

# Final Draft

## Chapter 11

### A FUTURE LAND USE PLAN FOR BRIDGTON

#### I. Introduction and Process

The Future Land Use Plan expresses in outline form, the citizens' vision for Land Use in the next decade. The implementation of this vision would be accomplished by the crafting of a growth management plan, including a code of development standards, based on the existing physical form and historic land use of the town. This plan will be in the form of a land use ordinance and the State will recognize it as zoning.

The Future Land Use Plan reflects the influence of many neighborhood meetings, including several in the downtown where residents of the town expressed strong support for several key elements relating to land use and to the creation of a zoning plan to implement these goals in the Downtown, along the highway corridors, and across all the neighborhoods of Bridgton:

- Protect the character of Bridgton while preserving the private property rights of its citizens
  - Minimal restrictions meant only to protect residents from incompatible uses, protect natural resources, and preserve the existing character of the landscape
  - Encouragement and incentives to direct commercial growth to appropriate growth areas
- Expand and nurture economic growth in ways that build on the assets we have
  - Beautiful setting
  - Tourism: Four season destination
  - Critical opportunities from regional traffic on intersecting corridors
  - Charming downtown with much opportunity for growth
  - Hospital and related facilities
  - Skilled work force
  - 3-ring binder: High-speed fiber-optic cable
- Expand and nurture economic growth that contributes to the vitality of the downtown
  - Expanded goods and services
  - Expanded activities, entertainment, recreation

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- Jobs
- Commercial tax base
- Enhanced quality of life
- Expand and nurture economic growth with plans for commercial development in designated growth areas along the inner 302 and 117 corridors
  - Expanded goods and services
  - Jobs
  - Commercial tax base
- Retain and protect the New England village character of the downtown and the outlying villages through thoughtful planning and the use of development and design standards
  - human-scale, walkable, pleasant, dense, accessible
- Protect the Town's many natural resources
  - Water quality
  - Wildlife habitat
  - Woods
  - Views
  - Lakes, streams and swamps
- Protect the character of the Town's rural neighborhoods
  - Walkable, bike-able, quiet country roads
  - Fields and wooded buffers along the roads
- Protect and encourage the Town's working resources
  - Forestry
  - Agriculture

The Future Land Use Map graphically depicts how Bridgton plans to direct and manage potential growth over the ten-year planning period. Recognizing that Bridgton's land use patterns have been formed over many decades, the map strives to describe, differentiate, and unify these patterns to allow for better understanding of how land uses fit together. It is not a zoning map, and the boundaries of identified areas on the map are general. But the map and associated plan will help guide development of the management plan, future zoning, other land use measures, and the capital investments program.

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The designations on the map are intended to provide for the best use of various areas of Town in accordance with the community's growth patterns, goals and policies as expressed throughout this Comprehensive Plan.

Each designation addresses particular situations and is intended to reflect natural constraints and opportunities of the land and desires of the community.

The map and plan embody the concept that the Town include distinct growth, transitional, and rural areas in its land use planning. Designation of these areas has evolved directly from:

- An understanding of Bridgton's water and natural resource systems.
- The historic development of the community;
- A desire to preserve a traditional New England village and countryside pattern, and to keep its character intact;
- The need to extend and use public services in the most efficient manner possible;
- A desire to provide ample opportunity for development of a broad range of housing;
- A desire to create new opportunities for business and commercial growth;
- The input of community comments received at public meetings, forums, and other communications.

The following designations will be considered:

- ❖ Downtown Village Business District
- ❖ Downtown Village Neighborhood
- ❖ Inner Corridor
- ❖ Outer Corridor
- ❖ Outer Village Neighborhood
- ❖ Lakeside Neighborhood
- ❖ Rural Neighborhood

The Future Land Use Plan presents a vision of what Bridgton residents want their town, area by area, to be in the future. What follows is a review of the types of development standards being considered; and then a more detailed description of the designated zones and examples of how zoning could influence development.

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## II. Development Standards for Bridgton

The Comprehensive Plan Committee adopted the motto “A Better Bridgton by Design” to emphasize the value of our town and the importance of community involvement in planning for its future. Conscious of the fact that the citizens of Bridgton have rejected in the past the lack of flexibility involved in traditional zoning we have looked at other ways of ensuring appropriate, yet flexible development standards in the creation of a growth management plan for our community.

