ 27,000	\$ 11,000
TOTAL	\$ 257,700	\$ 99,800	\$ 120,000
GRAND TOTAL ALL YEARS			\$ 477,500

Over the next six years the Town of Houlton will have a need for capital expenditures of \$1,592,800. These costs will be addressed through a combination of current year budget capacity and/or short term borrowing.

Fiscal Capacity Analysis

Certain capital equipment purchases such as police cruisers and replacement ambulances are addressed through the use of reserve accounts that are funded each year. Other smaller capital expenditure needs can be accounted for in the annual budget while maintaining a conservative approach to taxpayer impact.

The implementation of Tax Incremental Financing Districts in those areas of town most likely to see retail and/or industrial development will allow the town to incent future economic development through the use of Credit Enhancement Agreements, shelter new growth in assess value in these districts from county and school assessments, and earmark captured tax value on the incremental investments for the purpose of infrastructure needs within the district. These reserve accounts include the potential for bond financing for sewer and water expansion, direct funded capital improvements, and public safety expenditures. As such, we do not see the need for the Town of Houlton to acquire additional long term bond debt.

Debt Service

The Town of Houlton has long taken a conservative approach to debt, and as a result enjoys of low debt service ratio. The following table highlights the town’s successful management of debt service over the period from 2000 to 2007.

	Debt Service	Revenue	Ratio Revenue to Debt Service
2000	282,812	6,217,856	22:1
2001	251,027	6,865,927	27:1
2002	241,732	6,678,061	28:1
2003	245,098	7,291,098	30:1
2004	217,049	7,524,459	35:1
2005	236,421	7,472,372	32:1
2006	236,421	7,653,814	32:1
2007	241,181	7,826,675	32:1

Annual Capital Reserve Account Allocation

Houlton's annual allotment to the Capital Reserve Account is 1/2 mil. Since this figure is based on the Town's valuation, this portion of the allotment will be increasing. This amount is subject to additional funding through the annual budget cycle process, as well as augmentation from funding for small projects, and capital projects.

Capital Reserve Account and Project Funding

	Capital Reserve	Capital Projects	Small Projects	Roads
2003	215,000	60,000	67,015	162,000
2004	215,000	60,000	67,015	162,000
2005	108,920	46,000	94,550	161,702
2006	81,220	0	0	150,000
2007	189,043	0	21,288	200,000

Houlton's Roads 2000 Reserve Account

Houlton has a Roads 2000 Reserve Account to repair Town roads and streets. The account receives an allotment of one mil annually to complete projects prioritized by year. The table on the previous page shows expenditures from 2003 to 2007. During this time period, the town will have allocated \$835,702 for road repair.

Houlton's Airport Reserve Account

As mandated by the FAA, Houlton has established an Airport Reserve Account for improvements to its airport. Expenditures have been projected for these improvements; specific projects will be designated in more detail on a yearly basis.

Airport Reserve Account Chart

Airport Improvement Account			
	Income	Expenditures	Balance
2003	14,919	12,347	83,092
2004	24,654	16,440	91,006
2005	10,032	10,041	90,997
2006	3,748	34,103	65,042

Local Economy

Economic factors are the basic "facts of life" which define and limit the type and extent of activity in the planning area. Physical planning of the community implies that certain assumptions be made about the local economy and the use of land and water resources of a town. The planning of community facilities and services requires making assumptions about the size of the population and the types of activities to be served. In either case, local conditions must be viewed in the light of regional economic growth and economic structural changes, and their impacts on the community.

Houlton is located in its own Labor Market Area (LMA) which, in addition to Houlton, includes: Amity, Bancroft, Cary Plantation, Crystal, Danforth, Dyer Brook, Hammond Plantation, Haynesville, Hersey, Hodgdon, Island Falls, Kingman Township, Linneus, Littleton, Ludlow, Macwahoc Plantation, Monticello, Moro Plantation, Mount Chase, New Limerick, Oakfield, Orient, Patten, Reed Plantation, Sherman, Stacyville, and Weston. The entire region depends heavily on the Town of Houlton because it is the primary center for employment, retail goods, and services in the LMA. Conversely, Houlton depends on the region's as well as Canada's economic health for its economic well-being. In addition, Houlton's larger and specialized establishments make the Town a service center for residents outside the LMA.

Job holders in Houlton live both inside and outside of the Town. Nearly one-third of the labor force living in Houlton is employed primarily in educational, health, and social services according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In addition to its resident population, people working in Houlton but living in surrounding communities are critical to the survival of local establishments. This regional economic interdependence is important, and is illustrative of the overall connectedness of the region.

Regional Economy

Located at the northeastern corner of the State, Aroostook County borders the Canadian Provinces of Québec and New Brunswick, and is bordered by four Maine counties to the south. Aroostook County is an outstanding inland recreation area with more than 2000 lakes, streams, rivers, and ponds covering some 80,000 acres.

Aroostook County is Maine's largest county with a land area of 6,672 square miles. More than 88 percent of this area consists of heavily wooded land which supports the County's wood, paper, and lumber industries. Less than 8 percent of the land is actually cultivated farmland. However, Aroostook County's rich farmland is the source of 90 percent of Maine's potato crop.

There are four primary geographical regions in Aroostook County: Southern Aroostook, with Houlton, the County seat, as its commercial center; Central Aroostook, the main potato-growing region and business center of the County centering on the Presque Isle-Caribou-Fort Fairfield triangle; the St. John Valley at Maine's northernmost point along the Canadian border; and the giant wilderness area of western Aroostook County comprising roughly two-thirds of the land area.

The vast natural resource base and strong agrarian heritage have fostered an economy based upon the region's natural resources. Forests, extending into adjoining counties, separate Aroostook County from the rest of the state so that it may be visualized as a separate regional economy. Because of this geographic separation, Aroostook County could be described as having an "island economy" and is in some ways separate unto itself.

Between 1870 and 1960, Aroostook County's population more than tripled from 29,606 to 106,064, largely due to the increasing importance of potatoes as a cash crop. Then, from 1960 to 1970, the population dropped 12.8 percent to 92,463 due to the closing of the Presque Isle Air Force Base in 1961, and mechanization of potato production, which required fewer workers, resulting in a labor surplus throughout the region. Workers began leaving Northern Maine to seek the growing number of opportunities and the higher wages offered in the manufacturing sectors of Southern Maine and the rest of New England. This out-migration of working age people is a continuing problem; in 1990, the Aroostook County population decreased to 86,936 and by 2000 had dropped again to 73,938 representing a loss of 23% since 1970.

Houlton is a service center and as such, economic interdependence is a major factor as the surrounding towns and greater region are economically dependent on Houlton in a number of ways. Easy automobile access between Houlton and the surrounding communities permits those living within the region to seek services, goods, and jobs within the Town.

Agriculture

Agriculture and food processing is second only to lumber, wood and paper in importance to the Aroostook County economy. In 2001, farm earnings in Aroostook County amounted to \$25 million on cash sales of approximately \$130 million, and earnings from food processing amounted to \$28 million on sales of between \$170 and \$180 million.⁴ These industries provided nearly 3,000 jobs, accounting for approximately 7% of the County's total employment and personal income. This concentration is much higher than the national averages for these sectors and thus represents a clear area of competitive advantage for the County.

Table 20 Indices of Industry Concentration, Aroostook County 2001

Category	Aroostook	Share of total Aroostook economy	U.S. – share of total economy	Aroostook/U.S. ratio
Farm employment	1,740	4.2%	1.8%	231.3%
Farm proprietors employment	1,061	2.6%	1.3%	196.7%
Farm wage & salary employment	679	1.7%	0.5%	319.0%
Food Processing	1,125	2.7%	0.9%	312.6%
Farm Earnings (\$1,000)	\$ 24,959	2.5%	0.6%	416.7%
Food Processing employment (\$1,000)	\$ 28,076	2.8%	0.9%	311.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/action.cfm> CA25N Total full-time and part-time employment by industry and CA05N Personal income by major source and earnings by industry. Sales of food processors were estimated from 1997 Economic Census data and interviews with industry representatives.

The Potato Industry

The vast majority of Aroostook's agriculture is based on the potato industry. The cash sales of Aroostook farms in 2001 were approximately \$130 million, about \$100 million of which was "farmgate" sales of potatoes.⁵ The sales of Aroostook food processors were estimated to be between \$165 and \$175 million, of which approximately \$160 million was accounted for by potato products.⁶ The \$165 to \$175 million sales of food processors include the value paid to local growers for their produce, so the two sales totals cannot be added to arrive at a single total.

Potato production reports for 2001 indicated that Maine growers produced 16,430,000 cwt at an estimated farmgate value of \$99,401,500. The crop distribution saw 21.4% sold as table stock; 15.4% sold for seed; 43.8% sold for processing in Maine; and 12.4% sold for processing outside Maine. Value added activities brought the total sales value of the 2001 crop to \$293,000,000.

Roughly twenty percent of all potato farms in Maine are located in the Southern Aroostook area, which represents 13 percent of the total potato acreage in Maine (1990). As a whole, the Northern Maine Region contains 92 percent of the total potato acreage in Maine.

There has been a steady decline in the number of potato farms in both the Southern Aroostook area and in the entire state of Maine. Between 1985 and 1990 there was a loss of 24.5 percent of the farms in the Southern Aroostook area representing 1,908 acres. In the Northern Maine Region and all of Maine, there were losses in the number of farms of 23.6 percent (9,939 acres) and 22.1 percent (11,012 acres), respectively.

Rotation crops grown in Aroostook include oats, barley, and more recently mustard and canola, which have proven potential as high value rotation crops for specialty rather than commodity markets. Table 2 shows how Aroostook County stacks up in production of crops and livestock as compared to Maine.

Table 21 Crops & Livestock by Type, Maine and Aroostook, 1997

Crop/Livestock	Maine	Aroostook	Aroostook %
Potatoes (1,000 acres)	73.1	65.5	90%
Other Vegetables (1,000 acres)	11.7	7.4	63%
Oats (1,000 acres)	22.4	20.6	92%
Corn (1,000 acres)	27.5	0.8	3%
Hay (1,000 acres)	214.0	22.0	10%
Beef Cows (1,000)	11.8	2.9	25%
Milk Cows (1,000)	40.7	1.5	4%
Hogs & Pigs (1,000)	6.0	1.5	25%
Chickens (million)	6.1	1.1	18%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997 Census of Agriculture

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census 1997 Economic Census and interviews with industry participants.

For hay and milk cows, Aroostook is less important because the bulk of Maine's dairy industry is concentrated in the center of the state. However, the area of beef production holds great promise. While sales of livestock and poultry product accounted for only 5% of Aroostook farm sales, Aroostook farms accounted for 14% of the state's beef farms and 25% of the state's beef cows.

Animal Units

According to the Cooperative Extension Service in Houlton, Southern Aroostook has the most animal units (and, subsequently, corn silage) than any other region in the County. Many of the smaller and/or side hill fields and croplands with shallow depth to bedrock soils located in Southern Aroostook are more conducive to pasture and haylands, which originally led to more farmers operating dairy and beef farms. Another factor that greatly influenced the growth of dairy and livestock operations in Houlton and other Southern Aroostook communities was available infrastructure (local dairy processor) and easier access to markets for livestock in Central and Southern Maine. The staff of the Southern Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance to the region's livestock producers that include: cattle weighing and grading technical assistance programs, sponsorship of the Aroostook Beef Conference, and technical assistance and support of the Feeder Auction Program held in Houlton each year. As a result of all these factors, Southern Aroostook also has better farm diversification than the rest of the County. Unfortunately, data on animal units is not readily available at the sub-county level. The latest U.S. Agricultural Census figures for Aroostook County show that, in most cases, animal units decreased since the previous agricultural census.

Houlton and the Southern Aroostook sub-region have seen a significant amount of dairy and beef farming over the decades. Houlton Farms Dairy (HFD), a locally owned and operated dairy serving Southern Aroostook dairy farmers since 1938, purchased milk from 35 dairy farmers in 1965. By 1974 the number of milk producers served by HFD had decreased to 18, and today there are only 3 dairy farming operations being served by HFD. However, HFD officials are processing the same quantity of milk today, from 3 producers, as they processed when they served over 30 dairy farmers in the 1960's. This is a further testimony to the trends in agriculture which have seen many smaller farming operations give way to larger-scale farming operations that have been able to afford improved farming technology (more efficient equipment, enhanced farm management techniques, etc.) due to economies of scale available with larger operations.

Niche Farming

Niche farming is gaining popularity in southern Aroostook. Fourteen organic farms in Aroostook County are certified by the Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association (MOFGA). At least one, Wood Prairie Farm, has developed a substantial market through internet sales. Together these enterprises comprise a cluster of opportunity within the larger agriculture sector. There is also a red deer farm in Ludlow (Shakaree Red Deer Farm) that currently has about 600 deer. The deer are raised for hides, horns (medicinal and herbal uses), meat, breeding, and hunting. The deer farm has its business office in Houlton. Alpacas, goats, and even ostrich have been or are being raised in southern Aroostook for specialty export markets.

Agricultural Conclusion

Agriculture and the potato industry in particular, is an important component in Houlton's economy. This is true for both today and in the past, as Aroostook County was to a great extent the “breadbasket” of the United States in the 1800’s. As such, it is important and necessary to promote sustainable agricultural practices that will allow potato and other crop farming to continue well into the foreseeable future. In addition, the area’s agricultural future can actually be strengthened by the promotion of niche markets, such as organic farms.

The Southern Aroostook region enjoys a greater agricultural diversity than either Northern or Central Aroostook. In addition to potatoes, Southern Aroostook is endowed with successful farms growing small grains and vegetables as well as farms raising dairy cows and an assortment of animal units.

There are two current trends in the agricultural farming industry, including larger size farms, but fewer of them. In addition, farms are larger in Aroostook County, on average, than in the rest of the state. Any remaining smaller farms must find niche markets in order to compete and survive. For example, some farmers are growing different (broccoli, barley, flax, etc.) crops for sale at the local markets. Growing these crops reduces shipping costs and can result in savings to the consumer.

In looking at the future of agriculture, much depends on the entrepreneur who has the ideas, skills and knowledge to develop new business lines or expand existing ones. This may mean growing produce and finding new ways to market it, or it may mean taking existing produce and creating new products with it. Why the importance of marketing? Consumer expenditures have been rising for food, while actual dollars received by farmers have been declining. The area between farm value and consumer expenditures is the processing and marketing cost. This means that the growth in food expenditures has been going toward processing and marketing. Many of the successes in Maine in agriculture in the last decade have been entrepreneurs that have found ways to market new or existing products in new ways, either through existing stores or via the internet. Training in entrepreneurial activity will be important for the continued growth of agriculture in Maine and Aroostook County.⁷

Houlton currently protects its agricultural and farm heritage from development or conflicting land uses through its zoning code by regulating land uses in rural farm (RF) districts. The Town has evaluated the intent of and requirements within RF districts as part of the land use chapter. The Town recognizes that it should protect its farms outside the identified urban growth area, and should otherwise discourage higher-density development which could threaten its valuable farm resources in rural areas.

⁷ *Regional Economic Development And Strategic Marketing Plan - Town Of Houlton, Maine; Final Report – March 8, 2004* by Jim Damicis Associates

Forestry

Approximately 88 percent of Aroostook County is forested primarily with spruce, fir, maple, birch, and beech trees. The County is the largest timber-producing county in Maine. There are a number of mills in the region that employ Houlton residents. According to the existing land use map prepared for the comprehensive plan, 11,900 acres or 51 percent of Houlton's land area is forested. There are also portions of the Town that are considered "working forests."

Forestry data is difficult to obtain for the Southern Aroostook area due in large part to the lack of managed forest land. Most of the managed lands are small woodlots between agricultural fields. For the most part, landowners look to these woodlots for an extra source of income during winter months when other crops cannot be grown. As a result, some of these lots are "managed" for a one-time harvest that produces a one-time cash flow for the owner.

The 2004 data for land in Tree Growth tax by town (see table below) is available, but should not be considered representative of the amount of forest land in each town. Since the Tree Growth tax program is voluntary, landowners may not choose to participate for two reasons: the property taxes may not be high enough to warrant participation in the program or the owner may have future plans to convert the woodlot, which would then incur penalties. The program data, therefore, only gives a picture of those who, for various reasons, have chosen to participate in the program.

Table 22 Valuation, Number of Parcels and Acres in Tree Growth Tax* in Houlton, 2004

Town	#TG Parcels	SW acres	Mixed wood acres	Hard wood acres	Total acres	Total value
Houlton	15	195	196	208	599	\$62,263

Aspen, or poplar, is the predominant tree species in the Town. Virtually all of the aspen harvested is used for waferboard. The Louisiana Pacific mill in New Limerick and J.M. Huber mill in Easton are the mills that purchase aspen for waferboard. Spruce and fir harvested today frequently goes to the J. Paul Levesque mill in Ashland, Domtar's Pulp & Paper Mill in Baileyville, Katahdin paper Company in Millinocket or the Irving mill in St. Leonard, New Brunswick. There are two log home manufacturing companies in Southern Aroostook: Ward Cedar Log Homes of Houlton and Katahdin Forest Products in Oakfield, which are purchasers of cedar. Many of the recent timber harvest operations on small woodlots are buffered by agriculture fields or are away from developed areas. Based upon current land use patterns and resource constraints, such as wet soils, steep slopes, and accessibility, development does not appear to be significantly impacting Houlton's forest resources.

In general, most forest lands within Houlton are associated with a farm. Some landowners and/or farmers are converting marginal agricultural land to spruce plantations. Others are planting Christmas trees. A shift to well-managed woodlots and plantations could improve future forestry income within the Town.

Tourism

There are over 2,000 lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds in Northern Maine, covering some 80,000 acres. Combined with its vast forestlands, Northern Maine is an outstanding inland recreation area. However, according to data and analysis completed by Frank O’Hara of Planning Decisions and contained in *Aroostook Cluster Report – Part 1*, September 30, 2003, tourism is growing more slowly in Aroostook County than it is in neighboring New Brunswick or than it is in coastal Maine. And tourism is growing more slowly in the Houlton area than it is in the rest of Aroostook County. Data in the Aroostook Cluster Report shows that County lodging sales increased by 48% between 1990 and 2002 – about half the rate of growth of the state as a whole (86%). Within Aroostook County itself, the Presque Isle/Caribou region (at 47%) roughly tracked County lodging sales growth from 1990 to 2002, the Houlton area did worse (14%), while the Fort Kent area -- starting from a very low base – did much better (283%).

The Houlton Visitor Center experienced annual decreases in visitors between 1988 and 1994. Since 1994 visits have remained relatively consistent (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: Maine Tourism Association

The decline in visits is attributed to the closing of the Loring Air Force Base and the decline in value of the Canadian dollar compared with US currency.

Tourism development organizations in the Southern Aroostook County area include the Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, the Maine Publicity Bureau, and Aroostook County Tourism (ACT). Tourism revolves around outdoor recreation opportunities, especially winter activities, and the region’s natural resource-based economy. Houlton lacks a single major draw such as a ski resort or other natural point of interest, but has the potential to tap into and promote tourism development further with a combination of historic buildings and traditional market square, and its

proximity to the only major international border crossing in the County; important transportation routes including I-95 and US Route 1; and a variety of nearby outdoor recreation opportunities, forested areas, and scenic vistas. These and other factors could fill a niche for businesses in tourism.

Houlton Economy

The purpose of looking at the local economy is to help the community create policies and programs which can lead to steady growth over the long run. A community's economy can usually be broken down into two segments: the export base and the secondary base.

The export base is made up of those goods and services that the town exports to other towns or regions in order to bring in money. These earnings can provide the community with the means to import goods and services. Export based industries include manufacturing, agriculture, and forest products. Export based industries have a greater potential for growth due both to the broader market area that they serve and the expansion potential of that market. As export based industries grow, they employ more people and attract new workers to town. This increase tends to have a multiplier effect, increasing the demand for goods and services of the secondary businesses. In turn, secondary based businesses grow and provide more jobs and income.

The secondary based businesses serve the local economy. The size of these local businesses usually is reflective of the size of the town. For instance, in a small town, businesses such as gas stations, grocery stores, and other retail establishments are not likely to grow much. Secondary businesses in Houlton, however, tend to have some growth potential since Houlton is the hub of a labor market area (used here to describe the local economy), and thus draws on a regional market area.

Employment and Unemployment

Houlton's labor force is larger than the labor forces of the immediately surrounding communities, combined. Table 4 shows that the size of the Houlton labor force changed only 1.4% from 2000 to 2005, with a high of 2,762 in 2003 and a low of 2,672 in 2001. However, Houlton's labor force represents only about 0.4% of the entire State of Maine's labor force.

Table 23 Houlton Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Comparison with County and State

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)	Aroostook Unemployment Rate (%)	Maine Unemployment Rate (%)
2005	2,741	2,548	193	7	6.7	4.8
2004	2,735	2,570	165	6	6.2	4.6
2003	2,762	2,582	180	6.5	6.1	5
2002	2,730	2,597	133	4.9	5.2	4.4
2001	2,672	2,557	115	4.3	4.4	3.7
2000	2,704	2,601	103	3.8	4.1	3.3

Source: MDOL Civilian Labor Force Estimates

Unemployment rates are an important measure of an area’s economic well-being. The 2000 unemployment rate of 3.8% in the Town of Houlton was slightly higher than that of Maine and slightly lower than that of the County. In the subsequent years from 2001 to 2005 Houlton’s unemployment picture gradually worsened, as did the County’s, while the State as a whole fared better. Still, Houlton’s unemployment rate stayed close to the State’s rate until 2005 when the gap began to widen significantly. It is noted that during this 6-year time period, Houlton International Corporation – a hardwood furniture parts processor- closed its doors putting over 50 people out of work. Maine Brand Manufacturing also ceased operations in the area at a cost of over 30 jobs.

Table 5 shows that the 2000 Houlton LMA unemployment rate of 4.2%, which takes into consideration the surrounding communities, is higher than the Town, County, and State unemployment rates.

Table 24 Houlton Labor Market Area - Labor Force and Unemployment Statistics

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2005	8,500	7,860	640	7.5
2000	8,310	7,960	350	4.2

Source: MDOL – Labor Market Information Services

Occupation and Industry Employment

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, a large percentage of Houlton residents was employed in management and professional occupations (27%), followed by sales and office occupations at 25.4% and service occupations at 21.7%.

Table 25 Proportional Make-Up of Employed Labor Force by Occupation Type

Type	Houlton		Aroostook County	
	2000	Percent	2000	Percent
Management, Professional, and related occupations	687	27.0	8,896	27.4
Service occupations	554	21.7	5,599	17.2
Sales and office occupations	648	25.4	7,717	23.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	74	2.9	1,128	3.5
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	198	7.8	3,236	10.0
Production, transportation, material moving occupations	388	15.2	5,885	18.1
Totals	2,549	100.0	32,461	100.0

Source: 2000 US Census

As a service center community and county seat, it is understandable that the highest number of jobs were found in the education, health and social services sector, with retail trade and manufacturing sectors following in second and third highest employment sectors. Houlton’s largest employers include a regional hospital, a school district, and wood processing operations, but retail

employment is also significant with two large grocers, a major discount department store, and many smaller specialty retailers. Federal employment is high in Houlton due to Homeland Security jobs associated with the international port of entry and other activities in close proximity to the Canadian border. Public administration, transportation and arts/recreation sectors also have provided an even distribution of employment. Jobs were evenly distributed for lower percentages of the workforce throughout the remaining sectors. This variety of employment for Town residents creates a greater stability in the local economy, and is preferable to having only one or two dominant sectors.

Table 26 Proportional Make-Up of Employed Labor Force by Industry, 2000

Industry	Houlton		Aroostook County	
	2000	Percent	2000	Percent
Agriculture, Mining, Forestry, & Fishing	103	4.0	2,023	6.2
Construction	114	4.5	1,612	5.0
Manufacturing	220	8.6	4,074	12.6
Transportation	144	5.6	867	2.7
Wholesale Trade	84	3.3	4,416	13.6
Information	37	1.5	2,075	6.4
Retail Trade	392	15.4	525	1.6
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	94	3.7	1,021	3.1
Professional, Scientific, Admin., Waste Management	146	5.7	2,085	6.4
Education, Health, Social Services	694	27.2	8,745	26.9
Art. Entertainment, Recreation	185	7.3	1,699	5.2
Other Services	138	5.4	1,709	5.3
Public Administration	198	7.8	1,610	5.0
Totals	2,549	100.0	32,461	100.0

Source: 2000 US Census

Distribution of Workforce

Of the 2,549 employed persons 16 years of age and older living in Houlton, 1,905 (74.7%) were private sector wage and salary workers according to the 2000 U.S. Census. There were 481 (18.9%) government workers distributed between Federal, State, County and local government positions. In addition, there were 159 (6.2 %) self-employed workers representing a 3% drop from the 1990 US Census, and 4 (0.2 %) unpaid family workers in Houlton.

Area Employers

Important employers in the greater Houlton region today include those related to natural resource production in any way, manufacturing, health care, and miscellaneous retail and other services, some of which are discussed below:

Natural Resource Production

Houlton is more or less surrounded by large tracts of woodland. These woodlands are located to the west, south, and east in the Province of New Brunswick. As a result of its location at a major transportation crossroads, Houlton is the destination of a large amount of wood, which is converted into a variety of products. These include cedar log homes, furniture, lumber, shingles, oriented strand board, and musical instruments. Additionally, a portion of this wood is transferred by rail for use elsewhere, primarily for paper.

Manufacturing

Houlton is fortunate to have a fairly diverse manufacturing base. This base is primarily export-oriented, with one major exception: milk products. Major manufacturing employers currently include:

- Ward Cedar Log Homes - As Houlton's oldest wood products manufacturing company, Ward Log Homes specializes in the manufacture of high-quality structures made of interlocking white cedar. Recognized as a nation leader in the industry, the company is located in the Industrial Park and employs over 45 people at the Houlton facility.
- Louisiana Pacific Corporation - This Company is international in scope and owns plants in many parts of the world. The company owns a plant located just over the town line in New Limerick, but which is highly influential in the Houlton economy. This plant manufactures oriented strand board, which is a panelized product used in building construction. The product consists of chips of wood bonded with glue in a high pressure, high temperature system. The bulk of the product is made from poplar, with soft birch also used. In 2006, LP Corp embarked on a \$104 million plant expansion for a new Oriented Strand Lumber (OSL) production line, which will extend the useful life of the New Limerick plant for another 25-50 years and add another 40 jobs to the 111 current positions.
- Tate & Lyle - Tate & Lyle owns and operates a starch plant in Houlton and also has world-wide associations. Using ground tapioca as its primary ingredient, this plant manufactures both food grade and industrial grade starch products used in products as wide-ranging as medicines, paper, puddings and other foods, and ball-point pen ink. They employ approximately 40 people at the Houlton plant and export 100% of the finished product.
- Smith & Wesson - This Company is headquartered in Springfield, Massachusetts and is recognized world-wide as a high-quality handgun manufacturer. Smith & Wesson uses a metals removal process to make the company's complete line of .22 caliber semi-automatic handguns, Walther PPK, and police restraints in its Houlton plant. A recent designation of ISO 9001 status helps the company to market its quality products, and they have over 100 dedicated employees at the Houlton facility.

- Houlton Farms Dairy - This Company is one of two family-owned dairies in Maine and the last remaining family-owned dairy in Aroostook. Buying from local producers, Houlton Farms Dairy manufactures milk, butter, and ice cream of very high quality.
- Steelstone Industries – This Company seasonally employs as many as 35 workers in a variety of construction-related activities including mineral extraction, sand, gravel, and stone processing, ready-mix concrete, hot-mix asphalt, pre-cast concrete products, earth work, and trucking.
- BurrellesLuce – This Company provides full-service, regional and international press clipping services and media monitoring coverage for clients wishing to concentrate their efforts in a particular geographic area. Through their locations in Houlton and Presque Isle, they monitor and extract press clippings from 95 daily newspapers, 791 non-daily newspapers and 163 magazines, as well as providing expert monitoring of the Internet, newswires and broadcast media.

