

## **Land Use Patterns**

The evaluation of Poland's patterns of land use is important to the understanding of how community land use policies can be applied to achieve a beneficial balance of economic opportunities, while minimizing the negative impacts on existing residences, businesses and natural resources. Poland is a Town without a centralized village or definable downtown area. Village district areas have been designated in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and related Zoning Ordinance to enhance mixed use development patterns that are characteristic of New England Village Centers, however because of the pattern of development in the area, the Town of Poland has not traditionally had a village focus.

The cities of Auburn/Lewiston, Portland, and Boston, have had a profound influence on the development of Poland's land use patterns. Infrastructure development commonly follows land use development patterns, and it is instructive that in the Town of Poland, the development of major infrastructure features has followed development that has occurred in close proximity to neighboring towns, or in conjunction with large developments such as the Poland Spring Hotel complex, subdivisions, or mobile home parks.

There are three primary patterns of development in Poland that have evolved, primarily as a result of the transportation networks in the community: single-family residential uses; village retail/commercial uses; and larger commercial/industrial uses... Because existing land uses on Poland have developed in somewhat of a random fashion, there are no clearly definable boundaries in much of the community between these three development patterns. Following is a discussion of how these development patterns have and will affect the development of Poland.

### **Single-Family Residential:**

Poland is primarily a residential community, with predominately single-family homes on large lots. Poland is known as a historical bedroom community for the nearby Lewiston/Auburn area, but has more recently seen an influx of residents who work in the Portland market. The community is literally crossed with numerous local roads, which provide access to single lots and subdivisions

**Village Retail/Commercial Development:**

The pattern of the transportation infrastructure supports the observation that there is no clearly defined village center to the Town. Poland is bisected by three major State highways. Route 26, which runs between Bethel and Portland, Route 11 which runs between Raymond and Mechanic Falls, and Route 122, which runs between Poland and Auburn. Village areas are typically indicated by a cluster of roadways connected with each other to form a grid pattern. However, many of the villages and emerging commercial areas along these routes tend to have very narrow bands of land uses, which create a visual perception of a commercial strip. Future development and appeal in the village districts will likely be enhanced by concentrating development in nodes, minimizing curb cuts and adding depth to the villages.

**Commercial/Industrial Development:**

The history of large-scale commercial development in Poland is an interesting story. Starting with the perceived recuperative powers of the water, the areas around the initial Poland spring began to develop as a destination resort. During the late 1800s the Poland Spring Resort became increasingly popular amongst the wealthy inhabitants of cities along the East Coast. They would travel to Maine by steamboat and spend their entire summer in this Victorian oasis. At some point around the mid 1800s somebody believed that you could bottle and sell water, and an industry was born. Now Poland Spring Water Company is a giant in the industry. Poland Spring Water Company has the largest market share in the northeast and the bottling plant is the largest taxpayer and employer in the community.

The area along Route 122 (in the same general area as the Poland Spring plant) has the largest concentration of large commercial uses. In addition to the bottling plant, there is a commercial nursery operation and a quarry operation. Also, the Poland Spring Inn abuts the bottling plant property. Based upon traffic patterns and existing business clusters, it is conceivable that future large-scale commercial activities will occur on properties near the juncture of Route 122 and 26. However, because of the importance of the bottling plant and related groundwater resources, great care must be taken to ensure that new uses are compatible with and do not create a threat to this important resource.

More intensive industrial uses will most likely occur along the existing railroad line, adjacent to the City of Auburn. This area of Auburn has evolved into a major transportation and logistics center for the State of Maine. Accordingly, Auburn is expanding their industrial park, adjacent to Poland's borders to address the enormous growth in this marketplace. The General Purpose districts allow this type larger scale industrial development near roadways that have good access to primary travel routes, and near the railroad lines, which are the keys to the future development plans in Auburn.

**Appropriateness of Zoning Districts:**

As part of this effort, CDC conducted a review of the existing zoning districts related to their applicability to support future economic development efforts. This analysis consisted of a thorough review the Town's Comprehensive Land Use Code and related map. The analysis was further validated through field surveys.

