

**2013**

**Town of Randolph**  
**Comprehensive Plan**

*Draft for Public Review: September, 2013*



**Town of Randolph**  
**Kennebec County, Maine**  
**Aerial Photography (2011)**



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

**Map Legend**

- Town Line
- Roads



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# Introduction: The Comprehensive Planning Process

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Most towns in Maine have comprehensive plans. A comprehensive plan for a town is similar to a business plan for a small business. It identifies the trends in demand for our services, the resources available to meet those demands, and means for delivering those services economically and efficiently. The success of a plan is judged by how well its customers – our residents – view the result.

The essential part of the comprehensive plan is the set of recommended actions. These recommendations provide guidance to the municipal officers and officials, suggesting new courses of action or endorsing current ones. While the recommendations provide a directive to the town, they are not binding. For example, a recommendation to adopt or amend an ordinance does not take effect until the ordinance is drafted and voted on at a separate town meeting. Other recommendations may suggest a new approach to funding infrastructure, a strategy to preserve river access, or participation in a regional program to build senior housing. In all, the comprehensive plan must address economic development, land uses, natural resource protection, affordable housing, historic preservation, and public services and facilities.

Randolph has operated with a comprehensive plan for a number of decades. The Town's first full-scale plan was adopted in 1974. The State redefined comprehensive planning in 1988, and Randolph adopted a revised plan in conformance to those rules in 1996. This current version is the third iteration of a comprehensive plan for the Town.

In order to facilitate the development of the plan, Randolph raised funds in the 2011 and 2012 town meetings. This enabled us to hire Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, who wrote the 1996 plan, to assist us in developing the current version. KVCOG was engaged in November of 2012, and has worked under the direction of the Comprehensive Planning Committee since then.

While the committee has spent a great deal of time updating the information and recommendations from the 1996 plan, one of our first acts was to solicit ideas and suggestions from residents. We did this by means of a well-publicized “public gathering” on a Saturday morning in February at Hamlin School.

Attendees got to vote on how they would prefer their “discretionary” tax dollars be spent (results below) and write about the changes they would like to see over the next twenty years. We also had brainstorming discussions on three important topics: neighborhood improvements, the downtown/waterfront, and town government. Finally, the group spent some time drafting an overall vision statement for the town.

A vision statement is a grand goal for the future. If this were a business plan, it would be called a “mission statement.” It describes the kind of community we should be working towards,



based on our perceptions of what we have to work with and, for many of us, the reason we came to Randolph in the first place.

Randolph's vision of the future, the consensus of the public gathering, is as follows:

“As Maine's smallest municipality by area, Randolph is a blend of urban density with a small town atmosphere that values the natural resource of the Kennebec River and the rural fringe, provides for a quality education at our elementary school, and strives to keep the tax rate down while recognizing the need for responsible development and growth. The following statements reflect our values and aspirations that will guide the town in the next several years:

1. We value our small town atmosphere and governmental structure;
2. We understand that the majority of residents enjoy living here yet work out of town;
3. We recognize our past history, which was primarily based around the old narrow gauge railroad and river commerce, and would like to re-energize efforts to use the River as a resource for economic development and recreation;
4. We value the undeveloped parts of the town and want development to occur in a well planned manner that is respectful of neighbors and the character of the town;
5. We want the commercial area along Water Street to be an area of planned growth opportunities;
6. We want to provide a healthy and walkable town with sidewalks and public facilities for our youngest citizens to our more elderly folks.”

Each attendee at the meeting was asked to express a preference as to where (or “if”) they would like to allocate additional tax resources. This approach balances local desires with the reality of costs. From a menu of ten choices, residents prioritized the following:

1. Expanded sidewalks;
2. New fire station (#1 and 2 well above all others);
3. Recreational trails;
4. Recycling program;
5. Hiring a town manager;
6. A waterfront park and additional moorings (two separate items, but tied);
7. New “Welcome to Randolph” signs;
8. Basketball court or ballfield; and
9. Tax relief.

While it is hard to generalize from lists such as these, it seems fairly clear that the sentiment of the meeting was to favor expanded amenities well above tax relief. This may indicate that local property taxes are not considered particularly onerous in Randolph.

The updated plan generally follows the same format as the 1998 edition. Individual chapters are designed to address the format and topics required under the State law. In some cases due to the unique nature of the town, state-required topics were merged – farming and forest management (of which there is very little in Randolph) into “Land Use” and recreation opportunities into “Public Facilities.” However, the overall plan is designed to conform to State requirements while still reflecting the needs of Randolph's citizens.

As stated earlier, comprehensive plans result in a set of recommendations. They are the best ideas we can come up with but at this point they are only ideas. A comprehensive plan does not do any good until the recommendations are put into effect. These recommendations run the gamut from fiscal management, to regulatory tweaks, to new amenities for Water Street. Chapter 9, *Implementation*, addresses the actions necessary to carry out the recommendations. The individual recommendations from each chapter are summarized and prioritized, with suggestions on who should be responsible. Chapter 9 also contains a Capital Investment Plan, which is a start on thinking about how to program our spending for big-ticket items which threaten the stability of our budget.

# Chapter 1

## Randolph's Heritage

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The purpose of this chapter is to explore the town's history as it relates to past and future development decisions. We are interested in the historical basis for such things as our settlement patterns and economic development opportunities. We are also interested in historical artifacts and buildings that should be preserved.

### **Randolph's Development History:**

The following brief review of the town's history is taken primarily from the Fireman's Association 75th Anniversary Celebration, published in 1962. It focuses not so much on personalities as on the political and economic development of the town.

Though Randolph is a relatively young town (inc. March, 1887), its colonial settlement history dates to the 1600's. English ships had mapped the Kennebec for settlement as early as 1607, and by 1636 there were about 100 colonists on its shores. Harsh winters and hostile natives impeded early settlement progress (Alexander Brown, the first settler in this region, was killed by Indians in 1676.) But following establishment of Fort Western in Augusta, (1754) the area developed more rapidly. Several mills were established in the area, and in 1761 the first European-heritage child was born in what is now Randolph.

Randolph, Gardiner, and Pittston were all originally one town, incorporated under the name of Pittston in 1799 while Maine was still part of Massachusetts. Gardiner split off just four years later. During the early 1800's several mills sprang up as a result of available water power. Notable were a carding and fulling mill and lumber mill on Togus Stream and another mill on Togus Brook. Because of nearby stands of high-quality timber, Pittston became a shipbuilding center. The most notable yard was built by Frank and William Stevens about 1840, but there were several smaller yards.

The other major local industry was ice. By 1860, the business of cutting and warehousing Kennebec River ice was well-established. During the late 1800's, there were at least four major ice houses lining the river in Pittston/Randolph. Some of the foundations for these structures are still visible along the shore.

Slaughterhouses were also a feature of local commerce. According to local recollections, it was not that unusual to see blood from the slaughterhouse running down one side of the street and meltwater from the icehouse running down the other.

As with many towns, local catastrophe changed the course of history. In 1886, a major fire destroyed two ice houses and three private homes in the village of West Pittston. This motivated the inhabitants of the village to call for better fire protection, including a local fire house and piped water from Gardiner for the purpose. The proposed cost of this infrastructure



was soundly rejected by the majority rural population of Pittston. West Pittston residents responded by seceding. That name lasted only two weeks however, as the first town meeting voted to change the name to Randolph. (Peyton Randolph was the first President of the Continental Congress.) The town's population at that time was 1,125 and it was (and still is) the smallest geographic area of any municipality in Maine.

Being a river community, Randolph has also been afflicted with floods. The largest flood of the 19th Century was in the Spring of 1836, with water covering docks and wharves at least 8 feet deep and carrying away entire buildings. In 1896, floodwaters carried off the covered bridge between Randolph and Gardiner and another flood in 1936 caused considerable property damage. The flood of 1987 put Water Street under several feet of water and resulted in disaster aid and proposals to move Randolph's entire downtown uphill out of the floodplain.

Many of the original structures in Randolph have been destroyed either by flood or fire. The first Methodist Church was built in 1847 and burned in 1961. In 1934, fire destroyed the fire station. A replacement lasted only 25 years before the present one was erected in 1960. One building that has suffered an entirely different fate is the elementary school. It was originally built in the 1860's and added to in 1916, 1958, and again in 1993. The 1993 improvements completely replaced the 1860 and 1916 construction, so the school has no remaining historic elements.

The transportation infrastructure of town has been evolving as well. We are on our third bridge to Gardiner. The first one, a covered toll bridge, was constructed in 1853. It became a free bridge in 1886 and was destroyed by the flood of 1896. The following year a swinging metal bridge was constructed. It served until 1984, when the current span was completed.

At one time, the town was also served by the Kennebec Central Railway. This narrow-gauge railroad line opened in 1890 and ran from Randolph to Togus. It was discontinued in 1926, but the rail bed bisecting the village still provides a more recreational form of transportation – a well-used footpath.

Modern-day Randolph is a mix of old and new. The icehouses and slaughterhouses are long gone. Some large, old homes have been renovated into multi-family units while modern, smaller ones are built on half-acre and larger lots on the outskirts. Pineland Boot Company, once Randolph's largest employer, moved across the river; the building was razed and replaced by the new (floodproofed) Goggins IGA. The remainder of Water Street consists of small commercial structures, none of which have historical significance. Because of Randolph's compact size and development pattern, it never really had undeveloped frontage for businesses to "sprawl" along, and the village continues to evolve in place.

### **Historical Artifacts:**

It is important to recognize and preserve whatever indications of Randolph's heritage may surface. In order to do this, we must first inventory what we have -- not only the obvious historic structures in town, but the less obvious, nearly-gone evidence of earlier times.

Randolph has limited potential for prehistoric archeological sites. It is known that indigenous peoples frequented the shores of the Kennebec and several archeological sites up and down the river have been located. While it has been suggested that Randolph's shore might have been encampment sites, particularly at the mouths of Togus Stream and Togus Brook, there is little chance of uncovering artifacts. The shorefront has been subjected to cycles of flooding and development, and pretty much the entire river frontage has been excavated, scoured, built on, and generally upended.

"Historical archeology" looks to preserve some of the relics of development since the settlement era. Most of the early settlement in Randolph was right along the river, and in the interval, several floods and a few fires have scoured the area pretty well. But there are still a few signs to be found, among them the piers from an ice house north of the Gardiner bridge and an impoundment from water power days on the Togus Stream. The narrow-gauge trail also has historical significance, having the rail bed and pieces of bridge abutments still remaining.

Randolph has no public or commercial buildings of historical value. No churches or municipal buildings survived the various disasters or renovations. Historic portions of the elementary school have been replaced by newer additions. A 19th Century one-room schoolhouse survives on Kinderhook Street, but it was long ago converted to a private home and has been extensively remodeled.

In contrast, many private residences in Randolph are 100 years old or more. Century-old homes are most likely to be found along Kinderhook, Windsor, and Maple Streets, Second and Third Streets, Pleasant Street, and Middle Street. There are no structures currently identified as outstanding; however, there has been no comprehensive survey done.

There is no historic society or similar organization existing in the Town of Randolph. Artifacts and documents are stored by private individuals, including the town's official historian. Storage conditions vary, and there is no climate-controlled area to store artifacts locally.

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### **Recommendations for Historic Preservation**

*State Goal: Preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.*

Policy: Support the identification and maintenance of Randolph's historic sites, structures, and artifacts.

- 1.1 Encourage the creation of a local historical society and provide initial funding for its activities.
- 1.2 Seek financial assistance from Historic Preservation Commission to survey local historic homes and other sites for potential inclusion in National Register.

- 1.3. Continue to require professional historic or archeological evaluations for new developments along the lower reaches of the Kennebec River (below the bridge) and Togus Stream, or when affecting any structure or site listed in the above survey.

## Chapter 2 Randolph's People Profile

This section of the comprehensive plan describes the people of Randolph. It includes trends in population growth and what we can expect in the future. Most of the information is taken from the decennial U.S. Census (most recent is 2010) and the companion American Community Survey (prepared annually, most recent covers 2007-2011).

### Population Changes:

The most common measure of a town's level of development and prosperity is its population. Randolph's population is comparatively small, although this is primarily because of our small geographic size. Figure 2-1 illustrates Randolph's growth history, with its historical population shown at each census. The chart also shows three similar sized nearby towns. Although these towns are close in population to Randolph, they have much more developable land, probably leading to their healthy growth pace since about 1960.

Figure 2-1: Historical Population Growth

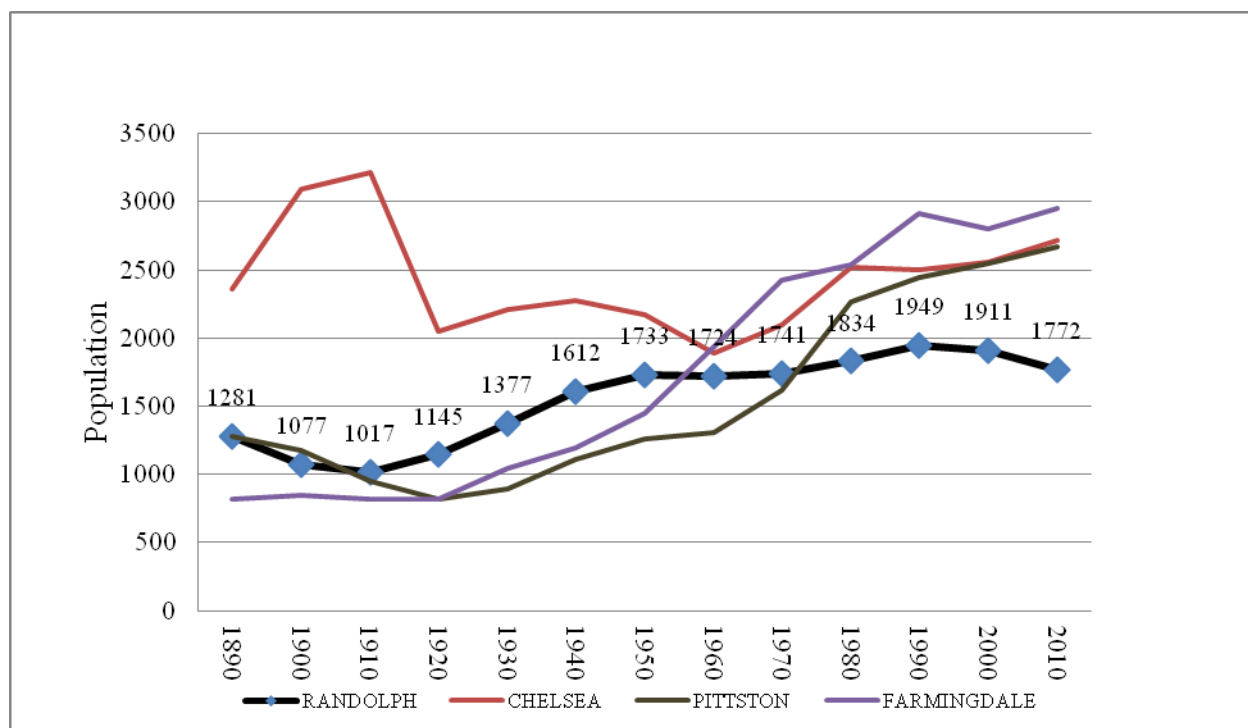


Table 2-1 illustrates Randolph's recent population changes in relation to these towns and Gardiner. Randolph has experienced negative growth, amounting to about 10 percent, over the past twenty years. Farmingdale has the largest population of the “small” towns, but has grown

just slightly in twenty years. Pittston and Chelsea are both in the category of rural suburbs, and have relatively high growth rates. Gardiner’s population has declined by about 14 percent since 1990. For comparison, Kennebec County overall has grown by 5.4 percent.

Table 2-1: Randolph's Population and Neighboring Towns

<u>Town</u>	<u>2010 Population</u>	<u>1990 Population</u>	<u>% change since 1990</u>
<b>Randolph</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>- 9.9 %</b>
Gardiner	5,800	6,746	-14 %
Chelsea	2,721	2,497	9 %
Farmingdale	2,956	2,918	1.3 %
Pittston	2,666	2,444	9.1 %

Source: U.S. Census

How and why the population changes is just as important as the trend itself. For those who want to plan for the future of Randolph, it's even more important, because what happens in the future is founded on what’s happening now. This chapter is all about how our population is changing and how that will influence our future.

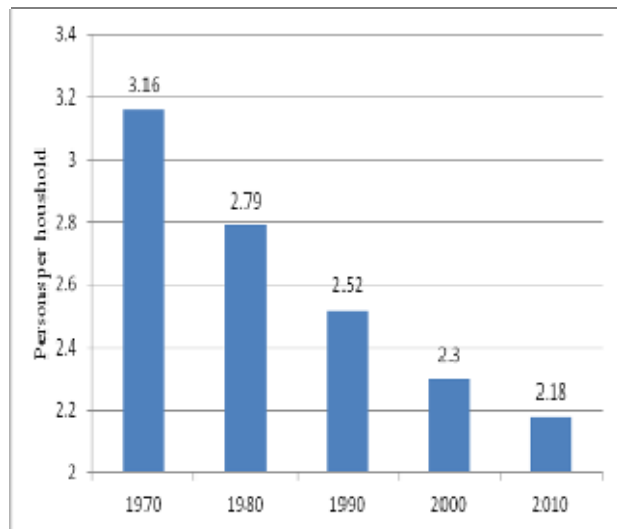
As Figure 2-1 showed, Randolph has lost population since 1990. This was matched by the slowing of growth in the housing stock. Between 1970 and 1990, Randolph added 242 housing units. Between 1990 and 2010, it added only 81.

**Dynamics of Population Change:**

The first question to ask is that, if we still grew by 81 housing units between 1990 and 2010, why didn’t the population grow as well? It did not grow because there are now fewer people in each house. *Household size* is the average number of people in a house (or trailer, or apartment). Randolph currently has about 2.18 occupants per unit. (See Figure 2.2.)

Figure 2.2: Change in Average Household Size

Household size seems like a small and harmless number, but really reflects some of the major societal changes that we are seeing today. When an elderly person can live independently instead of moving in with the kids, it shows up as two households instead of one. Young people strike out on their own earlier and marry later; there are more split families, empty nesters, etc. Nearly all the trends in America today are towards smaller households.



Randolph can see firsthand how declining household size drives a demand for more housing. Eighty one new housing units

in twenty years have not been enough to balance the dramatic decline in household size. In fact, the break-even point would have been 120 – or six new housing units per year. (There was also a change in the vacancy rate over twenty years, which had some small effect.) This dynamic has something to do with projections for future growth at the end of this chapter.

Randolph's population is not static. People are aging, moving, dying, and reproducing. Trends in the population profile of the community provide us with clues as to how to better prepare for the challenges of the future, particularly for demands for public services.

