

## Economy

### Conditions & Trends

(1) *The community's Comprehensive Planning Economic Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.*

Over the past decade, the Town's labor force increased by 113, which is greater than the increase of 48 people from 2000-2010. The unemployment rate has improved since the economic downturn in the previous decade, moving from 6.8% in 2010 to 4.7% in 2020. In 2020, 78 people in Bowdoinham's labor force were unemployed. This was 28 fewer people than in 2010.

<b>Bowdoinham Labor Force</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
2000	1,509	1,483	26	1.7%
2001	1,486	1,459	27	1.8%
2002	1,469	1,438	31	2.1%
2003	1,464	1,434	30	2.0%
2004	1,517	1,468	49	3.2%
2005	1,523	1,456	67	4.4%
2006	1,535	1,476	59	3.8%
2007	1,563	1,502	61	3.9%
2008	1,582	1,510	72	4.6%
2009	1,547	1,444	103	6.7%
2010	1,557	1,451	106	6.8%
2020	1,670	1,592	78	4.7%
Change	161	109	52	3%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Note: Annual Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force

Over the past decade, Sagadahoc County's labor force has increased by 504 people. The unemployment rate went from 6.8% in 2010 to 4.7% in 2020. At the end of the decade, the Town and County had the same unemployment rate for the second decade in a row. In 2020, 911 people in the Sagadahoc County labor force were unemployed and looking for work. This was 370 fewer people than in 2010.

<b>Sagadahoc County Labor Force</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
2000	18,795	18,305	490	2.6%
2001	18,500	17,932	568	3.1%
2002	18,206	17,566	640	3.5%
2003	18,312	17,595	717	3.9%
2004	18,509	17,827	682	3.7%
2005	18,460	17,656	804	4.4%
2006	18,721	17,965	756	4.0%
2007	18,959	18,222	737	3.9%
2008	19,208	18,323	885	4.6%
2009	18,741	17,388	1,353	7.2%
2010	18,755	17,474	1,281	6.8%
2011	19,142	17,875	1,267	6.6%
2012	19,163	17,946	1,217	6.4%
2013	19,092	18,010	1,082	5.7%
2014	19,077	18,218	859	4.5%
2015	19,058	18,386	672	3.5%
2016	19,240	18,672	568	3.0%
2017	19,434	18,898	536	2.8%
2018	19,557	19,068	489	2.5%
2019	19,591	19,185	406	2.1%
2020	19,259	18,348	911	4.7%
Change	464	3	421	2.1%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Note: Annual Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force

The Brunswick Labor Market Area (more recently designated as a Micropolitan Area) is almost twice the size of the labor force of Sagadahoc County. During the past two decades, the labor market area has been reduced by 680, with a decrease of 51 people between 2000-2010 and 629 fewer people between 2010-2020. The unemployment rate went from 6.9% in 2010 to 4.8% in 2020. In 2020, 1,360 people in the labor market area labor force were unemployed and looking for work. This was 751 fewer people than in 2010.

<b>Brunswick Labor Market Area / Micropolitan Statistical Area Labor Force</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
2000	34,704	33,765	939	2.7%
2001	33,993	32,950	1,043	3.1%
2002	33,417	32,218	1,199	3.6%
2003	33,365	32,041	1,324	4.0%
2004	33,865	32,619	1,246	3.7%
2005	33,784	32,322	1,462	4.3%
2006	34,371	32,992	1,379	4.0%
2007	34,904	33,552	1,352	3.9%
2008	35,327	33,739	1,588	4.5%
2009	34,575	32,115	2,460	7.1%
2010	34,653	32,272	2,381	6.9%
2020	34,024	32,394	1,630	4.8%
Change	-680	-1,371	691	2.1%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Note: Annual Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force. The Brunswick LMA/Micropolitan Area includes Brunswick, Harpswell, Dresden, Westport, Wiscasset, Arrowsic, Bath, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Georgetown, Perkins UT, Phippsburg, Richmond, Topsham, West Bath, and Woolwich.

The State labor force grew by 24,811 persons from 2000 to 2010 but shrank by nearly the same amount (20,701 people) between 2010 – 2020. While there were 18,483 fewer unemployed and looking for work from 2010 to 2020. The State unemployment rate fell to 5.4% in 2020, which was slightly higher than the unemployment rate in Bowdoinham, Sagadahoc County, and the Brunswick Labor Market Area.