The Town of Poland currently has designated three primary zoning districts which support most types of non-residential development activity occurring within the community: General Purpose District; Village District; and the Historical District. In addition, the Town has established two Aquifer Protection Overlay Districts, which establish standards to ensure the protection of the important resources.

**General Purpose Districts:**

The Town's General Purpose Districts will support most potential economic development functions and the district boundaries are appropriately situated adjacent to major roadways and nearby major development nodes. However, to acknowledge the appropriate areas where new commercial and industrial development in the community is likely to occur, we are making the following recommendations for rezoning (see Figure 1):

- Expand the General Purpose District to encompass the area near the intersection of Routes 26 and 122.
- Expand the General Purpose District adjacent to the rail lines, north of Hackett Mills Road.

**Village Districts:**

The designated Village Districts in Poland typically follow historical land use settlement and transportation patterns. Accordingly, the Village Districts in the community tend to be located either along major roadways in the community, or near the junctions of roadways. Generally, these Village Districts acknowledge and support more concentrated development activities within the Town. However, because the community does not have public water and sewer in most of these areas, future concentrated development is limited by lot size standards.

As was described above, Poland does not have one clearly delineated village or downtown center. However, the designated Village District along Route 26, north of Range Ponds, is developing as a distinctive commercial corridor. Based upon review of the Town's parcel maps in this area, this corridor is predominated by numerous small and shallow lots. If left unchecked, this area of the Town may evolve into a "strip commercial corridor", with all the resultant impacts (numerous incompatible uses, multiple driveways, traffic hazards, inconsistent signage, etc.).

In light of these factors, we recommend the establishment a new district (Downtown Village District), where the current Village District on north Route 26 currently is shown (see Figure 1). If appropriate standards are established, this area of the community could establish itself as a new downtown. This process could be facilitated through the development of a downtown plan and downtown tax increment financing district.

**Historical District:**

The Historical District generally encompasses the area surrounding the Poland Spring Inn and Golf Course, the first bottling plant and spring house and the area known as Preservation Park. We believe the zoning is appropriate for potential future uses on these properties and do not recommend any zoning district changes.

## **Tax Base**

A key element in evaluating the economic development opportunities and constraints of a community is the assessment of the make-up of its tax base. Recent tax studies in Maine and other areas have demonstrated that residential development typically does not pay for itself. The public costs of supporting residential development (schools, roads, waste disposal, etc.), typically cannot be supported by the residential tax base alone without continual tax increases. According to the American Planning Association, on the average, for each \$1.00 received in taxes from residential uses, the resultant cost is between \$1.50 and \$1.75. On the other side of the ledger, commercial and industrial uses typically require less community support. For every \$1.00 received, the average community cost is between \$.25 and \$.50. Thus, in order to stabilize tax rates, communities seek an appropriate balance between residential and commercial/industrial uses. While the appropriate balance varies widely between communities, most seek to have at least 30% of their valuation in commercial/industrial uses.

As illustrated in Table 1, over the past ten years the total property valuation in Poland has more than doubled, from \$205 million to over \$412 million. Today, residential property accounts for just over \$300 million, while business property accounts for nearly \$112 million. These valuations result in a current ratio of 73% residential and 27% business.

The residential portion of the property valuation increased by 65% and the number of dwelling units increased during this time by 27% (565 new homes) over the past ten years. The business real estate valuation during this same time increased six fold, and the business “personal” property valuation increased twelve fold. This represents a dramatic increase in the business tax base of the town, which, in 1995, was only 5% of the total valuation. The contribution to the total valuation of business real estate increased from 1.1% to 3.3% a significantly smaller amount, indicating that the equipment businesses utilize contributes more significantly to the tax base than the value of the property in which the business is located.

