

College of the Atlantic

Land Use Planning Class
Town Hill Project
Spring 2008

Final Presentation

During May 2008, students taking a class in Land Use Planning taught by Isabel Mancinelli and Gordon Longworth at College of the Atlantic identified some major planning issues for Town Hill.

Objectives

- Report back on visioning session
- Provide additional planning information

On May 22, 2008, Bar Harbor planner Anne Krieg organized a public visioning session for Town Hill residents at the fire station in Town Hill. The Land Use Planning class used this as an opportunity to identify residents' concerns and ideas for the future of Town Hill. This report is a close transcription of the public presentation given by students on June 2, 2008. The objective of this presentation was for the class to report back with the results of the visioning session and to present additional research that may be important to the planning process in general. This work is intended to be a stepping off point for further dialog between residents and planners as the Bar Harbor planning office moves ahead to draft a "Mini Plan" for Town Hill.

There are some key properties currently on the market and future development of some form is inevitable in Town Hill. Residents of Town Hill can have a voice in determining the kind of development they want to see. This is an important opportunity for planning and decisive action is needed.

Planning for the Future of Town Hill

Long range planning is a key component to making well thought-out decisions about the future of a community.

The area of Town Hill is resource-rich and a very desirable place to live. In the face of increased development, we need to be conscious of how our actions affect the landscape for future generations.

One way to approach this is through Open Space Planning.

Open Space Planning

- Balances developed and undeveloped areas within a village.
- Provides a greater sense of community
- Promotes recreation
- Minimizes the tax burden
- Creates links between communities

The idea of Open Space Planning is fairly broad but can create a framework to manage growth in an area. The basic concept is to work with the natural qualities of a region in creating a balance between developed and undeveloped spaces.

Open Space is defined as public or private land that is not intensively developed for residential or commercial use. Adequate open space has many benefits, including encouraging and fostering healthy communities, promoting recreation, minimizing the tax burden and creating links between communities.

Rural New England Town



This drawing shows a typical rural New England Neighborhood as it now exists, similar to Town Hill. It contains a mix of small farms, and forested lands as well as dispersed private homes. The stream in the center connects to the ponds and wetlands in the vicinity. Each of the undeveloped parcels in this image is thus part a larger ecological and cultural system.

Conventional Development Scenario



This drawing shows the same rural neighborhood after development under conventional two-acre zoning. Most of the farmland, often the easiest land to build on, is developed first. New subdivisions and roadside frontage lots fragment wildlife habitat and replace rural vistas with suburban house lots. The result is a landscape where existing natural and cultural resources are replaced by single-family house lots, resulting in a loss of rural character and quality of life.

Open Space Plan



Finally, this drawing shows an open space plan for development of the area, using existing natural resources to shape development. Streets and sidewalks are well connected, lot sizes and setbacks are ideal for appropriate rural development and scenic roadside farmland is protected. Large tracts of protected forests are extended and connected to maintain corridors for wildlife and recreation.

By planning first for open spaces, areas where development is appropriate become apparent. This technique greatly helps to limit sprawl in rural areas.

Open Space Planning

- By planning first for open spaces, then for development, growth takes a new shape.
- Eliminate sprawl in rural areas
- Create focused village centers which can grow and develop over time.

Usually, the best approach to growth is to consolidate new development into an area which will create a pedestrian-friendly village that connects to open spaces through roads, bikeways and trails. The Town Hill center has the potential to become this type of village. With the Market, Fire Station, Baseball Park, small shops and new playground all near-by, a pedestrian and kid-friendly environment could be created with a few additions.

Open Space in Town Hill

- Town Hill is full of possibilities for the future.
- The village center has great potential.
- Using Open Space Planning will help to connect your favorite places.
- Also, it will protect them for future generations.

The majority of the favorite places shared at the May 22nd meeting are currently in open spaces but some are in danger of being changed by new development. By creating a plan which prioritizes these favorite places, and focusing development in creating a community-promoting village center, Town Hill will have spaces for everyone to enjoy and enhance the area as a whole.

Open Space in Town Hill

Open Space Planning can be approached through:

- **Zoning Changes**
To promote healthy growth in specified areas and limit growth in others.
- **Conservation Efforts**
To protect important resources and create spaces for community.

Approaches to Open Space Planning, include zoning changes to promote development in designated areas and decrease it in others, also Conservation efforts for open spaces include protection of prime agricultural lands, shore access, and places of community-wide importance.

As it stands now, the growth patterns, zoning laws and lack of preservation of important natural resources are not conducive to healthy development.

Growth and development is *inevitable*.
Approaching change with a planned
vision and
optimism for the future
will help shape Town Hill into a healthy,
thriving community.

Trails in Town Hill

Town Hill Trail Resources

Trails are on private property; please respect land-owners' rights.



Town Hill residents and visitors enjoy the area's natural beauty and walking, biking, or hiking the local trails is one way to do so. This map shows the proposed and existing trails in the Town Hill area. The green rectangle is the Acadia National Park parcel that is designated for use as an island-wide transfer station. This parcel is central to many of the Town Hill trails and potential uses for the land will be discussed later by my classmates. The proposed Cross-Island Trail is an orange line, and existing trails or logging roads are red or striped. Many of these trails are on private property, so it is important when exploring Town Hill to respect land-owners' rights to decide how much access the public has to their land.

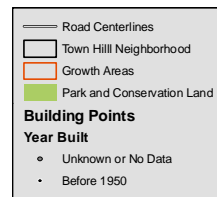
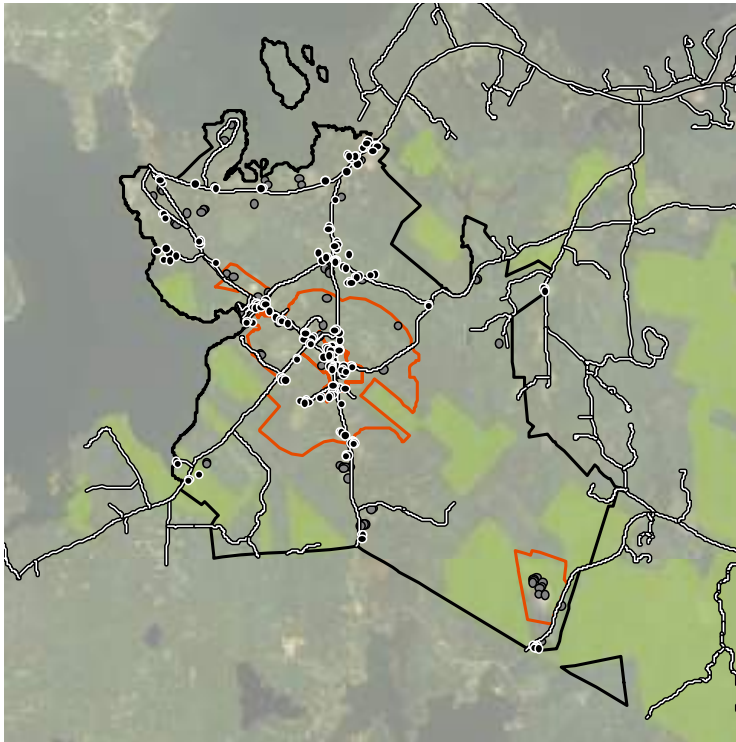


- As property changes hands, historic informal avenues of transportation may close to the public
- Options for preserving trail access
 - Planned Unit Developments that incorporate public trails
 - Trail easements

Many land-owners are happy to let people enjoy trails on their land and over years access to such trails can become traditional. But as land changes hands, trails that were once open to the public may become fenced off or posted, cutting off historic access to open spaces. If a trail network in Town Hill is something that you want to continue to preserve and improve, then some deliberate planning would be necessary. One way that trails can be created and preserved is for developers to incorporate them into Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and designate them as public right-of-ways. Also, individual land-owners can ensure the continued existence of a trail by choosing to agree to a trail easement with a land trust organization. Such an agreement would give the land trust organization the right to allow public access on the trail, given any restrictions the land-owner writes into the agreement at the time. For example, public access can be restricted to daylight hours or prohibit motorized vehicles. The land-owner would retain ownership of the land on which the trail exists and could still sell the land if he or she chose, and any new owners would know before they purchased the land that it contains a public trail. Such easements can provide tax incentives to the land-owners entering into them.

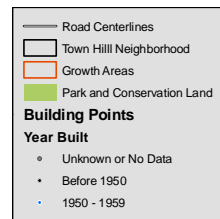
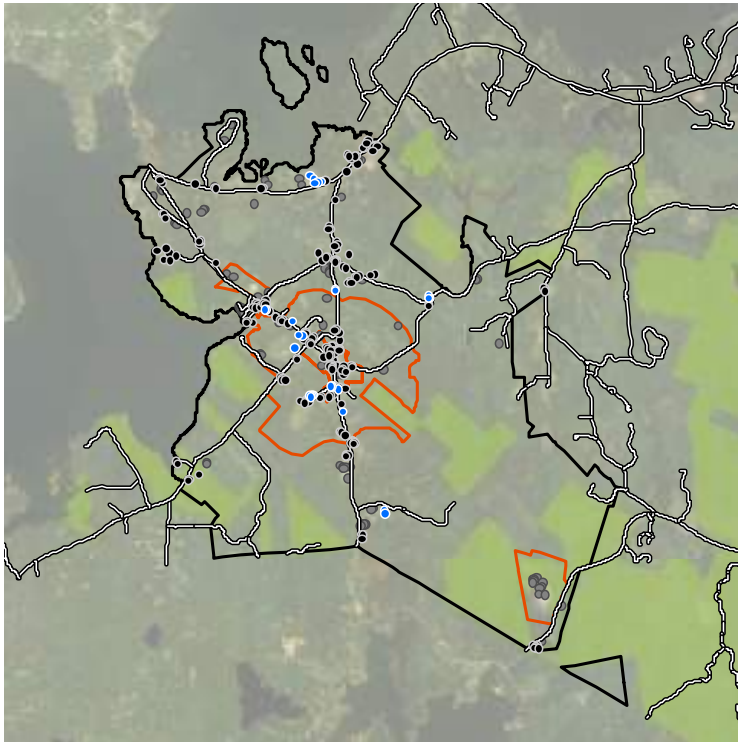
A Brief History of Development in Town Hill

Town Hill 1950



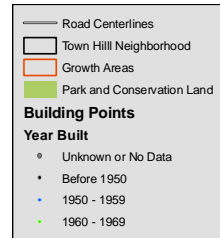
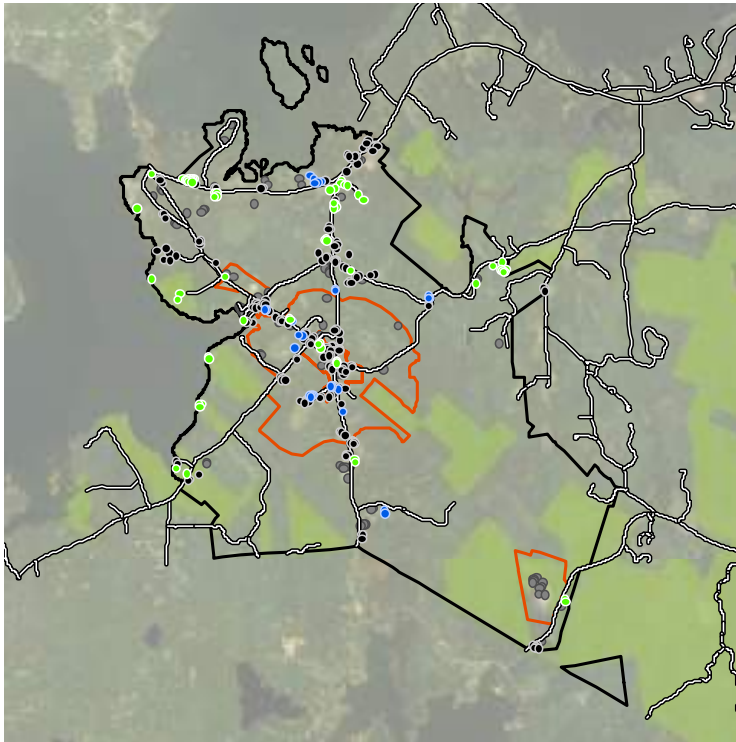
The dots are scaled to be 200 feet across because a 200 by 200 foot square is about the size of the smallest lot allowed by the current zoning in Town Hill. Most of the buildings built in Town Hill by 1950 were located within the Growth Area, in the Village Center. Those buildings not in the Village Center were mostly clustered along the major roads.

Town Hill 1960



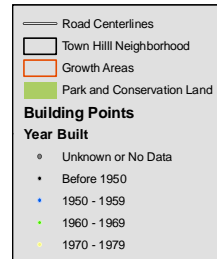
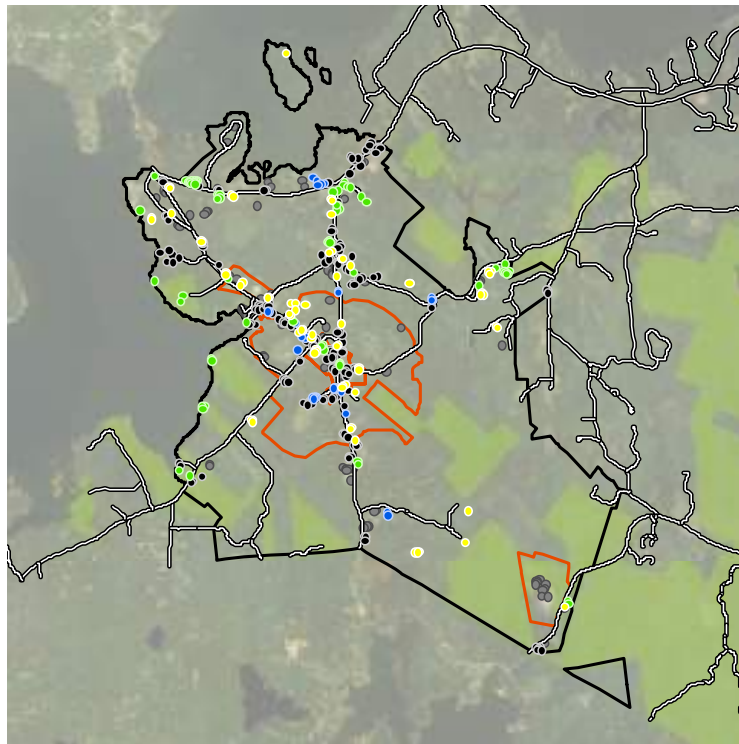
Not much development occurred during this time, but most of the new buildings were placed near existing structures and along the main roads.

