

M. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Past Development Trends

The earliest settlements in Jonesport developed around maritime industry. When all travel was by water, many lived on the islands close to the fish stocks. With the advent of gas engines and roads many moved their livelihoods and houses to the mainland. The original business district of Jonesport was located at Indian River and was comprised of a large sawmill, a shipyard, and mail center. Jonesport became a trading center for the outlying islands and the business district was moved to Main Street to be closer to commerce in Moosabec Reach. Sea captains built their homes in Jonesport, a good port down east on the sailing route from Boston to Canada.

Jonesport reached its peak in development and population during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Several sardine factories existed, but when the transportation of goods switched from sailing vessels to trains and trucks these factories ultimately closed. The loss of ocean commerce resulted in a decrease in the town's population, but the remaining residents continued to make their livelihood from farming and fishing.

Commercial wild blueberry production has been an important commercial agricultural crop in Washington County for over a century. The north/northeastern portion of Jonesport contains thousands of acres of land that remains undeveloped today because the deep sand and gravel substrate is perfect for wild blueberry production. As both profit and demand decrease, smaller wild blueberry farmers in Washington County are reducing or halting production or selling their fields for development.

The fishing industry remains the economic mainstay of the community. Although traditionally most fishing families lived on the shore and had their own access to marine resources, many fishermen have moved inland as shorefront property values increase. Many private access points still exist along the shoreline, but many more fishermen are restricted to Sawyers Wharf in downtown Jonesport. Therefore, to achieve the community's stated Vision, public waterfront access and space for maritime-dependent uses in the village area of Jonesport should be protected and preserved.

Existing Land Use

The village center of Jonesport is densely developed with residential, public, and commercial uses and extensive public and private maritime facilities. The village center includes retail stores, a pizza shop, banks, gas and service stations, construction businesses, home-based businesses, lobster pounds, wharves, and a shellfish processor. The fire and ambulance stations, post office,

library, historical society, ballfield, and public wharf are all located in the village center. Most lots in the village are not more than 30,000 square feet, the current minimum lot size.

Although tourism in Jonesport is increasing, the lack of downtown water and sewer infrastructure prohibits development of larger dining and lodging establishments on many lots. Overall, Jonesport does not have the infrastructure necessary to support a much larger number of visitors than occurs today. There are no hotels or motels in Jonesport, but the Town does own a small campground, and there are a growing number of short-term rentals listed on sites like Air BnB and VRBO. There are four restaurants in Jonesport: Moosabec video & variety (sit down & takeout), Harbor House (sit down & alcohol served), Jonesport Pizza (sit down & take out), and Stewart's (take out). A seasonal seafood takeout eatery just across the bridge in Beals, which was very popular with visitors, just recently closed. A large retail gallery located downtown sells the work of artists in the region, and there are several homebased galleries and studios nearby. The town Library is also active in promoting local artists and art activities for local schools. Visitors have boat access in the center of town, directly next to the Historical Society, providing an opportunity to develop unique maritime heritage tourism assets.

Other concentrations of development outside of the village area include Coast Guard housing north on Route 187 on the eastern side of the peninsula; residential development on the two points of land in the southernmost part of the Indian River estuary; and the medical and dental clinics, schools, and superintendent's office off Route 187 about 2 miles north of Main Street. Blueberry cultivation is the dominant land use in the northern quarter of Jonesport. There are also moorings for several lobster boats and some outboards and skiffs in the Flake Point Bar area.

Locations and Types of Recent development

Over the past several decades, residential development has expanded along the eastern side of the peninsula along the main artery of Route 187. Exceptional ocean views and larger lots with easy road access attract both residential and commercial uses. Inland lots are being developed with more affordable modular and mobile homes; new residential construction occurs primarily along the shorefront.

Between the 1980s and 2000s, over 30 major residential subdivisions were created (greater than 5 lots, up to 20 lots). More recent developments are occurring lot-by-lot. Low density agricultural land is now being sold for single lot development. Between 2017 and 2021, building permits were issued for thirteen newly constructed homes and fifteen mobile homes. Five commercial or industrial permits were issued.

Beginning in early 2020, home sales have skyrocketed in Jonesport as well as in all of Washington County. At least 100 existing homes have sold, mostly to new year-round residents. Some of these houses were historic buildings and are being renovated. An unknown percentage of these homes were sold for use as short-term rentals. Communities across Maine and beyond, and in Washington County, are considering how to manage the location or number of short-term rentals.

