

TOWN OF FREEDOM

DRAFT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2011

2011 Freedom Comprehensive Planning Committee

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March, 2011

Dear Friends of Freedom:

This document, the Freedom 2011 Comprehensive Plan, is the end product of many meetings and functions of Freedom citizens with extensive assistance for the past two and a half years from a professional planning consultant from Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG). Multiple public informational meetings, monthly public committee meetings and several special events sponsored by the Joint Comprehensive Plan /Planning Board Committee (CP/PBC) over the past four years attempted to inform, educate and seek the input and assistance of Freedom residents.

Work on the present Comprehensive Plan began in 2004 when the CPC (chaired by Hilary Fleming) surveyed the residents. In 2009 Freedom hired a KVCOG consultant to assist the committee, and the Planning Board joined the CPC forming the Joint CP/PB Committee. From the outset residents were invited to participate in monthly meetings, educational presentations, and sub-committee work. The traditional posting sites in Freedom as well as the town web site and local newspaper were used consistently to announce Comprehensive Plan meetings and events. The Joint Committee held a pot-luck supper, a Vision Session, an informal survey, personal and telephone interviews; while sub-committees, town officers, and town committee chairs worked countless hours gathering data and submitting reports used in creating the Comprehensive Plan. Selectmen who contributed a great deal of time and effort for the Joint Committee supplied valuable data and information and were informed of the committee's progress at each Select Board meeting. Response from town citizens to surveys and events helped create a vision for Freedom's future and directed the course taken by the 2011 Comprehensive Plan for Freedom.

It was an honor and pleasure chairing the Joint Committee. I sincerely thank all committee members, town officials, and residents over the years who generously volunteered many hours of help, and we all owe Fred Snow of KVCOG a huge debt of gratitude. Everyone's support has been invaluable and greatly appreciated.

We now ask for your support, and recommend adoption of this Plan for Freedom's future.

David W. Bridges, Chair, Freedom Joint Comprehensive Plan/Planning Board Committee

Town of Freedom
Draft Comprehensive Plan
2011
Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Development of the Comprehensive Plan.....	1
2	Population.....	4
3	Economy.....	10
4	Housing.....	20
5	Transportation.....	28
6	Agriculture and Forestry.....	37
7	Water Resources.....	42
8	Critical Natural Resources.....	47
9	Recreation.....	53
10	Historic and Archaeological.....	57
11	Public Facilities and Services.....	61
12	Fiscal Capacity.....	74

13	a. Existing Land Use.....	81
	b. Future Land Use Plan.....	87
14	Regional Coordination.....	96
Appendices:	Map Section.....	101
	Attitude Survey and Visioning Results Section.....	110

Chapter 1: Development of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a process for setting forth a set of recommendations for local action to improve the community, based on information about the past and expectations for the future. A Plan for a town functions in much the same way as a business plan – developing goals and strategies for controlling costs and increasing benefits. In the case of a community, of course, benefits are measured not in profit, but in the welfare of its citizens.

Comprehensive planning is not a state mandate, but the law identifies a set of goals and guidelines for towns that do engage in planning. The goals and guidelines are intended to ensure that local plans support any necessary land use regulation and qualify for state-based grants to improve growth-related public facilities. Freedom’s Plan is written to comply with those guidelines.

The comprehensive planning process is designed to be a reflection of community attitudes and desires. Freedom’s Plan is the result of an inclusive process that began in July 2009.

The Process

A Comprehensive Plan was prepared for Freedom in 1991 but was not adopted. A renewed effort began in 2004 with a Land Use Attitude Survey, which showed most were concerned about protecting rural character, the village center, access to Sandy Pond, and encouraging overall recreational opportunities. A high percentage of respondents showed an interest in having the Town manage development. Survey results can be found in the Appendix. Following the survey a rough draft of a Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 2008. A decision was made to seek assistance from KVCOG to work with a Comprehensive Planning Committee to prepare a Comprehensive Plan that would meet State Planning Office guidelines.

A Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) appointed by the Select Board began July 2009 meeting monthly including the KVCOG consultant every other month for the first phase of the process to develop a Comprehensive Plan. Using KVCOG issue papers based on “Comprehensive Planning: a Manual for Maine Communities” and the State Planning Office checklist as resources the CPC explored and discussed local (and regional) issues related to all topic areas required by the Growth Management Act. These topic areas include: agriculture and forestry, critical natural resources, water resources, economy, transportation, public facilities, fiscal capacity, recreation, historic and archeological, housing, population, and land use. The public was kept apprised of and were invited to CPC meetings by a link on the Town’s website, through flyers at the Town Office and Freedom General Store, through an oral and written report at March 2010 Town Meeting and by a monthly article about CPC discussions of each topic area in the Republican Journal by CPC member Sally Hadyniak. At the November 2009 election the CPC conducted at the Town Office a follow up attitude survey and served coffee. Survey results indicated that most favored adopting a commercial site plan review ordinance and open space subdivision provisions.

In a half day Community Visioning exercise facilitated by the KVCOG consultant in January 2010 the CPC attempted to reach out to residents – to generate some interest and excitement for the process as well as information about local priorities. The Community Visioning exercise was held in the basement of the Freedom Congregational Church, and attended by 28 people. In a series of brainstorming sessions, attendees were asked to identify big issues in town and suggest some priorities and solutions. Results indicated Sandy Pond and the Village were considered the most important special places in Town. Preserving farmland/open space ranked very high. Lack of a way to evaluate development proposals and a need for better municipal fiscal management also ranked high. Since the Comprehensive Plan sets future direction for local government, attendees were asked to rank where the town should focus its efforts (expressed in terms of spending priorities). The top three priorities were: 1) farmland protection, 2) roads, and 3) recreation facilities. Other priorities ranked highly were: historic preservation, the school system and economic development. Results from the Community Visioning exercise are in the Appendix.

During the rest of 2010 the CPC met monthly to discuss and propose policies and strategies that would address issues and goals for each of the topic areas mentioned earlier. Subcommittees including interested CPC members and other residents were formed around topic areas and assisted in gathering local data and posing strategies for the Plan. As the CPC developed analyses and vision statement and chose and generated policies and strategies for this draft Plan it intentionally factored in results from attitude surveys, Community Visioning exercise and oral comments from attendees at CPC meetings.

Vision Statement

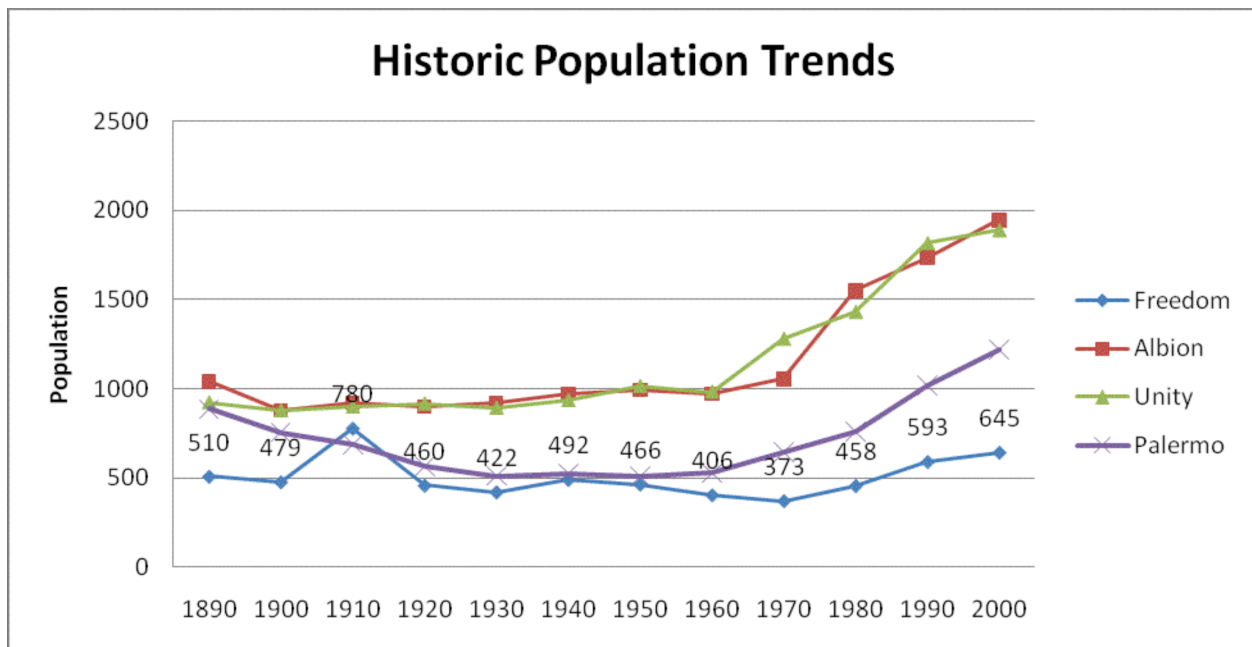
A vision is an image of what we want our community to be like in the future. The Vision Statement stems from public participation feedback and Comprehensive Planning Committee involvement. Freedom’s Vision Statement establishes an image of what we want our community to be like in 2020 and is as follows:

- Freedom is a small but diverse community consisting of village and rural landscapes, young and old residents, artists and entrepreneurs, farmers and professionals, visitors and lifelong residents;
 - Freedom at the crossroads for several adjacent towns that lack clear town centers (Knox and Montville) has a vital village with the old mill and most of its other existing buildings retrofitted with a diversity of small businesses, local services, housing and events for people of all ages in the community and in two adjacent towns;
 - Freedom has a wonderful rural landscape, scenic vistas, and enough undeveloped land to preserve the quality of Sandy Pond with a variety of local farms, public access to open space, outdoor recreation and protected critical resource areas;
 - Freedom maintains a relatively low tax rate while providing quality public services. Active volunteering keeps the community vibrant and municipal costs down.
 - Freedom provides economic opportunities and housing choices by managing and encouraging new development in a Village Growth Area near the existing village and encouraging re-development in the existing village in such a manner that neighborhood values, environmental resources, and the cost of public services are not adversely impacted.
-
- Freedom provides recreational opportunities to people of all ages and abilities and serves as a sportsmen's (hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, hiking, etc.) destination as well as a center of activity for local residents including good public access for boating and swimming at Sandy Pond.
 - Freedom collaborates locally and regionally to enhance land conservation, develop recreational trails, minimize service costs, and improve mutual aid.

Chapter 2: Population and Demographics

Historic population trends illustrate change over decades. Figure 2.1, below, shows Freedom's population trends for the past 110 years, along with those of nearby towns. Freedom has experienced slow and steady gains for over the past forty years, but has yet to regain a peak population of 780 in 1910. In contrast, Albion, Unity, and Palermo have experienced rapid growth in population since 1960, after little or no growth in the earlier part of the century.

Figure 2.1



Decennial census data in Table 2.1 includes 2010 municipal population released as this Plan was being finalized. This table compares Freedom's growth rate between 2000 and 2010 with that of nearby communities.

Table 2.1
Freedom's Population Growth Compared with Nearby Communities

	2000	2010	00 - 10 Growth	% growth
Freedom	645	719	74	11.5
Albion	1946	2041	95	4.9
Unity	1889	2099	210	11.1
Palermo	1220	1535	199	25.9

Table 2.2 summarizes Freedom's population from recent decades, as well as population projections in italics for the Town prepared by the Maine State Planning Office (SPO) prior to 2010 census. These projections indicate a slowing, and perhaps even a decline, in population growth through 2030. For the decade 2000 – 2010 population gain (74) noted by 2010 census is significantly more than the increase (30) projected by SPO. However a predicted prolonged gradual recovery from the severe 2008/2009 national economic downturn coupled with prolonged high gas and oil prices make gradual, slow population growth in Freedom the most likely scenario for the next ten years.

Table 2.2
Freedom's Population 1950 – 2030

Year	Population	Percent change
1950	466	
1960	406	-12.9
1970	373	-8.1
1980	458	22.8
1990	593	29.5
2000	645	8.8
2010	719	11.5
2020	<i>694</i>	<i>-3.5</i>
2025	<i>692</i>	<i>-0.3</i>
2030	<i>680</i>	<i>-1.7</i>

Population Components: Migration and Natural Change:

Population change can be broken down into two elements: ANatural Change,@ which is the difference between births and deaths, and AMigration,@ which is the difference between those moving into town and those moving out.

Natural change tends to be a fairly slow-changing number, based on trends in longevity and fertility. Between 2000 and 2010, Freedom recorded a net gain of 15 (15 more births than deaths).

Migration tends to respond more to economics. People will choose to move into or out of a community based on factors such as availability of employment, cost of housing, and perceptions of community vitality. Migration is calculated as the difference between population change and natural change. In the 1990=s, Freedom had an in-migration of 14 residents. Between 2000 and 2010 the town had an in-migration of 59.

Families and Households:

The measuring stick for many demographic trends from the perspective of the Census Bureau is not persons, but AHouseholds.@ Households consist of everyone living in a housing unit, whether they are single persons, families, or unrelated individuals. There are occasionally

persons who do not live in a household, and are classified as living in group quarters, but these are ignored statistically.

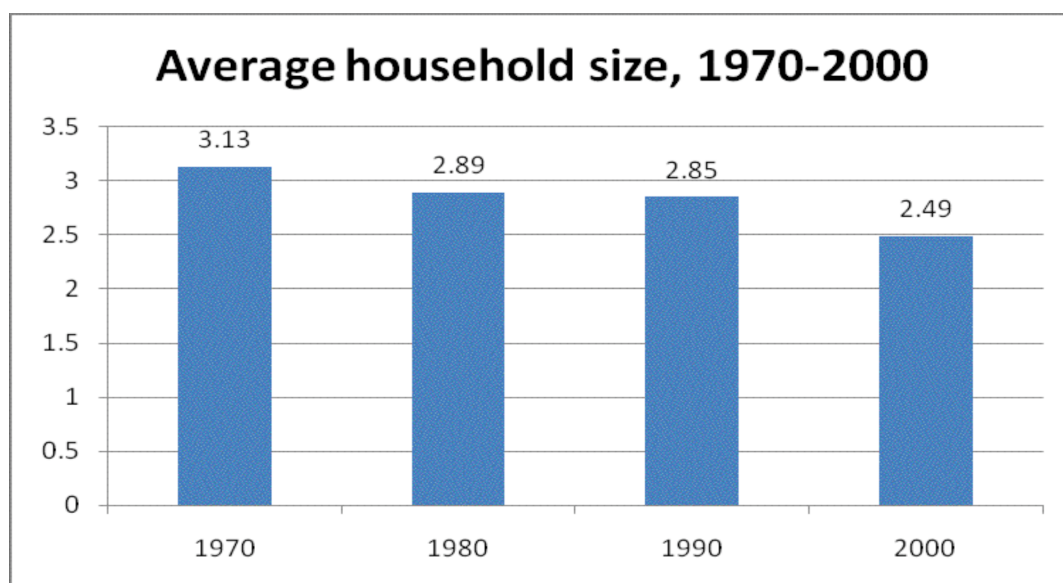
Table 2.3 illustrates the type of households in Freedom, and how they are changing over time. The table demonstrates the conventional wisdom that traditional two-parent families with children are becoming less dominant in Freedom, at least to some extent. The percentage of married couple families fell from 68% to 57% of the total between 1990 and 2000. Every other household type is growing in double or triple digits. Single-parent families, in particular, are increasing rapidly.

Table 2.3

Household Type	1990	2000	% Change
All Households	210	259	23.3
Single-person Households	37	57	54.1
Single-person "Over 65"	13	19	46.2
Married-couple Families	142	148	4.2
Single-parent Male-headed Families	7	15	114.3
Single-parent Female-headed Families	8	19	137.5

Note that the total number of households increased 23.3 percent during the same decade that the population increased by only 8.8 percent. The logical conclusion is that the average size of a household is getting smaller, which is indeed the case (see Figure 2.2 below). This is supported by the double digit increase in the number of single-person households.

Figure 2.2



Fewer people in more households means the average persons per household has declined. Throughout the country, the average number of persons per household has been trending this direction for decades. Factors include smaller families, broken families, more independent living among the elderly, and delayed marriage among the young.

The shrinkage of household size is not just an amusing statistic; it has an impact on development in Freedom: at 3.13 persons per household in 1970, we had 319 houses for every 1,000 people. At 2.49 in 2000, it now takes 402 houses for the same number of people.

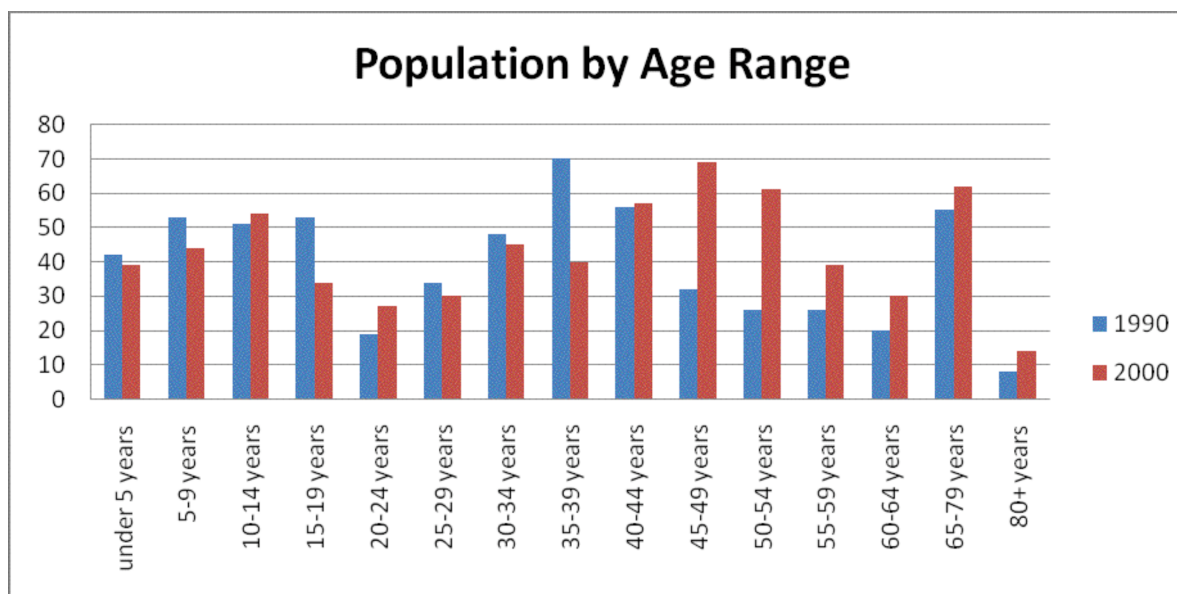
The type of housing can influence household sizes and, therefore, population growth. Different housing types are in demand for one- and two-person households than three- and four-person households. The construction of a senior housing complex, the demolition of an apartment building, or the development of a large-lot subdivision -- all will influence the size of housing units, therefore the relative mix of household sizes, age groups, and number of children and elderly in town. This is an area in which Freedom could actually impact its future, by steps which encourage or discourage suburban housing or apartments.

Population Features:

Other physical features of the population are highlighted in the census. One of the most important of these is age. The age profile and trend of the population can tell us whether we should be planning for new schools or new senior citizen centers.

In nearly every community over the past few decades, the significant feature of the age issue has been the Baby Boom. These are persons born generally between 1945 and 1965. There were a lot of them; so many that their impact was felt first in schools, then, as they aged in starter homes, now in upscale and vacation homes, and soon in retirement centers. Figure 2.3 shows the population of Freedom, by age, in 1990 and 2000.

Figure 2.3



Nearly one-third of the town was children in 1970; it is now down below __. However, Freedom's elderly population has remained at a relatively constant percentage of the total (See Table 2.4.)

Table 2.4

Population by Age Group, 1970-2000 Census								
Age Group	1970	%	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
under 18	120	32.2	144	31.4	184	31.0	160	24.8
18-64	203	54.4	262	57.2	346	58.3	409	63.4
Over 65	50	13.4	52	11.4	63	10.6	76	11.8
Total	373	100	458	100	593	100	645	100

Another measure of a community aging is its Median Age. A median is a point at which exactly half the population is above and half below (not the same as Average). As shown in Table 2.5 below, Freedom's median age in 2000 was 41.5. This is more than a six year increase in age from 1990 (age: 34.8), and more than an eleven year increase in age than the median age in 1980 (29.8). Now, while most of us, as individuals, age ten years in a decade, it is not the same with a population. If the median age of a population rises, it means that more people are being added to the old side of the balance than the young side.

Table 2.5

Median Age in Freedom, 1980-2000			
Town	1980	1990	2000
Freedom	29.8	34.8	41.5
Albion	28.8	33.5	36.8
Unity	25.2	26.9	30

Freedom's median age is older than that of neighboring towns. As shown above, Albion and Unity have lower median ages, and are "growing old" at a slower pace. Freedom's median age in 2000 was also older than that of Waldo County (39.3) and the State of Maine (38.6).

The census also tallies race and national origin. Racial proportions are not a big issue in Freedom. Like most of Maine, only about 3 percent of the Freedom population is non-white including mixed-race. Most of those are of mixed Native American origin. In Waldo County, 98 percent of the population is white, and in Maine, the figure is 97 percent.

As previously indicated the overall population growth rate in Freedom is slowing. The elderly is growing faster and the young under 18 is in decline. There could be some demand for elderly housing but overall there should be minimal demand for housing, municipal and school services. Ten percent of housing units in Freedom as of 2000 were considered seasonal. Town

data through 2009 showed this category increased by only 3. There is some effect but not a significant dependence on the Town's seasonal population.

Chapter 3: Economy

GOALS:

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

To promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

The lifeblood of a community is its economy. Economic activity adds value to the community, in the form of homes, businesses, and public services. Economic opportunities allow us to move a step forward, seeking more value and additional growth in the community. This chapter addresses both the statistical aspect of the economy – income, employment, and education characteristics – and the geographic and structural characteristics of our business climate.



Nineteenth century Freedom was a center of industry and prosperity. By 1850 there were 950 residents in town which supported a variety of industries including a flour mill, woolen mill, shingle mill, corn mill, a tannery and shovel factory. To support the population the town also had a dry goods store, two cheese makers, millinery, general store, barber shop, two blacksmiths, and a shoe store. The town also had a physician and dentist. None of these businesses, except a general store, exists today.

Today Freedom is a bedroom community. With the growth of automobile transportation and a myriad of improved roadways many of the residents commute to larger communities around Freedom. There are opportunities in Belfast (20 miles), Waterville (22 miles), Augusta (31 miles) and Bangor (40 miles). With growing employment opportunities in area towns Freedom has experienced steady growth over recent years.

The most conventional measure of a community's economic health is income. The US Census reports two basic types of income measures: Per-capita income, (PCI) which is the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and Household Income, which is the median income of the households within the town. The latter is more helpful from a planning perspective, since households are the basic social and economic unit of the community.

Per capita income (PCI) can be used for comparisons among geographic areas, such as towns. Freedom's PCI in the 2000 census was \$15,492. Although Freedom's PCI is higher than

Thorndike's and Unity's, it shows a negative growth rate, calculated in inflation-adjusted dollars. Waldo County, as a whole, was higher in 2000 than Freedom, with a PCI of \$17,438. Maine overall had a PCI of \$19,533 in 2000.

Table 3.1
Freedom Per Capita Income (PCI)

Town	1990 PCI	2000 PCI	Percent Change*
Freedom	\$13,673	\$15,492	- 19%
Palermo	\$11,064	\$17,827	29%
Thorndike	\$8,950	\$13,090	14%
Unity	\$9,668	\$15,086	24%
<i>* % change calculated after 32% decade inflation</i>			

Median Household Income (MHI) represents the actual budget for most families. Since household income is calculated based on all family members earning income, individual households can see a dramatic jump if a spouse or other family member starts working. Freedom's MHI as reported to the 2000 census was \$33,125. Once inflation is added in, in fact, there was a gain in real dollars of \$2,525 of the MHI from 1990 to 2000. Freedom's income levels are similar to Waldo County, which in 2000 recorded an MHI of \$33,986.

Table 3.2
Freedom Median Household Income (MHI)

1980	1990	2000
\$10,550	\$20,694	\$33,125

Looking at median income, however, does not give us a picture of the *distribution* of income levels. Table 3.3, shows a breakdown of income levels. The 2000 Census identified over thirteen percent of Freedom households earning less than \$10,000 per year, and another 40 percent earning less than \$35,000 (roughly 80 percent of the median). This information will be useful in determining the need for affordable housing. Another 4.6 percent earn more than \$100,000 per year as a household. The comparison with 1990 shows a general rise in income levels, though that is expected over a decade interval.

Table 3.3
Freedom Household Income Brackets 1990 – 2000 Census

Range	1990 #	% of Households	2000 #	% of Households
Less than \$10,000	45	20.6	34	13.1
\$10,000 - \$35,000	127	58.2	105	40.3
\$35,000 - \$100,000	41	18.8	109	41.9
Over \$100,000	2	0.9	12	4.6

The census attempts to identify the sources of income as well. In Freedom, 25 percent of the households receive social security, and 4.2 percent receive public assistance. In 1990 27.5 percent of households received social security and 10 percent received public assistance.

The Census Bureau also calculates the *Poverty Rate*, a figure varying from county to county and the number of persons in the household. An actual “poverty level” for an area is not published by the census (because it is different for each household size) but the number of persons below that rate is reported. In 2000, 99 residents of Freedom fell below poverty level, representing 15.4 percent of the population. That is lower than the 19.1 percent below the poverty line in 1990. The 2000 number included 8 persons over the age of 65 and 27 under 18. It represents 22 families. Five of those are single mothers. The single-mother poverty rate in Freedom is over 31 percent.

The labor force refers to the number of people either working or looking for work within the working-age population. The Census Bureau considers everyone over age 16 as working-age, including those already retired. Changes in the labor force affect the supply of workers for potential job growth.