<b>Maine Labor Force</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>
2000	672,440	650,385	22,055	3.3
2010	697,251	641,978	55,273	7.9
2020	676,550	639,760	36,790	5.4
Change	4,110	10,625	14,735	2.1%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Note: Annual Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force

Twenty-two new businesses located in Bowdoinham from 2010 to 2022, totaling 79 establishments. Further, Bowdoinham businesses employed 53 more employees in 2022 compared to 2010, bringing employment levels closer to 2005 reporting. Reported average wages in Bowdoinham workplaces have increased substantially by \$344 from 2005 levels.

<b>Bowdoinham Employment and Wages</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Average # of Establishments</b>	<b>Average Employment</b>	<b>Average Weekly Wage</b>
2005	43	256	\$550
2010	57	197	\$557
2022	79	250	\$894
Change	22	-6	\$344

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information

Average wages for those who worked in the County and State continue to be higher than for those who worked in the Town in 2005 and 2010, though the gap is closing. The increase in wages state-wide is significantly greater than the increase in Bowdoinham.

<b>State and County Employment and Wages</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Sagadahoc County Average Weekly Wage</b>	<b>Maine Average Weekly Wage</b>
2005	\$690	\$629
2010	\$837	\$718
2022	\$1,103	\$923
Change	\$413	\$294

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information

Despite significantly lower wages in Bowdoinham workplaces than in the State overall, the per capita income and mean household income are higher for Town residents than they are for residents of the County or State as a whole. Bowdoinham's higher income earners work for themselves, work outside of the Town, or have retirement income.

<b>Income Estimates</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Bowdoinham</b>	<b>Sagadahoc County</b>	<b>Maine</b>
2010	Per capita income	\$27,827	\$26,983	\$25,385
	Median Household Income	\$68,447	\$63,168	\$60,036
2020	Per capita income	\$38,663	\$35,226	\$33,774
	Median Household Income	\$92,270	\$68,039	\$59,489

Source: Census, American Community Survey

At 6.37%, Bowdoinham’s household poverty rate was half that of the State’s in 2009. Sagadahoc County’s household poverty rate is between the Town and State levels.

<b>Families Below Poverty Level 2021</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Bowdoinham</b>	<b>Sagadahoc County</b>	<b>Maine</b>
Number of Families	1,144	10,480	349,955
Families Below Poverty	112	425	2,947
% Below Poverty	7.20	9.70	6.60

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

The poverty level in 2020 was \$20,244 for a three-person family. See the next table for poverty levels by family size.

<b>U.S. Weighted Poverty Level by Family Size</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2020</b>
One person (unrelated individual)	\$10,956	\$13,171
Under 65 years old	\$11,161	\$13,465
65 years old and over	\$10,289	\$12,413
Two persons	\$13,991	
Householder under 65 years old	\$14,366	\$17,331
Householder 65 years old and over	\$12,968	\$15,644
Three persons	\$17,098	\$20,244
Four persons	\$21,954	\$26,695
Five persons	\$25,991	\$32,193
Six persons	\$29,405	\$37,027
Seven persons	\$33,372	\$42,605
Eight persons	\$37,252	\$47,650
Nine people or more	\$44,366	\$57,319

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

The largest occupational sectors in Bowdoinham were ‘management, professional and related occupations’, this is also the top sectors at the County and State level.

<b>Employment by Occupation in 2021</b>			
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Bowdoinham</b>	<b>Sagadahoc County</b>	<b>Maine</b>
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	751	7,752	270,644
Service occupations	164	3,086	115,875
Sales and office occupations	217	3,710	140,132
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	120	339	10,456
Natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations	123	2,397	72,099
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	260	1,908	82,437
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>19,212</b>	<b>691,643</b>

Source: 2020 Census, Occupation by Sex for the civilian employed population 16 years and over.

Total taxable retail sales increased significantly in Bowdoinham from 2010 to 2020 by 155%. The only sector that saw growth locally was auto transportation: motor vehicle related businesses. Due to the small numbers of businesses in Town, some sectors have non-disclosable data and so are combined into a remainder figure in the next table.

<b>Taxable Retail Sales in Bowdoinham (in Thousands of Dollars)</b>								
<b>Categories</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Change</b>
Business Operating	326.5	333.1	344.4	305	256.2	1,084.7	1,471.4	350%
Auto Transportation	1,393	1,538.2	1,967	2,122	2,877	2,824	3,629	160%
Remainder	1,948	2,042	2,385	1,899	2,371	2,290	4,250	218%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,667</b>	<b>3,913</b>	<b>4,696</b>	<b>4,326</b>	<b>5,504</b>	<b>6,199</b>	<b>9,350</b>	<b>155%</b>

Source: Maine Revenue Services. Sales Tax Reports

Notes: For confidentiality, categories with few businesses have been combined into the Remainder category.