The rapid rate of converting homes to short-term rentals is exacerbating housing shortages all over the nation, and especially in Downeast Maine with its exceptionally old housing stock. Housing shortages are detrimental to economic growth. It means people cannot move to the area to fill the workforce shortages or the schools. Converting a home in a higher density residential neighborhood into an Air BnB has land use implications regarding increased traffic, noise, light, and social activity.

Recent Development & Community Vision

The pattern of land use development over the past 10 years is primarily residential with some commercial lot-by-lot development along the roadways and shoreline. Continued lot-by-lot development and renovation of empty or underutilized structures does not contradict the community's vision and is consistent with historic development patterns.

More recently, historic homes have been purchased and are being restored. Some residential or commercial buildings will likely require change of use review as new property owners reinvent a site. Inevitably, some older structures will be removed, as many of them are in some state of disrepair. It is important for communities to consider the importance of their historic buildings and develop a plan for how to preserve those that matter most. Maine Preservation and the Maine Community Foundation are non-profit organizations that offer resources that Towns can use to guide them.

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan does not describe a specific community vision, but a summary of results from the 2003 public opinion survey indicate that citizens prefer Jonesport being an active rural fishing village with quaint architecture and clean properties, downtown water and sewer services, safe family oriented neighborhoods, facilities and services for the youth and elderly, housing and taxes that are affordable to younger and long-term residents and families, and new employment opportunities.

The 2022 Comprehensive Plan includes a detailed Vision Statement with essentially the same community desires as outlined in 2004. The 2022 Vision Statement describes Jonesport as a thriving maritime community with a vibrant village center that is a regional destination for visitors to experience the town's heritage and natural environment.

The vision includes several land-use related ideas:

- Expanded outdoor recreation infrastructure
- Safe transportation and mobility options for bicyclists, pedestrians, and those in wheelchairs.
- Preservation of cultural and historic sites
- Revitalization of vacant or underutilized buildings
- Space for outdoor community events like farmer’s markets and live performances
- Home-based businesses and telework – Broadband
- Natural resource industries/infrastructure, such as renewable energy
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Present Land Use Regulations

Existing Land Use Ordinances

The Town of Jonesport primarily relies on the minimum State-required regulatory measures to guide the nature and pattern of land development. Jonesport also adopted limited Floodplain, Subdivision, Shoreland, and Land Use standards. Jonesport utilizes minimum state development codes including the Maine State Plumbing Code, National Electrical Code, and National Fire Protection Association regulations.

Jonesport’s Land Use and Development Ordinance was adopted in January 1988 to protect property owners from new uses of land or structures which would make their own property less desirable and to protect the established character, social and economic stability of the Town of Jonesport.

The **Land Use Ordinance**, last updated in March 2022, sets forth development standards and provides a Table of Uses for five land use districts):

1. Resource Protection
2. Limited Residential Recreational
3. General Development
4. Harbor
5. Maritime Activities

Jonesport’s Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1991 and last updated in March 2022, regulates land use within the following Districts:

1. Resource Protection
2. Limited Residential

3. Limited Commercial
4. General Development I & II
5. Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities
6. Stream Protection

Subdivision Regulations were adopted in January 1988 and “re-written” in May 2012. The Floodplain Management Ordinance includes a section on sub-divisions; it was adopted in 1996 and has not been updated. The Subdivision regulations are currently being updated to match current State and Federal standards regarding Subdivisions.

Floodplain Regulations

Jonesport does participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The Floodplain Management Ordinance along with new Floodplain Maps was adopted in 1996 but has not been updated since then. The Floodplain regulations and maps are currently being updated to match current State and Federal standards regarding floodplain regulations and maps.

The **2004 Comprehensive Plan** proposed Growth Areas with four specific Land Use Districts: Medium Density Residential, Residential & Home-Based Business, Village Mixed Use, and Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan also proposed Rural Areas with three specific Land Use Districts: Rural Residential, Agricultural Protection, and Resource Protection. Only two of these districts (Maritime Activities and Resource Protection) are addressed in either the current Land Use and Development or Shoreland Ordinances; the rest were not acted upon.

Enforcement Capacity

Washington County does not have many CEOs to choose from and many Towns share a CEO. The current Code Enforcement Officer is responsible for several towns, as well as having a full-time job. The Comprehensive Planning Committee feels that the Town should not be burdened further with regulations that are not able to be enforced due to staffing capacity. Therefore, any Future Land Use Districts proposed within this chapter should be minimal, simple, and clear, and should facilitate development that is consistent with the Community Vision as described within this Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use Planning

Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Measures to Promote Development Consistent with the Community’s Vision

Feedback from both the Community Survey and Community Visioning session revealed an emphasis on improving community development, preserving open space and other natural resources, encouraging small locally owned businesses and home-based businesses, and only regulating growth to the extent needed to maintain the small-town atmosphere and a vibrant working waterfront.

