



# Town of Readfield 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update

## Readfield's Vision for the Future:

*The Town of Readfield is a scenic, dynamic and diverse community committed to fostering an inclusive, vibrant way of life for people of all backgrounds and ages. This vision commits to preserving the rural character of our community with a plan for a sustainable future.*

Readfield 1856



# What is a Comprehensive Plan?



## A Comprehensive Plan is:

At their most basic level, communities' complete comprehensive plans to prepare for the future. A comprehensive plan will include:

Review of current policies;

Review of community issues;

Encourage discussion amongst community members;

Help communities avoid problems and make decisions by providing a framework for decision making;

Guide the future of the town for the next ten years based on community input, and;

Provide a "snapshot" in time of the community's current conditions as well as determine where they want to be in the future and how they plan to achieve those goals.

## A Comprehensive Plan IS NOT:



Simply a response to state requirements rather than to the community's own need.

An ordinance, set of rules, or regulation.

A dust collector that sits on a shelf.

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# Why Have a Comprehensive Plan?

Communities in Maine have been creating land use plans since the early 1900s, and they have been an integral part of the state's structure of land use and zoning since the 1940s.

Comprehensive plans are required by state law, under the Growth Management Act of 1988, initiated to address unchecked growth and development sprawl, which was beginning to outpace local capacity for services.

Incentives only available to communities who have a certified comprehensive plan include:

- Enact legitimate zoning, impact fees, and rate of growth ordinances;
- Guide state growth-related capital investments towards designated growth areas;
- Require state agencies to comply with local zoning standards;

➤ Qualify for Site Location Development Act exemptions for certain growth-area developments;

➤ Qualify for authority to issue Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) and Site Location Development permits, and;

➤ Qualify for relaxed MaineDOT traffic permit standards for certain growth-area development.

In addition, towns with a certified plan receive priority for certain grants and other funding options. There are numerous grant and loan opportunities both state and federal, most of which have some sort of consideration for local comprehensive plans.

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## Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans tend to be general due to the broad scope of topics covered and length of time required for their completion. For this reason, they cannot, nor should they, include the level of detail or specificity as more focused, specific plans.

Comprehensive plans should provide clear recommendations, setting the course for direction without dictating a fixed action plan.

Clear recommendations, goals, and strategies presented in the plan will provide guidance in making future decisions about expected and unexpected situations.

Having a comprehensive plan also ensure consistency on the local and regional levels, resulting in coordination and efficiency.

Local, specialized plans, such as open space plans and downtown revitalization plans, should be consistent with the comprehensive plan, thus making them consistent with the state Growth Management Act.

Since the comprehensive plan is so broad, everything from zoning approvals, ordinance rewrites, land acquisition, to economic development incentives will all be connected back to the plan.

Since the plan is ultimately a cumulative effort of data collection input from residents, town officials, business owners, volunteer organizations, developers and more, it represents far more than just recommendations and a compilation of data.

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## Other Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan



Analyzes existing conditions and emerging trends, illustrates a plan for future development and conservation.



Provides strategies for sustainability and recommends steps for implementation.



Serves as a foundation for public policy and future land use decisions, while providing ongoing framework for public investment and private development.



Identifies fiscally and environmentally appropriate areas for future growth and investment.

- The plan is structured on the understanding that land use, transportation, fiscal means, housing, and environmental goals can only be met when thought of together.
- Prudent future land use choices can balance additional growth, preserve the essential community character, and protect natural resources.
- Designate areas where future development should be encouraged and where it should be discouraged, which is an essential element to preserving natural resources, agricultural land, and open space, while promoting a thriving town.

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## Community Input: Why Readfield Needs YOU

It is for all these reasons why you are here as a resident of Readfield. The Readfield Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for future land use, development, growth, preservation of natural resources, and to determine areas for improvements, all with goals and strategies to make them happen, based on community values and input.

The success of Readfield's Comprehensive Plan will ultimately be measured by implementation.

It will take the entire community working with elected and appointed officials, to make Readfield's vision a reality.

Residents can stay informed and involved in all stages of the plan by visiting the website, completing a survey, and coming to town meetings.

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### The Main Topic Areas Covered by the Comprehensive Plan:

- Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural
- Community Profile
- Local Economy
- Housing
- Public Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Rural Economic Resources
- Natural and Water Resources
- Fiscal Capacity
- Existing Land Use
- Future Land Use

\*\*SURVEY RESULTS IN THESE SECTIONS ARE AS OF JANUARY 24, 2023

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# Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

## Survey Responses for Readfield's History:

Readfield maintained 3 of the original 5 historic village centers. They are Readfield Depot, Readfield Corner, and Kents Hill.