To this end the Committee has considered favorably the use of development standards based on the organizing principles of form-based code as well as other types of zoning and land use regulating methods to construct a growth management plan unique to Bridgton. There are many advantages to this kind of code of development standards that:

- Encourages, and is the result of, public participation
- Has the ability to use clear standards to implement the community’s vision
- Has the ability to use these standards to control the character and function of the public realm by encouraging independent, individual development and diligently planned projects that fit into the vision of the community
- Has the ability to use these standards to support historic preservation and complementary development
- Understands that as development progresses, these standards allow the town to evolve and grow in a planned and sustainable manner
- Provides a basis for pedestrian scale development in the downtown, creating an inviting business district and lively street for both the visitor and the resident consumer
- Provides a basis for re-development, infill, and new development that can have a stand-alone presence and be unique yet respect and enhance the character of the street
- Is prescriptive (it states what you want), rather than proscriptive (what you don’t want)
- Emphasizes building form and how buildings fit into and interact with the public realm
- Encourages mixed uses, putting people on the street for business, shopping, dining, entertainment and enjoyment
- Allows for diversity of housing stock in neighborhoods
- Has the ability to transform or preserve existing lots/buildings
- Focuses on architectural form and public spaces, adding to the varied skyline and eclectic mix that is Bridgton

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In summary, rather than being organized strictly around USE, as in most types of traditional (Euclidian) zoning, with design and functionality taking secondary roles; Bridgton's growth management plan will focus on DESIGN and FUNCTIONALITY first while encouraging mixed-use, especially in the downtown area. This management plan will be written as a zoning ordinance in the implementation phase of this Comprehensive Plan. There will continue to be opportunities for the public to have input into this process, in fact it is required that the citizens be involved every step of the way. A fuller description of how a growth management plan for Bridgton could work follows next.

### III. Differentiating and Designating Areas

#### Growth, Transition, and Rural Areas

As we attempt to describe areas of town, we determine what the unifying aspects are for an area and what differentiates one area from another, in terms of the physical lay of the land and the uses we see there by asking questions such as these:

- What makes our rural roads and neighborhoods what they are?
- And what makes the highway approaches to downtown Bridgton different from these country roads?
- How is Bridgton's Main Street different from its downtown residential neighborhoods?
- What unifying characteristics are shared by all our lakeshore areas; not only the shorefront properties but further away from the waterfront in the extended contiguous areas?
- At what point do those characteristics change and become unified with the area that lies beyond?

It is this natural topography and the town's historical development pattern that informs these demarcations and leads to a sense of where new development should be and where things should be left alone as much as possible to best guide future growth.

It is the contrast between areas of largely untouched, natural beauty, downtown, and small, more compact villages, that is the product of the Town's historical development. The designation of growth and rural areas reflects the Town's desire to preserve this traditional development pattern. To accomplish this basic policy, the Town must avoid suburbanization of the community.

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Suburbanization is characterized by a development pattern of single-family homes on relatively large lots, no or limited public utilities, and little public open space. This development pattern not only rigorously separates different types of land uses so that places of living are distant from places of work, education, shopping, service, and social activity, but also makes reliance on the automobile for even convenience items necessary. In contrast, building on the existing village and countryside pattern creates a system of residential neighborhoods in which privacy and large yards are traded against distance, isolation, heavy reliance on the automobile, intrusion into wildlife habitat, and loss of rural character.

The village and countryside pattern of settlement typically imposes less expense on municipal services, is easier to serve, and is less damaging to the Town's natural and scenic environment than a spread-out, automobile-oriented suburban pattern of settlement. It can also produce a high quality of life and comfortable living space. Therefore, the Town may direct development toward designated growth areas and manage development of rural areas with discretion. To the extent that development does occur in rural areas, developers should be required to take measures to lessen the burden to serve it, for example, by building-in fire and other safety measures, and by expecting those residents that choose to build homes in those areas to be prepared to assume greater inconvenience and financial burden for health and safety needs.

These rural, transitional, and growth areas will be refined during the implementation phase of the Land Use Plan and for purposes of Bridgton's Future Land Use Plan, are sub-divided as follows:

### **Rural Neighborhood and Lakeside Neighborhood are the Plan's designated rural areas.**

**Rural Neighborhood** —These areas are not likely to have access to public services like public sewer or water and may include only those community facilities that draw few visitors and are compatible with rural activities and traffic levels. There is a certain quality of life in these rural areas that is cherished by those who live there. The rural designation is intended to provide long term protection of rural resources, important natural features, large blocks of un-fragmented habitat and open space, and scenic lands from incompatible development that could threaten natural resource-based industries, working landscapes, or the character of Bridgton. This designation includes those areas of the community that have multiple natural resource constraints, and/or are especially important for resource-based, scenic, and/or recreational opportunities, and/or are especially important for long-term water quality.