Sagadahoc County recorded an increase of 14% in total taxable retail sales from 2015 to 2019. Growth was most pronounced in the food stores and business operating category, while the general merchandise was the only category with a slight decline of 3%. It would be expected that retail sales would be lower when considering the economic downturn associated with pandemic which started in 2020.

<b>Taxable Retail Sales in Sagadahoc County (in Thousands of Dollars)</b>						
<b>Categories</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
Business Operating	14,438	11,060	10,268	16,910	18,153	26%
Building Supply	45,185	13,938	13,936	49,000	50,432	12%
Food Stores	37,865	48,725	47,817	49,855	50,632	34%
General Merchandise	67,712	69,025	61,025	64,327	65,508	-3%
Other Retail	30,463	31,545	30,346	30,660	30,715	1%
Auto Transportation	67,656	10,932	10,931	81,543	82,054	21%
Restaurant & Lodging	65,647	71,448	73,549	77,950	78,668	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>378,859</b>	<b>403,494</b>	<b>401,356</b>	<b>419,835</b>	<b>433,303</b>	<b>14%</b>

Source: Maine Revenue Services. Sales Tax Reports

Maine Revenue Services category descriptions:

- Total Retail Sales: Includes Consumer Retail Sales plus special types of sales and rentals to businesses where the tax is paid directly by the buyer (such as commercial or industrial oil purchase).
- Business Operating: Purchases for which businesses pay Use Tax, i.e., for items that are used by the business in its operation (like shelving and machinery) and not re-sold to consumers.
- Building Supply: Durable equipment sales, contractors' sales, hardware stores and lumberyards.
- Food Stores: All food stores from large supermarkets to small corner food stores. The values here are snacks and non-food items only, since most food intended for home consumption is not taxed.
- General Merchandise: In this sales group are stores carrying lines generally carried in large department stores. These include clothing, furniture, shoes, radio-TV, household durable goods, home furnishing, etc.
- Other Retail: This group includes a wide selection of taxable sales not covered elsewhere. Examples are dry good stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, sporting good stores, antique dealers, morticians, bookstores, photo supply stores, gift shops, etc.
- Auto Transportation: This sales group includes all transportation related retail outlets. Included are auto dealers, auto parts, aircraft dealers, motorboat dealers, automobile rental, etc.
- Restaurant/Lodging: All stores selling prepared food for immediate consumption. The Lodging group includes only rental tax.

(2) *A brief historical perspective on how and why the current economy of the community and region developed.*

The growth of manufacturing, which had employed most in the workforce for generations, occurred principally in larger communities like Bath, Brunswick, and Portland, which benefited from coastal harbors, and inland along larger rivers like the communities of Lewiston, Auburn and Augusta. Improvement in the roadway networks, especially during the second half of the

twentieth century, allowed more people to live farther from their workplaces in search of less expensive land and housing. Service sector employment (both public and private, and in low, moderate and high wage occupations) has surpassed manufacturing over the past four decades. Commuting has sustained predominantly residential communities like Bowdoinham. Nevertheless, there are important businesses located in the Town that provide needed services to residents. There have been and continue to be opportunities for business development that is in keeping with the character of Bowdoinham like small-scale, traditional trades, agricultural, and home-based occupations. Telecommunications and improved broadband services allow more people to work where they want to, which is now often closer to where they have chosen to live. Key businesses that have closed since 2000: FHC, Inc., Hilltop Log Homes, a hardware store, and Downeast Credit Union. While the Town Landing restaurant closed during the last decade the business was only vacant for a couple of years and a thriving Three Robbers pub opened in 2019.

- (3) *A list of local and regional economic development plans developed over the past five years, which include the community.*

The Midcoast Economic Development District, which includes Sagadahoc County and surrounding areas, prepares annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) reports. These reports outline economic trends and inventory planning and projects underway that seek to improve the economy by creating or retaining employment and services, and proposals for which there is community interest and for which funding from the U.S. Economic Development Agency is possible. Bowdoinham projects and proposals were included in the 2018 and 2021 CEDs. Among these plans and projects were the Bowdoinham Waterfront Redevelopment Project, and the Merrymeeting Trail.

