

BETHEL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SECTION I I

Planning Issues Goals, Policies & Strategies Regional Coordination Program Future Land Use Plan Capital Investment Plan

Prepared by
Bethel Comprehensive Plan Committee
with assistance from
Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments

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The Comprehensive Plan, presented in two sections-the Inventory & Analysis and Goals, Policies, & Strategies-should serve as a guide for the community and for town officials as they make decisions about the future of Bethel. The plan suggests general directions; recognizing the specific details will require further efforts. The plan should be considered a living document meaning that it will require review and revisions as Bethel changes over time.

The plan is not a zoning ordinance, and the future land use map is not a zoning map. The plan is, however, intended to guide future changes in the Town's land use regulations so that they will reflect the goals and policies of this plan. Similarly, the discussions of capital needs and spending priorities are intended as general guides, not as specific proposals.

This plan is the result of the efforts of many current and former members of the Bethel Comprehensive Plan Committee and input from many other citizens of Bethel.

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Introduction

Small town character. The physical beauty of scenic views, rivers and wildlife. Educational opportunities. Historic buildings and areas that have maintained their values. A citizenry consisting of people with Yankee pride, ingenuity, volunteerism and tolerance. An economy in transition from manufacturing to services. Growth stimulated by the Sunday River Ski Resort.

Today, Bethel is seen by its citizens as many different things. The Bethel of tomorrow will be the result of many factors. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to establish a vision for Bethel's future taking into consideration many divergent views.

In the broadest sense, the Comprehensive Plan envisions a Bethel that:

- * Is a community with a small town "feeling" having a town center without traffic problems allowing people to walk to services in safety;
- * Is a community that has maintained its heritage and quality of life consisting of environmental quality, leisure, cultural and recreation opportunities, manufacturing, business development and economic growth;
- * Has maintained its integrity and those characteristics that make it special as it grows while respecting private property;
- * Has made conscientious efforts toward meeting the needs of a multi-generational community that include environmental conservation while maintaining a healthy individualized economic base, education, spirit, health, character, housing and work opportunities;
- * Has strived to maintain a balance between residential, economic and commercial needs while preserving its historic district, Main Street and natural beauty. Above all, our next generation will want to live in Bethel and afford to.

The Comprehensive Plan present recommendations for how the town can work toward these visions as the town continues to change.

The Comprehensive Plan includes an inventory and analysis presented in Section I which considers past, current, and future community characteristics.

Planning Issues

Introduction

In developing the goals, policies and strategies for the Bethel Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Planning Committee began by developing a number of planning issues. The planning issues were derived for the results of the inventory and analysis element of the planning process, the results of a citizens survey and the input from three public forums. Based on the planning issues the Comprehensive Planning Committee developed recommendations which are presented in the goals, policies and strategies section of the draft plan.

The following presents those planning issues by planning topic.

The goals, policies and strategies of the comprehensive plan are presented in a series of planning topics. These planning topics relate to the state goals contained in the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act. In addition, the planning topics have been discussed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee and citizens of the town at several forums.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Population

Overview

Bethel's year round population remained stable between 1970 and 1990 at approximately 2,330. Over the period out migration was the controlling factor in population trends. This was the result of the loss of traditional employment opportunities and movement to the smaller rural neighboring communities. It is expected that the year 2008 population will approach 2,600. Population growth over the planning period will be the result of greater employment opportunities and a decline in out migration.

Bethel's seasonal population can increase by as many as 3,000 people. This is comprised of resident seasonal population or those that own second homes in Bethel and transient seasonal population or those that stay for short periods in hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts. Regional seasonal population can increase by as many as 12,000 people.

Planning Issues

* It is expected that over the 10-year planning period the town's year round population will reach its highest level in more than 100 years. Increases in year round population will place additional demands on municipal facilities and services.

* Bethel has become an attractive location for resident and transient population due in large part as the result of the Sunday River Ski Resort located in neighboring Newry.

This growth is a benefit to the economy but also places demands on municipal services and facilities.

* Resident seasonal population growth will increase the demand for housing and raise the sale prices of residences.

* It is expected that Bethel's year round population will continue to be older than that of the county and state.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Historic and Archaeological Resources.

Overview

Since its settlement in 1774, the Town of Bethel has been influenced by a wide variety of factors including geography, economic and regional forces and individuals. When white settlement was established in 1774 on lands that had once been inhabited by the Amarascoggin Indians, the population growth of the fledgling plantation was severely curtailed by the American War for Independence. Adding to the uncertainty was the raid upon the plantation by six Indians in 1781, thereafter termed "New England's Last Indian Raid."

Following the war, settlement grew rapidly from the ten families of 1781 to more than 300 at the time of the first federal census in 1790. Most of those who came here were farmers, but there were a few artisans and professionals as well. Early settlement occurred near the Androscoggin River, where the Indians had cleared the rich intervalle land. The town was incorporated on June 10, 1796 and renamed Bethel at the suggestion of Rev. Eliphaz Chapman, from the book of Genesis, Hebrew for "House of God."

Bethel's first industrial area was located on Mill Brook, below the present Bethel Inn. Later, this area became the center for a whole range of activities including starch and box factories, dowel and shingle mills and a tannery. The availability of waterpower dictated other locations for factories and mills. Initially, Bethel's industry was largely self-sufficient. Small businesses and shops made everything from shoes to bricks. With the arrival of the railroad, it became possible to ship goods easily. In the 1880s, the town subsidized the

construction of a chair factory to provide employment. This lasted until 1912.

Farming has always been an essential part of Bethel's economy. Crops changed with market demands. Wheat and hops were important in the nineteenth century, but by 1900, they had been abandoned in favor of corn and potatoes. Hillside farms, always marginal, were gradually abandoned; the fields and pastures so laboriously cleared returned to forest. Today, the harvesting of wood from these areas helps to support the forest product industries essential to life in the town.

Since the time of the Civil War, Bethel has attracted large numbers of summer visitors from the cities of the northeast seeking fresh air and memorable vistas. Following the arrival of the railroad, summer hotels and boarding houses began to flourish. Several visitors who came to town as tourists came to have important roles upon the town's development.

Bethel is rich in historic architecture. More fortunate than other Oxford County towns it has retained large portions of its architectural heritage and contains the only nationally recognized historic district in the county exhibiting all of the major nineteenth century architectural styles. Bethel contains the Broad Street Historic District that was first designated in 1977 and later expanded to include all of the Broad and Park Streets and a portion of Church Street. Besides the historic district individual structures listed on the national register include the Dr. Moses Mason House, Gehring Clinic, Samuel

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Historic and Archaeological Resources (Continued)

D. Philbrook House and John M. Philbrook House. Two other structures, the Cole Block and Middle Intervale Meeting House, have been determined to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Placement on the National Register is primarily ceremonial in that it offers no protection from activities that would reduce historic values unless the activity is funded, licensed or executed by the federal government. The town does not have any specific local standards relating to alterations or demolitions of structures located in the historic district.

Archaeological resources are physical remains of the past, most commonly buried in the ground or very difficult to see on the surface. Archaeological sites are defined as prehistoric or historic. Prehistoric sites are those areas where remains that were deposited thousands of years before written records began in the United States are found. These sites are the only source of information about prehistory. More recent archaeological sites are those sites which occurred after written records began. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has reported one prehistoric archaeological site has been documented on the banks of the Androscoggin River in Bethel.

Planning Issues

- * Bethel Village contains important historic architecture which is unique to Oxford County. Architectural style of new development or redevelopment of existing structures in and adjacent to the village could complement or detract from existing character.

- * The Bethel Historic District is important to the character of the town and attracts tourists. Placement on the National Register of Historic Places is primarily ceremonial in that it offers no protection from activities that would reduce historic values unless the project is funded, licensed or executed by the federal government. The historic district enhances community qualities. The loss of their historic values will detract from overall community character.

- * A number of structures located outside of the Bethel Historic District have been identified as having important historic architecture. These structures help present Bethel's character.

- * Archaeological resources are physical remains of the past, most commonly buried in the ground or very difficult to see on the surface. Archaeological sites are defined as prehistoric or historic. Prehistoric sites are those areas where remains that were deposited thousands of years before written records began in the United States are found. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has reported one prehistoric archaeological site has been documented on the banks of the Androscoggin River in Bethel and that other sites may exist in Bethel. Except for locations regulated by shoreland zoning no local specific standards exist to maintain the values of such sites.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Economic Development

Overview

The economy of Bethel has changed over the past ten to fifteen years. The historic dominance of the wood products industries as the primary employer has diminished. Employment in the service business occupations have increased. This growth has been stimulated by the continuing inflow of recreation tourists, attraction of local-based education facilities and health care and financial services. The continued expansion of the Sunday River Ski Resort in Newry has stimulated business in Bethel. The Bethel Station project which when completed will contain approximately 340,000 square feet of retail, office and other service space and create some 740 full-time equivalent jobs will have significant economic impact.

The wood related industries have traditionally been an important segment of Bethel's economy. These include P.H. Chadbourne & Company, Bethel Furniture Stock Inc., Kendall Dowel Mill, J.A. Thurston, S. Timberlake Company and Maine Line Products. These firms had sales in excess of \$50 million on 1996.