*Natural Change*, is defined as the difference between births and deaths. It can tell us whether the population is particularly old or consists of young families. Deaths are fairly predictable, but the number of births will rise or lower, depending on the number of women of child-bearing age. In large communities, natural change tends to be fairly even over time, but in a town as small as Randolph, could vary a lot in just one year. For example, births in the 70's and 80's increased, thanks to the women of the baby boom generation. The number of deaths has generally been creeping down as we make gains in longevity although the death rate is actually going up in rural towns. This is because elderly people are more independent, compared to years ago when they were expected to move in with their family or seek more urban housing closer to medical and social services.

According to the vital statistics recorded by the town office, Randolph has averaged 18.5 births and 22 deaths per year since 2000. Births ranged from a low of 15 in 2005 to a high of 25 the very next year. The lowest year for deaths was also in 2005, with 19, but the number of deaths increased dramatically in 2010, with 32 that year and 27 the following year. These figures are a turnaround from the 1990's, when births outnumbered deaths by an average of seven per year. The 1990's were a decade when a lot of Randolph residents were having families; they have since aged out of child-bearing or been replaced by an older population.

*Net Migration* is the number of people entering or leaving the town. When more people move out than move in, the net is a negative number. When more move in than out, it is positive. Migration fluctuates more rapidly than natural change, because it depends more on economic trends and housing availability. With a good economy and available and affordable housing, people move into the area, and vice versa.

In Randolph, there was almost no net migration in the 80's. This was an era of prosperity and growth. The 90's saw a net *out*-migration of 113 residents, which just overtopped the natural change and led to a small population decrease. The 2000's saw a slightly smaller *out*-migration: 104. But it came on top of the negative natural change and led to a more dramatic overall population drop.

The shifting of natural change into the negative numbers suggests an older population, while the migration of residents out of town suggests that housing availability is low. To counteract this trend, the town would need a strategy (or housing) to attract working-age young people or young families. Housing for young people tends to be apartments, mobile homes, or small properties.



## **Population Profile:**

In order to understand ourselves as a community better, it is necessary to know something more about who we are -- items like the nativity, age, and educational level of our citizens.

*Nativity:* Nearly 99 percent of Randolph residents were born in the US. Seventy-five percent were born in Maine. In terms of heritage, well over half of residents are descended from the English-Scottish-Irish lines. Another 30 percent are French or French-Canadian. Only three percent speak a “language other than English” at home.

*Gender:* In 2010, Randolph’s population consisted of 825 men and 947 women; 47 percent male. In 1990, the population was 49 percent male. This may be another indicator of an older population over time, with females tending to dominate in older age groups.

*Aging Population:* Understanding how many older or younger people live here can help us to understand what our needs are (or will be). For example, if we know there are many children we can identify active recreation and education as important needs; if there are many young adults, we know we need more jobs -- and that we can expect even more children in a few years. If there are more older people, we should be planning for better senior services.

The dramatic demographic that has been affecting American society for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is the “Baby Boom.” That, of course, is an obsolete term; baby boomers are now in their 50’s. The baby boom led to a massive increase in school enrollments in the 50’s and 60’s, a big increase in the workforce in the 80’s, and increased demand for housing and leisure amenities as the boom aged. As the leading edge of the boom hits retirement, within a very few years from now, there will be a sudden upsurge in demand for things like elderly housing, medical services, and public transportation.

The baby boom can be seen statistically. In 1970, 34.6 percent of Randolph’s population was under 18 years old. These would be the tail end of the baby boom. The elderly population made up only 12.7 percent of the total. In 1990, the percentage under 18 dropped to 24.8, while the percentage of residents in their prime working years (25-44) rose to 33 percent, and the elderly segment was up slightly, to 13.2 percent.

By 2010, the number under 18 had declined to under 20 percent. People aged 25-44 got caught up in the decline as the baby boom continues to age out, dropping to 23 percent. Almost 30 percent of the population is now between 45 and 65 and now 20 percent are over 65.

Over the next ten years, we can expect an average of 24 residents per year turning 65. We have averaged 22 deaths per year (unfortunately, not all over the 65 age bracket), so we can count on a continued increase of the elderly population. By 2020, it is likely that one out of every four Randolph residents (25 percent of the population) will be 65 or older.

The census reports a *median age* of the population, which is useful for watching changes over time and between communities. In Randolph, the median age has risen – from 31 in 1980 to 34 in 1990, 39 in 2000, and 46 in 2010. While Randolph does have one of the oldest populations around, neighboring towns have seen a similar progression: Gardiner’s median age is now 40, Pittston’s is 47 and Chelsea’s is 43. The median age in Kennebec County in 2010 is 42.2 and in Maine is 42.7.

## **The Future:**

What does the future hold for Randolph? The town’s population has been declining at least since 1990, so it is reasonable to expect that trend to continue. The official State population projections estimate that Randolph’s population will be 1,661 by 2020 and 1,508 by 2030. Kennebec Valley Council of Government’s projections estimate a 2030 population around 1,600. However, that need not be the case. It depends a lot on what actions the Town takes to put itself in a position for growth or decline.

While local government seldom has a direct role to play in population growth, its policies can affect decisions by current or prospective residents. Town policies can stimulate (or stymie) new housing development. Policies can also stimulate (or stymie) economic development, which leads to job growth which can also lead to population growth. And policies to make the town a more attractive (or less attractive) place to live can change public perceptions of the quality of life in Randolph, which again will affect growth.

Policy changes can result in a different future for the town, so we must be aware and prepared for it. Population projections can demonstrate the impacts of alternate scenarios. For example, we can illustrate the effects of population change in Randolph with scenarios depicting either growth or decline. These scenarios are described below.

**Scenario 1** assumes declining population at about the rate that the census has shown for twenty years. Between 1990 and 2010, Randolph lost an average of nine persons per year. (The loss in the 2000’s was slightly accelerated over the 1990’s, but over twenty years things tend to average out.) If the town averaged a similar loss over the next ten years, the 2020 population would be 1,682; the population in 2030 would be 1,592.

A change in the population affects housing in town and jobs, although strictly speaking, it is the other way around. A smaller population would mean a higher vacancy rate for housing, unless a continuing household size decrease makes up for it. Household sizes are not going to continue to shrink forever, and there is already evidence that the trend is slowing. In Randolph the average household shrank by nine percent in the 1990’s, but only five percent in the 2000’s. For the purpose of our projection, we can assume that it will shrink a further three percent over the next decades. That would yield an average household size of 2.11 in 2020 and 2.05 in 2030.

A 2020 population of 1,682 with a household size of 2.11 would require 797 housing units. In 2010, the town had 813 (occupied) units. Therefore a continued population decline would raise the vacancy rate by about 16 units (about two percent.) A high vacancy rate tends to lower prices for existing homes. While it might not stop someone from building a new house, it

would mean one new vacancy for every new home built. The alternative would be the demolition (or relocation, in the case of mobile homes) of existing housing.

Fewer people require fewer jobs, although not as many as you would think. In Randolph's case, a good fraction of the population is reaching retirement age, so will not require jobs. As for the remaining population, we figure jobs based on "per household" rather than "per capita" figures, because a household with only one person in it needs a job just as one with ten people. In 2010, 897 town residents had jobs, representing 813 households. In 2020, fewer households (797) would require 880 jobs. That is a loss of only 17 jobs. The loss can be absorbed either by retirement of 17 people over ten years, or an increase in the unemployment rate of 1.8 percent (or a combination of the two).

**Scenario 2** is designed to illustrate the impacts of population growth rather than decline. Since population growth is almost always predicated on the addition of housing units, for this scenario we begin with an assumption of new housing development. As noted earlier in this chapter, a break-even point for new housing in Randolph would be six units per year (the point at which new households make up for shrinking household sizes). Our actual experience has been about four. In order to promote growth, let us assume that the rate of new housing in Randolph doubles, to eight units per year.

Eight new units per year –80 per decade – would result in 893 households in 2020, and 973 in 2030. With a household size of 2.11, we get a 2020 population of 1,884 and a 2030 population of 1,994. That is a growth of 12.5 percent over 2010, just about balancing the population loss since 1990. It would mean a net gain of about 45 residents over forty years.

The job base would have to increase over the time period as well, or those new housing units will just end up empty. Using the same job-to-household proportions as in Scenario 1, a population of 1,884 in 2020 would require 985 jobs – 88 more than are employed now. An additional 85 jobs would be in demand for 2020 to 2030.

These figures demonstrate the value of a regional approach to economic development. It is not likely that Randolph on its own will create 88 new jobs over ten years. It will have to rely on the regional economy to do so. In fact, based on current trends, Randolph's greatest contribution to a job shortage created by scenario 2 might be the numbers of new retirees.

## Chapter 3

# The Local Economy

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This chapter addresses some of the characteristics and trends in Randolph's economic opportunities and workforce, as developed from statistical sources. It also examines the local business community and prospects for local and regional economic development.

### Trends in Economic Status:

As we look back over the past few years, for most of us our incomes have gone up. So has inflation, along with housing prices, taxes, and the cost of nearly everything. Individually, then, the bottom line is whether we are better off than we used to be. A similar question can be posed for the community at large? Have economic conditions improved, on balance, and will they continue to?

Statistics can be used to find some of the answers and sometimes pose new questions. For example, can we afford to pay for any more town services? Are we only better off because so many more of us are working? Are we (the work force in general) working at the same jobs as in the past or are the types of jobs (or types of people) in town changing?

Table 3-1 shows the growth in per capita and household income over the past 20 years in Randolph and nearby towns. "Per capita income" is the total income of the town divided by the total number of people; "Household income" is the total divided by the number of households. (Household income is not the same as average salary. Some households have two (or more) wage earners and others may be relying on retirement, social security, or disability.)

During this period (1990-2010), inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, was 69.5 percent (32 percent in the 90's, 28.4 percent in the 00's), so a 69 percent increase in income would be just breaking even. For example, Randolph's median household income grew by 59 percent *before inflation* which means in terms of purchasing power, it lost ground.

Table 3-1: Twenty-year Growth in Household and Per Capita Incomes

Community:	2010		1990		Change (%)	
	HHI	Per Cap.	HHI	Per Cap.	HHI	Per cap.
<b>Randolph</b>	<b>\$45,039</b>	<b>\$23,892</b>	<b>\$28,389</b>	<b>\$11,800</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>103</b>
Gardiner	\$51,036	\$27,903	\$27,330	\$11,411	87	145
Chelsea	\$54,328	\$25,401	\$26,271	\$ 9,771	106	159
Pittston	\$49,444	\$24,134	\$36,250	\$12,823	36	88
Kennebec Co.	\$46,904	\$25,023	\$28,616	\$12,885	64	94

Source: U.S. Census

This table demonstrates that Randolph has the lowest median incomes and one of the slower growth rates among our immediate neighbors. It is also very slightly below the county average. This lack of growth relative to our neighbors may be attributable to a lack of housing growth. In Chelsea, for example, there is a lot of rural land for building and some new, large homes went up in the 2000's. These require higher-income earners to buy them, and Chelsea's incomes went up as a result. Chelsea's income growth may result from a different type of worker moving into town rather than wage increases.

A slowing of income growth may also be an indication of an aging population. Rather than indicating wage growth, the income figures may instead be picking up on several households moving out of well-paying jobs and into retirement. The 2010 census reported 253 households with retirement income, versus 206 in 2000 and just 168 in 1990.

Incomes do tend to be a function of the educational level of workers, as well as opportunities. In Randolph, 89 percent of the (adult) population has at least a high school degree, while 11 percent has a bachelor's degree. Ten years ago, 84.3 percent of adults had high school degrees and 11.7 percent bachelor's. The educational attainment of the population is not advancing substantially, and may be a cause of lagging income growth. In Kennebec County, for example, college attainment went from 20.7 percent in 2000 to 24.4 percent in 2010.

Table 3-2: Income and Home Values over Time

Incomes are a fundamental measure of economic health, but must be taken in the context of other factors. The table at right shows how home values (another measure of wealth) and property taxes measure up to inflation. For the decade 2000-2010, inflation ran at 28.4 percent. Household incomes grew a little faster than that.

	2000	2010	change
Household Income	\$31,046	\$45,039	+ 45 %
Home Value	\$79,200	\$104,100	+ 31.5%
Property Tax on average home	\$1,360	\$ 1,380	+ 1.5 %

Home values grew at almost equal to inflation, despite the big drop in values due to the recession. Property taxes, *when adjusted for home values*, have remained steady, meaning the rises have been at the same rate as property values. Property values are analyzed more in Chapter 4 of this report, while tax rates and causes are the subject of Chapter 7.

We can't really end the discussion of income levels without mentioning the disparity in incomes and the level of poverty in Randolph. Randolph is a relatively homogenous (evenly distributed) population when it comes to incomes, but is still burdened with 11.3 percent of our households earning less than \$15,000 per year. Compare with Kennebec County, where 12 percent of households make less than \$15,000 a year, while 14 percent earn more than \$100,000.

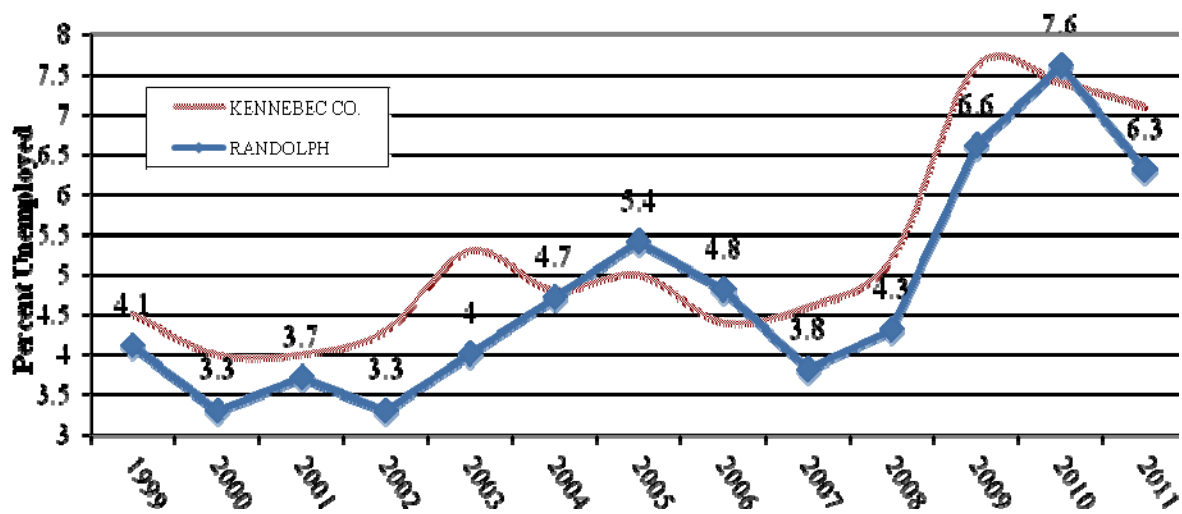
In Randolph, 9.1 percent of the population earns below the federally-designated poverty level. This is mostly an issue with younger families; 15 percent of all children, and 19 percent of families with a single mother, are below the poverty line. We do compare favorably with the rest of Kennebec County, where 12.2 percent of residents earn below the poverty level.

## Randolph's Work Force:

The term "work force" or "labor force" refers to the portion of the town's population who are either working or actively looking for work. According to the 2010 census estimates, Randolph's labor force consisted of 923 workers. That is 54 percent of the total number of residents 16 or older ("working age population"). Table 3-2 shows the trend since 2000.

Census estimates in this respect are not as accurate as figures collected by the Maine Department of Labor (DOL). DOL generally has more accurate figures – it uses monthly surveys and actual unemployment claims. DOL's figures estimate 940 people in the labor force. The monthly surveys also allow an accurate estimate of the unemployment rate. Randolph's and Kennebec County unemployment rates over a 12-year period are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Unemployment Rate 1999-2011 (Maine Dept. of Labor)



Since 1999, Randolph's unemployment rate has tracked the county rate pretty closely, just slightly under it for the most part. Like almost the entire country, our unemployment rate was very comfortable in 2007, bumped up a little in 2008, and shot up in 2009 as the recession took hold. Things seem to be improving. Randolph's unemployment in 2011 was 6.3 percent, compared to Kennebec County's rate of 7.1. It is obvious, though, that Randolph's economy depends heavily on that of the service center communities where most of the town works: Gardiner and Augusta have significantly higher unemployment rates than Randolph, at 7.7 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively.

Despite losing population between 2000 and 2010, the town gained in the number of working age residents. It lost, however, in the number in the labor force (Table 3-2). The reason for this is probably the overall aging of the population, as discussed in Chapter 2. The figures cited by the census include retirees that are "working age" but not in the labor force.

Table 3-2 illustrates that there are more women in Randolph's workforce than men, and have been for at least ten years. This is undoubtedly because adult women outnumber men 53



percent to 47 percent. But a higher percentage of adult men (58 percent) than women (53 percent) are in the labor force. The percentage of both has declined since 2000, probably as the result of increasing retirement rates.

Table 3-2: Randolph Labor Force, by Gender: 2000-2010

Year	Population	Working Age Population			In Labor Force		
		Total (%)	Male	Female	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
2000	1,911	1,536 (74)	687	849	983 (64)	457 (67)	526 (62)
2010	1,772	1,598 (78)	713	885	878 (54)	415 (58)	463 (53)

Source: U.S. Census

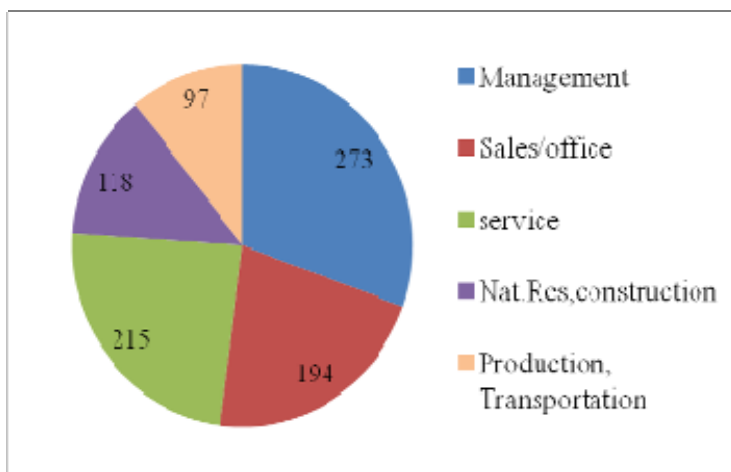
More evidence that many in the workforce are retiring comes from the trend in workers per household. Back in the 80’s and 90’s, Randolph averaged a fairly constant 1.29 workers per household. By 2000, the ratio had dropped to 1.2 and in 2010, it dropped further to 1.08. Two-worker households are a mainstay. This figure means that almost as many households in Randolph are retired as have two workers.

This trend is likely to continue in the future. The 2010 census reports residents by age. In 2010, an average of 20 persons per year entered working age (turning 16). In five years, the average drops to 16. An average of 20 persons per year also reached age 65 but by 2015, that average will jump to 28.

