

# *Town of Poland*

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## *Economic Development Strategy*

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*May, 2005*

*Community Dynamics Corp.*

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## *Executive Summary*

### **Community Overview**

- The primary objective of this strategy is to establish a workable framework to developing a sustainable and ongoing process for broadening the Town's tax base.
- Poland is strategically located adjacent to Maine's population and economic centers. Nearly 50 % of Maine's population is located within a 30-mile radius of Poland. While Poland does not in and of itself have a broad-based, diverse economy, it is part of a much larger economically robust regional economy.
- The Town of Poland is considered part of the Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This MSA has one of the most robust and thriving economies in the State, which possesses innovative healthcare, high precision manufacturing, financial services and printing sectors.

### **Land Use**

- There are three primary patterns of development in Poland that have evolved, primarily as a result of the transportation networks in the community: single-family residential uses; village retail/commercial uses; and larger commercial/industrial uses. Poland without a centralized village or definable downtown area.
- The Town of Poland currently has designated three primary zoning districts which support most types of non-residential development activity occurring within the community: General Purpose District; Village District; and the Historical District. Recommendations on district boundary changes and additions include the following:
  - Expand the General Purpose District to encompass the area near the intersection of Routes 26 and 122.
  - Expand the General Purpose District adjacent to the rail lines, north of Hackett Mills Road.
  - Create a new zoning district (Downtown Village District) to help the creation of a definable downtown.

## ***Executive Summary (Continued)***

### **Tax Base**

- Over the past ten years the total property valuation in Poland has more than doubled, from \$205 million to over \$412 million. Today, residential property accounts for just over \$300 million, while business property accounts for nearly \$112 million. These valuations result in a current ratio of 73% residential and 27% business.
- 24% (\$98 million) of the total Town valuation is on business personal property, which is primarily associated with bottling equipment at the Poland Spring plant. While certainly a good source of new tax revenue for the community, the personal property taxes are being targeted by the State to be phased out over time.

### **Infrastructure**

- Public water and sewer infrastructure that supports economic development can be accessed through existing distribution lines in Auburn and Mechanic Falls. Three phase electric power is found throughout the community.
- The communities of Poland and Auburn possess one of New England's most important rail networks in the northeast, with service offered through Emons Transportation Group/St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, Canadian National, and Guilford Industries.

### **Natural Resources**

- The natural resources around the community play a significant role in Poland's development history and future. These resources are both a significant economic asset to the community as well as a constraint to some future activities. Clearly, Poland's water resources, both ground and surface, provide much of the basis for its historical development.

## *Executive Summary (Continued)*

### **State and Regional Economy**

- Economic conditions in Maine improved in 2004, as unemployment declined after rising for three consecutive years. The annual average unemployment rate fell from 5.0 % in 2003 to 4.6 in 2004, and remained below the national average for the seventh consecutive year.
- From an economic perspective, Poland is influenced by a larger regional economy. While Cumberland County certainly has an influence on the Community, it is the tri-county regions of Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin that have and will continue have the major economic influence on the Town of Poland.
- Over the past two years, the Lewiston/Auburn MSA closely mirrored the State of Maine's unemployment rate. Unemployment was highest at 5.5% in January 2002 and was at its lowest in July and August 2003 at 3.6%.
- The sectorial employment for the L/A MSA is very diverse. Highlights on employment by sector follows:
  - Total employment in the MSA was 46,530 up 1.7% from 45,700 in 2001. 18.9% goods producing jobs, 69% service providing jobs and 11.7% government jobs.
  - Manufacturing accounted for 6,560 or 14% of the jobs in L/A.
- Poland is strategically located in a very robust regional economy that is one of the strongest and fastest growing in the State.
- There are some significant economic development activities occurring in adjacent communities that will benefit Poland.
- Poland is home to one of the most recognizable businesses and market brands in the consumer products business.
- Poland is located in the midst of a tremendously robust regional economy. Thus, planned and current economic activities in adjacent communities will have a profound impact on Poland and can create opportunities to enhance its tax base.