Town Hill 1970



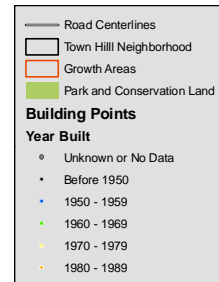
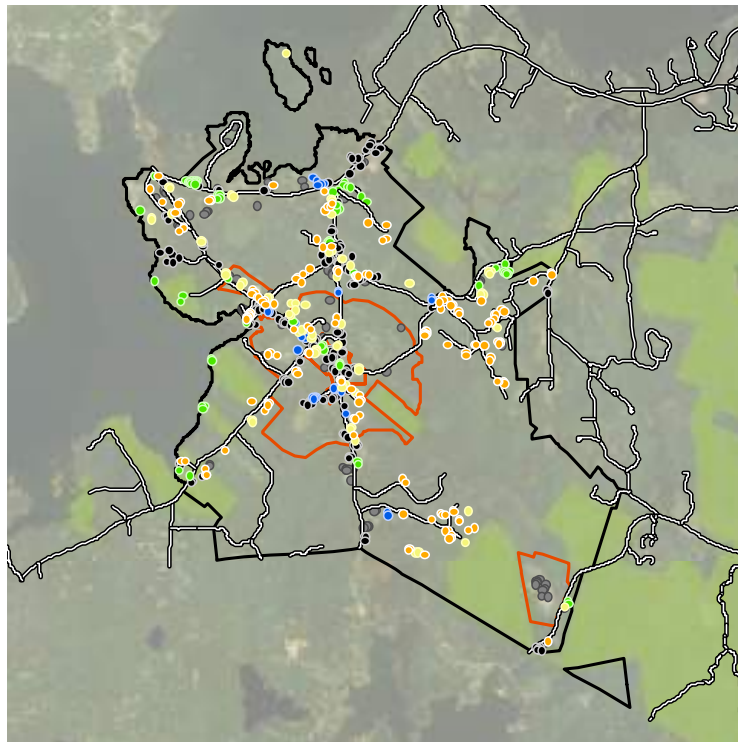
There was a little bit more development than in the 50's, but the main difference is *where* the buildings were built. A good proportion were built near the edges of the Town Hill neighborhood as opposed to downtown.

Town Hill 1980



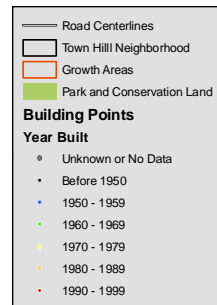
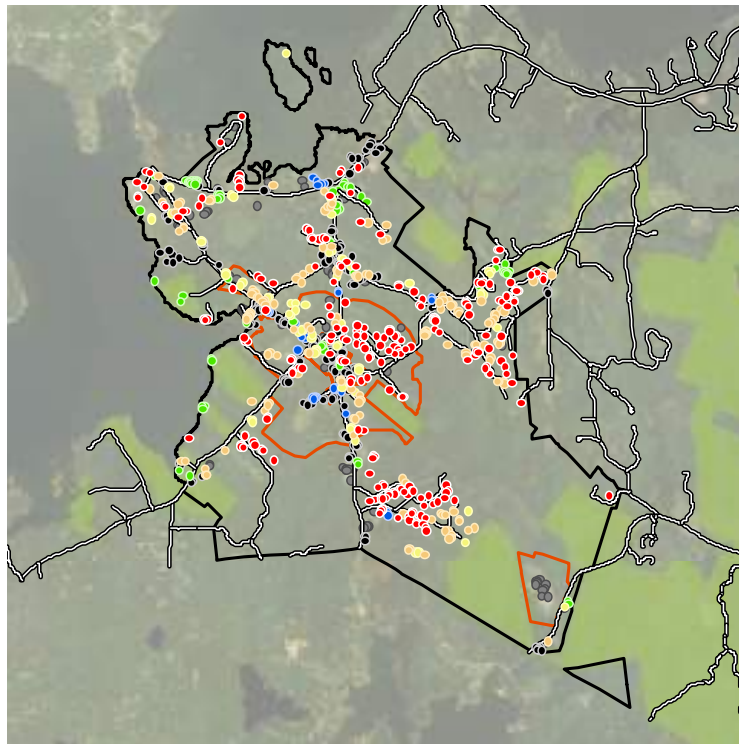
There was a similar amount of new buildings as in the 60's which were mostly built along Route 102. However, you can see the beginnings of a subdivision along Kittredge Brook Road in southern Town Hill.

Town Hill 1990



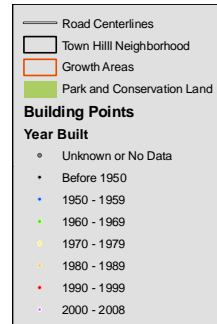
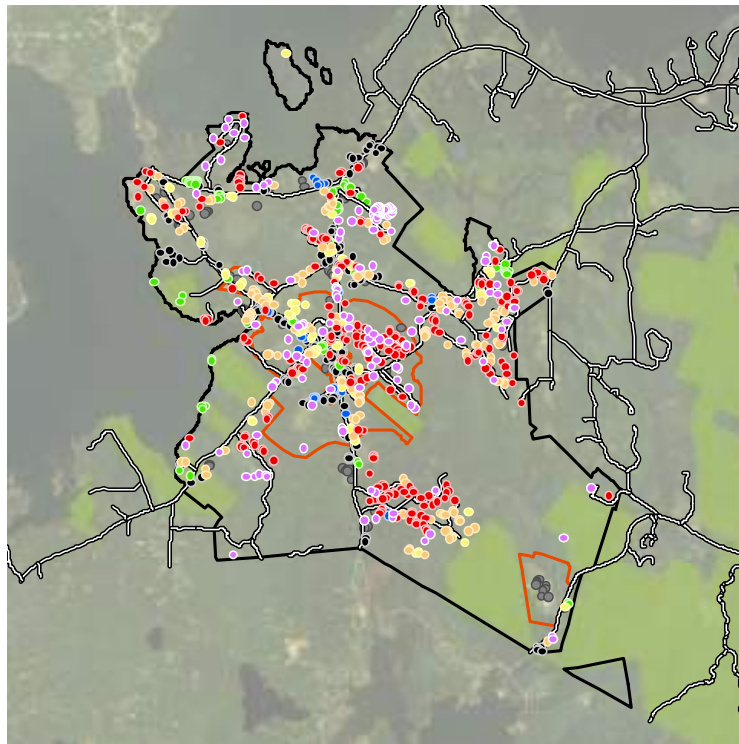
The 80's saw much more development than the previous decade. There were over twice as many new buildings built during the 80's than in the 70's. You can also see the new pattern development began to take — subdivisions off of main roads that require new roads to be built. Also, some of the land that was owned by the park was sold or traded during the 80's, opening up new land to potential development.

Town Hill 2000



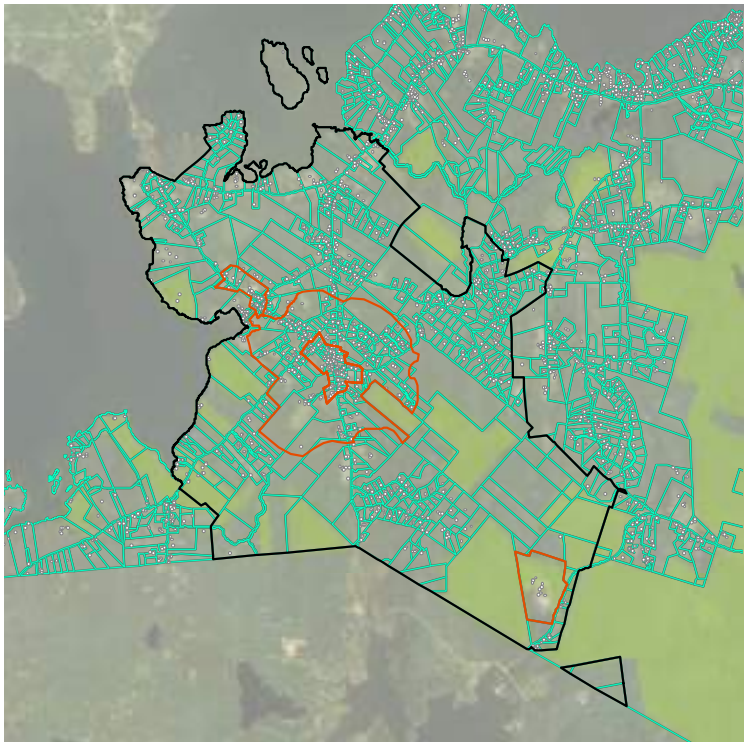
This trend of subdividing and developing land continued through the 90's. New buildings built in these growing subdivisions require more infrastructure than buildings clustered along the main roads and contribute to the loss of open space in Town Hill.

Town Hill Today

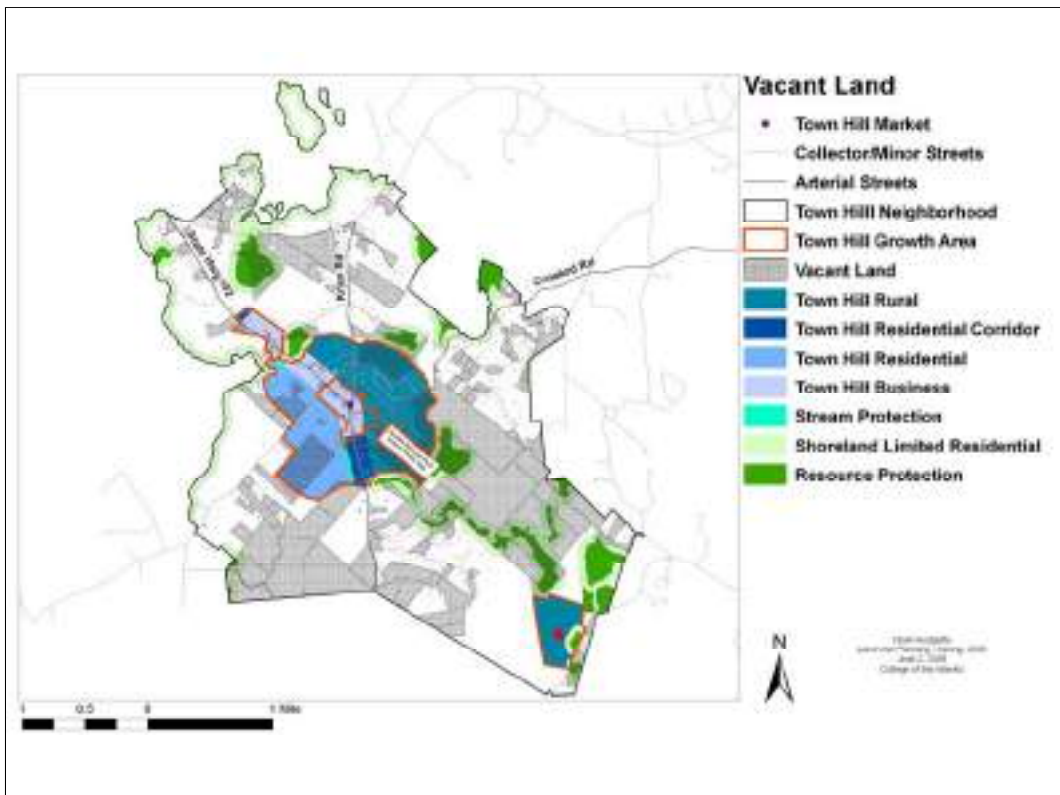


This map shows all of the buildings which have been built or been given a permit to build as of April 2008. Town Hill has been experiencing some major growth for the past 30 years. What was once a highly centralized village has begun to sprawl across the countryside. As more subdivisions are built in the neighborhood, the open space which contributes to the rural character of Town Hill is being lost.

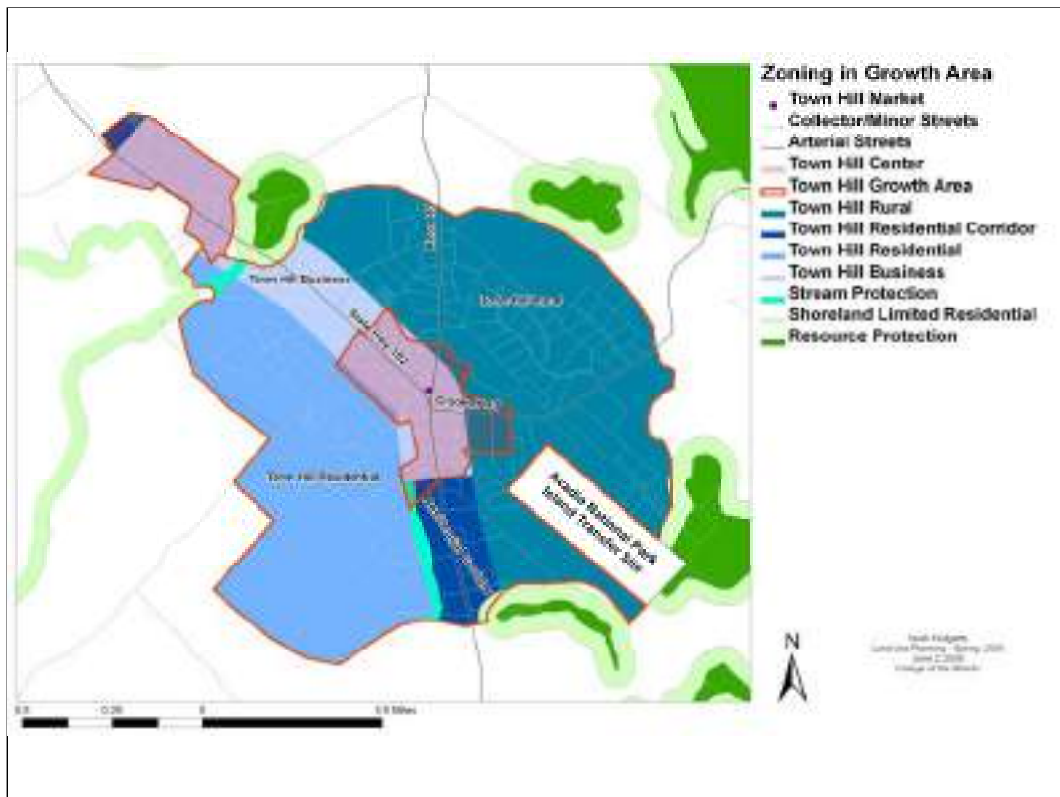
Growth: A Pattern of Subdivision



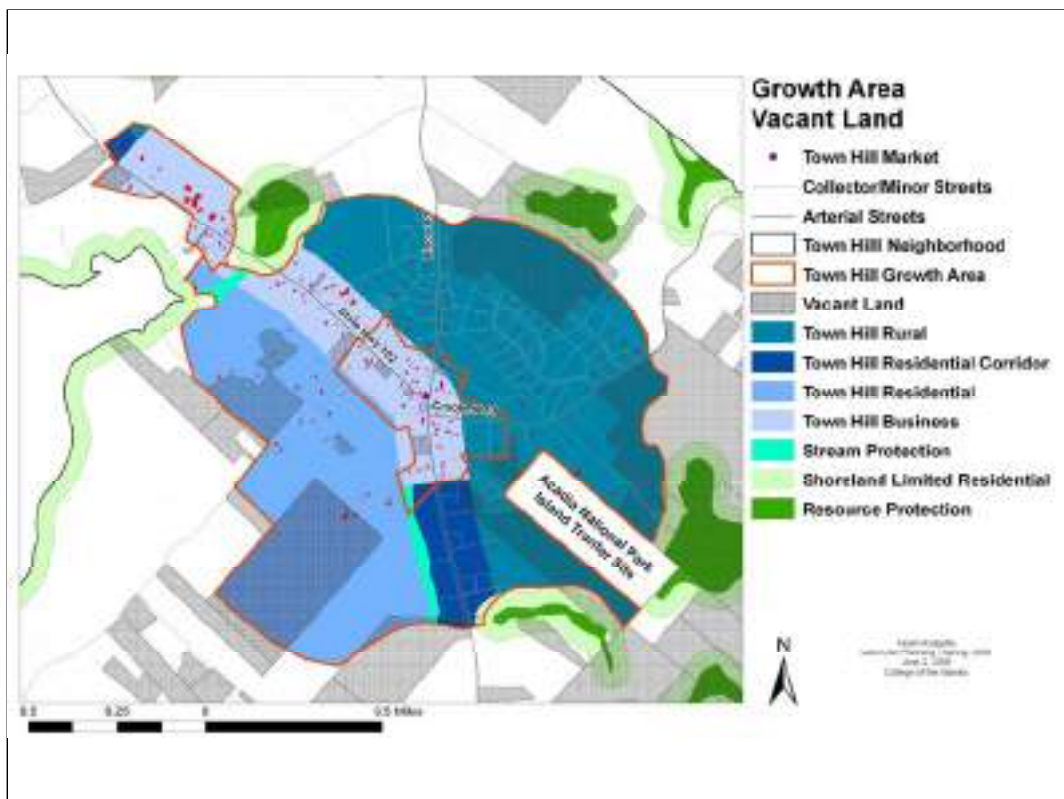
While much of the land has already been subdivided and built upon, there is still a significant amount of open space that has an uncertain future. If current trends continue, it is highly likely that this remaining land will be developed in the future.