As of 2020, Maine Historic Preservation Commission has documented one prehistoric archeological site where a stone tool was found along the shores of Lovejoy Pond, and one historic archeological site containing a petroglyph known as the "Know-Nothing Inscription".

The National Register of Historic Places list includes two stand alone structures, the Jesse Lee Church and the Union Meeting House (a.k.a. the Brick Church). It also includes the Kents Hill Historic District, which is Readfield's only historic district.

Beyond state requirements, Readfield currently has no regulatory requirement for surveys in areas that may contain historic or archeological resources prior to development.

Respondents were appreciative of the Historical Society and Readfield's efforts in preserving historic buildings.

46% of respondents felt Readfield's community history and historic buildings were very important or important aspects of the town.

Several respondents praised the Heritage Days, while noting they could be rejuvenated.

In an open-ended question, one survey respondent suggested the town consider creating a historic/architectural ordinance for new construction, renovations to older homes, and downtown buildings of significance, for the purpose of retain the character of the town.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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## Population Trends

	2020 Data:	2010 Data:	Age Trends Since 2000:
Population:	2,597	2,598	• Age category of under 5 decreased by 60%
Age Median age:	44.7	43.4	• Age category 25–34 increased 63%
Total households:	977	998	• Age category 35-44 decreased by 27%
Family households:	699	738	• Age category 45-54 increased 6%
Nonfamily households:	278	260	• Age category 55-64 decreased 9%
Average household size:	2.58	2.55	• Age category 65+ increased 54%

Readfield shares a school with Wayne, Mount Vernon, and Manchester (RSU #38). Enrollment has been declining steadily for the past several years. There has been an 11% decline in enrollment from 2020 to 2022. This trend is not projected to continue; school enrollment has been projected to increase.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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## Population Trends in Survey Respondents

Where survey respondents live: 27% Readfield Corner, 21% The Depot, 18% other, 15% Maranacook Lake, 13% Kents Hill, 10% Torsey Pond.

How long respondents have lived in Readfield: 42% 25+ years, 24% 3-9 years, 21% 10-24 Years, 14% less than 3 years.

Before moving to Readfield: 69% within Maine, 30% outside of Maine, 0.80% outside the U.S.

Respondents were: 90% year-round property owners, 6% non-resident property owner, 4% other, 2% year-round resident renting in Readfield, 0.80% occasional use resident and property owner, 0% occasional use resident renting property.

Number of people in each age group who live with respondent: 0-4 years old- 9 individuals, 5-17 years old- 37 individuals, 18-22 years old- 28 individuals, 23-35 years old- 34 individuals, 36-45 years old- 31 individuals, 46-64 years old- 101 individuals, 65+ years old- 93 individuals.

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## Readfield's Economic Statistics

Median household income: \$86,156

Per capita income: \$40,608, both household and per capita are higher than the state and county average.

1,477 individuals in Readfield's labor force: 40% are women and 60% are men. In 2000, the labor force was made up of 46% women and 54% men.

Readfield's unemployment rate is 2.3%. In 2005, the unemployment rate was 4.5%.

91% of Readfield residents commute out of town for work. Most work in the Augusta Micropolitan Area or Lewiston.

43.4% of Readfield residents held jobs in the educational services, health care and social assistance field.

Education attainment: 14.6%- High school or equivalent, 13% Some college/Associates Degree, 29% Bachelor's Degree or higher.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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# Local Economy Survey Responses

- Many respondents prioritized preserving and maintaining Readfield's natural resources and rural character over increased economic development.
- Land use types that should be encouraged: 28% industrial/light industrial, 37% commercial, 85% agricultural uses, 66% recreational uses, 84% residential, 72% conservation.
- The top choices for types of businesses residents want to see in Readfield: 31% restaurants, 30% grocery store, 29% cafe/bakery, 23% gas station, 10% pharmacy.
- Most residents feel the amount, location, and type of commercial development in Readfield is in keeping with the character and additional large scale commercial and industrial development would not be supported.
- Generally, most respondent were not in favor of more cannabis establishments or solar farms.
- 64% of respondents were opposed to rezoning residential property to increase commercial areas; 20% were in favor of rezoning; 16% had no opinion.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

# Housing Statistics

				1,320 Total housing units in Readfield
				977 Occupied housing units
				80% of houses are owner occupied
				93% of houses in Readfield are single family homes
				\$330,000- median home price in 2020
				\$202,000- median home price in 2010
				\$279,398- home price affordable to those earning median income
				59.1% of households in Readfield cannot afford a median priced home
				81.5% of renters in Readfield are paying 30% or more of their income on housing

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

# Housing Survey Responses



Overwhelmingly, most survey respondents indicated that the rural residential atmosphere, low density population, and natural resources were the main reasons they chose to live in Readfield.

