

**2005 Amendments to the  
Town of Thomaston  
Comprehensive Plan dated 1991**

**Thomaston, Maine**

Accepted at  
Town Meeting, June 15, 2005

Including Amendments  
Approved at the Referendum Vote  
May 16, 2006

Proposals for February 2009 Town Meeting

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CHAPTERS

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## **APPENDICES**

### **A. Abbreviations and Acronyms**

### **B. Maps**

Known Historic Archaeological Sites and National Register Property  
Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas  
Transportation Road Network Traffic Volume and Safety  
Topography  
Land Cover  
Soil Potential for Development  
Watersheds and Wetlands  
Critical Resources  
Shellfish Growing Area U St. George River: 1995, 1998, 2000, 2005  
Thomaston Land Use  
Future Land Use

### **C. List of Implementation Strategies**

### **D. Public Involvement**

Record of Public Input  
Community Survey  
Community Survey for Re-Use of Prison Property  
Recreation Questionnaire

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Thomaston has an approved Comprehensive Plan that was adopted by voters in December of 1991. The 1991 Plan provided direction for the development of the Thomaston Land Use and Development Ordinance, which was adopted in March of 1995 and which has been amended several times in response to identified deficiencies or new mandates. This 2005 Plan builds upon the 1991 Plan, recognizing significant achievements since 1991, and addressing new and emerging challenges.

This 2005 Plan has been several years in the making. What began as an effort to update an existing plan for a town which had seen few changes became an effort to keep up with rapidly changing circumstances. The major change during the drafting of this Plan was the relocation of the Maine State Prison to Warren and the closure of the Thomaston prison. This event and subsequent efforts to have the vacated prison demolished, to have the town acquire title to the property, and to consider possible future uses of the prison property occupied much of the Comprehensive Plan Committee's time for more than a year. Other significant changes that have occurred during the drafting of this Plan have been the decision of Dragon Products to undertake a major upgrade of the plant, the designation of a Pine Tree Zone, the downtown revitalization of neighboring Rockland, the reactivation of the railroad, and new transportation initiatives along the Route One corridor.

Organization: This Plan is organized by subject area. Each chapter contains:

- an inventory and analysis of the existing resources, facilities, etc associated with that topic area;
- reflections on accomplishments since the 1991 Plan toward achieving community goals,
- a summary of the current situation, and
- a section on goals, policies and implementation strategies for the future.

The reader will note that some subjects are closely related and that certain themes run throughout the Plan. In an effort to minimize duplication, the Plan frequently refers the reader to other chapters for a fuller discussion of certain issues. For example, US Route One is discussed in both the Transportation chapter and the chapter on Regional Coordination.

Ranking of Implementation Strategies: As noted above, each chapter lists goals, policies and implementation strategies. The implementation strategies are summarized in table form in Appendix C. Each implementation strategy is rated critical, very important, important or desirable. The list of implementation strategies is lengthy, and the Committee recognizes that not all of these



strategies can be implemented in the near term. However, we believe that each is important and each should be noted. In some instances, opportunities may arise to undertake certain desirable, but low priority tasks. In other instances, changes in circumstances may elevate the importance of a task. Additionally, certain strategies may dovetail with the work of private or non-profit entities with an interest in Thomaston's future.

With these limitations in mind, the Plan includes a recommended timeframe for each strategy: "ongoing" means that the task or strategy is existing practice or that work has begun on the task; "immediate" means the task should be initiated within one year; "near-term" means the task should be initiated within three years; and "long term" refers to tasks that are more than four years in the future. For the most part, the implementation strategies do not require capital expenditures. Those that do are included in the capital investment plan.

Public Involvement: The Committee has welcomed public participation in the development of this plan through open meetings, public hearings, informational mailings, surveys, discussions with other organizations and committees, updates in the town newsletter and by posting the initial draft on the town's web page. A summary of public involvement activities is found in Appendix D.

It is the Comprehensive Plan Committee's hope that this Plan serves to support and reinforce those aspects of Thomaston that people most value and want to retain while positioning the Town to take advantage of new opportunities.

Acknowledgements: The Committee wishes to acknowledge the assistance of: Peter Surek, Thomaston Code Enforcement Officer; David Martucci, Thomaston Assessor's Agent; Chris Damon, former Planning Board member and former Vice Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee; Eric Galant of the Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission; and Pat Jennings, land use planner who resides in Whitefield.

Respectfully submitted,  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Plan takes a comprehensive look at the town – its population, economy, natural resources, and land use patterns and provides a framework for future growth while preserving Thomaston’s unique heritage.

The Plan is organized by subject area. Each chapter contains: an inventory and analysis of the existing resources; reflections on accomplishments since adoption of the 1991 Plan; a summary of current issues; and a section on goals, policies and strategies [ranked by relative importance] for achieving community goals.

While the Plan presents many strategies for achieving goals, the Plan identifies the following actions as the most critical over the next ten years:

- Redevelopment of the former prison site.
- Planning for transportation along the Route One corridor.
- Extension of the wastewater collection system to additional users in designated growth areas, most importantly the Pine Tree Zone and commercial uses east of the cement plant.
- Monitoring of the Dragon Products TIF.
- The need to recruit and retain volunteers who provide emergency services to the town and to cooperate with area towns for the provision of these services were possible.
- Explore consolidation of MSAD 50 with MSAD 5 at the high school level.
- Change the anchorage designation of the harbor, and provide for harbor dredging in the vicinity of the beacon.

An overview of findings and recommendations follows:

### **HISTORY**

Thomaston has a rich history, with portions of Main and Knox Streets listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Situated on the St. George River, the dividing line between early French and English claims to land in North America, Thomaston became the site of an English trading post in 1623. In 1735, Samuel Waldo engaged 27 people to settle here. Lime kilns were erected along the river as early as 1734, and a brisk export trade developed in lime and cement. The Town was incorporated in 1777. Thomaston emerged as a shipbuilding center in the 1780’s, bringing increased trade and wealth to the area. By 1815 it was not unusual for Thomaston builders to launch four or five vessels each year. Major General Henry Knox, the country’s first Secretary of War, retired to the area in 1794 and built his estate “Montpelier” at the foot of Knox Street.

Much of Thomaston’s beauty derives from its history: its village center which anchors outlying areas, its historic structures in a range of architectural styles, and its

reminders of its shipbuilding legacy. Thomaston must shape its growth so that its attractiveness remains deep-rooted and community-wide.

*The Plan recommends that the town maintain and enhance its basic land use pattern of a walkable village surrounded by lower density development and recommends a study committee to explore ways to preserve and protect the Historic District and other distinctive historic features.*

## **MAINE STATE PRISON**

The Plan discusses the value of this site to the future of the town. The Plan makes general recommendations to guide the work of the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee including: provide for mixed use and open space, cluster buildings to maximize use while retaining open space, and retain public access to views of the St. George River.

## **POPULATION**

Between 1990 and 2000, the town's population increased from 3,306 to 3,748, an increase of 13.4% [annual rate of 1.34%], compared with 9.1% for Knox County as a whole. However, over the long term, Thomaston has grown only modestly at a rate of 0.67% annually. Our population is aging. The percentage of persons age 55-64 increased from 7.5% in 1990 to 10.3 % in 2000, and is projected to be 13.9% by 2013. While the number of school aged children [age 5 to 17] has remained relatively constant, children have decreased as a percentage of the population [562 or 17% in 1990, 578 or 15.4% in 2000, and projected to be 590 or 13.3% in 2013]. As with Knox County, our town has seen a decrease in the average household size. There are more retirees and single parent households. Changes in population will impact services; an aging population may increase costs for health related services such as ambulance, while a decrease in children will impact state aid to education.

*Closure of the prison may make Thomaston more attractive to developers; therefore, projections based upon past trends may be misleading. The Plan recommends close tracking of population data to determine the extent to which estimates based on census data approximate actual growth.*

## **HOUSING**

US Census data indicate that from 1990 to 2000, the number of housing units increased by 26% from 1212 to 1535 units, compared to 14% for Knox County and 11% for the state as a whole. This rate of growth does not appear to be correct and US Department of Housing and Urban Development data suggest a more modest increase in the range of 10%. There is a range of new housing in town, and existing land use ordinances do not significantly increase the cost of building homes. Data suggest that the cost of housing in Thomaston is affordable [less than 30% of household income] for most people in the community; however, data show that a

significant number of homeowners and renters are spending more for housing than the State considers to be affordable. The median home price is approximately 21% higher than a person with the median income can afford.

In 2000 67% of people lived in owner occupied housing [down from 70% in 1990] compared with 74% for Knox County as a whole. Occupancy rates are high in Thomaston, 93.6% compared with 76.8% for Knox County, indicating a possible demand for additional housing. However, with the addition of the new VOA housing units, elderly housing needs should be met. Given changing demographics, the percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline while the percentage of homes owned by retirees will increase. The town needs to continue to work with neighboring communities, nonprofit organizations, and developers to promote affordable housing opportunities for all age groups.

*The Plan recommends that the town continue to work with neighboring communities, the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition and other nonprofit organizations to develop affordable housing in appropriate residential growth areas. The plan establishes a goal of ensuring that at least 21% of all new housing will be affordable.*

## **EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY**

The top four sectors of employment for Thomaston residents are: “education, health and social services”, “retail trade”, “manufacturing” and “construction”. Thomaston residents are somewhat less affluent [median income of \$33,306] than residents of Knox County [\$36,774] or the state as a whole [\$37,240]. Thomaston’s largest employers are: Dragon Products, MSAD 50, Lyman-Morse Boat-Building, and Town of Thomaston. The Dragon Products TIF and CEA (Credit Enhancement Agreement) along with the recent designation of the Pine Tree Zone offer the town significant economic development opportunities.

*The Plan recommends that the Selectmen appoint a committee to evaluate and report annually on the state of the town’s economy; extend public sewer to the Pine Tree Zone and the commercial area east of the cement plant to support development; retain the existing Shoreland Commercial District at the harbor to protect and support marine-related businesses and commercial fisheries; and encourage business investment in the village center through infrastructure improvements.*

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Thirty-one percent [31%] of the respondents to the 2001 Comprehensive Plan survey cited traffic problems as something they dislike about living in Thomaston, and 58% supported a U.S. Route 1 bypass to minimize traffic problems. US 1 is currently the only east-west route through town, and accidents can paralyze traffic flow. US 1 though town has a LOS [level of service] rating of D on a scale of A to F, indicating moderate congestion. Since 1997, the greatest increases in traffic volume have

occurred on Buttermilk Lane south of US 1 [25.4%], Green Street south of Hyler [12.2%], and Route 131 High Street [8.5%]. Critical rate factors [CRF] are above 1, indicating accident-prone areas, for most of US 1, Route 131 and Old County Road. Most accidents occur when vehicles enter or leave US 1, highlighting a need for better access management. Truck traffic on Beechwood Street, and from Beechwood onto US 1, is a concern for many. Sidewalk improvements are needed throughout town, especially in the vicinity of the schools and the business block. Route 131 north of US 1 is scheduled for improvements in the MDOT FY2004 Biennial Transportation Improvement Program plan.

*The Plan identifies town participation in MDOT's Gateway 1 Project (which addresses development and transportation in the Route One corridor) as critical. Additionally, over the next ten years the town needs to: better define parking areas behind the business block, improve access to the post office, improve sidewalks for safety and ADA compliance, expand and improve hiking and biking trails, develop an alternate east-west route through town, and explore re-designation of Route 90 as US 1 and existing US 1 as historic/business 1 as a possible means of reducing summer traffic congestion.*

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Thomaston's desirability and hence its growth rate over the next ten-year period may be dramatically impacted by the relocation of the prison to Warren. Additionally, population pressure is increasing throughout midcoast Maine. In 2004 there was an increase in housing starts, with a move toward housing infill in the village area. Town services will need to grow with demands. The town is presently facing a shortage of volunteers for the fire and ambulance departments, and methods for recruiting volunteers or hiring personnel for these and other departments will have to be addressed. While financing of the wastewater treatment facility presents a challenge, the excess capacity is also an opportunity in that the town is well positioned to accommodate the wastewater disposal needs of future development.

*The Plan identifies recruitment and retention of public safety volunteers, extension of the wastewater system to the Pine Tree Zone and Buttermilk Lane, and discussions with MSAD 5 regarding consolidation at the high school level as critical issues.*

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The St. George River and its associated tributaries and wetlands, the significant amount of open space associated with farmland and forest land, and the pits and quarries associated with sand and gravel operations and rock quarrying are the defining physical features of Thomaston. Over the past decade, there have been dramatic improvements in the water quality of the St. George River with the construction of the new wastewater treatment facility and the elimination of combined sewer overflows and overboard discharges. Other significant accomplishments include updating of land use ordinances to limit development in unsuitable areas and

protect significant natural resources, improved access to the St. George River, and the creation of a Conservation Commission. In addition, the new Town Forest preserves a large contiguous area of open land for wildlife and recreational uses. While the 1991 Plan urged proactive efforts to protect agricultural land and open space, little or nothing has been done. The gravel pits and rock quarries, while important to the local economy and necessary as a source of raw material for various development needs, continue to represent a significant challenge with 63% of survey respondents wanting to discourage or forbid any new pits.

*As development pressure increases, the town needs to encourage concentrated patterns of growth to minimize impacts on natural resources, scenic character, farmland and open space, and maintain the small town atmosphere prized by town residents. Plan recommendations include: a comprehensive review of ordinances pertaining to pits and quarries, a review of ordinances to ensure that setback and vegetated buffer requirements are protective of critical and unique natural resources, and working with neighboring communities to develop an area-wide approach to protection of the St. George River, Rockland Bog, and the Weskeag River. In order to preserve rural quality, wildlife habitat and open space, the Plan also recommends that the land use ordinance be amended to require that subdivision proposals within the R-1 Rural Residential and Farming District include a cluster design either instead of, or in addition to, a traditional design for site plan review*

## **MARINE RESOURCES**

Over the past ten years, the town has made great strides in improving water quality of the St. George River, primarily through relocation of the wastewater treatment facility. These improvements have enhanced the waterfront to the advantage of the marine-related businesses, commercial fishermen, and the general public. Improvements at the town landing, the creation of Mayo Park, and the enhancements at the site of the former Town Beach have improved public access to, and enjoyment of, the river. The creation of the Shoreland Commercial District appears to have served its intended purpose as marine-related businesses appear to be thriving. Our public opinion survey shows continued support for management of the harbor as a working waterfront.

*Priorities for the future include: dredging of the channel around the beacon to ensure safe passage, replacement of floats at the landing, continued efforts to identify and control potential sources of pollution such as stormwater, procurement of land and/or easements and funds to complete development of a waterfront trail. The Plan also recommends that the town continue to participate in the Georges River Shellfish Management Committee and the Interlocal Clam Management Agreement.*

## **RECREATION**

In the 1991 Comprehensive Plan questionnaire, a large percentage of those responding asked for more comprehensive recreation programs. However, little has

been accomplished other than the addition of the Town Forest trail, which has added hiking and cross-country skiing possibilities for older children and adults. A 2002 Recreation Questionnaire again showed that the majority of persons responding want a multi-activity community center that would address both the year-round needs of youth and senior citizens, the two groups most in need of facilities and programs. Many of the programs and facilities lacking in Thomaston are available in nearby towns if transportation were provided.

*Recommendations include: continued funding of a full-time Recreation Director with a volunteer Recreation Coordinating Committee, development of a transportation strategy to take advantage of facilities in neighboring communities, and continued exploration of the feasibility of a community center. The Plan also recommends the development of after school and summer programs for youth and recreation programs for special needs citizens as resources permit.*

## **FISCAL CAPACITY**

Fiscal capacity is the ability of a town to pay for services today and into the future. Property taxes are the major source of town revenue, comprising 83% in 2002. Educational costs have risen at a rate of 4% per year over the last ten years, and currently represent 58% of the town budget. Public safety is the second largest expense, totaling 11% of the budget, followed by Knox County at 6%, and public works at 6%. Although general government currently represents 6% of the budget, its percentage of the overall budget has declined over the past five years. Four significant events have occurred in recent years that will impact the town's fiscal capacity over the long term: Dragon Products received a \$12,000,000 tax abatement in the mid 1990's, the school funding formula is shifting state educational subsidies away from the town, the closure of the Maine State Prison and associated impacts including funding for the wastewater facility, and the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement with Dragon Products.

*In spite of recent challenges, Thomaston is currently in a good position for future growth. The Dragon TIF protects Thomaston from cuts in State revenue sharing as a result of increased valuation of the Dragon facility. Thomaston's portion of the TIF funds can be used to create new jobs and improve the commercial and industrial tax base of the Town. The Plan recognizes the importance of careful tracking of compliance with the provisions of the TIF.*

## **CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

The Plan makes recommendations for improving the procedure by which the town plans for capital improvements. It also includes a capital improvement schedule for currently approved capital improvements as well as for capital improvements proposed in this Plan.

## LAND USE INVENTORY

Thomaston contains approximately 7,250 acres or 11.32 square miles. Of this total, approximately 5,890 acres are zoned residential, 150 acres commercial, 1000 industrial, and 180 acres are occupied by roads. A little less than 4,000 acres remains in residential districts. Most of this land lies north of Main Street and is not served by public sewer or water. Commercial land is concentrated at the waterfront, the Main Street business block and US Route One at the eastern end of town. Along Main Street many essential service businesses have closed and been replaced by non-essential businesses.

The community survey indicated that 84% of those responding rate small town atmosphere as the feature they like most about Thomaston. In order to maintain its character, the town needs to prevent sprawl along the highways including US Route One and consider ways to acquire or otherwise protect open space. The increase in gravel pit operations along Beechwood Street continues to impact the character of that portion of town. The demolition of the Maine State Prison provides an important opportunity for the town, and careful consideration should be given to the future use of that property.

## FUTURE LAND USE

Thomaston has had reasonably successful town-wide zoning for many years, and the settlement pattern is generally one that Thomaston property owners are satisfied with and wish to see continued. This Plan recommends retaining the basic land use pattern of the village surrounded by low density development. The demolition of the Maine State Prison and the resources associated with the Dragon TIF provide significant opportunities to shape the future land use patterns and need to be the subject of town discussion.

Land use challenges for Thomaston include: 1) preventing sprawl and maintaining a viable village center with a variety of small businesses, historic buildings, and pleasant residential areas in the face of increasing development pressure and increasing traffic along US Route One; 2) preserving the character of the federally designated historic district; 3) redevelopment of the former prison property in a manner that is compatible with surrounding residential uses and which complements the commercial and public uses at the village center; 4) maintaining affordable housing opportunities; 5) maintaining open space and public access to open space and the harbor; and 6) limiting adverse impacts of gravel pits and rock quarries on other land uses, and planning (long-term) for the eventual closure of these areas.

*Recommendations impacting future land use appear throughout the plan. These recommendations include the following:*

- *Steps to relieve congestion and truck traffic on US Route 1 and improve safety for pedestrians.*



- *Divide the Commercial District into a Village Commercial and a Highway Commercial District with appropriate ordinance changes to differentiate Main Street shops and businesses in the village area from the highway commercial uses east of the cement plant. The Plan recommends that no single retail store exceed a building size of 150,000 square feet.*
- *Establish a new district if necessary to provide for open space and mixed use development at the former prison site.*
- *Protect the R-1 District (Rural Residential and Farming) on High Street from encroachment by nearby commercial and industrial uses.*
- *Preserve as much green space as possible in the R-1 District.*
- *Promote clustered residential subdivisions with components of open space in the R-1 and R-2 Districts; and require consideration of cluster designs for residential subdivisions proposed for the R-1 District.*
- *Preserve the US Route One entrance to town over the St. George River as an important scenic resource, with appropriate visual screening of structural development.*
- *Extend the sewer line to the Pine Tree Zone and commercial areas east of the cement plant.*
- *Prioritize the TR-3 (Transitional Residential Zone) for any further extension of water and sewer lines. Allow mobile home parks as a conditional use in the TR-3 District as opposed to the R-1 District.*

## **REGIONAL COORDINATION**

It is important that Thomaston be well-informed regarding issues in neighboring communities, and work collaboratively with these communities where possible to achieve common goals. The Georges River Clam Management Committee is an excellent example of the need for, and the benefits that can be derived from, a regional planning approach. The potential development of Rockland as a transportation hub, with a high-speed ferry terminal, rail service for passengers and freight, and increased air travel, would have a significant impact on the entire region. On other fronts, the town must ensure that it provides services in a cost-effective manner and needs to work with other towns where appropriate. Financial considerations are significant factors when considering solid waste management, water supply, police protection, and the possible consolidation of education at the high school level.

*The Plan recommends that the town assign individuals or members of existing committees to work with neighboring towns on several issues including: Route One corridor planning and associated transportation issues, dispatch and other public safety services, possible consolidation with MSAD 5 at the high school level, and protection of important natural resources. The Plan also recommends that the town continue to work with neighboring communities and regional organizations to promote affordable housing.*

## **HISTORY**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Thomaston has a rich historical background. One of the early European settlements in the region, Thomaston was a major shipbuilding center and early commercial hub, and home to many notable figures. Evidence of Thomaston's early days can be seen and enjoyed in its architecture and waterfront activities. Also, it is clear that Native inhabitants were present before European settlers.

### **II. INVENTORY**

#### **A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Thomaston is fourteen miles up the St. George River from Muscongus Bay and the original 1605-landing place of the English explorer, George Weymouth, on Allen Island. The St. George River, with Allen Island near its mouth, has been an important natural feature in the history of the Town. A cross near the present Public Landing commemorates Weymouth's landing. Exploration of coastal rivers and streams opened the area to settlement. Ships carried settlers into the area and shipped timber, fur and mineral resources to world markets. The rivers and streams yielded fish and waterpower to run grist and sawmills. The wooded land provided timber for home construction and early shipbuilding. Much of the gently sloping land was eventually cleared and farmed. Limestone deposits led to the development of the limestone industry and included quarries, kilns, cooperage and the building and equipping of ships to carry the lime to markets.

Some questions remain as to where the name Thomaston (formerly Thomas Town or Thomas' town) originated. It was thought that the Town was named to honor Castine resident, medical officer Brigadier General John Thomas. However, the Thomaston Historical Society has found references to Thomas Town many years prior to the death of General Thomas. In 1703, Thomas Lefebvre owned much of the land in Thomaston. As the name Thomas Town has appeared on various maps and in written journals prior to the date when it was supposedly named in memory of Gen. Thomas, the evidence is very strong that the name found its roots with Thomas Lefebvre. Perhaps both men should be credited with giving their names to our town. It is quite likely that, as the name was generally known to be Thomas Town already, when the General died there may have been a ceremony to honor his service to what was to later become the United States.

In 1623, a trading post was established here on the east bank of the St. George River at what is now the foot of Wadsworth Street for the purpose of trading furs. The Town is situated in the heart of the Muscongus or Waldo Patent, deeded to Samuel Waldo by Sir William Phipps of Pemaquid, based on a 1694 purchase from Chief Madockawado. In 1719, two blockhouses were built and the old trading post remodeled into Fort St. George. Thirty houses were erected nearby, following the establishment of two sawmills on Mill River. In 1735, Samuel Waldo engaged 27 people to settle here. A gristmill was erected in 1740.

Mason Wheaton established a settlement on the Mill River in 1763. The town was incorporated in 1777. In 1848 South Thomaston separated from Thomaston. Later East Thomaston and Owls Head were divided. East Thomaston became Rockland. During this period the area was significant in the maritime history of Maine.

The first families enjoyed the fresh influx of new settlers who followed the enterprise of Major General Henry Knox. He retired from his post as the first Secretary of War in 1794 and built his great estate, called "Montpelier", facing south towards the river. Knox was extensively involved in many ventures in the region, including the development of the St. George River for navigation by flatboats and gundalows.

A brisk export trade developed in newly built ships. The lime by-product used in plaster and cement was obtained by boiling off the water from the limestone in kilns erected along the banks of the St. George River as early as 1734. The kilns voracious appetite for wood soon depleted local forests and led to an extensive trade in kiln wood from Maine's coast and islands and as far away as New Brunswick's St. John River Valley.

Shipyards were first established near the mouth of the Mill River, but eventually occupied the entire shore from Fort Point to Brooklyn Heights, and above the Wadsworth Street Bridge. Beginning in the 1780's, the first vessels to be launched into the St. George River were sloops and schooners. The first full-rigged ship to be built was the *Holoferenes* (1807), to be followed by the *Bristol Trader*. By 1815 it was not unusual for Thomaston builders to launch four or five large vessels each year.

In 1820 Maine was admitted as a State and in 1824 William King sold land in Thomaston to the State for the Maine State Prison.

By the early 1850's, the number of shipyards had grown and vessels of increased tonnage (1,000 tons not being unusual) emerged as the best built in Maine. In 1851 the ship *William Stetson* was built, with 1146 tons of cargo that could be held in its hull. Captain Levi Gilchrest, managing partner of Morton & Lermond, built one ship each year from 1847 to 1866. Other major shipbuilders had up to fifty vessels built on their accounts. Thomaston was, for a while, the terminus for steamboat lines running to lower St. George River points, Muscongus Bay ports, and Monhegan Island.

The Knox and Lincoln Railroad entered town in 1870-1871, crossing the St. George River from South Warren. It ran along the riverbank below the prison, passing through the site of "Montpelier", which was razed to make room for the railroad. The original Knox quarters was a dormitory that housed unwed men hired to work on the estate and care for the general's animals (sheep, cows, and horses) as well as men who tilled the soil and grew the crops. These residents were not in-house servants. The building later became the Thomaston Station. There were also married men who did this work and lived in town with their families. The railroad was completed between Woolwich and Rockland in 1871 and was soon taken over by the then expanding Maine Central Railroad. Passenger service on the line ended in 1956,

and freight service ceased in the mid 1980's. Freight service was re-established in October 1990.

A trolley came down New County Road from Rockland, reaching Mill River in 1893. It was extended along Main Street to Green Street in 1896 and in 1902 to Warren village via a private right-of-way lying east of the St. George River. The Rockland, Thomaston & Camden Street Railway Company carried passengers, mail and freight. Trolley service on all lines ended April 1, 1931.

Various authors and residents have chronicled Thomaston's rich history. Its architectural legacy is visible along Main Street and the intersecting streets within the center of the town. Its architecture includes fine examples from the Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate and French Second Empire styles. At least 200 of these 19<sup>th</sup> century homes remain.

In 1929, as a result of fund raising by publisher Cyrus Curtis and a committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a museum replica of "Montpelier" was opened on the east side of the Mill River on High Street. This museum is operated during the summer season by the "Friends of Montpelier", a non-profit organization established in 1999 to make Montpelier a year-round facility.

In 1972, the Thomaston Historical Society began the restoration of the original Knox workmen's dormitory on the site of the original Montpelier. In 2004 a wing was added restoring the building to its original footprint. Today, this fine brick building serves as the exhibit and meeting space for the Society. Monthly cultural programs are held for the townspeople and a series of publications has enhanced the cultural perspective of the town.

In 1986, dedication of the renovated Thomaston Academy building (1847) was held. The Mid-Coast center of the University of Maine at Augusta and the Thomaston Public Library occupied the building in 1985.

Thomaston's Fourth of July celebration is known as the best in the midcoast area and boasts very fine fraternal and patriotic organizations, which support and organize its parade and other events. Of greatest importance, however, is the appreciation that its citizens have for the quality of life and serenity of "The Town That Went to Sea". Yearly, scores of visitors visit the town to research the stories of the hundreds of seafaring men and women who once made this a significant river port for the State and the nation.

## B. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The State lists the village area of Thomaston as well as specific areas, primarily along the harbor and Mill River waterfronts, as historic and archaeological resources (see maps titled Known Historic Archaeological Sites and National Register Property, and Known Historic and Archaeological Sites and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas in the map section of this Plan). The village and harbor waterfront contain many buildings from the 19th century that are still in use, as well as ruins of early limestone kilns and shipyards. The St. George River has sites of "Indian" habitation and sites where ballast was discharged from sailing vessels. The shores of the Mill River show extensive remains of wharves and some traces of a brickyard. Both the St. George and Mill Rivers show foundations of long-vanished bridges, which are visible at low tide. The St. George and Oyster river banks are also archeologically sensitive areas for as yet unfound, but likely to exist, prehistoric sites.

**1. Knox Building (1794)** (ME 432-003): The only remaining structure built by General Henry Knox as part of his estate, "Montpelier". Used as the "workers" quarters, it was later converted for use as Thomaston's railroad station. Restored in the early 1970's, it is currently owned by the Thomaston Historical Society and used as a meeting place and museum.

**2. St. John Baptist, Episcopal Church (1868-69):** This board and batten Gothic Revival church was influenced by Richard Upjohn's designs. The bell tower was added circa 1872 by Francis H. Fassett, an architect from Portland, Maine. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

**3. The William Keith House (1830's - 1840's):** Formerly known as the Dr. Alden House, was built by William R. Keith. The Greek Revival design may have been based upon Edward Shaw's "Doric Cottage" in *Rural Architecture*, which was published in 1843. The building, at 88 Main Street, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

**4. The John Ruggles House (1827):** Designed in the Federal Style by John Ruggles for himself, this house stands at 33 Main Street. Ruggles, a lawyer and State Senator in 1818, initiated legislation that created the US Patten Office. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

**5. Main and Knox Streets:** An historic district was established in 1974. This includes both sides of Main Street from the former state prison to and including the replica of Montpelier on High Street, and both sides of Knox Street to and including the waterfront.

**6. Maine State Prison:** Built in 1823-24, fires in 1837, 1841 and 1850 destroyed much of the original buildings. The facility was operated as a prison until January of 2002 whereupon prisoners were moved to a new prison in nearby Warren. The old prison was found to be lacking in significant historical or architectural features by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. The prison's condition was poor and reuse

was far more costly than to demolish and build anew. Therefore, after several years of study the recommendation to remove the Maine State Prison was executed in the summer of 2002. A small cemetery is located at the site and a section of the prison wall remains as a memorial.

**7. Montpelier:** This replica of the home of General Henry Knox was built in 1929 on a site overlooking the Mill River. The original home was built from plans supplied by Ebenezer Dunton of Boston (who also oversaw the construction of the building and is called the builder in the document) at a cost of \$50,000 in 1794-95. In reality, he was the architectural designer of the estate. Following Knox's death, Montpelier fell into disrepair and was razed in 1871 to make way for the railroad.

**8. Native American Sites:** (028.009): These lie on the east side of the St. George River about a mile downstream of the Route One Bridge. This site is noted in a general area on the map but the exact location is withheld to protect it from disturbance. Other areas that are likely to contain prehistoric archeology are the riverbanks of the Mill River and the west shore of the St. George.

**9. Shipbuilding Sites:** These were located on the Mill River and along the waterfront from Wadsworth Street to just east of the foot of Knox Street, including the south bank of the St. George River just east of Brooklin Heights.

**10. Cross:** A cross commemorating the landing of George Weymouth in 1605 is located at the Public Landing near the foot of Knox Street off Water Street. Weymouth's landing was reportedly at the bend of the St. George River.

**11. Time Capsule:** A time capsule was placed on The Mall in 1977 on the occasion of Thomaston's Bicentennial. The site is marked by a ground level granite monument.

**12. Lefebvre Mill** (ME 403-001): French Mill.

**13. "Fannie May"** (ME403-002): Unidentified Wreck.

**14. Dublin Road Mill** (ME 403-003): American Tidal Mill.

**15. Beauchamp & Leverett Trading Post** (ME 432-001): English trading post.

**16. Fort St. George (ME 432-002):** English fort A recent study failed to find evidence of the fort but the study suggests that the current shoreline in the study area was fill and tailings and that the actual site was further inland.

**17. Daniel Morse (ME 432-004):** Anglo-American farmstead.

## C. ORGANIZATIONS

1. **Friends of Montpelier:** This not for profit museum is currently in a program to stabilize and catalog its collection. Recently it was successful in obtaining a \$100,000 matching grant to inventory and create a catalog of its artifacts.
2. **Thomaston Historical Society:** The society meets monthly though the year to conduct business and hold lectures of interest to the town and region. Recently the members raised funds and rebuilt a section of the building to bring it back to its original construction. The wing is climate controlled enabling increased year round work and for archival use.
3. **Museum in the Streets:** This first in the nation museum has come to Thomaston from France where it has been a great success. Placards are located around town at historical sites describing specific events or structures. A full town map is located in two locations and maps are available for walkers at local shops and the town office.

## III. REFLECTIONS

Relatively few of the implementation strategies of the 1991 Plan were achieved. The outlined adoption of the historic district and establishment of an Historic District Commission failed to gain public support at two town meetings. The most recent attempt to establish an Historic District was in 2001.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

As noted above, there has been a great deal of work done over the years by local citizens and the Thomaston Historical Society to maintain the historic areas of the town. However, most of the town's historical buildings and sites are unprotected.

Pressures on the Historic District grow more intense every year. The most endangered area is the one fronting on Main Street, U. S. Route One, which is threatened by increased traffic and which has seen some intrusion of modern architecture not in keeping with its surroundings.

Unfortunately, nothing has been done to protect this area other than listing it on the National Register of Historic Places. A careful review of the inability to enact even the simplest of preservation measures must take place before further action. The reason for lack of progress in formally protecting significant historic landmarks, heritage, archeological, and architectural sites is not clear. Some feel that the establishment of an historic district with accompanying ordinances might be too restrictive or exclusive.

Before any new attempts to adopt a new zone or ordinance, a careful study and review should take place to weigh the benefits and drawbacks. Since a failure to adequately inform and present the problem led in some part to the failure previously, special attention must be paid to presenting the findings of the study to the townspeople. Thomaston has little regulation of architectural standards and is fortunate not to have lost, or had changed significantly, any of the structures in the Historic District. However, the Land Use and Development Ordinance (LUO) should be strengthened to protect the architectural character of neighborhoods.

Archaeological sites are protected in the LUO and require Maine Historic Preservation Commission be notified 20 days prior to action by permitting authority. There are no reports of problems and the only site that came into question was the Fort St. George and a proper process was employed. However, many new areas are being added as sensitive and compliance will need to be monitored.



## **V. GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **A. GOALS**

#### State Goal

"To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources."

#### Local Goal

To preserve the character of Thomaston by protecting historic structures and archaeological resources.

### **B. POLICIES**

1. To prevent the threatened destruction of key historic structures.
2. To protect threatened neighborhood areas and archaeological resources.
3. To prevent future incompatible alteration and destruction of historic building facades.
4. To encourage and promote renovation of historic structures and neighborhoods.

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. Continue financial support for historical organizations in town that work to preserve the history of Thomaston. [Budget Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
2. Encourage and facilitate the donation of artifacts, documents, and properties to proper agencies that will preserve and maintain them for the public good. [Town Manager. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: Ongoing]
3. Create, appoint, and fund a study commission to review the benefits and drawbacks of an Historic District with protective ordinance. [Selectmen. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
4. Assist educational organizations that wish to inform residents and increase awareness of the benefits of historic preservation. [Selectmen. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: as resources allow]
5. Work with Maine Historic Preservation Commission to identify properties and structures which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Create a plan and identify possible sources of funding for fieldwork to identify and register these sites. [Selectmen. Historical Society. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: as resources allow.]

6. Work with Maine Historic Preservation Commission to complete survey work of Thomaston's Prehistoric and Historic Archaeological Sites, particularly along the St. George and Oyster rivers and extending out of town along most roads (see maps). Create a plan and identify possible sources of funding to identify, catalog and protect sensitive areas. [Selectmen, Historical Society. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: as resources allow]
7. Amend the Land Use and Development Ordinance (716.3) so that, at a minimum, development in any Known or Reported Prehistoric or Historic Archaeological Area of importance (see maps in map section of this Plan) must include protection of the resource, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed design, timing of construction, and limiting the extent of excavation. Sensitive Areas (see map) shall be reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer for determination of potential archaeological significance and application of Land Use Ordinance 716.3. Work with Maine Historic Preservation Commission to amend ordinance. [Selectmen, Historical Society. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: as resources allow].

## **MAINE STATE PRISON**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Thomaston was the home of the Maine State Prison from 1823 until February 2002 at which time all prisoners were transferred to a new facility in nearby Warren. The Thomaston facility was demolished in the summer of 2002 and the site is currently an open field. The ultimate disposition of this property is of great importance to the Town since it is prominently located on Route One at the southern gateway to our community and in close proximity to residential areas and the village center. Its ultimate re-use has the potential to shape Thomaston's future for generations to come.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

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Over its nearly 180 year history, the prison was a dominant feature of the town's landscape and it became, in some senses, part of the fabric of the community. In fact, the town and the prison have been virtually synonymous throughout the State for nearly two centuries. Many of the prison guards have made their homes in Thomaston and neighboring communities, and prisoners have provided labor for various public works projects over the years. Closure of the prison was a monumental event in the history of the town, and it was not without controversy.

While some opposed the construction of a new prison, the major concerns were financial and centered on the costs associated with the town's new wastewater treatment facility, which had been designed and sited in large part to accommodate the prison. For many years, the town operated a taxpayer funded wastewater treatment plant, which served the prison at no cost to the State until the mid 1980's when funding was converted to a user fee system. This facility was located at the foot of Knox Street with a discharge to the St. George River. The plant was frequently cited for noncompliance, due in large part to problems at the prison, the largest single user of the treatment plant.

To resolve these violations, the town entered into an agreement with the State and a new wastewater treatment facility was subsequently built with federal, state and local funds. As a one-third user of the plant, the Maine State Prison figured prominently in both the design and the financing of the new wastewater treatment plant. The prison agreed to pay one-third of the capital costs of the new plant as well as one-third of the operating costs. However, as the new treatment plant came on line in 1997, the State announced that it would close the prison in Thomaston and relocate to a new facility in nearby Warren. While the State has continued to pay the capital costs for the wastewater treatment plant, it stopped paying user fees when wastewater flows from the prison stopped. Consequently, the town has been burdened with operating

costs for a significantly larger-than-needed plant, and the town has among the highest wastewater user fees in the State. Differences with the State over this matter complicated efforts to plan for the future use of the prison property.

Following a decision by the State to close the Maine State Prison, town officials, including representatives of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, began a dialogue with State officials regarding the fate of the prison property.

State officials hired a consultant (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.) to investigate possible re-use scenarios. The State held an initial public meeting in September of 1999 to solicit ideas from the community for consideration by its consultant. Several public meetings, tours of the facility by State and local officials, the consultant's report on the costs of various re-use options, an assessment of the physical condition and historic value of the buildings, and a survey of community sentiment followed. After considering this information, the Comprehensive Plan Committee recommended that the Town support demolition of the facility, and that recommendation was endorsed by the Board of Selectmen.

The funds for demolition of the prison were ultimately approved by the Legislature, and the prison was demolished in the summer of 2002.

In June of 2002, Thomaston residents authorized at Town Meeting the Board of Selectmen to enter into negotiations with the State to resolve issues associated with the Thomaston Wastewater Facility and to acquire the prison property without appropriation of funds from taxation. In addition, in August 2003, the Board of Selectmen, after receiving public comment, retained J. R. Belair & Company to work with the town to explore reuse and redevelopment issues, including options that would not involve Town ownership. These actions were followed by the adoption of a "Public Policy Statement for the Maine State Prison Property" in October 2003 which endorsed town control of the site development process and encouraged the State to work cooperatively with the town to create a development plan for the property. Selectmen subsequently appointed a Prison Re-Use Committee and Task Force to look at development options.

This committee engaged four planning firms to assist the community with understanding future use opportunities for the site. The outcome of this work was a vote at the June 22, 2004 Annual Town Meeting to authorize the Selectmen to accept title to the former prison property and to forgive the last two payments from the State to the Town for improvements to the wastewater treatment plant.

At its December 13, 2004 meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee as successor to the Prison Re-Use Committee and Task Force "for the purpose of ensuring the successful development of the property formerly know as the State Prison Land as approved by the Town Meeting 6-22-04." The Redevelopment Committee convened in January 2005 with the goal of proposing a plan for approval by voters in 2005 or early 2006. It is

anticipated that title to the property will be transferred to the Town by September 2005 with few restrictions other than protection of the small on-site cemetery.

### **III. SITE CHARACTERISTICS**

The former site of the Maine State Prison consists of approximately 15 acres of land on the south side of Route One between Ship Street and Wadsworth Street. It is bounded on the south by the St. George River. It is part of a larger parcel of land owned by the State of Maine which includes the location of the State Police barracks, several outbuildings and residential dwellings, and the prison store at the Corner of Route One and Wadsworth Street. Significant site characteristics include the following:

- The property is owned by the State of Maine.
- The site is located in the Urban Residential District (R-3).
- The site is served by public water and sewer.
- A portion of the prison wall and a small cemetery are located on the south side of the property.
- Portions of the site have particularly scenic views of the St. George River and Thomaston Harbor.
- Prior to demolition, a limited environmental assessment was performed to identify potential environmental concerns, and any apparent hazards such as asbestos and underground storage tanks were removed.
- The lime rock quarry, which was a prominent feature of the prison facility, was filled in part with demolition debris from the prison. The site was graded and a vegetative cover was established. The presence of demolition debris and foundations below the surface will likely present some limitations for future structural development such as foundation and drainage work at the site.

#### **IV. FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the demolition of the prison, the Town has a unique opportunity to shape the use of a large parcel of land strategically located at the gateway to our community, in close proximity to the village center and developed residential areas, and with scenic views of the river and harbor. The ultimate disposition of this property will have a dramatic impact on the character of our community for generations to come and should be carefully planned to meet the long-term best interests of our citizens.

A community survey conducted in the summer of 2000 before the demolition of the prison indicated the following levels of interest in various re-use options: park and open space (26%), community and recreational center (17%), commercial (9%), residential (7%), office complex (7%), industrial (2%), and no action (4%). However, 32% favored park and open space pending a more thorough consideration of options once the buildings were removed, reflecting the need of many for additional time to carefully consider possible reuse options. In addition, many citizens have voiced their desire to have the site, or a portion thereof, returned to the tax rolls.

While, there is currently no consensus within the Town as to the preferred future use of the prison property, the Comprehensive Plan Committee recommends that any future land use plan for the site incorporate the following characteristics, consistent with the other goals and policies of the Town as set forth in this Plan:

- Retain access to views of the St. George River for the enjoyment of the general public. It is recommended that a walking/bike path along the perimeter of the property be incorporated into any future plan for the site to ensure continued public access to views. Such a path would contribute greatly to efforts to create a pedestrian-friendly town as well as to the efforts of the Conservation Commission to create a waterfront trail.
- Provide for proper maintenance of the cemetery and the portion of the prison wall as historical markers, readily accessible to all.
- Require any structural development to be of a scale and design that is in keeping with the character of the surrounding properties.
- Require parking associated with any structural development to be integrated into the design of the development so as not to dominate the landscape.
- Require any structural development to be clustered so as to maximize use while retaining some open space, including public access to scenic views and historical markers.

## V. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

On October 14, 2003 the Thomaston Board of Selectmen adopted the following Public Policy Statement for the Former Maine State Prison Property:

“The Thomaston Board of Selectmen, in order to promote and enhance the best interests of the community, endorse and support a public policy that vests control of the development process of the former Maine State Prison Site in the hands of the community. Further, the Selectmen urge and encourage the State of Maine, acting through the Bureau of General Services, to cooperate with the town in creating a development plan for the property.”

As discussed above, the Town has since authorized acquisition of the property and the Selectmen have authorized the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee to develop a proposal for the site.

Strategy: To work through the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee to develop a proposal and funding mechanism for redevelopment of the site for presentation to voters in 2005. [Selectmen, Thomaston Redevelopment Committee. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]

### February 2009 Amendment

The former prison property has been characterized by institutional and commercial uses since the early 1800s; and the prison has historically served as the southwestern “bookend” or anchor of the village area. Both residential and commercial uses currently abut the site. The site was initially zoned R-3 Urban Residential when town-wide zoning was adopted in 1972.

In keeping with the State goal of encouraging orderly growth and preventing development sprawl, and with the Town’s future land use goal of enhancing the village center while protecting its historic character, the 2005 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan recommend consideration of a new district for the site. It was recommended that the new district provide for both public open space adjacent to the river and high density development consisting of mixed residential, commercial and institutional uses compatible with existing neighborhood development.

At the June 10, 2007 Town Meeting, the town approved creation of the R-3A Village Mixed Use District to govern re-development of the site. The Town also approved a Land Use Master Plan for the site, which is now known as Thomaston Green.

It is the policy of the Town to re-develop Thomaston Green in a way that re-establishes the site as the beginning of the village center or downtown as one approaches from the south. The site will contain a civic core and balance denser structural development with public open space. Development will be human scale, compact, pedestrian friendly, and linked to the rest of the village center through interconnected streets and sidewalks.

## POPULATION

### I. INTRODUCTION

An important goal of a municipal comprehensive plan is to relate the town's future population to its economy, development and environment. Most sections and policy recommendations of this Plan are either dependent upon, or strongly influenced by, the projected size and composition of the town's future population.

Thomaston's population dropped dramatically in January of 2001 when the prison population of 424 resident inmates was relocated to Warren. This move decreased the town's population by approximately 11%. The historic incorporation of the prison population into the overall town population statistics has likely skewed the data in several respects, adding uncertainty to population projections based on historic data, particularly with respect to absolute population numbers. The impact of the prison closure on the desirability of Thomaston as a residential community for families of school aged children or for retirees is difficult to predict. However, it is expected that, given the general desirability of midcoast locations and growth in neighboring Rockland, the relocation of the prison will bring increased development pressure in Thomaston.

Please see the chapter on Employment and Economy for information on household income.

### II. INVENTORY

#### A. MIGRATION ANALYSIS

A town's population may change as a result of natural change (births and deaths) or migration. An analysis of birth and death statistics and census population totals may indicate whether or not a town's population is changing as a result of natural change or because of in or out migration. The information below was determined utilizing town data from the years 1990 through 2000.

Population Change:	
2000 Census Population (3,748) minus 1990 Census Population (3,306):	+ 442
Change due to Births:	
# of births to Thomaston residents between 1990 & 2000:	+ 304
Change due to Deaths:	
# of deaths of Thomaston residents between 1990 & 2000:	- 326
Natural change:	- 22
Change due to In-Migration:	$442 + 22 = + 464$



Since the number of deaths exceeded the number of births, Thomaston's population would have decreased between the years of 1990 and 2000 if there had not been a net in-migration. There was statistically a net in-migration of 464 people.

Table 3.1 shows where current residents of Thomaston lived in 1995. Of the 1490 people who moved to Thomaston between 1995 and 2000, 391 or 26% were from other states, and 52 or 3% were from other countries.

**Table 3.1 Residency of Thomaston's Current Population in 1995**

Residency in 1995 (Surveyed in 2000 Census)	Number	Number	Percent total pop
Population 5 years and over	3,554		100
Same house in 1995	2,012		56.6
Different house in the United States in 1995	1,490		41.9
Same county		793	22.3
Different county		697	19.6
Same state		306	8.6
Different state		391	11
Northeast		197	5.5
Midwest		16	0.5
South		151	4.2
West		27	0.8
Elsewhere in 1995	52		1.5

Source: U.S. Census

## **B. POPULATION AND GROWTH RATES**

Table 3.2 shows the year-round population and growth rate by decade in Thomaston, Knox County and Maine since 1930. While statewide population increased by only 3.84% in the decade between 1990 and 2000, the population in Knox County increased by 11.1%, and in Thomaston by 13.37%. This data likely reflects the increased growth rate in coastal communities relative to inland communities.

**Table 3.2 Year-Round Population by Decade**

	Thomaston		Knox County		Maine	
Year	Number	% Change	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
2000	3,748	13.37%	39,618	9.11%	1,274,923	3.83 %
1990	3,306	14.00%	36,310	10.23%	1,227,928	9.18 %
1980	2,900	9.60%	32,941	13.54%	1,124,660	13.37 %
1970	2,646	-4.82%	29,013	1.53%	992,048	2.35 %
1960	2,780	-1.07%	28,575	1.61%	969,265	6.07 %
1950	2,810	10.94%	28,121	3.42%	913,774	7.85 %
1940	2,533	14.41%	27,191	-1.81%	847,226	6.25 %
1930	2,214	--	27,693	--	797,423	--

Source: U.S. Census

**C. POPULATION FORECASTS**

Population projections for 2013 are shown in Table 3.3. If the town's average annual rate of growth of 1.39 percent per year from 1970 to 2000 (non-compounded) continues, our population would increase to a total of 4,424 persons by the year 2013 (or 4,189 using linear regression analysis). Over the longer term from 1950 to 2000, a more modest 0.67 percent per year (non-compounded) growth rate was seen. If that trend continues, the town's population would increase to a total of 4,073 persons by the year 2013 (or 3,740 using linear regression). Of course, changes in land use including new year-round residential development will largely determine the actual population growth of our town over the next ten years. A population increase following the annual growth rate as seen during the past thirty years is believed to be most likely to occur over the next ten-year period. The state estimates our population will total 4,265 by 2013.

**Table 3.3 Population Predictions for 2013**

Data base for period of prediction	Average Growth Per Year (Non-Compounded)	Population Predictions for 2013	
		Using Average Growth Per Year (NC)	Using Linear Regression
1950-2000	0.67%	4,073	3,740
1970-2000	1.39%	4,424	4,189
1990-2000	1.34%	4,399	4,323

Note: Base population data from Census

However, if the prison population is removed from the base years considered (since the prison population has been relocated to Warren), the population forecast would be as presented in Table 3.3a. This method projects a population high of 4,105 in 2013.

**Table 3.3a Population Projections for 2013  
(minus prison population from base years)**

Data base for period of prediction	Average Growth Per Year (Non-Compounded)	Population Predictions for 2013	
		Using Average Growth Per Year (NC)	Using Linear Regression
1950-2000	0.78%	3,663	3,294
1970-2000	1.59%	4,012	3,713
1990-2000	1.81%	4,105	3,986

Note: Base population from Census, minus Prison Population

#### **D. SEASONAL POPULATION**

There are no state or federal statistics on seasonal population for Thomaston. Based on a total of 25 seasonal housing units reported in the 2000 Census, and estimating average household size for non-residents at 2.31, on average approximately 58 additional persons may currently stay in Thomaston seasonally. This figure includes rental units, and is in line with town estimates. Thomaston has few rooms for rent or hotel/inns and therefore little seasonal variation in population. However, recent approval of a motel to be located on US Route One near the Rockland line will increase the number seasonal population.

#### **E. AGE DISTRIBUTION**

The following 2000 statistics compare population by age group for our town, county and state. As can be seen in Table 3.4, Thomaston has a slightly lower percentage of children than Knox County and the state, and a higher percentage of elderly (above 75 years old) than the county and state. Our median age is 2 years lower than the county average, and 0.8 years higher than the state median age.

**Table 3.4 Age Group Composition in 2000**

	Thomaston		Knox County		Maine	
Age Group	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	189	5.0	2,082	5.3	70726	5.5
5 to 9 years	204	5.4	2,383	6.0	83022	6.5
10 to 14 years	207	5.5	2,762	7.0	92252	7.2
15 to 19 years	251	6.7	2,437	6.2	89485	7.0
20 to 24 years	219	5.8	1,691	4.3	69656	5.5
25 to 34 years	538	14.4	4,655	11.7	157617	12.4
35 to 44 years	612	16.3	6,210	15.7	212980	16.7
45 to 54 years	579	15.4	6,404	16.2	192596	15.1
55 to 59 years	193	5.1	2,232	5.6	68490	5.4
60 to 64 years	194	5.2	1,930	4.9	54697	4.3
65 to 74 years	251	6.7	3,377	8.5	96196	7.5
75 to 84 years	247	6.6	2,497	6.3	63890	5.0
85 years and	64	1.7	958	2.4	23316	1.8
Median age	39.4	--	41.4	--	38.6	NA

Source: U.S. Census

Changes in population by age category between 1990 and 2000 are shown in Table 3.5. In proportion to the town's total population, the town has seen an increase in the 55-64 years old segment of the population from 7.5% in 1990 to 10.3% in 2000. The over 55 population (55-64 and 65 and older) increased from 22.8% to 25.3%. During the same period, the proportion of youth, those less than 18 years of age, decreased from 22.5% to 20.4%. In absolute terms, however, the numbers of youth increased slightly. The median age of residents increased 3.8 years to 39.4 years old.

**Table 3.5 Thomaston Population by Age: Year Comparisons**

Age Group	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	182	5.5%	189	5.0%
5-17	562	17.0%	578	15.4%
18-24	291	8.8%	303	8.1%
25-54	1,516	45.9%	1,729	46.1%
55-64	248	7.5%	387	10.3%
65 and older	507	15.3%	562	15.0%
Median Age	35.6	--	39.4	--

Source: U.S. Census

Assuming the highest population projections for the year 2013 of 4,424 persons and a continuation of current trends, the projected age distribution for the year 2013 is shown in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6 Thomaston Population by Age: Forecast**

Age Group	2013 Forecast	
	Number	Percent
Under 5	194	4.39%
5-17	590	13.34%
18-24	318	7.19%
25-54	2057	46.50%
55-64	617	13.94%
65 and older	648	14.65%

Source: U.S. Census

## **F. POPULATION BY GENDER**

As noted above, the relocation of the prison population to Warren will impact absolute population number as well as projections for Thomaston. This is clearly the case with respect to statistics regarding gender. Table 3.7 shows that males constituted a majority of the town population in 1990 and 2000, due in part to the all male prison population.

**Table 3.7 Thomaston Population by Gender**

Year	Female	%	Male	%	Total
2000	1,744	46.5	2,004	53.5	3,748
1990	1,505	45.5	1,801	54.5	3,306

Source: U.S. Census

## **G. HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND TYPE**

The average household size (see Table 3.8) in Thomaston decreased by more than 9 percent between 1990 and 2000, indicating the presence of more households with fewer or no children. This trend was less pronounced at the county and state levels. Given the increase in median age at the town level, it is likely that many of these households are 'empty nests' in which children have grown up and moved out on their own.

**Table 3.8 Average Household Size**

Average Household Size and Growth Rate		1990	2000
Thomaston	Persons per household	2.54	2.31
	% growth	--	-9.06%
Knox County	Persons per household	2.45	2.31
	% growth	--	-5.71%
State	Persons per household	2.56	2.39
	% growth	--	-6.64 %

Source: U.S. Census

Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of households in Thomaston grew at double the county rate and more than 2.7 times the state rate of growth (see Table 3.9). Household size has decreased as empty nesters and retirees occupy more of the town's housing stock (see Tables 3.10 and 3.10a). Since the town's median age has increased, any impact of younger families without children moving into town was more than offset by the increase in older households. The rate of household growth has outpaced the population growth at the local, county and state level, which indicates the presence of more single person, single parent, and retiree households. Almost 32 percent of all households are single person households, up from 25.1% in 1990. The high number of non-family households reflects, in part, the institutionalized prison population.

**Table 3.9 Number of Households**

		1990	2000
Thomaston	number	1,103	1,436
	% growth	--	30.19%
Knox County	number	14,344	16,608
	% growth	--	15.78%
State	number	465,312	518,200
	% growth	--	11.37 %

Source: U.S. Census

**Table 3.10 Households by Type in 2000**

<b>Total households in Thomaston</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>1,436</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>Family households (families)</b>	<b>888</b>		<b>61.8</b>
With own children under 18 years		401	27.9
Married-couple family		680	47.4
With own children under 18 years		279	19.4
Female householder, no husband present		148	10.3
With own children under 18 years		87	6.1
<b>Non-family households</b>	<b>548</b>		<b>38.2</b>
Householder living alone		455	31.7
Householder 65 years and over		224	15.6

Source: U.S. Census

**Table 3.10a Households by Type in 1990**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total Households in Thomaston</b>	<b>1,103</b>		<b>100.0</b>
<b>Family Households (families)</b>	<b>771</b>		<b>69.9</b>
Married-couple families		626	56.8
Other family, male householder		27	2.4
Other family, female householder		118	10.7
<b>Non-family Households</b>	<b>332</b>		<b>30.1</b>
Householder living alone		277	25.1
Householder 65 years and older		167	15.1

Source: US Census

## H. EDUCATION

Data on school enrollment and educational attainment are shown in Tables 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, and 3.14. In both 1990 and 2000, the town had a higher percentage of its population enrolled in school than did the county, but a lower percentage than the state (see Table 3.11). The town's public school enrollment (see Table 3.12) has decreased almost 20 percent in the last ten years at the elementary level, and has increased only slightly at the secondary level. Total enrollment is down almost 12 percent from 1989 to 2001. In 1993/94 there was a peak in enrollment of 601 students from Thomaston. There are no state statistics predicting future enrollment figures for the town. Given the population projections by age group for the town discussed above, a nominal decrease in

enrollment at the elementary level, with no change at the secondary level, is expected by 2013. Within the next ten years, fluctuations in total enrollment, as seen previously, are likely.

**Table 3.11 School Enrollment**

School Enrollment (aged 3 and up)	1990	1990 % Pop	2000	2000 % Pop
Thomaston	709	21.4%	832	22.2%
Knox County	7,660	21.1%	8,546	21.6%
State	304,868	24.8 %	321,041	25.2 %

Source: U.S. Census

**Table 3.12 Public School Enrollment of Thomaston Residents**

School Year	Date	Elementary	Secondary	Total
1989/1990	October 1	376	151	527
	April 1	375	149	524
1990/1991	October 1	404	156	560
	April 1	401	159	560
1991/1992	October 1	409	143	552
	April 1	410	143	553
1992/1993	October 1	416	173	589
	April 1	413	159	572
1993/1994	October 1	432	169	601
	April 1	419	152	571
1994/1995	October 1	404	143	547
	April 1	413	141	554
1995/1996	October 1	410	145	555
	April 1	400	134	534
1996/1997	October 1	381	154	535
	April 1	379	144	523
1997/1998	October 1	379	144	523
	April 1	390	145	535
1998/1999	October 1	356	175	531
	April 1	350	174	524
1999/2000	October 1	321	179	500
	April 1	322	176	498
2000/2001	October 1	306	174	480
	April 1	300	168	468
2001/2002	October 1	318	168	486
	April 1	314	157	471

Source: MSAD 50

According to the Maine Department of Education, in the 2000-01 school year there were 17 approved home instruction pupils in MSAD 50, which includes the towns of Cushing, Saint George and Thomaston.



**Table 3.13 Approved Home Schooled Students in MSAD 50**

1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
18	17	14	14	20	17

Source: Maine Department of Education

**Table 3.14 Educational Attainment**

In 2000	Thomaston		Knox County	State
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
High School Graduate or higher	2,275	85.0	87.5	85.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	555	20.7	26.2	22.9

Note: Percent calculated from persons aged 25 and over.

Source: U.S. Census

More information on schools is found in the Community Facilities and Services chapter of this Plan.

## **I. INSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION**

According to the Census, the Maine State Prison at Thomaston housed 381 inmates in 1980, 491 in 1990, and 424 in 2000. The prison relocated to the Town of Warren in 2002 and closed its operations in Thomaston in the same year. The economic impact of the prison relocation is discussed in the Employment and Economy section of this plan, while discussion of the reuse of the former prison site is presented in the Maine State Prison and Future Land Use chapters of this Plan.

## **III. REFLECTIONS ON 1991 PLAN**

The 1991 Plan outlined no goals, policies, or strategies with respect to population data and trends.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

While the population of Thomaston has grown modestly over the long term, the rate of growth since 1990 has exceeded that of Knox County and Maine as a whole. Our population is aging, with the over 55 population now comprising 25.3% of the population, and those under 18 years of age accounting for 20.4%. The number of school age children has decreased. As with Knox County, our town has seen a decrease in the average household size, with more retirees and single parent households. Almost 32% of all households are single person households. As noted above, it is difficult to predict the impact of the prison closure, but it will likely make the town more desirable as a residential community for families with school aged children and/or retirees.

#### **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

Given the importance of understanding, planning for and meeting the needs of current and future residents, the town has developed the following goals, policies and implementation strategies.

##### **A. GOALS**

To be a diverse community which is home to people of varying ages from a range of economic, social, and cultural backgrounds.

To understand population trends and use that information to plan for community needs.

##### **B. POLICIES**

To create opportunities to maintain and enhance diversity through means such as providing a range of housing types, maintaining a working waterfront, etc.

To monitor the size, characteristics and distribution of our population and utilize this information when making policy and budgetary decisions for the town.

##### **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. Monitor changes in population using town statistics on births, deaths, school enrollment, etc. to determine the degree to which actual population change approximates projected change. Information will be maintained in appropriate files that will be available in the town office for use by municipal officials and residents, and summarized in the town's Annual Report. [Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

## HOUSING

### I. INTRODUCTION

Thomaston's housing stock is in large part the basis for the town's tax base. Housing represents the major investment of most individuals. With rising property values and assessments, and a limited amount of land available for new construction, affordable housing has become a concern for many residents. The goal of this section is to document housing conditions and encourage affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Thomaston residents. The reader should note that there are some uncertainties in the housing data presented in this chapter because most of the information is derived from the US Census which apparently incorporates some aspects of the prison population which cannot be subtracted out. As with population data, the next census will provide an important check on projections in this Plan and a more reliable baseline for future housing demand and growth projections.

### II. INVENTORY

#### A. HOUSING UNITS

**Table 4.1 Total Housing Units**

	1990	2000	New units	Percent Change
Thomaston (census)	1,212	1,535	323	26.65%
Knox County	19,009	21,612	2,603	13.69%
Maine	587,045	651,901	64,856	11.05%

Source: U.S. Census and Town Office

#### 1. Number of Units

According to the US Census, Thomaston had a total of 1,535 housing units in 2000.. If both the 1990 and 2000 census data are correct, the town experienced more than a 26 percent increase in its housing stock with the addition of 323 units during this period, compared to almost 14 percent for Knox County and 11 percent for the state. As shown in Table 4.3, the census indicates that 210 of the new units were single unit detached dwellings. From visual observations of the town, it does not appear that this large an increase can be correct. US Department of Housing and Urban Development data for the period show 88 new housing building permits for the period, four of which were for multi-family housing. While the actual number of units is not known, if one were to assume ten units for each of the multi-unit permits, the increase would be approximately 124 units or 10.2%. Given these discrepancies between census data, town data, and perceived level of development, it is important

that the town computerize its record-keeping so that accurate information on housing unit growth will be available.

As seen in the Population Section, during the 1990s Thomaston experienced approximately a 9 percent decline in average household size to 2.31 persons per household. The town's population increased more than 13 percent to 3,748 persons by the year 2000. Based on population forecasts for 2013 of up to a maximum of 4,105 persons (See Table 3.3a Population Projections for 2013 minus prison population), and assuming a similar rate of change in the ratio between population and total housing units, it is anticipated that in 2013 there may be up to 2,631 total housing units in Thomaston. If the average household size stays the same over the next ten years, then only 1,681 units would be expected using a maximum forecast of 4,105 persons in 2013. Given existing land use patterns, shoreland zoning regulations and limited land for development, it seems likely that the number of housing units will be between 1,681 and 2,442. In fact, if the growth in housing units follows the trend of housing units built in the last decade, which is similar to the trend over the past twenty years as well, then a total of 2,067 housing units would be expected by 2013. Of course, changes in land use, local regulations, and the economy will determine the actual increase in the number of housing units in our town over the next ten years.

**Table 4.2 Thomaston Housing Predictions**

Assumption	Total Housing Units in 2013*
Average Household size continues to decrease	2,442
Average Household size remains at 2000 level	1,681
Annual trend of Housing Units built in 1990s continues	2,067

Note: Base data from U.S. Census

\*Population for 2013 estimated at a maximum of 4,105.

It is important for a community such as Thomaston to maintain sufficient housing units so prices do not become over-inflated. A supply large enough should exist, so new businesses can find reasonable housing for potential employees attracted to the area.

## **2. Structure Type**

The distribution of housing unit types is an important indicator of affordability, density, and the character of the community. Housing units in structures are presented in the

table below. In 2000, one-unit structures (attached and detached) represented more than 67 percent of the town's housing stock compared to 75.5% for Knox County as a whole. Multi-units accounted for 27 percent (14.2% for Knox County), and manufactured housing, which includes mobile homes and trailers, accounted for almost 6 percent of the housing stock (8.1% for Knox County). This data may be reflective of a greater number of large number old homes that may have been converted to apartments.

Thomaston has a modest share of mobile homes and trailers relative to its entire housing stock. The number of mobile homes and trailers increased in absolute terms but not percentage wise during the 1990s. Mobile homes and trailers are located on individual lots, and there is one mobile home park, with approximately 24 housing units. Although not disproportionate, many of these homes are inhabited by elderly people. Overall, mobile homes are in good condition. Pre-1976 mobile homes locating in town must meet the requirements of the Building Code and the State Electric Code.

**Table 4.3 Housing Units in Structure Type**

	Thomaston				Knox County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total housing units	1,212	100.0	1,535	100.0	19,009	100.0	21,612	100.0
1-unit, detached	814	67.2	1,024	66.7	14,120	74.3	16,310	75.5
1-unit, attached	7	0.6	11	0.7	265	1.4	489	2.3
2 to 4 units	197	16.3	223	14.5	2,013	10.6	2,003	9.3
5 to 9 units	65	5.4	81	5.3	491	2.6	474	2.2
10 or more units	60	5.0	110	7.2	486	2.6	581	2.7
Mobile home, trailer, boat, RV, other	69	5.7	86	5.6	1,634	8.6	1,755	8.1

Source: U.S. Census

### 3. Housing Stock

Maine's housing stock reflects the state's history, climate and the independent character of its people. More than 53 percent of the town's housing stock dates prior to 1940. Some of these units are in substandard condition and in need of repair. It is important for residents to be aware of existing rehabilitation funds (and renters aware

of their rights to demand a certain level of maintenance by their landlords). More than 11 percent of the town's housing stock was built between 1940 and 1969, compared to more than 16 percent for the county and 24 percent for the state. A significantly smaller proportion of the town's housing stock was built in the 1990s, as compared with construction seen in the county and the state.

**Table 4.4 Year Structure Built**

Years	Thomaston		Knox County		Maine
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
1990 to March	113	7.4	3,207	14.8	14.6
1980 to 1989	231	15.0	3,327	15.4	16.0
1970 to 1979	200	13.0	2,931	13.6	15.9
1940 to 1969	170	11.1	3,524	16.3	24.4
1939 or earlier	821	53.5	8,623	39.9	29.1
Total housing	1,535	100.0	21,612	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

## B. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Table 4.5 shows the proportional make-up of housing units by general physical characteristics in Thomaston for the most recent years for which this information is available.

**Table 4.5 Thomaston Housing Characteristics**

	Number	Percent
<b>Total housing units in 2000</b>	<b>1,535</b>	<b>100.0</b>
ROOMS in 2000		
1 room	22	1.4
2 rooms	64	4.2
3 rooms	177	11.5
4 rooms	207	13.5
5 rooms	280	18.2
6 rooms	282	18.4
7 rooms	188	12.2
8 rooms	93	6.1
9 or more rooms	222	14.5
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS in 2000		
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	7	0.5
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	0	0.0
No telephone service	27	1.9
SOURCE OF WATER in 1990 (total units calculated 1,183)		
Public system or private company	1,033	87.3
Individual drilled well	131	11.1
Individual dug well	13	1.1
Some other source	6	0.5
SEWAGE DISPOSAL in 1990 (total units calculated 1,183)		
Public sewer	862	72.9
Septic tank or cesspool	321	27.1
Other means	0	0.0
HOUSE HEATING FUEL in 2000		
Utility gas	4	0.3
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	42	3.0
Electricity	200	13.9
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	1,119	77.9
Coal or coke	0	0.0
Wood	61	4.2
Solar energy	0	0.0
Other fuel	5	0.3
No fuel used	4	0.3

Source: U.S. Census

### C. HOME OCCUPANCY

Home ownership is a good indicator of the overall standard of living in an area. One way to trace home ownership change over time is to compare owners and renters as a proportion of total occupied housing, as illustrated in the table below. A high rate of owner-occupied housing is typical of a predominately residential community such as Thomaston. In 1990 and 2000, the proportions of owner and renter-occupied housing units at the county level remained stable. A modest decrease of 2.6 percent in owner occupied housing was seen at the local level. However, renter-occupied housing units are 6.5 percent higher than the county, indicative of the greater percentage of multi-unit residential structures in Thomaston.

**Table 4.6 Housing Tenure**

TENURE	Thomaston				Knox County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	1,103	100.0	1,436	100.0	14,344	100.0	16,608	100.0
Owner-occupied housing units	773	70.1	970	67.5	10,564	73.6	12,287	74.0
Renter-occupied housing units	330	29.9	466	32.5	3,780	26.4	4,321	26.0

Source: U.S. Census

### D. VACANCY RATE

In 2000, over 6 percent of the town's total housing units were vacant; of which over 25 percent were for seasonal or recreational use. In the same year, 23.2% of housing units were vacant within Knox County as a whole (almost 19 percent of vacant units countywide were for seasonal or recreational use). The rental vacancy rate for Thomaston was 7 percent, compared to 5.9 percent for Knox County. The homeowner vacancy rate for Thomaston was 1.2 percent, and for Knox County was 1.3 percent. The data suggest an adequate supply of housing for rent and a limited supply for purchase.

**Table 4.7 Housing Occupancy and Vacancy**

OCCUPANCY	Thomaston				Knox County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All housing units	1,212	100.0%	1,535	100.0%	19,009	100.0%	21,612	100.0%
Occupied housing units	1,103	91.0%	1,436	93.6%	14,344	75.5%	16,608	76.8%
Vacant housing units	109	9.0%	99	6.4%	4,665	24.5%	5,004	23.2%

Source: U.S. Census



## **E. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

The affordability of housing is of critical importance for any municipality. High costs are burdensome to individuals, to governments, and the area economy. Excessively high housing costs will force low and moderate-income residents to leave the community, consequently reducing labor force size.

Many factors contribute to housing demand and the challenge of finding affordable housing, including: local and regional employment opportunities (e.g., in-migration to job growth areas contributes to demand); older residents living longer lives at home (less housing available for young singles and new families); more single parent households; and generally smaller household sizes than in previous years meaning more units needed to accommodate the same number of people. Those Mainers most often affected by a lack of affordable housing include: older citizens facing increasing maintenance and property taxes; young couples unable to afford their own home; single parents trying to provide a decent home; low income workers seeking an affordable place to live within commuting distance; and young adults seeking housing independent of their parents.

The State Planning Office requires that comprehensive plans show the, “proportional make-up of housing units by affordability to very low income, low income, and moderate income households (municipality and region) - for the most recent year for which information is available (est.).” Gathering this data is not as straightforward as it may seem, as several factors help explain. First, data from the Census on housing values is not disaggregated by the state categories of income levels (very low, low and moderate income), which the state sets for each county. Second, the Census provides only housing values of specified housing units, not the entire owner occupied housing stock of our town. Third, the value of a house based on tax assessment often does not reflect purchase price. Fourth, and more important, at any given time, most homes are not for sale, and so their value does not reflect their availability for purchase.

Given these data limitations, we attempt to show housing affordability by examining the income distribution of our town and county by state category, and relate this to the average selling price of homes recently purchased in Thomaston, as well as average rents in town. Additionally, we show the percentages of households who pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, which is a measure of unaffordable housing as defined by the State. We show Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) affordability index data for Thomaston and for the Rockland housing market to which Thomaston belongs. Importantly, we demonstrate that the town has met its obligation under the Growth Management Act for ensuring that a certain percentage of new housing is affordable, as well as laying out strategies for increasing the percent of affordable housing to our housing stock.

## 1. Definitions of Affordability

Affordable housing often includes manufactured housing; multi-family housing, government-assisted housing for very low, low and moderate-income families; and group and foster care facilities. In addition, decreased unit sizes, smaller lot sizes, increased density, and reduced frontage requirements can contribute to a community's affordable housing stock.

More generally, affordable housing means decent, safe, and sanitary living accommodations that are affordable to very low, low, and moderate-income people. The State of Maine defines an affordable owner-occupied housing unit as one for which monthly housing costs do not exceed approximately 30 percent of monthly income, and an affordable rental unit as one that has a rent not exceeding 30 percent of the monthly income (including utilities). Based on Claritas figures, in 2002 the median household income was \$32,951 for Thomaston, a conservative figure (See Table 5.1 in the Employment and Economy chapter of this Plan). Using this figure and state guidelines, three income groups are considered:

**Table 4.8 Affordable monthly rent or mortgage payment  
in Thomaston in 2002**

Thomaston Households	Income Range	Affordable monthly rent or mortgage payment
Very low income	To \$20,750	To \$519
Low income	\$20,751 - \$33,200	\$520 - \$830
Moderate income	\$33,201 – \$62,500	\$831 – \$1,556

Source: MSHA

## 2. Housing Selling Prices

The table below shows the affordable selling prices for very low, low, and moderate-income groups for Thomaston and Knox County. Taken with Census data on median household value, the MSHA data would suggest that housing was affordable for those households in the moderate-income group and above (which include 64.3 percent of the town's households).

**Table 4.9 Household Income Distribution &  
Affordable Housing Selling Prices, 2002**

Households by Income	Percent of Households		Affordable Selling Price
	Thomaston	Knox County	
Very Low Income	20.1%	21.2%	up to \$51,480
Low Income	15.6%	18.4%	up to \$85,925
Moderate Income	34.5%	32.6%	up to \$166,296

Source: MSHA, Claritas

The value of housing units in Table 4.10 below includes almost 80 percent of the owner-occupied housing stock in Thomaston for 2000.

**Table 4.10 Value of Specified Owner-occupied Housing Units**

<b>Thomaston: 2000</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than \$50,000	18	2.3
\$50,000 to \$99,999	427	55.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	221	28.6
\$150,000 to \$199,999	69	8.9
\$200,000 to \$299,999	31	4.0
\$300,000 or more	6	0.8
Median (dollars)	\$94,100	--

Source: U.S. Census

The Statewide Multiple Listing Service recorded home sales for Thomaston. This information is shown in Table 4.11. Significant increases in home sale prices have been seen recently. The town assessor reports 39 sales from April to September 2002, with an average sale price of \$122,590.

**Table 4.11 Home Sale Trends in Thomaston**

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
Home Type	Sales	Average Sale \$	Sales	Average Sale \$	Sales	Average Sale \$	Sales	Average Sale \$	Sales	Average Sale \$
Single Family	18	\$86,208	30	\$92,580	25	\$87,167	35	\$101,191	24	\$132,031
Multi-Family	--	--	2	\$86,500	2	\$96,500	2	\$102,500	2	\$134,000

Source: Statewide Multiple Listing Service (MREIS). All rights reserved.

Data on housing affordability is available at the municipal and housing market level. MSHA reports that the housing affordability index (price median income can afford divided by actual median home price) for Thomaston in 2001 was 0.79. For the Rockland Housing Market (RHM) (which includes all municipalities in Knox County, as well as Waldoboro in Lincoln County), the housing affordability index for 2001 was 0.86. On the index under 1.00 equals unaffordable; while over 1.00 equals affordable. In 2001, the median home price was \$113,750 in Thomaston, and \$121,000 in the RHM. The home price that could be afforded at the Thomaston median income was \$90,012. At the RHM median income, a home price of \$103,815 could be afforded.