In 2000, the labor force in Freedom consisted of 335 people, 65 percent of the working-age population. That total included 152 women (62 percent of female adults in the labor force) and 183 men (67 percent of female adults).

Unemployment is also reported by the Maine Department of Labor, which takes monthly surveys, and gives a more accurate picture than the US Census’ decennial survey. The labor force includes both employed and unemployed workers. In 2000, 27 people were unemployed, a rate of 8.1 percent. Table 3.4 highlights Freedom’s unemployment history beginning in 2004. Table 3.4 indicates that beginning in 2006 through 2009 Freedom’s unemployment rate approached or exceeded 2% more than Belfast Labor Market Area and 3% higher than the State’s average unemployment. These rates indicate that Freedom has been affected by the national recession.

Table 3.4
Freedom Unemployment Rate

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Freedom	5.7	4.6	6.8	7.4	8.4	10.8
Belfast LMA	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.6	6.2	8.9
Maine	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.6	5.4	8.0

Freedom is a net exporter of workers to other municipalities. 2000 Census data reveals that 261 or 78% of the Town's labor force commuted to work outside Freedom. Table 3.5 indicates from State Planning Office data the top five work destinations outside Freedom by the number commuting to each of them.

Table 3.5
Primary Work Destinations and Number of Commuters From Freedom

Work Destinations	Number of Commuters
Belfast	45
Augusta	36
Waterville	33
Thorndike	23
Unity	20

The census reports on the occupation and type of employment of residents. In 2000, 31 percent of Freedom's workers were executives, managers, and other professionals. The next largest category was "skilled labor," with 26.1 percent followed closely by sales at 24.5 percent. In 1990, only 22.3 percent of the workforce was in the "professional" classification, with the next largest category being skilled labor, at 18.5 percent. Only 23 percent of workers are now in what we view as the traditional occupations of farming, fishing, or woods work.

In 2000, 59.4 percent of the workforce worked for private companies, 25.2 percent worked for a government entity (including schools) and 15.5 percent were self-employed. Twenty-one percent of Freedom's workers were in the "educational, health, and social services" industry, with 13.9 percent in construction, 11.6 percent in retail, and 11.3 percent in manufacturing. In 1990, 19 percent of the workforce was employed in manufacturing.

Manufacturing grabs headlines when another plant shuts down. Yet, it is clear from the figures that manufacturing is no longer a significant player in the local economy, employing less

than one in eight workers. Local skills are now in health and education, and management, which, have been growing at every level. Economic development aimed at health, education, and other service-related jobs will best serve the current workforce profile.

Another factor in economic development efforts is the education level of the workforce. Jobs that require mastery of math, science and problem-solving skills are more likely to be attracted to areas with higher educational levels. College graduation is almost a basic requirement for many professional, health-related, and educational positions. Income levels are also higher for jobs demanding more education.

87.5 percent of Freedom adults are high school graduates and 22.7 percent are college graduates. Freedom's college attainment is close to that of Waldo County and Maine (22.9 percent).

Table 3.6
Percentage of High School and College Graduates in Freedom

Municipality	High School	College
Freedom	87.5	22.7
Palermo	86.5	17.2
Thorndike	81.6	18.4
Unity	80.1	20.4
Belfast	82	29.1
Waldo County	90.1	22.8
* percent of persons over age 25		

In terms of retail and service businesses not much has changed in the past decade or so. Almost all businesses in Freedom are small and most of these are home occupations. There is no public sewer or water in the Town. The following is a list of businesses in Freedom:

Agricultural:

Chase Farm: Penny and Addison Chase, vegetables

Village Farm: Polly Shyka and Prentice Grassi, Community Supported Agriculture

Gold Top Farm: John Ingraham, nonresident, cropland in Freedom

Freedom Farm: Ginger Durmott and Daniel Price, vegetables

Basil Barnes: dairy farm 437-5483

Raven Berry Farm: Brian Raven, pick-your-own strawberries, raspberries & vegetables

Brian Jones: Christmas trees

Dave Spencer: dairy farm and hay

Hague Brochu: maple syrup and beef

Mark Raven: vegetables

Meredith Coffin: organic garlic stock and soybean seed

David Bennett: hay

Steve Bennett: hay and wood, leased land for crops

Wilson Hess: cropland

Ron Price: leased land for crops

Retail:

Freedom General Store, Paul and Kate Flynn (nonresident)

Construction, Contracting, Trades, Trucking

Waylon Wolff, WTW Earth Moving and Trucking (nonresident)

Brian Mitchell, Metal Roofing

Doug Gould, State Wide Trucking

Gerry Spaulding, Trucking

Cliff Lewin, Flower Delivery

Nancy Bailey Farrar, Welding and metal craft design

Basil Higgins, Welding

Ted Reynolds(nonresident), Builder and Rental Properties

Dave Phillips, Trucking and Rental Properties

Clint and Christine Spaulding, Clint Spaulding N Family Trucking

Larry Turner, Trucking

Tim Randall, Truck Cap Builder

Jay Guber (CEO), Home Builder and Modular Home Sales

Dwight Gould, Trucking

Michael Buckley, Builder

Roger Littlefield, RL Trucking & Gravel

Services

Rick Martin, Wood Cutting

Cliff Lewin, Flower Delivery

Becky Furrow, Daycare

Michele Kelly, Daycare

Jay Guber (CEO), Building Inspection

Joann E Knowlton, Hair Styling

David (Jeff) Richardson, Catering

Francis Walker, Pie Cones

Debora Diemer, Reike Therapy, Seamstress

Creative Design and Production

Gary Luiz Me. Antler Design

Joe Ascrizzi, Art and Museum Restoration

Nancy Bailey-Farrar, Welding and Metal-craft Design

Donna Sporie, Leather Creations

The only recent industrial scale development in Freedom has been Beaver Ridge Wind, a 4.5 MW wind farm of three turbines on Beaver Ridge. It began generating electricity in 2008, and has two local employees.

Several banks in Waterville, Unity, and Belfast provide employment. Bank of America (formerly MBNA) employs many regional people at its credit card service office complex in Belfast.

Pike Industries, a highway construction corporation with a plant in Fairfield, provides work for many regional residents including several from Freedom.

The Educational Institutions in the region supply staff and professional employment for Freedom residents. SAD 3 occupied its new K-12 school complex in 2009. It services 11 regional rural towns. Waldo County Technical Center located in Waldo receives SAD 3 students. Local citizens are employed in both professional and staff positions. Unity College, Unity, remains a source of employment for several Freedom residents e.g. a past President, two retired professors and one dean presently reside in Freedom.

Johnny's Selected Seeds is a home-grown garden seed supplier of its own certified seeds. The company has consistently expanded since it began, and provides jobs for Freedom residents. From a back yard type operation just 20 or so years ago, it now employs 150 people supplying seed stock to gardeners and farmers throughout North America and beyond.

Regional health care facilities offer consistent employment opportunities. Waterville has Inland Hospital and two campuses of Maine General Medical Center. Waldo County General Hospital is in Belfast; Sebasticook Valley Hospital is just 30 miles north of Freedom in Pittsfield. Two regional health clinics, one in Albion and one in Brooks, also provide local people with employment opportunities.

Opportunities for large commercial and industrial businesses would be enhanced by a public water and sewer system, broadband, and greater access to three phase electrical power. Expense is the primary issue in providing these services. Three phase power comes into Freedom along Route 137 from Knox Ridge entering along Belfast Road and continuing to the corner of High and Main Street and southerly to Mitchell Road where lines bear easterly down the Mitchell Road and up the east face of Beaver Ridge to Beaver Ridge Wind Farm. Three phase power could be extended into growth areas. According to a strategy in this chapter the Town will take steps toward making public water and sewer available in growth areas by researching community public water and sewer systems in nearby towns and possible funding sources for these systems. The current recession and high fuel costs could reduce the number of commuters living and wanting to live in Freedom. Freedom's village has a number of historic buildings but many are in disrepair. This situation may offer an opportunity for businesses for affordable building retrofits in the village. The Visioning exercise revealed an interest in encouraging more small businesses in the Village area and home occupations throughout town. An attitude survey asked about types of businesses desired and results included a bakery/café/restaurant, agriculture and light manufacturing. Tourism is not an important part of the economy. Freedom has not indicated in surveys or Visioning exercise an interest in fostering tourism. The Town's priorities for economic development don't conflict with KVCOG's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan. There are no local or other regional economic development plans.

Action Plan

Policies:

- To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the community.
- To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.
- To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.

Strategies:

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Appoint a volunteer economic committee to explore economic initiatives and provide financial support, if necessary, for economic development activities.

Select Board
Year 1

- Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.

Planning Board
Voters
Year 2

- Research economic possibilities in tourism, outdoor recreation, agriculture, and natural resource based businesses.

Economic Committee
Year 2

- Research options for technical assistance, develop and adopt incentives suitable for the types and locations of economic development desired in the community.

Economic Committee
Year 2

- Promote current home-based businesses on town website and in quarterly newsletter.

Economic Committee
Website Master
Newsletter Editor
Year 1

- Assign responsibility to participate in Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) meetings.

Select Board
Year 1

- Continue to provide financial support for economic development activities at KVCOG.

Select Board
Ongoing

- Survey neighboring towns to determine shared economic development objectives.

Assigned person, KVCOG
Year 2

- Explore collaborations that would bring scarce resources into the area and maximize buying power.

Economic Committee
Year 2

- Participate in regional economic development efforts that are feasible and reflect Freedom's economic goals. If public investments are foreseen, as required, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local dollars, Community Development Block Grants, other grants, impact fees, bonding, etc..)

Select Board
Economic Committee
Year 2

- Develop and adopt incentives suitable for the types and locations of economic development desired in the community.

Select Board
Economic Committee
Year 2

- Review and amend as necessary standards for home occupations and cottage industries.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Research community public water and sewer systems in nearby towns for applicability to Freedom and possible funding sources for these systems as steps towards making public water and sewer available in growth areas.

Economic Committee
Year 1

Chapter 4: Housing

GOAL: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

In Freedom, housing numbers have grown faster than the population. The reason for this is declining household size. The total number of housing units in 1970 was 138. In 2000, the count of housing units had risen to 321. The town gained 183 housing units (133 percent) in thirty years, and only 272 residents (73 percent). As evidenced below, this housing growth is more than what has been evidenced in the neighboring towns of Albion and Unity in the past forty years, but not nearly as high as the rate in Palermo, which has grown substantially as a bedroom community of Augusta.



Table 4.1

Total Housing Units					
TOWN	1970	1980	1990	2000	% change, 70-00
FREEDOM	138	201	259	321	133
ALBION	362	559	698	805	122
UNITY	466	641	783	926	99
PALERMO	223	478	644	789	254

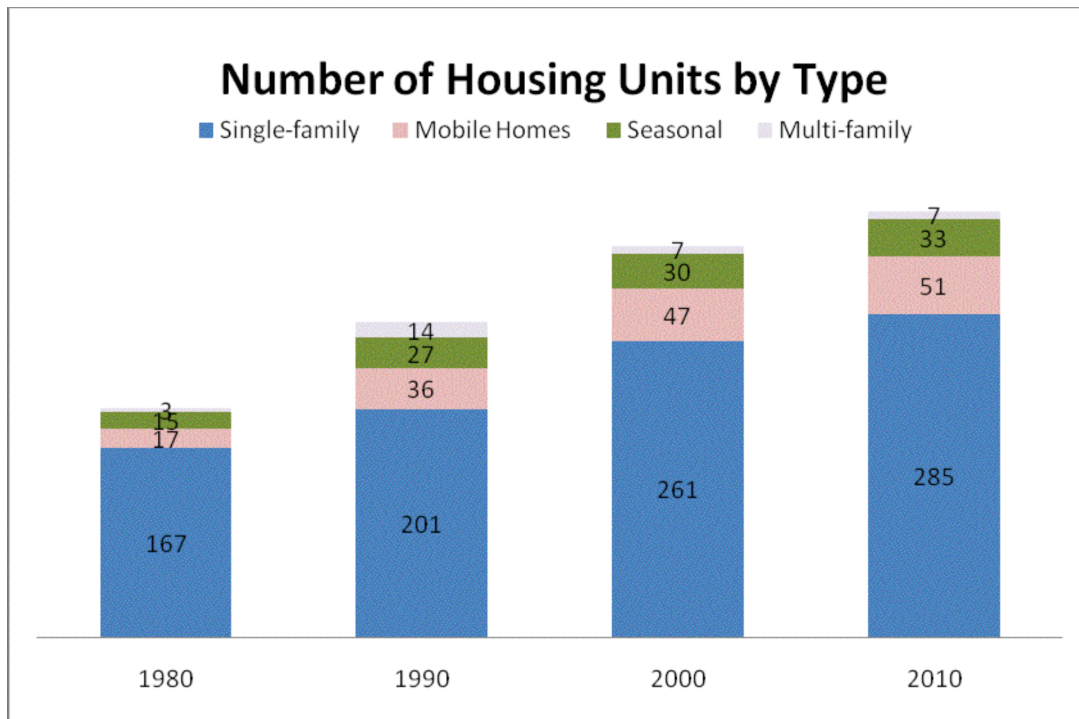
Approximately nine percent of the housing stock – 30 structures as of 2000 – are seasonal “camps,” unoccupied when the census was taken. The rest are year-round homes. Most of these are occupied, but in 2000, 19 percent of the year-round “owner-occupied” homes were vacant. A few seasonal homes have been converted to year round use but the impact has been minimal.

The figure above is based on the decennial census. Since 2000, we have only local tax records to refer to. They show another 38 year-round housing units between 2000 and 2009, plus three camps.

Housing Profile:

As housing stock changes over time, so does the nature of the community. Figure 4.1, below, profiles the type of homes in Freedom, and how they have shifted over the years. From 1980 (the first year mobile homes were counted as a separate category) to 2010, the number of mobile homes has gone from 25 to 62, an increase of 40 percent (37 units).

Figure 4.1



The number of multi-family units jumped during the 1980's, but have dropped back since then. The number of seasonal units in town has seen slow, steady growth. Traditional single-family, "stick-built" homes continue to be the mainstay of residential housing growth in Freedom, having increased by 118 units over 30 years, a growth rate of 71 percent. Mobile homes also make up a good portion of the housing stock in Freedom, offering an affordable housing alternative for many families. As is common in rural towns, Freedom has few rental units- about ten percent (31 units). These general proportions of housing types are also represented in recent housing trends, as evidenced by building permits issued in the Town of Freedom in recent years (Table 4.2). The category "Other" in Table 4.2 refers primarily to building additions and accessory structures where most building activity has occurred for the past 8 years.

Table 4.2
Building Permits Issued in Freedom

Year	Single-Family and Double-wides	Mobile Homes	Other
2003	1	0	17
2004	2	2	13
2005	8	2	40
2006	3	2	32
2007	7	1	32
2008	11	1	12
2009	3	0	17
Year	Single-Family and Double-wides	Mobile Homes	Other

2010	1	0	18
Total	36	8	181

The census does not tally how many rental units are apartments versus homes, but we can make a good guess. The total number of rentals is 52. The number of multi-family units is 7, a few of which may be owner-occupied. A good guess would be that most of rentals in Freedom are mobile or single-family homes. In 2000, 15% of occupied housing units in Freedom were rentals.

Table 4.3 contains housing projections for Freedom through 2030. These projections use State Planning Office population projections, and assume a 5% decrease in persons per household every ten years. They also assume a constant demand for rental units of 15%. Table 4.3 shows that with slow population growth projected there will be a need for only 8 additional housing units over the next decade and with declining population projected a surplus of housing units for the following decade. However the 2010 census shows a 2010 population of 719. If the same 3 percent gain indicated in Table 4.3 is assumed for the population between 2010 and 2020 then the 2020 increase of population would be 22 with a need for 10 additional units.

Table 4.3
Projected Population and Housing Data for Freedom

	2010	2020	2030
Population Estimate	675	694	680
Population increase during the decade	30	19	-13
Estimated Persons Per Household	2.37	2.25	2.13
Additional Housing Units needed	13	8	-6
Owner-occupied	11	7	-5
Rental	2	1	-1

The 2000 Census reports on the age of homes in Freedom. Fifteen percent of homes were built between 1990 and 2000, and 28.6 percent were built before WWII. The best decade for home-building in Freedom was the 70's, when 22.3 percent of the total housing stock was built. Freedom's housing growth in the last decade has lagged behind that of the Waldo County average. The county as a whole gained 19.5 percent of its housing since 1990, and has 28.5 percent pre-war housing units.

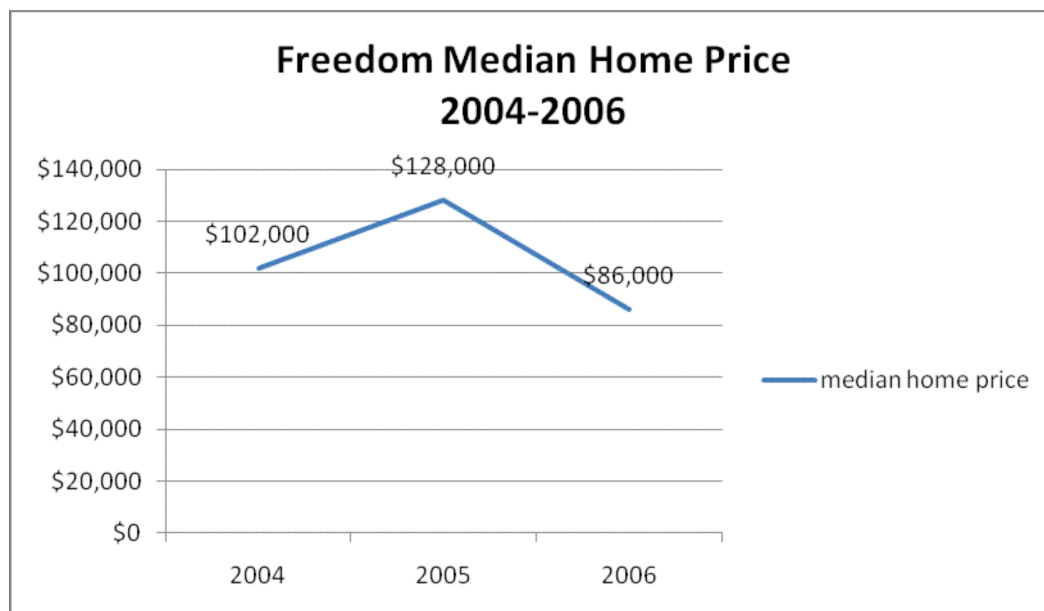
The census is also responsible for determining whether housing is "substandard." There are many indicators of this. For example in 2000, 35 year-round homes in town lacked complete plumbing facilities, and 8 lacked a telephone. Thirty-four percent of the year-round homes used wood as their primary heating source, though much of this amount is likely a matter of choice rather than "substandard". And 16 homes (5 percent of the total) consist of either one or two rooms.

Housing Prices and Affordability:

Freedom homeowners, like many in Maine, have been on a roller coaster ride of property values for the past twenty years. The U.S. Census asks homeowners their opinion of their homes' value on census surveys. Between 1990 and 2000, the median value of a Aspecified@ (stick-built, on less than ten acres) owner-occupied home rose from \$55,000 to \$65,000, or 18 percent. Inflation over that period was 32 percent, so homeowners lost value.

Since 2000, property values increased. In 2006, based on actual sales, the median price of a single family home in Freedom was \$86,000. That is a 32 percent gain over six years. With the recent recession having had a major effect on housing prices nationwide, it's highly likely this trend has reversed. Note the drop from \$128,000 in 2005 to \$86,000 in 2006 in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2



The price of a home reflects a balance between the willingness of a seller and the ability of a buyer. However, the *affordability* of housing is a public issue. If the families, who currently live and work in town cannot afford the housing that is available, it means a turnover in ownerships and a loss of the existing population. The character of the community will change as a result. Affordability B the relationship between housing cost and income B is a goal of the Growth Management Law, but frankly, the bar is set pretty low, as it only requires that *ten percent* of new housing be affordable to families making 4/5 of the town's median household income.

To determine the affordability of housing, the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) compares the median income in an area with the median home price, and creates an affordability index based upon the findings. If the index is higher than one, the area is considered affordable. If the index is below one, many residents will find the area to be unaffordable. The index rating, along with the median home prices and incomes for 2004 through 2006 are summarized in Table

4.4. In 2006, Freedom was an affordable place to live, with the median home price well below what was affordable to a household earning the median income.

Table 4.4

Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
2004	1.08	\$102,000	\$36,481	\$33,742	\$110,279
2005	0.91	\$128,000	\$37,500	\$41,408	\$115,919
2006	1.38	\$86,000	\$40,400	\$29,202	\$118,978

In 2000, an affordable home for the *median* income household in Freedom was approximately \$100,400. Since Freedom's median home price was \$65,000 in 2000, and \$86,000 in 2006, this is a preliminary indication that affordability is not a major issue in the town's homeowner market.

However, thirty-nine percent of Freedom residents in 2008 were considered Low, Very Low, or Extremely Low Income, so affordability of housing is a concern. As summarized by Table 4.5 below, the majority of renters in Freedom were low-income, as were a significant number of potential homeowners.

Table 4.5

	Extremely Low Income (\$12,519 or less)	Very Low Income (\$12,520-\$20,866)	Low Income (\$20,867-\$33,385)	Moderate Income (\$33,386-\$62,597)
Number of Households (2008)	40	33	44	99
Homeowners	29	24	36	91
Renters	12	8	7	9
Potential homeowners (25-44)	4	1	3	6

Average numbers do not tell the whole story, however. They obscure the needs of certain income groups. Seniors or young people, for example, may suffer in the housing market if there is not at least a distribution of housing prices. According to MSHA data, 35 percent of seniors in Freedom have an income less than half of the median. Most of those are homeowners. Table 4.6 below, summarizes data about lower-income seniors living in Freedom.

Table 4.6

Senior Households (2008)	Extremely Low Income (\$12,519 or less)	Very Low Income (\$12,520-\$20,866)	Low Income (\$20,867-\$33,385)	Moderate Income (\$33,386-\$62,597)
#Seniors 65 and older	11	10	14	17
Senior (65+) Homeowners	9	9	12	17
Senior (65+)Renters	2	1	2	0
#Seniors 75 and older	1	5	10	9
Senior (75+)Homeowners	1	5	8	9
Senior(75+)Renters	0	1	1	0

MSHA says that renters aged 25-44 are the most likely to buy a new home, yet nearly one out of three in Freedom make less than half the median income. For many young families in Freedom, low income may keep them out of the housing market. Table 4.7, below, identifies some of these more vulnerable members of Freedom's community, and the figures for the whole of Waldo County, as well.

Table 4.7

	Freedom	Waldo County
Total Number of Residents	645	36280
Number of Children Under 5	75	2024
Number of Children Under 5 living below the poverty level	10	401
Number of Families	182	10,053
Number of families below poverty level	51	1603
Number of families with Children Under 5 living below the poverty level	10	401
Number of single-parent-headed families	34	1929
Number of single-parent-headed families living below the poverty level	29	962
Number of single adult families in the workforce living below the poverty level with children under 5	8	245

MSHA has a program especially tailored for first-time homeowners. In Freedom, this program is not used frequently; only one family took advantage of the program from 2004 to 2008.

There are several governmental subsidy and assistance programs for renters making half or less of the median income. In Freedom, there is one subsidized housing unit, as of 2008.

There may be a need for additional senior or assisted living housing, which will be met locally. Strategies in this chapter address this issue.

Freedom in particular and Waldo County in general does not have a specific affordable housing coalition.

Freedom's town wide 2 acre minimum lot size requirement discourages affordable housing. A smaller minimum lot size allowed in a designated growth area would encourage affordable housing.

Action Plan

Policies

- To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.
- To seek to achieve at least 10% of all housing built or placed during the next decade be affordable.
- To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

Strategies

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot sizes, setbacks and road width, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to make housing less expensive to develop.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Assess current and future local housing needs.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.

Planning Board
CEO
Year 1

- Support a local affordable housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition if and when one is formed.

Selectmen
Year 1

- Designate location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A MRSA 4358(3)(M).

Planning Board
Year 1

- Make affordable elderly housing a primary goal when supporting regional affordable housing.

Selectmen
Year 1

- Educate homeowners concerning energy efficiency.

Conservation Commission
CEO
Year 1

- Educate residents about Maine State Housing Authority program for first time home buyers and assistance programs to low income renters by offering brochures or other information at Town Office, General Store and Town website.

Selectmen
Economic Committee
Year 1

Chapter 5: Transportation

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

As Freedom grows and becomes more interwoven with neighboring communities, the need for a quality transportation system becomes more and more important. Businesses need transportation to move products and draw customers. Commuters need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to get out of town workers here. Families need transportation to schools, services, shopping, and recreation. And tourists and summer residents need a way to get here.



The transportation system to this point has grown somewhat organically; that is, we grew up from cow paths and wagon trails to the highways we use now. As the cost of building and maintaining the system grows, though, we suddenly have to begin planning for how to manage it with more limited resources.

Roads:

There are approximately 29.7 miles of public roads in Freedom, which are noted on a Transportation Map in the Appendix. Route 137 also known as the Belfast Road is a State Highway that's 4.82 miles long. This route branches off Route 202 in Albion and entering northwestern Freedom runs easterly until it intersects with North Palermo Road then bears towards and exits near the northeast corner of town passing through Freedom village. North Palermo Road is the primary state aid road that enters the south end of Freedom from Palermo running northerly for 5.5 miles until it intersects with Route 137. Pleasant Street is a State aid road that intersects and begins at Route 137 and runs easterly through the village to intersecting boundary with Montville and Knox. Albion Road is a State aid road that intersects and ends at North Palermo Road and runs westerly to Albion. The remaining public roads amount to 17.85 miles. Roads are shown on a Freedom Transportation Map located in the Appendix.