**Jobs and Locations:**

Another characteristic of Randolph's workers is the type of jobs they are employed in. The census reports data in general categories. Figure 3.2, below, indicates the occupational profile of workers from Randolph. The single largest percentage of jobs are in the management sector. These jobs do tend to be higher-paying. “Skilled labor” are mostly blue-collar jobs, while “service occupations” is sort of a catchall covering everything from maids to real estate agents and medical professionals.

Figure 3.2: Randolph Workers by Occupation, 2010



The types of employment are changing over time, although the census sorts through and reclassifies job descriptions constantly, so it is difficult to compare over decades. In general, sales and office jobs among Randolph workers are declining, while the number of workers employed in executive and managerial jobs is increasing. This is a good trend for future income prospects.

This trend also matches up with availability of jobs in Kennebec County. Thirty percent of Randolph workers are in management jobs and 21.6 percent in sale and office. In Kennebec County, 34.5 percent of workers are in management; 25 percent in sales and office. That means more jobs are available in the areas where residents are qualified.

We already know from anecdotal information that the single largest draw of workers from Randolph is Augusta. According to the census, 34 percent of Randolph's workers commute there. The second biggest draw is Gardiner (9.5 percent), followed by Bath (5.9 percent) and Portland (3.6 percent).

The census estimates that only 11 Randolph residents work inside Randolph, which is probably sampling error common for small towns. Evidence of that is that the census also reports that 30 Randolph residents "work at home".

The census estimates that about 230 people work within Randolph's boundaries. Pittston and Chelsea residents make up the great majority of in-commuters.

*Educational Attainment:* The level of education in a town is not necessarily related to the population, but is a good measure of its economic potential. Towns with higher educational levels tend to have higher incomes and more flexibility in creating new job opportunities.

In 1990, 12.7 percent of Randolph's adult population had attained a college degree (bachelor's or higher). In 2010, this number had dropped to 11.5 percent. Compare this to Kennebec County, where 24.4 percent have a college degree. In 1990, 77 percent of Randolph adults had a high school diploma, and in 2010, that percentage had risen to 89 percent. The conclusion is that while we have more of the population with a basic level of education, we are falling behind with the more well-educated – those that have potential for higher-paying jobs.

### **Local Business Status and Trends:**

The business community in Randolph is small and concentrated. It's likely that most of the 230 jobs (2010 Census) are held by out-of-town residents. About 1/4 of the total local job base are individuals self-employed, generally in construction, transportation, or miscellaneous services.

There are few significant employers in town. The largest are Goggin's IGA and Hamlin Elementary School. Several businesses that had been successful in Randolph for years have relocated to Gardiner in order to expand. This points up a major economic development challenge for the town: competing for development with a neighbor having a larger infrastructure and customer base.

Small retail and service establishments really define the town, ranging from ice cream and tire sales to antiques and real estate. The largest of these is Goggin's IGA on Water Street. Most of the other retail establishments are also on Water Street, with a few scattered along Windsor Street. An auction house now occupies a former handbag factory on Water Street and generates a great deal of traffic with few employees but only a few days a month. A total of 25

businesses are listed on Randolph's town website. The largest single category is auto sales/service.

Randolph's size and location dictate that most economic activity is devoted to serving local residents. Although a river town, the only business that leverages this asset is the smelt shack/marina operation. The river could provide a source of attraction, but the much larger drawing card of Gardiner has more capacity to take advantage of it. Randolph has no significant open land, so the potential for resource-based industry is negligible. Randolph requires a permit for new home businesses. There have not been any issued since the ordinance went into effect.

Water Street is the only real commercial street. This highlights another major issue for economic development in town: the vast majority of commercial buildings and sites are within an area subject to regular bouts of flooding from the Kennebec River. New construction is constrained or more expensive in the floodplain. Water Street already sports a large number of vacant or under-utilized commercial buildings. The town commissioned downtown studies in the 80's and 90's, but they mostly recommended abandoning the downtown in favor of higher ground.

There are indications of renewed energy along Water Street. One existing business owner is developing a marina, while another has plans to establish a restaurant with a river view deck. Plans for a gas station/convenience store at the corner of Water and Windsor Streets await an improving economy, while just to the south of the intersection another developer has purchased several buildings and proposes to raze them and erect a hardware store.

Commercial development is regulated by Randolph's Land Use and Development Ordinance. Commercial development is generally permitted with little restriction in the Downtown and Commercial Districts, and prohibited in two residential districts. The Downtown District is most of lower Water Street (south of the bridge), while the Commercial District is located on five separate locations along Water or Windsor Streets.

Randolph recognizes that its business community is tightly tied to Gardiner directly across the river and the town participates to some extent in regional development. The primary vehicle in that respect is the Gardiner Board of Trade. Staffed by the City Economic Development Department, the Board consists of both business and civic leaders, who promote business development region-wide.

Participants in Randolph's 2013 public vision session discussed the local economy in the context of the downtown. Participants recognized the potential for redevelopment of existing properties. They also recognized the asset that is the river, and how it had potential to draw new business and revitalize existing ones. The lower Water Street area is very compact and it would not take much to transform it with improved sidewalks and crosswalks and pedestrian scale streetlights.

## **Recommendations for Improving the Local Economy:**

*State Goal: Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.*

### **Recommended Local Actions:**

Policy: Support small business development in Randolph.

- 3.1 Consider expansion of the commercial or downtown districts to the west side of Water Street north of the bridge.
- 3.2 Promote the small business revolving loan fund administered by the Town, as well as state and federal grants for business development and flood management.
- 3.3 Add provisions to the Land Use Ordinance that will encourage more local-scale businesses downtown.
- 3.4 Develop an ordinance to regulate itinerant vendors.

Policy: Improve downtown infrastructure for commercial development.

- 3.5 Allocate funding and seek grants for improving sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetlights along Water Street.
- 3.6 Expand capacity of water system line along Water Street north of bridge.
- 3.7 Establish a policy for future TIF (tax increment financing) requests.

Policy: Partner with Gardiner on initiatives of mutual benefit.

- 3.8 Continue to participate in the Gardiner Board of Trade.
- 3.9 Meet with Gardiner city staff regularly to discuss business possibilities that might benefit Randolph.

## Chapter 4

# Housing in Randolph

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Homes are the permanent and visible representation of the community. Residents may come and go, but the houses stay.

The quality and cost of housing helps to determine the character of the community – people are mobile and can change houses as they age, or their economic circumstances change. A community can control its own character (or prepare for the changing tastes of its residents) by encouraging or discouraging housing of a certain style or size.

This chapter addresses the number, quality, and cost of housing in Randolph. Discussion of the location of that housing is reserved for Chapter 5 (Land Use).

### Quantity and Occupancy:

The basic figures on housing numbers from the past three census counts appear in Table 4-1. The overall number of houses has increased from 819 in 1990 to 900 in 2010, an average of about one per year. This in spite of the report that the town lost population over that time. The table shows a breakdown by "Tenancy" -- owner, renter or vacant. The number and percentage of owner-occupied housing has grown slightly. That would lead to the conclusion that the decline in population is the result of increased vacancy among rental units. The number of occupied rental units has dropped since 2000, while the overall vacancy rate has risen.

Table 4-1: Housing Changes, 1990-2010

<u>Tenancy</u>	<u>1990</u>		<u>2000</u>		<u>2010</u>	
	<u>number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>number</u>	<u>%</u>
Total housing units	819	--	884	--	900	--
Year-round Occupied	773	94	829	94	813	90
Owner-	549	67	561	68	586	72
Renter-	224	28	268	32	227	28
Year-round Vacant	44	6	42	5	69	8
Seasonal	2	0	13	1	14	1

*Source: U.S. Census*

Figure 4.1 on the following page shows a more detailed analysis of housing units added, using the annual Municipal Valuation Forms submitted to the Maine Revenue Service by the Town. These numbers are “net,” meaning that any losses are deducted from the gains from new construction. These figures show about twice as many new homes between 2000 and 2010 as the census, but may not take into account losses from relocated mobile homes. On average the town has added a little over two homes per year.

Figure 4.1: Net New Housing Units by Year, 2000-2012

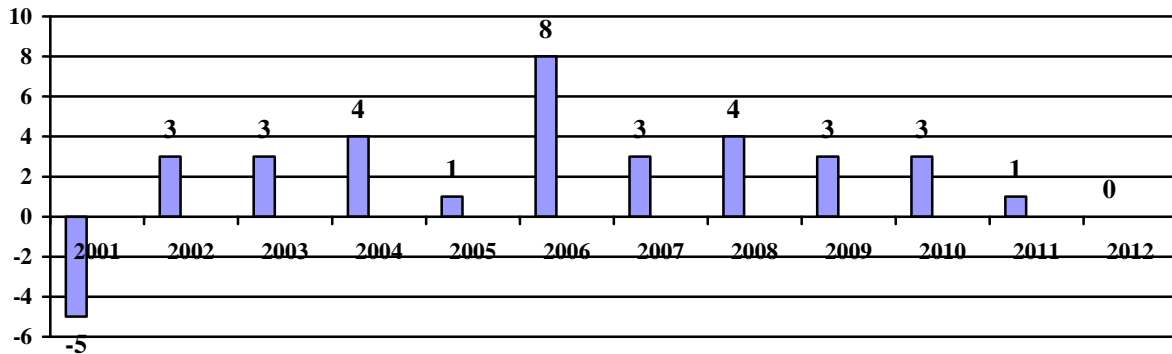


Table 4-2 compares Randolph’s tenancy and structural characteristics to that of neighboring towns. The table illustrates how a renter-dominated urban housing pattern such as Gardiner’s differs from rural and suburban ones. Rural towns tend to have very few multiple unit buildings, fewer rentals, and more mobile homes. Chelsea and Pittston are both typical. Urban areas, by contrast, tend to have more multi-unit buildings and a lower percentage of mobile homes. Randolph is somewhere in between – small in population, but urbanized. Randolph’s smaller lots and access to public water and sewer have encouraged the development of more multi-family units than would be expected of a town of our population, for example Windsor Heights and Fairview Estates.

Table 4-2: 2010 Tenancy and Structural Characteristics: Randolph and neighboring towns

Tenancy	Randolph	Gardiner	Chelsea	Pittston
Owner-occupied	72 %	64 %	87 %	86 %
Renter-occupied	28	36	13	14
Year-round vacant	8	9	5	6
**				
Single-family homes	64 %	56 %	71 %	73 %
Multiple Units	27	35	12	3
Mobile Homes	11	9	17	23

Source: U.S. Census

There is not actually much that town government can do to control the rate of home-building. A subdivision ordinance, by being either lenient or strict, could affect a developer’s motivation for building in Randolph but a lot of it has to do with costs and the market. Lot size requirements could influence the size and cost of houses built. Ease of access and availability of utilities would also influence home builders’ decision making.

It would benefit the town to be able to focus locally on demographic trends and how they will be affecting demand. As the population continues to age, demand will shift towards smaller housing units and innovative living arrangements. That could mean a decline in demand and prices for large, suburban-style homes. Randolph can make itself more attractive to the demand by providing the type of land and services necessary for the new demand.



## The Condition and Quality of Houses:

No one will dispute that a town with a collection of historic mansions has a different character than a town dominated by mobile homes. Through its policies and actions, a town can influence housing condition and quality.

Federal standards governing the construction of mobile homes, and a newly-adopted Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code ensure a fairly high initial quality of residential construction. Census information helps us get an idea on conditions in our housing stock, although it is based on statistical sampling and cannot be very accurate in small populations.

The census estimates that fewer than one in eleven Randolph homes lack complete plumbing facilities (defined as three bathroom fixtures and a kitchen fixture). Every home in town has a complete kitchen. Twelve percent of homes heat primarily with electricity and eight percent with wood. (These may be personal choices not an indicator of lack of central heating.) Less than two percent of housing units have only one or two rooms and none are overcrowded (defined as more than one occupant per room.)

Table 4-3 shows a breakdown of the age of houses in Randolph (as of 2010). It shows that nearly half of the houses in town are more than 50 years old. This is slightly above the average for Kennebec County of 43 percent. An older housing stock is a warning sign that plumbing, electric, and insulation systems might be below standard and have more extensive (and expensive) maintenance demands.

There are a number of state and local programs available to assist homeowners to improve overall quality. Efficiency Maine offers financial aid directly to homeowners for energy conservation improvements. The Town adopted a PACE energy ordinance 4 years ago authorizing residents to apply for these loans. Two homeowners have utilized this program since it was adopted. Maine State Housing Authority also offers low-cost home improvement loans. Community service agencies, such as Kennebec Valley Community Action Program, offer assistance with rehabbing and occasionally purchase derelict houses for improvements to bring them back into the housing market. Randolph offers aid in the form of home improvement loans from its own revolving loan program.

Table 4-3:  
2010 Age of Houses in Randolph

Age (years)	Number	Percent of total
0 - 5	48	5 %
6 - 10	51	5
11 - 20	110	11
21 - 30	117	12
31 - 40	124	13
41 - 50	78	8
over 50	457	46

## Housing Costs and Affordability:

Housing costs are an indicator of quality and affordability. An affordable home could also be of lower quality, yet more expensive housing could limit the opportunities for parts of the community, such as grown children and the elderly, to remain in town. Local policies can

influence the price and availability of housing in many ways; for example, limiting mobile homes and apartments, or requiring larger lot sizes, would tend to raise the price of housing in town but permitting unlimited new homes could depress prices.

Price ranges for local housing more or less correspond to the income ranges of residents. Table 4-4, below, shows how Randolph compares to our neighbors in home value and changes over the past ten years. This table is from the census survey which means that the numbers are only the homeowners' estimate of value not an actual sales price. Also, to make the numbers comparable, the census counts only stick-built, single-family houses on ten acres or less. Because the census uses data from a five-year sample, the values represented by the 2010 estimate cover both sides of a precipitous decline in home values after 2008.

Table 4-4: Regional Median\* Housing Prices, 2000-2010

<u>Town</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>% increase</u>
<b>Randolph</b>	<b>\$79,200</b>	<b>\$104,700</b>	<b>32 %</b>
Gardiner	\$76,900	\$151,200	97 %
Chelsea	\$85,000	\$137,000	61 %
Pittston	\$86,700	\$144,900	67 %
Farmingdale	\$87,700	\$157,100	79 %
Kennebec Co.	\$87,200	\$142,200	63 %

\* "Median" means exactly half of homes are above and half below stated value

*Source: U.S. Census (American Community Survey)*

According to these figures, Randolph has the lowest home values in the area. This is probably not cause for concern. Larger lot sizes are linked to higher prices for new homes, and Randolph has a limited number of large lots and a few new homes. More concerning is that the growth in home values over the past ten years is well below average for neighboring towns and the county. While other towns had homes appreciate faster (or added expensive, new homes to the average), Randolph's home prices barely kept up with inflation (28 percent during the 00's).

Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tracks actual home sale prices to determine affordability; in 2009, it reported the median sale price in Randolph was \$110,000.

From a policy standpoint, the real question is whether home prices are matching income rises or not. It really doesn't matter how much houses cost if the population cannot afford to buy them. That is a real issue for young people who grew up in Randolph and want to remain part of town, for older people who want to get out of the big house but stay close, and for all the others who have to pay taxes based on the value of their homes.

At first glance, Randolph incomes seem to have gained ground on housing prices since 2000. While housing prices rose by 32 percent, household incomes rose by 45 percent. The census estimates go into more precise detail. In 2010, the average monthly housing costs for homes with a mortgage was \$1,091; in 2000, the average was \$750. That is a 45 percent rise, exactly even with household incomes. That does mean that the average house carried a higher mortgage in 2010 than 2000.

This raises the question: at what point can a household no longer afford its mortgage and/or rent payments? Most banks will decline a mortgage if the payments would be more than 30 percent of a family's monthly income. MSHA uses the figure "33 percent" in its calculations of affordability among Maine towns. MSHA estimated in 2009 that the median income in Randolph was \$39,000 and that income could afford a home priced at \$112,400. These figures suggest that *on average* the typical Randolph household can afford the typical home.

This certainly does not mean that all homes are affordable. The census estimate of monthly housing costs in 2010 reported that 59 homeowners in Randolph (14.8 percent) pay more than 35 percent of their income in ownership costs. This is a little more than it was in 2000 (12.2 percent).

Similar calculations can be done for Randolph's renter households. One can usually assume that renters' households have lower incomes than owner-occupied households, so the issue of affordability might be more pronounced. In 2010, the median price of a rental unit in Randolph was \$487/month. That is an increase of only 16 percent from the 2000 cost of \$420. MSHA estimated that in 2009 the average income of a renter household was \$27,346. A renter with that income can pay \$750 per month (including both rent and utilities).

It would seem that – *on average* – rentals, too, are affordable in Randolph. However, the census estimates that 53 renter households (29 percent) are paying more than 35 percent of their household income for rent with another 21 percent paying between 30 and 35 percent.

The preceding figures show us that even though the average household in Randolph is able to afford the average-priced home or rental, there are many households that, for whatever reason, are paying more than they can afford. Specifically, 59 owner households and 53 renter households cannot afford their current living arrangements. That amounts to more than one out of every eight households in Randolph.

"Affordable housing" sometimes comes with a stigma, because it is associated with older mobile homes or low-quality apartments. People don't always stop to think who it is that needs it. In small towns, it is the young families just starting out or the elderly that can no longer afford to keep up the family home. In Randolph, it is likely to be among the 34 percent of households consisting of only one person or the 33 percent with elderly occupants (or the 16 percent that are both).

While there is strong demand for rental housing throughout the region, Randolph already has more than its fair share, primarily thanks to Windsor Heights, and a higher than average vacancy rate. Randolph also has two sizeable mobile home parks. Demographic trends show a very strong and growing demand for housing suitable and priced for seniors. Randolph already has one senior housing development consisting of 24 units.

The State encourages towns to be active in providing opportunity for housing for citizens of all income levels. That generally means that the town cannot legislate against "economy" housing, like mobile homes or apartments. Towns that have a more visible need or stronger

interest may need to take positive measures such as recruiting developers or initiating an elderly housing project. The State's guidelines suggest that we should reach a point where ten percent of new housing is affordable to a household making 80 percent of median income. In Randolph, that means an income of \$36,000, which would afford a home priced at about \$97,000 or a rental at \$900 per month. Based on Randolph's current rate of construction, that would amount to two or three homes per decade in that range. For new construction, that is quite a challenge.

### **Future Housing Demand:**

We have drawn a statistical picture of our housing inventory. But what about the future? We will need more houses if our population grows. And the trend towards smaller households means that we will need more houses even if it doesn't.

In Chapter 2, we outlined two future development scenarios, along with the housing demand that would result. In Scenario 1, a shrinking population would have no demand for new housing; in fact, there would be demand for fewer units, leading to undesirable trends. The vacancy rate would rise, leading to unoccupied and unmaintained homes. Prices would tend to fall due to the excess of supply over demand. While this would be a "cure" for affordable housing, it is not good for the long-term health of the community.

In Scenario 2, population growth required the construction of 80 new housing units over ten years. That is about triple the rate of development from the past ten years. If we assume the same ratios as exist in town today, only 50 of them will be single-family homes; 12 would be mobile homes and 18 would be multi-family units. If we adopt the State's affordable housing goal, eight of those 80 would be priced at under \$97,000 sale or \$900 rent.