Participants in the Community Survey and Community Visioning session identified specific types of desired development that would help Jonesport expand its economy and population while remaining true to its rural character, coastal culture, and commercial maritime heritage. Participant responses that directly relate to a Future Land Use plan are listed here.

Citizen Ideas for Future Land Use in Jonesport

- Retain/acquire/expand commercial working waterfront and shore access.
- Separate commercial uses from residential areas.
- Restrict solar farms along SR 187 (Main St) to protect the scenic views.
- Accommodate hydropower.
- Accommodate small industrial businesses.
- Consider re-use of the former IGA on Main Street (examples - science or cultural center).
- Encourage development of affordable housing in residential areas for seniors, Coast Guard, and low-income residents.
- Develop recreation areas - hiking trails across from Sandy River Beach; paved Waterfront walkway between Old House Point and Wharf St; bike routes (on- and off-road).
- Ensure wheelchair access throughout town; sidewalk repairs and construction.
- Enforce removal of junk/debris from private properties.
- Encourage development of eating establishments in the downtown village area.
- Install municipal sewer and water downtown.
- Preserve historic buildings in Sawyer Square.
- Prepare for storm surge and sea level rise.
- Maintain/preserve view at the Sculpture Park and other waterfront locations.

Land use zones such as Light Industrial, Public Infrastructure (solar, wind, hydro), Historic Village, Multi-Family Residential, and Scenic Preservation are examples of types of land use districts that could be explored going forward. Delineating land use zones could help prioritize where to invest Town infrastructure funds or direct development incentives. Land use ordinances can be crafted to encourage well-designed developments that meet the collective goals of the community and facilitate desired economic growth as well as preserving natural areas for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, and healthy ecosystem functions.

Any potential future zone changes and proposed ordinances affecting private land must be discussed openly with property owners within those areas and must be reviewed, drafted, and voted in through a town-wide public process.

Incentives that could help the Town encourage the preferred types of development include things like:

- Tax breaks for new businesses, even if temporary.
- Design standards or land-use zones specifically intended to encourage multi-family housing or subdivisions.
- Assistance with restoration of downtown buildings and those placed on the National Historic Register.

Participation in the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) could open access to housing, business development, and historic preservation funds through the Downtown Revitalization, Economic Development, Microenterprise Assistance, and Housing Assistance programs.

An option for protecting scenic areas, high-value natural resources, and expanding public access to outdoor recreation areas is to cooperate with local land trusts. Land trusts have the funds and tax advantage alternatives to compensate private landowners who voluntarily place a conservation easement on their property to restrict future development, or who choose to sell or donate it outright to preserve its habitat, ecosystem, and public access values.

Jonesport has considered the advantages and disadvantages of building a public water/wastewater system downtown for many years. The lack of this infrastructure hampers certain types of development due to small lot sizes and the distance requirements between wells, septic tanks, and property boundaries. Jonesport residents are divided on the desire for town water or wastewater facilities. Some residents express concern about the cost of these public utilities, a burden that would be shared by all taxpayers, not only service recipients. Some note that there is very little land in the downtown that could even accommodate a business of the type and size that would require public sewer/water - for example, a larger sit-down restaurant may not be feasible, but there are some lots that could accommodate a smaller restaurant on a private septic and well.

The minimum amount of land needed to accommodate projected residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial development at least ten years into the future depends on the type of private development being proposed (the Town does not anticipate any investments in

residential, commercial, or industrial developments). Multi-family housing, or single-family homes on small lots, would allow far more residential use than single-family homes on larger lots. The northwest area of Jonesport includes thousands of acres of undeveloped land, which could accommodate larger industrial, manufacturing, and commercial uses, as well as larger subdivisions or single/multi-family residential development.

Accommodation of New Residential Units and Larger Scale Developments

The only known large commercial development proposed at this time is for a major aquaculture company's land-based facility. They do not intend to develop housing but have considered transient worker accommodations which might be located on their proposed "campus". Many of the 75-100 potential new employees are likely to already live locally. It is likely that the development would result in new residents opening businesses or starting families in the area, which would to some degree affect school, transportation, and public service infrastructure in Jonesport. At this time, there is plenty of undeveloped land in the northeastern section of Jonesport.

