

## *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.