One of the challenges to future development in Randolph is the lack of developable land. Randolph has a substantial road network and access to public water and sewer service. However, much of the existing road frontage has been developed. Back land is available, but would require a road and investment in utilities. Subdividers in the 70's and 80's did provide new infrastructure, but subdivision activity has dropped off since. This may be due in part to the cost of building new roads, water, and sewer lines. New housing activity continues in several towns surrounding Randolph, however subdivisions with new roads and utilities are rare.

Demand for new housing is not likely to rise until the economy generates new jobs. It is unlikely that many new jobs will come from economic development in Randolph, so activity in accessible job centers like Augusta, Bath, and Gardiner will have the greatest impact on the demand for new homes in Randolph. The town should also be aware of the demographic steamroller of the baby boomers. This will create a demand for senior housing unrelated to the state of the economy. A good fit for Randolph would likely be a progressive care complex, with independent living homes and apartments as well as an assisted living facility, similar to Granite Hill Estates in Hallowell.

## **Recommendations for Providing Affordable and Decent Housing**

*State Goal: Encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine Citizens.*

### **Recommended Local Actions:**

Policy: Seek to assure that at least 10 percent of new housing will be affordable.

4.1 Clarify the Land Use Ordinance requirement that accessory housing units will not require additional land area.

4.2 Consider amending ordinances to permit senior housing as a higher density use than other multi-family development on areas served by public water and sewer services.

4.3 Continue to permit mobile home parks in the Urban Residential District.

Policy: Utilize regulatory controls and economic incentives to improve the diversity and quality of local housing.

4.4 Review the Land Use Ordinance to ensure that it permits a diversity of housing types in appropriate areas of town.

4.5 Continue to promote the town's revolving loan fund and the PACE Ordinance, as well as State programs, to assist homeowners in making improvements to home quality and energy efficiency.

Policy: Work with Gardiner as appropriate to support regional housing initiatives.

4.6 Meet with Gardiner Housing Committee to determine how Randolph can be incorporated into affordable housing planning.

## Chapter 5

# Land Use and Development in Randolph

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Located along the southern Kennebec River coast, Randolph was settled at an early date. Randolph and Gardiner together went through a period of great commercial activity when the river was the primary commercial corridor, but with commerce eventually shifting from river to highway, Gardiner has emerged as the commercial center and Randolph has settled into its role as a small residential neighborhood.

Randolph is almost unique within the state of Maine in that it was heavily developed before ever becoming a town in its own right. At the time of incorporation we already had 536 people per square mile. The reason for this is the town's unique genesis: it was the built-up "village" portion of Pittston which split from the parent community in a dispute over fire protection. There has never, therefore, been a significant amount of undeveloped land within Randolph's borders. Although some undeveloped tracts do exist, the present economy does not support large subdivisions or more urban forms of development.

### **Farm, Forest, and Undeveloped Land:**

Despite being perceived as built out (Randolph has one of the highest population densities of any municipality in Maine), only about half of the land in town is developed. Most of the remainder is undevelopable. Though there are relatively few wetlands, much of the area is simply inaccessible. Along the Togus Stream corridor, the strip of land within 500 to 800 feet of the stream consists of steep and rugged terrain covering roughly 200 acres. A smaller area of broken country lies along Togus Brook.

Commercial agriculture and forestry has no significant presence or potential in Randolph. This is simply a function of the town's size and developed area. The sole parcel enrolled in the farmland program (located on Barber Road) consists of 14 acres of cropland and 19 acres of woodlot. There are no parcels enrolled in either Tree Growth or Open Space. While there are some wooded acres of back land they are small, isolated, or being actively marketed for development. There are one or two hobby farms along some of the less-developed roads.

Prime soils for agriculture may be a consideration in the undeveloped portions of Randolph. These soils have qualities which are relatively rare in Maine -- well drained, good organic content, and somewhat level. Once they are developed, they are permanently prevented from use as farmland. Randolph does have a fair amount of one prime agricultural soil, Buxton silt loam, in the undeveloped parts of Town.

## **Commercial Development Patterns:**

The history of commercial development in Randolph is characteristic of many small towns. The last manufacturing facility closed more than ten years ago; the building now houses an auction house. The remaining businesses consist of small retail, service, and professional establishments. Most of them are located along Water Street. The largest of these is Goggin's IGA Market, relocated from a small building in the floodplain to a new supermarket a couple hundred yards to the south. (The old store now houses a Chinese restaurant.) Most of the commercial buildings on lower Water Street are located in the floodplain; Goggin's IGA was built on elevated land.

The intersection of Water and Windsor Streets is the principal crossroads in town possibly excluding the intersection with the bridge to Gardiner. This corner was clustered with commercial buildings, but many are now vacant or torn down. The northeast corner is now a vacant lot. The lot had been approved for development of a gas station, but the project is on hold until the economy picks up. Another developer is in the process of purchasing buildings to the south of the intersection with plans to build a new hardware store. Should both of these developments take place, traffic at the Water/Windsor Street intersection would become much more complicated and controls may have to be upgraded. However, it would serve to re-energize the downtown.

In several locations Water Street is bounded on one side by development and on the other by the Kennebec River. Development along Water Street is dense and oriented to automobile access. Goggin's IGA offers not just a grocery store but houses a bank and pharmacy. In addition to the market, there are service stations, a laundromat, restaurant, and other drive-up businesses on the roadside. A considerable customer base lives within easy walking distance but most people drive, in part because sidewalks into the residential neighborhood are sparse.

Although the Kennebec River is seen as an asset, it presents a whole set of physical limitations. Along much of Water Street, the river either bounds the street or leaves very small land area for development. Even east of the street large segments fall within the floodplain. Floodplain and related shoreland zoning restrictions severely limit the type and location of development in the area.

As a result of this challenge Randolph has made several attempts to study means of redeveloping and revitalizing the downtown. CDBG-funded planning efforts in the 1980's attempted to leverage the river through river-oriented businesses and amenities. A further study following the 1987 Flood suggested complete relocation of the commercial district and public infrastructure. The 1996 Comprehensive Plan stepped back from that recommendation.

The 1996 plan recommended maintaining strict floodplain building requirements and floodproofing public infrastructure, while moving towards more river-oriented activities by adding amenities and encouraging more small business.

A marina providing 30 or more docking slips and associated facilities has been approved on land just north of the bridge. Other than the smelt shack rental business this is the first effort

in Randolph to exploit the Kennebec River as a downtown economic asset. The town office has relocated out of the floodplain. The fire station and town garage are in the process of doing so while a new sewer pumping station has been floodproofed.

Each of these plans put forward several good ideas for downtown improvements. A recurring theme which has yet to be implemented involves adding more amenities to draw residents, tourists, and customers to the waterfront. Opportunities exist to do so but funding so far is lacking. Support for riverfront enhancements and amenities was also expressed at the public input session for this plan.

A half dozen businesses are evenly scattered along Windsor Street. Windsor Street has quite a few additional sites and traffic suitable for commercial development. The Land Use Ordinance provides several commercial district areas and Windsor Street will probably become more built up in the future.

Except along Water Street commercial development tends to be secondary to the predominant residential character of the town. The residential neighborhood that makes up the older section of Randolph has few commercial intrusions. The largest is a Spurwink Center facility on Hillcrest Ave. There are a few one-person and home occupation businesses scattered about.

### **Residential Development:**

The vast majority of developed land in Randolph is devoted to housing. About half of Randolph's housing dates to pre-1950 and is overwhelmingly located in the original village area. The village has expanded over the years. The newer half of housing is located in subdivisions at the edges of the village with some scattered along the few remaining rural roads.

Multi-family development basically falls into two categories in Randolph – rambling 19th Century homes and 70's-80's-era commercial buildings. Many old homes have been converted over the years to multi-family residences. Very few, if any, were built originally for multiple occupancy. The original streets in town such as Water Street and Windsor Street were where these large edifices were built. A few more are scattered in the older parts of town.

Several multi-unit complexes have been built along Windsor Street. Windsor Heights is a 52-unit garden apartment campus with seven buildings. Across the Birmingham Road intersection from this is a senior residential complex of 24 units in three buildings. These were the product of federal housing programs which are no longer available.

There are many homes, both imposing and more modest, in Randolph as single-family residences. Larger homes still occupy parts of Water and Windsor Streets and some of the older interior streets. Side streets are comprised largely of working-class homes built within the last century. Some significant subdivisions popped up in the 70's and 80's:

- Lewis Ave./McKenna Drive consists of 21 lots off of Kinderhook Street at the southern edge of the village. It is now built out.



- Rockwood Village, a 40 lot mobile home subdivision, is located on Togus Road east of Birmingham Road. The available lots are mostly full but the road network is capable of expansion.
- Fairview Estates, a 60 unit mobile home park, is located on Windsor Street at the eastern edge of the village.
- Brookview Dr./Steepleview Ct. consists of 28 lots, completely built-out, on Birmingham Road, just east of Fairview Estates.

A couple of these subdivisions are good examples of gradual expansion of the village core. The newer subdivisions are designed, however, in the style of the era, on cul-de-sacs and loop roads instead of the more traditional grid-style. Route 226 (Windsor Street/Togus Road), which bisects the "non-village" portion of Randolph, provides the lion's share of developable frontage in town and has seen most of the impacts from these developments.

It should be mentioned that the size and location of Randolph have a definite influence on the evolution of its land use patterns. The town is located directly across the river from the Gardiner city center. Businesses have migrated from Randolph to Gardiner on a regular basis. Gardiner offers many advantages for large-scale businesses. Randolph, on the flip side, has provided a more economical option for housing development.

Randolph's village also directly abuts the Pittston town line. The current village of North Pittston is separated from Randolph only by Togus Stream and the political boundary. The town line with Chelsea is just north of the village; however, that part of Chelsea is largely rural and undeveloped. The largest single undeveloped tract in Randolph -- nearly 200 acres -- borders Water Street and the Chelsea town line.

Undeveloped parcels in Randolph are generally "back land," meaning they have limited (though by no means prohibitive) access and frontage on the road system. Not more than 600 feet of frontage along the 1.8 mile stretch of Water Street is available for development (the remainder is either already developed or river frontage/wetland). Without a lot of road frontage available, subdivisions must include an interior road network and other utilities. The cost of road and utility construction may be contributing to the lack of subdivision proposals. A large senior housing project was considered for the tract off of Water Street but did not make it past the planning stage in part because of necessary improvements to the public water supply.

### **Existing Land Use Regulation:**

Based on the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, Randolph enacted a Land Use Ordinance in 1999. The Land Use Ordinance requires building permits for all new construction, and requires code enforcement or planning board review of most commercial activities.

The ordinance establishes five land use districts, separate from and not including districts in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. The five districts and their dimensional requirements are:

	<u>Lot Size</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Frontage</u>	<u>Front Setback</u>
Downtown	15,000 s.f.	25 %	100 ft.	20 ft.
Commercial	30,000	10	300	30
Urban Residential	15,000	20	150	30
Residential	30,000	10	300	30
Resource Conservation	40,000	--	--	--

The Downtown District is intended to regulate development along Water Street, from Windsor Street south. This is traditionally the most densely-developed commercial corridor. The Commercial District encompasses additional areas of existing commercial development along Water and Windsor Streets. It envisions more spacious commercial uses.

The Urban Residential District permits high density residential development characteristic of the older part of town and covers all of the residential neighborhoods west of Birmingham Road. The urban residential district does not permit commercial uses except for B & B's and professional offices. (Home occupations are also permitted, as they are everywhere in town.) The Residential District covers the developing portion of town and requires slightly more spacious lots and frontage. It is also slightly more permissive of low-impact commercial uses.

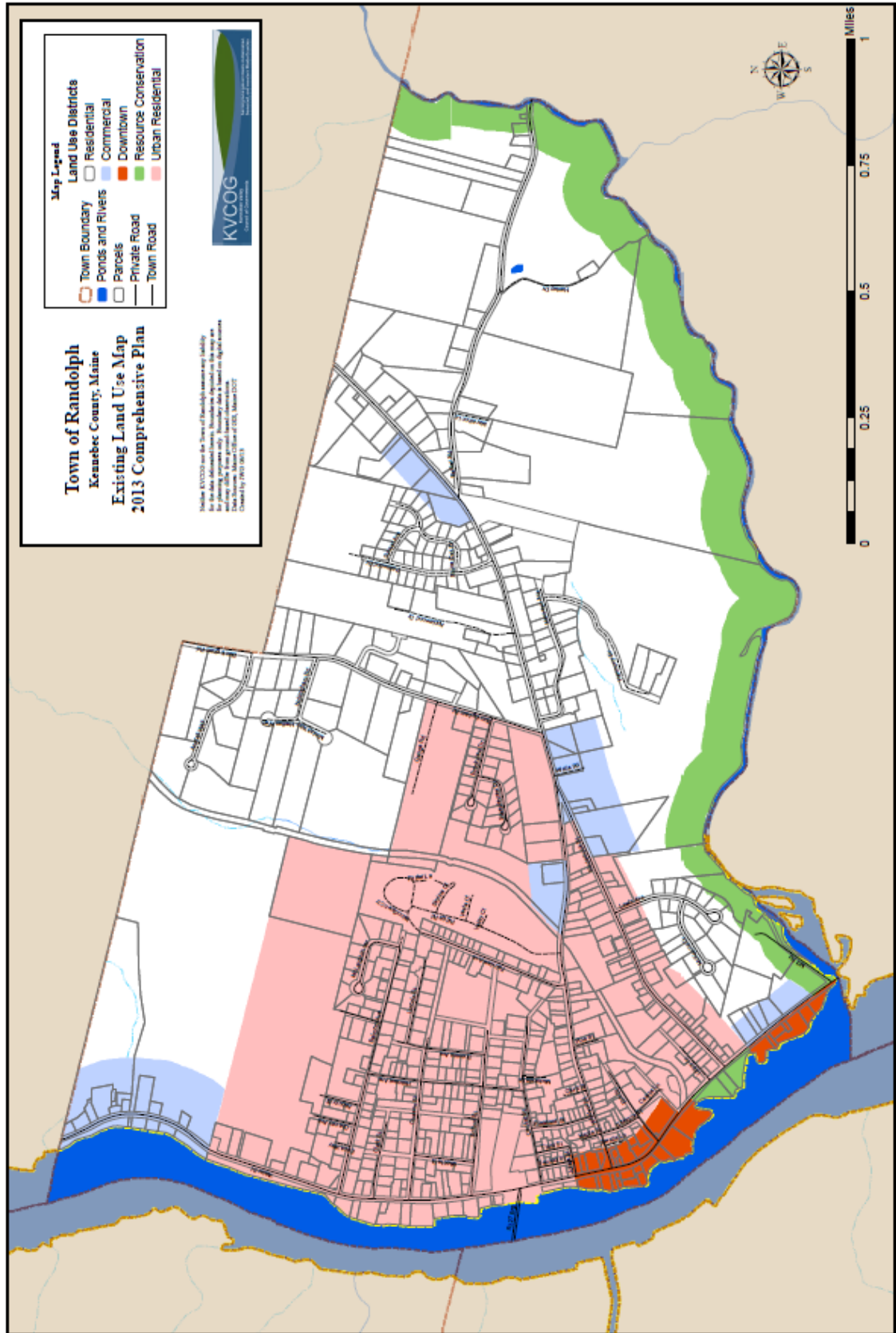
The four above-described districts are considered the “growth areas” of Randolph. They are depicted on the *Existing Land Use Map*. The “rural area” portion of Randolph consists only of the Resource Conservation District, primarily a swath of land abutting Togus Stream and ranging from 250 to 400 feet in width. No structural uses are permitted in this district.

The Land Use Ordinance contains a broad range of performance standards regulating site design and environmental and neighborhood impacts. The ordinance also has specific standards for junkyards, professional offices in the residential districts, and cell towers.

The Land Use Ordinance is regarded as having been generally successful in managing development in Randolph since its enactment. Since most of Randolph is growth area, it has not been the function of the ordinance to direct general growth as much as to require commercial growth to locate and build with respect for the site and the neighborhood. It has been suggested that the ordinance could be tweaked to permit higher densities for senior housing.

The Subdivision Ordinance was updated following the 1996 plan recommendations to include a more efficient process and up-to-date performance standards. It now contains detailed road construction specifications and guidelines for development of cluster design subdivisions.

The Town also has up-to-date Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Management Ordinances. Both are utilized regularly with downtown development so close to the river.



## **The Future:**

Present land use trends lead directly to future development patterns, except to the extent that local regulation redirects or influences development. Therefore, the patterns described above, together with broader economic and social trends, will define Randolph's future.

Despite the decline in Randolph's population over the past 20 years, development continues to happen. The town accommodates up to six new homes per year and is seeing indications of an uptick in commercial development. We have seen sudden surges in development activity in the past and there is no reason to think we will not see them again.

At the current rate of development, only a very small amount of new land is likely to be consumed with development – no more than five acres per year on average. However, because much of the road frontage in town is already consumed, it's likely that the biggest bursts of development will come from subdivisions, with a significant number of housing units or lots in a short period of time. Recently, the costs of roads and utility placements have been impeding this form of development. The next time housing prices begin to rise, this equation may change.

There is not enough commercial development to be able to project whether there will be growth, decline, or a change in character over the coming years. It is likely that we will see some redevelopment of the downtown/Water Street area and possibly one or two new businesses along Windsor Street. The current ordinance will direct commercial growth into appropriate areas.

Can we predict where the new housing will be located? The few vacant tracts in Randolph lie generally to the north and east of the village. There is a very small inventory of vacant lots for building. We may continue to see incremental development and infill within the residential district or we could see one or two large subdivisions. Birmingham Road and Barber Road seem to be good candidates for development, although, again, the limited number of ownerships makes it hard to predict. The market for senior housing will only increase, which could lead to another multi-family housing development along one of the major roads.

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## **Future Land Use Plan:**

The future land use plan identifies growth pressures in Randolph and makes recommendations regarding changes to the town's regulations and other policies to accommodate these pressures.

Beginning with the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, the Town has had a comprehensive land use plan and regulations for about 14 years. During that time, however, there has been negative population growth, slow housing growth and erratic commercial growth. Randolph's land use plan has been implemented but not really tested.

The 1996 plan argued that Randolph consists almost entirely of village area, and that therefore a growth-rural distinction was not valid. The designated rural area of town is adjacent to Togus Stream, which adequately protects the town's principal natural resource. (As related in Chapter 6, the town has very few significant natural resources.) The remaining land area is divided into two commercial and two residential districts. None of these districts is experiencing growth pressures that would justify adjusting district boundaries. Each of these districts has adequate area and public facilities for the desired intensity of use. The most densely-developed district, the Downtown District, had suffered from a high vacancy rate but seems to be regenerating itself.

District descriptions are included as part of the Land Use Ordinance. No change is proposed to the number of districts or the land use objective within each one.