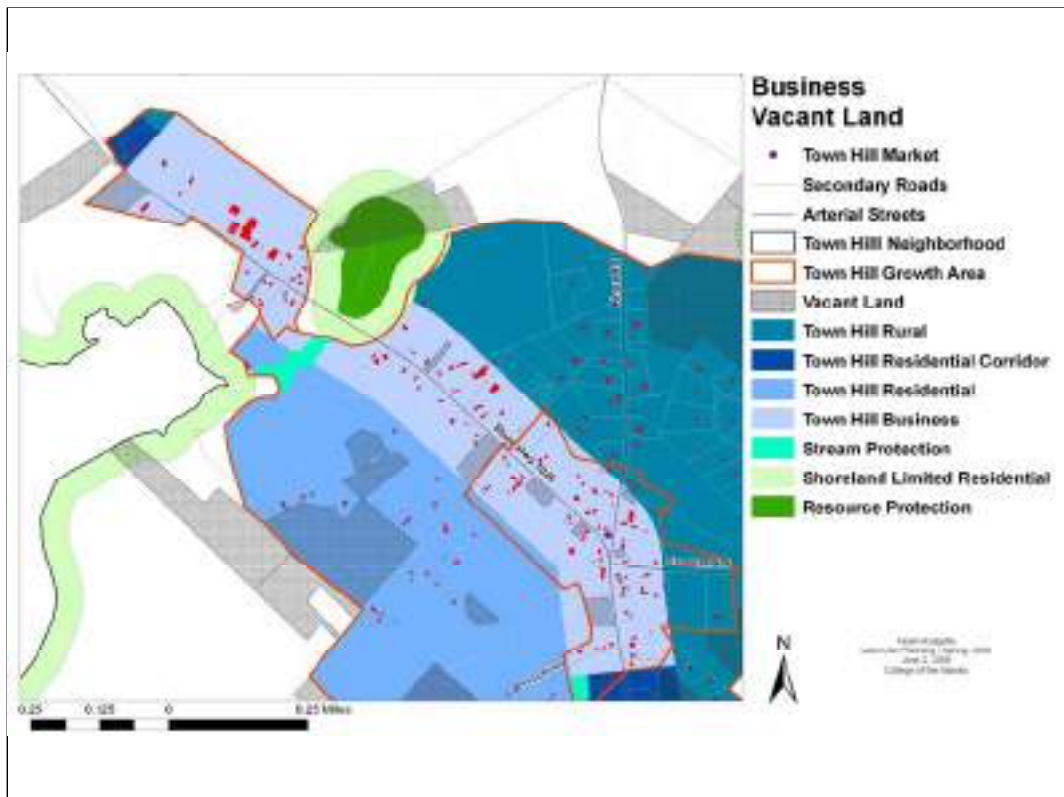
The following maps focus on showing the types of land use permitted on parcels located within the Business District of the Growth Area. The overall Town Hill neighborhood has a significant amount of undeveloped or vacant land, represented by the gray shaded area, which could be developed in the future.



This map shows the current land use zones in the Growth Area, which include Business, Rural, and Residential. Each zone has specific permitted land uses. The orange line shows the Growth Area and the red shaded area shows the current business zones of Town Hill located around EBS and the Town Hill Market.



The vacant land within the Growth Area is located very close to existing structures. It is therefore vital that careful consideration be given to how future development in the Growth Area affects the pre-existing built environment.



The Business District, which stretches from Fogg Road north on Route 102 to EBS, is the area of foremost concern because of the wide range of permitted land uses.

Business District Permitted Land Uses

- Auto
- Commercial
- Education & Science
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Retail
- Service
- Tourism/Lodging

The next three pages highlight the various types of existing permitted land uses within the Business District.

Industrial

- Food processing & freezing facility
- Light manufacturing/assembly plant
- Lumberyard or Sawmill
- Newspaper or printing facility
- Warehousing or Storage facility
- Wholesale business establishment

Retail

- Farmer's market
- Grocery store
- Liquor store
- Restaurant (takeout)
- Misc. retail business establishment
- Roadside stand
- Seafood market

Permitted Uses Not In Keeping With The Character of Town Hill

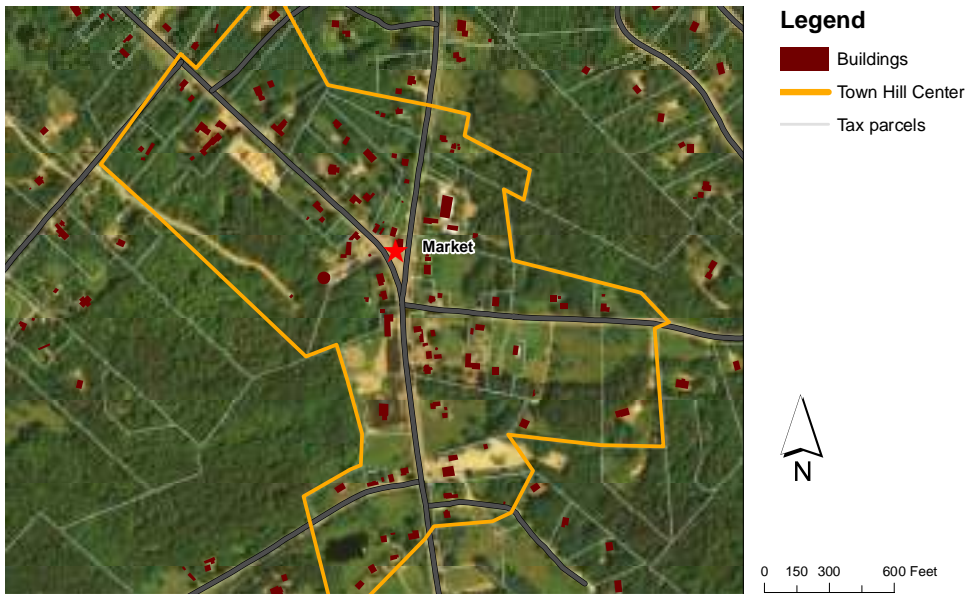
- Lodging & Meals: *50+ Rooms*
- Car Dealership
- Parking Garage

Some of these *permitted* land uses, especially 50+ room hotels, seem inappropriate for the scale of the Village Center.

Prohibited Land Uses

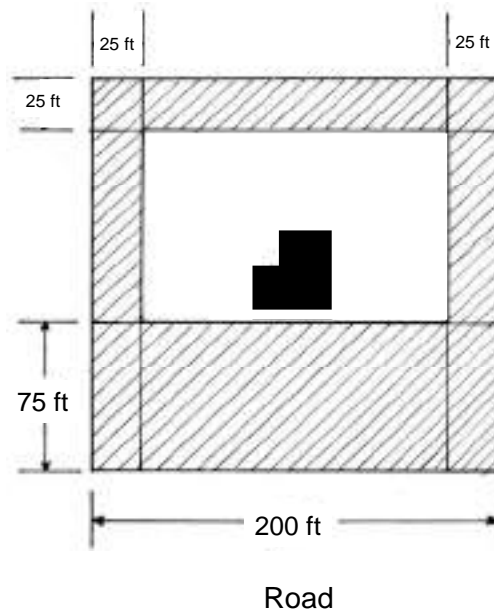
- Laundromat
- Child care center
- Transportation facility (ex: bus shelter)

Town Hill Village Center



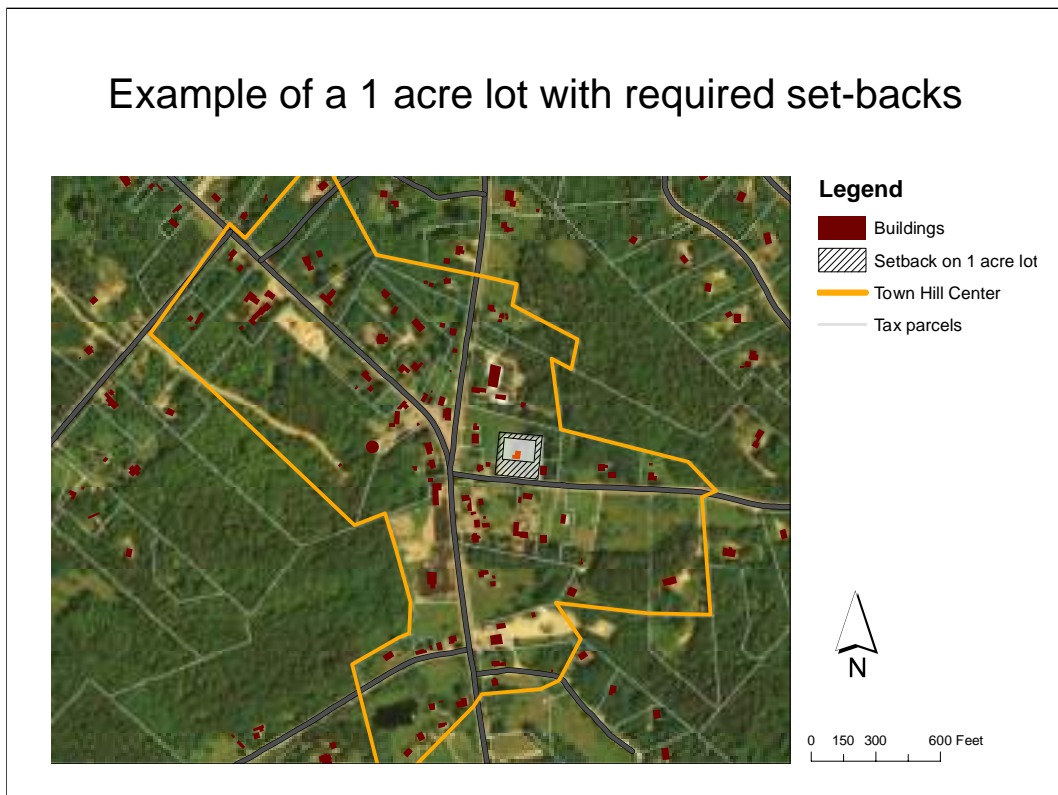
Many of the people who attended the visioning session on May 22, 2008 wished to maintain the existing character of the Village Center. Town Hill village character can be maintained and enhanced through a balance of encouraging business, providing services and creating a safe, attractive environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. However, allowing for greater density and encouraging development that is consistent with the existing village character is not possible with the current zoning. All of Town Hill is zoned for 1 acre minimum lot size. A consequence of this is that subdivisions are built in rural areas isolated from the Village Center, while less new development has occurred in the village itself. This is partly because the current zoning does not allow room for more growth in the village.

Diagram of a one acre lot showing required dimensions and set-backs



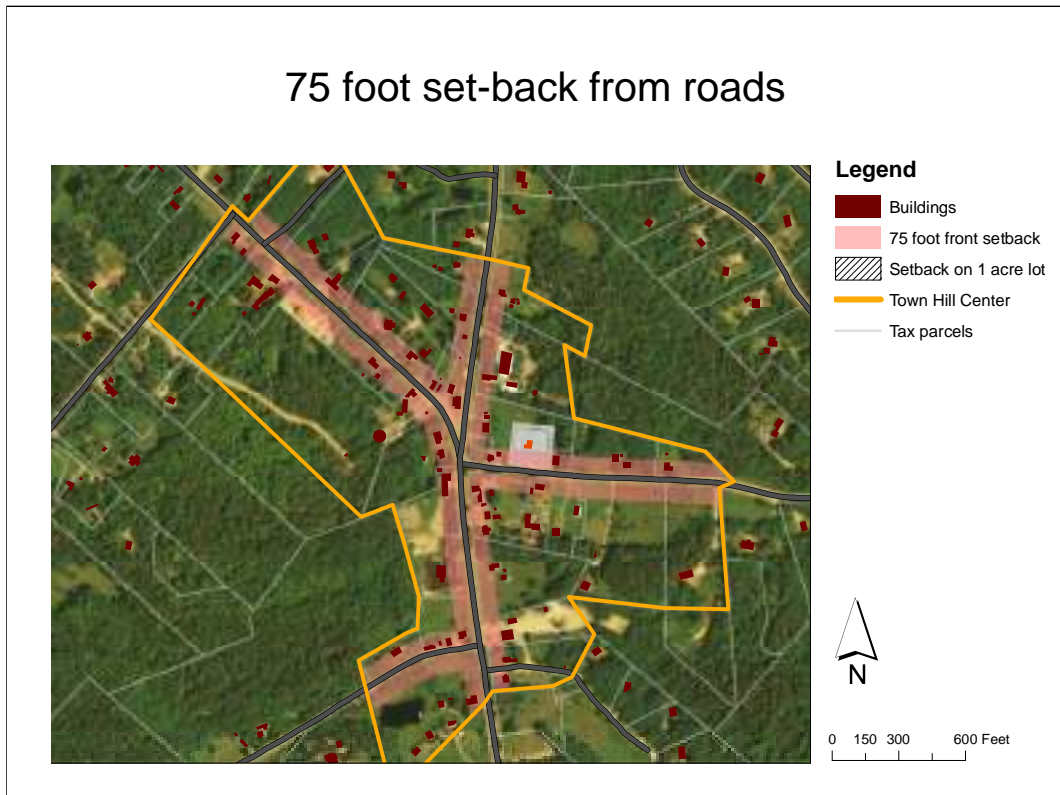
40,000 square feet (roughly 1 acre) may be a reasonable lot size for the Town Hill village, but as this diagram shows there are certain restrictions to subdividing land and building. First, parcels must have at least 200 feet of road frontage and be at least 200 feet wide. Second, new buildings must be placed at least 75 feet back from the road and 25 feet from the sides and rear of a parcel.