Major Employers Lost:

- Houlton International Corporation- This Company manufactured hardwood furniture parts on demand from national furniture companies. Turnings, blocks, seats, and table tops are just some of the products made by this company. The company used locally grown hardwoods such as ash, maple, and birch. Foreign competition and cheap Asian labor finally forced HIC to close its doors in 2003 at a cost of approximately 50 jobs. The Shiretown Development Corporation subsequently purchased the facility and is actively using it to attract new industry to Houlton.
- James River - This Company operated a transload facility that provided materials for their paper plant in Old Town. The facility employed as many as 15 workers and included a wood-grinding operation, with the wood materials shipped to the paper plant by rail. The chipping plant closed along with the paper mill in 2006.
- Maine Brand Manufacturing – This Company had been located in neighboring Littleton for over 25 years and employed as many as 50 employees in its cutting and sewing operations. A leader in the manufacture of work gloves with plants in Mississippi, and St Lucia, MBM was unable to remain profitable in its Maine location and ceased operations in 2004 at a cost of approximately 25 jobs.

Health Care

As the service center of Southern Aroostook County, Houlton is the regional center for health care services. The major health care providers include:

- Houlton Regional Hospital - Houlton Regional Hospital provides 25 beds for acute-patient care, 28 beds for skilled nursing care, and a wide range of specialized clinics in addition to providing normal hospital and diagnostic functions, many outreach services, and a 24-hour staffed emergency room. The hospital, which employs over 350 people, also serves as a triage center in conjunction with Eastern Maine Medical Center. Additional information on the hospital is in the Public Facilities chapter.
- Community Living Association - Community Living Association provides care and services for both the mildly and profoundly mentally retarded. This organization owns and operates

residential centers which range from institutions to small homes overseen by staff. Services include medical, living skills training, employment, and recreation.

- Nursing Homes - Houlton is also the location of a number of nursing homes which provide a variety of services ranging from simple short-term stays for those recovering from illness or injury to long-term care for those suffering from terminal illness and permanent debilitating disease. Madigan House also has a special wing dedicated to the care of Alzheimer’s patients.

Median Household Income

Household income includes the income of the householder and all persons 15 years old and over living in the household. Median household income is derived by ranking the household incomes within the town and selecting the middle income. Because some households contain only one person, the median household income is usually less than the median family income.

The most recent information on Houlton’s household income is available from the 2000 Census, which reports various income-level statistics for the Town for 1999. The median household income for Houlton in 1999 was \$26,212. This is slightly lower than the Aroostook County median household income of \$28,837 and is significantly lower than the State of Maine median of \$37, 240.

The distribution of income for 1999 is listed in the chart below, and comparisons can be made from chart data between Houlton, Aroostook County, and the State. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 20.4% of households in Houlton earned annual incomes of less than \$10,000. This is a significantly higher percentage than the County figure of 15.7% and the State figure of 10.3%. The greatest percentage of Houlton’s household incomes in all categories falls within this range.

Houlton household income closely mirrors that of the County in the remainder of the income brackets. Maine households statewide tend to earn more than households in either the County or in Houlton.

Houlton, Household Income, 2000

Income Level	Houlton	Percent of Total	Aroostook County	Percent of Total	Maine	Percent of Total
<\$10,000	545	20.4	4,751	15.7	53,259	10.3
\$10,000 to \$14,999	329	12.3	3,051	10.1	39,231	7.6
\$15,000 to \$24,999	401	15.0	5,428	17.9	76,633	14.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	418	15.6	4,677	15.4	73,614	14.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	469	17.5	5,391	17.8	94,848	18.3
\$50,000 to \$74,999	333	12.4	4,645	15.3	100,423	19.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	108	4.0	1,442	4.8	43,341	8.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	54	2.0	606	2.0	24,348	4.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8	0.3	163	0.5	5,866	1.1
>\$200,000	11	0.4	163	0.5	6,809	1.3
Total Households	2,676	100.0	30,317	100.0	518,372	100.0

Source: 2000 US Census

Commuting to Work

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, there were 2,533 workers 16 years of age and over who commute to work. Of that number 84% drove alone, while carpools accounted for only 8.9%, public transportation accounted for 0.2%, and “other means” accounted for 0.5% of workers’ commutes. In addition, 10.3 percent of those responding indicated they either walked or worked at home.

The mean travel time to work in Houlton is 13 minutes. Houlton residents, therefore, have a much shorter commute than do average Aroostook County residents, who commute an average 18.3 minutes, and State of Maine residents, who commute an average 22.7 minutes.

Figures 2 and 3 on the following pages illustrate where people working in Houlton live and where people living in Houlton work. These graphics were developed by the Maine Department of Labor’s Labor Market Information Services using 2000 US Census data.

Houlton is a net importer of labor with 4,312 total workers commuting to work in Houlton and 2,032 of those shown as living and working in Houlton. The imported net workforce was 2,280 workers. Conversely, only 501 Houlton residents commuted to work in other towns.

As a net importer of people, the economic spin off becomes a great benefit to the Houlton economy. This mobile workforce is commuting into Houlton each day and purchases food, gas, lodging, and other services from local businesses, creating a need for these businesses, which in turn employ people to provide the products and services being purchased.

Figure 2

Place of Residence of People Working in Houlton Total Commuters: 4,312

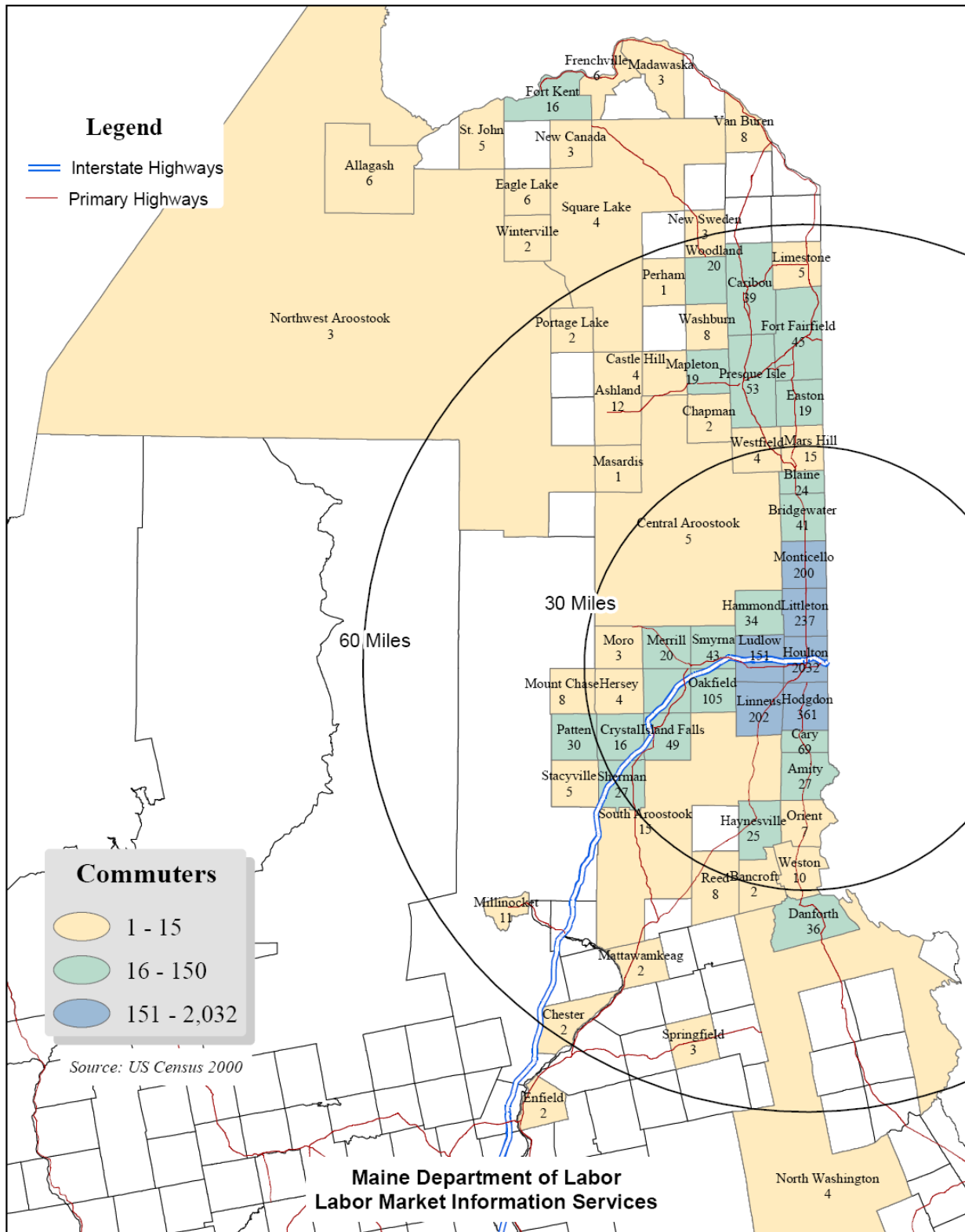
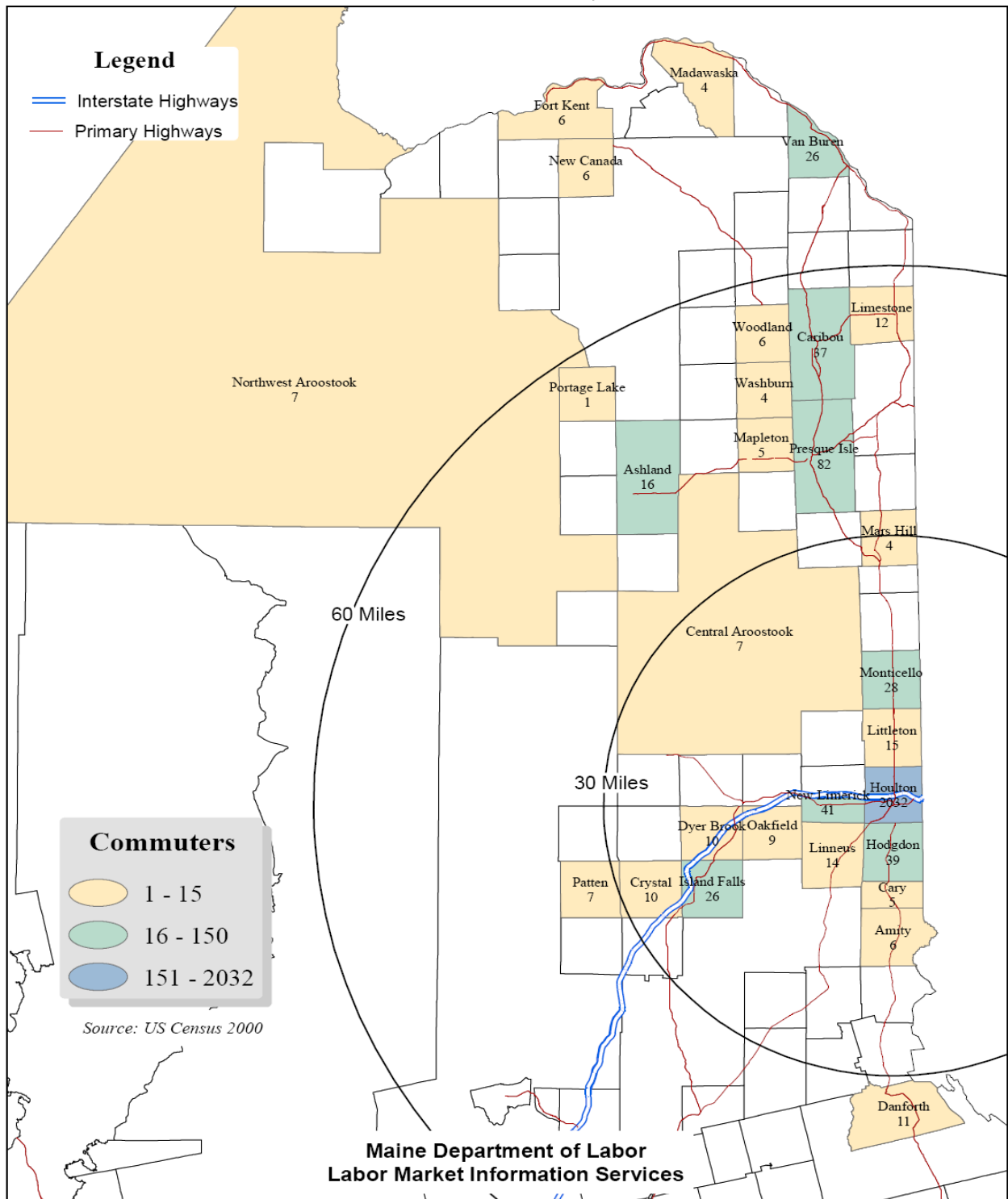


Figure 3

Place of Work of Houlton Residents

Total Commuters: 2,533



Total Consumer Sales

The following table shows that total consumer sales in Houlton fluctuated throughout the period of study. Year-to-year trends in Houlton followed those experienced by the County as a whole, with the greatest peak in Houlton's consumer sales in 2004, while the County peaked in 2002. Though Houlton's sales volume was more in line with that of Caribou, Houlton saw greater gains and a greater percent change over the tabulated period. Although no overall trend of increase or decrease is discernible from this table, sales gains appear to be followed by losses every other year. This was true for Houlton, Caribou, and Aroostook, but Presque Isle only saw sales drop slightly in 2003, while trending upward through the 5-year period. The information is a valuable indication of how the area is performing in terms of retail sales.

Table 27 Total Consumer Sales, 2000-2004 (in thousands of dollars)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	% Change 2000-04
Houlton	\$76,005	\$72,250	\$85,501	\$82,809	\$87,176	14.7
Presque Isle	\$158,538	\$162,892	\$186,665	\$182,568	\$191,221	20.6
Caribou	\$75,893	\$75,417	\$84,353	\$79,638	\$77,792	2.5
Aroostook Total	\$443,566	\$438,497	\$499,669	\$481,690	\$496,725	12.0

Source: Maine Revenue Services

Total Taxable Sales

Total taxable sales figures for Houlton show a general upward trend, but again hit downward skids in 2001 and 2003. Presque Isle, Caribou and the County each saw a more significant drop off in sales in 2003, but all ended with a greater percent positive change over the 5-year period.

Table 28 Total Taxable Sales, 2000-2004 (in thousands of dollars)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	% Change 2000-04
Houlton	\$84,797	\$81,615	\$94,892	\$94,457	\$100,942	16.0
Presque Isle	\$178,280	\$182,394	\$206,725	\$204,118	\$215,939	21.1
Caribou	\$82,499	\$89,760	\$97,037	\$93,956	\$97,270	17.9
Aroostook Total	\$510,347	\$510,164	\$572,441	\$558,965	\$594,118	16.4

Source: Maine Revenue Services

Proportional Make-Up of Taxable Retail Sales by Retail Industry Sector and Time of Year

Total taxable retail sales represent the sum of six store-type groups. The retail sector sales categories used in this analysis are:

- **Business Operating:** Includes taxable sales to commercial and industrial businesses, such as utility and fuel oil.
- **Building Supply:** Including building supply items typically found in lumber yards and hardware stores.
- **Food Stores:** Includes taxable sales at all food stores. Sales of food to be eaten in the home (the majority of the sales at these stores) are not included because such food items are not taxable.
- **General Merchandise:** Includes department stores and stores selling product lines such as clothing, furniture, shoes, appliances, home furnishings, and/or other major items.
- **Other Retail Sales:** Includes a large and diverse group of establishments selling items not covered in other categories such as dry goods stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, sporting goods stores, antique dealers, book stores, photo supply stores, gift shops, florists, and opticians.
- **Auto:** Includes auto sales and all transportation items such as boat and auto leasing, parts, and accessories.
- **Restaurant and Lodging:** Includes all businesses selling prepared food for immediate consumption. The lodging group includes only rental tax, thereby making it an accurate indicator of lodging business in the State.

It should be noted that food intended for home consumption (except for "snacks") is not taxed. The food store category typically represents about 25% of the total sales in food stores.

Table 29 Total Taxable Sales, 2000-2004 (in thousands of dollars) by Retail Sector & Time of Year

Yr/Qtr	Business Operating	Bldg. Supply	Food Store	Gen. Mdse.	Other Retail	Auto Transp.	Rest. Lodg.	Total
2004	13766.4	9897.4	9603.9	32703.6	6024.9	20710.5	8235.6	100942.3
Q1	3052.2	1722.2	2228.4	6761.3	851.8	4419.8	1634.7	20670.4
Q2	3604.9	2659.2	2494.9	8199.6	1295.0	5355.5	2247.8	25856.9
Q3	3780.1	3146.2	2625.7	8109.7	1856.4	5995.6	2296.7	27810.4
Q4	3329.2	2369.8	2254.9	9633.0	2021.7	4939.6	2056.4	26604.6
2003	11647.7	10001.7	9363.3	30185.3	4053.5	21234.4	7970.8	94456.7
Q1	2639.3	924.8	2067.9	5645.5	850.0	5031.5	1640.1	18799.1
Q2	3230.0	2733.6	2285.6	7335.7	1032.7	5957.5	1869.4	24444.5
Q3	3324.7	3569.8	2627.4	7598.4	938.3	5417.2	2501.4	25977.2
Q4	2453.7	2773.5	2382.4	9605.7	1232.5	4828.2	1959.9	25235.9
2002	9390.8	9577.3	9712.6	28407.1	3815.7	25687.7	8301.0	94892.2
Q1	1920.1	1693.7	2581.3	7286.4	974.1	7830.3	2373.0	24658.9
Q2	2553.1	2373.6	2229.0	6503.7	1039.1	6386.4	1836.0	22920.9
Q3	2452.3	3131.1	2630.3	6685.2	681.2	5812.7	2330.0	23722.8
Q4	2465.3	2378.9	2272.0	7931.8	1121.3	5658.3	1762.0	23589.6

Yr/Qtr	Business Operating	Bldg. Supply	Food Store	Gen. Mdse.	Other Retail	Auto Transp.	Rest. Lodg.	Total
2001	9364.7	7293.7	8075.6	24884.9	3432.7	20967.1	7596.0	81614.7
Q1	2514.3	832.4	1779.5	4915.3	698.2	5081.9	1587.6	17409.2
Q2	2197.8	2048.0	2024.8	6283.8	910.0	5517.5	2020.0	21001.9
Q3	2514.1	2602.1	2237.0	6199.3	767.4	5265.9	2150.2	21736.0
Q4	2138.5	1811.2	2034.3	7486.5	1057.1	5101.8	1838.2	21467.6
2000	8791.6	8186.2	9386.8	24709.2	3662.6	21436.4	8623.8	84796.6
Q1	2326.7	1176.3	2115.8	5051.9	665.7	5163.5	1791.6	18291.5
Q2	2052.3	2625.2	2293.7	6295.2	1042.0	6087.0	2428.2	22823.6
Q3	1767.0	2595.9	2672.5	6041.4	791.6	5258.1	2401.0	21527.5
Q4	2645.6	1788.8	2304.8	7320.7	1163.3	4927.8	2003.0	22154.0

Source: Maine Revenue Services

Note:

1. **Bold Figures** indicate highest annual sales total for individual category and total in each year reported.
2. **Bold Cells** indicate highest quarterly sales for individual category and total in each year reported.

Table 10 indicates that in the 5-year period from 2000 to 2004, first quarter retail sales were generally the weakest across each of the sectors, while third and fourth quarter sales were generally the strongest across the field, but particularly in general merchandise and other retail associated with the Christmas season. However, first quarter total sales were highest in 2002, and second quarter sales were highest in 2000. In each of those years, auto/transportation and restaurant/lodging were also highest in the same quarter as the total sales, indicating that those 2 categories are significant factors in the local economy. Building supply sales were generally highest in the third quarter, an indication of northern Maine's short outdoor construction season that sees the most activity from July to October. Interestingly, Houlton's restaurant and lodging sales were highest in the third quarter in 3 of the 5 years listed, indicating that Houlton is possibly less of a winter destination than communities in the central and northern Aroostook areas, but attracts a larger percentage of tourists during summer and fall for peak foliage viewing and hunting activities.

The only year that did not have a high total in one of the seven retail sectors was 2001, which is likely attributable to the negative impact on consumer spending following the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States.

Future Impacts to Retail Activity in Houlton

A major concern in Houlton's retail trade activity is the rate of exchange differential between the Canadian and U.S. dollar. The Canadian dollar has been gaining strength over the last few years resulting in increased Canadian cross border shopping, though not at the level seen in the early 1990's. This increase in activity could be threatened by the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which requires all citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from within the Western Hemisphere.

The travel document requirements make up the departments of State and Homeland Security's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). This change in travel document requirements is the

result of recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission, which Congress subsequently passed into law in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.

This travel initiative is being implemented in two phases. The first phase will be for air travel, and the second for land/sea travel. The latter is expected to be implemented as early as January 1, 2008, and would potentially have the most impact on Houlton's cross border retail trade. However, it is difficult to gage the extent of curtailment that this initiative may have on Canadian shopping trips to Maine and the U.S. The issue concerns the additional cost and inconvenience of acquiring and maintaining passports or other acceptable documentation in order to gain entry at U.S. Borders. While recent legislative changes permit a later deadline, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are working to meet all requirements as soon as possible.

Economic Development Programs and Projects

Community and economic developers in Aroostook County and in Houlton are continuously looking at developing a number of programs and projects that would benefit the Town. These programs and projects could bring a significant number of jobs to residents, and could have a significant economic impact on the community.

Houlton Tax Increment Financing Policy

In 2006, Houlton adopted an aggressive tax increment financing (TIF) policy that defined guidelines for the town to use in determining the nature and extent of development projects for which the town would proactively participate through the use of TIF. Subsequently, Houlton designated four TIF districts in order to provide benefits for both the businesses involved and the Town through the capture and reuse of new tax revenues from within the districts.

Houlton Industrial Park

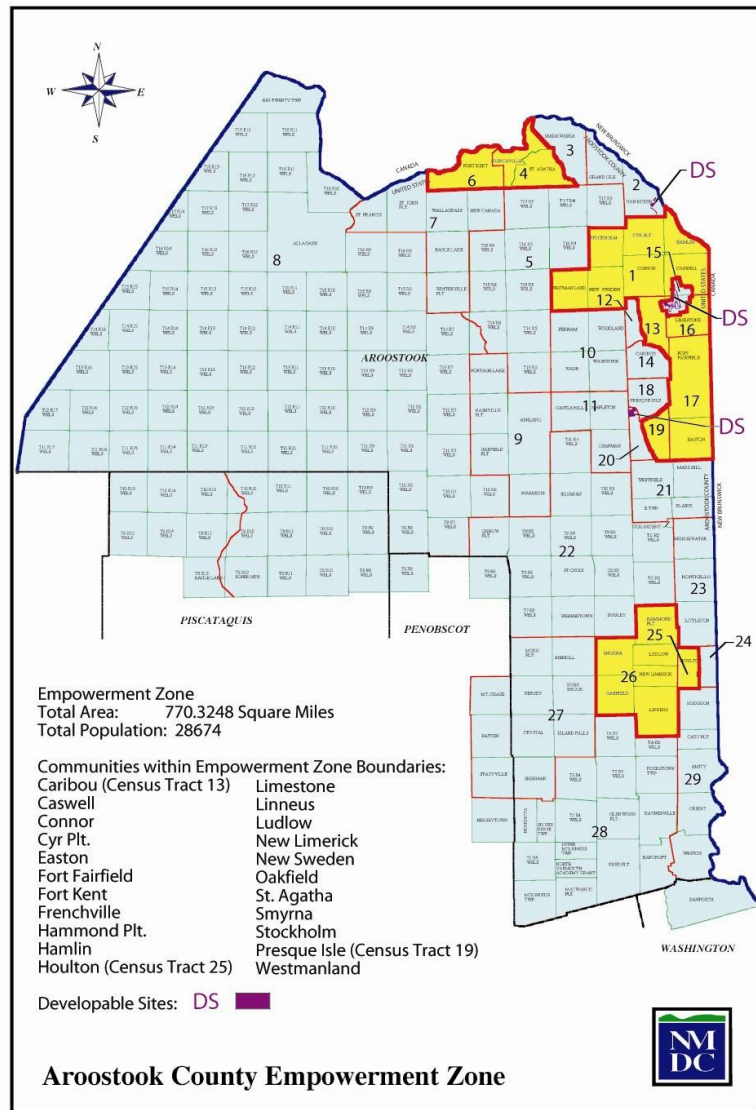
The Town has as a goal the expansion of the Houlton Industrial Park, which is located at the airport. There are currently 20 fully-serviced lots, and tax increment financing is available.

Airport Improvements

On May 13, 1996, the Houlton Town Council approved the International Airport Committee's recommendations not to extend Runway 5-23 at this time and to clear FAA-defined surfaces and approaches. Other recommendations approved by the Council include installing an all-weather instrument approach system, resurfacing the existing runway, surveying and clearing critical airspace, purchasing equipment for aircraft waste disposal, and upgrading the runway lighting system to conform to the recommended all-weather approach system. The Committee's overall goals are to make recommendations that are useful and necessary at the airport, while increasing the airfield's potential as a revenue-generating entity. The Committee's recommendations for this Economic Development Airport are being made to allow the airport to better serve cargo, particularly those markets in Europe, and corporate aircraft.

Aroostook County Empowerment Zone

In January of 2002, 3 parts of Aroostook County were designated as the Aroostook County Empowerment Zone (ACEZ). The empowerment zone program was created in the early 1990s by the federal government to aid distressed communities by providing opportunities for growth and revitalization. Today, the ACEZ is one of only 10 rural empowerment zones in the country, and one of only two that are based on population loss. Houlton is an Empowerment Zone community with the area west of US Route 1 included in the southern-most area of the ACEZ. The Federal government has not provided the anticipated program funding to date, but zone benefits have been derived through grant set asides and employee wage tax credits. The program was originally scheduled to sunset in 2012, but Maine’s Federal delegation is currently working to extend the ACEZ to 2015 to match the term of other designated EZ’s.



The Aroostook Partnership for Progress

The **Aroostook Partnership for Progress (APP)** is a public - private partnership dedicated to aggressive and effective results-oriented economic development actions that leverage the financial commitments and talents of the private sector in close partnership with the public sector. The APP will:

- Serve as the **Single Point of Contact** for Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) activities
- **Research and assemble data** on the communities, buildings and sites for BR&E activities.
- **Negotiate reduced lease rates** based on job creation and investment in communities.
- Ensure that companies receive full advantage of resources available to businesses in Maine

- Conduct a custom ***ROI Analysis and Incentive Valuation*** to estimate the value of incentive programs.
- Put companies in ***contact with business leaders*** that can address specific or technical questions about doing business in northern Maine.
- Assist companies interested in ***cross-border trade*** and access to the Canadian Labor Force.
- Coordinate free ***in-state visits*** for ***prospective*** companies considering a northern Maine location.

Aroostook Pine Tree Development Zone (APTDZ) Program

Depending on the level of new qualified business activity conducted in a PTDZ, starting with the statutory requirement for hiring a minimum of one net new qualified employee, the tax burden of qualified businesses may be reduced through exemptions, reimbursements, and credits. The Pine Tree Development Zone (PTDZ) program offers eligible businesses the chance to greatly reduce or virtually eliminate state taxes for up to ten years. The goal is to create quality jobs within 8 targeted industry sectors throughout Aroostook County and other areas of the state that have high unemployment and low wages. Houlton currently has designated 74 acres of PTDZ area in the following locations: Map 40 Lots 1-1 through 1-20; Map 40 Lots 2, 2B and 3; Map 33, Lots 1-4; Map 34 Lot 59; Map 28, Lot 9.

Business Finance Programs

NMDC's Business Finance Department recognizes the need to foster and enhance existing local businesses as well as to cultivate potential businesses. As such, the department promotes a variety of business finance programs, including the Economic Development Administration (EDA) revolving loan fund (and other revolving loan funds) and Small Business Administration (SBA) Microloan program (and other small business loan programs). They also manage the Southern Aroostook Revolving Economic Development Loan Fund (SA-REDLF), which offers low-interest loans at flexible rates and terms to eligible small businesses in Houlton, Littleton, Ludlow, Merrill, and Smyrna.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The CDBG Technical Assistance (TA) Program is funded by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development to help communities with application requirements and to answer general questions. Each community is given a degree of assistance at no cost, with services beyond that scope provided on a contractual basis.