The following table shows the length of specific public roads, their condition and road surface type along with problems if any.

Table 5.1
Public Roads In Freedom

<u>Public Road</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Condition</u>	<u>Surface / Problems</u>
<u>State Highway</u>			
Belfast Road (Rte 137)	4.8	good	paved
<u>State Aid Roads</u>			
Albion Road	0.6	good	paved
Pleasant Street (village)	0.9	fair	paved/ditches full
North Palermo Road	5.5	fair/good	paved needs maintenance
<u>Village Streets</u>			
Main Street	0.1	fair	paved/ditches full
Mill Street	0.1	poor	needs re-paving, ditches full
High Street	0.3	fair	paved/ditches full
<u>Town Roads</u>			
Wentworth	0.1	fair	gravel
Russell	0.1	good	gravel
Bryant	1.0	good	paved
Clark	0.2	good	gravel
Mitchell	2.9	good/fair	paved/surface broken/gravel
Raven	1.3	good	paved/gravel
Ayer Ridge	2.5	good	paved
Townhouse	0.8	good	gravel
Glidden	0.16	poor	gravel
Waning	0.5	poor	paved
Deer Hill	0.4	good	gravel
Sibley	1.0	good	paved
Goosepecker Ridge	1.0	good	paved
Penny	0.5	good	gravel
Smithton	1.6	good	paved/gravel
Burnham Hill	0.6	fair	gravel
Greeley	2.5	good	paved
Beaver Ridge	1.0	good	gravel
Rollins	0.8	fair	paved/gravel
Davis	0.74	good	gravel
Stevens	0.3	good	paved

Bridges:

Bridges in Freedom are noted on the Transportation Map in the Appendix. The following table shows location, ownership, and condition of bridges in Freedom:

**Table 5.2
Bridges In Freedom**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Condition</u>
Pleasant Street	Sandy Stream	State	Good
Belfast Road	Sandy Stream	State	Good
Mitchell Road	Winslow Brook	Town	Poor (Rail, guards)
N Palermo Road	Sibley Brook	Town/State	Fair (narrow)
N. Palermo Road	Pratt Brook	Town/State	Fair (narrow)

The two bridges on North Palermo Road in Freedom are adequate for automobile and pick-up truck use but too narrow for larger trucks to pass in opposite directions on them. The two bridges on State aid North Palermo Road need widening. The two bridges in Freedom Village respectively on Pleasant Street and Belfast Road are in good condition. The bridge spanning Winslow Brook on Mitchell Road is in poor condition because of insufficient guards. The south side of the bridge has been severely damaged by snow plows in the past and hangs over the brook suspended by the steel reinforcing rods in the concrete. The cables guarding the sides of the road leading to and from the bridge have collapsed to the ground and provide no protection. The guard rail system and south side of the Winslow Brook Bridge on Mitchell Road need repair. Guard rails need to be installed along part of Mitchell Road in this vicinity including near the culvert of Penny Pond outlet stream.

Maintenance:

The roads owned by Freedom are maintained to provide adequate means of transportation for its citizens. The State takes care of all maintenance of Belfast Road (Route 137) because it's a State Highway. The town does only winter maintenance for North Palermo Road, Pleasant Street (Hall Dale Road) and Albion Road, because they are State aid roads. Town roads are maintained year round by the Town. Maintenance of town roads is accomplished through Selectmen acting as road commissioner. There is a need for a more formal written maintenance plan.

Budget:

In the 2009-10 the Town budget for roads totaled \$108,500. The roads expenditure was partially offset by \$26,906 from Maine Department of Transportation Urban-Rural Investment Program (URIP) funding. The town has provided sufficient funds to maintain Freedom's roads, but not sufficient funds to re-pave sections of paved roads that are in need. Federal and state

funds have financed the re-construction and re-paving of some road sections damaged due to extreme weather conditions.

Safety:

Some of Freedom's roads contain either demonstrated or potentially dangerous areas. Between 2006 and 2008 one crash occurred at the intersection of Route 137 (Belfast Road) with North Palermo Road and one crash occurred at the intersection of North Palermo Road and Greeley Road/Albion Road. The intersection of Route 137 with Ayer Ridge, Mitchell and North Palermo Roads is hazardous having three separate town roads intersecting with Route 137 within about 300 feet of a sharp turn on the State Highway. The intersections of Pleasant Street, High Street, and Main Street in Freedom Village with Route 137 are respectively a potential hazard from limited visibility. There is a need for a pedestrian crossing near the intersection of Route 137 and Pleasant Street. The speed limit in the village needs strict enforcement. Two sections of road in Freedom are notable for crashes during 2006-2008. Five crashes occurred during that period on Belfast Road between Glidden Road entrance and the Albion town line. Seven crashes occurred over the same time period on North Palermo Road on the section south of Greeley/Albion Road intersection to the Palermo town line. The Town's Subdivision Ordinance has a standard that subdivisions be designed to minimize access points to any public road utilizing side roads and using common driveways where reasonable.

Traffic:

Traffic is not a problem in Freedom in general; however there are times when it can be noticed, and a few places where traffic can originate temporarily. Along State Route 137 (Belfast Road), Freedom General Store and the US Post Office both generate traffic daily but not to any great extent. The store generates traffic early morning when people are going to work, at noon, and around 5-6 PM. The post office has most of its activity midmorning and the sight distance in one direction is poor. Dirigo Grange Hall on Route 137 is used as a meeting center in town for large gatherings and in addition to monthly Grange meetings, generates some traffic at those times. Farm traffic in the form of trucks hauling corn silage, hay products, manure and equipment to and from the several farms located in Freedom and neighboring towns is seasonally noticeable. The Common Ground Fair held the third weekend of each September generates lots of traffic for three days each fall since Route 137 is a primary route to the fair.

Parking:

The area in front of the town office building and space adjacent to the fire house provides the only municipal parking area in Freedom, and provides 8 paved spaces in good condition. Though small it is sufficient for off road parking for town staff, selectmen, committee meeting held there. It is insufficient for large meetings such as the annual town meeting which is traditionally held in the Dirigo Grange Hall, consequently residents park in the small Grange parking lot along High Street and Stevens Road. Residents of the village have private driveways for the most part and do not park along streets. Winter road maintenance necessitates clear streets without parked cars along the margins. Freedom's Subdivision Ordinance has a provision that a subdivision will provide for adequate off road parking. Otherwise there are no parking standards or ordinance provisions related to parking.

Paths and Trails:

Freedom has three sources of off-road connection that could provide bicycle or pedestrian connection to neighborhoods and the region. The Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance (SWLA) maintains over 20 miles of foot trails some of which include Freedom. Freedom also has an active snow mobile club which maintains a system of trails with the potential for use by means other than snow mobiles. There is a Snow Mobile Trails map in the Appendix. Town roads that are “discontinued for maintenance only” and retain easement of access to backlands in town are traditionally used by bicyclists, pedestrians and others for recreational purposes. No potential off-road connections that would provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods, schools and other activity centers were noted.

No pedestrian sidewalks are extant though they (wooden sidewalks) did exist early in the last century when Freedom had a diverse business population along Main and Mill Streets in addition to the vegetable cannery in the present location of the Skidgel property on Skidgel Lane.

Public Transportation:

Public transportation is very limited in Freedom. The Waldo County Committee for Social Action provides a van to Freedom residents primarily for doctor and medical appointments. There is also a van from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Togus available to veterans needing transportation to and from the center. The need for additional public transportation did not surface in the attitude surveys or in the Visioning exercise.

Miscellaneous:

Current and future community plans don’t appear to be significantly impacted by State and regional transportation plans. Part of the existing village area and proposed new growth area will be located along a portion of State highway Route 137, which is one element that can encourage more growth in those areas. Implementation of proposed strategies in this chapter will address needed access management and actual and potential conflicts caused by multiple road uses affecting ability of highway to safely and efficiently move traffic. Current and projected population along with existing land uses and development trends fall below the threshold that would support a cost effective passenger transportation system. There is no rail system. Environmental degradation caused by transportation facilities or operations is not apparent but may be occurring. Strategies in this Comprehensive Plan address this topic. There does not appear to be a local concern with traffic noise or inappropriate street lighting. There is also not a concern about scenic, historic, or cultural resources within or adjacent to transportation facilities being affected by transportation expansion. There are no known locations with opportunities to restore habitat connections disrupted by transportation facilities. The Town follows State standards for the design, construction and maintenance of public roads. The Subdivision Ordinance requires subdivision roads to conform to minimum state standards and be sufficient for emergency vehicles. There is no road ordinance. The potential for existing private roads to become public roads is low. This Plan will positively affect safety, congestion, mobility, efficiency, and interconnectivity of the transportation system leading to road design standards that support the type of village, suburban or rural land use pattern the Town wants.

Action Plan

Policies

- To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems
- To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.
- To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.
- To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).
- To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.

Strategies

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Develop a ten year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation infrastructure that reflects community, regional, or state objectives. Provide for annual update.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1
- Review and consider the model Road Surface Management System developed by Maine Department of Transportation's Local Roads Center.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1
- Inventory potential parking sites in village and support efforts to improve unsafe parking situations and expand public parking.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1
- Limit strip development along State Highway.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Encourage new building in growth areas and design interior streets with accommodation for walking and biking.

Selectmen
Planning Board
Year 2

- Actively participate in regional and State transportation and land use planning efforts.

Selectmen
Ongoing

- Enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to be consistent with local, regional, and state transportation policies identified in this Plan.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:
 - a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA Section 73)
 - b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 MRSA Section 704.
 - c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 MRSA Section 704-A.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Review and consider including in local ordinances applicable access management standards outlined in Maine Department of Transportation's "Access Management: A Handbook for Local Officials"

Planning Board
Year 1

- Enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation efficient growth patterns and provide for future street connections. For example: Single curb cut subdivisions instead of strip development. Where dead-ends are unavoidable mechanisms will be put in place to encourage shorter dead-ends.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Amend the subdivision ordinance to include provisions that subdivisions proposed to be accessed by roads closed to winter maintenance and/or roads deemed to be inadequate to

carry the traffic associated with subdivisions be prohibited unless road improvements are undertaken by the subdivider.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Encourage and increase availability of alternative means of transportation.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1

- Explore alternative sources of funding to improve pathways, car pooling networks, and travel corridors.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1

- Develop a long term permanent plan for repairing gravel roads that are vulnerable to flooding, washouts, and other hazards.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1

- Ask Maine DOT to take appropriate actions to minimize motor vehicle and bicyclists and pedestrian conflicts on Route 137 and State aid roads.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1

- Post agricultural traffic safety signs.

Selectmen
Year 1

- Promote safe options for people who walk, cycle, and horseback ride by maintaining road shoulders, using rural road classifications and maintaining trails.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Recreation Comm.
Year 1

- Maintain travel corridors for wildlife in rural areas by leaving large blocks of unfragmented land intact and research and consider other means of mitigating impacts where wildlife corridors cross roads.

Selectmen
Planning Board
Conservation Commission
Year 1

- Work with the Maine Department of Transportation as appropriate to address deficiencies in the local transportation system or conflicts between local, regional, and state priorities for the system.

Selectmen
Year 1

- Propose ideal design for clustering houses and connecting them that would limit driveways onto State roads and fit into the rural landscape.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Keep updated list of abandoned or discontinued roads including their current status regarding access, and inform building permit applicants if proposed driveway would enter on any road on the list.

Selectmen
CEO
Year 1

- Consider including parking standards in proposed Commercial Development Review Ordinance.

Planning Board
Year 1

Chapter 6: Agriculture and Forestry Resources

GOAL: To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development, which threatens those resources.

Commercial farmland is that land which is being used in the cultivation and production of food and/or fiber. Freedom's farmland provides many benefits to our community. The capacity to produce food locally is a tremendous asset for a community, too often taken for granted. Most of the food Maine people eat is imported from either western states such as California, or from foreign countries. As a result, our food supply could be interrupted or threatened for any number of reasons. Production from local farms can make substantial contributions to the food needs of the community at all times, but becomes much more valuable in times of high costs and supply disruptions.

Local farms contribute to the quality of life in the community. By keeping farmland as farmland rather than developing it, open space is preserved, enhancing the aesthetic qualities of the town and protecting environmental and wildlife habitat.

Farm and forest land provides a buffer against high taxes. Contrary to common perception, building tax base is not the best way to keep taxes down. With a few exceptions, tax dollars from new development do not pay their share of local costs. Hundreds of case studies through the US have shown that towns provide about \$1.06 in services for every commercial tax dollar they receive, and \$1.27 in services for every residential tax dollar. But towns provide only \$0.16 of services for every tax dollar from farms and woodland. Put another way farms and woodland pay six dollars in property taxes for every dollar of government services they require. All "tax base" is subsidized by the taxes from open land; the more land that gets developed, the less there is to subsidize. Perhaps this is why taxes are always higher in the cities.

Keeping the land base from being overdeveloped is economically important not just to the residents but also to the whole region. Rural areas provide balance to the businesses, and services of village and downtown areas. People in the region enjoy locally grown food. Mills rely on wood from small woodlot owners and the burgeoning alternative energy industry will need wood. A wide variety of businesses and individuals get economic benefit from forestry and farming activities, including truckers, logging contractors, foresters, veterinarians, feed suppliers, equipment dealers, mechanics, restaurants, markets, etc. On average, each dollar spent on farming becomes seven dollars in its impact on the local economy. This is a significant contribution to the economic well being of a community.



The principal farming enterprises in Freedom have historically been poultry, dairy, livestock, and fruits and vegetables. Dairy farms are increasing in size but are declining in number, and much of the grain fed to poultry is not grown in this area. Apple orchards are on the decline.

Farming however remains a viable industry, despite dramatic changes to the industry. The old model – large, full-time farms producing crops, animals, or other products for sale in bulk to the food industry – has become harder to sustain in the face of even larger, well-funded competition from better growing areas of the world. This model is represented by large barns and grain silos. A new model of farming in Maine produces small crops of high value produce for sale to local customers. These small farms can specialize in niche products and are flexible enough to shift products. This new model is represented by the local farmers markets, roadside stands, pick-your-own berries farms, Christmas tree farms, nursery operations and value-added products. The many farms in Freedom including a Community Supported Agriculture operation, firewood business, etc. listed in Chapter 3 of this Plan is an indication that agriculture is important to and supported by the Town.

This shifting trend toward small farms is amply illustrated in agricultural statistics for Waldo County. (Agricultural census statistics are only collected as low as the county level.) The number of farms in Waldo County in 2007 is the highest since 1987, with 424 farms. The number of farms increased more than 35% between 1997 and 2007. The total acreage in farms has dropped slightly from 71,890 acres in 1992 to 68,219 in 2007. As a result, the average farm size dropped as well: from 218 acres in 1997 to 161 acres in 2007. That is the statistical result of a few large farms shutting down and a lot of farms as small as five acres starting up.

Not coincidentally, while the value of traditional commodity crops like apples, dairy, and forage have flat-lined, non-traditional crops such as strawberries, and table vegetables have significantly increased. Also an increasing number of organic farms provide produce that fetches a higher price. Other reasons cited for this profitability include more local retail outlets, where farmers receive a premium over commodity prices and easier access to local restaurants and stores where farmers enjoy a steady market at near-retail prices.

This trend is also affecting employment and income at farms. Smaller farms do not employ as much outside labor, and in fact, fewer farms are full-time jobs for their owners. For the first time since the agricultural census was begun more farmers had farming as their secondary occupation than as their primary occupation in 2007. Of greatest importance, the average-per-farm income has gone from \$35,318 in 2002, to \$53,820 in 2007 a greater than 50% increase.

Current use real estate tax relief programs allow property owners a reduction in their assessed property value. These programs are considered farmland and forestland protection tools and can be utilized by landowners if they meet certain requirements. In the Farmland Current Use Program the property owner must have a tract with at least 5 contiguous acres. The tract must contribute at least \$2000 gross income from farming activities each year. The land must be used for farming, agriculture, or horticulture and can include woodland and “wasteland.” There is no minimum acreage requirement with the Open Space Current Use Program. In this program the land must be preserved or restricted in use to provide a benefit such as public recreation, scenic resources, game management or wildlife habitat.

Several farms in Freedom are enrolled in one or more current use programs. In 1996 seven farms in town enrolled 605 acres in the Farmland program. By 2010 the number of farms enrolled in the program had doubled to 14 and the number of acres enrolled had more than tripled to two thousand ninety one acres. Freedom presently has 9 tracts with 420 acres enrolled in the Open Space program.

A Freedom Farms Map located in the Appendix illustrates how much farming takes place in town. A list of farms in town indicating location of each farm by assigned number and what each produces is included with the map.

There are two categories of agriculturally significant soils recognized by the USDA that have been mapped in Waldo County: Prime Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Prime Farmland Soils, according to the USDA, have the soil properties needed to produce sustained high yields of grain crops. Farmlands of Statewide Importance have similar characteristics to Prime Farmlands, but not in great enough quantities to be labeled Prime Farmland. As the description of Prime Farmland above implies, less effort is required to produce high yields.

Many areas in Town with important farmland soils are still used for farming but they're at risk of being developed. An aerial photo of Freedom shows fields/farms along Ayer Ridge Road and Raven Road in the north central part of town. Freedom's Agricultural Resources Map located in the Appendix shows prime farmland soil and soils of statewide significance in these areas. These important farmland soils are also apparent near Irving Lane and Palermo Road intersection, along easterly portion of Route 137, and west of intersection of Davis Road and Greeley Road along the Greeley Road where there are working farms indicated on the aerial photo. There is also a considerable area of important farmland soils along both sides of Smithton Road, which has grown up to forest and is characterized by residential development along the road rather than farms. A new state mandate requires that significant farmland be identified during a subdivision review process.

Forestlands are defined by the State as land used primarily for the growth of trees and forest products. About 80 percent (11,033 acres) of Freedom's land area, is wooded. The forest provides the basic raw products for employment of many people and contributes materially to the wealth of landowners and the economy of the area.

Some harvesting of timber does occur in Freedom, though these operations are generally limited to small woodlots – no industrial forest holdings. Clearing trees for development is more of an issue than clear-cutting for forestry. Statistics from the Maine Forest Service indicate for the ten-year period 1999 – 2008, an average of 127 acres per year was cut in Freedom in about 11 harvest operations a year. Over the period, only 9 acres was clear cut, but another 24 acres was cleared for conversion to a developed use.

Forestland is also a major contributor to Freedom's sense of "rural" and contributes a number of benefits. The forest floor soaks up huge quantities of water, helping to prevent flooding and erosion, and filters out impurities. This water then replenishes our watersheds including Sandy Pond. The forest canopy takes in carbon dioxide, thereby cleaning and cooling the air. Freedom's diverse forested landscape provides habitat for amphibians, insects, birds, and mammals. The trees are a renewable energy source. Our farms and woodlands are

also either actual or potential tourist attractions, providing visitors opportunities to pick fruit, hunt, fish, hike, ski, snowmobile, horseback ride, bird watch and just enjoy nature.

The Tree Growth Current Use Tax Program helps keep forestland from being developed. In 1996 fifteen property owners enrolled 1106 acres of forested land in Freedom in the program. Since 1996 the number of property owners enrolled in the program has almost doubled at 28 and additional acreage enrolled has increased by 80% to 1993 acres. Many wooded parcels are not enrolled in the program for various reasons. Many woodlots are either too small to enroll in Tree Growth, or their owners do not want to be bound by a management plan

Currently, one of the hidden aspects of agriculture and forestry in Freedom is that it is being increasingly forced “out of view” – relegated to back lots with a tiny sliver of land providing access to the public road. Individual homes line rural roads, many on small lots. The visual image of half a dozen homes stretched back-to-back along the road clashes with the pastoral image of rural agriculture. To date incompatible uses including new houses have not yet affected the normal operations of farms or woodlot owners.

In addition to the image of rural life being disrupted, tracts of potential farmland are still being lost to development due in part to high property taxes and a demand for house lots. There are currently no local organized efforts to protect farmland or important farmland soils in Freedom, outside of the traditional role played by the Soil and Water Conservation District. There are organizations such as Maine Farmland Trust and the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine, which operate statewide respectively protecting farmland and forestland. Some farms do participate in federal Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs but the exact number is not available because NRCS no longer shares the number of local participants in its programs. Freedom does not have a street tree or other tree planting and maintenance program. While there are two regional land trusts, Sebasticook Regional Land Trust and Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance neither has protected land in Freedom. There are no steps the community is currently taking to protect farm and forest land beyond current use programs. Strategies in this Plan remedy that. There are no non-private farming or forestry activities in Town.

Action Plan:

Policies:

- Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.
- Promote the use of best management for timber harvesting and agricultural production.
- Support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.

Strategies:

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Establish a Conservation Commission to take a lead role in promoting agricultural and forestry activities and among other responsibilities in conserving natural resources.

Comp. Plan Implementation Comm.(CPIC)
Select Board, Town Meeting
Year 1

- Promote awareness of services from Maine Forest Service District foresters and Small Woodlot Owners Association and from Soil and Water Conservation District and Maine Farmland Trust.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Consult Maine Forest Service District foresters when considering land use provisions pertaining to forest management practices.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Consult Soil and Water Conservation District when considering land use provisions pertaining to agricultural management practices.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Review ordinances, if needed, to not restrict activities that support small farms and woodlot operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, and pick-your-own operations.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Amend subdivision ordinance with and include in site plan review ordinance a provision that subdivision or commercial developments in significant farmland locations must maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Limit nonresidential development in critical resource areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers markets, and home occupations.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Educate owners of productive farm and forestland to enroll in the current use taxation programs.

Selectmen
Year 2

- Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.

Economic Committee
Year 1

Chapter 7: Water Resources

GOAL: To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the state's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.

Freedom has three primary watersheds. One area, the southeast corner of Freedom, is part of the Sheepscot River watershed. That watershed is characterized as a small and fairly simple one. All of Freedom west of Beaver and Ayer Ridges is part of the Sebasticook River and ultimately Kennebec River watershed, a large and complex watershed. Five streams receive drainage from tributaries distributed along Ayer and Beaver Ridges. These exit Freedom along the western town line and eventually flow into Fifteen-mile Stream, which feeds the Sebasticook River which empties into the Kennebec River. Freedom's third watershed, composed of the northeast quadrant of town, creates Sandy Pond. It's only outlet, Sandy Stream, flows north skirting Unity Pond Outlet and joins Twenty-five Mile Stream before it empties into the Sebasticook River, which in turn contributes its waters to the Kennebec River. The watersheds are shown on Freedom's Water Resources Map located in the Appendix.



Sandy Pond receives two significant tributaries from the south. The first, Winslow Brook, originates west of Route 137 and flows eastward to Birch Lane then north into the pond. The second is the outlet brook (Keene Brook) of Penny Pond that flows into the southern-most end of Sandy Pond. Both of these tributaries have extensive wetlands and significant wildlife habitat areas associated with them. Along the east shore of Sandy Pond several simple streams drain Goosepecker Ridge in Montville directly into the pond. By contrast, the west shoreline of Sandy Pond receives drainage from only three tributaries, but they have massive wetlands associated with them. Much of the west shore of the pond is composed of wetlands and wildlife habitat essential for nesting wading birds and waterfowl.

Sandy Pond is the most significant standing water body in town. Two other ponds, Penny and Taylor, are not easily accessed, and are much smaller (less than 10 acres), and undeveloped. Sandy Pond, on the other hand, is readily accessible via a boat launch with a parking lot near the edge of Freedom Village off Pleasant Street. It is used as a recreational pond providing warm-water fish species such as bass and pickerel.

Sandy Pond is a warm-water lake of 440+/- acres and is shallow and in places quite weedy. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) have collaborated in the collection of lake data to evaluate

present water quality, track algae blooms, and determine water quality trends. Water quality monitoring data for Sandy Pond has been collected since 1978. In summary, the water quality of Sandy Pond is considered to be below average, based on measures of depths of water clarity using Secchi Disks, total phosphorous, and chlorophyll. The potential for nuisance algae blooms on Sandy Pond is high and have occurred in the past.

The ecological nature of Sandy Pond does not easily accept human habitation because it's shallow, relatively small, and therefore quite susceptible to the adverse effects of human habitation. Phosphorous has a major negative impact on freshwaters according to DEP and is typically the primary cause of eutrophication of a pond or lake. Potential sources of phosphorous include sediment from soil erosion, the direct discharge of sewage or malfunctioning septic system products carried to a water body via surface water runoff, runoff from agricultural practices near a water body, erosion of driveways near a water body, lawn and garden fertilizer dissolved in surface water runoff, and soil and sediment washed down ditches from roads. Sandy Pond is on DEP's Most at Risk from Development list.

Most of the watershed draining into Sandy Pond is characterized by large forested areas including wetlands, some farms and some but not a lot of single lot residential development along some roads. The Shoreland Zone of some of Sandy Pond has been developed into camping lots, seasonal camps, and a few year-round homes. Phosphorous loading within the Shoreland Zone is a potential problem for Freedom's brooks and ponds. Proposed development within or near the Shoreland Zone should be allowed only when protective measures are in place.

Freedom's waterways should be protected from additions of phosphorous. Every bridge crossing a drainage area delivers materials to that waterway at four points. Therefore road and ditch maintenance needs to be done with consideration to season and weather conditions protecting and preserving the surface water quality in town. Freedom requires employees and contractors to follow Maine's Best Management Practices for Road Construction and Maintenance when public roads are constructed and maintained.

Wetlands, regardless of size, act to prevent flooding by absorbing and dispersing excess rainfall; they serve as recharge areas for groundwater; they provide habitat for flora and fauna; and they act as water purifiers. There are a number of wetland areas within Freedom as the Water Resources Map indicates. At least a dozen wetlands are over ten acres and therefore protected by Shoreland Zoning standards.