Example of a 1 acre lot with required set-backs



This map shows a 1 acre lot within the Village Center to illustrate how difficult further development would be. If 200 feet of road frontage is required, there is really no space for more subdivision in the village. New buildings may be constructed on existing parcels, but this is really the only growth possible. While concentrating growth in and around the village is good for the character of Town Hill by preserving open space in other areas, requiring 200 foot road frontage and lot width is probably important until the town considers installing public sewer.

75 foot set-back from roads



The 75 foot set-back from the road prevents any new development from being consistent with the existing village character. This map shows that most of the older buildings, including the Town Hill Market and the fire station, are completely within the 75 foot set-back, shown in pink. The recently constructed bank had to follow the zoning requirements and was built 75 feet back from the road. This made it more convenient to place the parking area in front of the bank instead of in the rear.



This is an illustration focusing on village character and the impact of set-backs. This slide shows the recently constructed bank in Town Hill, an excellent example of the current zoning requirement, a 75 foot set-back. From our last meeting we received pretty much unanimous agreement, that in the future, you would like to see parking in the rear of businesses. This is just one thing that is much more unlikely with 75 foot set-backs.



This is an example of what it could look like if the zoning for set-backs was cut in half. Many of the existing buildings along the Route 102 corridor are 15 to 18 feet from the road.



Those who participated in the May 22nd meeting expressed a preference for small-scale businesses, strong compact village character, and parking located behind stores. This illustrates that sort of village environment, and includes a sidewalk with a grass and tree buffer strip between walkers and traffic, as well as a crosswalk. All of these elements working together encourage a pedestrian-friendly village environment, strong in character.



The Town Hill Market, one of seemingly everyone's favorite places, sits about 15 feet from the road. Unfortunately, in the Village Center this type of construction, along with these images and scenarios are no longer possibility under current zoning.

Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources:

Exploring Examples and Design
Guideline Recommendations



Town Hill has a distinct small New England town feel, one where the traditional and oldest buildings were grouped close to each other at the top of the hill. Many of those buildings are very close to the street—with small setbacks. Ironically, current zoning makes this development pattern illegal.

The buildings range from vernacular farmhouses to Greek Revival style architecture. The pitch of the gables creates a vertical and consistent scale. However, although vertical, the buildings often are no taller than 2 1/2 stories high.



Not only are the homes important, but also the historic barns and farmland play a significant role in the landscape. They are symbols and reminders of the first settlers who worked primarily in farming and lumbering. Some of the open space and agricultural lands are still worked on today or have been adapted to serve other related functions such as a nursery.

Another important historic reminder is the old schoolhouse we are currently in right now. This building has an interesting history that dates back to the mid 1800s and has changed to meet the needs of the community over time.



Town Hill has an entrepreneurial and small business spirit. As one community member noted at the May 22nd session, a significant portion of Mount Desert Island is protected from development because of Acadia National Park, thus making Town Hill an important place for business and new development.

Some businesses include the Town Hill Market, a brewery, hardware store, and a dentist as well as a variety of shops located in West Eden Commons.



The views in Town Hill are part of what make the place very special. Great views of the mountains in Acadia can be seen along most of the Route 102 corridor. It is often not realized how valuable things are until they are gone — but here is a chance for the community to be proactive.

*The green triangles represent a few special views along Route 102.

Potential Development within Viewshed



To show the potential effects of development within viewsheds, a few potential scenarios have been provided — a realistic one and one that may be a little far-fetched, but still allowable.



This is a fictitious example of development that is allowable. One can see how the views of the mountains could be obstructed. This is also an example of the kind of out-of-scale development that would not fit the character of Town Hill.



Another scenario along 102...

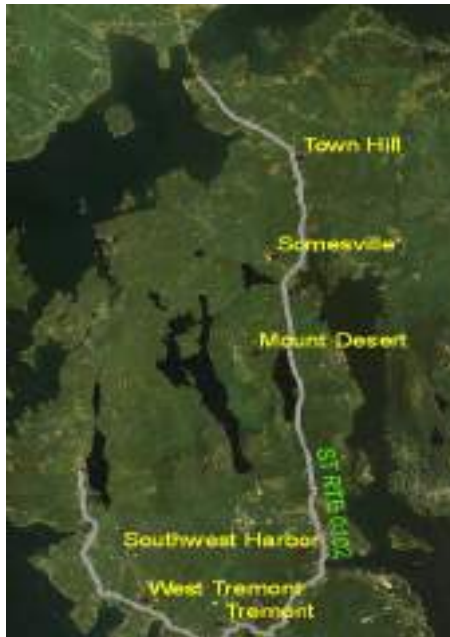


If a building like the bank in Town Hill was placed within a key viewshed, the views would be lost. This picture shows how a massive amount of paving detracts from the natural rural landscape.

Protection Techniques

In order to prevent the loss of scenic views, historic buildings, landscapes and Town Hill's unique sense of place, there are a few techniques the community could enlist.

Scenic Byway



- National Scenic Byways are based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities.
- Grant programs provide merit-based funding for byway-related projects each year.

A scenic byway designation gives communities a certain “pride of place” and recognizes that the corridors are unique. This route has been valued and recognized over time. In 1889, one community member said that this drive, which goes through Somesville, has the best views on all of the island.

Being designated a Scenic Byway would come with incentives such as grants to develop and improve pedestrian paths or bike routes to name a few. In addition, it could boost the local economy through increased tourism.

Becoming a Scenic Byway would reinforce that this route is a rural, scenic corridor—not an area to be turned into just another sprawling strip.

Contributing Rural Historic Landscape
Characteristics = Eligibility as National Register
Rural Historic District



There are several characteristics of the Town Hill village that may make it eligible for a National Register Rural Historic listing.

The cultural traditions of agriculture, the historic settlement in the early 1800s, and the local historic commerce and institutions support its eligibility.

Also contributing to its significance, is the distinct pattern of spatial organization in the Town Hill village. As noted earlier, the town was originally a compact unit, with minimal distances from the road or other homes.

Historic buildings and structures such as farmhouses, barns, stores, and this schoolhouse distinguish Town Hill as a potential Rural Historic District.

This may be something that you as a community may want to pursue.

Oddly enough being listed on the National Register, does not mean there is a design review.

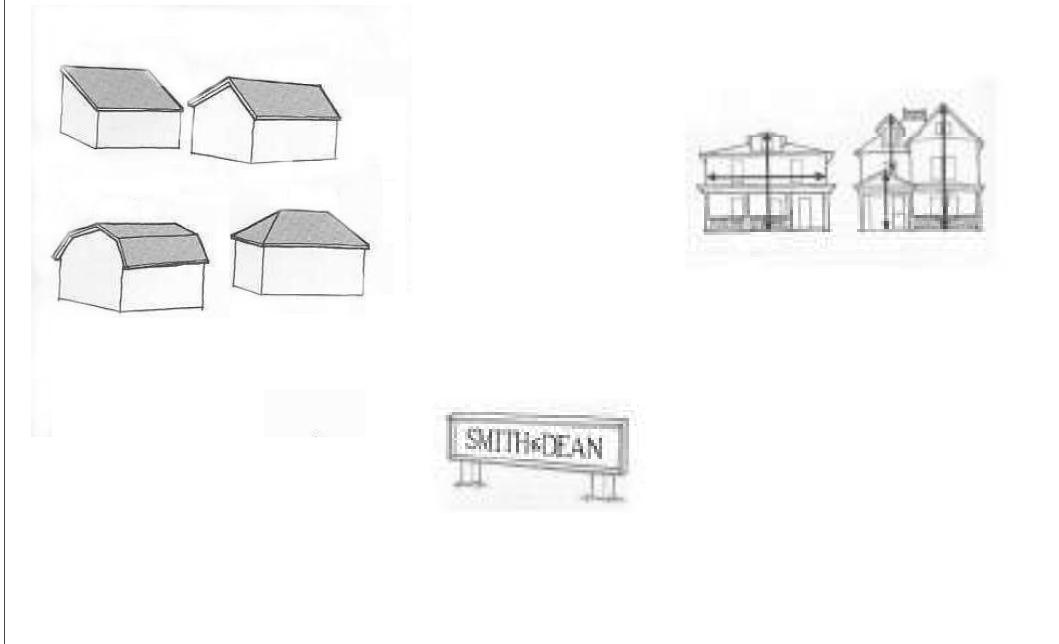
Local Historic District and Design Review

The Bar Harbor Downtown District has design review, and it is recommended that they extend this to the Town Hill village. However, the community should work to develop their own guidelines—distinct to Town Hill. Pursuing design review should be a priority action.

Design Guidelines have several advantages: they help to:

- Promote economic benefits of historic preservation
- Protect the local character and scenery that support the tourism so important to the local economy
- Add a level of predictability to new development since the guidelines would describe appropriate and inappropriate development

Considering Design Guidelines

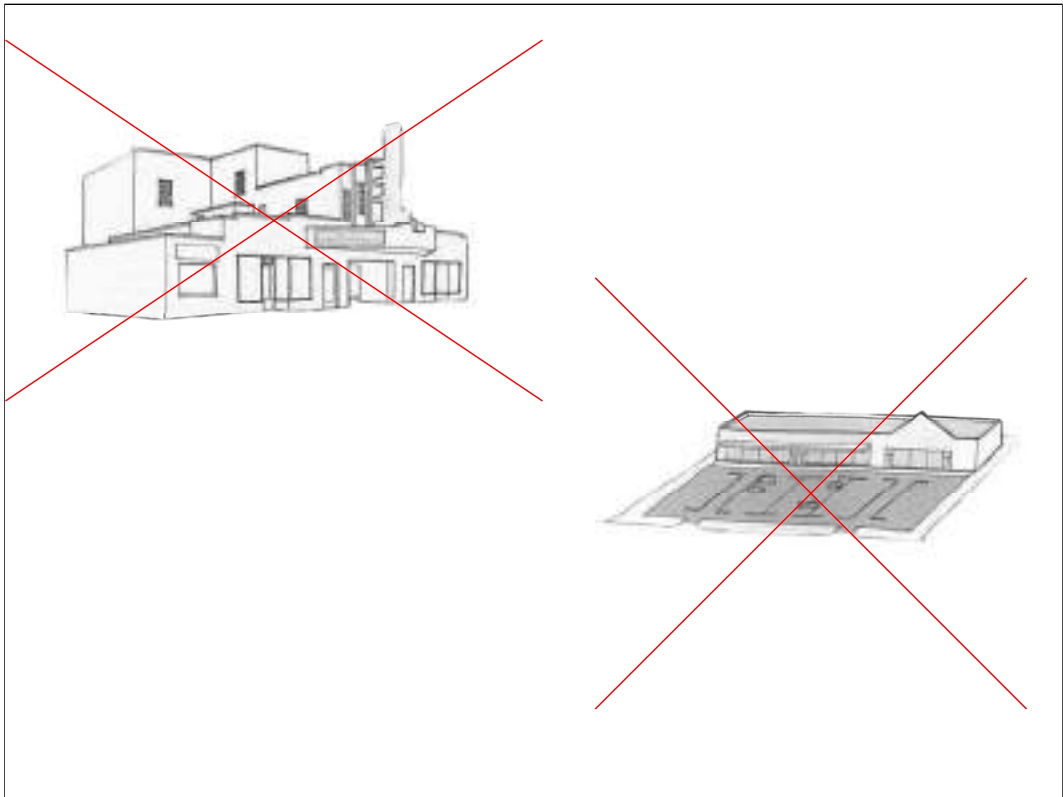


Here are some potential design guidelines.

Common roof forms in Town Hill include Gable, Gambrel, Shed, and Hipped—perhaps the community would want new developments to follow these forms to avoid buildings that are out of character.

In addition, the traditional homes have a vertical form and scale—new homes should ideally be in line with those forms.

Lastly, the community may want to discourage large, obtrusive signs. It could be ensured that businesses use natural materials and colors in their signs.



These are forms that are out of character in Town Hill—they would detract from its sense of place.

Both the modern art-deco building and the large front parking lot would be inappropriate.

Tax Incentives

Property owners could realize tax savings through preservation and conservation in two ways:

1. Through donation of conservation easements
2. Through use of federal and state tax credits for historic rehabilitations

These are incentives that might mean lower income taxes for several years—if the owners cannot use the tax credit themselves, they can sell them to someone who can.

In addition, Maine has new legislation that increases the ability of income-producing property owners to take advantage of state tax credits—this would include rental property.

Sprawl: A Real Threat to Town Hill



Sprawl is a real threat and a word that could come to mean something serious in Town Hill.

Sprawl can occur because of desires for rural lifestyles with large homes and large yards. Zoning allows for this, and sprawl causes or is in response to a weakening of farm and forestry activity in an area.

The over-reliance on the automobile and demands of businesses to be located along highway locations could create the conditions for strip development in Town Hill.

Pride of Place and a Healthy Future



According to the Brookings report, *Charting Maine's Future*, “over 110,000 acres were converted from low-density rural land to higher-density suburban land in Down East Maine between 1980 and 2000. Additionally, almost 70,000 rural acres were lost in Hancock County, bringing its share of rural land down to under 50 %. Bar Harbor is now adding 60 people per year, up from 40 before 2000.”

The report cautions that increased demand for residential development in Down East Maine—especially along the coast—threatens scenic corridors and picturesque landscapes.

In conclusion, the Town Hill community should consider taking steps such as those proposed to balance new development needs, without risking the character or the quality of life that makes this such an attractive and livable community in the first place.

Town Hill Center Intersection

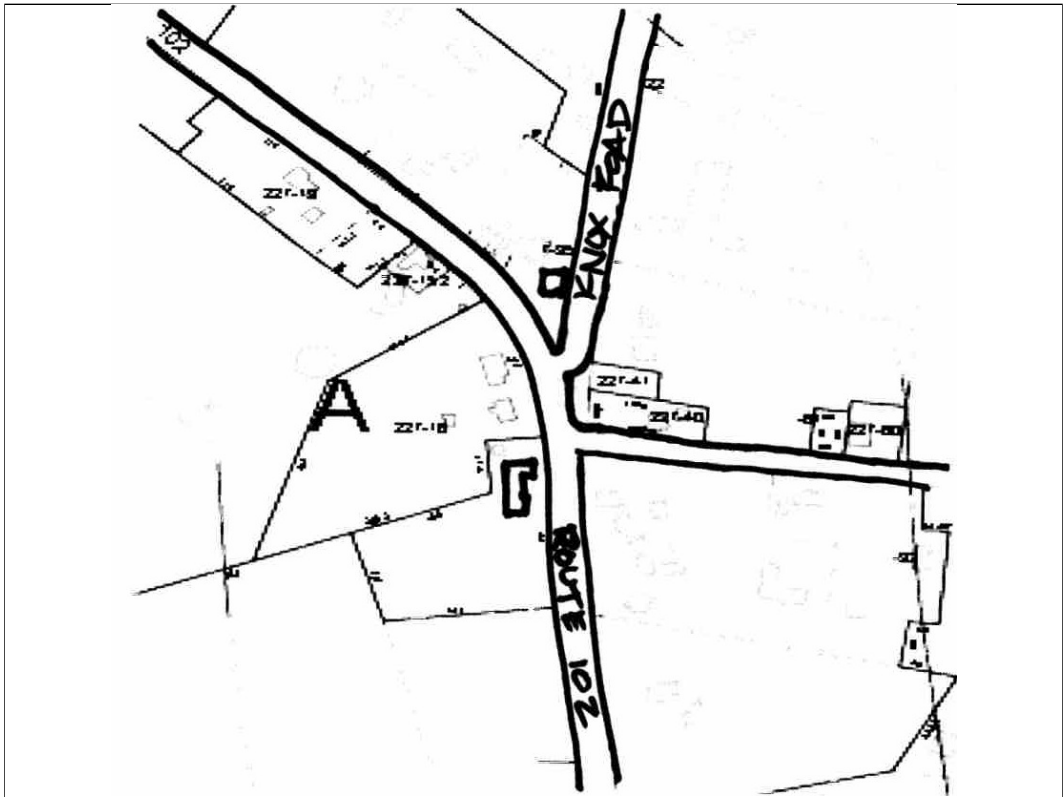


The intersection in Town Hill Center is an important issue to address when considering growth in the area. It handles traffic on all of the village's primary routes. However, as attendees of the May 22nd, 2008 meeting said, it is also often ambiguous where drivers should be, and certain maneuvers through the intersection can be very dangerous. This roads on this map were generated from accurate GPS measurements of the road edges and lines.