Table 4.12 shows median home prices in the region, along with a calculation of what the median income-earning family can afford to purchase. This data shows that the gap is 20.9%, ie the median home price is 20.9% more than the median income can afford.

**Table 4.12 MSHA Affordability in 2001**

Location	Index	Median Income	Actual Median Home Price	Median Income Can Afford	Affordability Gap
Maine	0.95	\$38,882	\$118,000	\$111,930	5.1%
Knox County	0.82	\$36,481	\$129,400	\$106,528	17.7%
Rockland Housing Market	0.86	\$35,708	\$121,000	\$103,815	14.2%
Rockland	0.73	\$29,763	\$104,000	\$76,040	26.9%
<b>Thomaston</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>\$34,565</b>	<b>\$113,750</b>	<b>\$90,012</b>	<b>20.9%</b>
Owls Head	0.79	\$42,625	\$160,000	\$125,937	21.3%
Warren	0.92	\$29,158	\$90,500	\$83,302	8.0%
St. George	0.83	\$36,075	\$130,000	\$107,960	17.0%

Source: MSHA

Note: MSHA median income estimates differ from Census figure (\$33,306 in 2000) and Claritas estimates (\$32,951 for 2002) as shown in Table 5.1 of the Employment and Economy Chapter.

### 3. Owner Costs

Table 4.13 shows selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income for almost 80 percent of the owner-occupied housing units in Thomaston in 1999. For 192 housing units (24.9%), there were monthly owner costs of 30 percent or more of household income suggesting that a sizable number of homeowners are spending more for their home than the State considers to be affordable.

**Table 4.13 Selected monthly owner costs in Thomaston in 1999**

Percent of Household Income	Owner Occupied Housing Units	
	Number	Percent
Less than 15 percent	291	37.7
15 to 19 percent	99	12.8
20 to 24 percent	107	13.9
25 to 29 percent	79	10.2
<b>30 to 34 percent</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>35 percent or more</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>19.7</b>
Not computed	4	0.5
Total	772	100

Source: U.S. Census

Note: 192 or 24.9% of housing units are not affordable for their owners.

#### 4. Renter Occupied Housing Affordability

The table below details rental housing costs in 1989 and 1999, which is the most recent year for which data is available. Only year round rentals are considered, as seasonal housing rentals are not reported. As can be seen the number of rental units increased by more than 41 percent in Thomaston, and the rents charged have increased almost 28 percent. As seen in the Table 5.1 of the Employment and Economy Chapter, median household income increased by 31.5 percent over the same period in Thomaston. The rents shown are reported by the tenants and take into account the subsidies many receive in the form of Section 8 housing.

**Table 4.14 Rental Units in Thomaston and Knox County**

	Renter Occupied Units		Median Rent		
	1989	1999	1989	1999	Rent Percent change
Thomaston	330	466	\$377	\$482	27.9
Knox	3,780	4,321	\$419	\$517	23.4

Source: U.S. Census

As shown in Table 4.15, in 1999, for 165 renter occupied units in Thomaston, more than 30% of household income was spent on housing costs. This data indicates that 35.8% of those renting are paying more for housing than the State considers affordable. In 2001 HUD/MSHA and USDA RD sponsored subsidized or affordable rental units and Section 8 Vouchers for 101 housing units in Thomaston.

**Table 4.15 Gross Rent as a % of Household Income  
in 1999 for Thomaston**

Percent of Household Income	Number	Percent
Less than 15 percent	71	15.4
15 to 19 percent	71	15.4
20 to 24 percent	56	12.1
25 to 29 percent	60	13
<b>30 to 34 percent</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>9.8</b>
<b>35 percent or more</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>26</b>
Not computed	38	8.2
Total	461	99.9

Source: U.S. Census

Note: 165 or 35.8% of units are not affordable for renters.

For the 466 year round rental units reported in the 2000 Census, which includes 'no cash' rental units, nearly all were affordable to those in the moderate income group. Almost half of the units were affordable to those in the low-income group, and about a quarter were affordable to those in the very low-income group. These are rough

estimates given the variable expense for utilities. See Table 4.8 “Affordable monthly rent or mortgage payment in Thomaston” for affordable rent figures.

**Table 4.16 Selected Rents in Thomaston**

Gross Rent in 1999	Number	Percent
Less than \$200	56	12.1
\$200 to \$299	47	10.2
\$300 to \$499	121	26.2
\$500 to \$749	145	31.5
\$750 to \$999	54	11.7
\$1,000 to \$1,499	0	0
\$1,500 or more	0	0
No cash rent	38	8.2
Median (dollars)	482	(X)

Source: U.S. Census

## 6. Affordability and the Growth Management Act

The State of Maine Growth Management Act requires that every municipality “...shall seek to achieve at least a level of 10% of new residential development, based on a five-year historical average of residential development in the municipality, meeting the definition of affordable housing.” As shown in Table 4.17, during the past five-year period from 1997 to 2001, 39 permits were issued for residential housing construction. Thus, Thomaston would meet the requirement of the Act if the town sought to provide 4 low-income units in this period (10% of 39). Within this period, affordable housing meeting state guidelines was built in the form of mobile housing, as 13 such units were put in place, which was 33.3 percent of all residential housing permits issued. Modular and mobile housing combined included 51.3 percent of the total number of houses built in this period. Based upon this five year average, it is reasonable to expect that Thomaston will be able to continue to meet the State goal of at least 10% of new residential development meeting the affordability standard.

**Table 4.17 Residential Building Permits issued in Thomaston**

	Stick-built Houses	Mobile	Modular Homes	Total
1997	2	2	1	5
1998	8	2	1	11
1999	6	4	0	10
2000	2	2	2	6
2001	1	3	3	7
Total	19	13	7	39

Source: Thomaston building permits

## **7. Affordable Housing Remedies**

Thomaston residents wish to provide affordable housing opportunities for the area workforce and persons of low and moderate income. The state recommends that the town consider ways of helping meet this need. Traditional recommendations include:

1. Relax zoning ordinance and building code requirements that tend to increase building costs. Thomaston has town-wide zoning and a building code at present. If either is amended, such amendments will be sensitive to the need to lessen the potential costs imposed on low-income residents.
2. Take steps to allow mobile homes and modular homes in more areas. Modular homes are currently a permitted use in the R-3, TR-3 and R-1 residential districts in Thomaston. Mobile homes are a permitted use in the R-1 residential district and mobile home parks are a conditional use in the R-1 district. At present, the town allows mobile homes in approximately 40 percent of the land area.
3. Provide town sewer, water and roads to new parts of town in identified growth areas thus “opening up” land for new homes.
4. Rehabilitate existing housing units including vacant structures.

The town should also encourage accessory apartments, so-called ‘mother-in-law’ apartments, and will revise ordinances and building codes if needed. Currently apartments are allowed in all residential districts in Thomaston.

Large lot sizes, while seemingly protecting the rural character of the community, can drive land prices higher, thus increasing housing costs and reducing the affordability of housing in the community. This is not a significant concern in Thomaston where lot sizes are comparatively small, ranging from 10,000 square feet in the R-3 District to 40,000 square feet in the R-1 District.

Additionally, in order to assist with the development of affordable housing, the town of Thomaston has absorbed the upfront cost of sewer line extension for an affordable housing project establishing a Special Sewer Zone, with the town to be repaid at cost after sale of the housing units.

While taking actions at the town level, the town believes that a regional approach to affordable housing may best meet the need of its low- and moderate-income residents. To that end, the town participates in the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition and works with surrounding communities to promote affordable housing options.

## 8. Elderly Housing

Elderly housing is a concern for us, especially for long-time residents who wish to remain in the area. Town-wide, almost 30 percent of owner-occupied housing and 25 percent of rental housing is occupied by persons over 65 years old. Recently, 32 low-income housing units for the elderly were constructed in Thomaston. Rockland has the closest assisted-living facilities. While our needs for elderly housing are being met currently, we would welcome a reexamination of this issue as our population ages.

**Table 4.18 2000 Thomaston Age of Householders**

	Number	Percent
<b>Owner-occupied housing units</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>100.0</b>
15 to 24 years	10	1.0
25 to 34 years	89	9.2
35 to 44 years	190	19.6
45 to 54 years	237	24.4
55 to 64 years	154	15.9
65 years and over	290	29.9
65 to 74 years	126	13.0
75 to 84 years	121	12.5
85 years and over	43	4.4
<b>Renter-occupied housing units</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>100.0</b>
15 to 24 years	57	12.2
25 to 34 years	110	23.6
35 to 44 years	75	16.1
45 to 54 years	54	11.6
55 to 64 years	55	11.8
65 years and over	115	24.7
65 to 74 years	39	8.4
75 to 84 years	68	14.6
85 years and over	8	1.7

Source: U.S. Census



## 9. Housing Programs

In addition to ensuring that our ordinances do not significantly increase construction costs, the town will also compile information on affordable housing programs for residents to consult at the Town Office. This resource will be updated on a regular basis and will include such programs as those offered through the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA), e.g. Rental Loan Program, Section 8, SHARP, Supportive Housing, and Vouchers, DEP septic and wells grants, and USDA Rural Development (RD), among other organizations.

Local, state, and federal governments have a number of different ways to subsidize housing costs for eligible citizens. In most cases the efforts of the different levels of government are integrated, with funding and operation and jurisdictional fields overlapping.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the primary federal agency dealing with affordable housing. Rural Development (RD), formerly Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), also deals with affordable housing. The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) is the State's agency for such issues. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing assistance programs are offered by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. The Town of Thomaston does not have a local housing authority and does not have a public welfare department; Town staff administer general assistance funds.

Subsidized units are built with state or federal monies for the express purpose of providing housing to lower-income individuals and families. A housing project or development may be entirely formed by subsidized units, or the project may be of mixed uses. Subsidized units are typically available to individuals below certain income guidelines, and residents are expected to pay a fixed percentage of their income as rent.

Housing is also subsidized through certificates and vouchers. When subsidized units are not available, the MSHA will provide monies for citizens to use as payment for rent for non-public units. The town is also reimbursed by the State for general assistance money that may be given to citizens with short-term immediate needs for housing. Finally, low interest loans through the federal or state governments are also a form of subsidy.

### III. REFLECTIONS ON GOALS AND POLICIES FROM 1991 PLAN

The 1991 Plan set forth several implementation strategies. Progress is summarized as follows:

STRATEGIES	STATUS
Enforce parking standards relating to conversion of single family residences to multi-family residences.	Parking standards established in Land Use Ordinance 717
Within the present Urban Residential District and the proposed TR-3 District, encourage a traditional village neighborhood block design. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to discourage subdivisions in cul-de-sacs in these districts.	Incorporated in Land Use Ordinance 729.2.7 on March 25, 1995.
Amend the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to include minimal landscaping requirements, primarily street trees.	Adopted and amended Nov. 3, 2004 – New Site Plan Review 735
Appoint an Affordable Housing Committee to: Conduct a survey to further determine the range of affordable housing projects to meet these needs, and work with the Mid-Coast Housing Alliance to obtain State funding.	Thomaston is a member of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition. Currently they are completing an analysis of low- and moderate-income housing in Knox County.
Seek State and Federal funding for rehabilitation programs.	As applicable. Continue strategy.
Amend the Land Use and Development Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance to require that 10% of housing be affordable to low and moderate income households. Devise means to assure long-term affordability.	No written restrictions for 10%. However language and ordinance encourages affordable housing.
Amend the Land Use and Development Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance to include a reduction in land area required per dwelling unit and frontage and side yard setbacks for designated affordable housing in the Growth Areas	Established the TR-3 Zone (708.5) Dimensional Requirements in Land Use and Development Ordinance are the same as those in the R-3 Urban Residential District.
Establish priority processing by the Planning Board for affordable housing projects.	Processing times have not been an issue.
Consider donating any tax-acquired land to affordable housing projects undertaken by a non-profit organization.	No tax-acquired land has become available in past 10 years. However we have worked with Habitat for Humanity re: sewers, etc.
Apply for membership in the Mid-Coast Housing Alliance in order for the Town to qualify for State funding for affordable land and housing projects.	Thomaston is a current member of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition.
Be aware of subsidized units converting to market economy, in order to have the possibility of a non-profit housing corporation acquiring these units to keep them affordable.	On-going. Currently under Federal subsidies.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

Affordable housing is often defined as not costing more than 30 percent of household income. The data reviewed suggest that the cost of housing in Thomaston is affordable for most people in the community; however, data show that a significant number of homeowners and renters are spending more for housing than the State considers to be affordable. Additionally, data show that the median home price is 20.9% higher than a person with the median income can afford. The majority of people live in owner-occupied single-family housing. Existing land use ordinances do not impose significant costs on the cost of building homes. There is a range of new housing in town, with mobile or manufactured homes used. As the population ages, the percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline further while the percentage of homes owned by retirees - both those from away and natives - will increase. The town needs to continue to work with neighboring communities, nonprofit organizations, and developers to promote affordable housing opportunities for all age groups.

#### **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

##### **A. GOALS**

###### State Goals:

1. To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.
2. To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

###### Local Goals:

1. To protect the residential quality of Thomaston while allowing for orderly growth.
2. To encourage a diversified community by providing affordable housing opportunities for all income groups.

##### **B. POLICIES**

1. To enhance the residential quality and character of Thomaston by preserving and improving the condition of existing housing and ensuring that new development is attractive and compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

2. To work with surrounding communities and organizations to achieve an adequate supply of affordable, decent housing for all Thomaston's citizens. The town will continue to encourage affordable housing within appropriate residential growth areas, with a preference for areas that could reasonably be served by public wastewater facilities and with the goal of ensuring that at least 21% of all new housing permitted will be affordable.

## **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The town will implement the following strategies:

1. The town will continue to welcome and encourage participation in programs such as the affordable housing tax increment finance program; grants (CDBG housing assistance and rehabilitation programs) and projects for the construction of subsidized housing whether within the town or the region; and grants to homeowners for improvements to energy efficiency, habitability, etc.. The town will work to ensure sufficient affordable housing options for its residents including elderly citizens, and will compile information on these programs and grants for the use of residents. [Selectmen. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
2. The code enforcement officer (CEO) will continue to address reported violations of local ordinances, and State laws and regulations that affect health, safety or community conditions such as the automobile graveyard provisions, removal of unsafe or deteriorated buildings, replacement of driveway culverts, etc. The CEO will work with the Planning Board to address any need for modification to the existing land use ordinances that may be appropriate. [Selectmen, Planning Board, CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
3. Through its land use ordinance, the town will continue to encourage affordable housing opportunities by allowing a mixture of appropriate housing types, including accessory apartments. In this effort, the town will encourage senior citizen housing opportunities and the land use ordinance will provide residential areas that allow single and multi-family dwellings, as well as manufactured housing. The town will continue to encourage mixed-income housing within the residential areas of the town. The Town will track new building permits, and rental unit availability and price. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: ongoing; tracking within 3 years]
4. The town will continue to participate with surrounding communities in bilateral and regional housing programs and projects. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]

5. The town will continue to support and participate in the programs and projects of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition (formerly Knox County Housing Coalition) and other nonprofit affordable housing organizations. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
6. The town will develop a long-range plan for extending public sewer to designated growth areas, and continue use of the Special Sewer Zone provisions where appropriate to support affordable housing projects. [Selectmen, Town Manager, Pollution Control Department. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: plan within 3 years; Special Sewer Zone provisions ongoing.]
7. The town will develop up-to-date maps depicting current land uses. Integrate land use mapping layers with maps depicting municipal infrastructure and tie to property cards. Computerize building permit information. [Town Manager, Assessor's Agent. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]

## EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

### I. INTRODUCTION

This section of the Comprehensive Plan examines several economic indicators to assess the economic health of the community. The goal of this section is to develop policies that expand the town's tax base, improve job opportunities for residents needing employment, and encourage overall economic well-being. See also the Marine Resources chapter for a discussion of marine-related businesses and commercial fisheries.

### II. INVENTORY

#### A. INCOME

Median household income and the percent change over the recent period are shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Thomaston's median household income has been increasing since 1990 but will likely continue to stay below the county's median household income and the state's. During the last intercensal period, Thomaston experienced an improved median household income with an increase of more than 31 percent, while Knox County had an almost 45 percent increase, and the state saw an almost 34 percent increase. At the town level, the median household income estimate for 2002 and projection for 2007, both made by Claritas, are most likely underestimates.

**Table 5.1**

<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>				
	U.S. Census		Claritas Forecast	
	1989	1999	2002 Est.	2007 Projection
Thomaston	\$25,332	\$33,306	\$32,951	\$36,619
Knox County	\$25,405	\$36,774	\$37,370	\$42,364
Maine	\$27,854	\$37,240	\$38,367	\$42,434

Source: U.S. Census, Claritas

**Table 5.2**

<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME CHANGE</b>	
	1989-1999
Thomaston	31.5%
Knox County	44.8%
Maine	33.7%

Source: U.S. Census

Table 5.3 shows the income distribution for residents of Thomaston and Knox County from the 2000 Census. Both the per capita income and median income in Thomaston are lower than found in Knox County as a whole.

**Table 5.3**

Income in 1999: 2000 Census	Thomaston		Knox County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Households</b>	<b>1,428</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16,608</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Less than \$10,000	202	14.1	1,567	9.4
\$10,000 to \$14,999	99	6.9	1,308	7.9
\$15,000 to \$24,999	220	15.4	2,462	14.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	214	15.0	2,444	14.7
\$35,000 to \$49,999	313	21.9	3,226	19.4
\$50,000 to \$74,999	226	15.8	3,141	18.9
\$75,000 to \$99,999	65	4.6	1,230	7.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	62	4.3	778	4.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	19	1.3	232	1.4
\$200,000 or more	8	0.6	220	1.3
Median household income (dollars)	\$33,306	-	\$36,774	-
Per capita income (dollars)	\$17,199	-	\$19,981	-

Source: U.S. Census

Table 5.4 shows the sources of income for residents of Thomaston and Knox County for 1999, the most recent year for which this data is available. Of those households surveyed, almost 76 percent derived their primary source of income from wages, salaries, interest income and rental income, or some combination of these sources. However, this figure was almost 3% less for Thomaston than for Knox County. Wage and salary employment is a broad measure of economic well-being but does not indicate whether the jobs are of good quality. Wage and salary income includes total money earnings received for work performed. It includes wages, salary, commissions, tips, piece-rate payments, and cash bonuses earned before tax deductions were made.

Percentage wise, more residents in Thomaston collect social security income (more than 33 percent) than do residents of the county. Social Security income includes Social Security pensions, survivor's benefits and permanent disability insurance payments made by the Social Security Administration, prior to deductions for medical insurance and railroad retirement insurance from the U.S. Government. About 4 percent of Thomaston's residents received public assistance.

Public assistance income includes payments made by Federal or State welfare agencies to low-income persons who are 65 years or older, blind, or disabled; receive aid to families with dependent children; or general assistance. In sum, the income types for Thomaston show a higher percentage of persons receiving public assistance and social security in town than is seen for the county as a whole, but a similar percentage living off retirement income.

**Table 5.4**

<b>Income Type in 1999</b>	<b>Thomaston</b>		<b>Knox County</b>	
(Households often have more than one source of income, as seen here.)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Households</b>	<b>1,428</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16,608</b>	<b>100.0</b>
With earnings (wage, salary, interest, rental) income	1,079	75.6	13,010	78.3
With Social Security income	479	33.5	5,027	30.3
With public assistance income	56	3.9	562	3.4
With retirement income	243	17.0	2,908	17.5

Source: U.S. Census

Table 5.5 shows poverty status in Thomaston and Knox County from the 2000 Census. The income criteria used by the U.S. Bureau of Census to determine poverty status consist of a set of several thresholds including family size and number of family members under 18 years of age. In 2000, the average poverty threshold for a family of four persons was \$17,050 in the contiguous 48 states (U.S. DHHS). More than 8 percent of Thomaston's families were listed as having incomes below the poverty level, which included 424 individuals. Percentage-wise this figure is higher than for Knox County.

**Table 5.5**

<b>Poverty Status in 1999</b>	<b>Thomaston</b>		<b>Knox County</b>	
<b>Below poverty level</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Individuals	424	12.8%	3,865	10.1%
Persons 18 years and over	332	10.0%	2,782	7.3%
Persons 65 years and over	88	2.7%	525	1.4%
Families	72	8.1%	695	6.4%
With related children under 18 years	39	4.4%	503	4.7%
With related children under 5 years	23	2.6%	250	2.3%

Source: U.S. Census

## **B. LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT**

The labor force is defined as all persons who are either employed or are receiving unemployment compensation. Table 5.6 shows the distribution of people aged 16 and above who are in or out of the workforce for Thomaston and Knox County. Thomaston has a higher percentage of residents who are not in the workforce than does the county. This is due to the higher number of retirees living in town, as seen in both the higher median age of Thomaston residents and the greater percentage of the town residents receiving retirement income as compared to the county as a whole.

**Table 5.6**

<b>Labor Force Status: 2000</b>	<b>Thomaston</b>		<b>Knox County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>



<b>Persons 16 years and over</b>	<b>3,081</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>31,782</b>	<b>100.0</b>
In labor force	1,612	52.3	20,024	63.0
Civilian labor force	1,608	52.2	19,939	62.7
Employed	1,516	49.2	19,263	60.6
Unemployed	92	3.0	676	2.1
Armed Forces	4	0.1	85	0.3
Not in labor force	1,469	47.7	11,758	37.0

Source: U.S. Census

Tables 7.7a and 5.7b show the employed population by industry for Thomaston and Knox County in 2000 and 1990. The size of the labor force, its distribution by industry, and how it is employed are important factors to consider when planning for future economic development. The plans for a new business or the expansion of an already existing one must be based on the assessment of available labor, in addition to the potential consumer market. It is important for the town to ensure that its labor force be appropriately trained to meet the job market needs, by keeping abreast with ever changing technology and emerging industries.

In 2000, the top four sectors of employment for Thomaston residents in order were: 'Education, Health and Social Services'; 'Retail Trade'; 'Manufacturing'; 'Construction'. Knox County shares the same top three sectors as Thomaston, while the fourth is 'Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services'. Thomaston has a significantly smaller segment of its population working in the 'agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining' category, than does the county. The town has a higher proportion of generally well paying jobs in the finance, insurance and realty markets, as does the county, and a higher percentage of people working in the manufacturing sector. Within the varied amount of employment opportunities in Thomaston, there is a diversity of occupations. There is not one single employer for the town's residents; however, most businesses are ultimately dependent on one another for much of their individual success.

Manufacturing jobs have provided a base historically for Knox County residents, but as seen throughout the nation and the region, the manufacturing sector has declined steadily over the past three decades, which reflects the low numbers of town residents working in this sector. Oftentimes, lower paying service sector jobs have replaced lost manufacturing jobs, and the creation of such jobs in Knox County has outpaced the demise of the manufacturing base. See Tables 5.7a and 5.7b for this trend over the past decade.

Table 5.7a

Employment Characteristics: 2000	Thomaston		Knox County	
INDUSTRY	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Employed civilians 16 years and over</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19,263</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, mining *	43	2.8	1,157	6.0
Construction	146	9.6	1,529	7.9
Manufacturing **	185	12.2	2,013	10.5
Wholesale trade	83	5.5	692	3.6
Retail trade	195	12.9	2,611	13.6
Transportation, warehousing, utilities info	25	1.6	623	3.2
Information	59	3.9	587	3.0
Finance, insurance, and real estate	136	9.0	1,376	7.1
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	66	4.4	1,223	6.3
Education, health and social services	341	22.5	3,926	20.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	105	6.9	1,638	8.5
Other services (except public administration)	42	2.8	1,014	5.3
Public administration	90	5.9	874	4.5
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>				
Private wage and salary workers	1,077	71.0	13,424	69.7
Government workers	266	17.5	2,507	13.0
Self-employed workers	173	11.4	3,266	17.0
Unpaid family workers	0	0.0	66	0.3

Source: U.S. Census

\* Clamming in the St. George River estuary provides part or all of the income for 100 area families. See Marine Resources chapter for information on commercial fisheries.

\*\* Dragon Products is included in this sector.

Table 5.7b

<b>Employment Characteristics: 1990</b>	<b>Thomaston</b>		<b>Knox County</b>	
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Employed persons 16 years and over</b>	1,393	100	16,200	100
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	49	3.5	944	5.8
Mining	0	0	1	0
Construction	103	7.4	1,295	8
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	134	9.6	1,053	6.5
Manufacturing, durable goods	103	7.4	1,528	9.4
Transportation	40	2.9	534	3.3
Communications and other public utilities	27	1.9	251	1.5
Wholesale trade	43	3.1	605	3.7
Retail trade	260	18.7	2,914	18
Finance, insurance, and real estate	65	4.7	637	3.9
Business and repair services	124	8.9	648	4
Personal services	61	4.4	777	4.8
Entertainment and recreation services	20	1.4	199	1.2
Health services	73	5.2	1,566	9.7
Educational services	127	9.1	1,289	8
Other professional and related services	101	7.3	1,181	7.3
Public administration	63	4.5	778	4.8
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>				
Private wage and salary workers	1,069	76.7	11,189	69.1
Government workers	187	13.4	2,261	14
Self-employed workers	128	9.2	2,699	16.7
Unpaid family workers	9	0.6	81	0.5

Source: U.S. Census

### C. SALES

Taxable sales are one of the few available indicators of the actual size, growth, and character of an economic region. Table 5.8 presents information on taxable sales of consumer goods by sector for Knox County, and the total amount of taxable sales for Thomaston. The Maine Revenue Services provides information on taxable sales disaggregated by retail sector at the municipal level for Thomaston. All figures are in real dollars, not adjusted for inflation, and represent only taxable sales. Thomaston had a modest increase in total taxable sales for the period of 1997 to 2001 of 4.1 percent. Auto Transport represented almost 66 percent of total taxable sales in 1997, but only 55 percent by 2001. For Thomaston, Food Store sales represented the second largest sector from 1997 (9.3%) to 2000 (11.8%). In 2001, the second largest sector was Business Operating (14.7%). By sector, the top three gainers from 1997 to 2001 in order were Business Operating (+96.8%), Restaurant and Lodging (+52.1%) and Building Supply (+36.2%). Auto Transport (-13.0%) and Other Retail (-1.9%) saw a decline in taxable sales over this five-year period. Seasonal variation in sales (i.e.

related to weather and tourism) was apparent in most sectors. First quarter sales were often not the strongest in any sector. Second quarter sales were sometimes strongest in Other Retail. Third quarter sales were often strongest in Building Supply, Food Stores, General Merchandise, Auto Transport, and Restaurant and Lodging. Fourth quarter sales were often strongest in Business Operating. Descriptions of these sectors follow the table on Knox County taxable sales.

**Table 5.8**

<b>Total Taxable Sales by Sector in Thousands of Dollars for Thomaston</b>								
Year/ Quarter	Business Operating	Building Supply	Food Store	General Merchdse.	Other Retail	Auto Transpo rt	Restnt & Lodging	Total
1997	2052.6	786.2	2443.1	1418.5	1072.1	17357.2	1247.9	26377.6
Q1	362.9	167.1	456.8	122.4	120.8	2778.3	135.5	4143.8
Q2	493.4	203.6	575.7	289.8	311.5	3567.2	263.7	5704.9
Q3	564.2	220.6	700.9	684.9	347.0	8244.1	507.3	11269.0
Q4	632.1	194.9	709.7	321.4	292.8	2767.6	341.4	5259.9
1998	2366.7	850.9	3001.6	1531.0	1178.4	12338.6	1581.4	22848.6
Q1	552.1	152.5	623.5	136.8	163.7	2433.3	227.0	4288.9
Q2	598.5	197.5	717.1	336.3	264.1	3579.2	337.4	6030.1
Q3	575.8	300.5	971.8	748.3	371.2	3626.4	630.2	7224.2
Q4	640.3	200.4	689.2	309.6	379.4	2699.7	386.8	5305.4
1999	2331.9	985.5	2907.0	1537.6	1364.3	14706.9	1591.4	25424.6
Q1	444.9	233.6	656.0	157.0	196.3	2763.4	211.8	4663.0
Q2	558.5	265.7	812.8	321.9	344.8	3568.6	351.2	6223.5
Q3	597.3	273.5	779.5	855.6	424.9	3781.0	630.4	7342.2
Q4	731.2	212.7	658.7	203.1	398.3	4593.9	398.0	7195.9
2000	2422.7	1186.8	2753.8	1526.5	1090.4	12381.3	1929.9	23291.4
Q1	383.3	382.3	582.1	142.7	208.7	2613.1	375.1	4687.3
Q2	701.7	288.2	700.7	579.4	307.6	3509.1	462.5	6549.2
Q3	787.3	274.4	818.6	504.3	292.7	3671.0	652.7	7001.0
Q4	550.4	241.9	652.4	300.1	281.4	2588.1	439.6	5053.9
2001	4039.8	1070.5	2771.3	1532.6	1051.8	15099.4	1898.2	27463.6
Q1	1339.3	213.6	562.0	180.9	183.6	2976.3	319.9	5775.6
Q2	869.3	289.0	689.6	526.4	300.8	5728.9	420.3	8824.3
Q3	934.7	267.3	805.1	661.6	291.2	2991.0	703.4	6654.3
Q4	896.5	300.6	714.8	163.7	276.2	3403.2	454.6	6209.4
<b>Percent Change 97-01</b>	<b>96.8%</b>	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>-1.9%</b>	<b>-13.0%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

Source: Maine Revenue Service

Unlike Thomaston, Knox County had a sizable increase in total taxable sales for the period of 1997 to 2001 of almost 23 percent. Auto Transport represented almost 20 percent of total taxable sales in 1997 and 2001. For Knox County, General Merchandise, and Restaurant and Lodging represented the second and third largest sectors from 1997 to 2001. By sector, the top three gainers from 1997 to 2001 in order were Business Operating (+44.8%), Building Supply (+38.3%), and Restaurant and Lodging (+26.0%). Other Retail (-3.3%) saw a decline in taxable sales over this five-year period. Seasonal variation in sales (i.e. related to weather and tourism) was apparent in most sectors. First quarter sales were not the strongest in any sector. Second quarter sales were rarely strongest, but occasional so in Business Operating. Third quarter sales were often strongest in Building Supply, Food Stores, Auto Transport, and Restaurant and Lodging. Fourth quarter sales were often strongest in General Merchandise. Descriptions of these sectors follow the table on Knox County taxable sales.

**Table 5.9**

<b>Total Taxable Sales by Sector in Thousands of Dollars for Knox County</b>								
Year/ Quarter	Business Operating	Building Supply	Food Store	General Merchds	Other Retail	Auto Transport	Restnt & Lodging	Total
1997	28359.7	38303.5	40138.6	56906.1	50221.0	65194.9	55745.5	334869.3
Q1	5746.8	6785.1	8047.3	9857.6	7578.4	12229.4	6982.3	57226.9
Q2	7583.8	9752.3	9662.6	13365.9	12307.4	15763.7	12310.0	80745.7
Q3	7769.8	11178.9	12140.0	16071.3	17498.3	22973.4	25306.2	112937.9
Q4	7259.3	10587.2	10288.7	17611.3	12836.9	14228.4	11147.0	83958.8
1998	31766.9	42920.2	42668.3	63879.5	71870.1	63875.0	62377.0	379357.0
Q1	7140.5	6936.6	8801.4	11146.0	14096.3	12581.7	8055.2	68757.7
Q2	8066.4	11252.6	10195.5	15003.4	17673.3	17431.4	13371.2	92993.8
Q3	8196.0	12234.8	13323.1	18001.0	22121.1	17249.4	28411.0	119536.4
Q4	8364.0	12496.2	10348.3	19729.1	17979.4	16612.5	12539.6	98069.1
1999	33905.7	47582.1	45387.2	69928.9	44842.9	71598.3	65791.1	379036.2
Q1	6565.5	8131.1	9111.1	12175.1	6188.7	13707.5	7912.1	63771.1
Q2	9165.7	12949.8	11197.7	16314.2	11428.3	18991.2	14533.4	94580.0
Q3	9087.1	12914.0	13980.4	20045.9	15932.0	19300.2	30045.1	121304.7
Q4	9087.4	13587.2	11098.0	21393.7	11313.9	19599.4	13300.5	99380.1
2000	39234.5	48875.8	4727.4	73188.5	48252.7	77217.2	68787.2	402827.3
Q1	8032.1	9083.6	9583.6	12814.2	5855.4	16619.8	8551.7	70543.6
Q2	9784.1	13180.6	11973.8	18540.1	13024.7	20537.4	16613.3	103654.0
Q3	11438.6	13697.9	14319.2	20249.0	17581.6	22429.8	30376.3	130092.4
Q4	9979.7	12913.7	11391.6	21585.2	11791.0	17630.2	13245.9	98537.3
2001	41054.0	52959.7	41896.6	75487.9	48548.7	81287.1	70213.2	411447.2
Q1	9915.0	9498.3	8627.3	13472.5	6462.5	17091.3	9075.6	74142.5
Q2	10994.5	14127.0	10201.6	18388.7	13352.1	22291.7	16136.5	105492.1
Q3	10174.5	14519.9	12857.7	21193.5	17218.3	21822.3	31267.5	129053.7
Q4	9970.0	14814.5	10210.0	22433.2	11515.8	20081.8	13733.6	102758.9
<b>Percent Change 97-01</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>32.7%</b>	<b>-3.3%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

Source: Maine Revenue Service

Below are the definitions of each retail sector:

- Total Retail Sales:** Includes Consumer Retail Sales plus special types of sales and rentals to businesses where the tax is paid directly by the buyer (such as commercial or industrial oil purchase).
- Business Operating:** Purchases for which businesses pay Use Tax, i.e., for items that are used by the business in its operation (like shelving and machinery) and not re-sold to consumers
- Building Supply:** Durable equipment sales, contractors' sales, hardware stores and lumberyards.
- Food Stores:** All food stores from large supermarkets to small corner food stores. The values here are snacks and non-food items only, since food intended for home consumption is not taxed.
- General Merchandise:** In this sales group are stores carrying lines generally carried in large department stores. These include clothing, furniture, shoes, radio-TV, household durable goods, home furnishing, etc.
- Other Retail:** This group includes a wide selection of taxable sales not covered elsewhere. Examples are dry good stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, sporting good stores, antique dealers, morticians, bookstores, photo supply stores, gift shops, etc.
- Auto Transportation:** This sales group includes all transportation related retail outlets. Included are auto dealers, auto parts, aircraft dealers, motorboat dealers, automobile rental, etc.
- Restaurant/Lodging:** All stores selling prepared food for immediate consumption. The Lodging group includes only rental tax.

#### **D. COMMUTER PATTERNS**

According to the Census, Thomaston's workforce overwhelmingly commutes by private vehicle. The second largest segment of town residents commute by carpools while the third largest work at home.

**Table 5.10**

<b>Commuting to Work: 2000</b>	<b>Thomaston</b>		<b>Knox County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Workers 16 years and over	1,494	100.0	18,829	100.0
Drove alone	1,222	81.8	14,043	74.6
In carpool	122	8.2	2,096	11.1
Used public transportation	12	0.8	84	0.4
Used other means	19	1.3	236	1.3
Walked	35	2.3	1,034	5.5
Worked at home	84	5.6	1,336	7.1

Source: U.S. Census

## E. EMPLOYERS

Most firms located in Thomaston employ less than 25 people each. With the closure of the State Prison in 2002, Thomaston lost over 450 jobs. Many of these positions, however, were transferred to the new facility in Warren. Thomaston's largest employers in 2002 are listed below. It should be noted that Thomaston's largest manufacturing companies, Dragon Products and Lyman Morse Boat-Building, recently made major capital investments. While Dragon Products did not add new jobs, employment at Lyman Morse has increased to approximately 100 employees as of January 2005.

**Table 5.11**  
**Thomaston's Largest Employers, 2002**

Name	Business	Employees
Dragon Products Company	Cement	125
MSAD 50	Education	171
Lyman Morse Boat-building Co.	Boat Building	60
Town of Thomaston	Government	50-75

Source: Maine Dept. of Labor 2001, Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission, 2002.

Many Thomaston residents commute to jobs located in surrounding communities. Seasonal fluctuations of employment are significant for tourism related businesses. A significant number of people hold multiple part-time jobs related to seasonal work. The major Knox County regional employers in the Manufacturing, Retail, Service, and Government sectors are listed in the tables below.

**Table 5.12**  
**Knox County Major Manufacturing Employers, 2002**

Name	Product	Municipality	Employees
Courier Publications	Newspapers	Rockland	100
BioWhittaker Molecular Applications	Bio-medical	Rockland	70
Dragon Products Company	Cement	Thomaston	125
Fisher Engineering	Snow Plows	Rockland	180
FMC BioPolymer	Seaweed extractives	Rockland	150
Marriners, Inc.	Bituminous concrete	Rockport	50
North End Marine and Fiberglass	Boat molds, boats	Rockland	87
Tibbets Industries, Inc.	Electronics	Camden	118

Source: Rockland-Thomaston Area Chamber of Commerce and City of Rockland, May 2002.

**Table 5.13**

<b>Knox County Major Retail and Service Employers, 2002</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Farley & Sons Landscaping	Landscaping	Rockport	50-180
Wayfarers Marine	Marina	Camden	80
Samoset Resort	Lodging	Rockport	300
Hannaford's /Shop and Save	Grocery Store	Rockland	207
Hurricane Island Outward Bound	Education	Rockland	326-600
Penobscot Bay Medical Center	Health care	Rockport	600
Shaw's Supermarket	Grocery Store	Rockland	128
Wal-Mart	Retail	Rockland	118
MBNA New England	Finance	Rockland	352
Maritime Energy	Fuel	Rockland	170
Kno-Wal-Lin Home Care, Inc.	Health care	Rockland	125

Source: Mid Coast Regional Planning Commission, May 2002

**Table 5.14**

<b>Knox County Major Government Employers, 2002</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Maine State Prison	Warren	475-500
State of Maine Human Services	Rockland	102
State of Maine Department of Transportation	Rockland	71
City of Rockland	Rockland	99
Knox County	Rockland	95
Maine School Administrative District #50	Thomaston	171
Maine School Administrative District #28	Camden	240
5 Town Consolidated School District	Camden	122
Maine School Administrative District #5	Rockland	252
Town of Camden	Camden	55 – 105
Town of Thomaston	Thomaston	50 - 75

Source: Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission, May 2002

In the spring of 2002, the Maine State Prison in Thomaston was demolished and the future use of the land is currently being studied by the Town of Thomaston. As noted above, the prison had employed more than 450 people, with many of those position transferred to the Town of Warren. Nautica Inc., which served as one of Knox County's major employers for many years, recently closed their Rockland operation. In the past ten years, major employers locating in Knox County have included MBNA, with branches in Camden and Rockland, the Samoset Resort in Rockport, and Wal-Mart in Rockland. In 2004, The Home Depot opened a retail store in Rockland.



### **III. SUMMARY OF MAINE'S FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

Below are listed incentives to financially assist the Town of Thomaston and its businesses.

□

#### **A. Business Property Tax Reimbursement Program (BETR)**

This program returns all local property taxes paid on eligible new business property placed in service or constituting construction in progress after April 1, 1995. Taxes on this property may be reimbursed by the State for a maximum of 12 years. The definition of qualified business property for this program is broad and specified by law. Eligible property includes certain property affixed or attached to a building or other real estate if it is used to further a particular trade or business on that site, and so may include property that would be classified as real property for other purposes.

#### **B. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District is an area within a municipality that is designated as a development district to allow the municipality to financially support a business development program using the revenue stream of new property taxes that will result from improvements made to the property. When forming a TIF district, a community may either fund a portion of the necessary improvements or return a percentage of the incremental tax revenue to the company to help offset project costs. The maximum term for a TIF district is 30 years, except in instances where the municipality issues bonds to finance a project, in which case the maximum term is 20 years.

□

NOTE: The Town of Thomaston negotiated a TIF with Dragon Products in 2004 in order to encourage that business to continue to benefit the region through employment, and at the same time, to establish a fund to support local economic efforts to diversify our town's economy.

□

#### **C. Employment Tax Increment Financing (ETIF)**

This program provides firms that add fifteen or more qualified employees within a two-year period with a reimbursement of between 30 and 50 percent of those employee's Maine income tax withholdings, for a period of up to ten years. To qualify, employees must be paid a wage equal to or above the average per capita wage in their labor market area and be provided group health insurance and access to an ERISA qualified retirement program. The company must also demonstrate that ETIF funding is an essential component of the expansion project's financing. Payments are made directly to the employer by the State. Businesses are prohibited from receiving ETIF and the Maine Jobs and Investment Tax Credit (JITC) concurrently. An ETIF-approved firm may elect to take the JITC, but must then receive the total amount of the available credit prior to receiving ETIF benefits.

**D. Pine Tree Zone**

□

The Pine Tree Development Zone program was created by the State Legislature to encourage economic development by providing tax incentives to businesses which locate in certain areas, thereby providing new or improved employment opportunities, broadening the tax base, and improving the general economy of the State.

Thomaston has joined with several other communities to form the Midcoast Pine Tree Zone, which received final designation status on October 26, 2004. The Midcoast Pine Tree Zone includes 150.9 acres in Thomaston south of US Route One in the vicinity of the Thomaston/Rockland town line. Thirteen (13) of the fourteen (14) lots included in the zone are located in the Industrial District, and the one remaining lot is located in the Commercial District. Thomaston hopes to expand its existing six lot industrial park, and encourage manufacturing/technology businesses currently located in Thomaston to expand and others to locate here using the incentives provided by the Pine Tree Zone. Thomaston has also proposed to use a portion of the Dragon Products T.I.F. to extend sewer to 50 of the 150 acres in the Pine Tree Zone.

□

**E. Economic Development Rate Programs through Electric Utility Companies**

Bangor Hydro Electric Company and Maine Public Service Company have economic development rate programs. While each of these programs is slightly different, all of them offer incentives to new and existing businesses.

**F. Maine Quality Centers**

Sponsored through the Maine Technical College system, Maine will respond to expansion or relocation labor force training needs through a single point of contact and rapid response for training and education. The program includes recruitment, assessment, workplace literacy, computer literacy, competencies training, and technical skills training. Maine also offers apprenticeship, continuing education, and customized school-to-work initiatives.

□

**G. Governor's Training Initiative (GTI)**

This grant program is available to eligible businesses in Maine for training and retraining employees. 'Training' services potentially funded under this program include: recruitment, screening and assessment, workplace literacy, workplace safety, technical training, on-the-job training, higher education, essential work competencies, job task analysis, specialized training, technical assistance on work force capacity issues, worker training plans, small business training, and technical assistance. Employers must provide a statement of commitment to long-term operation in Maine, provide training for new hires in occupations where there is not already a sufficient supply of trained workers, pay wages which are at least equal to 85% of the average wage for that occupation in that labor market, and provide at least 50% of the premium cost of

employee health insurance (except for businesses with fewer than 25 employees and in operation less than three years). Applications are made to the Maine Department of Labor.

#### **H. Community Development Block Grant Business Assistance and Economic Development Infrastructure Programs (CDBG)**

Through the Business Assistance Program, funds are available to local units of government (except Bangor, Portland, Lewiston, and Auburn) which in turn loan or grant these funds to businesses which create or retain jobs for low and moderate income persons and have a significant impact on a local or regional economy. The maximum amount that can be awarded to a community is \$300,000. The State Department of Community and Economic Development accept community applications on an ongoing basis.

The Economic Development Infrastructure Program provides Maine communities (same exceptions as above) with funds to develop or rehabilitate public infrastructure so that existing and new non-retail businesses can create or retain jobs for low and moderate-income individuals. The maximum community grant amount is \$400,000. (For information on application deadlines please call Eastern Maine Development Corporation).

#### **I. Maine Investment Tax Credit**

This is an income tax credit for machinery and equipment used directly in production and is worth 1% of the cost of such machinery and equipment per year over five years (a total credit of 5%). Note that, beginning in income tax years ending on or after July 1, 1997, this credit is not available to taxpayers receiving 100% reimbursement of property taxes under the Business Equipment Property Tax Reimbursement Program (BETR). A taxpayer receiving any less than 100% reimbursement, however, is still entitled to this credit. This program is an alternative to the BETR program if it proves advantageous to the company.

#### **J. Jobs and Investment Tax Credit**

This program provides a Maine income tax credit for investments in most types of personal property that generate at least 100 new jobs within two years of the date the investment is placed in service. The credit is tied to Federal investment tax credit (section 38) and is limited to \$500,000 per year, with carry-forwards available for up to seven years, including the year the credit is first taken. Thus the amount of the credit will not exceed \$4,500,000 unless there are multiple qualifying investments in successive years. Businesses are prohibited from receiving the Maine Jobs and Investment Tax Credit and Employment Tax Increment Financing concurrently.

#### **K. Machinery and Equipment Sales Tax Exemption**

This is an exemption from Maine State sales tax (6%) for machinery and equipment that is used directly in production. Included in this exemption are many essential fixtures. Items consumed or destroyed directly and primarily in production, repair, and replacement parts for qualified production equipment will be considered exempt from sales tax. Additionally, 95% of the fuel and electricity used in a manufacturing facility is exempt from State sales tax.

#### **L. Research and Development Tax Credit**

This program provides a two-tiered State income tax credit for new research and development activities in Maine. This program allows a credit of 5% of qualified research expenses over a three year average base amount and a credit of 7.5% of basic research payments as defined under section 41 of the IRS code.

#### **M. Supplier Network**

The Maine Supplier Access System matches Maine manufacturers with suppliers of materials and services within the State. In many instances, this results in lower costs to the manufacturer, more accurate inventory and quality control, and better access to suppliers.

#### **N. Site Selection and Environmental Permitting**

Working confidentially with regional and local economic development agencies, the State will identify sites and/or facilities that meet the client's specifications and locations that will allow the company to maximize its return on investment. Site location tours for selected locations can be coordinated with community leaders, suppliers, and others of interest to the client. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is prepared to assist companies in quickly identifying and addressing any site, air, or water permit issues that may be required. DEP is committed to facilitating business expansion projects by working proactively with companies from the earliest stages of the project's development.

#### **O. Financing Options**

Maine offers a number of financing options to companies interested in expanding or locating in the State. The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) administers several programs for the State, including loans, bonds, and guarantees. The Eastern Maine Development Corporation also administers loan programs for business development in the Eastern Maine region.

### **IV. REFLECTIONS ON GOALS AND POLICIES FROM 1991 PLAN**

The 1991 Plan set forth several implementation strategies. Progress made is summarized in the Table 5.15.

Additionally, some businesses have expanded significantly since the 1991 Plan was written, most notably Dragon Products and Lyman Morse. In 2005, our first chain hotel/inn will be constructed in the vicinity of the east entrance to Thomaston. The downtown business district has its own Merchants Council which promotes and strengthens the businesses in that area. The re-activated railroad service includes upgraded railroad tracks and crossings to accommodate the seasonal service.

Thomaston has recently taken several steps to advance its economic interests including: negotiation of the Dragon Products TIF (Tax Increment Finance) District, creation of a Pine Tree Development Zone, and formation of the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee (which is charged with developing a plan for reuse of the former prison site).

**Table 5.15: Summary of 1991 Implementation Plan for Economy**

Strategy in 1991 Plan	Status
Research grant and loan opportunities and provide information to Thomaston businesses.	Largely left to private sector. Area businesses network through local Chamber of Commerce. New Pine Tree Zone committee is working on economic development.
Promote properties in commercial and industrial districts to interested parties.	Promotion largely left to private sector; however, town recently worked with landowners to create a Pine Tree Development Zone, which received final designation status in October 2004.
Re-designate part of commercial district on Route One near St. George River to Rural Residential (R-2). Place all commercial land uses within Shoreland District along St. George River in Shoreland Commercial.	Commercial land uses within Shoreland District were re-designated Shoreland Commercial. None appears to have been re-designated R-2.
Include in Historic District Ordinance requirements that changes made by downtown businesses be compatible with existing architecture of the town, with measures for visual screening and landscaping.	Ordinance was drafted and proposed to voters, but defeated. Historic District was not designated at the town level, Historic District Ordinance was not adopted.
Amend Land Use and Development Ordinance to give preference to highway oriented businesses east of cement plant so businesses do not compete directly with downtown businesses. Require appropriate parking and landscaping to create pleasant environment.	Not done. Separate commercial districts for the village and highway areas were not created. Division of the Commercial District into Village Commercial and Highway Commercial continues to be recommended. See Future Land Use chapter.
Rezone some land on south side of US Route One near Rockland line from industrial to commercial.	Done.
Consider directing future expansion of downtown business district into area immediately north of Main Street business block.	Commercial District was extended to the VFW parcel only.
Repair, widen and extend sidewalks to serve downtown and the school campus. Connect downtown and waterfront business districts with sidewalks.	Funds for sidewalk construction have been limited. Little new construction. Town has striped lanes to designate sidewalk areas to the schools and along Water Street. Town has recently (2004) secured funding for \$300,000+ reconstruction of sidewalks in the Main Street business block.
Work with management of cement plant on eventual reuse of quarries and plant site.	Remains to be done. Recommended strategy.
Retain industrially zoned land adjacent and accessible to railroad east of High St. so industries which could use rail service can locate there.	Land east of High Street that was designated industrial has remained in the Industrial District.

## **V. SUMMARY**

Thomaston is tied into the regional economy of Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties. Because of its reliance on service center communities, most notably Rockland, for the majority of goods and services its residents use, fluctuations in the region's economy directly impact Thomaston's economy.

The top four sectors of employment for Thomaston residents in order are: 'Education, Health and Social Services'; 'Retail Trade'; 'Manufacturing'; 'Construction'. The residents of Thomaston are somewhat less affluent than residents of Knox County as a whole. With the aging of our population, the size of our workforce will continue to decrease. Our local government should strive to encourage and maintain appropriate development that will better employ residents.

Efforts to attract businesses to Thomaston, in an attempt to provide more local employment and broaden the tax base must be considered in the broader context of regional assets and needs and other community goals. In the community public opinion survey, when asked what they liked about living in Thomaston, 84% of the respondents cited small town atmosphere, with 55% saying that small town atmosphere was the most important asset. When asked what they disliked, 66% cited taxes. 54% stated that they would like to see moderate (42%) or rapid (12%) growth in the business district, with support for restaurants (other than fast food drive-in), bed and breakfasts, and tourist-related businesses. 46% stated they would like to see moderate (37%) or rapid (9%) growth in light industry. There was little support for expansion of heavy industry.

As indicated in the survey, attracting commercial growth and light industry is an acceptable economic development strategy for most residents. Growth needs to be channeled to areas of town capable of handling development while incurring minimal cost to the municipality. The town will continue to encourage responsible development through land use regulations, regional coordination and marketing.

However, it is critical that commercial growth complement existing commercial development both in Thomaston and neighboring communities, most notably Rockland, to preserve the viability of both Thomaston's and Rockland's town centers, as well as Thomaston's small town atmosphere.

## **VI. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **A. GOALS**

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

Local Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of Thomaston in order to increase job opportunities, broaden the tax base and improve the economic well-being of the community.

### **B. POLICIES**

1. To encourage business expansion in Thomaston.
2. To protect the downtown business district from outlying commercial strip development and otherwise strengthen the downtown business district.
3. To plan for the long-term re-use of the land areas now occupied by the cement plant and its quarries.

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

In order to promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being, the town will:

1. Appoint a committee to work with the Town Manager to annually evaluate the “State of the Town’s Economy” and report to Selectmen on actions that could be taken to encourage business investment. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: initiate within one year]
2. Encourage SAD 50 and the school committee to consult with area businesses on needed employee skills and identify opportunities to provide skills training in schools and/or through work study programs. [School Board. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: initiate within 3 years]
3. Continue to seek aid, whenever possible, from higher levels of government (County, State, and Federal) to provide support for roads, parks, public transportation or other activities that materially aid the Town’s economy. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
4. Take advantage of the presence of re-activated railroad facilities to enhance economic opportunities for Thomaston’s businesses and residents. Locate commercial and industrial growth areas such as the Pine Tree Zone and Thomaston Economic Tract (associated with the Dragon TIF) near the railroad line and spurs. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]



5. Retain existing Shoreland Commercial District designation along Thomaston harbor to protect and support marine-related businesses and commercial fisheries. [Selectmen. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]
6. Encourage business investment in the village center through infrastructure improvements such as improved sidewalks, lighting, and appropriate landscaping. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
7. Amend Land Use and Development Ordinance to divide the existing Commercial District into a Village Commercial and a Highway Commercial district to distinguish the Main Street shops and business uses located in the village area from the highway commercial uses east of the cement plant. Development in the village commercial area should protect and enhance the small town and historic character of Thomaston which contributes to the attractiveness of the town in a tourist economy. Require appropriate parking and landscaping to create a pleasant environment in both the village and highway commercial areas. [Selectmen and Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years.]
8. Meet with Dragon Products to obtain information on its long-term operational plans and plans for eventual closure of the facility. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

## TRANSPORTATION

### I. INTRODUCTION

Thomaston's role in transportation is shaped by many economic factors, including the economic growth of its adjacent communities. Rockland borders Thomaston on the northeast and is one of Maine's significant mid-size inter-modal transportation hubs. Rockland links Knox County, Mid-Coast Maine and Thomaston by way of the highway system, the rail system, the island ferry system and the air system served by the Knox County Regional Airport in Owls Head. Thomaston is a highly traveled connector in the transportation corridor that funnels into Rockland.

Thomaston's growth since the 1990 Comprehensive Plan has been significant. A strong national economy had a positive effect on Thomaston. Tourism has become Maine's fastest growing economic sector. In the year 2000, 44 million visitors came to Maine and produced \$5.4 billion in sales of which 14% or 73 million was for transportation. Tourism supplied \$330 million in tax revenues, 111,000 jobs with a 2.5 billion payroll and in excess of \$8.5 billion in an overall statewide economic impact. Consequently, this boom in tourism has increased seasonal demands on our roadways. In addition, state studies show that Maine's residents are driving more. During the period between 1980 and 2000, statistics show that the miles traveled in Maine by its residents grew by 95%, while the population only increased by 11%.

The Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT), in 1998, created an initiative called Explore Maine. Its purpose was to explore passenger transportation options that were destinations in themselves and to plan and align transportation systems that would support these options. Through a systems approach, profitable elements would support these transportation systems needing operating assistance. As the infrastructure investments grew, they would promote commuter and freight transportation alternatives and reduce sprawl. These infrastructure investments would also support community growth and development, thereby, forcing local townships to look for new ways to meet their mobility needs.

Over these last ten years, Thomaston has felt the impact of increased seasonal traffic, resident traffic and overall transportation growth.

### State Transportation Planning and Implementation

In order to identify the transportation needs of the state of Maine and its communities, Maine DOT has created a long range 20 Year Transportation Plan, which is policy based. Maine DOT's 6 Year Plan is interlocking with the 20 year Transportation Plan and the Biennial Transportation Improvement Plans. These plans identify transportation related projects, with actual and projected financial funding, which have time specific objectives.

The Maine DOT 6 Year Plan contains these sections: Highway and bridge programs, Passenger Transportation plan, Freight Transportation Plan, System Management Programs and Appendices. The Transportation Chapter of the Thomaston Comprehensive Plan will align itself with the 6 Year plan format:

Maine's Transportation Goals, 2000-2020

1. Support Economic vitality by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
2. Increase access and mobility options for people and freight.
3. Enhance integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the State, for people and freight.
4. Ensure local involvement, especially from non-metropolitan areas.
5. Improve coordination, cooperation and public involvement.
6. Integrate environmental and transportation planning decision making processes at all government levels.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Address highway system capacity deficiencies.
9. Increase transportation system safety and security for motorized and non-motorized users.

The 6 Year Plan further requires the following:

1. All deficient rural, principal and minor arterials will be addressed within ten years.
2. All deficient rural major collectors will be addressed within twenty years.
3. Deficient minor collectors will be addressed in partnership with those municipalities raising the required one-third match.
4. The Pavement Preservation Program will be extended to all arterials built to standard.
5. Built-to-standard rural major collectors will be repaved once every thirty to forty years in concert with major collector corridor improvements.

**II. INVENTORY**

**A. BRIDGES**

Thomaston's bridges are all in good condition with the exception of the Oyster River Bridge and they can be expected to provide at least 10-20 years of service.

1. Oyster River Bridge on SR 131 is the only Thomaston bridge listed in the 2002-2007 Six Year plan. This bridge is scheduled for replacement within the next 3-4 years. It is state owned and maintained, with a 48-foot span and buried concrete T-beam structure. Sections of the retaining walls have failed. It is a high priority for preconstruction engineering in the next (04/05) BTIP. Maine DOT Bridge maintenance will make repairs as required until replacement is funded.

2. Greenhouse Bridge is the only one of the three bridges that is town owned and maintained. It was rebuilt in 1993. A minor span on town-way, this 16-foot clear span has a steel stringer structure. Maine DOT will continue to inspect it on a two-year cycle.
3. Wadsworth Street Bridge (Iron) is state maintained bridge, with thru trusses and a main span pony truss. Maine DOT is completing routine repairs to pier caps. No capital improvements are planned. This bridge was repaired over the past two years.
4. The bridge over the railroad tracks on Wadsworth Street was replaced by MDOT in 2003.
5. Mill Creek Bridge is a state owned and maintained bridge on US 1. It has a 21-foot span and buried concrete slab. The structure is generally in good condition. No capital improvements are planned.

## **B. ROAD FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS**

Thomaston is served by a road network totaling 28.95 miles. These roads are classified by the Maine DOT as follows:

1. Arterials: Travel routes that carry high speed, long distance traffic, usually with interstate or U.S. Route number designations.
2. Collectors: Travel routes that collect and distribute traffic from and to arterials, serving places of lower population densities or removed from main travel routes.
3. Local Roads: Roads that provide access to private property or low volume public facilities. Local roadways are all roadways not classified as arterial or collector and serving primarily adjacent land areas.

## **C. ROAD INVENTORY**

As of 6/19/02, Maine DOT records show 5.26 miles of State Highway, 4.58 miles of State Aid Highway, and 18.59 miles of Town way. There are also .52 miles of so-called summer seasonal Town way. Total public road mileage in Thomaston is 28.95 miles. Reviews of these mileages are done periodically. A mail-out survey was sent to the town on 9/18/02 to verify the mileages. It should be noted that there are discrepancies between town and state mileage totals.

Please refer to the Transportation Appendix for comprehensive information on the dates that Thomaston's roads were last paved; the paving projects in 2003/2004 including length in feet, tons used and cost; and a list of roads to be paved in 2005/2006.

**Table 6.1 THOMASTON ROAD INVENTORY**

Roadway	Arterial, Collector, Local, Public Easement, or Private	Length in Miles	Owned by	Maintained by	Surface	Condition
Anna Belle Ln	Local	0.03	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Beechwood St	Local	3.4	Town	Town	Paved	Poor to Excellent
Bobolink Ln	Local	0.04		Town	Paved	Excellent
Booker St	Local	0.6	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Branch Brook Rd	Local	0.2	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Broadway St	Local	0.10	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Brooklyn Heights Rd	Collector	1.3	Town	State	Paved	Good
Buttermilk Ln	Collector	0.90	Town	State	Paved	Poor
Caroline St	Local		Town		Paved	Old carriage rd
Charles St	Local	0.07		Town	Paved	Excellent
Clark St & cul de sac	Local	0.24	Town	Town	Paved	Good to Excellent
Cross St	Local	0.05	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Dennis Dr	Local	0.06	Town	Town		Excellent
Dexter St	Local	0.48	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Dexter St Ext	Local	0.23	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Duane Ave	Local	0.06	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Dunbar Rd	Local	0.22	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Dunbar Rd Private	Private	0.10	Private	Private	Paved	Poor
Dunn St	Local	0.20	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Dwight St	Local	0.15	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Elliot St	Local	0.18	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Elm St	Local	0.17	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Elm St Court	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Emery Avenue	Local	0.18	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Erin St	Local	0.44	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Ferry St	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Fish St	Local	0.37	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Fluker St	Local	0.38	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Gay St	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Georges St	Local	0.14	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Gilchrest St	Local	0.09	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Gleason St	Local	0.6	Town	Town	Paved	Poor to Excellent
Green St	Local	0.34	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Greenhouse Hill Rd	Local	0.52	Town	Town	Gravel	Good

**Table 6.1 THOMASTON ROAD INVENTORY**

Roadway	Arterial, Collector, Local, Public Easement, or Private	Length in Miles	Owned by	Maintained by	Surface	Condition
Hannon Rd	Local	0.1	Town	Town	Gravel	Good
High St (SR 131 S/O US1)	Local	0.11	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Hyler St	Local	0.41	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Knox Ridge Avenue	Local	0.09	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Knox St	Local	0.51	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Knox St Ext	Local	0.06	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Kossuth St	Local	0.09	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Lawrence Ave	Local	0.17	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Ludwig St	Local	0.05	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Main St Mall	Local	0.11	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Marsh Rd (Buttermilk Rd area)	Local	0.40	Town	Town	Gravel	Fair
Marsh Rd (off High St)	Local	0.1	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Maurice Ave	Local	0.08	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Mechanic St	Local	0.10	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Natalie Court	Local	0.12	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
North St	Local	0.06	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Old County Rd	Collector	1.90	Town	State	Paved	Poor
Old Toll Bridge Rd	Local	0.26	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Oyster River Rd	Collector	0.61	Town	State	Paved	Good
Pine St	Local	0.18	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Pleasant St (Rockland boundary)	Local	0.30	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Pollution Control Rd.	Local	0.10	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Public Landing	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Ridgeview Drive	Local	0.50	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Robinson St	Local	0.09	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Ross Ave	Local	0.40	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Rte 131 to St George	Collector	0.60	State	State	Paved	Good
Roxbury St	Local	0.32	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Sawyer St	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
School St	Local	0.11	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Shibles Ln	Local	0.03	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Ship St	Local	0.12	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Star St	Local	0.08	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Stoney Brook Ln	Local	0.05	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Studley Ln	Local	0.73	Town	Town	Paved	Good

<b>Table 6.1 THOMASTON ROAD INVENTORY</b>						
Roadway	Arterial, Collector, Local, Public Easement, or Private	Length in Miles	Owned by	Maintained by	Surface	Condition
Sunrise Terrace	Local	0.50	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Sunset St	Local	0.20	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Sylvan Rd	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Thatcher St	Local	0.69	Town	Town	Paved	Poor
Thomas Ave	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Excellent
Thomaston St	Local	0.85	Town	Town	Paved	Good
US 1 (Main St) (New County Rd)	Arterial	4.74	State	State	Paved	Fair
Valley St	Local	0.07	Town	Town	Paved	Good
Wadsworth St	Collector	0.46	Town	State	Paved	Good
Water St	Local	0.41	Town	Town	Paved	Fair
Watts Ln	Local	0.27	Town	Town	Paved	Good
West Meadow Rd	Local	1.55	Town	Town	Paved	Poor

#### **D. TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND PATTERNS**

Major transportation linkages in Thomaston consist primarily of US 1, SR 131, Old County Road and Beechwood Street. US 1 connects our town with Warren to the west and Rockland to the east. SR 131 connects us with South Thomaston and Saint George to the south, and Warren to the north. The table below shows Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for the most recent years for which data is available. The volumes shown below represent both through traffic and local activity centered in our village. Seasonal variation, with peak volumes in the summer is significant, and is averaged in these figures. See Thomaston Transportation Road Network: Traffic Volumes and Safety in the map section of this Plan.

## 1. Volumes

TABLE 6.2 TRAFFIC VOLUMES				
Roadway	Location Description	AADT in 1997	AADT in 2000	Percent Change
US 1	Main St east of Beechwood St	14,290	NA	NA
US 1	Main St east of Kossuth St	12,870	13,070	1.6%
US 1	New County Rd northeast of SR 131 (High St)	16,690	16,560	-0.8%
US 1	New County Rd northeast of Old County Rd	12,680	12,950	2.1%
US 1	Main St east of SR 131 (W Main St)	11,010	11,240	2.1%
Old County Rd	Old County Rd north of Broadway	4,440	4,570	2.9%
Wadsworth St	Wadsworth St south of Main St	1,960	2,010	2.6%
Buttermilk Ln	Buttermilk Ln south of US 1	1,810	2,270	25.4%
Green St	Green St south of Hyler St	410	460	12.2%
SR 131 (High St)	SR 131 (High St) southeast of Main St	5,750	6,240	8.5%
SR 131 (W Main St)	SR 131 (W Main St) northwest of Main St	1,920	1,930	0.5%

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

## 2. Congestion

Traffic congestion lowers a roadway's level of service (LOS). LOS is a qualitative measure that characterizes operational conditions within a traffic stream and includes speed and travel times, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, and the perceptions of motorists and passengers. There are six levels of service, given letter designations from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F the worst. LOS E is defined as the maximum flow or capacity of a system. For most purposes, however, a level of C or D is usually used as maximum acceptable volume. Maine DOT has noted degradation in the LOS for roadways within Thomaston. Not surprising, US 1 has the lowest LOS grade observed, indicating moderate congestion. As an annual average, however, this figure does not reveal the heavy congestion that affects Thomaston during the tourist season. For planning purposes, a seasonally adjusted LOS should be used when analyzing the need for local traffic management improvements.



<b>Table 6.3 Level of Service</b>	
Roadway	Level of Service
US 1 Main St	D (portions C)
SR 131 West Main St	A
SR 131 High St	C
Old County Rd	B

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

### 3. Road Maintenance

Overall, Thomaston's roadways are in good condition. The Town works diligently with limited resources to maintain local roads. In 2001, utility poles were replaced along US Route One as part of a three-phase power upgrade with poles set farther back from the driving lanes.

Trucking activity causes most road damage. The State sets higher trucking weight limits on state and state aid roads than are set for interstate highways. Higher weight limits, as on US 1 and SR 131, support trucking businesses and businesses dependent on trucking services, which benefits consumers. The costs we save as consumers of products trucked to stores less expensively, however, may be offset by the increased taxes we must pay for more frequently needed road maintenance and for more repairs to our vehicles.

Harsh weather, which includes rapid changes in weather conditions, is another cause of road deterioration. Roads are most vulnerable to the weight of trucks and other heavy vehicles during the spring thaw, which is also a time of year when many natural resource based products are transported to market. As road weight limit postings are put in place, the conflict between road maintenance needs and the economic needs of local businesses are clear.

It is important to consider that most roads were not originally engineered for the weight they now carry. If money were no concern, the best course of action would be to rebuild each of the major service roads. That, however, may not be economically feasible.

The town has always maintained the salting and sanding of roads during inclement winter weather. Town personnel began plowing of roads in 2002; the town had previously contracted for plowing services. The State reimburses the town about half the actual costs of the town for the state roads that the town is mandated to maintain.

Maine DOT is responsible for all the non-local roads. Their authority includes the following: permitting of driveways and entrances, curb cuts, summer and winter maintenance, traffic flow and safety decisions such as traffic signals, signs, reconstruction and road widening.

## **E. MAINE DOT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Projects from the current Maine DOT 6 Year Plan that will improve Thomaston's roadways are as follows:

### **1. Principal Arterials**

- a. US 1 and SR 131, 0.2 mi. easterly of the Warren town line; easterly 2.1 miles to Pine St.
- b. US 1 Beginning 0.2 miles west of Old County Rd; easterly 1.9 miles to 0.1 miles westerly of the Rockland town line.

### **2. Major Collector Corridors**

- a. Thomaston to Rockport, Old County Rd. Beginning at SR 17; northeast to US 1 (backlog mileage 0.88)

### **3. Minor Collectors**

- a. Thomaston-Buttermilk Lane
- b. Wadsworth Street

Other projects are being considered for future work because they do not meet modern standards. "Modern Standards" for SR 73 implies a good base to protect the roadbed from negative drainage impacts. In addition, it implies 11-foot travel lanes and 3 to 5-foot shoulders. For US 1, the general rule of thumb is that Maine DOT attempts to provide 12-foot lanes and 8-foot shoulders in rural sections; 12-foot lanes and curbing in urban sections. In some instances, due to volumes and the existence of intersections, turn lanes may also be needed. Most often, the actual design details are worked through with local communities.

The Maine DOT has a Local Road Center, which is currently promoting a "simplified" pavement management tool known as the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) for use by municipal governments in developing road maintenance and improvement budgets. It's a program that helps the Director of Public Works to systematically identify roads that need repair, prioritize condition of the roads and then develop a plan to fund and execute the repairs and management. Thomaston has begun to implement this program.

The Maine DOT receives federal funding for the transportation system. However, federal funding can only be used for capital improvements. Only State funds from the Highway fund can be used to maintain the transportation system.

## **4. Costs**

For planning purposes only, the per mile highway improvements cost estimates for State roads are covered below. Per mile costs vary based on the specific

characteristics of the highway, the cost of the materials, geographic location and other factors. These costs are not applicable to local roads:

**Table 6.4 Cost for Improvements**

Improvements	Per Mile Cost
Crack seal	\$4,000
Microsurface	\$59,000
3/4" Overlay	\$84,000
Level 2 overlay	\$230,000
Pavement Rehab/reconstruction	\$300,000+

The maintenance funding that Maine DOT provides each community to assist with maintenance of state and state aid highways has also changed.

## **5. System Management Programs Safety**

Over 39,000 motor vehicle crashes occurred in 1999 on Maine's public roads, involving nearly 94,600 people. These crashes resulted in 175 fatalities, over 7,500 known injuries, and more than 8,700 possible injuries. The estimated cost of these crashes exceeded \$1.2 billion. These crashes affect literally every family in Maine, either through personal losses or increased insurance rates.

Historically, the number of crashes occurring on Maine roads has increased as traffic volume has increased, though the crash rate and fatality rate have declined. Improved road design, vehicle safety features, and public awareness of safety issues have all contributed to the declines both in the crash rate and fatality rate.

The 20 Year Plan recommends four strategies to improve the safety of Maine's transportation system:

1. Apply safety management principles;
2. Increase public awareness of safety issues;
3. Identify existing and potential safety problems; and
4. Address physical features contributing to safety problems.

## **6. Access Management**

Access Management is the planned location and design of driveways and entrances to public roads. Such planning reduces accidents and prolongs the useful life of arterial roadways. While arterial highways represent only 12% of the state-maintained highway system, they carry 62% of the statewide traffic volume. Maintaining posted speeds on this system helps people and products move faster, which enhances productivity, reduces congestion-related delays and environmental degradation. By preserving the capacity of the system we have now, we reduce the need to build costly new highway capacity such as new travel lanes and bypasses in the future.

Maine DOT has established standards, including greater sight distance requirements for the permitting of driveways and entrances for three categories of roadways: retrograde arterials, mobility arterial corridors, and all other state and state-aid roads. Due to the high volume of traffic on our roadways, our town has US 1 listed as a retrograde mobility corridor, and so comes under stricter access management standards outside of compact urban areas.

To maintain and improve traffic flows, future land use ordinances should include access management performance standards that are in accordance with current law.

## **7. Dangerous Intersections and Stretches of Roads**

Maine DOT calculates roadway and intersection safety using Critical Rate Factors (CRF), which corresponds to the number of times the actual accident rate exceeds the expected (average) accident rate at a given location, taking total traffic volume into account. According to Maine DOT, from 1997 through 2001 there were 343 reported accidents in Thomaston. There were no fatalities. Eighteen (18) accidents involved serious personal injuries; sixty-two (62) involved minor injuries, most involved property damage. Since 2001, there have been two fatalities: a boy was hit by a truck on Beechwood St. and a man crossing Beechwood St at US 1 was struck by a pick-up truck turning onto Beechwood St from US 1. The CFRs were above average, indicting accident-prone areas, along most of US 1, SR 131 and Old County Road. High CFRs were recorded along Old High Street and Water Street. Most accidents in Thomaston occurred when vehicles entered or exited US 1. Accordingly, it would be prudent to reduce driving distractions and improve sight distances in the highly traveled and congested areas of US 1.

Currently, the Thomaston Police Department calculates accident updates manually. The town should consider hiring a part-time data entry staff person to compile and update accurate transportation related statistics. This would allow the town to effectively transmit statistics to the State's computerized traffic data count system.

US 1 (Main Street) in Thomaston is the most dangerous road in Thomaston because it carries the most traffic. Not only are there vehicles in the travel lanes, there are vehicles backing up onto the roadway from parking spaces and entering or exiting the roadway from side streets and driveways, as well as pedestrians. Drivers also need to maneuver around deep trenches. These dangerous trenches house the culvert pipes on the north side of US 1. They have become a hazard to drivers who have pulled off the road. Accordingly, placement of under-drains in the north and south part of US 1 in conjunction with the installation of curbing is recommended for safety.

The greatest number of accidents in Thomaston has occurred accessing and exiting US 1. Therefore, it would be wise of the town to explore ways in which driving distractions can be reduced in highly traveled and congested areas. A traffic signal was installed at the intersection of US 1 and SR 131 south in 1995 to help regulate

traffic flow and increase safety at that intersection. During the school year buses and parents drop off their children at school, which creates congestion and hazards as vehicles attempt to enter and exit onto Beechwood Street. The town should explore ways to safely expedite the traffic flow onto US 1 during morning drop-offs of students and the afternoon pick-up of students. Perhaps a traffic policeman or a one-way direction for traffic would be effective during the school year. Thomaston should also enforce ordinances that reduce the amount of curb cuts in congested business areas. This would reduce the number of frequent, uncontrolled accesses and exits to US 1 and would visually reduce the distractions on this busy road. Safety would improve.

US 1 is currently the only east-west route through the town. Accidents on US 1 cripple the traffic flow and create long delays. The town needs to examine alternative routes for purposes of emergency evacuation, timely access for medical emergencies and heavy truck traffic. Thomaston should consider developing a new road to relieve Beechwood St. residents of truck traffic and provide an emergency route for US 1. The road would have a new or existing right-of-ways (R.O.W.s) between properties belonging to Mark Brooks and Lawrence Brooks to the north and Jones to the south and almost due east to, or through, properties belonging to Mark and Lawrence Brook, to or through, the town of Thomaston's woodlot, continuing across Mill River and skirting to the southerly edge of so-called Dragon Mountain and entering Old County Rd in the vicinity of the entrance to Dragon Quarry.

With the expected expansion of the Dragon Cement Plant, Thomaston's town manager signed a joint letter with Rockland on July 22, 2002 to pursue an Industrial/Recreational park on Buttermilk Lane (now the Pine Tree Zone). Thomaston and Rockland received a grant in the amount of \$250,000 from MDOT for development use. Maine DOT was asked to upgrade Buttermilk Lane to US 1 through the Rural Road Initiative Program. It is improvement plan #8466 signed on 5/11/01. Under this plan, the engineering department with Maine DOT will take off the broken shoulders and knolls and add a right angle space for the left hand turn into Buttermilk Lane.

