

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

Summary

Easton partners with neighboring communities in several ways that help reduce costs and improve services through the cooperative management of shared facilities. The primary areas of cooperation include transportation, solid waste disposal/recycling, fire protection, ambulance service, septic waste disposal, recreation and public works related joint purchasing. Neighboring communities are also discussing cooperation in tax assessment and revaluation services. Details of how this is accomplished are described in the inventory and analysis sections related to transportation, public facilities and services, local economy, recreation and future land use.

Easton is a long-standing member community of the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) with representation on the NMDC executive board. This representation gives the Town a voice in the types of economic development programs NMDC offers. The Town also participates in county and state directed regional coordination efforts in such areas as transportation, housing, tourism and hazard mitigation. There is also considerable opportunity to cooperate in the protection of shared natural resources, primarily water related, by working toward consistency with zoning standards. The strategies describe under regional coordination efforts detail the actions needed for Easton to continue and to improve upon its coordination with surrounding towns.

Conflicts with other Town's Policies/Strategies

The planning process identified inconsistencies among neighboring towns related to shoreland zoning but not specifically to policies and strategies found in existing comprehensive plans. With the exception of Mars Hill and Presque Isle, all neighboring towns have plans that need to be updated. The current adoption dates and update schedule, where available, is listed below. Easton proposes to provide these towns with a copy of its updated Comprehensive Plan. Specific policies and strategies in Easton's plan include areas of cooperation with neighboring towns. They may use this information to consider ways to improve consistency with their policies and strategies.

Fort Fairfield – Comprehensive Plan – adopted 2006; currently needs updating

Mars Hill – Comprehensive Plan – adopted 2014

Westfield – Comprehensive Plan- adopted 1996; currently needs updating

Presque Isle – Comprehensive Plan – updated July 2008

A local review of the two most current Comprehensive Plan including their goals, policies and strategies for the transportation and public facilities/services sections did not identify any conflicts.

Summary of Regional Coordination Efforts

Regional Water and Natural Resource Strategies:

- a. Work with the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to conduct educational meetings on the resource value of riparian habitats.

- b. Work with the Fort Fairfield and Mars Hill Planning Boards to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Prestile Stream watershed.
- c. Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest such as the Prestile Stream.

Regional Transportation Strategies:

- a. Seek funding from the MaineDOT to construct paved shoulders on the entire length of Route 1-A.
- b. Work with the Amish community on ways to reduce the amount of animal waste left alongside the roads.
- c. Add additional “Share the Road” signage at strategic locations near Amish farms, community centers, and businesses.
- d. Continue to fund the Aroostook Regional Transportation bus for the elderly and LMI populations.
- e. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and safety education through the Recreational Trail Program and SCORP.
- f. Work with the MaineDOT to upgrade the rail line to Easton and work with the rail provider to improve service to Easton’s businesses and industry.
- g. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MaineDOT’s Capital Work Plan, Aroostook County Emergency Management Planning efforts, and NMDC’s regional transportation efforts.
- h. Work with Cyr Bus lines to develop a stop in Easton.
- i. Devote substantial economic development effort to the agricultural and forest product and other industries that require rail.
- j. Use Northern Maine Regional Airport as part of on-going economic development/business attraction efforts by making Easton more accessible to prospective companies.
- k. Coordinate and fund, with the Northern Maine Regional Airport major stakeholders, an on-going public relations/awareness initiative on the benefits and importance of the facility.
- a. Continue to monitor and comment on the Aroostook County Transportation Study Segment 7 project which connects the Conant Road to Presque Isle.

Regional Public Facility/Services Strategies:

- a. Participate in a regional firefighter training and recruitment program with automatic/mutual aid departments and seek funding under FEMA-Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and other sources.
- b. Continue to seek grants and provide local funds for non-profits and new service businesses.

- c. Work with the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce to promote the need for new services.

Regional Recreation Strategies:

- a. Continue to contact landowners at least once annually for appreciation and recognition.
- b. Study feasibility of the development of ATV and snowmobile trailer parking and trail access at appropriate locations.
- c. Raise funds through grants, club fundraisers and private donations for the development of shelters that serve all trail systems.
- d. Continue to participate in the new Maine ATV interconnecting trail system (MATS) and support its growth.
- e. Through the local clubs, implement an annual landowner awareness program to educate existing and prospective trail landowners on tax incentives and insurance benefits available to them.
- f. Seek the input and support of the MaineDOT and the Nordic Heritage Center to construct paved shoulders along roads that have high bike and pedestrian usage.
- g. Work with interested groups, landowners and the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to map all known access points to the Prestile Stream, Rivere du Chute, and other water bodies. These should include both public (secure) and private (unsecure) locations.