Intersection Issues



There are five major identified issues with the intersection. One, it is difficult to see traffic on Route 102 South when turning onto it. Two, Knox Road continues straight from Route 102, resulting in a situation where people do not slow down in the village center when making that turn. Three, turning from Knox Road onto Crooked Road requires crossing both lanes of traffic on Route 102, then blocking traffic to make a second left turn. Four, there is an ambiguous patch of pavement between Knox and Crooked Roads that is not clearly part of any road. And five, the Town Hill Market parking lot is not clearly defined and people will sometimes cut across it to turn off of Knox Road.



The Town of Bar Harbor has a plan in the works to realign Knox Road to intersect Route 102 at a 90-degree angle – shown here in a document from the town. They also do away with the ambiguous piece of pavement between Knox and Crooked Roads. At the meeting on May 22nd, 2008, many people expressed support for this change. There also seemed to be a lot of support for the addition of a left turn lane on Route 102, and some support for adding a blinking light at the intersection.

Town Hill Center Intersection Redesign



If these modifications are made, the intersection will look more like this. In this situation, Route 102 has a left turn lane to accommodate traffic going to the Town Hill Market, Knox Road, and Crooked Road. The left turn lane would make it easier for traffic to turn onto these roads, as well as removing the danger for people turning from Knox Road to Crooked Road because they would not block traffic on Route 102 South. The addition of this lane requires making the road twelve feet wider for that stretch, which could also increase visibility. This change would not interfere with any existing buildings. Knox Road also intersects Route 102 at a 90-degree angle, and the ambiguous stretch of pavement between Knox and Crooked Roads is no longer present. This would address the issue of people turning from Route 102 to Knox Road without slowing down, and help to stop people from cutting across the market parking lot to make turns. The centers of Knox and Crooked Roads are a full 100 feet apart on this map, which should be substantial enough to dramatically increase safety while turning on and off them. It would also be prudent to better define the market parking lot, through the use of a curb or painted lines along its boundary.



Another way for the Route 102-Crooked Road intersection to be improved is to add sidewalks and crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian traffic and to add painted lines to minimize confusion between the road and the Town Hill Market parking lot. Some provision for pedestrian traffic is particularly important for this intersection considering the existing baseball field and the public playground that is in the works. On this map, the Town Hill Market is represented by a red star, the pink lines are sidewalks, which are between 3 and 4 feet wide, the green lines are crosswalks, and the yellow lines are paint lines demarcating the edges of the Town Hill Market Parking lot. This way a person at the baseball field or fire-station who wanted to buy, say, some ice-cream from across the street could cross Route 102 here. Or, if they wanted to go to the Town Hill Market they could continue walking up the sidewalk here, cross Crooked Road here, walk up the sidewalk here, and cross Knox Road to get to the Market here, without obstructing or being endangered by traffic. Seeing crosswalks and sidewalks might also remind drivers to slow down in this intersection.

Soils are important to consider when developing

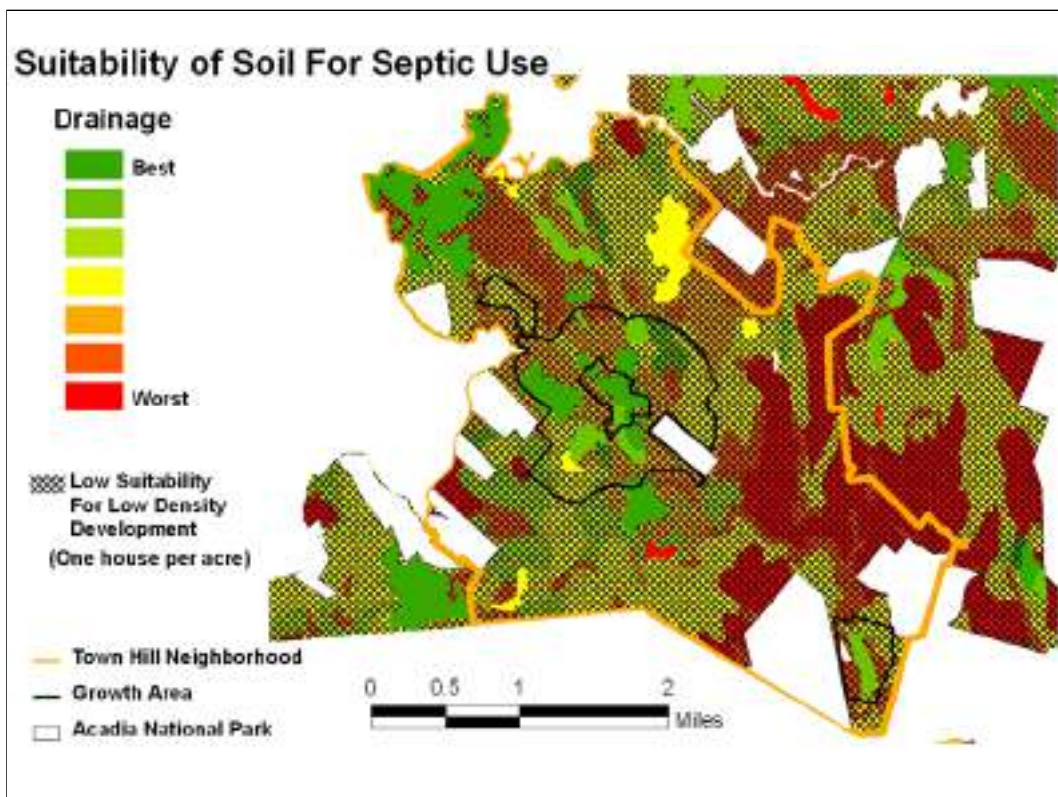
- Percolation of the soil
- Height of the water table
- Depth of the soil
- Density of development

Soils are important to consider when designating growth areas and planning for development because some soils are not suitable for handling large numbers of septic systems. For instance, some soils allow liquid waste to pass through too quickly to sufficiently filter out pollutants before reaching the ground water. Other soils have a high water table and are incapable of filtering waste. Some soils are too shallow. Increased density of developments can overload the filtering capacity of the soil, requiring the town to provide public sewer.

Why is this important?

Because if the soil does not adequately filter waste, the groundwater becomes contaminated.

If the soil is not adequately filtering waste, the groundwater becomes contaminated and may contaminate existing or new wells.

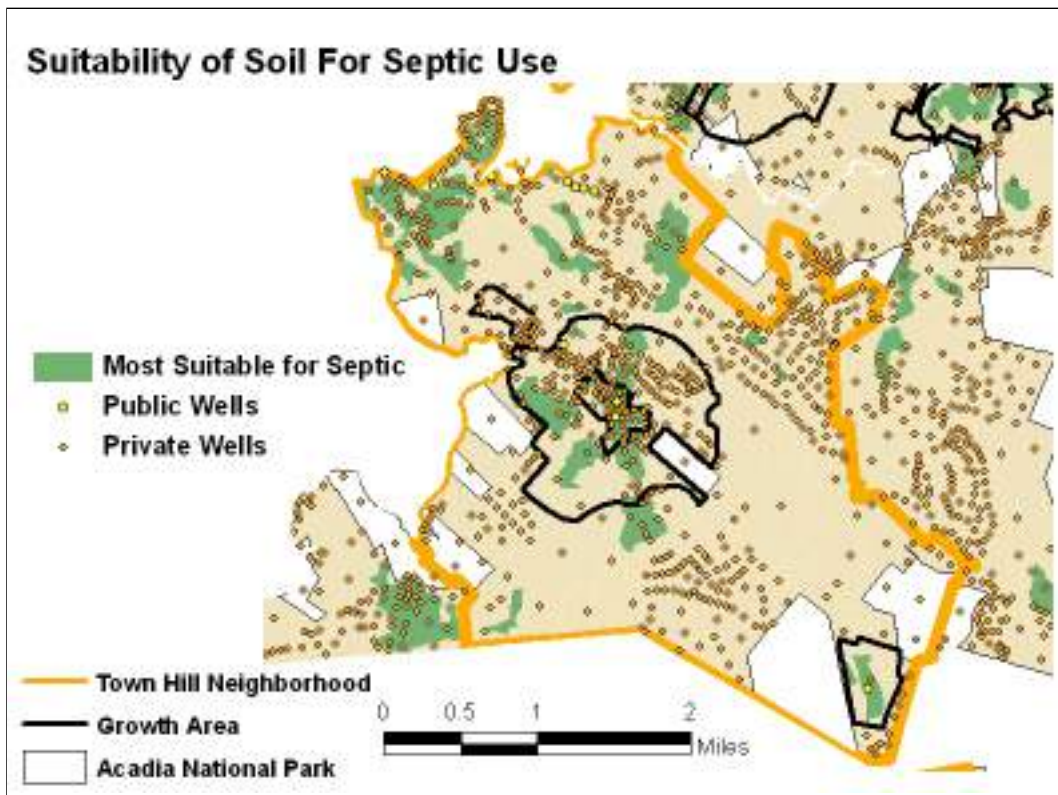


The soils shown in black cross-hatch are unsuitable for high intensity development for various reasons, including shallow or droughty soil or a high water table.

If these areas were developed to their full potential under existing zoning, additional infrastructure such as sewer lines would help to keep the groundwater from being contaminated.

Groundwater at Degregiore Park, northwest of Town Hill, became contaminated and the town had to install sewer lines. This could happen in Town Hill if care is not taken.

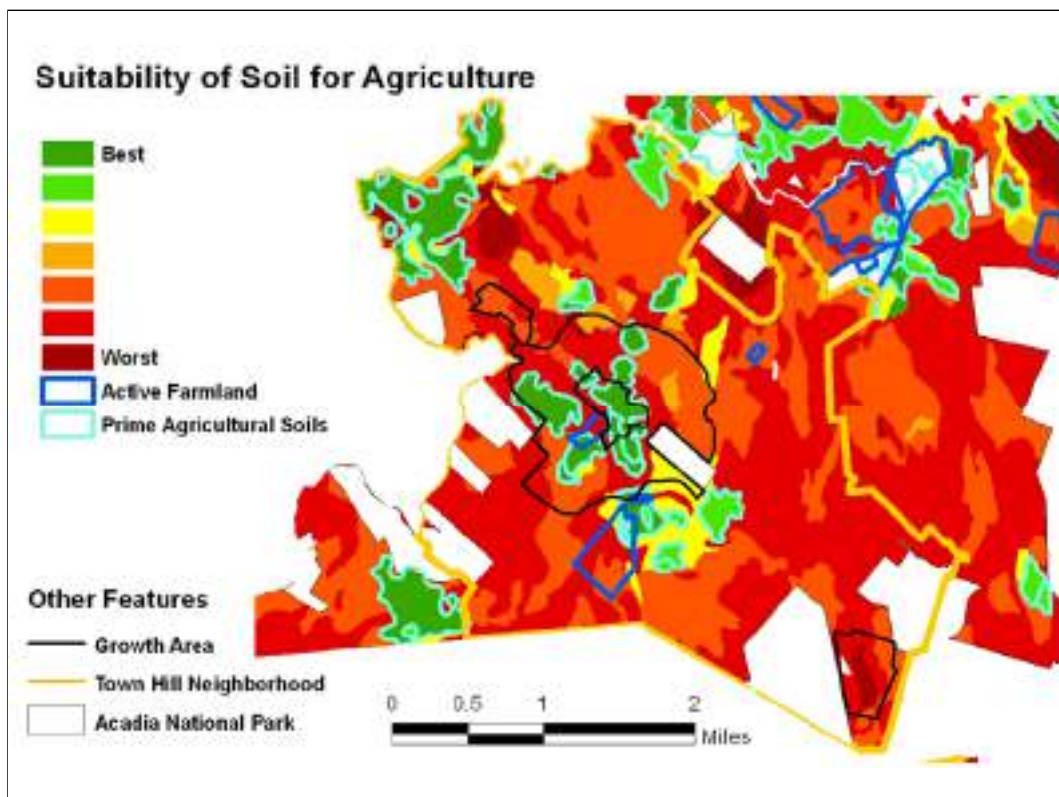
The green and yellow areas not covered in cross-hatch will be shown in green on the next map.



The green areas are most suitable for septic systems at a low density of one house per acre.

Town Hill has no public water or sewer lines, relying heavily on both septic systems and wells.

This will pose a problem as the density of Town Hill and residents may want to consider the option of installing sewer lines to help protect the quality of the groundwater in certain problem areas. Another option is to limit the density of development in particular areas.



Another important thing to note is that the soils most suitable for septic systems are also highly productive farmland. Because Town Hill has no public sewer, its farmland is in danger of being developed for subdivisions.

The information in this map was taken from the Soil Survey of Hancock County Area, Maine. The ratings are based on the 'Land Capability Classification.'

Town Hill has many areas designated by the state and the federal government as prime agricultural soils.

As this map shows, many of the prime agricultural soils are not currently being used as farmland. Some of it is now under subdivisions, particularly in areas just south of the growth area.

Farmland preserves open space and viewsheds. Town Hill would not have the views that it does if it did not have open fields.

It is important to note that once the soil is used for development, it is lost forever as productive farmland.

The Future of Liscomb Farms?