Between 1991 and 1996-consumer retail sales increased by 36 percent or approximately \$6,000,000 not considering the rate of inflation. Considering inflation, consumer sales increased by \$5,200,000 over the six-year period. The rate of growth in Bethel retail sales exceeded the State of Maine growth of 28 percent during the six-year period from 1991 to 1996.

Consumer retail sales are the greatest in the first quarter, January February and March, which corresponds to the peak ski season. The second highest quarter is the third, July, August and September which correspond to the summer tourist season and when the greatest amount of building materials are

sold. This information indicates that tourism is an important component of Bethel's economy.

Since 1993 there has been reported growth of some 130 in Bethel's labor force. This is an indication of the improving local and regional economy after the recession of the early 1990's. Annual average unemployment rates in Bethel have however, exceeded those of Oxford County and the State. An important element of the somewhat high annual average unemployment rate in Bethel is seasonal employment. Over the past five years unemployment rates in the months of April, May and June have been in the range of 11 to 15 percent.

Planning Issues

- * Bethel's shifting economy has created a need of good quality year round employment opportunities.
- * The current town ordinance requires a sewer connection fee for both residential and non-residential connections. The amount of the fee may discourage new economic development/redevelopment.
- * Locations with the necessary infrastructure for the development of manufacturing and business that require large land area, water, sewer and transportation connections are limited in Bethel.
- * To succeed in business attraction a labor pool with the required skills is necessary.
- * Transportation systems, highway, rail and air, are crucial to economic growth.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Housing/Affordable Housing

Overview

Although Bethel's population remained steady between 1980 and 1990, the total number of dwelling units increased by 28 percent or 273. Eighteen percent of this total was reported by the census to be held for seasonal use. From 1990 to 1997 local information showed that 135 new dwelling units have been added to the housing supply. It is estimated that 100-new year round dwelling units will be needed to house the 2008 population.

The average sale price of homes in Bethel increased from \$66,000 in 1990 to \$98,000 in 1994. The proximity of the Sunday River Ski Resort has a significant impact on housing costs and availability in Bethel. Vacancy rates for rental units are low and costs are high. Households with annual incomes of less than \$24,000 may have difficulty finding affordable housing in Bethel.

Planning Issues

* Over the past six years more new housing units have been constructed in the more rural areas of the community than in location readily assessable to municipal services. A continuation of this trend will likely increase public service costs associated with transportation of school children, maintenance of roads, police protection and fire protection.

* Dwellings used for seasonal purposes have increased in Bethel over the last 20 years. This seasonal and second home use has resulted in low vacancy rates for year round dwellings and inflated costs.

* Availability and affordability of housing in Bethel may be a problem for those households with annual incomes of less than \$24,000. Much of the future employment in Bethel is expected to be in the services sectors with annual wages near or below \$24,000.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Outdoor Recreation

Overview

Outdoor recreation is a significant aspect of Bethel's economy and way of life. Respondents to the Citizens Survey supported the expansion of recreation programs and riverside walking trails. The practice of private land owners of allowing public access has been appreciated by both residents and nonresidents.

Planning Issues

- * Walking and bicycling is becoming a more popular recreational activity. Additional facilities for these activities are needed.
- * All sports fields and courts used by Bethel residents are on non-town owned property (SAD # 44 and Gould Academy).
- * Swimming opportunities are limited to private property in an adjacent community.
- * Recreational opportunities on the Androscoggin River have increased as water quality has improved. Suitable public access would enhance recreational use of this resource.
- * A system of multi use trails connecting the village and recreation areas would enhance recreational opportunities.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Natural Resources

Overview

The natural resources of Bethel are an integral part of the town's economic, social and cultural heritage. These resources provide for Bethel's economic and recreational well being. The natural resources considered in the Plan include soils, agricultural land, surface and ground water, flood plains, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries, forest resources, rare and endangered species and scenic areas. These resources can be enhanced or degraded as Bethel changes in the future.

Citizens have identified the natural resources and beauty of the town as an important characteristic that should be maintained.

Planning Issues

- * Approximately 35 percent of the land area in Bethel has slopes in excess of 20 percent. Construction and other land use activities on these steeper slopes are more difficult, more costly and involve a greater potential for environmental degradation than similar activities on more level terrain.

- * Much of the new development in Bethel will utilize subsurface waste water disposal systems for sewage disposal. Bethel contains significant areas not well suited for subsurface waste water disposal due to slope and wetness.

- * Bethel contains areas with soils, identified by the Department of Agriculture, as having highly productive qualities termed farmland soils of national importance. Some areas of such soils are in locations which may be attractive to development.

- * The rivers, stream, and brooks are important natural resources and are an element of Bethel's character. Bethel Village is served by a surface water supply from Chapman Brook. The greatest threat to maintaining the quality of these waters is from non point pollution sources or run off.

- * Bethel does not contain any great ponds (ponds greater than 10 acres in size). However, portions of the watershed of North Pond, Songo Pond and South Pond are found in Bethel. Phosphorus that acts as a fertilizer to algae is a major threat to water quality within great ponds. The amount of phosphorus reaching great ponds can increase as the result of development activity anywhere within its watershed.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Natural Resources (Continued)

- * Bethel contains significant sand and gravel aquifers that can produce high quantities of water. One of the West Bethel's wells is located in a sand and gravel aquifer and the other well is in bedrock. Contamination of these aquifers would be a major calamity and restoration would be very expensive.
- * Large areas next to the major rivers and streams are considered floodplain. Areas adjacent to Route 2 and the Sunday River Road that may be attractive for development are also located within the 100-year floodplain. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to human safety concerns and structural damage.
- * Both game and non-game wildlife has been identified by the citizens as an important aspect of living in Bethel. Critical to wildlife are suitable habitats.
- * The forest resources of Bethel have been and continue to be important to the local and regional economy and are an important component of Bethel's character. Healthy forest will benefit the local and regional economies and maintain the character of Bethel.
- * In a scenic resource inventory 20 significant scenic view locations were identified. These scenic views make Bethel unique and are an important element of the town's character. Permanent degradation of scenic resources would alter town character.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Municipal Services

Overview

An examination of Bethel's public facilities and services and today's capacity is an important element of the comprehensive plan. Their capacity to meet current day and future demands will affect economic growth and property tax rates. For a community with a year round population of 2,500 a wide array of municipal services are provided. These include educational services, full time police protection, volunteer fire and rescue services, public sewer and water, public works and administrative services. The projected growth in year round and seasonal populations will place greater demands on these services.

Planning Issues

- * Over the planning period municipality facilities/services including solid waste, fire fighting equipment, police services and administrative offices will require upgrading.
- * The sewer treatment plan has limited capacity for future growth.
- * The increases in the resident seasonal population and transient seasonal population requires service capacity to meet peak demands while such demands are only part time.
- * New business and residential growth will place greater demands on municipal facilities and services.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Transportation

Overview

Bethels' transportation system consists of a highway and sidewalk network, airport, rail and trail systems. The major highways into Bethel are Routes 2 and 26. These arterials are designed to carry long distance traffic at high speeds and are the major travel routes to the Sunday River Ski Resort in Newry. Development next to these routes can reduce their functions to move vehicles efficiently and safely. Presently, the capacity of the major highways is adequate to move the annual average daily traffic volumes. However, during periods of peak traffic volumes some delays at some intersections approach unacceptable levels. It is expected that over the next 20 years the level of use at the airport will double. Future improvements under consideration include runway extension, navigation aids, taxiway and hangers. The town's sidewalk system allow pedestrians to walk through the Village. Improvements to existing side walks and new sidewalks would enhance the existing system.

Planning Issues

- * Transportation systems, highway, rail and air, are crucial to the economic growth of Bethel.
- * Route 2 from Mayville to the Sunday River Road has attracted new and conversions to commercial land uses. Route 2 functions as a major travel corridor for recreational and industrial traffic. Continued development next to Route 2 will increase traffic congestion, reduce the capacity of Route 2 to move vehicles safely, and alter the approach to Bethel.

- * Other major travel corridors including Route 26, Route 2 west to Gilead, and Routes 5 and 35 have seen varying degrees of commercial type development. These routes serve as gateways to the town and carry through traffic.
- * The Bethel Airport has economic value to the town and is an element of its transportation system. Adjacent land uses should be compatible with airport operations.
- * Pedestrian facilities including sidewalks and trails allow movement through and around the Bethel Village area. Improvements and expansions to these systems are needed.
- * The primary purpose of the major highways is to carry traffic from point to point. New development next to these highways will add conflict points (driveways) which can slow traffic and increase the potential for accidents.
- * The proliferation and location of the State of Maine Official Business Direction Signs (Blue Signs) have begun to detract from community character.
- * There are several high accident locations in Bethel.
- * Snowmobile access into Bethel Village is needed.
- * A transit link between Bethel and the Sunday River Ski Resort would serve as an alternative to the passenger car and reduce traffic congestion and parking demands.
- * Parking to serve Main Street businesses and services is inadequate at various times and locations.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Land Use and Development Patterns

Overview

Bethel occupies approximately 43,000 acres of land and water with only 2 percent being surface water. The town's traditional land use patterns developed around sources of water power. The construction of the railroad in the mid 1800's lead to Bethel Hill becoming the primary center of town. While the town has maintained much of its traditional development patterns, new commercial development associated with services has begun to alter those patterns. Bethel's shift from traditional resource-based economy to a recreation and tourist-based economy is reflected in its emerging development patterns.