The potential for flooding in town is limited to Sandy Pond, the two large wetlands on the northwest side of the pond, and along the banks of Sandy Stream - the outlet of Sandy Pond. Freedom has a Floodplain Ordinance, which is up to date and consistently enforced. The Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Sand and Gravel Aquifers

Sand and gravel aquifers are rare in Freedom. One sand and gravel aquifer in Montville, capable of producing 10-50 GPM (gallons per minute) of water to a properly

constructed well, just barely extends into Freedom along part of the east border and in southeast corner of town as indicated on the Water Resources map in the Appendix. The town of Freedom has no public water supply; therefore all domestic and public supplies come from wells. The yield and quality is considered to be good. The depth of wells varies with the site – the deepest known being 650 feet deep.

All surface area has potential for aquifer recharge, but wetlands are extremely important. As a result contaminants such as petrochemicals, soil amendments, fertilizers (lawn and agricultural), pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and other potential contaminants should be handled with caution. Wetlands and riparian areas are direct aquifer recharge areas and should be protected from potential contamination.

There are few known areas of potential ground water contamination in town. Two gravel pits operate, but the Freedom Landfill is capped and not used, and no known fuel or heating oil tanks remain underground in town. Consequently the ground water resources seem well protected and continue to supply the town with water of sufficient quantity and quality. However Skidgel's closed discount store on Skidgel Lane may have hazardous material housed onsite. Maine Department of Environmental Protection conducted a preliminary investigation in 2006. The potential for contamination of surface and ground water from this former business is uncertain.

There are no point sources of pollution but nonpoint sources are a concern. Shoreland Zoning updated to be consistent with state guidelines offers some protection to water bodies but it's the only local safeguard. For additional protection the Planning Board should consider incorporating low impact development standards and phosphorous control provisions in ordinances. There are no significant threats to drinking water supplies. Interlocal collaboration in protecting common watersheds particularly with Montville concerning protection of Sandy Pond would be useful. Collaboration with Waldo County Soil and Water Conservation District would also be helpful. There are no water resource advocacy groups active in the community.

Action Plan

Policies

- To protect current and potential drinking water sources.
- To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.
- To protect water resources in growth areas, while promoting more intensive development in those areas.
- To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

Strategies

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Provide water quality “best management practices” information to farmers and loggers, which include Maine Forest Service’s Best Management Practices for Forestry: Protecting Maine’s Water Quality.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Update the floodplain ordinance, as needed, so that it continues to be consistent with state and federal standards.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Enact public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms when necessary.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Consider incorporating low impact development standards in local land use ordinances.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Continue requiring water quality protection practices and standards for contractors to employ for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties.

Select Board
Conservation Commission
Ongoing or Year 2

- Collaborate with abutting towns if applicable to develop common watershed protection measures.

Planning Board
Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Ensure Sandy Pond has ongoing volunteer lake monitoring and encourage other citizen-based water quality monitoring efforts.

Planning Board
Conservation Commission

Year 2

- Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding invasive species.

Selectmen
Conservation Commission
Ongoing

- Develop ordinance standards to minimize phosphorus export for both subdivision and single lot development in the Sandy Pond watershed.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Provide inspection of erosion and sedimentation control measures during development construction.

Code Enforcement Officer
Ongoing

- Amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:

- The Maine Stormwater Management Law and Stormwater Rules (Title 38 MRSA Section 420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502.)
- DEP's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.
- The Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.

Planning Board
Year 3

- Continue efforts with owners of the Skidgel property and if necessary Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Environmental Protection Agency to resolve problem of hazardous waste at Skidgel's.

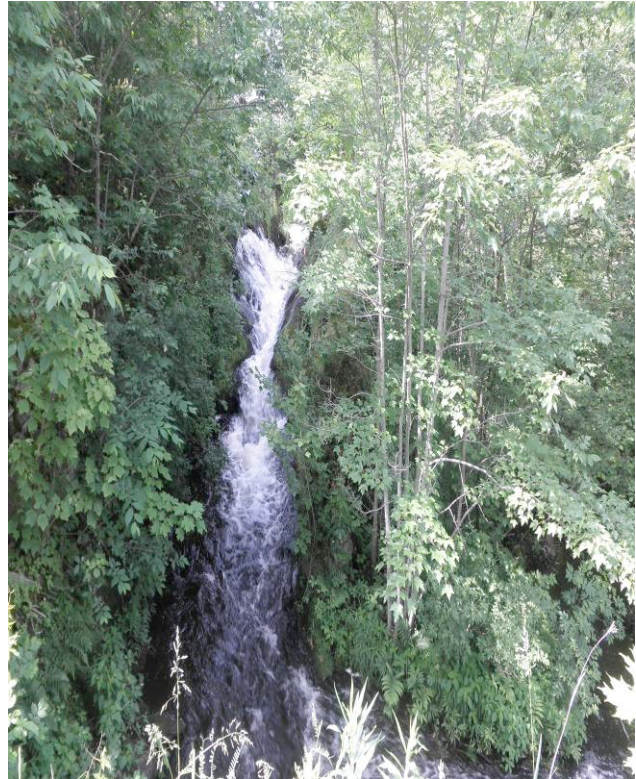
Code Enforcement Officer
Selectmen
Ongoing

Chapter 8: Critical Natural Resources

GOAL: 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.

The natural resources in Freedom are an asset for area residents as well as surrounding communities in the region. Freedom is fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional natural beauty and a high quality environment. Freedom's landscape consisting of rolling hills, and open space, is responsible for productive forest and farmland, wildlife for hunting and possible tourism, and the overall natural beauty of town.

Freedom has been covered and uncovered by ocean waters throughout its geologic history. That has resulted in a mixture of both marine and continental geological features. During the Silurian (1408 million years ago (mya)) and Devonian Periods (360 mya) sandstone and slates were laid down. On the eastern side of town during the Ordovician Period (438 mya) volcanic rock and sediment layers were deposited to later be changed to gneiss and schist rock formations.



A bent ridge runs the length of town from NE to SW somewhat down the center simulating a spine. On the north boundary the ridge follows Ayer Ridge Road to Hardwood Lane and on to Beaver Ridge. Beaver Ridge extends the spine of town south and exits with Sanford Hill along the south town line. This long ridge and one minor one divide the area roughly into three large blocks varying in size.

Subsequent to the last glacial retreat soils developed from deposits left behind. The Waldo County Soil Survey shows Freedom to have two general soil associations. First the Peru-Marlow-Brayton association is characterized as "deep, nearly level to steep, well drained to poorly drained soils formed in dominantly moderately coarse textured, compact glacial till;" whereas the second, Lyman-Peru-Tunbridge association, is characterized as "shallow to deep, gently sloping to very steep, somewhat excessively drained to moderately well drained soils formed in dominantly moderately coarse textured glacial till." The soils are varied with the best soils used traditionally by farmers. Much of that land is still in agricultural production. Freedom's Agricultural Resources Map shows prime farmland soils and is located in the Appendix of this Plan.

Soil type dictates where development may take place in Freedom. Due to the lack of available public water and sewer services in Freedom, development must take place where

soils exist which are suitable for private wells and the installation of subsurface wastewater disposal systems. Development is generally restricted from hydric soils.

Many of the soils of Freedom are well suited to agriculture and forestry. The same soil is also suitable for residential and commercial development. The increasing demand for housing in Freedom and the central Maine area can create a conflict in land use. Land use regulations must address this conflict. For agriculture to remain viable in Freedom it must be economically sound. The town is not willing to place undue burdens on agricultural businesses in Freedom.

Rural landscapes can preserve healthy natural communities of plants and animals. To ensure the health and continuity of such communities critical habitats have been identified and provided as maps by Beginning with Habitat, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW). These maps provide tools for planning town development ensuring that the appropriate high value plant and animal habitats are protected. Sufficient high value habitats must exist in large enough blocks to support populations of wildlife species, and seasonal habitats must have sufficient corridors connecting them to provide summer and winter homes for wildlife such as deer, as well as sufficient areas of adequate protection during migration between seasonal habitats. Some data from Beginning with Habitat maps have been transferred to a Critical Natural Resources (CNR) Map in the Appendix of this Plan.

Essential Wildlife Habitat are areas providing physical or biological features essential to the conservation of an endangered or threatened species in Maine, such as nest sites or important feeding areas that may require special management considerations. The CNR Map indicates a bald eagle nesting site at the south end of Sandy Pond. Eagle nests are no longer considered as Essential Wildlife Habitat because eagles are no longer listed as endangered or threatened species. Eagles are still listed as a species of special concern and remain protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Significant Wildlife Habitats are areas mapped or identified by DIFW and protected under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. They include state or federal endangered or threatened species habitat, deer wintering areas, significant vernal pools, high- and moderate-value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, and shorebird nesting, feeding, and staging areas. Permits are required for certain activities that occur in significant wildlife habitats.

The Maine DIFW has identified a number of significant wildlife habitats, including deer wintering areas and waterfowl and wading bird habitat, which are regulated by Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. The Act requires a permit for most land use activities that involve working in, or disturbing soil within or adjacent to a protected natural area (e.g. identified significant habitat).

Deer use forested areas of softwood with 60% canopy cover for wintering areas. Four deer wintering area are shown on the CNR Map. One is in the Sandy Pond watershed south west of Mitchell Road encompassing the upper part of Winslow Brook south and east of North Palermo Road but not including the large wetland south of Mitchell Road where the brook turns northeast and flows to Sandy Pond. The largest deer wintering area encompasses Sibley Brook between North Palermo Road and Route 137. It includes the drainages of several tributaries south of Route 137 and does not quite include Sibley Brook's confluence with Pratt

Stream. The third wintering region is on the western town line just north of South Freedom Road and impinges on an inland waterfowl/wading bird habitat encompassing a small brook. This is the smallest of the four deer wintering habitats but is by no means insignificant. The final deer wintering habitat shown in Freedom is an extension of a much larger portion that exists in Albion. Freedom's part of the large winter habitat is in the southwest corner of Freedom west of North Palermo Road and a bit south of Taylor Pond. The CNR map shows all four deer wintering habitats including areas of forest or forested wetlands — ranked as High Value Habitats by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This high value forest or forested wetland exists along most streams in Freedom, and the CNR map should be consulted for any planned development.

Inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat shown on the CNR map is also Significant Wildlife Habitat. Inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat is important for a number of functions. They provide significant breeding and migrating/staging habitat for inland waterfowl; as well as, breeding, feeding, loafing, migration or roosting habitat for inland wading birds. The west shoreline of Sandy Pond receives drainage from three tributaries that have considerable wetlands associated with them. Most of these wetlands and much of the west shore of Sandy Pond, which is largely composed of wetlands, is significant inland and wading bird habitat.

Beginning with Habitat Map 2 <http://megis2.dafs.maine.gov/ifwpdf/Freedom/Map2.pdf> shows numerous areas that are high value habitats for plant and animal species considered important by the US Fish & Wildlife Service(USFWS). These habitats include high value grassland, shrub and forested areas valued as essential to existence of USFWS priority species, and are therefore important and should be noted when development plans are considered in Freedom.

Freedom's Comprehensive Plan Committee has identified the following natural scenic areas as being valuable toward preserving the overall integrity and character of the community:

- 1) Chain of Ponds and Old Tote Road off Beaver Ridge
- 2) Gorge near the flowage wetlands near Lewin's Drive
- 3) the Ledges
- 4) Mills Falls
- 5) View of Sandy Pond near Montville line
- 6) View of the Village and wetland area from the crest of the hill near Pleasant Hill Cemetery
- 7) View to the west and north from the top of Beaver Hill
- 8) Length of Ayer Ridge Road to the town line with Unity
- 9) Stone bridge on Dumont's land on the Albion line

Two Freedom ordinances help protect critical natural resources. Shoreland Zoning standards protect riparian resources, including many areas identified as critical natural areas, by maintaining buffers and requiring development setbacks. The Shoreland Zoning ordinance was recently upgraded with amendments that meet new State Guidelines. Freedom's subdivision ordinance has a standard that requires that an existing buffer of trees be maintained along State and town road frontage. Visual screening is also required along all exterior boundaries of

subdivisions. Cluster development is allowed, but is not required by the subdivision ordinance. Existing measures do not sufficiently prevent fragmentation and degradation of critical natural resources.

One of the best tools to protect critical natural resources is permanent protection through purchase of land or conservation easements from willing landowners by a land trust or similar organization. The Sebasticook Land Trust covers Freedom's part of Sebasticook River watershed and two other land trusts the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association and Sheepscot Well-spring Land Alliance cover its portion of the Sheepscot River watershed in the southeastern part of Freedom. There is no current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources but Freedom can and should partner with both of the above mentioned organizations in the future.

There are a number of critical natural resource areas as well as prime farmland that warrant the Town's attention. Creating an *open space plan* with these areas as priorities for protection would be a major step towards the goal of effectively protecting these areas. An open space plan identifies areas with critical natural resources as well as other open space priorities. An open space plan identifies areas most in need of protection and puts municipalities in a better position to partner with outside organizations for whatever protective measures are most appropriate.

Freedom shares some critical natural resources with neighboring towns. Resource areas such as Sandy Pond (shorelands and pond) are shared with Montville. Interlocal cooperation needs to be extended concerning natural resources shared in common.

Protection of critical natural resources advances Comprehensive Plan policies in several areas. Protection of critical natural resources protects surface and ground water, protects aspects of economy based on Quality of Place including natural resource businesses such as farms and forest operations, outdoor recreation, etc..

Action Plan

Policies

- To conserve critical natural resources in the community.
- To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.

Strategies

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Research and communicate incentives to encourage landowners to implement permanent land conservation strategies.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Do not make local Shoreland Zone standards less stringent.

Planning Board
Ongoing

- Designate Shoreland Zoning Resource Protection Areas as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Consider amending subdivision ordinance and including in a site plan review ordinance a provision to provide Planning Board the authority to consider development impacts on scenic vistas when designated.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Include in site plan review ordinance outdoor lighting standards that will minimize night glare for non-residential development and land use activities

Planning Board
Year 1

- Require Planning Board to incorporate Beginning with Habitat maps and information during all development review and to require appropriate measures based on state agency comments to protect critical natural resources including changes in proposed site design, construction timing and/or extent of excavation.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Require MDIFW written comments when a portion of a proposed subdivision is within a High Value Plant and Animal Habitat Area as indicated on a State Beginning with Habitat maps to minimize negative impacts on those habitats.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical natural resources while including area land trusts.

Conservation Commission
Planning Board
Year 3

- Distribute information to those living in or near critical natural areas about applicable local, state or federal regulations and options for voluntarily permanently protecting open space.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Adopt natural resource protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties.

Select Board
Conservation Commission
Year 3

- Create an open space plan that includes a scenic inventory and assessment, identifies and prioritizes high value natural areas including farmland, and establishes strategies to pursue public/private partnerships to protect these areas such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.

Conservation Commission
Year 3

Chapter 9: Recreation

GOAL: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

Recreational opportunities abound in Freedom. Hunting, fishing, hiking or cross country skiing are actively pursued in Freedom, for the town is replete with large forested tracts of land accessible by discontinued roads retaining town access easements. Sandy Pond is used by fishers both summer and winter, while several small ponds and brooks provide additional fishing challenges for Freedom's residents and visitors. While most large landowners in Freedom do not restrict their land for hunting and fishing restricting traditional access is becoming more common. The North Star Riders, Freedom's snow mobile club, adequately maintains trails for all to use. See the Freedom Snowmobile Trail Map in the Appendix of this Plan. Conflicts between different uses are minimal. The Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance (SWLA) land trust maintains trails in the region some of which are in Freedom and all of which are available for Freedom residents to use as footpaths. The SWLA covers the southeastern portion of Freedom and the Sebasticook Regional Land Trust covers the remainder of the Town.



The Town Recreation Committee is appointed annually by Selectmen and remains active. The 2010 committee is Cindy Abbott, chair, Kim Holmes, Janet Boynton, and Scott Holmes.

Freedom Park, the 3 acre town park, is located within walking distance from the center of town with good public accessibility. An area of the park has been designated Mitchell Field in memory of Harold (Red) Mitchell, a long time first selectman of the town and strong supporter for a baseball field for the children in the area. The park includes a baseball diamond with dugouts, a small playground, a paved basketball court with basket supports, a horseshoe pit, and a picnic area complete with a concession stand. The baseball field was completely rebuilt and resurfaced with a new backstop donated by Competitive Energy Services in the fall of 2010.

Freedom Park occupies the original grounds of Freedom Academy which was destroyed by fire in 1957. When the town became part of MSAD 3, it kept the park for the townspeople to use for recreational purposes. Two monuments are at the park. One is on an area that had been the front lawn of Freedom Academy and commemorates the school. The second is close to the ball field and is dedicated to Harold "Red" Mitchell. In addition a Veterans Memorial Bench has been recently installed on the grounds and the Veterans Monument at Pleasant Hill Cemetery will be moved to Freedom Park and installed there in the near future.

The Freedom Recreation Committee holds Freedom Field Days annually at the park as a summer celebration of the town for its residents. The park is also used by the local softball, Little League and Farm League baseball teams for practice and games.

Sandy Pond, part of the Sebasticook River watershed, forms part of the town boundary line between Freedom and Montville. It is 440 acres with a maximum depth of 11 feet. This warm water pond is habitat for (non-native) largemouth bass (stocked in 1958/59) along with white perch, yellow perch, chain pickerel, pumpkin seed sunfish, horn pout (brown bullhead catfish), and various forage fishes. Various frogs, toads, and turtles thrive in and around the pond. Bird watchers may be rewarded with diverse nesting waterfowl and wading birds in the summer. In addition the brushy banks and wetlands bordering the pond abound with a wide variety of other birds and wildlife dependant on the pond habitat. Finally the south end of the pond houses an occupied eagle nest, and several offspring have been observed over the years as they emerged from their nest and joined other birds of prey on the pond.

There is public access to Sandy Pond at the public boat landing on Pleasant Street in the village. The pond is used for fishing, kayaking canoeing and swimming. Being rather small and shallow it is not well suited for speedboats or personal water craft. It is primarily a quiet little fishing pond. There are no other water bodies determined to have adequate access in Town.

Recreational facilities at Freedom Park were recently upgraded. However the Town needs to consider providing recreational opportunities for an increasing elderly population perhaps in collaboration with nearby communities.

Other than Freedom Park and the boat launch at Sandy Pond there are no important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation that are publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved. Freedom does not have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust to acquire important open spaces and access sites either outright or through conservation easements. Any important open space that's commonly used for recreation could be evaluated and prioritized as part of an Open Space Plan that will be developed as a strategy of this Plan. It's likely an open space fund and partnerships with area land trusts will be important elements in the Open Space Plan.

Action Plan

Policies

- To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
- To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.
- To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming; and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

Strategies

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that

strategy.

- Expand role of current recreation committee to develop a master plan to meet recreation needs of all ages and abilities and explore future needs based on changing demographics as well as opportunities to collaborate with other communities.

Select Board
Year 1

- Include public recreational facilities and spaces in or near designated growth areas.

Recreation Committee
Ongoing

- Include any capital needs identified for recreation facilities/spaces in the Capital Investment Plan.

Select Board
Year 1

- Do a feasibility study of making or expanding a multiple use recreation area on town owned land.

Select Board
Recreation Committee
Year 2

- Educate about supporting organizations that promote outdoor recreation activities.

Recreation Committee
Year 1

- Draft or oversee drafting a master plan for open space conservation development of a trail network and outreach with landowners. This could be part of developing an Open Space Plan.

Conservation Commission
Recreation Committee
Year 3

- Inventory, map, and classify (open or closed access) all trails in Town.

Conservation Commission
Recreation Committee
Year 2

- Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.

Conservation Commission
Recreation Committee
Year 2

- Educate residents about conservation easements and gifting rights of way as one way to preserve open space and public access for outdoor recreation.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Contact and collaborate with land trusts interested in working with residents to preserve open space and access to recreational opportunities.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Provide education regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property.

Conservation Commission
Recreation Committee
Year 2

Chapter 10: Historic and Archaeological Resources

GOAL: To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources.

Freedom was settled in May 1794 by Stephen Smith and his family and was named Smithton Plantation or Smithtown. This settlement developed from the operation of a sawmill on the Sheepscot River in Montville. Smithton was built on the high ground west of the river in what would later be incorporated into Freedom. The name was first changed to Beaver Hill Plantation, but by 1809 a more substantial village had developed on the banks of Sandy Stream north of Smithton. The new development was known as Hussey's Mill and became the site of many mills using Sandy Stream as hydro-power. This would become the village of Freedom.

The first recorded town meeting was held October 31, 1812 and marked the organization of the Town of Freedom. The name was selected due to anti-British sentiment fed by the War of 1812 celebrating independence from England.

Freedom was made part of a newly established Waldo County in 1827 when Maine achieved statehood as a part of the Missouri Compromise. In 1835 the town established new town boundaries by annexing the east side of Sandy Stream from Montville in exchange for a Goosepecker Ridge tract of land.

The town prospered in the nineteenth century. Sandy Stream powered a flour mill, woolen mill, shingle mill, long lumber mill, corn mill, a tannery, and a shovel factory. Some reports list a carding and a clothing mill as well. These provided employment for the citizens who were then able to support a retail environment including a dry goods store, two cheese makers, a general store, a barber shop, a shoe store, and two blacksmiths. The town also was the home and business for two physicians and a dentist. Freedom village was a bustling center of commerce with three hotels and wooden sidewalks.

Freedom peaked in population (780) in 1910, which decreased along with the businesses, which supported employment beginning in the 1920s. Freedom has become a quiet, residential village with a few surrounding farms and many home businesses. For the most part, due to the improvement of roadways and affordability of cars and trucks, Freedom has become a bedroom community for towns within commuting distance including Belfast, Waterville, Augusta, and Bangor.

Significant Buildings and Sites.

The original town meeting building erected in 1853 sits at the corner of Townhouse and



North Palermo Roads. Town meetings were held in the Townhouse until 1945. It is being renovated by the Freedom Historical Society.

The first church in Freedom was a branch of the Palermo Church, which began in 1804 as the Beaver Hill Church. The congregation declared independence in 1812 and continued to worship at that site until it closed in 1850. In 1857, Freedom townspeople began constructing a new church in the village with the first meeting held in April 1858. Dr. A. J. Billings and Henry Dodge solicited funds to build the new church with the parsonage, next door, being built at a later date. After a number of administrative and name changes the church is now the Freedom Congregational Church. It is well supported by the community and is used as a meeting center in town.

Dirigo Grange Hall, on Belfast Road at the corner of High Street, is a principal meeting hall for the town housing its annual Town meeting as well as many other functions. The hall a former cheese factory was purchased by the Dirigo Grange in 1883.

Part of a former mill still exists on the banks of Sandy Stream at the Freedom Falls, but it is in serious disrepair. Various parties have expressed interest in restoring it for preservation purposes; however unless the process is started soon it may be too late to preserve that as a representative of Freedom's history.

On the very north edge of the village remnants of the Monmouth Canning Company and Freedom Corn Factory buildings still exist. Until recent years this facility housed Skidgels, a retail salvage store. The buildings deteriorated beyond safety levels, so Skidgels was closed but the buildings continue to deteriorate.

The Environmental Protection Agency cleaned up a significant portion of this site at the request of the Code Enforcement Officer, and the owner plans to finish the clean up and demolish the buildings. Removal of these buildings ends an era of significant support for the local agricultural community extending from the 1930's through the 1950's when garden vegetables were grown by farmers and canned at the factory in Freedom. The cannery and farmers supplying it provided ample local employment opportunity in Freedom and surrounding communities for many years.

Freedom Academy was established in 1836 and provided educational opportunities for area scholars until it burned in 1947. It was rebuilt and continued serving the community until 1957 when it burned a second time. The site of the original Freedom Academy building is maintained as a memorial park and will house the several honor memorials in town when completed. The rest of the grounds of the Academy are now town property used as a community recreation area/baseball field.

Freedom contains 14 cemeteries; six are municipal and the rest either private or owned by associations. The town supports a cemetery committee for maintaining them.

Freedom has a very active Historical Society and has adequate community support for its efforts. There are no properties in Freedom that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; however, the members of the Historical Society have actively sought financial assistance, through grants, and are restoring the old town house building located on the corner of Town House Road and North Palermo Road.

Freedom history can be found in a number of places. In 1976 a group of citizens published “Historical Scrapbook, Freedom, Maine” which gives a pictorial history of the town and its growth. It identifies prominent citizens, organizations, schools, businesses, and buildings that represent a foundation to the town as it exists today. This “Historical Scrapbook” was updated in 2000 to represent the town as it was at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Other written history is found in the documents on births, deaths and marriages that have been restored and maintained at the town office as well as records of town meetings that have been recorded during the town’s history.

Historic patterns of development are still evident in Freedom. Many of the buildings in the village have existed since the early 1800’s and have served a number of functions as businesses, professional offices, post offices, and private homes. Some of these are in disrepair and need to be inventoried and prioritized by the Historical Society. Strategies in this section of the Plan will help the community provide incentives to preserve some of these buildings as historic resources and will help provide protective measures for historic resources that don’t exist now.

Freedom’s Subdivision Ordinance has a review criterion from the State Subdivision law that considers whether a proposed subdivision “will avoid adverse impact to state significant natural, cultural, and historic resources.” There are no regulations that require applicants proposing development in areas that may contain historic or archaeological resources to conduct a survey for such resources. Current measures are not effective in protecting local historic and archaeological resources.

There are no officially recognized archaeological sites in Freedom.

Action Plan

Policies

- Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

Strategies

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

- Work with neighboring historical societies and the Maine Historic Preservation

Commission to assess the need for and, if necessary, plan for a comprehensive community survey.

Historical Society
Year 1

- Adopt a set of standards to use as a guide in determining whether a site meets historic preservation criteria.