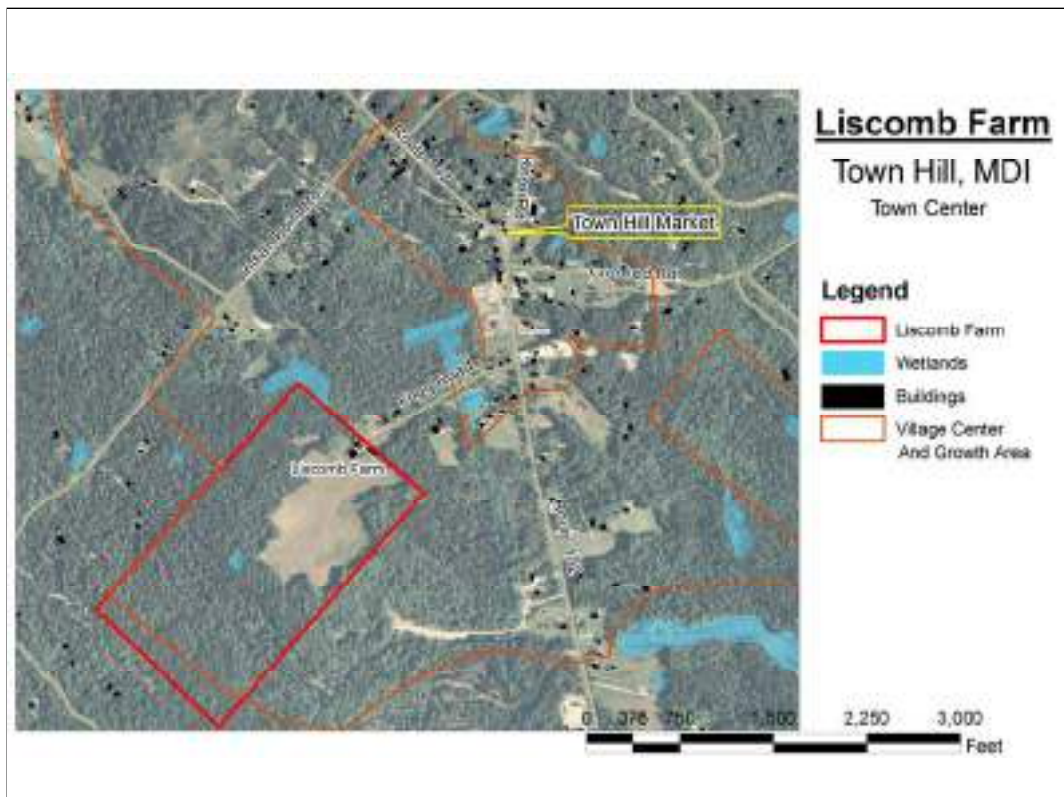
Subdivision Scenarios



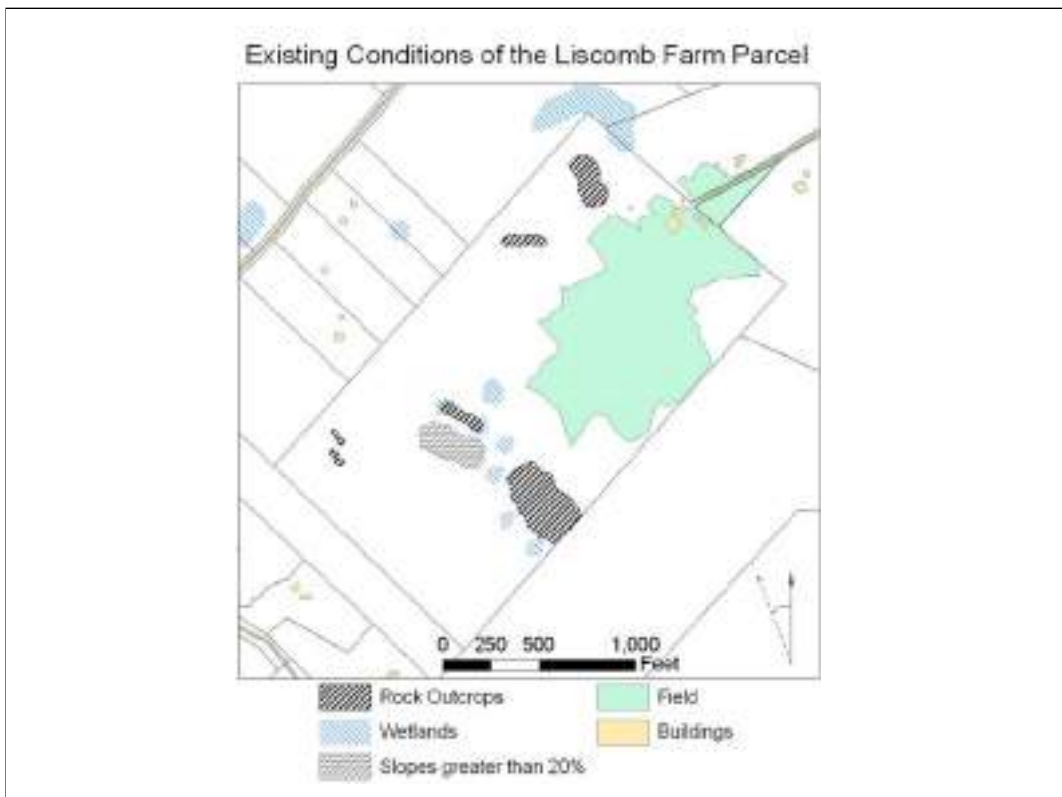
This parcel of land was chosen for subdivision scenarios for several reasons. It is within the proposed Growth Area, it is zoned as Town Hill residential and it is for sale which means that any future changes are uncertain.



There are plenty of other reasons to consider this properties future including the marvelous views experienced from the highest point in Town Hill. In addition, the field and this view have been identified as a favorite place of many residents.



The farm is within Walking Distance of the town center.



This map orients you to the existing conditions that have been inventoried on Liscomb Farm. The parcel is the large rectangular one in the center of the image.

Within this parcel the area in white is forested.



The parcel is currently zoned as Town Hill Residential. The minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet, the same as Town Hill Rural.

This is the 78 acre parcel divided into 68 separate parcels with setbacks shown in pink.

Hypothetical property lines are shown in blue and the road needed to fulfill the minimum road frontage requirement is in red.



This is a more likely scenario of how the land would be sub divided. All of the land is still subdivided, leaving no common space or open space. These lots are larger than the minimum lot size, which typically happens. There are 24 fewer parcels than the grid pattern subdivision. There is a new road accessing Indian Point road. The parcel that the road is on is also up for sale by the owners of Liscomb Farm.



This is the hypothetical subdivision with an aerial photograph in the background for better reference.

Take notice of the 11 parcels on the field.

5 of these are restricted to building in the middle of the field, the others can build along the tree line.



Now imagine 5 houses sitting in the middle of the field.
This is considered to be prime agricultural soil which is rare in Town Hill.
This valuable resource could potentially be lost forever.



Standing on the ground, these houses would ruin the views of these mountains to the South East.



Looking out of the window of a two story house would have a great view of Sergeant, Pemetic, and Cadillac Mountains. Only few would enjoy it as it would detract from the view for everyone else.

Resource Protection Area Scenario



— New road

— 28 New Parcels

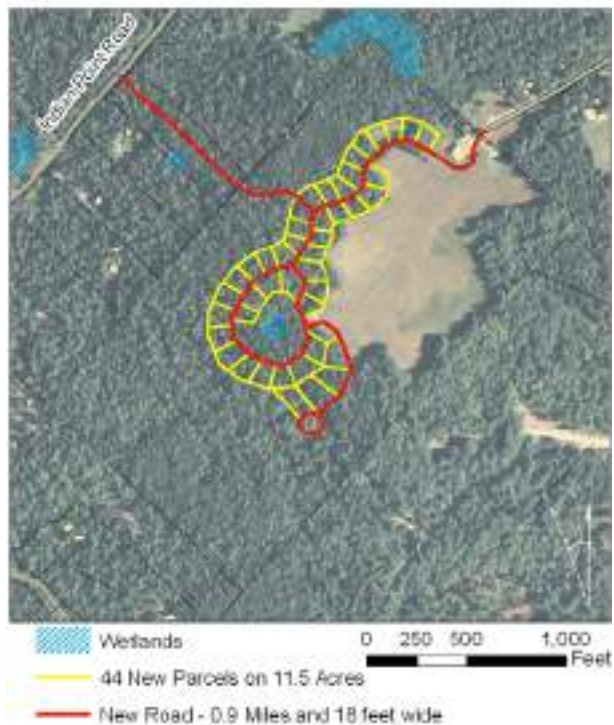
— Setbacks / Unbuildable

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

If prime agricultural land was considered to be a resource protection area, then the field would remain open space. and this is what a conventional subdivision might look like.

If the town does not choose to protect prime agricultural soils then it is up to a willing land owner to protect this resource. Perhaps the current owner or new owner would approach Maine Coast Heritage Trust to hold an easement on this beautiful field.

Planned Unit Development Scenario



Conventional subdivision scenarios are used to create the base density for development for subsequent PUD (Planned Unit Development) scenarios.

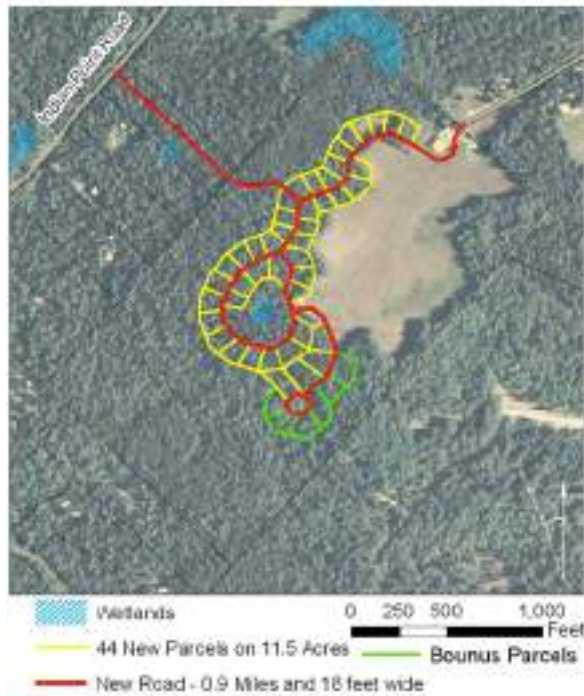
By determining the number of new parcels in a hypothetical conventional subdivision, a PUD gets a base number of houses for development.

Under PUD the development can obtain additional houses by having underground utilities, LEED certified houses, additional affordable housing, recreation areas, or each additional 10% of open space conservation.

A planned unit development would relax setback and min lot size requirements, allowing for clustering houses together maximizing open space.

Under current regulations as a PUD, 8 of these 44 units would be required to be affordable.

Planned Unit Development Scenario

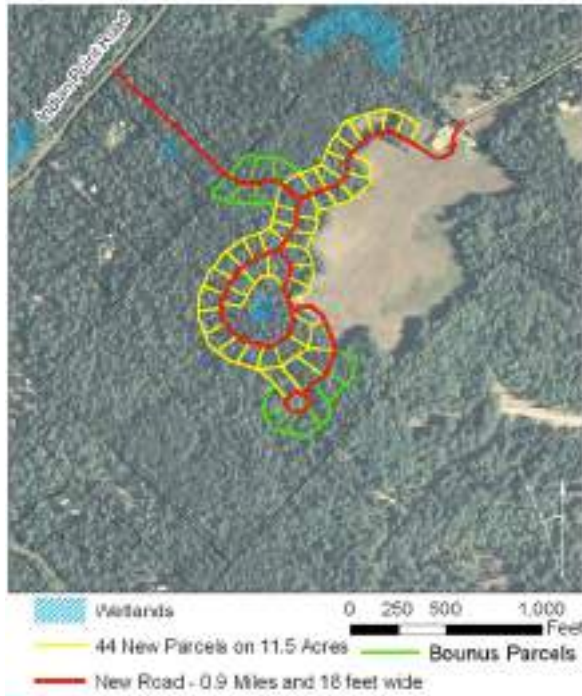


20% of a PUD must be open space.

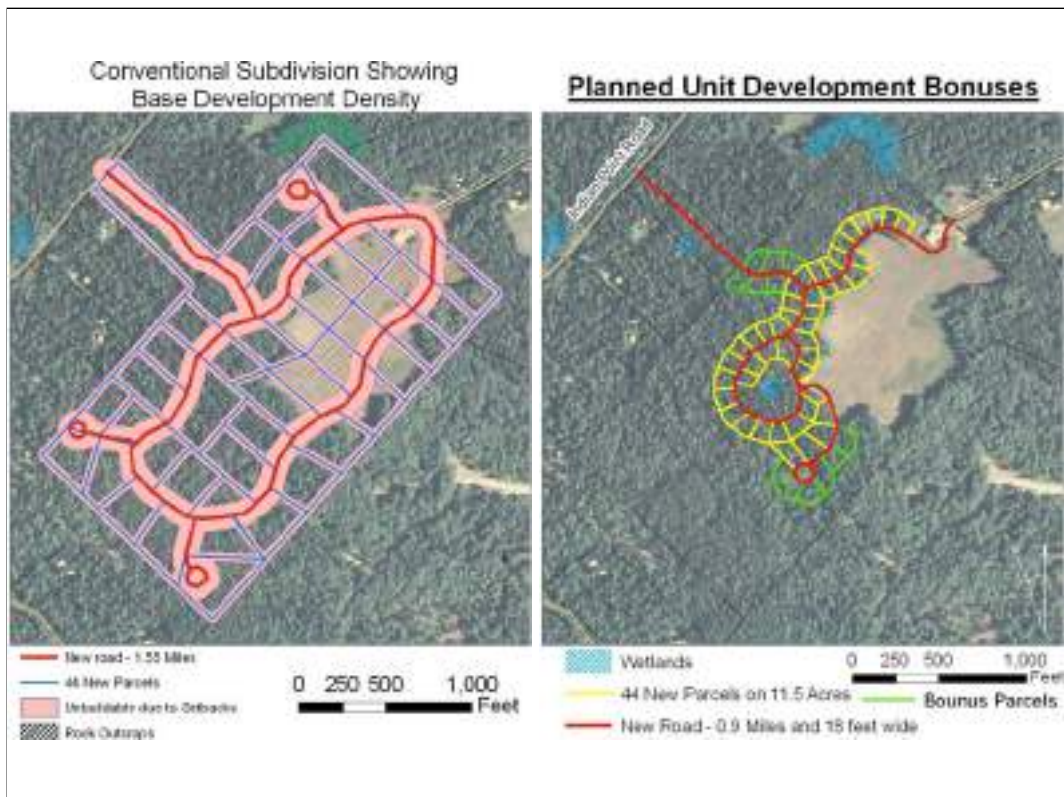
This design has 66 and a half acres of open space, exceeding the requirement, and allowing for 6 additional market houses based on the additional 10% open space bonus alone.

For every additional 7.8 acres preserved as open space, the base density for development can increase by one.