Alignment with Community Vision

Jonesport residents envision a future where Jonesport is a thriving maritime community and a regional destination for ecotourism and experiential tourism where residents and visitors may learn about and appreciate the town's heritage and natural environment. They would like to see vacant or underutilized buildings revitalized or repurposed, and would like natural resource industries/infrastructure, such as renewable energy, to be properly sited and contribute to the regional economy. (For more information, see Chapter A - Community Vision & Executive Summary, Appendix A - Community Survey, and Appendix B - Youth Vision.)

The Future Land Use Plan supports infill development for commercial uses in the village, multi-family residential development in areas immediately adjacent to the village, and commercial water-dependent development along the southern shoreline. The Future Plan also accommodates larger scale industrial or manufacturing uses, such as solar or wind farms, in areas that would protect scenic coastal views and would be removed from most residential and smaller scale commercial developments.

Configuration of Growth Areas

The proposed areas are defined by existing types of development and infrastructure, including primary transportation routes, and the location of land that is suitable for siting sewer and water

systems. Expanding the Village area takes into consideration the possibility of future Town investments in public water or wastewater, and the proximity of undeveloped lots to the main street (Route 187). Expanding the Medium-Density Residential area accounts for the need for slightly larger lots that can accommodate private sewer/water systems on site and connects existing residential areas to Route 187. The proposed General Development District incorporates land that can accommodate large sewer/water systems and development footprints while protecting the region's aquifer and remaining separated from existing residential areas.

PROPOSED LAND USE DISTRICTS

Growth management legislation requires the designation of growth and rural areas in comprehensive plans. The designation of growth areas is intended to direct development to areas most suitable for growth and away from areas where growth would have a negative impact on rural resources. Based on growth management principles, growth areas should be located close to municipal services to minimize the cost to the municipality of delivering these services. The designation of rural areas is intended to protect agricultural, forest, wildlife habitat, scenic areas, and other open space areas from incompatible development.

There is no municipal water or sewerage service in any area of Jonesport. Only detailed site-specific analysis can determine land suitable for development and at what densities. In addition, the comprehensive plan has not assessed the individual landowner's desires to sell their land for development and for what type of development, to develop it themselves, or to leave it undeveloped.

This document serves as a guide to achieving land use goals in the next 5 to 10 years - it is not an ordinance or rule. The purpose of the future land use plan and map is to identify the best locations for anticipated growth in order to encourage development that supports the community's vision for their future (as outlined in Chapter A - Community Vision and Executive Summary). The proposed land use plan does not identify specific parcels. All land use districts and land use ordinances that may be developed from this proposed plan must be proposed by the Planning Board and enacted through a public process and town-wide vote.

Growth Areas

The current Land Use Ordinance sets forth development standards for five land use districts:

1. Resource Protection
2. Limited Residential/Recreational
3. General Development

4. Harbor
5. Maritime Activities

Jonesport proposes several Growth districts intended to guide growth in three ways:

1. Enable small commercial developments, home based businesses, commercial fisheries, and marine industry activities to continue in and near the village and denser residential areas.
2. Encourage housing developments, including multi-family housing, that are affordable for the families, workforce, retirees, and older residents.
3. Separate heavier commercial or industrial use from residential and village areas.

Three districts proposed as growth areas are described below and illustrated on Map: Proposed Future Land Use at the end of this section. These include one new district designation - **General Development** - and an expansion of the existing **Medium Density Residential** and **Village/Mixed-Use** Districts.

Areas outside of these three growth districts are designated as **Rural Residential** and are intended to protect natural resources while allowing lighter residential and agricultural development.

Medium Density Residential District (MDR)

The purpose of the Medium Density Residential district is to support an existing pattern of residential & home-based business development in areas where neighborhoods are already established. Current land uses and development activity includes agricultural, residential, light commercial, and home-based businesses.

The Medium Density Residential District occurs on the eastern and western shorelines of Jonesport. On the east, it extends from downtown, around Kelley Point and beyond Sandy River Beach, and ends at the top of Englishman Bay south of Flake Point Bar. To the west, the future Medium Density Residential District consists of the existing MDR district and the existing Low-Density District just to the south along the Chandler River. Both areas are currently developed at a lower density with mixed uses of rural residential and light commercial.

Any revisions to the land use ordinance will specify the types and sizes (footprint and height) of commercial uses allowed and will incorporate commercial development standards, such as traffic, noise, lighting, emissions, outdoor storage, runoff, buffering, and other standards that will ensure any new or expanded commercial developments are compatible with residential uses. Smaller minimum lot sizes (30,000 – 40,000 square feet) and limited frontage (150 feet) exist, and the same pattern will be continued.