The only area with significant non-conforming use is the portion of Water Street north of the bridge, as far as Belmont Ave. On the west (river) side of the road, there are at least three businesses mixed in with residences. This area should be considered for inclusion in the Commercial District. This area is designated on the *Future Land Use Plan* (page 38).

While the public water supply on Water Street appears adequate for current uses, it may not be sufficient for growth. Therefore, the town should work with the water district to prioritize Water Street north of the bridge for enlargement of water supply lines.

### **Recommendations for Growth and Development**

*State Goal: Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community, while protecting rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.*

#### Recommended Local Actions:

Policy: Maintain existing regulatory structure for land use and development.

5.1 Review the land use and subdivision ordinances to ensure that they reflect current laws and practices. In particular, the ordinance should:

- a) ensure effective permitting standards and streamlined permitting procedures
- b) utilize current best practices for protective measures for natural resources within the town,
- c) provide adequate protection and flexibility for districts and neighborhoods affected, and
- d) Favor small locally-oriented businesses in the downtown area.

5.2 Consider providing development incentives, such as higher permissible density, to senior housing or progressive care housing in the commercial or urban residential districts.

5.3 Continue to provide adequate training and hours for code enforcement.

5.4 Make a record of the location of all new residential or commercial permits (code enforcement officer), and report annually to the planning board on the number and type of new permits in each district.

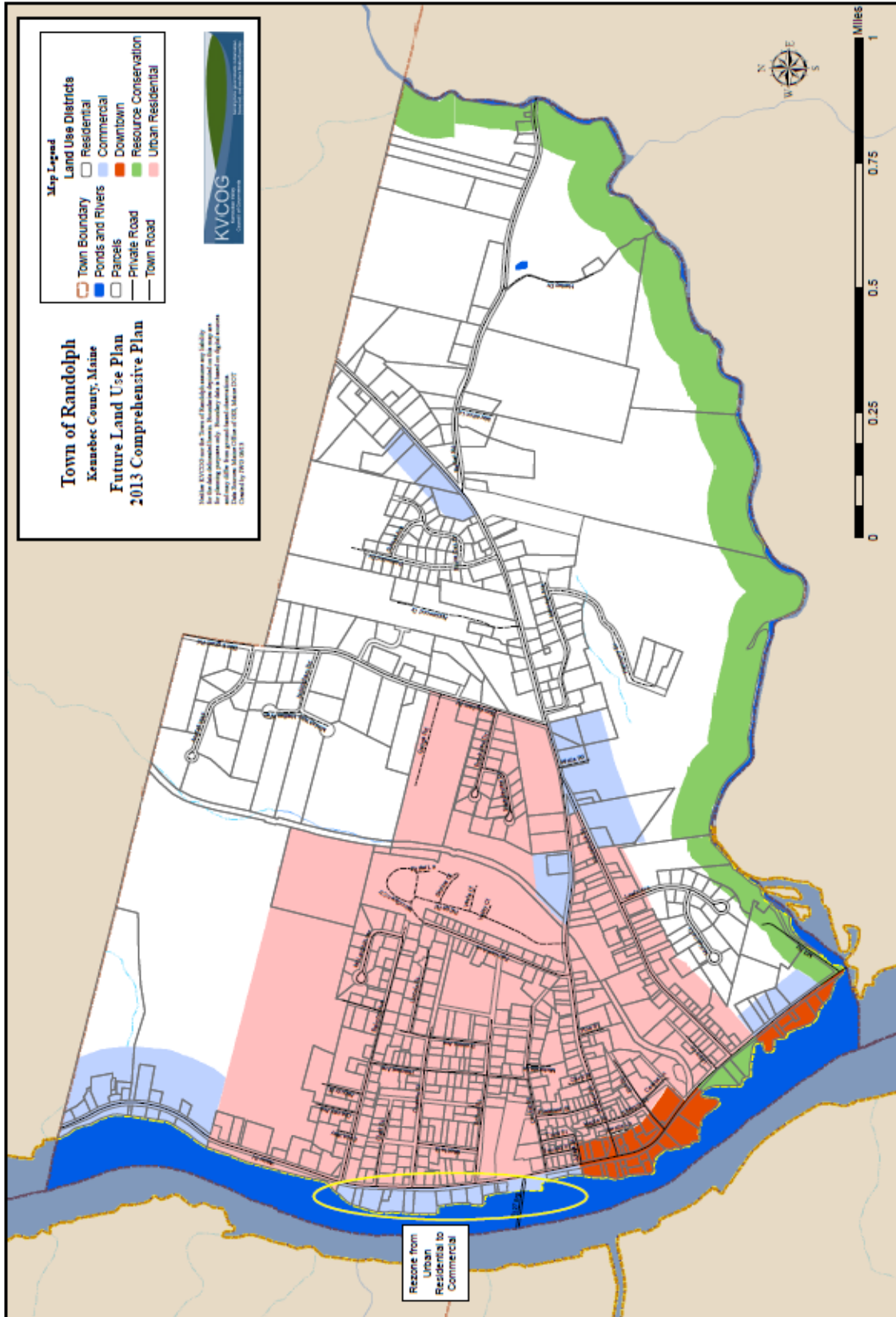
5.5 Produce a digital copy of the district map, after consideration and enactment (if appropriate) of any minor boundary adjustments.

5.6 Monitor development patterns and policies in Pittston and Chelsea and contact these towns, if warranted, to coordinate development and resource protection strategies.

Policy: Promote non-regulatory inducements to implement the vision of this plan.

5.7 Request that Gardiner Water District evaluate water supply line capacity on Water Street north of the bridge and develop a project and priority to increase capacity consistent with growth potential and fire-fighting needs.

5.8 Develop a plan for installing downtown area (Water Street – south) enhancements such as sidewalks, public spaces, and lighting, and identify projects and funding sources to implement it.



## Chapter 6

# Randolph's Land and Water Resources

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This chapter examines the land and water resources that act as constraints and opportunities for development in Randolph. This includes soils, topography, wildlife, scenic areas, and streams, as well as the Kennebec River and marine resources associated with it.

### **Surface Waters:**

The Kennebec River forms Randolph's western boundary while Togus Stream defines the southern and eastern boundaries. Togus Brook runs down the center of town and feeds into the Kennebec. There are other smaller streams and a few wetlands. The Town has no lakes or naturally occurring ponds, but there is one small half acre impoundment near the mouth of Togus Brook and the narrow gauge railroad bed.

The Kennebec River is one of the scenic and recreational highlights of the state of Maine. From Randolph's banks it offers scenic views, boating access to the ocean, and fishing opportunities for brown trout, Atlantic salmon, striped bass, smallmouth bass, and other sport fish. Ice fishing for smelt is a particularly popular winter activity on this part of the Kennebec. However, there is limited public fishing access. Much of the accessible portions of the river in Randolph is private land already developed. Although not locally perceived as coastal property, the Kennebec River at Randolph is tidal.

Water quality in the Kennebec River has been improving steadily since the 1970's. Though historically river-dependant, for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Randolph's river access wasn't considered much of an asset; however with improved water quality and increased interest in recreation, the river can once again be a valuable part of the town's future. The Kennebec River Initiative (KRI) has been active in promoting increased public access and asset-based development along the length of the river. Randolph's Public Vision Session – part of this planning effort – identified the riverfront as a major community asset and one which should be exploited. Several suggestions generated by this session have been incorporated as recommendations in this chapter.

Due primarily to lack of access and steep terrain, Togus Stream has little development potential along its course in Randolph. Yet it also offers minimal wildlife habitat. Some individuals have set up eel weirs at its mouth. It has good water quality according to both the Department of Environmental Protection and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The wastewater treatment outflow from Togus VA Hospital in Chelsea used to flow into Togus Stream, but has been rerouted into the Augusta Sewer System, improving the stream's quality.

Togus Brook is a lesser tributary of the Kennebec, its mouth a couple hundred yards upstream from Togus Stream. It meanders up through the middle of town. Due to floodplain



and wet conditions, there has been little development in the immediate vicinity of the stream. The bed of the old Narrow Gauge Railway and its associated right-of-way run along the brook and help to prevent development while ensuring public access to the brook.

The town is committed to ensuring that the quality of surface waters is maintained for future generations. Best management practices for residential, commercial, and public infrastructure construction and maintenance activities are in place to prevent future degradation of Randolph's streams. Aesthetics can be addressed at the time of development review by the planning board. Public access also should be at the forefront of any future plans.

## **Marine Resources**

By virtue of the fact that the Kennebec River at Randolph is tidally influenced, the town is considered a coastal community by the State of Maine. It does not, however, have any of the activities or amenities normally associated with a coastal community.

Randolph's waterfront does not support any marine industry, except for a seasonal smelt fishing business. This has not always been the case. In the sailing ship era, Randolph was a warehousing center and major source of river ice for northeast coastal cities. Remnants of piers and foundations still remain. Today, this part of the river is used almost entirely for recreation, with the open ocean a two hour motor through Merrymeeting Bay and the Narrows. A 30-slip marina to be located just north of the bridge is in the permitting stage.

The Town used to have a public, handicapped accessible dock that gave residents and visitors access to marine waters. It was used mostly for fishing and was removed after lack of maintenance made it a liability issue. There exists a great deal of interest in the community in restoring this access, particularly if it could play a role in downtown renovation and recreation. The Town owns property near the junction of Water and Windsor Streets (formerly the park-and-ride) that fronts the river and could potentially be converted to a small riverfront park.

Randolph also has a couple of courtesy moorings and 45 registered moorings under a mooring plan. The moorings and other waterfront issues are managed by the harbormaster, who is also the police chief.

Marine fish species are available to anglers from Randolph's banks. Togus Stream is the northernmost tributary on the Kennebec that hosts a run of Atlantic salmon. The Kennebec also has experienced a steady rise in the number and size of striped bass. Smelt fishing shacks used to be regulated by the Town but are no longer.

As mentioned above, the Kennebec River is an underutilized asset. Across the river Gardiner has been investing in river access. The city has public dock improvements and is making efforts to reach out to businesses and recreationists. It would be difficult to compete for patrons with better facilities just across the river but there remains a lot of potential for local commercial activities associated with the river.

## **Groundwater:**

Protecting groundwater as a source of drinking water has not been a concern for most residents of Randolph since the vast majority of the town is serviced by the Gardiner Water District (discussed in Chapter 7). Groundwater is not static, however, and may flow into surface waters or across town lines. Sources of groundwater contamination can be hydrologically linked across political boundaries and to nearby surface waters.

Groundwater can be affected by a variety of activities. Activities that may be a factor today in Randolph would be old industrial sites, underground storage tanks, and antiquated sewage lines. Older underground storage tanks associated with businesses like gas stations can develop leaks unnoticed for years. Sections of Randolph's sewer system are nearly 100 years old. Even though the Town has a program of replacing lines found to be leaking some infiltration is still happening.

There have been no reported incidents of groundwater contamination within Randolph. There are no significant aquifers mapped within the town's boundaries.

## **Wetlands:**

Randolph has few wetlands and even those few are relatively small. This does not mean however that wetlands are of little value to Randolph landowners. These wetlands serve a number of functions that may not be apparent to the casual observer.

Wetlands are habitat for all forms of wildlife. They provide areas for wildlife breeding, forage, and protective cover. Wetlands also serve as sponges during wet times of the year by absorbing excess ground and surface waters that can cause damage to homes, businesses, or roads. Wetlands also absorb and hold polluting runoff from such things as construction sites or parking lots.

Wetlands in the southwest portion of Town that are adjacent to the Kennebec River and Togus Stream are regulated through the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and the Maine Natural Resources Protection Act. Any activity on or adjacent to these wetlands requires a permit through the Town and may require one from the Department of Environmental Protection. The wetland located at the mouth of Togus Stream is designated high value waterfowl and wading bird habitat affording it additional protections, and is encompassed within the Town's Resource Protection District. Wetland locations are depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* (following page).

## **Critical Natural Resources:**

Simply due to the fact that most of Randolph is developed, there is very little valuable wildlife habitat. Information on wildlife habitat and other critical natural resources is now aggregated by the Department of Conservation Maine Natural Areas Program, through its *Beginning with Habitat* initiative. This information is made available to towns and is updated on a regular basis.



Based on the information available, Randolph has no occurrences of endangered species or critical habitat. Bald Eagle and Osprey have been observed over the river, but no nesting sites have been identified. The wetland at the mouth of Togus Stream is identified as high value for waterfowl and wading birds. There have been no significant vernal pools identified in town to date. The *Critical Natural Resource Map* does show one deer wintering area bordering Chelsea in the very northeastern corner of Town.

A deer wintering area or “deeryard” basically is a dense stand of evergreen trees that provides forage and protects deer from wind, heat loss, and deep snow during the coldest winter months. This type of habitat is very important in central Maine. Whitetail deer are near the northern limit of their range in Maine and anything to protect them from the winter weather increases their chance of survival. Development reduces the effectiveness of deer yards, therefore, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife provides guidance to developers that will help to minimize the impacts.

Undeveloped tracts of land provide the best opportunity for a diversity of wildlife habitat. Randolph only has a couple of areas with up to 200 acres of undeveloped land. The largest undeveloped tract forms a corridor along Togus Stream and is mostly encompassed by the Town’s Resource Conservation District. The tract has no roads, farmland, or other development and offers a diversity of habitat types and access to water and a travel corridor. Another large undeveloped tract is bounded by Water Street, Belmont Street and Togus Brook but is at the edge of the village and being actively marketed for development.

### **Floodplain:**

The existence of floodplain in Randolph has been alluded to in the Land Use Chapter as a significant constraint to development. The floodplain covers all of the land on the river side of Water Street, as well as the east side for several hundred feet south of Windsor Street. This impacts Randolph’s primary commercial area, and the Town’s Floodplain Management Ordinance gets regular usage.

The official designation of floodplain includes the land area expected to be inundated by a flood of 100-year frequency, or a 1-in-100 chance of being flooded in any given year. Randolph’s most recent experience with flooding was in 1987, when much of Water Street and many downtown businesses were waist deep in floodwaters. Since then the town office has relocated out of the floodplain (the fire station will follow suit shortly) and a large manufacturer has relocated to Gardiner. The newest large structure, Goggin’s IGA, was elevated out of the floodplain as required by the ordinance.

### **Soils and Topography:**

Randolph residents should be concerned with at least a couple of aspects of our land base. While for the most part we do not need to be concerned with the ability of soils to support septic systems (virtually the entire town has access to public sewer), the slope and ability of soils to support roads and foundations are two characteristics that will affect development in Randolph.

Steep slopes will affect the cost and practicality of construction and maintenance of roads and buildings. Developers must go to extra expense to prevent erosion or slippage of soil throughout the life of the road or structure. There is a greater potential for runoff and pollution from development on steep slopes. Despite the fact that much of Randolph is perched on the banks of the river, very little has actual steep slopes. The Togus Stream corridor is the only location with prolonged slopes in excess of 25 percent.

The town contains soils that would present severe problems for roads and foundations. These soils possess characteristics such as shallow bedrock and/or a high water table. The physical difficulties for developing buildings and roads on these lands are obvious and lead to inflated development costs which may have affected Randolph's recent development lull.

The pattern of poor soils shown could be an impediment to future development of the land between Lewis Avenue and Maureen Avenue, and East of Route 9 (Water Street north of the bridge). Poor soils in the Togus Brook corridor could also affect development. One recent subdivision near the brook has very large lot sizes to compensate for the poor soils.

### **Scenic Resources:**

The chapter on natural resources would be incomplete without some mention of Randolph's scenic attractions and a consideration of them in future planning. The Town's main scenic asset is its proximity to the Kennebec River. There are ample views of the river from Water Street showing its wide expanse as well as developed and undeveloped sections of river bank. The elevated portions of Town provide limited scenic views. And the narrow gauge trail gives one the sense of wooded isolation -- a rare commodity in downtown Randolph.

### **Local Protection of Natural Resources:**

Randolph provides regulatory protection of natural resources through its development ordinances. The Subdivision Ordinance requires developers to make accommodation to protect natural land cover, open spaces and historic features, and to control erosion and water pollution. The Land Use Ordinance contains standards governing air and water pollution, protection of historic resources and wildlife habitat, and stormwater management. It also prohibits construction on slopes exceeding 25 percent and in Togus Stream's Resource Protection District.

With little in the way of open space, Randolph has not been active in developing or participating in conservation organizations. There are no legally-protected open space parcels in the town.

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### **Natural Resource Recommendations:**

#### *State Goals:*

*To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.*

*To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.*

*To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.*

**Recommended Local Actions:**

Policy: Continue to provide protections for Randolph's natural resources

6-1 Continue performance standards in Subdivision, Shoreland Zoning, and Land Use Ordinances regulating erosion and sedimentation, groundwater protection, wetlands, scenic resources, and wildlife habitat. Update as necessary with new information or state mandates.

6-2 Utilize *Beginning with Habitat* maps and information when updating ordinance provisions and reviewing development applications.

6-3 Continue to provide Code Enforcement Officer training in resource protection.

6-4 Require that public works employees be certified in best management practices for erosion control in road maintenance.

6-5 Ensure that the town office has technical and contact information available for landowners from Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Kennebec Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and other agencies providing technical assistance for resource protection.

6-6 Continue the Resource Protection District designated in the Land Use Ordinance for the protection of existing or yet-to-be-identified critical natural resources in the Togus Stream area.

Policy: Preserve the Kennebec River and associated coastal resources.

Maine Coastal Policies:

- a. To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation;
- b. To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources;
- c. To support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;
- d. To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;
- e. To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;

- f. To protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs;
- g. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development;
- h. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses; and,
- i. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime characteristics of the Maine coast.

6-7 Work with riparian landowners and the Kennebec River Initiative to ensure more access points to the river.

6-8 Re-establish town-owned access, including a new town dock and recreational facilities.

6-9 Utilize the Land Use Ordinance to encourage water-dependent forms of development along the river as well as tourist/leisure businesses that highlight the river.

6-10 Cooperate on river management strategies with Gardiner, Pittston, and other river towns.

6-11 Encourage owners of marine businesses to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Local Services and Facilities**

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The comprehensive plan allows us to evaluate the services and facilities provided by the government and paid for and used by the citizens. The function of government is subject to many competing demands – the needs of a growing population and economy, demand for government accountability, dealing with state and federal mandates, and the ever-present priority to keep taxes at a reasonable level. We cannot satisfy all of these demands. The best we can do is try to provide the services that residents want as cost-effectively as possible.

The following public services are offered to some or all residents of Randolph by the town (unless otherwise noted): Public water (Gardiner Water District), public sewer, schools (SAD 11), police protection, fire protection, ambulance, public works, street lighting, cemetery maintenance, solid waste, recreation, library (Gardiner), harbormaster, and town office services. These services are evaluated below.

#### **Utility Services:**

##### Public Water:

Public water supply is provided by the Gardiner Water District (GWD) and paid for through user fees. Water distribution lines cover virtually all of town with the exception of the northern half of Birmingham Road, and there is a district storage tank on Windsor Street. The general condition of the distribution system is good with the exceptions noted below.