Most of Bethel's land area is forested. Of the approximately 43,000 acres of land in Bethel, it is estimated that 36,000 acres are forested. Some 14,000 acres of forested land are registered in the Tree Growth Program. Bethel's early development was based on agriculture. The rich soils along the flood plains of the Androscoggin and lesser streams attracted farmers to these locations and are still the primary agricultural locations today. Twenty years ago there were approximately 3,400 acres of land in agricultural use with the majority hayland. Today, the flood plains of the Androscoggin are still the primary agricultural locations used for row crops, corn silage and hay. Since the 1970s, there has been a decline in the total amount of land used for agriculture. This has been the result of the abandonment of the less productive lands that are reverting to woody vegetation. Because much of the agricultural land is also flood plain, there has not been significant loss due to residential development.

Land use devoted to manufacturing is found adjacent the major transportation corridors, Routes 2 and 26. These sites are also close to the rail line. These industries' raw materials are logs and wood and require highway access that can be used on a year-round basis. Bethel has both historic commercial development patterns as well as movement away from traditional locations. The traditional Bethel Village commercial area contains a wide range of commercial and service land uses. The traditional Bethel Village commercial area has limited vacant land available for development thus conversion of some residential properties to commercial uses has occurred. This trend is expected to continue. A secondary smaller village center is found in West Bethel. In 1994-1995 the Bethel Station Project located adjacent to the traditional Bethel Village was approved. As originally planned this 70-acre mixed use project would contain 160,000 square feet of retail space, 27,000 square feet of office space, 120,000 square feet of hotel, 23,000 square feet of restaurant, a 7,300 square foot theater and a 2,400 square foot train station. Today, the specific uses in the Bethel Station Project area not determined.

Route 2 in Mayville and the Sunday River Road have become attractive locations for highway commercial development over the past 10 years. Commercial land uses in these locations are lodging, services and convenient stores primarily associated with the skiers on route or returning from Sunday River and other recreation. Route 2 is a primary east-west corridor. Highway commercial development adjacent to Route 2 west of Bethel Village has also occurred, however not to the degree east of the Village. Route 26 currently contains scattered commercial development.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Land Use and Development Patterns (Continued)

Traditional compact, year-round residential land uses are found primarily in and adjacent to Bethel Village. Served by public water and sewer, lots in the Bethel Village range from 10,000 to 30,000 square feet. West Bethel, although much smaller than Bethel Village also exhibits traditional compact development. Scattered residential development means single family development adjacent to long time public roads. The town requires a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet for those locations not served by public sewer and not in an area regulated under the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, in some locations scattered residential development can appear compact and in other locations this type of development is spread out by larger lots. Scattered residential development can be found on the majority of public roads. Since 1990 this type of residential development has been the most prevalent.

Subdivision residential includes those areas that are approved for subdivision development whether or not lots have been built on. Subdivision development since the late 1980's has been in the rural areas of town not served by public water and/or sewer. In the majority of subdivisions, the lot sizes have far exceeded the 20,000 square foot minimum requirements.

Bethel Village is a gem of Oxford County. It serves as the business and service center for the Bethel region. Land uses include retail, service, public, education and residential. These land uses have been combined to create a village development pattern only wished for in most communities. Village residents, students and visitors can walk to most services creating a pedestrian oriented environment. Land use lining Main Street from Railroad to Broad is characterized by retail, service and public uses. Forming the westerly side of Bethel Village is the

Broad Street Historic District, Church Street with it historic architecture and the campus of Gould Academy. To the north of the traditional village is the developing Bethel Station Project which is being developed to encourage pedestrian movement from the traditional village to the Project. The southern portion of the Village consists of residential neighborhoods including the Crescent Park School.

Since the early 1980's, Bethel has seen significant growth in service and retail land use. This growth has been primarily associated with the recreation industry and the Sunday River Ski Resort in Newry. Because access to Sunday River is via Route 2 business development, conversion and expansion has been centered adjacent to Route 2 and the Sunday River Road. The original design of the Bethel Station Project would add some 340,000 square feet of retail and service space to the town's inventory. However, a demand will continue for highway retail and service space along Route 2 and Route 26.

From 1990 through July of 1997, there has been 90 new stick built single family homes, 37 manufactured homes and seven seasonal homes added to the town's housing supply. In addition, eight multi-unit condominium type ownership dwellings and the Bethel Park Apartments were constructed. The vast majority of these dwellings has been located in the rural portion of town.

Planning Issues

PLANNING TOPIC: Land Use and Development Patterns (Continued)

Planning Issues

- * Since 1990, 87 percent or 123 of the new dwelling units³ have been constructed greater than two miles from the center of town in the more rural areas of the community. A continuation of this trend will increase public service costs associated with transportation of school children, maintenance of roads, police protection and fire protection and alter the character of the rural portions of Bethel.
- * Locations with the necessary infrastructure for the development of manufacturing and businesses that require large land areas, water, sewer and transportations connections are limited in Bethel.
- * Route 2 from Mayville to the Sunday River Road has attracted new and conversions to commercial land uses. Route 2 functions as a major travel corridor for recreational and industrial traffic. Continued development adjacent to Route 2 can increase traffic congestion and reduce the capacity of Route 2 to move vehicles safely and alter its current character.
- * Other major travel corridors including Route 26, Route 2, west to Gillead, and Routes 5 and 35 have seen varying degrees of commercial type development. These routes serve as gateways to the town and carry through traffic. Future development accessed by these Routes will alter current character.
- * Current town standards establish as a minimum lot size requirement of 20,000 square feet or approximately ½ acre in all areas except those served by public water and/or sewer. While this lot size conforms to the State Minimum Lot Size Law, such size lots make it difficult to maintain the required 100-foot separation between septic systems and wells on the lot and adjacent lots and creates compact development that may conflict with the rural character in some locations.
- * Agriculture and forestry is still important in Bethel. Some land currently used for agriculture and forestry is in areas attractive for development. While some land uses are compatible with modern day agricultural and forestry practices, others are not.
- * Future land uses within the navigable airspace and safety zones of the Bethel Airport require management to provide for aircraft safety and compatibility with airport operations.

PLANNING TOPIC:

Population

State Goal:

- * To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community.

Local Goal:

- * That population growth is in concert with Bethel's characteristics and values.
-

Population

POLICIES		IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
2.	1. That year round and seasonal population growth is at an orderly rate so that municipal services and facilities may accommodate such growth and the values and characteristic set forth in the comprehensive plan are maintained.		
	2. Maintain a profile and characteristics of population change.		
	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan.		
	1. Provisions contained in the Subdivision Ordinance and Site Plan Review Ordinance relating to Municipal Facilities Impact Analysis should be carefully considered in development review.		Planning Board
	2. Population growth should be monitored in relation to municipal service demands.		Planning Board
	B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.		
	1. If population growth increase at a rate which over burdens municipal services and facilities, an impact fee ordinance should be developed.		Planning Board

PLANNING TOPIC:

Historic and Archaeological Resources

State Goal:

- * To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources.

Local Goals:

- * To maintain historical values.
 - * To identify and conserve the values of those areas of special cultural or archaeological significance.
-

Historic and Archaeological Resource

POLICIES		IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
1. To maintain the historic values of structures and sites located in the Bethel Historic District. 2. To maintain the values of those structures which exhibit documented historic architectural styles and sites that are located outside of the Bethel Historic District. 3. That the design and exterior characteristics of new or redeveloped structures in and adjacent to Bethel Village relate harmoniously with the Village environment. 4. To assess the impacts of development on known archaeological sites.	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan. 1. The existing standards contained in the Site Plan Review Ordinance pertaining to Relationship of the Proposed Buildings to the Environment should be amended to better guide the planning board in the consideration of building design. 2. Local ordinance provisions should be developed that contain standards that maintain the historic architectural values, sites and locations by the Planning board in their non-residential development reviews.		Planning Board

Historic and Archaeological Resource (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Local Ordinance provisions should be developed that require the consideration by the planning board of impacts on archaeological sites listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the board's review of development.		Planning Board
4. Develop and maintain a listing of historic structures and sites and develop an educational program for owners of such properties in voluntary techniques to maintain historic values.		Historical Society
B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.		
1. A Bethel Historic Protection District Ordinance should be enacted which maintains the historic values of the District.		Planning Board/Historical Society
2. Request the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess and document archaeological sites.		Selectmen

PLANNING TOPIC:

Economic Development

State Goal:

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

Local Goals:

- * To maintain, expand and diversify Bethel's economy.
 - * To encourage new economic growth which is appropriate for Bethel.
-

Economic Development

POLICIES

IMPLEMENTATION

RESPONSIBILITY

1. To be an active partner in promoting economic development that results in quality year round employment and a diversified economy.
2. To assure local development standards do not impede economic growth and development while maintaining valued community character.
3. To allow in-home businesses throughout the town while maintaining the values of adjacent residential properties and neighborhoods.
4. To provide for new areas for commercial development while maintaining the economic viability of traditional commercial locations.