Historical Society
Year 1

- Prioritize list of projects to preserve the town's history and identify the time and money needed for completion.

Historical Society
Year 1

- For sites with identified potential for historical and archaeological significance, through local land use ordinances, require subdivision and nonresidential developers to look for and identify any historical and archaeological resources, and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to modification of proposed design, construction timing and/or extent of excavation.

Historical Society, Planning Board
Year 2

- Educate public about importance of historic sites and artifacts.

Historical Society
Year 1

- Through local land use ordinances require the incorporation of maps or other information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into the Planning Board review process.

Historical Society
Year 2

Chapter 11: Public Facilities and Services

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

Freedom runs quite efficiently thanks to many who volunteer their expertise, time and energy. The generosity of residents allows the Town to function without a Town manager, police department, paid fire department, municipal water and sewer. With projected minimal population growth most of the public facilities and services should be sufficient to meet demand over the next ten years. Locations of public facilities in Freedom are shown on a public facilities map in the Appendix.

Partnering with neighboring towns has been a second factor in Freedom's effective use of limited resources. The educational needs of students have been met by joining forces with Brooks, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Thorndike, Troy, Unity and Waldo to form MSAD #3.

Likewise, Freedom's shared ownership of the Unity Area Regional Recycling Center (UARRC) with nine other towns has created an economy of scale that allows residents to recycle ten different items as well as several types of household hazardous wastes.

The mutual aid agreements that the fire department has with nine neighboring towns along with its membership in Northern Waldo Mutual Aid Committee which works with ten other towns to improve interoperation skills and accountability and standardize operating procedures makes an all volunteer fire department feasible and effective.

Governance:

Town government in Freedom is made up of three Selectpersons, which were elected for one year terms until 2004. At that time the town voted to make these positions three year staggered terms. Other positions for which the town elects a person are: the Clerk, Tax Collector; Excise Tax Collector, Registrar of Voters and Treasurer. Each position is elected for a one year term. A school board member is elected for a 3 year term to represent Freedom on the board of SAD #3. In 1989 the town voted to adopt an Australian ballot method to elect town officers including Assessors, Clerk, Excise Tax Collector, Overseers of the Poor, School Committee member, Select Board members, Tax Collector, and Treasurer. The Board of Selectmen appoint an Animal Control Officer, Code Enforcement Officer, Emergency Preparedness Director, Health Officer, Licensed Plumbing Inspector. The Select Board shares the position and responsibilities of Road Commissioner. The Fire Chief is elected by the firefighters and recommended to the townspeople for approval by vote at the annual town meeting.

There are a number of Boards and committees that are staffed by residents who volunteer to serve and are appointed by the Select Board. These include the Board of Appeals, Budget Committee, Comprehensive Planning Committee, Planning Board, Public Works Committee, Recreation Committee and Regional Solid Waste Committee. The boards and committees are responsible to provide recommendations to the Select Board as well as to develop, propose, implement and administer town rules, regulations and policies which contribute to the protection of the health and safety of the residents and assure compliance to the town, state and federal rules and regulations. Some members of the boards also represent the town on a number of regional committees.

Town employees are limited to public works and include snow plow drivers, cemetery and summer road workers, and someone who mows lawns and someone who shovels snow.

Town Office:

The Freedom Town Office is located adjacent to the Fire House on Pleasant Street and close to the Village Center. Until 1995 the Freedom Town Office shared space in the Freedom Fire House however, most day to day business was done in the private homes of the municipal officers. A new building was built in 1995 to house the Select Board as well as space for the Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer and Registrar of Voters. This allowed townspeople to take advantage of regular office hours at one location in order to complete their business. The Town Office is open five days a week and one Saturday per month. The office also has limited but suitable space available for Select Board and other Town board and committee meetings.

Town Owned Property:

Table 11.1 indicates Town owned property and capital equipment its location, use, condition and anticipated replacement date if less than 10 years.

**Table 11.1
Town Owned Property**

	Built or Acquired	Location	Use	Condition	Anticipated Replacement Date if < 10 years
Town Office (main building)	1995	Pleasant St.	administration and committee meetings	Good, needs energy audit	
Town Office (annex)	Obtained free 2009, modular classroom	Pleasant St.	meetings, voting, storage	Good, needs energy audit	
Fire House	mid 1950's	Pleasant St.	houses firefighting equipment & trucks	good	
Town Garage		Skidgel Lane	houses public works/snow plowing equipment & trucks	fair, needs new siding and water supply on property	use of water from adjoining property owner available spring 2011
	Built or Acquired	Location	Use	Condition	Anticipated Replacement Date if <10 years
Sand/salt pile near		Skidgel Lane		Needs to be stored within a	Within 2 years

				shed or containment area	
Recreational Field		Pleasant St.	used for youth baseball field	excellent baseball field, rebuilt, upgraded 2010	
Old Town House		North Palermo Rd.	potential museum	is being restored	
Boat Landing		Pleasant Street	Boat landing on Sandy Pond	good	

The following list of Town owned properties includes brief descriptions and map and lot numbers for most of the properties from the Town's tax map:

1. North Palermo Rd is the site where the old town house sits. This building is in the process of being restored by the Freedom Historical Society. (Map 7 lot 13-04)
2. There are two lots on the Mitchell Rd. One is the site of the town dump, which functioned until the mid 1990s. (Map 6 Lot 16)
3. The second lot on the Mitchell Rd encompasses the area used as the town dump. (Map 6 Lot 17)
4. This is the site where Freedom Academy was located on Pleasant Street. (M11 Lot 14)
5. This lot is the baseball field. (Map 11 Lot 17)
6. The lot where the Freedom town office is located. (Map 11 Lot 18)
7. The site of the Freedom Fire Department's garage and meeting space is located, (Map 11 Lot 19)
8. A lot on the Stevens Road, which has an unused garage type building on site.
9. There is a lot on Skidgel Lane, which is the site of Freedom's garage and salt and sand storage. (Map 11 L36)
10. This property is identified as wetlands along Route 137.

Cemeteries:

There are fourteen cemeteries in the town of Freedom. Many of the old family cemeteries have been abandoned and are no longer maintained by any organized group although

some are maintained by local citizens or family members. Some cemeteries are maintained by either the Freedom Cemetery Association or under the care of a family trust. Freedom's Cemetery Association is represented by a committee of seven residents, governed by existing by-laws. The Association holds meetings twice a year to obtain comments concerning care and maintenance of cemetery grounds. Their efforts are financed through trust fund and private contributions. Pleasant Hill Cemetery has 1500 lots and has burial space available.

Table 11.2

Cemeteries In Freedom

Name	Ownership	Location
Pleasant Hill	Association	Belfast Rd. _ mile south of Post Office
Raven	Private	East side of Raven Road
Briggs	Private	East side of Raven/Ayre Ridge Road intersection
Glidden - Abbott	Municipal	South side of Timberwood Lane
Kelley-Danforth	Municipal	Hardwood Lane at intersection with Arrowhead Lane
Gould	Municipal	Private road off the north side of Timberwood Lane
Spinney	Municipal	Russell Road
Penney	Private	North side of Mitchell Road 1/10 mile before intersection with Goosepecker/Smith-ton Road
Ranlet-Bowen	Private	Near intersection of Sibley Road Extension and Beaver Ridge Road (location unknown)
Name	Ownership	Location

Bradstreet	Private	North side of Greeley Road midway between North Palermo Road and Davis Road
Smithton	Association	East side of Smithton Road 1/8 mile north of Greeley Road
Hutchins	Municipal	Hutchins Lane south of Albion Road
Cummings	Municipal	On discontinued portion of Davis Road near North Palermo Road intersection
Waterman	Private	West side of N. Palermo Rd. near south boundary with Albion

Police Protection:

The Maine State Police and Waldo County Sheriff provide police protection for the town. They are available as needed. Neighbors watching out for neighbors serve as a deterrent to criminal activity.

Fire Protection:

The Freedom Volunteer Fire Department (FVFD) is housed in one location in Freedom Village at 75 Pleasant Street. The original 950 sq. ft structure was built in the late 1950's and is in fair condition. In 1996 a 30 x 40-ft. structure was added to the firehouse to house a tanker and pumper truck. The condition of the new addition is excellent.

The Fire Department's operating budget for 2010 is \$18,450, and an additional \$12,000 was allocated through town appropriations for the FVFD Capital Improvement Account. Another \$6,000 was acquired from the town of Knox for contract fire protection. The Fire Chief has voiced that he is concerned over the increasing demands of accountability, training, and the cost of equipping the firefighters – all of which are mandated by Law.

The FVFD is composed entirely of volunteers currently 23, including one Fire Chief and two Assistant Chiefs. The Chief is elected by the membership of the FVFD and then approved by town residents at the annual town meeting. Recruitment and retention of staff occasionally becomes an issue with this volunteer department due, in part, to the amount of time required by the volunteers for training without any form of reimbursement, as well as citizen apathy and town politics.

Training is required for all FVFD staff. Training is accomplished through in-house training activities done in conjunction with an approved Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills

training curriculum provided by Maine Fire Training and Education (MFT&E). Certified classes are also provided by area Fire Attack Schools that are held throughout the year at various locations around the state. MFT&E also provides certified classes at the local fire departments with a qualified instructor. These classes are scheduled at no cost to the fire department.

Freedom is a rural town and has no central water source to draw on at a site of a fire therefore the fire department depends on Sandy Pond as their primary water source. There are also a number of dry hydrants located at farm ponds and streams throughout Freedom to support and provide water for fires as needed.

The town of Freedom participates in an automatic mutual aid program for structure fires in nine neighboring towns. FVFD, as well as the fire departments of Brooks and Thorndike provide contracted fire protection services to the town of Knox. This is a fixed price contract with the amount divided equally between the participating towns. The FVFD is also a member of the Northern Waldo Mutual Aid Committee, which works with 10 other towns to improve interoperation skills, standardizing operating procedures and improving accountability.

The table below illustrates the number of automatic mutual aid calls the FVFD responded to plus incidents FVFD responded to in Knox as part of a contract in the last five years:

Table 11.3
Mutual Aid Calls in Nine Towns and Incident Responses in Knox

TOWN	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Albion	2	2	5	2	5	5
Brooks			2		2	1
Liberty		2		1	3	1
Montville	5	8	7	6	9	4
Palermo	1	3	2	1	3	2
Searsmont		2				1
Thorndike		2	6	4	5	5
Troy		5	2	2		1
Unity	4	5	1	6	7	8
Knox	20	13	8	19	16	16

A review of Table 11.4 reveals that the Freedom Volunteer Fire Department responded to a variety of calls over the past 6 years. The most frequent calls were mutual aid (180.) Other frequent calls when combined with Knox were: car accident (63), downed power lines (20), structure fires (17), chimney fires (12), and a variety of other calls.

Table 11.4
Fire-related Responses in Freedom

CATEGORY	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Structure Fires		1	2	2	1	1
Chimney Fires		3	1	2	2	1
Car Accidents	2	7	5	3	2	6
Vehicle Fires		3	1			
Detector/Smoke Alarms			1			2
Brush/Grass Fires				1		
Search and Rescue						1
Clean Chimneys	2		2	5	5	2
Hazmat Spills			1		1	
Power Lines Down		6	1	1	1	6
Assist Ambulance	1	2		2		4
Flooded Cellars			2	1	1	
Control Burns	2	1	4	3	5	3
Tree on Individual						1
Standby Station	7			3		
Trees Down		2		1	1	1
Motorcycle Accident		1				
Fire/Intrusion Alarms				3	1	1
Unauthorized Burning				1	1	
TRIAD Deliveries					1	1
Electrical Fires					1	
Cancelled Enroute						2

Code Enforcement:

A Code Enforcement Officer is available by telephone. He is responsible for issuing building permits and checking on code violations. He works closely with the Select Board, the Planning Board, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MeDEP), and the Fire Marshall's Office. The hours are adequate at this time but may need to be revisited if building activity increases significantly or he is asked to take on greater enforcement responsibilities.

Emergency Response System:

E911 calls are handled by Waldo County Regional Communications Center (WCRCC), which serves as the County's E911 Public Safety Answering Point. The WCRCC located at 111 Miller Street in Belfast also serves as the dispatch center for all law, fire and emergency medical service agencies within Waldo County. Each dispatcher has undergone written and hands-on testing by the State. The Town's emergency response system is adequate.

In Freedom the E911 Addressing Officer is the Fire Chief. The Town does not have an E911 ordinance. If a new address is needed or a new road is developed the Addressing Officer is contacted to assign a number or set the range for a new road.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS):

Delta Ambulance part of Maine General provides EMS to Freedom and 17 other municipalities at no cost to these communities from 2 base locations – Waterville and Augusta. Data since 2005 reveals that Delta responds to an average of 40 medical emergencies in Freedom annually. Average response time during that period was 17.8 minutes from Augusta and 24.9 minutes from Waterville. Delta is a 24/7 operation with three levels of certified staff.

Emergency Management:

Emergency management includes preparation for, response to and recovery from natural and man-made disasters. Freedom has an Emergency Management Ordinance and a local Emergency Management Director. The Town adopted an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that's required by the ordinance. The EOP includes: Direction and Control, Communications, Warning Systems, Public Information, Evacuation Routes, Mass Care, Public Health and Medical Situations, Resource Management, Damage Assessment, Homeland Security, and Continuity of Operations. Detailing and implementing the EOP is a work in progress.

Health Services:

Freedom is not privileged to house any health care providers within the community. The residents are served by a number of providers, facilities and agencies located primarily in Belfast, Waterville and Bangor including respectively Waldo County General Hospital, Inland Hospital and 2 campuses of Maine General Medical Center, and Eastern Maine Medical Center. Freedom is fortunate to have a representative on the Board of Directors of Lovejoy Health Center a regional health care clinic in Albion. Sebasticook Valley Hospital is just 30 miles north of Freedom in Pittsfield. The Town of Freedom appropriates funds annually to help support a number of health care agencies that provide services to our residents such as Kno-Wal-Lin Home Health Agency, Kennebec Valley Mental Health, Mid-Coast Mental Health, Senior Spectrum, Sexual Assault Crisis Center and the American Red Cross. Freedom does have a Public Health Nurse. The Town does not have any significant public health issues.

Education:

Freedom is part of Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) #3. MSAD #3 includes Brooks, Freedom, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Thorndike, Troy, Unity and Waldo. The Town of Freedom has one representative on the MSAD #3 School Board.

MSAD #3 has five elementary school buildings throughout the district that provide kindergarten through grade six education. The district has one Junior High School and one Senior High School, which are located in Thorndike and provide classes for grades 7 through 12.

The elementary schools in the district are Morse Elementary School in Brooks, Monroe Elementary School in Monroe, Troy Central School in Troy, Walker School in Liberty, and Mt View Elementary School in Thorndike. Freedom children attend Mt View Elementary School. All students within the district are transported to Thorndike to attend Junior High and Senior High School. The district built a new K-12 school building in 2008 on property adjacent to the existing Mt View complex located on Route 220 in Thorndike. With the recent construction of the new regional school and slow growth projected no expansion will be needed for the next

ten years. Since the school is not in or near Freedom opportunities to promote residential development around the school or walking/bicycling trails to the school aren't present.

The following table includes enrollment in MSAD #3 since 2006 when the district's preschool program began. Projected enrollment for 2011 originated from the Superintendent's office. Projected enrollment totals for 2012-2021 were developed by Planning Decisions. There has been a gradual decline in enrollment over the past 10 years from 1768 in 2000 to 1490 in 2010. Projections indicate a very gradual increase in enrollment with the total in 2021 predicted to be similar to the total enrollment in 2006.

Table 11.5
Enrollment in MSAD #3

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Preschool	17	33	29	54		86										
K - 12	1507	1456	1446	1428		1356										
Total	1524	1489	1475	1482	1490	1442	1450	1461	1482	1487	1484	1496	1498	1492	1511	1528

Solid Waste Management:

The weekly solid waste collection is managed under a contract with a private company and is taken to Penobscot Energy Recovery Company (PERC) in Orrington. Freedom contracts to have household trash pickup on a weekly basis.

The town is also a member of the Unity Area Regional Recycling Center located at 95 Leonard Road Thorndike Maine. The town has a monthly pick up of goods to be recycled.

The monthly recycled goods pick up is managed by a local contract and is delivered to the Unity Area Regional Recycling Center (UARRC) in Thorndike. Freedom has one representative on the board of directors of the UARRC. The cost to operate the center is shared by nine member towns based on the population of the towns. The center is open six (6) days a week and is operated by two full time employees, one part-time employee and three dedicated volunteers. The UARRC accepts corrugated containers, newsprint, mixed paper, office paper, numbers 1, 2N, 2C, 3, 4, 5 and 7 plastic, steel cans, aluminum, batteries, computers, monitors, mercury containing devices, glass and some mixed electronic waste. They also schedule Household Hazardous Waste drop off days. Freedom has varied in the amount of tonnage sent for recycling. In 2009 Freedom recycled 13.5 % of the total goods recycled at UARRC. The following chart indicates Freedom's history of recycling:

Table 11.6
Solid and Recycled Waste in Freedom

Year	Solid Waste(tons)(PERC)	Recycled Waste (tons)(UARRC)
------	-------------------------	------------------------------

2010	163.74	24.01
2009	171.64	24.70
2008	263.65	24.76
2007	222	17.17
2006		unavailable

There is an annual white and brown goods collection. Each year the town votes to have either a door-to-door pick up or a central drop off location each year.

A goal for Freedom is to increase awareness of recycling and encourage residents to participate in the recycling program. Ultimately this decreases the cost of trash disposal for the town.

With projected slow growth and declining tonnage of waste disposed and not recycled the current solid waste management system seems to be meeting current needs although increasing recycling would provide additional benefits. The Town provides information about recycling particularly what to recycle on the Town website. With projected slow growth the capacity of the solid waste management system is adequate. Regionally UARRC plans to expand the types of items it recycles in the near future.

Sand and Salt Storage:

The town maintains a salt and sand pile near the Town Garage on Skidgel Lane. The sand pile is near Sandy Stream and needs to either be moved to another site or be contained within a shed or containment area. Containment within a shed onsite is planned.

Electrical Services:

Central Maine Power provides electricity to the residents of Freedom. Three-phase power comes into Freedom along Route 137 from Knox Ridge. The three phase lines enter town along Belfast Road and continue up to the corner of High Street and Main Street and then southerly to Mitchell Road where they bear easterly to the easterly face of Beaver Ridge to Beaver Ridge Wind (a 3-unit wind farm with 4500 kW total plant name plate capacity.) Three phase power is not available elsewhere in Town.

Telecommunication:

FairPoint Communications, with a regional office in China, Maine provides phone services in the Town of Freedom. While the company provides local long distance as well as out-of-state long distance services, citizens can request other companies to provide these services. Residents can call Freedom, Albion, Brooks, Liberty, Morrill, Palermo, Thorndike and Unity

at no additional charge. Residents seem satisfied with available phone services in town. A 2004 attitude survey indicated that 6% of the respondents felt telephone services were excellent, 44% felt the services were good, 20% felt services were fair, 15% felt the services were poor and 14% had no opinion.

Internet services are provided by FairPoint Communications as well as Unity Phone Company. FairPoint Communications provides dial-up and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) services. Unity Telephone will provide dial-up services to customers within the free calling area. Cable service is not available.

Freedom seems to be a "black hole" in the cellular telephone world with complaints from town people about the inability to receive or transmit from most areas of town. The only areas where residents seem to be able to receive or transmit are just west of the village, on Route 137 by the Pleasant Hill Cemetery and in a few areas along the North Palermo Road. There is a need for better cell phone coverage, which would help support local economic development.

Water and Sewer and Storm Water Management:

All homes and businesses in Freedom have private wells and septic systems. Availability of public water and sewer in the village would likely be a stimulus for growth in and near the village. However, because current and projected growth is low public water and sewer is not essential to meet demand but would encourage economic development during the planning period.

Several commercial disposal firms that accept septic tank waste operate in the area. There are no specific local policies or regulations other than State regulations regarding septic waste collection and disposal. There are no known issues or concerns regarding septic tank waste collection and disposal.

Storm water management facilities are adequate and will meet projected demand.

Miscellaneous:

With implementation of strategies in this chapter and elsewhere in the Plan and given low rate of projected growth most municipal services overall will be adequate to meet changes in population and demographics. There is a need for a salt and sand shed, a fire department tanker truck, repair of Sandy Pond earthen dam, repaving of some Town roads, repair of guardrails on Mitchell Road bridge, and before the end of the planning period replacement of Town plow trucks. The community's priorities for funding needed improvements are reflected in the capital investment plan. Most of these facility or equipment improvements are located or housed in or near the growth area.

Action Plan

Policies

- To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.

- To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

Strategies

- Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate Freedom's anticipated growth and changing demographics.

Selectmen
Year 1

- Continue to explore ways to decrease municipal costs (sharing of town functions, increase recycling, etc.)

Selectmen
Budget Comm.
Ongoing

- Increase recycling through educational outreach.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Promote a strong community spirit or sense of community to attract volunteers.

Selectmen
Recreation Comm.
Ongoing

- Explore alternative sources of funding for needed increases and/or improvements in facilities and services.

Selectmen
Econ. Dev. Comm.
Year 1

- Research Smart Growth options and select those that fit Freedom. Hold public forums to get Town input.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Steer new development towards growth areas to make service delivery more cost effective. Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.

Selectmen
Planning Board
Year 1

- Consider including ordinance provisions that require major development proposals to include a municipal service impact analysis, and if found that developments would require additional expenditures above that it would support by taxation, require off-site improvements in kind contributions and/or an impact type fee.

Planning Board
Year 2

- Identify potential hazardous situation, assess the likelihood of occurrence, and explore funding options to prevent or correct based on priorities.

Selectmen
Emergency Preparedness Director
Fire Department
Year 1

- Encourage each municipal committee to contact similar committees in neighboring towns on at least an annual basis to explore possible joint ventures or shared public facilities equipment or expenses.

Selectmen
Local Committee Chairs
Year 1

Chapter 12: **Capacity**



Fiscal

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

A significant element of the public services picture is the ability of the town to finance and maintain its services. Town governments are faced with multiple challenges: ordinary population growth, sprawling new patterns of development, new technology and mandates from state and federal government, and more sophisticated demands from residents for leisure services, protection, education, and so on. Coupled with a heavy reliance on property taxes from a very slow-growing valuation base, fiscal management is key to delivery of all other services.

Comprehensive Plans are not intended to dictate day-to-day financial decisions of local government. They are intended to identify long-term trends and needs resulting from growth and development. These needs usually resolve into new or expanded capital facilities or an increased range of public services. These needs must be balanced with the capacity of a town to fund them.

The following expenditures and revenues respectively in Tables 12.1 and 12.2 came from Town office records. Freedom recently had an audit completed for 2005 and 2006 Town budget. Completing audits for subsequent years of the Town budget is a primary priority and is ongoing. Audited figures are used for 2005 and 2006 in Tables 12.1 and 12.2. Categories in the audits differ somewhat from categories used for Town budgets. “Other Public Works” ended up in “Other” in 2005 and there was no amount under “Other” in 2006. Unaudited budget data from subsequent years may have inaccuracies but suffice for noting trends, which is a prime objective of the Plan.

As illustrated in Table 12.1, municipal expenditures track fairly closely with revenues. The largest single item is education, consisting of more than 43 percent of expenditures. Since 2005, school expenditures have risen 36%. County tax, which accounts for 7.6 % of expenditures has increased by almost 27% over that period. County and school administrative unit obligations make it more difficult to finance proposed capital investments.

**Table 12.1
Expenditures**

Expenditures	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Administrative	\$108,090	\$122,552	\$144,518	\$133,360	\$148,950
County Tax	\$60,753	\$60,048	\$61,622	\$66,376	\$77,000
School	\$309,444	\$353,606	\$392,545	\$383,381	\$420,000
Solid Waste	\$52,775	\$70,295	\$46,285	\$54,400	\$65,070
Expenditures	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Roads	\$75,326	\$107,174	\$92,500	\$131,000	\$108,500

Other Public Works	-	\$31,312	\$32,480	\$83,826	\$71,000
Fire Protection	\$13,145	\$50,041	\$19,570	\$24,750	\$28,180
Other Public Safety	\$1,612	\$4,652	\$5,750	\$5,250	\$6,410
Cemetery	\$1,036	\$298	\$1,300	\$250	\$2,000
Historical	-	-	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Recreation	\$2,857	\$4,233	\$5,450	\$4,900	\$6,650
Local Agency Support	\$8,797	\$9,234	\$10,646	\$10,270	\$13,702
Welfare	\$215	\$559	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000
Other	\$81,384	-	\$5,285	\$25,000	\$25,000
Total	\$715,434	\$814,004	\$820,951	\$926,263	\$975,962

The control of expenditures has allowed Freedom to stay well within its LD1 limits since enactment of the law. The town has not required a vote to exceed LD1 limits and does not expect to in the near future. Currently, service demands are not outpacing revenue growth.

The total revenues for 2009 come to just over \$1 million, and include excise taxes (\$92,080), intergovernmental transfer ((\$92,215), and fees (\$19,147) as contributors. The 2009 revenue total (\$1,080,258) is 68% higher than the \$642,332 revenue total in 2005. Property taxes accounted for 79% of revenues for 2009. The property tax component is up by \$433,134 (103 percent) since 2005. Tax exempt properties are: Avian Haven (wildlife primarily birds rehabilitation center), Dirigo Grange, and Freedom Congregational Church. Tax exempt properties have a minimal effect on property tax revenue. Revenue amounts dedicated to tree growth and farmland and open space programs were not available from the Town office. There are no tax increment finance districts. Freedom's tax base changes are anticipated to be minimal.