Land uses should be focused on small-scale residential, agricultural, and the resource assets of the area. If developed in a manner sensitive to the objectives of these areas, mineral extraction, essential services, and some low intensity outdoor recreation, public, institutional, or commercial activities may be acceptable.

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**Lakeside Neighborhood** — This designation represents the mostly residential development surrounding Bridgton's lakes. While the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (SZO) supersedes anything the Plan adds, the intention for the Lakeside Neighborhood designation is to lift up the common protected status of these areas, no matter which lake, and to further protect portions of developments and associations that may lie outside the scope of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (SZO) with information and incentives that create understanding and stewardship of these fragile areas. Lakeside Neighborhood areas overlap Inner Corridor, Downtown Village Business District and Downtown Village Neighborhood areas in places, as well as the Shoreland Zone (see map). Each of these will need to be thoughtfully addressed in the zoning plan. In the Downtown, Shoreland Zoning has development layers, GDI and GDII, intended to allow flexibility for downtown development. These layers will need to be revised to allow further flexibility for the town. Lakeside Neighborhood areas on Highland Lake and Long Lake where they overlap with Downtown Village Neighborhood areas and with Inner Corridor areas, as well as the Downtown Village Business District, need to be carefully addressed to allow for vibrant redevelopment that will serve these growth areas of town. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will need to be engaged in this process. In North Bridgton, where Lakeside Neighborhood, Shoreland Zoning, Outer Corridor, and Outer Village Neighborhood areas all come together, the priority of the layers has to be set in the zoning plan, with Shoreland Zoning first, then Outer Village Neighborhood overlapping both Lakeside Neighborhood and Outer Corridor.

### **Outer Corridor and Outer Village Neighborhood are designated as transitional areas.**

**Outer Village Neighborhood** — This designation is intended to provide for a share of anticipated residential development over the planning period, but is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for growth areas nor is it intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in Rural Neighborhood or Lakeside Neighborhood areas. Rather, these Outer Village Neighborhoods can provide a transitional buffer from a denser growth area to rural areas. This designation includes those areas of the community that are largely developed and suitable for medium density development, do not at this time require expansion of municipal facilities, and do not include significant rural production, natural resource, and/or large areas of undivided and undeveloped land. Outer Village Neighborhoods are intended to provide for limited, suburban or rural residential development opportunities and at this time include the more densely settled areas in North Bridgton and South Bridgton.

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**Outer Corridor** — This designation applies to the highway corridors along Routes 302 and 117, outside the growth areas, and as they extend to the Town's borders. These transitional areas share important characteristics that help define Bridgton to the traveler as well as to those of us who live here: a strong sense of the natural beauty of the area is found in the balance of village and countryside development patterns. These areas are the public face of Bridgton's rural charm.

### **Downtown Village Business District, Downtown Village Neighborhood and Inner Corridor are designated as growth areas.**

While all of Bridgton will grow in various ways over the next ten years, the designation of growth areas is intended to ensure that the Town plans for growth by directing it to areas most suitable for development and away from areas where it would be incompatible. Growth, in this context, should be understood not simply as new building structures but also as redevelopment and revitalization projects. Typically, a town's designated growth areas will contain sufficient area to accommodate anticipated growth and development, are physically suitable for development, redevelopment, or revitalization, and can be efficiently served by public facilities. To encourage development in growth areas, it is important that these areas are pleasant places to be. To assure that growth areas are attractive and desirable locations, it is important that open spaces, parks, and overall quality of the landscape is not an afterthought, but is front and center in the design of the areas. Linked open spaces, parks and natural areas, sensitively located and well maintained landscaped buffers, and an abundance of shade trees, especially as part of the streetscape, are a critical part of ensuring that different land uses are good neighbors, that privacy is a key factor in design, and that growth areas are desirable places to live and work. Directed growth areas in Bridgton include the Downtown Village Business District, Downtown Village Neighborhood and the Inner Corridor areas.

**Downtown Village Business District** — These mature, developed areas have traditionally accommodated a higher density of Bridgton's population, a greater mix of businesses and institutions, and an overall higher intensity of use than occurs in the rest of the Town. Furthermore, presently much of the Town's commercial and a large part of its social activity take place in the Downtown Village Business District. This designation is intended to encourage the preservation, revitalization, and some expansion of development in the Downtown Village Business District and to protect it from encroachment from incompatible uses. The Downtown Village Business District should be served by public sewer and water and is host to a number of community and municipal facilities.