***Executive Summary (Continued)***

**Economic Opportunities**

- There are some promising growth opportunities for Poland in the following business clusters:

<b>Economic Focus</b>	<b>Promising Business Clusters</b>
<b>Industries and businesses that build on existing local and regional business clusters and strengths</b>	-Bottled Water Related Businesses -Resort Hotel/Tourism
<b>Industries and businesses that build on emerging regional business activities and clusters</b>	-Transportation and Logistics -Back Office/Telecommunications -Manufactured Housing/Building Trades -Home Products/Fine Furniture -Retirement Communities
<b>Small business entrepreneurs that compliment Poland’s environment and culture</b>	-Artisans/Craftmakers/Antiques -Ecotourism/Recreation Operators -Commerce/Specialty Retail
<b>Industries in new emerging business clusters in Maine and New England</b>	-Biotechnology -Radio Frequency/Digital Electronics -Information Technology -Advanced Wood Composites -Environmental Technology

***Executive Summary (Continued)***

**Strategic Action Recommendations**

- Following is a listing of specific strategic recommendations that will support the realization of the economic development opportunities.

<b>Strategic Focus</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>
<b>Business Retention and Expansion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continue to support the growth of Poland Springs Bottling Company.</li> <li>-Work with the owners and support the redevelopment of the Poland Spring Inn.</li> <li>-Support other existing businesses as appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Development/Project Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Using TIF proceeds, establish an economic development fund to support economic development staff functions within the community or within a regional context to implement this strategy.</li> <li>-Form a Local Development Corporation to assist the Town in developing properties.</li> <li>-Work with AVCOG and others to identify and include Poland’s projects in the regional CEDS program.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Cooperation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Work with the City of Auburn to explore joint participation in the expansion of the industrial park and areas in Poland adjacent to the rail line.</li> <li>-Work with the cities of Auburn and Lewiston on the airport expansion.</li> <li>-Work with Lewiston, Auburn and Mechanic Falls utility districts to ensure continued capacity to support future development activities.</li> <li>-Work with AVCOG and/or others to establish a business attraction effort.</li> <li>-Work with AVCOG and others to promote Poland’s tourism assets in the Western Lakes and Mountains Tourism Council.</li> </ul>

*Town of Poland*

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<b>Strategic Focus</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>
<b>Prospectively Re-zone Land</b>	-Expand the General Purpose District in the areas around the junction of Routes 26 and 122 and north of Hacket Mills Road. -Establish a new Downtown Village District, along Route 26, north of Range Pond to facilitate the creation of a Poland downtown.
<b>Downtown Creation/Route 26 Revitalization</b>	-Develop a Downtown Plan and related TIF district to support and facilitate the creation of a new downtown on portions of Route 26.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	-Evaluate utility extensions vs. community based system.

## *Introduction*

The Town of Poland has experienced significant population growth over the past thirty-five years, from 2015 people in 1970 to over 5200 people in 2005. There are multiple factors contributing to this rapid growth in population. Poland is a desirable place to live with its geographic location adjacent to major employment and service centers and major transportation routes, making for an easy commute. Poland has a generally rural character, with larger lots and generally lower taxes than adjacent service center communities. Poland has a large number of lakes and ponds that are desirable for both seasonal and year round homes.

There are several large non-residential tax payers in the community, including the Poland Spring bottling plant, the Poland Spring Hotel, several youth summer camps and several natural resource based businesses (Pike Industries, Jolly Gardiner Products and Morse Brothers Bark Mulch). Collectively, these uses represent less than 4% of the taxable valuation of the community. Accordingly, the majority of the municipal tax revenue base is derived from residential uses.

Because of the Town's rapid increase in population and subsequent dramatic increases in the residential component of the tax base, the Town is concerned that the current business/commercial/residential tax base will not be sufficient to maintain and provide affordable quality municipal services to the residential and corporate citizens in the future. In order to provide a balance of tax base to support municipal services, without overburdening residential uses, non-residential valuation should exceed 30% of the community's total valuation. While Poland's non residential property valuation is currently approximately 30%, less than 4% is in real property.

In light of the above, the Town of Poland commissioned Community Dynamics Corp. (CDC) to develop a realistic and achievable economic development strategy to meet the community's long term goals. The primary objective of this strategy is to establish a workable framework to developing a sustainable and ongoing process for broadening the Town's tax base.

In developing this strategy, CDC conducted the following analyses: an inventory and assessment of current community economic development assets; an evaluation of state and regional initiatives and competitive opportunities and constraints; and an assessment of economic development opportunities within the Town and abutting communities.