The Maine DOT widening project on US 1, from the Warren/Thomaston line to Pine St. has been put on hold. When the project moves forward, the drainage ditches should be covered, and granite curb should be installed from SR131 north to SR 131 south. Sidewalks should also be constructed from SR 131 north to SR 131 south on at least one side of the road, but preferably both sides. The construction of the sidewalks should be wide enough to comfortably accommodate two adults walking abreast to reduce the need or tendency for people to walk in the road, thus creating a safety issue. In addition, from the Warren line to SR 131 north, reconstruction should be in keeping with the R-2 character of the area.

## **F. PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION**

The Maine DOT Office of Passenger Transportation's (OPT) responsibilities extend

to air transportation, marine transportation (including the Maine State Ferry Service), park & ride programs, pedestrian and bicycle transportation, passenger rail transportation, local public transit, inter-modal facilities and intelligent transportation systems. The Maine Department of Transportation, in 1998, created an initiative called Explore Maine. Its purpose was to explore passenger transportation options that are destinations in themselves and to plan and align transportation systems that would support these options.

## 1. Coastal Transportation

Coastal Trans was started in 1985 and is owned by the Methodist Conference Home. The organization receives its capital funding for vehicles through the rural transportation subsidy program of Maine DOT. They have offices in Rockland and Bath/Brunswick. They currently operate 8 vehicles and travel as far south as Portland and as far north as Belfast. They contract with the Department of Human Services. Their mission is to supply non-emergency public transportation services to low income, elderly, disabled and “at risk” children.

Coastal Trans is mostly funded by Maine Care (64%), Maine Department of Human Services (11%) and the Maine DOT supports 9% of the operating funds and 80% to 90% of its capital funding. The remaining 16% of operational costs come from a multitude of sources, including, contracts, municipal funding, United Way and others. Coastal Trans annual service provided to the residents of Thomaston for the fiscal year 10/1/00-9/30/01 is reported as follows:

<u>Trips</u>		<u>Miles</u>	<u>Value of Service</u>	<u>Individuals Served</u>
Van	1,342	8,419	\$22,694.82	35
Volunteer	477	9,425		
Total Trips	1,819	17,844		

Thomaston is in need of transportation options to support its recreational programs. The Maine DOT does not have any grants available for local transportation needs nor does Coastal Transportation; however, federal funding should be explored in order to strengthen Thomaston’s recreational transportation needs.

## 2. Bus Service

Concord Trailways provides scheduled service for Maine. The bus service supports transportation connections to the following areas: Calais-Machias-Ellsworth, Caribou-Houlton, Bangor-Portland-Boston-Logan Airport, Logan Airport-Boston-Portland-Bangor and Maine Coastal Route. The bus service goes through Thomaston, but no longer has a stop in Thomaston. Customers must board and disembark at the Maine State Ferry Terminal in Rockland, which is where the Concord Trailways is located. Daily service is provided for Thomaston residents.

### **3. Knox County Regional Airport**

Knox County Regional Airport (RKD), in Owls Head is located just 5.5 miles from the intersection of Buttermilk Lane and US 1 or 4.7 miles from the Rockland/Thomaston town line. The National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems designates RKD a commercial service airport. In addition to serving the needs of general aviation, it receives scheduled air service from regional/commuter airlines. U.S. Airways Express provides scheduled service for passengers and small parcels to Boston's Logan International Airport. Some flights are routed via Augusta or Trenton (Bar Harbor). Telford Aviation provided local air charter service, including airfreight, United Parcel Service and mail service to the islands of Matinicus, Islesboro, Vinalhaven and North Haven; however in August '04, Telford shifted the services to their division named Maine Atlantic Aviation, still owned by Telford. In Dec. '04, Maine Atlantic Aviation stated they could no longer afford to service the islands. During the last week in Dec. '04, Penobscot Island Air took over the contracts that Maine Atlantic Aviation had and began to provide service to the islands. Downeast Air is the Fixed Base Operator, providing fuel, maintenance and catering service to transit aircraft. The Knox County Flying Club has its base here and aircraft associated with the Owls Head Transportation Museum also use the airport. Rental vehicles are available at the airport from Budget Rent-A-Car.

The airport was constructed as a Works Progress Administration project, sponsored by the City of Rockland, in 1939. Beginning in 1941, the airport was taken over by the Navy and served as a satellite training facility to Brunswick Naval Air Station during World War II. The City of Rockland assumed ownership in 1946 and it was transferred to the Knox County Commissioners in 1968. The approximately 538-acre airport is located mostly within the Town of Owls Head, with a small portion in South Thomaston. It includes some off-site parcels purchased for environmental mitigation, including noise control. The size of the airport is restricted until 2022 by an agreement made with the Knox County Regional Airport, South Thomaston and Owls Head. Runways consist of a 5,000' X 100' primary 13-31 runway and the 4,000' X 100' secondary 03-21 runway.

In 1997, RKD had 69 aircrafts based there. In 1997, Knox County Regional Airport had 15,192 passenger enplanements. The Maine Aviation Systems Plan Update (Projections of Based Aircraft) show that RKD airport will have 65 based aircrafts by the year 2020, while Augusta and Bangor are projected to have 54, and 52 respectively. Refer to Chart entitled: The Maine Aviation Systems Plan Update (Projections of Based Aircraft). Currently, up to 25 planes on a summer day can be seen and heard over Thomaston in their approach to the airport, creating a distasteful amount of noise pollution for Thomaston's residents. Refer to maps entitled: Instrument Landing System, the Approaches to Knox County Airport and Thomaston Historic District. Since the airport is an uncontrolled airport, which means it has no control tower, the individual pilots are not under the jurisdiction of the airport. The FAA guides the planes in from their station in Brunswick. The RKD airport can only offer suggestions for flight routes and travel times. The airport

manager has been collecting data with regards to airport noise and complaints. Citizens are able to call 594-4131 and register their complaint. The type of aircraft, location and time is required when registering complaints.

The airport is controlled by FAA rules. Much of the airport is federally funded. Any changes to runways etc. need to be cleared through the FAA, since the airport accepted federal funds and agreed to their terms. Any changes that Thomaston might try to implement regarding the noise pollution from the approaching planes would require a federal study, but because the airport is small, the federal government has been unwilling to do so. The noise level determination is based on a 24- hour period, which increases the numbers of flights that would justify an effective case for changing the approach of planes to an area other than over Thomaston.

The State's designation of Knox County Regional Airport as an economic development airport focuses limited funding for runway extensions, precision instrument approaches, and other improvements to support statewide and local economic development objectives. The Instrument Landing System for runway 13-31 was completed in 1995 when the runway was extended to a length of 5,000 feet and equipped with a variety of navigational aids, making air traffic safer.

Directly related to the instrument landing designation is the new flight path of incoming planes over Thomaston. Furthermore, The State of Maine's Projections of Commercial Service Operations for the years 2001-2020 reflect a 1.70% growth, which would compound the number of flights over Thomaston. Commercial air traffic growth, on the other hand may be a selling point for companies exploring the transportation options available when relocating or developing a new company to the proposed Industrial Park on Buttermilk Lane.

Recommended future improvements at the airport include: repair and rehabilitation of both runways and the existing aircraft parking apron, extending Taxiway "A", grading of the Runway 3 safety area, reconstructing the access road, constructing a new terminal building, and constructing additional spaces for both aircraft and vehicle parking. Many of these "landside" facilities will be constructed only if the demand for them develops in the future.

#### **4. Emergency Air Service**

Telford Aviation provides both fixed wing and helicopter medical evacuation services using aircraft based at Owls Head. There is a helipad located at Penobscot Bay Medical Center in Rockport.

#### **5. Ports**

There are no port facilities in Thomaston. Rockland Harbor is the closest port in Knox County. It has a public landing and piers for vessels with a draft no greater than 13 feet and/or length no greater than 200 feet.



## **6. Marine Highway - Maine State Ferry Service**

The OPT is working with the communities of Portland, Bangor, Bath, Boothbay Harbor, Rockland, Eastport and Bar Harbor to develop the shore side facilities for various marine services including high-speed ferries, water taxis, and cruise ships. This effort will include providing inter-modal connectivity, whenever feasible. Thomaston will need to be active in the county and regional planning and stay informed of developments, since the tourist business in Rockland will impact Thomaston's transportation and economic development.

The Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS) provides transportation to Islesboro, North Haven, Vinalhaven, Swan's Island, Matinicus, and Frenchboro. The system is owned, operated, and subsidized by the State of Maine and provides year-round service. The Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS) terminal at Lermond Cove maintains year-round service to the islands of North Haven, Vinalhaven, and Matinicus. In fiscal year 2000, the Ferry Service in Rockland transported 196,139 passengers, 58,382 vehicles, and 3,005 bicycles (all one-way trips).

Capital costs for the MSFS are completely subsidized by the State and Federal governments. As a result, travel from the islands is inexpensive. The policy of low fares was established early in the 1960's to help preserve year-round communities on the islands.

The State's investment in the Ferry Service in Rockland is substantial and is expected to continue, with the support of Maine's voting public. The State invested \$2.5 million in the construction of a new 8,740 square foot, one-story, frame terminal, including offices and waiting room, and substantially increased parking and other improvements which were completed in 1996.

The State's FY 2000-2001 TIP includes \$5,000,000 to design and upgrade the existing single transfer bridge at the terminal with two transfer bridges and improvements to the fixed pier. These improvements will allow for increased vessel handling capabilities and double the ability to move traffic efficiently through the facility. This project is dependent on award of Ferry Boat Discretionary funds by the Federal Highway Administration and/or general obligation bonds. The TIP also designates \$300,000 for the design and construction of a new ferry facility at Matinicus. A 20 car ferry has been designed as a replacement for the Governor Curtis; however the anticipated \$5,000,000 construction cost does not appear in the current two or six year TIPs.

The Regional Advisory Council recommends that the Rockland Ferry Terminal share the facility with the High Speed ferry that will go from Bar Harbor to Yarmouth first, and then from Portland to Rockland to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

## **7. Passenger Rail Transportation**

Since 1871, when rails first reached Rockland, both passengers and freight were carried over the line from Woolwich terminal for the train ferry to Bath. The Carlton Bridge replaced the ferries in 1927. During 2000, the line was operated primarily for freight service. However, the Maine DOT's Explore Maine plan envisions future use of the Rockland Branch for passenger as well as freight service. Thomaston is not slated to have a railroad stop.

The Knox and Lincoln Railroad was completed to a station in the vicinity of the roundhouse and turntable near Park Street in 1871. Following completion of the branch through the South End to the steamboat pier, the line was extended to freight and passenger stations at Pleasant and Union Streets in 1886. A brick passenger station was constructed in 1917-1918, replacing the 1886 station, and served until April 4, 1959 when passenger service ended on the Rockland Branch. It was later used as Rockland's City Hall. Monies for the refurbishment of the passenger station has all ready been set aside by the state (\$400,000) and when the lease by Coastal Community Action Program expires, renovation will begin. The expected date is 2004-05. Thus far, 33 million has been spent on the new railroad system and the projected date for rail upgrade to Rockland by October 2002 has been met.

## **8. Parking/Sidewalks**

In 1995, Thomaston paved the following areas for sidewalks: 1 mile of Beechwood Street, 1237 feet along Dunbar Street, 600 feet on Old Route One at Old County Road, 330 feet on Pleasant Street, 400 feet on Dwight Lane, and 280 feet on Cross Street. In 1997 the town paved the existing Main Street sidewalk from Beechwood Street to Mill Creek. In 2002 Star Street was paved and widened to allow for safe pedestrian travel.

The issue of additional sidewalks connecting the schools to Main St, Booker St and Beechwood St. was brought up by a concerned citizen's group and was partially addressed. In response to this concern, the town has widened the pavement in some areas and painted yellow lines to designate a pedestrian's right of way. Additional sidewalks are needed in Thomaston. Funding has limited construction and maintenance; however, in '99, \$18,000 was allocated to sidewalk installation. More recently, the Main Street Enhancement Committee has worked with MDOT to secure funding for reconstruction of sidewalks in the business block. Construction of the new sidewalk, which will comply with ADA (American Disabilities Act) standards began in the spring of 2005.

Thomaston's major public parking facilities are viewed as being adequate with regards to accommodating the needs of the projected population and economy of Thomaston. In 2000, the town acquired and repaved land adjacent to Watts Hall to provide additional parking for the town office. In 2002, new drainage was installed at the Academy parking lot and the area paved. There are currently 69 parking spaces

in the immediate down town area. On Knox St. there are 9 horizontal parking spaces, with three next to the town office, two across the street adjacent to the Thomaston Cafe and four on the same side of the street as the Fire station. There are eighteen additional horizontal parking spaces on the Main St., 5 in front of the Watts block, 6 in front of the Masonic temple and seven in front of the Camden National Bank and Knox Hotel. Eighteen angle parking spaces are available in front of the Main Street Shopping Block, 6 additional angle parking spaces are next to the Police Station.

Behind the Main St. block are approximately 200 parking spaces inclusive of the Main St. block, the Red Barn Antiques building and the American Legion Post. The American Legion Post has approximately 50 of the approximate 200 parking spaces. If the American Legion ever closed, the town might loose a portion of their parking spaces. The Williams-Brazier Post # 37 of the American Legion's (according to their charter) property would revert back to the charter of the Maine American Legion Post to dispose of, as they would like. It would be prudent of the town to offer to purchase the property and give the Post #37 tenancy rights for a certain period of time or until they no longer can maintain their charter, at which point the property would revert back to the town.

Parking behind the Thomaston Main St. business block does not have painted parking space lines for organized and maximized use of parking space. It is recommended that the town paint lines for parking and consider incorporating shade trees and more street lighting at parking locations, specifically, the American Legion post, beside the Red Barn Antiques building and behind the Main St. block. In addition, it is recommended that the town determine what portion of the parking lot belongs to the town and which portion is the responsibility of the business owners or lessees. That way the town can determine who should be maintaining the parking lot. The ordinances should uphold business responsibility to maintain parking lot lines.

Additional parking has been added at the town landing. However, the demand for parking spaces for clambers and their rigs can at times exceed capacity.

a. Parking site locations:

1. In front of the business block
2. Behind the business block
3. Town parking lot
4. Harbor and town landing
5. U of Me Thomaston branch
6. Catholic Church
7. Beside the Red Antique Barn
8. School parking
9. Behind Watts Hall
10. Beside the Police Station
11. In front of the Masonic Hall
12. In front of the Baptist and Episcopal Churches

### **III. REFLECTIONS ON THE 1991 PLAN**

Transportation improvements since the 1991 Plan include the following:

1. Widening of US 1 has been partially completed from Warren to Thomaston.
2. Traffic signal at intersection of US 1 and SR 131 south has been installed.
3. Bridge over the Kennebec River from Bath to Woolwich was rebuilt in the mid-1990's. The Wiscasset bypass study is still underway.
4. The 1992 US 1 study was completed, resulting in a series of recommendations, one of which was to pursue a Wiscasset bypass study.
5. The railroad from Boston to Portland has been activated.
6. Plans for the railroad passenger service to extend to Rockland by 2004 are in place. The rails have all been upgraded.
7. Knox County Regional Airport has converted to an Instrument Landing designation and upgraded to meet instrument landing requirements.
8. The Highland Path has been through the Thomaston Town Forest, with plans to expand walking trails along the St. George River and Mill River.
9. The Wadsworth St. Bridge has been repaired.
10. New sidewalks/curbs have been put in on Wadsworth St., Hyler St., Knox St. to Green St., Green St. to School St., Booker St. between Main and Valley St.
11. The East Coast Alliance bike path is designated to follow US 1 through Thomaston to Rockland.
12. In 1999, \$18,000 was spent on sidewalk improvement and installation. (Wadsworth St.)
13. Roads have been identified by name and properties renumbered to comply with the E-911 system.
14. The Regional Transportation Advisory Committees (RTAC), which were established in 1993 but have since been abolished, provided a mechanism for regional input to Maine DOT in planning for transportation improvements in all modes. Thomaston is currently working with MDOT and other communities on new planning initiatives such as Gateway One.
15. Funding to rebuild sidewalks in the Main St. business block has been obtained. Construction began in the spring of 2005.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

Part of the six year plan by the Maine DOT has begun with regards to the widening and the rebuilding of the roads at the west and east portions of US 1. On the west end of town, Maine DOT has rebuilt a portion of US 1 in Warren from SR 90 toward the Thomaston town line. On the east end of US 1, the Maine DOT is planning to rebuild US 1 from the Rockland line to SR 131 south: the design is in process. The center of Thomaston will be the next segment for paving: however, no widening is necessary on this portion as it is currently wide enough. The town has already begun to take the steps to beautify the downtown through the reconstruction of the business block. The rebuild of US 1 to accommodate more traffic safely will have a significant impact on Thomaston's business and its small town atmosphere. Thirty one percent of Thomaston's respondents to the 2001 Comprehensive Planning Committee Town Survey disliked the traffic problems during the summer months and fifty-eight percent of the respondents supported a US 1 bypass to minimize the traffic problems in Thomaston and other coastal towns. The residents thought it was a good option for keeping heavy traffic congestion away from Thomaston's Main St. It is evident that transportation improvements will be needed to adequately accommodate the user demands generated by projected increases in population and development within Thomaston, the county and the region.

Thomaston's highways and roads are now and are likely to remain for the foreseeable future, the means by which most of our transportation of people and goods occur. The major issue for Thomaston residents is the increasing congestion on US 1 that peaks during the tourist season. Over the next 10 years, the congestion on US 1 will be significant. Thomaston Comprehensive Planning Committee and citizens should explore the designation and use of SR 90 to US 1 and the current US 1 becoming a Historic Route 1 designation.

In order to better regulate the traffic on US 1, it has been suggested that the speed limit from the Thomaston green to Fish Street be set at 25 M.P.H. for safety purposes and noise pollution purposes.

A traffic signal might be in order at the intersection of SR 131 coming from Warren at the US 1 intersection. Poor visibility and increased volumes of traffic make a safe entrance onto US 1 difficult.

Maintenance of local roads should be addressed with long- term maintenance costs as a long-term objective in order to reduce short-term repairs that become costly over time. It will be important for Thomaston to enforce the ordinances that regulate the amount of curb cuts on roadways to increase traffic safety and lessen congestion.

Accidents on US 1 cripple the traffic flow and create long delays. The town needs to examine alternative routes for purposes of emergency evacuation, timely access for medical personnel and citizen option. Thomaston should consider developing a new

road to relieve Beechwood St. residents of truck traffic and an emergency route for US 1. The road would have a new or existing ROW between properties belonging to Mark Brooks & Lawrence Brooks to the north and Jones to the south and almost due east to, or through properties belonging to Mark and Lawrence Brook, to or through the town of Thomaston (woodlot), continuing across Mill River and skirting to the southerly edge of so-called Dragon Mountain and entering Old County Rd., near the entrance to Dragon Quarry.

## **A. CORRIDOR-WIDE ACTIONS**

Corridor-wide actions that are relevant to Thomaston's comprehensive planning effort, listed in the US Route 1 Mid-Coast Transportation Study, are as follows:

1. Upgrade the entire length of US1 between Bath and Belfast to better accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel.
2. Implement a comprehensive traveler information and signage improvement program.
3. Discourage the strip-type development.
4. Promote driveway, site design and development standards along US 1.
5. Encourage towns to keep their growth areas near to, but not on, US 1, so as to avoid more strip commercial development.
6. Include provisions in local comprehensive plans that promote higher density, mixed use development around centers.
7. Enact local ordinances that provide incentive for developers to create bike and pedestrian ways and mixed uses in town.
8. Initiate a corridor-wide access management programs to control the proliferation of driveways along the corridor.
9. Construct 4 to 6-foot wide shoulders in developed areas as resurfacing or construction projects occur.

## **B. PARKING**

Downtown parking does not seem to be a major concern for the Town of Thomaston. The town's ability to meet the parking needs over the next 10 years seems to be adequate. What does seem to be a problem for Thomaston is the maintenance of parking spaces. The parking spaces behind the Business Block are not properly designated by painted lines and signage for the businesses re: bank, cleaners & laundry mat, real estate, antique shop, insurance parking, and dental office parking, etc. The question is, "Should the responsibility lie with the private business owners to provide the painting and signage or should the town maintain the parking areas by painting, providing signage and maintaining the surface area and charge back the expenses to the current business owner?" Not having proper parking space designations and lines is poor use of space and can create safety hazards for pedestrians and drivers.

An additional problem that was brought forth, when exploring the parking spaces in

Thomaston was the possible loss of the parking spaces owned by the American Legion Hall, located at the far end of the town parking area. The American Legion charter would revert back to the state charter if the amount of its members fell below 37. If the town were not able to negotiate a first right of refusal on the building and land, the town would lose control of that property and could possibly lose additional parking spaces and full usage of the parking area for town events.

Proper signage indicating the “no parking” areas along US 1 would increase safety. Access to the town post office is very hazardous. Trying to move in and out of traffic from that location is a safety problem. Over the next 10 years, with increased traffic, the town needs to consider buying the property behind the Rubenstein Real Estate Office to enlarge post office parking and offer an entrance and exit to and from the post office onto Beechwood Street or determine a safer location. This strategy would increase safety.

IN 1999, a town received a grant for Mayo Park. Parking spaces have been added to the Public Boat Landing; however parking there is still a challenge. During the summer months it is difficult to find parking spaces. Two of the parking spaces at the Public Boat Landing are “self-made”. Additional options need to be explored to promote access and safety.

## **C. SAFETY**

Thomaston’s critical factor rates for accidents identify US 1 as a high accident area. The Dexter Street Extension and the area near the Cinemas are both rated for high accidents. It will be important that the curb cuts and parking design for incoming businesses be reviewed and accepted by the town Board of Selectmen with ordinances in place to reflect the type of growth and safety issues that Thomaston will need over the next ten years.

## **D. PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE ROUTES AND SIDEWALKS**

The relatively level land in most of Thomaston’s built up neighborhoods makes the town ideal for walking and bicycling. However, heavy vehicular traffic and a lack of sidewalks in some neighborhoods make pedestrian and bicycle travel less safe and enjoyable than they could be. In 1999 a recreational lane was added to Route 131 south making the road safer for bicyclists. Some sidewalks are obstructed by utility poles, thus making passage especially difficult for those using wheelchairs. All future sidewalks that are constructed should be graded for handicap access.

Providing level walking surfaces on the sidewalks makes it safer for the elderly and the young when walking. Sidewalks should be added with curbs and connect the schools to the Main St.

The lack of sidewalks tends to isolate the young and those without ready access to private autos. Some subdivisions and other residential developments do not have

sidewalks within them or are isolated from the present network of sidewalks.

East Coast Greenway Alliance under the auspices of the Maine DOT has designated the area along US 1 as part of the East Coast Greenway Alliance, which is a connecting bikeway from Florida to Maine. An example would be the pedestrian bike path in Brunswick, which is part of the East Coast Greenway Alliance.

The pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as those on in-line skates, skateboards, and scooters should be accommodated on recreational bikeways that are separated from nearby roadways (as outside of Brunswick along US 1) outside the densely developed parts of Thomaston. Shoulders should be added to some rural roads to accommodate bicyclists. The town should seek federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian routes.

#### **E. BY-PASSES / TRUCK ROUTES / ACCESS LIMITS**

With increased traffic projections over the next 10 years being significant, it would be beneficial for Thomaston to support SR 90 as a US 1 bypass to limit heavy truck traffic through the business and historic districts of Thomaston. Thomaston should pursue the designation for US 1 going through town, as a Historic Route 1 designation.

#### **F. AIR TRANSPORTATION**

Knox County Regional Airport had always been a non-issue for Thomaston residents, until the airport switched over to an instrument landing designation. Before instrument landing designation, airplane approaches and arrivals were over the water. With the instrument landing designation, approaches come right over the Town of Thomaston's historic area. The noise pollution from the volume of arrivals has been unacceptable to Thomaston residents. The Knox County Regional Airport does not control the approaches and landings of flights. The airplane pilots are guided in by the Brunswick air station, since the Knox County Regional Airport has no control tower of its own. The only role that Knox County Regional Airport can take is to suggest routes that should be taken by the individual pilots. At this point, the airport is beginning to put into a database the type of aircraft, the location and the time that an aircraft is coming in, as part of the airport noise and complaint department. The number is 594-4131. Their objective is to analyze complaints and problems and find solutions that are agreeable to neighboring towns. Concerned citizens need to call and register complaints and support attempts to change patterns because the planes have an adverse effect directly or indirectly on a Historic District of Thomaston under sec. 106 of the Historic Act.

The airport is controlled by FAA rules. Much of the airport is federally funded, so any changes, like runways, need to be cleared by FAA, because the airport agreed to take federal funding. Changes require a federal study, but because the airport is so small, the federal government won't complete a federal study to initiate any changes.



Noise pollution is measured over a 24-hour period, and because of the size of the airport, the noise level over the 24-hour period would never be reached, since there would never be enough aircraft approaching or landing within the 24-hour period. The incidents of noise over the Town of Thomaston and surrounding towns are annoying. The noise level could negatively influence people's desire to maintain homes in the historic district. Unfortunately, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission was contacted by the Knox County Regional Airport to sign off on the New Historic Act, which in general states the air traffic would not adversely affect, directly or indirectly, or diminish the visual and atmospheric quality of life and it did sign off.

Regardless of the inconveniences, Knox County Regional Airport is a regional transportation resource. The nearest comparable airport is located in Augusta, with smaller airports located in Wiscasset, Brunswick, the islands of Matinicus, Vinalhaven, North Haven and Islesboro. The May 2000 Airport Master Plan Update anticipates increased use of jet aircraft, both corporate and commercial, with the projected sales of jet fuel more than doubling between 2002 and 2007 from 298,800 to 640,500 gallons. Questions to be explored include: Can Thomaston benefit from increased scheduled service to and from Knox County Regional Airport? What additional routes would be beneficial to Thomaston and the region? What will be the costs to Thomaston of construction and services designed to accommodate any increases in air travel?

## **G. RAIL FACILITIES / LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

While operated by the Maine Coast Railroad, the Rockland Branch has, within the city of Rockland, been almost wholly a freight-only operation. However, with the Maine DOT's Explore Maine plan, Rockland could be the location for tourist -oriented rail services and commuter service, with additional rail connections available at Brunswick. As a neighboring town, Thomaston may feel effects of this development. Questions to be explored include: Would increased tourist traffic from commuter train service in Rockland result in increased tourist traffic through Thomaston? If train stations continue to be used in the Pleasant Street area, will traffic continue to flow through Thomaston's historical district, or use the SR 90 bypass? Should Thomaston have a representative attend the RTAC meetings to keep Thomaston informed of developments and to position the town so the towns' growth is compatible to its citizens wants and needs.

The recent history of local public transportation in the city of Rockland, town of Thomaston and nearby towns indicates limited public acceptance and use of the services. Questions to be explored include: Would subsidy of a regional bus service lead to more use of public transit? Would this be an additional attraction to tourists and other visitors? Could it operate to regional destinations, such as the Knox County Regional Airport or to nearby towns?

## **H. INTER-MODAL FREIGHT SERVICE**

Due to the size of the market and service area needed to support inter-modal facilities, and the need for competitive rail connections in Rockland, establishment of an inter-modal freight terminal in Thomaston is unlikely. However, passenger rail service in Rockland may offer the opportunity to transport mail and express parcels on schedules competitive with highway trucking for some destinations. Questions to be explored include: Could rail passenger service also reduce regional truck traffic? Are there products other than cement that could be transported to Thomaston through Rockland by water? Are there other products that could be transported to and from Thomaston through Rockland by rail carloads, in freight service?

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

### **State Goal**

To plan for, and develop, an efficient system of public transportation to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

### **A. HIGHWAYS**

#### **Goals**

1. To ensure that US Route 1 is reconstructed and maintained in a manner that promotes safety, lessens traffic congestion, promotes a pedestrian friendly environment in the village areas, and is protective of Thomaston's historic character.
2. To maintain Thomaston's roads and sidewalks to a standard that provides for safety and mobility and protects the investment in infrastructure.

#### **Policies**

1. Improve and maintain Thomaston's roads and sidewalks in "good to excellent" paving conditions.
2. Require developers to meet adequate standards when building roads and sidewalks for future acceptance by the town as public rights of way.

#### **Strategies**

1. To work with MDOT and other communities on the Gateway 1 Project to ensure a regional approach to US Route 1 that also addresses Thomaston's concerns re: safety, access management, traffic congestion, and preservation of historic character of Route 1 through Thomaston village. [Town Manager, Comprehensive Plan Committee, Planning Board. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]
2. Amend ordinance to require that sidewalks be put in all new subdivisions located within the Urban Residential (R-3) District. [Planning Board. Priority: Very Important . Time frame: within 1 year]
3. Use granite curbing and concrete sidewalks on primary streets whenever possible. [Road Commissioner. Priority: Important. Time frame: Immediate]
4. Annually fund the sidewalk improvement reserve account. [Budget Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 1 year.]

## **B. BY-PASSES / TRUCK ROUTES / ACCESS LIMITS**

### **Goal**

1. To relieve congestion and improve safety on US Rte 1 through Thomaston, and reduce the negative effects of access on thru-traffic at arterials and major collectors.

### **Policies**

1. To develop alternatives to US Rte.1 through Thomaston.
2. To improve truck access to the industrial park, Pine Tree Zone and nearby, major industrial land uses.

### **Strategies**

1. Work with MDOT to route through traffic along SR 90 and re-designate US 1 as Historic or Business US 1 through Thomaston. [Select Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: raise issue as part of Gateway 1 discussion; ongoing.]
2. Work with M/DOT to examine options for a new east/west road, possibly connecting Beechwood St. with Old County Rd. This may occur in conjunction with the Gateway 1 Project. [Select Board, Town Manager, Road Commissioner. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: raise issue as part of Gateway 1 discussion, ongoing]

## **C. PARKING**

### **Goal**

1. To ensure safe and adequate parking for businesses, municipal services and residents.

### **Policy**

1. To establish responsibility regarding parking spaces and maintenance and work with local businesses to adopt rules and regulations regarding painting, signage and maintenance of parking spaces.

### **Strategies**

1. Adopt ordinance for business block parking with provisions for painting, signage, maintenance and lighting. [Selectmen, CEO, Ordinance Committee, Road Commissioner. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3years]
2. Secure right of first refusal from the American Legion for the property behind the Main St. business block. [Select Board, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: initiate within 1 year]

3. Investigate the town's ability to purchase property located behind Rubenstein Real Estate to enlarge post office parking lot and offer an entrance and exit to and from the post office onto Beechwood Street. [Town Manager. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

#### **D. SAFETY**

##### **Goal**

1. To improve the safety of Thomaston's roadways.

##### **Policy**

1. Work with the Maine DOT to improve signaling, signing and physical layout of roads and intersections that are high accident locations.

##### **Strategies**

1. Reconstruct the Oyster River Bridge on SR 131 north: currently included in MDOT's 2002-2007 Six Year Plan. Communicate importance to MDOT. [MDOT, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
2. Request the MDOT to make a study and report findings on safe traffic control at the intersection of SR 131 (from Warren) and US 1 by Sept 2007. [Maine DOT, Town Manager, Road Commissioner. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

#### **E. PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE ROUTES / AND SIDEWALKS**

##### **Goal**

1. To develop and maintain a safe network of in all areas where significant pedestrian traffic is likely to occur, and a town-wide network of bicycle routes useful for both local and regional bicycle travel.

##### **Policies**

1. To bring all sidewalks into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. Encourage the connection of all neighborhoods and major subdivisions to Thomaston's sidewalks, and provide sidewalks to connect schools and recreational facilities with the neighborhoods they serve.
3. Use whatever grants and cost-sharing opportunities are available for constructing and maintaining sidewalks, bicycle paths and other pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

##### **Strategies**

1. Construct sidewalks in neighborhoods in Urban Residential (R-3) District and provide for paved shoulders in low traffic areas where sidewalks would not be justified. [Road Commissioner. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing and long-term].

2. Work with utility companies to relocate utility poles restricting use of sidewalks and adopt standards for construction of subdivision sidewalks to require setbacks far enough to accommodate utility poles or trees between sidewalks and the curb. [Selectmen, Ordinance Committee, Planning Board. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing and long-term]
3. Apply for available cost-sharing programs to construct and maintain pedestrian and bicycle path network. Encourage the East Coast Greenway Alliance (under the auspices of the Maine DOT) to design a network of bicycle routes, similar to Brunswick along US 1. [Town Manager. Priority: Important. Time frame: initiate in 4 to 6 years]

## **F. AIR TRANSPORTATION**

### **Goal**

1. To encourage the provision of affordable air transportation services beneficial to Thomaston residents and businesses, and manage air traffic so as to preserve the quality of life in Thomaston.

### **Policies**

1. Work with the Knox County Commissioners, FAA and Maine DOT to provide routes and services desired by Thomaston's residents and businesses.
2. Encourage the County Commissioners to establish fees for services and/or realize the benefits of increased activities at the airport to reduce the need for County subsidies.
3. Support safe approach and landing patterns that minimize noise pollution.

### **Strategies**

1. Actively participate in the activities of the County Commissioners regarding Knox County Airport policies, operations, and proposed expansions to ensure that Thomaston's concerns are considered. (e.g. impact of flight patterns and associated noise which affect Thomaston's quality of life). [Select Board, Comprehensive Plan Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: initiate within 1 year]
2. Work with MDOT to provide year-round bus or shuttle service connecting transportation facilities and area communities. [MDOT, Town Manager. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: 4 to 6 years]

## **G. PASSENGER RAIL FACILITIES / LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

### **Goal**

1. To provide local and regional public transportation options to connect rail, ferries and the airport with one another and with other regional services and destinations.

**Policies**

1. Work with the Maine DOT and neighboring communities to provide public transportation options that would connect rail, water and air terminals with one another and with regional attractions, thereby making Thomaston and the region more attractive to tourists and residents.
2. To utilize the return of passenger rail service to Rockland in ways beneficial to Thomaston.

**Strategy**

1. Establish regular meetings (quarterly) with the comprehensive planning committee members of adjacent towns to coordinate and integrate a plan that reviews the impact of alternative transportation on our communities including: impacts on tourism and highway traffic, impacts on residential areas located along the railway, and the feasibility of commuter rail service to Bath. [Comp. Plan Committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**H. INTER-MODAL FREIGHT SERVICE**

**Goal**

1. To ensure the continuation of inter-modal freight for those local industries now using it and expand freight service, by all modes, for local and regional markets.

**Policy**

1. Work with the Maine DOT Office of Freight Transportation to assure the continuation of present services.

**Strategy**

1. Work with MDOT and local industries to support transportation needs for freight to and from the Pine Tree Zone to minimize traffic hazards. Look at future development areas, such as Buttermilk Lane, and determine how its development will impact traffic patterns. [Town Manager, Select Board. Priority: Very Important. Time-frame: initiate within 1 year, perhaps as part of Gateway 1 discussions]

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The intent of this Chapter is to inventory and define Thomaston's Town Governing Body, its programs and facilities, and to summarize how each serves town residents.

### **II. INVENTORY**

#### **A. TOWN GOVERNMENT**

Thomaston, incorporated in 1777, operates under a Board of Selectmen/Town Manager/Town meeting form of government. A Town Moderator, elected by the voters, oversees the Town Meetings. An Annual Town Meeting is typically in June with Special Town Meetings called when necessary. Easily accessed, the town office is located at 170 Main Street on the first floor of the Watts Block, a town-owned building rebuilt on the corner of Main and Knox Streets after a fire in 1915. The town is a member of the Maine Municipal Association; the Coalition of Maine Service Centers; the Regional Planning Commission; and the Maine Municipal Review Committee, a consortium of the original members of Penobscot Energy Recovery Corporation (PERC).

#### **B. TOWN ADMINISTRATION**

Town voters elect a five-member Board of Selectmen, a three-member Board of Assessors, and a five-member Board of Directors for Maine School Administration District #50 (MSAD50). The selectmen appoint a chairperson and vice-chairperson for the board and are responsible for hiring a Town Manager. The Town Manager hires a Code Enforcement Officer, Office Coordinator, Town Clerk, Accounting Clerk, Pollution Control Clerk, Harbor Master, EMA Director, Animal Control Officer and Custodian – all to be approved and confirmed by the board of selectmen. Also appointed by the board of selectmen with recommendation from the town manager are the Police Chief; Fire Chief, Ambulance Director, Recreation Director, Public Works Director, Tree Warden and Pollution Control Superintendent. The town office is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. and on Friday from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Assessor's Agent is usually there on Tuesday from 8-5. The town office prepares monthly newsletters to keep residents informed of meetings and other items of interest and puts together an annual report for distribution prior to the annual meeting. Announcements and events are displayed inside the office windows having Main Street frontage. The town has a comprehensive risk management plan to ensure that employees and volunteers are appropriately trained and equipped to perform assigned duties.



## C. STANDING BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

**1. Board of Selectmen.** The five-member board of selectmen meets on the second and fourth Mondays of every month. The selectmen appoint members to the following:

a. Academy Board of Trustees: A seven-member Board of Trustees is appointed by the board of selectmen to oversee the business and maintenance of the Thomaston Academy on Main Street. The Thomaston Academy is a multifaceted educational institution founded in 1847. It currently houses the Thomaston Public Library and the University Center at Thomaston, part of the University of Maine in Augusta. Facilities include classrooms, offices, a small gymnasium and the library. The town has upgraded and maintained the building by installing an elevator for handicap accessibility; re-framing the entire interior roof; installing new exterior roofing; painting and rewiring sections of the building; and improvement of drainage and re-pavement of the parking lot.

b. Watts Block Board of Trustees: The town-owned Watts Block is overseen by a seven-member board of trustees appointed by the board of selectmen. In addition to a commercial store front and the Police Department, the Watts Block houses the town offices, selectman's board meeting room, an auditorium with capacity for 299 people, a kitchen and restrooms on the second floor. The auditorium is used for town meetings and other scheduled functions, such as theatrical performances, receptions, banquets and meetings, making full use of the facility. The board of trustees maintains a schedule for its use. An elevator has been installed for handicap accessibility. Within the past ten years, the building was re-roofed with EPDM material, which has a 20-year guarantee, and the building's brick exterior walls have been re-pointed.

c. The Village Cemetery Board of Trustees: The Village Cemetery and all matters connected are under the control of a board of ten trustees, consisting of four members appointed by the board of selectmen; the remaining six trustees consist of the five-member Board of Selectmen and the town clerk. The committee is guided by appropriate ordinance. The town clerk serves as trustee and secretary of the Board of Trustees. The trustees appoint a sexton to supervise the regulation, maintenance and management of the cemetery, including planting, pruning, cultivation or removal of trees and shrubs. Town cemeteries under this jurisdiction are the Village Cemetery (Erin St.) and Morse's Corner Cemetery (West Meadow Road). Elm Grove Cemetery (Erin Street) is privately owned, and compensates the town for any work performed. At the current usage rate, there is adequate area for burials beyond the ten-year planning period. A tree nursery is located on the west side of the cemetery buildings for town-wide planting and replacements of trees on a regular basis.

d. Planning Board: Five members and two associate members are appointed by the board of selectmen for three-year terms to perform such duties and exercise powers as provided by Thomaston ordinances and state law. A Code Enforcement Officer is

hired by the town manager to enforce the town ordinances and to maintain records pertaining to such. This officer is also the local plumbing inspector. No building or structure can be erected, moved, added to, structurally altered or demolished without a permit. No building permit is issued except in conformance with the provisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance. See the Land Use Chapter of this plan for a summary of ordinances, and see the ordinances themselves for a complete description of standards and regulations. Established zoning districts within the town are described as follows: (Definitions described in Land Use Chapter)

- Urban Residential District - R-3 (Section 707)
- Transitional Residential District – TR-3 (Section 708)
- Rural Residential District - R-2 (Section 709)
- Rural Residential and Farming District - R-1 (Section 710)
- Resource Protection District – RP (Section 711)
- Commercial District – C (Section 712)
- Industrial District – I (Section 713)
- Shoreland Commercial District – SC (Section 714)

e. Budget Committee: Seven members are appointed by the board of selectmen for three-year terms. Advisory duties consist of reviewing and making recommendations proposed by the town manager on the annual operating budget, annual capital expenditures, supplemental appropriations and expenditures, and making recommendations on fiscal matters when advisable.

f. Harbor Committee: This seven-member committee, appointed by the board of selectmen for three-year staggered terms, serves as the Appeals Board for the Harbor Master's decisions, promulgates harbor rules and regulations and establishes fees. The committee is guided by appropriate ordinance. The Harbor Master, appointed for one year, enforces the Thomaston Harbor Ordinance and the rules and regulations pertaining to harbors and tidal waters under the jurisdiction of the Thomaston Harbor Committee and cooperates with other government agencies in enforcing their regulations.

g. Recreation Committee: This nine-member committee is appointed for three-year terms by the board of selectmen consisting of seven town residents, two alternates, one senior citizen and one high school student, the latter two in non-voting capacities. The committee is guided by appropriate ordinance. Duties consist of establishing programs and rules covering all town activities. Upon committee recommendation, a Recreation Director is hired by the town manager and approved by the board of selectmen. The director's duties are to work with and support the committee goals.

h. Comprehensive Plan Committee: A committee appointed by the board of selectmen, was reactivated in 2000 and has convened twice monthly since that time to revise the 1991 Comprehensive Town Plan.

i. Conservation Commission: Seven members are appointed by the board of selectmen for three-year terms with responsibilities for maintenance and enhancement of natural and scenic resources, protection of natural streams and water supplies, promotion of conservation of swamps, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes, enhancement of the value to the public of parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations, sanctuaries and public recreational opportunities.

j. Personnel Committee: The five-member committee, consisting of one selectman, two appointments by town manager and four town residents (plus one alternate) is appointed for staggered three-year terms. Duties consist of all processes and aspects necessary for the hiring of regular full-time and part-time employees. Based on committee recommendations, three applicants are referred to the town manager for final consideration. The committee is guided by a personnel policy manual, which has been reviewed by the town attorney.

k. Zoning Board of Appeals: The board of selectmen appoints five members and two associate members to serve staggered terms of three years. The Board of Appeals hears and decides appeals in which it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by the code enforcement officer or the Planning Board. The Board of Appeals grants variances on a case-by-case basis, adhering to an itemized list of exceptions found in ordinances. An appeal is heard by the Board of Appeals, once filed with the code officer or the Planning Board, and then is followed by a public hearing. If the Board of Appeals denies an appeal, it may not be heard again for one year unless there are special circumstances. Aggrieved parties may appeal to Superior Court in accordance with state laws within forty-five days of the date of the vote by the Board of Appeals' decision.

l. Library Board of Trustees: Nine members with staggered terms are appointed by the board of selectmen. These trustees are responsible for governing the Thomaston Public Library, hiring and supervision of library employees, appointment of the head librarian, and directing expenditures and investments.

m. Trust Fund Committee: Five members, including a town select person and the Town Manager, are appointed by the board of selectmen to oversee investment of town funds.

n. Solid Waste Committee: Two representatives from each of the three-town cooperative of Thomaston, South Thomaston, Owls Head plus the Maine State Prison, are appointed to oversee the Solid Waste Municipal Facility on Buttermilk Lane. The coop manages the transfer of municipal solid waste from the three towns to the Penobscot Energy Recovery (PERC) facility in Orrington. The three-town coop is a charter member of PERC.

o. Tree Warden Thomaston: has a registered professional forester and licensed arborist serving as the town tree warden. This warden was responsible for 27 new elms set out along Route One in 2001 and actively seeks tree replacements. A tree

nursery, maintained on cemetery land, is set aside for future replacement trees. Thomaston recently received a matching grant from the Maine Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program shade trees for city streets, the removal of dead branches and tree stumps from town property and for maintenance equipment. The tree warden works with Central Maine Power on the removal of trees having the potential of causing significant power outages during storms.

p. Georges River Shellfish Management Committee/and Clam Committee: The Georges River Shellfish Management Committee represents the Georges River, the clam resource, the licensed clambers and many recreational diggers. The Committee is comprised of representatives from Cushing, Thomaston, St. George, Warren and South Thomaston. Their primary goal is to manage the resources for harvesting while assuring future yields. This involves conservation of existing clam flats and re-seeding those that have been over harvested. Improved water quality has enabled the Department of Marine Resources to open flats in new areas. The Board of Selectmen appoints a three-member town Clam Committee that works closely with the Georges River Shellfish Management Committee.

q. Main Street Enhancement Committee: This committee's current focus is on the Main Street portion of Thomaston's sidewalk on the north side of the business block, extending from the Thomaston Grocery to Beechwood Street. This sidewalk will eventually extend to the Masonic Hall to the west and the post office to the east.

r. Sealer of Weights and Measures: By law, every town is obliged to have a Sealer of Weights and Measures. Thomaston's measurer is state-appointed and must have yearly renewal of certification. Duties include the testing for accuracy of all scales and metering units of any description used throughout the town (gas station pumps, fish scales, fuel companies, commercial scales, etc.) A seal and date are affixed after satisfactory inspection. The state is responsible for payment to the measurer for fuel station readings, but merchants, private individuals and other businesses must reimburse the sealer directly for services rendered.

s. Micro Loan Committee: This committee oversees contributions to the Coastal Community Action Program (CCAP), a non-profit agency, offering programs and services that build individual, family and community assets in Thomaston and the surrounding communities. Services include: promotion of safe and independent living for elderly and disabled homeowners with assistance for minor home repairs and home maintenance; micro business loans for start-up or expansion of small businesses; education of first-time homebuyers and assistance with mortgages; assistance with home heating and home repair loans; Head Start and child care assistance; and food pantry services.

t. Animal Control: An Animal Control Officer is appointed to handle animal complaints, most of which are related to strays, injured or barking dogs. This officer works closely with the Humane Society with whom the town has a contract.

**2. Board of Assessors.** The elected Board of Assessors hires an Assessor's Agent with recommendation by the town manager. The assessor is usually in the office on Tuesday from 8-5. A Town Moderator is appointed by a vote on the floor of each meeting. The operation of town services is carried out with municipal appropriations approved by residents at the annual town meeting. The Board of Assessors determines annual town assessments by placing a value on all real and personal properties. These real estate assessments assist the Board of Assessors in determining a tax rate (mil rate) to be established in order to meet the municipal appropriation costs. In 2002, Thomaston had an "In House" revaluation of all residential and some business real estate, driven by substantial increases in sale prices of town residences. This method of revaluation saves the town from incurring considerable expense in hiring outside consultants.

**3. M.S.A.D. #50 Board of Directors.** Five elected members along with representatives from St. George and Cushing comprise the School Administration District Board of Directors, who are responsible for the appointment of a superintendent and oversight of school policy and expenditures.

#### **D. TOWN-OWNED PROPERTIES**

1. Watts Block at corner of Main and Knox houses the town office, police department and commercial storefront on the first floor; an auditorium/meeting hall, board meeting room, kitchen, restrooms, food pantry, TIFF pantry, storeroom and distribution center on second floor.
2. Fire Department/EMS Building, 6 Knox Street
3. Pollution Control Buildings, Lagoons and Spray Fields, and Town Forest, 33 Clark Street
4. Cemetery and Garage, 57 Erin Street
5. Thomaston Academy, 60 Main Street
6. Public Works Facility, 68 AnnaBelle Lane
7. Town Beach, Water Street
8. Mayo Park and Town Landing, Water Street
9. Former Landfill area, off Fish and Roxbury Streets
10. Pump Station properties on Fish, Ship and Water Streets
11. School Property behind business block, north side of Main Street off Watts Lane The school property is owned by MSAD #50, of which the town is a member. Portions of the Little League field are owned by the town.
12. Transfer Station Property, Buttermilk Lane (as part of the cooperative with Owls Head and South Thomaston)
13. Stump Dump east of Beechwood Street and west of Mill River
14. Main Street Mall, public park on West Main Street

#### **E. PUBLIC SAFETY**

**1. The Police Department.** The Thomaston Police Department is now in a handicapped-accessible location on the first floor of the Watts Building, adjacent to

the town office. The force is comprised of five full time officers: a police chief, appointed by the town manager with approval by the selectmen; a sergeant, three officers, and four part-time reserve officers. The police chief, as commanding officer, provides leadership, guidance and supervision of members of the department. He assigns duty, schedules, shifts, makes out payroll, keeps attendance and sick leave records. He is responsible for the enforcement of law and maintenance of order; direction of the police work; and arranging for the attendance of one or more police officers at every fire. As well, he seeks to preserve order and to prevent destruction of property; regularly inspects town streets, wharves and lanes, and removes nuisances and obstructions. He is responsible for the maintenance and care of all property used by the police department and the submission of monthly and annual reports to the town manager. The chief supervises all police investigations and is on-call in emergencies 24 hours a day.

The department maintains 22 hours per day road coverage and two hours of on-call coverage. There are currently three police vehicles, two patrol and one administrative. Recent office renovations provide for better security, more privacy and improved efficiency. A video surveillance camera is in place at both front and back entrances. In the former location on the second floor of the Watts Building, the department had access to the generator used by the fire hall. This shared accessibility was lost with the move to the present downstairs location. The department has a town source for K-9 and bloodhounds for improved tracking capabilities. There is on-going cooperation with police departments of local neighboring townships. A fully computerized office system is tied into the Knox County Sheriff's Department, Rockland PD, Rockport PD, Camden PD and the District Attorney. Grant monies were made available for laptop computers in the cruisers.

In 2003, repairs to the front wall of the building following a motor vehicle accident, included a false wall placed six feet inside the front of the police headquarters. This was done to allow a safe space for those seeking a policeman. The foyer may be locked from the inside with a direct phone line to the dispatch office.

**2. Knox County Sheriff.** The County Sheriff's Office, 327 Park Street, Rockland, provides law enforcement coverage to towns without their own police departments and assists those towns with existing law enforcement agencies within the county limits. Routine checks and on demand services are provided by a force of 21 full time employees with 19 vehicles and 1 D.A.R.E. van. Employees consist of the sheriff; chief deputy; lieutenant; two sergeants; nine deputies; four detectives; two civilian employees; and one school resource officer.

**3. State Troopers.** Troop D of the Maine State Troopers maintains a facility at the corner of Ship Street and Route One in Thomaston with a staff of one commander, three sergeants, one lieutenant, one custodian, one secretary and 24 troopers. The troop's jurisdiction includes the counties of Lincoln, Knox Sagadahoc and the southern area of Kennebec

**4. Fire Department.** The Thomaston fire department consists of the fire chief, appointed by the town manager with approval by the selectmen for an indefinite term; the deputy chief and assistant chief are appointed by the town manager with approval by the selectmen. The chief and his assistants control the engine house and all apparatus, making rules for the government, discipline and order of the department and are responsible for the extinguishing of fires. The chief has sole and absolute control, command and direction of all personnel, supplies, and protection of property from fire. He is responsible for compliance with fire laws, ordinances and regulations. The department has three captains, three lieutenants and 25 volunteer members, two being junior firefighters. Town ordinance adopted the NEPA 101 Life Safety Code as the Life Safety Code for fire prevention.

The current 56' x 92' station on Knox Street with Knox Street access of three bays and one bay access in the rear of the building. Six pieces of equipment are housed within the station:

- a. Engine 1 1995 E One 1000 gpm Pumper; Replacement Date 2020
- b. Ladder 2 2002 Central States 75' aerial, 1250 gpm Quint; Replacement Date 2022
- c. Engine 3 1968 Utility Truck built by Thomaston Steel Works, back pumps, grass fire equipment, generator
- d. Engine 4 2002 Central States 1250 gpm Pumper A/B foam system, Cascade Air
- e. System, 6 kw hydraulic power generator; Replacement Date 2027
- f. Engine 5 1980 Continental Fire Truck 1000 gpm Pumper; Replacement Date 2005
- g. Forestry Unit 6 1977 Dodge Power Wagon 4x4 PU 250 gallon skid tank with 50 gpm pump. (This truck is on loan from the State Department of Conservation but is maintained and insured by the Town. The truck can be called to service whenever the state needs.)
- h. In-house Cascade System (1992) will need to be upgraded as soon as possible; Replacement Date 2007
- i. In-house generator Katolight (1974);
- j. In-house station compressor (1954+-); Replacement Date was 1990
- k. Audible Fire Horn, now out of service

The town ambulance currently utilizes a Knox Street bay within the station. This move opened up the one bay large enough to accommodate the newly acquired ladder truck, accessible from Main Street (Route One). An interior wall and second toilet were removed to lengthen this storage space, eliminating former storage rooms. The town recently re-pointed the brick on the exterior walls of the fire station, built in 1956. In 2003, the acquisition of a pumper truck and a ladder truck replaced a 1962 pumper and a 1973 Tele-squirt. Ongoing compliance with new restrictions, procedures and mandates consume non-emergency hours. Training is ongoing.

Statewide acceptance of the 9-1-1 dispatching system of Knox led to the closure of the Thomaston Dispatch Service on April 11, 2002. The fire station's interior space was rearranged. The former chief's office now houses the Emergency Service Coordinator's Office. The former dispatch center has become shared office space between the fire chief, ambulance director, officer's desk and a communication center.

**5. Dispatcher.** At the special town meeting in January 2002, it was voted to abandon the dispatch center because Knox County charged the town an annual service fee for E 9-1-1, regardless of the continued operation of a town dispatch center. As of April 11, 2003, dispatching services for the police, fire and EMS services for Thomaston are handled by the Knox Regional Communications Center (KRCC) through a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Call Handling Agreement. The KRCC is a 24/7 9-1-1 emergency dispatch center servicing Knox County. In 2002, the center handled 116,028 telephone calls, which generated 36,030 emergency responses. Of that total, 5,359 calls originated in Thomaston, generating 4,845 police complaints, 145 fire runs and 369 EMS calls.

The KRCC coordinates multi-jurisdictional responses under a unified command structure to Thomaston in emergencies. Backup radio ensure reliable communications with all public safety entities served. A 24/7 constant recording of all radio and telephone traffic through the communications center is made, providing audio documentation of all incidents for the town.

**6. Emergency Service.** An Emergency Manager Agency (EMA) Director is recommended by the town manager and appointed by the board of selectmen. The director works closely with the Knox County Office and the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). In the event of major emergency disasters or catastrophic events, the director reports to the Knox County Emergency Management Agency's office in the Knox County courthouse to participate in a public aid-related network. If necessary, the director would work with state and federal agencies in the procurement of relief disaster funding.

**7. Ambulance.** The Ambulance Department Director shares office space with the fire chief, in whose building the ambulance is housed. Recently the ambulance bay was relocated to the Knox Street side, allowing for more efficient egress to emergency response. Weekday per diem ambulance coverage was approved by the town providing for two licensed personnel to be on duty at the fire station from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. five days per week. Three medics, four EMTs, three intermediates (EMTI) and four drivers--all volunteers--respond to ambulance calls. The emergency service coordinator serves under the fire chief and ambulance director to manage day-to-day activities and administrative functions. Training is ongoing with certification mandated by state law. As with the fire department, volunteers are becoming fewer and fewer.



## **F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

The Public Works Director is appointed annually by the town manager and confirmed by the board of selectmen. The director is directly responsible to the town manager for the management and operation of the public works department and acts as a crew leader. He provides leadership, guidance and supervision to the three members of the department, assigning duties, schedules and shifts. He makes out payroll, keeps attendance and sick leave records. The public works department is responsible for road and sewer system maintenance and repair and the operation of the stump dump. The public works garage, located off Erin Street, includes a boxcar used to store construction materials and salt. Town vehicles, maintained by the employees, consist of two back hoes [1982 & 1992]; one five-ton dump truck [2001]; one five-ton dump truck [2000]; one five-ton dump truck [1994]; one five-ton dump truck [1990]---all of which have plows and sanders, some have wings. A Caterpillar grader [1968] will need replacement within the next ten years. A small four-wheel drive tractor is used for sidewalk snow removal, mowing and sweeping. Other vehicles consist of a pick-up truck with switch-blade snow plow and a one-ton dump truck on loan from the cemetery. Additional equipment includes an air compressor, paint-striper, lawn mowers, welder and leaf vacuum.

The public works department is responsible for the following:

- Maintenance of Mayo Park and annual seasonal installation and removal of the town floats at the public landing;
- Maintenance of town streets and sidewalks;
- Landscaping maintenance of town properties, including the town Mall, park and other properties;
- Annual painting of crosswalks and curbing;
- Seasonal clean-up of roads, sidewalks, storm drains and culverts;
- Installation of new catch basins when necessary;
- Winter plowing, sanding and salting of sidewalks and road maintenance;
- Overseeing paving of parking lots, streets, sidewalks and roadside ditches;
- Tree work and branch removal as required;
- Stump Dump container compacting and general maintenance;
- Call out for emergency clean-up of fish spills, sewer back-ups, tree parts in roadways and help in overhauling fire and accident scenes.

## **G. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITIES**

The Pollution Control Department (PCD) was established in 1990 to maintain and operate all of Thomaston's wastewater facilities located within its legal limits, including portions covered by interlocal agreement with other municipalities. The board of selectmen appoints the staff and establishes the rules and regulations for PCD. The superintendent is responsible for complete administration, operation and maintenance of the town wastewater collection and treatment system, except for the collection sewers. The PCD is under the general direction of the town manager and

the direct direction of the PCD Superintendent. (See Appendix for detailed information.)

## **H. SOLID WASTE FACILITIES (TRANSFER STATION)**

The municipal solid waste facility (MSWF), a transfer and recycling station built in 1967, is located in Thomaston on Buttermilk Lane. Manned by two employees, the facility is open four days a week (Tues, Weds, Thurs and Sat) from 8-4 and serves Thomaston, South Thomaston, Owls Head, and the Maine State Prison. A volunteer recycling program has been in effect since 1991 for scrap metal, newspapers and magazines, corrugated cardboard, glass, tires and some plastic. Waste from the station is hauled from the site to the Penobscot Energy Recovery Corporation (PERC) in Orrington by assigned trucking contractors, who charge a tipping fee by the ton. This fee increases annually due to increasing operational and transportation costs, which have more than doubled over the past ten years. In spite of ongoing voluntary recycling efforts with a local hauling contractor, the MSW tonnage (and associated costs) hauled to PERC continues to increase.

The 2003 Cooperative Solid Waste Committee budget expense line totals \$452,421 with an anticipated income of \$6,150. The net to be financed by the towns and prison is \$446,271. The three-town cooperative and prison population percentage shares were adjusted to reflect the 2000 census figures. Previously, the Maine State Prison population numbers were included in the Thomaston census for cost-sharing percentage figures. Therefore, the 2003 prison population number of 774 (per Sgt. Wooster of the prison staff/12/13/02) was subtracted from the 2003 Thomaston population figure and the recalculated percentage share will, henceforth, be charged to the Maine State Prison for cost sharing. Cost Share percentages are shown in Table 7.1. Based on the revised figures, Thomaston's monthly payment share is \$15,991.38, an increase of 14%.

**Table 7.1 Solid Waste Cost/Share Percent**

Co-op Member	2003 Population	Cost/Share Percent
Owls Head	1,601	24%
Prison	774	11%
South Thomaston	1,416	21%
Thomaston	2,974	44%
Total	6,765	100%

## **I. STUMP DUMP**

The town operates a stump dump off Annabelle Street with a staff of one, open on Wednesday and Saturday, for the collection of construction and demolition materials, brush, tree parts and natural vegetation, upholstered pieces, televisions, computers and cold ash. These materials are separated for trucking by private contractor to state mandated landfills. A wood chipper, belonging to the Pollution Control Dept.,

has recently been used to dispose of tree branches, thus eliminating the need for any burning and resultant ash analysis testing. Two 53-yard capacity open-topped containers are located at the stump dump, one for plastic and synthetic materials, including computer hardware and other materials not accepted at the transfer station, and one for clean wood that can be ground up for biomass fuel and hauled at a lower cost. The highway department crew assists by compacting boxes with a backhoe and moving other materials as necessary. The burning of brush has been discontinued due to a new state requirement that ash be tested when four inches deep (estimated cost per test \$400). For this reason, the town purchased a power feed for the existing chipper. Chips are currently composted with other organic matter and made available to the public. New policies on the disposal of brush and other herbaceous matter are pending.

## **J. WATER SUPPLY**

Thomaston's public water supply is provided by Aqua Maine. Serving PA, IL, OH, NJ, ME and NC, the Camden/Rockland Division is located at 855 Rockland Street, in Rockport. This department also serves Rockland, Rockport, Camden and sections of Owls Head and South Warren through a single water system. The entire system serves a mid-coast area population of 20,000 through 8,000 service connections. Thomaston represents 11% of this customer base, or a population of approximately 2,100 served through 940 service connections.

The water mains supply about 70 fire hydrants with an annual cost to the town of over \$1,000 per hydrant. (See Appendix for additional information.)

## **K. ELECTRIC POWER**

Thomaston is served by Central Maine Power Company. The local service center is in the Rockland Industrial Park. A new three-phase power line running through Thomaston to the Warren prison---necessitating the removal of several trees near the town center---now runs the extent of Main Street/Route One to Warren.

## **L. COMMUNICATION**

Local and long distance telephone service is available through a host of carriers. Local Maine internet service providers include Adelphia, Midcoast and several other regional and national ISPs.

Newspapers available include *The Courier Gazette*; *Midcoast Review* (free monthly serving Knox, Waldo and Lincoln Counties); *The Free Press* and *The Times* (weekly serving Midcoast Maine); *Fisherman's Voice* (Free); *Working Waterfront*; *Bangor Daily News* and *Portland Free Herald*. Boston and NY papers are available at local stores.

Radio Stations providing local coverage in the area include WQSS Camden; WBQX Wbach Rockland; WBYA Belfast; WMCM Rockland; WRKD Rockland; WWFX Brewer; W2kBh Village Soup

Thomaston's post office has been on Main Street in the center of town since the early 1960's and currently has nine employees with three city carriers, two rural carriers, and one sub. Hours are M-F 9-4; Saturdays 9-3 (lobby). A UPS Distribution Center is located in nearby Rockland Industrial Park with pick-ups and deliveries in the Thomaston made daily. UPS operates a Brown Store in the Harborfront Mall in Rockland. FedEx also services the area.

Adelphia Cable services the Thomaston area and is located on Old County Road in Rockland. Cable services include Broadcast and Basic (with 28 channels); Digital Cable (26); Pay Per View Movies and Special Events (27); Analog Premiums, and Power Link Packages with Leased Modem.

## **M. HEALTH CARE**

Although Thomaston currently has no doctors practicing within the town, many are located nearby. Penobscot Bay Medical Center, Rockport, is a 109-bed full service community hospital with a medical staff of over 85 physicians. A full range of specialty services is offered, including a 24-hour emergency department, pharmacy, birthing center, and both inpatient and outpatient care. There are two dental offices in Thomaston and adequate numbers of both physicians and dentists located within a ten-mile radius of the town limits. Kno-Wal-Lin Home Health Care, a division of Northeast Health, provides home health visits throughout the three-county area of Knox, Waldo and Lincoln. There are several optometrists in the area. The Department of Human Services and Public Health Nurses and Rockland District Nursing Association operate from Rockland. Currently, there are no nursing homes located within the town. Two boarding houses are in Thomaston, Lucette and Vera Brandise, and there is a state group home.

## **N. SMALL ANIMAL POUND**

The Humane Society of Knox County, a non-profit organization located off Dexter Street Extension in Thomaston, provides shelter and adoption programs for cats, dogs and rabbits. Fees for adoptions and acceptance of stray animals are set to help defray expenses but a good portion of support is from donations by businesses, towns and individual donors.

## **O. CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

Thomaston's public schools are under Maine School Administrative District 50 (MSAD 50), which also includes elementary schools in Cushing and St. George. There are three schools in Thomaston, sited in a campus-like setting to the rear of

the downtown business area. See the Population Chapter of this plan for enrollment projections.

**1. The Lura Libby School.** Constructed in 1949 with expansions in 1954, 1990 and 1996, the total area is approximately 22,200 square feet. With a maximum capacity of 250 students, it currently serves 214 grade K-4 students, 172 of whom reside in Thomaston and 42 of whom reside in Cushing. In general, the facility is in good condition.

**2. Thomaston Grammar School.** Constructed in 1982 with expansion in 2001, the total area is approximately 34,500 square feet. With a maximum capacity of about 260, it currently serves 218 grade 5-8 students, 58 of whom reside in Cushing, 150 of whom reside in Thomaston, and 52 residing in St. George. In general, the building is in good condition.

**3. Georges Valley High School.** Constructed in 1962 with expansions in 1987, 1997 and 2000, the total area is approximately 50,950 square feet. With a maximum capacity of 370 students, it currently serves 354 grade 9-12 students. In general, the building is in fair condition.

**4. District Offices.** The District Offices are located in leased space above Fleet Bank in the downtown business district.

**5. Day Care and Nurseries.** Mid-Coast Children's Services in Rockland provides and coordinates support services for all developmentally-delayed and at-risk children from birth to 5, as well as for their families. Parent education is also provided. Creative Learning and Child Care Center (6 weeks to 5 years) is operated by Pen Bay Medical Center. Wee Care Day Care Center is located in South Thomaston; Ashwood Waldorf School, Children's House Montessori School, Helping Hands Daycare and the Growing Tree Learning Center are located nearby.

**6. University of Maine.** The University Center, part of the University of Maine System, is located in Thomaston. Centered in the former Thomaston Academy building on Main Street (shared with the town library), it offers a number of "course delivery systems". A variety of courses is available to qualified individuals. Senior citizens have been allowed to audit courses. In 2002 a Coastal Senior College was activated.

**7. Thomaston Public Library.** The Thomaston Public Library has been located in the town-owned Thomaston Academy building since 1986. Operating six days a week (Mon-Sat), it is governed by a nine-person board of directors. Several community programs are offered (Chess, Pre-School Stories and Activities, and crafts in addition to special scheduled programs and summer programs). The library has 28,000 volumes, including books, videos and books-on-tape, with a circulation of about 45,000, and two computers with Internet access. It is run by a full-time staff of one with four part-time staff and four volunteers allowing for a daily staff of two. The

library currently uses its endowment capital for operating expenses. Five years ago, it nearly closed due to insufficient funds and, as a result, currently receives about \$19,000 in town support. The library is covered by town insurance but the one full time staff, the director, does not receive either medical or retirement benefits. Grants from MBNA and the Libra Foundation are being applied to the library's automation. Library programs and shelving space are currently maximized with no room for expansion.-

## **8. Museums.**

a. Montpelier, The General Henry Knox Museum The Montpelier Mansion, High Street, is a replica of the home of Major General Henry Knox. It is a museum, offering a glimpse of life into the late eighteenth century home of one of Maine's most honored leaders. Ownership of the mansion was transferred by the state in 1999 to the Friends of Montpelier, a group of volunteers from the area, and remains an important cultural attraction. A major fundraiser was initiated in 2002-03 with matching funds awarded by the Sunshine Lady Foundation. These funds are being applied toward the preservation of the building's interior rooms and artifacts, creation of the first comprehensive archival catalog of the collections, initiation of a historically correct landscape and garden plan, completion of work on the exterior façade and continued development of educational programs for the schools. The museum is open during the summer months for visitors and is the annual site for the Project Graduation in May, the Major General Henry Knox birthday celebration in July, a fall weekend tour in October, a Christmas Open House in December for the townspeople and other tours made by special arrangement. The Friends of Montpelier take an active role in pursuing grant monies for continuing restoration projects and ongoing museum activities.

b. Thomaston Historical Society The Thomaston Historical Society operates a museum on Knox Street in a brick building built in 1795; the only original building remaining of the General Henry Knox estate. The society opens the museum during the summer months, holding meetings of historical interest monthly between April and November. The building has been restored and houses various rotating exhibitions relating to the town's history. The society has produced several books covering historic topics pertaining to the town. Land was acquired from the state and an ell was replaced on its original footprint for use as a climate-controlled archival wing. The society worked with the Thomaston public library, MSAD #50 and the town office on the installation of *Museum in the Streets* in 2002. Plaques in English and French are strategically placed near town sidewalks, facilitating self-guided walking tours.

The museum building houses letter collections, family Bibles, business ledgers and day books, shipping records, shipbuilding records, an extensive collection of historic photographs, old town records (including deaths, births and marriages), oil paintings of ships and prominent townspeople, shipbuilding materials, antique dolls, household

furnishings including a baby carriage, a marble mantelpiece from an early Thomaston marble quarry, samplers, kitchen items and china.

### **III. REFLECTION ON 1991 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Since the 1991 Plan was accepted, the town has continued to minimize the suburbanization of Thomaston, maintaining a visual distinction between the outer limits of the compact village area and the surrounding more rural area. At that time it was hoped open land would be preserved by requiring larger lots beyond the limits of water and sewer lines, land use controls and public purchase of open land for parks, recreation and wildlife preserves. Purchase of the former prison property will, hopefully, allow some land for a park and recreational use. Several clustered subdivisions have been added within the village limits in keeping with the policy to encourage increased densities of development within the areas already served by utilities.

1. *In 1991 the disposition of the sewer system and WWTP were unknown.*  
A new Waste Water Treatment Facility was constructed. Given the relocation of the Maine State Prison and the resultant loss in flows, the treatment plant has a significantly higher capacity than necessary. A three-town cooperative continues to address municipal solid waste. Recycling efforts need immediate attention.
2. *Investigate and implement if feasible, "curbside" pickup by private haulers.*  
Some residents are using private contract garbage haulers.
3. *Encourage home composting of garden and lawn wastes.*  
A program designed to address this was unsuccessful and discontinued.
4. *Maintain close contact with fire and ambulance personnel so the present high level of performance of these services can be continued.*  
This has been ongoing but performance will be diminished if current shortage of volunteers continues.
5. *Continue to support regional medical services of assistance to Thomaston residents, including those providing transportation for medical patients.*  
(See information on Coastal Trans, Public Transportation in the Transportation Chapter)
6. *Continue Town support of the Friends of Montpelier and work closely with the State to stop the deterioration of Montpelier.*  
Ownership of Montpelier was transferred by the state in 1999 to the Friends of Montpelier and remains an important cultural attraction in the town. The town continues to cooperate in lending support to the museum.

7. *Construct a sand and salt shed by 1996.*

The town was in the process of complying with an earlier state law mandating the building of a sand and salt shed, when the state, due to insufficient funding, withdrew the requirement. The pile is ranked by the DEP as Priority 5; a shed is no longer required.

8. *The Conservation Commission was established in 1996.*

With the alteration of wetlands for the building of the new pollution control facility and spray fields, the state and federal government required Thomaston to set aside lands in a conservation easement. This parcel is part of the Thomaston town forest, now under the management of the Thomaston Conservation Commission. In 1996, the board of selectmen discouraged involvement by the TCC in private land issues. The Conservation Commission focuses its efforts on recreational opportunities in the town forest and on other public land.



#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

Thomaston's growth rate over the next ten-year period may be dramatically impacted by the removal of the Maine State Prison in 2002, and an overall population increase throughout midcoast Maine. Building and plumbing permit requests have increased substantially, and new land subdivisions are currently under review. Town services will need to grow with demands, directly impacting almost every service currently offered.

Since 84% of the town-wide survey responses from homeowners favored Thomaston's small town atmosphere and viewed the public safety services with favorable ratings, this would indicate the town should continue improving current services as needs arise. The town should formulate new or rework existing ordinances to protect its historical character and small town atmosphere, while providing essential services to its growing citizenry. Although 78% of the survey respondents gave fair to excellent marks for Thomaston's town parks and open spaces, half of those responding want additional small parks developed over the next ten years. Forty-four percent want nature programs developed, in line with TCC plans for nature trail extensions. A community center was favored by 52%. Town acquisition of the former prison site provides an opportunity to add public open space and extend the town trail through the property. Should funds become available, a portion of the land could be used for a new community facility.

Since adoption of the last comprehensive plan, both the town office and the town's police department have moved into restructured office space within the Watts Block, resulting in a more efficient use of space and both are now handicapped accessible. The facility is adequate. The town office personnel continue to work on maintaining adequate records of town properties and equipment. The town maintains a Fixed Asset Inventory of capital equipment.

The needs and requirements for the police department directly reflect changes within the community and new state laws.

The utilities in the fire department have not been upgraded since construction in 1956 and require major upgrades. The 60-amp electrical service needs to be upgraded to 200 amps. The present boiler is not efficient for heating the building. Although the boiler was replaced a few years ago, no efficiency upgrades were made. The present air system for whistle alarm, built and installed by Thomaston Steel Works in the mid 1950s, failed state inspection. There is no ventilation exhaust system. Fire trucks keep getting larger because more equipment is carried on fewer vehicles. Current space is filled to capacity. The fire equipment currently owned by the town is sufficient to meet needs for the planning period.

Ten years ago, availability of adequate numbers of volunteers for staffing both the fire and EMS departments was a problem. This situation has become even more severe.

Volunteer staffing is becoming increasingly difficult, partly due to training and the demands of full-time employment. It is becoming more difficult to retain fire and other emergency personnel since many persons who have volunteered now commute to jobs out of town. Also new federal and state mandates requiring additional hours of volunteer training time---most of which is held off-site at state regional facilities at considerable distances---create additional expense and time for already busy volunteers. A fulltime cross-trained fire/EMS department day shift may be necessary to fill the lack of manpower.

The County Emergency Management Agency is currently gathering flood plain information to be filed with the MEMA.

Since the hydraulic rams and other associated equipment at the transfer station are over 30 years old, the Co-op is planning to rebuild at the current site. The containers for recycled materials will be moved to allow the relocation of the packing equipment.

Education continues to play an important role in the town with the presence of the University Center on Main Street--part of the University of Maine--and the Coastal Senior College. Space in the former Thomaston Academy building is presently leased to the University from the Town of Thomaston and the building is shared with the town library.

If the town library is to grow to meet the needs of town residents, additional space is needed. If the library should ever relocate, the University should be encouraged to expand into the rest of the Academy Building. The former prison site may provide a site for a new library should funds become available.

With respect to town government, the Select board appoints both the Planning Board members and the Zoning Board of Appeals members. To improve checks and balances and avoid conflicts of interest, members of the Zoning Board of Appeals should be elected rather than appointed.

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

### **A. GOALS**

#### **State Goal**

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

#### **State Purpose**

To undertake an inventory and analysis of capital facilities and public services necessary to support growth and development and to protect the environment and health, safety and welfare of the public and the costs of those facilities and services.”

#### **Local Goal**

To continue to improve the present system of public services and facilities, keeping pace with and anticipating community growth.

### **B. POLICIES**

1. To provide for public safety, health and welfare through the maintenance of adequate facilities and equipment and the provision of appropriate training for town government functions such as the Town Office, Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Pollution Control and Public Works. Maintain up-to-date inventory of town properties, infrastructure and other assets.
2. To work cooperatively with neighboring municipalities in the provision of public services such as water, sewer, solid waste management, public safety, and public transportation using interlocal agreements where appropriate.
3. To maintain streets, sidewalks and other town infrastructure in a safe condition.
4. To use provision of public services such road improvements and water and sewer extensions to encourage development in designated growth areas to maximize return on investment and recoup loss of sewer-use revenue due to relocation of the State Prison.
5. To continue municipal support of educational, historic and cultural facilities and activities of benefit to town residents.