**Downtown Village Neighborhood** — These are the primarily residential areas surrounding Bridgton's Main Street and extending from Highland Lake to Long Lake. This designation is intended to allow for infill development with similar types of uses at comparable densities, which are generally higher than what occurs in other parts of the community. Where necessary, public sewer and water should be extended.



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Taken together, the primary objective of the Downtown Village Business District and the Downtown Village Neighborhood designations is to reinforce the concept of Bridgton's downtown village lifestyle, as a special and attractive aspect of small-town life. To accomplish this, the Town could adopt an approach to dealing with existing buildings that encourages their full utilization by allowing flexibility in their use. Permitted uses may include higher density residential, comparable to the intensity and design of existing development in the surrounding village, community facilities, and appropriately scaled retail, office, service, and other nonresidential uses suitable for a central business area and mixed use village. Existing nonresidential uses that are not necessarily village-oriented may continue to be allowed, but may only undertake limited expansion as part of overall renovation and maintenance necessary to allow for continued economic operation of the properties. Development proposals should undergo design review to ensure compliance with these standards and maintenance of a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment.

The Downtown Village Business District together with its residential areas should strive to serve as the center of Bridgton's social and cultural life. A safe, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian environment shall be a key focus of amended standards of development, which will be part of required design review of new development. These downtown growth areas overlap Lakeside Neighborhood areas along Highland Lake, where the Town beach, residences, and businesses are located right on the water, and in the residential area of Plummer's Landing on Long Lake. **Shoreland Zoning and General Development areas I and II (GDI and GDII) in the Downtown Business District need to be reviewed for best possible flexibility in these areas.**

**Inner Corridor**— These are the areas of highway corridor coming in and out of town and at risk for further decay, sprawl and unattractiveness. As an extension of the density and vibrancy of the Downtown Village Business District, carefully planned growth in these areas can result in a charming, eclectic, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, economic driver for Bridgton. A unifying code of development standards and strong incentives for existing and new business to participate could be part of the Plan's policies, the intentions for which are summarized next.

### V. Land Use Zone Designations and Policies

The policies outlined here, area by area, are meant to be examples of how Bridgton's growth management plan may be developed. The intent is to identify and describe the areas of Bridgton as they are unified or differentiated with and from each other, and then to make sample policy statements that might lend themselves to the desired growth and enhancement, or keeping as-is of these areas. These suggested policies come directly from the Committee's meetings and public sessions, and as applied to each area, should show clearly the distinctions of each.

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## Downtown Village Business District

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The Downtown Village Business District represents Bridgton's traditional downtown along its Main Street and includes several off-Main Street areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map. In this area are located at this time; Town Government, including Police and Fire Departments, District Court, public services such as Library and Community Center, parks, town beach, and retail, professional, and service businesses, along with single family homes and apartments. The Downtown Village Business District overlaps Shoreland Zoning areas along Highland Lake, where the Town beach, residences, and businesses are located right on the water, and in heart of the downtown along Corn Shop Brook and Stevens Brook. **Shoreland Zoning and General Development areas I and II (GDI and GDII) need to be reviewed for best possible flexibility in these areas.** A main focus of this entire Plan and the primary goal of the Downtown Village Business District is to achieve a lively, highly functional downtown supporting an intentional mix of retail, office/institutional, and residential uses at relatively high densities. This is where new vitality finds a home amid downtown Bridgton's historic and eclectic mix of architecture and existing uses. This is where carefully planned growth puts people on the street participating in an 18-hour economy.

### Downtown Village Business District Policies

1. The Plan supports an intentionally dense and integrated mix of uses in an effort to encourage an active, lively, 18-hour downtown environment.
  - a. Recruit targeted retail, office, healthcare, entertainment, and other commercial uses
  - b. Identify opportunities to encourage second story residential uses and other compatible uses
  - c. Streetscape, sidewalk, and signage enhancements
  - d. Create connectivity by linking sidewalks to parking, to services and facilities, to the beach
  - e. Focus on linking recreational opportunities
  - f. Focus on new business development, and supporting new life for old buildings for ground floor commerce and upper floor apartments
2. The vitality and function of the downtown area should be protected from decline through a variety of practices including but not limited to:
  - a. A new code of development standards
  - b. Development of incentives to encourage well-designed development
  - c. Streetscape, sidewalk, and signage improvements
  - d. Design protection and preservation of distinct architectural resources
  - e. Strong support for preserving, rehabbing and repurposing old buildings

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3. While currently located at sites in the Downtown Village Business District, Fire and Police Departments, Municipal Complex, and District Court may, in the next planning phase, need to be relocated to sites that will better accommodate their growth. Stevens Brook Elementary School, Bridgton Community Center and Bridgton Public Library provide community-serving anchors in the downtown and should be highlighted, visually connected, and protected in the Downtown Village Business District.