## ***Community Assets***

### **Poland's Place in the Region**

The Town of Poland is geographically situated adjacent to major growth centers in central and southern Maine. It has a unique economic history; its local economy was developed and is still centered upon its valuable water resources. Located 20 miles north of Portland and 5 miles from the center of Lewiston-Auburn, Poland is strategically located adjacent to Maine's population and economic centers. Nearly 50 % of Maine's population is located within a 30-mile radius of Poland. While Poland does not in and of itself have a broad-based, diverse economy, it is part of a much larger economically robust regional economy.

The Town of Poland is considered part of the Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This MSA has one of the most robust and thriving economies in the State, which possesses innovative healthcare, high precision manufacturing, financial services and printing sectors. The region is home to world-class companies, colleges and institutions. Some of the State's most prestigious companies are located in the region including Poland Spring Bottling, Proctor & Gamble's Tambrands, Inc., General Electric and L.L. Bean's Telemarketing Center, to name but a few. A recent independent study by KPMG International ranked the cost of doing business in this MSA as nearly two %age points below the U.S. benchmark, making it one of the most desirable places to do business in the State and northeast. Poland's major contributions to the MSA's economy are the Poland Spring Water Company, which employs over 400 people, and the Poland Spring Inn.

This MSA is centrally located in Maine and offers access to numerous institutions of higher learning, including renowned Bates College, L-A College, (the fastest growing campus of the University of Maine System) and Central Maine Technical College. Central Maine Technical College and L-A College work closely together to share course offerings.

## **Land Use Patterns**

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

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

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

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

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

**Village Retail/Commercial Development:**

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

**Commercial/Industrial Development:**

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

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

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

**Appropriateness of Zoning Districts:**

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

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

**General Purpose Districts:**

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

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

**Village Districts:**

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

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

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

**Historical District:**

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

## **Tax Base**

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

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

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

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

## *Town of Poland*

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Infrastructure**

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

### **Public Water & Sewer**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Electricity**

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

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

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

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

## **Transportation**

### **Rail:**

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

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

### **Highway:**

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

**Air:**

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

**Communications:**

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

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

## **Natural Resources**

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

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

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

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

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

## ***State and Regional Economy***

Understanding the State and regional economic picture is important to the development of a realistic and achievable economic development strategy for the Town of Poland. Following is a discussion of the State and regional economy, strategic objectives and current initiatives that could have a bearing on Poland's economic future.

### **Overview of the State Economy**

According to the Maine Department of Labor, economic conditions in Maine improved in 2004, as unemployment declined after rising for three consecutive years. The annual average unemployment rate fell from 5.0 % in 2003 to 4.6 in 2004, and remained below the national average for the seventh consecutive year. The annual average number of non-farm wage and salary jobs in Maine increased by 7,100 to an average of 613,900 in 2004. This gain follows a slight increase of 300 jobs in 2003 and a loss of 1,600 jobs in 2002. Non-farm jobs increased by 1.2 % between 2003 and 2004 in Maine, slightly above the growth rate of 1.1 % nationally. This was the seventh consecutive year that Maine outperformed the nation.

Service-providing industries continued a long-term trend of growth, adding 7,500 net new jobs in 2004. Health care and social assistance (+3,400), retail trade (+2,200), government (+1,200), leisure and hospitality services (+800), educational services (+500), wholesale trade (+300), and information (+200) each added jobs. Not all service-providing industries added jobs, as professional and business services (-600), other services (-300), and financial activities (-200) each recorded job losses. Goods-producing sector jobs declined by 400. A gain of 500 construction jobs was more than offset by a loss of 1,000 manufacturing jobs. The manufacturing job loss between 2003 and 2004 was a significant reduction in recent annual job losses (-3,900 between 2002 and 2003, -6,600 between 2001 and 2002). Several manufacturing industries recorded small job losses, with the largest being a drop of 500 in paper manufacturing.

Total personal income in Maine increased 5.5 % between 2003 and 2004 to \$40.3 billion. This compares to a national growth rate of 5.7 % and a New England gain of 5.9 %. Personal income is the sum of income received from earnings from work; dividends, interest, and rent; and transfer payments.

All major non-farm industries, with the exception of nondurable goods manufacturing, registered total earnings increases. The fastest rate of growth was recorded by real estate, rental, and leasing at 12.6 %. Information workers were second with an increase in earnings of 9.6 %, followed by health care and social assistance (9.2 %). Earnings in nondurable goods manufacturing remained unchanged over the year.