65% feel the amount of development has been in keeping with the town's character.

Preferable affordable housing initiatives: 51% permanent elderly housing, 54% non-conventional (accessory apartments), 38% traditional multifamily dwellings.

Most opposed affordable housing initiatives: 52% greater density development, 62% decrease in single family acreage requirements.

55% did not support expenditure of town funds on affordable housing; 34% supported this initiative; 12% had no opinion.

47% did not support limiting the size of residential structure, 42% supported this, 11% had no opinion.

On decreasing minimum lot size to encourage density: 54% keep the same, 16% smaller lot sized, 17% larger lot sizes, 12% no opinion.

The response was split evenly when asked if they felt there was a need for alternatives to single family housing.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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# Public Facilities and Services Statistics

Buildings owned by the Town of Readfield: Town Hall (Gile Hall), Readfield Community Library, and the Fire Station.

There are 25 active volunteer fire fighters, with a capacity for 30. The town's Insurance Safety Officer (ISO) rating is generally a "6," which is a very good rating for a rural town.

Readfield is part of a 5-town mutual aid, including: Mount Vernon, Wayne, Vienna, and Fayette.

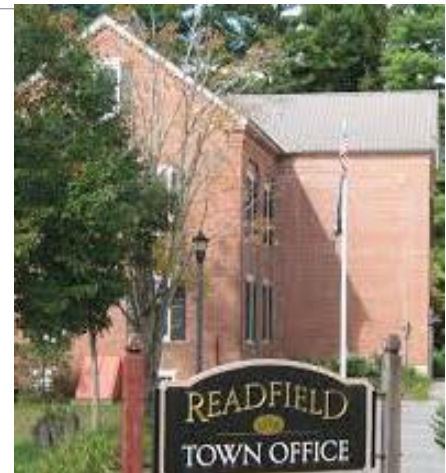
Ambulance services are provided through Winthrop.

Readfield relies on the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office and Maine State Police for law enforcement.

The transfer station in Readfield serves Wayne and Fayette as well.

The town does not have public water or sewer except for a small, limited public water system in Readfield Corner that serves approximately 22 homes and businesses.

Other town amenities include a town beach, a Town Forest/Farm, several cemeteries, a local elementary school, a regional middle and high school (RSU #38), and numerous recreational and open space properties.



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# Public Facilities and Services Survey Responses

Maintaining the public beach was a top priority amongst respondents.

The following were ranked highest as very important: 74% fire department, 42% solid waste and recycling, 41% trails and conservation, 40% public works, 38% library, 32% code enforcement and planning, 29% general assistance and heating assistance, 26% recreation programming and youth sports, 23% animal control, 19% cemetery and sexton, 18% age friendly and older resident support services, 7% government TV and meeting recordings.

Things residents would like to see: expand the Fairgrounds, create community centers, handicap access at all public buildings, disc golf course, and a dog park.

75% of respondents do not feel there is a need for additional police services; 15% feel there is a need, and 10% had no response to this question.

52% of respondents do not feel there is a need for additional Emergency Medical Services; 31% feel there is a need; 17% did not respond to this question.



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## Transportation

Approximately 47 miles of public roadway.

Over 100 privately owned roads, most commonly camp roads.

Routes 17, 41, 135 & North Road are state maintained.

One High Crash Location (HCL): on Route 17 at the intersection by Readfield Corner.