- a. Support expansion of water and sewer in this district.
- b. Examine opportunities to encourage, incentivize, or require design improvement to non-conforming structures, sites, and parking lots.
- c. Supports connectivity of public resources throughout the District through the development and enhancement of sidewalks and signage.
- d. Encourage opportunities for public events and gatherings in high quality public spaces.

### **Downtown Village Neighborhood**

The Downtown Village Neighborhood areas represent Bridgton's residential village neighborhoods, located downtown off Main Street as shown on the Future Land Use map. The goal is to protect and enhance the character and function of these neighborhoods, keeping their small-town appeal while offering close access to the activity of Main Street and the Inner Corridor commercial areas.

#### **Downtown Village Neighborhood Policies**

1. Encourage neighborhood safety and connectivity through sidewalks and trails
2. Support expansion of water and sewer throughout the Downtown Village Neighborhood areas, allowing for better use of small lots and increasing property values
3. Encourage well-designed residential infill development when opportunities present
4. Allow home business in primary residence or attached, with care taken to ensure compatibility with neighborhood values for noise, traffic and visual appeal.
5. Define and protect special and historic neighborhood features and identities

### **Inner Corridor**

The Inner Corridor areas are the other main focus of concern and desire for careful planning. From Bridgton's main intersection at Pondicherry Square, Route 302 runs east to Portland and the coast and west to Fryeburg on its way to North Conway and beyond, becoming Bridgton's Main Street on its way. Route 117, runs from the intersection to Harrison and points north and south to Denmark and beyond.

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While there is ongoing concern for the potential, seen in so many other places, of these corridors becoming developed in ways that detract from our vision of Bridgton, there is also real opportunity, with careful planning, for commercial growth that enhances these approaches to the downtown, inviting people to stop and experience all we have to offer, while adding to the economic vigor of the Town. The Inner Corridor Development Areas represent the stretches of highway in all directions as they radiate from the Downtown Village areas and abut the Outer Corridor transitional areas as they continue to the town line, as shown on the Future Land Use map.

### Inner Corridor Policies

1. Support an intentional mix of uses in order to encourage development that offers residential, commercial, recreational, and employment uses in close or reasonable proximity to one another.
2. Support the extension of water and sewer to areas designated as Inner Corridor Development Areas. Furthermore, lines should be sized for additional expansion for further private development of these services.
3. Inner corridor roadways are intended to have upgraded infrastructure such as but not limited to sidewalks and shade trees.
4. New *residential* development in the inner corridor area is intended to be located at the backs of lots away from the highway and accessed by side streets and could incorporate design characteristics including but not limited to:
  - a. Mix of residential housing types patterned after the eclectic diversity and varied skyline found in the town's residential village areas.
  - b. Residential development in the inner corridor is intended to be more dense than in the rural residential areas of the town. Townhouses, condominiums and apartment buildings could be directed here.
  - c. Well-designed passive and active green space
  - d. Pedestrian connectivity with sidewalks and trails
  - e. The Town may examine opportunities to encourage, incentivize or require design improvements to non-conforming structures, sites, and parking lots.
5. New *commercial* development in the inner corridor area is intended to be located to take best advantage of the corridor frontage and could incorporate design characteristics including but not limited to:
  - a. Mix of commercial building types and eclectic design diversity patterned after the varied skyline found in Bridgton's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods
  - b. High to medium density with shared entrance, parking and connected green space
  - c. Well-designed passive and active green space

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- d. Pedestrian connectivity with sidewalks and trails
- e. The Town should examine opportunities to encourage, incentivize or require design improvements to non-conforming structures, sites, and parking lots.

### **Lakeside Neighborhood**

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The Lakeside Neighborhood includes the mostly residential areas in the Shoreland Zone surrounding each of Bridgton's lakes. Each lake and the properties there are distinct in certain ways, but the Lakeside Neighborhood designation will highlight their shared nature. The Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance lays out development standards for the protection of the water bodies we all value so highly. Lakeside Neighborhood areas include development along the lakes beyond Shoreland Zoning, including entire associations and their roads, as they abut Rural, Village, and Inner Corridor areas.