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING GOALS**

See the Capital Investment Plan, following the Fiscal Capacity Chapter, for the estimated costs of strategies that require capital outlays.

1. **Town Inventory:** Continue to maintain up-to-date inventory of town assets using Government Accounting Standard Bulletin 34 [GASB]. [Responsibility: Town

Manager, Assessor's Agent and Board of Assessors. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

2. **Conservation Commission:** Work through the Thomaston Conservation Commission (TCC) to expand the trail system and otherwise expand and support open space opportunities for the town. The former landfill area off Thatcher Street is a prime example of a potentially threatened area that should be preserved as one of the few vistas leading to the river. Investigate possibilities of continuing the town trail through a portion of the former prison property. [Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, TCC, Planning Board. Priority: Important. Time frame: portions ongoing]
3. **Public Safety:** Install an independent generator system for the police station and town office or reconnect with the fire department's generator. [Responsibility: Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Police, Fire, EMS Depts. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 yrs]
4. **Public Safety Personnel:** Continue to maintain current risk management program and support ongoing training for police, fire and emergency medical service personnel. Develop volunteer recruitment/retention plan. [Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Police, Fire, EMS Depts. Priority: Critical. Time frame: training is ongoing; develop plan within 3 years]
5. **Streets and Sidewalks:** Continue support of the Main Street Enhancement Committee and extension of improved sidewalks along the length of Main Street and into the neighborhood streets especially those leading to the schools and other public facilities. Install new sidewalks and upgrade existing walks throughout the town. Investigate an aesthetically pleasing and more durable surface alternative to macadam on walks. Upgrade street lighting. With the installation of *Museum in the Streets* and increased pedestrian traffic, it is important there be safe pedestrian walkways within the village. [Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Main Street Enhancement Committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: portions ongoing, long term]
6. **Solid Waste Transfer Station:** Update procedures at the Solid Waste Facility and Transfer Station on Buttermilk Lane and address recycling program. Institute a mandatory recycling program. Re-design present unused space at the solid waste facility within the fenced area on Buttermilk Lane by relocating access and egress. Address the rapid escalation of tipping fees. Promote regionalization with surrounding townships. [Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Tri-town representatives. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
7. **Sewer and Pollution Issues:** Cluster housing would require fewer sewers to serve more residences. Work to increase number of users in designated growth areas without compromising the town's historical architectural character. Extend

wastewater collection system to Pine Tree Zone and Route One east of the cement plant. [Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, and Pollution Control Dept. Priority: Critical. Time frame: ongoing]

8. **Post Office:** Access to the present post office parking lot is both difficult and dangerous during peak traffic periods. An alternative traffic pattern for post office patrons and employees should be undertaken by encouraging the landlord to purchase available land to improve access and egress to the building via Beechwood Street. [Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, MDOT. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: long term]
9. **Universities:** Create a task force of citizens to initiate a long-term plan for the expansion of the satellite campus of the University of Maine. [Responsibility: Selectmen. Interested citizens. Priority: Important. Time frame: long term]
10. **Library:** Explore options for expansion and/or relocation of town library. [Responsibility: Library Trustees. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: long term]
11. **Watts Hall:** Retain ownership of Watts Hall for community programs. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: ongoing]
12. **Museums:** Continue support of Montpelier and Thomaston Historical Society in their collective attempts to preserve and promote the historical significance of General Henry Knox and the Town of Thomaston. [Responsibility: Selectmen, Budget Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: ongoing]
13. **Communications:** Explore the cost and feasibility of televising various town meetings. [Responsibility: Town Manager. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
14. **Town Government:** Consider moving to new system whereby members of the Zoning Board of Appeals are elected by voters. [Selectmen, Town Meeting. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

## **APPENDIX: Wastewater Treatment Facilities**

Additional information on wastewater treatment facilities:

In 1990, the town was forced into a Consent Agreement with the State of Maine due to years of neglect of its wastewater collection and treatment system. In response, the town initiated a wastewater system improvement program, to improve the water quality of the St. George River by the elimination of combined sewer overflows (C.S.O's) and to improve the compliance record of the treatment facility. That same year, the town began an aggressive sewer replacement program to eliminate the C.S.O's. Engineers were retained to conduct an evaluation of the existing treatment plant to determine the scope of work necessary to upgrade the plant to meet current and future needs of the town.

In 1992, the town determined that it was in its best interest to construct a new treatment facility. The town and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP.) agreed to evaluate alternatives that would eliminate the existing discharge to the St. George River. The St. George River is a very productive shellfish area and by eliminating Thomaston's wastewater discharge, much of the area previously closed to shellfishing could be opened. It was determined that complete elimination of the river discharge was not economically feasible. The Town and the DEP worked together to develop an alternative that fit within the available funding and would utilize land application of treated effluent for as much of the year as possible (May through October). Discharge to the river occurs only in the months of January, February and March when much of the river is typically frozen and less accessible for shellfishing.

The new wastewater treatment facility went on-line at the end of 1997. The treatment facility consists of three aerated treatment lagoons constructed in series with a total capacity of 21 million gallons. Aeration is provided to the treatment lagoons via three blowers, air distribution piping, and 98 fine-bubble diffuser assemblies. A storage lagoon follows the treatment lagoons with a capacity of 36 million gallons. The facility is designed to treat an average of 427,000 gallons per day.

About nine months after the new treatment facility began operations, the Maine State Prison (MSP) announced plans to move the prison to another town. This reduction in flow left the plant running at only a little over 40% of its capacity.

Prior to 1991, the cost of operating the wastewater collection and treatment system was paid from property taxes. Since then, the users have been billed directly with the charge based on the volume of water used. In the first nine years of user charges, the rate was raised only once. As a result of the move of the Maine State Prison, a 16.5% rate increase was implemented in 2001. This has left Thomaston with one of the highest sewer rates in this area. DEP guidelines limit sewer charges to 2% of the median income, and this is likely to be exceeded as it will be very difficult to replace the approximately 100,000 gallons per day that was lost in the prison move.

## **APPENDIX: Public Water Supply**

Additional information on water supply:

The primary source for this water system is Mirror Lake in Rockport. Grassy Pond, also in Rockport, is a secondary supply. Water is transferred from Grassy Pond to Mirror Lake through a pumping system. The combined safe yield capacity of these supplies is 4.2 million gallons per day. The current average daily demand is 3.1 million gallons per day. The available supply capacity is projected to meet the water supply needs of the region for 20 to 40 years.

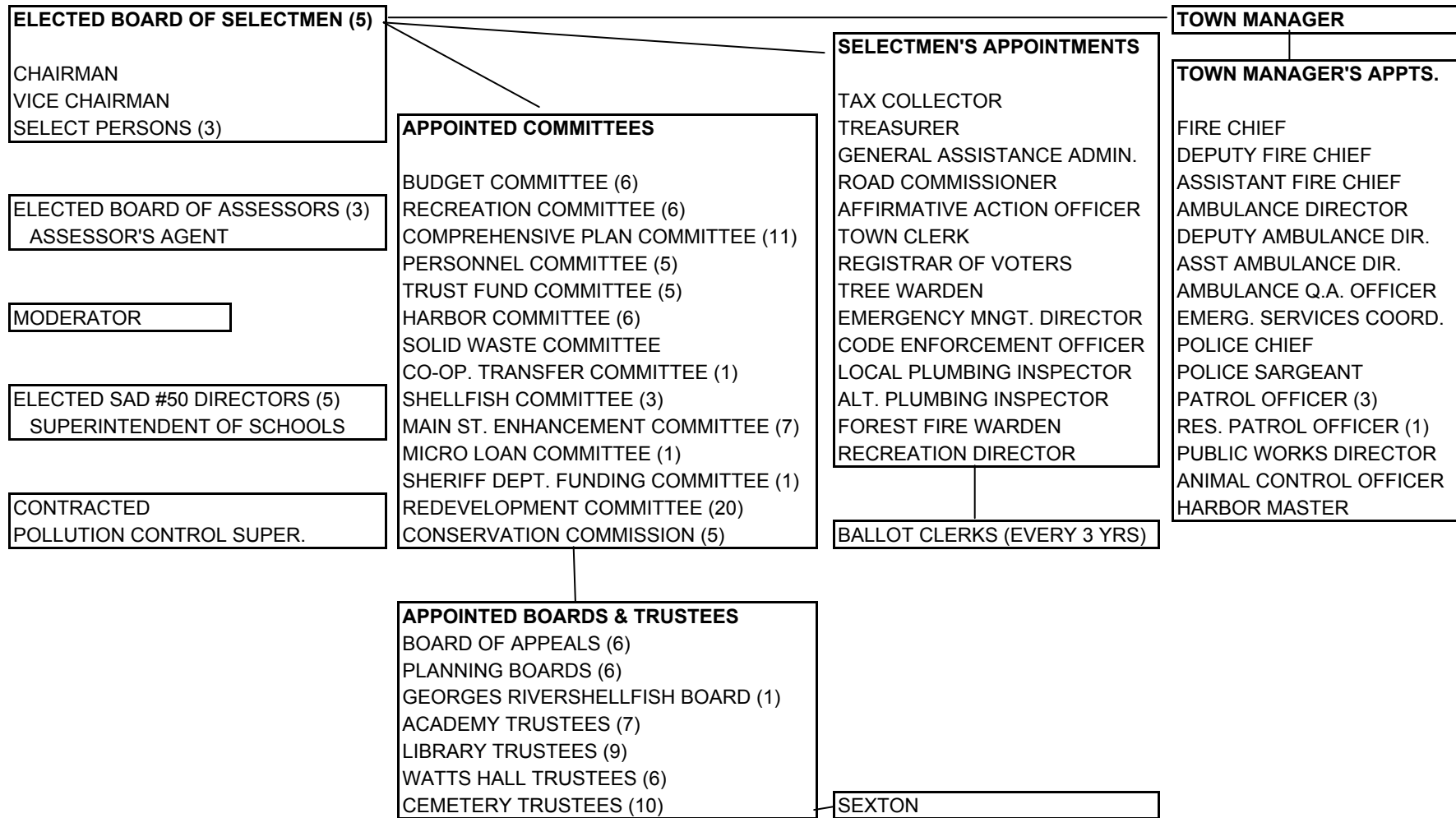
Both lakes have well-protected watersheds due in large part to the significant land ownership of the water company. The company maintains an active watershed monitoring and protection program. Water treatment is provided at a central treatment facility located on Route 17 in Rockport at the easterly end of Mirror Lake.

From Mirror Lake, water to Thomaston flows along Route 17 to the primary water storage facility on Juniper Hill in Rockland. From the Juniper Hill tank, water flows through Rockland to a booster pumping station at the intersection of Route One and Buttermilk Lane near the Rockland/Thomaston town line. All water flowing into Thomaston and South Warren passes through the Buttermilk Lane booster station. Currently, this booster station has a pumping capacity of 600 gallons per minute, or 864,000 gallons per day. The booster station supplies water to an elevated water storage tank on Main Street in Thomaston. This tank controls the distribution system pressure in Thomaston and provides water for fire protection, emergencies, and peak demand flows.

The water distribution system in Thomaston spans the entire length of Route One, from the Rockland town line to the St. George River. The system branches off Route One to serve the village area from Pleasant Street to Wadsworth Street. The system also serves Beechwood Street, Booker Street and crosses the St. George on Wadsworth Street to serve the residential area of Sunrise Terrace, Brooklyn Heights and Atticus Hill. The distribution system can provide adequate pressure to serve areas in Thomaston below an elevation of 200 feet above sea level.

The water system has sufficient capacity to serve additional residential and commercial customers in Thomaston. Rules established by the Maine Public Utilities Commission govern the extension of the water system to serve new customers. These rules require that the new customers pay for all costs associated with the extension of water service. The water utility is then allowed to invest in the extension based on a formula that recognizes the new revenues provided to the utility by the new customers served. When lengthy main extensions are required to serve residential developments, the cost of extending water service is often greater than the cost of installing private wells. A benefit to the municipality and to the property owners of extending the public water system is the ability to provide public fire protection to the development. This benefit should be considered by the municipality in its review of proposed developments.

# TOWN OF THOMASTON ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2005



**ALL EMPLOYEES REPORT TO THEIR IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR OR SENIOR EMPLOYEE**



## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The natural features and resources of an area influence settlement patterns, the economic and social character of the area, and the quality of life of its citizens. While community development is less tied to natural features and resources than in the past, an understanding and appreciation of the value of these resources is essential to the development of a desirable land use plan which complements the natural system, protecting critical resources and using others in a sustainable manner. In addition to the information in this chapter, please see the Marine Resources chapter for a discussion of commercial fisheries and shore and water access issues.

### **II. INVENTORY**

#### **A. OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES**

All town residents play an important role in the stewardship of our natural resources; however, town government has certain specific responsibilities. The Planning Board has oversight of most new development in town, and responsibility for ensuring that proposals for development are in compliance with the town's Comprehensive Plan and land use ordinances. The town's Code Enforcement Officer is responsible for enforcement of town ordinances relating to natural resource protection. The Conservation Commission is charged with the enhancement and conservation of the town's natural and scenic resources. Conservation Commission projects are authorized by the Select Board or at Town Meeting. In addition the Maine Department of Environmental Protection regulates activities in, on or adjacent to protected natural resources including coastal and freshwater wetlands, rivers, streams or brooks, and significant wildlife habitat through the Natural Resources Protection Act. It is critical that town officials work cooperatively with the owners of property adjacent to, or containing, valuable natural resources to ensure that these resources are adequately protected and that development where permitted is done in an environmentally sensitive manner and in accordance with state law and local land use ordinances.

#### **B. INVENTORY OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

##### **1. Topography and Floodplain Designations**

Thomaston is characterized by gently sloping terrain (see Topography Map) associated with the Presumpscot Formation. Notable exceptions include the steep banks along the St. George, Oyster and Mill Rivers; the steep hills above Meadow and Branch Brooks; and the man-made quarry excavations in the eastern section of town.

The Mill River divides the town into two distinct areas. The land west of the river is generally higher than that to the east. Dominant features east of the river, including the cement plant and quarries, are easily visible from the higher land along Beechwood Street. The highest elevation in Thomaston is in the northernmost part of town west of Branch Brook and is just 360 feet above sea level. Other significant heights of land over 200 feet in elevation are at least one mile north of Route One. Most of Main Street within the village is at or above 100-foot elevation, with extensive almost level land north of Main Street and west of the southerly portion of Beechwood Street.

As noted above many of the watercourses have cut deeply into the land, forming steep banks, some of which are actively eroding. The banks of the Mill River have slopes ranging from 10% to 30%. The St. George River has banks with slopes ranging from 10% to 35%, with particularly steep slopes from the Wadsworth Street (iron) bridge upstream to the bend above the former site of the Maine State Prison.

Floodplains are defined as areas adjacent to a water body that can reasonably be expected to be covered at some time by floodwater. The primary function of floodplains is their ability to accommodate large volumes of water from nearby overflowing channels and dissipate the force of moving water. A floodplain may also absorb and store a large amount of water, later becoming a source of groundwater recharge. Floodplains also serve as wildlife habitats, open space, areas for outdoor recreation and agriculture without interfering with their ability to handle flood waters.

Given the steep slopes adjacent to much of the Mill and St. George Rivers, the 100-year floodplain is relatively narrow throughout much of the developed portion of the village. The most recent FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) maps for Thomaston (effective date December 4, 1985) show a broader floodplain along the St. George River north of the point where the river turns sharply to the northeast and south of Route One. Other areas where the 100-year floodplain zone is more extensive are the northern area of the Oyster River near its confluence with East Branch Brook, along the Meadow and Branch Brooks and their associated wetlands, and isolated pockets associated with wetlands in the quarry areas north of Route One and between Route One and Thomaston Street.

In Thomaston, most residential and commercial development has occurred on higher ground. Most of Thomaston's vulnerable development is adjacent to the harbor, a location dictated by its former or present marine-related use.

The Town has a Flood Hazard Building Permit Ordinance, revised June 10, 1998, which sets standards for construction where flooding may occur.

Topography and Floodplains: Planning Considerations

- Future growth and development is most appropriate in those areas with slopes ranging from 0% (level) to 20%. Areas of steeper slopes, above 20%, are difficult to develop and are more susceptible to erosion. Subsurface (on-site) sewage disposal is not allowed on slopes over 25%. In response to recommendations made in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the town has enacted several ordinances to regulate structural development in such areas.
- Development should not occur within areas that would be inundated by a 100-year flood. The FEMA floodplain maps for Thomaston are dated and general in nature. Proposed development in low-lying areas adjacent to rivers, streams and wetlands should be checked to ensure that the area is above the 100-year floodplain level. Much of the floodplain area adjacent to the upper Oyster River is unlikely to be developed because it is either zoned Resource Protection or is adjacent to the Thomaston Town Forest. Areas of floodplain along the St. George River north of the former prison site are generally located between the river and the railroad track, and therefore are unlikely to be developed. There is some concern that dated FEMA maps may be inaccurate and inappropriately limit development, particularly in the eastern portions of town. According to the State Planning Office, FEMA maps for Knox County are scheduled for digital updates beginning in 2007, with final maps available approximately two years later. The maps will be updated using high resolution orthophotos and digital elevation models, which will significantly improve the accuracy of the floodplain maps.

## **2. Climate and Air Quality**

Thomaston's climate is typical of coastal Maine. The temperature ranges from a summer mean of 64<sup>0</sup> F. to a winter mean of about 26<sup>0</sup> F. Precipitation ranges from a summer mean of about 3.2 inches monthly to a winter mean of about 4.1 inches monthly.<sup>1</sup> Prevailing winds within the Rockland-Thomaston area are either southwesterly or northwesterly nearly 57% of the time, being southwesterly in the summer and northwesterly in the winter. Winds are easterly approximately 28% of the time, and calm nearly 15% of the time.<sup>2</sup>

Local air quality concerns include: (a) particulate matter (dust) from the quarries, rock crushing operations, and cement kiln dust piles; (b) odors associated with the Rockland dump; and (c) auto and truck emissions, especially along Route One. The cement kiln dust is of particular concern to neighboring landowners who have organized to demand that the Maine Department of Environmental Protection require Dragon Products to bring its operations into compliance with State environmental laws.

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<sup>1</sup> National Weather Bureau, "Climate of the States: Maine", 1959.

<sup>2</sup> From wind records, Knox County Airport, Owls Head, 1954-1959.

On a regional scale, the southwesterly winds during the summer months transport ground level ozone (commonly referred to as smog), as well as the pollutants that contribute to ozone formation, from other locations along the eastern seaboard to coastal Maine, including Thomaston. Mobile sources, typically cars and trucks, as well as large stationary industrial sources that burn fossil fuels (such as oil, gas and coal) are significant contributors to the air emissions that react in the air and sunlight to form ground level ozone. Elevated ozone levels that may occur from May through September along the Maine coast from Kittery to Mt. Desert Island on those “hazy, hot and humid days” are a health risk to all persons, but especially children, the elderly, and persons with respiratory diseases. Ground level ozone can also harm plants by decreasing growth rates, increasing susceptibility to disease, and reducing crop yields. Additionally, particulate emissions from the burning of fossil fuels contribute to regional haze, which diminishes visibility and impairs scenic views.

Climate and Air Quality: Planning Considerations

- Land use planners must be mindful of the anticipated rise in sea level along the coast of Maine, estimated at approximately two feet in the next 100 years.<sup>3</sup> The anticipated rise in sea level makes development in low-lying areas increasingly vulnerable to flooding.
- It is critical that emissions from rock quarry and cement plant operations comply with State environmental laws in order to protect public health, the environment, the quality of life of area residents, and the continued viability of other land uses in the vicinity of the quarries and cement plant.
- Odors associated with the Rockland dump adversely impact land uses in the vicinity of the dump. State officials should require operations to comply with State environmental laws and require odor mitigation as part of the facility’s license.
- Mobile sources, such as cars and trucks, are a significant source of the pollutants contributing to poor air quality in Maine. Impacts to local and regional air quality should be considered when evaluating transportation options and initiatives.

### **3. Land Cover Types**

Land cover type is the term used to describe the visible features of the earth’s surface, including vegetation, soils, rocks, water and constructed materials covering the land’s surface. Land cover is distinct from land use which characterizes the economic and cultural activities permitted and/or practiced at a location (for example, commercial uses, residential uses) which may or may not show up as visible surface features.

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<sup>3</sup> Maine Geological Survey. Robert Marvinney, personal communication.

Land cover maps are generated from satellite imagery (Landsat Thematic Mapper [TM]) with a spatial resolution of 30 meters. The smallest features that can be mapped accurately are one acre in size. Features less than one-acre in size will be generalized so that only the dominant land cover is mapped. See Land Cover map in the map section of this Plan. Associated land area is summarized in Table 8.1

**Table 8.1 Land Cover**

Land Cover	Acreage	Square Miles	Percentage
Forest	4090.9	6.4	66.27%
Grassland	1490.9	2.3	20.14
Wetlands/Open Water	857.1	1.3	11.58%
Developed Land	683.9	1.1	9.24%
Cultivated	250.9	0.4	3.39%
Bare Ground	28.7	0.0	0.39%
Total	7402.4	11.6	100%

Bare Ground: Composed of bare soil, rock, sand, silt, gravel, or other earthen material with little or no vegetation.

Cultivated Land: Includes herbaceous (cropland) and woody (e.g., orchards, nurseries) cultivated lands.

Developed: Includes built-up centers, large, constructed surfaces in suburban and rural areas, and large buildings (such as multiple-family housing and large barns), highways, and runways. Contains substantial amounts of constructed surface mixed with substantial amounts of vegetated surface. Collections of small to medium sized buildings on small lots close together (such as single-family housing), streets, and roads typically fall into this class.

Forest: Includes areas of single-stemmed, deciduous woody vegetation unbranched 0.6 to 1 meter (2 to 3 feet) above the ground and having a height greater than 6 meters (20 feet), as well as areas coniferous and broad-leaf evergreens.

Grassland: Dominated by naturally occurring grasses and non-grasses that are not fertilized, cut, tilled, or planted regularly.

Wetlands: Includes (a) all nontidal wetlands dominated by woody vegetation greater than or equal to 6 meters in height, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas in which salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 parts per thousand (ppt). (b) Includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than or equal to 6 meters in height, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas in which salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. Includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas in which salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. Includes erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes (excluding mosses and lichens) that are present for most of the growing season in most years. Perennial plants usually dominate these wetlands. All water regimes are included except those that are subtidal and irregularly exposed. (c) Includes substrates lacking vegetation except for pioneering plants that become established during brief periods when growing conditions are favorable. Erosion and deposition by waves and currents produce a number of landforms, such as beaches, bars, and flats, all of which are included in this class.

## 4. Geology, Mineral Resources, and Soils

### a. Bedrock Geology

Thomaston's bedrock geology has long been economically important. Of particular significance is a geologic trough of limestone and siltstone/sandstone, which runs northeasterly from High Street. While small amounts of impure limestone were

quarried in many parts of the state, only the Rockland-Thomaston area has historically produced and continues to produce a significant amount of lime from comparatively pure deposits.<sup>4</sup> These deposits supply the cement plant, which produces approximately 500,000 tons of cement per year, and its aggregate operation, which utilizes 100,000 tons of waste rock per year.

The quarry associated with the cement plant is bordered by Route One, Dexter Street, and Old County Road. Approximately 84 acres of this area is actively mined. Dragon Products, the current owner of the cement plant and quarry, obtained a permit amendment in October 2001 from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection for a 70 acre expansion on the western side of the existing quarry in lieu of the previously approved expansion to the northeast. According to application materials, the project will supply sufficient quantities of rock to the cement plant for a minimum of 30 years. The expansion will bring the active quarry closer to the residential areas of town, particularly those located along Old County Road. See the Air Quality and Ground Water sections of this Chapter for a discussion of environmental concerns associated with quarry and cement plant operations.

b. Surficial Geology

Surface deposits are the unconsolidated materials that overlie bedrock. These materials were largely deposited at the end of the last ice age some 13,200 years ago. At that time rock fragments that had been carried by the glacier were deposited along the border of the glacier in ridges of till or sand and gravel producing what are called moraines. These moraines run in roughly east-west bands north of Route One and are associated with the sand and gravel deposits located along Beechwood Street and West Meadow Road. An end moraine also traverses Brooklyn Heights. Dramatic evidence of the glacier's ability to transport huge boulders is seen in the glacial erratic (referred to as "split rock") located in the town forest to the north and west of the town's center as well as large boulders evident on some properties along Beechwood Street.

As the glacier receded from Maine, 12,500 years ago, the current coastline emerged from the sea, buried in marine sediments. These glacial-marine deposits, known as the Presumpscot Formation, are interspersed with farmland soils throughout the center of Thomaston and Brooklyn Heights. These are the so-called "cat clays" or "blue clays" found throughout the coastal area. They are generally poorly drained, sticky when wet and "rock hard" when dry. There are also limited pockets of swamp and tidal marsh deposits consisting of peat, silt, clay and sand. These areas, which are flat and poorly drained, are most prominent along Meadow Brook and Marsh Brook. Bedrock covered with a thin layer of marine sediments is found along the river bottoms.

Unconsolidated surficial deposits are often mined for materials such as sand, gravel

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<sup>4</sup> Maine Geological Survey, "History of Maine Quarrying".

and clay. Thomaston's sand and gravel deposits have historically provided a commercially viable source of material for various construction purposes. This is evidenced by the pits set back from the town's rural roads, notably west of Beechwood Street. In addition, on the east side of the Mill River, just north of the railroad tracks, there is the remains of an old brickworks.

c. Soils

Soil surveys prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, are widely used to identify soils suitable for development (see Soil Potential for Development map in the map section of this Plan). The boundaries between soil types are not distinct but blend into each other over a distance of 50 to 200 feet.

A detailed description of Thomaston's soils may be found in the *Soil Survey of Knox and Lincoln Counties, Maine* published by the Soil Conservation Service (predecessor of the Natural Resources Conservation Service) in 1987. While there are 37 individual soil types within Thomaston, the soils generally fall into three main categories:

- Peru-Turnbridge-Marlow: Moderately deep and deep, gently sloping to steep, moderately well-drained and well-drained soils; formed in glacial till. These soils are located primarily along Beechwood Street.
- Boothbay-Swanville-Lyman: Deep, nearly level to moderately steep, moderately well drained to poorly drained soils; formed in marine and lacustrine sediments; and shallow, gently sloping to steep, somewhat excessively drained soils; formed in glacial till. These soils are found primarily south of Route One and east of Wadsworth Street.
- Peru-Swanville-Lyman: Deep and shallow, gently sloping to steep, moderately well-drained and somewhat excessively drained soils; formed in glacial till; and deep, nearly level, poorly drained soils; formed in marine and lacustrine sediments. These soils are found along the Oyster and Mill Rivers, south of Route One west of Wadsworth Street, and in Brooklyn Heights.

The above referenced soil maps give only a general guide to soil suitability for various land uses. Detailed site specific soil maps and soil tests should be consulted when considering land use options.

Geology, Mineral Resources, and Soils: Planning Considerations

- The recently approved expansion of the cement plant quarry toward the west will influence future land use in the immediate vicinity along Old County Road. Concerns include blasting, the off-site transport of dust from quarry and cement plant operations, and the potential for groundwater contamination. Additionally the handling of kiln dust and waste rock generated by past, present, and future operations has had, and will continue to have, a visual impact on the community. Dragon Products has received approval from the Department of Environmental Protection for the beneficial reuse of some of this material.
- The large sand and gravel pits off Beechwood Street influence other land uses in that portion of Thomaston. The sand and gravel reserves are largely depleted. One large pit is being mined for rock. The other serves primarily as an area for processing of materials trucked to the site. It is important for the town to work with pit owners and operators to minimize the impact of these activities on neighboring properties and area traffic.
- Eventual reuse of pits and quarries in a manner compatible with existing surrounding development and in compliance with environmental standards is in the long-term best interest of the town. Use of rock quarries for waste disposal should not be permitted.
- Areas characterized by glacial marine deposits have generally poor drainage and relatively low bearing capacity. Agriculture, forest production and on-site sewage disposal are all severely limited. These areas may be developed for small structures subject to detailed on-site investigation.
- Because the available soils information is too broad for site-specific planning, detailed on-site soils investigations and analysis should be required prior to development. Such investigations and analyses should focus on depth to bedrock, depth to seasonal high water table, frequency of flooding, erosion potential and drainage characteristics. For large structures, the bearing strength (ability to support weight) of soils may also be important. Projects involving on-site subsurface sewage disposal (septic tank and leach field) require on-site soil investigation and interpretation of available soil information by qualified persons.

## **5. Agricultural Resources**

Agricultural soils are found along Beechwood Street, West Meadow Road, Old County Road, Route 131 south, Studley Lane, Brooklyn Heights, Thomaston Street and the southern part of Buttermilk Lane.

Approximately 16% (or 1201 acres) of Thomaston's land area is classified as Prime Farmland. "Prime Farmland" is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the best land, nationwide, for producing food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops. The criteria are tied directly to soil properties and not land use, except that if the land is



urban or built-up, it cannot be prime farmland. Prime farmlands can be land in cultivation, forest, pasture or idle land and it can be remote or inaccessible. In Thomaston, these soils are primarily BoB Boothbay silt loam (3-8% slopes) and PaB Peru fine sandy loam (3-8% slopes). Areas of prime farmland are located east of the Oyster River, south of Route 1 between the St. George River and the former site of the Maine State Prison, along Beechwood Street, east of the Mill River, between Old County Road and West Meadow Road, off Buttermilk Lane and Thomaston Street, along Route 131 South and along Brooklyn Heights.

In addition approximately 146 acres (or 2% of Thomaston's area) are identified as "Additional Farmlands of Statewide Importance". Criteria for defining and delineating this land were determined at the state level in February 1976 by the Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service), state agricultural agencies and others. These soils include BoC Boothbay silt loam (8-15% slopes) and MrC Marlow fine sandy loam (8-15% slopes). These soils are located primarily adjacent to the rivers: along the East Branch of the Oyster River, the Oyster River, Mill River, Meadow Brook just upstream of its confluence with Mill River, and between Thomaston Street and Route 1. A large percentage of the settled portion of Thomaston south of Route 1 between Wadsworth Street and Route 131 South is located on land that, if undeveloped, would be classified as farmland soils.

Farming locally has followed the national trend of the decline of small farms. In 1991, there were three moderate-sized active farms in Thomaston, located on West Meadow Road, Brooklyn Heights and Thomaston Street. Only the farm on Thomaston Street remains active for purposes other than haying. Some additional acreage is devoted to small part-time farming.

The Farm and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36, MRSA, section 1101, et seq.) encourages landowners to conserve farmland and open space by taxing the land at a rate based on its current use, rather than potential fair market value. Thomaston town records show that in 2004, 396 acres of land were classified as farmland under the Farm and Open Space Tax Law. 187 acres were classified as cropland, orchard land and pasture land, down from 200 acres in 1990. An additional 160 acres were classified as farm woodland, down from 423 acres in 1990. Forty-nine (49) acres were classified as wet and waste lands, and 28 acres were classified as open space. Given the economics of small scale farming, increasing land prices, and increasing development pressure, conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses is likely to continue. To assist agricultural uses, the Land Use and Development Ordinance allows commercial agricultural and horticultural sales of farm produce on premises as a permitted use in the Rural Residential and Farming (R-1) District and the Commercial District, and a conditional use in the Rural Residential (R-2) District.

Agricultural Resources: Planning Considerations

- While farming is not a significant portion of the local economy, local produce is valued by many as an alternative to produce available in supermarkets. The Town should continue to support agricultural sales in the R-1, R-2 and Commercial Districts. Allowed sales should include Maine made agricultural products in addition to products produced on the premises.
- Farm fields and pastures are disappearing, and remaining farmland is likely to be subject to increasing development pressure. The remaining farms and agricultural fields have great value, not only as farming operations, but also as open space which separates other land uses, provides habitat for wildlife, and contributes to the scenic and aesthetic quality of the area.

## **6. Forest Resources**

Historically, Thomaston's forest resources supplied much material for its wooden shipbuilding industry, as well as the usual timber for building construction and domestic firewood. As the lime industry developed, additional pressure was placed on the woodlands to supply wood for the wood-fired kilns that burned the lime, and to make the barrels in which the lime was shipped. As a result, most of the town's forests disappeared by the late 19th century, some replaced by farm fields and pastures and some left to natural regeneration. Today, there is one active sawmill in Thomaston, Deans' Sawmill and Lumberyard on Beechwood Street.

Thomaston's forest resources can be categorized as either woodland or urban forest.

### **a. Woodland**

At present about 66% of Thomaston's land area is estimated to be wooded. Stands include soft, hard and mixed wood. The Tree Growth Tax Law (Title 36, MRSA, section 571 et. seq.) provides for the valuation of land classified as forestland on the basis of productivity, rather than fair market value. In 2004 177 acres (58 acres of softwood, 9 acres of hardwood, and 110 acres of mixed wood) were classified under the Tree Growth Tax Law, down from 423 acres in 1990. There are no known registered tree farms. Most currently forested land is located north of the built up "village" area of Thomaston, with some additional woodland along the rivers.

Maine Forest Service data indicate that owners of forest land in Thomaston conducted 21 individual timber harvests on 575 acres during the period 1992 to 2003, see Table 8.1a.

**Table 8.1a Timber Harvests**

Year	Selection harvest (acres)	Shelterwood harvest (acres)	Clearcut harvest (acres)	Total harvest acres	Change of use acres	Number of timber harvests
1992 - 1995	125	-	40	165	-	5
1996	36	-	-	36	6	3
1997 – 2002	310	-	-	310	3	10
2003	64	-	-	64	-	3
Totals	535	-	40	575	9	21

Data compiled from confidential year end landowner reports to the Maine Forest Service. To protect confidential landowner information, data is reported only where 3 or more landowner reports reported harvesting in the town.

Technical assistance is available to the woodland owner including: assistance from the State Forester, located in Jefferson; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service programs from an office located in Warren; educational programs of the Time & Tide Resource Conservation and Development office in Augusta; the Cooperative Extension Service in Warren; and assistance from the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine in Augusta.

In 1996, the Town acquired 350 acres of land (now known as the Thomaston Town Forest) to accommodate the proposed wastewater treatment plant and its associated lagoon/spray irrigation system. The Town Forest is located northwest of the village center roughly parallel to the Oyster River. The area was heavily harvested prior to the Town's purchase and it contains few stands of mature trees. The Forest Management Plan (Jones Associates, Inc., June 1996) developed for the property sets the following management objects for the land: wildlife management (high priority), recreation management (high), aesthetics (medium), and timber income (low). A portion of the Town Forest is located within a deer wintering area (DWA) adjacent to the Oyster River and East Branch Brook. A second DWA is located north of Wiley's Corner and east of Beechwood Street.<sup>5</sup> The Thomaston Town Forest is part of a 2874 acre undeveloped habitat block in the Oyster River watershed in Thomaston and Warren and, as such, is an important wildlife habitat and open space resource.

b. Urban Forest

Thomaston's urban forest consists of the trees planted by the town along the streets, on school property and in the cemeteries, along with those maintained as yard plantings by homeowners. The town embarked upon a significant and largely

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<sup>5</sup> (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat Map for Thomaston, June 1994.)

successful urban tree planting effort after the die back of the elms in the mid 1970's. A majority of the old sugar maples are now in decline. While the trees planted in the 1970's have grown sufficiently large to improve the urban landscape, continued removal of dead and dying trees followed by new plantings is critical to maintain and enhance the character and livability of the village center. Urban trees also provide cooling in summer, help improve air quality, and provide habitat for songbirds and other small wildlife. In 2001 the town planted approximately 20 disease resistant elms, primarily along Main Street, partially in anticipation of the loss of many old maples over the next five to ten years.

#### Forest Resources: Planning Considerations

- Thomaston's forest land which is in private ownership represents a potentially valuable but largely unmanaged natural resource. Management of the resource could ensure that it would continue to serve local needs for wood, wildlife, water resources and open space. There is potential to increase participation in the Tree Growth Tax Program.
- With the acquisition of the Thomaston Town Forest, a significant amount of forested land has been preserved, thereby protecting wildlife habitat and providing open space for recreational and other purposes. The forest also serves to protect a portion of the Oyster River watershed within Thomaston from future structural development. This area should continue to be managed in accordance with the priorities established in Thomaston's Town Forest and Town Trails Program (1997).
- The value of the deer wintering areas is unknown since, in recent years, winters have not been severe enough to result in the yarding of deer. A forester should be consulted prior to timber harvesting in designated deer wintering areas to ensure that its value as a deer wintering area is not diminished.
- The health of our urban forest is essential to maintaining and enhancing the character and livability of our village center. Forest land and urban tree plantings can also provide important visual buffers along highways and between different land uses. Attention should be given to landscaping requirements and increased tree plantings in the commercial district to improve the visual quality of the area. The town's tree nursery has proven to be a cost effective means of providing replacement trees for our urban forest. The old sugar maples are in decline; many will need to be removed and replaced over the next decade.

## **7. Ground Water**

Ground water is used by virtually all land use activities outside the built-up area of town. In 1990, 144 households (12.2%) were served by individual drilled (131) or dug (13) wells. While Thomaston's geology may provide adequate groundwater for private use in the more rural sections of town, the Maine Geological Survey has not mapped any significant sand and gravel aquifers in Thomaston. Most drilled wells are in fractured bedrock. Because of the extent of the area served by Consumers Maine

Water Company and the probable lack of high yield aquifers, no studies are recommended for location and establishment of high yield wells.

Ground water quality may be degraded by chemical, biological and physical impurities. According to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the most significant sources of groundwater contamination in Maine are: fertilizer applications, pesticide applications, above ground storage tanks, underground storage tanks, solid waste landfills, septic systems, shallow injection wells such as floor drains, hazardous waste sites, salt storage, road salting, and miscellaneous spills.<sup>6</sup>

a. Ground Water Contamination

The only known area of groundwater contamination in Thomaston occurs along Old County Road in the vicinity of the Rockland dump. Four residential wells in this area have shown elevated levels of sodium and/or arsenic. These wells have been periodically monitored by the City of Rockland in an effort to determine if the dump is the source of the arsenic and sodium in the well water. An analysis of the chemical composition of the dump leachate indicates that the dump is unlikely to be the source. The arsenic may be naturally occurring, as is the case in several locations throughout the state. Given the uncertainties associated with groundwater movement in the vicinity of the Rockland dump, the groundwater in this area should be closely monitored. That monitoring should extend to nearby residential wells.

b. Historic and Potential Sources of Ground Water Contamination

Potential sources of groundwater contamination in Thomaston, and their status is summarized below.

- Cement kiln dust piles: Cement kiln dust has a high pH and can contain elevated levels of certain heavy metals. Area residents have expressed concern that the cement kiln dust piles are not covered and may be a source of groundwater and surface water contamination. Questions pertaining to the proper management of these piles are pending with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.
- Shallow injection wells, including floor drains: Fourteen facilities in Thomaston were listed in the Department of Environmental Protection's "Inventory of Injection Wells" as of November 2001 due to the presence of floor drains. Five of these facilities discharge into the municipal sewer system; two are connected to holding tanks; one discharges to a quarry; and six have unknown discharge points.<sup>7</sup>
- Underground storage tanks: In 1985 the Legislature enacted a law regulating the handling and storage of oil in underground facilities. This law required registration

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<sup>6</sup> State of Maine 1998 Water Quality Assessment" or 305(b) Report prepared by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

<sup>7</sup> UIC Site Report, Town of Thomaston, from Maine DEP, November 5, 2001.

of all underground oil storage tanks and established a schedule for the removal of tanks that did not meet standards. In August of 1989, the DEP listed 36 locations in Thomaston having underground tanks requiring registration and possible removal. While others may exist, all registered tanks not meeting current standards have been removed. As of July 17, 2001, the Department's underground storage tank database lists only 8 locations with underground tanks, all of which were installed under rules adopted subsequent to the law. These tanks are found at the four gas stations, the town's elementary, middle and high schools, and at the cement plant.<sup>8</sup> One of the gas stations closed in early 2005, and its underground tanks have been removed.

- Sand-salt piles: The town maintains an uncovered sand-salt pile at the Public Works Garage off Erin Street. Given that the surrounding area is served by public water and there are no significant sand and gravel aquifers in the town, the sand-salt pile is ranked by Maine DEP as a low or Priority 5 site<sup>9</sup> and is not required to be contained within a storage building. Although there has not been a study of groundwater flow in the vicinity of the sand-salt pile, regional flow is toward the St. George River which is tidal throughout its length in Thomaston. Some groundwater flow from the vicinity of the sand-salt pile may be toward the Mill River near the point at which it joins the St. George River; therefore, it is not likely that the pile would have an adverse impact on the natural resources of the area.
- Aboveground Storage Tanks: Individual aboveground tanks for the storage of home heating oil, gasoline or kerosene (if improperly installed or maintained) are potential sources of residential well contamination in areas not served by public water.
- Septic Systems: Improperly sized, located, installed and/or maintained septic systems may contaminate residential wells with bacteria, nitrates, or other compounds disposed of through household sinks and drains.

#### Ground Water: Planning Considerations

- The potential discharge of contaminants to ground water via the large quarries in Thomaston and neighboring Rockland is a significant concern. Town officials should insist that the existing use of the Rockland quarries for waste disposal strictly comply with State standards. The use of additional quarries for municipal and industrial waste disposal should be strictly regulated or prohibited. The cement kiln dust piles must be regulated and managed to prevent the discharge of contaminants to groundwater and surface water.

<sup>8</sup> UST Registration Database, Maine DEP, September 17, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Sand/Salt Storage Area Site Evaluation Worksheet, Thomaston, from Maine DEP, November 5, 2001.

Ground Water: Planning Considerations (cont.)

- Groundwater resources should be protected from contamination so they can continue to serve existing development and provide a source of potable water for future small-scale development in areas not served by public water. Development must be carefully sited with regard to on-site sewage disposal. Owners of private wells should properly dispose of wastes and avoid activities which may contaminate their wells. Proper installation and maintenance of heating oil, gasoline, or kerosene tanks as well as septic systems are critical to the protection of private drinking water wells. Efforts to restore contaminated wells to drinking water standards are often extremely expensive and often unsuccessful; and the cost of extending public water to areas of contaminated groundwater can be prohibitive.

## **8. Surface Water and Wetland Resources**

As discussed in the section on topography, Thomaston has six significant watercourses: the St. George, Oyster and Mill Rivers and Marsh, Meadow and Branch Brooks (See the Watersheds and Wetlands map in the map section of this Plan). These waterbodies have important wildlife habitat, fisheries and recreational values. Significant characteristics of these water resources are summarized in Table 8.2. There are no natural lakes or ponds.

### **a. St. George River**

The St. George River is the most significant waterbody in Thomaston. After leaving its headwaters at St. George Lake in Liberty, the St. George River flows through seven ponds and receives waters from several tributaries before reaching Thomaston. Throughout Thomaston, the river is tidal and is generally bounded by steep shorelines. After passing under the Wadsworth Street bridge, the river widens into a protected harbor. After receiving the waters of the Mill River, the St. George turns toward the southwest and flows nearly twelve miles as a navigable and deepening estuary before opening into Muscongus Bay.

### **b. Historic and Potential Sources of Surface Water Contamination**

In the years following the mid 1960's, three significant events occurred to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged to the St. George River: (1) the construction and operation of Thomaston's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) at the foot of Knox Street, (2) the closure of a woolen textile mill in Warren which discharged wastes from wool washing into the river, and (3) the prevention of manure spreading on land immediately adjacent to the river. While these events and others improved water quality and the river was upgraded from Class C to Class B, the frequent overflows of combined sanitary wastewater and storm water from Thomaston's WWTP forced closures of clam flats which were previously opened as a result of the plant being placed in operation. Several steps were subsequently taken to address this and other water quality concerns.

- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs): In 1991, the town began a sewer replacement program to reduce the amount of stormwater and groundwater flow to the sanitary sewer system in an effort to eliminate untreated discharges of wastewater into the St. George River during high flows associated with storm events. By 1997 the town had eliminated all CSO's.
- Municipal Wastewater: The Town of Thomaston, with the assistance of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, constructed a new treatment facility north of Route One. This facility is a lagoon/spray irrigation design with a total capacity of 21 million gallons and the ability to treat an average daily flow of 427,000 gallons. The facility discharges treated wastewater to the St. George River only during the winter months of January, February and March. This facility, along with efforts by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Georges River Tidewater Association, and others to identify and eliminate overboard discharges and nonpoint sources of pollution to the river, resulted in the opening of the area's clam flats to depuration harvesting beginning in 1996.

In addition to improvements within Thomaston, a wastewater treatment plant to serve the village area of Warren and the "Supermax" prison in South Warren was constructed in 1991. This facility has been expanded to accommodate the relocation of the Maine State Prison from Thomaston to Warren. It discharges treated wastewater to the St. George River just below the railroad trestle. It is critical that this discharge be monitored to ensure that it does not adversely impact water quality of the St. George River.

- Overboard Discharges: Overboard Discharges (OBDs) are small non-municipal discharges of sanitary wastewater to the waters of the state. In 1987, the state passed a law to prohibit new OBDs or expansions of existing OBDs, and provided incentives for removal of such discharges. One goal of the program was to reclaim closed shellfish areas. As of July 2001, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection lists only two (2) overboard discharges of sanitary wastewater to surface waters in Thomaston.<sup>10</sup> One is a 300 gallon per day (gpd) residential discharge to the Oyster River that is treated with a sandfilter and is currently licensed through July 2006. The other is a 300 gpd residential discharge to the St. George River. This discharge is also treated with a sandfilter and is licensed through October of 2006.
- Stormwater and Non-Point Source Pollution: While Thomaston has eliminated all combined sewer overflows, stormwater still discharges to the St. George River. These stormwater discharges as well as overland runoff and other non-point sources of pollution carry particles of soil and debris and have the potential to carry chemicals such as petroleum and fertilizers into receiving waters.

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<sup>10</sup> Maine DEP Database, Active and Inactive OBD's, July 20, 2001.



- Erosion and Sedimentation: Coastal bluff mapping south of Route One by the Maine Geological Survey (Open-File No. 00-94, 2000) indicates a 0.1 mile segment of “highly unstable” salt marsh shoreline along the St. George River approximately 2200 feet downstream of Route One. There are also seven locations with “unstable” bluff totaling 0.7 miles of shoreline along the St. George River. These unstable areas may be natural sources of sediment to the river.

In 1998, the St. George River was listed as a NPS Priority Coastal Watershed by the Department of Environmental Protection (one of 17 such watersheds). It was listed because of the levels of bacteria present, the low dissolved oxygen levels, its commercial marine resource value, and its high ecological value. The St. George River Modeling Report (April 2000) prepared by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection states that the majority of the St. George River estuary (everything below the former location of the Maine State Prison) meets the dissolved oxygen criteria for Class SB waters. Water quality problems are “generally limited to upper four miles of the estuary during the summer period”. The report notes that non-point sources of pollution are most evident in the Mill River and recommends greater attention to Best Management Practices as a means of decreasing non-point source pollution to the St. George River estuary.

c. Salt Marshes and Freshwater Wetlands

Salt marshes are found along 80% of the riverbank terrain in Thomaston. The width of the marsh on the St. George River varies between 5 and 60 feet with the exception of two spots on the east shore, where the marsh runs inland along smaller creeks. Wider marshes are found along the Weskeag River. The Oyster River and Weskeag River salt marshes are rated as "High Value" by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW).

At least 16 freshwater wetland areas of 10 acres or more exist in Thomaston. The largest wetlands are in the northeast and northerly areas of Thomaston, in the valleys of Meadow and Branch Brooks. Additional wetlands are located east of the cement plant in the area drained by Marsh Brook. Due to their general unsuitability for development, these wetlands have not yet been significantly altered. Because of their environmental and ecological value, wetlands should be protected from development or threats to their integrity posed by pollution flowing from nearby developed areas.

Surveys of wetlands in Thomaston by Maine DEP and MDIFW have found that many wetlands in the town have high values. Coastal wetlands with High Value ratings include the Upper Bay, Mill River, Oyster River, Marsh Brook and the St. George River above the "Iron Bridge". Large freshwater wetlands (10 acres or more) adjacent to or drained by the Oyster River and Meadow Brook have high and moderate values, respectively. Freshwater wetlands greater than 2 acres in size are zoned Resource Protection.

d. Drainage Swales

Freshwater wetlands between Beechwood and Erin Streets, Gleason and Fluker Streets, Fluker and Thatcher Streets, and Valley and Main Streets serve as major segments of the town's stormwater drainage system. The town completed drainage improvements in the area of Booker Street and Main Street in 1997. In March 1999, Wright Pierce Engineering completed a Stormwater Analysis for the town of the drainage areas around Booker, crossing Main in the vicinity of School Street, flowing south to Hyler and continuing south to the harbor east of Wadsworth Street. Stormwater flows in this area need to be managed to prevent flooding of the railroad tracks in the vicinity of Wadsworth Street during periods of high runoff. The Wright Pierce study identified several needed improvements. Of these, improvements at lower Wadsworth Street and Water Street to the harbor were completed in 2001. The Maine Department of Transportation will be constructing needed improvements at the railroad tracks in the vicinity of Wadsworth Street in 2005. Improvements at Wadsworth Street Court and Hyler remain to be done.

**Table 8.2 Summary of Surface Water and Wetland Resources**

<b>Waterbody</b>	<b>Significant Characteristics</b>
<b>St. George River</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headwaters: St. George Lake, Liberty</li> <li>• Class B* from Route 90 in Warren to tidewater</li> <li>• Tidal throughout Thomaston, Class SB**</li> <li>• Bank slopes range from 10-35%</li> <li>• Maine Geological Survey has mapped one area of highly unstable coastal bluff on the east side of the river south of Route One.</li> <li>• Designated Non-Point Source Priority Coastal Watershed by Maine Department of Environmental Protection.</li> <li>• Channel designated Class A Coastal Wildlife Concentration Area by Me. Dept. of Inland Fisheries &amp; Wildlife [MDIFW].</li> <li>• Tidal flats designated Shorebird Nesting, Feeding, Staging Area by MDIFW.</li> </ul>
<b>Oyster River</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headwaters: Mirror Lake</li> <li>• Class B</li> <li>• Primarily tidal in Thomaston</li> <li>• Generally steep banks</li> <li>• Associated marshes rated as high value by MDIFW.</li> <li>• Designated Class A Coastal Wildlife Concentration Area by MDIFW</li> </ul>
<b>Mill River</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed at confluence of Branch Brook and Meadow Brook</li> <li>• Class B</li> <li>• Tidal south of Route One</li> <li>• Bank slopes range from 10 – 30%</li> </ul>
<b>Branch Brook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drains land west of Benner Hill in Rockland, including Rockland Bog.</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Brook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headwaters: Chickawaukie Lake</li> <li>• High value Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (WWH)</li> <li>• Presence of rare botanical feature: <i>Carex atherodes</i></li> </ul>
<b>Marsh Brook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drains large tidal wetland area including portions of Rockland, Thomaston, So Thomaston and Owls Head; flows into Weskeag River (a Non-Point Source Priority Coastal Watershed).</li> <li>• Designated Shorebird Nesting, Feeding, Staging Area by MDIFW.</li> <li>• Presence of rare botanical feature: brackish tidal marsh.</li> <li>• R. Waldo Tyler Wildlife Management Area borders Thomaston in vicinity of Marsh Brook.</li> </ul>
<b>Weskeag River</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portions of Thomaston are located within the watershed of the Weskeag River. Salt marshes associated with the river are rated High Value by MDIFW.</li> </ul>

**\*Class "B"** waters "shall be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water supply after treatment; fishing; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation...; and navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat shall be characterized as unimpaired." Discharges "shall not cause adverse impact to aquatic life in that the receiving waters shall be of sufficient quality to support all aquatic species indigenous to the receiving water without detrimental changes in the resident biological community." [38 MRSA section 465]

**\*\*Class "SB"** waters shall be "...suitable for the designated uses of recreation in and on the water, fishing, aquaculture, propagation and harvesting of shellfish, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation and navigation and as a habitat for fish and other estuarine and marine life. The habitat shall be characterized as unimpaired." [38 MRSA, Section 465-B]

Surface Water and Wetland Resources: Planning Considerations

- The town's rivers are of great economic and aesthetic importance to the town since they convey a feeling of being "by the shore" from many vantage points. Conservation of, and access to, these waterways and associated viewsheds has important ecological, economic, recreational, and aesthetic value.
- Coastal and freshwater wetlands provide multiple economic, recreational, environmental and public safety benefits. In Thomaston these include: 1) income from commercial fisheries of soft-shell clams and marine worms; 2) habitat to support recreational fisheries of smelt, striped bass and other finfish; 3) protection from coastal and river flooding; 4) wildlife habitat; 5) open space and 6) filtration of pollutants in storm water runoff.
- Control of non-point source pollution is critical to the health of the St. George River estuary.
- To ensure that wetland values, functions and benefits are not lost, it is essential to restrict activities in wetlands and the upland areas immediately adjacent to them. Shoreland Zoning Guidelines require that the wetland and the 250 foot wide upland area surrounding "high" and "moderate" value wetlands be placed in Resource Protection Districts. Also, areas of 2 or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils must also be placed in a Resource Protection District.
- Alteration of wetlands is governed by state law under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). The 1995 amendments to NRPA extended protection to freshwater wetlands of less than 10 acres. Persons seeking to alter wetlands should consult with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection regarding permit requirements. Dredging and filling of wetlands is also regulated by the United States Army Corp of Engineers under the Federal Clean Water Act. Persons should consult with the Corp prior to activity in a wetland to determine whether a Corp permit is required.
- Restrictions on activities which impair the hydrological functioning of smaller wetlands are necessary to avoid the cost and maintenance associated with storm water drainage systems and to prevent flooding of downstream properties. The stormwater control function of wetlands is particularly important in the developed areas of Thomaston. Freshwater wetlands between Beechwood and Erin Streets, Gleason and Fluker Streets, Fluker and Thatcher Streets, and Valley and Main Streets serve as major segments of the town's storm water drainage system.

**9. Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat, and Critical Natural Resources**

The town's agricultural and forest lands, surface waters and wetlands provide important habitat for a wide array of wildlife. Large blocks of land that are not bisected by public roads, as well as riparian areas are particularly valuable for maintaining biodiversity. Several areas in the town have particular value as habitat for wildlife and/or certain rare and endangered plant species are discussed below.

a. Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

Critical Natural Resources identified in Thomaston are depicted on the Critical Resources map in the map section of this Plan.

The Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA), administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, provides protection to certain natural resources including Significant Wildlife Habitats. Significant Wildlife Habitats are defined by the NRPA as:

- Habitat for State and Federally listed Endangered and Threatened species;
- High and moderate value deer wintering areas and travel corridors;
- High and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitats, including nesting and feeding areas;
- Shorebird nesting, feeding and staging areas; and
- Seabird nesting islands.

Essential habitats are defined by the NRPA as “areas currently or historically providing physical or biological features essential to the conservation of an endangered or threatened species in Maine and which may require special management considerations.” Essential habitat protection in Maine currently applies only to Bald Eagle nest sites and Roseate Turn, Piping Plover, and Least Tern colonies, but additional listed species may receive attention in the future.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) has mapped two deer wintering areas within Thomaston, one lying north and east of Wiley Corner on Beechwood Street (DWA 020680) and the second east of the Oyster River south of Beechwood Street (DWA 020864). A portion of the deer wintering area east of the Oyster River is located within the Town Forest, and subject to the associated management plan. The remainder of this deer wintering area and the wintering area east of Wiley Corner are located partially in Resource Protection (RP) and partially in Rural Residential and Farming (R-1) districts.

MDIFW has identified four areas as waterfowl and wading bird habitat (WWH). These areas are located along Meadow Brook (WWH 031176), an area south of Old County Road (WWH 031826), an area just south of the Rockland Bog (WWH 031175) and a wetland area between Route One and Thomaston Street (WWH 03177). With the exception of WWH 031826 (which is associated with quarries and is zoned Industrial), these areas appear to be within the Resource Protection District. Two areas have been identified as Shorebird Nesting, Feeding and Staging Areas; one along Marsh Brook (zoned Resource Protection), the other in the tidal flats of the St. George River.<sup>11</sup>

The rivers and streams in town provide habitat for species such as alewives, striped

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<sup>11</sup> MDIFW Significant Wildlife Habitat Map, Thomaston. July 6, 1995. Updated August 2001.

bass, and eels. The tidal flats along the St. George River, which extend into South Thomaston on the east side, are rated as having high habitat value, as are the wetlands adjacent to the Oyster River and Marsh Brook. The Oyster River and the channel of the St. George River are rated as a "Class A Coastal Wildlife Concentration Area" for fisheries.

Birds are found in great variety in Thomaston, where habitats include coniferous and deciduous forests, woodland borders, cleared areas and fields, marshes, tidal flats and open salt water. Ospreys and bald eagles, wading birds, and varieties of ducks have been observed along the rivers. There are no known bald eagle nesting sites.

b. Critical Natural Resources

The Maine Department of Conservation, Natural Areas Program has identified one rare plant (*Carex atherodes*, awned sedge) which has a state ranking of S1: Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity or vulnerability to extirpation. This plant has been documented at only two locations in the state, both locations within Knox County and one within Thomaston. It is found in the wetland associated with Meadow Brook, which is zoned Resource Protection. In addition, the Marsh Brook area contains a brackish tidal marsh, which is categorized by the Department of Conservation, Natural Areas Program as a "rare botanical feature".<sup>12</sup> See the Critical Resources map in the map section of this Plan. The portion within Thomaston is zoned Resource Protection. However, adjacent upland areas are zoned either Industrial or Rural Residential and Farming (R-1).

Additionally, the southern end of the Rockland Bog is located near the Rockland-Thomaston municipal boundary. The bog is an unpatterned fen ecosystem and is identified as a rare or exemplary natural community by the Department of Conservation. Approximately 81 acres in Thomaston immediately south/southwest of the bog is owned and managed by a nonprofit natural resource education and conservation organization. This 81 acres together with other land surrounding the Rockland Bog are part of a 6075 acre undeveloped habitat block located in Thomaston, Rockland, Warren and Rockport. Additionally, as discussed above under Forest Resources, the Thomaston Town Forest is part of a 2874 acre undeveloped habitat block in Thomaston and Warren. Such large blocks of undeveloped habitat have been identified by the "Beginning with Habitat" project as important to the maintenance of biodiversity.

c. Threats to Critical Natural Resources

The greatest threat to these resources is likely from structural development and associated stormwater runoff. For the most part, these resources are located in areas zoned Resource Protection and Rural Residential and Farming, which should help to minimize the potential for adverse impacts. However, care should be taken to

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<sup>12</sup> Rare or Exemplary Botanical Features, Town of Thomaston, Me. Natural Areas Program, Me. Dept. of Conservation. August 2001.

ensure that industrial development in the vicinity of Marsh Brook is sited and designed to protect Marsh Brook and associated wetlands which flow to the Weskeag River.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat, and Critical Natural Resources: Planning Considerations

- Large blocks of land should be retained in open space. Wildlife travel "corridors", including those in riparian areas, should be protected. The Thomaston Town Forest (see Forestry section) is a large, mostly undeveloped block of land in the Oyster River watershed. Connecting this land with similar blocks of open space in neighboring communities will help to maintain a diverse wildlife population in the midcoast area.
- Both the rare plant and the exemplary botanical feature discussed above are associated with wetlands. Any proposed alteration of these wetlands, as well as proposed development that would be adjacent to them, should be carefully reviewed to avoid potential adverse impacts to these resources and the plant and animal communities they support.
- Continuously connected habitat is of paramount importance in brooks, streams and rivers. It is important that road/waterway crossing structures be properly placed so that these habitats do not become disconnected. When building, replacing or maintaining culverts and other road crossing structures, it is important to ensure that the structures do not impede water flow or upstream/downstream movements of organisms and materials. Structures should attempt to remain within the overall horizontal and vertical alignments of the stream in the general vicinity of the crossing.
- All waterways rely on adjacent habitats for energy resources for in-stream food webs. Streamside or riparian habitats are also valuable for wildlife, water quality and flood control. Review of proposed developments near waterways should ensure that ordinances are strictly enforced.
- Purchase of land or easements on land adjacent to waterways provides multiple benefits in that such purchases protect important riparian habitat from large-scale development, allow undisrupted function of of riparian and aquatic habitats, and provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

## **10. Scenic and Aesthetic Resources**

Thomaston's location along the St. George River combined with its long history of settlement and associated historic structures are distinguishing features of the town that contribute to its scenic and aesthetic qualities. When asked what people like about living in Thomaston, 84% of those responding to the Committee's community survey cited small town atmosphere, 64% mid-coast location, and 58% historic character. These characteristics are important components of the Towns' scenic character.

In 1986, the State Planning Office commissioned an analysis of Maine's coastal scenic resources. Criteria used in rating scenic quality included:

- Topography: elevation, slope, variety of landforms, etc.;
- Open space: agricultural land and views of water;
- Shoreline configuration;
- Special scenic and cultural features; and
- Water views from major roads.

Thomaston has many views that include one or more aspects seen as desirable in this study. Although a scenic inventory has not been conducted, there are some notable views worthy of consideration as the town evaluates various land use options.

The bridge over the St. George River on Route One, with the confluence of the Oyster and St. George Rivers just upstream, is considered by many to be one of the nicer river crossings in midcoast Maine. Upstream, the banks of the river on the Thomaston side are relatively undeveloped, and recent development is well screened by the existing vegetation. Downstream and on the Warren side of the river where existing vegetation is lower, structural development has begun to erode the scenic quality of the area.

The approach to the town from the Route One bridge to Route 131 North is characterized by woodland, open fields, and limited structural development. It has a rural quality which is visually appealing and complements and serves to distinguish the town's compact village center, contributing to the small town atmosphere valued by many town residents.

Within the village area, the St. George River and harbor are visible from several public vantage points. The harbor can be seen down Knox Street from Main Street. Water Street, Mayo Park, the public landing and portions of Thatcher Street offer nice views. The western end of Town, once dominated by the Maine State Prison, has particularly scenic views of the St. George River and the harbor. The Mill River can be seen from the Route One crossing and along portions of Fish and Water Streets.

Outside the village center, distant views down the St. George River can be seen from Route 131 South, High Street and near the South Thomaston town line. The Camden Hills are visible from portions of Studley Lane and from outer Beechwood Street, about three miles from Main Street, as well as from West Meadow Road and Old County Road. Dexter Street offer views over Rockland out to the islands of Penobscot Bay, as do the higher portions of West Meadow Road. High ground within the Thomaston Town Forest affords a view of the hills to the north in Warren and Rockport.

In addition to our natural resources, the town has many important and interesting



structures which contribute to the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the town. There are fine views of the town and harbor from Brooklyn Heights and from Route 131 South as one travels north toward the village. The Mall, business block, large white homes, churches, and the Academy Building along Main Street; and the view of Montpelier as one travels east along Main Street are distinctive and contribute greatly to the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the town. While topography and the Mill River physically separate the village center from the industrial section where the cement plant and quarries are located, the waste rock piles and towers associated with the cement plant are clearly visible from many locations. The waste rock piles are viewed negatively by many, with 36% of survey respondents citing them as something they dislike about Thomaston.

Scenic and Aesthetic Resources: Planning Considerations

- Reuse of the Maine State Prison property will have a significant impact on the visual character of the community. Demolition of the prison has created an opportunity to enhance both physical and visual access to the St. George River for the general public.
- In reviewing development proposals, the town should work with developers to ensure that proposed development is of a scale and design that is compatible with surrounding uses and is located so as to minimize adverse impact to the town's scenic and aesthetic resources. Views of protected natural resources, such as waterbodies, from public vantage points should be protected.

### **III. REFLECTIONS ON 1991 PLAN**

The town has made considerable progress in implementing many of the strategies pertaining to natural resources set forth in the 1991 Plan, as well as other measures not identified in the 1991 Plan. The town's progress is summarized in Table 8.3. Notable accomplishments include:

- Removal of CSOs (combined sewer overflows) and construction of a new wastewater treatment facility. These actions removed two major threats to surface water quality contributing to measurable improvements in the water quality of the St. George River estuary and the reopening of the clam flats to harvesting in 1996.
- Removal of underground tanks and other threats to ground water resources.
- Implementation of land use ordinances to limit development on steep slopes and unsuitable soils.
- Amendments to the subdivision ordinance to encourage preservation of prime farmland, forest land, deer wintering areas, and rare and irreplaceable natural areas, and to incorporate Best Management Practices for stormwater management.
- Update of land use ordinances to comply with state shoreline zoning requirements.
- Creation of a Conservation Commission in 1996. The Conservation Commission, in partnership with the Georges River Land Trust, has created over 3.5 miles of hiking trail in the Town Forest, which will eventually link up with other sections of the Georges River Highland Trail. The Conservation Commission has also participated in the creation of Mayo Park at the Town Landing, and reclaimed the abandoned Town Beach on Water Street as a small park. It is hoped that these public spaces will become part of a proposed waterfront path linking the Town Forest Trail System to a proposed Department of Transportation hike/bike path along Route 131 south.

Objectives outlined in the 1991 plan that were not fully realized include the following:

- While significant strides have been made in removing threats to both ground water and surface water, the town needs to continue its efforts to reduce adverse impacts to surface water resources from storm water and non-point sources of pollution.

- There continues to be a need to address operation of gravel pits and rock quarries, including their eventual site closure and restoration. The Dragon Cement quarries and the large pit (Pease Pit) off Beechwood Street will likely yield large quantities of rock and sand and gravel for decades. Closure plans need to be required of these facilities. Additionally, the ongoing operations of these facilities poses challenges for the town including concerns about vehicular traffic, dust, noise, and the potential for groundwater and surface water contamination.
- Although ordinances have been amended as proposed in the 1991 Plan, there have been few pro-active efforts to protect the right to farm, or to acquire or otherwise protect, agricultural lands and open space.
- FEMA flood insurance maps are dated. According to the State Planning Office, the FEMA maps for Knox County are scheduled for digital updates in 2007, with final maps available approximately two years later. The town will need to review these updates when available and amend its land use district boundaries to reflect any changes in floodplain information.
- Lack of scenic resources inventory. While the 1991 Plan and this Plan identify important scenic views, no formal inventory or survey of these views has been made. As development pressure increases in the midcoast area, the town would be well served to identify important scenic resources and work cooperatively with landowners to protect these resources which contribute greatly to the quality of life in our community.

These remaining challenges along with additional strategies for future action are further discussed in Section V of this Chapter.

**Table 8.3 Summary of Implementation Plan from 1991 Plan for Natural Resources**

“Section” references in the table below are to Chapter 7 Thomaston Land Use and Development Ordinance, adopted 3/25/95 and as amended 11/3/04

<b>Task/Strategy in 1991 Comp. Plan</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>#1 Slopes:</b> Amend Ordinance to restrict activities on slopes >20%, consider slope on all development proposals.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 711.2: places areas of 2 or more contiguous acres with slopes >20% in Resource Protection District; Sec. 711.6.1: single family residence allowed in Resource Protection as special exception provided located on slope <20%; Sec. 716.6.2,d: if activities on slopes >20%, minimize adverse impact as condition of approval of permit re: erosion and sedimentation control; Sec. 716.10.8,a: requires increased setback for roads and driveways in Shoreland districts on slopes >20%.
<b>#2 Slopes &gt;20%:</b> Amend Ordinance to require applicants having existing incompatible uses and activities on slopes >20%, to minimize known or likely adverse environmental impacts as condition of approval to expand, relocate, or change land use.	<u>Implementation Ongoing.</u> No specific reference to slopes, but erosion and sedimentation considered in assessment of no greater adverse impact.
<b>#3 Soil suitability:</b> Require analysis and review by Soil Conservation Service if soil suitability is in doubt.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 716.11.3: Review costs borne by developer; Sec. 716.11.4: Proposed uses in Resource Protection or Shoreland require soils report based on on-site investigation by qualified professionals.
<b>#4 Soils limitations:</b> Review ordinances to consider soils limitations, require steps to minimize environmental impacts as condition of approval for permits to expand, relocate, or change land use.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> See Items #1-#3 above.
<b>#5 Suitable soils:</b> Require by ordinance all future land uses and activities be located on suitable soils; constructed and maintained to minimize adverse environmental effects.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 716.11: Soil Suitability standards.

Task/Strategy in 1991 Comp. Plan	Status
<b>#6 Rare, unique and exemplary plant communities:</b> Treat publicly identified rare, unique and exemplary plant communities as “environmentally sensitive areas”, place in land use districts to prohibit adverse impact.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Included in definition of Resource Protection District and considered in subdivision review. Sec. 723.8 requires that applications for subdivision demonstrate no undue adverse effect on rare and irreplaceable natural areas.
<b>#7 Agricultural land and open space:</b> Encourage placement of active agricultural lands and other open space in Farm and Open Space Tax program. Support conservation easements and other means of preserving forest and agricultural lands through local land trusts.	<u>Status.</u> No evidence that town has actively encouraged preservation of agricultural land or open space.
<b>#8 Farmland soils, forest, open space:</b> Amend subdivision ordinance to encourage preservation of prime farmland soils and forest as open space as part of subdivision approval process.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing</u> Sec. 726.2.4.p regarding preliminary plans for subdivisions shall include the location of open space to be preserved. Wherever possible, prime farmland and soils shall be reserved as open space as well as significant forest parcels and deeryards, as part of the final approval.
<b>#9 Bedrock geology:</b> Request further mapping/analysis of bedrock geology	<u>Status.</u> No evidence this has been done. No demonstrated need at this time.
<b>#10 Geologic resources:</b> Encourage educational use of geologic resources.	<u>Status.</u> No evidence this has been done.
<b>#11 Sand and gravel pits, rock quarries:</b> Amend ordinance to provide more specific guidelines for operation and closure of sand and gravel pits and rock quarries.	<u>Task Partially Accomplished.</u> Section 716.5 Earth Material Removal of the ordinance contains provisions pertaining to operation and closure of pits and quarries. Pits and quarries are also subject to regulation by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Ordinance has been amended to restrict new pits and quarries to the Industrial District.
<b>#12 Inactive pits and quarries:</b> Work with owners of inactive pits and quarries to achieve beneficial reuse of areas.	<u>Status.</u> No known inactive pits except Henry pit off Beechwood Street, which may be appropriate for closure. Pit off West Meadow Road is currently used for composting. Existing operational pits off Beechwood Street as well as Dragon quarries must comply with Maine DEP regulations governing closure.

Task/Strategy in 1991 Comp. Plan	Status
<b>#13 Surficial geology:</b> Encourage mapping/analysis of surficial geology.	<u>Status.</u> No evidence that this has been done. No demonstrated need at this time.
<b>#14 Ground water :</b> Amend ordinances to require applicants for large scale (>20 acres) developments to collect hydrogeologic information and conduct impact assessments.	<u>Task Partially Accomplished.</u> Ordinance Amended for Subdivision. Implementation Ongoing. Sec. 726.24,f: requires submission of such information on subdivisions of 18 acres or more. Development of more than 20 acres non-residential or more than 30 acres residential would also trigger Site Law review by Maine DEP [38 MRSA section 482(5)].
<b>#15 Wetlands:</b> Identify boundaries of significant freshwater and coastal wetlands, place adjoining land within Shoreland District.	<u>Task Accomplished.</u> Ordinance amended and wetlands depicted on zoning maps.
<b>#16 Stormwater:</b> Adopt best management practices for stormwater control to ensure all municipal stormwater drainage systems are kept in good repair.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 716.12: Storm Water Runoff requires that all new construction be designed to minimize stormwater runoff in excess of natural pre-development conditions. Town has been upgrading its stormwater management system.
<b>#17 Flood Hazards:</b> Amend Flood Hazard Building Permit Ordinance to comply with federal standards.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Ordinance last amended on 6/10/98 and current according to State Planning Office. See Section 716.7 Flood Plain Areas.
<b>#18 Shoreline zoning:</b> Amend ordinance to comply with state shoreline zoning guidelines.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Ordinances reviewed on yearly basis and amended as needed. Currently up-to-date and approved by Maine DEP.
<b>#19 Wetlands 2-10 acres:</b> Amend ordinances to avoid development on wetlands 2-10 acres; ensure alterations do not affect ability of wetlands to function for storm water flow control; protect major storm drains by requiring 25 foot setback for buildings, restrict filling.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 711.2: Definition of Resource Protection District includes wetlands >2 acres in size; Ordinance requires structures to be set back 25 feet from drainage ditches and upland edge of wetlands 2-10 acres in size; toe of fill must be set back 20 feet from upland edge.
<b>#20 Stormwater:</b> Amend subdivision ordinance to institute Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater management during/after construction; restrict flow off-site to pre-develop levels.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Section 716.12 establishes standards regarding storm water runoff. Sec. 723.16 requires adequate stormwater management for subdivisions.

Task/Strategy in 1991 Comp. Plan	Status
<b>#21 Conservation Commission, scenic resources:</b> Establish Conservation Commission; rate open spaces and vistas.	<u>Task Partially Accomplished:</u> Commission established June 3, 1996. Rating of open spaces and vistas has not occurred.
<b>#22 Survey wetlands:</b> Conduct survey, develop program to acquire and protect wetlands.	<u>Task Partially Accomplished.</u> Wetlands have been mapped and placed in Resource Protection District. There is no program to acquire wetlands for protection.
<b>#23 Groundwater:</b> Amend subdivision ordinance to incorporate density requirements to protect ground water from on-site wastewater disposal systems.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 723.12 requires demonstration that subdivision will not adversely affect quantity or quality of ground water; Sec. 726.2.4,f requires hydrogeologic information on development of 18 acres or more.
<b>#24 Underground Tanks:</b> Work with DEP to ensure replacement of underground tanks	<u>Task Accomplished.</u> All registered underground tanks not in compliance with standards have been removed.
<b>#25 Deeryards:</b> Include deeryards as land reserved as open space in subdivisions.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing.</u> Sec. 726.24,p includes deeryards.
<b>#26 Subdivisions:</b> Amend subdivision ordinance to require environmental impact assessment in applications for subdivisions over 20 acres in R-1 and R-2 Districts.	<u>Ordinance Amended.</u> No applications to date to which this provision would apply.
<b>#27 Critical natural areas:</b> Work with Critical Areas Program to better define critical natural areas.	Areas are mapped.
<b>#28 Critical natural areas and farmland:</b> Work with landowners and land trusts to identify, preserve, protect critical natural areas and farmland.	Remains to be done. <u>Recommended strategy.</u>
<b>#29 Scenic resources:</b> Amend subdivision ordinance to include scenic factors.	<u>Ordinance Amended. Implementation Ongoing</u> Sec. 723.8 No undue adverse affect on scenic or natural beauty ...or public rights to physical or visual access to the shoreline. □

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

The St. George River and its associated tributaries and wetlands, the significant amount of open space associated with farm and forest land, and the quarries associated with mineral resources are the defining physical and natural features of Thomaston.