- (4) *Where does the community's population work and where do employees in your community reside? A description of the major employers in the community and labor market area and their outlook for the future.*

Most Bowdoinham residents who work do so within a 24-minute commute in Brunswick, Bath, or Bowdoinham, with 30% working in Bowdoinham. About a third of those working in Bowdoinham work from home (9.4% of Bowdoinham's working population). Considering commuting data for State and Sagadahoc County, it is assumed that the remainder of Bowdoinham's workforce comes from neighboring communities such as nearby communities in Sagadahoc, Cumberland and Lincoln Counties within 24 miles.



Commuting Characteristics of Bowdoinham 2021	
Workers	1,474
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK	
Car, truck, or van	
Drove alone	82.6%
Carpooled	7.3%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.7%
Worked from home	9.4%
Workers over 16 who did not work at home	1,335
Less than 5 minutes	0.0%
5 to 9 minutes	2.2%
10 to 14 minutes	0.9%
15 to 19 minutes	10.7%
20 to 24 minutes	39.6%
25 to 29 minutes	7.9%
30 to 34 minutes	13.3%
40 to 44 minutes	1.9%
45 to 59 minutes	5.2%
60 to 89 minutes	2.9%
90 or more minutes	13.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2021 Commuting Characteristics

Commuting Characteristics of Bowdoinham 2019 estimate	
PLACE OF WORK	
Worked in state of residence	96.5%
Worked in county of residence	36.4%
Worked outside county of residence	60.1%
Worked outside state of residence	3.5%
Bowdoinham	31.5%
Worked in place of residence	0.9%
Worked outside place of residence	30.6%
Not Bowdoinham	68.5%
Workers 16 years and over who did not work from home	1,465

Source: U.S. Census 2019 est. Commuting Characteristics

Most employers in Bowdoinham employ just a few people each. The next table shows local employers with five or more employees, as reported to the Maine Department of Labor. Town government and education provide many of the jobs available in Bowdoinham. Declining school enrollments and the poor economy will continue to stress local government and school districts to reduce expenditures, often through staff downsizing. Private sector employment depends also on the incomes of area residents and so may face continued difficulties until the regional, State and national economies improve.

<b>Employers in Bowdoinham with 5 or more employees each in 2020</b>			
<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Partial Address</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Employee Range</b>
Apple Creek Farm LLC	Millay Rd	Unclassified	10-19
Atlantic Organics	Port Point Rd	Professional and Technical Services	10-19
Blue Bell Farm LLC	Carding Machine Rd	Unclassified	10-19
Bowdoinham Community School	Cemetery Rd	Educational Services	20-49
Bowdoinham Country Store	River Rd	Accommodation and Food Services	5-9
Bowdoinham Fire Department	Post Rd	Public Administration	20-49
Brunswick Gastroenterology	Bay Rd	Health Care and Social Assistance	5-9
Cumberland County Glass	Pond Rd	Wholesale Trade	20-49
Ehs Advantage	Cairn Hill Rd	Health Care and Social Assistance	5-9
Five County Credit Union	Main St	Finance and Insurance	10-19
Harvest Tide Organics LLC	Ridge Rd	Unclassified	10-19
Judy Tuck	Preble Rd	Accommodation and Food Services	10-19
Robert's Auto Ctr Inc	Bay Rd	Other Services, Except Public Administration	5-9
Six River Farm LLC	Center Point Rd	Unclassified	10-19
T & H Excavation Inc.	Millay Rd	Construction	5-9
Taurus Systems Inc	River Rd	Information	5-9
Town of Bowdoinham	School St	Public Administration	20-49

Source: Maine Department of Labor. [Employer Locator](https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/employers2.html). Bowdoinham, ME. 2020 yr. [https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/employers2.html]

The largest single employer in the region remains the Bath Iron Works, with over 5,000 employees. It depends upon federal government contracts to build and repair military vessels. The medical sector provides a significant amount of employment (in low, moderate and high wage positions). Given the forecasted aging of the region's population, this sector is likely to continue growing regardless of the overall condition of the State or national economy. Retail and education are also noteworthy regional employers. A large component of these sectors is dependent upon markets outside of the region and State. For education, Bowdoin College attracts

qualified students who can afford its relatively high tuition or can receive loans or scholarships. For retail, LL Bean’s market is based on customers who live in the U.S. and abroad. Based upon solid reputations, both of these entities are poised to benefit from an upturn in the national economy should that occur.