A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals the Bethel Community should under take the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan.

1. An analysis of the effects of the Sewer System Direct Charge including the amount of fee on economic growth should be undertaken along with any recommended revisions.
2. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to include standards relating to home occupations that assure compatibility with adjacent properties and residential neighborhoods.
3. The town should continue to pursue funding for improvements to the airport as presented in the Airport Master Plan.

Appointed Committee/Town Manager/Selectmen/Sewer Department

Planning Board

Selectmen/Airport Commission

Economic Development (Continued)

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>IMPLEMENTATION</i>	<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>
6. To encourage the improvements to transportation systems that are beneficial to economic growth.	4. The town should continue to work with regional groups, neighboring communities and the Maine Department of Transportation to continue the upgrading of the major highways into Bethel.	Town Manager/Selectmen
7. To work with the educational system including adult education so that needed skills and training are provided for business retention and attraction.		
8. To recognize agriculture and the forest and forest products industry as an important component of the local and regional economy.	5. The town should coordinate an annual summit between business, economic development interests and the educational community to address educational needs to maintain a skilled labor pool.	Town Manager
9. To plan for infrastructure improvements to serve expanded and new manufacturing.	6. The town should pursue grants and/or program funds through the Capital Improvement Program for Bethel Village improvements and pedestrian systems.	Town Manager/Selectmen
10. To better promote Bethel's outdoor recreation opportunities.		
	7. The Town should pursue Tax Increment Financing, if appropriate, to encourage business development and expansion.	Town Manager/Selectmen
	8. Maintain Bethel Village as the central location of governmental offices and services that are regularly frequented by patrons.	

Economic Development (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
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B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.

1. An assessment for the need and location options for a business park should be developed.

Selectmen/Committee

2. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to provide for a staff review and approval of low impact projects located in Bethel Village.

Planning Board

3. Assess the advantages of reviving the Bethel Area Development Corporation, joining with an existing development entity or forming a new development entity.

Selectmen

C. Long-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within six to ten years of the adoption of the plan.

1. A business park should be developed with funding from state and federal sources.

Town Manager

PLANNING TOPIC:

Housing/Affordable Housing (Affordable housing is that in which an area family does not expend more than 30% of their income for housing costs, whether rented or acquired property. For example, an area family whose gross family earnings are \$24,000 per year should not expend more than \$600/month for rent or PITI (principal, interest, taxes, insurance) payments.

State Goals:

- * To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens; and
- * 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.

Local Goal:

- * To encourage safe and affordable housing in appropriate locations.
-

Housing/Affordable Housing

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
1. To allow a variety of housing types including seasonal or second homes to provide for the changing housing needs of current and future housing consumers. 2. To encourage the greatest densities of new residential development to take place in those locations readily accessible to municipal services. 3. To encourage the development of affordable housing options. 4. To assure that new dwellings and major renovations to existing dwellings comply with minimum construction and safety standards.	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan. 1. Amend local ordinances to contain provisions that allow the creation of accessory apartments in single family dwellings. Standards should ensure sufficient off-street parking, adequate sewage disposal, maintenance of external structural characteristics and a minimum square footage of living area.	Planning Board
	2. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to include provisions that allow a density bonus for a percentage of lots or units in multi-family developments if the developer agrees to market such lots or units within defined affordable guidelines.	Planning Board

Housing/Affordable Housing (Continued)

POLICIES		IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		3. Local development standards should be enacted that encourages residential development in areas accessible to municipal services.	Planning Board
B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.			
1.	The town should assess the interest from adjacent communities in developing a regional affordability housing analysis. If interest is found to exist, technical assistance should be sought.		Planning Board
2.	The town should review and revise as necessary building construction standards to assure they remain current with changing construction techniques.		Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer/Building Code Committee

PLANNING TOPIC:

Outdoor Recreation

State Goal:

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

Local Goal:

- * To provide recreational opportunities for all the town residents.
-

Outdoor Recreation

POLICIES

1. To plan for the upgrading and development of recreation facilities and programs within the community to serve the needs of all ages.
2. To encourage the recreational use of the Androscoggin River while respecting private property.
3. To participate in the development of a system of multi-use trails.
4. To support the programs of snowmobile clubs.
5. To upgrade and expand the pedestrian facilities in and adjacent to Bethel Village.
6. To recognize traditional outdoor recreation activities including fishing, hunting and trapping and encourage education, safety and respect for private property.

IMPLEMENTATION

A. Short-Term Activities- To

accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan.

1. A committee should develop an indoor and outdoor recreation needs plan which identifies facilities and program needs, priorities, opportunities for regional cooperation and possible funding mechanisms.

Recreation Board/follow-up group from
97 Community Conference

RESPONSIBILITY

2. Amend the town's land use ordinances to include provisions that assure new development/redevelopment is pedestrian friendly and connections are provided to the existing pedestrian systems.

Planning Board

3. The town's capital improvement program should include financing for the continued development of the river trail system including a multi purpose recreation bridge over the Androscoggin River.

Capital Improvement Plan
Committee/Selectmen/Town Manager

Outdoor Recreation (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
4. Assess the benefits and cost associated with a paid Recreation Director.		Recreation Board
B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.		
1. The town should acquire the use of land through easement or purchase of a suitable public area for swimming.		Town Manager/Selectmen
2. Develop a program to improve and develop additional access sites to the Androscoggin River.		Conservation Commission

PLANNING TOPIC:

Natural Resources

State Goals:

- * To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources including lakes, aquifers, great ponds and rivers.
- * To protect the State's other critical natural resources including, without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas.

Local Goal:

- * To maintain and conserve the town's natural resources and features for current and future generations.
-

Natural Resources (Continued)

POLICIES		IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY	
7.	To conserve wildlife habitat including deer wintering areas and travel corridors adjacent to rivers and streams and wetlands.	3.	Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to allow the Planning Board to require the identification of well exclusion areas and a nitrate-nitrogen analysis for those subdivisions proposed with lots of less than 40,000 square feet and on soils with a limiting factor of less than 15 inches.	Planning Board
8.	To encourage management that will maintain multiple use forest.			
9.	To conserve state or federal documented unique natural sites and areas.			
10.	To conserve those scenic view locations which make Bethel unique.	4.	The town should support state wide initiatives directed toward current use taxation of agricultural, forest and other nondeveloped land.	Selectmen
		5.	Review the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances and amended if necessary so that development and other land use activities are managed to protect surface water quality.	Planning Board

Natural Resources (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Review the Site Plan Review Ordinance and amended, if necessary, to contain specific standards to assure that those commercial and industrial uses that carry a significant threat to ground water and are proposed to be located on sand and gravel aquifers are designed to protect ground water.	Planning Board	
7. The Flood Plain Management Ordinance should continue to be strictly administered and enforced.		Planning Board/Code Enforcement Officer
8. The Planning Board, landowners and other knowledgeable parties should meet annually with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to review and update the Essential and Significant Wildlife Habitat Maps for Bethel.		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Code Enforcement Officer

Natural Resources (Continued)

<i>POLICIES</i>		<i>IMPLEMENTATION</i>		<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>
9.		Amend the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to require the Planning Assistant to provide an applicant information available from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on the location of significant wildlife habitats including fisheries and measures to conserve the identified habitats.		Planning Board
10.		Should the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife rate wetlands as moderate or high for wildlife values, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance should be amended to place those wetlands rated high or moderate for wildlife values it regulates and the areas within 250 feet of the upland edge in a resource protection district.		Planning Board
11.		Amend the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to allow the Planning Board consider the long term effects of new development on adjacent agricultural and commercial forest land.		Planning Board

Natural Resources (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
12. The Planning Board, landowners and other knowledgeable parties should meet with the Maine Natural Areas Program staff to review listed sites reported to contain rare or endangered plants in Bethel.		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Code Enforcement Officer
13. Amend the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to require the Planning Assistant to provide an applicant to request information available from the Maine Natural Areas on the location of documented sites containing rare and endangered plants and measures for their conservation.		Planning Board
B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.		