Creative Economy

In 2006, the Creative Economy Steering Committee appointed by Maine State Government developed a Creative Economy Community Handbook designed to provide communities with some basic resources and guidance as they develop elements of a Creative Economy appropriate for their particular needs. Houlton began a series of work sessions for local creative entrepreneurs to learn more about their issues in making a living from their particular skill sets. The Community Handbook identifies the "Ten Building Blocks" of the Creative Economy, which include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Strategies | 6. Infrastructure |
| 2. Creative People | 7. Networks |
| 3. Centers of Education | 8. Leadership |
| 4. Cultural and Natural Amenities | 9. Money |
| 5. Business Engagement | 10. Time |

Houlton possesses many of these building blocks and by using the tools provided in the Community Handbook, can be positioned to develop a more robust creative economy element in the future overall economic development strategy.

Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan

In 2005, Kent Associates Planning & Design completed a Downtown Revitalization Plan for Houlton that addressed Design, Organization, Marketing, and Economic Development in developing a set of phased, action-oriented strategies to guide the Town through the revitalization process. Phase I (short-term) objectives included establishing a Downtown Committee to drive implementation forward; creation of a Downtown TIF District to help finance downtown improvements; and promotional activities. Phase II (intermediate) objectives are to be implemented once Phase I is accomplished include establishing a downtown economic development entity (such as a Downtown Manager) to carry out focused business retention and attraction activities identified in the plan; develop and administer building improvements fund; plan and fund design improvements such as streetscapes, riverfront, and pedestrian enhancements. Phase III (extended-term) objectives include collaborative efforts with building owners to improve parking/infrastructure, upper level access such as shared elevator service, and additional downtown marketing including contests and tenant recruitment.

LEAD

LEAD, Inc., a non-profit corporation, was established in 1986 for the purpose of fostering and encouraging the balanced development of Aroostook County, which includes:

- The Economy and Jobs - the promotion of balanced economic development and the creation of jobs.
- Image - the improvement of the County's image.
- Partnerships - the development of working partnerships and alliances with Aroostook County's Canadian neighbors and other Maine organizations.
- Small businesses - the promotion of small business development and assistance network.
- Promoting New and Existing Businesses - the encouragement of existing businesses and industry expansion, as well as the recruitment of new business and industry.
- Natural Resources - the support of the utilization and development of the natural resources of Aroostook County.
- Legislation - the review and support of legislation to improve the economic climate and to discourage legislation harmful to the County economy.

LEAD is currently engaged in directing and influencing policy and law making decisions at the State and Federal levels on transportation issues, specifically the north-south highway project and weight limit increase for I-95.

Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEMEP)

The Maine Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF) received federal funding in 1994 to establish the MEMEP throughout the State of Maine. The MSTF has provided funding to this region to establish a field office to serve Northern Maine manufacturers. The mission of the program will be to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Maine's manufacturing firms through the coordinated delivery of integrated, quality modernization services. The MEMEP field agent markets and brokers available services to meet individual manufacturer needs, and organizes cooperative networks, through which groups of firms can work together to solve problems and receive services more effectively.

Maine Quality Centers Program (MQC)

Located at each of Maine's seven technical colleges, **Maine Quality Centers** offers customized education and training to:

- Increase the competitiveness of established companies by upgrading the work methods and skills of their employees;
- Meet the specifications of businesses seeking to locate in Maine;
- And provide workers with education and training opportunities that lead to quality employment either with current or new employer.

The program will also assist in the recruitment and screening of trainees, free of charge for both the employer and trainees.

Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC)

The **Northern Maine Development Commission** (NMDC) ensures that the region's diverse interests are fairly represented, and that local skills are used to form and implement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). Northern Maine Development Commission is one of five nonprofit economic development districts in the state of Maine, providing regional planning, economic and community development, business loans and packaging, geographic information system services, and small business counseling services to the northern Maine region. In addition, NMDC is the lead agency for the Aroostook County Empowerment Zone. With representation from member communities, NMDC works with federal, state, regional, and local partners to implement services and programs for all of northern Maine that make the most of the area's resources to build a healthy and diverse economy.

Northern Maine Finance Corporation (NMFC)

Northern Maine Finance Corporation (NMFC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to improvement of the economy and the creation of jobs. It was formed in 2002 with the help of USDA Rural development organizational grant and the matching funds and hands on assistance of Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC). NMFC is a standalone corporation with its

own board of directors and officers. NMFC's principal function has been the formation of the Aroostook Investment Exchange (AIX), whose function is to bring together providers of risk capital with qualified entrepreneurs seeking capital through an exchange forum. AIX is supported by Northern Maine Development Commission, Aroostook Partnership for Progress and is part of the strategic plan for Aroostook County.

Regional Economic Development and Strategic Marketing Plan – Town of Houlton

In 2004, an economic development plan was completed for Houlton with funding from the Economic Development Administration and the Maine Office of Community Development. Although Houlton initiated the project, it was not entirely specific to just Houlton and therefore took on a regional (southern Aroostook) focus. The plan conducted a detailed assessment of seven areas of economic activity or opportunity, including:

- The Canadian Connection
- Retail Trade
- The Downtown
- Tourism
- Traditional Industries
- Growth Industries
- Entrepreneurship

The regional economic development plan has been referenced throughout this comprehensive plan and many of its objectives and strategies have been coalesced into this plan as well.

Small Business Park

The Town's long-term plans include promoting the conversion of industrially-zoned property formerly owned by Bangor & Aroostook Railroad into a small business park. The park would cover approximately eight to 10 acres off Bangor Street that is currently underutilized. The Town envisions light industrial and commercial tenants in the park. Negotiations with the BARR, and most recently with the bankruptcy trustee, have been long-term, and are on-going. Chances that an acceptable agreement can be reached in the near term are not good.

State Fair Grounds

Houlton achieved State Fair status some fifteen years ago and since then, has held an annual state fair during the first week of July. The fair attracts visitors from throughout the region, and is seen as vitally important to Houlton's economy. A considerable investment has been made in fair facilities, with additional investments to be made as need arises.

Tourism Five-Year Business Plan for Northern Maine

Northern Maine Development Commission and Aroostook County Tourism (ACT) determined the need for an intermediate-term Tourism business plan to help guide a strategic approach to Tourism development in the County. With assistance from Economic Stewardship, Inc., the 5-year plan was completed in December 2005. The plan included focus groups and online surveys to assess the current public impression of northern Maine as a tourist destination as well as its strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. From this assessment, task-oriented themes were identified, and supporting strategies were developed. The themes were:

- ❖ Establishing and maintaining identity
- ❖ Celebrating Landscapes and Communities
- ❖ Organizing Partnerships for Tourism Resource Management
- ❖ Cultivating Affinity Markets
- ❖ Building Momentum

Many of the supporting strategies included in the 5-Year Tourism Plan play well with activities that Houlton can be or is already involved in. Of particular importance is Houlton's position as a "Gateway" into the County for those arriving by I-95 or from New Brunswick through the Houlton International Port of Entry and how Houlton will exploit the Gateway aspect in future tourism development.

Economic Forecasts

The University of Southern Maine prepared long-term economic and population forecasts for Maine's nine regions early in 2002, with funding under the EDA's University Research Center Program, and from the Maine Department of Transportation as part of the regional transportation planning process established by the Sensible Transportation Act. The University economists worked with the staff of Maine's regional development agencies, which provided details on recent and anticipated changes in their local economy to include in their economic forecasting models. Detailed assumptions used in the models are available from the University of Southern Maine.

For Northern Maine, which has been going through a period of tremendous change, these forecasts were very much needed to accurately assess the local economic climate -- especially when dwindling state resources left little support for this type of regional-level study. Although the University forecasts project slower growth in Aroostook County than the other regions of Maine, the prospect of any growth in the aftermath of a major base closure in this rural area was good news for the region. Some of the University of Southern Maine's forecasts for Aroostook County are summarized below:

- **Employment:** Overall employment in Aroostook County is predicted to increase by 12.7% during the period from 2000 to 2020. Table 11 indicates that increases are forecast in 7 of the industrial classifications, with the largest increases expected in services (10.5%), including health care, business services, and hotels; and private non-farm employment (13.6%). Manufacturing, non-durables, and retail are each expected to decline over the 20-year period.

Table 30 Total Employment and Population Forecast – Aroostook County (all figures in thousands)

Aroostook	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Private Non-Farm	33.228	34.647	36.109	36.959	37.748
Manufacturing	5.777	5.515	5.505	5.61	5.766
Durables	3.241	3.171	3.352	3.585	3.862
Non-Durables	2.535	2.344	2.153	2.025	1.905
Non-Manufacturing	27.451	29.132	30.604	31.348	31.982
Mining	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.016	0.016
Construction	2.032	2.061	2.087	2.041	2.015
Transport & Public Utilities.	2.146	2.28	2.258	2.206	2.13
Financial/Insurance/Real Estate	1.894	1.836	1.937	1.984	2.012
Retail Trade	7.073	7.089	7.049	6.91	6.758
Wholesale Trade	0.965	0.983	0.955	0.943	0.92
Services	12.889	14.314	15.726	16.627	17.465
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Serv.	0.435	0.553	0.575	0.622	0.665
State and Local	5.113	4.886	4.863	4.842	4.847
Federal Civilian	0.77	0.78	0.782	0.793	0.794
Federal Military	0.448	0.54	0.578	0.592	0.601
Population (Thousands)	74.71	71.355	70.839	71.342	72.648

Source: University of Southern Maine, Center for Business and Economic Research 2002 Long Range Employment and Population Forecasts

- **Per Capita Income:** Per capita income (PCI) grew by 11.2 percent in Aroostook County compared to only 3.7 percent growth statewide between 1990 and 1995. In 2000 the value of Aroostook County's PCI was only 72% of the State's PCI, and the County's PCI is expected to increase to reach 94% of the State's PCI in 2015. There are no projections beyond that year.
- **Exports:** The value of exports in the County is expected to increase by 26.4 percent between 1995 and 2015. Imports to the County will increase by 21.1 percent over the period.

Economic Analysis

The region's economic base is fairly well diversified, with regionally significant jobs related to natural resource production, manufacturing, health care, and miscellaneous retail and other services. This diversification can protect local employment as a whole from significant economic downturns that might otherwise devastate a town that relies more heavily on just one or two industries.

Natural resources, which are discussed in more detail in the Natural Resources chapter, provide many of the jobs related to manufacturing and agriculture in the area. The Town will make every effort to protect its valuable farm assets through both regulatory and non-regulatory means. Zoning can be used to discourage encroachments in rural areas while encouraging residential development in the Town's delineated growth area. With appropriate changes to Town zoning, the Town's rich agricultural future should continue indefinitely.

Health care (as well as education and government) is typically an important employer in a regional center such as Houlton. Recent construction and expansion at the hospital is testimony to its continuing importance in the region in terms of both the necessary medical care it provides within the region and employment.

Changes in the regional international economy over the last 10 years, including the continued weakness of the Canadian dollar and changes in Canadian tax policies, severely impacted the region's economy, and dampened cross-border shopping. Recent gains in the value of the Canadian dollar have lessened the impact and Canadian cross border shopping activity has been steadily increasing. Since the value of the Canadian dollar relative to the U.S. dollar is not fixed, local businesses should not rely on Canadian shoppers to remain viable (see also the Public Facilities chapter). Additionally, any increase in retail activity could be threatened by the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which requires all citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from within the Western Hemisphere. Future impacts from the WHTI once implemented, should be carefully monitored and strategies developed through collaboration with the Federal delegation and other retail groups such as the Maine State Chamber of Commerce.

While Houlton has seen the creation of new retail centers such as Wal-Mart, Shop 'N Save, and Marden's, other businesses have closed, such as Pay Less Shoes. However, taxable consumer sales figures have increased significantly since 2000, but have also experienced some fluctuation along the way. Regardless, the total dollar value of taxable goods being sold is increasing indicating consumer spending is strong. This also indicates that there is capacity for additional retail establishments in the local economy, but because of a lack of population to support intense competition, new establishments should seek to fill gaps in goods and services rather than compete for the same business. Houlton should carefully consider the impact that any additional new retail centers may have on its existing businesses, and should also consider when it may be appropriate to support existing and new infill businesses. It is difficult to effect a positive net growth in retail sales unless population, earnings, and employment growth in the region also occur.

Houlton will work with local realtors and commercial property owners to develop an inventory of vacant commercial buildings in order to promote infill, discourage sprawl, and draw on any potential synergistic advantages of locating businesses together (including economies of scales and multi-purpose shopping trips. An inventory would be useful to economic developers should a business contact the Town with an interest to locate there. The inventory should, at a minimum, include information on the square footage of each vacant building, its age, zoning district, construction type, and asking lease or purchase price.

It is expected that some businesses will continue to locate along North Street / U.S. Route 1 where they are highly visible to the motoring public. New development in this area will be important to the community, and the Town has designated a North Street TIF District to capture incremental new tax revenue for such development to improve infrastructure, traffic safety and access management. However, downtown Houlton can continue to be a valuable economic asset to that community with Town support for and implementation of the 2005 Downtown Revitalization Plan, and through determined patronage by local residents. In addition, past downtown improvements

have provided ample parking and have protected and promoted the Market Square's unique turn-of-the-century architecture. Recent accomplishments such as the Gateway Crossing pedestrian bridge and planned development of a riverfront park are important marketing attributes for future Downtown activity. The Town should be commended for its past support of downtown businesses, and should periodically evaluate its ability to further promote downtown in any way feasible.

Houlton will continue to promote its location as a major strength, including its rich cultural tradition, its proximity to major forest reserves, and its location at the junction of a major transportation crossroads. This crossroads includes I-95, U.S. Route 1, and the Canadian border as well as important access to various mode choices, including highways, rail, and air at the Houlton International Airport. Houlton's ideal location at this crossroads (and cross modes) should be capitalized on, such as through promotion of the proposed transload facility and the recommended airport improvements to provide an all-weather precision approach.

The construction of a limited-access four-lane highway from I-95 at Houlton, northward to the St. John Valley, if ever approved, would have a significant impact on Houlton. While the highway would open up untold tourism, shopping, and roadside service opportunities, it would also affect existing businesses along Route 1. Only if and when a highway alignment is eventually selected will it be possible to determine if those impacts on existing U.S. Route 1 businesses will be positive or negative. The Town should make every effort to follow any proposals related to this potential project, and should provide continual input into the planning process at every opportunity possible.

Houlton has two valuable tools to guide economic development activities over the next 5 to 10 years: The Regional Economic Development and Strategic Marketing Plan – 2004; and The Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan – 2005. These two documents contain a far more detailed analysis of economic and community development opportunities than can be included in this Comprehensive Plan. Houlton will need to refer to all three plans for background and supporting data, but this plan has attempted to coalesce all of the most important objectives and strategies from each into one document for ease of use.

Local Economy Policies and Implementation Strategies

Houlton is the retail and employment center of southern Aroostook County. Job holders live both in and outside the Town, and local retail and service establishments depend on shoppers from throughout the region for a significant portion of their trade. With its proximity to I-95, US Route 1, the Trans-Canada highway, and an international airport, Houlton has as a major advantage its prime location for the existing and potential business community.

State Goal: *To promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being*

In terms of employment, professional services (including education and health care), retail trade, and manufacturing provide the most jobs to Town residents. The local economy is fairly well diversified, which helps to protect employment from major economic downturns. The land uses associated with business and industry can have impacts on neighboring properties and the environment, and can generate traffic and create demands on public facilities. The Town should continue to accommodate existing and new commercial and industrial uses which provide jobs to the residents of Houlton and the surrounding region.

Local Goal: *To have and promote a diversified economy that builds upon the Town's existing diversified employment base to increase employment opportunities and support economic well-being.*

Local Economy Policies

Policy	Corresponding Strategy
A. Promote and protect rural agricultural and forest resources as vital components in local and regional economy.	1-3,11, 13, 15, 19, 24
B. Continue to support and promote tourism development.	1-5,8,11-14,16,18,19
C. Promote local businesses and unique development needs of downtown Market Square, the Creative Economy, North Road businesses, and other business centers within urban growth area.	1-5,8-10,12-15, 18-20,22,25
D. Promote local economic development projects.	1,2,6-10,12,13,21-23
E. Recognize needs of future generations and provide local employment opportunities.	1-5, 11,12,14,15,16,18, 20, 22-25
F. Encourage and prepare for advances in information technology and ensure that availability meets the needs of Houlton’s residents and businesses.	1-5, 15, 20, 25

Local Economy Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
1. Encourage outreach programs designed to support existing businesses. These programs must assure businesses of community support in response to changing economic conditions, and work to face challenges before problems arise.	CDP, CC, w/NMDC, MSBDC	On-Going
2. Continue and increase communications with Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) and similar organizations such as: Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development (LEAD), Aroostook County Tourism (ACT), Dept. of Economic & Community Development (DECD), and Maine Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) through periodic forums and economic development meetings when opportunity presents.	CDP, TM	2007 On-Going
3. Consult with the local business community on a regular periodic basis through the Houlton Chamber of Commerce or other agencies to identify potential spin-off businesses and services that the town should look to attract or promote as a local start up opportunity.	CDP	2008 On-Going
4. Liaison with agencies that are already conducting marketing studies or business surveys to determine local business and service needs so that efforts can be focused on filling these needs as opposed to passively allowing unnecessary competition that undermines business viability.	CDP, TM, TO	2007 On-Going
5. Continue to promote development and business attraction to the Houlton Industrial Park and to provide technical and financial assistance to potential businesses, including support of tax increment financing, other available incentives, and utilize the international port of entry as a marketing tool when appropriate.	CDP, TM	2008 On-Going
6. Continue to apply for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and/or other programs for downtown revitalization projects.	CDP	2007 On-Going
7. Develop and adopt a Downtown Development Program and Tax Increment Financing District that compels owners and businesses to invest in building improvements and infrastructure (Objective 10 of Revitalization Plan).	TM, CDP, TO	2007
8. Expand and amend site design review criteria for non-residential development from North Street to other non-residential growth areas to promote environmentally sound and aesthetically pleasing commercial development proposals.	CDP, PB, CEO	2008
9. Assist in marketing availability of existing commercial/industrial space/land in Houlton by through systematic communication with realtors and commercial property owners.	PB, CDP	2008 On-Going
10. Continue efforts with the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railroad to discuss the (Brownfield) redevelopment of their land and facilities for diversified uses in a mutually beneficial manner.	CDP, TM	2008 On-Going
11. Provide assistance to local businesses by maintaining awareness of and information on business/financial incentive programs.	CDP	2007 On-Going
12. Continue to coordinate and implement economic development strategies identified in the Regional Economic Development and Strategic Marketing Plan – March 8, 2004, prepared for Houlton by Jim Damicis Associates	TM, CDP, NMDC	2008 On-Going
13. Foster a spirit of entrepreneurship in local students through career days, and by seeking their input and participation into downtown revitalization and other special events.	CC, SAD, Civic Groups	2008 On-Going
14. Work with the many local creative artisans and micro-enterprise businesses to develop a more robust creative economy in Houlton.	CC, CDP	2008-2010

Strategy		Responsibility	Year		
15. Pursue the development of eco-tourism through tools such as a municipal riverfront park, walking trails, interpretive center/kiosks, to improve economic impact from tourism in Houlton.		CDP, CC, PRD	2008 On-Going		
16. Inventory the condition of commercial/industrial structures and work toward removal of those structures that cannot be rehabilitated. For structures that can be rehabilitated, assist the owners in finding support for rehabilitation through programs such as Maine Rural Development Authority’s Commercial Facilities Development Program.		CDP, CC, CEO	2008- 2009		
17. Continue to promote and enhance the downtown through strategies outlined in the Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan – 2005, drawing on the historic significance and uniqueness of Market Square.		CDP, CC, TM	2008 On-Going		
18. Work with the Chamber of Commerce, area merchants, and other such organizations to support business attraction and retention both town-wide and to the downtown area.		CDP, TM, CC	2008 On-Going		
19. Strengthen the lines of communication between the Town and the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to assist in efforts to attract and keep businesses and industries in Town.		CDP, TM, CC	2008 On-Going		
20. Develop a policy and strategies to guide the Town in determining criteria that would incent applying for and utilizing sub-zone status under one of the existing Foreign Trade Zones in Maine such as Lewiston-Auburn or Madawaska.		CDP, ADC, CC	2009		
21. Assist local efforts from the business community to develop and fund scholarship programs that pay educational costs for students who in return, pledge an employment commitment to that business upon graduation.		CC, Civic Groups	2009 On-Going		
22. Include agriculture and forestry issues in local economic development plans.		TM, CDP	2007 On-Going		
23. Encourage a variety of available and affordable options for high speed, broadband Internet access and future information technology advancements.		CDP, PB, TO SAD, HWC	2007 On-Going		
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM					
24. Work with surrounding communities to develop regional plans for overall economic development, tourism, land use, and transportation strategies.		CDP, PB, TM	On-Going		
25. Continue existing communication between Houlton and Woodstock, NB on transportation-related and economic development issues.		CDP, ADC, CC	2008 On-Going		
26. Provide pertinent input into the planning of a proposed North/South Highway at every opportunity given. The alignment of the highway is critical to economic viability of many of Houlton’s businesses.		TM, CDP	On-Going		
27. Monitor effects of WHTI once implemented, including analysis of retail sales data and anecdotal accounts from area merchants to determine extent of negative impact on local retail trade. Relay findings to Federal delegates, Maine State Chamber of Commerce, and other resources; coordinate with them to develop and implement strategies to mitigate impacts as necessary.		CDP, CC, TM, NMDC	2009 On-Going		
Key					
ADC	Airport Dev. Committee	LIB	Cary Library	R2C	Roads 2000 Committee
BC	Budget Committee	MFS	Maine Forest Service	SAD	School Admin. District
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MWC	Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TA	Tax Assessor
CDP	Community Dev. Planning	PD	Police Department,	TC	Town Council
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	PB	Planning Board	TM	Town Manager
DEP	Dept. of Env. Protection	PRD	Parks & Recreation Department	TO	Town Officials
HWC	Houlton Water Company	PRAB	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board	ZBA	Zoning Bd. of Appeals
IF&W	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	PWD	Public Works Department		

Housing

The following information is a summary of existing housing data for the sub-region and Houlton. This section attempts to address, as completely as possible, the current availability of housing and the costs associated with obtaining decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling units. The main emphasis of the comprehensive planning process related to housing is an assessment of the affordability of the housing within the community. An important component of the process is to identify the segment of the population most significantly affected by the costs of housing, their income ranges, what type of housing stock is needed (if any), and the geographical areas which are a priority. Ultimately, the community should be able to project the future housing needs of the residents and base policy and strategy decisions upon those findings.

The inventory and analysis, with the current 2000 US Census data, complemented by the detailed local data gathered by the Comprehensive Planning Committee, provides the informational framework for considering the actions to be taken by the community to ensure affordable housing for all the residents of Houlton. This section on housing examines various statistical housing data of Maine, the sub-regional area that includes adjacent communities, and Houlton.

The US Census defines a household as all the persons who occupy a housing unit. A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied as separate living quarters. The US Census defines family as a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Regional Housing Trends

The number of housing units existing today versus the past two decades will indicate to the community if the overall housing stock is growing or declining. Demographic trends within Houlton, such as an increase or decrease in family size as well as changes in the number of housing units, play an important part in the future housing needs of the community.

The inventory of regional housing trends includes data from communities within the Southern Aroostook County sub-region. Towns studied in this chapter include Hodgdon, Houlton, Littleton, Ludlow, and New Limerick. These towns all showed an increase in the number of housing units between 1980 and 2000. Despite gaining the greatest number of housing units over the period (385 units), Houlton gained the least number of units percentage-wise relative to other communities in the sub-region. Therefore, compared to Houlton, the surrounding communities appear to be making relatively greater gains in the size of their housing stocks. During the same time period, the number of housing units increased by 7.8% in Aroostook County and 30.1% in the State. Therefore, the 14.8% growth of housing units in Houlton lagged significantly behind that in the State, but almost doubled that of the county over the historical period of study.

Of the two time periods studied, Houlton experienced its greatest gain between 1990 and 2000 when the community gained 224 units, representing a 7.9 percent increase, indicating that housing demand is increasing in Houlton. Only Littleton saw greater growth in housing during that period.

Regional Housing Units Comparison, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	#Units Gained 1980-00	% Change 1990-00	% Change 1980-00
Hodgdon	382	470	487	105	3.6%	27.5%
Houlton	2,609	2,774	2994	385	7.9%	14.8%
Littleton	336	368	447	111	21.5%	33.0%
Ludlow	164	189	198	34	4.8%	20.7%
New Limerick	322	359	385	63	7.2%	19.6%
Aroostook County	35,920	38,421	38,719	2,799	0.7%	7.8%
State of Maine	501,093	587,045	651,901	150,808	11.0%	30.1%

Source: 1980-2000 US Censuses.

Houlton Housing Trends**Housing Characteristics**

According to US Census data, there were 2,677 households in Houlton in 2000. Of these households, 1,654 were family households, with 1,269 being married couple families. Two-hundred ninety-five (295) households were headed by females with no husband present. Of the 1,023 non-family households, 917 were householders living alone. Of those living alone, 483 were 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.29 people and the average family size was 2.94 members. This information provides an overview of the type of households in Houlton as well as insight into the potential types of housing units the community may want to develop to meet the future housing needs of the community.

Past Trends

In 1980, the majority (1,748, or 70 percent) of the housing units in Houlton were single-family dwellings. The 1990 US Census indicates that this trend of primarily single-family dwellings continues into the present as there were 1,874 single-family housing units, or 67.6% of the total. In 1990, Houlton had 900 multi-family housing units, which comprised 32.4% or nearly one-third of the Town's housing stock.

According to the 1980 Houlton Comprehensive Plan, a 1978 housing survey conducted in Houlton revealed that only 12.6% of the Town's housing units were considered standard. Therefore, nearly 90% of the Town's housing stock was, as that time, considered substandard. Slightly more than 75% of the substandard units identified were considered to be suitable for rehabilitation. The poor condition of Houlton's housing was linked to the age of the housing stock. According to US Census data for 1970, 71% of the Town's housing units were constructed prior to 1939. To remedy the identified housing problems, the Town applied for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for housing rehabilitation in the late 1970's and early 1980's. CDBG funds were used at that time to rehabilitate hundreds of units in target areas, including eastern Military

Street, Hollywood Road (renamed Hillview Avenue), areas within Census Bureau Enumeration District 92, and Pennington Street.

The median selected monthly owner cost for homeowners with a mortgage was \$463 per month according to the 1990 US Census. This figure included everything paid to the lender including principal and interest payments, real estate taxes, fire, hazard, and flood insurance payments, and mortgage insurance premiums. The median selected monthly owner cost for homeowners without a mortgage was \$208 per month. When these costs were stated as a percentage of 1989 household income, the median selected monthly owner cost for homeowners with a mortgage was 18.1 percent of household income. The median selected monthly owner cost for homeowners without a mortgage was 15.2 percent of household income. The median gross rent for the Town was \$329 per month.

Recent Trends

The 2000 US Census indicates that the median selected monthly owner cost with a mortgage was \$620 per month representing an increase of 34% over 1990 census figures. Compared to median household income in 2000, monthly owner costs were 28% of median monthly household income representing 54% increase over 1990 census figures. Therefore the trend would indicate that housing in Houlton is significantly less affordable now than it was a decade ago, but still within the guidelines for affordability (28% to 30% of household income).