<b>Brunswick Micropolitan Area Major Employers with 250+ employees each in 2021</b>		
<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Sector</b>
Bath Iron Works	Bath	Shipbuilding, repair
Bowdoin College	Brunswick	Education
Downeast Energy Corp	Brunswick	Energy Supplier
LL Bean Mfg	Brunswick	Manufacturers
Mid Coast Hospital	Brunswick	Medical, hospitals
Sweetser	Brunswick	Mental Health Provider
Walmart Supercenter	Brunswick	Retail

Source: Maine Department of Labor

The Brunswick Micropolitan Area includes Brunswick, Harpswell, Dresden, Westport, Wiscasset, Arrowsic, Bath, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Georgetown, Perkins UT, Phippsburg, Richmond, Topsham, West Bath, and Woolwich.

The State’s major private sector employers are located in service center communities like Augusta, Bangor, Bath, Brunswick and Portland. Most of these employers have multiple locations.

<b>Major Employers in Maine 2020</b>				
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Business Description</b>
1	MaineHealth	Statewide	18,001-15,500	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
2	Hannaford Bros	Statewide	8,001-8,500	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores
3	Wal Mart / Sam’s Club	Statewide	7,001-7,500	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters
4	Bath Iron Works Corp Gen Dyn.	Bath	5,501-6,000	Ship Building and Repairing
5	Eastern Maine Medical Center	Statewide	3,501-4,000	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals

(5) *A description of any economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts, in the community.*

Bowdoinham established a Natural Gas Pipeline Municipal Tax Increment Financing District and Development Program (TIF) for 20 years in 2000 which was renewed in 2019 for a total of 30 years. Further, the Town approved a 15-year CMP TIF in 2014 which was extended in 2023 for a

total of 30 years. The purpose of the TIFs is to attract quality employment and expand the municipal tax base. TIF revenue has been designated to support its administration by funding the position of Director of Planning and Development, planning initiatives for small businesses to expand employment opportunities for low and moderate-income persons, increasing and improving public infrastructure, mitigating adverse impacts from development, and removing regulatory barriers to economic and community development.

### Analysis

- (1) Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?*

Growth in the local economy had been inhibited by the poorly performing statewide and national economies. However, Bowdoinham has added several new small businesses and the size of the local labor force has experienced modest growth in the past ten years with a recent spike in local wages. Total unemployment at the Town, County and State levels have also decreased in the last decade. However, Bowdoinham residents have lower incomes on average compared to County residents and State residents. This is due in large part to an ability and willingness of Bowdoinham residents to commute to areas with greater employment opportunities outside of the Town. Importantly, as described in the Population and Demographics Chapter, the Town's population is aging, with more retirees who are not dependent upon the local economy for their income.

The municipal tax base is generated predominately from residential property taxes. See the Fiscal Chapter for more information.

- (2) Does the community have defined priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans?*

The priorities for economic development are generated through public input and the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) who advises the Select Board, which sets local economic development policies. The Economic and Community Development Director provides staffing and guidance. Priorities are formalized in the committee's work plan on an annual basis. Some of these priorities are communicated to the Midcoast Economic Development District, which drafts annual updates to its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report that covers a multi-county region. See the Conditions and Trends section.

The Town's current plans include revitalizing the village area, improving public infrastructure (sidewalks, internet) and amenities (Waterfront Park facilities), growing the Bowdoinham brand and increasing the number of visitors (through events, ecotourism and agri-tourism) that will encourage more people to use the village and support existing businesses.

- (3) If there is a traditional downtown or village center(s) in the community? If so, are they deteriorating or thriving?*

The Bowdoinham village area retains its historic architecture of civic, commercial, religious, and residential buildings. There have been signs of renewal in the village center. The Country Store underwent a major restoration in 2021 and has improved significantly. The gas station next door provides the necessary local service. Three Robbers Pub has been very popular and has been attracting people from outside of Bowdoinham. While a hardware store was not sustainable it has

been repurposed as a childcare facility in 2023. A new gallery has opened in the Knights of Pythias building which too contributes to village activity.

The liveliness of our village is enhanced through a variety of other activities. In the summer, the Farmers' Market brings people to our waterfront park from all over the area. Because the Market is a magnet, other ventures have been able to piggyback on its popularity such as artisans, the library, and local services. The Food Pantry brings families to the village, especially on the Wednesday food distribution day. Free concerts in the summer provide an opportunity for local musicians to perform, and local non-profits raise money by offering a supper for attendees. The Merrymeeting Arts Center's Gallery and Studio attract gallery visitors and art/pottery students.