While it would appear that Poland is approaching a stabilizing ratio of residential and business valuation, there are several cautions to note. As depicted in Table 1, 24% (\$98 million) of the total Town valuation is on business personal property, which is primarily associated with bottling equipment at the Poland Spring Plant. While certainly a good source of new tax revenue for the community, the personal property taxes are being targeted by the State to be phased out over time. While it is unclear what the resulting impact of the proposals will be, it is clearly a potential threat to future tax stabilization efforts. This is also exacerbated, as Poland Springs Water Company is clearly the largest taxpayer in the community, representing over 20% of the total valuation.

## *Town of Poland*

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Designated Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts have the ability to shelter future property valuations, both real and personal from the State and county rolls, while preserving them on a local level. The Town of Poland has approved and designated two TIF districts to facilitate the investment of nearly \$75 million in real estate improvements and capital equipment by Poland Spring Water Company. As a result of these TIF's, Poland is in the process of conducting nearly \$5 million dollars in public improvements in the community that would not have been otherwise realized without the TIFs in place.

**Table 1**  
**Poland's Tax Base**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Valuation</b>	<b>Housing Valuation</b>	<b>Business Real Estate Valuation</b>	<b>Personal Valuation</b>	<b>Business Real Estate &amp; Personal Valuation</b>	<b>Business Real Estate % of Total</b>	<b>Business Real &amp; Personal % of Total</b>
1995	205,014,080	194,785,597	2,196,503	8,031,980	10,228,483	1.07%	4.99%
1996	207,716,910	194,417,075	2,082,425	11,217,410	13,299,835	1.00%	6.40%
1997	221,206,920	199,887,167	3,034,133	18,285,620	21,319,753	1.37%	9.64%
1998	230,675,720	200,033,648	3,998,352	26,643,720	30,642,072	1.73%	13.28%
1999	248,121,720	204,872,476	5,496,424	37,752,820	43,249,244	2.22%	17.43%
2000	283,917,120	212,437,044	7,278,556	64,201,520	71,480,076	2.56%	25.18%
2001	306,047,700	217,116,729	10,095,371	78,835,600	88,930,971	3.30%	29.06%
2002	378,842,300	281,306,712	12,495,988	85,039,600	97,535,588	3.30%	25.75%
2003	389,165,800	289,792,432	13,172,068	86,201,300	99,373,368	3.38%	25.53%
2004	402,278,100	298,759,720	13,341,680	90,176,700	103,518,380	3.32%	25.73%
2005	411,904,925	300,374,278	13,545,147	97,985,500	111,530,647	3.29%	27.08%
<b>% Incr</b>	<b>200.92%</b>	<b>154.21%</b>	<b>616.67%</b>	<b>1219.94%</b>	<b>1090.39%</b>		

The Milage rate for the Town of Poland fluctuated widely in the late 80's and early 90's, but has remained relatively stable for the past ten years. The drop in the mil rate in 1990 corresponded with the opening of the Maine Bottling Company (but we may want to gather more information regarding why the rate went right back up, etc). In 2003, mil rates began to climb again; this climb corresponded with the building of the new Poland Regional High School.

**Table 2**  
**Poland's Milage Rates**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Rate</b>
1986	17.25	1996	16.95
1987	11.9	1997	16.5
1988	12.95	1998	16.5
1989	14.2	1999	16.5
1990	16.95	2000	16.9
1991	8.3	2001	17
1992	19.68	2002	16.5
1993	20.35	2003	19
1994	22.35	2004	18.75
1995	16.9	2005	19

## **Infrastructure**

Assessing the current and future utility infrastructure assets in a community is an important element to developing a realistic economic development strategy. Economic growth is highly dependent upon supporting infrastructure. The location of existing and proposed public water supplies, waste water disposal, electrical power, highways and roads, and rail lines are all very important to growing a local economy. Following is a discussion of these elements in the community, while Figure 1 graphically illustrates their location.