Planned Unit Development Bonuses

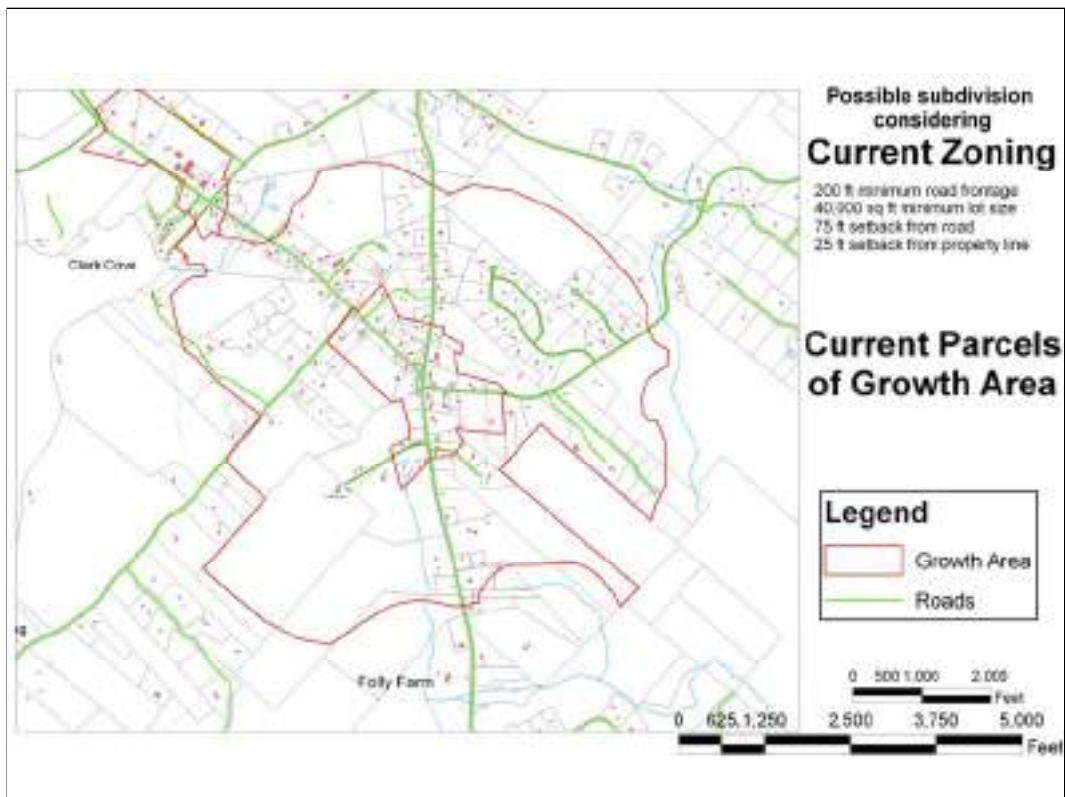


More housing would be permitted if the developer sought other bonuses such as recreational areas or underground utilities. Though neighbors are close together they are not looking at each other

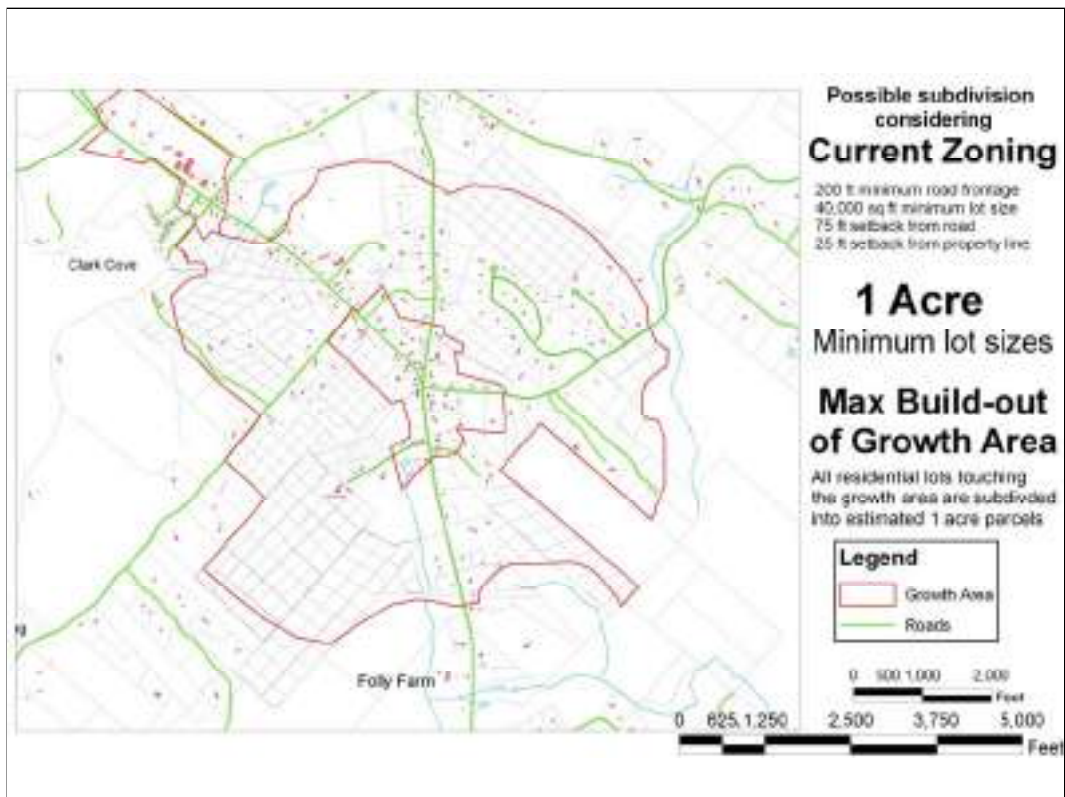


This is a comparison between conventional and PUD scenarios

Rather than looking at neighbors houses in the middle of a field, lots in the PUD have nice views across the open field and to the mountains.



This is the present division of property in Town Hill.



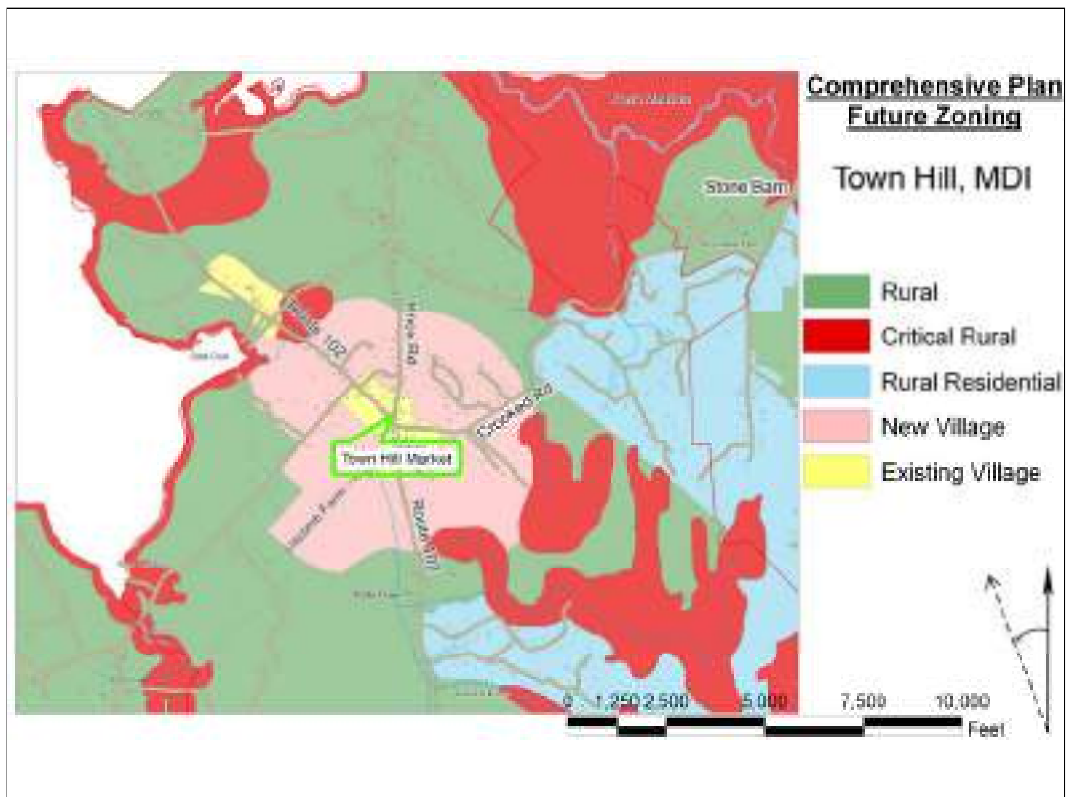
This shows the maximum allowable sub division of land within the proposed growth area.



This is a comparison of what the current zoning allows for and what rural zoning might seek to accomplish.

Even though this is currently zoned as Town Hill Residential and is within the growth area which seeks higher density development, using this farm as an example is good for zoning explanations because we are so familiar with the site now.

This is what the parcel could look like if zoning required a minimum lot size of 5 acres for Town Hill Rural areas which is more in keeping with the existing lot sizes on the outskirts of the village.

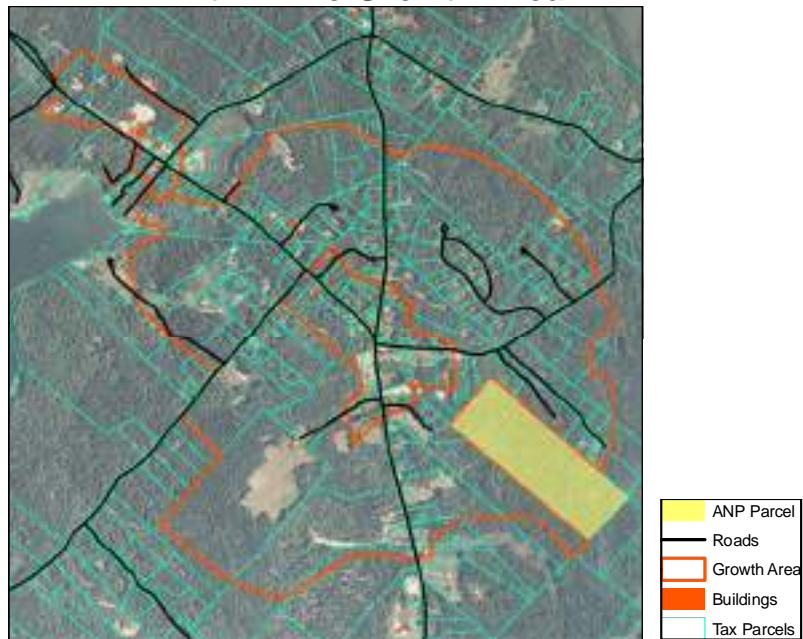


The Comprehensive Plan envisions most of Town Hill to be zoned as Rural in the future. Some areas will be Rural Residential, Critical Rural, and New Village.

Ordinances like the Planned Unit Development can encourage the type of development residents would like to see in Town Hill. Continuing to use the zoning scheme created in the 1980's will only produce more sprawl and will not promote a village character.

Acadia National Park Parcel

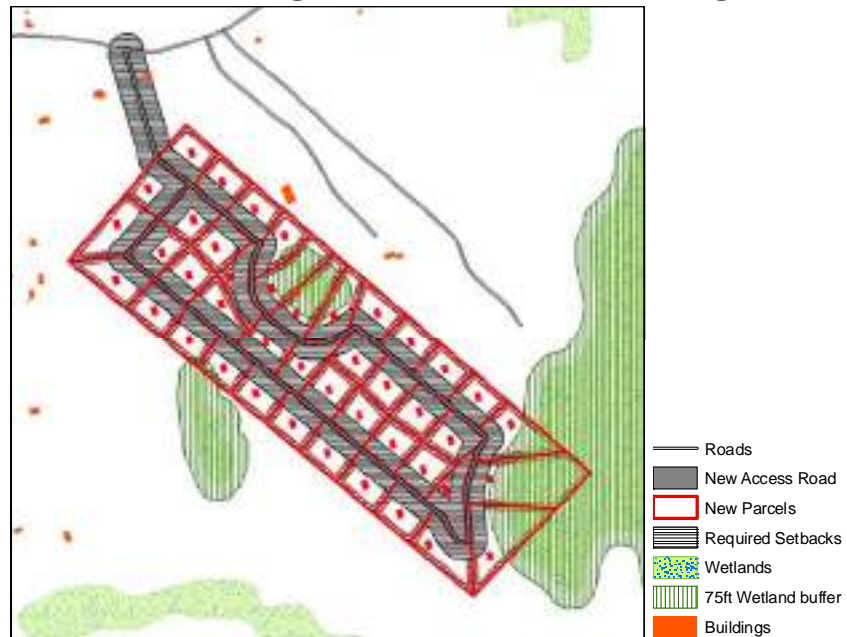
Map Showing the Designated Parcel Within The Growth Area



Some of those attending the meeting on May 22nd stated an interest in seeing what potential use the Acadia National Park parcel, designated as an island wide transfer station, might be used for. Any change in this designation would need to be agreeable to all of the island towns.

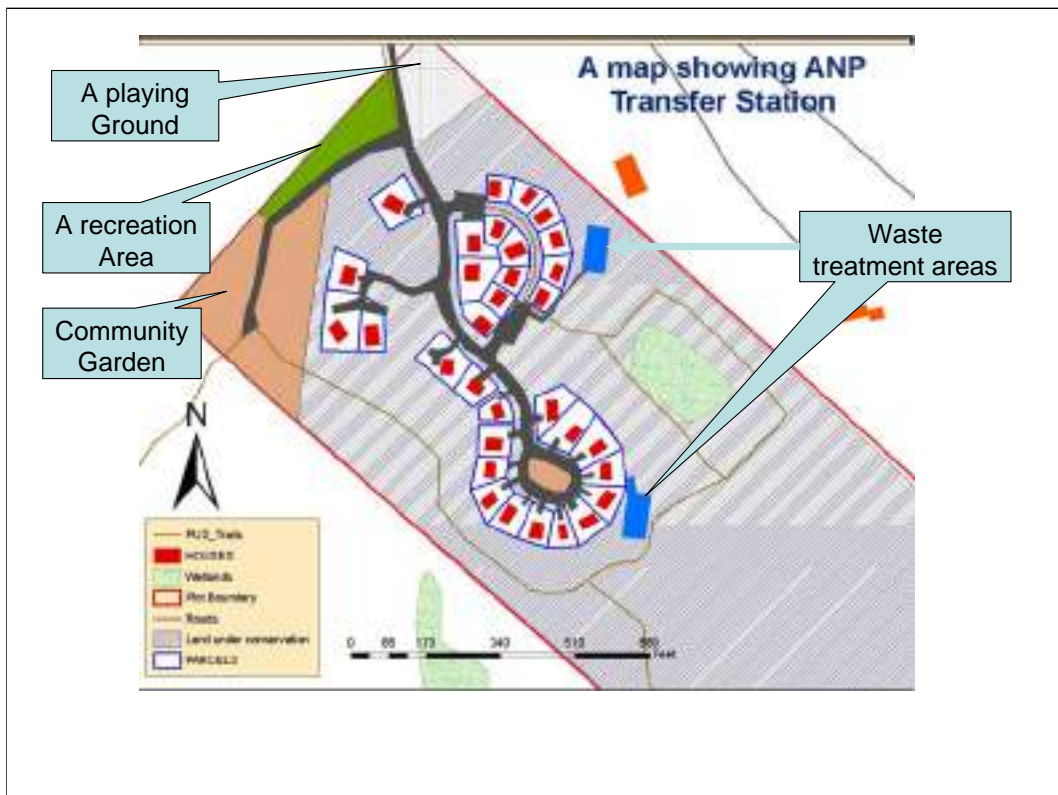
This map shows where the ANP parcel is located. Notice its proximity to the Village Center. Also notice the way the Growth Area boundary is drawn. The parcel falls outside of it.