A key feature of our village center are the waterfront parks along the Cathance River. Now that the town has developed Maily Park, where there is a public dock and restrooms, it is about to further develop an additional 20 acres as a multi-use park, we have assured an attractive asset for future use. See Transportation Chapter and Public Facilities Chapter for a description of these efforts.

*(4) Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, what steps has the community taken to support this industry?*

One of our greatest assets is outdoor recreation opportunities. Our "tourists" tend to be day visitors—cyclists, boaters, and hikers. The community has been deeply committed to enhancing outdoor opportunities. For instance, we have had representatives serving on the multi-town Merrymeeting Trail Committee which in 2023 made the recommendation to the Commissioner at the Department of Transportation to develop a rail/trail which passes right through the center of our village. It goes by our pub and general store and promises to bring visitors to our area.

Because Bowdoinham is located on Merrymeeting Bay, hunters and boaters have traditionally come to use this asset. Efforts to create a new paddle put-in facility right on the Bay are underway as of this plan. See the Recreation Chapter.

*(5) Do/should home occupations play a role in the community?*

Home businesses are a vital part of our economy in Bowdoinham. The Town has provided many supports for these primarily service businesses. There is a business directory on the town website that has been recently updated. It helps to direct people to local service providers. Bowdoinham Friends and Family on Facebook often has posts from local businesses and serves as a referral to providers. The Town has offered free workshops for entrepreneurs in the past and stands ready to offer business start-up guidance. There are packets of information for new businesses at the Town Office that help to guide people who wish to get started or locate in our town. There is also a small, local business loan fund that has helped many home businesses, including farms, to get needed equipment and funding.

*(6) Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?*

Because the village area has many restrictions for development, the most appropriate area for industrial development is at Exit 37 on I-295. There are several parcels in that area that have been for sale for several years. There is also a large parcel on Main Street that could be used. However, access to that parcel is awkward and it is in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Any new

facility would have to build its own wastewater system since there is no village sewer system. New development would have to go through a site plan review.

- (7) *Are public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?*

The small-scale and traditional type of development does not necessarily require significant public expenditure for new infrastructure. If large-scale development were sought three-phase power is needed along Pond Road to support the light manufacturing at the old Hilltop Log Homes facility. The Town does not have public sewer, which is a barrier for new development in the village area. In 2019 the Town commissioned a study which found that creating a village sewer system would be unfeasible. However, public water is available in the village area. Further, Broadband access throughout Town was made possible in 2020 through a 25-mile fiber optic network project which now serves all but one rural road in town. This allows for more home-based businesses and home occupations. See the Public Facilities Chapter and Existing Land Use Chapter for the limitations that this places on additional development.

The fundamental concern in providing new public facilities is cost. Current municipal revenues are not sufficient to upgrade services to subsidize new large-scale development. See the Fiscal Capacity Chapter for the Capital Investment Plan and for information on reserve accounts.

- (8) *If there are local or regional economic development incentives such as TIF districting, do they encourage development in growth areas?*

Tax increment financing (TIF) districts were established in 2000 and 2014, that have been instrumental in helping us to develop the waterfront area. They have also funded essential economic development support activities.

- (9) *How can/does the community use its unique assets such as recreational opportunities, historic architecture, civic events, etc. for economic growth?*

Our very active Historical Society purchased the former Grange Hall, renovated it, and has built it into an important community resource for events, meetings, and a secondhand bookstore for the library. The cluster of historic municipal buildings provides a hub of activity. It should be said that both the Town Hall and the Coombs Building (town offices and library) are in desperate need of repair and renovation. There are ongoing efforts to raise the money for this work. Bowdoinham is also a community of festivals and events. The Town annually hosts: The Ice and Smelt Festival in February, Open Farm and Studio Day in the July, Tour de Bowdoinham charity bike ride in August, the Celebrate Bowdoinham parade and festivities in September, and the Holiday Festival with craft fairs, fundraisers, and tree lighting in December. As mentioned before, the summer Farmers' Market and free summer concerts provide a hub of activity by the waterfront. Local organizations such as the Merrymeeting Arts Center, the Bowdoinham Guild of Artisans, the Food Pantry, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, the Historical Society, and the Library (and its new used bookstore, Merryreading Books), enrich the life of our community.

As we move into the future, our very special location and the natural beauty of our landscape will provide important opportunities for community building. The development of the new

park and paddle put-in on the Cathance River along with the creation of the Merrymeeting Rail Trail will solidify our town's reputation as a great place to walk, hike, boat, and recreate.