Lakeside Neighborhood areas overlap downtown growth areas along Highland Lake, where the Town beach, residences, and businesses are located right on the water, and in the residential area around Plummer's Landing on Long Lake. There are businesses located in Lakeside Neighborhood areas—summer camps and campgrounds among them, and the continued commercial use of these properties should be supported. **The Plan recommends that Shoreland Zoning be reviewed to allow for flexibility in supporting these and other compatible commercial uses.**

#### Lakeside Neighborhood Policies

1. Support strict compliance with Bridgton's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance
2. Inform and encourage voluntary attendance to BMPs (Best Management Practices) for critical watersheds

### **Outer Corridor**

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The Outer Corridor characterizes the highway approaches into Bridgton from its borders with its neighboring towns and abutting the Inner Corridor Development Areas. These sections of Route 302 and Route 117 lend residents, visitors, and passers-through alike, an appealing vision of rock outcroppings, woods, and swamps, with a smattering of residences, businesses and side roads along the way.

#### Outer Corridor Policies

1. Support a wide range of uses, at medium and low densities.
2. Support a balance of commercial development with open space.
3. Support the appeal of these transitional areas, encouraging the use of vegetated buffers along the corridor frontage, building setbacks commensurate with building scale, architectural design that reflects the town's historical form, and side road access where applicable, to limit curb cuts.

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## Outer Village Neighborhood

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The Outer Village Neighborhood represent Bridgton's small villages; North Bridgton and South Bridgton, located along and off the highway corridors. These neighborhoods each have their own distinct history and identity. The goal is to protect their rural appeal and differentiate them from the activity of downtown and the business corridors.

### Outer Village Neighborhood Policies

1. Encourage neighborhood safety and connectivity through sidewalks and trails
2. Define and protect special and historic neighborhood features and identities
3. Support small, compatible, community-serving businesses

## **Rural Neighborhood**

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Bridgton is a mostly rural community, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, its country roads dotted with both old and new residential uses, spread out in all directions from the downtown and the state highways that crisscross it. These areas are the “countryside” of the village and countryside pattern and the citizens want to preserve and protect the rural feel and function, as well as the natural beauty of these areas. The Rural Neighborhood is intended to support low-density residential development and selected non-residential and agricultural uses in a relaxed regulatory climate.

### Rural Neighborhood Policies

1. Residential densities could be supported at one unit per acre parcel or greater. However, in an effort to consider steps toward a more environmentally sustainable community, the Town may consider ordinance amendments designed to encourage cluster development—the practice of allowing smaller lot sizes clustered more closely together, while achieving the balance of the development in preserved open space.
2. Small scale, rural-serving non-residential commercial uses may be directed to locate at intersections with arterial roads or major crossroads. Agribusiness and other rural employment options could be encouraged to locate at major crossroads as well. Non-residential site development should follow conservation design techniques, focusing on preservation of natural features, a reduced footprint, and limits on impervious surfaces.

## **Conservation Planning Areas** (see Constraints to Development map)

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Designated Conservation Planning areas protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and high value open spaces from residential, industrial and commercial encroachment.

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Shoreland Zoning affords protection of our water bodies. Additionally, and throughout the Town, sensitive natural resources including floodplains, parks, historical buildings and sites, woodlands and prime wildlife habitat, much-loved views and vistas, prime agricultural lands, and natural recreational areas could be preserved to ensure the continuation of that which is our greatest asset as a Town. A designated growth area may sometimes have Conservation Planning areas located inside its boundaries, including some land areas that are physically unsuitable for development or redevelopment, such as a stream, small flood prone area, small natural hazard area, small pond, or small critical natural resource, as long as they are of a scale and a level of protection that does not hinder the effectiveness of the growth area. Protection of these natural resources contributes to the community's overall health and sustainability and enables it to invite robust economic development without fear of losing what it values most.

### Conservation Planning Policies

1. In Conservation Planning areas, occurring throughout the town, residential development could, for example, be supported at very low densities on private well and septic. Standards should encourage low-impact construction practices.
2. As a general policy, commercial development should be limited in these areas. Where development is appropriate, low impact engineering and architectural design practices should be incorporated into all projects.

## **VI. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Comprehensive Plan is only as good as the tools developed for its implementation. This Plan takes seriously the development of such tools. The best formula for the successful implementation of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan is one that prioritizes the development of a new regulatory structure, including a new zoning ordinance and development standards, as introduced in the Future Land Use Plan. This Comprehensive Plan makes no stronger recommendation.