In addition, GWD serves portions of Gardiner, Farmingdale, and Pittston. Districtwide, usage is about 850,000 gallons per day (GPD), less than half of the 2,000,000 GPD capacity. The source of water is a wellfield in Gardiner with the Hallowell Water District providing a backup supply. GWD has a wellhead protection program in place.

Over the past fifteen years, the GWD has worked to upgrade water mains with historically low volume or pressure. In Randolph, these include Birmingham and Barber Roads. On the north side of Water Street, water supply is adequate for current usage, but does not have the capacity for significant new development. This should be the next priority area for upgrades.

##### Public Sewer:

Sewer service is supplied to Randolph residents through a cooperative effort of the Town and the City of Gardiner. The City maintains the Gardiner Wastewater Treatment Plant in South Gardiner, constructed in 1982. It originally had a capacity of 1.65 MGD and a design life of 20



years but has been modified and expanded since then. Randolph's wastewater is funneled to a pump station on Water Street pumped under the river to Gardiner. The pump station and all sewer lines in Randolph are owned and maintained by the Town.

The Gardiner treatment plant has plenty of room for growth. Randolph uses only a small portion of the treatment plant capacity, however, its effective capacity is that of the Randolph Pump Station. There is currently capacity in that system. Randolph had issues with combined sewer overflows (CSO) in the past but has eliminated most of them at this time. Additional capacity was gained through elimination of cellar drain connections to sewer lines and infiltration through manhole covers and pipe joints. Work continues on these objectives.

The collection system in Randolph dates back in some places over 100 years. The system has been expanded piecemeal since then as the town developed. Many times, expansions were done with no standards and no records kept, which has come back to haunt us today. There are no records of locations through some portions of the village. Replacing the collectors is an ongoing activity of the Town.

The main pump station is located on Water Street adjacent to the fire station. The station was completely replaced two years ago, floodproofed, with new pumps and wiring installed. Two additional pump stations are located on Barber Road. The Town is in the process of acquiring a new pump that may be installed at any location as an emergency backup.

Residents and businesses are billed quarterly for sewer service, based on a metered rate. Revenue goes to pay Randolph's pro-rated share of the treatment plant and maintenance of lines in town. Randolph's sewer charge is lower than that of neighboring towns for the average user.

#### Public Utilities:

Randolph is widely served by the Central Maine Power distribution system. Three phase power is available in downtown areas (Water Street).

A natural gas pipeline is in the process of being built between Pittston and Augusta, passing through Randolph. The main line is being placed in 2013, with local distribution lines anticipated during upcoming years. The local impact of natural gas availability on economic development is unknown, although it will have a positive effect on existing residents by making the cost of heating homes and running local businesses much cheaper.

Cable and broadband internet services are generally available throughout the town.

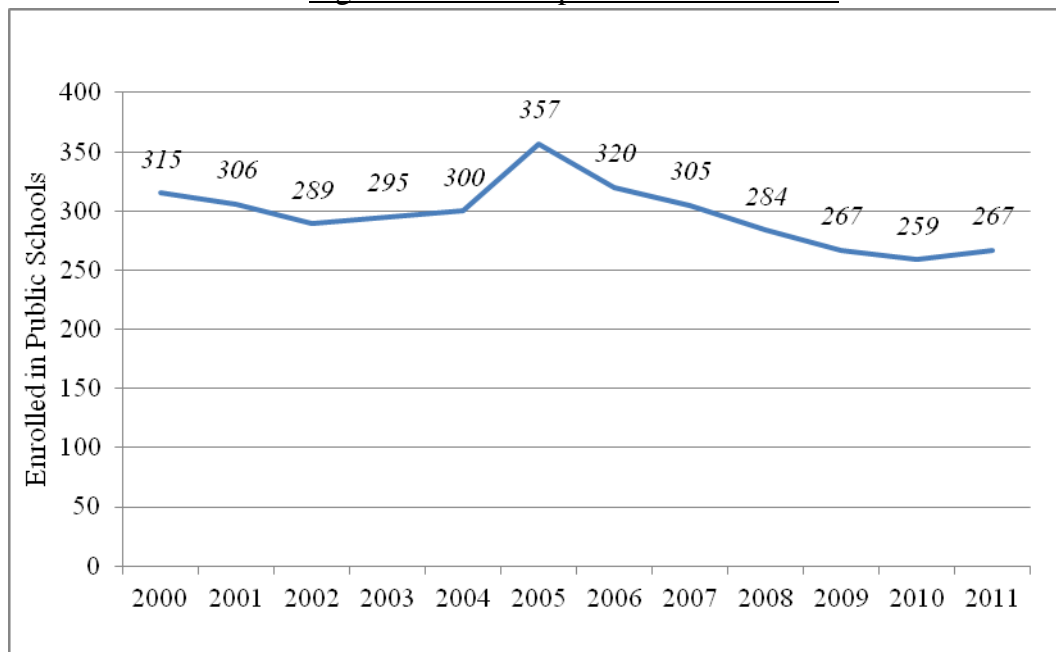
#### **Education:**

School Administrative District 11 serves Gardiner, West Gardiner, and Pittston. Teresa Hamlin Elementary School is located at the intersection of School Street and Water Street downtown. Junior High and High Schools are located in Gardiner. Operating and capital investment decisions are made by the SAD and confirmed by local voters. The town is on good terms with the district particularly when it comes to sharing recreational facilities.

There are not likely to be capacity problems at the school based on the slow decline in enrollment (Figure 7.1) and stable population levels. In fact, the district has discussed the possible closing of Hamlin School. Overall enrollments in SAD 11 have declined at a somewhat slower rate than Randolph's: from 2,296 in 2000 to 2,255 in 2005 to 2,175 in 2011.

Should Hamlin School be closed, the Town will be faced with an opportunity to acquire the property. There has been some interest expressed in it, but the maintenance costs would be high. Other towns facing similar decisions have retained consultants to analyze the costs and benefits, and Randolph could be expected to do the same. The degree of uncertainty is high, both with the decision to close it and the utility to the town, so we would do best just to be prepared for whatever decision the SAD makes.

**Figure 7.1: Randolph Enrollment Trends**



The average cost for educating a student at SAD 11 in 2011-12 was \$8,364 (\$7,741 for elementary; \$9,859 for secondary). This was a three percent increase over 2010-11, but still lower than all nearby or similarly-sized districts. It is also significantly less than the statewide average of \$9,727; however, the state cost average only increased by one percent over the prior year. Randolph's contribution to the SAD budget in 2011 was \$759,531, averaging \$2,845 per enrolled student.

**Public Safety:**

Police Protection:

Primary protection is provided by a part-time police chief and deputy, with additional coverage supplied by the Kennebec County Sheriff and State Police. Coverage is considered to be adequate. The police chief also serves as town harbormaster. As harbormaster, he is

responsible for maintaining the dock and buoys, and locating the moorings. He uses his own boat for the purpose.

The town owns a police cruiser and equipment utilized by the officers.

#### Fire Protection:

The Randolph Fire Department provides protection to Randolph and has mutual aid agreements with Gardiner, Pittston, Farmingdale, Chelsea, and Togus VA.

The department is headquartered out of a cinder block building on Water Street. The building, erected in 1962, includes two bays and a meeting/training area. Situated in the floodplain, the building also has other deficiencies. The town is currently considering relocation of the station. Current plans call for it to be located near the town office, though those could change if the school property becomes available. The \$500,000 estimated price tag would be partially covered by grants. A vehicle replacement reserve account currently has about \$50,000.

Personnel in the department include approximately 17 volunteers, including the Chief. Recruitment and training is recognized as a problem. The lack of able-bodied personnel, particularly during the day, is a problem shared with many Maine towns.

The town's ISO rating is currently a 7 with most of the town covered by hydrants. The Kennebec River is available as an emergency water source. There are no dry hydrants in town. The department tests hydrants regularly and ones with a yield below a certain GPM identified for upgrades. A problem recognized by the department is that development located on long private driveways is sometimes inaccessible by department vehicles.

Fire and Ambulance (Gardiner) respond through 911, using dispatch services from the Lincoln County Sheriff. All streets and addresses have been put into compliance with the Town's Street Addressing Ordinance, adopted in 1998.

#### Emergency Management:

The fire chief acts as the emergency management director. Having survived several floods and the occasional fire over the years, the town has a thorough all-hazard emergency management plan. The plan is authorized and implemented through an Emergency Management Ordinance.

#### **Public Works:**

The Public Works Director is responsible for maintaining town roads, the sewer lines and pumping station, and town buildings. Road maintenance issues are discussed in Chapter 8.

Equipment for public works includes a 1977 backhoe in fair condition, a 1974 one-ton truck in poor condition, a Ford ¾ ton pickup, and a sewer rodder. The Public Works Garage, located adjacent to the fire station, was built in 1964 and is used mainly for storage of

equipment. It will likely be relocated out of the floodplain at the same time as the fire station. The public works vehicles have exceeded their service life. While the need exists, the funding does not.

Winter road maintenance is contracted out, so there are no municipal salt or sand storage sites. A DOT maintenance garage is located on the Birmingham Road, with salt storage.

### **Solid Waste:**

Solid waste disposal in Randolph is the sole responsibility of the individual. Household waste is either picked up by a contractor or taken by the homeowner to Hatch Hill Landfill in Augusta. Although some of the trash collection contractors take recyclables separately, there is no municipally sponsored recycling program. If the town could establish one at minimal cost, it would probably be well-used. The idea was supported at Randolph's public vision session. It is possible that when a new fire station and public works garage get built, a site for recycling could be incorporated into the plans.

The town has sponsored an annual town cleanup each Spring for several years. Residents can get rid of their bulky wastes and other items, although there is a charge for larger items. The event is popular with residents. The proposed appropriation for 2014 is \$2,500.

### **Outdoor Recreation:**

Despite its small geographic size, Randolph has a couple of outstanding recreational assets: the Kennebec River, and the Narrow Gauge Trail.

The Kennebec River is Randolph's access to coastal waters, and is, in fact, tidal itself. The town used to maintain a town dock, but it was hauled out a number of years ago and never replaced. The town also administers a number of mooring spaces on its side of the river. River access is available summer and winter, with smelt fishing an active sport in the winter. Right now, the only boat access is via a private boat ramp. The Town does own land adjacent to the river where the old swinging bridge was sited many years ago. This could be improved for river viewing and access, though the bank is too steep to be suitable for a boat launch.

Periodic downtown plans for Randolph have proposed to leverage the river as a recreational asset in revitalizing the downtown. River access, a riverside park, and scenic viewpoints have been recommended in the past. However, across the river Gardiner has made recent improvements to its riverfront, which means that similar activities in Randolph would not have as much impact.

The Narrow Gauge Trail is the right-of-way of an abandoned narrow gauge railroad line. It bisects the town providing a walking, jogging and nature trail in the summer, as well as providing cross-country ski opportunity in the winter. As one of the few areas of open space in the town, it is a rare opportunity for local citizens. The trail is the town's responsibility to maintain. It is kept up by a committee of volunteers but no funds exist to enhance it.

The elementary school provides the only public facilities for youth recreation in town as well as the only public green space other than narrow gauge rail bed and the cemetery. The schoolyard contains a multi-purpose field (winter skating rink), a basketball court, and playground. Residents also raise over \$10,000 per year to participate in the Gardiner Boys and Girls Club, which provides organized activities and facilities for residents.

### **Library:**

Randolph has no local library, but utilizes the Gardiner Public Library located on Gardiner's Water Street. The library and grounds are owned and operated by the Gardiner Library Association with representation from Randolph. The library itself contains a collection of over 35,000 books, plus other materials. Randolph has in the past provided a stipend to Gardiner (\$16,971) to permit free use by residents. In an effort to save tax money, the Town is considering alternatives.

### **General Government:**

Randolph's town office is located on Kinderhook Street. Built in 2000, in part on the recommendation of the 1996 comprehensive plan, it is a state-of-the-art facility adequate to the town's administrative needs. The town office affords space for selectboard and committee meetings, as well as offices for the town's administrative staff and code enforcement officer. There are no plans for improvements to the town office, although if the elementary school becomes available, the town could look at consolidating its functions there.

Virtually all town administrative duties are handled by the selectboard or town office staff. This includes fiscal management and planning, grant-writing and administration, business development, and compliance with state and federal standards, as well as just paying the bills and supervising the staff. Townspeople have discussed several times the benefit of employing a town manager. A strong recommendation to that effect came out of the town's visioning session. However, the Town could not afford a full-time manager, and may not need one. It is thought that the town could possibly share a town manager with a neighboring towns, as some other Maine towns do.

Local government maintains above-average communications with residents. The town maintains a website – [www.randolphmaine.org](http://www.randolphmaine.org) – with good information regularly updated. The Town also publishes a regular newsletter with news of community events and upcoming local meetings and activities.

### **Town Fiscal Management:**

Beyond the physical provision and planning for public facilities, we need to examine municipal budgetary procedures and fiscal capacity to determine whether we are financially prepared for the needs of our public services. Needs are generated by growth -- both of the population and of new or expanded programs instituted by the voters or state/federal levels of government. But our budget is generated by our tax base. "Fiscal capacity" is the ability of our tax base to keep up with the demands on the local budget.

Randolph’s tax base consists of real and personal property. Taxes are levied according to the “mill rate,” which is \$0.001 per dollar of value. Randolph’s mill rate for 2011-12 was 15.08, which equates to about \$1,500 tax on a \$100,000 home. In 2011-12, this raised about \$1,297,000 in revenue. Another \$200,000 or so was generated in personal property taxes, including excise tax.

Randolph’s mill rate has been rising gradually since 2008. The dollars raised from property taxes has also been rising (see Figure 7.3, on next page). This indicates that the growth in Randolph’s tax base is not keeping pace with the growth in expenses. Figure 7.2 on the next page illustrates that “municipal valuation” (AKA tax base) has changed very little since 2008. In 2008, it was \$86,844,700; in 2012, it was \$86,006,000. With expenses rising almost three percent per year (see Table 7-1), it is not hard to see why the tax rate is rising.

“State valuation” is the term for the State’s estimate of the tax base. It is calculated from actual property transactions during the year. State valuation numbers assure that all property in Maine is assessed equally. If the local assessor’s valuation falls below a certain percent of the state valuation, the Town is required to re-value its property. This happened in Randolph between 2007 and 2008, and is illustrated in Figure 7.2. State and local values were out-of-whack in 2007 and equalized in 2008 represented by the bar heights. Since 2008, local values are slowly falling behind the State’s again, visible by the discrepancy of the bars in 2012. The local assessment has remained almost constant since 2008. The local assessment has either not corrected for inflation or not picked up additional valuation. If it had, the local mill rate would not have risen in the past couple of years.

Figure 7.2

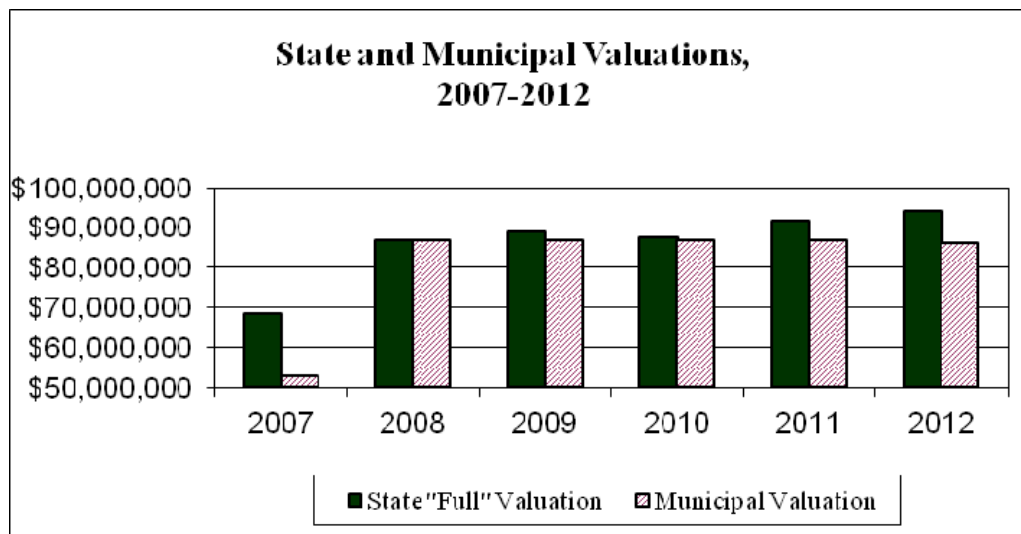
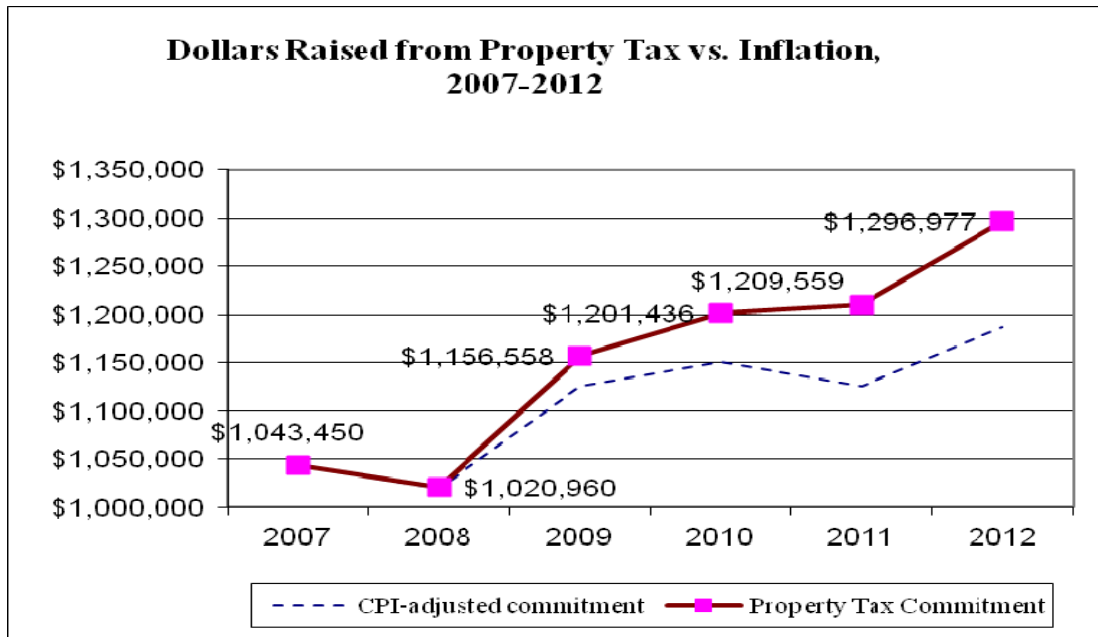


Figure 7.3



State valuation figures are used to allocate revenue sharing and school aid on an equal (proportional to tax base) basis. It also allows us to compare tax rates between towns, which could not be done using all-local valuations and mill rates. In 2010 (the most recent year for which comparisons are available), Randolph’s “full value” mill rate was 13.18. By comparison, Chelsea’s mill rate was 14.60, Pittston’s 10.55, Farmingdale’s 11.13, and Gardiner’s 18.83. Small towns habitually have lower mill rates than cities, because demand for public services in cities exceeds the additional tax revenue from development. Randolph is in a unique situation being an urban village with city utilities but a rural tax base. All things considered, Randolph’s tax rate is quite reasonable.