Houlton, Homeowner and Renter Characteristics, 2000

Housing Characteristics	Maine	Aroostook County	Houlton
A. All occupied housing units	518,200	30,356	2,677
B. With householder moved into unit:			
1. 1999 to March 2000	17.2%	13.4%	6.9%
2. 1969 or earlier	11.2%	16.0%	34.0%
C. Specified owner-occupied:	254,866	15,053	1,397
1. Housing units with a mortgage:	169,138	8,263	834
a. Median selected monthly owner cost	\$923	\$661	\$620
b. Median selected monthly owner cost as percentage of 1999 household income	29.7%	27.5%	28.4%
2. Housing units not mortgaged:	85,728	6,790	563
a. Median selected monthly owner cost	\$299	\$248	\$254
b. Median selected monthly owner cost as percentage of 1999 household income	9.6%	10.3%	11.6%
D. All renter-occupied housing units	143,727	7,955	1,000
1. Specified renter paying no cash rent:	10,383	857	55
a. Median gross rent	\$497	\$364	\$360
b. Median gross rent as a percentage of 1999 household income	16.0%	15.1%	16.5%

Source: 2000 US Census

Of the 2,994 housing units in Houlton (2000 US Census), 2,677 were occupied (89.9%). Of the 2,677 occupied units, 1,397 (52.2%) were specified as owner-occupied while 1,000 units (37.4%) were specified as renter-occupied.

Houlton, Structural, Plumbing, and Equipment Characteristics, 2000

	Maine	Aroostook County	Houlton
A. All housing units	651,901	38,719	2,994
B. Year structure built:			
1. 1999 to March 2000	1.9%	1.3%	0.2%
2. 1990 to 1998	12.7%	9.7%	6.8%
3. 1980 to 1989	16.0%	11.4%	7.8%
4. 1970 to 1979	15.9%	16.7%	11.3%
5. 1960 to 1969	9.2%	10.2%	7.0%
6. 1940 to 1959	15.3%	20.9%	22.8%
7. 1939 or earlier	29.1%	29.9%	44.1%
C. Number of rooms: median	5.3	5.1	5.4
D. Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0.9%	1.1%	0.6%
E. Lacking complete kitchen facilities	2.5%	0.5%	0.4%

Source: 2000 US Census

Of the housing units in Houlton that were sampled in the 2000 Census for structural, plumbing, and equipment characteristics, 26.1% were built between 1970 and 2000 while 44.1 percent were built 1939 or earlier. Of the housing units sampled, the median number of rooms was 5.4. Structurally, only 0.6% of the units sampled lacked complete plumbing and 0.4% lacked complete kitchen facilities. In comparison to county and State figures, Houlton appears to have an older housing stock of larger than average homes that are well maintained and functional.

Houlton, House Heating Fuel Characteristics, 2000

	Maine	Aroostook County	Houlton
All occupied housing units	518,200	30,356	2,677
House heating fuel:			
Utility Gas	3.5%	0.2%	0.3%
Bottled, Tank, or LP Gas	4.9%	0.7%	0.6%
Electricity	4.4%	4.6%	6.2%
Fuel Oil, Kerosene, etc.	80.2%	84.5%	88.1%
Other or None (includes wood heat)	7.0%	10.1%	4.8%

Source: 2000 US Census

Census figures indicate that a higher percentage of Houlton homes heat with electricity and fuel oil than either the county or State, with wood heat being less popular in Houlton than the rest of the county.

Mobile Homes

Mobile homes have become an increasingly popular form of housing in Maine. One reason for this is their initial price, which is especially low when compared to the cost and construction

factors associated with newly constructed conventional houses. Equally important is that mobile homes are relatively inexpensive to heat and, due to their smaller size, are well-suited to the less space-intensive needs of smaller families and retired couples. In Houlton, however, residential zoning is fairly restrictive. There are limited undeveloped residentially-zoned areas where mobile homes may locate, and public water and sewer are generally not provided in rural areas necessitating large lot sizes. In addition, the Town’s zoning provides no locations for new mobile home parks. Therefore, mobile homes are locating outside the urbanized area adjacent to agricultural property, and are necessarily dispersed for water and septic purposes. This situation puts development pressure on existing agricultural property, fuels residential sprawl, and limits the effectiveness of this form of affordable housing.

Houlton showed an increase of 101 mobile homes between 1970 and 1990 according to the 1990 US Census, but lost 36 units from 1990 to 2000. Mobile homes in Houlton made up only 5.1% of all Town housing units in 2000, the smallest percentage of the five communities listed. This small percentage of housing units reflects the lack of mobile home parks and existing zoning restrictions that make it difficult to locate mobile homes within the Town. In addition, the 1974 Airport Master Plan advocated the removal of mobile homes that were on industrially-zoned airport property to non-industrially zoned airport property. This has since been accomplished. Ludlow had the highest percentage of mobile homes of the communities studied, while New Limerick saw the greatest increase in percentage of mobile homes from the previous census.

Mobile Home Comparison, 1970-2000

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1970-00	Percent Change 1990-00	Percentage Total Housing Units 2000
Hodgdon	NA	NA	75	79	NA	5.3	16.2%
Houlton	87	41	188	152	74.7%	-19.1%	5.1%
Littleton	49	57	61	58	7.3%	-4.9%	13.0%
Ludlow	NA	NA	68	76	NA	11.8%	38.4%
New Limerick	NA	NA	31	36	NA	16.1%	9.4%

Source: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 US Census

Federally Assisted Multi-Family Housing Units

There are four sponsoring agencies of subsidized or low-income housing throughout the State and region. These sponsoring agencies are: the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), USDA Rural Development, and Public or Local Housing Authorities (PHA's). There are several federally assisted multi-family and elderly units in Houlton. Federally-assisted housing is administered locally through the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) in Presque Isle. The MSHA sponsors four public housing projects in Houlton, including Hestia Heights, Kellern Court, Military Street Apartments, and Ricker Plaza. There is no Local Housing Authority in Houlton.

MSHA-Sponsored Multi-Family Housing Units

<i>Development</i>	Units	Waiting	Target Population
Hestia Heights	20	NA	Families, Elderly & Handicapped
Kelleran Court	20	10	Families
Military Street Apartments	24	7	Elderly
Ricker Plaza	41	8	Elderly & Handicapped

Source: ACAP and individual developments, 2006.

There are several U.S.D.A Rural Development District 1 units in Houlton, with rents federally controlled for a guaranteed period and, through this period, based on income. They include Four Seasons Village, Northwood, The Highlands, Bowdoin Place, Lee Apartments and Century House. Bowdoin Place and Northwood Apartments are available to families, while the others are for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The ACAP administers on average, 130 Section 8 certificates in Houlton through HUD per month. HUD’s Section 8 Program provides rental assistance to qualifying tenants in obtaining privately owned apartments. For person(s) or a family to be eligible for a rental assistance certificate under HUD’s Section 8 Program, they must meet certain Very Low Income (VLI) guidelines. In addition, there are certain federal preferences given to those VLI program applicants. These preference criteria are as follows:

- > 50% of gross income is used for rent and utilities payments;
- Applicant(s) are living in substandard housing (with a leaky roof, no plumbing, etc.); or
- Involuntarily displaced (homeless - had to move out of housing through no fault of own, such as domestic abuse, natural disaster, etc.).

According to ACAP, there is a list of approximately 70 families awaiting Section 8 Program Certificates. ACAP performs an annual review of all Section 8 Certificate Holders through third-party verification (Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, Department of Human Services, etc.) on the anniversary date of each issued certificate to ensure program participants meet eligibility requirements.

The Moderate Rehabilitation (Mod Rehab) Program is also administered locally through ACAP. The Mod Rehab Program requires the housing unit owner to enter into an agreement with MSHA to provide subsidized housing for VLI families for a 20-year period as compensation for financing moderate rehabilitation work of their housing units. Currently, there are 11 MSHA and 18 USDA Mod Rehab units in Houlton. Currently, there are no ACAP Mod Rehab units in Houlton. There remains a shortage of qualified rental units in Houlton.

There are two temporary housing options for the homeless in Houlton. The Battered Women’s Project operates a shelter in Houlton. The women’s shelter, which includes 14 beds, provides temporary housing to women for up to one month, and also offers support groups, advocacy, and a hotline. Homeless Services of Aroostook in Presque Isle, which includes 30 beds, provides

temporary housing for the homeless throughout Aroostook County. There have been very few clients from Houlton that have needed the shelter in the past and the general assistance administrator foresees no significant impact on Houlton should the center close.

Houlton Housing Units and Tenure

The 1990 US Census indicates that 59.7 percent of the Town's year-round housing units were owner occupied, excluding seasonal dwelling units such as camps and cottages. The vast majority of the housing units in Houlton are year-round dwellings, with seasonal units only comprising less than 1 percent of the Town's total housing stock according to the 1990 US Census. The following chart provides a summary of housing tenure.

Houlton, Housing Units, Tenure, 1990 and 2000

Houlton Housing Units and Tenure	1990	% Total (1990)	2000	% Total Units (2000)
Total housing units	2,774		2,994	
Total year round units	2,749	99.1%	2,975	99.4%
Occupied year round units	2,584	93.2%	2,677	89.4%
Owner occupied units	1,657	59.7%	1,676	56.0%
Renter occupied units	927	33.4%	1,001	33.4%
Vacant year-round units	179	6.5%	298	10.0%
Seasonal units	15	0.5%	19	0.6%

Source: 1990, 2000 US Census

As shown, Houlton experienced a 220-unit increase in housing between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, the percentage of year-round housing units occupied by owners was 59.7%, which dropped to 56% in 2000. There was a slight increase in the percentage of year-round housing units from 1990 to 2000, but owner-occupied units decreased by 3.7 percent, about equal to the increase in vacant year-round units.

Year-round Housing Past, Present & Future						
	1980	1990	2000	2006* (Est.)	2015* (Est.)	% Change 1990-00
Hodgdon	382	470	487	501	552	3.6
Houlton	2,609	2,774	2994	2855	2988	7.9
Littleton	336	368	447	419	469	21.5
Ludlow	164	189	198	177	202	4.8
New Limerick	322	359	385	252	289	7.2

Source: US Census, Maine State Planning Office

*Figures provided by Maine State Planning Office using methodology based on number of households, occupied and vacant units for sale.

Senior Housing

Senior housing is and will continue to be a concern over the planning period. The population of the town is aging as it is in the county and the state. Many senior householders will relocate to elderly housing facilities where the burden of home maintenance and property taxes will be lessened. According to 2003 figures from MSHA, 30.3% of the Houlton housing market area households were 65 years or older and more than half of those were 75 years or older. More than 15% had incomes less than 60% of the median income level, indicating that half of the area seniors would fall in the low income bracket where subsidized rents may be necessary should they wish to move into rental units.

Senior Households in Houlton Housing Market Area , 2003				
	65+	65-74	75+	Total
Households	1,683	805	878	5,561
% of Total Households	30.3%	14.5%	15.8%	
@ <60% of Median Income	850	351	499	
% of Total Households	15.3%	6.3%	9.0%	
% of Senior Households	50.5%	43.6%	56.9%	

Source: 2003 Claritas

Population forecasts indicate that there will be no net gain in population in the housing market area, but the senior age group in Houlton alone will increase by 148 individuals. Therefore, there may be a need for additional rental units, but they will need to be affordable as well.

Housing Sales

The Maine State Housing Authority's residential sales figures for Houlton show that registered sales of Houlton residences were fairly stable in the early 2000's, with an overall trend toward increase through 2003, except for a 12.3% dip in sales volume in 2000. This trend toward a general increase in sales volume was driven in part by the national decline in home mortgage interest rates, and Homeland Security staff increases following the September 11 terrorist attack in 2001 that resulted in more than 50 families relocating to the Houlton area. The median single-family home sales price in Houlton followed a similar trend over the period, with an overall increase over the five-year period of 28.4% from \$44,400 to \$57,000.

The average sales price is a useful planning tool in determining housing affordability. According to the table below, an average of 38 single family residential properties were sold annually during the 5-year period. These real estate transactions only affect ownership of 2 percent of the 1-unit structures in the Houlton and far less if all towns in the Houlton housing market are factored into the equation. This low number of sales may be an indicator of home ownership stability, or it also may be indicative of the inability of a segment of Houlton's population to afford residential

dwellings at the current real estate market value or of a low level of overall housing demand. However, a closer study using real estate tax transfer records shows that an average closer to 84 transactions actually occurred in Houlton, but may not have been registered sales with the MREIS.

The following table shows that Houlton’s median annual residential sales price is relatively consistent with the Aroostook County medians, but Houlton experienced a much greater increase in price in 2001 and 2003 than the county. In general, homes are still less expensive in some of the smaller communities in Houlton’s housing market area. Overall, the County has shown a larger net increase in single family sales volumes through the period, but Houlton has seen a larger increase in all types of housing.

Houlton Housing Market Median Home Sales Compared to Aroostook County, 1999-2003*

Type of Home	% change 99-03	1999			2000			2001			2002			2003	
		Median	#	%	Median	#	%	Median	#	%	Median	#	%	Median	#
All (County)	37.2 (29.8)	\$39,900 (38,450)	31 (34)	-2.3 (2.7)	\$35,000 (39,500)	25 (38)	21.4 (7.6)	\$42,500 (42,500)	33 (66)	3.5 (17.8)	\$44,000 (50,075)	61 (106)	24.4 (-.3)	\$54,750 (49,900)	54 (97)
Single Family	28.4 (39.0)	\$44,400 (39,400)	29 (32)	-17 (1.5)	\$37,000 (40,000)	24 (36)	24.9 (10.0)	\$46,200 (44,000)	30 (62)	1.7 (17.0)	\$47,000 (51,493)	58 (102)	21.3 (6.3)	\$57,000 (54,750)	49 (90)
Mobile Home	0.0%													\$26,750	5
Multi-Family	0.0%													\$47,450	6

Source: *Statewide Multiple Listing Service (MREIS)*

Note: Under “Type of Home” All includes single family, condominiums, and mobile homes. Multi-family is defined as 2 to 4.

Rate of Growth

The following table compares the rate that median income has increased to the rate at which housing sales and rents have increased over the last two census years.

Comparison of Change in Income and Housing Costs			
	1989	1999	% change
Median Rent	\$329	\$360	9%
Median Home Value	\$50,200	\$58,100	16%
Median Household Income	\$20,316	\$26,212	29%

This comparison shows that household income has clearly outpaced the increased cost of housing during the 10-year period between 1990 and 2000. However, a close look at the table below, which studies housing costs and the affordability index for very low, low, median, and moderate income levels for the 4-year period from 2000 to 2003 indicates that housing has become less affordable for all of the income levels since 2000. The figures for Aroostook County are similar with the exception that they begin to show a reversal toward greater affordability from 2002 to 2003 while Houlton’s index continues to decline, particularly for the low and very low income households.

Affordability Index for Houlton Housing Market 2000 – 2003							
Note: An index of less than 1 is unaffordable; an index of more than 1 is affordable							
Year	% of Median Income	Index	Median Income	Median Home (MH)	Median Income can afford	Income/yr needed For MH	Hourly Wage for MH
2000	30%	0.58	\$8,190	\$35,000	\$20,238	\$13,245	\$6.37
2000	50%	1.00	\$13,650	\$35,000	\$35,028	\$13,245	\$6.37
2000	80%	1.64	\$21,839	\$35,000	\$57,285	\$13,245	\$6.37
2000	100%	2.06	\$27,299	\$35,000	\$72,138	\$13,245	\$6.37
2000	150%	3.12	\$40,949	\$35,000	\$109,119	\$13,245	\$6.37
2001	30%	0.50	\$8,611	\$42,500	\$21,197	\$16,096	\$7.74
2001	50%	0.86	\$14,352	\$42,500	\$36,750	\$16,096	\$7.74
2001	80%	1.42	\$22,963	\$42,500	\$60,163	\$16,096	\$7.74
2001	100%	1.78	\$28,703	\$42,500	\$75,789	\$16,096	\$7.74
2001	150%	2.70	\$43,055	\$42,500	\$114,746	\$16,096	\$7.74
2002	30%	0.51	\$8,971	\$44,000	\$22,536	\$16,223	\$7.80
2002	50%	0.89	\$14,951	\$44,000	\$39,212	\$16,223	\$7.80
2002	80%	1.46	\$23,921	\$44,000	\$64,331	\$16,223	\$7.80
2002	100%	1.84	\$29,902	\$44,000	\$81,100	\$16,223	\$7.80
2002	150%	2.79	\$44,853	\$44,000	\$122,859	\$16,223	\$7.80
2003	30%	0.41	\$8,707	\$54,750	\$22,276	\$19,612	\$9.43
2003	50%	0.71	\$14,512	\$54,750	\$38,989	\$19,612	\$9.43
2003	80%	1.17	\$23,219	\$54,750	\$64,193	\$19,612	\$9.43
2003	100%	1.48	\$29,024	\$54,750	\$81,025	\$19,612	\$9.43
2003	150%	2.25	\$43,536	\$54,750	\$122,994	\$19,612	\$9.43

Source: Claritas by indicated year and Statewide Multiple Listing Service (MREIS)

Affordable Housing

The Growth Management Law requires that Maine towns prepare a Comprehensive Plan that addresses the state goal of promoting affordable housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

Affordable housing for renters is distinguished from that for homeowners by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. Under their guidelines, a rented home is considered affordable to a household if the monthly estimated rent, insurance costs, and utility costs do not exceed 30 percent of the household monthly income. An owner-occupied home is considered affordable if the unit sales price or value does not exceed that for which monthly estimated mortgage payments (including principal and interest), property tax, insurance costs (homeowner's and private mortgage insurance), maintenance costs, and utility costs equal 28 percent of the household's monthly income.

Affordable Housing Comparison

Affordable housing availability is focused on very low income, low income, and moderate income households defined as follows:

- Houlton’s median household income in 2000 was \$26,212; in 2003 it was \$27,769.
- Aroostook County median household income in 2000 was \$28,837; in 2003 it was \$30,991.
- Very low income is considered to be 50 percent of the county’s median household income.
- Low income is considered to be between 51 percent and 80 percent of the county’s median household income.
- Moderate income is considered to be between 81 percent and 150 percent of the county’s median household income.

In the table below, Houlton’s median income for 2003 was used for this analysis on the basis that it would present a more accurate picture of local affordability, and would also represent a “worst case” study as the median incomes of both the county and Houlton housing market were higher than Houlton’s median income. Therefore, if these income levels were used, it would make the sales that occurred during the study period more affordable.

Rental affordability was based on 30% of household income, while affordable mortgage was based on 28% of household income.

Affordability Calculations for Houlton 2003			
	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income
% of Median Income	50 %	51% to 80%	81% to 150%
In dollars	\$13,884	\$14,162 - \$22,215	\$22,492 - \$41,654
Affordable rent	<\$347	<\$555	<\$1,041
Affordable Mortgage	\$324	\$325-\$518	\$519-\$972
Less Taxes, ⁸ insurance and utilities ⁹	+/- \$160	+/- \$225	+/- \$300
Affordable Mortgage payment	\$164	\$165-\$343	\$344-\$672
Affordable House Price	\$27,000	\$27,500-\$50,000	\$50,500-\$111,500

The income, rent and mortgage figures from the previous table were used to conduct a local affordability analysis for housing in Houlton. Real estate sales tax transfers were tabulated for the years 2001-2005 to form the basis for the analysis. Only those transfers involving outright sales of dwellings were considered and the lowest and highest transactions were eliminated from consideration.

⁸ Tax based on 18.5 mils

⁹ assumed \$100/month utilities

The following table provides a breakdown of the 480 total sales into the given ranges of affordability outlined previously.

Housing Sales 2001 -2005

Sale Price Range	# Sales and Percentage of Total Sales
Under \$27,000	94 (20%)
\$27,001-\$50,000	120 (25%)
\$50,001-\$111,500	227 (47%)
Over \$111,501	39 (8%)

Source: Real Estate Transfer Records – Houlton Town Office

A total of 480 home sales were considered as part of the housing affordability study. During the period, the average sale price was \$58,076 with a high of \$214,900 and a low of \$6,000.

Affordable Housing Availability

- 211 (or 44% of) sales were more than the average sale price of \$58,076, which closely mirrors the figures from 2003 Claritas, MSHA, and Maine Real Estate Information System (MREIS), which indicate that 39% of homes sold in Houlton in 2003 were more than what was considered affordable for the median household income.
- At least 94 homes sales between 2001 and 2005 were affordable to very low income families
- At least 214 home sales between 2001 and 2005 were affordable to low income families.
- The moderate income families had the widest available options for home sales with 227 sales in the moderate affordability range in addition to those in the low and very low ranges.
- Very low income families had the fewest options as 80% of home sales were not affordable to them, but still could potentially afford 20% percent of the sales during the period.

Rental Affordability

Rental units make up 1,000 or 33.4% of the total housing stock in Houlton according to the 2000 US Census. Rental affordability was determined with 2000 US Census information.

- The median rent was \$360
- At least 355 rental units (35.5%) had rents that were affordable to very low income families.
- At least 786 rental units (78.6%) were affordable to low income families.
- At least 929 rental units (92.9%) were affordable to moderate income families.
- At least 53.6% spent less than 29.9% of their household income on gross rent, while over 38% spent more than 30% of their household income on gross rent. This indicates that renting in Houlton is comparatively a little more expensive than in the county or State, but may be attributed to the lower median household income rather than higher rental costs.

Home Maintenance

Home maintenance is also an important component of housing affordability. There are several federal and state programs to help low-income families repair and preserve their homes. USDA Rural Development grants and low-interest loans, MSHA housing preservation loan funds, ACAP's Weatherization Program and Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP), and Community Development Block Grants are examples of assistance that can be obtained to help low-income families maintain or repair their dwellings.

Housing Analysis

Houlton's housing stock remains old, but is no longer suffering from deterioration as it was in the previous 20 years. There have been significant improvements from renovation and replacement over the last decade, and due to low mortgage rates and Homeland Security staffing increases, the demand for housing in the Houlton area is high. Successful efforts by the Town's Community Development Office in securing funds through the CDBG program in the 1980's made significant headway in improving the Town's housing stock and revitalizing its downtown. These efforts enhance Houlton's ability to market the Town to future potential businesses and industries, which is critical to the Town's economic revitalization and future job creation. The Town should continue to improve housing conditions for its residents wherever possible by actively pursuing federal and state grants for housing rehabilitation.

Municipal officials are also, as part of this comprehensive planning process, reviewing the Town's existing zoning ordinances and building codes to ensure these are compatible with its current economic development goals. The zoning ordinance will be updated to protect existing residential land uses, while discouraging incompatible land use encroachment into established neighborhoods, all-the-while providing safe and sanitary housing for present and future residents.

The Town needs to encourage more affordable housing opportunities within the urban growth area of the Town. Current zoning practices encourage sprawl by disallowing affordable housing (that is, smaller, more densely located housing) in the urbanized area. This, in turn, creates a heavier burden on public services, including police and fire protection, road maintenance, and higher taxes. The Town might consider offering developers incentives to create more affordable housing opportunity within the R-1 and R-2 districts. Incentives such as density bonuses, affordable housing tax increment financing programs, and facilitating the provision of water and sewer have been used in other areas to encourage higher density development in the urbanized area.

However, before any development can occur, the town must identify parcels within the urban growth area that are suitable and available for development. These growth areas are already highly developed making opportunity for further development somewhat limited. For example, there may be fringe areas that are not currently served by public water and sewer, but could easily accommodate short extensions of these services allowing further development to meet affordable housing goals.

Population forecasts indicate that there will be no net gain in population in the housing market area, but the senior age group in Houlton alone will increase by 148 individuals. Therefore, there will be a need for additional rental units that are either subsidized, rent controlled, or made affordable in some way.

Housing Policies and Implementation Strategies

Houlton has a downtown area with mixed uses and exclusive residential neighborhoods, as well as linear, less-dense residential development along rural roadways. For the most part, the housing stock is comprised of single-family dwellings, with some mobile homes and multi-family units for the elderly and lower-income families.

The primary task for the Town in the housing inventory section was to assess housing and its affordability for its residents. The information used by the committee to consider affordable housing was primarily 2000 US Census data, but also included information from the Maine State Housing Authority. Based on this data, the greatest housing needs appear to be those of the elderly and potential homeowners. Since the elderly share of the population is projected to increase relative to the Town’s population as a whole, the needs of the Town’s elderly will also increase with time. This section establishes policies and strategies to attain the housing goal, with a specific focus on the elderly and potential homeowners.

Houlton’s Housing Goal

- *To possess and promote a wide variety of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, housing for older residents and special needs groups, and to meet the needs of various types of households and income levels, while assuring that the housing is decent and safe.*

State Goal: *To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.*

Housing Policies

<i>Policy</i>	Corresponding
	Strategy
A. Provide safe, decent, and affordable housing to all Town residents.	1-6,10-11
B. Identify land for, and support of, the construction of infrastructure for affordable, senior, and other housing options within the urban growth area.	1-6,8-13
C. Ensure the Town’s land use regulations are consistent, adhered to, and enforced to meet the Town’s housing needs.	7-9,12-15
D. The Town will seek to meet the goals of the Growth Management Act regarding affordable housing.	1-9, 11, 14(d), 14(e)

Housing Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year			
1. Provide through widely advertised notices for a forum by the Planning Board and Town officials on the housing needs and issues of the community.	CDP	2007			
2. Determine the specific housing needs of the Town through the forum mentioned in #1, and make recommendations.	PB, CDP	2007			
3. Work with the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) rehabilitation program and the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) to take advantage of programs, and obtain annual program updates from these agencies.	CDP	On-Going			
4. Assess the impact of eventual expiration of USDA RD income-based rent requirements may have on affordable housing opportunities.	CDP, TA	2007			
5. Seek out and make available sources of funding for housing rehabilitation from private sources, service organizations, and state and federal programs.	CDP	On-Going			
6. Support ACAP's efforts to improve low-income and senior housing quality and availability.	CDP, TO	On-Going			
7. Assess the impacts of proposed commercial and industrial development on abutting residential properties and make recommendations.	PB, CEO	2007-08			
8. Review and recommend suitable areas and performance standards for affordable housing (including mobile home park development), taking into account existing or planned public facilities.	PB	2007-08			
9. Establish language in the Town's regulations that encourages developers to provide low- to moderate-income housing in areas that are or can be served by public sewer and water.	PB, CEO	2007-08			
10. Inventory and recommend the removal, if feasible, of houses which are dilapidated and cannot be rehabilitated.	CDP, CEO	2008			
11. Prepare a listing and map of all vacant residential lots in residential districts suitable for infill development that could include affordable housing and make available to potential developers.	CEO, TA	2007			
12. Encourage clustering of new developments greater than 10 acres to reduce the costs of providing new roads, public services, and utilities.	PB, CEO	2008			
13. Continue to promote higher densities for residential development in and around the urban growth area, subject to connection to the sewer and water system.	PB, CEO, HWC	2007			
14. To discourage residential sprawl, Houlton will: a. Study the effects of increasing the minimum lot size in areas zoned RF, b. Create a program of density bonuses for developers for clustered housing in proposed developments of 10 acres or more, c. Include right-to-farm and right-to-forest provisions in the zoning ordinance for the RF District, and d. Allow affordable housing in R-2 Districts, contingent upon access to public sewer and water. e. Draft an Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing Policy for approval by Town Council	PB	2007-08			
15. Design and host workshops on housing, timely land use issues and the variance procedure for local realtors.	CEO, PB	Annually			
Key					
ADC	Airport Dev. Committee	LIB	Cary Library	R2C	Roads 2000 Committee
BC	Budget Committee	MFS	Maine Forest Service	SAD	School Admin. District
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MWC	Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TA	Tax Assessor
CDP	Community Dev. Planning	PD	Police Department,	TC	Town Council
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	PB	Planning Board	TM	Town Manager
DEP	Dept. of Env. Protection	PRD	Parks & Recreation Department	TO	Town Officials
HWC	Houlton Water Company	PRAB	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board	ZBA	Zoning Bd. of Appeals
IF&W	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	PWD	Public Works Department		

Natural Resources

Topography

Houlton features a gently rolling topography dissected by the Meduxnekeag River watershed and its numerous tributaries. The Meduxnekeag River flows northward into the Town of Littleton, and then swings easterly into the Province of New Brunswick, Canada where it eventually empties into the St. John River. Houlton covers an area of 36.7 square miles or approximately 23,488 acres. It is bounded by Hodgdon to the south, Littleton to the north, New Limerick and Ludlow to the west, and the Province of New Brunswick, Canada to the east. Elevations range from a low of 290 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL) to a high of 809.5 feet MSL. The lowest elevation in the Town is located along the main stem of the Meduxnekeag River in the northeastern corner of the Town, just downstream of the Lowry Road Bridge crossing. The highest elevation documented in the Town is at the location of a radio tower/beacon situated on Hovey Hill on the Maine-New Brunswick International Boundary Line. Other high elevations in Houlton (600-700+ feet MSL) are associated with a series of upland ridges associated with Henderson Hill in neighboring Hodgdon, and some ridges associated with the Houlton-Littleton Esker located in the western portion of the Town. The Houlton-Littleton Esker travels in a northerly direction and is considered a regionally significant geologic formation rich in sand and gravel deposits.

