

Comprehensive Planning Update

Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments

June 24, 2020

Why Comprehensive Planning?

- Comprehensive Planning began in Maine in the 1910's, with Auburn adopting the first Comprehensive Plan in 1918;
- Municipalities did so because they wanted to adopt zoning ordinances to help direct growth and protect neighborhoods from undesirable and uses deemed incompatible;
- According to Maine state law (which is based on federal law), a town which wants to have zoning (in addition to Maine's state required Shoreland zoning) must have a Comprehensive Plan which meets the requirements of the state Growth Management Act (GMA), this is the underpinning of zoning ordinances which ensures they are not arbitrary or unfair but tied to a community vision.

What is Consistency?

- The determination by the state of Maine that a municipal C-Plan meets the requirements of the State's Growth Management Act is called a finding of consistency.
- The C-Plan should be updated regularly; the state finding of consistency for a Comprehensive Plan with the GMA is good for 12 years.
- Generally efforts to update the plan should be undertaken every 10 years or so, it usually takes 1-2 years to update the plan.

What are the advantages of consistency?

Only communities with a consistent plan can:

- Enact legitimate zoning, impact fee and rate of growth ordinances;
- Require state agencies to comply with local zoning standards;
- Qualify for preferred status with many state competitive grant programs;
- Guide state growth-related capital investments towards local-chosen growth areas;
- *Local control (if desired) of DEP, NRPA, MaineDOT permitting may be available*

Okay, so what is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Document consisting of text and a series of maps
- Long range planning tool (10-20+ years)
- Communicates a community's goals and objectives, and provides a blueprint for future land use serving as a basis for zoning, subdivision and land use ordinances. Can also provide guidance for establishing laws, policies, and programs to achieve implementation.
- During its formulation, a diverse group of stakeholders is involved providing input in developing goals and identifying actions needed to achieve them.

Isn't it the same as a Strategic Plan?

- No, a Comprehensive Plan is not a Strategic Plan.
- A strategic plan would not meet the requirements of the state Growth Management Act, which allows towns to enact zoning.
- Strategic planning is usually for a shorter duration and focuses on a specific issue or problem, often critical in nature. It doesn't look at the big picture of land development in a community.
- Most strategic plans have a performance indicator or timelines and assignments. Comprehensive Plans often have an aspect of strategic planning in them, with goals with specific objectives, a timeline for completion and responsible parties.

How does your town grow?

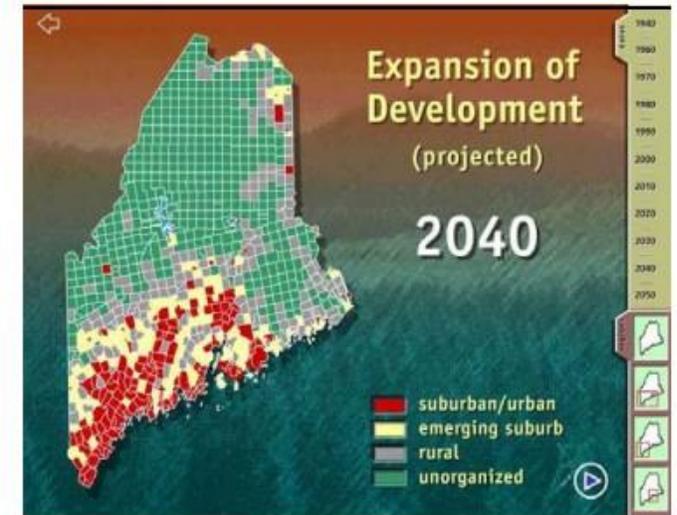
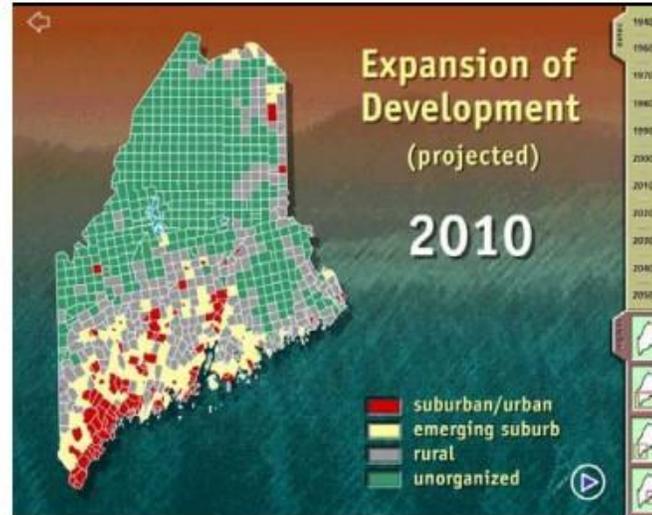
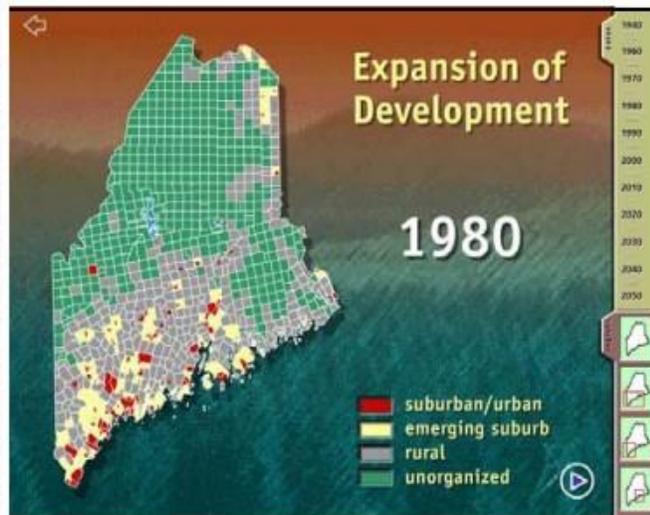
Like this?