Property taxes make up the largest fraction of the municipal budget. Table 7-1, on the following page, is taken from the town audit reports. It shows that “property taxes” (which appears to include vehicle excise taxes) accounted for 83 percent of total revenues in 2007. Five years later in 2012, they comprised about 90 percent of the town’s revenue, illustrating the additional burden on the property tax. The remaining fraction is primarily revenue sharing from the State which has been shrinking steadily.

Expenditures have been rising at the rate of 2.85 percent per year since 2007. This is just above inflation. The largest item in the municipal budget is “education” accounting for 45 percent in 2007, 47 percent in 2012. The most rapid increase, according to the table, is “public works,” growing at 7.6 percent per year. However, the expenditure fluctuates dramatically from year to year, probably reflecting necessary road work, making it difficult to generalize.

**Table 7-1: Randolph Revenues and Expenditures, 2007-2012**

<u>Expenditures:</u>	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	annual change
general gov't	\$381,131	\$443,896	\$427,501	\$417,896	\$439,854	\$429,254	2.41%
public works	\$110,837	\$215,877	\$89,786	\$114,728	\$115,397	\$160,005	7.62%
public safety	\$64,779	\$66,657	\$61,546	\$60,172	\$54,020	\$62,235	-0.80%
Culture/recreation	\$21,718	\$23,544	\$26,321	\$26,321	\$26,321	\$27,106	4.53%
public health	\$7,119	\$9,013	\$6,104	\$7,599	\$6,035	\$7,467	0.96%
education	\$661,096	\$668,459	\$760,016	\$746,668	\$759,531	\$787,693	3.57%
county and overlay	\$75,118	\$80,473	\$85,729	\$82,358	\$88,790	\$91,496	4.02%
debt service	\$125,187	\$148,848	\$183,347	\$181,926	\$165,841	\$122,137	-0.49%
depreciation	\$116,463	\$117,308	\$123,050	\$124,274	\$120,608	\$121,171	0.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,465,985</b>	<b>\$1,656,767</b>	<b>\$1,680,546</b>	<b>\$1,654,794</b>	<b>\$1,655,789</b>	<b>\$1,687,393</b>	<b>2.85%</b>
<b>Revenues</b>							
property tax	\$1,306,413	\$1,266,623	\$1,398,728	\$1,432,659	\$1,453,602	\$1,549,039	3.47%
Intergovernmental	\$232,176	\$221,400	\$198,023	\$164,232	\$163,152	\$180,315	-4.93%
investment earnings	\$28,970	\$14,276	\$6,861	\$5,209	\$4,757	\$4,658	-30.62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,556,668</b>	<b>\$1,505,953</b>	<b>\$1,604,877</b>	<b>\$1,601,637</b>	<b>\$1,621,101</b>	<b>\$1,725,942</b>	<b>2.09%</b>

The Town tends to use a combination of borrowing and reserve accounts for the majority of its capital investments – the “big ticket” items that can affect the annual budget. The Town maintains a reserve account for fire equipment and a capital account for road improvements; its current borrowing is limited to wastewater facilities. Municipalities are required by Maine law to limit their borrowing to 15 percent of the valuation. Randolph’s in 2012 was at 2.02 percent plus a small fraction for county and school debts.

In 2011 and 2012, the Town had to vote to exceed the LD1-mandated limit on property tax levies. This was not due to unforeseen or unmanaged local expenditures. It was probably a combination of a stagnant tax base and school spending. Since 2010, the school assessment to the Town has exceeded the total increase in local expenditures, meaning the Town’s non-school spending declined.

**Public Service Recommendations:**

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

*Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities, including access to surface waters.*

**Recommended Local Actions:**

Policy: Continue to plan for adequate public facilities.



- 7-1 Sewer system: Acquire a spare pump for backup at the pump stations.
- 7-2 Sewer system: Continue to rehabilitate outdated sewer lines.
- 7-3 Water system: Work with Gardiner Water District to replace and expand water mains on Water Street north of the bridge.
- 7-4 Fire protection: Build a new fire station.
- 7-5 Fire protection: Continue funding reserve account for equipment replacement.
- 7-6 Public works: Build a new public works garage.
- 7-7 Schools/recreation: Communicate with SAD 11 school board regarding the future of Hamlin School. If and when the school is proposed for closure, form a local committee to study and recommend future uses of the building or site for the Town of Randolph.
- 7-8 Recreation: Form an ad hoc committee to study and propose a plan for development of river access on town property at the old bridge site or another possible location.
- 7-9 Recreation: Continue to cooperate with Gardiner on active recreation opportunities.
- Policy: Strive to improve town administration.
- 7-10 Develop a capital improvements plan and update annually.
- 7-11 Consider hiring a part-time or full-time town manager.
- 7-12 Continue to seek opportunities to cooperate with Gardiner and neighboring towns on efficient delivery of public services.

## Chapter 8 Transportation Services

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Residents and businesses in Randolph are highly dependent on its transportation system. Local businesses need it to move products and draw customers. Residents need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to access workers. Families need transportation to schools, services, shopping, and recreation. This chapter explores how we can provide the most cost-effective transportation choices, while promoting land use and economic development choices that make the best use of the system.

### **System Elements and Issues:**

#### *State Highways:*

The backbone of Randolph's transportation system is a highway system designed to accommodate motor vehicles. Randolph's state highways are:

State Route 27: Route 27 is the major arterial road through Randolph. Coming from Gardiner, Route 27 becomes Water Street, the primary commercial route through town, exiting across Togus Stream at Pittston. The Maine DOT classifies this road as a "retrograde arterial," an arterial road important for continued mobility but suffering a higher-than-average rate of crashes from driveway entrances. The drawback to mobility on Route 27 is the number of side roads and commercial entrances, but this is a common feature of roads that also form the backbone of local commerce. Route 27 is in good physical condition and a high priority for maintenance by DOT.

State Route 9: Route 9 enters Randolph from Chelsea, follows Water Street as far as the bridge, then crosses into Gardiner. Route 9 is classified as a major collector road. Carrying slightly fewer vehicles per day than Route 27, it serves primarily as a commuter route to and from Augusta and commercial alternative to Route 201 west of the river. Route 9 is in good physical condition and a high priority for maintenance by DOT.

State Route 226: Route 226 (Windsor Street) is classified as a major collector road, and is a slightly lower priority category for improvements. It serves much of the residential part of Randolph and carries about half the traffic that Water Street does (see Table 8-1). It joins with Water Street south of the bridge and runs eastward towards Chelsea. The road is in good physical condition.

The Maine DOT Work Plan lists no projects on tap for Randolph through the end of 2015.

### *Local Roads:*

As a compact town, Randolph has only about seven miles of road to maintain but they are primarily urban roads. There are over 30 named public roads so the average is only about 1,500 feet in length. All but one of the roads are paved.

Randolph has established a road surface management system for the purpose of prioritizing and budgeting for road repairs. Roads scheduled for paving in 2013 include Meadowview Drive and Lincoln Street and for 2014 Central Street. The Town budgets \$25-30,000 per year for repaving and \$5,000 per year for other improvements, which it leverages with State funds (Local Road Assistance Program) -- \$8,600 in FY2013. Funding is not sufficient to keep up with identified needs.

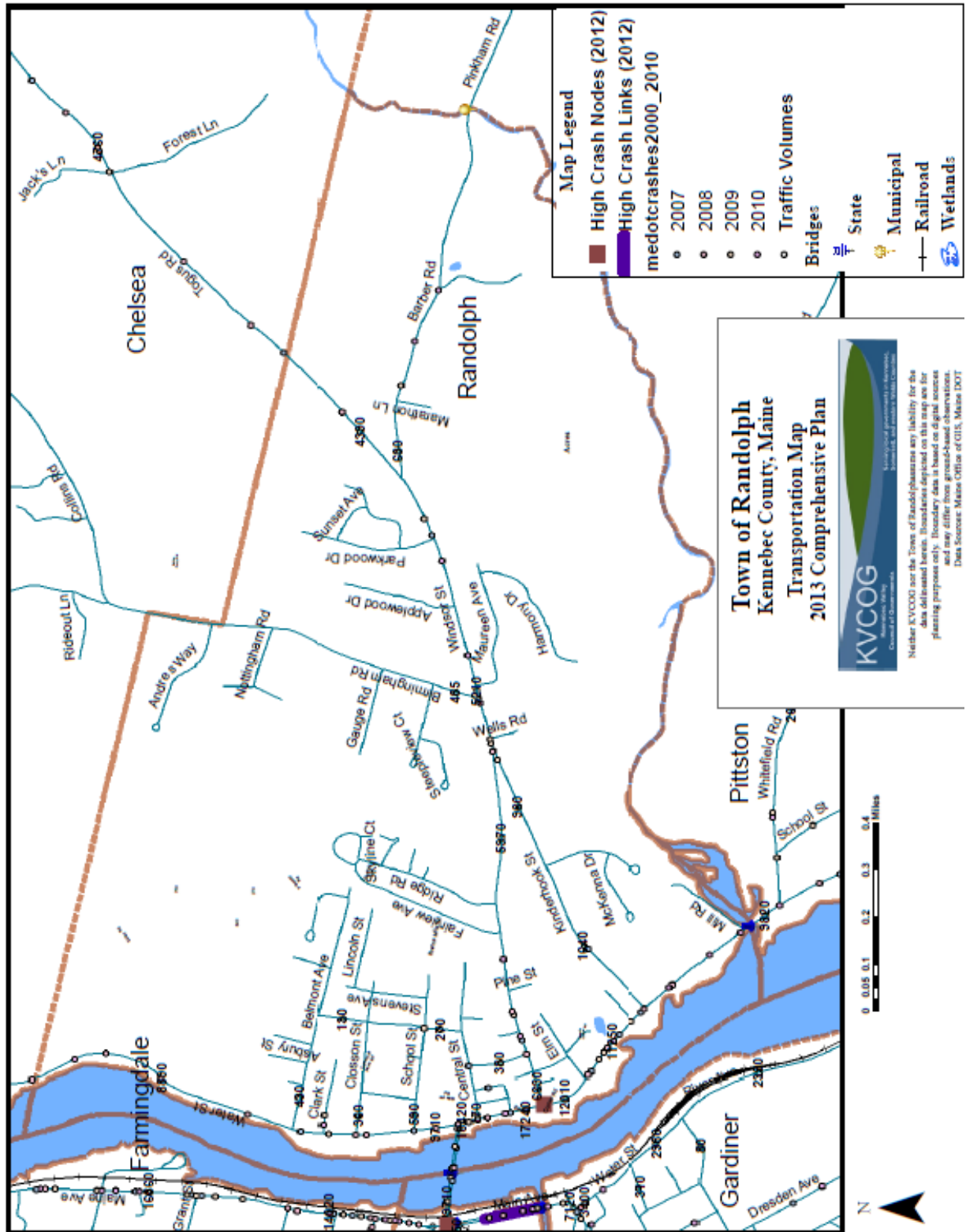
The Town's Subdivision and Land Use Ordinances both contain standards for development access to local roads, very similar to the MaineDOT's Driveway and Entrance Standards. The Town also has a Driveway Ordinance, with standards such as site distance and number of driveways from individual properties. The Subdivision Ordinance contains design standards for new road construction. In the past, new subdivision roads have regularly been accepted by the Town.

### *Support Infrastructure for the Road System:*

In order to function efficiently, the highway system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges, traffic controls (signals, directional controls), and parking facilities.

Bridges: Road systems require bridges or culverts for water crossings. Culverts are the responsibility of the town to maintain, but most bridges are the responsibility of the State, depending on the length of their spans. The Maine DOT inventories all bridges on a regular basis. Randolph's three bridges are:

- The Gardiner-Randolph (Pearl Harbor Remembrance) Bridge (#2304) spans the Kennebec River between the two towns. Built in 1980 to replace an earlier version, it is 998 feet in length and carries about 20,000 vehicles per day. It is rated by Maine DOT inspection reports as being in good to satisfactory condition. (Federal sufficiency rating of 94 out of 100.) No major work is contemplated for the bridge.
- The Togus Bridge (#2862) carries Routes 27/126 (Water Street) over Togus Stream between Randolph and Pittston. This is a concrete girder-style bridge built in 1926, spanning 28 feet. Traffic counts on this bridge average over 11,000 per day. The condition of this bridge is only fair (rating of 51 out of 100.) Based on age and condition rating, this bridge may need replacement in the next couple of decades.
- The "Gullycross" Bridge (#0493) on Barber Road crosses Togus Stream between Randolph and Pittston. At only 15 feet long, this bridge is owned and maintained by the Town. It is essentially a culvert, installed in 1980. It is on a town way carrying fewer than 1,000 vehicles per day, and is rated in satisfactory condition (89 out of 100.)



Traffic Controls: Traffic controls are infrastructure to help manage the flow of traffic. They range from pedestrian crosswalks and STOP signs to signals and raised islands.

With traffic exceeding 10,000 vehicles per day turning left from Water Street onto the Gardiner-Randolph Bridge, the traffic signal at the bridge intersection is essential. The signal controls three legs, with some left-turn-only timing. It generally functions well, but with backlogs notable during the rush hours.

There are no other signals in town, though there have been repeated suggestions for a signal at the intersection of Water and Windsor Streets. It does not currently meet DOT thresholds for a signal, even though it has been identified as a high crash location on the most recent DOT maps. It now has a right-turn lane for traffic turning north onto Water Street, and a stop sign for left-turning traffic. Further commercial development near this intersection will probably increase traffic to the point where it warrants signalization. A gas station/convenience store was originally permitted for the intersection. A hardware store is proposed, and at a minimum will require permitting by the Town and DOT.

In Randolph there are a number of pedestrian crossings along Water Street and Windsor Street. Many of these connect existing sidewalks. In general, the crossings are in good condition and are well-marked, however few of them meet current DOT requirements for location and design. A crosswalk on School Street leads directly to the elementary school.

Parking: Parking in Randolph is traditionally provided by the property users, and off-street parking is mandated for new development. Randolph's Site Review Ordinance contains a comprehensive set of standards for off-street parking for new development.

No public parking is provided other than that associated with public facilities such as the town office and elementary school. There is one park-and-ride lot, discussed later. There is insufficient concentration of businesses to justify developing common parking areas.

#### *Environmental Issues:*

Transportation systems have been recognized to have an impact on natural and environmental assets. Runoff from roads can pollute water bodies or generate erosion on private property. In Randolph, public works projects utilize best management practices for erosion control and contractors are required to demonstrate DEP certification.

Transportation facilities can also impact wildlife habitat, including travel corridors. This can be particularly evident at stream crossings or near wildlife management areas. There are no recognized wildlife travel corridors in Randolph or areas where existing roads conflict with wildlife habitat.

Noise and light pollution can occur with some roads. Water Street carries a lot of commercial traffic and volumes at all times of the day, but has relatively few residences near the road. Light from development can also spill onto the roadways, creating a safety issue for motorists. Randolph's Site Review Ordinance contains standards limiting glare from lighting in

new development. Local officials have received occasional complaints from citizens about the number or location of streetlights along Water and Windsor Streets. It is possible that we could get along with less-frequent lighting. If the Water Street area is redeveloped with better sidewalks and crosswalks the Town could consider replacing existing lights with pedestrian-style fixtures. Complaints have also been heard regarding trucks using air brakes on the long grade of Windsor Street from east to west.

### *Transportation Choices:*

Even in today's society where a huge majority of trips and miles travelled are by motor vehicle, there is still demand for alternatives. Some segments of the population (notably youth and some elderly) cannot use motor vehicles to get around and the increasing costs and impacts of energy consumption argues for reduced automobile use into the future. While we do not anticipate a dramatic shift in demand over the period of this plan, transportation systems take an enormous amount of time and money to put in place and require planning well in advance.

Common alternatives to the car or truck in densely developed areas are the rail or public transit service. Rail service is not available in Randolph. A freight rail line is available across the river in Gardiner but it is used infrequently. At some point, passenger rail service could be restored on this line but it is very uncertain and well into the future.

The Kennebec Explorer public bus serves the Augusta-Gardiner area. The route to Gardiner will come as far as the Goggin's IGA store on request, but it is not a scheduled stop. There are additional places in Randolph that a bus could serve, such as Windsor Heights, but that will have to wait until the service can expand. For special needs services, Kennebec Valley Transit – the same organization that runs the Kennebec Explorer – provides limited on-demand bus service. For some purposes and locations, KV Transit will provide volunteer drivers instead of full-sized busses or vans.

Carpools/vanpools provide targeted public transportation for commuters. In 2009, 23 percent of Randolph's workers reported that they carpooled to work, an increase from the 15 percent that did so in 2000. "GoMaine" is a privately-funded service matching riders and drivers from one point to another. GoMaine has a ridesharing sign up in Randolph but there is no one in Randolph currently signed up for this service. Informal arrangements are common but undocumented.

The attraction of carpooling will continue to rise as travel becomes more expensive and time-consuming. A park-and-ride lot is a basic bit of infrastructure for carpooling. Randolph has a park-and-ride lot located on Route 27 just north of Togus Stream. The lot has space for 50 vehicles and is served by a shuttle to BIW. It has signs indicating park-and-ride but has not been improved – consisting of a gravel surface without lighting or designated spaces. Usage has remained constant over the years.

Because Randolph has a well-developed urban core, it also has a sidewalk network. Sidewalks are available along one side of most of Water Street, and along Windsor Street as far as Fairview. Some form of sidewalk is also available along some of the side streets. Sidewalks

tend to be of bituminous surface and located immediately adjacent to the curb, except at the southern end of Water Street. Residents of Randolph support the expansion of the sidewalk network but there is very little funding available. One of the high priorities for a sidewalk should be on South Maple Street, used by many pedestrians to access Goggin's.

Pedestrians can also access the narrow gauge trail, which runs from Water Street just south of Goggin's north and east. This is a cleared but unimproved off-road pathway.

Bicycle travel in Randolph is limited to on-street routes. Side streets are quiet enough to encourage biking but Water Street and Windsor Street have enough traffic to make some riders feel uncomfortable. Both roads have paved shoulders. The town can encourage biking by identifying bicycle-friendly destination points, such as the school or IGA, and providing them with bike racks. There are a large number of active cyclists in town.

There are no public airports in Randolph. Augusta State Airport, seven miles to the north, is the nearest airport, with Portland Jetport providing the best passenger service.

#### *Traffic and Development:*

A transportation system is judged on more than just its physical condition. The quality of the system is also a function of the usage it receives. Government has historically been responsible for the infrastructure itself but has not exerted much control over how (and how much) it is used. In urban areas, we are seeing how lack of attention to land use patterns has overburdened transportation systems, leading to increased costs for safety, congestion, and added capacity.