As discussed above, Thomaston has made significant progress in reducing and/or eliminating many threats to surface and ground water quality and in protecting wetlands and riparian areas. These efforts have enhanced the wildlife, scenic and aesthetic values of these resources and have contributed to the opening of many of the clam flats in the St. George River estuary to harvesting.

In addition to their value as natural resources, these waters have also shaped the character of our community. The St. George, Oyster, and Mill Rivers and their associated wetlands frame the developed portion of the town. Collectively, they create a sense of being by the shore from many locations. These waterbodies, in conjunction with the historic location of the Maine State Prison along Route One west of the village center and the cement plant and quarries to the east, have contributed to the development and preservation of a relatively compact village center. The prison and cement plant may also have served to dampen development pressure relative to that in other midcoast communities, thereby preserving open space and the historic flavor of the town.

Our community survey results indicate that maintenance of our compact village center with its small town atmosphere is a high priority for town residents. The survey also showed support for town acquisition of land for open space to retain rural character and scenic views (44% yes, 22% no, 22% undecided) and additional public access to water (43% yes, 30 % no and 19% undecided). The recent demolition of the prison has provided an opportunity to further enhance our village center and recapture spectacular views of the St. George River for the enjoyment of the general public.

The acquisition of the Town Forest associated with the wastewater treatment facility has provided an important opportunity to preserve a large contiguous area of open space in the Oyster River and St. George River watersheds for wildlife and recreational uses. The Town Forest can be an important part of a network of open space associated with, among other things, the Georges River Highland Path, that can serve to protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity in the midcoast area.

The gravel pits and rock quarries, while important to the local economy and necessary as a source of raw material for various development needs, represent significant challenges. Thirty-six (36%) of survey respondents cited the “cement plant mountains” as something they disliked about living in Thomaston. When asked about future land use, 43% wanted to forbid new gravel pits, 25% wanted to



discourage them, and only 20% favored them. The town needs to ensure that these pits and quarries are operated in compliance with State law and in a manner consistent with other community goals.

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES**

The following list is a summary of the goals, policies and implementation strategies pertaining to the protection and appropriate use of the Town's natural resources.

### **A. STATE GOALS**

The State Planning Office has established several state goals and policies pertaining to natural resources. These goals, as set forth in 19-498 CMR Chapter 202 Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria, are listed below.

1. "To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl."
2. "To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers and coastal areas."
3. "To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas."
4. "To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources."
5. "To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters."

### **B. STATE COASTAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

The State has also established coastal management policies, which are also set forth in 19-498 CMR Chapter 202. These policies are listed below.

1. "To promote the maintenance, development and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation."
2. "To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats,

to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters, and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources."

3. "To support shoreline development that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline, and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources."
4. "To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides, or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety."
5. "To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources."
6. "To protect and manage critical habitats and natural areas of state and national significance, and to maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast, even in areas where development occurs."
7. "To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation, and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development."
8. "To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine, and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses."
9. "To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors, and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime character of the Maine coast."

### **C. LOCAL GOAL**

To protect Thomaston's air, land, water, natural, and scenic resources; prevent development sprawl and preserve a compact village center; and ensure that the extraction and processing of mineral resources (including rock, sand and gravel) and the ultimate closure of pits and quarries are done in compliance with environmental laws and local land use ordinances so as to minimize adverse impacts on environmental resources and the community as a whole.

## **D. POLICIES**

Policies and strategies to protect and enhance our natural resources are organized below by resource type for ease of reference. However, there is considerable overlap between resource types and actions taken in one area, frequently provide benefit throughout the environment. For example, protection of wetlands benefits water quality and wildlife, protects unique resources, and contributes to the scenic and aesthetic quality of the area. Additionally, ecological systems cross municipal boundaries and it is recommended that the Town work collaboratively with neighboring communities to protect and enhance natural systems through regional planning efforts such as “Beginning with Habitat”<sup>13</sup>.

Overall Policy: To encourage concentrated patterns of growth to minimize impacts on natural resources and scenic character and ensure that the scale of new development is appropriate relative to surrounding land uses.

### **1. Floodplains**

To reduce the potential of flood damage and maintain the National Flood Insurance Program to insure public facilities against flood damage and make flood insurance available to private property owners.

### **2. Climate and Air Quality**

To protect and enhance air quality, supporting efforts to minimize air emissions from both stationary and mobile sources.

### **3. Geology, Mineral Resources and Soils**

- (a) To regulate the operation of sand and gravel pits and rock quarries to protect public health and safety; minimize impacts to air, ground water and surface water resources and other land uses; and provide for the eventual reuse of these areas in an environmentally sound manner.
- (b) To restrict future growth and development on soils which have severe limitations for the proposed use(s).

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<sup>13</sup> “Beginning with Habitat” is a natural resource and land use planning tool developed by a group of state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations including: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine State Planning Office, Maine Audubon Society, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, Maine Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, The Nature Conservancy, and Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve.

#### **4. Agricultural and Forest Resources**

- (a) To protect agricultural resources from adverse impacts of incompatible development.
- (b) To protect and promote sound management of forest resources.
- (c) To enhance the livability of the village center through the creation of a system of parks and/or open space and the maintenance of a healthy urban forest.

#### **5. Ground Water**

To preserve and protect from adverse impact groundwater resources in all areas of Thomaston, but especially those areas not served by public sewer and/or public water.

#### **6. Surface Water and Wetland Resources**

- (a) To preserve, protect from adverse impact, and enhance the quality of all surface waters in town, in accordance with State water classifications.
- (b) To use Thomaston's rivers and watercourses for the uses for which their depths, water quality and topography best suit them, with particular emphasis on retention of marine-oriented uses along developed portions of the shoreline and on preservation of natural resources along undeveloped portions.

#### **7. Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat, and Unique Natural Areas (see also Marine Resources)**

- (a) To protect wildlife habitats from adverse effects of development.
- (b) To protect and improve water quality to enhance its wildlife and recreational values and the viability of commercial fisheries.
- (c) To protect natural areas that possess unique physical features, or which serve as habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species or representative plant communities.

#### **8. Scenic and Aesthetic Resources**

- (a) To protect Thomaston's scenic and aesthetic resources from adverse effects of development.
- (b) To enhance physical and visual access to the shore for the general public.

## **E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The implementation strategies identified below are in addition to continued enforcement of the Town's existing land use ordinances and standards.

### Air Quality:

1. Continue support for Park and Ride Program through allocation of parking spaces behind the business block. [Selectmen. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

### Geology, Mineral Resources, and Soils:

2. Review town ordinances pertaining to sand and gravel pits and rock quarries and amend as needed to ensure that impacts to other natural resources, other land uses, and transportation systems are adequately addressed. Include provisions to address closure of depleted pits and quarries. Track compliance of pits and quarry operations with required State permits. [Planning Board, CEO, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: initiate tracking within 1 year, review ordinances and amend if needed within 3 years]
3. Continue to restrict growth and development on slopes greater than 20%. Continue to enforce ordinances pertaining to erosion and sedimentation control and stormwater management. [Code Enforcement Officer, Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]

### Agricultural and Forest Resources:

4. Encourage through educational outreach efforts placement and retention of active agricultural lands and other important open space in the Farm and Open Space Tax Program, and productive forest land in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Survey current users of these programs to assess program effectiveness and encourage continued participation. Explain benefits of these programs to other landowners whose properties have important agricultural, open space, and forestry values. Provide woodlot owners with information on forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). Encourage conservation easements to preserve important agricultural, open space, and forest lands through local land trusts. [Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Tree Warden. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing, survey within 1 year]
5. Continue to manage the Town Forest in accordance with the objectives and practices set forth in the Town Forest and Town Trails Program (1997). [Conservation Commission. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

6. Increase funding for the town's tree nursery as a cost-effective means of supplying replacement trees for our urban forest. [Selectmen, Town Meeting. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: within 3 years]
7. Establish regulation governing removal and replacement of trees located along roads that ensures consultation between Tree Warden and affected property owners. [Selectmen, Tree Warden. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: within 3 years]

Ground Water:

8. Continue to track results of DEP required monitoring of groundwater in the vicinity of the Rockland quarry waste disposal area. [Town Manager. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
9. When issuing building permits in areas not served by public water, provide property owners with information regarding steps they can take to protect their ground water supply (i.e., their well). [CEO. Priority: Important. Time frame: initiate within 1 year]

Surface Water and Wetland Resources:

10. Continue to inspect development projects to ensure compliance with the town's Shoreland Zoning, Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Storm Water Management ordinances. [CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
11. Continue to protect minor watercourses and drainage swales from development and erosion to ensure that they continue to function as part of the town's stormwater management system and do not contribute to localized flooding or to sedimentation of surface waters. Complete stormwater management improvements recommended in the 1999 Wright Pierce study. [CEO. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
12. Continue to work with landowners and entities such as the Georges River Tidewater Association to monitor water quality and to identify and eliminate non-point sources of pollution to the St. George River and its tributaries. [CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
13. Continue to restrict future development on all wetlands outside of the Shoreland Commercial District. Ensure that impacts to wetlands are avoided and minimized to the maximum extent possible and that compensation for wetlands loss is made in accordance with state law. [Planning Board, CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat, and Unique Natural Areas:

14. Review town ordinances pertaining to vegetative buffers in areas abutting critical natural resources (notably commercial and industrial uses in the eastern section of town) and amend as needed to ensure protection of those natural resources. [CEO, Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time-frame: initiate within 1 year]
15. Meet with neighboring communities to review land use plans and ordinances and develop an area-wide approach to protection of important natural resources such as the St. George River, Rockland Bog and Weskeag River using tools such as "Beginning with Habitat". Report to Selectmen by January 2008 on any proposed changes to Thomaston's land use ordinances. [Conservation Commission, Comprehensive Plan Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
16. Encourage through site plan review patterns of development that preserve wildlife travel corridors and large blocks of open space. Require subdivision proposals within the R-1 (Rural Residential and Farming) District to submit a cluster design instead of, or in addition to, a traditional design for site plan review. Land to be left in open space should, to the extent possible, include prime agricultural soils, critical natural resources and important wildlife habitat and should abut and augment such open space on adjoining properties. [Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 1 year]
17. Review ordinances and amend as needed to ensure that culverts and other crossings of rivers, streams and wetlands are designed and constructed so that they do not impede water flows or the upstream/downstream movement of organisms and materials. Structures should attempt to retain the overall horizontal and vertical alignments of the watercourse in the general vicinity of the crossing. [Road Commissioner. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 yrs.]

Scenic and Aesthetic Resources:

18. Continue to work cooperatively with landowners to extend the trail system from the Town Forest along the waterfront to the Mill River and Montpelier, connecting to the proposed hike/bike path along Route 131 south. [Conservation Commission. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
19. Work with landowners to design proposed development so as to minimize impact on scenic views. Continue to enforce existing land use ordinance provisions that require commercial and industrial uses to configure proposed development in a visually harmonious manner and to ensure that structures do not impede scenic views to the extent reasonably practical. [Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Immediate]

20. Develop guidelines for the assessment of scenic impacts using concepts such as scale, contrast and spatial dominance to assist developers and the Planning Board in design and review of proposed development projects. Amend existing ordinance to allow Planning Board, at its discretion, to require a scenic impact analysis as part of site plan review. Encourage owners of existing development in the commercial area east of the cement plant to plant trees and shrubs to improve the visual appearance of the highway commercial area along US Route One. [Selectmen, CEO or Ordinance Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 2 years.]
21. Develop inventory of scenic resources. [Conservation Commission. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: within 3 years]



## **MARINE RESOURCES**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Thomaston's marine and estuarine waters include all of the St. George River within the town, the Oyster River for all its length within Thomaston, the Mill River up to Route One, and the salt marshes and streams in the southeastern portion of town associated with the Weskeag River.

This chapter focuses on the commercial and recreational uses of the harbor and associated shoreland areas, as well as public access to the town's waterbodies and harbor. Water quality and natural resource values of these areas are discussed in the chapter on Natural Resources.

### **II. INVENTORY**

#### **A. OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES**

In 1987 Thomaston adopted a Harbor Ordinance outlining the duties and powers of the Harbor Master and Harbor Committee, establishing standards for moorings, floats and piers, and navigation, and setting penalties for violation of rules. The Harbor Master, who is appointed annually, is charged with regulating navigation, assigning moorings, directing the removal of vessels if necessary and otherwise enforcing the Town's harbor ordinances. The Harbor Committee consists of seven members appointed by the selectmen for staggered three-year terms. The Harbor Committee serves as an Appeals Board for decisions of the Harbor Master, promulgates harbor rules and regulations, and establishes fees.

The Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Committee, with representatives from Thomaston, South Thomaston, Warren, Cushing and St. George, works with the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to improve water quality and manage the shellfish resource for sustainable harvests. The non-profit Georges River Tidewater Association works collaboratively with the Management Committee and DMR on water quality issues.

The Conservation Commission is actively involved in developing and enhancing public access to the waterfront.

#### **B. THOMASTON HARBOR**

##### **1. Description**

Thomaston Harbor is situated westerly of the bend in the St. George River when approaching the Town from seaward. The harbor consists of a narrow channel at low tide, which measures 19.3 acres between the fixed beacon and the Wadsworth Street

Bridge. At normal high water, the water surface measures 96.9 acres.

During northerly winds the harbor is sheltered. During south to southwest winds the harbor is sheltered from the Wadsworth Street Bridge to the vicinity of Brown's Point. Southeast winds provide the only direction from which wind and waves create a problem for a majority of the harbor. During incoming tides, the average current is 2 to 3 knots. During outgoing tides, the current averages 3 to 4 knots. A current of 6 knots has been measured above the Wadsworth Street bridge at the Narrows.

Presently the harbor sees maximum activity in the spring from April through June when boats are launched, and in the fall during September and October when boats are hauled. Summer activity, both recreational and commercial, is quite heavy. Clamming continues at a somewhat reduced level through the winter, as the river channel downstream of the harbor normally remains open. The Mill River is traditionally the site of a seasonal ice fishery for smelt.

## **2. Navigation**

Thomaston harbor has historically been part of the St. George River Federal Navigation Project. The harbor channel is buoyed for navigation by the U. S. Coast Guard. The granite monument at the bend in the channel was repaired in May 1990. The navigational marker was replaced later that summer.

The harbor and channel were dredged in 1903 to a project depth of 16 feet below mean low water. Maintenance dredging was performed in 1919 and 1934, with the most recent dredging in 1977. The main channel is approximately 16 feet below mean low water, and as narrow as 15 feet wide in some places. The "layout channel" for moorings is approximately 90 feet wide with a depth at mean low water of 5 feet. Recent investigations undertaken by the Harbor Committee indicate that the only portion of the harbor/channel requiring dredging to maintain current uses is the area around the beacon.

Given the evolution of the boat-building and commercial fisheries industries in Thomaston, the requirements associated with the harbor's designation as a Federal Navigable Channel, including a requirement for a 100 foot wide channel unobstructed by moorings or floats, became incompatible with current and projected future use of the harbor. Therefore, the Town sought a change in the status of the harbor from a Federal Navigable Channel to a Federal Navigable Anchorage. This change in status, which required approval by the U.S. Congress, became effective in 2000. Subsequently, the Town learned that its harbor ordinances are incompatible with the harbor's designation as a Federal Navigable Anchorage. Specifically, some town ordinances (such as those which differentiate between resident and non-resident users in matters such as the assignment of moorings) are incompatible with requirements for Federal Navigable Anchorages. The town is now seeking to modify the designation once again, by removing the harbor proper from the Anchorage designation and retaining federal designation of the channel, seaward from the vicinity of the beacon, as a Federal

Navigable Channel. This modification will allow the town to receive federal assistance with dredging in the vicinity of the beacon while allowing the town to retain local control over the use of the harbor.

### **3. Harbor Improvements**

As noted above, the harbor is comparatively small, with the channel measuring 19.3 acres at low tide. In the late 1970's the town hired Barry S. Timson, Consulting Geologist, to examine alternatives for increasing the mooring capacity of the harbor. At that time the most promising alternative included a mooring basin on the southerly side of the project channel approximately opposite what is now Mayo Park (formerly the site of the municipal wastewater treatment facility), perhaps in conjunction with a floating tire breakwater extending shoreward from the vicinity of the beacon. It was anticipated that dredging to maintain existing project depths would be needed every 6 to 7 years, with more frequent intervals for some of the mooring basins proposed. None of the options was pursued. In the early 1990's the town installed mooring floats to increase mooring capacity.

Mooring locations are not well documented. Based upon best available information, there are currently between 15 and 18 moorings within the main channel. These moorings are used primarily by marine-related businesses at the harbor. There is little recreational demand for moorings, perhaps due to the Town's location 12 miles up river from Port Clyde. As of April 2005, only two individuals are awaiting moorings. The Harbor Master indicates that there are some unclaimed moorings which may be available for reassignment.

While adequate water area exists north of the dredged channel for a substantial number of additional slips and floats, depths are inadequate for other than near high tide use without dredging. Private and/or municipal funding would be needed if any expansion of the mooring area is accomplished by dredging. Dredged materials must be tested before disposal, and may or may not be able to be used as fill. (Spoil from the 1977 dredging was used to raise the level of the "old dump" just upstream of the railroad bridge on the Mill River.)

### **4. Boat Launching Facilities**

Thomaston Harbor has the only public boat ramp on the upper salt-water portion of the St. George River estuary. This facility provides water access not only for Thomaston residents, but for neighboring communities such as Warren, Cushing, Friendship, and South Thomaston; and is the primary launch used by persons accessing the clam flats in the upper estuary. The ramp is located a short distance from US Route One, and is therefore readily accessible to the general public. The only other public launch on the lower St. George River is at Port Clyde, approximately 12 miles down river.

The public boat ramp facility was improved and expanded in 1994 with funding from the

Maine Department of Conservation. The launch provides access during the full tidal cycle, and includes a wharf and float system. The town obtained a grant in January 2005 for reconstruction of the floats.

As the commercial softshell clam industry has expanded with water quality improvements, there is considerable demand for use of the town landing to obtain access to the flats in the upper estuary, thereby increasing the demand for parking of trucks and rigs in the vicinity of the launch. At the present time, parking for commercially licensed individuals of the marine industry is limited to the upper hillside area, or as otherwise posted. The lower paved parking areas are reserved for recreational users of the landing (14 spaces) and adjoining Mayo Park, which has 8 spaces for large vehicles and rigs and 4 for passenger vehicles. At times the need for commercial parking, as opposed to recreational, exceeds the available space.

In addition to the public launch, some of the marine-related businesses on the waterfront have separate launching facilities to accommodate their individual business needs.

### **C. LAND USE SUBDISTRICTS**

In 1987, Thomaston adopted a Shoreland Commercial District in an effort to preserve its waterfront for marine related uses. The Shoreland Commercial District is approximately 25 acres in size. It includes the northerly shore of Thomaston Harbor from Ferry Avenue, upstream of Wadsworth Street (the "Iron Bridge") up to Water Street, and land east of Knox Street and south of the railroad to the Mill River. On the south side of the harbor, only the property occupied by Jeff's Marine is included in this District. The Shoreland Commercial District includes that part of the waterfront most suited for marine oriented activities. Within this District, permitted land uses are limited to emergency services; essential services; non-essential structures less than 100 square feet in size for educational, scientific or nature purposes; and soil and water conservation practices and structures. Conditional uses are largely limited to marine related activities such as boat shops and yards and related services.

Most of the southerly shore of the harbor is in a Resource Protection District, as are the shores of the Mill River above the railroad bridge. Higher land south of the harbor is in the Rural Residential R-2 District, while most of the land north of the harbor is in the Urban Residential R-3 District. Low-lying land is also covered by the Flood Plain Ordinance, which has been amended to require that any substantial expansion of non water-dependent uses in the Flood Hazard Areas be elevated above the level of anticipated flooding.

### **D. MARINE-RELATED BUSINESSES**

The marine-related businesses at the harbor have a significant impact on Thomaston's character and economy. Approximately 130 people are employed by marine-related businesses adjacent to Thomaston Harbor.

At present there are five boat-building, storage and/or repair businesses located adjacent to the harbor [Lyman Morse, Jeff's Marine, Epifanes, Custom Coating, and Marine Exhaust]. Of these businesses, Lyman Morse is the largest employer with approximately 100 employees. Lyman Morse specializes in new boat construction, as well as the service and storage of large boats up to 100 feet in length. In the fall of 2003, Lyman Morse obtained approval for the installation of a 110 ton marine travel lift. This lift will enable the company to launch and haul larger boats and to expand its business into the market for repair of large boats.

In addition, there are two marinas and one harborside restaurant. One marina services over 300 boats annually, approximately 12 feet to 30 feet in length. It has docking facilities and moorings plus sales and services for boating accessories. The marina associated with the restaurant has docking and mooring for approximately 20 boats. The restaurant is located adjacent to the Public Landing and is open for lunch and dinner for most of the year.

Dragon Products (the cement plant) owns a parcel of waterfront land which it purchased as a prospective site for shipping and receiving products by barge. However, that plan was abandoned in the late 1980's and the company has no plans for the use of the parcel at this time.

Although outside and north of the harbor area, a small portion of St. George River frontage southerly of the Route One bridge is in a Shoreland Commercial District. Development in this district consists of a marine construction firm, which maintains a ramp and float with tidal access to the river.

## **E. COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

Thomaston is located at the head of the St. George River estuary. Elimination of numerous discharges throughout the St. George River watershed (see Natural Resources Chapter) has been key to the revitalization of commercial and recreational fisheries in the estuary. The relocation of Thomaston's municipal wastewater treatment facility and construction of a lagoon/spray irrigation system, which discharges treated effluent only during the winter months, has been a major factor in improved water quality downriver of Thomaston. With this improvement and the removal of overboard discharges, and continued efforts to reduce non-point source pollution throughout the estuary, the acreage of flats open to clamming throughout the St. George River has greatly expanded.

The Saint George River is designated by DMR as Shellfish Growing Area U (See map section of this Plan). As of 2005, there are 72 active sampling stations in this shellfish growing area. Shellfish growing area classifications and allowed activities are summarized in Table 9.1.

**Table 9.1 Shellfish Growing Area Classifications**

<b>Shellfish Growing Area Classification</b>	<b>Activity Allowed</b>
Approved	Harvesting allowed
Conditionally approved	Harvesting allowed except during specified conditions
Restricted	Depuration and/or relay harvesting only
Conditionally restricted	Depuration and/or relay harvesting allowed except during specified conditions.
Prohibited	Nor harvesting or water use allowed for processing

A review of DMR's shellfish classifications for the upper estuary (north of Fort Point in St. George) between 1995 and 2004 indicates the following:

- In 1995, harvesting in the estuary was conditionally restricted from an area outside of Thomaston harbor off Brooklyn Heights downriver beyond Fort Point to Watts Point. Harvesting was prohibited in the estuary in the vicinity of the Mill River, in Thomaston Harbor and upriver of the harbor. Restrictions were in part attributed to discharges from the Thomaston wastewater treatment plant.
- The new Thomaston treatment plant became operational in 1997. In 1998, much of the estuary below Hospital Point to Station 20 was conditionally approved for shellfish harvesting. The area north of Hospital Point remained conditionally restricted, with a prohibition in an approximately 100 acre area off the Mill River, and approximately 300 acres in and upriver of Thomaston Harbor.
- In 2000, the conditionally restricted area north of Hospital Point expanded to the mouth of the Mill River opening more acreage to depuration harvesting. Harvesting in the Mill River, harbor and upriver continued to be prohibited.
- As of 2004, shellfish harvesting is prohibited in the immediate harbor area and upriver, and in the Mill River. The area from these points south to Hospital Point remains conditionally restricted). The river below Hospital Point to Fort Point is conditionally approved depending upon rainfall amounts. Harvesting is approved in most of the estuary south of Fort Point.

Within Thomaston, the river from Route One to Thomaston harbor is likely to remain closed to shellfish harvesting. This area is not particularly productive and is not a high priority for restoration given the location of the Warren and Thomaston wastewater

outfalls and the boat activity in Thomaston harbor. DMR maintains prohibitions on shellfish harvesting near wastewater outfalls and in harbors where large recreational boats may be moored. The conditionally restricted area outside of Thomaston harbor and north of Hospital Point is approximately 450 acres in size and is a rich shellfish area open to depuration harvesting. Continued efforts to eliminate sources of contamination have the potential to open more of this area to other than depuration harvesting.

To manage this reclaimed soft-shell clam resource, Thomaston, along with Cushing, St. George, Warren and South Thomaston, participates in the George's River Regional Shellfish Management Committee. The Management Committee consists of three members from each of the participating towns, at least two of whom are commercial diggers if they are available and willing to serve. Members are appointed by the municipal officers of each town for terms of three years. The Committee's activities are overseen by a Joint Board of Selectmen, consisting of one municipal official from each of the participating towns. The Management Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Establish licensing procedures and limit the number of shellfish harvesters;
- Restrict the time and area where digging is permitted;
- Limit the minimum size of soft-shell clams taken;
- Limit the amount of soft-shell clams taken; and
- Provide effective enforcement of the Regional Shellfish Management Ordinance.

Member communities have entered into a Interlocal Clam Management Agreement, the goals and objectives of which are "to manage the resource through licensing, limitations on the number of diggers and quantities harvested, limiting size of clams taken, limiting time and areas where digging is permitted, opening and keeping the river open for harvesting, seeding programs, and by rewarding conservation work." The towns have adopted an ordinance governing shellfish harvesting (Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Ordinance) and member communities work cooperatively with the Maine Department of Marine Resources to improve water quality and manage the resource for a sustainable harvest. According to the Maine Department of Marine Resources, the Committee issued 128 commercial shellfish licenses in 2002, nine of which were student licenses. There were no limits on the number of recreational licenses.

Clamming in the estuary provides part or all of the income for nearly 100 area families. In 1998 and 1999 clam landings for the licensed diggers exceeded \$1,000,000 each year. According to the Maine Department of Marine Resources, softshell clam landings in 2001 totaled \$17.4 million dollars statewide. That same year, the value of softshell clams harvested in Knox County (of which the St. George River estuary is a significant component) totaled \$2.9 million. The Clam Management Committee reported that 1,086,920 pounds of clams were landed in 2003.

## F. PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT

In addition to the public boat launch in Thomaston harbor, there is a small, informal hand-carried boat and canoe-launching area north of the US Route One bridge on the Thomaston side of the St. George River. This launch was established in the early 1990's following construction of the new bridge. This launching area is used by persons with canoes, kayaks and other light-weight craft seeking access to the St. George and Oyster rivers. Persons also hand launch small boats at the Wadsworth Street bridge.

The Conservation Commission has focused considerable effort on enhancing public recreational opportunities, including physical and visual access to the shore. In 2000, the town completed construction of Mayo Park at the site of the former wastewater treatment facility. This public park abuts the public boat launch and provides a picnicking area for the general public, with scenic views of the St. George River.

In the fall of 2002, the Conservation Commission completed enhancements at the site of the former Town Beach, with the addition of plantings and a stone bench. The site is located between Lyman Morse and Epifanes on Water Street. Although not suitable for swimming, the site provides fine views of the working waterfront and, together with Mayo Park, is an important link in the creation of a town trail. It is hoped that a town trail will eventually connect the Town Forest and the Georges Valley Highland Path with the Thomaston waterfront, and eventually Montpelier. The town should retain ownership of its existing properties that abut the river to help ensure public access to the water and facilitate development of a waterfront trail.

### Planning Considerations

- Thomaston has the only public boat ramp on the upper salt-water portion of the St. George River estuary. As water quality continues to improve, both commercial and recreational pressure on this facility will likely increase. There is limited space to expand vehicle parking space for persons wishing to access the water.
- In 1987 Thomaston voters approved creation of a Shoreland Commercial District to protect the working waterfront from harbor-side residential and non marine-oriented commercial development. It is important to retain the protections against inappropriate land uses that do not require or benefit greatly from a waterfront location, such as high-density residential uses.
- The town-owned land which abuts the river should be retained by the town to help ensure public access to the shore and facilitate development of a waterfront trail.
- Continued participation in the George's River Regional Shellfish Management Committee is critical to management of the shellfish resource for sustainable yields. Communities throughout the watershed need to continue their efforts to eliminate sources of pollution.



### III. REFLECTIONS ON 1991 PLAN

The 1991 Plan identified four implementation strategies to achieve the town's goals. The town's progress toward meeting these goals is summarized in Table 9.2.

In addition to these accomplishments, the town has made significant improvements to the waterfront, largely as a result of the relocation of the wastewater treatment facility. Relocation of this facility has improved water quality, thereby benefiting the waterfront businesses, commercial fisherman and the town as a whole.

**Table 9.2 Summary of 1991 Implementation Plan for Marine Resources**

<b>Task/Strategy in 1991 Plan</b>	<b>Status</b>
Include the entire St. George River waterfront and the Oyster and Mill Rivers, except for the present and proposed Shoreland Commercial Districts, in Resource Protection Districts.	Completed
Amend the Shoreland Commercial District to reduce the number of non-marine-oriented Conditional Uses and/or more specifically restrict them to marine-oriented uses.	A number of changes were made. The Harbor Committee believes that provisions are generally serving to promote marine-related businesses.
Place all commercial land uses wholly or partially within the Shoreland District along the St. George River in the Shoreland Commercial District.	Completed.
Establish a reserve fund for acquisition of available waterfront properties for public use and access to water.	Not done.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

Thomaston has a comparatively small harbor, with limited land (approximately 25 acres) in the Shoreland Commercial District. The creation of the Shoreland Commercial District appears to have served its intended purpose as marine-related businesses appear to be thriving. In the public opinion survey, there appeared to be general support for continued management of the harbor as a working waterfront. Twenty-five (25) percent of those responding wanted to leave the harbor as it is, 22% favored more development but only for marine-related uses, 15% favored development of the harbor for marine-related uses allowing apartments on the second floor. Only 26% favored development of the harbor emphasizing a variety of commercial uses. Seventeen (17) percent were undecided.

As discussed in the Natural Resources chapter, the town has made great strides in improving water quality in the river, primarily through the elimination of combined sewer overflows, overboard discharges, and most importantly, the relocation of the wastewater treatment facility and its conversion to a lagoon/spray irrigation system. These improvements in water quality have enhanced the waterfront to the advantage of the marine-related businesses, commercial fishermen, and the general public.

The public landing has been expanded and improved, and with proper maintenance, appears adequate to meet anticipated demand for the foreseeable future except that parking for commercial fishermen may need to be expanded.

Public access to the waterfront has increased with the improvements to the public landing, the creation of Mayo Park, and the recent enhancements to the site of the former Town Beach.

The primary needs are:

- Removal of the Federal Anchorage Designation, while retaining the area around the beacon as part of the Federal Navigable Channel. This will ensure federal assistance with dredging in the vicinity of the beacon while allowing the Town to retain control over the use of its limited harbor space.
- Dredging of the channel around the beacon to ensure predictable conditions and safe and adequate passage into and out of the harbor.
- Identify location and secure necessary approvals for management of sediments to be dredged from the channel.
- Identify opportunities for expanding shorefront parking for commercial fishermen, and/or develop alternative locations to access clam flats in the St. George River Estuary.
- Continue to identify and eliminate or reduce potential sources of water contamination; thereby, allowing more flats within the estuary to be opened to shellfish harvesting.
- Procurement of land and/or easements and funds to continue/complete construction of a waterfront trail. Consider preservation of shorefront north of Wadsworth Street bridge to preserve scenic quality of the river.

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

### **A. STATE GOALS**

The State Planning Office has established a number of goals and policies pertaining to marine resources. These goals and policies, as set forth in 19-498 CMR Chapter 202 Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, are listed below.

1. "To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers and coastal areas."
2. "To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors, from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public."
3. "To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters."

### **B. STATE COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

In addition, the State Legislature has adopted nine Coastal Management Policies, also set forth in Chapter 202 and in Title 38, MRSA, Section 1801.

1. To promote the maintenance, development and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation.
2. To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters, and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources.
3. To support shoreline development that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline, and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources.
4. To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides, or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety.
5. To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.

6. To protect and manage critical habitats and natural areas of state and national significance, and to maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast, even in areas where development occurs.
7. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation, and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development.
8. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses.
9. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors, and to protect the enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime character of the Maine coast.

### **C. LOCAL GOALS**

1. To continue to improve water quality in the St. George River and its tributaries.
2. To retain a viable working waterfront and increase public access to the water, balancing the needs of marine-related businesses and commercial fishermen with the public's need for visual and recreational access to water.
3. To protect important wildlife habitat in the estuary and adjoining shoreland, and the scenic quality of the harbor.

### **D. POLICIES**

1. To keep undeveloped portions of Thomaston's shoreland in districts that will limit development and protect marine and other natural resources.
2. To work cooperatively with state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other towns in the lower St. George River to identify and control/eliminate sources of water pollution and to manage the commercial fishery for sustainable yields.
3. Support efforts to maintain and improve existing public waterfront facilities.
4. To work with the U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, Federal and State representatives, and the Thomaston Harbor Committee to ensure safe boat access to Thomaston harbor.

## **E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. Retain existing Shoreland Commercial and Resource Protection Districts abutting the St. George River. [Selectmen. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing.]
2. Change anchorage designation. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]
3. Seek federal assistance for dredging in the vicinity of the beacon and identify site for handling of dredge spoils. [Selectmen, Harbor Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
4. To assist with navigation, harbor planning and allocation of resources, develop a GIS (Geographic Information System) map of the harbor, locating the channel, launch, moorings, and other significant natural and manmade features. [Harbor Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
5. Assess needs and develop a plan to ensure adequate parking for waterfront commercial and recreational uses. Identify opportunities for expanding shorefront parking for commercial fishermen, and/or develop alternative locations to access clam flats in the St. George River Estuary. [Harbor Committee, Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Committee, Conservation Commission. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
6. Continue working with other communities on the St. George River and the Maine State Prison to improve water quality. Continue to work with other neighboring communities to improve access to the shellfish resource, and manage the commercial fisheries for sustainable yields utilizing tools such as regional ordinances and interlocal agreements. Continue participation in the George's River Regional Shellfish Management Committee and the Interlocal Clam Management Agreement. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Ongoing]
7. Retain town-owned properties that abut the river to help ensure public access to the shore. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
8. Work with landowners and conservation organizations to procure easements and funds to extend the trail system from the Town Forest along the waterfront to Montpelier. [Conservation Commission. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
9. Investigate, in consultation with conservation organizations, means of preserving the scenic quality and recreational value of the shoreline north of the Wadsworth Street bridge. [Conservation Commission. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: within 4 to 6 years]

## **RECREATION**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

For the purposes of this section of the Thomaston Comprehensive Plan “recreation” is defined in the broadest sense as those “leisure and learning activities which take place outside the work place and/or the home.” These activities and programs may include athletics, the arts, outdoor pursuits, youth and adult programs, diverse education opportunities, and special-need citizens’ activities. In fact, the only limit on recreation opportunities is that imposed by the community and its government, by economics, land and facility availability, manpower, transportation, and most important, by commitment and interest of its citizens.

Thomaston is a small town with limited available land and facilities, and a limited recreation budget. Many of the towns around Thomaston have extensive facilities and programs available. However, transportation is often is a major stumbling block to enjoying these programs and facilities, particularly for the youth population. Because of this limitation and following the Part A Inventory of the Thomaston programs and facilities, a list of out-of-town facilities will be briefly described in Part B of the Recreation Inventory. A more detailed list of Inventory items is given in the Appendix, Part A and Part B.

### **II. INVENTORY**

#### **A. THOMASTON RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Thomaston has a Thomaston Recreation Committee that is appointed by the Select Board. The committee is made up of seven Thomaston residents and a student representative, and meets monthly. A part-time Recreation Director is employed by the town and reports to the Recreation Committee.

A Recreation Questionnaire was sent out by the Thomaston Comprehensive Planning Committee to the various town sectors, their directors, and committees that are involved with any form of recreation. Much of the descriptive material and the suggestions for the future come from those persons and/or committees who returned the questionnaire. Suggestions concerning Recreation from the Town-Wide Survey have been incorporated also.

At the present the youth programs are largely focused on team sports depending on the season and school facilities available: basketball, baseball, soccer, field hockey, etc. Recently however, the programs have been augmented by a golf and a martial arts program. These programs are aimed at an age range of approximately seven to fourteen. For seniors, seasonal bus trips have been arranged.

## B. THOMASTON RECREATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

1. **The Arts: Dance:** Appropriate facilities for dance studios do not exist in town. *Watts Hall* and the *University Center* at Thomaston occasionally offer their facilities for folk dancing, ballroom dancing, etc.
2. **The Arts: Fine Arts (Painting, Sculpture, Crafts, Art History, Photography, etc.)**  
Courses are offered through the *University College at Thomaston*. Craft and drawing programs connected with the library have been available—particularly for children. There is no other suitable town facility in existence for such activities.
3. **The Arts: Music:** Thomaston citizens have a number of opportunities for either performing in music groups, or becoming part of the listening audience. Following is a partial list of recreational programs that perform in or around the community and beyond:
  - a. Baroquen Consort
  - b. Downeast Singers
  - c. Harborside Harmony
  - d. Long Cove Wind Quartet
  - e. Midcoast Community Band
  - f. Midcoast Flute Ensemble
  - g. Orion Women's Trio
  - h. Youth Choir of the Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist
4. **The Arts: Theatre:** In the past decade a number of performances have been held either by the Georges Valley High School students, sometimes with the addition of adult performers from the community. Occasionally small performing groups such as the *Chamber Theatre of Maine* and the *Watts Hall Players* have given performances. The high school “auditorium” is a gymnasium and as such is deficient in seating, acoustics and size and availability of stage, dressing rooms, etc. Since the revival of Watts Hall, local theatre productions are increasingly held in that building.
5. **Cinema:** At the northeast end of town the commercial *Flag Ship Cinema* has a variety of first-run cinemas to choose from.
6. **Fitness and Exercise Programs and Facilities:** In the past senior citizens who lived in the Knox Hotel Apartments enjoyed a regular exercise program but this has been absent in the last few years. From time to time adult exercise programs are offered at local churches.

## 7. Individual and Informal Sports Opportunities:

### a. Winter Sports:

Cross-country skiing; snow-shoeing; snow-mobiling; ice-fishing: During the winter months with adequate snow cover for frozen water-ways, these sports can and are participated in on an individual basis. The new *Forest Trail* with its wide access road is an ideal place to enjoy these activities. A number of snow mobile clubs have been organized in an around Knox Country, but not in Thomaston.

### b. Summer Sports:

As noted in the description of the Town Forest, opportunities for individual hiking are much increased with the completion of a large section of the trail system. Bicycling will be available on paths with the completion of the proposed “around-town” bike and walking path. ATVs may, at the present time, operate only on the wide access roads within the Town Forest. Elsewhere, ATVs, motorcycles, and other off-road vehicles operate with permission of land owners. Recreational fishing and clamming are available for anyone with a license on the George’s River, the Oyster River, and the Mill River. There are no longer any swimming programs, nor appropriate swimming beach access on the harbor for Thomaston residents. During hunting season those with licenses may hunt in non-restricted appropriate wildlife areas including the Georges River for duck hunting. Water safety and navigation programs are not now offered in town or through the schools. Public access to launch boats exists at the Town Landing, under the Wadsworth Street Bridge and at the Route One Oyster River Bridge. Currently two commercial marinas are located in Thomaston Harbor. At one time Thomaston had a number of in-town private tennis courts; these are long gone and the high school courts became the only source for tennis for students and townspeople. In the last few years the courts have greatly deteriorated from lack of maintenance and vandalism. The high school tennis team now must be transported to other towns/schools to practice and play matches. Although the Forest Trail and other group trails might someday be available for horseback riding, at the present time riding depends on permission to use private lands and trails. There are no areas set aside for skateboarding, roller blading, and scooters within the town. Parking lots and residential streets are now used.

- 8. Mayo Park:** As of 2000, Thomaston has a new waterfront park. Through a grant of \$24,750 from the Conservation Committee with the addition of \$10,000 in taxpayer funds, the park was completed in the summer of 2000. The area provides picnic benches and barbecue pits on a grass area, additional boater parking, restrooms, and a walking path along the base of the park. A problem exists with careless use and vandalism.



- 9. Montpelier – The General Henry Knox Mansion Museum:** After a rather bumpy past of decay, neglect, and “State Rescue,” the replica home of Major General Henry Knox was turned over to the Friends of Montpelier in October of 1999. The past few years have been devoted to restoration of both the interior and exterior of the building, and the expansion of programs so that the mansion would function as part of the community from an historic, cultural and educational point of view. Adjacent property was purchased by the Friends in 2001, as well as the hiring of a fulltime Museum Manager. Off-season tours are available by arrangement. Encampments are planned for fall weekends. Selling historical replicas and other gift items takes place within the building. A fund-raising plan for outdoor site improvements is underway as are plans for hiring an archivist and director of education.
- 10. The Museum in the Streets (Le Musée Dans La Rue):** The summer of 2002 brought the people of Thomaston a new museum; a museum of the streets. Twenty-five placards showing early photographs of nineteenth century houses, hotels, churches, waterfront, and commercial sites with an explanatory text in English and French have been put into place at appropriate sites around the town, and these have enhanced the sense of history that the old houses, buildings, and harbor give to the residents and the visitors.
- 11. Programs for Special-Needs and Handicapped Citizens:** With the exception of the senior citizen bus trip program under the management of the Thomaston Recreation Committee, most of these special programs are managed within other neighboring towns and will be considered in the larger area inventory. At the time of writing, the new *Penobscot Bay YMCA* offers a special once a week swimming program to Life Skills Class of MSAD 50 (and MSAD 5). MSAD 50 has other in-school programs for special-needs children, but there is no formal program at the moment for adults, nor is there in Thomaston a regular recreation program in place for special-needs children or adults during holidays and summer vacation. Some special-needs children have in the past been mainstreamed through the now suspended MSAD Summer Program.
- 12. Religious Institutions: The church as a Provider of Facilities and Programs:** Many Thomaston Churches offer their facilities to assorted groups, summer and winter, and have youth or senior citizen or out-reach programs such as scout troops, space for concerts, support groups, senior citizen programs, and summer programs open to children of whose families have other or no church affiliations.
- a. Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist offers their parish hall for community functions. A number of different groups use this space for classes, hobbies, games, instruction, youth events, music lessons, support groups, and for people needing shelter. Non-profit and community groups may use the space free of charge; donation is suggested for profit groups. Future plans may be focused on adapting church space for more concerts and plays since this space has excellent acoustics and provides intimate seating.

- b. Federated Church has a number of programs in place, e.g.: senior exercise group, cub scouts, senior social group, MS support group. Music rehearsals and choral presentations are regular events.
- c. Thomaston Baptist Church: As well as the usual support groups and congregation functions, the church is host many concerts including the Down East Singers, the Midcoast Community Band and the Living Christmas Tree carol presentation.

*(Note: Other local churches chose not to respond to the Recreation Questionnaire delivered to them.)*

**13. Summer Camp Programs:** Strictly speaking there are no summer camps within Thomaston town limits. However, several camp have in the past provided transportation from Thomaston, or nearby, to their facilities: *Camp A-Homa* of the Penobscot Bay YMCA and the *Wavus Camps* on Damariscotta Lake.

**14. Thomaston Harbor and Georges River:** The harbor is a working waterfront giving access by ramp for the launching of small boats and for clamming and fishing. The ramp primarily serves the commercial fisherman and the recreational boater. Due to the limited harbor size, there has been a shortage of small boat moorings for both resident and transient boaters. North of the Route 1 (Wadsworth St) by the bridge crossing the Georges River is a small area for hand-launched boats.

**15. Thomaston Historical Society:** The Thomaston Historical Society owns the 1794 brick building at the foot of Knox Street, the remaining structure of the original General Henry Knox estate. The Society offers programs from April through November. These involve talks on town history; readings from local history records, walking tours with school children and adults; maintaining a website; services honoring General Knox; participation in the Fourth of July parade; marketing publications centering on historic Thomaston events and people. A new addition to the building now allows for safe storage of archives and extra space for artifacts. Future problem areas include the matter of accessibility, limited parking, close proximity to a reactivated railroad system, and the continued shortage of volunteers in the summer months.

**16. Thomaston Public Library:** The Town Library, established in 1898, has gone through several removals before arriving at its present location in the University Center at Thomaston. In the year 2001, the library, now open six days a week, installed has a new head librarian and children's librarian. The collection has expanded in the last five years not only with a wider selection of books but with the addition of audio videotapes. Recent renovations have been made to the Children's Library. A variety of programs and readings have been planned, and a summer children's program has been in place during the summer months. Two computers with Internet access are available for use by the public. The Friends of the Library Committee has been re-invigorated and meets regularly. This committee is dedicated to planning for the future and will be examining the

possibilities of finding a new library facility. [For more details concerning the Thomaston Town Library, see Community Services]

17. **Thomaston Town Forest Trail System:** The *Town Forest Trail* is a section of the *Georges Highland Path* long distance project. This system will provide travel paths over thirty miles along the river's watershed. In 1996, the Town purchased 350 acres of land near the Oyster River for a new wastewater treatment facility. Approximately 100 acres was used for the lagoon and land-sprinkling system while the balance of the land—which adjoined the resource—protected the area along the Oyster River. The *Town Forest* has served the local population for generations for hunting; it is also the home of a variety of wildlife. The Thomaston Conservation Commission and the Pollution Control Department have jointly developed a system of trails for public use. Hikers, cross-country skiers, and dog walkers have used the trails extensively. Also, the wide access road has attracted Snowmobilers and ATV's (their use is limited to this road), as well as hikers. Parking and trail maps are available at designated access points off Beechwood Street and Booker Street.
18. **Town Cemeteries:** *Village Cemetery* and the *St. James Catholic Cemetery* (privately owned) offer shaded walks, and as a bonus, give the visitor a comprehensive sense of the people who lived and died in "The Town That Went to Sea" from before the Revolutionary War to the present day.
19. **University College at Thomaston-University of Maine System:** The Town is fortunate to have the college which is part of the *University of Maine System*, located in Thomaston. It is centered in the old Thomaston Academy building (along with the *Thomaston Public Library*) and offers 34 degree and certificate courses either by "on site" classes, or through over 200 of interactive and video "course delivery systems" As of Fall 2002, the *University College* offered a new program for seniors, the *Coastal Senior College*. This organization, run largely by volunteers and using qualified volunteer instructors, offers citizens an opportunity to explore a wide variety of subjects.
20. **Watts Hall:** Watts Hall has had a rebirth. It is an integral part of the Thomaston community. Through the efforts of the Watts Hall Trustees and many volunteers, the entire Hall has been painted, structurally improved, an elevator installed, and further work, both cosmetic and structural, is ongoing. The Hall is now host to a number of functions and events: a food pantry, assorted theatre productions, town meetings, scouts, teen dances, dance instruction, concerts, and many others. In 2002, the Police Station was moved from the backstage area of the auditorium, subsequently making more space available. The Town Office in 2003 now has its chief entrance on Main Street. Watts Hall, cannot be considered as an all purpose community center since there have been objections by residents to noisy adolescent entertainments.

**21. Youth Programs:**

- a. SAD 50 Summer Program: Now suspended. This program involving arts, music, and games, in the past has filled the first three or four weeks of summer vacation for children from first grade and up through Middle School on SAD 50 sites. A bus was provided to pick up St. George and Cushing children and deliver them to Thomaston. Despite the suspension of this program, there is talk about reviving such a valuable addition to recreation activities.
- b. The Scouts: Cub Scouts, Brownies. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts meet in the parish houses or other appropriate spaces in town churches and in Watts Hall.
- c. The Trekkers: This group, created in 1994, is a non-profit, outdoor-based mentoring and travel program for students living in Thomaston, St. George, and Cushing.

*(Note: For a more complete list of facilities and programs in Thomaston, refer to Appendix.)*

### **C. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES BEYOND THOMASTON WHICH MAY BE AVAILABLE TO THOMASTON RESIDENTS**

As stated in the introduction, because Thomaston is a small town and most of its institutions and facilities run on a limited budget, out-of-town offerings must be considered. Some, like golf courses, ski hills, swimming and sailing programs, YMCA, and summer camps are not likely to be duplicated in Thomaston. Also, the surrounding area offers major cultural and educational events and facilities and a brief description of some of these follow since they round out the picture of recreational opportunities that under certain circumstances (notably, access to transportation) are available to the Thomaston citizens.

#### **1. Art Museums, Galleries, Historical Societies:** These include:

- a. Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport (formerly The Maine Coast Artists): This gallery is well-known for its many exhibits featuring Maine artists and lectures pertaining to art.
- b. Conway Homestead-Cramer Museum: Located on the Camden-Rockport line off Route One is an eighteenth century farmhouse, fully restored and furnished with period pieces. A working blacksmith shop, a maple sugar house, Victorian privy, and herb garden are featured.
- c. Davis Town Museum, Liberty.
- d. Farnsworth Art Museum and Wyeth Center: This facility in Rockland describes itself as one of the “finest regional art museums in the country.” The museum offers visitors a broad spectrum of special events (music, lectures, tours, cinema showings, art classes, and workshops). Other adjuncts of the museum complex include the Olson House in Cushing (site of many Andrew Wyeth’s paintings) and “The

Homestead,” a Greek Revival Building once belonging to the Farnsworth family.

- e. Historical Societies: Each historical society can be considered a miniature museum. Almost every town in the midcoast has its own historical society and building, and each has a number of historical artifacts, photographs, manuscripts, and models that pertain to that particular community. These societies host a number of special programs, lectures, concerts, and demonstrations that are open to the public.
- f. Island Institute and Archipelago: An institution in Rockland that shows works by island and coastal community artists and artisans with the intention of preserving island life and culture.
- g. Marshall Point Lighthouse Museum: A working lighthouse that doubles as a museum celebrating Maine’s connection with the ocean and coast.
- h. Matthews Museum of Maine Heritage: This Union Fairgrounds museum features displays of early settler artifacts and tools of industry.
- i. Owls Head Transportation Museum: This museum collects, preserves, and exhibits pioneer aircraft, ground vehicles, and engines. The exhibits, lectures, rallies, auctions, and demonstrations draw thousands of visitors each year.
- j. Round Top Center for the Arts: Located in Damariscotta, this is a major art presence on the midcoast scene. In addition to a continuing number of art shows, the Center also sponsors workshops, classes, musical events, musical training and performance, and theatre events. (see also under Theatre)
- k. Schoolhouse Museum: This Lincolnville museum depicts the town’s history from the ice-age on.
- l. Shore Village Lighthouse Museum: A Rockland institution showcases lighthouse and marine memorabilia. This is also the home of the Rockland Historical Society.

**2. Arts-Performing:** Among the many organizations and facilities featuring the performing arts are:

- a. Ave Maris Stella: Camden. Vocal group specializing in medieval music.
- b. Bay Chamber Concerts: A well known Rockport organization presents classical music and jazz concerts plus lectures on various aspects of music all year round by guest artists from all over the music world.
- c. Camden Civic Theatre: This community theatre offers its facilities to a wide variety of theatrical and musical productions.
- d. Camden Opera House: A facility presents operas year round in English and is also available for a variety of cultural events.
- e. Chamber Players: Theatre group playing at various locations.
- f. Early Music Ensemble: A music group that combines recorders, cornamuse, and viol da gamba. Rockland, Camden area.
- g. Lasansky School of the Dance. Lincolnville. Offers dance instruction and programs for children.

- h. Lincoln Street Center for Arts and Education: A Rockland center which offers youth and adult educational programs in all forms of the arts as well as opportunities for performance.
- i. Martha's Place (formerly Route 90 Studio for Dance): Teaching in various dance techniques. West Rockport.
- j. People to People Dance Organization: Located in Camden and Damariscotta, this group offers dance instruction and performances.
- k. Rockport Opera House: A facility available for a variety of performances including the Bay Chamber Concerts.
- l. Round Top Center of the Arts: A multi-use facility in Damariscotta sponsors art shows, art classes, theatre productions, musical events, and instruction (see also under Museums, Galleries)
- m. Sacred Harp: Damariscotta. Singing group.
- n. Solati Trio: A resident chamber music ensemble in the Camden area.
- o. Waldo Theatre: This Waldoboro art deco-style facility presents a variety of performances throughout the year plus summer instruction touching on all forms of the theatre.

**3. Cinema:** Beyond Thomaston there are three nearby cinemas of note:

- a. The Strand Theatre: Rockland
- b. Bay View Cinema: Camden
- c. Lincoln Theatre: Damariscotta

**4. Library Programs**—Most of the towns around Thomaston have library facilities of various sizes. Many offer programs of lectures, small concerts, and children's events. Even the smallest library offers inter-library loans, computer use, audio-recorded book selections, as well as a collection of audio tapes (fiction and non-fiction) and video tapes of popular and classical movies. Most of these libraries offer non-residents borrowing privileges with the purchase of its library card.

**5. Programs for Handicapped/Homeless/Teen Age/with Education Component:**

The best source of information on these comes from the *Mid-Coast Mental Health Center* in Rockland, the *Penobscot Bay Hospital* in Glen Cove, *Coastal Workshop* in Camden, *Miles Memorial Hospital* in Damariscotta, or through the public and private schools.

- a. Freedom Riders: This organization with run by professional health personnel, riding coaches, and volunteers serve a wide variety of special-needs children and adults at Hunter Hill Farm in Union.
- b. Special Olympics: Preliminaries are held regularly in the area. See supportive organizations, hospitals, schools, the YMCA.
- c. Youthlinks: An organization for youth which encourages community service of all sorts. Adult mentors work with children between ages 11 and 15 to develop leadership ability and the chance to work in fields as varied as teaching computer use to planting gardens, donating food, working in soup kitchens.

- 6. Religious Institutions as Providers of Facilities and Programs:** A large number of churches of different denominations, synagogues, and other religious institutions, beside their usual functions, may also provide programs open to surrounding communities. These may include lectures, musical performances, and the offering of their institution facilities to associations, clubs, support, study, and youth groups.
- 7. Schools:** There is a wide choice of private schools, specialty schools, alternate, and church-sponsored schools. Among these are:
- a. Alternate Schools include a number of “community schools” providing alternate secondary education for youth no longer in a regular school system:
    - Come Spring School, Union
    - Community School, Camden
    - Hope Elementary School
    - Village School of Appleton
  - b. Church-sponsored Schools:
    - Coastal Christian School, Waldoboro
    - Pen Bay Christian School
    - South Hope Christian School, South Hope
  - c. Lincoln Street Center for Arts and Education: As mentioned above this center provides a full course in the theatre and other performing arts.
  - d. Penobscot School: Offers courses in foreign languages using native instructors and immersion courses overnight in at least eight languages. The school also offers classes in English for non-native speakers. A children’s language course is given through a Rockland public school. Also the school provides a lending library with language books, magazines, tapes, and videos.
  - e. Pre-School Facilities/Programs: Pre-School Facilities
    - Stepping with the Stones Preschool, Camden: Multi-age learning center fostering self-confidence and supportive social behavior.
    - The Toy Library of Rockland: St. Peter’s Episcopal Church Parish Hall arranges play-and-learning opportunities where young children in a safe social setting ways to explore and learn with toys, books, and art materials. Toys may be borrowed for home play.
  - f. Private Primary and Secondary Schools include:
    - Ashwood-Waldorf School, Rockport
    - Children’s House Montessori School, Rockport
    - Lincoln Academy, New Castle
    - Lion’s Lane, Camden
    - Riley School, Glen Cove.
  - g. Private High School:
    - The Watershed Community School opened its doors in September 2003. Its organizers claim to offer a “strong academic program,” as well as other innovative programs. This school is currently located

on the second floor of the Lincoln Street Center for Arts & Education in Rockland.

h. Specialty Schools and Colleges include:

- Avena Institute: non-traditional courses for adults and healthcare providers.
- Center for Furniture Craftmanship: Year round courses in wood-working.
- Downeast School of Massage, Waldoboro International Film and Television Workshops: International college for film makers, actors, digital image makers.
- Kennebec Valley Technical College: Programs of customized technical training using Mid Coast School of Technology facility.
- Maine Photographic Workshop: Summer courses for adults, college and high school students.
- McKenzie Driving School, Camden
- Mid Coast School of Technology. Vocational and technical programs.
- Rockport College: Programs leading to AA and MFA

- i. Summer school: From time to time public school districts outside of Thomaston offer summer school reading and other enrichment activities (theatre, art, dance, music, etc).

**8. Special Events, Festivals, Fairs:** A complete listing is impossible. A few examples of these are:

- a. Boat Shows: Boat shows are an important feature along the midcoast.
- b. Camden Conference: A forum for discussion and lectures on matters of national and international importance.
- c. Gardens in the Watershed: Georges River Land Trust tour of area gardens.
- d. House and Garden Tour. Camden. Maine's oldest summer tour.
- e. Kelmscott Farm, Lincolnville has in past been devoted itself to a variety of programs centering on saving and breeding rare domestic animals. It is now undergoing reorganization and future plans have not been articulated.
- f. North Atlantic Blues Festival. Two day event over-looking with Rockland Harbor featuring "world famous" blues musicians.
- g. Rockland Lobster Festival: Week-long event. Music, parades, races, sea food celebration on the Rockland waterfront.
- h. Transportation Spectacular and Aerobatic Show: Transportation Museum, Owls Head.
- i. The Union Fair: An agricultural fair featuring locally-raised food, livestock, fireworks, craft works, harness racing, concerts, etc.
- j. U.S. National Toboggan Championships. Camden Snow Bowl. More than 250 teams from all over the U.S.
- k. Windjammer Weekend: Camden Harbor. Largest single gathering of Maine Wind Jammers.



(Note; Almost every local town has its designated “day” with races, markets, parades, and special events.)

- 9. Special Recreation Opportunities:** Many towns close to Thomaston have recreation programs as well as health and fitness centers/programs. Non-Residents are often welcome to participate after paying tuition fees.
- a. Camden Skateboard Park is a popular item for the middle school and high school set.
  - b. Fundamental Moves, West Rockport. A USAG gymnastics facility in which a variety of classes in gymnastic and martial arts are offered as well as a summer camp program.
  - c. Knox County Flying Club, Owls Head. Opportunities for flying lessons and sharing of aviation experiences and programs.
  - d. Rockland Recreation Center is available with many programs.
  - e. Rockland Skateboard Center, a new popular addition to area recreation.
- 10. Sports, Camping, Indoor, Outdoor Recreation by Land and Sea: Facilities; Group and Individual Physical Activity Programs:**
- a. Atlantic Challenge Program. “The Rockland Community Sailing Program”:  
It is a fact that many Thomaston children and adults live their whole life by the ocean and rarely have an opportunity to learn boat handling. The Thomaston Harbor with its swift tidal currents is not suitable for sailing or small boat handling instruction. However, one of the new assets to the area is the above program. In 2001 some one-hundred ten children (ages 8-14), in addition to a number of adults, enrolled for the two-week sessions throughout the summer. The Sea Scouts lend their building at Snow Marine Park to this program. Partial scholarships are available. Transportation remains an obstacle for participation. Under the *Atlantic Challenge* program, the *Apprentice Shop* offers hands-on boat building experiences. In the past several years Thomaston High School students, along with others in the area, have participated in an overseas sailing Atlantic Challenge contest.
  - b. Audubon Maine Youth Camp: Ecology and Ornithology are studied by youth groups and adults on Hog Island in Breman.
  - c. Bicycling, Bike Racing, Mountain Biking: Bicycling is always popular and more towns are attempting to map out roads, paths, trails for these activities. The growth of mountain biking represents an expansion of the sport.
  - d. Boat Launch Areas, Swimming Beaches, Canoeing, Kayaking, Boating, Etc. Almost all neighboring towns to Thomaston (except Cushing) but including the Penobscot Bay Islands have both a public access to a swimming beach and/or access to the water for boat launching. Thomaston offers to five local towns a launching space to its harbor. Canoeing, kayaking, and other forms of boating are possible on the ponds, lakes, and through the *Georges River* system and via access points on the *Georges*

*River Land Trust Trails.* Boat rentals, boat handling, and instruction are available either at a launch area or at sporting goods stores. [See also section on Marine Resources].

- e. Bowling: Oakland Park Bowling Lanes in Rockport is open to the public. Candlepin bowling is available at Candlepin Lodge on Vinalhaven.
- f. Commercial Campgrounds: These are numerous in areas around Thomaston and include established facilities in Warren, Rockport, Camden, Cushing, Appleton, as well as others at a greater distance.
- g. Fencing: Instruction is offered in fencing (foil, épée, saber) at the Thompson Community Center in Union and in Camden at all seasons.
- h. Fitness and Exercise Programs: Fitness programs can be found at the *Penobscot Bay YMCA* as well as a number of private facilities throughout the area. The *Penobscot Bay Hospital* and *Miles Memorial Hospital* staff have been helpful in referring interested persons to suitable programs.
- i. Golf Courses: Area courses are used by local high schools for their golf programs. A miniature golf course may be found along Route One in Rockport and there are several driving ranges in the area, as well as on many of the public and private golf courses.
- j. Hiking, Climbing, Mountain Trail possibilities *The Georges River Land Trust* has more than seven hundred acres of *protected* land, extends from Liberty to Port Clyde, and includes a wide range of topography from wetlands, hills, ponds, mountains, and more than fifteen miles of hiking trails. The Trust has plans to extend the *Georges Highland Path* through the *Oyster River Bog* and link up with the *Thomaston Town Forest* section with the *Ragged Mountain* section in Warren, Rockport, and Camden. Mohegan Island offers vigorous hiking along its wood and rocky headland trails.
- k. Horseback Riding, Instruction, Boarding Stables, Trail Riding, Carriage Trips: Beside private stables, there are outside of Thomaston, a number of boarding stables and riding academies whose owners offer instruction in all forms of riding. There is also in Knox County a program of horseback riding for handicapped citizens of all ages. Called *The Freedom Riders* it runs during the summer and early fall months at *Hunter Hill Farm* in Union. There are no public trails at this time for horse owners in surrounding towns; the right to trail ride depends on permission from private land owners. Carriage rides are available in several communities.
- l. Hunting: Beyond the Thomaston Forest Trail System, hunting is available in the county in season. Since season dates and regulations for hunting and the species restrictions are revised annually, the hunter and/or trapper is advised to secure the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife annual bulletin.
- m. Hurricane Island Outward Bound School: This private non-profit, resident co-ed program uses Rockland and Hurricane Island, and number of land and sea wilderness areas. Activities include sailing, sea kayaking, backpacking, canoeing, and strategies for developing independence and

survival. Short programs are available for younger teen-agers; longer than others including adults.

- n. Ice Fishing, Ice Boating: These sports can be enjoyed when the ice is safe on the area ponds, lakes, and rivers. The *Knox County Fish and Game Association* holds a winter fishing derby—the oldest in Maine—which is open to waters within twenty- five miles of *Beaver Lodge* in Hope. Every year awards are given in adult and children’s divisions for the largest fish in the specified fish categories.
- o. Kayak/Canoe Instruction/Tours: A number of commercial kayak and canoe sales places and boating operations in the area offer instruction and tours from certified Maine guides.
- p. Maine Guides: Trips under the auspices of a registered Maine Guide add pleasure and educational value and safety to trips in the woods, on mountains, rivers and along the coast.
- q. Midcoast Recreation Center: A multi-use recreation facility situated in Rockport. This complex now offers four tennis courts, a full-size ice rink for general skating, hockey practice and games. Indoor soccer, baseball, soft ball will be available when the ice season is over.
- r. Motorcycles and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs): The best source of information on shops, clubs, race, and trial meets is through the motorcycle and ATV dealers.
- s. Penobscot Bay YMCA. Located in Rockport this new facility is available to surrounding communities for a membership fee. The new YMCA is a multi-use complex complete with swimming pool, gymnasium and walking track among other features. Thomaston residents may join the Y (for a fee) and participate in activities. However, lack of transportation currently minimizes the accessibility to many interested Thomaston residents. *Camp A-Homa*, as mentioned previously, offers busing neighboring towns to their Camden Ski Bowl property from the middle of June to the middle of August. The “Y” also offers an “out-reach” physical fitness program for neighboring towns for adults and seniors; Thomaston has not yet made use of this program.
- t. Sailing, Cruising, Excursions: Rockland, Rockport, and Camden harbors offer through a number of marine business facilities the rental of larger boats as well as opportunities for chartering (with or without a crew). Day or week-long cruises, around-harbor-trips are offered on a number of sailboats, windjammers, or motor vessels, lobster boats. Aerial trips are available through helicopter and small planes.
- u. Skiing, Snow-Shoeing, Tobogganing: Downhill skiing is available through the *Camden Snow Bowl* facility. The groomed trails are used by the public and by schools which sign up for a group program. (Thomaston does not do so) Cross- country skiing and snow-shoeing are available on a number of recreation and/or school properties throughout the area and on private property with permission of the land owner. Tobogganing is available the renovated *Toboggan Chute* at the Camden Snow Bowl where the National Toboggan Championship is held annually.

- v. Snow Mobiling: This activity can be done on an individual or group basis through snow mobile clubs and their trails, or on private property with owner's permission. The State of Maine partially reimburses the clubs for trail maintenance; otherwise club programs are funded through registration fees. There are to date eleven snow mobile clubs in nearby towns.
- w. Summer Camps: Day and Night: Listed in the Appendix are those camps within a forty-five minute drive from Thomaston. Many options for overnight camping within the state are available. These come from private camps, camps sponsored by the scouts, the churches, and such organizations. There are special focus camps: sports, art, music, crafts, environmental programs, special needs, etc. Many camps offer tripping, travel, and adventure-wilderness programs. As reported two camps have provided transportation to Thomaston area residents: *Camp A-Homa* of the YMCA; the *Wavus* day camp program in Jefferson.
- x. Tennis: Thomaston citizens must depend on out-of-town facilities since the town courts are sub-standard. At the present time tennis is available at these sites:
  - Oyster River Tennis Club. Rockport; indoor courts for members
  - Samoset Resort has outdoor courts for guests and members.
  - Midcoast Recreation Center has four indoor tennis courts in its facility.

*(Note: Local public courts may be found in some neighboring towns)*
- y. Town, County, and State Parks: There are a number of small town and county parks in the area and on the islands as well as five state parks. All of these are within fairly easy reach of Thomaston by car or ferry. Some camps/ scouts/schools use these parks as part of their recreation and/or instruction programs.
- z. Special Needs, Handicapped, Disabled, and Senior Citizen programs: These are provided for or run through the auspices of the two local hospitals (see above) and their mental health and physical therapy services. These groups, the YMCA and the community help put together the *Special Olympics* teams and schedules. Also, the above mentioned *Freedom Riders* work with a number of special needs adults and children.]

[NOTE: Details, lists, and in some cases, repetitions, and additions to the "out-of-town" part of the Recreational Comprehensive Plan may be found in the Appendix ]

### **III. REFLECTIONS ON 1991 PLAN**

**A. FAILURES:** Both the 1974 Comprehensive Plan and that of 1991 cited the lack of diversity in recreation programs, the continued absence of a swimming facility and skating rink, the lack of a waterfront program, and the need for a community center. The 1991 Plan recommended the establishment of a Community Activities Committee to coordinate the many and varied programs in place and those which could be initiated or augmented. This has not been done. Transportation to out-of-town facilities (with the exception of the summer YMCA program at *Camp A-Homa* and the *Wavus Camps*, has not been available. The two to three week summer art/sport/music/game program held at one of the SAD 50 schools was given up despite the fact that some of the school personnel privately expressed a real need for a summer program. The recommended playground complex has not been built. Special recreation programs for handicapped citizens have not been initiated. The limited senior citizen program which briefly included a fitness class has not been expanded.

The 1991 Plan recommendations were not accomplished for some or all of the following reasons: insufficient staffing, lack of funding, loss of property for activities, no transportation arrangements, and lack of volunteers.

**B. ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** On the positive side, the 1991 Plan recommended the acquiring of land for recreational purposes and this has happened through the relocation of the water treatment plant which allowed for the development of a system of trails and access roads. This trail system, lying between Booker and Beechwood Streets, known as the *Thomaston Town Forest Trail*, is part of the *Georges Highland Path*. Another plus is the development of *Mayo Park* on the Thomaston waterfront. Other developments include the happy revival of and continuing improvements to *Watts Hall*, the formation of the *Trekker* youth travel program, and the *Community Center* concept complete with an architectural drawing. Programs at the library and the two museums— *Montpelier* and the *Thomaston Historical Society*— have been augmented, the *University Center at Thomaston* housed in the Academy Building continues to enlarge their curriculum, and in the winter of 2002 a *Coastal Senior College* was formed using the same facilities as the University. In the following years a number of new courses and instructors or seniors have been added.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS INCLUDING RESULTS OF TOWN SURVEY**

Significant to the future recreation programs are the answers to the two questionnaires: the first to those directly involved with various aspects of recreation; the second as part of the town-wide questionnaire.

##### **A. RESPONSES TO THE RECREATION QUESTIONNAIRE.**

A Recreation Questionnaire was sent to those citizens directly involved in some aspect of managing, providing, planning, and helping with recreation programs. The majority expressed the need for a full-time Recreation Director<sup>1</sup>, community center with facilities for children, youth, adults and seniors. This community center would, these responders stated, among other benefits, offer an expanded recreation program for all citizens. In particular, this facility would be open for after school activities and summer time programs. The focus of these programs would go beyond sports and games to take in arts, crafts, music, hiking, nature programs, as well as instructional classes in such activities as boating and hunting safety. It was also suggested by those concerned with the Thomaston Town Library management and programs that a community center might contain a new library since the present Academy Building, shared with the University Center at Thomaston, is now much hampered by a lack of space. Responders to the *Recreation Questionnaire* also stated that after the multi-use community center is agreed to by the town, they would like a swimming program and a skating rink for its citizens. It should be noted (again) that the real stumbling block for young people taking advantage of similar activities in nearby towns the lack of transportation. Working parents and caretakers often do not have the time or money to drive children back and forth between school closing and early evening to nearby towns. Therefore, after-school time is usually spent, especially by teenagers, in simply “hanging out.” Responders also pointed out that the younger children are kept in private daycare, but that there is a shortage of these facilities as well as a top age limit. It is further noted that there has been in the past a number of organizations that would be willing to come to either the classrooms or to after-school meetings for instructional courses in such things as water and boat safety (The Coast Guard) and hunting and gun safety (The NRA), but these organizations must be asked for their help and arrangements made for time and place of their participation. The burden of asking, arranging, and finding facilities, it has been suggested, is on the SAD 50 authorities in coordination with the Recreation Committee. It is the opinion of many questioned that “Special Needs” children (and adults) need their own recreation programs, especially in the summer months. The loss of the usual summer two week arts and sports program run by the SAD 50 administration was unfortunate. The hope was expressed by the responders that such an in-school program will be reinstated.

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<sup>1</sup> A full time Recreation Director was subsequently authorized at Town Meeting in 2004.

## **1. Responses to the Town Survey of Thomaston Home Owners to Questions Pertaining to Recreation:**

To question 1 “What do you like about living in Thomaston” of the ten possibilities “Recreation Activities” ranked with an 11% score next to the bottom – being beaten out only by “Other.” The top score of 84% went to “Small town atmosphere.”

To the question 3 “What, if anything, do you dislike about living in Thomaston: “Not enough recreational opportunities came fifth after 1) taxes, 2) not enough shopping facilities, 3) cement plant mountains, 4) traffic problems. This ranking certainly suggests that recreation programs are deficient.

To question 8 “Do you think that Thomaston should acquire land for any of the purposes below” Recreation shared top percentages with “Open spaces to retain rural character and scenic views” both just beating out “Additional public access to water.”

To Question 11 “Over the next ten years which (if any) of the additional recreational facilities and programs listed below should be developed in Thomaston”?

- a. (52%) Community Center
- b. (50%) Small Parks
- c. (44%) Nature Programs
- d. (44%) Waterfront activities
- e. (42%) Community ice skating rink
- f. (38%) Senior citizens activities and programs
- g. (28%) Playground with climbing and play equipment
- h. (20%) Sports programs for adults
- i. (8%) None of the above

Of interest is the response to question 12 which addresses the transportation situation: The third problem (after insufficient parking and summer traffic congestion) cited by 51% of the responses is “inadequate public transportation from Thomaston to other towns. This problem, as has been noted, directly affects citizens—especially the youth population—from taking advantage of the many out-of-town recreation facilities, and programs offered.

To sum up: Despite the additions of the Forest Trail complex, Mayo Park, and the Watts Hall improvements; the local management and control of Montpelier and the increased number of programs at the museums, library, and at several churches there are still a number of issues to be addressed. This is made plain by the fact that the Recreation Program is, judging from the answers given in the two questionnaires (Recreation Survey and Town-Wide Survey) deficient in quite a few aspects.

### **C. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TABLE**

The Maine Department of Conservation has published guidelines for the types of recreational facilities that municipalities should seek to develop and maintain. The guidelines are based upon a town's population. In the table below those guidelines and the facilities and services found locally are shown, as well as the condition and brief description of those facilities.



**Table 10-1**

Guidelines for Recreation and Park Services for Municipalities with Populations between 2,500 and 5,000	Located In Thomaston?	Condition	Description/Location/Capacity
<b><u>I. Administration</u></b>			
Recreation and Park Committee or Board	Yes	Full-time Rec. Director; volunteer committee <sup>2</sup>	Rec. Director works with MSAD 50 facilities, student reps. Plus resident volunteers.
Community Education/Recreation Combined School/Town Rec, Dept.	Yes	See above	See above
<b><u>II. Leadership</u></b>			
<i>A. Summer Program:</i> Swimming Instructors Summer Recreation Director	None Full-time Rec. Director		Summer programs exist in nearby towns; no town paid transportation
<i>B. Winter Program</i>  Skating Rink Supervisor(s) General Program Supervisor (part time.)	None Full-time Rec Dir.		Winter programs/rink/tennis in other Towns; no transportation.  Full-time Rec. Director works with Team sports.
<i>C. Year Round Program</i> Full-time Recreation Director One full-time staff Part-time or contractual program specialist	None None None		
<b><u>III. Program</u></b>			
Swimming Instruction	None		
Supervised Playground Program	None		
Senior Citizen Club	None		Two trips per year under Rec. Program management
Teen Program	None		
Skiing Instruction Program	None		
Ice Skating (Rink Supervisor)	None		
Community-wide Special Events	None		Privately funded, planned.
Organized Community Music Groups	None		Private music organizations exist
Arts & Crafts Programs	None		
Evening Adult Education	None		
Recreation Program			
Organized Dance Group	None		

<sup>2</sup> Recreation Director authorized as full time position in June 2004.