Village/Mixed Use District (V/MU)

The purpose of the Village/Mixed Use district is to retain the unique character of the downtown area, which is a high-density mix of residential, municipal, and commercial use area. The current mixture of land use and development activity includes municipal, commercial, maritime-commercial, single-family (primarily) residential, and home-based businesses.

The Village/Mixed Use district includes the existing V/MU district plus an extension to the northeast of the village center that is currently zoned as a Rural Area for Seasonal Uses. The additional V/MU area is currently undeveloped.

This area could be easily accessed off of Main Street (Route 187) and the land is suitable for development. It is adjacent to and surrounded on three sides by the existing V/MU area. If in the future the Town should choose to expand an existing or install a new water/wastewater system to accommodate commercial growth, this area provides a good option.

Any revision to the land use ordinance will specify the types and sizes of commercial uses allowed. The schedule of uses will be consistent with current and existing development. Performance standards will be developed within the land use ordinance to include access requirements, parking, landscaping, signage, as well as design criteria to ensure attractive development. Coordinated access among commercial site plans and secondary service roads will be encouraged. Smaller minimum lot sizes (30,000 – 40,000 square feet) and limited frontage (150 feet) exist, and the same pattern will be continued.

General Development District (GD)

The purpose of the General Development District is to accommodate larger commercial, manufacturing, and industrial uses in Jonesport without compromising the character of existing, more densely developed residential neighborhoods or the Village area, and without compromising important natural resources.

The General Development District is in the northeast section of Jonesport and west of Great Bar across an area that currently includes three land use designations - Low Density Residential/Agricultural Land, Low Density Residential/Home Based Businesses, and Seasonal Uses. The area is to the south of the significant aquifer and north of an inland network of streams (See Map: Natural Resources and Chapter L - Natural Resources). Current land uses and development activities include agricultural, residential, commercial, and home-based businesses. Current lot size and road frontage are quite varied, and any new ordinance would allow that pattern to continue.

Any revisions to the land use ordinance will specify the types and sizes (footprint and height) of commercial uses allowed and will incorporate development standards for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial uses, such as for traffic, noise, lighting, emissions, runoff, buffering, impervious surface, and other standards that will ensure any new or expanded commercial developments protect nearby natural resources, including wildlife habitat, water quality, and open space such as agricultural and recreational uses.

LAND USE POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

| Goals | Strategies | Responsibility | Timeline |
|---|--|------------------------------|---|
| Coordinate Jonesport's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts. | Assign responsibility for implementing and periodically updating the Future Land Use Plan to the Planning Board and Selectboard. | Select Board, Planning Board | Ongoing - At least every five years or with significant changes to the community. |
| | Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies. | Planning Board | Ongoing |
| Support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision. | Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to: a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development; b. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and | Planning Board | Ongoing, requires regular consideration of current issues |

| Goals | Strategies | Responsibility | Timeline |
|---|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | <p>c. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources.</p> <p>d. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed.</p> | | |
| | Track new development in the community by type and location. | Select Board, Planning Board | Ongoing |
| | Develop design standards or land-use zones specifically intended to encourage multi-family housing or subdivisions. | Planning Board | Near term - 1-3 years |
| | Support property owners who want to restore downtown buildings, especially those placed on the National Historic Register. | Select Board | Ongoing |
| Support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas. | Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses. | Select Board | Annual budget, and ongoing |
| | Complete development of a working waterfront at Henry Point. | Select Board | Near term, 1-3 years |
| | Find a solution to the need for public water/wastewater in the village to support larger commercial developments, like restaurants and lodging. | Select Board | Near term, 1-3 years |
| | Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related | Select Board | Ongoing, included in |

| Goals | Strategies | Responsibility | Timeline |
|---|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan. | | annual budget review |
| | Explore possible incentives for new business development. | Select Board, Planning Board | Near term, 1-3 years |
| Maintain/Update efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas. | Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools and support necessary to enforce land use regulations and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451. | Select Board, Planning Board | Ongoing |
| | The Subdivision regulations and maps should be updated as soon as possible to match current State and Federal subdivision regulations. | Planning Board | Immediate |
| Protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development. | The Floodplain regulations and maps should be updated as soon as possible to match current State and Federal floodplain regulations and maps. | Planning Board | Immediate |
| | Resolve known problem areas and potentially problematic septic systems, such as along Feeney Street where septic systems are located in low, flat areas with poor drainage. | Select Board | Near term - 1-3 years |