Traffic levels are a function of the location of traffic generators (destinations); traffic conflicts ("crashes") are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Traffic levels have generally been growing over the past few decades as part of a national trend. Freight (truck) traffic is up noticeably, a result of our increased standard of living (more consumer goods and food travelling longer distances) and an increasing reliance on roads by freight carriers.

In terms of road use, however, automobile traffic has the greater impact. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. Randolph is an example of the "residential" end of traffic generators. The only significant traffic generator in Randolph is the IGA. Intermittent traffic generators are the elementary school and the auction house. Remote (out-of-town) destinations that influence flows in Randolph include Augusta, Gardiner's downtown, Togus VA Hospital, and BIW.

As can be seen from the Table 8-1 on the next page, traffic has not grown recently and in fact has declined in most locations by an average of 10-15 percent. Some of this decline is attributable to overall reduction in travel due to rising gas prices. (2008 figures are used because the recession showed up in later numbers and affected volumes to an unusual extent.) Some is also attributable to the 7 percent loss in population over the last decade. But the trend is opposite

what is happening in many suburbs, where traffic is still increasing, sometimes at several times the rate of population growth.

Table 8-1: Historical Traffic Volumes\*

<u>Location</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
Route 9 north of bridge	11,310	10,980	9,740	9,710
Route 27/126 south of bridge	17,150	18,420	17,460	17,240
Route 27/126 at Togus bridge	11,760 ('97)		11,250	
Route 226 east of 27	7,330	7,820	6,700	6,630
Route 226 west of Kinderhook	6,790	6,610	5,920	5,970
Kinderhook Ave west of 226	980	1,080	960	1,030

- Traffic volume numbers are average daily trips past a given point over one year.

Source: MDOT Traffic Counts

Counts of commercial (truck) traffic are much more sporadic than general traffic counts. In Randolph only one count is available. On Route 226 (Windsor Street) in 1996, trucks accounted for about four percent of overall traffic.

Traffic volumes on Water Street are at a level which should be a concern. The volumes alone indicate a level of service which could be negatively affected by further growth or individual developments.

While traffic accidents can happen anywhere and for any reason, traffic engineers can use a statistical analysis to determine if there are certain crash locations that are particularly prone. The DOT's 2008 analysis reported that the intersections of Water Street and the bridge, and with Windsor Street, were both designated as high crash locations. Water Street between Elm Street and Kinderhook Street was also identified as a high crash location. (See *Transportation Map*) HCL designation is based on a three-year history of crashes, so high crash locations can come and go from year to year. Most crashes are linked to turning movements, however, highlighting the importance of regulating new driveways and evaluating road intersections.

## **Transportation Recommendations:**

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

### **Recommended Local Actions:**

Policy: Prioritize local and regional needs of citizens, including children, the elderly, and disabled, to promote a safe, efficient, and optimal use of the transportation system.

- 8-1. Continue to use Road Surface Management System as a priority guide to town road improvements.



8-2. Form a Sidewalk Committee and establish a priority list and funding strategy for improving and extending the local sidewalk system. Include extensions along South Maple Street and Windsor Street as high priorities.

8-3 Evaluate the need for and location of crosswalks on Water Street, based on new development patterns and a potential river park, and rebuild with suitable landing spots.

8-4 Advocate for an extension of Kennebec Explorer bus service into Randolph, and promote the service through the town's newsletter and website.

8-5 Work with MaineDOT, the City of Gardiner, and other interested parties to identify and address regional transportation needs.

Policy: Manage land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system;

8-6 Tweak the access management standards in land use ordinances to better complement the State's access management rules (adopted after Randolph's).

8-7 Identify the Water/Windsor Street intersection and Water Street from Windsor to Kinderhook as priorities for improving safety and mobility as growth and development occur.

## Chapter 9

# Implementation

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The Randolph Comprehensive Plan contains over 50 individual recommendations for action. The success of the plan depends on the implementation of these recommendations. This chapter presents a strategy to do so.

The principal challenge to implementation in Randolph is the lack of administrative capacity. Unlike many larger towns, Randolph does not have a town manager, nor does it have a multitude of local (volunteer) committees such as historic, conservation, or economic development. This will make it difficult in some cases to assign responsibility for action steps.

This challenge can be eased a little by developing an implementation plan, which will help to organize the recommendations and bring in additional guidance. This chapter provides a plan with three elements:

- 1) An implementation schedule, which groups the recommendations listed in chapters 1-8 into similar time frames. Some of these recommendations address actions which the town is already engaged in. These are recommended to be “continuing/ongoing.” Another set of recommendations are a priority to be commenced or completed within the next year to 18 months. This includes all proposed ordinance changes. These are grouped as “short-term.” A third set are those which will either take a little longer to organize, or are a little less of a priority. They are labeled “mid-term” and should be undertaken within five years. A final set are those which may not be very well-defined, may be dependent on other things happening first, or just a long ways off. These are part of the “long-term” group.
- 2) A Capital Investment Plan. The CIP is a mechanism to assist in financial management. It addresses the need for major expenses as well as the means to pay for them with as little disruption to the local budget as possible. The CIP looks at the plan’s recommendations for capital expenditures in greater detail, proposing a priority list and potential funding sources. While the plan itself does not make many recommendations for spending that have not already been discussed at the town level, it will provide an outline to be filled in and updated as necessary. It is intended to give the Budget Committee and selectmen a running start towards long-term financial planning.
- 3) Regional coordination is essential to the success of many initiatives in Randolph, simply because we do not have the administrative capacity nor the financial power to meet all the demands of residents. In addition, regional coordination allows the town to communicate with our neighbors for good management of shared resources, such as the Kennebec River. The regional coordination section of this chapter identifies examples of ongoing regional coordination and opportunities to expand it to bring greater benefit to local residents.

Implementation of the plan will benefit from someone looking at the overall picture, evaluating which strategies have been completed successfully, which are next in line or have risen in importance, and which have run into problems and may need to be re-thought. Ideally, this would become a scorecard for the success of the plan.

Many towns assign this responsibility to a town manager or a newly-formed implementation committee. Again, Randolph does not have these resources to draw on. Randolph's chief implementers will be the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.

The Planning Board, assisted by the code enforcement officer, will work primarily on regulatory changes, land use, and natural resource activities. The Selectboard, assisted by the town office staff, will implement public facility and economic development actions. We need to assure that nothing "falls between the cracks." Therefore, this plan recommends a separate implementation strategy, that *the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen will schedule a joint meeting at least once a year for the purpose of discussing progress in implementing the plan and objectives for the upcoming year.*

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## Implementation Schedule:

The strategies listed are numbered as they are in the source chapter, but are also labeled with the chapter topic, to make it easier to trace where they come from. In some cases, the recommendations have been abbreviated from the "full" version in the chapters.

### *Ongoing or Continuing Actions:*

3.2 Promote the small business revolving loan fund administered by the Town, as well as state and federal grants for business development. (Economic Development)

3.8 Participate in the Gardiner Board of Trade. (Economic Development)

4.5 Promote the town's revolving loan fund and the PACE Ordinance, as well as State programs, to assist homeowners in making improvements to home quality and energy efficiency. (Housing)

### CEO TRAINING

5.3 Continue to provide adequate training and hours for code enforcement. (Land Use)

6.3 Continue to provide Code Enforcement Officer training in resource protection. (Natural Resources)

5.6 Monitor development patterns and policies in Pittston and Chelsea and contact these towns, if warranted, to coordinate development and resource protection strategies. (Land Use)

6.2 Utilize *Beginning with Habitat* maps and information when updating ordinance provisions and reviewing development applications. (Natural Resources)

6.4 Require that public works employees be certified in best management practices for erosion control in road maintenance. (Natural Resources)

6.5 The town office should ensure that it has technical and contact information available for landowners from agencies providing technical assistance for resource protection. (Natural Resources)

6.7 Work with riparian landowners and the Kennebec River Initiative to ensure more access points to the river. (Water/coastal Resources)

6.10 Cooperate on river management strategies with Gardiner, Pittston, and other river towns. (Water/coastal Resources)

7.2 Sewer system: Continue to rehabilitate outdated sewer lines. (Public Facilities)

7.5 Fire protection: Continue funding reserve account for equipment replacement. (Public Facilities)

7.9 Recreation: Cooperate with Gardiner on active recreation opportunities. (Public Facilities)

7.12 Seek opportunities to cooperate with Gardiner and neighboring towns on efficient delivery of public services. (Public Facilities)

8.1. Use Road Surface Management System as a priority guide to town road improvements. (Transportation)

8.4 Advocate for an extension of Kennebec Explorer bus service into Randolph, and promote the service through the town's newsletter and website. (Transportation)

8.5 Work with MaineDOT, the City of Gardiner, and other interested parties to identify and address regional transportation needs. (Transportation)

*Short-term:*

ORDINANCE CHANGES:

1.3. Require professional historic or archeological evaluations for new developments along the lower reaches of the Kennebec River (below the bridge) and Togus Stream, or when affecting any structure or site listed in the above survey. (Historic Preservation)

3.1 Consider expansion of the commercial or downtown districts to the west side of Water Street north of the bridge. (Economic Development)

3.3 Add provisions that will encourage more local-scale businesses downtown. (Economic Development)

4.1 Clarify the requirement that accessory housing units will not require additional land area. (Housing)

4.2 Consider amending to permit senior housing as a higher density use than other multi-family development on areas served by public water and sewer services. (Housing)

4.3 Continue to permit mobile home parks in the Urban Residential District. (Housing)

4.4 Review the ordinance to ensure that it permits a diversity of housing types in appropriate areas of town. (Housing)

5.1 Review ordinances to ensure that they reflect current laws and practices:

- a) ensure effective permitting standards and streamlined permitting procedures
- b) utilize current best practices for protecting natural resources within the town,
- c) provide adequate protection and flexibility for districts and neighborhoods affected, and
- d) Favor small locally-oriented businesses in the downtown area. (Land Use)

6.1 Continue performance standards regulating erosion and sedimentation, groundwater protection, wetlands, scenic resources, and wildlife habitat. Update as necessary with new information or state mandates. (Natural Resources)

6.6 Continue the Resource Protection District for the protection of existing or yet-to-be-identified critical natural resources in the Togus Stream area. (Natural Resources)

6.9 Utilize the Land Use Ordinance to encourage water-dependent forms of development along the river as well as tourist/leisure businesses that highlight the river. (Water/coastal Resources)

8.6 Tweak the access management standards in land use ordinances to better complement the State's access management rules. (Transportation)

5.4 The CEO will make a record of the location of all new residential or commercial permits (code enforcement officer), and report annually to the Planning Board on the number and type of new permits in each district. (Land Use)

5.5 Produce a digital copy of the district map, after consideration and enactment (if appropriate) of any boundary adjustments. (Land Use)

## MUNICIPAL RIVER ACCESS

6.8 Re-establish town-owned access, including a new town dock and recreational facilities. (Water/coastal Resources)

7.8 Recreation: Form an ad hoc committee to study and propose a plan for development of river access on town property at the old bridge site or another possible location. (Public Facilities)

6.11 Encourage owners of marine businesses to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs. (Water/coastal Resources)

7.1 Sewer system: Acquire a spare pump for backup at the pump stations. (Public Facilities)

7.10 Develop a capital improvements plan and update annually. (Public Facilities)

8.7 Identify the Water/Windsor Street intersection and Water Street from Windsor to Kinderhook as priorities for improving safety and mobility as growth and development occur. (Transportation)

#### *Mid-term:*

1.1 Encourage the creation of a local historical society and provide initial funding. (Historic Preservation)

3.4 Develop an ordinance to regulate itinerant vendors. (Economic Development)

#### DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS:

3.5 Allocate funding and seek grants for improving sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetlights along Water Street. (Economic Development)

5.8 Develop a plan for installing downtown area (Water Street – south) enhancements such as sidewalks, public spaces, and lighting, and identify projects and funding sources to implement it. (Land Use)

8.2. Form a Sidewalk Committee and establish a priority list and funding strategy for improving and extending the local sidewalk system. Include extensions along South Maple Street and Windsor Street as high priorities. (Transportation)

8.3 Evaluate the need for and location of crosswalks on Water Street, based on new development patterns and a potential river park, and rebuild with suitable landing spots. (Transportation)

#### WATER STREET PUBLIC WATER IMPROVEMENTS:

3.6 Expand capacity of water system line along Water Street north of bridge. (Economic Development)

5.7 Request that Gardiner Water District evaluate water supply line capacity on Water Street north of the bridge and develop a project and priority to increase capacity consistent with growth potential and fire-fighting needs. (Land Use)

7.3 Water system: Work with Gardiner Water District to replace and expand water mains on Water Street north of the bridge. (Public Facilities)

3.7 Establish a policy for future TIF (tax increment financing) requests. (Economic Development)

3.9 Meet with Gardiner city staff regularly to discuss business possibilities that might benefit Randolph. (Economic Development)

5.2 Consider providing development incentives, such as higher permissible density, to senior housing or progressive care housing in the commercial or urban residential districts. (Land Use)

7.4 Fire protection: Build a new fire station. (Public Facilities)

7.6 Public works: Build a new public works garage. (Public Facilities)

*Long-term:*

1.2 Seek financial assistance from Historic Preservation Commission to survey local historic homes and other sites for potential inclusion in National Register. (Historic Preservation)

4.6 Meet with Gardiner Housing Committee to determine how Randolph can be incorporated into affordable housing planning. (Housing)

7.7 Schools/recreation: Communicate with SAD 11 school board regarding the future of Hamlin School. If and when the school is proposed for closure, form a local committee to study and recommend future uses of the building or site for the Town of Randolph. (Public Facilities)

7.11 Consider hiring a part-time or full-time town manager. (Public Facilities)

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## **Capital Investment Plan**

Cities and towns for years have been using capital improvements planning as a means to prioritize and finance one-time purchases, or to schedule periodic improvements. The State's Growth Management Law requires a capital investment plan as a means to introduce capital improvements planning to towns. The capital investment plan is a summary of development-related infrastructure needs identified by the comprehensive plan, which are intended to be rolled into an annual process incorporating all of the town's needs.

The capital investment plan, just like other elements of the comprehensive plan, is a recommendation. It is not intended to be implemented nor is it accurate enough to budget or schedule by. The primary elements of the plan include a consideration of alternative financing sources and a priority listing that reflects growth needs in the town.

A priority listing ranks prospective projects as either low-medium-high priority, or short-mid-long term. The eventual CIP would specify a year in which the expenditure would be made, and the means by which funds would be available for that year. For Randolph, the capital investment plan specifies short to long term timelines.

Funding for capital needs can come from many and multiple sources. In Randolph, the principal means of paying for large ticket items is to establish a reserve account. In times of high inflation or low interest rates, reserve accounts may not accrue fast enough to buy the item when it is needed however, leading to a need to either borrow or raise funds all in the final year of purchase. Borrowing (bonding) is a more common way of financing by many governments, but partly because they do not plan out well enough to know when their needs are coming due.

An alternative favored by some towns is a single reserve account that may be tapped for any of the town’s capital needs. To be successful, the town must know exactly when these needs are scheduled. For example, instead of separate reserve accounts for fire trucks, road improvements, a boat launch, and sewer lines, a town could set aside a constant amount and purchase some sewer lines and the boat launch the first year, a fire truck the second year, a minor road improvement and more sewer lines the third year, a major road improvement the fourth year, etc. Any funds not expended one year stay in the reserve account for something that may exceed the money raised the following year.

Developing cost estimates and financial strategies provides another advantage; the town has identified its needs in advance and so can take advantage of opportunities to save money. At some point, a grant program may come up that will fund a project in the town’s CIP that had been planned for taxes. Or, as in the past few years, the town could be flexible to take advantage of historically low interest rates or contractor prices to move a project up in the queue.

Several capital improvements have been listed in this plan’s recommendations. The list below identifies them, together with a suggested priority and funding source:

<u>Project (recommendation #)</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
Improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetlights along Water Street. (3.5)	Mid	DOT/local match
Expand capacity of water system along Water Street north of bridge. (3.6)	Mid	GWD
Re-establish town-owned access, including a new town dock and recreational facilities. (6.8)	Mid	Coastal grant/local match



Acquire a spare pump for backup at the pump stations. (7.1)	High	appropriation
Build a new fire station. (7.4)	High	Bond or grant/loan
Fire vehicle/equipment replacement. (7.5)	High	Reserve account
Build a new public works garage. (7.6)	High	Bond or grant/loan
Improve and extend the local sidewalk system, including extensions along South Maple Street and Windsor Street. (8.2)	Low	Reserve account

Additional items to be incorporated into an annual CIP should be police equipment, sewer upgrades, public works equipment, and recreational facilities. It should be noted that the town already uses the Road Surface Management System to prioritize road improvement needs. This system can estimate costs, permitting the town to schedule out road needs for a number of years in advance.

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## **Regional Coordination:**

“Regional coordination” refers to the practice of engaging in joint projects or coordinated initiatives with either regional organizations or neighboring communities. This permits a town the size of Randolph to provide benefits to citizens that it could not provide on its own, or save money while providing better services than before.

A good example of regional coordination is our participation in the school district. While we can debate the rising costs and potentially adverse impacts of losing Hamlin School, there is no question that Randolph students have a wider variety of opportunities – in academics, vocational trades, athletics, and so on – in a regional school than if we were supporting the 260-odd students on our own.

Randolph already engages in many forms of regional coordination. Lying adjacent to a service center community gives us opportunities that many small towns do not have. Other examples of regional coordination include:

- Water supply through Gardiner Water District,
- Sewer treatment facilities, through the Gardiner Wastewater Treatment Plant,
- Gardiner Public Library,
- Gardiner Boys and Girls Club,
- Fire department mutual aid agreements,
- Police coverage/law enforcement from Kennebec County Sheriff,
- Gardiner ambulance service,
- Dispatching through Lincoln County,
- Gardiner Board of Trade, to support economic development.

That leaves plenty of room for us to expand our efforts at regional coordination. The following recommendations have already been presented as part of the plan:

3.9 Meet with Gardiner city staff regularly to discuss business possibilities that might benefit Randolph. (Economic Development)

4.6 Meet with Gardiner Housing Committee to determine how Randolph can be incorporated into affordable housing planning. (Housing)

5.6 Monitor development patterns and policies in Pittston and Chelsea and contact these towns, if warranted, to coordinate development and resource protection strategies. (Land Use)

6.7 Work with the Kennebec River Initiative to ensure more access points to the river. (Water/coastal Resources)

6.10 Cooperate on river management strategies with Gardiner, Pittston, and other river towns. (Water/coastal Resources)

7.12 Continue to seek opportunities to cooperate with Gardiner and neighboring towns on efficient delivery of public services. (e.g. recycling, road equipment)

8.5 Work with MaineDOT, the City of Gardiner, and other interested parties (e.g. *Kennebec Explorer*) to identify and address regional transportation needs.