Houlton is home to numerous small ponds. Jordan Pond, located on the Littleton-Houlton townline and measuring approximately 14 acres in size, is the largest of these ponds. About two-thirds of Jordan Pond is located in Littleton. The other small ponds in the Town are unnamed and are either associated with impounded flowages (beaver dams), freshwater wetlands, or small farm ponds. There are numerous streams, brooks, and associated tributaries that offer habitat for brown trout. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has identified eleven (11) non-forested wetlands in Houlton. The largest of these mapped wetlands is 36.88 acres in size (Wetland #33 on Houlton's Water Resources Map) and is located just south of Hidden Road and approximately 3/4 mile north of the Interstate 95/U.S. Route 1 Interchange. This wetland and most of the others are associated with the Meduxnekeag River or its numerous tributaries.

Houlton's dominant topographic feature is the main branch of the Meduxnekeag River, which winds through farm fields and forestlands from the southwestern to the northeastern corner of the Town and flows directly through downtown Houlton. The Meduxnekeag River is one the most renowned brown trout fisheries in the Northeast. Its watershed drains approximately 185,000 acres in Houlton and eight other neighboring southern Aroostook communities. Other predominant topographic features within the Town are the kames, kettleholes, and long sinuous ridges of sand and gravel deposits associated with the famous Houlton-Littleton Esker. This esker is a segment of the 212 mile long Houlton-Dennysville Esker System, one of the greatest esker systems in the State. Further information on this esker will be covered in the Critical Areas sub-section of this chapter.

Soils

Soils are the fundamental resource by which the suitability of the land to support a variety of land uses is determined. The United States Department of Agriculture-Soil Conservation Service (USDA-SCS) has mapped the soils found in Houlton. The various soil types that occur in Houlton have been detailed in the USDA-SCS's Aroostook County Soil Survey - Southern Part issued in 1964. Usually, it is assumed that soils are somewhat different in each region. Houlton is located in the southern part of the soil survey area and has soils similar to the surrounding regions. Soils information for Houlton's natural resource inventory are from two sources: Soils Survey-Aroostook County, Southern Part (Map #'s 38, 39, 45, 46, 52 and 53) issued in April 1964 and Soil Survey Data for Growth Management in Aroostook County, Maine, Southern Part.

Definitions

Soil Associations - several main patterns of soil types.

Soil Series - soils with profiles that are almost alike.

Soil Types - distinct soils irrespective of slope.

Soil Group - soil series that have many internal features in common.

Phases - distinct soil type including slope.

Soil Types

Soils are listed two ways in the soil surveys. First, they are listed by name, such as Mapleton shaly silt loam. Secondly, they are listed as a symbol containing three letters. The first two letters indicate the soil type (such as Cg, Ea, Mh) and the last letter indicates the slope on the map ("A" indicates a 0-2 percent slope, "B" 2-8 percent, "C" 8-15 percent, "D" 15-25 percent, and "E" 25-45 percent). For example, MhB indicates a Mapleton shaly silt loam, with a 2 - 8 percent slope.

There are seventeen (17) distinct **soil types** mapped by the USDA-SCS within the Town of Houlton. Of the 17 types, Mapleton shaly silt loams and Colton gravelly sandy loams make up the greatest proportion of soils found in Houlton. Caribou gravelly silt loams also comprise a significant percentage of the soil types found in the cleared lands located in the Town. The Mapleton shaly silt loam soil type makes up about 4.4 percent of all the soil types mapped in Aroostook County. Houlton is fortunate to have an abundance of mapped Mapleton shaly silt loam, Colton gravelly sandy loam, and Caribou gravelly loam soil types as these are some of the more productive farmland and forestry soils in the County and in the State. In addition, Caribou gravelly loam soils, because of their soil structure and drainage characteristics, are highly rated for a variety of low-density developments, such as dwellings and roads. A soils map is located at the end of this section.

Soil Types found in Houlton

Symbol	Name	Symbol	Name
Cg	Caribou gravelly loam	Mn	Mixed alluvial land
Cn	Colton gravelly sandy loam	Mo	Monarda & Burnham silt loam
Co	Conant silt loam	Pa	Peat and muck
Ha	Hadley Silt Loam	Ra	Red Hook & Atherton silt loam
Ho	Howland gravelly loam	Sg	Stetson gravelly loam
Ln	Linneus silt loam	Th	Thorndike shaly silt loam
Ma	Machias gravelly loam	Tk	Thorndike very rocky silt loam
Mh	Mapleton shaly silt loam	Wn	Winooski silt loam
Mm	Mapleton very rocky silt loam		

Source: Soil Survey, Aroostook County Maine, Southern Part, August 1964

Agricultural and Forest Resources

Agricultural Resources

Agriculture within Houlton has followed the regional trends of declining acreages of active farmland, and declining numbers of operational farming units. Some of these declines are a result of improvements in farming mechanization that enabled a farm operation to improve crop production while reducing labor requirements. Thus, fewer farming operational units were needed to plant and harvest more or equal amounts of acreages with improvements in farm equipment technology. Probably a larger factor in the declining number of farmers and cultivated acreages of row crops (primarily potatoes) in Houlton and the region, were the significant increases in the costs of production that occurred during the 1970's and 1980's while the market price for the crop produced remained somewhat stable, or in the case of high yielding years, (where surplus stocks outstripped market demand) market prices that were below the costs of production.

Most of Houlton's prime agricultural soils are not being actively farmed. However, any proposed land use ordinance amendments to be developed during the implementation phase of this comprehensive planning process might provide that the principal use of certain sections of Houlton be "agricultural" to potentially prevent prime farmlands from being taken out of agricultural production. Residential development that may occur along some of the rural roads that are surrounded by agriculture may be incompatible with agriculture as it places a different set of demands on natural resources. Through proper land use controls, nuisance conditions arising from incompatible land uses can be avoided. Houlton should strive to maintain the operational integrity of viable farming units by controlling residential development on prime farmlands. Many of the soil types that are prime farmland are also those that are the most suitable for subsurface wastewater disposal. This places a greater demand on those areas that have suitable soils.

The southern Aroostook sub-region has the most animal units per farming operation (both beef, dairy, and sheep) than do all other regions of northern Maine combined. Many of the smaller and/or side hill fields and croplands with shallow depth to bedrock soils located in southern Aroostook may have been more conducive to pasture and haylands, which may have led to more farmers operating dairy and beef farms. Another factor that greatly influenced the growth of dairy and livestock operations in Houlton and other southern Aroostook communities was available agribusiness infrastructure (local dairy processors & depots) and easier access to markets for milk products and livestock in Central and southern Maine. A local granary, Aroostook Milling, provides a readily accessible market for grain grown by local farmers and provides a value-added economic benefit to oats, barley, and other small grains produced in the Town and region. The southern Aroostook region has also benefited over the years from having good technical support with herd management and health. The southern Aroostook region is serviced by certified artificial breeding technicians, and has had a large animal veterinary doctor serving dairy and livestock farms since the late 1940's. Currently the Southern Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District (SASWCD) and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) have programs to provide technical assistance to the region's livestock producers. In addition, SASWCD & UMCE provide the agricultural community with farm livestock and crop management technical assistance.

Agricultural Diversification

In spite of declining trends in the numbers of potato and dairy farmers operating in Houlton, agricultural activities within the Town and region continue to experience significant diversity in operations. In addition to the potato farmers, there are 4 beef producers, 9 farms with horses, and 1 dairy farmer in Houlton according to Southern Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District's records. Shakaree Red Deer Farm in nearby Ludlow has approximately 600 head. Oats and barley are primarily raised as rotation crops by potato farmers in Houlton. Throughout southern Aroostook County, typical crop rotation is one year of potatoes alternated with a year of small grains, peas, or flax. According to the Cooperative Extension Service, barley is now the second largest crop in the southern Aroostook Region in terms of acreage, and oats is the third largest crop. Houlton is also home to a local granary, Aroostook Milling, which provides a local market for grain grown throughout the region as well as a value-added feed ration to area livestock and dairy farms. Peas, field run and commercial greenhouse tomatoes, pumpkins, broccoli, sweet corn, etc. are all grown in southern Aroostook County according to the Cooperative Extension Service in Houlton. Timothy hay is also grown by several farmers for horse owners in the region as well as some of the thoroughbred racehorse owners in the southern portions of Maine and New England. Potatoes and processor broccoli are grown for export out of the region. All other vegetables are sold at farmers markets within the region.

Another important feature of agricultural activities within the Town is the significant number of landowners that rent land out for potato production, hay stumpage, or growing small grains. According to SASWCD records there are approximately 36 landowners in Houlton that keep portions of their land in active agricultural production through rental agreements.

Forest Resources

Houlton contains significant forest resources although a very small percentage is viable for commercial harvesting. There are only 599 acres or approximately 5 percent of forest lands within the Town that are enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Of the 599 acres of forest lands enrolled in the Tree Growth Program, 195 acres are classified as softwood, 196 acres are mixed wood, and 208 acres are classified as hardwood, for a combined 2004 valuation of \$62,263 (Source: MMA 2006). Like many areas in Aroostook County, the amount of forest acreage has been increasing as farmland has been abandoned or planted to trees. The largest tracts of contiguous forest lands are located in lowland areas associated with the Meduxnekeag River and its major tributaries such as Pearce Brook and the B Stream.

Most of the commercial forest tree species found in Aroostook County are also found in Houlton. The three major forest cover types include softwood, hardwood, and mixed forest stands. Approximately 88 percent of Aroostook County is forested primarily with spruce, fir, maple, birch, and beech trees. The County is the largest timber-producing county in Maine. There are a number of mills in the region that employ Houlton residents.

Town-specific forestry data is difficult to obtain for many Aroostook County communities due in large part to the lack of managed forest lands. Many of the managed lands are small woodlots between agricultural fields. Houlton's woodlands are owned for the most part by approximately 200 different landowners. These woodlands are in parcels of less than 500 acres and are usually attached to farms. Based on municipal tax records there are no large tracts (> 500 acres) owned by industrial forest management companies. Typically forest landowners look to their woodlots for an extra source of income during winter months when many of these forest lands are frozen and accessible. As a result, some of these lots have been "managed" for a one-time harvest that produced a one-time cash flow for the owner. The following table indicates forest harvest information for the town of Houlton.

Year	Selection Harvest	Shelterwood Harvest	Clearcut Harvest	Total Harvest	Change of land use	Number of Timber Harvests
1991-94	99	-	15	144	15	7
1995	126	14	-	140	1	5
1996	335	-	3	338	3	10
1997	359	20	-	379	-	16
1998	232	50	39	321	70	14
1999	108	5	13	126	3	11
2000	340	285	-	625	-	16
2001	608	-	-	608	-	16
2002	420	-	-	420	2	9
2003	35	-	-	35	-	4
Total	2,662	374	70	3,106	94	108

Source: Maine Forest Service 2006

Forest stand types are distributed throughout the Town based primarily upon soil depths and drainage characteristics. Softwoods dominate the shorelands, wetlands, and lowlands. According to the USDA-Forest Service, balsam fir, red spruce, and northern white cedar, respectively, comprise the majority of the softwood stock growing in Aroostook County. Aspen, sugar maple, and red maple comprise the majority of the hardwood growing on steeper slopes and upland ridges in the Town. Other species include white birch, beech, and yellow birch.

Timber Markets, Harvesting and Development Impacts

Aspen, or poplar, is the predominant tree species in the Town. Virtually all of the aspen harvested is used for waferboard. The Louisiana Pacific mill in New Limerick and J.M. Huber mill in Easton are the mills that purchase aspen for waferboard. Spruce and fir harvested today frequently goes to the J. Paul Levesque mill in Ashland, Domtar Mill in Baileyville, or the Irving mill in St. Leonard, New Brunswick. There are two log home manufacturing companies in southern Aroostook, Ward Log Homes, Inc., of Houlton, and Katahdin Forest Products in Oakfield, that are purchasers of cedar. Many of the recent timber harvest operations on small woodlots are buffered by agriculture fields or are away from developed areas. Based upon current land use patterns and resource constraints such as wet soils, steep slopes, and accessibility, development does not appear to be impacting Houlton's forest resources.

Houlton's Town Forest

Houlton is fortunate to own a 300-acre Town Forest. The Town Forest has been used over the past four decades as a resource to educate present and future forest landowners about management techniques that can be implemented on their woodlots to improve timber stand productivity and to enhance other uses of the forest resources (wildlife habitat, recreation) within the community and wider region. Future light harvest operations are planned on a sustainable basis. The Town Forest has been a tremendous educational resource for students at Houlton High School.

In general, most forest lands within Houlton are associated with a farm. There is a general perception that these woodlots could be better managed. Some landowners and/or farmers are converting marginal agricultural land to spruce plantations. Others are planting Christmas trees. A shift to well-managed woodlots and plantations could improve future forestry income within the Town.

Wetland Areas

Wetlands are defined under the Natural Resources Protection Act, MRSA Title 38, Section 480-B, subsection 4 definitions. "Freshwater Wetlands" are defined as freshwater swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas that are: inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and for a duration sufficient to support, and which under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of wetland vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils; and not considered part of a great pond, coastal wetland, river, stream, or brook."

Some of the local benefits of Houlton's wetlands relate to wildlife, flood control, and water quality protection. The amount and variety of plants found in wetlands create excellent habitat for wildlife such as moose, deer, snowshoe hare, songbirds, ruffed grouse, and waterfowl. The dense cover and available browse found in wetlands and their fringe areas are essential for the survival of wildlife during the region's long winter. During periods of heavy rain and spring run-off, wetlands act as catchment basins or sponges that collect and hold water and gradually release it as stream flow or groundwater recharge. All wetlands, regardless of size, perform the important function of reducing flooding. The biological composition of wetlands allows them to absorb tremendous quantities of nutrients and pollutants which make them act like a water purification system. The quality and quantity of ground and surface water is maintained by healthy, undisturbed wetlands.

According to the freshwater wetland map prepared by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in 1989, Houlton has eleven (11) non-forested wetlands. These wetlands range from 6.1 to 36.88 acres for a total of 183.8 acres (0.78% of Houlton's total land area). There are six wetlands that are over 10 acres in size, therefore requiring mandatory protection under the Shoreland Zoning Act, Title 38 MRSA, Sections 435-488. Prior to the adoption of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, wetlands could be encroached upon by timber harvesting to the detriment of ground and surface water quality. The largest wetland is 36.88 acres and is located just south of Hidden Road, and adjacent to an unnamed tributary to the Meduxnekeag River. Most of these wetlands have not been given a wildlife rating by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W). One wetland (number 34 on the Water Resource map) has been given a low wildlife rating by IF&W. Areas within 250 feet of the upland edge of the Town's mapped wetlands have been included within the Town's Stream Protection District as detailed in the Houlton Shoreland Zoning Ordinance adopted in July of 1992.

According to National Wetland Inventory information, there are significantly more wetlands located in Houlton than identified by MDEP. These wetlands also provide wildlife habitat and flood protection. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has mapped many of these as wading bird and waterfowl habitat over 10 acres in size. In total there is 180 acres of wetlands that need to be afforded protection under Shoreland Zoning. These have been identified on the Water resources map at the end of this section.

Water Resources

Water resources play a significant role in the community's economic potential and quality of life. Water resources are divided into two separate categories: groundwater and surface water. Each type of water provides benefits to the community and may be threatened by certain land uses.

Groundwater

Groundwater is typically one of the most important resources a town can have. Groundwater, either public (more than 85 percent of households in Houlton) or private, is the primary source of drinking water for the residents of Houlton. The Maine Geologic Survey (MGS) has identified fourteen (14) sand and gravel aquifers in Houlton. The largest aquifer is 555.1 acres in size and rated by MGS as having a moderate groundwater yield potential (10 to 50 GPM). This large

aquifer and nine (9) other aquifers are associated with the 212-mile long Houlton-Dennysville Esker system. The Houlton-Dennysville Esker is a geologic formation rich in sand and gravel deposits that is underlain with abundant quantities of groundwater. Evidence of these significant groundwater resources is substantiated by the fact that four (4) of the mapped sand and gravel aquifers associated with this esker system have been rated as having a higher yielding potential for groundwater (≥ 50 GPM) according to MGS data. These higher yielding deposits have been rated by MGS as good to excellent potential groundwater supply resources. The Houlton Water Company has drilled wells into this same esker system in the neighboring community of Hodgdon.

Houlton has a total of 1,460 acres of mapped sand and gravel deposits throughout the Town (6.2 percent of Houlton's area). Of the 1,460 acres of mapped aquifers, subsurface data indicates that approximately 95 acres have excellent groundwater yield potential (≥ 50 GPM). As discussed in the Public Facilities and Services chapter, Houlton's groundwater resources are sufficient to supply the needs of its residents and could support greater commercial and/or light industrial developments if these were targeted towards areas mapped as yielding sufficient groundwater supplies. Houlton's groundwater resources, although abundant, are very susceptible to contamination from a variety of sources and thus need to be afforded a planned level of protection. Some potential sources of groundwater contamination that have been identified by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection are: faulty/substandard septic systems, agricultural chemicals, underground fuel tanks, ground discharging floor drains, old solid waste dumps, and sand/salt storage piles. The Town is a consistent participant in the DEP Small Communities Septic Grant program, assisting an average of 2 residential septic system replacements per year during the 2003-2006 timeframe.

The Town of Houlton and the Houlton Water Company have developed and adopted a Drinking Water Protection Ordinance. While this will be discussed at greater length in the Land Use section, the ordinance is designed to protect groundwater resources located adjacent to Houlton's municipal wells. The purpose of this ordinance is to:

- A. To manage the present and future groundwater recharge and supply areas of the Town of Houlton in order to maintain the present rate of recharge and, where possible, to enhance recharge, thus ensuring a safe and dependable water supply to the Town and its inhabitants for the future.
- B. To protect such areas from contaminants that can reasonably be expected to accompany certain uses of land or activities, thereby maintaining the high water quality. The water quality for the municipal water supply will require efforts by all residents in the area to ensure that the high quality of the supply is ensured indefinitely.

Surface Water

The Meduxnekeag River is the major surface water resource within Houlton. The river flows from southwest to northeast through the center of the Town, and meets with the St. John River in New Brunswick. All the streams and brooks in Houlton flow directly into the Meduxnekeag, which has an overall watershed drainage basin of 185,000 acres or approximately 289 square

miles. The Meduxnekeag River watershed includes Houlton and all or parts of 15 neighboring southern Aroostook towns. The River supports a wide range of wildlife, birds, migratory waterfowl, and fish. Primary features of the Meduxnekeag River Watershed are as follows:

Meduxnekeag Watershed Features

• <u>Size of Watershed</u>		185,000 acres
• <u>Land Use</u>	- Forestland	146,200 acres
	- Active Cropland	23,900 acres
	- Hay & Pasture Land	3,900 acres
	- Conservation Reserve Program	2,900 acres
	- Grassland	100 acres
	- Water and Urban Land	8,000 acres
• <u>Land Ownership</u>		
	- Private	166,500 acres (90%)
	- State & Local	18,500 acres (10%)
• Number of Farms		393 farms
• Average Farm Size		80 acres
• Prime & Important Farmlands		105,000 acres

Source: SASWCD, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, & USDA Watershed Protection Plan, June 1993

The Meduxnekeag River Watershed has over 290 miles of flowing surface waters, including both named and unnamed streams and brooks. Portions of the following named streams and brooks of the watershed that flow through parts of the Town are as follows:

Brooks & Streams of the Meduxnekeag River Watershed in Houlton *

B Stream	85,000 feet	16.10 miles
Dog Brook	17,500 feet	3.31 miles
Moose Brook	40,800 feet	7.73 miles
Pearce Brook	30,000 feet	5.68 miles
Smith Brook	20,000 feet	3.79 miles
Cook Brook	41,200 feet	7.80 miles
Oliver Brook	14,500 feet	2.75 miles

*Note: not all of the complete measured lengths of these listed streams & brooks flow through Houlton.

In addition to the above-named streams and brooks flowing into the Meduxnekeag River, there are numerous miles of unnamed perennial brooks that drain into the Meduxnekeag. The MDEP has given the main stem of the Meduxnekeag River, from its outlet at Meduxnekeag Lake to the international boundary and all its tributaries, a Class B surface water classification. Class B

waters are the third highest classification given by the MDEP and are suitable for: drinking water (after treatment), fishing, recreation, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. As per State regulation, discharges to these Class B waters are not allowed to have a quality lower than the receiving waters and shall not cause adverse impact to aquatic life. There are, in any community, a number of sources of threats to the water resources that arise from land uses. Any land use has the potential of degrading water quality in the immediate area and areas around the watershed.

The Meduxnekeag River watershed has been recognized for over a decade by state, federal and local officials, Native American tribes, and natural resource management agencies as a valuable natural resource that is in need of protective management measures to prevent degradation of water quality and fisheries habitat value, as well as aesthetic values. In an effort to develop land use management alternatives to protect and sustain the unique natural resource features of the Meduxnekeag River Watershed, including water quality, prime farmlands, forestlands, wildlife & fisheries habitat, potable water supplies, recreational values, and aesthetics, the USDA, the SASWCD and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians entered into a Watershed Protection Plan Agreement in July of 1993. This Watershed Agreement Plan, which was authorized under the Public Law 83-566 (PL-566), Small Watershed Program, has outlined numerous land management practices to adopt with a projected benefit to cost ratio of 2.0 to 1.0. The details of the Meduxnekeag River Watershed Protection Plan/Environmental Assessment are as follows.

Meduxnekeag River Watershed Protection Plan/Environmental Assessment, June 1993

The Meduxnekeag River and its numerous tributaries flow through some of the most intensively farmed areas in southern Aroostook County. About 40 percent of the cropland located in southern Aroostook is located within the Meduxnekeag Watershed. Many of the small lakes, streams, and brooks that are located in the upstream portion of the watershed, above the agricultural land, have no known significant water quality problems. Based upon inventories conducted by SASWCD and NRCS staff, there are some 2,500 agricultural fields that drain directly into intermittent or perennial streams in the watershed. Most of the fields have no riparian buffer zones to filter out sediments or nutrients before reaching these surface waters. Several of the watershed's significant problems that occur on farm fields, forestlands or roadways include:

- Loss of productivity and deterioration of the soil resource base due to excessive cropland erosion;
- Lack of adequate riparian buffer zones between cropland and drainage ways;
- Inefficient use of pastures, animal wastes, and pesticides;
- Inefficient forest management, which leads to an unhealthy forest, low prices for harvested wood, and increased sediment and erosion; and
- Erosion and sedimentation associated with farm roads and ditches.

These identified problems ultimately cause significant water quality problems in the Meduxnekeag River and some of its major tributaries. The sediments loads, which include soil, nutrients, and pesticides, that are delivered to the river from numerous cropfields, woodlots, and

road ditches, are known as non-point source (NPS) pollution. According to local residents and IF&W biologists, the watershed's fishery resource has deteriorated over the years primarily because of NPS pollution. Problems from point sources, such as wastewater treatment plants and industrial discharges, have been alleviated. The numerous NPS run-off problems associated with agricultural fields, forest harvesting operations and urban development that have been documented over the years have resulted in problems such as: elevated water temperatures, lower oxygen levels, excessive algae growth, loss of fishery habitat, loss of fish spawning and nursery areas, and changes in aquatic life and the food chain in the watershed.

The overall effects of these problems have resulted in the reduction of fishing opportunities and have prevented the river from reaching its fishery resource potential. NPS pollution is now considered the limiting factor affecting biological conditions in the river and its tributaries. Streams turn muddy with suspended sediment during runoff events in all seasons of the year, even during winter thaws. Runoff from spring snowmelt and rain, and during fall rains when over 20,000 acres of cropland is bare, delivers the heaviest sediment loads to the watershed. Heavy summer storm events, even when there is some ground cover, commonly add pesticide-laden sediment loads to the watershed that may threaten aquatic life. According to the Watershed Environmental Assessment Report (USDA et al, June 1993), each summer over 9 miles of the main stem of the Meduxnekeag River, from Houlton to Canada, becomes choked with thick mats of green algae, reducing sport fishing opportunities and decreasing the visual appeal and esthetics of the river. This has created a significant under-utilization of the watershed's recreational potential and caused a loss of revenue from recreational activities.

To reverse trends in declining water quality and fisheries habitat, the project sponsors formulated a series of alternatives that include conservation practices, land management techniques, and technical assistance to land users/owners in the watershed. The total estimated project cost is \$3,645,800. The various types and quantities of conservation practices, management systems, and technical assistance that comprise the Watershed Protection Plan include:

Meduxnekeag Watershed - Conservation Practices Planned

Conservation Practice	Amount Planned
<i>Diversions</i>	<i>25,000 feet</i>
<i>Grassed Waterways</i>	<i>50 acres</i>
<i>Sediment Basins</i>	<i>250 units</i>
<i>Sub-surface Drainage</i>	<i>100,000 feet</i>
<i>Erosion Control Structures</i>	<i>150 units</i>
<i>Nutrient & Sediment Control Systems</i>	<i>50 units</i>
<i>Waste Storage Structures</i>	<i>25 units</i>
<i>Road Ditch Stabilization</i>	<i>25,000 feet</i>
<i>Planned Grazing Systems (Voisin)</i>	<i>50 systems</i>

Meduxnekeag Watershed - Planned Resource Management Systems

Management Systems Planned	
Nutrient Management Systems	Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
Pasture and Hayland Management	Forest Management
Critical Area Plantings	Filter strips (Riparian Buffer Strips)
Livestock Exclusion Systems (Fencing)	Cultural Resource Assessments/Protection Plans

Source: Meduxnekeag River Watershed Protection Plan ,USDA et al June 1993

Technical assistance in the form of surveying, planning, and design lay-out to implement the planned conservation practices and management systems will be provided by the USDA. Financial assistance for the recommended measures will be borne by a mix of FSA/USDA Agricultural Conservation Program and Water Quality Incentive Program Funds. Additional funds will be provided by the State of Maine and other local (non PL-566 Funds) sources. Implementation of the needed soil and water conservation practices will depend upon the availability of cost-sharing funds from FSA/USDA and other sources. The Watershed Protection Plan has an implementation sequence that is scheduled over a ten-year period. More information on the Watershed Protection Plan can be obtained by contacting the NRCS office in Houlton. A watershed protection plan of this magnitude needs to have local ownership and involvement by community leaders to be successful. In an effort to slow and reverse trends in water quality degradation while providing valuable local input into watershed conservation planning activities, the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition was formed in June of 1995.

Other Water Bodies

There is one (1) named open waterbody in Houlton, Jordan Pond (14 acres), and several smaller unnamed farm ponds or impounded flowages. Only Jordan Pond meets the definition of a Great Pond (that is, a natural body of water over ten acres in size) and therefore is a surface water covered under the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife currently has no available fisheries census data on this pond.

Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat

Houlton has a wide variety of natural habitat that is capable of supporting most of Maine's major wildlife and fish species. Houlton's vast tracts of woodlands and wetlands, combined with significant cropland acreages, abandoned farmlands, and other habitat such as fringe areas and regeneration areas, are capable of supporting a tremendous amount of wildlife from songbirds to large animals such as the moose. The long, cold winters are a limiting factor in all of Aroostook County for the amount of wildlife present.