Natural Resources (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
1. The town should refer agricultural land owners to possible sources of purchase of development rights and conservation easements to conserve agricultural lands.	Conservation Commission	
2. With the communities of Greenwood and Woodstock and the Land Use Regulation Commission, a phosphorus export allocation for North, Songo and South Ponds should be developed.	Conservation Commission	
3. A wellhead protection study that includes recommended ordinance amendments should be undertaken for the West Bethel wells.	Water District	
4. A detailed scenic site analysis should be undertaken with landowners to expand upon the information collected as an element of the Comprehensive Plan and develop measures to conserve their values.	Conservation Commission and Planning Board	

PLANNING TOPIC:

Municipal Services

State Goal:

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

Local Goal:

- * To provide the necessary municipal services that are responsive to local needs in such a manner as to not overburden the community's fiscal resources.
-

Municipal Services

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>IMPLEMENTATION</i>	<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>
1. That new year round and second home development does not over burden municipal services or require increased property tax rates for the sole purpose of providing municipal services to such development. 2. To continue to plan for major capital expenditures through Bethel's Capital Improvement Program. 3. That new development or redevelopment does not overburden public water and sewer systems. 4. That new development be encouraged to locate where municipal services can be economically provided. 5. To assure the educational system is responsive to changing educational needs of all age groups and needs of businesses.	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan. 1. Amend the municipal service and impact analysis standard contained in the site plan and subdivision ordinances to specifically include impacts on fire, police and rescue services. 2. A public facilities and service needs plan that includes facility and staffing requirements should be developed. 3. Amend municipal land use ordinances to contain incentives such as greater densities, greater units per acre, and higher impervious and floor area ratios that encourage new development in location where municipal services can be the most economically provided.	Planning Board Public Facilities Needs Committee Planning Board

Municipal Services (Continued)

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>IMPLEMENTATION</i>	<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>
	4. The School District should discuss with municipal government and the business community on a continuing basis changing educational needs of the community.	School District
	5. The Capital Improvement Program should be updated annually.	Town Manager, Budget Committee, Selectmen, Department Heads, Planning Board

PLANNING TOPIC:

Transportation

State Goal:

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

Local Goal:

- * To maintain and improve the transportation system to meet the needs of the public.
-

Transportation

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
1. To encourage improvements to the transportation system that are beneficial to economic growth and the safe movement of the traveling public.	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan. 1. A local ordinance should be enacted to regulate the erection of official business directional signs and designation sought from the Department of Transportation for local administration of the placement of such signs.	Sign Committee
2. That new development or redevelopment accessed by Routes 2, 5, 26 and 35, and the Sunday River Road maintains the traffic carrying functions of these highways and minimizes congestion and accident potential.		
3. To seek improvements and expansions to the Bethel Airport while minimizing impacts on adjacent land uses and property.	2. The town should seek federal money for airport improvements.	Selectmen/Airport Authority
4. To expand and upgrade pedestrian and bicycle facilities.	3. A sidewalk improvement program should be developed with the Chapman and Railroad Street sidewalks a priority.	Public Works Department
5. To require the developers of new or redeveloped projects that would exceed existing public road or intersection capacity to make improvements necessary for anticipated traffic volumes to be generated by the project.		

Transportation (Continued)

<i>POLICIES</i>		<i>IMPLEMENTATION</i>	<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>
6.	To consider options to reduce motor vehicle accidents in those locations with high accident rates.		
7.	That new public and privately-owned roads conform to construction standards that will assure durability and safe access and movement of motor vehicles.		
8.	To support efforts of snowmobile clubs to maintain a trail system and seek development of an Androscoggin River multi purpose recreation Bridge crossing.		
9.	That the location and number of Directional Signs do not reduce the gateway values of Bethel, unreasonably divert traffic from Bethel Village or detract from overall community character.		
10.	To participate in efforts to develop a transit link between the Sunday River Ski Resort and Bethel.		
11.	To seek options to increase parking to serve Main Street businesses and services.		
B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.			
1.	Local land use standards should be enacted that regulate obstructions to air navigation, airport safety zones and land use compatibility with airport associated noise.		Planning Board/Airport Authority
4.	Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to include access management standards that establish a minimum level of service of intersections that minimizes turning delays and maintains a stable flow of traffic, minimum driveway spacing, and limits on the number of driveways based on traffic volume and frontage.		Planning Board
5.	The Town in conjunction with Sunday River should explore the feasibility and funding options to develop a transit service between Sunday River and Bethel.		Town Manager

Transportation (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
2.	The Bethel Pathway Plan should be expanded to include pedestrian amenities and bikeways.	Pathway Committee
3.	The town should work with the Maine Department of Transportation to define options to reduce accidents in those high accident rate locations.	Town Manager

PLANNING TOPIC:

Land Use and Development Patterns

State Goals:

- * 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.
- * To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.
- * To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.

Local Goal:

- * To manage land use and development so that valued characteristics are conserved, opportunities are provided for economic growth, demands upon municipal services are minimized and rights of property owners are respected and protected.

Land Use and Development Patterns

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
1. To provide for new areas for commercial development while maintaining the economic viability of traditional commercial locations.	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan.	
2. To encourage the greatest densities of new residential development to take place in those locations readily accessible to municipal services.	1. Maintain the traditional Bethel Village as the central location of government offices and services regularly frequented by patrons.	
3. To assure that development and road construction that takes place on steep slopes is undertaken in a manner to minimize environmental degradation and municipal costs.	2. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances to consider obstructions to air navigation and maintain land use compatibility within the airport safety zones.	Planning Board/Airport Authority
4. To assure that development, redevelopment and other land use activities minimize degradation to surface or ground water quality.	3. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to include provisions for open space type development that would conserve agricultural and forest lands.	Planning Board

Land Use and Development Patterns (Continued)

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>IMPLEMENTATION</i>	<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>
5. To manage development in floodways and floodprone areas to reduce flood damage and protect human life.	4. Amend the Site Plan Review Ordinance to include provisions relating to noise, odor, electronic interference and light glare that protect residential areas from the impacts of nonresidential development that requires site plan review.	Planning Board
6. That new development or redevelopment accessed by Routes 2, 5, 26, and 35 or the Sunday River Road is designed to maintain the traffic carrying functions, minimize congestion and accident potential and provide for future highway improvements.	5. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to require that subdivisions fronting on Routes 2, 5, 26 and 35 minimize driveways or access points and /or use shared driveways.	Planning Board
7. To balance traditional land uses with aircraft operations within the airport safety area.	6. Amend ordinance standards to allow for shared parking and setbacks of structures that reflect current development patterns in Bethel Village.	Planning Board/Appointed Ordinance Committee
8. To assure that new development is served by roads that have the capacity to serve such development safely.	7. Review the Site Plan Review Ordinance and amend, if necessary, to contain specific standards to assure that those commercial and industrial uses that carry a significant threat to ground water and are proposed to be located on sand and gravel aquifers are designed to protect ground water.	Planning Board
9. To encourage innovative residential development techniques that conserve land and reduce construction costs.		

Land Use and Development Patterns (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
10. To maintain the social and economic values of residential areas and neighborhoods.		
11. That cluster commercial development is favored over strip development next to major highways to reduce accidents and congestion and maintain gateway attractiveness.	8. The existing standards contained in the Site Plan Review Ordinance pertaining to Relationship of the Proposed Buildings to the Environment should be amended to better guide the Planning Board in the consideration of building design.	Planning Board
12. That the architectural design of new commercial and redeveloped commercial development and characteristics of advertizing features including signs are compatible with the community and surrounding areas.	9. The Town should support state wide initiatives directed toward current use taxation of agricultural land, forest, and other undeveloped land.	
13. To encourage manufacturing to locate where compatible land use exists.	10. The Town should refer agricultural land owners to possible sources of purchase of development rights and conservation easements to conserve agricultural lands.	Conservation Commission
14. To encourage the conservation of the resource values of productive forest and agricultural land.	11. The Subdivision Ordinance and Site Plan Review Ordinance should be modified or a new Land Development Ordinance developed to carry out the Future Land Use Plan. Ordinance standards should provide for waivers to specific standards and recommended minimum street frontages, development of backlots or lots that do not have road frontage or lack the recommended minimum frontage and the development of subdivisions as approved prior to ordinance amendments.	Planning Board/Appointed Ordinance Committee

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

One of the most important elements of the comprehensive plan is to establish a guide for future growth and development. The plan establishes the foundation for land use decisions, defines various development areas within the community, and identifies future capital improvement needs. It is important, therefore, that the comprehensive plan set forth a realistic development guide so that the community can prosper and maintain valued characteristics.

The Future Land Use Plan identifies desired future development patterns and characteristics. The Future Land Use Map synthesizes the statement of policies presented in the comprehensive plan. It must be realized that, as demands dictate, the Future Land Use Plan and Map will require revisions. Principles that guided the development of Bethel's Future Land Use Plan and Map included the following:

1. The desire to manage development so that Bethel's valued characteristics, including a viable town center, historic district, natural beauty, scenic views, natural resources and open space are maintained.
2. The desire to provide for suitable locations for new and expanded commercial, industrial and residential development.
3. The desire to maintain and enhance the economic value of Bethel Village.
4. The desire to maintain the social and economic values of residential areas.
5. The desire that the type and location of development be compatible with municipal services including the transportation system, and sewer and water systems.
6. The desire to manage commercial development along Bethel's major travel corridors to minimize traffic congestion and present an attractive gateway to Bethel and the Western Maine region.
7. The desire to maintain Bethel's historic heritage.
8. The desire to manage development so that it has a positive impact on the municipal tax base.
9. The type and density of development should be compatible with the natural and environmental constraints of the land. Maintenance and protection of surface and ground water, the soils' capacity for subsurface sewage disposal, the slope of land and the presence of unique natural areas are key factors.