### **Public Water & Sewer**

Currently, Mechanic Falls provides water to the Poland Regional High School located on Route 26 (see Figure 1). This 12” cast iron line crosses into the Town of Poland at the intersection of Route 26 and Route 11, running over 2000 feet with a flow rate of 1000 gal/minute. Based upon discussions with staff of the Mechanic Falls Water District, there is the possibility of extending this 12” line another 2000 feet to accommodate the needs for new retail development.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the Auburn Water District currently provides water service on a portion of the West Hardscrabble Road in Auburn. In 2004, the 12” (1000 gal/minute) water main was extended a distance of 3,500’ from the existing water main located at 224 West Hardscrabble Road in Auburn to a point at the southerly entrance to Brookdale Village on Hardscrabble Road in the Town of Poland.

The Town and the Auburn Water District of Poland have had discussions regarding the possibility of extending a 12” (1000 gal/minute) water main over one of two routes being considered to serve the Poland Spring Bottling Plant (see Figure 1). Route One would extend the current 12” main along the Lewiston Junction Road in Auburn continuing into the Town of Poland to the intersection with the Empire Road, following the Empire Road to where it meets Route 122, then continuing to the Poland Spring Bottling Plant. Route Two, would begin 4200’ from the Poland line in Auburn on the Hotel Road to the intersection of Route 122. It continues along Route 122, through the town of New Gloucester on Ricker Road then into the Town of Poland on Spring Water Road to the Poland Spring Bottling Plant.

Public sewer service, from the Lewiston Auburn Pollution Control Authority, is provided by a 12” main and extends along the Lewiston Junction Road from the Poland-Auburn town line to the intersection of Empire Road (see Figure 1). The public sewer extends along the Empire Road to a point near the intersection of Route 122 and Empire Road where it continues on to provide service

to the Poland Spring Bottling Plant and three other customers along the sewer route. This sewer main has a 200,000 Gallon/Day (GPD) capacity currently running at 50% capacity.

The remaining communities that border the Town of Poland – Minot, Oxford, Otisfield, Casco, Raymond, and New Gloucester – either do not have public water and sewer services or do not have services that extend into the Town of Poland at this time.

### **Electricity**

As illustrated in Figure 1, Central Maine Power (CMP) has numerous three phase power assets that are critical to future economic growth. There are three large areas each serviced through a different substation that can provide current and future three phase power service. These areas are as follows:

**Southeast Poland** – Beginning on the easterly point, the service follows Route 122 where it borders the town of New Gloucester to a point where it intersects Route 26. The southerly portion of Route 26 also has three phase power from Ricker Road easterly from Upper Range Pond then due south on Route 26 until it crosses Quarry Road and into New Gloucester. Also service is available on the Empire Road from the intersection of Route 122 and Empire Road to the intersection of Lewiston Junction Road where it continues along the Lewiston Junction Road to the City of Auburn line. There are smaller branches that are more visible on Figure 1.

**North Poland** – Beginning on the Minot town line, the service follows Route 11 until it crosses the Mechanic Falls town line; next at the northerly beginning of Maple Lane south through the intersection of Elm Street and continuing until it crosses Route 26; continue along Poland Corner Road turning left onto Summit Spring Road for roughly 2200' +/- . This service also has a section on Route 26 from Aggregate Road continuing north along Route 26 approximately a mile to a point south of Trip Lake Road.

**Northwest Poland** – This service begins at the intersection of Route 26 and Route 11 and follows Route 26 in a southeasterly direction to a point north of Trip Lake Road; making a cross country path, it connects and follows Trip Lake Road south to Tripp Pond and the intersection of Route 11; continuing south along Route 11 to the intersection of White Oak Hill Road continuing west through the intersection of Megquier Hill Road and North Raymond Road where the road becomes Johnson Hill Road; continue south along Johnson Hill Road until the intersection of Heath Road until the Town of Casco.

## **Transportation**

### **Rail:**

The existence of a rail line bisecting the community (see Figure 1), creates some significant economic development advantages and creates several opportunities to develop strategic recommendations. The communities of Poland and Auburn possess one of New England's most important rail networks in the northeast, with service offered through Emons Transportation Group/St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, Canadian National, and Guilford Industries. Here are facts about this important infrastructural asset.