Fisheries Habitat

When discussing the local fisheries resource, it is essential to clarify the critical role that the Town's streams play in the health of the resource. Although all of them may not support trout populations, they serve to maintain the cold water temperatures necessary for healthy, viable populations. Brook trout become stressed in water temperatures above 68 degrees Fahrenheit for extended periods of time. Maintained shade cover along all of Houlton's streams helps to keep water temperatures at cooler, more tolerable levels. According to the Regional Fisheries Biologist, the Meduxnekeag River and some of its major tributaries are brook trout and brown trout fisheries of statewide significance.

Native, wild fisheries

One Great Pond, Logan Lake (also called Jordan Pond), which lies on the Houlton-Littleton town border, is managed by the IF&W as a trout pond. Logan Lake is stocked annually with brook trout from State fish hatcheries. This small lake, which has carry-in access via an old railroad, supports a good trout fishery during the summer months.

The Town has an abundant wild trout resource in flowing waters. The primary water is the Meduxnekeag River and its tributaries. Brook trout are native to the drainage and the River is unique in Maine because it supports a wild population of brown trout. Resident and nonresident anglers frequent the river during April to September, depending on river conditions (flow and temperature), and experience trout fishing in a relatively remote setting.

The IF&W has long identified the River as a resource having statewide significance. A special regulation section was established in 1990 and was extended in 1992 to include a total of nine miles of the lower-most river and portions of its tributaries. More conservative regulations were enacted at this time to rebuild the trout populations and improve the sport fishery; the populations responded well and today support popular sport fisheries.

All flowing waters within the Town likely have wild trout populations. Significant populations are located in B Stream, Pearce Brook, Cook Brook, Moose Brook, and Smith Brook. In addition, several small, unnamed brooks are important spawning and nursery areas for wild trout and serve as refuge areas where larger trout may congregate during warm summer months. Currently, the IF&W believes Smith Brook is being severely impacted by nonpoint source pollution.

Habitat Protection

Healthy, productive habitats in rivers and brooks are critically important to maintaining wild trout populations. Upholding protection in the riparian zones, improving bridges and culverts at road crossings, and minimizing development adjacent flowing waters can help maintain the coldwater habitat trout need to survive. Best management practices should be implemented and maintained on all projects adjacent to waterways.

Public Access

Any opportunity to obtain or secure land parcels for public access to the State’s waterways should be pursued within the Town. Access sites along the Meduxnekeag River have improved public access opportunities in downtown Houlton (boat launch), at Carys Mills (carry-in), and at the Lower Road Bridge (carry-in). These three sites can be used to promote river trips, particularly in May-early June and September-October. Brook trout fishing is at its peak in a four to six week period of May to early June. The IF&W has made significant efforts to obtain access sites downstream in Littleton so that longer canoe trips might be promoted.

Wildlife Habitat

The abundance of prime agricultural and forestland soils in Houlton is an indicator of the Town's potential to support wildlife. Agricultural land that is no longer in production and is reverting back to upland vegetation provides important habitat for woodcock and other upland birds, snowshoe hare, deer, bear, and moose. Cut-over woodland areas also provide significant amounts of browse, provided they are near uncut areas. Most of Maine's wildlife needs a diversity of habitat including wetlands, fields, fringe areas, and woods. Populations of these important species are influenced by land use practices on both agricultural and forestlands.

During 2005, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife surveyed and mapped deer wintering areas and waterfowl and wading bird habitats. They also indicated the presence or absence of any endangered and threatened wildlife species. Houlton has no endangered or threatened wildlife species, three (3) identified Deer Wintering Areas (DWAs), and twenty (20) mapped Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats (WWH) that have been identified by IF&W.

The following Deer Wintering Areas table provides the size, location and IF&W rating for the deer wintering areas located in Houlton. Houlton's DWAs currently have an indeterminate rating from IF&W, with a rating determination expected by the summer of 1997 after IF&W has surveyed the areas.

Deer Wintering Areas Table

Location	IF&W#	Size	Rating
South of London Lane - adjacent to tributary to Main Branch of Meduxnekeag River	122121	30.66 acres	Indeterminate
South shore of Logan Lake	122123	9.96 acres	Indeterminate
Adjacent to the Hillview Avenue - just westerly of Pearce Brook	122122	33.73 acres	Indeterminate

Town officials may wish to work with IF&W to monitor the status of these mapped deer wintering areas. In addition, Town officials may also wish to work with the landowners of these mapped DWAs in the development of forestry management plans that foster cultural practices that are compatible with maintaining viable deer wintering area habitat while meeting the land use objectives of the landowners.

IF&W has also identified twenty (20) Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats (WWH) that include nesting and feeding areas, comprising a total of 1,035 acres. Two (2) of these WWH have a high habitat rating, six (6) have been give a moderate rating by IF&W, and the remaining 12 have a low rating. Deer wintering areas and wading bird and waterfowl habitat have been identified on the Critical Natural Resources map.

Unique Natural Areas

The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) has documented two (2) rare plant species and natural communities in Houlton that are on the state's inventory and data management system for rare plants, animals, and natural communities. The main purpose of this MNAP inventory is to monitor the location and status of these rare features which contribute to our natural diversity and to provide data for land use planning, permit review, and conservation planning.

According to the Maine Natural Areas Program the following are listed in their Unique Natural Areas database, including rare plants, natural communities, and critical areas in Houlton:

Rare Plants and Animal Communities in Houlton

Scientific Name	Common Name	Survey Site	TNC Rank	MNHP Rank	ME Stat.	Last Seen
<i>Cypripedium reginae</i> ¹	Showy Lady's-slipper	Porter Settlement Swamp	G4	S1	T	1983
<i>Ranunculus gmelinii</i>	Small yellow water crowfoot	B Stream	G5	S3 S4	WL	1986

Source: Maine Natural Areas Program , 2006.

Key to Rare Plants and Natural Communities table:

- S1 - Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (five or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation form the state.
- S2 - Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6-20 occurrences or fewer remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3 - Rare in Maine (on the order of 20-100 occurrences)
- S4 - Apparently secure in Maine
- E - Endangered: represented in Maine by one recent (within the last twenty years) documented occurrence, or federally listed as Endangered
- SC - Special Concern: represented in Maine by five to ten recent documented occurrences, and could within the foreseeable future become Threatened
- WL - Watch List: represented in Maine by more than ten recent, documented occurrences, but still of concern.
- 3C - Formally a candidate species, but now known to be more abundant or widespread then previously believed; not subject to any identifiable threat.
- G - Indicates global ranks, and follow the criteria listed here for state ranks. For example, "G1" means extreme rarity with five or fewer occurrences and critically imperiled throughout range.

Critical Areas

The Maine State Planning Office's Critical Areas Program is charged with the task of identifying natural resources of statewide significance. Such areas include rare plants, old-growth forests, peat lands, geologic formations, and associated fossils and other unique features. Designation as a Critical Area is non-regulatory and advisory. The Critical Areas program does not own land,

but cooperates with landowners and other conservation organizations to protect the unique natural heritage of Maine. Houlton has one registered critical area within the Town, including:

Critical Area # 315 Houlton-Littleton Esker Segment

Critical Area Boundaries, Size, and Features:

Location

Aroostook County

Towns of Houlton and Littleton

Latitude (southern end) 46° 11' 00" Longitude (southern end) 67° 52' 00"

Latitude (northern end) 46° 12' 00" Longitude (67° 52' 00" northern end)

Owner's Name and Address

Town of Houlton

One private landowner has requested that his name not be listed.

Attn.: Town Manager

Houlton, ME 04730

Boundaries and Size of the Area

This area includes a 1.6 km (1 mile) long segment of the 354 km (212 mile) long Houlton-Dennysville Esker System. The eastern boundary begins along the Houlton-Littleton town line, 3000 feet west of Route 1. From this point, the eastern boundary extends 1,200 feet due north, and 3,500 feet due south. The southern boundary begins at the southern terminus of the eastern boundary, and extends 660 feet in a westerly direction. The western boundary begins at the termination of the southern boundary, and continues due north for 1.6 km (1 mile). The northern boundary begins at the northern terminus of the eastern boundary, and extends 660 feet in an easterly direction until it meets the northern edge of the eastern boundary. This segment encompasses 980 acres.

Description of the Area - Unusual Qualities and the Reason(s) for its Inclusion on the Register

The Houlton-Littleton Esker Segment belongs to one of the greatest esker systems in the state--the Houlton-Dennysville Esker System. This 354 km (212 mile) long system becomes discernible in the region west of Calais, and can be traced, with breaks and branches, as far as Griswold and Blaine, and possibly all the way to Presque Isle. Occasionally, as at Danforth and Houlton, the system breaks up into a series of kames and kettleholes, which probably represent major halts of the ice front during the time of glacial recession.

The esker within the boundaries of the critical area is a well-defined, steep-sided ridge approximately 15-20 m high. Several dry kettle hole depressions lie adjacent to or on top of the ridge, and two kettle hole ponds flank the esker (these fall outside the critical area boundaries). No houses or roads interrupt the esker gravels or the naturalness of the area. Only a narrow path (which may have been a skidder trail at one time) traverses the 6 m wide ridge crest. The steep,

30° slopes are forested with poplar, hemlock, balsam fir, northern white cedar, and remnant large white pines.

Esker systems of Maine are exceptionally well-developed and numerous, in contrast to other glaciated areas of the United States. These long, sinuous ridges of sand and gravel were deposited between 12,700 and 13,300 years ago by meltwater streams within or beneath stagnant glacial ice. As the confining ice walls of the channels melted, ridges of sorted and occasionally stratified coarse sediments were left behind as conspicuous reminders of the last ice age. In Maine, these landforms are commonly referred to as "horsebacks" or "whalebacks" and often provide high, dry routes through peatlands and swampy lowlands.

Eskers are significant geologic features since they provide information on glacial processes and history in a number of ways. First, esker formation requires meltwater at or near the base of the glacier, which indicates the climatic conditions and thermal characteristics of the glacier at the time of deposition. Second, the trend of the eskers, as well as their internal sedimentary characteristics helps define the direction of the surface slope of the glacier and the overall geography of the glacier margin. The orientation of the eskers is generally parallel to the flow direction of the glacier, and towards and perpendicular to the retreating ice front. Third, eskers were deposited both above and below the late glacial sea level. Due to the weight of the overlying ice, the earth's crust was depressed enough to allow the sea to flood Maine's coastline as far inland as East Millinocket on the Penobscot River and Bingham on the Kennebec River. Eskers deposited below this upper marine limit, within reach of the invading sea, have marine sediments incorporated into the esker gravels and sands. Radio carbon dates on the fossils found in the marine sediments provide valuable information on the time of marine submergence and de-glaciations.

Shoreland Areas

The Town of Houlton adopted a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance in July of 1992. The ordinance identifies rivers, streams, brooks, great ponds, and non-forested wetlands (> 10 acres in size) where the shoreline is regulated. The Meduxnekeag River has segments that are zoned general development and limited residential development where it flows through the more built-up portions of the community. Other segments of the Meduxnekeag are afforded a greater level of protection by being placed in the Resource Protection Zoning District. Most of the brooks mapped throughout the Town have been placed in the Stream Protection District.

The Resource Protection District designated waterbodies and wetlands have a 250-foot regulated zone around them. Stream Protection District wetlands and streams have a 75-foot regulated zone adjacent to their defined high water marks. Streams are defined as a channel between defined banks including the floodway and associated floodplain wetlands where the channel is created by the action of the surface water and characterized by the lack of upland vegetation or presence of aquatic vegetation and by the presence of a bed devoid of topsoil-containing water borne deposit on exposed soil, parent material, or bedrock. A copy of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Map is on file at the Town Office.

Hazard Areas

There are two types of hazard areas found in Houlton, the floodplain areas and the areas of steep slopes. Floodplains are scattered throughout the Town along the Meduxnekeag River and most of its major tributaries. The major flood hazard areas in Houlton are, according to data supplied by the National Flood Insurance Administration, areas adjacent to Pearce Brook at the crossings of Green, Columbia, Brook, and Court Streets. Other areas with documented flooding problems are in the vicinity of Joseph, Varney, and Pearce Avenue where Brown Brook crosses these roadways. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified several Flood Zone A designations along the Meduxnekeag River. The USDA has worked in cooperation with the Town of Houlton to conduct a Floodplain Management Study in June of 1987. This Floodplain Study better defined flood-prone areas within the community and developed a number of structural and non-structural management measures that could be undertaken by the Town to alleviate property damage associated with flooding events. A copy of this Floodplain Management Study is available at the Town office and at the NRCS/USDA's Regional Field Office in Houlton.

There are several areas within the Town where these floodplain zones are traversed by roads. Most of these roads crossing flood-prone areas are located adjacent to either Pearce or Brown Brooks and are between 150 feet to over 500 feet in width at the point where the road traverses the floodplain zone. Several of these stream road crossings have been identified in the 1979 Houlton Comprehensive Plan Update as having annual flooding or wash-out problems due their proximity to designated floodplain zones. The Town should evaluate road reconstruction methods (such as culvert sizing, bridge redesign, base grade work, raising road elevations, or other construction techniques that would alleviate these annual flood-related road maintenance costs). Municipal officials should be cognizant of these flood-prone areas when developing land use policies. These flood-prone areas should have development restricted to mitigate potential future property damage related to flooding. More information on the Town's floodplain management ordinance is discussed in the Land Use Section of the Plan.

Areas of steep slopes are referred to as hazard areas for a number of different reasons. Generally, the steeper the slope the more potential hazards exist. Steep slopes generally have a high surface run-off rate and accelerated erosion. Development on steep slopes requires sound engineering and more sophisticated sediment and erosion control planning. The cost of developing roads, buildings, and other structures tends to be significantly greater because of the increased hazards. Also, the operation of machinery can be extremely hazardous on slopes 15 percent or greater. There are no major expanses of steep slopes in Houlton. Several of the flanks associated with the Houlton-Littleton Esker Segment and some forested stream valleys have several areas of slopes greater than 25 percent as terrain runs down into these valleys. The vast portion of the Town is characterized as gently rolling terrain, although there are some areas with slopes greater than 15 percent scattered throughout Houlton.

Natural Resource Analysis

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important part of the community's economy. The Town's substantial acreage of prime farmlands should be managed with good conservation practices. This valuable cropland resource is important to the community's future welfare. Future land use proposals that might conflict with the efficient operation of the Town's major farming units should be carefully analyzed and acceptable alternatives considered. Municipal officials should utilize zoning ordinances proposed with this Plan to encourage development in non-prime farmland areas. Municipal officials should explore developing tax assessment programs that encourage food and fiber production on prime farmlands and forestlands currently in farming and forestry uses. In addition to the production of crops, dairy products, and livestock on the farms, the storage, packaging, processing, marketing, and shipping of these commodities for the ultimate use of consumers have beneficial influences on the Town's economy. Municipal officials should work with the agricultural sector of the community to strengthen opportunities for growth, and diversification of farming-related businesses. Municipal officials should encourage farmers and owners of farmland to adopt Best Management Practices to conserve valuable cropland and prevent soil erosion from impacting the quality of the region's surface waters.

Forestry

Well-managed forestlands have multiple uses. In addition to the production of wood, these lands are vital to protect water quality, wildlife and fisheries habitat, and to provide for recreational resources. Ownership of forest land resources is dominated by small woodlot owners. These smaller woodlots (< 500 acres) are important to their owners and others in the community. The Town should encourage these small woodlot owners to contact professional consultant foresters serving the area to gain technical assistance in managing their forestlands. The Town may want to consider retaining some of any future tax-acquired forestland in public ownership for multi-use management opportunities such as outdoor recreation, timber harvesting, and wildlife management. Woodlot owners within the Town should be aware of the requirements of Maine's Forest Practices Act. In addition, Town officials may wish to make woodlot owners aware of the Stewardship Incentive Program administered by the Maine Forest Service that was established to foster sound and sustainable multi-use management of forest land resources. Woodlot owners with forest lands enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program should be aware of the forestry management plan requirements of this Act. The future use of the forestlands within the Town should be planned with all of these considerations in mind. The Town should continue to utilize the Town Forest as an educational tool to transfer sound woodlot management practices to forest land owners in the community. Municipal officials should work with the Maine Forest Products Council, the UMCE, and the business community to explore methods and measures to encourage greater value-added natural resource-based business opportunities.

Water

Groundwater supplies in most portions of the Town will yield sufficient quantities for individual homes and commercial and industrial businesses because of the significant sand and gravel aquifer resources that exist within the Town. There are 14 mapped aquifers, most of which are associated with Houlton-Dennysville Esker System that traverses the Town. Four (4) of these aquifers are rated as yielding excellent quantities of groundwater, at rates of more than 50 gallons per minute. These higher-yielding groundwater areas offer potential for future Town growth and development within the community. Municipal officials should explore working closely with the Houlton Water Company and representatives from state agencies such as the Maine Rural Water Association, the DEP, and the Department of Human Services to develop wellhead/aquifer protection plans and associated overlay districts that are consistent with land use policies developed as part of this comprehensive plan. A Drinking Water Protection District around the Town's public wells in Cary Mills and Hodgdon, has been adopted by the Houlton Water Company and the Town and will greatly enhance the Town's ability to prevent degradation of its public water supplies.

The majority of Houlton's surface waters are predominantly related to the Meduxnekeag River Basin. Other surface waters within the Town drain directly into this Watershed. These streams and brooks currently have a Class B water quality classification that is related to water quality classification rating of the Meduxnekeag River segment which receives the numerous perennial streams and brooks within the Town. Town Officials should continue to actively support the conservation activities of the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition and continue to work with the major sponsors of the Meduxnekeag River Watershed Protection Plan to implement conservation practices and management systems that will enhance the water quality of the Meduxnekeag. All of the named streams and surface waterbodies are subject to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Wildlife, Rare Plants & Natural Communities

Houlton has considerable amounts of good habitat for wildlife. There are two mapped deer wintering yards and twenty mapped waterfowl and wading bird habitats. It is recommended that deer wintering yards and waterfowl and wading bird habitats be managed for the benefit of the wildlife. Since wildlife habitat is essentially a transitory situation, virtually all of the Town can be considered habitat for wildlife. Wildlife needs open areas as well as forestland, so it would be desirable to maintain a balance of both habitats within the Town. Future Town changes and developments should consider the community's many natural resource factors, all of the available alternatives, and the desires of a broad segment of the residents. Municipal officials should consider working with land owners of forest land or wetlands that include valuable habitat for wildlife (including deer, waterfowl, and migratory landbirds) to insure forest management practices and other land uses that are implemented are compatible with sustaining valuable habitat that has been identified by IF&W or the Maine Natural Heritage Program. Municipal officials should encourage woodlot owners to participate in programs such as the Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) administered by the Maine Forest Service. The SIP was established to foster sound and sustainable multi-use management of natural resources by landowners. There are cost-shares available through the Maine Forest Service for such practices as vegetative

plantings to enhance wildlife habitat, duck pond construction, and silva cultural practices that improve wildlife species diversity.

Fisheries

The Meduxnekeag River and its major tributaries are the predominant fisheries resources available to the Town. In addition, the Meduxnekeag River is considered a brook trout and brown trout fishery of statewide significance. These watercourses are important to the community. Taken together, all provide excellent brook trout and brown trout habitat and are fished by the residents and others. Municipal officials and interested citizens within the Town should network with the various agencies and organizations (including IF&W, MDEP, NRCS, SASWCD, HBMI, US Forest Service, Maine Forest Service) that are involved with the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition and work to foster a cooperative working relationship that enhances the fisheries habitats and water quality of the Meduxnekeag Watershed. It has been shown that efforts to improve water quality and the fisheries habitat within a given watershed can have a tremendous economic benefit to the region's communities. If the shorelands of some of these Town waterbodies are to be considered for future expanded zoning, their importance from the standpoint of their contributions to retaining high quality fisheries should be kept in mind. Vegetation along the banks influences the water temperature, prevents erosion, and filters out silt. Town officials may wish to work with contiguous communities and various natural resource agencies to insure that any efforts to improve fisheries habitat in the Meduxnekeag Watershed are consistent with land use plans in neighboring municipalities and are compatible with the existing fisheries populations.

Natural Resources Policies and Implementation Strategies

Houlton contains an important and diverse natural resource base, including numerous wetlands, floodplains, rich deposits of sand and gravel, significant fisheries and wildlife habitat, valuable prime farmlands, and vast acreage of prime forestlands. Through the development and implementation of locally driven management plans, the Town can conserve its valuable natural resources while also utilizing these

resources to enhance economic development opportunities for natural resource-based industries

State Goals:

- *To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.*
- *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.*
- *To discourage development in natural hazard areas.*
- *To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.*

and businesses. By adopting wise multi-use strategies for the many different natural resources (farm & forestlands, water resources, etc.), Houlton can provide for greater use of the resource base for business opportunities, recreation, wildlife and fisheries management, farming, and forestry, while also maintaining the quality of life that these resources offer residents of the Town. The section below includes some general agricultural and forestry goals, policies, and strategies, with more specific agricultural and forestry information provided in the two subsections that follow.

Natural Resource Policies

Policy	Corresponding Strategy
A. Promote development in areas with suitable soils, and guide new development away from areas with unsuitable or marginal soils.	1, 11
B. Safeguard the Town’s significant agricultural and forestry resources through raising the public’s awareness about the favorable benefits to the community, providing tax incentives to farm, and assuring the right-to-farm.	2,3,11, 14-18,23
C. Protect the quality and quantity of the Town’s wetlands as well as surface and groundwater resources.	6-8,13,20-22
D. Protect the Town’s fisheries and wildlife habitat.	7-9,19-21
E. Continue to protect the Town’s shoreland areas.	5,7,12,21
F. Strongly discourage development in hazard areas, including floodplains and areas of steep slopes and critical habitat.	5, 7, 10,14,21
G. Promote the use of Best Management Practices in all applicable activities.	3,4,9-11,18,22,23
H. Support the strengthening of the forest and farm-based businesses and industries operating within the community.	14-18

Natural Resource Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
1. Provide for review and revision, as necessary, of the Town’s land use regulations by the Planning Board to ensure adequate standards are maintained for development on soils, including soils known to be prime forestland, floodplain, highly erodible, etc.	PB, CEO, DEP	2008 Ongoing
2. Encourage landowners to develop forest management plans that use Best Management Practices to protect water quality in the Meduxnekeag Watershed and in brooks and streams flowing in major forest and farmland tracts. Also encourage farmers to use BMPs in agricultural and forestry practices.	PB, MWC, CEO	2008 - Ongoing
3. Provide training to the Code Enforcement Officer in state and local laws and applicable Best Management Practices to protect water quality so the CEO can effectively investigate potentially harmful activities, advise possible violators in remediation techniques, and notify appropriate authorities for enforcement action, if necessary.	TM, CEO	2008

4. Continue to educate landowners and realtors about requirements of the local Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and effectively enforce the Ordinance to minimize water quality impacts from inappropriate development.	CEO, TC, PB	Ongoing
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Strategy	Responsibility	Year
5. Educate and encourage owners of underground storage tanks (USTs) to comply with the appropriate federal and state regulations for certification and inspection and to encourage owners of above-ground storage tanks to complete a visual inspection of their tanks.	TM, CEO	Ongoing
6. Work to develop long-term wildlife management goals for the Town with assistance from MIF&W. Planning may include: a) Workshops through the SAD adult education programs on creating, improving, or maintaining wildlife habitat, and b) Informing landowners of various programs, practices, and technical assistance available to manage wildlife and wildlife habitat on private lands.	PB, MWC, IF&W, CEO	2009 - Ongoing
7. Work with MIF&W and other agencies to protect deer wintering areas, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, and protected areas while also protecting the rights of property owners.	PB, IF&W, MWC	Ongoing
8. Evaluate current road construction standards to identify ways to alleviate annual flood-related maintenance costs.	PWD	Ongoing
9. Utilize the development constraints map in development reviews to steer new projects away from environmentally sensitive areas.	PB	Ongoing
10. Encourage landowners to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Southern Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District (SASWCD) to adopt practices to reduce soil erosion.	PR, CEO, MWC	Ongoing
11. Encourage residents to volunteer time to work with various natural resource management agencies and organizations, to remedy potential non-point sources of pollution that are significantly impacting surface waters.	MWC, TM, PB	Ongoing
12. Continue to support and promote the work of the SASWCD, and other natural resource management agencies and departments.	TM, CED	Annually
13. Work with the Forest Products Council, NMDC's Business Counseling Service, and other appropriate agencies and departments to provide technical assistance to potential value-added forest-based businesses.	CDP, TM, TC, PB, TO	Ongoing
14. Work with agricultural producers and owners of prime farmland to inform them of the benefits of the Farm and Open Space Tax Program and how to participate in it.	TM, TA, CDP	Ongoing
15. Work with various natural resource agencies to strengthen and expand current programs to inform loggers, foresters, farmers, landowners, and the general public about Best Management Practices to lessen pollution from agriculture, forest harvesting practices, and general development activities in wooded areas.	PB, CEO, TM MWC	Ongoing
16. Continue to regularly sweep streets to control airborne particulate matter (PM ₁₀), and reduce stormwater pollutants from entering surface waters during rain or run-off storm events.	PWD	Ongoing
17. Encourage developers to use BMPs during construction to control fugitive dust, erosion, and sedimentation problems.	PB, CEO, PWD	Ongoing

Strategy		Responsibility	Year		
18. In order to control the effects of improper development on agricultural and forest resources, the Planning Board shall: a) Discourage development on prime forest lands capable of economic production in order to protect the economic base of the Town and help maintain the rural character through appropriate land management. b) Establish a process for the periodic review and amendment of the Plan and other land use regulations with respect to agricultural and forest resources. c) Work with developers of large agricultural and forest lands to encourage cluster development. d) Recommend developers provide high intensity soil survey information and map the prime forest lands.		PB, CEO, TM	2008 - Ongoing		
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM					
19. Develop and maintain open communications between all parties concerned with natural resource management, including neighboring communities.		CDP, TM, PB, CEO, TC	Ongoing		
20. Continue to participate in the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition to ensure the Town's interests are represented in the Coalition's planning and implementation activities.		TM, MWC	Ongoing		
21. Develop a Public Access Improvement Plan for the Meduxnekeag River and its major tributaries. The Plan should include an inventory of public access points to significant surface water resources, goals and strategies for maintaining and/or improving public access, and funding sources to implement strategies of the Plan.		PB, TC, MWC, PRD, CED	2008		
22. Request MIF&W conduct a fisheries census of major tributaries to the Meduxnekeag River to determine fisheries value and appropriate management plans to improve the trout fishery in the watershed.		PB, IF&W	2008		
23. Work with the NRCS, the SASWCD, University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE), Maine Potato Board (MPB), Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other groups to foster diversification of agricultural enterprises within the community and region.		CED, PB, TC	2007 - Ongoing		
Key					
ADC	Airport Dev. Committee	IF&W	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	PRAB	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
BC	Budget Committee	LIB	Cary Library	PWD	Public Works Department
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MFS	Maine Forest Service	R2C	Roads 2000 Committee
CDP	Community Devt & Planning.	MDOT	Maine Dept. of Transportation	SAD	School Admin. District
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	MWC	Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TA	Tax Assessor
DEP	Dept. of Env. Protection	NMDC	N. Maine Devt Commission	TC	Town Council
DTC	Downtown Committee	PD	Police Department,	TM	Town Manager

HHS	Houlton Historical Society	PB	Planning Board	TO	Town Officials
HWC	Houlton Water Company	PRD	Parks & Recreation Department	ZBA	Zoning Bd. of Appeals

TOPOGRAPHY MAP

BACK of TOPOGRAPHY MAP

SOILS MAP

BACK OF SOILS MAP

NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP

BACK of NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP

WATER RESOURCES MAP

BACK of WATER RESOURCES MAP

CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES MAP

BACK of CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES MAP

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS MAP

BACK of DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS MAP

Cultural and Historic Resources

Introduction

Houlton, a community of approximately 6,476 people in 2000, is known as the “Capital of Aroostook.” It is located at an important transportation crossroads, and provides a major port of entry into New Brunswick, Canada. The first settler in Houlton, John Putnam, came to the area in 1805, and was soon followed in 1807 by Joseph Houlton, for whom the Town is named. The Town of Houlton was incorporated in 1831, making it the oldest town in Aroostook County. Not surprisingly, Houlton has both a rich cultural heritage and deep sense of pride that makes it an attractive place to both live and work. Evidence of the Town’s culture and traditions is contained in this chapter.