Future Land Use Plan

Conservation Areas

The purposes of these areas are to manage development and use activities to conserve important natural resources, minimize resource degradation and to reduce the threats to the loss of property. Certain areas within Bethel warrant special consideration due to their natural values and the potential for degradation as the result of various land use activities. Some land use activities and construction within these areas may require stricter regulation or, in some circumstances prohibition. These areas include:

- a. **Floodplain:** The land area within the 100-year floodplain that is also within 250 feet of the normal high water line and not developed or suitable for development next to the Androscoggin and Sunday Rivers should be placed in a resource protection district that prohibits new structural development. In areas that are within the 100-year floodplain of these two rivers that are developed, new construction and redevelopment should comply with the standards of Bethel's Floodplain Management Ordinance. Areas that are in the 100-year floodplain and located more than 250 feet from the normal high water line of the Androscoggin and Sunday Rivers and other waterways should be strictly managed according to the Floodplain Management Ordinance. This supports the current Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Management Ordinance standards.

- b. **Wetlands:** Freshwater wetlands of ten acres or more in size regulated under the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act that have a low or indeterminate wildlife

value and the land area within 250 feet of their upland edge should be limited to residential and nonstructural uses. A greater range of land uses should be allowed in similar wetlands areas that are adjacent to developed locations. Other non forested freshwater wetlands should, through development review standards, be conserved for their resource values. This supports the current Shoreland Zoning Ordinance standards.

- c. **Watersheds:** Bethel contains two watershed types. Land use activities within the watershed of Chapman Brook that is the source of Bethel Village water and the North, Songo and South Pond watersheds that will disturb soil should be undertaken in a way that minimizes erosion and phosphorus export so water quality is not degraded.

- d. **Shoreland Areas:** The land area within 250 feet from rivers and 75 feet from streams is critical to the well-being of the body of water. In addition, these areas contain significant wildlife habitats and travel corridors. These areas should be limited to residential and nonstructural uses except those areas next to Bethel Village and the Androscoggin River and other areas that already have concentrations of commercial or manufacturing development. This supports the current Shoreland Zoning Ordinance standards.

e. **Significant Ground Water Supply Areas/Sand and Gravel Aquifers:** These areas, because of potential for degradation and/or contamination, require that development or redevelopment activities practice safeguards to minimize potential water quality degradation. The Bethel Water District obtains its water for West Bethel from a well in a sand and gravel aquifer. New land uses and redevelopment in this aquifer should be managed by using Best Management Practices to protect this important resource. Future analysis of required wellhead protection areas associated with the Water District well may require additional protection measures.

f. **Critical Wildlife Habitats Including Travel Corridors:** These areas should be maintained through development standards that minimize degradation as the result of development.

g. **Steep Slopes:** Areas of two or more contiguous acres, with sustained slopes of 20 percent or greater, should be placed in resource protection that prohibits structural development when they are in areas regulated under the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Law. When development will take place in other areas of steep slopes, local development standards should assure safe guards are undertaken to prevent erosion and sedimentation and municipal costs are minimized.

h. **Scenic Locations:** Scenic locations and views are important characteristics of Bethel. After further review of scenic views and locations as recommended in the plan is completed impacts upon them should be minimized through development standards.

Highway Commercial Areas

The purposes of these areas are to provide locations for commercial and service-type land uses that do not fit in size or character in Village Commercial Areas, will not conflict with the traffic-carrying function of major travel corridors and present attractive gateways to Bethel.

Route 2 and 26 are important travel corridors carrying significant volumes of traffic and serve as the gateways to Bethel. Over the past ten years new commercial type development has located next to these important travel corridors. It is expected that over the planning period additional commercial type land uses will seek these locations. It is intended that development be managed to maintain gateway values, traffic carrying functions and avoid the visual blight and congestion that often accompany "commercial strips" through requiring planned development, limiting the number of driveways and requiring other access management techniques, buffering or landscaping and building design that is compatible with Bethels character. Appropriate uses for these areas include commercial, service, lodging, public, and light manufacturing. Found within this highway commercial area are two commercial nodes or areas, Sunday River Road and Mayville, where a concentration of commercial and service land use is developing and should be encouraged before other areas are developed.

Future Land Use Plan (Continued)

Sunday River Road

Development here is primarily associated with the Sunday River Ski Resort and provides retail and services including ski sales and rentals and food. In addition multi-unit residential development has occurred here. Much of the land to the east of the Sunday River Road is within the 100-year floodplain of the Sunday River. Development will be served by onsite water and subsurface sewage disposal systems. Uses similar to existing uses are appropriate for this area. Development standards should address access management through limiting driveway entrances, assuring off street parking is sufficient and that building design is compatible with the character of the area. Lot area should be a minimum of 40,000 square feet with not more than 60 percent of the lot covered by structures and parking. Multi family dwellings should be a density established by the Minimum Lot Size Law and with suitable amounts of green or open space.

Route 2 Mayville

This section of Route 2 just north Bethel Village has developed as a lodging center with hotels/motels and bed and breakfast. Because of Mayville's proximity to Bethel Village, pedestrian connections should be encouraged. In addition other services including food and fuel are found here. This area is suited to similar uses that are compatible with airport safety areas. Much of this area is in the 100-year floodplain of the Androscoggin River and thus development must meet

the standards contained in the Flood Plain Management Ordinance. Public water and/or sewer could be available in the future. However, for the immediate period uses will be served by onsite water and subsurface sewage disposal systems. Development standards should address access management through limiting the number of driveway entrances, encouraging shared access points among businesses, assuring off street parking is sufficient and that building design is compatible with the character of the area. Lot area should be a minimum of 40,000 square feet with not more than 60 percent of the lot covered by structures and parking. Multi family dwellings should be a density established by the Minimum Lot Size Law and with suitable amounts of green or open space.

In other areas of the highway commercial area lot size standards should require a minimum of 20,000 square feet for areas served by public water and/or sewer and a minimum of 40,000 square feet for areas not served by either public sewer or water. In addition, lot sizes should be designed so that not more than 60 percent of the lot is covered by impervious surfaces such as structures and parking areas. In all highway commercial areas setbacks for structures and parking areas should be of such depth as to allow for safe entrance "throat" lengths to remove traffic safely from the highway and allow buffering between the highway and parking areas. Acceptable access management standards should be imposed including shared access for commercial subdivisions.

Future Land Use Plan (Continued)

Village Commercial Areas

The purposes of these areas are to maintain, improve and encourage economic growth in the villages. The Village Commercial Area includes the traditional Bethel Village commercial area (Main Street and Railroad Street), West Bethel Village and the Bethel Station Area. A mixture of land uses exist in these areas including retail, service, public, semi-public and residential. This mixture of land uses was what traditionally created viable village centers, and such a mixture of uses should be encouraged to continue. Development regulations should be flexible to provide for a continuation of traditional village activities including commercial, services, public and semi-public uses, business offices, retail sales and residential. Parking requirements should be allowed to be met through on street, town provided or shared. Land use standards should promote a pedestrian environment and scale. Lot size, setback and building height standards for new or reconstructed buildings should reflect the existing pattern of development. Building design and scale should be compatible with the Bethel character.

Industrial/Manufacturing Areas

These areas are those that are currently used for industry/manufacturing and similar uses and areas which due to their locations are suitable for such uses. The Future Land Use Map identifies several locations for future development besides existing manufacturing sites. These areas are intended to serve as locations for manufacturing, processing, warehousing and distribution. Because of the nature of such uses, these areas should be buffered from less

intensive uses and accessed by transportation systems with capacity to carry anticipated traffic on a year round basis.

Lot standards should be a minimum of 40,000 square feet with a maximum of 75 percent of the lot covered with structures, parking and out side storage areas.

Shoreland Residential

The purpose of the Shoreland Residential is to comply with the standards of the Shoreland Zoning Act and support current shoreland zoning standards. The shoreland residential areas are adjacent to the Androscoggin and Sunday Rivers that are not in the 100-year floodplain. These areas extend 250 feet back from the normal high water line. Residential use is the primary land use; however, other land-use activities associated with shoreland settings are appropriate here. Development and other land-use activities in these areas must take under consideration the shoreland setting and the need to maintain shoreland and water quality factors. New lots should not be less than 40,000 square feet with a minimum of 200 feet of shore frontage as required in the current Town of Bethel Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Future Land Use Plan (Continued)

Compact Residential Area

The purpose of the Compact Residential Area is to provide for primarily residential neighborhoods at densities that take advantage of public services including water and sewer and are in reasonable distance from other public facilities. Compact residential areas comprise the older, built-up portions of Bethel Village and fringe areas. This area is served, or could be served, by public water and sewer. Residential land uses, including single-family and multi-family should be the primary land use. Other land-use activities associated with residential neighborhoods, such as public uses and small commercial uses associated with residential areas, should be allowed after site plan review.

Residential lots not served by public water and sewer should be a minimum of 20,000 square feet with a recommended minimum of 100 feet of street frontage. Multi-family development should not exceed a density permitted by the State of Maine Minimum Lot Size Law. For lots served by public water and sewer, there should be a minimum of 10,000 square feet with a recommended minimum of 75 feet street frontage.