Per capita personal income in Maine rose 4.8 % between 2003 and 2004 to \$30,566. This was the 24th highest rate of increase among the 50 states, and was slightly above the national growth rate of 4.7 %. The Maine 2004 per capita personal income ranked 30th of all states compared to 28th in 2003. Maine per capita personal income stood at 93 % of the national average in 2004. Per capita personal income in the other New England states ranged from 100 % of the national average in Vermont to 138 % in Connecticut.

### **State Economic Development Strategy and Initiatives**

Increasing economic opportunity for the people of Maine is one of Governor Baldacci's top priorities. Economic growth occurs through business retention, business expansion, business creation and business attraction. To achieve each of these factors, the State has developed an economic development strategy to address four economic drivers: (1) the creation of a fair and stable business environment to attract investment to Maine; (2) investment in people; (3) a clear focus on key sectors of the State's economy; and (4) building infrastructure. Table 3 illustrates the main focal points of the Governor's economic development strategy.

**Table 3**  
**State Economic Development Strategy**  
**(A Summary)**

<b>Mature Industries</b>	<b>Emerging Industries</b>	<b>Cross-Cutting Issues</b>
Forest Products	Biotech and Biomedical Research	Entrepreneurship
Marine Related Activities	Financial Services	The Creative Economy
Precision and Niche Manufacturing	Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)	Small Business Support
Tourism		

## **Overview of Regional Economy**

From an economic perspective Poland is influenced by a larger regional economy. While Cumberland County certainly has an influence on the Community, it is the tri-county regions of Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin that have and will continue have the major economic influence on the Town of Poland.

In evaluating the regional economy, it is important to the review the demographic, socioeconomic and labor force characteristics and the economy and industry of the region. This information was derived from the regional Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) produced by the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), and the Labor Market Digest produced by the Maine Department of Labor.

### **Demographic, socioeconomic and labor force characteristics:**

#### **Types of Employment:**

- Dominance of non-manufacturing versus manufacturing employment in the tri-county area in 2002: service providing 64% (including: trade, transportation and utilities, information, finance activities, professional and business services, education and health services, leisure and hospitality, and other services), manufacturing (16.1%), construction (5.1%), government (13%), and natural resources/mining (1.1%).
- State of Maine: services (66%), manufacturing (11.2%), construction and natural resources (5.3%), government (17%).

#### **Lumber/Wood Products and Furniture/Fixtures** (Source: Maine Department of Labor)

- In the tri-county wood products manufacturing employed approximately 1,850 people in 2002, roughly 27% of the State of Maine figure.
- Employment in manufacturing wood products in the tri-county by Labor Market Area: Farmington LMA 500; Lewiston-Auburn MSA 480; Norway-Paris LMA 450; Rumford LMA 420.

Paper Manufacturers: Mead Paper Corporation, Rumford, International Paper, Jay, Masonite Corporation (Division of IP), Lisbon Falls and Wassau-Mosinee Paper Corp., Otis Mill - Jay. (Source: Pulp and Paper Association, March 2001)

- Employ 2,780 workers or 27% of all the pulp and paper industry workers in the State of Maine
- Combined payroll of \$193 million dollars.
- Spent \$121 million dollars locally and \$282 million statewide.
- Capacity to produce 32% (or over 6,100 tons/day) of the total State of Maine pulp and paper product.

Agriculture (Source: 1997 Census of Agriculture)

- The value of agricultural products from Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties was \$87.5 million dollars, a 14.5% decline from 1992. This represents approximately 20% of State of Maine gross market value.
- There are 869 farms in Western Maine, a 1% increase since 1992, covering 159,955 acres, a 2% increase since 1992.

Retail Sales Androscoggin Economic Summary District: Consumer Retail Sales (Source: Maine State Planning Office; District includes Lewiston-Auburn, Lewiston-Auburn Suburban, Paris, Rumford, Farmington, Livermore and Rangeley.)

- For the years 1999 through 2003, total consumer retail sales experienced growth of 3.4%. Building supply sales grew 8.8%, followed by general merchandise 5.1%; auto stores 3.2%, restaurant & lodging 3.2%, other retail 1.3% and food store sales decreased 0.6%.
- From 2002 to 2003, overall retail sales grew by 5.2%. Building supply sales grew 10.4%, general merchandise 5.8%; auto stores 4.8%, food stores grew 4.6%, restaurant & lodging 3.4% and other retail sales 2.8%.

Tourism

- The region encompasses 3 of the 5 largest lakes and 4 of the 5 largest mountains in the State of Maine.