Community Character Defined

Houlton defines itself as a community with a rich and vibrant history, a beautiful Market Square and residential neighborhoods filled with 19th Century architecture well preserved and reminiscent of early Americana.

As the oldest town on Aroostook County, Houlton displays many cultural resources. Cultural resources are those activities, opportunities, and benefits the Town has that reflect the culture and heritage of the community, the recreational resources, scenic resources, and public access plans.

- Recreational resources are those facilities and programs, both public and private, which provide recreational opportunities for the residents of the Town. These include athletic fields, tennis courts, skating rinks, swimming pools, school facilities and programs, campgrounds, parks, nature preserves, game preserves and sanctuaries, publicly owned land, trail systems, important hunting and fishing areas, and access to water bodies.
- Scenic resources are those areas of the community that may offer scenic vistas, such as areas identified by the state as having scenic value, scenic views, natural or cultural features (churches, trees, fields, mountains...), and parts of the community that contribute to the character of the Town (village green, historic site...).
- Public access plans are those opportunities which the people have to obtain entry to and use waterbodies and large tracts of land for recreational pursuits.

Historic and archaeological resources include sites on the National Register of Historic Places, sites on existing historical surveys, local historic areas, and other sites of potential historic significance. It is important to review these resources and identify the surrounding land uses or other areas which may impact on these resources and then plan accordingly.

Cultural Resources

There are many attractions and festivals that take advantage of the beautiful natural surroundings and celebrate the rich culture, heritage, and local way of life of the Houlton area. They include:

Cultural Attractions

Market Square and Main Street

Market Square and Main Street in Houlton are registered with the National Historic Preservation Commission as an historic business district. This district consists of a cohesive grouping of twenty-eight architecturally significant structures dating from 1885 to 1910. Development within the historic district is specifically regulated by the Town (see Land Use Chapter). Market Square and Main Street feature many fine examples of intricate brickwork by 19th century artisans. Also listed on the National Register of Historic Places is the Black Hawk Putnam Inn. Located in Houlton, the Inn is the oldest surviving house in town and was built by Aaron Putnam in 1812. It was later occupied by Black Hawk Putnam, a famous Civil War cavalryman.

The Boy with the Leaky Boot Fountain Statue

The Boy with the Leaky Boot Fountain Statue, located in Houlton's Pierce Park, was purchased in 1916 with a \$1,000 donation made by Mrs. Clara Frisbee. The foundry which produced the statue has long since broken the mold and has even lost track of the identity of the original sculptor. It is one of 27 in the world and the only one that provides water for both man and beast.

The Aroostook Historical and Art Museum

Aroostook Historical and Art Museum, located on Main Street in Houlton, features Aroostook pioneer implements, artifacts and documents; Indian and Aroostook War artifacts; and a natural history collection.

The Watson Settlement Bridge

The Watson Settlement Bridge, built in 1911, is located on the Watson Settlement Road in Littleton and is registered with the National Historic Preservation Commission. It is the youngest and most northern covered bridge in the state.

The Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum

A group of interested citizens purchased the former Littleton Elementary School in 2001 and created a home to collect and preserve items and memorabilia from Maine farms. The Museum expanded in 2006 with the addition of a barn to house the larger pieces of farm machinery. It is funded through donations and grants and is entirely staffed with volunteers.

John A. Millar Civic Center

The John A. Millar Arena is a modern facility with an 85' by 200' artificial ice rink. It also has a kitchen, rest rooms, heated viewing area, elevator, and locker rooms, and is located in Community Park. The Arena is open for skating from late October to late March. The arena serves the Southern Aroostook Minor Hockey Association, the Houlton-Hodgdon Blackhawks

schoolboy hockey team, and is also rented out as home ice for the Stearns Minutemen from Millinocket. Public skating hours are also scheduled on a weekly basis. The civic center can accommodate occupancies of 3,260 standing, and 630 with ice in, making it a versatile venue for public and private functions.

The Southern Aroostook Cultural Arts Project (SACAP)

SACAP organized in 1999 to help the arts flourish in southern Aroostook County, Maine. "Cultural Arts" describes the many art forms that have sprouted from our local culture. It encompasses fine arts, folk arts, traditional arts, historic arts, performing arts, and contemporary crafts. Through the efforts of scores of volunteers and donors, SACAP opened a shop called VISIONS at 66 Main Street, Houlton. VISIONS sells original and handcrafted fine arts and fine crafts created by artists from Aroostook County and surrounding regions. VISIONS also features the *Blue Moon Gallery*, which periodically showcases a featured artist's work. SACAP has also taken on several partner projects including:

1. SACAP Web design with SAD #29 Web Design II Class
2. Houlton Fine Arts & Antiques Show with Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce
3. Art Harvest Celebration with Health Services Foundation
4. Northern Lights Film Series with Temple Cinema

Other attractions include:

- Old Houlton fire station bell tower relocated from the town office building to Pierce Park in 1998;
- The Houlton Amphitheater in Monument Park built in 1997, used for McGill's Community Band summer concerts and other community arts/events.
- The Gateway Crossing Bridge erected and dedicated in 2005, is a laminated wood arch suspension bridge for pedestrian use crossing the Meduxnekeag River and connecting River Front Park with Houlton's historic Market Square.

Festivals / Events

Meduxnekeag Canoe Race

The annual canoe race down the Meduxnekeag River is typically held in April. The race was shortened to approximately seven miles in 1996, and is open to all.

Southern Aroostook Trade Show

The trade show is held annually at the Millar Civic Center and features merchants from Southern Aroostook County. In 2007, there were over 1,300 attendees and 37 exhibitors. The Trade Show is presented by the Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, and the Southern Aroostook Trade Show Committee.

Northern Maine Soap Box Derby

The Northern Maine Soap Box Derby Committee organized the first soap box derby race in 1996 using Garrison Hill on Military Street (US Route 2). The next year, work began on building a

self-contained derby track in Community Park and in 1998, the first race was held at the Wayne Miller Memorial Derby Hill. The soap box derby is an annual event and there are soap box derby rally races held throughout the summer as well.

McGill's Community Band

Outdoor concerts are held twice, monthly during the summer months in Monument Park at the Houlton Amphitheater, with one performance also in Community Park.

Townwide Midnight Madness Sale

This annual event includes closing Market Square and Main St, sales at local stores, and live entertainment. An arts & crafts fair is held in Monument Park the following day and includes homemade arts & crafts, specialty items, and food for sale. These events serve to kickoff the annual Agricultural Fair.

Houlton Agricultural Fair

The Houlton Agricultural Fair is held annually at Community Park during the July 4th week and has historically included fireworks, a horse show, musical events, carnival rides, live entertainment, games, helicopter rides, a parade, agricultural displays, animals, arts & crafts, truck pulls, a demolition derby, etc. On average, 15,000 people attend the fair each year.

The County Open Charity Golf Tournament

The golf tournament includes a day of golf at Community Golf Course and Island Falls Golf Course, as well as a raffle dinner. The Open also includes a cycling event and 10K road race.

Potato Feast Days

The Potato Feast Days include a parade of dolls, dances, potato feast supper, entertainment, townwide sales, truck pulls, fun run, classic car show, and an arts & crafts fair.

Houlton Rotary Radio Auction

Local Rotarians auction off items donated by local businesses on the local radio station (WHOU) to raise money for community projects.

Christmas Light Parade

The annual Christmas Parade follows a route from the shopping center on North Road, south on North Street, through Market Square, and up Main Street to the Episcopal Church parking lot. The parade officially marks the beginning of the holiday season with the arrival of Santa, who also makes an appearance at the Town's Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Winter Arts & Crafts Fair

This event has been held annually on the Saturday and Sunday following Thanksgiving. Area craftspeople display a variety of homemade and specialty arts & crafts. Refreshments are available.

Other Cultural Resources

Service Organizations

Houlton has a large number and variety of civic groups and service and activity organizations that contribute to the overall well-being and culture, as well as provide support and a social gathering point to many. The list of community and civic groups provided by the Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce is extensive and includes: A.B.W., American Association of University Women, B.P.O. Elks Lodge, Congregational Guild, Family Support Group, East Grand Snow Club, Al-Anonymous, Aroostook Historical/Art Museum, Bereavement Support Group, American Legion, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Alzheimer's Support, United Veterans Motorcycle Club, Aroostook Riding Club, BABES, DAV and DAV aux., Friends & Needles Quilt Club, Houlton Professional Women, Houlton Community Chorus, Houlton Council of Catholic Women, Houlton Fish and Game Club, Houlton Lions Club, Houlton Pax Christi Group, Houlton Regional Hospital Auxiliary, Houlton Senior Extension Homemakers, Houlton Fair Assoc., Houlton Garden Club, Houlton Parent Support Group, Houlton Rifle & Pistol Club, Houlton Women's Club, Houlton Christian Women, Houlton Community Golf Club, HFD, Ladies Aux., Houlton Grange Hall, Houlton Rotary Club, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Linneus Sno Club, Meduxnekeag Longrifles, Parent Teachers Organization, Rainbow Girls, Senior Citizen Club, Knights of Columbus, DAR, Monument Lodge Masonic Order, Nobel Grands of Portia Rebecca Lodge, Senior Extension Group, McGills Community Band, Meduxnekeag Ramblers Snowmobile Club, Sno Rovers Club, US Customs Explorers, Southern County Shorthaulers, and the Sunshine Club. These organizations provide residents with a wide variety of activities, support groups, and opportunities to exchange ideas and promote the overall well-being of the Town's population.

Houlton Churches

There are 18 churches located within Houlton. Although there are a wide variety of religious preferences represented, the churches do work together to build a better community. In addition, the Greater Houlton Christian Academy is a private Christian school located in the old Lambert School building on School Street. (see Public Facilities Chapter for further information on the Academy).

Houlton, Churches, 2006

Church	Denomination
Church of the Good Shepherd	Episcopal
First Baptist Church	Baptist
First Church of Houlton	Unitarian Universalist
First Congregational Church UCC	Congregationalist
Full Gospel Assembly of God	Assembly of God
Gospel Light Baptist Church	Baptist
Houlton Church of Christ	Church of Christ
Houlton Christian Science Society	Christian Scientist
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witness	Jehovah’s Witness
Military Street Baptist Church	Baptist
Shiretown Baptist Church	Baptist
St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church	Roman Catholic
Salvation Army	Nondenominational
United Methodist Church	Methodist
The Houlton Wesleyan Church	Wesleyan
United Pentecostal Church	Pentecostal
Church of the Latter Day Saints	Mormon
Southern Aroostook Church of Christ	Church of Christ

Source: Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce listing and telephone book

Recreational Resources

Recreational resources are those facilities and programs, both public and private, which provide recreational opportunities for the residents of the Town. These include athletic fields, tennis courts, skating rinks, swimming pools, school facilities and programs, campgrounds, parks, nature preserves, game preserves and sanctuaries, publicly owned land, trail systems, important hunting and fishing areas, and access to water bodies.

Houlton is fortunate to have access to a variety of recreational resources, including parks with a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, museums, trails for walking, hiking, horseback riding, and motor biking, a golf course, and an ice arena. Given the wide variety of recreational opportunities, there are activities available for people all ages.

There are also many important maintained snowmobile trails located within Houlton, including the Northeast Snowmobile Trail (NEST), ITS 86, 81A, 81B, and 87. The NEST is a premier trail that extends from Van Buren, through Houlton, and southeast through Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties. Taken together, there are 1,600 miles of groomed trails in Maine (365 miles in Northern Maine). Maine has more trails than any other state in New England, and its trails actually extend from New Brunswick to Pennsylvania.

These assets, in conjunction with Houlton’s location at a major international border crossing and access to I-95 and Route 1, potentially enable Houlton to tap into and promote tourism development. In sum, Houlton’s recreational assets should continue to be promoted to fill a niche for tourism-related businesses.

Houlton's residents have access to all of the following recreation facilities:

Name of Area	Size (acres)	Parking (spaces)	Comments
River Front Park	3+/-	10	Gateway Crossing Bridge
Gentle Memorial Building	2	100	Outdoor tennis courts, recreation hall, gym.
Houlton ATV	1	0	Motor bike trails, rail trail
Houlton Community GC	40	50	9-hole golf course & driving range in New Limerick.
Houlton Community Park	52	500	Wading pool, indoor skating rink, derby hill, exercise and walking trails, 1 baseball, 2 little league, and 1 softball fields; full basketball court, 3 outdoor tennis courts, 3 horseshoe pits, playground, skate park, 15 picnic tables.
Houlton Elementary School	2	100	Playground, gym.
Houlton High School	5	75	Soccer field, multi-purpose field, 2 gyms.
Houlton International Airport	2	100	Cross-country ski trails, softball field, 19 pistol/rifle positions.
Houlton Monument Park	2	0	Walking paths, benches, statuary, Houlton Amphitheater
Houlton Museum	0.25	0	Enclosed historic center.
Houlton Southside School	2	100	Nature trails, gym, outdoor fields, playground
Houlton Tourist Information Ctr.	8.7	0	Off I-95/Route 1; Picnic tables (15), playground.
Greater Houlton Christian Acad.	2	25	Multi-purpose field, half basketball court, playground.
My Brothers Place	40	0	Beach, 100 tent and 62 vehicle sites, half basketball court, playground, recreation hall.
Rollerama	3	80	Indoor roller skating; games; public/private events
Shiretown Livery/Riding Stables	40	0	Lessons; Horse trails; guided trail rides; indoor arena.
Pierce Park	2	0	Benches (Boy with the Leaking Boot); old HFD bell tower

Source: Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Recreation, Town of Houlton

Houlton Parks and Recreation

The Town of Houlton is fortunate to have excellent recreation programs and facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department offers a full range of recreation activities, with a concentration on youth programs. Youth programs offered include the following:

Soccer - coed MRPA/Hotshot Basketball Hershey Track & Field

Toddler Time Just for Kids Playground Halloween Fun Party

Swimming Lessons Basketball - coed, boys & girls Tennis Lessons

Girls Softball Skating Lessons Sun & Fun for Preschoolers

Summer Basketball Camp Soccer Camp T-Ball & First Pitch

Special activities for children are provided during school vacations. Other activities available to children living in Houlton include Southern Aroostook Minor Hockey, Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth Baseball. An extensive array of adult programs is provided, but is required to be financially self-sufficient, with primary leadership coming from the participants. Examples of some of the adult programs include exercise/aerobics, co-ed softball, men's softball and basketball.

The Parks and Recreation Department office is housed in the Gentle Memorial Building (Rec. Center), which was initially constructed in 1952. This building also has a gym, locker rooms, game room, stage, and two lounges. The Rec. Center has open gym and game room hours, which begin after harvest break and continue through to the end of April vacation.

The Parks and Recreation Department also oversees Monument Park, Pierce Park (home of The Boy with the Leaking Boot), Riverfront Park, Garrison Hill, and a backup softball field at the airport.

Outdoor Recreation

Houlton and the surrounding region have much to offer in the way of year-round outdoor recreation. The predominant outdoor recreational offerings in the area include:

Lakes

There are no lakes located within the Town of Houlton. There are several lakes located in nearby towns, however, including Nickerson and Drews Lakes in New Limerick and Linneus, Mattawamkeag Lake in Island Falls, the Chiputneticook chain of lakes (including Grand, Brackett, North, Longfellow (Deering), Spednick, and Sucker Lakes in the Weston, Forest City and Danforth area), and the Baskahegan chain of lakes (including Hot Brook, Upper Hot Brook, Baskahegan, Crooked Brook, Drake, and Jackson Brook Lakes). North of Houlton lies a chain of small kettle ponds, including Deep, Carry, Conroy, Ross, Long, Monson, and Logan (Jordan) Lakes. Other lakes in the Houlton area include Beaver Brook, Mud, Skitacook, Bradbury, Cochrane, County Road, and Timoney Lakes, plus a large number of ponds.

The lakes in the region offer swimming, boating, fishing, and bird watching opportunities, and serve as the sites of many camps and cottages for area residents and tourists.

Rivers

Houlton is bisected by the Meduxnekeag River, which drains Drews Lake in New Limerick. According to the Regional Fisheries Biologist, the Meduxnekeag River and some of its major tributaries are brook trout and brown trout fisheries of statewide significance. Fishing is an important outdoor recreation activity in the Houlton region and, as such, municipal officials should continue to support and participate in the activities of the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition to improve fish habitat and enhance recreational opportunities on the Meduxnekeag River and its major tributaries.

The Meduxnekeag is fed by a number of tributary streams, including the South Branch, which drains portions of Hodgdon, Cary, and Amity; the B Stream, which drains portions of Houlton, Ludlow, and Hammond; and Cooks Brook, which originates in Houlton. Other rivers in the Houlton area include the Mattawamkeag River (both East and West Branches), the St. Croix, and the North Branch of the Meduxnekeag.

These rivers are noted for their cleanliness and are used not only for fishing, but also for canoeing, swimming, fiddlehead fern harvesting, bird watching, and hunting. A public boat launch was constructed several years ago with funding from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on property at the southeast end of the Highland Avenue Bridge in downtown Houlton, making it an attractive area for residents to use and visit.

Mountains

As part of its outdoor recreation opportunities, the Houlton area offers Mars Hill Mountain, Mount Katahdin, Sam Drew Mountain, Timoney Mountain, and Number Nine Mountain. These mountains offer climbing, hunting, skiing, snowmobiling, and camping to the outdoor enthusiast.

Woodlands

Houlton is located near extensive woodlands, most of which are privately owned. Landowners typically allow their holdings to be used for hunting, fishing, camping, nature hikes, and snowmobiling as long as there is no interference with wood harvesting. The woodlands also are the location of many seasonal camps and cottages, most of which are situated on leases offered by the landowners.

Snowmobile Trails

Snowmobiling is a very popular outdoor activity in Northern Maine and in the Houlton area. Many trails serve the area, with the primary ones being ITS 83 and ITS 86. These trails are cared for locally by the Meduxnekeag Ramblers, Linneus Sno-Sports, and Smoki Haulers snowmobile clubs. Each of the clubs owns and maintains a clubhouse which, in addition to serving the needs of individual clubs, is offered for public and private events and functions. (See: Transportation Section)

Golf Courses

There is one golf course located in Houlton (the Community Golf Course on Nickerson Lake). Other golf courses in Northern Maine and nearby New Brunswick include the Fort Kent Golf Course, the Birch Point Golf Course in Madawaska, four golf courses in New Brunswick (Edmunston, Woodstock, Hartland, and Grand Falls), the Aroostook Valley Country Club in Fort Fairfield, the Presque Isle Country Club, the Caribou Country Club, a resort in Island Falls, the Mars Hill Country Club, the Va-Jo-Wa Golf Course, and Portage Hills Country Club.

Scenic Resources

Scenic and open space resources are those areas of the community that may offer scenic vistas or large tracts of open fields, such as areas identified by the state as having scenic value, scenic views, natural or cultural features (churches, trees, fields, mountains...), and parts of the community that contribute to the character of the Town (village green, historic sites...).

There are no areas in Houlton identified by the state as having scenic value of statewide significance. Houlton has two locally important areas that provide, or have provided, excellent views of the Town. These scenic areas are an important resource within the Town and should be maintained. Houlton has no local ordinance provisions that consider impacts of certain types of development upon scenic resources. The Town should consider mechanisms for identifying, assessing, and protecting existing and potential sites, as well as implementing performance standards for development activities within or adjacent to these sites. The comprehensive planning committee has identified the following areas during the inventory phase:

1. Reservoir Hill
2. Garrison Hill

Garrison Hill, named for the historic Hancock Barracks, was an important scenic view point in earlier times, providing views of the Town in all four directions were possible, but it has since become overgrown with trees. The Town is interested in restoring this view if possible, or at least protecting it from further encroachment by development.

Public Access

Public access opportunities are those locations where people can obtain entry to and use of waterbodies and large tracts of land for recreational pursuits. The major surface water in Houlton is the Meduxnekeag River. Several private landowners allow public access to the river for boating. A public boat access point is located off River Road near the downtown. The Town currently owns two large tracts of land along the river, with only one of these being suitable for public access development. The Town is encouraged to continue improvements along the river, such as the Riverfront Park to provide a unique outdoor experience to Town residents and contribute to the overall quality of life in Houlton.

The Town should consider mechanisms for the identification, assessment, and protection (as needed) of potential public access sites, with emphasis on the two parcels of property it already owns along the riverfront. The Town should also consider performance standards for development activities within or adjacent to existing or potential public access sites. These standards would be particularly important if the Town pursues developing any of its waterfronts for either passive or active recreational use in the future.

Historical Resources

This section includes a discussion of the Native Americans living in the present-day Town of Houlton, an overview of the history of Houlton, and a discussion of resources of documented importance in history. Historic and archaeological resources include sites on the National Register of Historic Places, sites on existing historical surveys, local historic areas, and other

sites of potential historic significance. It is important to review these resources and identify the surrounding land uses or other areas which may impact on these resources and then plan accordingly.

Native Americans - The Houlton Band of Maliseets Indians

Historical Background

The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (HBMI) is a small band of the larger Maliseet Nation, a Native American Indian tribe of North America. The aboriginal ancestors of the 590 present (1996) Band members traditionally lived and hunted off the land in the Saint John Valley watershed and throughout Aroostook County. By the 1870's non-Indians had completely settled Aroostook County. Their arrival had created tremendous disruption in the Maliseet's traditional hunting and gathering economy. Houlton, an area frequently visited by migratory Maliseet families, eventually became a focus for Maliseet settlement. However, this settlement was characterized by impoverishment. Poor Maliseet families lived in substandard homes at subsistence levels for generations. The poverty of the local economy and prejudices against the Maliseets further limited opportunities for education and employment. Most Maliseet Indians were restricted to predominantly seasonal labor, cutting timber, picking potatoes, raking blueberries and making Christmas wreaths. Maliseets often supplemented meager incomes by making and selling brown ash splint baskets. A bill passed by the Maine legislature in 1947 taxing off-reservations Indians caused a severe economic blow to Maliseets. Over 40 families lost their homes to taxes and during the next two decades become increasingly impoverished. Without a land base, the Maliseet community never had the opportunity to develop as a strong cultural and physical entity with an effective tribal government that could challenge institutional and cultural biases in Aroostook County. Their off-reservation status placed Maliseets in an environment where the pressure to assimilate has been strongly exerted.

The Maliseets Today

HBMI became officially recognized as a governmental organization by the Federal Government in 1980. Since then, HBMI has adopted the traditional form of Tribal Council/Tribal Chief model of government. The Tribal Chief carries out the executive functions of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians. Their six-member council carries out their legislative functions. HBMI is incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

HBMI acquired 800 acres of land held in trust by the Federal Government. In early 1994, HBMI completed a project on a portion of this land that provided fifty housing units. Here Band members can live and work together and better govern themselves as a group. Work is currently underway to develop and adopt a Tribal Constitution.

HBMI has land holdings of approximately 1,000 acres in Aroostook County, with much of it bordering the Meduxnekeag River. The river is a critical link in preserving tribal practices, traditions, and history. More information is available at www.maliseets.com.

Native Americans - The Micmacs

Historical Background

The Micmac Indians were among the first native North Americans encountered by European explorers to the New World. Their initial contact with Europeans in the early years of the 16th century gradually changed their way of life forever. The chief basis for early Micmac relations with Europeans was trade. During the second half of the 16th century, the fur trade appears to have changed from a subsidiary activity of fishermen to the major occupation of many European sailors. The fur trade had an immediate, and ultimately negative, impact on the Micmacs. The demand for furs dramatically expanded the traditional fur hunting season and thus altered the intricate seasonal cycles of the Micmacs. By reducing the annual periods traditionally spent along the seashore, the Micmacs increased their dependence on European trade goods and food, and therefore were left more susceptible to sudden famines. This also caused a radical wild game depletion in their usual hunting areas and ultimately became a motivating factor in acts of warfare among the tribes in the region.

The World War I economy provided a brief boom in job options for the Micmacs, and during this time some traveled widely in search of new work and adventure. But the vast majority of Micmacs remained locked into low-paying and sporadic seasonal work, including guiding, commercial fishing, lumbering, and farm labor.

In the latter half of the 20th century, large numbers of Micmacs, still in search of an income, went to Boston and cities like Hartford to work in high steel construction jobs. By 1970, at least one out of every three men in the labor force of Restigouche (the largest Micmac Reserve in Canada) had spent some time (usually in Boston) working in construction on high rise buildings.

The Micmacs Today

At present, the estimated Micmac population enrolled on Canadian Band-lists is more than 10,000. Only 7,000 of these live on Reserves; the other 3,000 live scattered over the Maritimes and New England, or are just “on the road.” In addition, there are an estimated 2,000-3,000 Micmacs who live in Canada who are not registered on the Band Rolls of the Canadian Reserves. In total, there are about 5,000 registered and non-registered Micmacs in new England, the majority of whom live in Boston. Aroostook County provides the major transitory route to and from the Canadian Reserves and the urban areas along the Atlantic seaboard of the U.S., both because of its location and because of the presence of a strong Micmac community.

The Micmacs were not part of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 and, as such, were without the services of the State of Maine’s Department of Indian Affairs, which had closed its doors. In response, the Aroostook Micmac Council, Inc. was formed, which obtained recognition and assistance from the federal government’s Bureau of Indian Affairs. Currently, funding is available from the Administration of Native Americans, a branch of the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Indian Lutheran Board.

In June of 1982, members of the Micmac Indian Tribe in Aroostook County chose Presque Isle as their headquarters. As heirs of the First People, the Micmac Indians are part of the Eastern Algonquian-speaking peoples who have traditionally inhabited the territories of Maine and the Maritime Provinces.

Today, the resident core of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs consists of approximately 562 people. Of the 233 adult members, 135 live within a 20-mile radius of Presque Isle, 46 (20 percent) in and around Houlton, and 22 in and around Madawaska. They recently developed about 20 units of tribal housing in Littleton.

Houlton Town History

The land now comprising the Town of Houlton is made up of two parts. The southern half of the Town was originally a half-township deeded to the Academy of New Salem by the Legislature of the commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1799. The northern half of the Town was part of a grant to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Until the Missouri Compromise in 1820, Maine was part of Massachusetts.

The settlement of Houlton was organized as a plantation in 1826 and was incorporated as a Town in 1831. Aroostook County, with Houlton as the Shiretown, was organized and approved on March 16, 1839. The Town of Houlton, which was six miles square, operated under the selectmen form of government under the original charter. The Council-Manager form of government was approved by the legislature in 1939.

In the early years of settlement, the residents of the region engaged in farming and supplemented their agricultural products with lumbering and trapping. Later, lumbering rivaled potatoes as a principal occupation. The opening of the New Brunswick Railroad in 1870 and the addition of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad in the 1890's provided markets for potatoes and their derivatives which were national in scope and which provided the community with an agricultural specialty.

Houlton suffered from two major fires in the downtown area between 1879 and 1880. However, the Town continued to thrive. In fact, the 1890's was the period of the largest growth in Houlton and the Southern Aroostook area. By 1894, Houlton was referred to as the "Capital of Aroostook." With a population of about 5,000, it had over 100 mercantile establishments of all sizes and 50 manufacturing establishments. In the 1880's and 1890's, most of the larger buildings in downtown Houlton were constructed.

According to the "History of the Houlton Area" by Charlotte L. Melvin, "When we look back 70 or 80 years [from 1975], one of the most striking facts about the small towns of Southern Aroostook is how many small industries then existed which have now disappeared. Unfortunately, usually there are no detailed histories of the towns to help us trace how they came to be, however they changed, and then disappeared."