Or like this?



Maine is urbanizing



Maps prepared for Maine State Planning Office in 2007

Good Planning Makes Good Communities

- Sustain rural living and vibrant village/ town centers
- Preserve a healthy landscape and walkable community
- Balance economic prosperity with quality of life
- Protect working waterfronts and community farms
- Develop a discussion among neighbors
- Develop a basis for sound decisions in town management

The Process

- Assemble the involved parties (C-Plan Committee, consultant, staff, etc.)
- Committee members familiarize themselves with the comprehensive plan requirements;
- Committee members familiarize themselves with the current comprehensive plan and the status of its recommendations;
- Inventory and analysis update, identify new issues or sections to include;
- Conduct public outreach and visioning sessions.

The Process

- Prepare recommendations for minor and major amendments to the existing comprehensive plan
 - Minor amendments may include new broad policies and strategies,
 - Major amendments may include significant deviations from the future land use plan and map
- Conduct further public meetings.
- Finalize draft plan, submit to the state for consistency finding and to Town Meeting for public approval.

Committee Member Commitment

- Be able to participate in the committee for up to 18 months (at least 12).
- Be able to attend meetings in the evenings.
- Attend monthly meetings.
- Review written materials and be able to discuss and analyze content.
- Listen to many differing values and opinions.
- Perform research and data gathering tasks, as needed.

Possible Schedule

- Month 1 Committee Organization/ Preliminary Analysis and Key Issues
- Months 1-3 Inventory and Analysis Update
- Month 4 Community Vision
- Months 4-8 Develop Goals, Policies and Strategies
- Month 8 Public Forum
- Month 9 Future Land Use Plan
- Month 11 Public Forum
- Months 11-12 State Review
- Month 13 Public Hearing
- Month ? Town Meeting Action

Topics the C-Plan Addresses, part 1

- Historic/ Archeological Resources;
- Population and Demographics;
- Economic Information;
- Housing Information;
- Transportation Information;
- Recreation Information;
- Water Resources;
- Natural Resources;
- Agriculture and Forestry;
- Public Facilities and Services;
- Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan;
- Land Use Information;

Topics the C-Plan Addresses, part 2

- Local concerns and issues;
- Emerging topics of interest to the community, such as:
 - Adaptation & Resiliency (climate, emergency planning, broadband)
 - Age Friendly Community
 - Economic Parity Solutions
 - Inclusive Community & Racial Justice

AVCOG Involvement

- AVCOG is a contractor for the town with a set scope of work and price.
- We will prepare map updates,
- Attend some of the committee meetings,
- Assist with engaging public participation,
- Prepare much of the inventory and analysis updates,
- Pull together the overall document update



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