Tourism Revenues

- In 1998 lodging and restaurant sales in the Western Maine Lakes and Mountains region, which includes Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford Counties, plus the Sebago Lake region, increased 12%.
- An estimated 1.2 million travelers visited the Western Maine Lakes and Mountains region in 1997, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular destination in the state.

- Most travelers to Western Maine choose the region as a primary designation for their vacation rather than a pass-through, with the most popular activities being touring, skiing, special events, and relaxing in country settings.
- Visitors ranked the top 5 strengths of Western Maine as a vacation destination as: beautiful scenery, excellent family atmosphere for adults and children, good opportunities for boating, water sports, and camping, and safety.
- 8 of 21 licensed downhill ski facilities in the State of Maine are located in Western Maine.
- In 1996 an estimated \$87,951,844 was spent in Franklin County by tourists. The total full time equivalent jobs created from the tourism industry was 1,949.

Defense Dependence (concentrated in Southern Androscoggin County)

Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS)

- Congress authorized a base realignment and closure (BRAC) round in 2005 that could impact the naval air station in Brunswick. BNAS serves as the only Naval Air Station in the Northeastern United States. A defense dependency analysis completed in the 1990's indicated that approximately 300 residents of Androscoggin County were directly dependent on BNAS for employment and over 80 businesses contract directly with BNAS and BIW for work.

Bath Iron Works (Source: BIW 4/00)

- 1,485 employees are residents of Androscoggin County. This constitutes 19.5% of the BIW workforce (7,600).
- Annual sales of \$1 billion, \$300 million payroll, \$120 million benefits and \$13.3 million state payroll taxes.
- \$220 million in investment by General Dynamics for the modernization of BIW. Over 200 vendors/contractors valued at \$40 million and will increase to over \$90 million by completion of the project. Creation of 400 construction jobs associated with the project.

Maine's Exporting (Source: New England Indicators, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston)

- From 2002 to 2003, Maine's exports grew faster than most other New England states and grew more than double the national rate.
- Computer and electronics and the paper industry grew the most with computer and electronics growing 13% and paper growing 7.8%. Forestry and logging declined slightly by 0.3%.

**Table 4  
Summary of Demographic Data**

**TRI-COUNTY INCOME**

	# of Households	Less than \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 or more	Median income (dollars)	With earnings
<b>Maine</b>	518,372	53,259	39,231	76,633	73,614	94,848	100,423	43,341	24,348	5,866	6,809	\$ 37,240	406,912
Androscoggin County	42,095	4,703	3,087	6,718	6,112	7,627	8,351	3,228	1,467	324	478	\$ 35,793	32,885
Franklin County	11,772	1,384	1,122	2,148	1,890	2,202	1,853	728	278	84	83	\$ 31,459	9,146
Oxford County	22,321	2,436	1,881	3,800	3,493	4,239	3,972	1,563	651	131	155	\$ 33,435	16,925

**PER CAPITA INCOME 1999**

<b>Maine</b>	\$19,533
Androscoggin County	\$18,734
Franklin County	\$15,796
Oxford County	\$16,945

**FAMILIES IN POVERTY**

	Families	With related children under 18 years	With related children under 5 years
<b>Maine</b>	342,431	165,522	56,068
Androscoggin County	27,480	13,611	4,951
Franklin County	7,807	3,661	1,172
Oxford County	15,236	7,052	2,250

Source: Department of Labor, 2002

**Economy and Industry:**

The Town of Poland is located within the Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area (L/A MSA). The L/A MSA include the communities of Auburn, Greene, Lewiston, Lisbon, Mechanic Falls, Poland, Sabattus, Turner and Wales.

**Table 5  
Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area  
Non-Farm Wage and Salary Employment 2001 to 2002**

	2001	2002	% Change		2001	2002	% Change
Goods Producing	9,180	8,810	-4.2%	Service Providing	31,490	32,280	2.45%
Construction	2,320	2,240	-3.5%	Transportation/Utilities	9,890	9,790	-1.0%
Manufacturing	6,850	6,560	-4.4%	Wholesale Trade	1,300	1,270	-2.3%
Logging	10	10	0%	Information	730	690	-5.8%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	2,390	2,280	-4.8%	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2,670	2,910	8.2%
Wood Product Manufacturing	510	480	-6.2%	Professional and Business	5,110	5,710	10.5%
Fabricated Metal Manufacturing	370	410	9.7%	Education & Health Services	8,300	8,310	.12%
Non-Durable	4,460	4,280	-4.2%	Leisure and Hospitality	3,150	3,200	1.5%
Food Manufacturing	440	440	0%	Other Services	1,640	1,670	1.8%
Printing/Publishing	630	660	4.5%	Retail Trade	7,050	7,000	-.71%
Leather & Leather Products	540	470	-14.8%	Government	5,030	5,440	7.5%
Textiles	730	700	-4.2%				
Paper Manufacturing	830	820	-1.2%				
<b>Total Non-Farm Wage and Salary Employment</b>					<b>45,700</b>	<b>46,530</b>	<b>1.78%</b>