Table 12.2
Revenues

Revenues	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Property Taxes	\$420,062	\$552,506	\$585,340	\$612,128	\$853,196
Excise Taxes	\$89,553	\$87,890	\$87,877	\$90,264	\$92,080
Fees	\$16,592	\$18,926	\$17,260	\$26,241	\$19,147
State Road Assist.	\$30,309	\$30,309	\$31,117	\$30,800	\$26,906
Revenue Sharing	\$47,399	\$47,399	\$47,138	\$77,634	\$65,309
Revenues	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Other	\$38,417	\$65,646	\$19,872	\$64,260	\$23,620

Total	\$642,332	\$802,876	\$788,604	\$901,327	\$1,080,258
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Overall valuation (local assessed) has increased by almost \$24 million (72 percent) during that time (See Table 12.3.) The mill rate for 2009 would have been 15.5 if not for tax revenue from the three wind turbines in Freedom owned by Beaver Ridge, LLC. While the mill rate has dropped the last 2 years taxes have increased because of increased valuation.

Table 12.3
Local and Assessed Value and Mill Rate

Year	Local Assessed Value	State Assessed Value	Mill Rate
2010	\$56,319,625	\$51,150,000	14.3
2009	\$55,654,044	\$50,350,000	14.2
2008	\$36,100,255	\$43,250,000	17.0
2007	\$33,485,685	\$40,500,000	20.4
2006	\$33,617,161	\$36,500,000	17.1
2005	\$32,379,496	\$35,000,000	14.7
2004	\$32,528,151	\$28,850,000	12.5
2003	\$32,517,420	\$25,900,000	12.5
2002	\$24,471,289	\$24,500,000	17.8
2001	\$23,204,134	\$23,000,000	17.8

Table 12.4 indicates Town owned property and capital equipment including its location, use, condition and anticipated replacement date if less than 10 years.

Table 12.4
Town Owned Property & Capital Equipment

	Built or Acquired	Location	Use	Condition	Anticipated Replacement Date if < 10 years
Town Office (main building)	1995	Pleasant St.	administration and committee meetings	Good, needs energy audit	
	Built or Acquired	Location	Use	Condition	Anticipated Replacement Date if <10

					years
Town Office (annex)	Obtained free 2009, modular classroom	Pleasant St.	meetings, voting, storage	Good, needs energy audit	
Fire House	Late 1950s	Pleasant St.	houses firefighting equipment & trucks	fair	
Fire House Addition	1996	Pleasant Street	houses firefighting trucks	excellent	
Town Garage		Skidgel Lane	houses public works/snow plowing equipment & trucks	fair, needs new siding and no water supply on property	use of water from adjoining property owner available spring 2011
Sand/salt pile near Town Garage		Skidgel Lane		Needs to be stored within a shed or containment area	Within 2 years
Recreational Field		Pleasant St.	used for youth baseball field	excellent baseball field, rebuilt, upgraded 2010	
Five Parcels		throughout town		varies	
GMC Tanker Truck	1974	Fire House	fire protection	poor	Replace 2011
GMC Mini-pumper	1981	Fire House	fire protection	good	
Freightliner Truck pumper	2004	Fire House	fire protection	good	
GMC 2ton truck w. plow	2000	Town Garage	snow plowing, public works	good	
GMC 2 ton truck w. plow	1997	Town Garage	snow plowing, public works	good	
GMC 2 ton truck w. plow	1988	Town Garage	snow plowing, public works	good	
	Built or Acquired	Location	Use	Condition	Anticipated Replacement Date if >10 years

Case Loader		Town Garage	public works	good	
Old Town House		North Palermo Rd.	potential museum	is being restored	
Boat Landing		Pleasant Street	Boat landing on Sandy Pond	good	
Earthen Dam On Sandy Pond		Pleasant Street	Maintains level of Sandy Pond	Needs repair	Dependent on results of structural assessment

Rather than borrow heavily, the Town has preferred “a pay as we go” system, setting aside money in capital reserve or dedicated accounts for items the Town anticipates needing in the future. Currently Freedom sets aside money annually for fire-fighting needs, road and bridge work, heavy equipment purchase/repair, recreation, and expenses related to Historic Committee projects. Freedom does not have an impact fee ordinance.

Table 12.5
Capital Funds Expenditure Account

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Fire Dept.	\$11,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$9,000
Capital Improvements (public works)	0	\$2,500	0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Recreation (ball field)	\$2,500	\$2500	\$2500	\$2500	0
Historic Committee				\$2500	\$2500

In Freedom, capital investments are funded through a combination of appropriations, reserve funds, and grants. Table 12.6 is a recommended Capital Investment Plan. The Town is seeking ways to reduce capital expenditures by regionalizing services. Freedom shared its Fire Department tanker truck with Knox, which doesn’t have a fire department and contracts with Freedom and two other neighboring towns for fire protection services. The Montville Fire Department currently houses its tanker truck in Freedom’s fire station for mutual benefit. Freedom plans to meet with all the towns that it and Knox have cooperative fire department agreements with to collaborate on a regional grant request for a tanker truck.

Table 12.6
Recommended Capital Investment Plan

	Priority	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding	Responsible
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			Funding Sources	Party
Fire Dept. Tanker Truck	High (within 2 yrs.)	\$150,000 to \$200,000	Reserves, Grants, Taxes, including Interlocal Arrangements	Select Board, Fire Dept., Voters
Salt and Sand Shed	High	\$150,000	Grants, Taxes, Reserves	Select Board, Voters
Replacement of Town Plow Trucks	Low (5 – 10 yrs)	\$150,000	Taxes, Reserves	Select Board, Voters
Repaving Town Roads and Repair Mitchell Road bridge guardrails	Medium (2 – 5 yrs)	\$300,000	Grants, Taxes, Reserves	Select Board Voters
Repair Sandy Pond Earthen Dam	Dependent on structural assessment	Dependent on structural assessment	Grants, Taxes, Reserves	Select Board Voters

Action Plan:

Policies

- To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.

- To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.
- Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan.
- To reduce Maine’s tax burden by staying within LD1 spending limits.

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year for beginning that strategy.

Strategies

- Implement the capital investment plan (CinP) by developing a capital improvement program annually or biennially.

Selectmen
Budget Comm.
Year 1

- Review and/or update the capital improvement program annually or biennially.

Selectmen
Budget Comm.
Year 1

- Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.

Selectmen
Year 1

Chapter 13A: Existing Land Use

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.

Current Land Use Patterns and Development Trends

Geographically Freedom covers 22.2 square miles and is located 30 miles northeast of Augusta, 20 miles east of Waterville, and 16 miles west of Belfast. Freedom is a rural community like surrounding towns of Unity, Knox, Montville, Palermo and Albion. There is a village in the northeastern section of Town with the rural remainder farm fields and forestland with several farms and some residences.

Like many towns in Maine, Freedom is the culmination of an historical growth pattern based on settlement over the course of some 200 years. Historically the vast rural portions of the town contained farmsteads but most people lived in or near the village. The village itself is but a shadow of its former self, when the vibrant 19th century agricultural economy of interior Waldo County had Freedom Village as its hub. The naturally steep pitch of Sandy Stream in this area made it a desirable location for mills that could use water power to grind flour, turn lathes for wood products and card for wool. The historical architectural remnants of this heyday are still situated in the downtown village area and form a quaint hub of interest. Many residents and tourists enjoy stopping in the village center to view the mill pond waterfall, the stream and the old architecture.

Newer buildings and enterprises in the village that provide public and private services include the US Post Office and Freedom General Store on Route 137, the Town office and Fire Department located on Pleasant Street. The newly renovated Mitchell field and park near the site of the old Freedom Academy School is another signal that village downtown assets and community resources are of value and could be expanded and improved if there is the will to do so.

Residential development has largely shifted to rural areas. This change is not consistent with the community's vision. A primary reason for the shift is the lack of connection between much of rural housing and being engaged in a rural activity such as farming or forestry. Today it is more common for a person or a family to select a rural site for a home based upon a desire for rural living, privacy, views, proximity to work, or own land rather than to be involved in farming or forestry. The shift to rural area housing development has also been the result of the abundant supply of land and the ease of access brought on by cheap gas and good roads. Few homes could be built in the village with a two-acre minimum lot size requirement and a lack of public sewer and water. These factors will continue to discourage new buildings in the village area. Village lot sizes have historically been much smaller than the required 2 acre minimum lot size. Maintaining the traditional village character with new development will be difficult if not impossible if a 2 acre minimum lot size is retained for the village area. So while Shoreland Zoning helps protect critical resources it and other local regulations are not effective in directing growth to appropriate areas. Allowing a smaller minimum lot size, shorter road frontage requirement, shorter road centerline setback, and shorter adjoining property line setback in the village area would encourage more growth there.

The preference for rural living absent the traditional rural occupation has many consequences for Freedom. The traditional rural land use pattern required large tracts of land to manage forestry, keep livestock, grow crops, hay or plant orchards. The best land for agriculture and forestry were off limits to housing. This self-imposed market restriction functioned as a sort

of unwritten voluntary zoning law. People's use of the land to produce crops, lumber, animals or for a recreational use imposed limits for other forms of development such as housing. Rural rules for land development were working in Freedom as little as 40 years ago. As time passed the traditional restraints diminished and a different pattern of development often referred to as sprawl has gradually become more dominant. Subdivision activity over the past decade has been sparse, but there have been a back log of subdivision lots available for building. Lot by lot development has predominated in the rural area.

Commercial development responds to different priorities. While a commercial developer also wants to minimize the cost of development, he must also think of the demands of the functioning business. Most businesses require either good access to transportation or communications infrastructure or large volumes of water and sewer service. In any case, few businesses locate in rural areas, and those that do so, are either grown internally (home occupations, etc.) or rely on some rural resource or clientele.

Table 13a.1 indicates that construction of single family homes, which includes double wides decreased considerably after 2008. The number of mobile homes and other construction also significantly declined after 2008. Other construction is primarily additions and accessory buildings. While this category declined after 2008 it accounted for all but one of the building permits issued in 2010.

Table 13a.1
Building Permits by Year and Type for Freedom

Year	Single Family Homes	Mobile Homes	Other
2003	1	0	17
2004	2	2	13
2005	8	2	40
2006	3	2	32
2007	7	1	32
2008	11	1	12
2009	3	0	17
2010	1	0	18
Totals	36	12	181

Tables 13a.2 and 13a.3 clearly show the lack of growth in the village area in the past 8 years with no building permits along village streets with the exception of Pleasant Street, which extends well beyond the village center and only accounted for 3 building permits during that period. In contrast 22 permits were issued along Route 137 and 45 permits were issued along North Palermo Road during this period. Private roads are noted in the following tables as lanes.

Table 13a.2
Building Permits by Road in Freedom 2003 – 2006

Roads and Streets	2003	2004	2005	2006
<u>State Highway</u>				
Belfast Road (Rte 137)	5	1	2	5

State Aid Roads

Albion Road	1			3
Pleasant Street (village)		1		
North Palermo Road	3	2	12	8

Village Streets

Main Street
High Street
Mill Street

Town Roads

Wentworth				
Russell				
Bryant	4	3	3	
Clark			1	1
Mitchell	1		1	2
Raven		1		
Ayer Ridge		2		2
Townhouse				
Glidden				
Waning			1	1
Deer Hill			1	1
Sibley		1		1
Goosepecker Ridge	2	1	2	1
Penny				1
Smithton	2		4	3
Burnham Hill	2	1	1	
Greeley	2		5	1
Beaver Ridge		1		
Rollins		2	1	3
Davis				
Stevens				
Oak Lane	1			
Carey Lane			1	1
Ledges Lane			1	1
Lewin Lane			2	1
Cellar Kitchen Lane			3	
Bennett Lane				2
Sanford Hill Lane				1

Table 13a.3
Building Permits by Road 2007 – 2010

<u>Roads and Streets</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
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State Highway

Belfast Road (Rte 137)	4	3	1	1
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State Aid Road

Albion Road

Pleasant Street (village)		1	1	
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North Palermo Road	5	7	3	5
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Village Streets

Main Street

High Street

Mill Street

Town Roads

Wentworth

Russell

Bryant	2	1	1	
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Clark	2			1
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Mitchell				3
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Raven	1		2	
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Ayer Ridge	1	3		1
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Townhouse	3			
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Glidden

Waning			1	
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Deer Hill		1		
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Sibley	4		2	
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Goosepecker Ridge

Penny

Smithton	2	1		3
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Burnham Hill	1	1		
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Greeley	1		1	2
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Beaver Ridge

Rollins	1		1	
---------	---	--	---	--

Davis

Stevens

Carey Lane	3	1		
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Hardwood Lane	1		2	2
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Ledges Lane	3			
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Lewin Lane	2	2		
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Bennett Lane	2	1		1
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Irving Lane	1			
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<u>Roads and Streets</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
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Cellar Kitchen Lane		1		
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Timberwood Lane		1		
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Oak Lane			1	
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Hutchins Lane	1			
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Thompson Lane				1
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It's useful to estimate the minimum amount of land needed to accommodate projected residential and non-residential development. The need for new housing according to State Planning Office projections will be a modest 8 units over the next decade. However between 1970 and 2000 there has been a narrowly ranging average of 61 single family housing units per decade. Assuming this historic trend will continue with 60 single family housing built over the next ten years and considering current ordinances in place that require a minimum two acre lot and 150 foot road frontage at least 120 acres and 9,000 feet of road frontage should be available for residential growth. While likely commercial growth will be new or expanded home occupations and a few other small businesses light manufacturing which is desired by many in town is possible especially with 3 phase power present in part of Freedom. An additional 120 acres should also be available for non-residential growth factoring in the possibility of light manufacturing. The acreage of proposed growth areas that are detailed in the Future Land Use Plan meets and exceeds the 240 acre minimum amount recommended to be available for growth.

Current Local Land Use Regulation

Shoreland Zoning

As mandated by the State, the purposes of this ordinance are to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; to prevent and control water pollution; to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; to protect buildings and lands from flooding and accelerated erosion; to protect archaeological and historic resources; to protect freshwater wetlands; to control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; to conserve shore cover, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland waters; to conserve natural beauty and open space; and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

This ordinance requires a permit for construction or other development in flood plains noted on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps and allows Freedom to become a community participant in National Flood Insurance program.

Subdivision Ordinance

The purpose of the ordinance is to assure the comfort, health, safety, and general welfare of the people, to protect the environment, and to provide for the orderly development of an economically sound and stable community.

Building Ordinance

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public through the regulation of construction, relocation, replacement, and alteration of buildings. There is a 2-acre minimum lot size requirement town wide. Minimum road frontage is 150 feet and minimum setback of structures from road center is 50 feet. Minimum setback of structures from adjoining property lines is 20 feet. Mobile home parks are allowed anywhere in Town.

The ordinances are administered primarily by the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer (CEO). The Planning Board consists of seven members and meets monthly. It is responsible for issuing permits under building, subdivision, shoreland zoning, and floodplain ordinances, and for recommending necessary changes to these ordinances. The CEO is fully certified. The CEO issues some zoning, shoreland zoning, and floodplain permits, and advises applicants and the planning board. The Board and CEO receive regular training opportunities.

To do a better job of ensuring efficient development while protecting public values there is a need for developing a commercial site plan review ordinance ideally as part of a land use ordinance and updating the subdivision ordinance with some contemporary standards.

Chapter 13B: Future Land Use Plan

**GOAL:
encourage
growth**



**To
orderly
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.

Creating a Future Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Committee through a Visioning exercise, two surveys, discussions and conversations with residents heard that people wanted to protect rural character including large tracts of farmland, keep the village center intact, protect Sandy Pond and encourage farming and other natural resource businesses as well as light manufacturing. The overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a direction for how residents want the town to grow and develop. It appears very clear what the people of Freedom wish to see for the future shape of the town. However, our vision will require a plan, guide or road map to make sure Freedom in ten and twenty years will look the way we envision it today.

The Future Land Use Plan is the guide or road map to help shape the town and direct new development in a way Freedom citizens’ want for the town. Land use planning for the town would not be a difficult issue if we were still overwhelmingly a farming/forestry rural town with a small village as in past years. The overall scheme or plan for land development was previously driven by an unwritten set of rules that kept large tracts of land in production for crops or lumber. Other developments such as housing and commercial uses were naturally directed into the village. Today those previous ways of doing things are no longer available and we must create a fair and balanced set of rules and policies to direct how the town will grow and change.

Change and growth will occur but we as residents can shape how new development will fit into the community in a way consistent with our vision for the town. The tools we have available include a mix of voluntary measures and regulations. The Future Land Use Plan will propose many strategies for citizens to consider. The exact shape of these strategies will be crafted by the Planning Board and discussed at public hearings. Multiple opportunities will be provided for townspeople to voice their opinions. Any ordinance changes will require a vote at future Town Meetings.

Anticipating the Future

No one can accurately predict the future but we can make educated guesses based upon past trends. Many strategies in the land use plan are based upon how we anticipate change to occur in Freedom over the next ten to twenty years. It is important for the town to monitor population and housing growth and be ready to discuss how the Comprehensive Plan may need to be modified based upon new trends and issues. Some of our assumptions about future trends include the following:

- Need for new housing according to SPO projections will be a modest 8 units over the next decade. Historically 1970 – 2000 a per decade average of 61 single family housing units were built
- Overall population growth will be low with a shrinking household size.
- Suburban roadside housing development will continue to be popular.

- Rural housing will continue to be popular.
- Some subdivision development will increase to provide new rural housing.

The following are also some trends, however, which may discourage development in Freedom and will need to be monitored:

- The high cost of fuel may slow rural housing development.
- The current housing market slowdown may delay future housing growth.
- Some people may no longer select rural housing and switch to more urban areas to take advantage of public transportation and access to services.

Objectives for the Future Land Use Plan

The following are the Future Land Use Plan objectives:

- To maintain the rural character of the town.
- To establish strategies which are fair and balanced.
- To develop strategies which respect our natural resources.
- To offer citizens voluntary ideas and methods to preserve our rural character.
- To guide change and growth in a way selected by the townspeople.
- To offer development incentives which promote our vision for the town.
- To guide most future development into growth areas.
- To direct new housing development into growth areas most suited to accommodate higher densities.
- To preserve our natural resources.
- To develop subdivision design standards which enhance our rural character.
- To make sure that traditional rural activity such as farming and forestry can continue to flourish and grow.
- To identify strategies promoting affordable housing especially for the elderly.
- To develop a commercial site plan review ordinance and a basic land use ordinance to implement some of the land use plan recommendations.

- To foster smart growth
- To guide and enable Freedom's vision for the community.

Identifying Growth and Rural Areas

Growth areas are intended to accommodate higher density housing, and some growth areas are intended for larger commercial projects and large subdivisions. Most commercial activities, except for home occupations and natural resource businesses, will be directed or strongly encouraged to locate into designated growth areas. Most future municipal capital investments will be directed to growth areas.

Recommended Land Use Areas

Growth Area #1, Village Area

This area contains the existing and historic village center located in the northeastern corner of Town. It is intended to serve as a mixed-use growth area for residential and small commercial activities. Allowing higher density to half acre minimum lot size along with lower dimensional requirements is recommended. Architectural design guidelines/incentives are recommended so that new development blends in with traditional village architecture. Anticipated major capital investments needed to support the proposed land use will depend on implementation of strategies in Chapter 11 Public Facilities and Services. This area is shown on the Land Use Map – Village Area in this Plan's Appendix.

This growth area was selected because it has the following attributes:

- Most of the Town's public facilities and services are already located in this area.
- This area contains existing homes and some businesses.
- A portion of this area is located along a State Route (Route 137.)
- Three-phase power is available in part of the area.
- Most of the area falls outside a watershed of a DEP listed lake or pond at risk from development.
- The area is an existing village center
- The area aligns with the Vision Statement

Growth Area # 2, Village Growth Area

The Village Growth Area adjoins and extends from the Village Area and is intended to serve as a primary growth area. Future public infrastructure will be directed into this area. Three-phase power is nearby along Route 137 from Knox to the corner of High and Main Street (and continues to Mitchell Road.) The area is intended for both residential and commercial development including light manufacturing. The boundary of this area runs 2000' from intersection of Route 137 and Pleasant Street southwesterly along Route 137 then turns northwesterly to intersect of Clark Road with Town boundary with Unity then easterly along

boundary with Unity to the Stevens Road then follows Stevens Road back to origin. This area is intended to serve as a mixed use growth area for residential and commercial activities ranging from small enterprises to light manufacturing. Allowing higher density ranging from half acre to 1 acre along with less road frontage required is recommended to encourage growth in this area. Anticipated major capital investments needed to support the proposed land use will depend on implementation of strategies in Chapter 11 Public Facilities and Services. This area is shown on the Land Use Map – Village Area in this Plan’s Appendix.

This growth area was selected because it contains the following attributes:

- Public facilities and services are located near this area in Village Area.
- The area is located partially along or near a State Route (Route 137.)
- The area has land available for future development.
- Three-phase power is available or nearby.
- Most of the area falls outside a watershed of a DEP listed lake or pond at risk from development.
- The area is an extension of an existing village center.
- The area aligns with the Vision Statement.

Critical Resource Area

The existing Shoreland Zoning Resource Protection Zone in Freedom is designated a Critical Resource Area and is protected by regulatory mechanisms. Other high-value areas identified by the Open Space Plan to be developed may also be designated as Critical Resource Areas and will be protected primarily by non-regulatory mechanisms. This area aligns with the Vision Statement.

Rural Area

The balance of the land in town will be designated as a Rural Area. This area is intended for agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, outdoor recreation, natural resource based activities such as lumber yards and sawmills, and agricultural based activities, which will be encouraged. Housing and home occupations will be allowed but will be expected to conform to the rural character of the area so that traditional activities such as farming and forestry will not be hindered. This area aligns with the Vision Statement. The area is shown on the Land Use Map in the Appendix.

General Recommendations

The rest of the Future Land Use Plan consists of recommendations, which are designed to achieve our objectives. A critical step in putting this Future Land Use Plan into action will be the involvement and participation of Freedom citizens. Each recommendation and idea proposed in this plan will need to be further developed by the Planning Board or other town committees and reviewed by the town before it becomes an ordinance or is put into practice. The recommendations are offered as a guide to be discussed and put into a final form for consideration at Town Meeting. The outcome of these recommendations will be shaped through

a public process, which should reflect the vision and wishes of Freedom's citizen's. General recommendations follow:

- Maintain Freedom's community vision when developing specific strategies to encourage or discourage development;

Selectmen
Planning Board
Conservation Commission
Year 1

- Meet periodically with planning boards from Montville, Unity and perhaps other adjoining towns, to discuss issues of development along mutual boundaries;

Planning Board
Year 1

- Direct most municipal capital investments to growth areas;

Selectmen
Economic Committee
Year 2

- Develop some basic traffic access provisions for all new development and include provisions for proper sight distance, minimum driveway or road opening widths, driveway and road drainage and turn-around areas so that traffic does not have to back-out into the roadway;

Planning Board
Year 1

- Prepare a technical assistance brochure that will include suggestions of what homeowners can do regarding erosion control.

Conservation Commission
Code Enforcement Officer
Year 2

- Maintain and not weaken the existing Shoreland Zoning ordinance;

Planning Board
Code Enforcement Officer
Ongoing

- Continue to update the Floodplain Management ordinance to stay in conformance with the State Model Floodplain Management Ordinance;

Planning Board
Ongoing

- Develop a Commercial Site Plan Review ordinance that reviews the impacts of large commercial development;

Planning Board
Year 1

- Consider developing a Land Use Ordinance to guide how future development will be directed into the recommended land use areas. The ordinance would provide a variety of incentives such as more favorable lot sizes, reduced dimensional requirements, and similar items to direct the appropriate type of development into areas designated by the town.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Continue to provide the code enforcement officer (CEO) with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the CEO is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA Section 4451.

Selectmen
Ongoing

Recommendations to Direct Growth to Growth Areas

- Hold a community design forum to discuss how to direct new housing into the Village Area and Village Growth Area;

Selectmen
Year 2

- Design flexible dimensional standards including lot sizes for proposed development within the Village Area to maintain the historical patterns of the area. Standards should comply with State Regulations pertaining to wells and subsurface waste water systems;

Planning Board

Year 1

- Create incentives for subdivisions to locate in the Village Growth Area;

Selectmen
Planning Board
Year 1

- Amend or develop ordinance to encourage mixed use and small scale commercial use and to permit congregate-style housing in the Village Area;

Planning Board
Year 1

- Allow an affordable housing density for subdivisions proposing to develop a certain number of affordable housing units in the growth areas;

Planning Board
Year 1

- Develop incentives for senior housing projects;

Selectmen
Year 2

- Prioritize road improvements to give preference to growth area roads (part of road improvement plan);

Selectmen
Year 2

- Direct large-scale commercial development including light manufacturing to the Village Growth Area.

Planning Board
Year 1

- Establish fair and efficient permitting procedures and appropriate fees, and streamline permitting procedures in growth areas.

Selectmen
Planning Board
Code Enforcement Officer
Year 1

Recommendations to Discourage Inappropriate Growth In (and Encourage Protection of) Rural Areas

The first seven recommendations involve education and promotions that offer ways individuals may voluntarily choose to develop and use their land. A Conservation Commission to be formed would be responsible for implementation of the first seven recommendations.