Guidelines for Recreation and Park Services for Municipalities with Populations between 2,500 and 5,000	Located In Thomaston?	Condition	Description/Location/Capacity
Day Camp Program			
<b>IV. Facilities</b> (to include School Areas)			
<i>Outdoor Facilities</i>			
Neighborhood Playground, 2-10 acres; w/in 1/2 mile of each housing concentration of 50+ homes; playground, basketball court, playfield, etc.	None		
Community Recreation Area, 12-25 acres w/ball fields, tennis courts, swimming, ice skating, etc.	None		
Softball/Little League Diamond (0.75 per 1,000 pop.)	School facilities	C	Within the MSAD 50 property area
Basketball Court (0.50 per 1,000 pop.)	School facilities	C	Within the MSAD 50 property area
Tennis Court (0.67 per 1,000 pop.)	Yes	F	Within the MSAD 50 general area
Multi-purpose field: football, soccer, field hockey (0.50 per 1,000 pop.)	School facility	C	Within the MSAD property area
Swim area to serve 3% of town pop. (15 sq.ft/user)	None		
Pool –27 sq. ft/water per user or Beach 50 sq. ft/water, 50 sq.ft./beach per user			
Ice Skating (5,000 s.f. per 1,000 pop.)			
Playgrounds (0.50 per 1,000 pop.)	None		
Horseshoe Courts	None		
Shuffleboard Courts	None		
Picnic Areas w/tables & grills (2 tables per 1,000 pop.)	Mayo Park	B	Small area on harbor with tables/grills/toilets
Outdoor Education Area or Nature Center	Town Forest Trail	A	Extensive trail system; approx. 250 acres; part of Georges Highland Path
<i>Indoor Facilities</i>	Yes	C	Facilities available within SAD Elementary, Grammar, and High School
School Facilities Available for Public Use			
Gym or Large Multi-Purpose Room (0.20 per 1,000 pop.)	Yes	C	Within MSAD buildings; see above
Auditorium or Assembly Hall	Yes	C	Watts Hall is available for meetings, plays; theatre section needs upgrading.
Arts and Crafts shops	None		
Teen Center	None		
Senior Citizen Center	None		
Game Rooms	None		

Guidelines for Recreation and Park Services for Municipalities with Populations between 2,500 and 5,000	Located In Thomaston?	Condition	Description/Location/Capacity
Public Library	Yes	D	Within town limits; old, crowded facility within University College Bldg.
V. <b>Finance</b> (funds for operation and maintenance - not capital) Minimum \$6 per capita minimum for part-time	Yes		Underfunded Recreation program; \$21,800 appropriated by town for the Recreation Department budget. <sup>3</sup>

#### Condition Classification System:

#### Grade Classification

- A Relatively new facility, lifetime expected in excess of 20 years (with proper maintenance)
- B Facility is a few years older and has been well cared for, lifetime expected to be in excess of 10 years
- C Older facility that may not be in the best of shape and may need minor improvements within 5 years
- D Old facility that needs considerable maintenance within 2 years and/or significant renovation
- F. Very old facility that has outlived its usefulness or is in severe disrepair. This facility (or equipment) is unsafe or unusable and should be attended to very soon. Replacement may or may not be necessary (based on need assessment).

<sup>3</sup> Budget increased in 2004 with conversion of Recreation Director from part-time to full-time position.

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

### **A. GOALS**

#### **State Goals**

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services.

To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

#### **Local Goal**

To enhance individual and family physical and cultural well-being through provision of year-round, broad-based recreation programs and opportunities for all age groups.

### **B. POLICIES**

1. To expand the recreation program to include all age groups.
2. To make efficient use of town facilities and resources and cooperate with other entities such as MSAD #50 and neighboring municipalities to provide recreational opportunities for town residents.

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING GOALS**

The following strategies for achieving community recreation goals are based on the recommendations of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the 2001 Recreation Survey (answers from persons in concerned with recreation programs) and the 2001 Town Survey. These strategies are presented for town consideration:

1. **Community Activities Committee:** Formation of such a committee involves appropriate members of the Town government including the Selectboard. It is assumed that an Activities Committee would be made up of volunteer members under the guidance of the paid Director of Recreation. Their work would include coordination with other sponsors of town recreation programs. The Committee would work to coordinate use of SAD 50 facilities (such as sports fields), possibly with SAD 50 personnel and also with persons involved with the library, museums, theatre, the college, other art groups, and environmental organizations. Because some programs might best be facilitated outside town limits, the Committee might have to consider a system of transportation. [Responsibility: Select Board. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 1 year]
2. **Full-Time Recreation Director:** Continue to fund a full-time director of recreation needs to make use of existing space in Thomaston and also coordinate

use of SAD 50 busses to access regional recreational facilities. [Responsibility: Selectboard. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

**3. Community Center:** The building of a community center has had a start through the formation of a volunteer committee and the use of an architectural firm to develop a design concept. However, several major hurdles remain:

- Location. The building should be close enough to the center of town so that students and non-drivers can easily reach the building.
- Land Availability: Find on a suitable and available parcel of land.
- Funding: Make a final plan for funding such a center—volunteer fund raising, grants, private donation, town funding, or other.

[Responsibility: Multiple: private, public funding effort. Priority: Important. Time frame: long term]

**4. Waterfront: Boating and Safety Program:** Such a program under the management of the Recreation Director would involve working through the SAD 50 schools for in- school or after school programs during the school year, perhaps enlisting the U.S. Coast Guard personnel who are usually willing to provide instructional programs. The Harbor Committee members or citizen might be willing to provide a boat for hands-on learning. However, the Thomaston Harbor does not lend itself to safe solo boating practices and other sites should be looked at. The Atlantic Challenge Program run in Rockland Harbor with its fleet of small boats and instructors, if transportation could be provided, would be suitable for both child and adult learning programs. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**5. Hunter and Firearm Safety Program:** The National Rifle Association has for a long time run such programs and it is usually willing to send volunteer instructors to work with the students either during or after school. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee in cooperation with SAD 50. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: more than 3 years]

**6. Summer Swimming Program:** This lack is regrettable and should be a top priority with the Recreation Committee. There is now no suitable beach within the town, so outside facilities must be found either through lease, purchase, donation, or the joint use of other town facilities such as those in the new Y building in Rockport. This last would of course involve transportation. It is also possible that if a Community Center is built, a swimming pool might be one of its features. This last would provide swimming access throughout the year (as is the case of the Y); not simply the summer months. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: long term]

**7. Skating Rink:** A natural rink could be made from either a piece of SAD 50 property or from donation of suitable piece of town land. Better, perhaps, would be the use of the new Midcoast Recreation Center artificial ice rink which offers space for hockey, general skating, and skating instruction. Again, transportation to and

from Rockport is an issue. Coaches would either be paid, perhaps using those already on the Midcoast Recreation staff, or found among volunteer ranks. *Time Frame*: Long term. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee; perhaps with cooperation of SAD for busing to other locales. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: long term]

**8. Renovation of Tennis Courts:** Existing tennis courts are in poor shape and are being used for skate boarding. Conversion to skate board area has been approved. It would be desirable to have new courts at some time in the future. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee and SAD 50. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: long term]

**9. Summer-Long Program for Children and Teens:** Cooperation with the SAD 50 personnel is a must for such a plan. The in-school facilities, outdoor grounds, and playing fields should be part of any comprehensive summer program. Also to be considered is use of the Forest Trail for nature and hiking programs, the coordination with the Recreation committee to provide a swimming and boating program, as well as theatre, music, and art programs. The use of Watts Hall (or the proposed new community center) should be considered in these respects. Again, out-of-town summer programs are available to non-residents but transportation remains a stumbling block. Efforts should be made to support the Y's Camp A-Homa and any other camps/programs/recreational facilities which might provide bus services to Thomaston children. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee with SAD 50. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**10. Develop an Environmental/Nature Program using the Forest Trail:** An effort should be made to recruit volunteer naturalists in the area who would be willing to put together a program for presenting citizens with a comprehensive picture of the local flora and fauna. This program could also include the identifying and preserving endangered species. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee with Thomaston Conservation Commission. Priority: Desirable. Time frame: within 3 years]

**11. Teenage Summer Corps:** The use of teenagers for assistance in summer programs would solve two problems: work for older youth and help with younger children's programs. Increasingly high schools and colleges are expecting students to have been involved in some sort of community service and a summer corps (and perhaps a winter corps) would seem to be a fine opportunity for the town's adolescents. YouthLinks is one group already engaged in such work. However, there are many agencies and organizations that welcome youth volunteers; among these are the Humane Society of Knox County, The Freedom Riders, the therapeutic riding program that takes place in Union, and Penobscot Bay Hospital. Also many community libraries are glad of extra help in the summer months. As in other programs, transportation of under age teens or teen drivers without access to a car is the key to using teen help outside of the town. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee and SAD 50. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**12. Transportation System.** Some system of transportation —bus, van, private car—is a must if townspeople wish to avail themselves of special programs not available within Thomaston. As repeatedly stated, it is impossible for most children and many adults to avail themselves of the many offerings in neighboring towns: (golf, swimming, sailing, camping, theatre, art, music, skating, photography classes, to name but a few) unless a reliable system of town-to-town transportation is developed. At the very least the rental of a bus (or perhaps two) with driver(s) would be needed. This will probably have to come from the town budget and be approved through a town vote. It might be also possible to use (if still operating) the Coastal Trans system and/or the SAD 50 vans. Greater cooperation between Rockland and Thomaston would be desirable. [Responsibility: Selectboard, Recreation Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**13. Playground Complex featuring Rollerblade Course, Skate Board Ramp:** A matter of land availability and the financial support for purchase of materials. This project could be perhaps fitted in on SAD 50 land; in the proposed Community Center area; or at some unidentified piece of land close to the center of town. Volunteer labor would be expected. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee, SAD 50, Community Center development committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**14. Watts Hall, Montpelier, Thomaston Historical Society:** Encourage financial support through fund raising, encourage volunteer efforts to help sustain these valuable institutions. [Responsibility: Appropriate committees and trustees. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

**15. Fitness Programs for Adults and Seniors:** The Penobscot Bay YMCA has a reach-out program and is already helping neighboring towns set up a fitness program using town buildings. Thomaston has Watts Hall and the possibilities of using church facilities so that no great difficulty should be seen in meeting this need. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

**16. Hiking and Biking Trail around the Town:** Support efforts by conservation groups to plan a hiking/biking trail around town perimeter. Local conservation groups already have such a plan in place for the establishment of a hiking and biking trail around the town perimeter and connecting with the Oyster River and/or Town Forest at one end and the Mill River at the other. This idea should be encouraged as it will increase in-town easily accessible areas for physical activity. Part of the cost will presumably be absorbed by using volunteer labor or grants from environmental groups. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Georges River, and area environmental groups. Priority: Important. Time frame: long term]

**17. Recreation Program for Special Needs Citizens:** This program should be coordinated with Midcoast Health Services, Penobscot Bay Hospital, Miles Memorial Hospital, care-givers at homes for special needs adults and children,

and from those working with the Special Olympic programs. [Responsibility: Recreation Committee, Sad 50, hospitals, and mental health services. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 4 to 6 years]

**18. The Fourth of July:** This traditional celebration put on by Thomaston citizens should be given continued support through town financial assistance, through volunteer efforts, and through private donations. [Responsibility: Selectboard, Volunteers. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

**19. Encourage Preservation of Open Space through Future Land Use Ordinance:** This that will require major new Residential Developments to be reviewed by Code Enforcement Office and Planning Board to ensure that Open Space that can provide recreational opportunities is part of a Developer's Plans: [Responsibility: Planning Board, Selectmen. Priority: Important. Time frame: long term]

*[Note 1: The future of the Maine State Prison property (fifteen plus acres) is at this writing will depend on a town vote regarding property use and development. Possibilities considered will include recreation, commercial use, housing, park, community center.*

*[Note 2: For the Town Library programs, development and/or removal. see Community Services. For water access for boating and swimming, see Marine Resources.]*



## FISCAL CAPACITY

### I. INTRODUCTION

Fiscal Capacity represents a community's ability to pay for services both today and into the future. Property value is the basis for determining fiscal capacity. The municipal budget provides for all of the services of the community. The exceptions are MSAD 50 and the Pollution Control Department. Pollution Control is a separate enterprise account, funded through user fees. Property taxes account for the majority of Thomaston's revenues, 82% in Fiscal Year 2003 for example.

Four significant events have occurred during the period of this review.

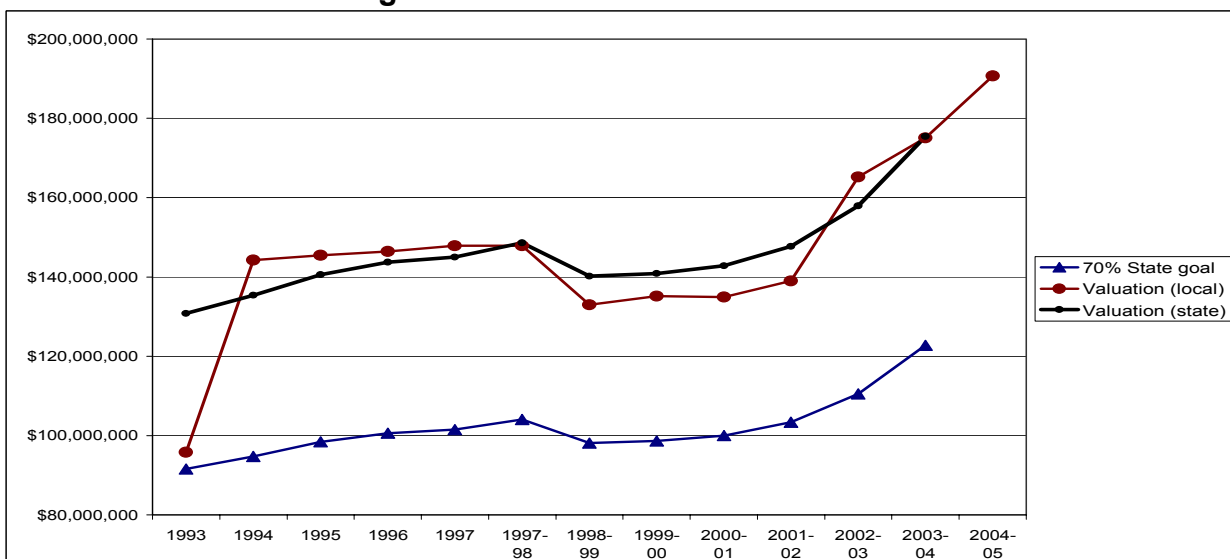
- Dragon Products received a \$12,105,450 property value abatement May of 1998, or just over 8% of the town's assessed property value.
- Thomaston identified a flaw in the school funding formula, which has shifted educational resources away from Thomaston.
- Closure of the Maine State Prison and resulting impacts, mainly to the Sewer Enterprise account.
- The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement with Dragon Products for its \$40-50 million dollar expansion.

### II. INVENTORY

#### A. VALUATION

Valuation is very significant because it is used as the key indicator for many monetary calculations such as local school funding and State aid to education. Real estate sales are used to determine State Valuation through a complex process of averaging. The State Value is considered full value. The ratio of local to state value is mandated to be not less than 70% by State law.

**Figure 11.1 State and Local Value**



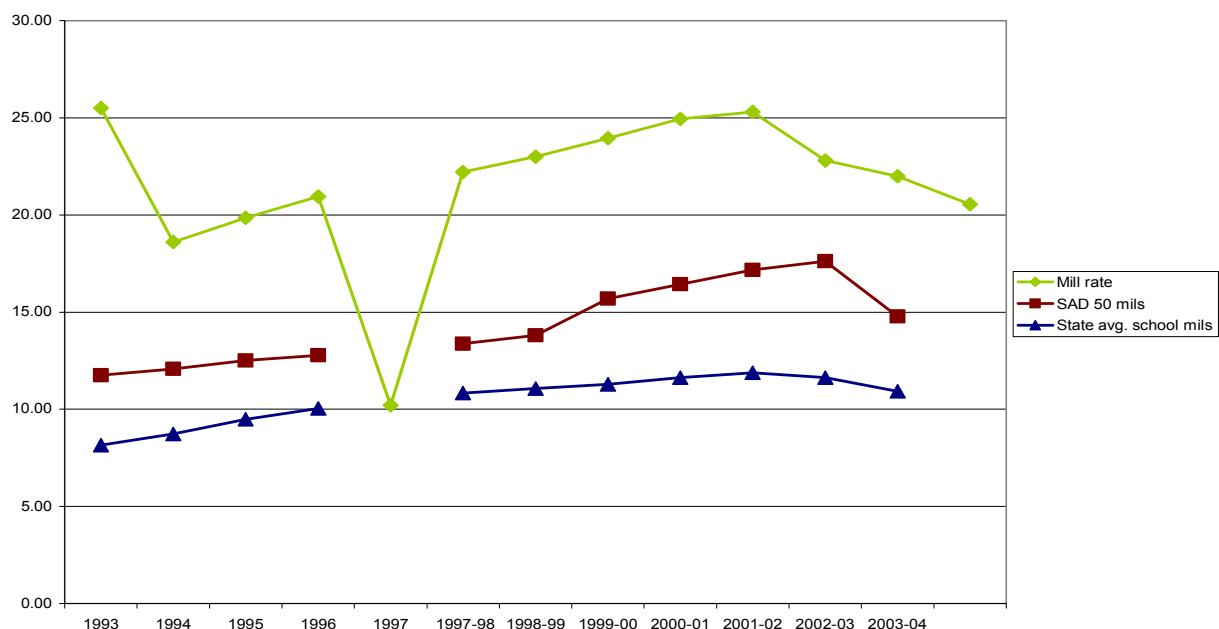
Thomaston's valuation history is somewhat unusual. (See Figure 11.1 above)(See Appendix for data) Thomaston underwent a town wide revaluation resulting in the increase of 1994. The settlement of the Dragon Products abatement is reflected in the drop of value between Fiscal Year 1997 and FY 1998. An additional drop in valuation occurred that year with the introduction of the Homestead Act. A factored revaluation was completed in FY 2000 and FY 2002 to offset a recent upsurge in prices paid for real estate in the region.

Although all home and land prices are rising throughout the region, towns with waterfront properties, and/or scenic vistas, are seeing very substantial increases in prices. Thomaston has little of this type of property and does not have the same potential for the high run up in valuation that some coastal towns are experiencing. However, the effect of closing the Maine State Prison on property sales is not known at this time.

## B. MIL RATE

Thomaston's mil rate is down somewhat from its high in FY 2002. This is due to the new value added, which lowered the mil rate by providing more tax base over which to spread the burden. From 1994 until FY 2002, as Figure 10-2 shows below, the mil rate had been growing steadily. This indicates that growth of the town valuation has been slower than the growth of town expenses. Thomaston's recent history is of high mil rates. As far back as 1989 the mil rate has only been below 20 in 1994 and barely in 1995. Thomaston has consistently raised more than the State average to pay school costs.

**Figure 11.2 Mil Rates**



Note: The gap denotes the half year Thomaston changed financial reporting from calendar to fiscal year.

## C. REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Thomaston uses a balanced budget formula for raising revenue and committing expenditures. The annual town meeting votes to approve the town's annual spending. Property taxes are committed after revenues from other sources are deducted from the total funds needed to pay for town, county and school expenditures. The town accounts are audited annually and the figures and tables that follow are taken from the audited reports (see appendix).

### 1. Revenues

Revenues for Thomaston have grown at a steady rate for the period of this review with the exception of intergovernmental sources (see Figure 11.3 below). The increase in intergovernmental sources is primarily due to revenues generated by the Homestead Exemption. Investment income also showed better than average growth in the late nineties but is unlikely to sustain this level in the future and is a tiny fraction of the overall. Eight two percent of the total revenues are raised from property taxes.

**Figure 11.3 Revenues**

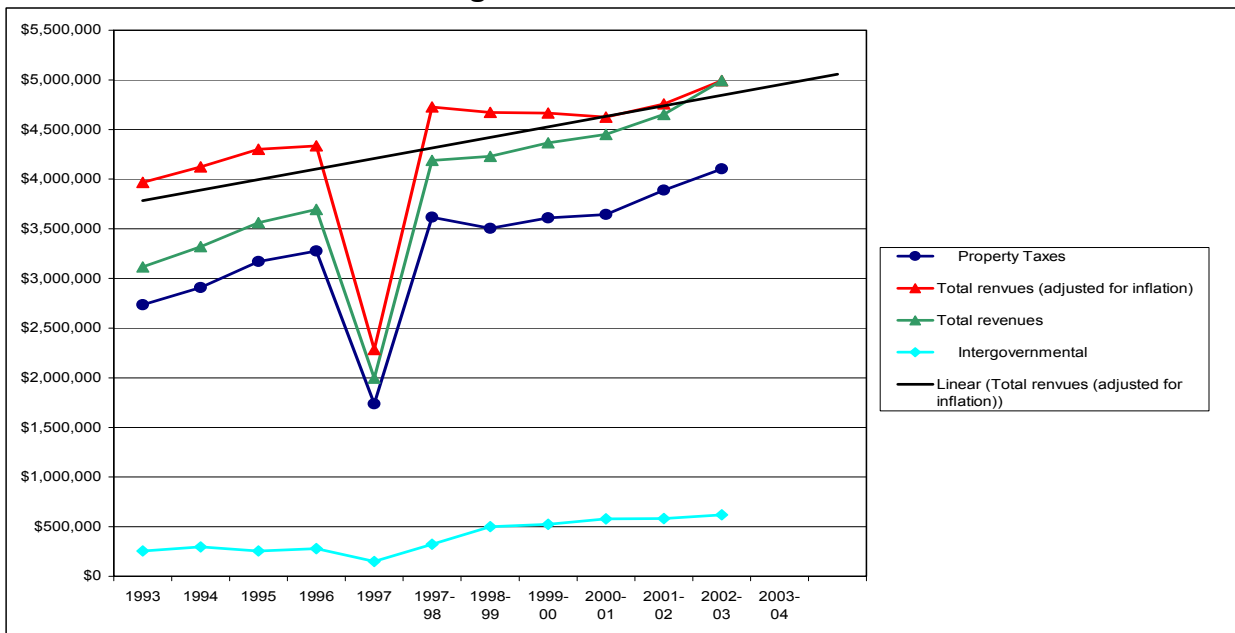


Figure 11.3 above shows revenues for the period. It is important to note that in 1997 the town moved from a calendar year to a fiscal year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, the data for 1997 is somewhat equivalent to a half year. For the sake of projecting the linear trend line, the 1997 data has been omitted.

a. Property Taxes

Over 93% of FY 2002 property taxes are from buildings and land. Excise tax makes up for the majority of the balance. Since property taxes constitute the vast majority of revenues for the town, the assessment and collection of these taxes is of vital importance. Assessment is the responsibility of the elected Board of Assessors. They hire an Assessor's Agent and vote to commit the mil rate and value for the town.

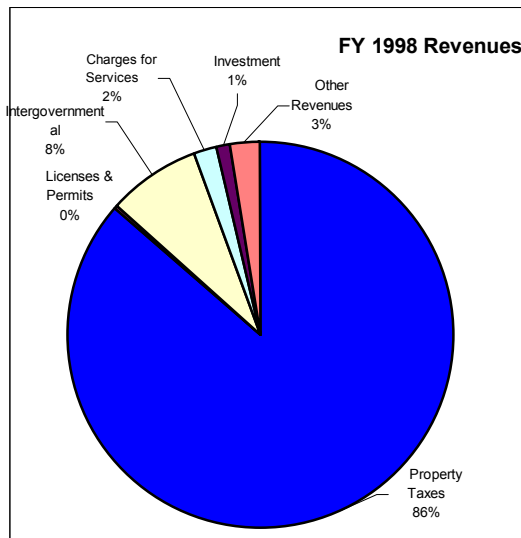
b. Licenses and Permits

Licenses and permits have shown steady growth over the last ten years, increasing four times. However, these fees are only 1% of the town's revenues.

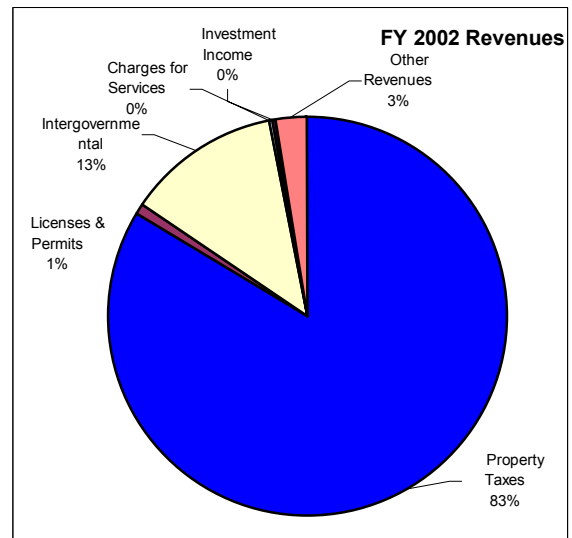
c. Intergovernmental

This group of revenues is made up of State and Federal funds, such as State Revenue Sharing, Local Road Assistance, General Assistance Reimbursement, Homestead exemption, and several other less significant sources. State Revenue Sharing accounts for the majority: 67% in FY 2002. The Homestead Exemption, introduced in FY1998, makes up about 22%. Recently, the Homestead Exemption was scaled back by the Governor and State Legislature. Local Road Assistance adds 4% and the rest of the sources are 1% or less.

**Figure 11.4**



**Figure 11.5**



d. Charges for Service, Investment Income, and Other Revenues

These make up less than 5% of Thomaston's total revenues. Nearly 50% of Other Revenues is rental income on town properties such as Thomaston Academy, and Watts Block.

## 2. Expenditures

**Figure 11.6 Expenditures**

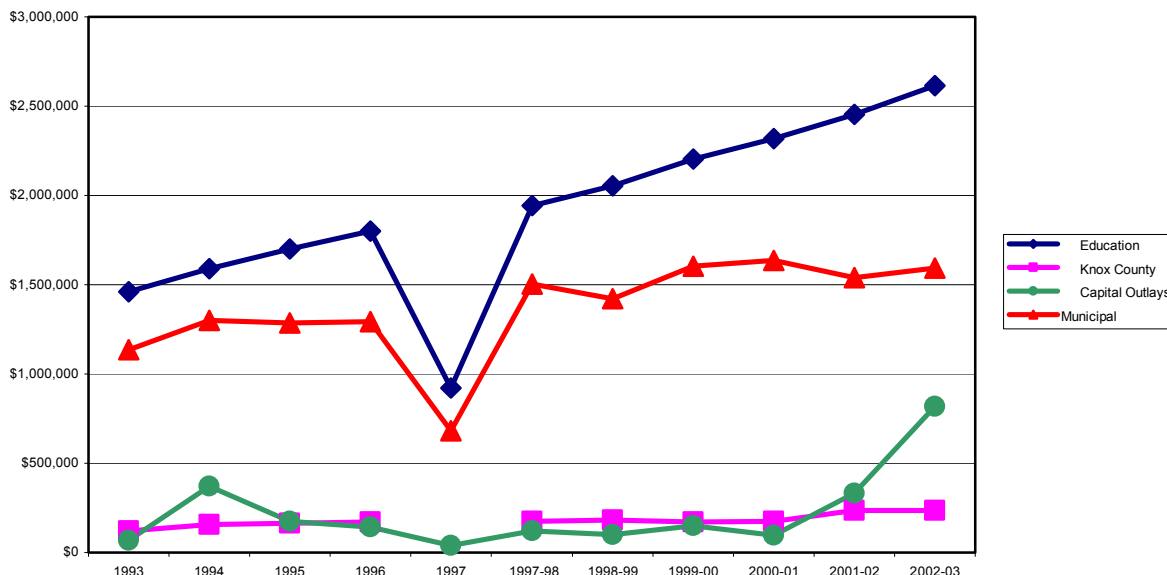
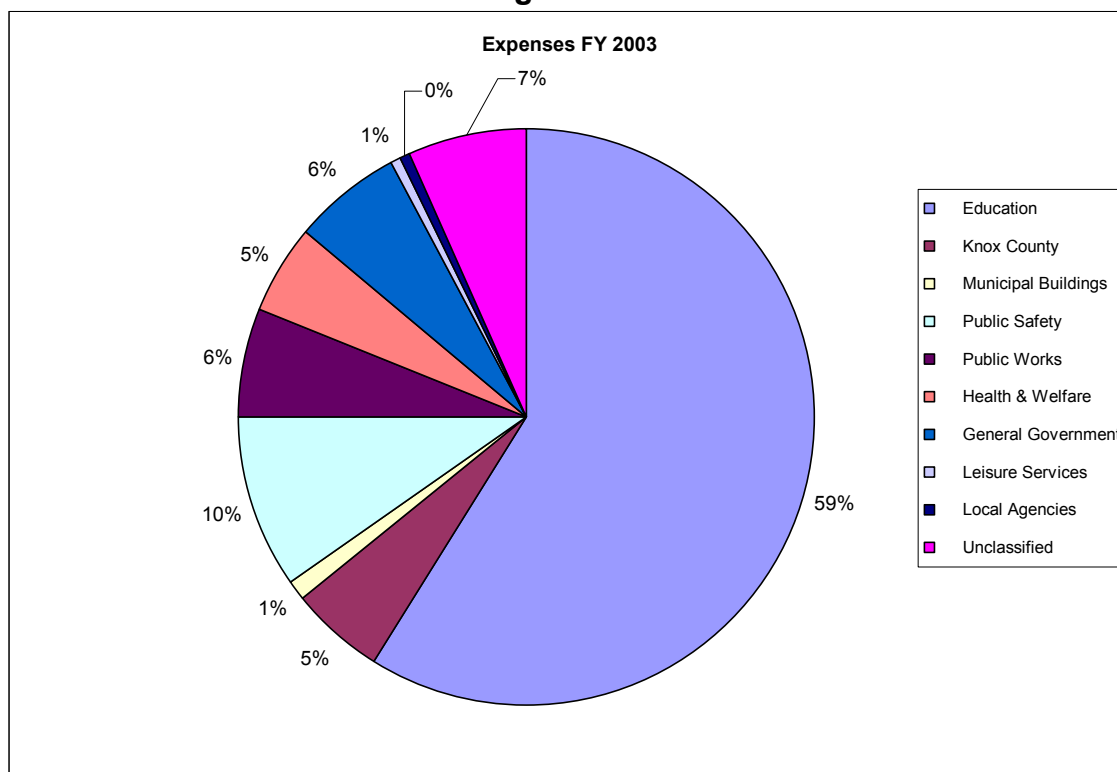


Figure 11.6 shows the expenditures for the period. A onetime expense of \$835,000 to settle the abatement request of Dragon Products is not shown on the figure. Although this payment was made in FY 1998, revenues were raised and reserved for 3 years. Municipal spending consists of Municipal Buildings, Public Safety, Public Works, Health and Welfare, General Government, Leisure Services, Local Agencies and Unclassified accounts. Each of these grew during the period with the exception of Local Agencies, down 33% over 10 years. Capital Outlays are shown outside of municipal expenses on Figure 11.6, since it is unstable, due the reserving of funds over a period of years and the nature of capital projects. This effect can be seen in 1994 and FY 2003 when reserve funds was used to acquire fire-fighting apparatus. Knox County has a gap in 1997 due to the half-year and the county sending only one bill paid in the new FY 1998. Again the large dips represent the half-year of 1997.

The budgeting process involves the Town Manager, Department Heads, Budget Committee, and Selectmen. The budget is approved by vote at the annual town meeting. An overlay of 5% is carried between the approved spending and revenues raised.

**Figure 11.7**

Note: Capital Outlay not included in Figure 11-7 above

a. Education

In the last ten years educational costs have risen at a steady and even pace of 4% a year. When this cost is adjusted for inflation it increases an average of 2.5% a year. Thomaston's MSAD #50 (Local Allocation) has increased \$1,152,000 since 1993. Education costs represented 59% of Thomaston's spending in FY 2002 as opposed to 54% in 1993 and FY 1998. The budget is voted on by the three MSAD 50 towns and needs a simple majority of the combined population to be enacted. Representatives to MSAD #50 are elected to serve on the Board of Directors. Thomaston has five directors serving three year terms, elected in alternating years.

Twice in the last five years, Thomaston has appealed to the district for a change in the allocation formula. The Town Manager, Budget Committee and the Board of Selectman believe a flaw exists in the SAD #50 Local Allocation Formula.

Historical data shows the formula to be based on 100% valuation through 1987. In 1978 the valuation was approximately \$20 million for Cushing and \$44 million each for St. George and Thomaston. By 1987 the values had shifted to \$37 million for Cushing, \$98 million for St. George, and \$64 million for Thomaston, with Thomaston having 492 students, St. George 359 and Cushing 144. There was agreement that Cushing paying 18%, St. George 49% and Thomaston 32% was unfair, resulting in the change to a local funding option based 50% on value, 50% on enrollment.

This change would have been satisfactory to all if the changes were from a shift in enrollment. However, the shift was in valuation. The current flaw in the formula is that revenue received by the school district titled “General Purpose Aid to Education”(GPA) is taken from the total revenues needed as shown in Figure 11.8 below.

**Figure 11.8**

FY 2002-03 MSAD #50 Budgeted Expenditures	\$ 9,946,519.00
General Purpose Aid to Education	\$ 1,875,480.00
Other Revues	\$ 386,335.00
Local Funding Required	\$ 7,684,704.00

The Local Allocation is generated by applying the formula, 50% based on value, 50% based on enrollment, to the remaining Local Funding Required.

GPA to education is a complex formula. However, it is primarily derived from 85% valuation and 15% income. This is used in conjunction with enrollment to make the cost of education more uniform for all communities. Therefore, a town with a low relative value, to other towns in the state, and high relative numbers of students gets more help from the state. Conversely, a town with a high relative value and fewer students gets less aid from the State.

Thomaston has a low value and a high number of students, relative to the state average. 85% of GPA to MSAD #50 results from this disparity. However, since the State Aid is deducted from the total budget **before** calculating Local Allocation, all three towns share the Aid equally. Since the State calculates GPA only by valuation, the local formula fails to allocate the aid as the Law intended.

b. Knox County

Over the last 5 years the Knox County assessment has increased 26%. During this time Thomaston shifted dispatch from local to county. A new call center was established in Rockland to serve the region and Thomaston's center was shut down. Jail costs continue to escalate and questions as to the facility's ability to handle growth have been raised. A County Charter was approved by voters in 2004.

c. General Government

General Government is compromised of: the office of the Town Manager, Administration, Town Clerk, Code Office, Assessor, Selectman, Planning Board, Finance, and General Office. In FY1998 legal fees pertaining to the Dragon Products abatement were charged to the general government account. The total legal fees for this year were in excess of \$170,000. Except for this onetime expense, General Government expenditures increased 35% over ten years or an average of 3.5% annually.

d. Public works

Public works is responsible for maintenance and new construction. The public works expenditures have grown 13% in the last five years up \$31,000. The department has reserves for purchase of planned for new equipment generally added to yearly by warrant article.

e. Public Safety

Public Safety includes Fire, Police and Ambulance and is down 9% or \$ 39,800. This is due in part to the closure of Thomaston's dispatching center.

f. Unclassified

Unclassified accounts are Employee Benefits, Insurance, Public Library, Fourth of July, Abatements and Overlay and a few other small accounts. The majority of unclassified accounts are Employee Benefits. Health Insurance costs have increased at very high rates in the last few years and show no indication of slowing down; however, the Board of Selectmen negotiated a maximum annual increase that the town will cover into the 2004 union contract.

g. Capital Outlays

Capital Outlays are not consistent year to year. Some capital purchases are planned well in advance and funds are placed in reserve accounts (see Figure 11.9). Other expenses are the rebuilding of infrastructure such as roads and storm water drainage. The Recreation Department, Ambulance Per Diem, Comprehensive Plan, and Building Improvements are all funded through Capital Outlays. Thomaston's Capital Outlay over the last ten years has been as low as 69,113.00. In 1993 and as high as \$370,574 in 1994.

**Figure 11.9 Reserve Accounts FY 2002**

Salt Shed	\$ 699.00
Capital Improvements	\$ 13,127.00
Police Cruiser	\$ 23,648.00
Ambulance	\$ 37,494.00
Fire Engine	\$ 89,613.00
Dump Truck	\$ 477.00
Academy Building	\$ 25,289.00
Sidewalk	\$ 5,355.00
Recreation	\$ 26,274.00
Drainage	\$ 6,022.00
Tennis Court	\$ 10,882.00



h. Health and Welfare, Leisure Services, and Local Agencies

These accounts make up just about 5% of the total expense for the town. Health and Welfare is the largest segment and includes the Transfer Station and Ambulance Department. Transfer Station costs have gone up moderately and indications are that the industry is facing some challenges.

**D. DEBT**

The Municipal Government is essentially debt free. However, the Pollution Control Department Enterprise Fund has long-term debt. The municipal budget supports \$150,000 of annual payments to that debt. Department of Corrections contributes \$184,000. State Law does not allow a municipality to borrow more 15% of its State Valuation. Overlapping debt includes the county and MSAD 50. Over the last ten years, Thomaston's borrowing peaked at about \$ 5 million, easily within the limit. At the 2004 annual town meeting, voters approved bonding \$2.3 million for sewer improvements. The funds to pay off these bonds will be generated through the Dragon Products TIF.

**E. ALTERNATIVE CAPITAL REVENUE SOURCES**

**1. Dragon Products TIF**

The Tax Increment Finance agreement with Dragon Products and resulting Credit Enhancement Agreement (CEA) are a significant new revenue source. The credit enhancement funds will total approximately 13 million dollars. These funds are designated for economic development in the town. If Dragon Products completes its work as outlined in the TIF development plan, the Town will see revenues in FY 04-05. The duration of the TIF is twenty years. The funds generated in the first five years will be minimal to the town, as the bulk of the new taxes created go back to Dragon Products. As the TIF gets older, the proportions reverse in favor of Thomaston.

**2. Sewer Enterprise Account**

The Sewer Enterprise Account is a user fee structured account. Selectmen set the budget after a budget process between Town Manager and the Director of Pollution Control. The rate is also set by the selectmen. For FY 2003 the sewer rate was raised by 16% to \$ 4 per cubic ft. residential and \$ 4.25 per cubic ft. commercial. This was necessary to offset the first half of the loss due to the closure of the Maine State Prison. The Prison paid a user fee the same as any user, totaling about \$100,000 or 1/3 of the total revenues. Operating costs have been cut and cannot be reduced further. The plant is operating at 55% capacity but many costs are fixed and not related to volume. Thomaston's Sewer costs are about 10<sup>th</sup> highest in the state.

The Sewer Enterprise Account is heavily indebted. The facility cost \$12.3 million to build, of which the town bonded about \$7 million, the rest being Federal and State grants. These costs are shared with the Department of Corrections. At the present time

all bonds would be paid off by FY 2019. The long period is the result of several recent re-negotiations resulting in lower rates and increased savings.

## **F. FIXED ASSETS**

Fixed assets were established as part of the Town record keeping in 1996. Actual cost basis totaled \$847,192 and for 2003 \$1,756,731. They include vehicles, buildings, machinery and equipment. In Fiscal year 2003-2004 Thomaston adjusted accounting practices to meet the new Federal General Accounting Standards Board 34 (GASB 34). The intent of GASB 34 is to "improve the accountability of government to their citizens by providing better, more accessible information about the condition and cost of capital assets. One of the results of this process is detailed lists of town owned property, infrastructure, and equipment stating condition and value of all town fixed assets.

## **G. TRUST FUNDS**

The trust funds are first disclosed in the 1993 audit at \$1,241,076 and are \$2,296,868 as of 2003. A Trust Fund Committee is appointed by the Selectmen to oversee the management of the trust funds. They set spending goals, track performance and select financial managers in accordance with the town's Investment Policy. Banknorth currently handles financial management. The Studley Family left a major bequest to the Library in 1998 and 1999, thereby stabilizing the library's future. All accounts were up for the period as can be seen in Figure 11.10.

**Figure 11.10**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>2003</b>
Library Trusts	\$ 362,387.00	\$ 1,003,414.00
Library Book Fund	\$ 228,226.00	\$ 344,747.00
Dietz Scholarship	\$ 57,066.00	\$ 74,847.00
Cemetery Funds	\$ 286,027.00	\$ 420,480.00
Charitable Funds	\$ 307,370.00	\$ 519,724.00

## **III. REFLECTIONS ON 1991 PLAN**

The 1991 Plan outlined no goals, no policies, and no strategies, therefore we cannot state achievements or underscore failures. The survey results strongly suggest that people believe the taxes are too high.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

Thomaston's taxes are higher than many of the communities around it. The town's tax rate has been in the top 25 in the state several years in a row. Only in the last few years has the rate been coming down. In part the high tax rate is a result of services that many other communities in the area do not offer. Town police are found in only three other local communities. The State considers Thomaston a service center, providing essential services to those who live outside the town.

Some of the high tax rate can be attributed to the flaw in the local allocation of school costs. The extra burden that Thomaston carries puts pressure on the growth of municipal spending. (See Figure 11.6) If this disparity worsens, the high taxes could affect the growth of property values. However as valuation increases without an increase in new students, the mil rate for education will come down.

Thomaston is currently in a good position for future growth. It has borrowing capacity and, it has new revenues through the Dragon Products CEA to increase the town's valuation. This should in turn help to lower the mil rate. Increasing real estate sale prices and residential, commercial and industrial development all have in the last two years lowered the mill rate. Growth in real estate prices may be near the top but growth in new construction, expansions of existing structures and renovations appears to be staying at a high level

Dragon Products properties represent more than 20% of the town's value. The Dragon Products TIF of 2001 fixes the valuation of Dragon's properties for 20 years at \$25.5 million. The new valuation created by the expansion is sheltered from the State and local valuation. This protects Thomaston from loss of revenue due to increased Valuation and the corresponding cuts in State revenue sharing. The funds created in this sheltered value "zone" are intended to be split evenly between the Town and Dragon Products over the 20 year period. Thomaston's portion of these funds is to be used for economic development, and could improve the commercial and industrial tax base for the town.

The impact of closing the Maine State Prison is unknown at this time. However, the loss of stigma as a Prison town might be significant to the valuation of properties. At the annual town meeting in 2004 voters approved taking title to the site of the Prison. Plans for the re-use of the property should be good for the Sewer Enterprise Account and the town's overall valuation provided a mix of uses occurs without an increased population in the schools.

In FY 2003-2004 Thomaston was a charter member in creating the MidCoast Pine Tree Zone. This special economic incentive was "designed to encourage investment and the creation of high quality jobs in the state by providing targeted tax-based economic development incentives within designated zones." Eight zones were approved within the state by the Department of Economic Development (DECD). Thomaston initially designated 150 acres, known as the Thomaston Economic Tract (TET), in the area between Rt. 1 and Thomaston Rd. from Buttermilk Ln. to the Rockland town Line. An

additional 11 acres were added later to include the Shoreland Commercial zoned property of Lyman Morse Boatbuilding Co. Inc. The special status of these properties will likely increase the value adding to the towns overall valuation. In the TET where certain properties are currently undeveloped the potential exists for substantial growth in property values.

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES**

### **A. GOALS**

1. Develop a capital investment plan for financing the replacement and expansion of public facilities and services required to meet projected growth and development.
2. Maintain sound fiscal policy, management and reporting.

### **B. POLICIES**

1. Utilize Dragon products TIF CEA funds to increase commercial and industrial property values.
2. Seek new users to the Pollution Control Facility.

### **C. STRATEGIES**

1. With respect to the Dragon Products TIF, it is critical that the town constantly evaluate Dragon Products' compliance with the TIF, maintain careful records and consult with specialists in all matters relating to the company's valuation. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]
2. Continue to maintain financial records of ongoing and previous year's spending. Publish financial records in the annual report in both spread-sheet and graphical presentations. Add reports tracking spending and revenues for 10 year period. [Budget Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: portions ongoing, expand tracking within 3 years]
3. Review user fees annually and increase fees to keep pace with inflation. Shift some of the property tax burden to users of services. [Selectmen, Budget Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
4. Continue to utilize reserve accounts for capital purchasing. [Budget Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
5. Expand sewer system to increase number of users and connect to east end of town. Consider creative ideas such as special sewer zone in place on Clark St. to stimulate growth in designated growth areas not currently served by public sewer. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

## **CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of a capital investment plan is to establish a procedure for the Town to follow in order to finance needed capital improvements. Capital improvements are distinguished from operating expenses by three criteria: cost, frequency of purchase and length of useful life. Capital improvements are relatively costly, usually having a cost of \$5,000 or more, per item. They usually don't need to be purchased annually. They usually have a service life of three years or more (in the case of purchase of land, the "service life" is indefinite) and they are physical assets.

### **II. INVENTORY**

Thomaston has an active Budget Committee. The Committee usually makes recommendations on capital expenditures, as do the Selectmen. When they differ, the Selectmen and Committee may make separate recommendations on articles on the Town Meeting warrant.

Thomaston has used capital financing to fund the Pollution Control Facility and such items as fire trucks, police vehicles and public works equipment. This is paid for by a combination of setting aside reserve funds, voting the amount necessary at Town Meeting at the time of purchase, and bonds. The procedure for deciding on capital improvements has been relatively informal as there is no Town Charter or ordinance describing the duties of the Budget Committee.

#### **A. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

The capital investment plan is the procedure to be followed to create a capital improvement plan. The procedure is as follows:

1. "Department head", such as the Public Works Director, the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, the Ambulance Director, or the Superintendent of Pollution Control would make an estimate of the needed capital improvements or purchases for the coming budget year. Longer term, up to five year, estimates should also be made for on-going improvements (such as a long-term replacement program for culverts and repaving or rebuilding certain portions of Town roads and/or sidewalks) and anticipated major purchases (such as replacement of fire trucks, construction of a salt shed, purchase of a replacement ambulance, or extension of a sewer line). These estimates would be in addition to, and separate from, the normal operating expenses anticipated by each "department" for the coming budget year. Both the operating and capital improvements parts of these budgets would be submitted to the Selectmen.

Similarly, other groups such as the Watts Block Committee or the Harbor

Committee would submit estimates for funding improvements (such as handicapped access to Watts Hall). If purchase of land for a Town park, or other public improvements not usually included in the departmental budgets are desired, the group(s) desiring such improvements would also submit estimates to the Selectmen. Estimates of any increases in, or savings anticipated from, operational budgets resulting from the proposed capital expenditures should also be submitted to the Selectmen, where available.

2. The Town Manager, after receiving all requests for any budget year, meets with department heads or spokespersons from other groups making the requests and with the Budget Committee.

3. The Budget Committee would analyze both the operating and capital improvement requests for the budget year and, to the extent possible, estimate capital expenditures in subsequent years - up to five years in the future.

4. The Budget Committee would make its recommendations to the Selectmen on both the on-going operating budgets presented to them and the capital improvements. Recommendations would include preferred methods of financing the capital improvements and their scheduling (the year such a purchase or expenditure would be made).

5. Once the Selectmen and Budget Committee have agreed on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), it would appear in the Town Report. The CIP would include the estimated amount of the expenditure, the methods of paying for the improvements and the schedule of both the purchases and the retirement of debt (if any), showing total annual (principal and interest) payments. The anticipated changes in operational budgets (such as savings on repairs by replacing a worn-out piece of equipment) should also be shown.

6. Once in place, the CIP would be refined and updated annually, whether or not a capital expenditure was made each year. As purchase dates approach, more detailed cost estimates, perhaps involving engineering or other studies, would be made by the Town to better estimate final costs of scheduled capital improvements for presentation to Town Meeting.

## **B CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Some items in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will originate within the Comprehensive Plan. Others will arise from needs not now foreseen. Whatever their origin, they must be placed in priority rankings in order to be assigned an implementation schedule. Priorities are generally assigned as follows:

1. Priority A – Immediate Need. A capital improvement rated "A" would typically remedy a danger to public health and safety. This priority may include replacement of capital equipment damaged in service or repair of damage to

existing public facilities (more extensive than that allowed for in the operating budget). Borrowing would probably be necessary for some Priority "A" items.

2. Priority B – Necessary within Three Years. A capital improvement rated "B" would typically correct (or reduce) a deficiency in an existing facility or service. A combination of reserve funds and borrowing, perhaps with appropriation of taxes in the year of purchase, could be used to pay for such improvements.

3. Priority C – Future Improvement (4-6 years). A capital improvement rated "C" would be desirable, but funding and scheduling would be flexible. There would be no immediate problem associated with such an improvement. Such improvements could, typically, be at least partially funded from reserve funds placed in interest-bearing accounts until the purchase date.

4. Priority D - Desirable (more than 6 years in the future, eventually). A capital improvement rated "D" would be desirable, but its timing would be subject to delay due to more urgent needs. Reserve funds may be useful as part of the financing of Priority "D" improvements.

Priority "A" improvements would typically be made before Priority "B" improvements, which would typically be made before Priority "C" improvements. However, lower priority items may be funded ahead of schedule if higher priority items have already been funded or are prohibitively expensive at that time, or if funding or other resources (such as donated property or equipment) became available. While the hoped for improvements in Priority "D" may have only a remote chance of being implemented, they should be kept on the list in the event that funds become available at some future date. In any case, regardless of the priorities assigned or the funding sources obtained, each item will have to be voted on at Town Meeting in order to commit the Town to appropriate funds for reserve accounts or to purchase any capital improvement.

### **C. RECURRING NON-CAPITAL EXPENDITURES**

Some recurring non-capital expenditures are mentioned, or implied as results of actions recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. These would include maintenance of Town buildings, roads and facilities such as the Town Landing and the Mall. Replacement of road signs, updating of parcel maps on an annual basis, amendment of various ordinances and many other items would be placed in the operational budgets of the Fire Department, Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board, Assessor's Agent, etc. The Budget Committee and Selectmen would consider these expenses as they prepare the annual budget for Town Meeting.



**D. INITIAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE**

Project		Priority				Cost	Funding source(s)	Local Share
		A	B	C	D			
1	Main Street Sidewalk, Business Block	X				\$ 356,000	Town, MDOT, BGS, EDI	\$ 10,000
2	Develop Former Prison Property	X				planning now	Sales of property	\$
3	Sewer Extension, High St-Buttermilk Ln & TET	X				\$ 2,320,000	Town, bonds TIF/CEA	\$ 2,320,000
4	Generator - Police, Town Office, Fire Station		X			\$ 16,048	Homeland Security LETPP	\$ 2,000
5	Public Landing Floats	X				\$ 32,000	Town, State	\$ 20,000
6	GIS			X		\$ 17,200	Town, State	\$ 11,300
7	Dredge Harbor				X	\$ 500,000	ACE, Town	\$ 250,000
8	Buttermilk lane	X				\$ 320,000	Town, MDOT	\$ 10,000
9	Computer system & accounting software upgrade	X				\$ 51,000	Town	\$ 51,000
10	Equipment - Vehicles, machinery		X	X	X	\$ 190,000	Town	\$ 190,000
11	Roads improvements 2005-2006		X			\$ 131,000	Town	\$ 131,000
12	Sidewalk Improvements			X		\$ 5,000	Town	\$ 5,000
13	Thomaston Economic Track		X			planning now	TIF/CEA	\$
14	Municipal Building Roofs				X	\$ 75,000	Town	\$ 75,000
15	Historic district study			X		\$ 5,000	State, Private	\$ 2,500
16	Skateboard Park	X				\$ 14,000	Town	\$ 14,000

Abbreviations: TM-town manager, SM-selectman, PWD-Public Works Director, RC-recreation department, HC-harbor committee, PD-Pollution Department, agent, EDI-Economic development initiative, TRC-Thomaston Redevelopment Committee, PCD-Pollution Control Department

### **III. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

Thomaston's population growth will create added demands for community services and facilities. Some needs exist now. A continued reduction in Federal funding for domestic purposes seems likely. State funding is also facing austerity measures in response to declining tax revenues. The Town may have to finance most of its capital improvements from its own tax base. However, having a capital investment plan and an on-going capital improvement plan in place may increase eligibility for any future State or Federal grants or assistance programs. It may also assist the Town in charging "impact fees" for improvements needed to serve new subdivisions, since costs of some anticipated needs will have been estimated. Regardless of the source of the funding, having a capital improvement plan can accomplish needed improvements with smaller fluctuations in the tax rate, less borrowing cost, and fewer unanticipated major expenditures.

A capital improvement process or plan, once established, provides a means of anticipating future funding requirements to meet public needs. By involving the Town Manager, Selectmen, Department Heads and the Budget Committee in the process, the capital portion of each annual budget can be considered along with the operating expenditures. Similarly, because estimates are updated annually, including known obligations for any capital projects paid for either partly or wholly with bonds or short-term loans, the system is "self-correcting".

Parts of the 1991 plan were successful. The town uses reserve funds for much of its Capital financing needs. Even for the Dragon Abatement Settlement funds were reserved for a few years. There is room for improvement, as the full recommendations of the CIP were not adopted.

#### **IV. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

##### **A. GOALS**

###### State Goal:

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

###### Local Goals:

1. To plan ahead for financing major capital improvements or equipment purchases consistent with Thomaston's long-range goals and needs.
2. To anticipate the need for replacing capital equipment.
3. To assess the Town's ability to pay for capital expenditures.
4. Use reserve accounts to avoid major increases in property taxes and reduce the amounts of borrowing in the years when capital expenditures are made.

##### **B. POLICIES**

1. Maintain and review annually a long-range Capital Improvement Plan to assist the town in meeting its future capital needs.

##### **C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. Adopt the above outlined Capital Investment Plan procedure, leading to an on-going Capital Improvement Plan. [Selectmen, Town Manager, Budget Committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
2. Adopt the above Priority Rating System, to be used in the Capital Improvement Plan. [Selectmen, Town Manager, Budget Committee. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

Project		Priority				Cost	Funding source(s)	Local Share	Oversight / responsibility
		A	B	C	D				
1	Main Street Sidewalk, Business Block	X				\$ 356,000	Town, MDOT, BGS, EDI	\$ 10,000	TM, PWD, SM, MSEC
2	Develop Former Prison Property	X				planning now	Sales of property	\$ -	TM, SM, TRC
3	Sewer Extension, High St-Buttermilk Ln & TET	X				\$ 2,320,000	Town, bonds TIF/CEA	\$ 2,320,000	TM, SM, PWD, PCD
4	Generator - Police, Town Office, Fire Station		X			\$ 16,048	Homeland Security LETPP	\$ 200	TM, PD, FD, PWD
5	Public Landing Floats	X				\$ 32,000	Town, State	\$ 20,000	TM, HC
6	GIS			X		\$ 17,200	Town, State	\$ 11,380	TM, AA
7	Dredge Harbor				X	\$ 500,000	ACE, Town	\$ 250,000	TM, HC, SM
8	Buttermilk lane	X				\$ 320,000	Town, MDOT	\$ 10,000	TM, PWD, MDOT
9	Computer system & accounting software upgrade	X				\$ 51,000	Town	\$ 51,000	TM, SM
10	Equipment - Vehicles, machinery		X	X	X	\$ 190,000	Town	\$ 190,000	TM, SM, BC
11	Roads improvements 2005-2006		X			\$ 131,000	Town	\$ 131,000	TM, PWD
12	Sidewalk Improvements			X		\$ 5,000	Town	\$ 5,000	TM, PWD, BC
13	Thomaston Economic Track		X			planning now	TIF/CEA	\$ -	TM, SM
14	Municipal Building Roofs				X	\$ 75,000	Town	\$ 75,000	TM, SM, BC
15	Historic district study			X		\$ 5,000	State, Private	\$ 2,500	TM, SM, HS
16	Skateboard Park	X				\$ 14,000	Town	\$ 14,000	TM, SM, RC, PWD

Abbreviations: TM-town manager, SM-selectman, PWD-Public Works Director, RC-recreation department, HC-harbor committee, PD-police department, AA-assessors agent, EDI-Economic development initiative, TRC-Thomaston Redevelopment Committee, PCD-Pollution Control director, HS-Historical society

## CURRENT LAND USE

### I. INTRODUCTION

Thomaston's earliest land use pattern dating back to the late 1700s and early 1800s was along a path having the shape of an inverted "U"; development spread from the harbor up Wadsworth and Knox streets and along Main Street. By the 1820s, the town was well established, having extended across Mill River and along High Street. As the town expanded, it spread out along Main Street (US Route One), Old County Road, up Beechwood Street and across the St. George River toward Cushing.

Thomaston's current land use pattern is a function of this historical development pattern and town-wide zoning, which was first adopted in 1972. (See Land Use map in the map section of this Plan.) Thomaston contains approximately 7,250 acres or 11.32 square miles. Of this total, approximately 5,890 acres are zoned residential, 150 acres commercial, 1000 acres industrial, and 25 Shoreland Commercial with approximately 180 acres of roads.

This chapter focuses on current land use, existing ordinances, and changes in land use since the 1991 Plan. The chapter on Future Land Use discusses rural and growth areas with reference to existing land use districts, and makes recommendations for the future.

### II. INVENTORY

#### A. **LAND USE ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS**

Thomaston municipal land use ordinances and regulations are described below.

1. **Thomaston Land Use and Development Ordinance**, adopted 3/25/1995, most recently amended November 3, 2004, regulates town-wide zoning, shoreland zoning, site plan review, subdivisions, street construction and excavations. Land Use Districts, with residential density and lot size requirements, are listed in the table below. See the Ordinance for a complete description of all districts, including dimensional requirements. Designating districts has helped to maintain traditional patterns of development in Thomaston, which in turn has helped ensure the continued economic and community viability of the village area and working waterfront as well as the preservation of rural areas for conservation, natural resource based activities and recreation. A copy of the Zoning Map is located in the map section of this Plan. The Thomaston Land Use and Development Ordinance is appended to this Plan.
2. **Thomaston Building and Property Maintenance Code**: Incorporates BOCA Basic Building Code to ensure safe construction of buildings and other structures.

3. **Thomaston Floodplain Ordinance:** Regulates construction activity in floodplain areas.
4. **Thomaston Harbor Ordinance:** Ensures harbor open for navigation and other purposes, includes mooring administration and fees, pollution control, and defines role of Harbor Committee and Harbor Master.
5. **Thomaston Odor Ordinance:** Regulates offensive odors.
6. **Thomaston Sewer Ordinance:** Regulates municipal wastewater/sewer facilities.
7. **Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Ordinance for the Towns of St. George, South Thomaston, Thomaston, Warren and Cushing:** An inter-municipal ordinance regulating the issuance of permits to protect shellfish resources from depletion due to over-harvesting.

The town also administers:

8. **Maine State Plumbing Code:** Installation of plumbing fixtures and septic systems must be in accordance with Maine State Law and Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and Regulations.
9. **National Electrical Code:** All electrical work in Thomaston must be consistent with applicable portions of the National Electrical Code.
10. **NFPA 101:** National Fire Protection Association regulations pertaining to life safety, ingress, egress, and capacity provisions.

## **B. CATEGORIES OF LAND USE**

The categories of land use in Thomaston are described below, with applicable land use districts indicated in parentheses. (See Land Use map in the map section of this Plan.)

### **1. Resource Protection: (RP)**

The amount of land in Resource Protection is difficult to determine, but with three rivers surrounding the residential areas of Thomaston, Resource Protection is a very important land use for the town. The district includes the following areas:

- All areas within 250 feet horizontal distance of the normal high water level of tidal waters, the upland edge of salt marshes and salt meadows, freshwater wetlands associated with rivers, and wetlands rated moderate or high value by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as of January 1, 1973;
- The floodplains along rivers, defined by the 100 year floodplain designated on the

Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map effective December 4, 1985;

- Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater;
- Land areas along rivers subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or river bed movement and lands adjacent to tidal waters which are subject to severe erosion or mass movement, such as steep coastal bluffs;
- Area within all wetlands greater than two acres in size; and
- Land area within 75 feet of the normal high water line of streams and within twenty-five feet from the normal high water line of drainage ditches.

Planning Considerations:

The area west of Beechwood Street (zoned R-1) includes Resource Protection (RP) areas that should be considered sensitive for future development. Past development on wetlands in the Booker Street area has caused flooding problems "downstream." Although a recent upgrade to the drainage system has alleviated downstream flooding, this effort will need to continue into the future. Resource Protection areas are discussed in more detail in the Natural Resources section of the Plan.

## **2. Residential: (R-1) (R-2) (R-3) (TR-3)**

Residential land uses in Thomaston occur in three patterns.

First is the more densely developed village area north of the harbor which extends across US Route One and about a mile up Beechwood Street. This area is primarily zoned Urban Residential (R-3). This is the compact "urban" area of town and consists of about 880 acres. It is the area of highest population density with a minimum requirement of 10,000 square feet per dwelling unit. Public water and sewers serve this high-density area. Although single-family residences prevail, this area includes about 70 multi-family residences and six subsidized apartment buildings along with schools, public library, college, cemeteries, historic district and VOA (Volunteers of America) housing on Booker St.

Second, is the "strip" residential pattern along upper Beechwood Street (primarily Rural Residential and Farming: R-1), West Main Street (Rural Residential: R-2), Brooklyn Heights (R-2), Old County Road (R-1), West Meadow Road (R-1), High Street (R-1) and Thomaston Street (R-1). The lack of sewer system and lack of access to back lots has influenced this development pattern.

Third are "outlying" subdivisions. These are primarily located in the R-2 District; the largest consists of about 50 homes in Brooklyn Heights.

There are a few residential uses in the Commercial District at the village center,

including apartments above the stores on Main Street and in the renovated Knox Hotel [apartment buildings are a conditional use in the Commercial District]. There are four residences [3 houses and 1 apartment] in the Shoreland Commercial District and a number of homes on Pleasant Street in the Commercial and Industrial Districts.

The major residential land use changes in the past ten years have been the conversion of large old homes to apartments; the addition of new single family homes and small apartment buildings in the R-3 District and the increase in single family residential development along Beechwood Street. Residential uses in the Shoreland Commercial District are no longer permitted. In 2004, there was a move toward housing infill in the Urban Residential (R-3) District. Table 13.1 summarizes lot dimensional requirements for residential development.

**Table 13.1 Lot Dimensional Requirements for Residential Development**

	Land Use District	Max. Net Residential Density/Acre	Min area/dwelling (sq. ft.)	Min. Street Frontage (feet)	Min. Street centerline setback (ft)
C	Commercial	None+	N/A	None	N/A
I	Industrial	None	40,000N/A	None	N/A
R-1	Rural Residential and Farming: Sewered	2	20,000	100+++	60
	Rural Residential and Farming:Unsewered	1	40,000++	150+++	60
R-2	Rural Residential: Sewered	4	10,000	100+++	60
	Rural Residential: Unsewered	1	40,000++	150+++	60
R-3	Urban Residential: Sewered	4	10,000	100+++	40
	Urban Residential: Unsewered	2	20,000	100+++	40
RP	Resource Protection	1*	40,000	200	60
SC	Shoreland Commercial	None	7,500	75	
TR-3	Transitional Residential: Sewered	4	10,000	100	40
	Transitional Residential: Unsewered	2	20,000	100	40

+ Apartment buildings are a conditional use in the Commercial District.

++ Reduced to 30,000 square feet for cluster development.

+++ May be reduced to 30 feet measured along the chord of a cul-de-sac.

\* By special exception.



Planning Considerations:

- The primary land use in Thomaston, by acreage, is residential. Approximately 4,000 acres of undeveloped land remains in residential districts. This includes parcels of five acres or more.
- Most of the undeveloped residential land lies north of the urban area of town along Beechwood Street west to the Oyster River and east to Old County Road in the R-1 and TR-3 Districts. This area is not served by public sewer or public water. Development in this area is also influenced by the presence of gravel pits and quarries, existing non-conforming uses.
- The R-1 District along High Street includes Montpelier, which has great historic and cultural significance. It is critical that nearby commercial and industrial land uses not encroach on this residential area.
- There is undeveloped land in the R-2 District at the western end of town, but, except for the water line out West Main Street, these areas are not served by public water and are not likely to receive public water or sewer in the near future thus limiting development potential.
- There is some space available for infill development within the Urban Residential District (R-3) if land becomes available for sale.
- The former prison site is currently zoned (R-3) and may offer opportunities for residential growth near the village center. The Thomaston Redevelopment Committee is investigating the viability of various mixed-use and open space options for this site.

### **3. Home Occupations**

Home occupations, a permitted use in all residential districts, are scattered throughout the town. Some of the locations are obvious but many are not and, with an increasingly computerized society, these activities, no doubt, will increase. Home occupations are an accepted part of the town's economy and especially so in a town with limited space for small businesses. However, the Town should enforce existing standards to ensure that home occupations, in both size and type, do not detract from the residential neighborhoods in which they are located.

### **4. Commercial (C) and Shoreland Commercial (SC)**

Thomaston's commercial land uses are concentrated in three areas: the waterfront, the small businesses and retail shops on Main Street, and the highway strip along US Route One east of the cement plant.

Waterfront uses consist primarily of boat construction, repair and service companies

and other marine-oriented businesses and activities. A restaurant, convenience store, three houses and apartments for owner security are the only non-marine related land uses. This Shoreland Commercial area consists of approximately 25 acres with very little land available for expansion. However, limited land area is not a major concern of the Harbor Committee. The Industrial District, including the Pine Tree Zone, is linked to the harbor by rail and may provide development opportunities for marine-related support services that do not require water access.

The shops and businesses located on Main Street are easily accessible to the pedestrian and by car. This two-block area contains a grocery store, jewelry store, banks, bookstore, laundromat/dry cleaner, restaurant, art and antique shops and other small businesses. Some of these stores and businesses have changed ownership and uses in the last ten years, and many essential service businesses (including a small hardware store, pharmacy, 5&10, and gift shop) have closed and been replaced by non-essential businesses. There is limited land for expansion. Renovation of existing buildings could provide some additional space.

Highway commercial land use is located on both sides of US Route One east of the center of town. It is separated from the village center by the Mill River and the cement plant and its quarries, with the exception of a small area at the intersection of Old County Road and US Route One. Uses in this area are primarily automobile sales and related businesses. The demand for commercial land has been greater than for industrial land; consequently, a portion of the Industrial District south of US Route One was re-designated for commercial use in accordance with recommendations in the 1991 Plan. The 1991 Plan also noted that all businesses fronting US Route One have individual access drives connecting directly with the highway. This situation still exists and, to add to the problem, many businesses have no designated driveways. This makes it difficult for drivers to know where to expect vehicles to enter the road. The Maine Department of Transportation's proposed upgrading of US Route One, with designated turn lanes and limited entrances and exits, should address this problem. The approximately 80 acres available for commercial uses in this area should be sufficient to meet anticipated needs.

## **5. Industrial (I)**

Industrial uses are concentrated east of the center of town on both sides of US Route One and are dominated by the cement plant and its quarries. Thomaston has a comparatively high percentage of its land area in industrial use. The cement plant and associated quarries occupies about 723 acres within the industrial area, or approximately 10% of the entire land area of the town. Dragon Products also owns approximately 200 acres in residential areas and 1.5 acres in a commercial zone. Berms, fencing and plantings screen portions of the current operations. Other smaller industrial uses are located in the industrial area east of the cement plant. With the recent designation of the Pine Tree Zone, the reactivation of the rail line, and the proposed infrastructure improvements associated with the Dragon Products Tax Increment Finance District (TIF), this area should attract more industry. (See Employment and Economy Chapter)

## 6. Institutional and Non-Profit

The total amount of land used for Federal, State and municipal facilities is about 150 acres, exclusive of the Town Forest. Except for the transfer station and two State agency offices, all of these facilities are located in the village area including the Post Office, Town Office, Police Station, Fire/Ambulance Building, Watts Hall, Academy Building with library and a branch of the University of Maine, six churches and two cemeteries. Of these 150 acres, MSAD 50 owns about 47 acres (the three schools with their playing fields) located behind the Main Street business block. The State owns about 26 acres at and adjoining the site of the former State Prison. Approximately 15 acres of this land will be transferred to the Town in the summer of 2005.

Montpelier, the replica of the Knox mansion, is located on High Street at the eastern end of the village area. This structure has great historic, cultural, and aesthetic value and its preservation is a vital to the historic character of the community.

### Planning Considerations:

Keeping public facilities in the village area helps to prevent development sprawl, limit traffic increases, and create a pedestrian-friendly town.

## 7. Resource Production and Gravel Pits

The cement plant is the only resource production land use that significantly affects Thomaston's and the region's economy. Dragon Products employs approximately 125 persons and produces approximately 500,000 tons of cement per year. While waste rock has historically been placed in waste piles (such as the so-called Dragon Mountain off Old County Road), the plant's aggregate operation now utilizes approximately 100,000 tons of waste rock per year. The ultimate closure of the plant and quarries, and the disposition of waste rock and kiln dust piles is a major land use concern for the town. In addition, gravel pit operations exist north of the village center off Beechwood Street. These operations have an impact on other land uses in this section of town, and on traffic throughout town (see Natural Resources Chapter).

Agricultural land use in Thomaston includes two farms totaling about 200 acres and smaller separate parcels used by individuals for pasturing of horses or haying. Although this farmland is important to the town's rural environment, it does not significantly affect the town or regional economy. In 2004, 424 acres of land were classified under the Farm and Open Space Tax Law, 187 of which were classified as cropland, orchard land or pasture land. Although approximately 66% of the land area of Thomaston is wooded, only 177 acres were classified under the Tree Growth Tax Law in 2004. Maine Forest Service data indicate 21 timber harvests on 575 acres during the period of 1992 through 2003. The estuary of the St. George River remains an important source of shellfish and adds significantly to the region's soft shell clam supply. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries are discussed more fully in the Natural Resources and Marine Resources chapters of this Plan.

## **8. Open Space/Recreation**

Much of Thomaston's present charm results from the fact that attractive vistas of fields, the St. George River, or woodlands are visible from many locations in town. These open spaces include approximately 600 acres registered under the Farm and Open Space and Tree Growth Tax Programs.

The 350 acre Thomaston Town Forest is a valuable open space, wildlife habitat and recreational resource. It includes 3.5 miles of hiking trails extending from US Route One to Beechwood Street which form a segment of the Georges River Highland Path. At Beechwood, the trail connects with Oyster River Bog section of the Highland Path. This section extends seven miles along the east branch of the Oyster River and west side of the Rockland Bog to Route 90. Approximately 81 acres of land along the northern boundary of the town and immediately south/southwest of the Rockland Bog are owned and managed by a nonprofit environmental organization.

The Town owns very little land suitable for recreation other than that associated with the Thomaston Town Forest (see Natural Resources chapter). A small area on the harbor historically served as a Town Beach, but it is no longer suitable for swimming. The site is, however, maintained by the Conservation Commission as a location to sit and view the harbor. In addition, Mayo Park at the Town landing and a narrow strip of land at the location of the old dump along the Mill River are public properties that provide open space at the harbor. Other than the Town Forest, most publicly-owned land is on the MSAD 50 school campus. The school campus includes the elementary, middle and high school buildings and associated playing fields. Located behind the business block, the school campus provides a significant amount of open space in the Urban Residential (R-3) District. The Conservation Commission recommends that this area remain open space and that public access be encouraged.

## **9. Former Prison Site**

The relocation of the prison to Warren has opened an approximately 15 acre parcel in the village area for new uses. As discussed in the Maine State Prison chapter of this Plan, the prison was demolished in 2002 and the site is currently an open field. The town has voted to accept title to the property, and the Selectmen have authorized the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee to investigate options and plan for the redevelopment of the site.

## C. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Thomaston does not have a detailed historical record of lot creation or development; most of the records are not in electronic format. In order to examine building trends, the Town reviewed property tax cards and building permits issued since the beginning of town-wide zoning in the early 1970's. A review of this building activity information indicates the following:

- Substantial residential building activity in the 1970's that tapered off in the 1980's and 1990's.
- While most of the residential building activity has occurred in the R-3 (Urban Residential District), there has also been substantial development in both the R-1 (Rural Residential and Farming) and the R-2 (Rural Residential) districts. Development in the R-1 District north of Route One, primarily along Beechwood Street, has experienced as much residential building activity as areas in the R-2 Districts. However, development in the R-1 is primarily on large single lots, whereas, development in the R-2 is primarily on small subdivision lots.
- During the period from 2000 to 2004 the town experienced a jump in residential building construction with as much activity in this five year period as in the previous decade. Much of this residential construction (approximately 45%) occurred in the R-3 Urban Residential District as infill development; compared to approximately 35% in the R-1 District, 17% in the R-2 District, and 3% in the TR-3 District.
- The TR-3 (Transitional Residential) District, which was created in the 1990's as a future growth area, has seen little activity. The lack of building activity may be partially attributable to existing gravel pit operations and associated truck traffic in the vicinity which may make the area less desirable than other areas of the community for new housing.
- Commercial and industrial building activity was relatively flat from 1970 through 2000. There has been some expansion of existing commercial and industrial uses including major capital investments at both Lyman Morse Boat Building and Dragon Cement. However, in 2004 and 2005 there has been increased interest in commercial development east of the cement plant with the approval of a hotel and a pending application for retail development.
- The Maine State Prison was relocated to Warren in 2002, eliminating a major institutional use in the Town but opening up land in the village area for new uses.

### III. REFLECTIONS ON THE 1991 PLAN (ACCOMPLISHMENTS)

The 1991 Plan recommended several implementation strategies for guiding future land use in Thomaston. Accomplishments in this area are summarized below.

Strategy in 1991 Plan	Status
Appoint land use ordinance committee to write new and revise existing ordinances	Land Use Ordinance enacted in 1995, with subsequent amendments. Committee did not become a standing committee.
Prepare official zoning map	Completed
<u>Resource Protection District:</u> Add St. George River, Oyster River, flood plains, areas with slopes greater than 20%, and wetlands.	Completed
<u>Shoreland Commercial District:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend to comply with state Shoreland Zoning Guidelines;</li> <li>Place commercial land at St. George River and Route One in Shoreland Commercial;</li> <li>Review uses and densities for compatibility with marine related / water dependent businesses and visual access to harbor and river, amend as necessary.</li> </ul>	Completed
<u>Rural Residential and Farming District (R-1)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum lot size 40,000 square feet; 30,000 square feet for clustered subdivisions;</li> <li>Subdivisions of more than 6 acres must submit a clustered design in addition to traditional;</li> <li>Driveways of subdivision lots must exit onto subdivision roads;</li> <li>Require environmental impact statement for subdivision in excess of 20 acres;</li> <li>Relocate southern boundary of R-1 on Beechwood Street;</li> <li>Make railroad right of way northern boundary of R-1 on Thomaston Street.</li> </ul>	Completed, except that cluster plans are encouraged and given priority, but developer not required to submit both clustered and traditional design.