As illustrated in Table 5, the sectorial employment for the L/A MSA is very diverse. Highlights on employment by sector follows:

- Total employment in the MSA was 46,530 up 1.7% from 45,700 in 2001. 18.9% goods producing jobs, 69% service providing jobs and 11.7% government jobs.
- Manufacturing accounted for 6,560 or 14% of the jobs in LA.

Transportation and Utilities make up 21% of service jobs, education and health services 17.8%, professional and business services 12.2%, leisure and hospitality 6.8%, finance, insurance and real estate 6.25%, and information jobs 1.48%. \*totals do not equal 100% because some categories are subcategories of a larger sector. The L/A MSA include many large employers in the health services, retail/telemarketing, and manufacturing sectors. As of September 2002, the largest employers with over 500 employees included Sisters of Charity Health Systems, Central Maine Medical Center, Banknorth Group, Lewiston School Department., Bates College Auburn School Department., Tambrands, Inc., Perrier Group (Poland Spring Water), Panolam (Pioneer Plastics). (Source: MDOL).

Over the past two years, the Lewiston/Auburn MSA closely mirrored the State of Maine's unemployment rate. Unemployment was highest at 5.5% in January 2002 and was at it's lowest in July and August 2003, at 3.6%. For most months unemployment rates have remained at or below the State average for most months. Since November 2003 Lewiston-Auburn MSA unemployment rates have been 5% to 9% lower than the State average. In March 2004 the L/A rate was 4.7% compared to the State's rates of 5.6%.

## **Regional Economic Initiatives**

While State strategies and initiatives are important to gain an overall perspective, analysis of regional strategies and efforts are critical to developing a realistic and achievable economic development program for Poland. As discussed above, Poland is located in the midst of a tremendously robust regional economy. Thus, planned and current economic activities in adjacent communities will have a profound impact on Poland and can create opportunities to enhance its tax base.

Economic development projects within the region are evaluated and monitored on an on going basis in the CEDS process, in order to determine the readiness of the project and in what time frame projects are expected to be ready for implementation. This includes economic development planning activities and infrastructure projects.

### **Economic Development Project Status:**

Following is an analysis of economic development projects in the region that would have an impact on Poland and that are either in the planning or implementation stage.

**Industrial Park – City of Auburn** – The City of Auburn has been seeking to develop an industrial park adjacent to the L/A Airport and the town boundaries of Poland. The purpose of this new facility is to build upon and expand Auburn’s presence as one of the most significant logistical and transportation hubs in the northeast and to leverage their other investments in an intermodal facility. This area has been designated as both a Foreign Trade Zone and a Pine Tree Development Zone.

In April of 2005, The Auburn City Council voted unanimously to bond \$3 million to build the new 144-acre industrial park on land owned by the Auburn Business Development Corporation. Bisson Transportation of West Bath will be the first tenant. Company officials signed a letter of intent to build a \$13 million warehouse facility adjacent to the rail line. They will initially employ 100 workers in 2006.

Because of the location of this new industrial park, adjacent to the Town of Poland, there is a significant opportunity for the Town to benefit from future development in this area. Poland has property zoned for General Purpose along potential expansion corridors and has the rail line bisecting the community. Based upon preliminary discussions with City of Auburn officials, there is a tremendous opportunity to partner with this community on a portion of this new development.

**Western Maine Office Technology Park (Norway, Maine)** – Western Maine Development, a subsidiary of EnterpriseMaine.com, development agency for the Oxford Hills area, has submitted a pre-application for the development of infrastructure associated with establishing the park. They have a 161-acre parcel of land to establish a technology office park. In partnership with five communities in the Oxford Hills region they have been actively working on a plan to develop a first-class office park offering state-of-the-art telecommunications services and built to LEED standards. The Technology Park will include 10 buildings ranging in size from 15,000 to 40,000 square feet and will have advanced telecommunications and data services. The park will be surrounded by conservation land with public walking and nature trails, and will be designed to protect its panoramic lake, mountain and woods views. A speculative building may also be developed to support business attraction efforts. Western Maine Development has worked with representatives of several municipalities to put together a partnership structure that minimizes risks and maximizes returns that can be shared throughout the region.