- Develop a pamphlet, which describes ways to design and develop house sites in harmony with rural landscape. Information about setbacks, buffers, privacy, living near farms, security, gravel roads, and other topics will be included;

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Promote interest in using land conservation easements to preserve farmland, forest, open spaces, scenic views and natural resources. Information about these programs will be made available to residents. Regional and state groups promoting conservation easements will be invited to speak with residents on a regular basis.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Identify state and regional programs, which offer large landowners, farmers and forest landowner's advice on making wise land use decisions to meet short and long-term goals. This recommendation is designed to offer residents credible information about the best ways to develop their land to meet a short-term need and still maintain their land investments.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Promote the use of Farmland and Timber Harvesting Tax Programs to encourage these traditional rural activities

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Develop a farm friendly guide for homeowners to alert new residents to the sights, sounds and smells of living in a rural community. The guide will help new homeowners adapt to a rural area.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Promote cooperation and discussion among owners of large blocks of land to enhance wildlife habitat especially travel corridors and open space. The town will promote the use of sustainable forest practices to provide a long-term supply of wood and maintain the economic vitality of forestlands.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Foster discussion with landowners and citizens to find ways to preserve scenic vistas and other cherished views within the community.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

- Permit only low-impact commercial uses in the rural area

Planning Board
Year 1

- Limit the number of access points from subdivision lots onto public roads

Planning Board
Year 1

- Amend the subdivision ordinance to discourage town acceptance of private roads in the rural area, and require the establishment of homeowners' road associations responsible for maintenance

Planning Board
Year 1

- Develop and implement an Open Space Plan, which will identify critical resource areas and other high-value rural lands (scenic areas, high-value farmlands, etc.) and devise mechanisms to protect those lands (conservation easements, grants for acquisition, development standards, etc.)

Conservation Commission

Year 2

- Consider augmenting Critical Resource Area with additional areas identified by the Open Space Plan to be developed

Planning Board
Conservation Commission
Year 4

- Establish or assign a municipal committee to actively promote the use of rural land for appropriate economic activity, such as local farms and farm stands, woodlots, eco-tourism.

Selectmen
Year 3

- Require roads within major subdivisions to reflect the topography and character of the area in which they are built

Planning Board
Year 4

- Amend Subdivision Ordinance so that subdivisions proposed in Rural Area will be designed using open space design principles which include the following:
 1. Housing will be located on the site in a manner, which respects rural character of the site and the surrounding area. Lots will be sited within woodlands or if that's not possible along far edges of open fields preferably adjacent to woodlands (to enable new construction to be absorbed by natural landscape features)
 2. Buffers will be maintained or established between proposed housing and adjacent farms
 3. Storm water will be collected and treated on site
 4. Lot sizes may be reduced according to guidelines established in the ordinance
 5. A portion of the site will be set-aside for non-development which may include recreation, forestry, agriculture or open space
 6. Significant land features on the site should be preserved according to a priority list established in the ordinance. Significant land features may include, prime farmland soils, existing areas used for agriculture, scenic areas, wildlife habitat areas, and existing trails.

Miscellaneous

The Future Land Use Plan aligns with the Vision Statement by reflecting a desire to foster growth in existing village area and in an area next to the existing village area. Recommendations in the Future Land Use Plan also conform to the Vision Statement by reflecting a desire for growth to avoid areas with environmental constraints or critical natural resources and existing farms. By striving to foster smart growth and counter sprawl the Future Land Use Plan does not conflict with existing regional plans.

Municipal capital investments are primarily directed to growth area from the standpoint that past capital fund expenditures in Table 12.5 and capital investments in Recommended Capital Investment Plan, Table 12.6 have been and are targeted to facilities or for vehicles/equipment that's housed in facilities located in village growth areas. Recommendations in this Future Land Use Plan will help direct more capital investment into growth areas.

Implementation

Upon adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the Selectmen will task the Planning Board and/or will appoint a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and task it to prepare recommended changes noted in this Future Land Use Plan except the first eight recommendations under Rural Area recommendations will be the responsibility of the Conservation Commission after it's formed. The Planning Board is expected to prepare a Commercial Site Plan Review ordinance within 12 months of adoption of the plan, and to amend the subdivision ordinance within 24 months. (The Planning Board may consider combining ordinances into a single code.)

The Selectmen will authorize and fund the development of an Open Space Plan within five years of the adoption of this plan. The Conservation Commission will be responsible for overseeing development of the Open Space Plan.

Evaluation

The plan anticipates that the Selectmen will appoint a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee that would meet on an as-needed basis or direct Planning Board to oversee implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Approximately five years after adoption of the Plan the Committee or Planning Board would meet to evaluate the following:

- The degree to which Future Land Use Plan strategies have been implemented;
- The location and amount of new development in relation to the community's designated growth areas and rural areas;

- The amount of rural area protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

Chapter 14: Regional Coordination Program

Shared Resources

Freedom shares a number of resources and services with neighboring communities, and has worked cooperatively with these communities to manage these resources. There are no known conflicts with the neighboring communities' policies and strategies. Shared resources and facilities include:

- **Route 137**, which links Waterville and Winslow with Ellsworth and provides the major access to and from Freedom.
- **A Great Pond** that is Sandy Pond with much of its eastern shore forming part of the boundary between Freedom and Montville.

- **Education** both elementary and secondary is provided through MSAD 3 with a combined elementary and secondary school in Thorndike, which serves in addition to Freedom and Thorndike, Brooks, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Troy, Unity and Waldo.
- **Mutual aid for fire protection** purposes with Albion, Unity, Thorndike, Montville, and Palermo. Freedom VFD along with VFDs from Brooks and Thorndike that provide contract services to Knox. Freedom VFD is also a member of the Northern Waldo Mutual Aid Committee comprised of Burnham, Troy, Unity Plantation, Unity, Albion, Knox, Thorndike, Jackson, Monroe, and Brooks. The Committee strives to improve fire department interoperating skills, standardize operating procedures, and improve accountability.
- **Emergency dispatching** services that are provided to Freedom and all other Waldo county communities by the Waldo County Regional Communications Center.
- **Solid waste management services** include the multi-town waste disposal services of the PERC (the Penobscot Energy Recovery Company) and recycling services provided by Unity Area Regional Recycling Center which also serves Brooks, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Thorndike, Troy and Unity.

Freedom anticipates that it will continue to work cooperatively with other communities to achieve mutually beneficial objectives.

Note following each strategy is the responsible party and year to begin implementing that strategy.

Regional Coordination Strategies

Public Facilities and Facilities

- Encourage each municipal committee to contact similar committees in neighboring towns on at least an annual basis to explore possible joint ventures or shared public facilities equipment or expenses.

Selectmen
Local Committee Chairs
Year 1

Critical Natural Resources

- Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical natural resources while including area land trusts.

Conservation Commission
Planning Board
Year 3

Water Resources

- Collaborate with abutting towns if applicable to develop common watershed protection measures.

Planning Board
Conservation Commission
Year 2

Economy

- Assign responsibility to participate in Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) meetings.

Select Board
Year 1

- Continue to provide financial support for economic development activities at KVCOG.

Select Board
Ongoing

Economy (continued)

- Survey neighboring towns to determine shared economic development objectives.

Assigned person, KVCOG
Year 2

- Explore collaborations that would bring scarce resources into the area and maximize buying power.

Economic Committee
Year 2

- Participate in regional economic development efforts that are feasible and reflect Freedom's economic goals. If public investments are foreseen, as required, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local dollars, Community Development Block Grants, other grants, impact fees, bonding, etc..)

Select Board

Economic Committee
Year 2

Fiscal Capacity

- Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.

Selectmen
Year 1

Historical & Archaeological

- Work with neighboring historical societies and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for and, if necessary, plan for a plan for a comprehensive community survey.

Historical Society
Year 1

Housing

- Support regional affordable housing coalition.

Selectmen
Year 1

Recreation

- Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.

Conservation Commission
Recreation Committee
Year 2

- Contact and collaborate with land trusts interested in working with residents to preserve open space and access to recreational opportunities.

Conservation Commission
Year 2

Transportation

- Develop a ten year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation infrastructure that reflects community, regional, or state objectives. Provide for annual update.

Selectmen
Public Works Comm.
Year 1

- Actively participate in regional and State transportation and land use planning efforts.

Selectmen
Ongoing

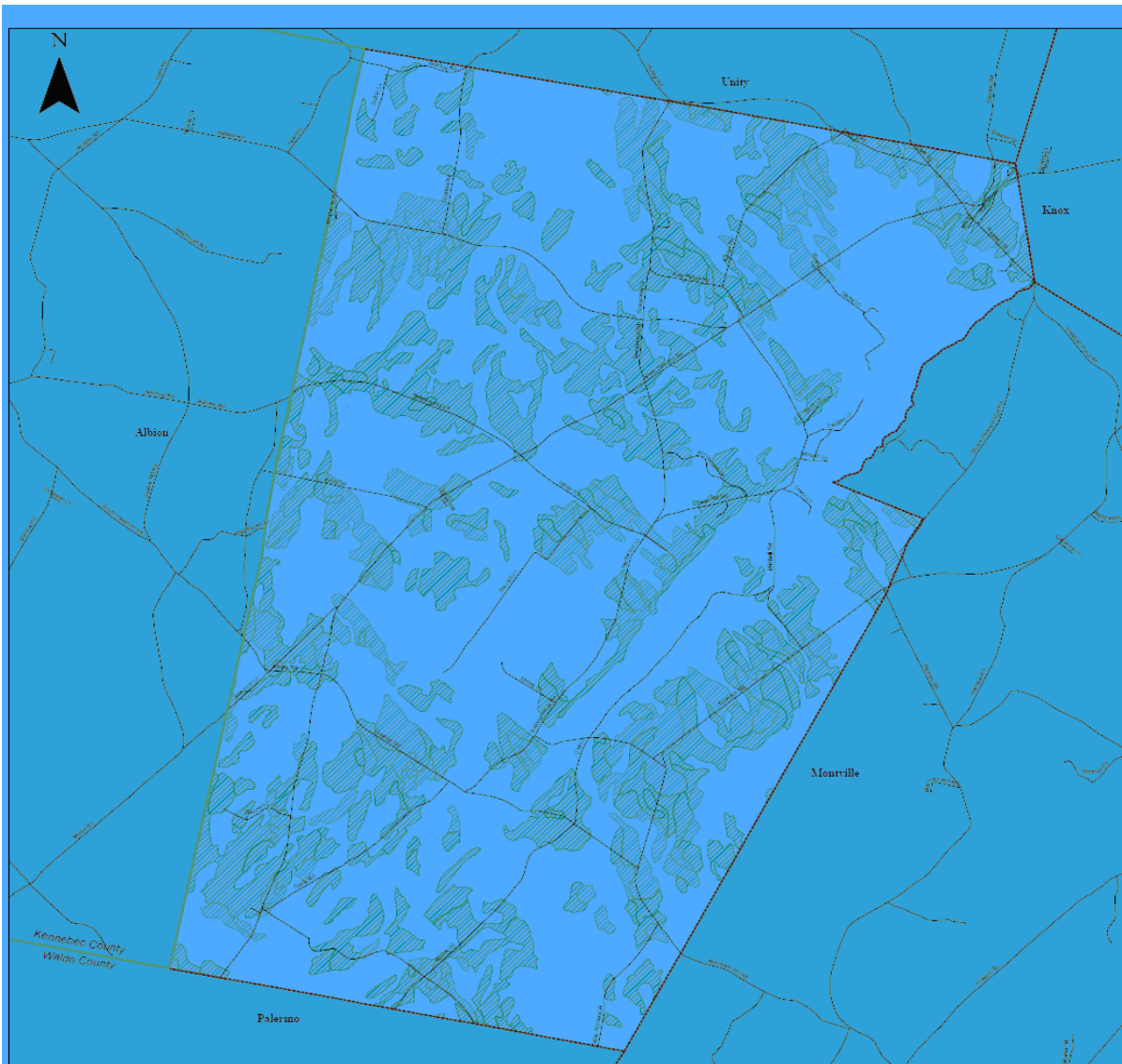
- Work with the Maine Department of Transportation as appropriate to address deficiencies in the local transportation system or conflicts between local, regional, and state priorities for the system.

Selectmen
Ongoing

Appendices

Map Section

Attitude Surveys and Visioning Results Section



Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Agricultural Resources Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

Neither KVCOG nor the Town of Freedom assume any liability for the data delineated herein. This map is intended for planning purposes only and does not represent a survey. Features may not always line up exactly due to multiple data sources.

Data Sources: USDA, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

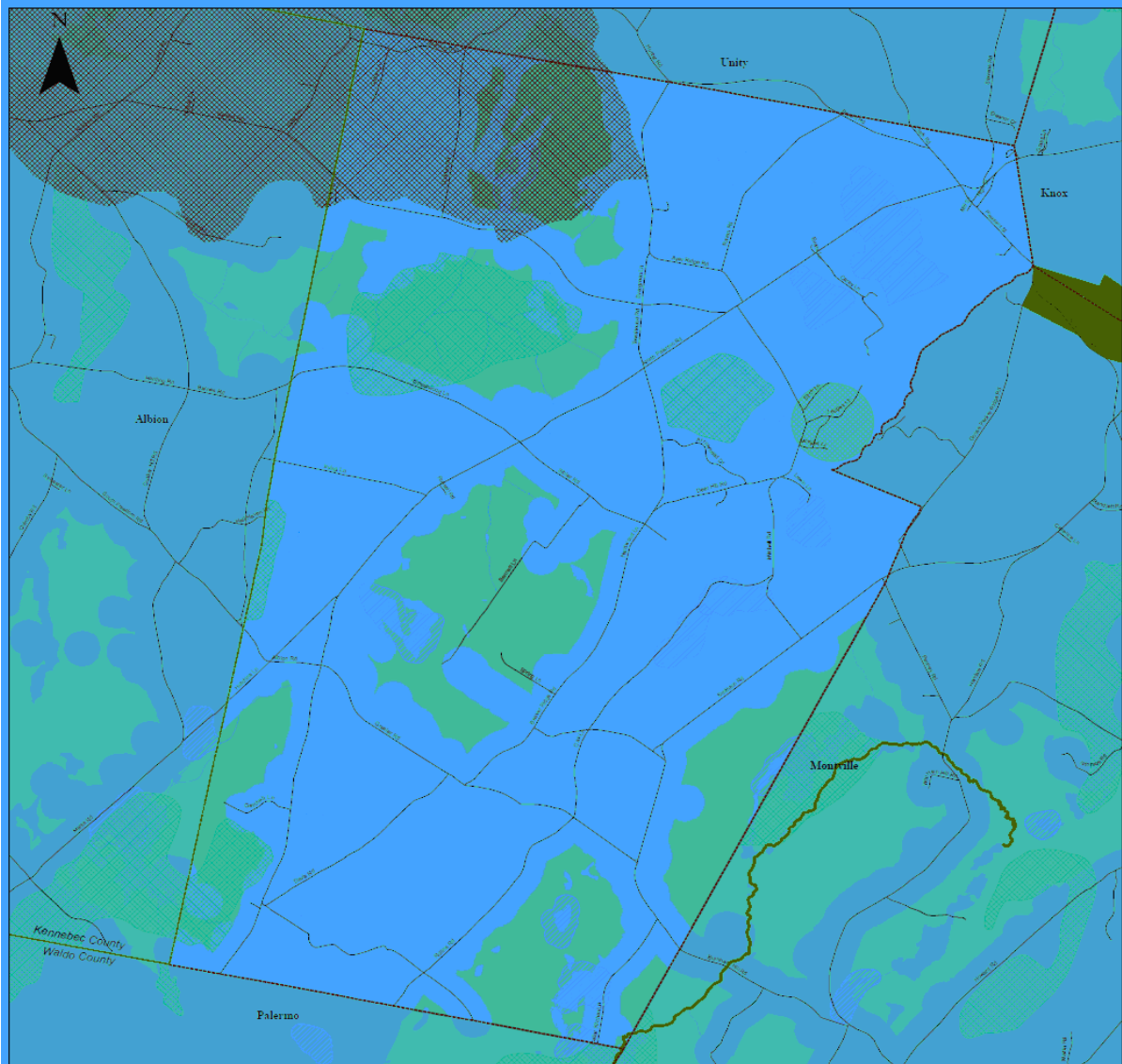
Created 11-30-2010 by JWB



Map Legend	
	Prime Farmland
	Farmland of Statewide Importance
	Roads
	Wetlands
	Lakes and Ponds
	Perennial Streams
	Intermittent Streams
	Town Boundary
	County Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 9,000 12,000 Feet



Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Critical Natural Resources Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

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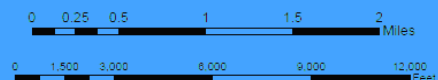
Data Sources: Maine Beginning With Habitat Program, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

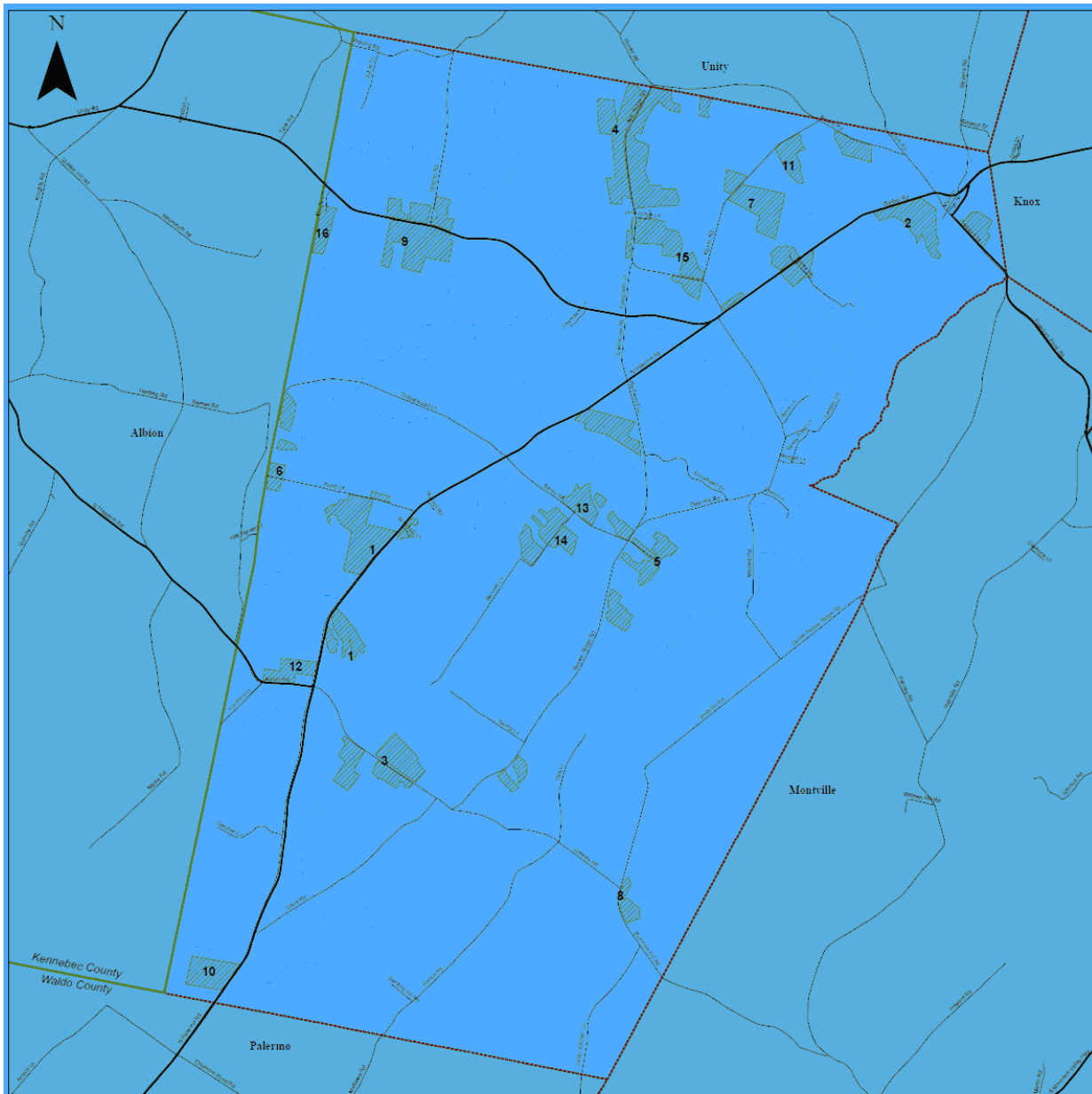
Created 11-29-2010 by JWB



Map Legend

- Atlantic Salmon Habitat
- Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance
- Deer Wintering Area
- Bald Eagle Nesting Site
- Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat
- Conservation Land
- Undeveloped Forest Blocks
- Roads
- Perennial Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Wetlands
- Town Boundary
- County Boundary





Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Farms Map

2010 Comprehensive Plan

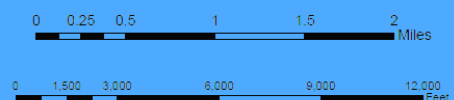
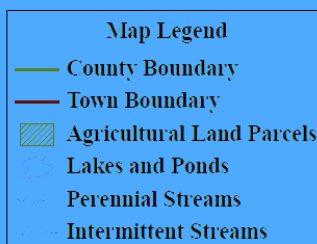
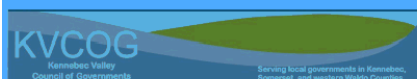
1. Chase Farm: Penny and Addison Chase, vegetables, 448 acres.
2. Village Farm: Polly Shyka and Prentice Grassi, community supported agriculture, 124 acres.
3. Freedom Farm: Ginger Dermott and Daniel Price, vegetables, 55 acres.
4. Gold Top Farm: Ingraham Family, dairy cropland, 183 acres.
5. Ronald Price: leased land for crops and Beaver Ridge Wind Turbines, 76 acres.
6. Basil Barnes: dairy farm cropland, 694 acres.
7. Raven Berry Farm: Brian Raven, several kinds of 'pick your own' berries and vegetables, 132 acres.
8. Brian Jones: Christmas trees, 85 acres.
9. David Spencer: Dairy cows, milk and hay, 329 acres.
10. Haig Brochu: maple syrup and chianininas beef, 75 acres.
11. Mark Raven: vegetable, dry beans, 5 acres.
12. Meredith Coffin: organic garlic stock and soy bean seed, 32 acres.
13. Steve Bennett: hay and leased cropland, 248 acres.
14. David Bennett: hay and pasture, 78 acres.
15. Larry Hotham: leased cropland, 505 acres.
16. Bernard Wentworth: leased cropland, 70 acres.

Total acreage: 3139

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Data Sources: Town of Freedom, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

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Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Land Use Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

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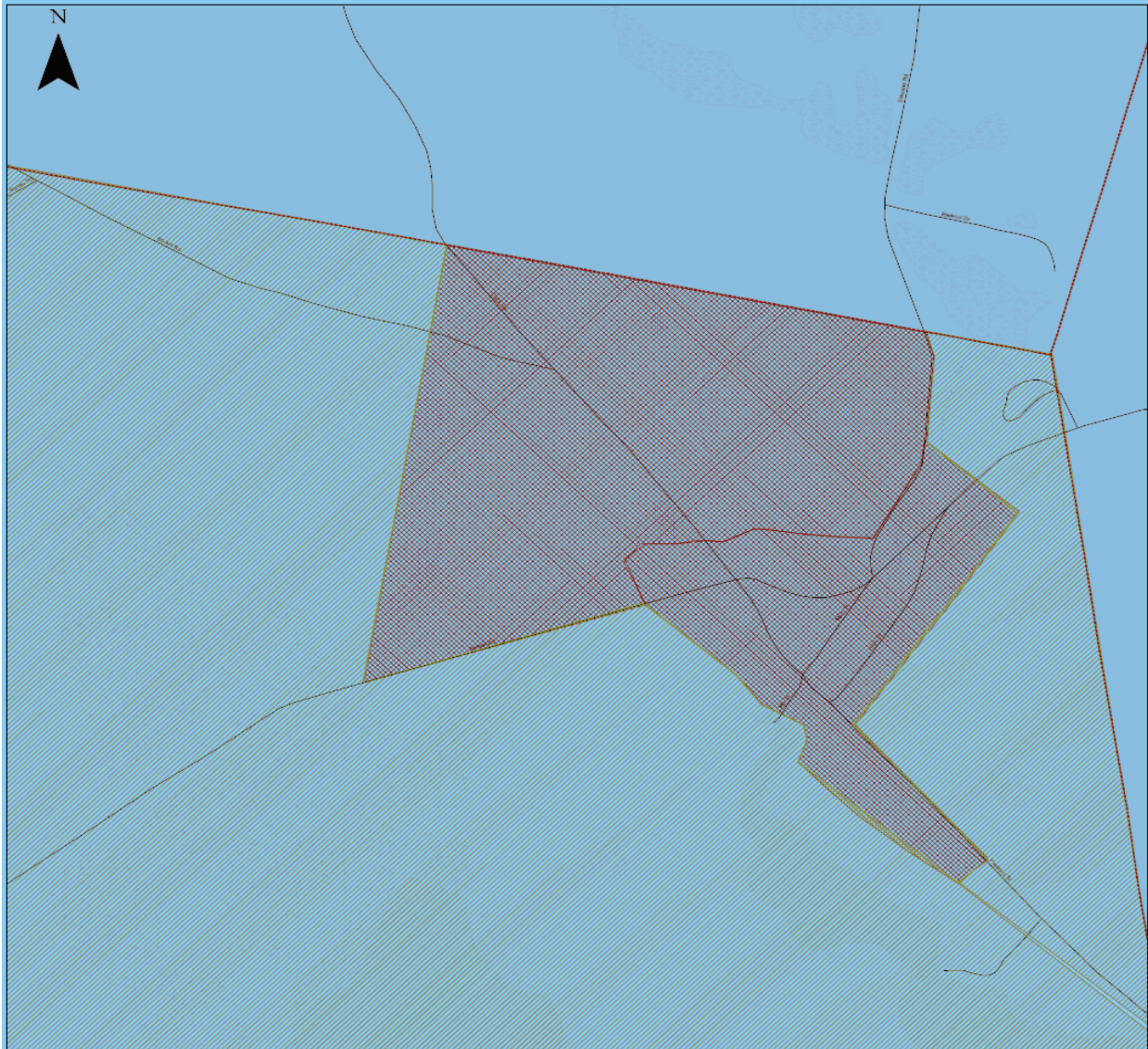
Data Sources: Town of Freedom, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

