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**Appendices:** see [www.brunswickme.org/planning/compplan/compplan.htm](http://www.brunswickme.org/planning/compplan/compplan.htm)

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## **Introduction and Vision**

Updating the Comprehensive Plan presents a unique opportunity to look at Brunswick's values of ten years ago, examine how the Town has changed since the last Plan, ask about the community's values now, and look at how the Town can work to guide the inevitable ongoing changes.

It is Brunswick's values and vision as a community that have guided this Plan's major initiatives. As it grows and changes, Brunswick should continue to be a highly desirable community that facilitates the work and play of its diverse people -- the young and old, the working and retired, the well-off and those of lesser means.

This vision resulted in the eight policy areas found in the Plan, highlighting the essential elements of the community that require continuing attention. Brunswick needs strong schools, a vibrant downtown, a robust economy providing good jobs, protected natural resources, quality public facilities, and affordable housing.

To implement these policies, the Plan establishes several goals. First, overall, the Plan strengthens the Town's growth boundary. This is in response to the pattern of recent development, in which approximately half of all residential units have been built in the Rural Area on relatively large lots. This has resulted in the incremental loss of some of the community's highly valued habitats and natural resources, as well as the aesthetic and recreational value of this land. This Plan encourages policies to avoid sprawl and limits total new residential building permits in the Rural Area. Within the Town's Growth Area, this Plan articulates changes in zoning that will allow greater density to occur. Overall, this will encourage future growth to concentrate in the Growth Area, while preserving the Town's highly valued rural character.

An essential component of Brunswick's character is its gateways. Like many Maine communities, Brunswick is fortunate to still have a distinct sense of arrival and departure from this town to the next. Protecting the identity of Brunswick means acknowledging and maintaining these visually attractive transitions. A new overlay district for these gateways is included in the Plan.

Brunswick's downtown, located between the Androscoggin River and Bowdoin College, is the heart of this community. The vision for Brunswick is to maintain, enhance, and invest in the downtown and the surrounding core, to strengthen its presence as the community's social and cultural hub.

The community's investment in public education comprises the single greatest annual budget expenditure. Maine has identified attracting and retaining young adults as an urgent need in growing the state's economy and creating a high quality of life. Providing a superior public education enhances Brunswick's ability to attract young adults and families, creating a balanced community.

Attracting young people is an essential element in Brunswick's future economic growth. As technology has allowed jobs to become more portable, communities offering a high quality of life benefit from the mobility of young entrepreneurs who create economic opportunities. The Plan includes support of Brunswick's growing "creative economy" along with other essential actions to ensure a diverse and healthy local economy.

A healthy local economy includes the resiliency to weather short-term economic impacts. The unexpected closure of the Brunswick Naval Air Station (NASB) creates substantial economic and social impacts, but also offers a tremendous opportunity to set the course for the community's future. As Brunswick will suffer the primary impacts from this closure, with NASB occupying the center of the community, the more than 3200 acre NASB site must be redeveloped with Brunswick's public benefit as the main priority. The Plan includes goals and actions to work towards as the community begins the process of redevelopment.

The Comprehensive Planning process has provided an opportunity to evaluate the community's current needs in a changing environment, within which the NASB closure is particularly significant. Given an environment of change, long range planning continues to allow the community to remain focused on its goals. Brunswick's investment in planning for its future will reap benefits in achieving its vision of the future. This Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide a clear list of strategies with associated actions and designated entities responsible to the Town for their implementation, and offers the opportunity to measure the community's progress in achieving these goals.

The Update builds on and refines the policy directions of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan and the subsequent planning that the Town has undertaken in response to that plan.