- Emons Transportation, part of Genesee & Wyoming, operates New England's only double-stack intermodal facility in Auburn, allowing transfer of containers between trains and trucks. Emons doubled the size of its intermodal facility from 16 to 35 acres recently.
- St. Lawrence & Atlantic, which was named Short Line of the Year in 1998 by *Railway Age* magazine, offers service as far west as Chicago, and to Europe through Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Auburn's Safe Handling, named one of *Inc.* magazines fastest growing private companies, and is Maine's largest trans-shipment facility, conveniently and professionally handling chemicals and food-grade products.
- The US Department of Transportation has designated a high-speed rail corridor from Portland to Auburn, establishing the first steps for eventual passenger service to the region.

### **Highway:**

Poland is easily accessible and is considered one of the State's central commercial hubs. In fact, nearly half of the state's population is located within a 30-mile radius of Poland. The turnpike access is located within five miles of the center of Poland in Auburn and about ten miles in Gray. With direct access to I-495 and I-95, Poland is part of a network that extends from Maine to Florida.

**Air:**

The Auburn/Lewiston Municipal Airport, located adjacent to Poland's east boundary, is a fixed-based operator facility with two runways: one 2,750 feet, the other 5,000 feet. Numerous companies use charter service for business trips as a convenient, often more affordable mode of transportation. In addition, Portland International Jetport is less than 30 minutes from Poland and offers daily flights to and from Boston, New York, Washington, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

**Communications:**

Maine has one of the nations most advanced and reliable telecommunication networks. Maine's telecommunications system is redundant and reliable, with state-wide SONET ring deployment. Maine was first to have a state-wide ATM fiber optic based network, and is one of the first states with a 100% digitally switched network. All of Maine schools and libraries have internet access. Maine is wired for voice, data, and video services to support e-commerce, call centers and other commercial operations.

Maine has among the most advanced voice, data, and video transmission services available. Among them is ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), offering inexpensive fully digital access to worldwide telecommunications through standard copper telephone lines. Other advanced services include frame relay service, Infopath Packet Switching Service, Superpath 1.544 MBPS service, Flexpath Digital PBX, and digital Centrex service.

## **Natural Resources**

The natural resources around the community play a significant role in Poland's development history and future. These resources are both a significant economic asset to the community as well as a constraint to some future activities. Clearly, Poland's water resources, both ground and surface, provide much of the basis for its historical development. Poland is underlined by a significant aquifer system, which was created by a retreating glacier over 10,000 years ago. That same geologic event created numerous lakes, ponds, wetlands and substantial sand and gravel deposits. Each of these glacial remnants has directly influenced the growth of Poland.

Beginning with a single spring, a new industry and the foundation of Poland's economy was born. When first bottled by the Ricker family back in 1845, Poland Spring® Natural Spring Water was drawn from a single source. Over the years, Poland Spring Natural Spring Water was regarded for its healing powers, has grown to be one of the top bottled water brands in the U.S., and is enjoyed by millions of people throughout the Northeast. Currently, Poland Springs Water Company is the largest single tax payer and employer in the community and employs over 400 people.

Many of the lakes and ponds located within Poland's boundaries have played a large role in the development of the community. The shores of these water bodies are dotted with seasonal and year-round residences, campgrounds, summer youth camps, and a State Park.

The Town also contains several large rock, sand and gravel deposits, one of which holds Pike Industries, who also operates a commercial asphalt plant.

On the constraint side of the equation, the presence and importance of the aquifer system has necessitated the Town in enacting aquifer protection standards and restrictive development zones to protect this valuable resource. As a mechanism to protect its important ground water resources, the Town has designated two Aquifer Protection Overlay Districts in their Comprehensive Land Use Code. In addition, the presence of numerous large wetland areas, particularly in north Poland, creates a natural constraint to development activity.