Residential Area

The purpose of this area is to provide for primarily residential areas of medium density adjacent to town-maintained or developer constructed roads, while minimizing local service costs. Residential development, including single, multi-family and mobile home parks, should be the primary land use. Other non-intensive land uses, including public and semi-public, should be allowed after site plan review.

Lots to contain both a subsurface wastewater disposal system and well be a minimum of 40,000 square feet with a recommended minimum of 150 feet of street frontage.

Lots served by public water and/or sewer should have a minimum of 20,000 square feet with a recommended minimum of 100 feet of street frontage. When subdivisions are to be accessed by off-site streets, the subdivision should be limited to two access points.

Rural Area

The purpose of the Rural Area is to encourage the continuation of traditional forestry and agricultural land use while accommodating low density residential development and other activities for which rural locations are appropriate. This area comprises a significant portion of the land area in Bethel. The rural area is comprised largely of commercial forest land, agriculture, and low density residential land uses. Large areas have slopes more than 20 percent and are only accessible by logging roads. Forestry and agriculture and associated activities should be the primary activity within this area. Residential development that takes place should be undertaken to maintain the rural area character and be compatible with commercial forestry and agriculture. Open-space-type development that maintains rural qualities should be encouraged through a 10 percent density bonus and relaxation of road frontages and road travel way widths. Density requirements for new subdivisions should be based on a Rural Land Management System which determines density or lot size based on soil suitability for subsurface wastewater disposal and slope of land. For areas with soils well suited for subsurface

Future Land Use Plan (Continued)

wastewater disposal and slopes less than 10 percent density should be 40,000 square feet per lot or dwelling. For sites least suited for subsurface wastewater disposal or in areas of five (5) or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20 percent or greater lot size or density should be a minimum of 120,000 square feet. For lots created outside subdivisions, lot size or density should be a minimum of 40,000.

Development regulations should encourage residential development to occur on existing or newly-constructed interior roads. Other land uses compatible with rural areas are appropriate for this area. These may include natural resource-based processing, manufacturing and services, recreation and planned unit or mixed use development.

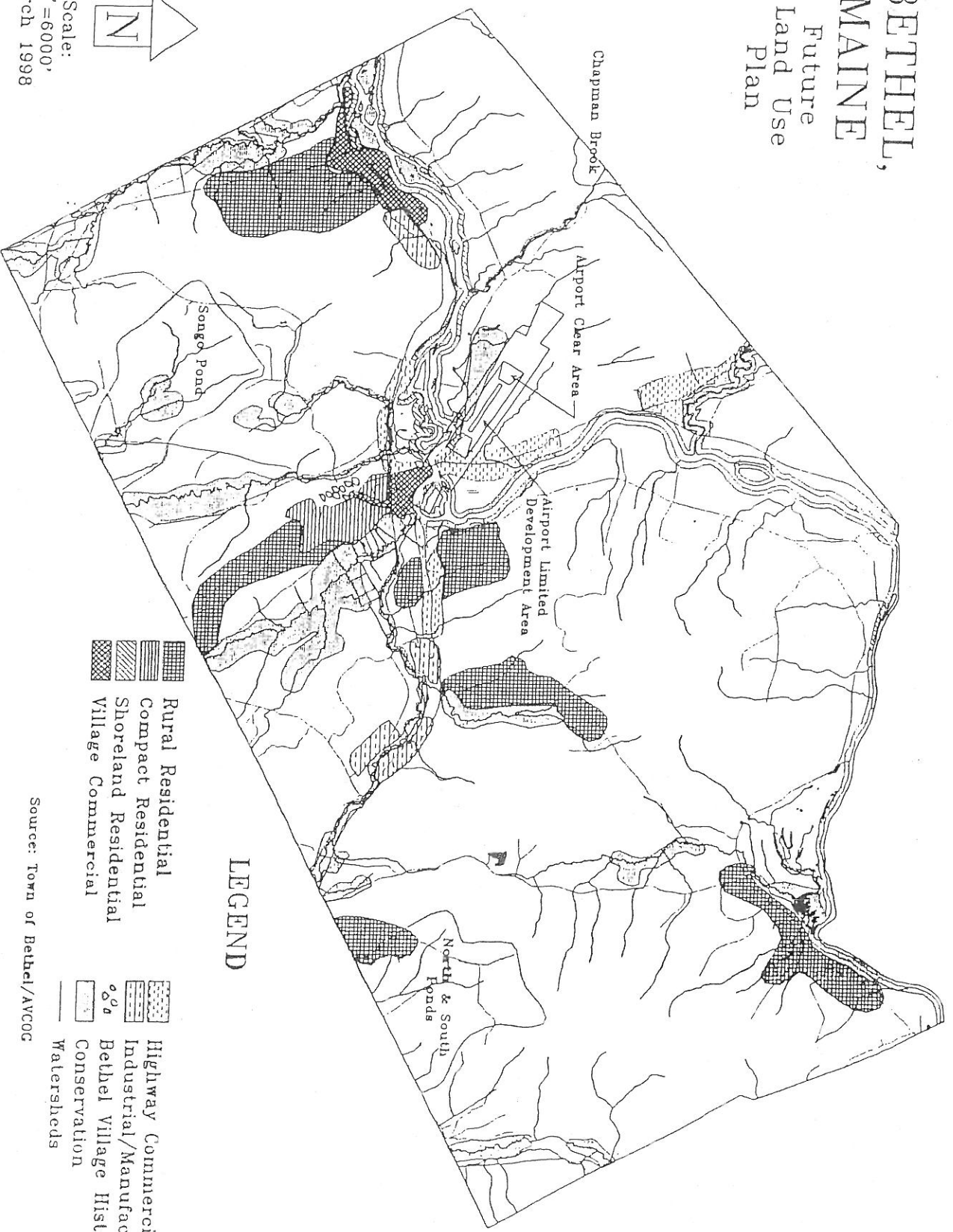
Bethel Historic Area

The purpose of this area is to manage change in the Bethel Historic District to conserve the District's unique values. The Bethel Historic District is the only nationally recognized historic district in the county to contain all of the major nineteenth architectural styles. The District contains a mixture of land uses including residential, public, educational, services and commercial. This mixture of land uses and architectural styles make the District unique. Such a mixture of land uses should continue. The exterior alterations and redevelopment of structures should be undertaken to maintain the important architectural values of the District.

Airport Safety Area

The purpose of this area is to maintain public safety, while respecting property owners, to assure land use and airport operations are compatible. As the use at the Colonel Dyke Field increases and improvements are made the potential for conflicting land uses may increase. The Federal Aviation Administration establishes standards to determine structures that pose potential obstructions to air navigation. Besides structures other potentially hazardous conditions need to be recognized when considering land use compatibility with airports. These include places of public assembly, distracting lights, glare, smoke, electronic interference and bird attractors. The Federal Aviation Administration or the State of Maine has no authority to regulate land use beneath an airport's airspace. Therefore, land uses and airport operations within the Airport Safety Area should provide for public safety and be compatible within the airport safety zones and primary, transitional, horizontal, conical and approach surfaces.

BETHEL, MAINE Future Land Use Plan



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Rural Residential | | Industrial/Manufacturing |
| | Compact Residential | | Bethel Village Historic |
| | Shoreland Residential | | Conservation |
| | Village Commercial | | Watersheds |

Scale:
1"=6000'
March 1998

Source: Town of Bethel/AVCOG

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

Overview

The Town of Bethel realizes that coordination and/or joint action is necessary to address a number of interlocal planning issues. Based upon the results of the inventory and analysis element of the Comprehensive Plan and the various policies contained in the plan, the following interlocal issues have been included in the Regional Coordination Program.

Economic Growth and Development

Transportation/Highway Improvements

Water Quality

Affordable Housing

Transit Link

Outdoor Recreation

Planning Issues

- * The benefits of economic growth and development go beyond the borders of Bethel. Regional approaches that increase and improve employment opportunities will benefit Bethel and the region's communities.
- * Transportation systems that efficiently move people and goods into the Bethel Region are crucial to economic prosperity.
- * Bethel does not contain any great ponds (ponds greater than 10 acres in size). However, portions of the watershed of North Pond, Songo Pond and South Pond are found in Bethel. Phosphorus that acts as a fertilizer to algae is a major threat to water quality within great ponds. The amount of phosphorus reaching great ponds can increase as the result of development activity within its watershed.

-
- * A large portion of the Chapman Brook watershed is in Newry and Riley. The source of the Bethel Water District's supply is Chapman Brook. Land use activities within the entire watershed can affect water quality.
 - * Availability and affordability of housing in Bethel may be a problem for those households with annual incomes of less than \$24,000. Much of the future employment in Bethel and the greater Bethel area is expected to be in the services sectors with annual full time wages near or below \$24,000.
 - * A transit link between Bethel, the Sunday River Ski Resort, and other communities would serve as an alternative to the passenger car and reduce traffic congestion and parking demands.
 - * Regional opportunities may exist to provide for swimming areas and expanded Bethel Pathway.

Town Goal

It is a goal of Bethel to develop and participate in regional programs to achieve common desires.