A conventional Design For Affordable Housing

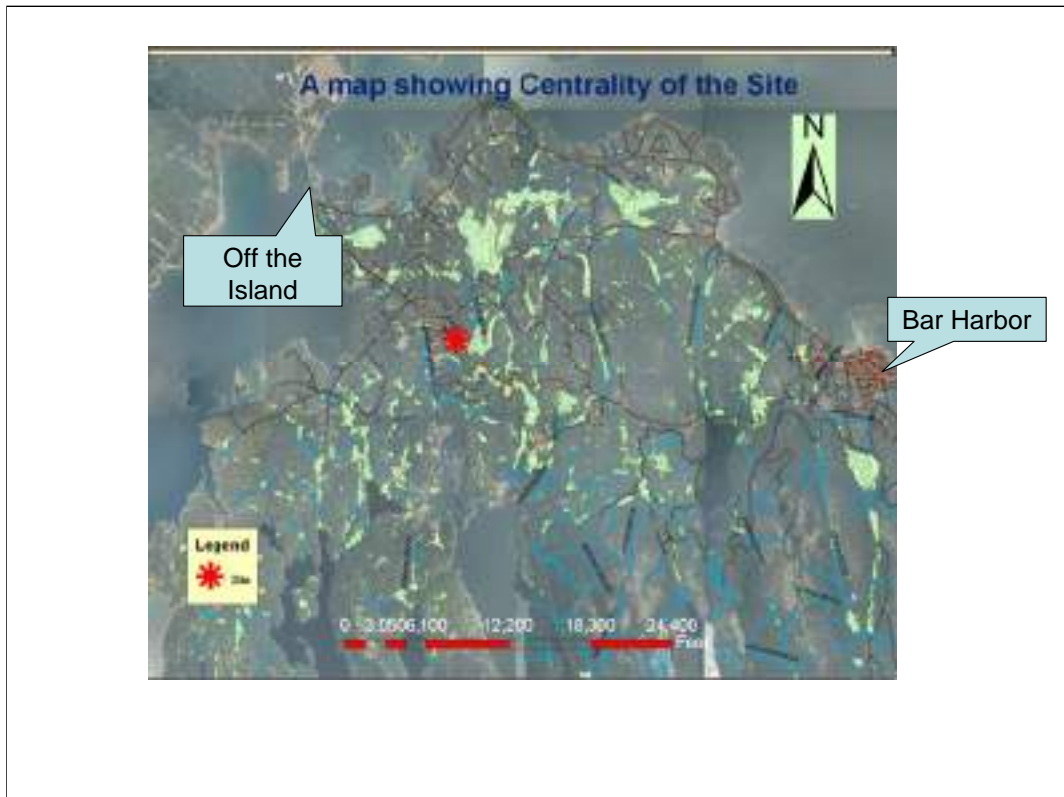


All four Island towns have expressed a need for affordable housing. Using the ANP parcel for affordable/workforce housing would benefit all island towns.

This map illustrates a conventional design for affordable housing on the ANP parcel. Note how the conventional design tends to consume the whole area i.e. roads, set-backs and houses lots. Under this design 43 single household units can be accommodated.



This map shows an illustration of a Planned Unit Development. It is based on the Northeast Creek housing project and is drawn to scale. The houses shown on this plan represent DUPLEX housing units; they are 32 in total and represent 64 family units. Note how the design represents a compact development system. This leaves most of the land undeveloped thus promoting the idea of having open spaces, more land for conservation purposes and other community shared amenities such as recreation areas, playing grounds and community gardens. Shared waste treatment areas could also be constructed to minimize groundwater contamination .



This map shows the proximity of this site to other places on the island. This suggests that if affordable housing is adopted as the use of the land, people working in different places on the island can more easily get to their places of work. This reinforces affordable housing as a convenient choice for the parcel — to benefit the whole island.

Planned Unit Development

- The intent
 - “development that enhances the town as a whole, by offering financial incentives.”
 - Clustering
 - Open Space
 - Environmental Impacts
 - Affordable Housing
 - Pedestrian Access

The PUD ordinance was voted in by the town of Bar Harbor in June of 2006. The intent was to “encourage development that enhances the town as a whole, by offering financial incentives.” Specific principles included those of clustering, open space, reducing negative environmental impacts, including affordable housing, and encouraging creative design and fostering community through better pedestrian access.

Problems with the PUD

- The Affordable Housing Requirement
- Method of calculating the “Base Development Density”
- The 15 acre minimum

Since the PUD was enacted there have been only two Plan Unit Developments. One is the Northeast Creek Affordable Housing Development and the other, the Compass Harbor conversion of a motel.

There have been a number of problems with the PUD, which the planning board and planning department are working to fix it by June 4th in time for town meeting in November.

The Affordable Housing Requirement

- PUDs require 20% of the housing to be affordable
- Developers say they are not choosing PUD because it cuts into their profit margin

One of the largest problems developers have with the PUD is that it requires the development to have at least 20% of the units be affordable to median income residents of Hancock County. Developers say that meeting the requirement significantly cuts into the profit margin when compared to conventional subdivisions. Developers say that because of the affordable housing requirement it is more practical for them to build a conventional subdivision.

Base Development Density

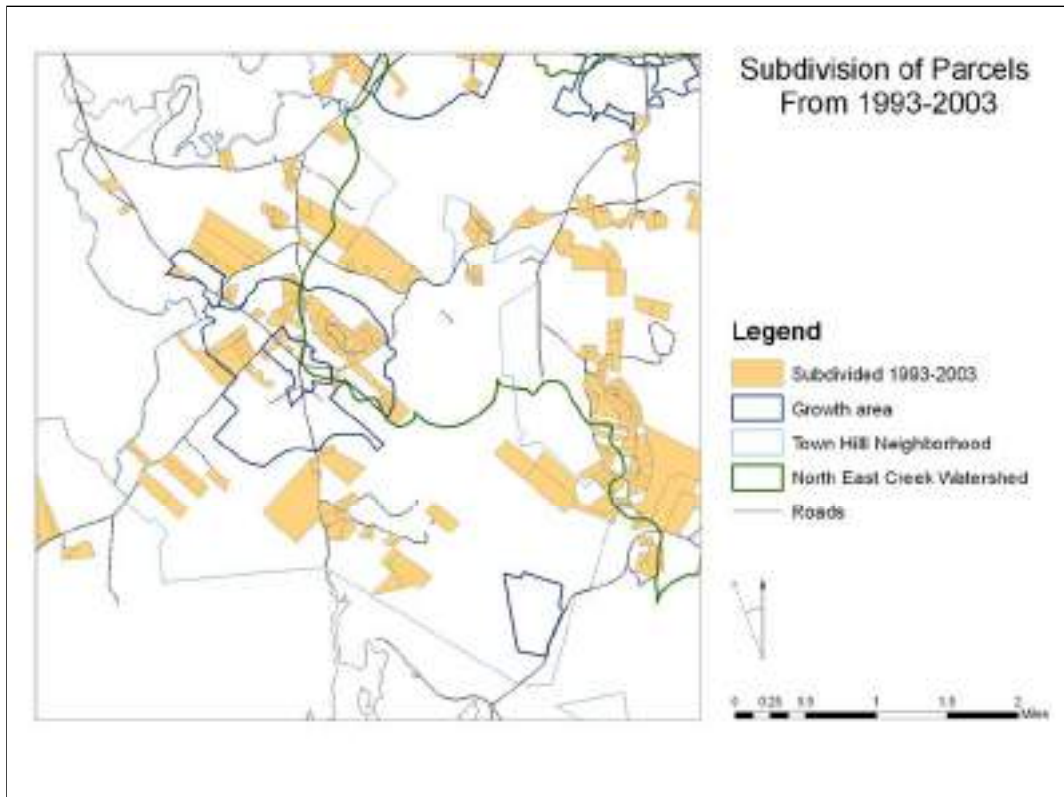
- Two methods of calculating base development density
- The methods do not always reach the same conclusions

Another issue involves the Base Development Density bonus which is written in the PUD. It is a financial incentive which the PUD offers developers. For each criterion that you meet within the PUD such as affordable housing, open space or recreation areas a developer is allowed an extra market rate dwelling. This incentive allows developers to build more houses than in a conventional subdivision for shaping the development in ways that meet the intent of the PUD. The original method for calculating base development density was for a developer to come with a conventional development plan which complies with the zoning ordinances. The number of parcels in the conventional subdivision is used as the base development density. However the planning board has opted to use a simple formula to calculate base development density. The problem with this formula is that it may be overly simplified compared to an actual development plan. Although this method is more efficient and costs less on the side of the developer the numbers are easily inflated. The alternative would be that the developer would spend more money and time in order to give the town an accurate density estimate. In the Liscomb farm example, the same tract of land yielded a density of 44 units on 78 acres using the original method of calculation and using the new method there were 68 possible units estimated.

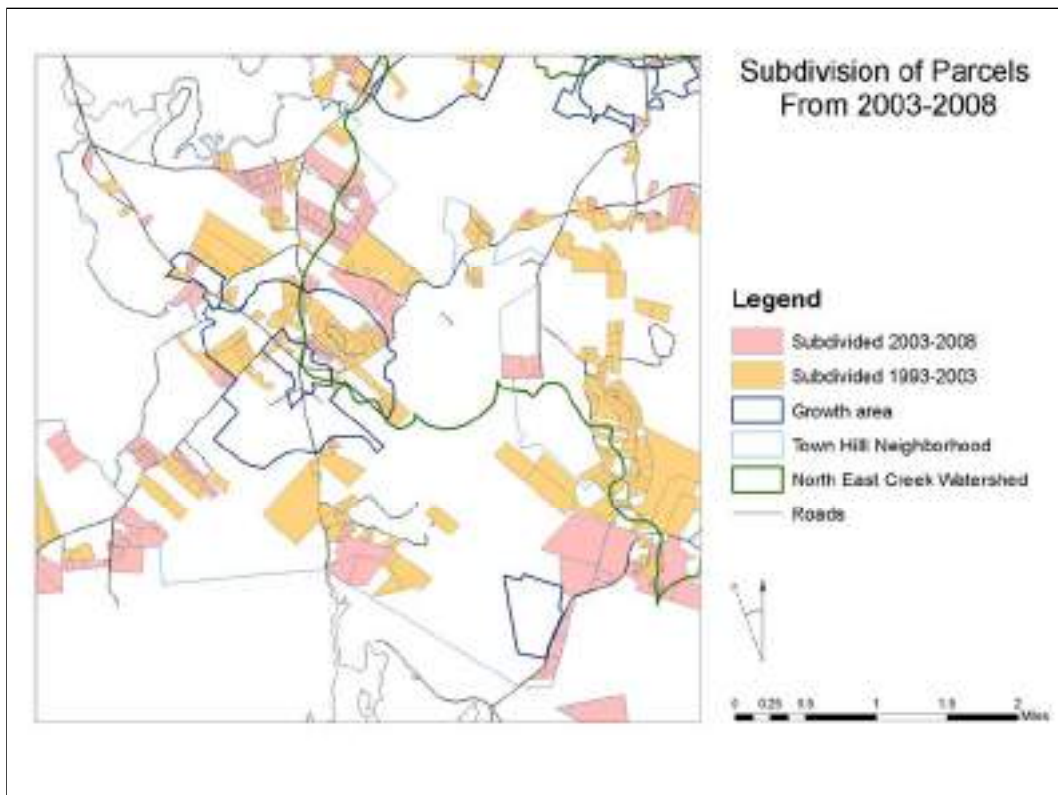
15 acre minimum

- No clustering provisions for parcels of land under 15 acres
- The kind of development the PUD creates is limited to large tracts of land

The PUD replaced the clustering ordinance in Bar Harbor. This means that it is now not possible to create clustered developments on smaller tracts of land due to the zoning and setback requirements. The only way retain village character and prevent sprawl in areas where there are not large tracts of land is to eliminate the minimum acreage requirement from the PUD ordinance. This would allow developers to create PUDs anywhere in Bar Harbor.



This is a map of parcels in Town hill that were subdivided from 1993-2003. Note how the divisions are spread out across the town.



This is a map of parcels in Town hill that were subdivided from 2003-2008. In these 5 years almost all of the divisions were outside of the growth area. There is a trend not only of large parcels being subdivided, but parcels under 15 acres as well.

The PUD is a tool which allows the town to see the kind of growth they want, and developers still make a profit. However, as it stands now the PUD is being under utilized. The Planning Department and Planning Board are working to amend the PUD in time for it to be voted on in town meeting in early November.

In Conclusion...

Important Considerations:

- Resources
- Infrastructure
- Regulations

Growth and development are inevitable and can bring great benefits or create many problems. Planning for growth now is necessary to control the shape it will take. What follows are important considerations when planning for the future of Town Hill.

Resources

- Open space
 - An open space plan could prioritize favorite places and focus development in a community-promoting village center.
- Character
 - Town Hill's traditional character could be preserved by creating a design review system for Town Hill.
- Soils
 - Preserving prime agricultural soils could help farming continue to be a part of Town Hill.
 - Soils in Town Hill make it necessary to consider water quality issues that may become problems in the future.

Town Hill has many resources to enjoy and protect:

Favorite open spaces in Town Hill are in danger of being changed by development. By creating a plan which prioritizes these favorite places, and focusing development in creating a community-promoting village center, Town Hill will have spaces for everyone to enjoy and that will enhance the area as a whole. Such a plan could include zoning changes to promote development in designated areas and conservation efforts to protect prime agricultural lands, shore access, and places of community-wide importance.

Town Hill currently has a very rural character. Preserving open space is one step that could be taken to preserve that character, as is creating a design review system for Town Hill.

Soils in Town Hill include some prime agricultural land, which is also prime development land. If farming is an important, some preservation of prime farmland soils might be a necessary step. Another important aspect of soils to consider is that they are suitable for 1-acre density development septic systems only in a very few areas.

Infrastructure

- A municipal sewer may become necessary in some areas as housing developments are built.
- The Route 102—Crooked Rd intersection could be improved in many ways.

Creating new and modifying existing infrastructure could address some of the current and future needs of Town Hill:

Soils in Town Hill are not well suited for 1-acre density development using septic systems and currently all residents of Town Hill depend on wells for their water supply. As development continues water quality may become a serious issue. The town might want to consider creating a municipal sewer for some areas.

The intersection of Route 102 and Crooked Road has long been known to be a dangerous place for vehicles and pedestrians. Modifying the intersection's configuration and adding sidewalks, crosswalks, and parking-lot lines could improve safety for all passing through. The State Department of Transportation needs to be convinced of the importance of this issue.

Regulations

- Zoning
 - Required road frontages and setbacks make it difficult to create new buildings like those that currently exist.
 - Revision of the Planned Unit Development Ordinance could make it a more viable, and thus a more often-chosen, option for developers.

Modifying existing regulations may be necessary to protect the character of Town Hill.

Current zoning laws are not conducive to creating development in Town Hill that fits with the rural character and protects valued resources.

Required road frontages and setbacks make it difficult to create new buildings like those that currently exist and are treasured as local landmarks.

In order to encourage more compact development that incorporates open space, it is imperative to revise the Planned Unit Development Ordinance as quickly as possible to make it a viable option for developers.



We thank the residents of Town Hill who gave us the opportunity to learn about their community. We hope our perspectives provide new insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the town. With a planned vision and optimism for the future, Town Hill could become an even more healthy, thriving community.

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