Some excerpts from the concluding chapter of "The Story of Houlton" by Cora M. Putnam, while they do not give a clue to the reasons for the declining economy of Houlton, they do reveal that the problems of 1957 remain with us today: "Houlton, in 1957, faces the future with courage, although economically the situation is not as bright as it has been. The potato growing industry has suffered a series of 'bad years.' It is estimated (probably with great exaggeration) that the town has lost 2,000 in population in the last seven years. At the moment it appears that industrial positions are on the decline."

Archaeological and Historic Buildings and Sites

It is important for communities to remember and preserve traces of their past -- houses, churches, farms, grange halls and evidence of prehistoric occupation, to name a few. Such buildings and sites contribute texture to the Town, bring history to life for many, and set a standard for the future. There are several such sites and buildings listed by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. In addition, buildings and sites do not have to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Maine to be of local importance. Churches, schools, and mills, for instance, often are not listed, yet are vital components of history for the Town. Some of these locally important buildings and sites are also identified below.

Prehistoric and Historic Archaeological Sites

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is the central repository in the state for all prehistoric and historic archaeological survey information. Survey files include computer files, map sets, paper data forms, field notes, detailed unpublished reports, photographic archives, and published works. Most of the basic information is retrievable on a town-by-town basis. It is the policy of MHPC that the standard of historic value reflected in municipal plans should normally be eligibility to or listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Because the National Register program accommodates buildings and sites of national, state, and local significance, it can also accommodate local values.

According to the MHPC, there are nine known prehistoric archaeological resource sites in Houlton as of May 2005. Archaeological resources are physical remains of the past, most commonly buried in the ground or very difficult to see on the surface. In many areas of Maine these areas are generally found within 50 yards of an existing or former shoreline. These areas provided good boat access and camp locations. A majority of the known Houlton sites are located on the banks of the Meduxnekeag River, two of which are also located on Houlton Band of Maliseet land. The MHPC recommends that future surveys, inventories, and analyses be done to focus on all low-slope areas along the Meduxnekeag River and B Stream, as well as esker deposits near other streams. This will allow the Town to identify other prehistoric archaeological resources which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register.

The MHPC lists Hancock Barracks, ME207-001, as the only current Historic Archaeological Site in Houlton. The Barracks has unfortunately been neglected and is currently in a state of disrepair, and as mentioned earlier, the view from the garrison is now over grown and unremarkable. The MHPC recommends that future fieldwork for historic sites focus on sites relating to the earliest European settlement of the town, beginning about 1807 since no professional survey for historic archaeological sites has been conducted in Houlton.

Historic Buildings

According to the MHPC, there are ten known buildings / structures / objects in Houlton that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as of 2005. National Register sites meet at least one of four criteria that include: whether the site is associated with an event that has made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; whether the site is associated with a

person significant in the past; whether the site embodies distinctive characteristics, possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity; and whether the site yields or may yield important information in prehistory or history. A comprehensive survey of Houlton’s above-ground resources is recommended by the MHPC to identify other properties which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register. National Register sites in Houlton include the following:

Historic Buildings 2006

Resource	Location
First National Bank of Houlton*	Market Square Historic District
Blackhawk Putnam Tavern	22 North Street
White Memorial Building	109 Main Street
Market Square Historic District	Downtown
Amazeen House	15 Weeks Street
Edward L. Cleveland House	87 Court Street
Cary Library	107 Main Street
Unitarian Church of Houlton	Military Street
Aroostook County Courthouse and Jail	Court Street
Walter P. Mansur House	10 Water Street

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 2005
 * Part of Market Square Historic District.

The following is a list of historic buildings located within the Market Square Historic District that contribute to its importance:

1. W. P. Mansur Block, 1905-06
 Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect
 Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
2. First National Bank, 1907 (N.R. 9/20/73)
 Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect
 Neo-Classical Revival, 2 stories, stone with metal trim.
3. Masonic Building, 1918
 Edward J. Bolan of Boston, Architect
 Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood and cast stone trim.
4. Putnam and White Bock, 19th Century
 Greek Revival, 3.5 stories, frame with asphalt siding.
5. Green Block, c. 1910
 Commercial Style, 2 stories, brick with cast stone and metal trim.
6. H.T. Frisbie Block, left five bays, 1894: remaining seven bays, 1905
 Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect

- Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
7. Perks Brothers Block, 1894
Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect
Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
 8. J.M. Rice Block, 1897
colonial Revival, 2 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 9. J. A. Millar Block, 1894
Colonial Revival, 2 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 11. Charles H. Fogg Block, 1911
John G. Chadwick of Houlton, Architect
Commercial Style, 2 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 12. O.F. French Block, 1894
Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect
Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 13. J. A. Browne Block, 1894
Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 14. S.A. Gray Block, 1894
Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
 15. Block, 1912
Commercial Style, 2 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
 17. Dunn Block, late-19th Century
Rebuilt after the 1902 fire by Dunn Furniture company, (Hotel)
Italianate, 3 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 19. Block, late-19th Century
Rebuilt after the 1902 fire
Italianate, 3 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 20. Houlton Lodge of Elks, 1906-07
S. K. Coffin of New Britain, Connecticut, Architect
Colonial Revival, 2.5 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 21. Carr Block, 1902-03
Kendall, Taylor and Stevens of Boston, Architect
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
 22. A.H. Fogg (Odd Fellows) Block, 1902-03

- Kendall, Taylor, and Stevens of Boston, Architect
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
23. Block, c. 1902
Colonial Revival, 2 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
24. McPartland Building, 19th Century
Greek Revival, 2.5 stories, frame with clapboard exterior.
25. The Brick Block, 1885
George M. Coombs of Lewiston, Architect
Italianate, 2.5 stories, brick with wood, stone and metal trim.
26. McPartland House, 19th Century
Italianate, 1.5 stories, frame with clapboard exterior.
27. Houlton Fire Station, 1907
Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor, Architect
Colonial Revival, 2 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
28. U.S. Custom House and Post Office, 1893
Willoughby J. Edbrooke, Supervising Architect, U.S. Treasury Dept.
Romanesque Revival, 2.5 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.

Non-conforming intrusions detracting from the integrity of the district.

10. Block, 20th Century
3 stories, frame with vinyl siding.
16. Block, mid-20th Century
1 story, brick.
18. F. W. Woolworth Block, 1946
1 story, brick.

Houlton's Downtown Revitalization Plan incorporates the historic preservation of Market Square and the cultural enhancement of the entire downtown "village" into its strategies. In addition, the Downtown Tax Increment Financing District and Development Program will provide a potential funding stream for upgrades and improvements that will help ensure these valuable assets are here to enjoy for decades to come.

In addition to the National Register sites and district, the MHPC also suggests that portions of the former WWII P.O.W. camp (see *Camp Houlton* below) have been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register, but needs further survey, inventory, and analysis. A general MHPC recommendation is that Houlton should carry out a comprehensive survey of historic

above-ground resources conducted in order to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register. These include residential neighborhoods that have a number of important period homes in good condition (i.e., Pleasant, Court, Main, and Military Streets); and the Bangor Road area at the site of the original factory where horse-drawn potato planters were manufactured, the dormitory building at the former Ricker College, and the Episcopal Church (1848), which draws on the design of a ship's knees. These places are locally significant and worthy of preservation.

Camp Houlton

In 1944 a major part of the Houlton Army Air Base was made into Camp Houlton, a Prisoner of War (POW) internment camp. It was a violation of the Geneva Convention to force POWs to work but they could volunteer to work. Camp Houlton provided laborers for local farms to harvest peas, pick potatoes, and perform other work, but not all POWs were allowed to work on the farms for security reasons.

Many farmers came to see the POWs who worked their fields as good laborers rather than enemy soldiers. The prisoners were paid a dollar a day in scrip that they could spend at the Post Exchange for toiletries, tobacco, chocolate, and even beer.

In 2004, a granite memorial was placed at the entrance to the Airport Industrial Park commemorating the existence and contributions of the German prisoners of war that were consigned for internment at Camp Houlton between 1944 and 1946. The town subsequently gave the Houlton Historical and Art Museum property on the site of the POW camp to maintain and preserve as they wished. Although Town officials are supportive of preservation efforts regarding Camp Houlton, they are also concerned about how the issue will impact future development of the industrial park. Some development has already occurred in the industrial park in years past without much consideration to the history of Camp Houlton.

Historic, Cultural, and Recreational Resource Analysis

Houlton residents appreciate the town's rich history and the town possesses many significant historic and cultural assets. Unfortunately, the regulatory measures have been primarily put in place for the historic downtown district and have not proved sufficient to adequately protect and preserve assets found elsewhere in the community. The Airport Industrial Park is an example of one such area.

The comprehensive planning committee and town officials will take steps to ensure a higher level of attention is given to preservation measures in order to protect historic resources. The future land use plan includes strategies and implementations that will be incorporated into the townwide zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and site design review ordinance to require the identification of and mitigation measure for prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, as well as historic buildings, structures, and objects.

Houlton is assuming its role as a cultural center for the County. The creative economy is making strides in Houlton, with important assets such as the Houlton Amphitheater, the Southern

Aroostook Community Arts Project, and the possibility of a new Community Performing Arts Center at Houlton High School, all playing a role in the Town's cultural success.

Houlton is also very well positioned in providing a number of recreational choices for residents of all ages. The Town will work hard to make the River Front Park a vibrant addition to the pedestrian friendly and inviting historic Market Square. Community Park is well maintained, and offers versatility in accommodating a number of various sporting and entertainment events from softball tournaments and Soap Box Derby racing to arena-style concerts and agricultural fairs.

Throughout this comprehensive plan, other planning efforts and resulting strategies have been referenced. These include:

- *Regional Economic Development and Strategic Marketing Plan* prepared for the Town of Houlton by Jim Damicis Associates in 2004 (denoted as REDSMP)
- *The Houlton Downtown Revitalization Plan* prepared by Kent Associates and others in 2005 (denoted as HDRP)
- *Maine's Creative Economy – Community Handbook* by Maine State Government Resources for Communities in 2006 (denoted as MCEH)

In an effort to coordinate overlapping action steps that address cultural, historic, and recreational issues, these planning documents and their recommendations related to these issues are incorporated into the following policies and implementation strategies for Houlton.

Cultural and Historic Resources Policies and Implementation Strategies

Houlton's Cultural and Historic Goal

- *To possess and promote an understanding of the archaeological, prehistoric, historic and cultural resources in Houlton, and work to recognize, preserve, and educate the public about the key elements of its past, including archaeological, prehistoric, and historic buildings, structures, sites, and artifacts.*

The State Cultural and Historic Goal:

To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources

Cultural and Historic Policies

Policy	Corresponding Strategy
A. Support the identification, preservation, and protection of valuable cultural and historic resources.	1-5
B. Promote citizen utilization of Houlton’s and Aroostook County’s numerous and diverse cultural resources, including scenic and public access resources, and create additional resources when opportunities present themselves.	2,3,6-10
C. Foster Houlton’s regional reputation and importance as an historic and cultural center.	1-4,6,8-13

Cultural and Historic Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
1. Continue to identify archaeological, prehistoric, and historic structures, sites, and artifacts, and identify regulatory and voluntary mechanisms to preserve them. Currently unprotected resources to consider include: a) World War II site/buildings/objects at the airport, b) historic homes in Pleasant, Court, Main, and Military Streets area, c) factory site of the original horse-drawn Aspinwall potato planter, d) dormitory building at the former Ricker College, and e) Episcopal Church.	CDP, ADC, PB, PRD, TC, TM, HHS	2008-Ongoing
2. Add pre-historic and historic archaeological site protection standards to townwide zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and site design review ordinance as outlined in future land use plan	PB, TC, HHS	2008
3. Develop a program of public education about the Market Square Historic District, including written materials and workshops for downtown merchants, to increase compliance with and respect for requirements outlined in the Historic District Ordinance.	TM, PB, CDP	2008
4. Promote and publicize arts and cultural activities in local school programs, community events, and regional festivals. (MCEH - BB#2, #3)	SAD, CC, LIB	Ongoing
5. Continue to regulate historic Market Square buildings through the use and enforcement of the Historic District Ordinance.	PB, TC, CDP	Ongoing
6. Identify scenic resources important to the area and develop performance standards to regulate activities affecting these resources. (MCEH-BB#4)	PB, CDP	2008
7. Continue to host local and regional events unique to Houlton, such as local band concerts, State Fair, and Soap Box Derby, and continue to maintain locally important attractions, such as the Boy with the Leaky Boot. (MCEH-BB#4; REDSMP#5.c)	CC, PRD	Ongoing
8. Organize and carry out an annual local riverfront clean-up to generate interest in the river as a natural and recreational resource. If successful, work with other groups to extend the clean-up to roadway corridors, abandoned rail beds, and abandoned properties. Also promote the Adopt-A-Highway program.	CDP, PRD, PWD	2008-Ongoing

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
9. Recognize the importance of local civic and historic preservation organizations to the Town and provide an annual forum to discuss coordination between the organizations on issues and opportunities for the community. Compile a list of projects these organizations are willing to take on and ensure projects are compatible with the Comprehensive Plan’s strategies. (MCEH-BB#2,7-8)	TC, TM, CDP	2008-Ongoing
10. Continue to foster a successful and supportive relationship with Fair Committee and provide necessary facilities for the continued success of the Annual State Fair in Houlton. (MCEH #7-8; REDSMP #5.c)	TM, PRD	Ongoing
11. Develop a long-range plan for the Meduxnekeag Riverfront Park to incorporate a River Interpretive Center featuring the historic impact that the river had on the development of Houlton, such as hydro-powered industries, the building of the Col. Hume Bridge, the old dam, etc. (HDRP II.9)	CDP, PRD, HHS	2007-Ongoing
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM		
12. Pursue multi-municipal support for initiatives and facilities from surrounding communities and Woodstock, N.B., which highlight Houlton’s historic and cultural connection to the County and Province.	TM, HHS, CC	2007-Ongoing
13. Recognizing that tourism development is an integral part of and a valuable asset to the future of Town and region. The Town will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote tourism in the Town and region by cooperative efforts of the Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, Aroostook County Tourism (ACT), and Maine’s tourism marketing initiatives. (MCEH- BB#7-8) b. (REDSMP #5.c; HDRP I.4-6) c. Inform residents of the benefits of a tourism development program, d. Instill a sense of ambassadorship in residents and retailers toward "out-of-towners" and promote excellence in service, e. Develop four-season tourism packages, programs and services f. Encourage tourism through plans that are consistent with local land use concerns, g. Encourage and promote the development of the tourism industry by attracting an increased number of tourists/tourist dollars to the Town and region h. Stimulate investment and employment in the tourism industry through supporting education, employment, training programs, and a strong marketing program. (REDSMP #5.c; HDRP I.4-6) 	TM, CC, CDP, DTC, HHS, PB, TC	2008-Ongoing
Key		
ADC Airport Dev. Committee	IF&W Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	R2C Roads 2000 Committee
BC Budget Committee	LIB Cary Library	SAD School Admin. District
CC Chamber of Commerce	MFS Maine Forest Service	TA Tax Assessor
CDP Community Dev. Planning	MWC Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TC Town Council
CEO Code Enforcement Officer	PD Police Department,	TM Town Manager
DEP Dept. of Env. Protection	PB Planning Board	TO Town Officials
DTC Downtown Committee	PRD Parks & Recreation Department	ZBA Zoning Bd. of Appeals
HHS Houlton Historical Society	PRAB Parks & Recreation Advisory Board	
HWC Houlton Water Company	PWD Public Works Department	

Recreational Resource Policies and Implementation Strategies

Houlton’s Recreation Goal

- *To provide recreational opportunities, activities, and facilities for people of all ages in Houlton.*

The State's Recreation and Open Space Goal:
 To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

Recreation Policies

<i>Policy</i>	Corresponding Strategies
A. Enhance public access to the Town's rivers and streams, particularly the Meduxnekeag River and its tributaries, for recreational uses, and seek outside funding in support of these activities.	1,3,6
B. Support the creation of recreational opportunities for people of all ages.	1,2,3,4,5
C. Seek to encourage and expand cooperative recreation programs and facilities with surrounding communities and New Brunswick.	5
D. Promote membership in and support for trail organizations and recreational clubs to assist in the proper use and maintenance of private land for trails, fishing and hunting, and other recreational uses.	4,6
E. Encourage and support opportunities for a permanent network of trails that link both motorized and non-motorized users to open space and recreational areas in the region.	1,2,3,4,5,6
F. Support recreational activities within the Town and greater region that help maintain a healthy and high quality of life.	1,3,5
G. Encourage the development and maintenance of Meduxnekeag Riverfront Park for the benefit of all.	1,3

Recreation Strategies

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
<p>1. The Recreation Department should continue to be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identifying, developing, and maintaining recreational resources for people of all ages, b. Making existing recreational facilities function to their fullest potential, c. Working with existing civic groups and organizations to secure support for recreational programs, d. Working with the Planning Board in creating standards in the Town's land use regulations for the preservation and protection of all vital recreational resources, e. Developing a plan and a program for the expansion of winter recreational facilities and trails within the Town and region, f. Working with landowners to preserve and conserve water resources for recreational activities and to develop plans for recreational access, g. Inventorying and mapping all private access points to surface waters, h. Inventorying and mapping popular hunting and fishing areas used by general public, i. Initiating and coordinating with PWD a locally organized clean-up of river and stream embankments, roadway corridors, and abandoned properties, j. Seeking out technical assistance from the State Bureau of Parks and Recreation in recreation planning. 	<p>TM, PRD, PB</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>2. Develop a program for the acquisition and maintenance of lands for open space and recreational activities, including revenue streams for any necessary funding to accomplish this task. This effort will be viewed as a way of preserving key areas with significant natural, recreational, or scenic value. The effort should include a wide range of possibilities for both the method of acquisition (gifts, land trades, purchase, etc.) and the extent of ownership (conservation easements, development rights, fee ownership, etc.). The development and operation of a successful open space conservation / recreation program will require commitment by the Town and will need to be an on-going activity. Efforts will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing an overall plan which identifies the types and locations of land which should be conserved through public/private action and establishing priorities for evaluating various parcels, b. Exploring possible funding mechanisms that can be used for acquiring open space lands including public and private outside funding, c. Establishing relationships with existing conservation organizations to coordinate activities and utilize their knowledge and experience, d. Working with landowners to explore the use of conservation easements or similar devices to protect all or portions of their land for the future, and e. Developing a program for the on-going acquisition and maintenance of open space areas as identified in step (a). 	<p>TM, TC, PRD, PB</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>
<p>3. Develop and maintain the Meduxnekeag Riverside Park as part of the townwide trail system; incorporating a River Interpretative Center, picnic facilities, trail facilities, parking, river access, and handicapped accessibility.</p>	<p>CDP, PRD, HHS</p>	<p>2008-Ongoing</p>

Strategy	Responsibility	Year
<p>4. Support recreational access to private land through the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a landowner contact program that will seek the continued cooperation of landowners, establish a system to respond to complaints about public access, and provide information on techniques of maintaining scenic value to those landowners whose property has been identified as a scenic resource, b. Publish a handout about the recreational groups and clubs in the area and distribute it to all residents when they register motor vehicles, vote, or when they purchase licenses, c. Provide for annual recognition of landowners who have contributed to public access and recreational opportunities, d. Maintain and publicize educational information for landowners and recreation users on the value of recreation and responsibilities users have with the public use of private lands for recreation, and e. Incorporate the study of recreational ethics in the school’s curriculum. 	<p>CDP, PRD, SAD</p>	<p>2009</p>
REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM		
<p>5. Pursue cooperative municipal support for recreational programs and facilities from the surrounding communities and New Brunswick, when appropriate.</p>	<p>TM, TC</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>
<p>6. Work with the state and local trail user groups, and landowners to develop a comprehensive local and regional trail system. The Town will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Research identified rights-of-way to determine their legal status and the public's right to use the areas, b. Develop a trail system using the available rights-of-way as connectors, where feasible c. Work with landowners to obtain permanent or long-term public use rights where crossing of private land is necessary or desirable, and d. Establish a system for maintaining trail(s) and assuring rights will be respected. e. Continue to financially support trail organizations through registration fees and other funding sources as needed. 	<p>TM, PB, CDP, PRD</p>	<p>2008-Ongoing</p>
Key		
<p>ADC Airport Dev. Committee</p>	<p>LIB Cary Library</p>	<p>R2C Roads 2000 Committee</p>
<p>BC Budget Committee</p>	<p>MFS Maine Forest Service</p>	<p>SAD School Admin. District</p>
<p>CC Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>MWC Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition</p>	<p>TA Tax Assessor</p>
<p>CDP Community Dev. Planning</p>	<p>PD Police Department,</p>	<p>TC Town Council</p>
<p>CEO Code Enforcement Officer</p>	<p>PB Planning Board</p>	<p>TM Town Manager</p>
<p>DEP Dept. of Env. Protection</p>	<p>PRD Parks & Recreation Department</p>	<p>TO Town Officials</p>
<p>HWC Houlton Water Company</p>	<p>PRAB Parks & Recreation Advisory Board</p>	<p>ZBA Zoning Bd. of Appeals</p>
<p>IF&W Inland Fisheries & Wildlife</p>	<p>PWD Public Works Department</p>	

Regional Coordination Program

Throughout the development of this Plan a number of shared resources were identified and a clearer understanding of the Town's relationship to the surrounding communities was achieved. As Houlton functions as a regional center for employment, transportation, recreational opportunities, cultural activities, and etc., the Town is inextricably linked to the surrounding towns. The Comprehensive Planning Committee identified numerous implementation actions to address these and other elements of regional importance within the policies and strategies. These spell out the specific steps that will be taken over the next five years in dealing with regional issues and resources. The Committee will forward a copy of this Plan to each neighboring town for their timely review and comment. These include: Hodgdon, New Limerick, Littleton, and Ludlow. New Limerick is the only community of this group that has undertaken a comprehensive planning effort.

The following table aggregates the strategies that the planning committee has identified to be an issue needing Regional Coordination. In some cases, the Regional Coordination activity will need to be accomplished through formal resolutions or agreements. In far more instances, it will be accomplished simply by communicating with neighboring towns and sharing information, technical assistance resources, or in some other informal way.

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM STRATEGIES		
Strategy – Public Facilities and Services	Responsibility	Year
20. Sponsor a meeting with Town officials and adjoining towns to identify and reinforce shared programs and opportunities for cooperation. Expand cooperative purchasing and explore joint resolutions.	TM, SAD, HWC	2008 annually
21. Continue to pursue least-cost options for solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling; work with regional entities and local service provider to increase recycling volumes and remove recyclables from MSW stream.	TM, CDP	2009 - Ongoing
22. Support initiatives aimed at stabilizing or lowering energy costs to HWC customers, such as LD742, and the Haynesville transmission line connection to the New England power grid.	TM, TC, HWC	2007 Ongoing
Strategy – Transportation	Responsibility	Year
23. Establish an open dialogue with the communities along Routes 1, 2, and 2-A to address maintenance, planning priorities, curb cuts, access management, and impact of development.	CDP; TM; NMDC	2007-2008
24. Encourage the completion of projects listed in the Aroostook County Transportation Study (Environmental Impact Statement). Continue to articulate Houlton's position that by-passing the community is not in the best interest of the town and the region.	TM; TC; ADC	Ongoing
25. Encourage upgrades to the Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic rail system including infrastructure, service, and intermodal facilities.	TM; TC; ADC	Ongoing
26. Work with the congressional delegation in their efforts increase the weight limits on Interstate 95 from 80,000 to 100,000 pounds.	TM; TC; ADC	Ongoing
27. Support the implementation of the Air Service Redevelopment Plan at the Northern Maine Regional Airport which includes seeking regional jet service and improved air service (pricing and increased frequency).	TM; TC; ADC	Ongoing

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM STRATEGIES (continued)		
Strategy - Economy	Responsibility	Year
28. Work with surrounding communities to develop regional plans for overall economic development, tourism, land use, and transportation strategies.	CDP, PB, TM	Ongoing
29. Continue existing communication between Houlton and Woodstock, NB on transportation-related and economic development issues.	CDP, ADC, CC	2008 - Ongoing
30. Provide pertinent input into the planning of a proposed North/South Highway at every opportunity given. The alignment of the highway is critical to economic viability of many of Houlton's businesses.	TM, CDP	Ongoing
31. Monitor effects of WHTI once implemented, including analysis of retail sales data and anecdotal accounts from area merchants to determine extent of negative impact on local retail trade. Relay findings to Federal delegates, Maine State Chamber of Commerce, and other resources; coordinate with them to develop and implement strategies to mitigate impacts as necessary.	CDP, CC, TM, NMDC	2009 - Ongoing
Strategy - Housing	Responsibility	Year
32. Support ACAP's efforts to improve low-income and senior housing quality and availability.	CDP, TO	Ongoing
Strategy – Natural, Water, Agricultural, Forest Resources	Responsibility	Year
33. Maintain existing dialogue with Meduxnekeag watershed organizations and Houlton Band of Maliseets to ensure participation in policy development regarding regional land use and associated environmental issues, particularly for protection of water resources and aquifers.	TM, PB	Ongoing
34. Develop and maintain open communications between all parties concerned with natural resource management, including neighboring communities.	CDP, TM, PB, CEO, TC	Ongoing
35. Continue to participate in the Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition to ensure the Town's interests are represented in the Coalition's planning and implementation activities.	TM, MWC	Ongoing
36. Develop a Public Access Improvement Plan for the Meduxnekeag River and its major tributaries. The Plan should include an inventory of public access points to significant surface water resources, goals and strategies for maintaining and/or improving public access, and funding sources to implement strategies of the Plan.	PB, TC, MWC, PRD, CED	2008
37. Request MIF&W conduct a fisheries census of major tributaries to the Meduxnekeag River to determine fisheries value and appropriate management plans to improve the trout fishery in the watershed.	PB, IF&W	2008
38. Work with the NRCS, the SASWCD, University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE), Maine Potato Board (MPB), Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other groups to foster diversification of agricultural enterprises within the community and region.	CED, PB, TC	2007 - Ongoing
Strategy – Historic, Cultural, and Recreational Resources	Responsibility	Year
14. Pursue multi-municipal support for initiatives and facilities from surrounding communities and Woodstock, N.B., which highlight Houlton's historic and cultural connection to the County and Province.	TM, HHS, CC	2007- Ongoing

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM STRATEGIES (continued)					
Strategy - Historic, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (cont.)			Responsibility	Year	
15. Recognizing that tourism development is an integral part of and a valuable asset to the future of Town and region. The Town will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote tourism in the Town and region by cooperative efforts of the Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, Aroostook County Tourism (ACT), and Maine’s tourism marketing initiatives. (MCEH- BB#7-8) i. (REDSMP #5.c; HDRP I.4-6) j. Inform residents of the benefits of a tourism development program, k. Instill a sense of ambassadorship in residents and retailers toward "out-of-townners" and promote excellence in service, l. Develop four-season tourism packages, programs and services m. Encourage tourism through plans that are consistent with local land use concerns, n. Encourage and promote the development of the tourism industry by attracting an increased number of tourists/tourist dollars to the Town and region o. Stimulate investment and employment in the tourism industry through supporting education, employment, training programs, and a strong marketing program. (REDSMP #5.c; HDRP I.4-6) 			TM, CC, CDP, DTC, HHS, PB, TC	2008- Ongoing	
Key					
ADC	Airport Dev. Committee	IF&W	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	PRAB	Parks & Rec Advisory Board
BC	Budget Committee	LIB	Cary Library	PWD	Public Works Department
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MFS	Maine Forest Service	R2C	Roads 2000 Committee
CDP	Community Devt & Planning.	MDOT	Maine Dept. of Transportation	SAD	School Adm. District
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	MWC	Meduxnekeag Watershed Coalition	TA	Tax Assessor
DEP	Dept. of Env. Protection	NMDC	N. Maine Devt Commission	TC	Town Council
DTC	Downtown Committee	PD	Police Department,	TM	Town Manager
HHS	Houlton Historical Society	PB	Planning Board	TO	Town Officials
HWC	Houlton Water Company	PRD	Parks & Recreation Department	ZBA	Zoning Bd. of Appeals

INTERLOCAL RESOURCES MAP

BACK of INTERLOCAL RESOURCES MAP