Strategy in 1991 Plan	Status
<u>Rural District (R-2)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District should remain unsewered and rural;</li> <li>Minimum lot size 40,000 square feet, reduce to 30,000 square feet for cluster development;</li> <li>Subdivisions of more than 6 acres must submit a clustered design in addition to traditional design;</li> <li>Place non-commercial land on Route One at St. George River in R-2;</li> <li>Building setback along Route One from St. George River to Route 131 north should remain 60 feet from centerline;</li> <li>Retain vegetative buffers along Route One, St. George River to Route 131 north; encourage additional;</li> <li>Driveways from lots in subdivisions exit onto subdivision roads.</li> </ul>	Completed, except that cluster plans are encouraged and given priority, but developer not required to submit both clustered and traditional design.
<u>Urban Residential District (R-3)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include nursing homes, congregate housing, schools and hospitals as conditional uses;</li> <li>Include parcels at terminal points of sewer lines;</li> <li>Reduce minimum setback from centerline of street from 60 to 40 feet;</li> <li>Encourage traditional grid type of development;</li> <li>Review and revise performance standards to protect traditional residential character and Historic District;</li> <li>Encourage pedestrian environment; extend sidewalks within R-3 out Beechwood, down Wadsworth, south side of Water Street to Knox.</li> </ul>	Partially completed. However, hospitals not added as a conditional use; no performance standards to protect Historic District; and only modest progress on sidewalk construction.
<u>Transitional Residential District (TR-3)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new district north of existing R-3; with permitted and conditional uses and dimensional requirements similar to R-3;</li> <li>New district to have priority for sewer extension beyond R-3;</li> <li>Minimum residential lot without water and sewer, 20,000 square feet; 10,000 square feet with water and sewer;</li> <li>Anticipate new road approximately parallel to Main Street, first section Beechwood to Booker.</li> </ul>	Completed, except new road has not been constructed. A new road north of Main Street is still recommended. See Transportation chapter.
<u>Home Occupations:</u> Allow in all residential districts as conditional uses.	Not done. Remains a permitted use in all residential districts.

Strategy in 1991 Plan	Status
<u>Commercial District (C)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish downtown business area as a separate district from other commercial areas;</li> <li>Adjust boundary to include all of Masonic Hall property;</li> <li>Change area of Commercial District east of cement plant to include some of land on south side of Route One currently zoned industrial;</li> <li>Strengthen landscaping requirements;</li> <li>Add "change of use" regulation (see Site Plan Review Ordinance).</li> </ul>	District boundary changes were made. Downtown/village commercial was not placed in separate district, landscaping not strengthened; no change of use regulation.
<u>Industrial (I)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add "change of use" regulation (see Site Plan Review Ordinance).</li> </ul>	Not Done
<u>Site Plan Review Ordinance</u> (all districts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require Planning Board review of non-residential uses requiring structures/additions greater than 500 square feet in floor area;</li> <li>Require Planning Board review of any "change of use" on vacant or undeveloped land;</li> <li>Require designated ingress and egress with vegetative buffer between for all uses in highway commercial and industrial districts.</li> </ul>	Completed. Approval is required for structures and additions greater than 1000 square feet. Zoning controls use. Ordinance limits curb cuts, requires landscaping.
<u>Subdivision Ordinance</u> (all districts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen landscaping provisions to require reasonable number of new shade trees along new streets, and retain percentage of existing;</li> <li>Define open space/clustered subdivisions and provide criteria for deciding between cluster and traditional design proposals;</li> <li>Require construction of large subdivisions (more than 20 lots) to be phased in over more than one year.</li> </ul>	Partially completed. Landscaping provisions were strengthened. Criteria for deciding between traditional and clustered designs not done. Phasing of subdivisions not required.



#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

Thomaston's current land use pattern is the result of historical development and comprehensive town-wide zoning. Since zoning has been in effect since 1974, current land uses generally approximate the designated uses identified in the Land Use and Development Ordinance, with some non-conforming uses such as gravel pits present. The most problematic non-conforming uses are the mineral extraction operations off Beechwood Street.

The predominant land use in Thomaston is residential, followed by the industrial uses associated with the cement plant and rock quarries. A review of building activity since 1970 indicates that both commercial and industrial development has been relatively flat. The greatest amount of residential building has occurred in the R-3 Urban Residential District, with an increase in infill development since 2000. However, there has been substantial residential building in the R-2 Rural Residential District (with two large subdivisions) and the R-1 Rural Residential and Farming District (primarily individual lots along Beechwood Street). The TR-3 Transitional Residential District has seen little activity, perhaps due in part to grandfathered gravel pit operations in the vicinity. While there is sufficient land area for residential uses for the foreseeable future, development potential is somewhat limited by the lack of access to back lots and lack of public water and sewer beyond the village area. In order to prevent development sprawl, the town needs to encourage growth in the TR-3 District through extension of the public sewer system to this area. Creation of an east-west road north of Main Street would also facilitate development in this area.

Residential uses in the village center are threatened by increased traffic along US Route One as well as increased traffic from the Cushing peninsula up Wadsworth Street and along Water Street. The lack of east-west roads north of Main Street means that Beechwood Street traffic (including heavy truck traffic associated with pits and quarries) is funneled onto US Route One at the village center. Additionally, there is no alternate route through town in the event of an emergency in the vicinity of the Route One Mill River crossing. The town needs to examine mechanisms to protect the character of the federally designated historic district along US Route One and Knox Street.

As noted above, commercial development has been relatively flat in Thomaston over the past 30 years. However, in 2004 and 2005 there has been increased interest and activity in the commercial district east of the cement plant. An application for a hotel has been approved, and plans for a retail development are pending. Even with these developments, the town should have sufficient land in Commercial District to accommodate demand for the planning period. To protect the character of the village center and to provide for differing types of commercial development, the Commercial District should be divided into a Village Commercial District and a Highway Commercial District with dimensional standards appropriate for each.

Shore frontage in Thomaston is zoned either Resource Protection or Shoreland

Commercial. While the Shoreland Commercial District is limited to 25 acres, the prohibition on non-marine-related uses helps to ensure the viability of businesses in this area. Additionally, designation of the Pine Tree Zone, which is connected to the waterfront by rail, should provide space for marine-related businesses to expand if certain manufacturing functions are not water dependent.

Dragon Cement is the major industrial use in town, occupying more 10% of the land area of Thomaston. The designation of the Pine Tree Zone may provide an incentive for additional industry to locate in Thomaston.

## **V. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

See Future Land Use Chapter

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Much of Thomaston's beauty derives from its history: its village center that anchors rural outlying areas and its historic structures, along with more modest reminders of the town's maritime and farming past. While providing for continued population growth and associated housing and business development, Thomaston must continue to shape this growth so that the Town's traditional character remains deep-rooted and community wide, and not reduced to remnants.

As noted elsewhere, Thomaston has had reasonably successful town-wide zoning for many years, and the settlement pattern is generally one that Thomaston property owners are satisfied with and wish to see continued.

This Plan supports maintaining the basic land-use pattern of the village surrounded by low-density development, and supports efforts to preserve the character of the town's federally designated Historic District.

While the population of Thomaston has grown modestly over the long term, the rate of growth between 1990 and 2000 exceeded that of Knox County and Maine as a whole. As discussed in the Population chapter of this Plan, it is difficult to predict the impact of the prison relocation, but it will likely make the town more desirable as a residential community. The revitalization of Rockland will also likely increase population pressure in Thomaston.

Future land use challenges for Thomaston include: 1) prevent sprawl and maintain a viable village center with a variety of small businesses, historic buildings, and pleasant residential areas in the face of increasing development pressure and increasing traffic along US Route One; 2) preserve the character of the federally designated historic district; 3) redevelop of the former prison property in a manner that is compatible with surrounding residential uses and that complements the commercial and public uses at the village center; 4) maintain affordable housing opportunities; 5) provide for commercial and industrial development to provide jobs and increase the tax base ; 6) maintain open space and public access to open space and the harbor; and 7) limit adverse impacts of gravel pits and rock quarries on other land uses, and planning (long term) for the eventual closure of these areas.

The major land use changes proposed in this Plan include: 1) the establishment of a new district, if necessary, that allows for open space as well as mixed use development at the former prison site; and 2) dividing the existing commercial district into a village commercial district and a highway commercial district, with differing dimensional requirements and standards. In addition, some modifications within existing zones are recommended. While this Plan does not recommend creation of a town historic district with associated ordinances at this time, it strongly recommends establishment of a committee to examine the benefits and drawbacks of such a

designation and to consider other means of preserving the character of this area as well as other key historic structures in the community.

This Chapter is intended to guide the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Code Enforcement Officer in the preparation of recommended revisions to the town's ordinances for action at Town Meeting.

## **II. INVENTORY**

The Thomaston Land Use and Development Ordinance and the 1991 Plan provide for both rural and growth areas in accordance with Maine's Growth Management Act.

Rural areas, as defined by the State, are:

"...large areas of contiguous open space, farmland, or forestland...; areas [where] the level and type of development will be compatible with the maintenance of rural character and will not constitute or encourage development sprawl or strip development; areas containing natural resources and scenic open spaces that are intended to be protected."

Growth areas are defined as:

"areas within which public facilities and services are efficiently provided or can be efficiently provided...; areas...that are physically suited for development...; enough land area suitable for development to accommodate all growth and development planned to occur during the planning period...[but] should encourage compact, efficient development and discourage development sprawl and strip developments."

### **A. RURAL AREAS**

Using the above definition, rural areas in Thomaston include the Resource Protection District (RP), the Rural Residential and Farming District (R-1), and the Rural Residential District (R-2).

#### **1. Resource Protection District (RP)**

The purpose of a Resource Protection District, as stated in the town's Land Use and Development Ordinances, is: "To further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; prevent and control water pollution; protect spawning grounds for fish, aquatic life, bird and wildlife habitat; control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; and conserve shore cover, visual as well as actual points of access to inland and coastal wetlands and natural beauty."

The Resource Protection District was expanded as recommended in the Natural Resources section of the 1991 Plan to give additional protection to waterbodies and wetlands. Some development is allowed in the Resource Protection District; however, the uses are restricted and require Zoning Board approval. These

additional safeguards are important not only for the purposes stated above, but also to prevent flooding along rivers and drainage ways.

No changes in the district boundaries are recommended at this time. However, ordinances should be reviewed annually, and amended as needed, to ensure that the standards are consistent with State Shoreland Zoning Guidelines [06-096 CMR Chapter 1000] and other State and federal laws and regulations governing protection of natural resources. Additionally, as discussed in the Natural Resources chapter, the town should review ordinances pertaining to vegetative buffers in areas abutting critical natural resources and amend if necessary to ensure adequate protection of these resources.

## **2. Rural Residential and Farming District (R-1) and Rural Residential District (R-2)**

The purpose of these districts is to provide for residential development while retaining the rural quality of these areas. Areas within these districts provide a “greenbelt” around most of the town. Many open fields are found here, with one farm in the R-1 District and one in the R-2 District in Brooklyn Heights. Although these farmlands are not a major factor in the local economy, they do contribute greatly to the environment and to the human need for open space. Their continued existence is strongly encouraged. Open space is also provided by other parcels registered under the Farm and Open Space Tax Law and the Tree Growth Tax Law. Additionally, the Thomaston Town Forest is located in the R-1 district, as are portions of the deer wintering areas and critical natural resources not zoned Resource Protection.

Nearly all vacant residential land in Thomaston is located in areas zoned R-1. Areas within the R-1 District are not served by public sewer and have little potential for public sewer due to cost, unless developed in a large conservation subdivision with a community sewer. The goal of land use planning in the rural density areas should be the preservation of as much green space as possible to maintain Thomaston’s traditional rural character, whether through wetland and steep slopes protection and/or dedicated open space.

Montpelier, the Knox mansion, is located in the R-1 District on High Street. It is critical that commercial and industrial uses not encroach upon the R-1 District in this area. Protection of this historic landmark and the neighboring residential area is vitally important to the Town.

Land zoned Rural Residential (R-2) is located in Brooklyn Heights and at the western entrance to town along US Route One. The town’s largest residential subdivisions are located in these areas along Sunrise Terrace and Ridgeview Drive. There is room for additional residential development in each area, but density is limited by soil conditions and the lack of public sewer.

To enhance rural atmosphere while allowing for needed housing growth, clustered residential subdivisions with components of open space continue to be strongly recommended in the R-1 and R-2 districts. Town ordinances allow a reduction in minimum lot size per dwelling to 30,000 square feet in these districts in exchange for land retained in open space. These provisions allow the same number of houses on a typical parcel of land as if the land were fully developed with 40,000 square foot lots (the current minimum size for lots in R-1 and R-2 districts not served by public sewer) while retaining 25% of the land in permanent open space. Land use ordinances should be amended to require the submission of a cluster design for residential subdivisions in the R-1 district instead of, or in addition to, a traditional design for site plan review.

Additionally, the 1991 Plan highlighted the importance of preserving the US Route One western entrance to Thomaston over the St. George River as an important scenic resource. As discussed above, this area is zoned R-2, with a small Shoreland Commercial (SC) district south of the US Route One bridge. US Route One through Warren is becoming more developed, and distinct green borders are important if we are to preserve Thomaston's identity. If Thomaston were to allow strip commercial development or dense residential development in this area, the visual separation of Thomaston from Warren would become as blurred as that of Thomaston from Rockland. Additionally, such development would increase traffic congestion along US Route One. For these reasons, no land use changes are recommended in this area; however, conditional uses should be reviewed to ensure that they are compatible with rural residential areas.

For development which is allowed along US Route One from the St. George River to Route 131 north, the number and location of entrances onto US Route One must be limited to ensure safe traffic flow. Additionally, attention must be paid to visual screening to maintain the visual quality of this area. Any further development in the Shoreland Commercial District on US Route One in the vicinity of the Route One bridge should be done so as to minimize adverse impacts to the visual quality of the area. Provisions in the Land Use and Development Ordinance pertaining to "visually harmonious" development and protection of scenic views [section 716.16.5.2] should be carefully evaluated as part of project review. With respect to development in the R-2 District at the western entrance to town, the Planning Board should encourage cluster development in accordance with section 719.1 of the Land Use and Development Ordinance to preserve open space, large trees and tree groves, native plant life, wildlife cover and other natural features.

It is also critical that commercial and industrial uses not encroach upon the R-1 District on High Street (Route 131 south) and that proposed development be carefully evaluated to ensure compliance with existing ordinances. Montpelier is a dominant landmark in this area. Protection of this landmark and neighboring residential areas is vitally important to the Town.

Commercial uses and other incompatible uses must continue to be prohibited in these districts.

## **B. GROWTH AREAS**

Districts associated with growth areas include: Urban Residential (R-3), Transitional Residential (TR-3), Shoreland Commercial (SC), Commercial (C), and Industrial (I). Thomaston's current growth areas are believed to be sufficient to meet anticipated need.

### **1. Urban Residential District (R-3)**

Residential development in the last ten years has not been concentrated in any particular area; however, the period between 2000 and 2004 has seen a move toward housing infill in the village center (R-3 district) including new single family homes, apartment buildings and elderly housing.

The land area within the Urban Residential District (R-3) has remained generally the same since 1995, and no changes are proposed in this Plan. The R-3 District is served by public water and sewer systems. This district includes the federally designated historic district along US Route One and Knox Street. A traditional grid pattern of development is encouraged. In response to recommendations in the 1991 Plan, the road setback for houses was reduced to 40 feet so that new development will fit in with the predominantly traditional design of this area.

There is limited open land within this district to accommodate new development. The Land Use Ordinance allows conversion of single family homes to apartments, providing additional housing opportunities; however, strict adherence to parking standards is needed to lessen the impact of automobiles on residential neighborhoods.

To encourage a safe and pedestrian friendly environment, sidewalks should continue to be extended and reconstructed within R-3 including farther out Beechwood Street and along the south side of Water Street. New development site plans for projects within the R-3 District should be required to provide adequate setback to allow for future extension of sidewalks in compliance with a comprehensive sidewalk plan. Additionally, the Transportation chapter of this Plan recommends sidewalk improvements along US Route One from Route 131 north to Route 131 south.

### **2. Former Prison Site (currently zoned R-3)**

As discussed in the Maine State Prison chapter, the Town has voted to accept title to the former prison site located on US Route One at the western end of the village center. The Selectmen have established a committee to investigate redevelopment options for this 15 acre parcel. The land is currently zoned Urban Residential (R-3). While not wanting to pre-empt the work of the Redevelopment Committee, this Plan

recommends consideration of a new district that would provide for both open space and mixed residential, commercial and institutional uses compatible with surrounding residential land uses and the existing business block in the commercial district at the village center.

### **3. Transitional Residential District (TR-3)**

This land use district was established as a growth area in response to recommendations in the 1991 Plan to concentrate future residential development closer to the more compact areas of town and to preserve upper Beechwood Street as a more rural area. However, a review of building permits indicates little development in this area. To encourage residential growth in this district, this area should be given priority for any extension of water or sewer lines. This Plan also recommends consideration of a new road north of US Route One between Beechwood and Old County Roads. Such a road would encourage residential development in this area, relieve traffic congestion on US Route One, and provide an alternate route through town in the event of an accident or other emergency blocking US Route One at the Mill River crossing. (See the Transportation chapter of this Plan for recommendations pertaining to road construction.) Additionally, the Land Use and Development Ordinance should be amended to allow mobile home parks as a conditional use in the TR-3 District as opposed to the R-1 District.

### **4. Shoreland Commercial District (SC)**

The harbor was zoned as a separate district in 1987. Water dependent and marine-oriented uses have always predominated here, and the Shoreland Commercial District was established to help ensure these uses will remain. In the community survey, 62% of those responding favored retaining this area for marine-related businesses. While land area is limited, the Harbor Committee believes that it is adequate for anticipated needs, with the possible exception of parking at the town landing. Dimensional requirements for structures in this district, including a maximum building height of 35 feet and maximum building coverage of 50%, limit development potential but help protect visual access to the harbor and should be retained.

No change in the district boundaries or its dimensional requirements is recommended. However, given the need to balance the needs of marine-related businesses with the need of the public for visual and physical access to the harbor, it is recommended that the town work with property owners on the placement of any new structures so as to help preserve visual access to the water from public vantage points. The Land Use and Development Ordinance Article II General Standards of Performance requires proposed commercial and industrial development to be located and configured “in a visually harmonious manner with the terrain and vegetation of the parcel and surrounding parcels” and proposed structures to impede “as little as reasonably practical, scenic views from the main road or from existing structures and the natural environment” [716.16.5.2]. This provision needs to be carefully



considered when evaluating proposed developments in the shoreland commercial district.

Additionally, the current shoreland property owned by the town should be retained for public access. As noted in the Marine Resources chapter, the town should work cooperatively with willing landowners to secure easements needed to develop a waterfront trail from Wadsworth Street to Montpelier.

## **5. Commercial District (C)**

As recommended in the 1991 Plan, the Commercial District should be divided into a Village Commercial and a Highway Commercial District to separate and distinguish the Main Street shops and business uses located in the village area from those of the primarily highway commercial uses east of the cement plant.

The present allowable uses of small businesses, municipal buildings, social organizations, churches, Post Office and apartments should be retained in the village commercial district, but both new and renovated buildings in this area should be compatible in design and scale with the surrounding residential uses and historic character of the area. Although there is limited space for growth in this area, some opportunity for growth does exist if buildings are renovated. The possibility of adding small shops behind the business block should be considered, but attention must be paid to maintaining adequate parking for downtown businesses and services. Sidewalk improvements in the business block are needed to ensure safe access to businesses for all patrons and encourage business investment. As noted above, the Town is exploring options for mixed use development at the former prison site, which may provide an opportunity for additional small scale commercial development in the village area.

The commercial lot at the junction of US Route One and Old County Road should be included in the proposed village commercial district. Given traffic concerns at this location, commercial development should remain small scale and should not be expanded. In addition, this commercial area is located near Montpelier and other historic structures. It is critical that development in this area not adversely impact these unique historic and cultural resources.

As noted elsewhere, the highway commercial uses along US Route One east of the cement plant have increased faster than industrial uses in this area. In response to this demand and recommendations in the 1991 Plan, an additional commercial area was added across Route One from the existing commercial district. The land use ordinances for the proposed highway commercial district would need to accommodate the existing automotive, storage, theater, retail and hospitality uses of this area. However, dimensional requirements should ensure that the scale of future development is in keeping with the needs of the region and the maintenance of a viable commercial district in the village center. It is recommended that no single retail store exceed a building size of 150,000 square feet. Additionally, changes in

landscaping requirements are necessary to improve the appearance of commercial development in this area and to provide for safer access to parking areas and encourage business investment. In excess of 80 undeveloped acres are currently available in this district.

## **6. Industrial District (I)**

The only significant change in the Industrial District since the 1991 Plan was the redesignation of some land on the south side of U S Route One near the Thomaston-Rockland municipal line from industrial to commercial, to accommodate the greater demand for commercial land uses in this area of Thomaston. However, the development potential of the industrial district has changed significantly with the recent designation of the Dragon Cement Company Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District, and the designation of 150 acres as part of the Midcoast Pine Tree Zone. Both the Dragon TIF and the Midcoast Pine Tree Zone are discussed in greater detail in the Employment and Economy chapter of this Plan. The tax incentives associated with the Pine Tree Zone and the use of a portion of the TIF funds to extend public sewer to 50 of the 150 acres of the Pine Tree Zone should encourage business growth in this area. Reactivation of the rail line which passes through the industrial district should also aid business development. No further actions are recommended at this time.

### **III. GOALS, POLICIES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

#### **A. STATE GOAL**

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

#### **B. LOCAL GOALS**

1. To achieve a pattern of land use that retains Thomaston’s small town character, protects its historic structures from incompatible development, enhances its village center, and protects its rural surroundings from over development while providing for business growth and affordable housing opportunities.
2. Direct commercial, industrial and residential development to appropriate growth areas and ensure that the scale and character of future development does not adversely impact existing uses and the natural, historic and archeological resources of the town.

#### **C. POLICIES**

1. To protect the traditional residential and historic character of the town.
2. To provide housing opportunities for a range of household sizes, types, and incomes, and ensure affordable housing opportunities.
3. To increase safety and lessen traffic congestion in residential and commercial areas and along US Route One.
4. To ensure that future residential and commercial development is compatible in scale and character with existing uses.
5. To encourage commercial and industrial uses to locate in appropriate growth areas including the Pine Tree Zone to provide new employment opportunities for residents.
6. To protect physical and visual access to the shore for the general public.
7. To ensure that the extraction and processing of mineral resources (including rock, sand and gravel) and the ultimate closure of pits and quarries are conducted in compliance with environmental laws and local land use ordinances so as to minimize adverse impacts on air, land and water resources and the community as a whole.

## **D. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Each chapter in this Plan sets forth goals, policies and implementation strategies which have implications for future land use. Key recommendations and strategies pertaining to land use districts and ordinances are summarized below.

### **Rural Areas**

1. Encourage, through educational outreach efforts, placement and retention of active agricultural lands and other important open space in the Farm and Open Space Tax Program, and productive forest land in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Survey current users of these programs to assess program effectiveness and encourage continued participation. Explain benefits of these programs to other landowners whose properties have important agricultural, open space and forestry values. Provide wood lot owners with information on forestry best management practices. Encourage conservation easements to preserve important agricultural, open space and forest lands through local land trusts. See Natural Resources Chapter. [Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Tree Warden. Priority: Important. Time frame: Ongoing, survey within one year.]
2. Encourage through site plan review patterns of development that preserve wildlife travel corridors and large blocks of open space. Amend Land Use and Development Ordinance to require subdivision proposals within the R-1 (Rural Residential and Farming) District to submit a cluster design instead of, or in addition to, a traditional design for site plan review. Land to be left in open space should, to the extent possible, include prime agricultural soils, critical natural resources and important wildlife habitat and should abut and augment such open space on adjoining properties. [Selectmen. Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within one year.]
3. Meet with neighboring communities to review land use plans and ordinances and develop an area-wide approach to the preservation of open space and the protection of important natural resources such as the St. George River, Rockland Bog and Weskeag River using tools such as "Beginning with Habitat". Report to Selectmen by January 2008 on any proposed changes to Thomaston's land use ordinances. See Natural Resources chapter. [Conservation Commission, Comprehensive Plan Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years].
4. The Planning Board and CEO will annually report to the Select Board on the number, type and location of new development permits issued in the preceeding year. A reexamination and revision of appropriate sections of this Plan and amendments to land use ordinances will be suggested if, after five years, more than 35% of total growth observed occurred in rural areas. [Planning Board, CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: begin tracking immediately – 2006].

## **Residential Districts**

5. Continue to allow a range of housing densities based on the established settlement pattern and provide a sufficient amount of affordable housing types, including accessory apartments and multi-family housing. [Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
  - (a) Single Family Housing:
    - Continue the established single-family development pattern of dwellings in and near the village with a gradual transition to rural densities as distance from the village increases.
    - Require proposed housing subdivisions, regardless of the number of lots, to adhere to design and site layout standards.
    - Encourage layout of development that is compatible with the natural landscape.
  - (b) Two-Family Housing: Continue to permit two-family dwellings in those areas where a mixed single-family and two-family residential character has been established.
  - (c) Multi-Family Housing: Support additional multi-family housing in the R-3 and TR-3 Districts.
  - (d) Apartment, Accessory Units, and Accessory Cottages:
    - Continue to allow apartments on upper floors of multi-story buildings within the commercial district at the village center.
    - Encourage owners of accessory apartments to meet affordability guidelines, when owners control more than one accessory apartment or structure.
  - (e) Home occupations should continue to be allowed in all residential districts.
6. Amend the Land Use and Development Ordinance to allow mobile home parks as a conditional use in the TR-3 (Transitional Residential) District as opposed to the (R-1) Rural Residential and Farming District to provide for housing closer to the village area and prevent development sprawl. [Selectboard. Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 1 year]

## **Commercial and Shoreland Commercial Districts**

7. There are substantial differences in the nature and character of the commercial uses in the village area and those along US Route One east of the cement plant. The 1991 Plan recommended creation of separate land use districts to reflect these differences and manage growth appropriately in each. This Plan again recommends creation of separate districts for the village area and Route One in the vicinity of the Rockland municipal line. Amend Land Use and Development Ordinance to divide the existing Commercial District into a Village Commercial and a Highway Commercial district to distinguish the Main Street shops and business uses located in the village area from the highway commercial uses east of the

cement plant. Development in the village commercial area should protect and enhance the small town and historic character of Thomaston which contributes to the attractiveness of the town in a tourist economy. Require appropriate parking and landscaping to create a pleasant environment in both the village and highway commercial areas. [Selectmen and Planning Board. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years.]

8. Encourage business investment in the village center through infrastructure improvements such as improved sidewalks, lighting, and appropriate landscaping. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
9. Retain existing Shoreland Commercial District designation along Thomaston harbor to protect and support marine-related businesses and commercial fisheries. [Selectmen. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]

### **Industrial District**

10. Promote appropriate industrial development in the Pine Tree Zone. Take advantage of the presence of re-activated railroad facilities to enhance economic opportunities for Thomaston's businesses and residents. Locate commercial and industrial growth areas such as the Pine Tree Zone and Thomaston Economic Tract (associated with the Dragon TIF) near the railroad line and spurs. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
11. Meet with Dragon Products to obtain information on its long-term operational plans and plans for eventual closure of the facility. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

### **General Strategies**

12. Site Plan Review Ordinance (for all subdistricts): Continue to require Planning Board review of all non-residential uses requiring structures or additions over 1,000 square feet in floor area, including schools, municipal buildings, churches, etc [Planning Board. Priority: Important. Ongoing]
13. Maintain up-to-date maps depicting current land uses. Integrate land use mapping layers with maps depicting municipal infrastructure and tie to property cards. Computerize building permit information. [Town Manager, Assessor's Agent. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]
14. Establish a Land Use Ordinance Committee to assist the Code Enforcement Officer with reviewing and drafting amendments to the Town's land use ordinances. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 1 year]
15. Establish a committee to examine the benefits and drawbacks of designation of an historic district and associated ordinances and to consider other means of

preserving the character of the federally designated historic district as well as other key historic structures in the community. See History chapter. [Selectmen. Priority: Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

16. Consider need for a new district at the former prison site to provide for both open space and mixed residential, commercial, municipal, and institutional uses. See Maine State Prison chapter. [Thomaston Redevelopment Committee. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]
17. Explore construction of an alternate east-west road through town [in the vicinity of the Transitional Residential (TR-3) District connecting Beechwood Street with Old County Road] to encourage residential growth in the TR-3 District and alleviate traffic congestion on Route One. See Transportation chapter. [Select Board, Town Manager, Road Commissioner. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: raise issue as part of Gateway 1 project, ongoing]
18. Review land use ordinances pertaining to gravel pits and quarries and amend as necessary to ensure that impacts to natural resources, other land uses, and transportation systems are adequately addressed. See Natural Resources chapter. [Planning Board, CEO, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
19. Require predevelopment work such as tree clearing, contouring, road grading, and alterations to natural drainage ways to be reviewed by Code Enforcement Officer or Planning Board prior to the start of site work. [Selectmen, Planning Board, CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 1 year]
20. Develop guidelines or standards for the assessment of scenic impacts using concepts such as scale, contrast, and spatial dominance to assist Planning Board in its review of proposed development projects. Amend existing ordinance to allow Planning Board, at its discretion, to require a scenic impact analysis as part of site plan review. [Selectmen, Planning Board, CEO. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 1 year]

### **Transportation Improvements**

This Plan makes road recommendations with the goal of alleviating existing traffic congestion problems on US Route One and adding development potential. With these improvements, Thomaston could reduce congestion, including trucking activity through the village, and enable the village area to remain the historic crossroads of the town. Thomaston should apply for MDOT grants to improve roadway safety and reduce congestion at specified intersections and along specified corridors through lane re-striping, redesign of unsafe intersections, new turning lanes, widened approaches, etc. as appropriate for the specific circumstances. Limited entry points along Route One and the use of service roads are recommended. See the Transportation chapter for a discussion of these issues.

## **REGIONAL COORDINATION**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Regional cooperation is an important element of comprehensive planning efforts. The land uses in one community can affect another community, particularly when that land use is located near the boundaries of the town. As discussed in the Natural Resources Chapter of this plan, Thomaston should attempt to develop compatible resource protection standards with nearby communities.

The neighboring towns of Rockland, Warren and Owls Head either have locally adopted comprehensive plans that are consistent with state law or are in the process of forming a comprehensive plan committee. Rockland's comprehensive plan has been approved. Cushing, Rockland and South Thomaston have locally adopted comprehensive plans that have not been found consistent with state law. Rockland has zoning districts beyond the state mandated shoreland zones, as does Warren and South Thomaston.

Commercial retail activity in Rockland attracts Thomaston residents as consumers. Industrial, maritime, service sector and other professional employment opportunities attract Thomaston residents for work in Rockland. Medical providers are focused in Rockport and Rockland.

Town of Thomaston municipal boundaries extend as follows:

- Northerly just east of Old County Rd
- Easterly to Meadow Brook
- Easterly across Old County Rd
- Oyster River to Branch River
- Southeasterly along Pleasant St. Southerly to the vicinity of the Marsh Brook
- Southerly by Branch River and Meadow Brook
- Southwesterly by Marsh Brook which becomes the boundaries with South Thomaston
- The Cushing boundary is a little less than a mile from the St. George River and the Wadsworth St. Bridge

### **II. INVENTORY OF LAND USE ORDINANCES IN SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES**

(Note: Please see the Current Land Use chapter for a discussion of Thomaston's land use ordinances, and the Future Land Use chapter for a discussion of proposed revisions to those ordinances.)

Land use ordinances are designed to protect the current and future use of the land within the town. Some ordinances are mandated by the state, while others are



developed by the board of selectman and voted on by the people in the town, as long as the ordinances are in conformance with state minimums.

## **A. CUSHING LAND USE ORDINANCES**

### **1. Cushing's Boundaries as they relate to Thomaston:**

Cushing's boundary joins Thomaston's southerly side with the town line running east-west between two points on the shore of the St. George River.

### **2. Cushing's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance:**

Cushing's only land use ordinance is for the Shoreland Zone, which is on the St. George River near the sharp bend in the river. It extends upstream from the Wadsworth Bridge in Resource Protection and has allowed for the land in Cushing near the Thomaston line to be left undeveloped.

## **B. SOUTH THOMASTON LAND USE ORDINANCES**

### **1. South Thomaston's boundaries as they relate to Thomaston**

- North a short distance along Buttermilk Lane.
- East of the St. George River.
- South of Thomaston
- Marsh brook westerly from the Rockland line to the vicinity of Buttermilk Lane
- Westerly up to the former Maine Central Railroad to the St. George River shore at the mouth of Mill River.

### **2. South Thomaston's Shoreland Zoning**

South Thomaston's shoreland zoning ordinance was amended on 3/17/87 and is in compliance with the state guidelines. The state owns a wide area around Marsh Brook & the Weskeag River marshes including a strip 250 ft. wide along the shore of the Weskeag near the Thomaston line or in an area known as *Waldo Tyler*. Aside from the shoreland zoning ordinance, most of South Thomaston is zoned R-1 (residential). Currently there are no junkyards or industrial uses in South Thomaston.

### **3. South Thomaston R-1 Zoning District**

#### **a. Uses**

- Single family, two-family units, multi-family dwellings, inclusive of community living. Elderly housing congregates are included in the R-1 zoning as a special exception only.
- Non-Residential uses are allowed as Special Exceptions: campgrounds, commercial activities, junkyards, offices, public & private schools.

#### **b. Limits:**

- Minimum lot size or area per dwelling unit for residential is 1 acre

- Minimum lot size for industrial use and campgrounds is 3 acres.
- All other uses are 1 acre.
- No lot coverage restrictions are stated.
- Building height of 34 ft. has been determined for residential uses; non-residential building height is 50 ft.

These land use ordinances have favorably impacted Thomaston's boundaries with South Thomaston, in that the roads on both sides of Westbrook St along the Thomaston line have seen development and there have been no conflicts between the two towns regarding adjacent land since 1991.

#### **4. South Thomaston R-2 Zoning District**

The Shoreland District around the Weskeag River/Marsh Brook area, westerly to the vicinity of SR 131 and the land along the Thomaston line. Anything on the water is now R-2

### **C. ROCKLAND LAND USE ORDINANCES**

(Rockland's Zoning Changes since 1991 that may affect Thomaston)

#### **1. Rockland's Residential B District**

##### a. Location:

- All the land adjacent to the town line from the western limit of Rockland to the Old County Rd. area.
- The area west of Branch Brook, northerly to the telephone company ROW that is in the Woodland/Wildlife G District, north of the telephone line.
- Some land adjacent to Thomaston line along Pleasant St. between Park St. & Payne Ave (US 1), land in the Pleasant St. Gardens subdivision and land adjacent to Thomaston St.
- Unsewered areas extend west of the vicinity of Old County Rd. and Pleasant St., except along US 1.

##### b. Uses:

- Single, 2- family, multi-family dwellings, trailer parks, nurseries & greenhouses, farming and truck gardening.
- Semi-public uses include parks, golf courses and other recreational uses.
- Special exceptions include boarding houses, lodging, houses and hotels.

##### c. Limits:

- Height of 35 ft. for 2 family dwellings.
- No building can exceed 55 ft or 4 stories in the residential B district
- A 10,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size for dwellings.
- 5,000 sq. ft. per dwelling is required per 2 multi-family dwellings.
- Maximum lot coverage by buildings is no more than 60% of the lot size.
- State minimum lot size in a non-sewered area is 20,000 sq.ft. for any developed

property in this district.

## **2. Rockland's Industrial E Zone**

### a. Location:

- The old worked out quarries along Old County Rd, the Rockland Transfer Station demolition debris area, and the closed landfill.
- Land along Old County Rd. and between Pleasant Gardens and Thomaston St.

### b. Uses:

- Commercial and industrial uses are allowed, but cement manufacturing is prohibited.

### c. Limits:

- Prohibits residential uses except for security personnel & their families.
- No minimum lot size.
- Building height no more than 5 stories or 65 ft.\*
- Lot coverage to be no more than 33%\* of the lot size.

### d. Impact of E Zoning on Thomaston

- Negative impact on Rockland & Thomaston residential real estate because the E zones are adjacent to some residential areas.

## **3. Rockland's Commercial C Zone**

### a. Location:

- The area adjacent to US 1: It is a continuation of the highway- orientated commercial district east of the cement plant in Thomaston.

### b. Uses:

- Offices and a wide variety of commercial activities

### c. Limits:

- Maximum building height 65 ft or 5 stories.
- Residential density maximum is 1 dwelling per 25,000 sq. ft. for 1 & 2 family dwellings.
- Lot coverage for dwellings is no more than 60% of the lot with no limit for residential uses.

## **4. Rockland's Shoreland Zone**

### a. Location

- The area within 250 ft. of Meadow Brook and the wetland portion of the Rockland Bog.
- Land along Branch Brook at least as far upstream as the vicinity of Bog Rd. and the wetlands around Marsh Brook.

- The bog is all residential except for the 1000 ft. setback.
- Lindsay Brook is all protected by Shoreland zoning

**b. Limits**

- Excludes Central Commercial C District & Industrial Districts E and F (Rockland Industrial Park)

**D. WARREN LAND USE ORDINANCES**

**1. Warren's Boundaries as They Relate to Thomaston**

- West of Thomaston with St. George River & Oyster River forming a boundary.
- A point on the Oyster River below the falls, where the town line angles slightly to the East of north to the point north of Beechwood St.. (This is where Warren, Rockland & Thomaston meet.)

**2. Warren's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance**

- Adopted on 7/14/75. Amended 3/15/88.
- Resource Protection shore South of US 1.
- Residential/Recreational Zoning for the entire shore of Oyster River

**3. Warren's Rural District**

**a. Location**

- All areas adjacent to the Thomaston line, other than Shoreland zoning are Rural District

**b. Uses**

- Residential, agricultural, campgrounds, commercial and industrial activities, many require planning board review.

**c. Limits:**

- Minimum lot size 40,000 sq. ft with additional 10,000 sq. ft. for each additional dwelling unit.
- Maximum building height 35 ft. for residential, 50 ft. for non-residential.
- Maximum lot coverage is 20%.

**d. Impact:**

- Little development near Thomaston line except on US 1, SR 97 and SR 131.
- No conflicts with Thomaston Zoning.

### **III. REFLECTIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 1991 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

In 1993, the Shoreland Ordinance was adopted. In 1995, the articles required by the Comprehensive Plan were adopted. These requirements were then added to the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan in 1995.

Further accomplishments noted since the last comprehensive plan include the following:

- Replacement of sewers, separation of stormwater and sanitary sewers.
- Development of a new water treatment plant.
- Acquisition of 350 acres by the Conservation Commission, for hiking paths between communities (Highland Pathway).
- Formation of The Georges River Tidewater, who complete periodic scheduled samples of the water quality of the St. George River.
- Replacement of the US Route One bridge by MDOT between Warren and Thomaston.
- Formation of the Knox County Dispatch Service as of April 2001. ( The town voted to use the Knox County Dispatch service and close the Thomaston dispatch service. The 911 system has been completed, although the E-911 system is not yet complete.)
- The old stump dump, as we knew it, closed and our solid waste management has been routed to Orrington for disposal by PERC.
- Montpelier has been taken over by the Friends of Montpelier, which is a non-profit organization.
- All neighboring communities have taken some of the necessary steps to protect natural areas from pollution through the Shoreland Zoning and other applicable ordinances.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS, REGIONAL GOALS, POLICIES AND INITIATIVES**

Many community issues need to be evaluated in a broader regional context if they are to be successfully addressed. Key regional efforts and initiatives discussed in the other chapters of this Plan are summarized below. Regional goals are highlighted. See the individual chapters for more information on each of these topics.

##### **A. TRANSPORTATION**

Goals: Regional transportation goals include: (1) ensuring safe and easy access to the region while respecting the unique character of the area, and (2) increasing public transportation alternatives.

Three important regional transportation initiatives are: MDOT's Gateway 1 Project, the reactivation of rail service to midcoast Maine, and MDOT's Explore Maine project.

##### **1. Gateway 1**

Gateway 1 is a regional planning initiative of the Maine Department of Transportation. It seeks to develop a comprehensive approach to management of US Route One from Brunswick to Prospect, taking into consideration the needs and characteristics of the communities in this corridor. MDOT representatives met with Town officials in the spring of 2004 to gather information on town concerns related to US 1. Increased summer traffic, safety, and the preservation of our town character are important issues for Thomaston. The idea of a bypass to relieve traffic congestion and improve the traffic flow into the Thomaston and Rockland area and an alternate east-west road through town have been raised. It is important that Thomaston actively participate in Gateway 1 and other regional transportation discussions in order to ensure complimentary strategies for Thomaston's planned growth. With the current economic growth in our area, regional coordination among communities will continue to be paramount. See Transportation chapter for specific strategies.

##### **2. Rail Transportation**

One of the transportation issues currently discussed is the re-activation of the railroad in order to alleviate congestion on our highways during the height of the tourist season. The railroad re-activation plan has been divided into three segments: Boston to Portland, Portland to Brunswick and Brunswick to Rockland. The Boston to Portland completion date was 9/01.

The railroad is currently operating successfully between Boston and Portland via

Amtrak. Passenger services will be contracted for the Portland to Rockland routes. The railroad re-activation and track rehabilitation completion date for the Brunswick to Rockland segment was 2002. The state does not plan to own any train cars. This railroad project is part of the Explore Maine Initiative. A passenger commuter service to Bath may be explored once the railroad is operational. Dave Nelson from MDOT anticipates 300-600 people per day will use the train. The train depot is projected to be at the site of the original train depot in Rockland; however, other locations are being considered. This rail service will affect service and tourist business in the region and tie into the Rockland waterfront.

In addition, freight operations by rail are expected to increase. The Dragon Cement Plant is a current user of the railroad lines for freight. Some land in Thomaston, accessible by rail, remains industrially zoned. Thomaston will need to make sure that the proper zoning and ordinances are in place as the transportation demands change.

Thomaston needs to work with MDOT , Rockland and other neighboring communities to examine, among other things, :

- Potential impacts of increased rail service on residential areas bordering railroad tracks;
- Potential impacts on tourism and highway traffic;
- Level of interest in a train depot/stop in Thomaston; and
- Feasibility of commuter rail service to Bath.

### **3. Explore Maine**

The State's interest in developing connectivity between different modes of transportation and a desire to create tourism destinations has the potential to significantly impact our community. Rockland is being considered as a transportation hub, where highway, air, rail and potentially high speed ferries will connect to efficiently transport passengers and freight to various destinations.

### **B. DRINKING WATER**

Goal: To ensure an adequate and healthful water supply for Thomaston residents.

Aqua America Maine (formerly the Consumer Maine Water Company) services Thomaston and its neighbors. The water supply line is 104 years old, but remains in good condition. As a regional effort, the use of low-flow toilets could help to conserve water. As discussed in the Community Facilities and Services chapter, the water supply is projected to meet anticipated demand for 20 to 40 years.

## **C. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Goal: To ensure that solid waste is managed in accordance with State law and that area communities recycle to the extent feasible.

Thomaston's solid waste transfer station and recycling center, located on Buttermilk Lane, is managed by a committee with members from the three-town cooperative of Thomaston, South Thomaston, and Owls Head and the Maine State Prison. The co-op manages the transfer of municipal solid waste from the three towns to the Penobscot Energy Recovery Facility (PERC) in Orrington. The three-town co-op is a charter member of PERC. The Thomaston stump dump is an independent facility operated by the town of Thomaston. See Community Facilities and Services chapter.

## **D. POLICE, FIRE AND AMBULANCE SERVICES**

Goal:

1. To provide effective and cost efficient police, fire and ambulance services for all area residents.
2. To provide adequate facilities, staff and training for these essential services.

These services are shared within the region. On April 11, 2002, the Thomaston dispatch service closed. Currently, dispatch services for police, fire and EMS services for the town are controlled by the Knox Regional Communications Center (KRCC) through a (PSAP) Public Safety Answering Point call handling agreement. The ambulance service is controlled through the 911-dispatch; however, Thomaston's ambulance is housed at the Fire Station on Knox St. If neighboring communities need back-up services or if we require back-up, a pact with neighboring communities has been established. Due to costs and increases in services, the region has discussed developing one centralized police department for the immediate region. The premise is that the centralization of the police force would reduce administrative costs and increase resources.

## **E. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

Goals:

1. To provide high quality education at the most reasonable cost.
2. To provide easy access to education and professional training.
3. To provide access to information on government and community affairs.

The communities of Thomaston, Cushing and St. George are members of MSAD 50, which provides K-12 education. All three communities contain facilities for grades K-8. Georges Valley High School, located in Thomaston, serves all three communities. There is some discussion regarding possible consolidation with Rockland for a new regional high school.



In addition, Thomaston is fortunate to have the University College at Thomaston, which is part of the University of Maine System. The facility is located in the old Thomaston Academy, which also houses the Thomaston Public Library. The college services the region by offering degree and certificate courses, either onsite or via the 200 interactive and videos course. The steady growth and ability of the college to meet the educational needs of the community will be prompting the college to explore how their facility will sustain student activity. In 2002, Coastal Senior was implemented. It offers educational programs for seniors and is targeted for the 55 year old-plus population. This program is executed mostly by volunteers and qualified instructors. The Thomaston Center and the Hutchinson Center in Belfast should explore coordination and integration of course curricula and credits.

The local access channel provides television coverage of numerous community meetings and events. Thomaston should explore the cost and feasibility of televising town meetings.

## **F. HISTORICAL RESOURCES / MONTPELIER**

### Goals:

1. To maintain significant historic structures.
2. To encourage private and public use of these facilities.
3. To protect historic structures from incompatible land uses, including damage from transportation systems.

Montpelier is the replica of General Henry Knox's home. In October 1999, the state turned over the home to the Friends of Montpelier and it has been operating seasonally as a museum and gift shop for historical replicas. Members and volunteers staff the facility, coming from neighboring communities. In addition, Montpelier has been used as a facility for community fund raising events.

## **G. HOUSING**

Goal: To promote affordable housing.

Thomaston is a member of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition that, among things, is analyzing the need for low and moderate income housing in Knox County.

## **H. NATURAL AND MARINE RESOURCES**

Goal: To take a regional approach to the protection and management of natural and marine resources.

There is considerable regional coordination with respect to management of the St. George River and its associated fisheries. The Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Committee, with representatives from Thomaston, South Thomaston, Warren, Cushing and Saint George, works with the Maine Department of Marine

Resources to improve water quality and manage the shellfish resource. The member communities have entered into an Interlocal Clam Management Agreement to manage the resource for sustainable harvests.

Additionally, the non-profit Georges River Tidewater Association works with the Shellfish Management Committee to improve the water quality of the river. The all-tide public boat ramp in Thomaston provides access to the shellfish resource for commercial fishermen in Thomaston and neighboring communities.

As discussed below, the Thomaston Conservation Commission is working with the Georges River Land Trust on development of a trail system throughout the Georges River watershed.

Finally, as discussed in the Natural Resources chapter, the town and neighboring communities should take a comprehensive look at area natural resources using the tools established by the State Planning Office as part of its “Beginning with Habitat” program.

## **I. RECREATIONAL LAND AND FACILITIES**

Goal: To work with neighboring communities to maximize access to a range of recreational opportunities for all area residents.

The town purchased 350 acres of land near the Oyster River for the new wastewater treatment facility. The Thomaston Conservation Commission and the Pollution Control Department have jointly developed a system of trails for public use. Known as the Town Forest Trail, this trail is a section of the Georges Highland Path, which will run over 30 miles through the river’s watershed in Thomaston and nearby communities.

As discussed in the Recreation chapter of this Plan, there is substantial interest in developing additional recreational opportunities for Thomaston citizens. Discussions include development of a recreational center, perhaps in cooperation with Rockland. Existing facilities in Camden and Rockport are available to Thomaston residents, but are not easily accessed, especially by school aged children.

## **J. LAND USE ORDINANCES**

Goal: To promote compatible development across municipal boundaries.

It is critical that land use planners look beyond their respective municipal boundaries to ensure that natural resources are adequately protected and that actions in one community do not have adverse impacts on existing land uses in neighboring communities.

**V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. Participate in MDOT's Gateway 1 Project. See Transportation chapter. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Critical. Time frame: Ongoing]
2. Establish regular meetings (quarterly) with appropriate representatives from MDOT, Knox County Regional Airport, Rockland, and other neighboring communities to develop an integrated plan for assessing and mitigating the impact of alternative transportation options (including rail, high speed ferry, air service) on area communities. See Transportation chapter. [Town Manager, Comprehensive Plan Committee. Priority: Important. Timeframe: within 3 years]
3. Participate in the water company's advisory to stay abreast of water supply and system issues and any resource limitations. See Community Facilities and Services chapter. [Town Manager, Priority: Desirable. Ongoing]
4. Establish a committee with representatives of SAD #5 and SAD #50 to consider interest in, and feasibility of, a consolidated high school. See Community Facilities and Services chapter. [School Committee. Priority: Critical. Timeframe: Ongoing]
5. Periodically review the effectiveness of the County Dispatch Service in meeting community needs and assess opportunities for additional efficiencies. Report to Selectmen annually. See Community Facilities and Services Chapter. [Police and Fire Departments. Priority: Very Important. Timeframe: Ongoing]
6. The town will continue to participate with surrounding communities in bilateral and regional housing programs and projects. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
7. The town will continue to support and participate in the programs and projects of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition and other nonprofit affordable housing organizations. [Selectmen, Town Manager. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing.]
8. Establish Land Use Ordinance Committee to meet with neighboring communities to review town ordinances and identify incompatible land uses and ordinances that may adversely impact existing uses in neighboring municipalities. See Land Use chapter. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]
9. Meet with neighboring communities to review land use plans and ordinances and develop an area-wide approach to protection of important natural

resources such as the St. George River, Rockland Bog and Weskeag River using tools such as “Beginning with Habitat”. Report to Selectmen by January 2008 on any proposed changes to Thomaston’s land use ordinances. See Natural Resources chapter. [Conservation Commission, Comprehensive Plan Committee. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: within 3 years]

10. Continue participation in Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Committee. See Marine Resources chapter. [Selectmen. Priority: Very Important. Time frame: Ongoing]

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AADT:	Annual Average Daily Traffic
BETR:	Business Property Tax Reimbursement Program
BTIP:	Biennial Transportation Improvement Plan
CCAP:	Coastal Community Action Program
CDBG:	Community Development Block Grant
CEO:	Code Enforcement Officer
CFR:	Critical Rate Factor (safety rating of roadways)
CSO:	Combined Sewer Overflow
DEP:	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
DOT:	Maine Department of Transportation (also MDOT)
DWA:	Deer Wintering Area
ETIF:	Employment Tax Increment Financing
FAA:	Federal Aviation Administration
FAME:	Finance Authority of Maine
FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FmHA:	Farmer's Home Administration
GIS:	Geographic Information System
GTI:	Governor's Training Initiative
HUD:	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
JITC:	Maine Jobs and Investment Tax Credit
KKRC:	Knox Regional Communications Center
LOS:	Level of Service of a roadway (rated A through F)
MDIFW:	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
MEMA:	Maine Emergency Management Agency
MHSA:	Maine State Housing Authority
MSAD:	Maine School Administrative District (also SAD)
MSFS:	Maine State Ferry Service
NRPA:	Natural Resources Protection Act

OBD:	Overboard Discharge
PERC:	Penobscot Energy Recovery Corporation
RHM:	Rockland Housing Market
RKD:	Designation for Knox County Regional Airport
RSMS:	Road Surface Management System
SR:	State Route
TIF:	Tax Increment Finance District
USDA:	US Department of Agriculture
VOA:	Volunteers of America
WWH:	Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat
WWTP:	Wastewater Treatment Plant

## LEGEND

Streams    Railroads    Water

### TRAFFIC VOLUMES - LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

LOS A    LOS D  
LOS B    LOS E  
LOS C

LOS data from 2002

5916 AADT

Traffic Volumes - Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) are from 2001.

### SAFETY - HIGH CRASH LOCATIONS

\* HCL Points (Nodes) (1998 - 2002)

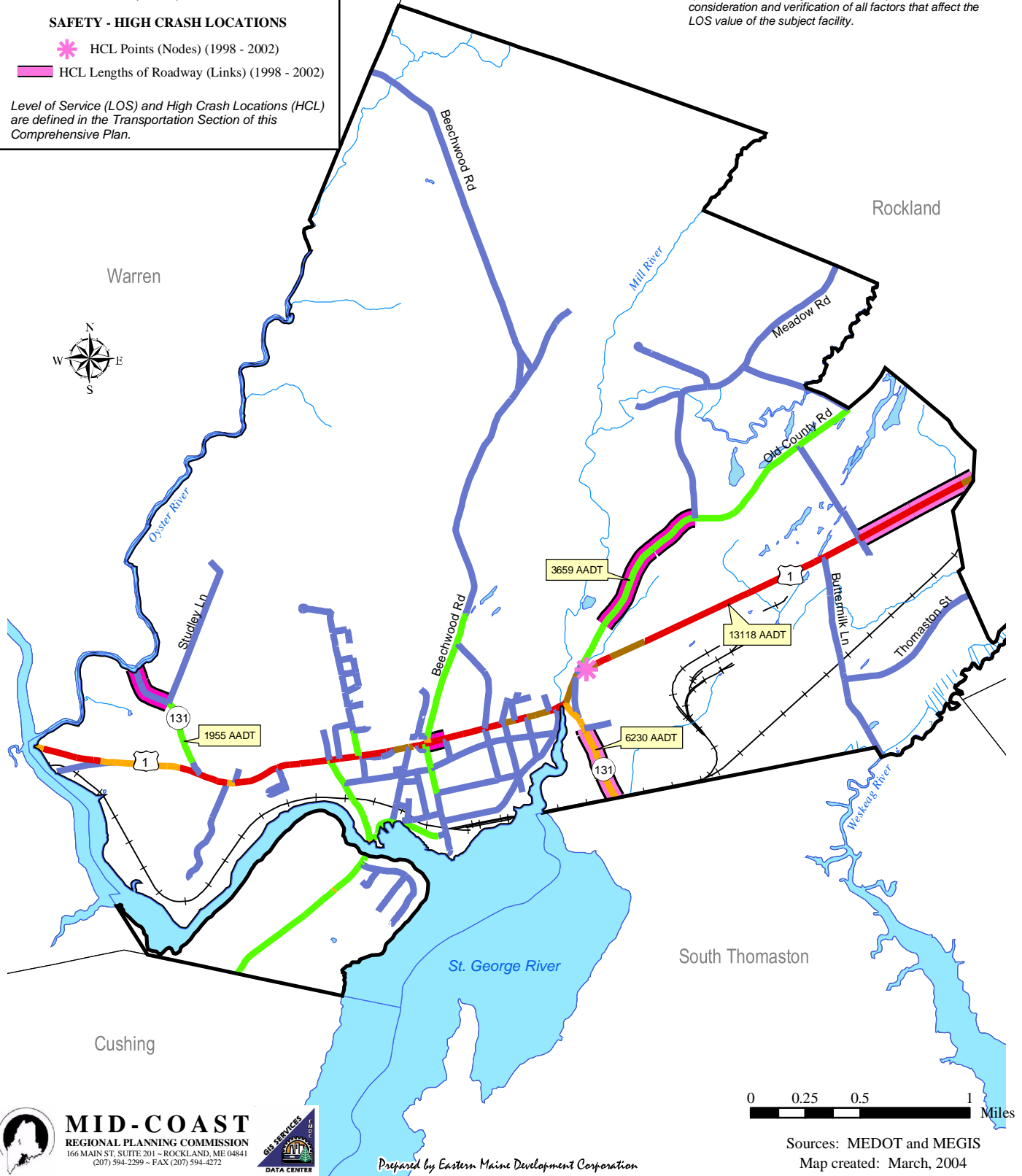
█ HCL Lengths of Roadway (Links) (1998 - 2002)

Level of Service (LOS) and High Crash Locations (HCL) are defined in the Transportation Section of this Comprehensive Plan.

# Thomaston

## Transportation Road Network: Traffic Volumes and Safety








MDOT's Level of Service data is meant for system analysis and should not be substituted for an engineering study of a specific corridor or segment of roadway which includes consideration and verification of all factors that affect the LOS value of the subject facility.




# Thomaston





## Topography

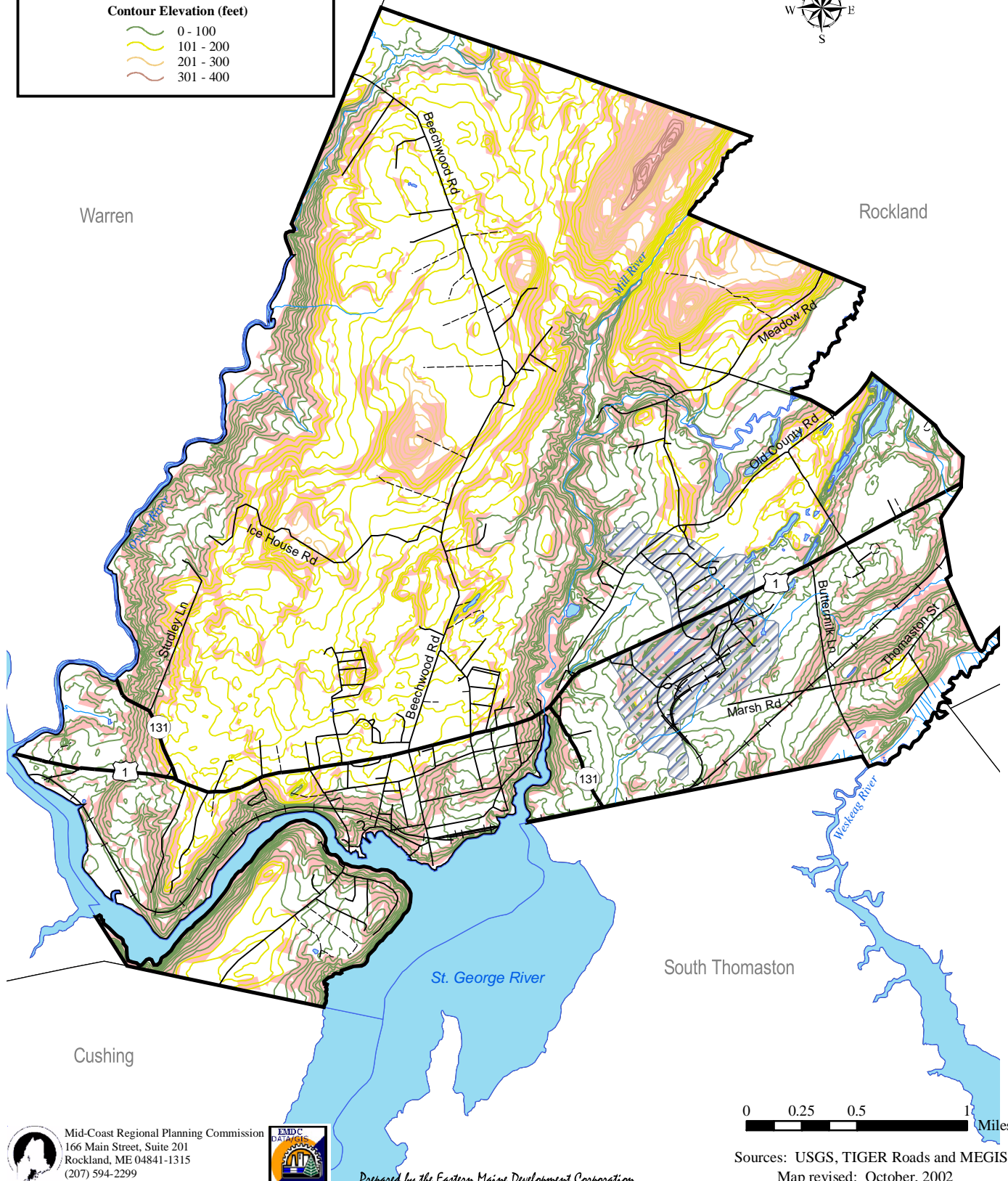
### LEGEND

-  Primary roads
-  Secondary roads
-  Private/service roads
-  Dragon Cement Company
-  Streams
-  Railroads
-  Water

 Slopes greater than 15%

### Contour Elevation (feet)

-  0 - 100
-  101 - 200
-  201 - 300
-  301 - 400



Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission  
166 Main Street, Suite 201  
Rockland, ME 04841-1315  
(207) 594-2299



Prepared by the Eastern Maine Development Corporation

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Sources: USGS, TIGER Roads and MEGIS  
Map revised: October, 2002



# LEGEND

- Primary roads
- Secondary roads
- Private/service roads
- Dragon Cement Company
- Streams
- Railroads

## Land Cover Classification

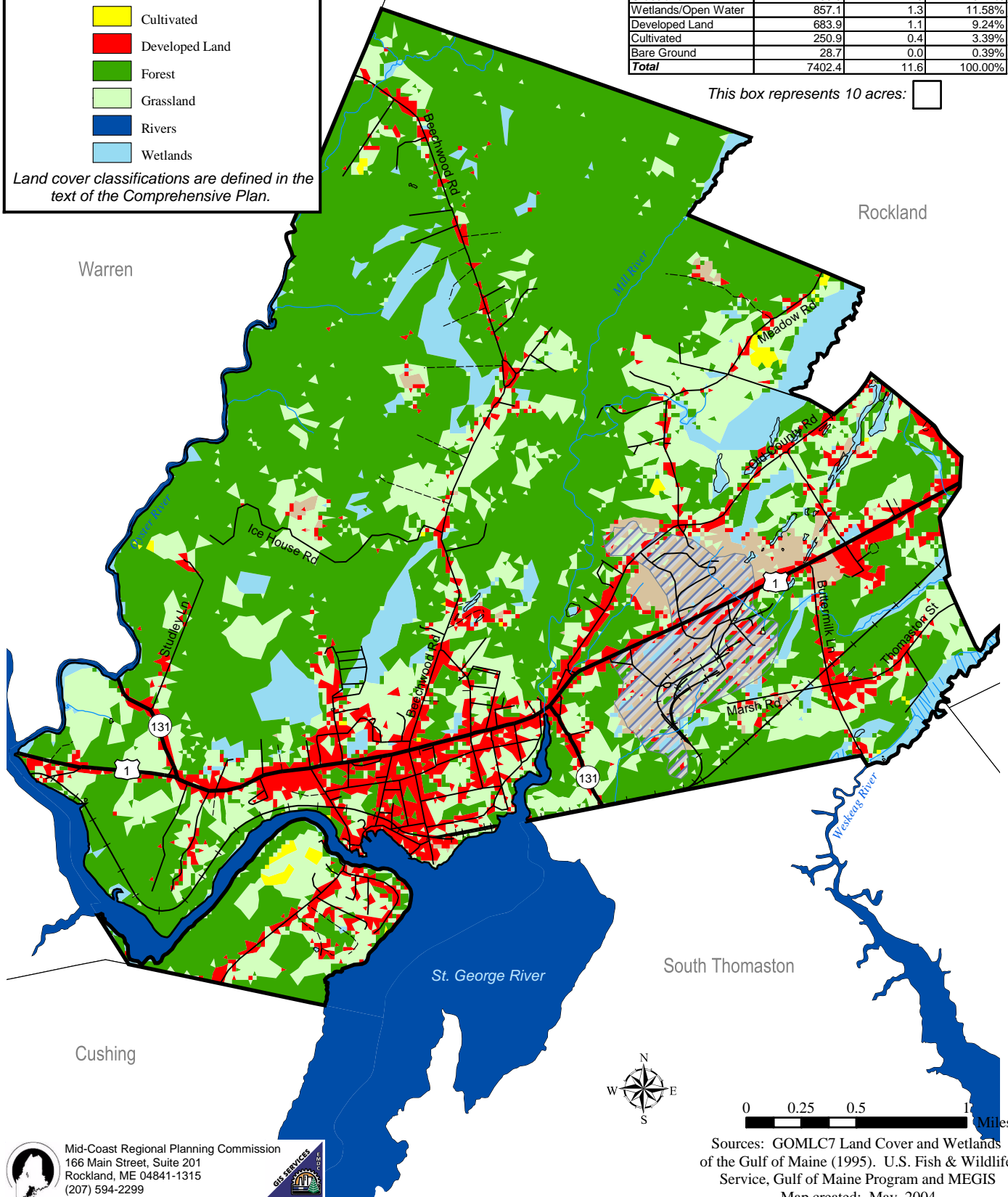
- Bare Land
- Cultivated
- Developed Land
- Forest
- Grassland
- Rivers
- Wetlands

Land cover classifications are defined in the text of the Comprehensive Plan.