**Bates Mill – City of Lewiston/Lewiston Mill Redevelopment Corporation** – The Bates Mill, located in the heart of downtown Lewiston, is of great economic and historical importance to the City. The redevelopment of the complex is a significant priority to the City’s downtown revitalization efforts. To assist in implementing the Master Plan for the Complex, the City of Lewiston will seek funding through EDA as well as other public and private sources. The complex consists of nine major buildings containing approximately 1.1 million square feet on 12 acres. Currently, three mills have been fully or partially renovated. Future redevelopment will involve repair and plans of existing buildings to implement the actions outlined in the master plan.

**USM LA College:** In collaboration with the University of Southern Maine, Lewiston-Auburn College, along with the AVCOG and the Lewiston-Auburn Economic Growth Council, EDA funds will be sought to assist in helping the University acquire and rehabilitate a 38,000 sq. ft. former manufacturing facility which will allow the college to expand its research capabilities and academic offerings. The College, located in the Lewiston Industrial Park, currently enrolls 1,800 students. The college has been able to attract top notch scientists who are actively conducting their research on campus. An expansion of this facility is critical for the continued emphasis of research and development.

## ***Economic Development Opportunities***

### **Promising Market Sectors**

The identification of business sectors that are suitable and realistic for Poland is based on a number of factors that are based on the assets in the community, what economic activity is occurring within the region and State and what are the industry sectors of tomorrow. In light of these factors, we developed the following listing of promising economic development opportunities for Poland, based on the following four criteria: 1) industries and businesses that build on existing local and regional business clusters and strengths; 2) industries and businesses that build on emerging regional business activities and clusters; 3) small business entrepreneurs that compliment the local environment and culture; and 4) industries in new emerging business clusters in Maine and New England.

#### **1. Existing Local and Regional Clusters and Strengths:**

##### **a. Bottled Water**

There are several important business clusters within Poland and adjacent communities that fit this criterion and pose significant opportunity for growth in Poland. The Town possesses a significant resource in its groundwater aquifers. Clearly the continued growth of Poland Springs Water Company and other related businesses should be considered a top priority for the community. This business and the Town of Poland have significant brand recognition in the bottled water marketplace, which could be capitalized on by the Community.

##### **b. Resort Hotel/Tourism Oriented**

In it's hey day, the Poland Springs Inn was one of the most desirable destination resorts in the northeast. Due to re-emergence of destination resort hotels in the tourism industry, we believe that there is a tremendous opportunity to grow and enhance this facility to capture this growing market opportunity. If coupled with recreation and nature based tourism opportunities, this facility could regain its prominence in the region.

**2. Emerging Regional Business Clusters:**

**a. Transportation and Logistics**

Based upon Poland's rail assets and its location adjacent to the developing industrial park in Auburn, there is a tremendous opportunity to capture new businesses that are involved in transportation and logistics. Currently, New England Public Warehouse has a facility in the northeastern section of town.

**b. Back Office/Telecommunications**

The back office and telecommunications related sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Central and Western Maine region, with multiple facilities in Lewiston, Auburn and Oxford. Back office opportunities exist in banking, insurance, medical administration, retail, travel management and third-party sales. Companies in these sectors require advanced telecommunications, affordable real estate and a capable workforce.

**c. Manufactured Housing/Building Trades**

The Oxford County region has developed into one of the largest clusters of manufactured housing builders and building trades companies in the Northeast. Based upon Poland's strategic location in close proximity to that cluster - close to major highways and possessing the rail asset - there is a natural opportunity to attract and grow this sector in the community.

**d. Home Products/Fine Furniture**

As a compliment to the manufactured housing and building trades sectors, Poland would be an ideal location for home furnishing and fine furniture businesses. While not currently a robust industry in New England, there are some successful businesses in this sector in Maine. New business in Poland could be successful if aligned in the supply chain of existing building trades or home products businesses.

**e. Retirement Communities**

The retirement/senior housing sectors is another rapidly growing business sector in Maine's economy. Based upon Poland's natural and recreational assets and location in proximity to the major healthcare and service centers in Lewiston and Portland, there is a promising opportunity to attract retirement communities and related businesses.