Created 11-30-2010 by JWB



Map Legend	
County Boundary	Lakes and Ponds
Town Boundary	Village Growth Area
Local Roads	Village Area
State Route	Rural Area
Minor collector	Perennial Streams
	Intermittent Streams





Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Land Use Map-Village Area 2010 Comprehensive Plan

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Data Sources: Town of Freedom, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

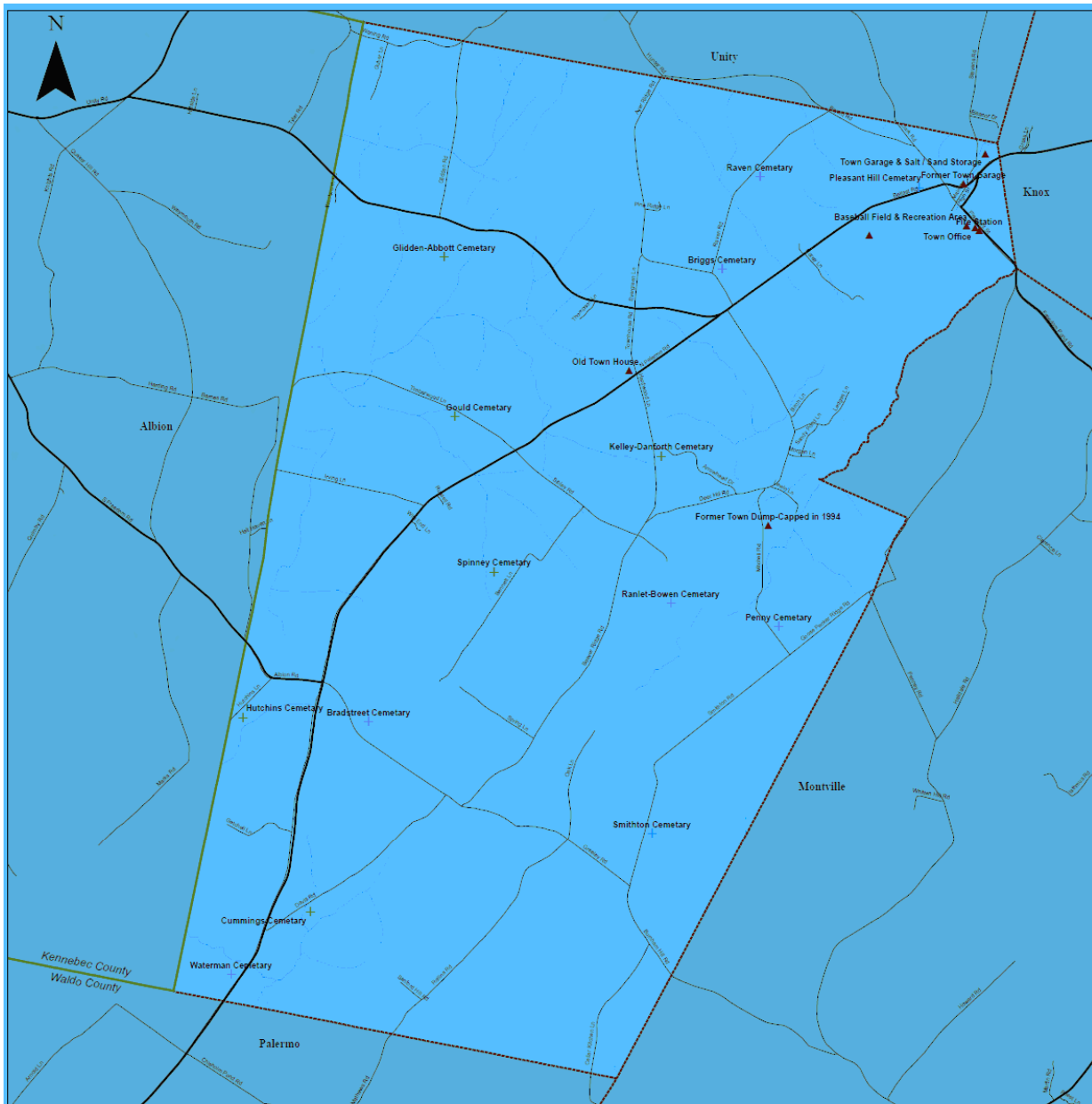
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Map Legend	
	Village Area
	Village Growth Area
	Rural Area
	Roads
	Perennial Streams
	Intermittent Streams
	Lakes and Ponds
	Wetlands
	Town Boundary
	County Boundary

0 375 750 1,500 2,250 3,000 Feet

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 Miles



Town of Freedom

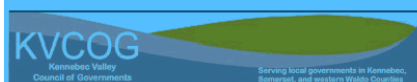
Waldo County, Maine

Public Facilities Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

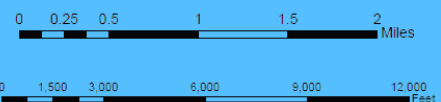
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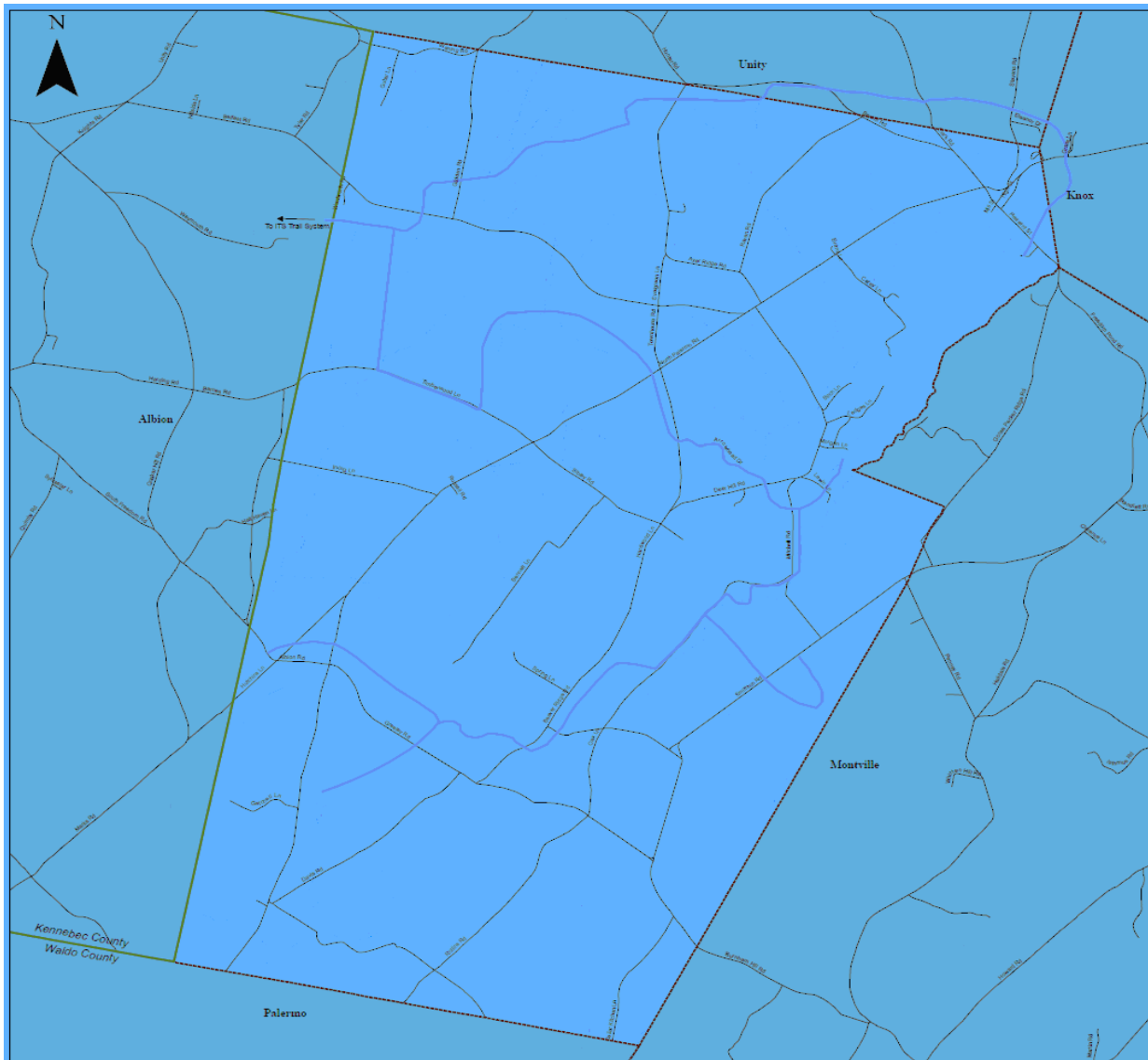
Data Sources: Town of Freedom, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

Created 11-29-2010 by JWB



Map Legend	
▲	Municipal Property
+	Association Cemetery
+	Municipal Cemetery
+	Private Cemetery
—	Roads
—	County Boundary
—	Town Boundary
□	Lakes and Ponds
~	Perennial Streams
- - -	Intermittent Streams





Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Snowmobile Trails Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

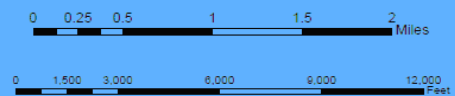
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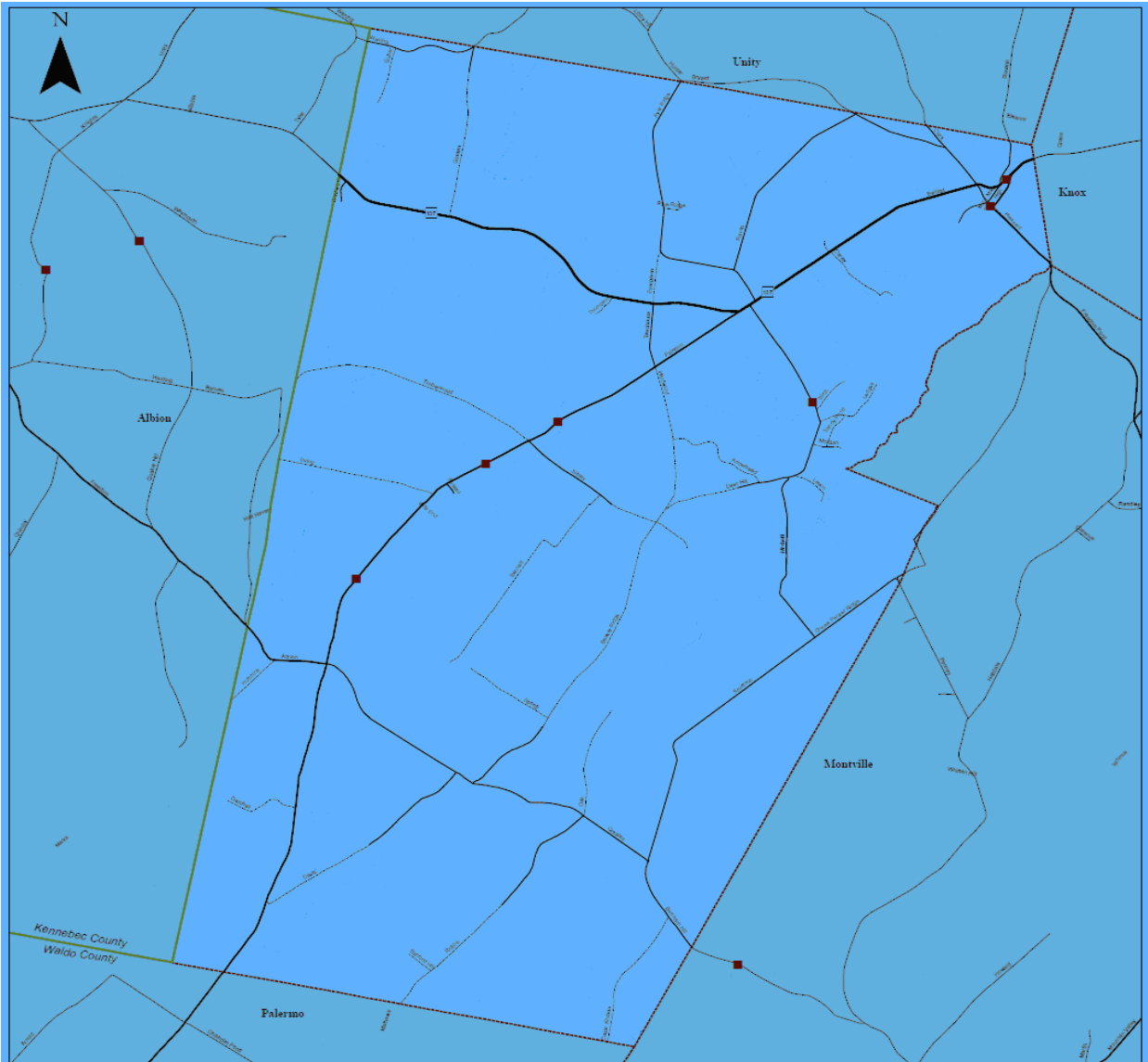
Data Sources: Town of Freedom, Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

Created 11-30-2010 by JWB



Map Legend	
	Snowmobile Trails
	Roads
	Perennial Streams
	Intermittent Streams
	Lakes and Ponds
	Wetlands
	Town Boundary
	County Boundary





Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Transportation Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

Created 11-29-2010 by JWB



Map Legend	
■	Bridge
—	State Highway
—	State Aid Road
—	Town Road
—	Private or Discontinued Road
~	Perennial Streams
~	Intermittent Streams
○	Lakes and Ponds
■	Wetlands
—	Town Boundary
—	County Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 9,000 12,000 Feet



Town of Freedom

Waldo County, Maine

Water Resources Map 2010 Comprehensive Plan

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT

Created 11-29-2010 by JWB



Map Legend	
	Significant Aquifer
	Watershed Boundary
	Perennial Streams
	Intermittent Streams
	Lakes and Ponds
	Wetlands
	Roads
	Town Boundary
	County Boundary



FREEDOM ATTITUDE SURVEY

ANSWER SUMMARY

November 3, 2009

I.

Would you favor a Subdivision Ordinance that would allow Open-Space Development, meaning lot sizes in a proposed subdivision could be reduced in exchange for an ample portion of the parcel to be permanently protected as Open-Space?

YES: 53 (85%) NO: 9 (14.5%)

62 Answers

II.

Would you favor the town of Freedom considering Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which can reduce taxes for both new businesses and taxpayers, in order to attract desirable businesses to Freedom?

YES: 54 (88%) NO: 7 (11%)

61 Answers

III.

Put an X before the ordinances you want the town to adopt.

(53 checked 1 or more, 11 had no answer so were counted as “no”, 64 total)

___ 1. Commercial Development Site Ordinances (37/64, 57.8%)

___ 2. Occupancy Permit Ordinances (19/64, 24.9%)

___ 3. Junkyard Ordinances (37/64, 57.8%)

IV.

Would you favor encouraging tourist trade in Freedom?

YES: 49 (79%) NO: 13 (21%)

V.

To what town do you travel to work?

Freedom – 11

Thorndike – 6

Belfast – 5

Knox – 3

Waterville - 2

2004

Town of Freedom
Public Opinion Poll

Please rate the following in the order of importance to you and your family with 1 being the most important and 11 being the least important. If an issue is not important please mark with a 0.

	All my life Relatives	Friends	Close to work	Rural atmosphere	Safe place	Affordability	Close to coast	Central	Schools	Other
0	52	39	24	10	8	16	18	16	37	15
1	30	31	22	45	28	15	15	20	13	1
2	3	4	11	17	22	12	9	19	3	2
3	2		4	11	10	17	10	5		
4			4	4	8	11	15	13	4	1
5	1	5	7	4	9	12	14	16	2	
6	3	2	3	2	7	3	7	15	8	2
7			6	2	4	8	4		3	1
8	3		4	3	3	3	4	3	5	
9	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	
10	1	5	2	1	1		2	3	2	
11	9	5	4	4	2	2	2	5	4	1
	44	49	66	92	94	83	82	97	42	7

The above totals to do not include the line "0"

2 What aspect of Freedom would you like to have preserved

Village center	Rural character	Access to ponds and Trails	Interconnecting recreational trails	Economic and Social diversity	Scenic vistas
85	103	79	62	60	71

3 How would you rate the following?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	Totals
Fire	43	50	11	2	22	128
Police	11	28	30	18	28	115
Ambulance	11	22	36	13	37	119
Road maintenance	16	47	30	18	5	116
Snow plowing	22	41	37	9	9	118
Trash collection	27	59	15	4	12	117
Recycling	32	53	13	4	21	123
Town government	14	55	28	4	14	115
Town office services	31	51	23	6	9	120
Opportunity for public input	19	49	20	12	18	118
Health services	5	17	21	23	51	117
Public Assistance	4	19	16	11	67	117
Park and recreation	6	39	27	13	34	119
Cemeteries	9	49	21	1	32	112
Electricity	5	58	22	7	20	112
Street lights	5	37	17	6	45	110
Telephone	7	49	23	17	15	111
	267	723	390	168	439	

4 What action should the town take on the following?

	Encourage	Discourage	No Opinion	Totals
Single family dwellings	93	5	23	121
Multifamily dwellings	36	60	21	117
Accessory housing	71	22	34	127
Senior citizen housing	78	12	23	113
Mobile homes	25	73	25	123
Mobile home parks	21	82	10	113
Cluster housing development	27	67	15	109
Commercial development	51	45	12	108
Light manufacturing	67	35	17	119
Heavy industry	17	80	12	109
Tree farming	91	7	11	109
Recreational opportunities	108	2	11	116
Preservation of rural character	108	7	9	119
Removal of unsafe buildings	95	9	13	117
Removal of multiple unregistered vehicles	95	5	7	107
	973	511	243	

- 5 What type of businesses would you like to have in Freedom?

Agriculture	8
Artisans	1
Auto Repair	2
B&B	3
Bakery/Café/Restaurant	12
Bank	1
Big Box Store	1
Boarding/Nursing Home	1
Book, used	2
Car Wash	2
Clothing	1
Farming	2
Gym	1
Hardware	3
Legal	1
Light Manufacturing	7
Medical	3
Non polluting jobs	2
Plumber	1
Supermarket	2

- 6 Freedom experienced a 9% growth from year 1990 to 2000
Over the next five years how would you like to see Freedom grow?

Same rate	Slower rate	Faster rate	No opinion
66	33	6	12
117			

- 7 Should the town manage the following types of development?

	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Agricultural	Recreational	None
Yes	70	77	68	58	71	8
No	34	26	28	40	29	11
	104	103	96	98	100	19

8 What type of dwelling do you live in?

Single family home	96
Two family home	0
Multifamily home	0
Mobile home	10
Seasonal housing	7
Rental property	3
Currently building a home	
Land only	5
Other (Please explain)	2
Total	123

9 Do you own or rent your home?

Own	93
Rent	6
	99

10 How long have you lived in Freedom

Less than 1 year	3
1-4 Years	10
5-9 Years	10
10-19 Years	29
20 or more	34
All my life	11
Own property only	16
	113

11 Do you consider yourself

A year round resident	93
Seasonal resident	8
Non resident property owner	12
	113

12 How might you choose to use your property in the next ten (10) years

Family residence	82
Vacation	16
Seasonal	6
Retirement	22
Rental	9
Small business	16
Large Business	
Farming	13
Residential development	4
Conservation easement	8
Undeveloped investment	13
Other	3

192

13 People of what age group live in your home

Please check all that apply indicating the number of people in each age range

0-5	6-17	18 - 24	25 -34	35 - 44	45 -54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 & over
8	21	13	12	17	48	50	30	15

14 Please indicate the highest level of education of each adult in the household

Grade 8 Or less	Some high school	High school diploma	Some secondary education	2 year degree /certificate	4 year degree	Advanced degree
2	12	51	30	18	45	29

15 Do you operate a business in your home?

Yes	No	Type
22	61	Building Consultant Candle maker CEO Contractor Farming Flooring Non-profit Wholesale
		Painting Photography Real Estate Sales Service Welding Writing

16 To what towns do you regularly commute to for work, volunteering, school etc

Augusta 13	Bangor 1	Belfast 32	Camden 2	Rockland 1	Unity 7	N/A 6
Thomdike 5	Fairfield 4	Brooks 4	Knox 3	Albion 3	Warren 2	Bath 2

The following towns had 1 to each town:

Biddeford
Bath
Brewer
Greenville
Lewiston
Liberty
Oakland
Palermo
Searsport
Somerville
The Forks
Waldo
Washington
Windsor
Winslow
York

17 In what town do you or other members of your household do most of you household shopping?

Augusta 16	Knox 1
Bangor 4	Portland 2
Belfast 37	Unity 12
Freedom 2	Waterville 69

18 Do you have internet access in your household

Yes	No
74	39

19 Do you have satellite TV in your household?

Yes	No
68	46

FREEDOM VISIONING SESSION (1/10/10)

Results

Mapping Exercise of Special Places

	<u>Rank Order</u>	<u>Score</u>		<u>Rank Order</u>	<u>Score</u>
Group 1	1) Sandy Pond	3	Group 2	1) Sandy Pond	3
	2) Church	2		2) All Open Space	2
	3) Grange	1		3) Village (mun. bldg.)	1
Group 3	1) Sandy Pond	3	Group 4	1) Sandy Pond	3
	2) Village	2		2) Village	2
	3) Sandy Stream	1		3) Wetlands	1
#1 Sandy Pond		all groups picked first			12
# 2 Village		3 groups picked as 2 nd or 3 rd choice			5
Other topics: in order of score but identified only once:					
Church, All Open Space, Sandy Stream, Wetlands					

Strengths & Weaknesses/ Strengths

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	
1A	9	Natural Resources
1B	9	Intact Village Center
2A	6	Rural Characteristics
2B	6	Wildlife Habitat/Lg. Blocks
3	5	Fire Dept.(commitment of volunteers, good work)
4	3	New School
5A	2	General Store
5B	2	Own Post Office
6A	1	Location(centrally located, rural but near work)
6B	1	Pond Boat Launch
6C	1	Snowmobile club with trails
6D	1	Land Trusts (Sheepscot and friends of Unity Wetlands)
6E	1	Unity College (culture, library, etc.)
6F	1	Long History of Agricultural Activity
6G	1	Fast Internet
6H	1	Historic Restoration of Old Town Meeting House
6I	1	Avian Haven

Listed Strengths but no votes

Scenic quality	Elderly life experience	Creative artists
Unity barn raisers	Local tech. center(students)	Unity restaurants
Sense of community	Rte. 137- wide corridor	Emergency response Delta
Unposted access rural land	Town website	Public works road maintenance
Town meeting form of govt.	Active church community	

Strengths & Weaknesses/Weaknesses

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	
1	12	No Way of Evaluating Development
2	7	Tax Burden
3A	6	Lack of Civic Volunteerism (long commutes)
3B	6	Not Much Economic Opportunity Nearby in Town
4A	5	Lack of Diverse Tax Sources
4B	5	Limited Economics
5	4	Community Divisiveness
6A	2	Small Size of Town Physically Could Limit Population
6B	2	Untapped, Not Well Known Creative Human Assets
7	1	Lack of Young People

Listed Weaknesses but no votes

Location- if gas prices rise problems for many residents who are commuters

Road maintenance/public works Rte 137-hazardous chemicals

Emergency response/distance

Important Issues

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	
1	8	Fiscal Mgt.
2	7	Emergency Services
3A	5	Skidgell warehouse hazardous waste EPA
3B	5	Wind turbines impact Beaver Hill
4A	4	Environmental degradation
4B	4	Lack Of Tax Base
4C	4	Managing growth
4D	4	Earthen Dam
5A	3	Managing Commercial growth
5B	3	Managing Residential growth
6A	1	Preserving scenic and rural qualities, attractiveness
6B	1	Better and wider communication of town happenings
6C	1	Dump site
6D	1	Expand EMS

Listed Important Issues but no votes

Regulating Priorities Lack of Info about Dump Attracting Young People

Emergency Services (see overall above)

- Fire station not central (affects insurance rates)
- Volunteers, need professionals?
- Loss of Emergency Vehicles
- Capacity
- Aging Community; need for quicker emergency response

The Village

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	
1A	10	Identify village boundaries
1B	10	Preserve Village (Sandy) stream
2	9	More Business
3	7	Identify growth area
4	6	Restore old mill
5A	5	Protect old architecture
5B	5	Invasive bamboo
6	3	Public water and sewer
7A	2	Road “dust bowl” seep in center (leak?)
7B	2	Homeownership/ don’t encourage rents
7C	2	Managing Rte. 137 traffic (near village)
8A	1	Town should buy mill and its land up to park
8B	1	Better maintenance of old homes

Rural Area Outside Village

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	
1	14	Preserving farmland/open space
2	10	Concern about sprawl
3A	5	Preserving large tracts of undeveloped land
3B	5	Large lot (2 acres) minimum lot size fragmenting “eating up” large land parcels

Strategies

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	
1	9	Hire a grant writer
2	8	Inventory economic assets (scenic views, farms, artists)
3	7	Village Committee
4	6	Attract business to help with taxes
5A	3	More Recreation facilities
5B	3	Reach consensus on vision
5C	3	Rural character protection but few restrictions
6A	2	Farmer’s organization – to help succeed
6B	2	Ordinances to implement Comp Plan goals
7A	1	Conservation fund to buy open space
7B	1	ID village incentives for village business development
7C	1	Encourage a couple of bed & breakfasts in Town
7D	1	Regional coordination

Listed Strategies but no votes

Set up Conservation Commission Adopt Comp Plan leading to grants

Discretionary Funding Priorities

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	<u>Categories Facilitator Provided</u>
1	59	Farmland Protection
2	52	Roads
3	47	Recreation Facilities
4	42	Historic Preservation
5	35	Open Space
6A	30	Schools
6B	30	Economic Development
7	5	Housing