Regional Coordination Program

POLICIES		IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
1. It is a policy of the town to participate in and support local and regional efforts and programs to improve and expand the local and regional economy. 2. To encourage improvements to the regional transportation system that are a benefit to economic growth and safe movements of people and goods. 3. To encourage land use practices within that portion the Chapman Brook that serves as the public water supply to be undertaken to maintain water quality. 4. To manage subdivision development within the watersheds of North, Songo and South Ponds so that water quality is not degraded. 5. To consider regional affordable housing needs.	A. Short-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within one to two years of the adoption of the plan.	1. The town should continue to work with regional groups, neighboring communities and the Maine Department of Transportation to continue the upgrading of the major highways into Bethel. 2. The town should communicate with the Town of Newry and the Land Use Regulation Commission that watershed protection standards for the Chapman Brook watershed should be included in their land use/development standards.	Town Manager/Selectmen Town Manager/Selectmen Planning Board

Regional Coordination Program (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
6. To participate in efforts to develop a transit link between the Sunday River Ski Resort and Bethel.		
7. To work with adjacent communities and groups to expand and improve outdoor recreation opportunities including bike paths.		
	4. The Town in conjunction with Sunday River should explore the feasibility and funding options to develop a transit service between Sunday River and Bethel.	Town Manager
	5. A committee should develop a recreation needs plan for both indoor and outdoor which identifies facilities and program needs, priorities, opportunities for regional cooperation and possible funding mechanisms.	Recreation Board and follow-up group from 97 Community Conference
	B. Mid-Term Activities- To accomplish these goals and policies, the Bethel Community should undertake the following within three to five years of the adoption of the plan.	
	1. With the communities of Greenwood and Woodstock and the Land Use Regulation Commission a phosphorus export allocation for North, Songo and South Ponds should be developed.	Conservation Commission

Regional Coordination Program (Continued)

POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	2. The town should assess the interest from adjacent communities in developing a regional affordability housing analysis. If interest is found to exist, technical assistance should be sought.	Planning Board

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Introduction

Over the planning period roads, fire equipment, sewer and water facilities, recreation areas and other public facilities will require upgrading. In addition, new public facilities and infrastructure to meet ongoing needs and to support growth in Bethel will be required. Town development depends on renewing, expanding and improving systems that support and/or stimulates development. To promote appropriate development and accommodate Bethel's projected growth, to correct existing and emerging problems, to improve the quality of life for Bethel's year-round and seasonal residents, to promote citizens' health, safety and welfare, and fulfill the policies and strategies of the comprehensive plan public improvements will be required.

Capital investments as contained in the Capital Investment Plan are expenditures greater than \$20,000 that do not recur annually, have a useful life of greater than three years, and results in fixed assets. They include new or expanded physical facilities, rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities, major pieces of equipment that are expensive and have a relatively long period of usefulness, the cost of engineering or architectural studies and services, and the acquisition of land for community facilities. Capital investments or improvements usually require the expenditure of public funds; town, state, federal or some combination thereof. Funding limitations will make it impossible to pay for or implement all needed major public improvements at any one time or even over a multi-year period. Bethel maintains a 5-year Capital Improvement Program updated annually.

Listed on the next page are the significant capital investments expected over the next ten years identified during the comprehensive planning process. Individual items represent necessary equipment replacement/upgrading, facility improvements and investments required by projected growth. Where sufficient information is available, the percentage of the project cost by funding source is identified.

The capital investment needs identified in the following tables were derived from the Town of Bethel Capital Improvement Plan, interviews from departments and recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan. These capital investments needs have not been endorsed by the selectmen or Budget Committee. Funding for the suggested investment needs or other future capital investment needs will only occur through further analysis, review and action of voters at future town meetings.

Capital Investment Plan (Continued)

IDENTIFIED CAPITAL INVESTMENT NEEDS 1998-2007

ITEM	YEAR	ESTIMATED COST	PROBABLE FUNDING SOURCE
Capital Expenditures Identified in Town of Bethel Capital Improvement Plan			
Road Improvements	1999	\$239,000.00	CR
	2000	\$125,000.00	
	2001	\$125,000.00	
	2002	\$125,000.00	
Sidewalks	2003	\$125,000.00	CR
	1999	\$30,000.00	
	2000	\$20,000.00	
	2001	\$38,000.00	
Highway Trucks	2000	\$80,000.00	CR/RF
	2001	\$60,000.00	
Highway Heavy Equipment	2001	\$105,000.00	CR
	2002	\$10,000.00	
Fire Trucks	1999	\$25,000.00	CR/RF
	2000	\$95,000.00	
	2001	\$190,000.00	
	2002	\$125,000.00	
Police Cruiser	1999	\$27,000.00	CR

Capital Investment Plan (Continued)

ITEM	YEAR	ESTIMATED COST	PROBABLE FUNDING SOURCE
Capital Expenditures Identified in Comprehensive Plan			
Androscoggin River Recreation Bridge*	99	\$175,000.00	G/D
West Bethel Fire Station	2005	\$150,000.00	RF
Transfer Station Improvements	2003	\$100,000.00	CR
Airport Improvements	2002 ¹	Unknown	G/CR
Develop Business Park	2007	Unknown	G/B/TP
Bethel Village Improvements	2002	\$150,000.00	G/RF
Public Swimming Area Acquisition	2003	Unknown	G/CR/D
Pathway Expansion	2000-04	Unknown	G/D

* Balance for completion

NOTES:

CR: Current Revenues
 B: Bonding
 RF: Reserve Funds
 TP: Time Phased
 D: Donations

UF: User Fees
 G: Grants
 DF: Developer Financing
 LL: Low Interest Loans

Capital Investment Plan (Continued)

Capital Improvements Financing

Capital improvements, as they are ranked and scheduled for implementation through Bethel's multi-year Capital Improvement Program, require a funding source or means of financing. A variety of techniques for financing capital improvements exist and are outlined below. State laws usually govern which techniques are authorized and how they are to be carried out.

CURRENT REVENUES (Pay-As-You-Go)

The most fundamental and simplest means of paying for capital improvements is on a pay-as-you-go basis: funding capital improvements from current revenues. This has the advantage of avoiding bonding and its interest costs. Its disadvantage is that large scale capital improvements may require a similarly large amount of money to finance them. That would create an inordinate tax burden for the implementation period and extreme fluctuations in the tax rate. Spreading these costs over a longer period reduces such sudden impacts and rate swings.

BONDING

Borrowing against future taxes (general obligation bonds) or future service charges or fees (revenue bonds) to finance long-term public improvements is widely practiced and makes good sense from the standpoint of "paying-as-you-use." Bonding evens out the tax impact over time and allows the municipality to obtain vital improvements earlier in time than current revenue or reserve fund arrangements would permit. As a rule, no improvement or equipment should be bonded beyond its service life and thus violate the pay-as-you-use rule. The chief

disadvantage of bonding is the payment of interest on the borrowed money. The fact that purchasers of municipal bonds are usually exempt from payment of taxes on interest received causes the interest rate on such bonds to fall below market rates.

RESERVE FUND

A reserve fund is analogous to a family savings account for a future big ticket purchase (car, appliance, etc.). Reserve funds are often used to replace equipment with a known service life whose cost and date of replacement are accurately known and can be planned for. The full replacement cost thus becomes available at the time when replacement is necessary without the necessity of bonding or suffering a sudden impact on the tax rate. Other advantages are that reserve funds may be invested to collect interest on their principal, thus reducing the tax revenue contribution required. Reserve funds, like bonding, even out the flow of revenues required for capital improvements.

TIME-PHASED PROJECTS

Some very large scale projects can be broken into time-phased increments, and thus paid for over a period of several years through annual bonding or pay-as-you-go arrangements. This, again, avoids sudden tax increases.

Capital Investment Plan (Continued)

MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT AND USER FEES

Development fees, assessment and user charges, if appropriate and feasible, may also be applied by the municipality to recapture costs from direct beneficiaries or users of specific capital improvements. Assessments, for example, are commonly used to recapture street improvements for which fees, assessments and service charges are appropriate and may lend themselves to the use of revolving funds. Under this arrangement, the income so generated, after paying off the original improvements, is placed in a fund dedicated to financing future improvements of the same sort.

DEVELOPER FINANCING OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Shifting public sector costs to the private sector is becoming a more frequently used option. The infrastructure required for large scale developments becomes part of the developer's investment costs. If built to municipal specifications, the improvements may later be accepted by the municipality for maintenance.

GRANTS AND COST SHARING

A number of state and federal grant-in-aid programs exist to share the cost of certain categorical public improvements. Full advantage should be taken of these cost-sharing programs to maximize the benefits to the community, recapture an equitable share of locally generated taxes and secure vitally needed public improvements. Cost sharing grant programs exist in a variety of areas such as highways and streets, water quality, sewers, energy co-generation, parks, community development, conservation, school construction and bike paths.

LOW-INTEREST LOANS

In some cases, the federal and state governments have developed special low-interest loan programs to support certain categories of public improvements. These should be investigated as possible funding mechanisms for capital improvements falling within those categories.