**3. Entrepreneurs that Compliment the Local Environment and Culture:**

**a. Artisans/Craftmakers/Antiques**

Maine has a significant cluster of small business artisans and craftmakers that play a significant role in the economy. Many of these small entrepreneurs are making beautiful products in their homes and garages and sell them at multiple venues. In addition, the region contains numerous antique dealers. Based upon the large volumes of tourist traffic on Route 26, we believe that there is an opportunity for Poland to develop an artisan/crafts/antique center that will become a destination attraction.

**b. Ecotourism/Recreation Operators**

Based upon Poland's multiple lakes and ponds, large tracks of land and large volume of tourism related traffic passing through the community, opportunities abound for small business entrepreneurs in the recreation/ecotourism business. Businesses that provide canoe, kayak and biking tours and rentals in the summer and fall, and cross-country and snowmobiling in the winter months should be successful.

**c. Commerce/Specialty Retail**

There is a general lack of commercial businesses and retail establishments in the community to support local residents, summer visitors and pass-through travelers. Restaurants, banks, and specialty retail establishments like small drug stores, grocery and other shops would be successful in the community.

**4. Industries in New Emerging Business Clusters:**

There are several emerging business clusters in Maine and New England that may hold future promise for Poland as follows. However, the attraction of these industries will be dependent on the State's ability to continue to develop supportive infrastructure for these emerging industry sectors.

**a. Biotechnology (Agricultural Products)**

**b. Radio Frequency/Digital Electronics**

**c. Information Technology (Computer Software)**

**d. Advanced Wood Composites**

**e. Environmental Technology**

## ***Summary and Strategic Action Recommendations***

### **Summary**

The preceding analyses illustrated that Poland has a tremendous potential to grow and diversify its tax base through economic development activity. There are multiple opportunities that if properly nurtured, could put Poland on a very stable and balanced course. There are a number of factors which support the potential economic development opportunities for the community as follows:

- Poland is strategically located in a very robust regional economy that is one of the strongest and fastest growing in the State.
- There are some significant economic development activities occurring in adjacent communities that will benefit Poland.
- Poland is home to one of the most recognizable businesses and market brands in the consumer products business.
- Poland has a rich history in destination tourism which can be further enhanced.
- Poland possesses numerous significant natural resources, including groundwater, surface water and minerals.
- Poland possesses a high value vehicular and rail network, with close proximity to business centers.

### **Strategic Action Recommendations**

While the above described factors support the opportunity to realize economic balance in the community, most of the promising opportunities will most likely not be realized by happenstance. To properly capitalize on these promising opportunities, the Town of Poland needs to take pro-active steps to develop the appropriate plans, structures, infrastructure and mechanisms to support the desirable activities. Following is a listing of specific strategic recommendations that will support the realization of the economic development opportunities.

#### **1. Business Retention and Expansion**

- a. Continue to support the growth of Poland Springs Water Company.
- b. Work with the owners and support the redevelopment of the Poland Spring Inn.
- c. Support other existing businesses as appropriate.

**2. Organizational Development/Project Implementation**

- a. Using TIF proceeds, establish an economic development fund to support economic development staff functions within the community or within a regional context to implement this strategy.
- b. Form a Local Development Corporation to assist the Town in developing properties.
- c. Work with AVCOG and others to identify and include Poland's projects in the regional CEDS program.

**3. Regional Cooperation**

- a. Work with the City of Auburn to explore joint participation in the expansion of the industrial park and areas in Poland adjacent to the rail line.
- b. Work with the cities of Auburn and Lewiston on the airport expansion.
- c. Work with Lewiston, Auburn and Mechanic Falls utility districts to ensure continued capacity to support future development activities.
- d. Work with AVCOG and/or others to establish a business attraction effort.
- e. Work with AVCOG and others to promote Poland's tourism assets in the Western Lakes and Mountains tourism campaign.

**4. Prospectively Re-zone Land**

- a. Expand the General Purpose District in the areas around the junction of Routes 26 and 122 and north of Hacket Mills Road.
- b. Establish a new Downtown Village District, along Route 26, north of Range Pond to facilitate the creation of a Poland downtown.

**5. Downtown Creation/Route 26 Revitalization**

- a. Develop a Downtown Plan and related TIF district to support and facilitate the creation of a new downtown on portions of Route 26.

**6. Infrastructure**

- a. Evaluate utility extensions vs. community based system.