# Thomaston Land Cover

Land Cover	Acreage	Square Miles	Percentage
Forest	4090.9	6.4	55.27%
Grassland	1490.9	2.3	20.14%
Wetlands/Open Water	857.1	1.3	11.58%
Developed Land	683.9	1.1	9.24%
Cultivated	250.9	0.4	3.39%
Bare Ground	28.7	0.0	0.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7402.4</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

This box represents 10 acres:



# Thomaston

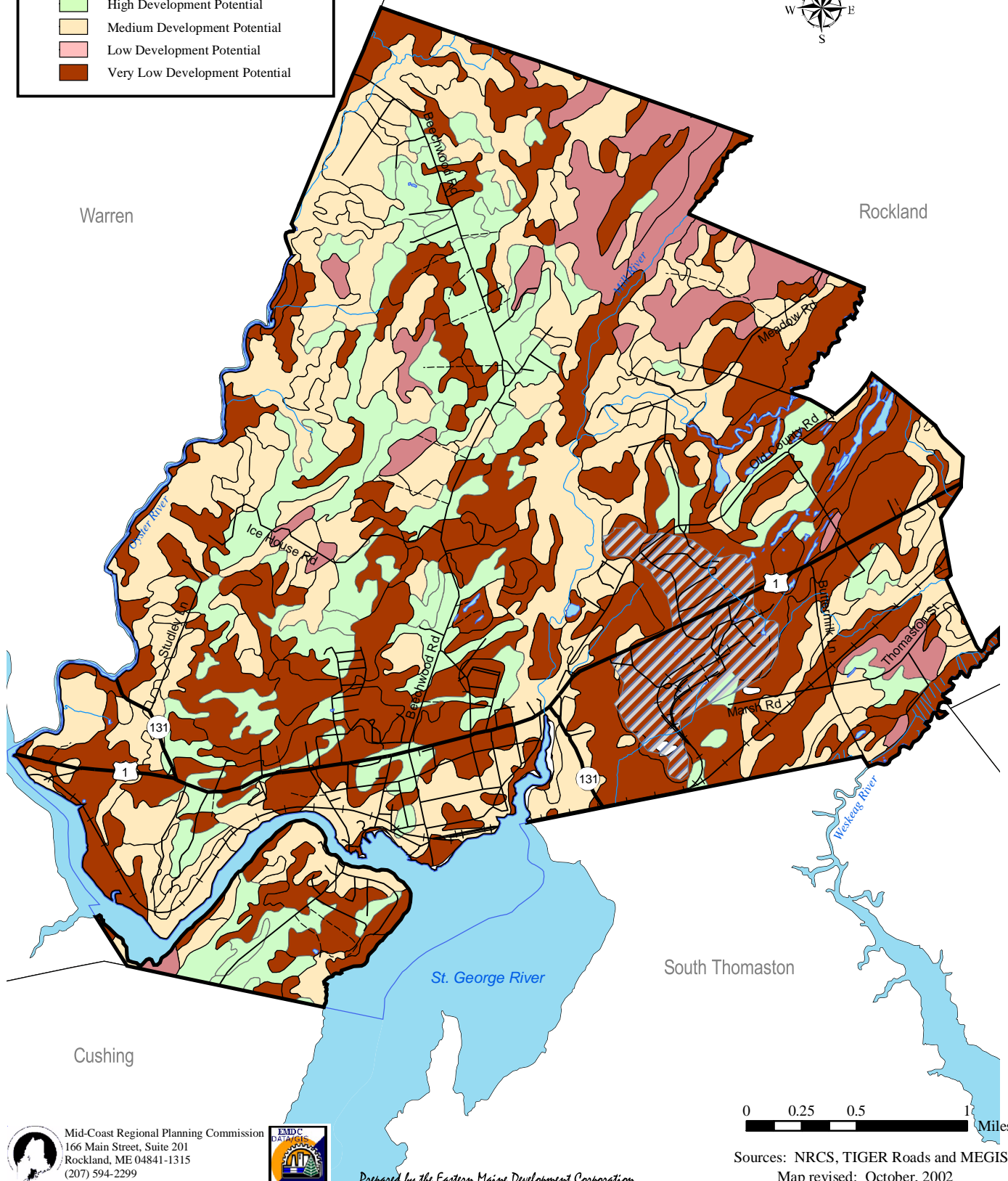
## Soil Potential for Development

### LEGEND

- Primary roads
- Secondary roads
- Private/service roads
- Streams
- Railroads
- Water
- Dragon Cement Company

### Soil Potential for Low Density Development

- High Development Potential
- Medium Development Potential
- Low Development Potential
- Very Low Development Potential



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Prepared by the Eastern Maine Development Corporation

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Sources: NRCS, TIGER Roads and MEGIS  
Map revised: October, 2002

# Thomaston

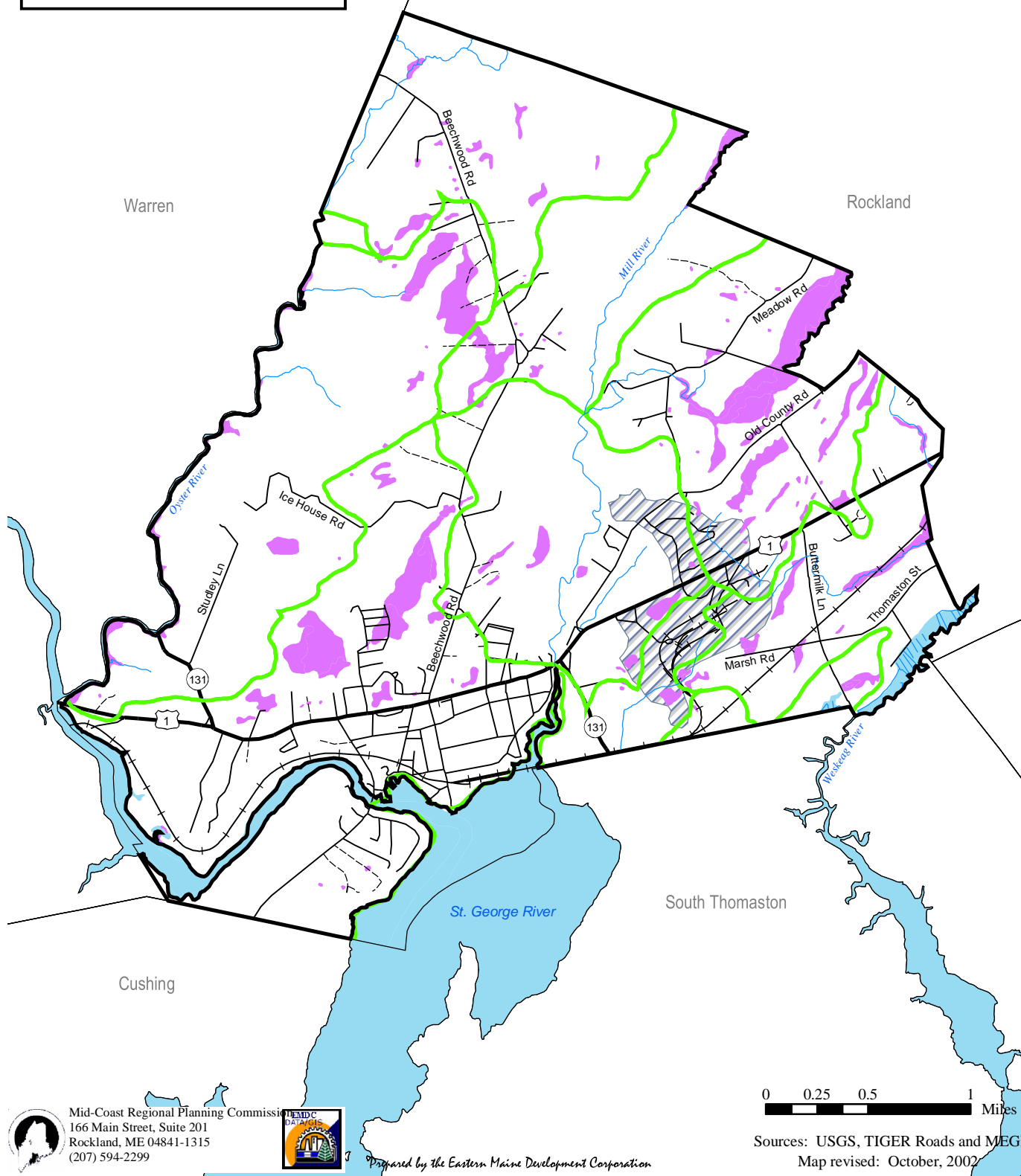
## Watersheds and Wetlands

### LEGEND

- Primary roads
- Secondary roads
- Private/service roads
- Dragon Cement Company
- Streams
- Watersheds
- Railroads

### NWI Classification

- Estuarine
- Palustrine



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0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Sources: USGS, TIGER Roads and MEGIS  
Map revised: October, 2002

# Thomaston

## Critical Resources

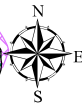
### LEGEND

- Primary roads
- Secondary roads
- Private/service roads
- Dragon Cement Company
- Streams
- Railroads
- Water

Public/Conservation Lands

### Critical Habitat

- Coastal wading bird and waterfowl habitat
- Inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat
- Deer wintering areas
- Rare or Exemplary Natural Communities
- Shorebird area
- Saltmarsh Sharp-Tailed Sparrow



Unpatterned  
Fen Ecosystem

Rockland

Awned Sedge

Brackish Tidal  
Marsh

R. Waldo Tyler WMA

South Thomaston

Warren

Cushing



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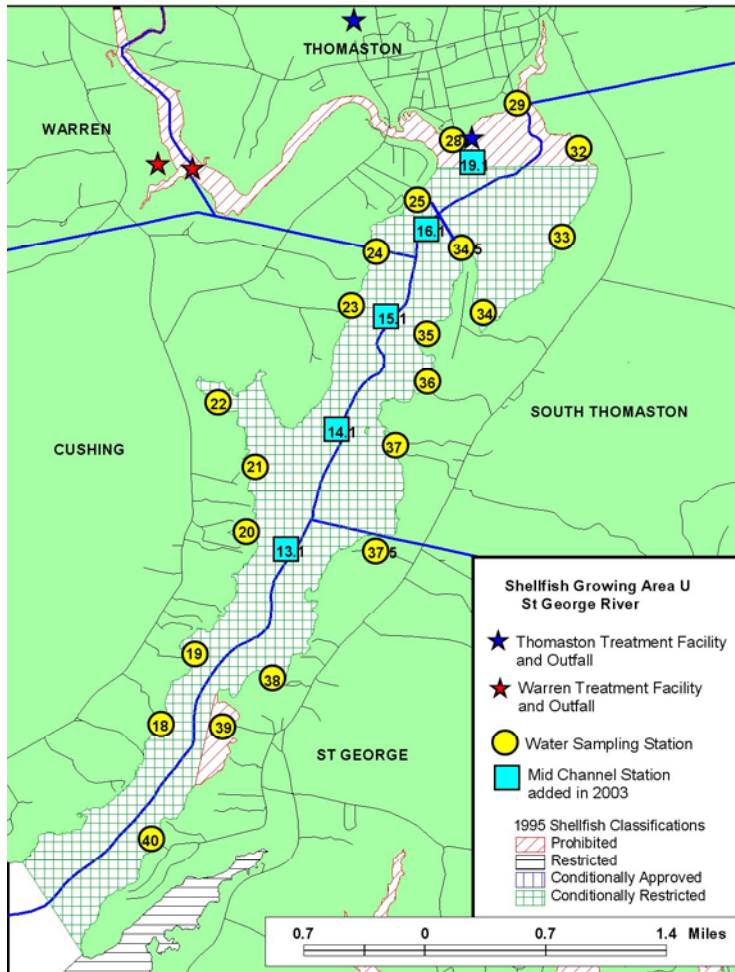


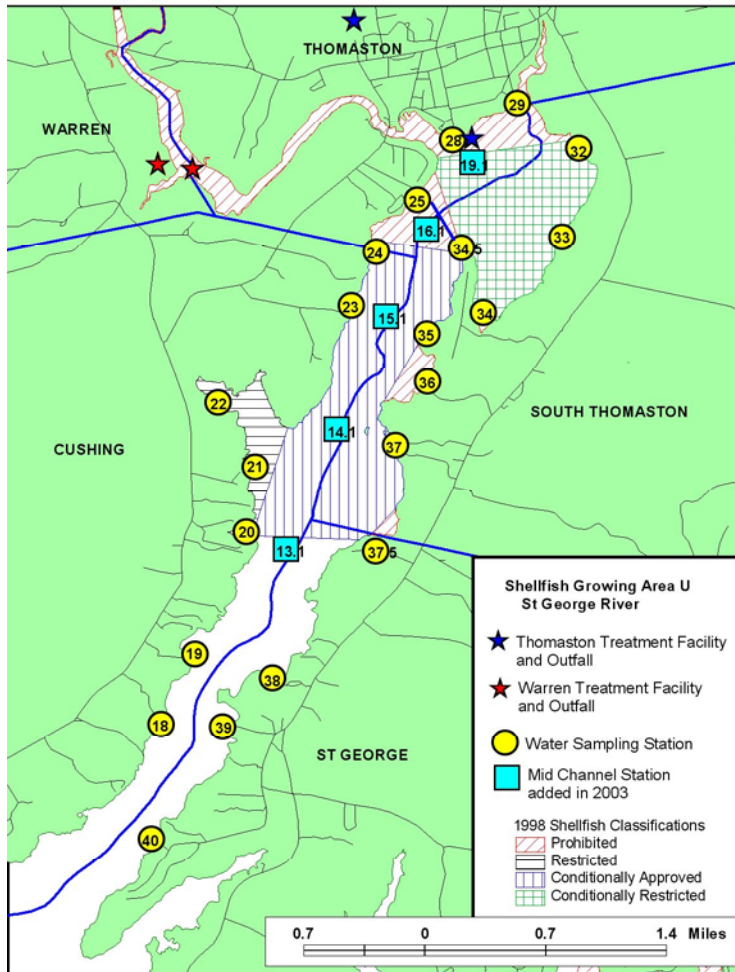
Prepared by Eastern Maine Development Corporation

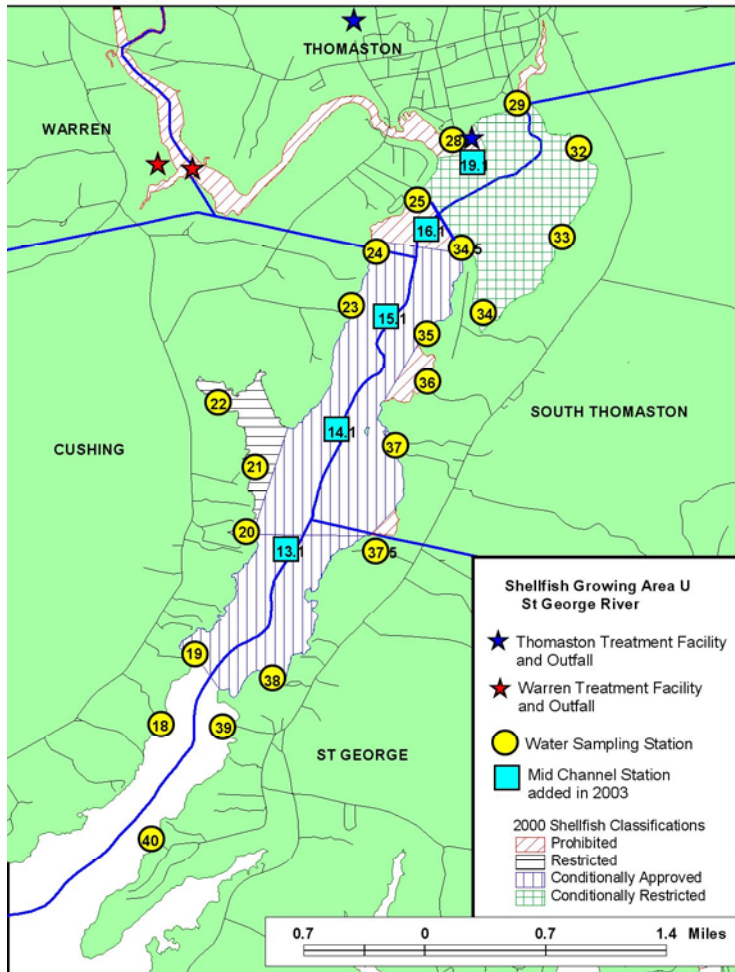
Sources: MNAP, IFW, TIGER Roads and MEGIS  
Map revised: May, 2005

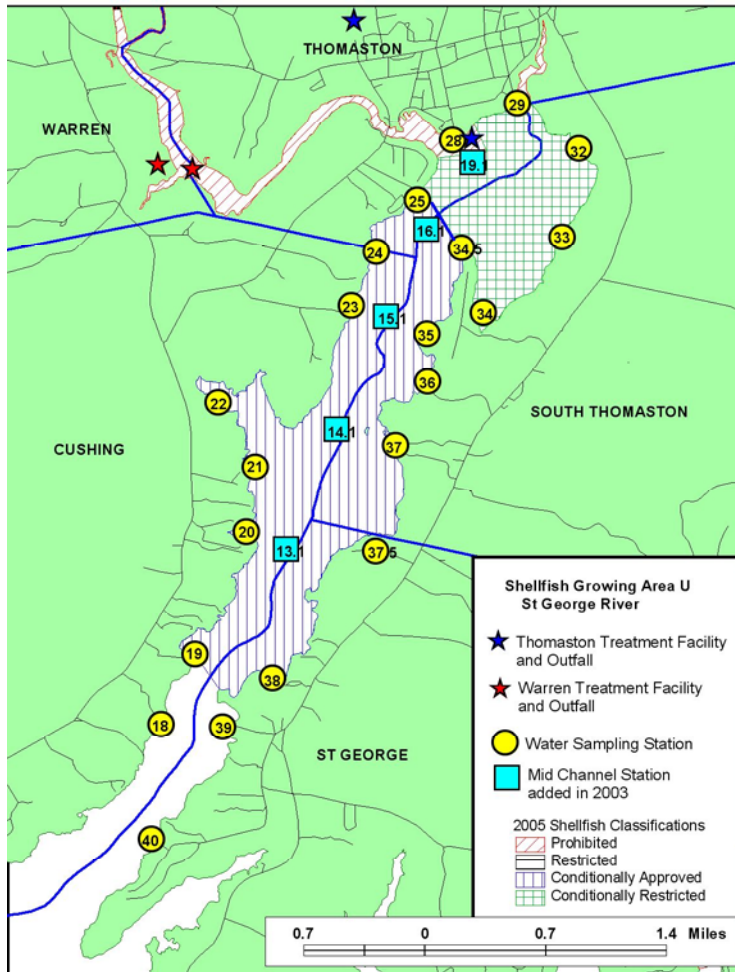
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





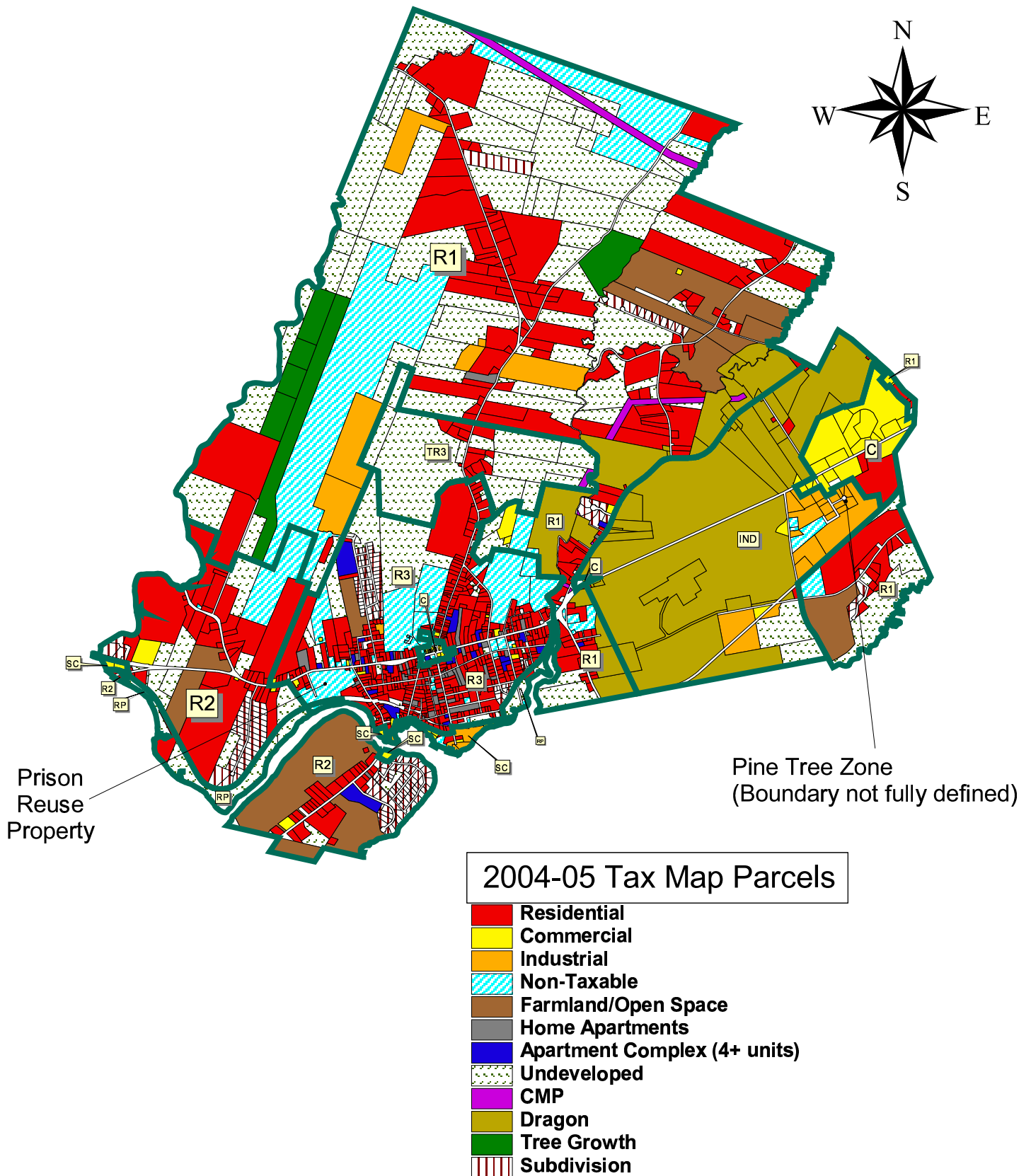




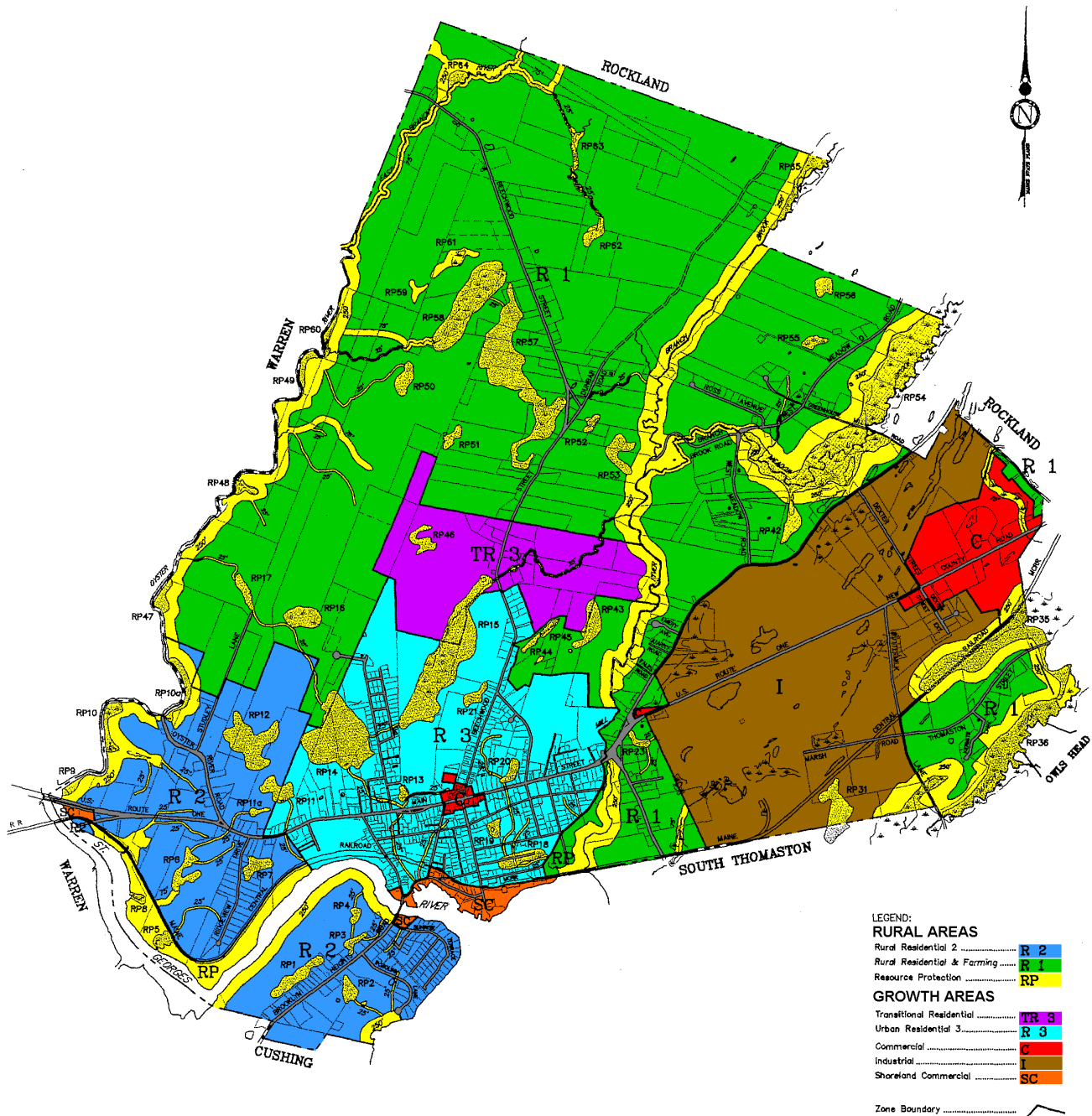




# Thomaston Land Use



# FUTURE LAND USE



PREPARED BY: AERIAL SURVEY AND PHOTO, INC.  
546 AIRPORT ROAD, PO BOX 659  
NORRIDGEWOOD, MAINE  
Based on Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission Map dated June 19, 2001

APRIL 1, 2002  
0 1000 2000 3000 4000

ZONING MAP  
**TOWN OF THOMASTON**  
KNOX COUNTY, MAINE

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								
2	1	History	Continue financial support for historical organizations in town and those that work to preserve Thomaston's history.		2			ongoing
3	1	History	Encourage and facilitate the donation of artifacts, documents, and properties to proper agency that will preserve and maintain them for public good.				4	ongoing
4	1	History	Create, appoint, and fund a study commission to review the benefits and drawbacks of an Historic District with protective ordinance.			3		near-term, w/in 3 yrs
5	1	History	Assist educational organizations who wish to inform residents and increase awareness of the benefits of historic preservation.				4	long-term, as resources permit
6	1	History	Work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to identify properties and structures which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Create plan and identify possible sources of funding for field work to identify and register these sites.				4	long-term, as resources permit
7	1	History	Work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to complete survey work of Thomaston's prehistoric and historic archeological sites, particularly along the St. George and Oyster rivers and extending out of town along most roads (see map). Create plan and identify possible sources of funding for fieldwork to identify, catalog and protect sensitive areas.				4	long-term, as resources permit
8	1	History	Amend the Land Use and Development Ordinance (716.3) so that, at a minimum, development in a known or reported prehistoric or historic archaeological area of importance (see maps) must include protection of the resource including, but not limited to, modification of the proposed design, timing of construction, and limiting the extent of excavation. Sensitive areas (see map) shall be reviewed by the CEO for determination of potential archaeological significance and application of Land Use Ordinance 716.3. Work with Maine Historic Preservation Commission to amend ordinance.				4	long-term, as resources permit
9								
10	2	Prison	To work through the Thomaston Redevelopment Committee to develop a proposal and funding mechanism for redevelopment of the site for presentation to voters in 2005 or early 2006.	1				ongoing
11								
12	3	Population	Monitor changes in population using town statistics on births, deaths, school enrollment, etc. to determine the degree to which actual population change approximates projected change. Information will be maintained in appropriate files that will be available in the town office for use by municipal officials and residents, and summarized in the town's Annual Report.		2			ongoing
13								

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
14	4	Housing	The town will continue to welcome and encourage participation in affordable housing programs, grants and projects for the construction of subsidized housing whether within the town or the region; and grants to homeowners for energy efficiency, habitability, etc.. The town will continue to work to ensure sufficient affordable housing options for its residents and will compile information on programs and grants for the use of its residents.			3		ongoing
15	4	Housing	The town will continue to address reported violations of local ordinances and state laws that affect health, safety or community conditions such as the automobile graveyard provisions, removal of unsafe or deteriorated buildings, replacement of driveway culverts, etc. The CEO will work with the Planning Board to address any need for modification to the existing land use ordinances that may be appropriate.		2			ongoing
16	4	Housing	Through its land use ordinance the town will continue to encourage affordable housing opportunities by allowing a mixture of appropriate housing types, including accessory apartments. In this effort, the town will encourage senior citizen housing opportunities and the land use ordinance will provide residential areas that allow single and multi-family dwellings, as well as manufactured housing. The town will continue to encourage mixed income housing within the residential areas of the town. The town will track new building permits and rental unit availability and price.		2			ongoing, tracking w/in 3 yrs.
17	4	Housing	The town will continue to participate with surrounding communities in bilateral and regional housing programs and projects.		2			ongoing
18	4	Housing	The town will continue to support and participate in the programs and projects of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition and other nonprofit affordable housing organizations.		2			ongoing
19	4	Housing	The town will develop a long-range plan for extending public sewer to designated growth areas, and continue use of the Special Sewer Zone provisions where appropriate to support affordable housing projects.		2			ongoing, plan within 3 years
20	4	Housing	The town will develop up-to-date maps depicting current land uses; integrate land use mapping layers with maps depicting municipal infrastructure; and tie to property cards. Computerize building permit information.		2			ongoing
21								
22	5	Economy	Appoint a committee to work with Town Manager to annually evaluate the "State of the Town's Economy" and report to Selectmen on actions that could be taken to improve business investment.		2			w/in 1 year
23	5	Economy	Encourage SAD 50 and the school committee to consult with area businesses on needed employee skills and identify opportunities to provide skills training in schools and/or through work study programs.				4	w/in 3 yrs

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
24	5	Economy	Continue to seek aid, whenever possible, from higher levels of government (County, State, and Federal) to provide support for roads, parks, public transportation or other activities such as programs and infrastructure that materially aid the Town's economy.		2			ongoing
25	5	Economy	Take advantage of the presence of the re-activated railroad facilities to enhance economic opportunities for Thomaston businesses and residents. Locate commercial and industrial growth areas such as the Pine Tree Zone and Thomaston Economic Tract (associated with the Dragon TIF) near the railroad line and spurs.		2			ongoing
26	5	Economy	Retain existing Shoreland Commercial designation along Thomaston harbor to protect and support marine-related businesses and commercial fisheries.	1				ongoing
27	5	Economy	Continue to encourage business investment in the village center through infrastructure improvements such as improved sidewalks, lighting, and appropriate landscaping.		2			ongoing
28	5	Economy	Amend the land use ordinance to divide the existing Commercial District into a Village Commercial and a Highway Commercial District to distinguish the Main Street shops and business uses located in the village area from the highway commercial uses east of the cement plant. Development in the village commercial area should protect and enhance the small town and historic character of Thomaston which contributes to the attractiveness of the town in a tourist economy. Require appropriate parking and landscaping to create a pleasant environment in both the village and highway commercial areas.		2			near-term, within 3 yrs
29	5	Economy	Meet with Dragon Products to obtain information on its long-term operational plans and plans for eventual closure of the facility.			3		within 3 yrs
30								
31	6	Transportation	To work with MDOT and other communities on the Gateway 1 Project to ensure a regional approach to US Route 1 that also addresses Thomaston's concerns re: safety, traffic congestion, and preservation of historic character of Route 1 through Thomaston village.	1				ongoing
32	6	Transportation	Amend ordinance to require sidewalks in new subdivisions located within the Urban Residential (R-3) District.		2			w/in 1 yr
33	6	Transportation	Use granite curbing and concrete sidewalks on primary streets whenever possible.			3		w/in 1 yr
34	6	Transportation	Annually fund the sidewalk improvement reserve account.		2			w/in 1 yr
35	6	Transportation	Work with MDOT to route through traffic along SR 90 and re-designate current US 1 as Historic or Business US 1 through Thomaston.		2			Gateway 1, ongoing

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
36	6	Transportation	Work with MDOT to examine options for a new east/west road, possibly connecting Beechwood St. with Old County Rd. This may occur in conjunction with the Gateway 1 Project.		2			Gateway 1, ongoing
37	6	Transportation	Adopt ordinance for business block parking with provisions for painting, signage, maintenance and lighting.		2			w/in 3 yrs
38	6	Transportation	Secure right of first refusal from the American Legion for the property behind the Main Street business block. [Select Board, Town Manager]		2			initiate w/in 1 yr
39	6	Transportation	Investigate ability to purchase property located behind Rubenstein Real Estate to enlarge post office parking lot and offer an entrance and exit to and from the post office onto Beechwood Street.			3		w/in 3 yrs
40	6	Transportation	Reconstruct Oyster River Bridge on SR 131 north: currently included in MDOT's 2002-2007 Six-Year Plan. Communicate importance to MDOT.		2			w/in 3 yrs
41	6	Transportation	Request MDOT to make a study and report findings on safe traffic control at the intersection of SR 131 (from Warren) and US 1 by Sept. 2007.		2			w/in 3 yrs
42	6	Transportation	Construct sidewalks in neighborhoods in Urban Residential (R-3) District throughout town and provide for paved shoulders in low traffic areas where sidewalks would not be justified.		2			ongoing and long term
43	6	Transportation	Work with utility companies to relocate utility poles restricting use of sidewalks and adopt standards for construction of subdivision sidewalks to require setbacks far enough to accommodate utility poles or trees between sidewalks and the curb.			3		ongoing and long term
44	6	Transportation	Apply for available cost-sharing programs to construct and maintain pedestrian and bicycle path network.			3		long term
45	6	Transportation	Actively participate in the activities of the County Commissioners regarding the airport policies, operations, and proposed expansion to ensure that Thomaston's concerns are considered. (e.g. impact of flight patterns and associated noise which effects Thomaston's quality of life.		2			initiate w/in 1 yr
46	6	Transportation	Work with MDOT to provide year-round bus or shuttle service connecting transportation facilities and area communities.				4	long term
47	6	Transportation	Establish regular meetings (quarterly) with the comprehensive planning committee members of adjacent towns to coordinate and integrate a plan that reviews the impact of alternative transportation on our communities including: impacts on tourism and highway traffic, impacts on residential areas located along the railway, and the feasibility of commuter rail service to Bath.			3		w/in 3 yrs
48	6	Transportation	Work with MDOT and local industries to support transportation needs for freight to and from the Pine Tree Zone to minimize traffic hazards. Look at future development areas, such as, Buttermilk Lane and determine how its development will impact traffic patterns.		2			initiate w/in 1 yr
49								

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
50	7	Com Services	Continue to maintain accurate inventory of all town-owned property using Government Accounting Standard Bulletin 34 [GASB].		2			ongoing
51	7	Comm Services	Work through the Thomaston Conservation Commission to expand trail system, and otherwise expand and support open space opportunities for the town. The former landfill area off Thatcher Street is a prime example of a potentially threatened area that should be preserved as one of the few vistas leading to the river. Investigate possibilities of continuing the town trail through a portion of the former prison property.			3		portions ongoing, long term
52	7	Com Services	Install independent generator for police station and town office or reconnect with the fire department's generator.			3		within 3 years
53	7	Comm Services	Public Safety Personnel: Continue to maintain current risk management program and support ongoing training for police, fire, and emergency medical service personnel. Develop volunteer recruitment and retention plan.	1				training ongoing, recruitment plan within 3 years
54	7	Com Services	Continue support of the Main Street Enhancement Committee and extension of improved sidewalks along the length of Main Street and into neighborhood streets especially those leading to the schools and other public facilities. Install new sidewalks and upgrade existing walks throughout the town. Investigate an aesthetically pleasing and more durable surface alternative to asphalt on walks. Upgrade street lighting where necessary with energy efficient fixtures that minimize overhead glare.			3		portions ongoing, long term
55	7	Com Services	Update procedures at the Solid Waste Facility and Transfer Station on Buttermilk Lane, and relocate entrance and exit to better use available space. Institute a mandatory recycling program. Address the rapid escalation of tipping fees. Promote regionalization with surrounding communities.		2			w/in 3 yrs
56	7	Com Services	Work to increase number of sewer users in designated growth areas without compromising the town's historical character. Extend the wastewater collection system to the Pine Tree Zone and to Route One east of the cement plant.	1				ongoing
57	7	Com Services	Improve access to and from Post Office		2			long term
58	7	Com Services	University: Create a task force of citizens to develop a long-term plan for expansion of the satellite campus of the University of Maine.			3		long term
59	7	Com Services	Explore options for expansion and/or relocation of town library		2			long term
60	7	Com Services	Retain town ownership of Watts Hall for community programs.		2			ongoing
61	7	Comm Services	Continue support for Montpelier and Thomaston Historical Society in their collective attempts to preserve and promote the historical significance of General Henry Knox and the Town of Thomaston.		2			ongoing

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
62	7	Comm Services	Explore cost and feasibility of televising various town meetings.			3		w/in 3 yrs
63	7	Comm Services	Consider moving to a system whereby members of the Zoning Board of Appeal are elected by voters.			3		w/in 3 yrs
64								
65	8	Natural Resources	Continue support for Park and Ride Program through allocation of parking spaces behind the business block.			3		ongoing
66	8	Natural Resources	Review town ordinances pertaining to sand and gravel pits and rock quarries and amend as needed to ensure that impacts to other natural resources, land uses, and transportation systems are adequately addressed. Track compliance of pits and quarries with required state permits.			2		tracking w/in 1 yr; ordinance review w/in 3 yrs
67	8	Natural Resources	Continue to restrict growth and development on slopes greater than 20%. Continue to enforce ordinances pertaining to erosion and sedimentation control and stormwater management.			2		ongoing
68	8	Natural Resources	Encourage though educational outreach efforts placement and retention of active agricultural lands and other important open space in the Farm and Open Space Tax Program, and productive forest land in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Survey current users of these programs to assess program effectiveness and encourage continued participation. Explain benefits of these programs to other landowners whose properties have important agricultural, open space, and forestry values. Provide woodlot owners with information on forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). Encourage conservation easements to preserve important agricultural, open space and forest lands through local land trusts.			3		ongoing, survey within 1 year
69	8	Natural Resources	Continue to manage the Town Forest in accordance with the objectives and practices set forth in the Town Forest and Town Trails Program (1997).			3		ongoing
70	8	Natural Resources	Increase funding for the town's tree nursery as a cost-effective means of supplying replacement trees for our urban forest.				4	w/in 3 yrs
71	8	Natural Resources	Establish regulation governing removal and replacement of trees located along roads that ensures consultation between Tree Warden and affected property owners.				4	w/in 3 yrs
72	8	Natural Resources	Continue to track results of DEP required monitoring of groundwater in the vicinity of the Rockland quarry waste disposal area.			3		ongoing
73	8	Natural Resources	When issuing building permits in areas not served by public water, provide property owners with information regarding steps they can take to protect their ground water supply (i.e., their well). [CEO]			3		initiate w/in 1 yr
74	8	Natural Resources	Continue to inspect development projects to ensure compliance with the town's Shoreland Zoning, Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Storm Water Management ordinances.			2		ongoing



Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
75	8	Natural Resources	Continue to protect minor watercourses and drainage swales from development and erosion to ensure that they continue to function as part of the town's storm water management system and do not contribute to sedimentation of surface waters. Complete stormwater management improvements recommended in the 1999 Wright Pierce study.			3		ongoing
76	8	Natural Resources	Continue to work with landowners and groups such as Georges River Tidewater Association to identify and eliminate non-point sources of pollution to St. George River and its tributaries.		2			ongoing
77	8	Natural Resources	Continue to restrict future development on all wetlands outside the Shoreland Commercial District. Ensure that impacts to wetlands are avoided and minimized to the maximum extent possible and that compensation for wetlands loss is made in accordance with State law.		2			ongoing
78	8	Natural Resources	Review town ordinances pertaining to vegetative buffers in areas abutting critical and/or unique natural resources (notably commercial and industrial uses in eastern section of town) and amend ordinances as necessary to protection of those natural resources.		2			initiate w/in 1 yr
79	8	Natural Resources	Meet with neighboring communities to review land use plans and develop an area-wide approach to protection of important natural resources such as the St. George River, Rockland Bog and Weskeag River using tools such as "Beginning with Habitat". Report to Selectmen by Jan 2008 on any proposed changes to Thomaston's land use ordinances.		2			w/in 3 yrs
80	8	Natural Resources	Encourage through site plan review patterns of development that preserve wildlife travel corridors and large blocks of open space. Require subdivision proposals within the R-1 (Rural Residential and Farming) District to submit a cluster design instead of, or in addition to, a traditional design for site plan review. Land to be left in open space should, to the extent possible, include prime agricultural soils, critical natural resources and important wildlife habitat and should abut and augment such open space on adjoining properties.		2			within 1 year
81	8	Natural Resources	Review ordinances and amend as needed to ensure that culverts and other crossings of rivers, streams and wetlands are designed and constructed so that they do not impede water flows or the upstream/downstream movement of organisms and materials. Structures should attempt to retain the overall horizontal and vertical alignments of the watercourses in the general vicinity of the crossing.			3		within 3 years
82	8	Natural Resources	Continue to work cooperatively with landowners to extend the trail system from the Town Forest along the waterfront to the Mill River and Montpelier, connecting to the proposed hike/bike path along Route 131 south.		2			ongoing

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
83	8	Natural Resources	Work with landowners to design proposed development so as to minimize impact on scenic views. Continue to enforce existing land use ordinance provisions that require commercial and industrial uses to configure proposed development in a visually harmonious manner and to ensure that structures do not impede scenic views to the extent reasonably practical.		2			initiate w/in 1 yr
84	8	Natural Resources	Develop guidelines for the assessment of scenic impacts using concepts such as scale, contrast and spatial dominance to assist developers and the Planning Board in design and review of proposed development projects. Amend existing ordinance to allow Planning Board, at its discretion, to require a scenic impact analysis as part of site plan review. Encourage owners of existing development in the commercial areas east of the cement plant to plant trees and shrubs to improve the visual appearance of the highway commercial area along US Route One.		2			<u>within 2 years</u>
85	8	Natural Resources	Develop inventory of scenic resources.				4	w/in 3 yrs
86								
87	9	Marine Resources	Retain existing Shoreland Commercial and Resource Protection Districts abutting the St. George River.	1				ongoing
88	9	Marine Resources	Change anchorage designation.	1				ongoing
89	9	Marine Resources	Seek federal assistance for dredging in vicinity of the beacon and identify site for handling of dredge spoils.		2			w/in 3 yrs
90	9	Marine Resources	To assist with navigation, harbor planning and allocation of resources, develop a GIS (Geographic Information System) map of the harbor, locating the channel, launch, moorings, and other significant natural and man-made features.		2			w/in 3 yrs
91	9	Marine Resources	Assess needs and develop a plan to ensure adequate parking for waterfront commercial and recreational uses. Identify opportunities for expanding shorefront parking for commercial fishermen, and/or develop alternative locations to access clam flats in the St. George River Estuary.			3		w/in 3 yrs
92	9	Marine Resources	Continue working with other communities on the St. George River and the Maine State Prison to improve water quality. Work with other communities to improve access to the shellfish resource and manage the commercial fisheries for sustainable yields utilizing tools such as regional ordinances and interlocal agreements. Continue participation in the Georges River Shellfish Management Committee and the Interlocal Clam Management Agreement.		2			ongoing
93	9	Marine Resources	Retain town-owned properties that abut the river to help ensure public access to the shore.		2			ongoing
94	9	Marine Resources	Work with landowners and conservation organizations to procure easements and funds to complete construction of a waterfront trail to Montpelier.		2			ongoing

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
95	9	Marine Resources	Investigate, in consultation with conservation organizations, means of preserving the scenic quality and recreational value of the shoreline north of the Wadsworth Street bridge.				4	4 to 6 yrs
96								
97	10	Recreation	Expand responsibilities of Recreation Committee to include coordination of a variety recreational opportunities for all age groups.			3		w/in 1 yr.
98	10	Recreation	Continue to fund a full-time Recreation Director:		2			ongoing
99	10	Recreation	Support groups working to establish a Community Center. Locate a suitable and available parcel of land, and develop a financing plan including volunteer fundraising, grants, private donations and town funding.			3		long-term
100	10	Recreation	Boating and Safety Program			3		w/in 3 yrs
101	10	Recreation	Hunter and Fire Arm Safety Program				4	long term
102	10	Recreation	Develop summer swimming program.				4	long term
103	10	Recreation	Construct outdoor skating rink.				4	long term
104	10	Recreation	Construct new tennis courts.				4	long term
105	10	Recreation	Develop summer program for children and teens.		2			w/in 3 yrs
106	10	Recreation	Develop an Environmental/Nature Program using the Forest Trail. An effort should be made to recruit volunteer naturalists in the area who would be willing to put together a program for presenting citizens with a comprehensive picture of the local flora and fauna. This program could also include identifying and preserving rare and endangered species.				4	w/in 3 yrs
107	10	Recreation	Develop teen age summer corps to assist with summer recreational programs.		2			w/in 3 yrs
108	10	Recreation	Transportation System. Develop system of transportation to make use of the many offerings in neighboring towns.		2			w/in 3 yrs
109	10	Recreation	Improve playground and recreational facilities including addition of a roller blade course and skate board ramp.			3		w/in 3 yrs
110	10	Recreation	Support Watts Hall, Montpelier, Thomaston Historical Society for variety of programs. Encourage financial support through fundraising and encourage volunteer efforts to help sustain these valuable institutions.		2			ongoing
111	10	Recreation	Develop fitness programs for adults and seniors.			3		w/in 3 yrs
112	10	Recreation	Support efforts by conservation groups to plan and develop a hiking and biking trail around the perimeter of the town.			3		long term
113	10	Recreation	Develop recreation program for special needs citizens			3		4 - 6 yrs
114	10	Recreation	Continue support for July 4th celebration though town financial assistance, volunteer efforts, and private donations.		2			ongoing
115	10	Recreation	Require major new Residential Developments be reviewed by Planning Board to ensure that Open Space for recreation is part of a Developer's Plans.			3		long-term
116								

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
117	11	Fiscal Capacity	Continually evaluate compliance with Dragon Products' TIF. Maintain careful records and consult with specialists in all matters relating to the company's valuation.	1				ongoing
118	11	Fiscal Capacity	Continue to maintain financial records of ongoing and previous year's spending. Publish financial records in annual report in both spread sheet and graphic form. Add reports tracking revenue and spending for ten year period.		2			portions ongoing, expand within 3 yrs
119	11	Fiscal Capacity	Review user fees annually and increase fees to keep pace with inflation. Shift some of the property tax burden to users of services.		2			ongoing
120	11	Fiscal Capacity	Continue to utilize reserve accounts for capital purchasing.		2			ongoing
121	11	Fiscal Capacity	Expand sewer system to increase number of users and connect to east end of town. Continue to consider creative ideas such as the Special Sewer Zone provision to stimulate growth in designated growth areas.		2			w/in 3 yrs
122								
123	12	Capital Investment	Adopt recommended capital investment plan procedure, leading to an on-going capital improvement plan.			3		w/in 3 yrs
124	12	Capital Investment	Adopt recommended priority rating system for capital improvement plan.			3		w/in 3 yrs
125								
126	14	Future Land Use	Encourage though educational outreach efforts placement and retention of active agricultural lands and other important open space in the Farm and Open Space Tax Program, and productive forest land in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Survey current users of these programs to assess program effectiveness and encourage continued participation. Explain benefits of these programs to other landowners whose properties have important agricultural, open space, and forestry values. Provide woodlot owners with information on forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). Encourage conservation easements to preserve important agricultural, open space and forest lands through local land trusts. See Natural Resources Chapter)			3		ongoing, survey within 1 year
127	14	Future Land Use	Encourage through site plan review patterns of development that preserve wildlife travel corridors and large blocks of open space. Require subdivision proposals within the R-1 (Rural Residential and Farming) District to submit a cluster design instead of, or in addition to, a traditional design for site plan review. Land to be left in open space should, to the extent possible, include prime agricultural soils, critical natural resources and important wildlife habitat and should abut and augment such open space on adjoining properties. See Natural Resources Chapter.		2			within 1 year

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005 - Revised Jan. 3, 2006

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
128	14	Future Land Use	Meet with neighboring communities to review land use plans and develop area-wide approach to protection of important natural resources such as the St. George River, Rockland Bog and Weskeag River using tools such as "Beginning with Habitat". Report to Selectmen by Jan 2008 on any proposed changes to Thomaston's land use ordinances. See Natural Resources Chapter.		2			w/in 3 yrs
129	14	Future Land Use	The Planning Board and CEO will annually report to the Select Board on the number, type and location of new development permits issued in the preceeding year. A reexamination and revision of appropriate sections of this Plan and amendments to land use ordinances will be suggested if, after five years, more than 35% of total growth observed occurred in rural areas.		2			begin tracking immediately [2006]
130	14	Future Land Use	Continue to allow a range of housing densities based on the established settlement pattern and provide a sufficient amount of affordable housing types, including accessory apartments and multi-family housing.		2			ongoing
131	14	Future Land Use	Amend the land use ordinance to allow mobile home parks as a conditional use in the TR-3 (Transitional Residential) District as opposed to the R-1 (Rural Residential and Farming) District to provide for housing closer to the village area and prevent development sprawl.		2			within 1 year
132	14	Future Land Use	Amend the land use ordinance to divide the existing Commercial District into a Village Commercial and a Highway Commercial District to distinguish the Main Street shops and business uses located in the village area from the highway commercial uses east of the cement plant. Development in the village commercial area should protect and enhance the small town and historic character of Thomaston, which contributes to the attractiveness of the town in a tourist economy. Require appropriate parking and landscaping to create a pleasant environment in both the village and highway commercial areas. See Current Land Use Chapter.		2			w/in 3 yrs
133	14	Future Land Use	Encourage business investment in the village center through infrastructure improvements such as improved sidewalks, lighting, and appropriate landscaping. See Economy Chapter.		2			ongoing
134	14	Future Land Use	Retain existing Shoreland Commercial District designation along Thomaston harbor to protect and support marine-related businesses and commercial fisheries. See Economy Chapter and Marine Resources Chapter.	1				ongoing

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005 - Revised Jan. 3, 2006

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
135	14	Future Land Use	Promote appropriate industrial development in the Pine Tree Zone. Take advantage of the presence of the re-activated railroad facilities to enhance economic opportunities for Thomaston businesses and residents. Locate commercial and industrial growth areas such as the Pine Tree Zone and Thomaston Economic Tract (associated with the Dragon TIF) near the railroad line and spurs. See Economy Chapter.		2			ongoing
136	14	Future Land Use	Meet with Dragon Products to obtain information on its long-term operational plans and plans for eventual closure of the facility.			3		within 3 yrs
137	14	Future Land Use	Site Plan Review: Continue to require Planning Board review of all non-residential uses requiring structures or additions over 1000 square feet in floor area.			3		ongoing
138	14	Future Land Use	Maintain up-to-date maps depicting current land uses. Integrate land use mapping layers with maps depicting municipal infrastructure and tie to property cards. Computerize building permit information.		2			ongoing
139	14	Future Land Use	Establish a Land Use Ordinance Dcommittee to assist the Code Enforcement Officer with reviewing and drafting amendments to the Land Use and Development Ordinance.		2			within 1 yr
140	14	Future Land Use	Establish a committee to examine the benefits and drawbacks of designating an historic district and associated ordinances and to consider other means of preserving the character of the federally designated historic district as well as other key historic structures in the community. See History Chapter.			3		within 3 yrs
141	14	Future Land Use	Consider new district for the former prison site if needed to provide for both open space and mixed residential, commercial, municipal, and institutional uses. See Maine State Prison Chapter.	1				ongoing
142	14	Future Land Use	Consider an alternate east-west road through town [in the vicinity of the Transitional Residential (TR-3) District connecting Beechwood Street with Old County Road] to encourage residential growth in the TR-3 District and alleviate traffic congestion on Route One. See Transportation Chapter.		2			ongoing w/ Gateway 1
143	14	Future Land Use	Review land use ordinances pertaining to gravel pits and quarries to ensure that impacts to natural resources, other land uses, and transportation systems are adequately addressed. See Natural Resources Chapter.		2			w/in 3 yrs
144	14	Future Land Use	Require predevelopment work such as tree clearing, contouring, road grading and alterations to natural drainage ways to be reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer or Planning Board prior to the start of work.		2			within 1 yr

Thomaston Comprehensive Plan  
Implementation Priorities by Chapter  
Feb. 17, 2005 - Revised Jan. 3, 2006

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
145	14	Future Land Use	Develop guidelines for the assessment of scenic impacts using concepts such as scale, contrast, and dominance to assist the Planning Board in its review of proposed development projects. Amend existing ordinance to allow Planning Board, at its discretion, to require a scenic impact analysis as part of site plan review. See Natural Resources Chapter.		2			within 1 yr
146								
147	15	Regional Coordination	Participate in MDOT's Gateway 1 Project. See Transportation Chapter.	1				ongoing
148	15	Regional Coordination	Establish regular meetings (quarterly) with appropriate representatives from MDOT, Knox County Regional Airport, Rockland, and other neighboring communities to develop an integrated plan for assessing and mitigating the impact of alternative transportation options (including rail, high speed ferry, air service) on area communities. See Transportation Chapter.		3			w/in 3 yrs
149	15	Regional Coordination	Participate in water company's advisory committee to stay abreast of water supply and system issues and any resource limitations. See Community Facilities and Services Chapter.			4		ongoing
150	15	Regional Coordination	Establish a committee with representatives of SAD #5 and SAD #50 to consider interest in, and feasibility of, a consolidated high school.	1				ongoing
151	15	Regional Coordination	Periodically review the effectiveness of the County Dispatch Service in meeting community needs and assess opportunities for additional efficiencies. Report to Selectmen annually. See Community Facilities and Services Chapter.		2			ongoing
152	15	Regional Coordination	The town will continue to participate with surrounding communities in bilateral and regional housing programs and projects. See Housing Chapter.		2			ongoing
153	15	Regional Coordination	The town will continue to support and participate in the programs and projects of the Midcoast Affordable Housing Coalition and other nonprofit affordable housing organizations. See Housing Chapter.		2			ongoing
154	15	Regional Coordination	Establish Land Use Ordinance Committee to meet with neighboring communities to review town ordinances and identify incompatible land uses and ordinances that may adversely impact existing uses in neighboring municipalities. See Land Use chapter.		2			w/in 3 yrs
155	15	Regional Coordination	Meet with neighboring communities to review land use plans and ordinances and develop area-wide approach to the protection of important natural resources such as the St. George River, Rockland Bog and Weskeag River using tools such as "Beginning with Habitat". Report to Selectmen by January 2008 on any proposed changes to land use ordinances. See Natural Resources chapter.		2			w/in 3 yrs
156	15	Regional Coordination	Continue participation in Georges River Shellfish Management Committee and Interlocal Clam Management Agreement. See Marine Resources Chapter..		2			ongoing

## RECORD OF PUBLIC INPUT FOR THOMASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVISION

Note: All documents on file in Thomaston Town Office

April 24, 2000: Notice of Prison Re-Use Public Hearing inviting town committee members and townspeople.

May 2000: Town Newsletter announces Public Hearing scheduled for May 9, 2000 on Re-use of Prison Property.

May 9, 2000: Public meeting with Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services to gather input on re-use of Prison Property.

June 14, 2000: Thomaston Annual Town Meeting. Survey distributed to attendees. Comprehensive Plan Committee members present to answer questions on Prison Re-use proposals.

June 20, 2000: Public meeting with Maine DAFS, Gen. Services. Prior to meeting, flyers posted and distributed around town to encourage townspeople to attend. Survey distributed to attendees.

July 2000 Town Newsletter: Surveys distributed as part of newsletter and article on front page advises of Comprehensive Plan meeting dates and invites comments regarding future of Thomaston.

July 10, 2000: 137 Surveys completed and returned. 92 out of 136 completed surveys supported demolition of Maine State Prison.

July 31, 2000: Prison Re-Use Recommendations presented to Selectboard by Comprehensive Plan Committee.

August 2000 Town Newsletter: Announcement that results of survey are available in Town Office.

August 7, 2000: Board of Selectmen Special Meeting to discuss Comprehensive Plan Committee recommendations regarding re-use of the prison property.

September 2000: Town Newsletter reports that Board of Selectmen voted to accept Comprehensive Plan Committee recommendation regarding prison site reuse options.

November 2000: J. Scott Creighton distributed surveys to local churches, sports coaches, library, etc. to gather information on recreational activities in town.



January 2001 Town Newsletter: Article outlines dates for series of meetings to gather input for the chapter drafts of the revised Comprehensive Plan. Townspeople encouraged to submit comments in writing if unable to attend sessions.

\*January 3, 2001: Public Input Meeting on History, Population and Housing chapters.

\*January 11, 2001: Public Input Meeting on Natural Resources and Marine Resources chapters.

\*January 18, 2001: Public Input Meeting on Community Facilities and Services, and Recreation and Cultural Activities chapters. Flyers distributed prior to meeting.

\*January 25, 2001: Public Input Meeting on Regional Coordination, and Transportation chapters. Flyers distributed prior to meeting.

\*February 1, 2001: Public Input Meeting on Land Use and Future Land Use.

\*February 8, 2001: Public Input Meeting on Fiscal Capacity/Capital Investment Plan and Economy.

\* **NOTE:** It is estimated that approximately 80 townspeople (in addition to the Comprehensive Plan committee members) attended the above public input meetings.

February 2001: A town-wide survey was distributed by mail to all taxpaying households.

March 2001 Town Newsletter: Comprehensive Plan Committee thanks Thomaston residents who completed and returned surveys.

March 2001: A meeting with the Rockland Comprehensive Plan committee was held to gather input on Regional issues.

April 2001: Data from 194 returned town-wide surveys being compiled, entered on spreadsheet and analyzed.

September 6, 2001: Public Session on Recreation. 7 townspeople attended.

November 2001: Natural Resources chapter draft distributed to interested persons for review and comment.

January 2002 Town Newsletter: Appeal to townspeople for additional input on Land Use Inventory, Future Land Use, and Transportation chapter sub-committees seeking help in identifying issues. Also reminder of dates and times of committee's regular twice-monthly meetings as well as request for help on many small tasks.

January 17, 2002: Representatives from Dragon Cement Products attended committee meeting to inform us of the cement-making process, the land use in Thomaston and future plans.

February 2002 Town Newsletter: Article summarizes recent activities of the Comprehensive Plan Committee such as meeting with Dragon Products regarding their future plans and the impact on Thomaston. Also expressed concern that state funding for the prison demolition is in jeopardy. Again reminder published of the committee's meeting times and appeal for additional help and input.

March 2002 Town Newsletter: Article giving update on Comprehensive Plan Committee activities as well as on March 7<sup>th</sup>, Nancy Fritz from the Knox County Affordable Housing Coalition will speak on issues regarding affordable housing. Again, an invitation to interested parties to attend any Comprehensive Plan meeting and the need for additional help.

July 18, 2002: Public session held to gather input for the Transportation chapter.

August 15, 2002: Public session on Recreation chapter revised draft.

September 2002 Town Newsletter: Update on activities of Comprehensive Plan Committee and additional request for input and assistance.

September 19, 2002: Public session held to gather input on financial condition of Town, current and future status of budget and overall financial status.

November 2002 Town Newsletter: Article outlining November activities planned by Comprehensive Plan Committee: Discussion of Housing chapter draft and Transportation chapter draft.

February 4, 2003: Chairman James Gregg contacted Town Manager Val Blastow by memo requesting department heads, boards, commissions, etc., to respond to suggested topics outlined for the purposes of drawing up an effective revised Comprehensive Plan.

May 2003 Town Newsletter: Announcement of May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting to engage in a roundtable discussion of newly-released Revised Comprehensive Plan Draft.

May 18, 2003: Public Hearing held on published Draft 1 of Revised Comprehensive Plan. Refreshments served as an enticement to townspeople to attend but without success.

June 2003 Town Newsletter: Reminder to townspeople that copies of Draft 1 of the Revised Comprehensive Plan are available at the Town Office.

June 24, 2003: Annual Town Meeting. "Thomaston in 2010 ?!" document distributed at polls and meeting, asking for input. Feedback deadline: July 17, 2003.

July 2003 Town Newsletter: Published article on "Thomaston in 2010 ?!" asking for input on whether the townspeople agree with the Comprehensive Plan Committee's vision.

July 17, 2003: We received two public responses (one verbal, one written) as a result of the draft of the revised Comp Plan distributed and made available at the Town Office and the "Thomaston in 2010 ?!" document.

September 2003 to February 2005: Continued with regular Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of each month. Notice published on town calendar. Committee members working on rewrite of plan.

February 28, 2005: Selectboard reviewed draft Comprehensive Plan, authorized submission to State Planning Office for consistency review, scheduled public hearing 25, 2005, copies of revised plan available at town office for public inspection.

April 2005 Town Newsletter: Included Executive Summary of the Revised Draft Comprehensive Plan and notice of Public Hearing on revised plan.

April 25, 2005: Public Hearing on Draft Comprehensive Plan.

May 4, 2005: Town received State agency comments on Draft Comprehensive Plan.

May 23, 2005: Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed with Selectboard proposed changes to draft plan in response to public and State agency comments. Selectboard scheduled a public hearing for June 6, 2005 on the revisions proposed in response to comments.

June 6, 2005: Public hearing on revisions proposed in response to comments received from the public at the April 25, 2005 public hearing and from State agencies.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN-RECREATION: Addendum to the Appendix - A: the  
Questionnaire—Text:

**A Questionnaire from the Thomaston Comprehensive Planning Committee  
concerning Recreation, Cultural, and Educational Programs and Facilities.**

It would be most helpful if a member (or several members) from your organization would take time to answer the following questions which concern the next ten or so years of Thomaston recreation and cultural programs, activities, and facilities that are—or might in the future—be made available to the community.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan concerns those “leisure time” activities or programs that take place outside the workplace, the school, the home, or in the case of senior citizens, can be brought into their living complex. These activities and programs may be athletic, team or individual, art centered individual or group: music, fine arts, dance, theatre, crafts, etc. They may consist of a variety of educational programs from nature walks, local history, archaeology, photography, water safety, swimming, boating and hunting safety, etc. They may encompass pre-school programs, indoor hobby groups, lectures, youth group activities (scouts, summer day camps) and senior citizen events. In fact the only limit on recreation and cultural opportunities is that imposed by the community and its government; by the reality of economics, land and facility availability, manpower, and most important, by the commitment and interest of its citizens.

To sum it up, we need your input, your ideas and suggestions. Your hopes for what your organization can contribute to the future of Thomaston’s recreation programs. So please try and answer the following questions and mail them back to me or give me a call and I will pick them up. I will also be very happy to come and talk to any Thomaston organization, church group spokes-person, recreation group, art, library, music committee, etc. about their ideas. Thank you. Jean Scott Creighton, 15 School St., Thomaston, ME 04861; Tel: 354-2280. E-mail: [jscott@kona.midcoast.com](mailto:jscott@kona.midcoast.com)

.....

1. Please list or give a description of programs and/or facilities now in place in your organization and which you expect to continue—or discontinue—in the next two or three years.

2. What additions to your present programs and/or facilities would you hope to put into place in the next two or three years?

3. Dust off your crystal ball: What do you see in the future for your organization? What programs or facilities would you like to be able to offer to the Thomaston community within the next ten years? Realistically (within budget limits). Or not realistically, if budget were not a concern, if grants were available, if the sky were the limit.

4. In regard to recreation, cultural, and local educational programs and facilities what does your organization see as Thomaston’s greatest need—or needs?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE (Note: answers to the first two questions appear in the text of the short form of the Recreation Plan and/or in the Appendix). The following are given in more detail than was possible in the above two texts.)

**QUESTION THREE [The Future]:** Dust off your crystal ball: What do you see in the future for your organization? What programs or facilities would you like to be able to offer to the Thomaston community within the next ten years? Realistically (within budget limits). Or not realistically, if budget were not a concern, if grants were available, if the sky were the limit. Answers as follows (quoted with one exception as written)

**Watts Hall Trustees.** Realistically, as above, improve appearance and visibility within budget guidelines.

No limit: Fly space for state, air conditioning, new windows, make balcony functional again, provide more efficient municipal spaces.

**Cathie Virgie – Director Thomaston Recreation Program** - See our drawing for a Community Building – that is what our committee would like to see. I am a bit disappointed. We haven't done much in the past ten years to improve the Recreation Department. For the past 5 years I have been working full time for just over \$6,000 per year. The town expects a full-time director for part time pay. With that said this department can never go forward.

**Recreation Committee Member** (name not given) - I think what I said above [question 3: needs rec center with own gym and multipurpose room, teen area, tennis courts fixed] is realistic with a firm commitment from the town and community. If grants were available a comprehensive after-school/day care program would be wonderful and a great asset to our community. Also we could offer more diverse programs for our kids like safe boating, a baseball/softball summer clinic or day bike or hike trips. An arts and crafts program. A swimming program.

**Librarians.** A new building for the library which would provide a program room and meeting room, reading room with equipment listen to music as one reads (if patron so desires), and plenty of storage space. A properly built recreation center could provide many of these needs thru sharing and cooperation.

**The Thomaston Historical Society Eve Anderson, President responding:** [this particular answer because of its length is summarized and paraphrased] We will have to raise approximately \$100,000 in order to complete our building project, possibly through grants. There is need to house the collections properly to safeguard valuable paper collections, to have more volunteer workers, to interest the younger generations in the works of the Society. We would like to maintain our historic buildings and protect our historic districts from unsightly development that will impair the flavor of the town.... Thomaston needs a place for children to gather that is safe and well managed; perhaps a center for after school sports, and arts and crafts instruction, a larger better-supplied library....if money were not a factor a swimming pool would be an excellent addition, a place to hold teen dances and perhaps an ice skating rink....a place for children to hold dances and rock concerts which if held at Watts Hall is disruptive to the neighborhood.

**The Federated Church, Rev. John C. Shaw, Sr.** Two or three worship services and an outdoor amphitheater style chapel for wedding services with a staff of two or three clergy and a full time administrative staff.

**The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, The Rev. Peter Edwards-Jenks.** As far as long range or dreams of possibilities I would see our space being used for more concerts and plays that could be adapted for our unique set-up, excellent acoustics and intimate seating. It would be nice to have better seating but that would hinder the aesthetics in other ways. It would also be nice to be able to participate in joint efforts for conferences along with the Baptist Church and other buildings. An example of this will be next fall when the American Baptist Churches of Maine will hold their annual convention at both the Baptist and Episcopal Churches.

**The University Center at Thomaston.** [refers to question 2 re plans for next 2 or 3 years ] See above statement: i.e. The University Center is in the midst of internal evaluation of program and space needs. I am unable to provide reasonable response to the question until March 1 2001.

**Michael Reese – Thomaston Conservation Commission.** To complete the above would be ideal [see question 2 lengthening of the described trail along water from Route One to Montpelier]. Continued maintenance and improvement of over 5 miles of trail would up busy enough. However, the Georges River Land Trust is planning a further continuation of the trail at the upper end of Dunbar Road in order to connect with Warren's section of the Highland Path. Of course, we would be participants in that project. The town's vote to create a park on the Prison property mandates that the conservation Commission be included in any discussion. We foresee our trail passing through that property on its way to the Town Beach. The ideal situation in my crystal ball would be seeing the entire community using the trail and parks, whether it is a nature hike through the forest or enjoying a picnic at a waterfront. Park.

**Jo Anne Parker – Director of Midcoast Community Band/ Long Cove Wind Quintet/Midcoast Flute ensemble/Baroque Consort, recorder and string ensemble/SAD50 choral performing groups.** ...It is my feeling that each of the above groups would benefit greatly if one or both of the following facilities were to be made available at the sight of the soon-to-be-vacant Maine State Prison: an **auditorium** and/or an **outdoor bandstand**.

**QUESTION FOUR: What does your organization see as Thomaston's greatest need—or needs—as far as recreation programs and facilities go?**

Answers as follows, quoted as written with one exception.:

**Watts Hall Trustees.** A place for adolescents to meet and have events, especially noisy ones. We have tried to serve all, but are only able through the consideration of other occupants [of Watts Hall and adjacent buildings?]

**Cathie Virgie-Recreation Director –** A full time recreation director and a Community Building to run our programs from.

**Recreation Committee Member** [name not give] – Our own Recreation Center.

**Librarians:** First we need facilities, a building. The building should be versatile to accommodate sports, exercise, plays, meetings, programs, (variety), and maybe even a library. Perhaps “Community Center” would be a better name.

**Thomaston Historical Society, Eve Anderson, President:** [statement summarized] ...Providing Thomaston’s youth with a safe and well staffed facility can help to keep the older buildings in better condition as they would be used less often for activities for which they were not built. (Watts Hall is taking a beating from some activities that should really not be held there but, for want of another facility, they are). ... but I truly believe that if various groups cooperated with each other for the good of the town...we could get a lot more accomplished than we do. I am constantly frustrated by the too narrow focus and jealousies that exist between organizations. Everyone seems to be interested in just their little section and few people are really looking at the town as a whole....The welfare and preservation of Thomaston should be everyone’s concern. Our townsfolk have got to begin to think and act as a “community” instead of worrying about self-interests alone.

**The Federated Church, Rev. John C. Shaw, Sr.”** Convention center and rec. center combination. This would allow for large conferences to be held here as well as facilities that would provide for pick-up sports games, skating rink (indoors), indoor track for general exercise and competition meets. (Srs, youth, and Special Olympics).

**The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, the Rev. Peter Edwards-Jenks.** Personally I would like to see an indoor pool somewhere in the area, along with a theater or auditorium, but then Watts Hall is quite adequate. It would be great if the police station and town hall were moved to appropriate accommodations allowing for better backstage space where police station now resides.

**The University Center at Thomaston – University of Maine System:** From the Director: Joan R. Fink: I hope that the people of Thomaston realize the great resource they have — and support, in availability of local access to higher education through the University Center at Thomaston. Continuing support is essential

**Michael Reese – Thomaston Conservation Commission:** I cannot speak for our organization in this matter. But for myself, the greatest contribution to the educational, recreational, and cultural life of this town would be an auditorium.

**Jo Anne Parker – Director of Midcoast Community Band, Long Cove Wind Quintet, Midcoast Flute Ensemble, Baroque Consort** (recorder and string ensemble), **SAD 50 choral performing groups** : It goes without saying that the town of Thomaston needs an auditorium. I know that such a building has been considered by the local school district, so I’m sure that the town would want to be in touch with the school board so that duplicate plans are not made.

## **ADDENDUM**

### **ANSWERS FROM RECREATION QUESTIONNAIRES AND TOWN SURVEY**

**The Thomaston Recreation Committee:** (as reported by members of the Thomaston Recreation Committee in response to a questionnaire and including suggestions and recommendations – via Director Cathy Virgie):

- 1) Question One asks details of the present program and these are also listed under Appendix I (inventory/programs,etc).

The program as of year 2000-2001: Kindergarten through Sixth Grade:

Basketball K-2 Clinic; 3-4: play games; 5-6 play games

Baseball K-1 T-Ball; 2-6 Farm League

Softball K-1 T-Ball; 2-6 Farm League

Little League Baseball: 9 – 12 yrs old

Little League Softball: 9 – 12 yrs old

Babe Ruth Baseball: 13 – 15 yrs old

Babe Ruth Prep. 13 yrs only

Summer Soccer Clinics

Soccer K – 1 Clinic; 2-4 play games; 5-6 play games

Cheerleading: grades 3-6

Senior Citizens: 2 – 3 trips a year.

- 2) Questions 2-4 as follows: 2) What programs and/or facilities the Rec. Committee would like to put in place in the in the next two or three years, 3) what programs/facilities (with or without budget considerations )would you like to see not) in the next ten years, and 4)What do you see as Thomaston's greatest need(s) as far as recreation programs and facilities go. Cathy Virgie, Director answers as following:

1) "In order to add anything else you would first need to hire a full-time Director. Second, you would need to build a facility for whatever exists and what needs to be added to this community.

2) "See our drawing for a Community Building – that is what our Committee would like to see."

3) "A full-time Recreation Director and a Community Building to run our programs from."

From Bart Virgie, Recreation Committee Member, answers to these four questions:

1)[His list of programs is identical to Cathy Virgie's above.]

2)"First a full time Rec Director is necessary to organize and monitor future goals. \*Swimming lessons. \*Tennis, \*Arts and Crafts. \*Provide classes to teach different games to interest children (i.e. chess, backgammon, spades, bridge, etc. \*Racquetball."

2) "A community center is needed to provide a place where the citizens of the

Surrounding area can gather and enjoy various activities. This facility will afford a place where our children can come and be safe and engage in organized activities; classes, can be held for all age groups from painting to sewing, ceramics, or aerobics. This facility would house a fitness center and have its own basketball court and auditorium and lounge area."



From another (anonymous) member of the Rec. Committee answering the above four questions: [question one-list of programs omitted as is duplicated by Cathy Virgie]

- 1) “We need a rec center with our own gym and multipurpose room. I would also like to expand our senior citizen program to offer regular activities like bingo or exercise programs to all adults like line dancing or aerobics. With a good rec center our teens would have a place to go —evenings too! We need to get our tennis courts fixed.”
- 2) “I think what I said above is realistic with a firm commitment from the town and community. If grants were available a comprehensive after school and daycare program would be wonderful and a great asset to our community. Also we could offer more diverse programs for our kids like safe boating, a baseball/softball summer clinic or day bike and hike trips. An arts and crafts program. A swimming program.”
- 3) “Our own Recreation Center.”

2) **Watts Hall:** The following description and recommendations are taken directly from the answer by the Watts Hall Trustees —responder: Bill Hahn. Question One also appears under Inventory of Present Programs.

Question One, Present Programs: “The Watts Block currently functions as the municipal center for the town and provides meeting and function space for concerts, dances, shows, etc. The operational costs for the building are presently partially offset by commercial rental spaces on Main St. A small space is also utilized for food disbursement. The auditorium and meeting room are made available to the public for all sorts of activities at moderate or no cost to the users. Preference is given to town functions and functions providing community service. The current uses are expected to continue with adjustments as necessary to meet the changing needs of the town.”

Question Two concerns additions to present programs and/or facilities would you hope to put into place in the next two or three years?

“The use of the building has increased in recent years to the extent that time management is now the key concern. The building is limited in by size, location, and the ability of its clients to pay. The Trustees goal is to improve maintenance levels and keep the building operating in a safe economical manner for the community. Thus future efforts will be aimed at improvements to result in operational efficiency, while providing the same amount of space.

Question Three asks the responders what programs and/or facilities they would like implemented in the future; realistically, or without budget considerations.

“Realistically as above, improve appearance and visibility within budget guidelines. No limit: Fly space for stage, air conditioning, new windows, make balcony functional again, provide more efficient municipal spaces.

Question Four: what does your organization see as Thomaston’s greatest need—or needs—as far as recreation programs and facilities go?

A place for adolescents to meet and have events, especially noisy ones. We have tried to serve all, but are only able to through the consideration of other occupants.

**4) Thomaston Public Library:** As will be seen by the following answers to the questionnaire, much depends on availability of space—restructuring of old space, or acquisition of new space, i.e. a new library building. Responder: Head Librarian Kathy Daley. Question One answer is also under Inventory, **Appendix I)**

Question One: Present Program: “With a new children’s librarian in place, we have begun to offer reading programs, entertaining yet educational programs usually centered around a theme. In January [of 2001] we will begin to do programs of [a] cultural, historical, literary nature which we hope will be interesting and sometimes entertaining as well. We offer books on tapes and large print books for those with visual problems. We have two computers for patron usage. Could use another computer.

Question Two, Additions to programs/facilities in next 2 or 3 years:

More adult informational and cultural programs....dealing with genealogy, local history, music and the arts. An outreach program for those unable to get to the library. Nothing can be done with our facilities as we share with UMA’s Thomaston Center and they occupy most of the building.

Question Three: The future, realistic or not for the next 10 years:

A new building for the library which would provide a program room and meeting room, reading room with equipment to listen to music as on reads if patron so desires), and plenty of storage space. A properly built recreation center could provide many of those needs through sharing and cooperation.

Question Four: Thomaston’s greatest need re Recreation programs and facilities:

First we need facilities, a building, and a sports, exercise, plays meetings, programs (variety), and maybe even a library. Perhaps “Community Center” would be a better name.

**5) Thomaston Historical Society:** Responders: Eve Anderson, President, and Olaf Anderson.

Question One re present programs and facilities: [n.b. this is a paraphrase of an answer too long to print here] The Thomaston Historical Society owns the 1794 brick building at the foot of Knox Street and is the last remaining structure of the original General Henry Knox estate. The Society offers programs and events from April through November. [this schedule is largely due to the fact of no heating in the winter months which a time period which the town might benefit from programs] Among programs offered are talks on town history, readings from historical documents and letters, workshops, tours to school children, maintaining a web site, services honoring Gen. Knox, participation in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, and marketing various publications.

Question Two, the next 2, or 3 years: “...reestablish the ‘original footprint’ of our building. ...Because donations to our archives have been growing...we need to reconstruct [a former wing] and install into it a fire proof and climate controlled room....to accommodate our collection... .The addition will also provide extra space on the second floor that we can use to expand the displays in our museum.

Question Three: Plans for the next ten years, realistic or hopeful: [answer summarized]. We must raise \$100,000 in order to complete building project, partly it is hoped through grants. This is a must because of the above need to protect acquisitions. We also need to attract younger persons to the society as the group of retired people who now attend programs and give support will eventually dwindle. We need to emphasize to all the citizens the need to restore and keep the historic houses and authentic look of the town before more structures are lost forever.

Question Four: What does your Historical Society see as Thomaston's greatest recreational needs: A place for children to gather that is safe and well managed; A center for after school sports and arts and crafts; a larger and well-supplied library; a swimming pool; an ice rink; a place for teens to hold dances; a family oriented gathering place. Last, greater cooperation between citizens and the various town groups for the greater good of the town.

**6)Montpelier:** ( See also **Appendix I**) No questionnaire was returned but this is a summary of a verbal response: Besides offering tours by costumed volunteers to visitors during the summer months, the Friends have put on a band concert and strawberry shortcake party, a General Knox 250 birthday celebration, an encampment weekend, a Christmas candlelight musical afternoon, a Georges Valley graduation fund raising dessert cum concert gala.

**7) The University Center at Thomaston:** The director, Joan R. Fink, did not answer the questionnaire except in making the following two statements:

“The University Center is in the midst of internal evaluation of programs and space needs. I am unable to provide reasonable response to the question[s] until March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001. I hope that the people of Thomaston realize the great resource they have — and support, in availability of local access to higher education through the University Center at Thomaston. Continuing support is essential.” [nb: an attempt will be made to augment this report]

**8) The Town Forest:** Responder Michael Reese from the Conservation Committee: (Question One also appears in **Appendix I** – Inventory of Present Programs.

Question One: Programs and Facilities now in place: By the summer of 2001, working with the Georges River Land Trust the Conservation Committee will have completed over three miles of hiking trail through the town Forest and an adjacent lot owned by the Land Trust, this being part of the larger project called the Georges Highland Path. The trail is not physically challenging and allows of for a wide range of hikers. Another plus is the proximity of the trail to downtown Thomaston. In the past two years there have been two Community Hikes and each spring the community is made again aware of the trail by announcements in the Town News Letter.

Question Two: Plans for the next two or three years: Continual lengthening of the trail by another two miles. “From the 2001 point at water tower on Route One we hope to make it to the Town Beach (another reclamation project we are planning for this year along Water St. to Mayo Park, on to the old Town Dump, and ending at Montpelier. .... This section will be created so as to permit an even wider range of use.” A hard surface walk to allow baby strollers, bicycles, roller skaters/blades access as well as accommodating wheelchairs. Plans also exist for a “family park” along the Town Dump, a piece of land that can be improved for picnic tables, a parking lot, and offers of view of the River. “Within the Forest trail, we would like to provide educational placards identifying different plant life and geological characteristics. Also we hope to enrich the Town Forest, through plantings, for wildlife benefit and diverse tree growth.

Question Three-projecting 10 years, realistic or unrealistic hopes: “To complete the above would be ideal. Continued improvement of over 5 miles of trail would keep us busy enough. However, the Georges River Land Trust is planning a further continuation of the trail at the upper end of Dunbar Road in order to connect with

Warren's section of the Highland Path. Of course we would be participants in that project. The Town's vote to create a park on the Prison property mandates that the Conservation Commission be included in any discussion. We foresee our trail passing through that property on its way to the Town Beach. The ideal situation in my crystal ball would be seeing the entire community using the trail and parks, whether it is a nature hike through the forest or enjoying a picnic at a waterfront park."

Question Four: re Thomaston's greatest need from a recreational point of view:

"I cannot speak for our organization in this matter. But for myself, the greatest contribution to the educational, recreational, and cultural life of this town would be an auditorium."

**9) Midcoast Community Band**— Director Jo Anne Parker responded to the questionnaire section with a general answer on [Thomaston's] future wants and needs:

Each town music group "would benefit greatly if one or both of the following facilities were to be made available at the site of the soon-to-be-vacant Maine State Prison: an *auditorium* and/or an *outdoor bandstand*. If the bandstand were to be an option I would recommend that it be large enough to hold a 50-piece band and have overhead lighting and power available inside the structure. Imagine being able to have outdoor concerts in the evening—something I don't think any other community offers at this point. Also if power were in place, an amplification system could be used. The mind boggles with the endless possibilities of such a structure. It goes without saying that the town of Thomaston needs an auditorium. I know that such a building has been considered by the local school district, so I'm sure the town would be in touch with the school board so that duplicate plans are not made."

**10) Other Music Programs:** In put during a town meeting on Recreation on January 18, 2001 of a professional musician and teacher in the SAD 50 system (Beverly dalPozzal) revealed that studio space, performance center, access to piano, organ, and possibly other instruments would be necessary to realize a town-wide music program. Suggestions at the same meeting were focused on the desirability of having summer music programs (such as operettas) involving the whole town, but it was generally agreed that the pre-requisite for such would be an auditorium, separate or as part of a community center.

**11 Church Programs:**

1) *The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist*, The Rev. Peter Jenks: In answer to Question One re programs and facilities in place, as follows: (nb:some comments are condensed) "Our facilities consist of a Sanctuary that holds approximately 125 people, two meeting spaces downstairs as well as a kitchen, library, and several offices upstairs. A number of different groups use our space. From yoga classes to cub scouts, to AA, to the Midcoast Orchid Society, a weekly bridge group, cribbage games, school planning groups, library, singing groups, music lessons, birthday parties, youth overnights, to people who need a place to sleep or use a shower our space is multifaceted and oftentimes occupied." Non-profit and community groups may use the space free of charge; donation is suggested for profit groups. Question Two re future use in next 10 years: The church is meeting with the Red Cross to see if the space can be used for emergency shelter. The church is small, the outside space is limited, but future use may depend on community needs. Question Three re long range "dreams": Adapt our space for more concerts and plays since the space has excellent acoustics and provides and intimate seating. "We have talked in general ways about how our facilities and people might work more closely with the schools for mentoring and other educational programs. Question Four, The Thomaston's greatest

need from a recreational point of view: “Personally I would like to see an indoor pool somewhere in the area, along with a theatre or auditorium, but then Watts Hall is quite adequate. It would be great if the police station and town hall were moved to appropriate accommodations allowing for better backstage space where the police station now resides.” [Note: the police station occupies a large segment of upstairs Watts Hall]

**2) *The Federated Church*, The Rev. John C. Shaw, Sr.:** Question One, programs and facilities now in place: (condensed) Senior exercise group – meets 2 times a week...and they get work out of muscles while seated; Cub Scout pack 215; Senior Social – meets once a month and open to anyone 55 and over. MS support group with programs and speeches. Church services every Sunday. Question Two: additions to programs in next 2-3 years: Youth group activities for Jr.-Sr. High age which would be a combination of fun, service projects, and Bible study. Question Three, Future of your organization in next ten years, realistically or not: Two other worship services and an outdoor Amphitheater style chapel for weddings and services with a staff of two or three clergy and a full time administrative staff. Question Four: Thomaston’s greatest need as far as recreation goes: “Convention center, rec area combination. This would allow for large conferences to be held here as well as facilities that would provide for pick up sports and games, skating rink (indoors), indoor track for general exercise and competition meets. (Srs, youth, and Special Olympics).”