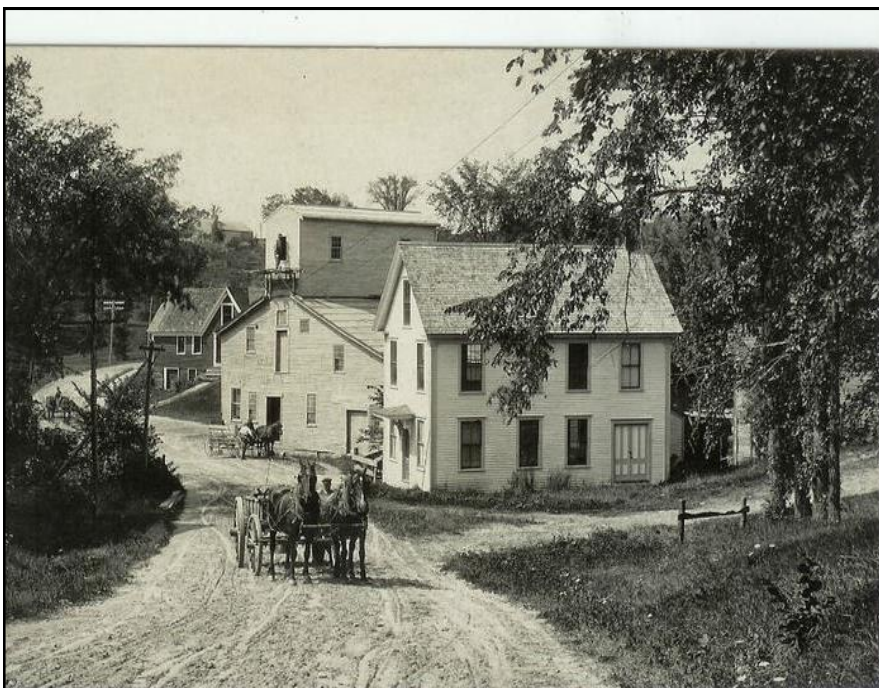
One blinking traffic light at the intersection of Routes 17 and 41.

Most of the summer and winter maintenance is contracted out.

The town plows a total of 34.26 miles of road in the winter.

The town utilizes a road management plan as part of the Capital Investment Plan, which documents every road and includes a resurfacing schedule.

Public transportation is limited to KVCAP and Neighbors Driving Neighbors, which was established in 2022.



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## Transportation Survey Responses

83% of respondents are satisfied with the network of town roads, 12% are not, 5% had no opinion.

Ranked as 'very important' for future transportation: 39% snow removal, 30% sidewalks in village areas, 23% bike and pedestrian paths, 19% focused transportation for those with limited mobility, 7% paving publicly owned gravel roads, 5% general public transportation options like bus services, 0% building additional roads.

Respondents noted their appreciation of the town's sidewalks in open ended questions.

Respondents noted the following future improvements: bike and walking trails and sidewalks in village areas.

In open ended responses, many felt that speeding was an issue in Readfield.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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## Recreation

Readfield is becoming the unofficial regional recreation hub, and with good reason!

Readfield has a town beach and boat access to Maranacook Lake, Torsey Pond, and Echo Lake (two miles over the town line into Mt. Vernon).

One of Readfield's most notable assets is the wide availability of recreational opportunities. All combined, there are 1,337 acres of conserved land in Readfield across multiple entities and ownerships.

Maranacook Community School, Readfield Elementary, Readfield Beach, and the Fairgrounds provide access to various sports fields, as does privately owned Kents Hill.

The Age Friendly Committee initiated all ages recreational programs through grants and other funding.

Readfield Recreation Committee coordinates with other towns to offer a joint recreation program.

ALL

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## Recreation Survey Results

When asked what they liked best about Readfield, the most popular answer was the numerous recreational opportunities (trails, Fairgrounds, lakes/ponds, beach, ball fields, etc.).

Residents feel there is a need for a bike/pedestrian paths through town (54%).

Respondents favored maintaining the town beach, developing a park and recreation area for all ages, preserving open space, continuing to purchase conservation areas, and support community-based agriculture.

48% of respondents felt there was enough open space, 34% felt more was needed, 11% didn't respond, and 10% responded 'other' and wrote a response, most of which was in favor of preserving specific areas.

Rankings for 'very important' recreational categories: 53% hiking/walking trails, 40% Readfield Beach, 23% tied between boating access and cross-country skiing, 22% park/playgrounds, 21% tied between access for fishing and recreation/community center, 16% softball/baseball fields, 14% outdoor basketball courts, 13% swimming areas/pools, 11% outdoor tennis courts, 9% skating/hockey rink.

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## Rural Economic Resources

Traditionally, the principal farming enterprise in Readfield was dairy.

2,509 acres have been identified as Prime Farmland Soils with another 812 acres identified as Farmland of Statewide Importance; this is approximately 16% of the total acreage in Readfield.

Farm size and traditional farming styles are declining in favor of smaller, specialty farms.

Agriculture is generally allowed in every zoning district in Readfield.

Readfield adopted a Food Sovereignty Ordinance to support and encourage local food production.

Readfield collaborates with the Kennebec Land Trust, Maine Farmland Trust, and Land for Maine's Future to protect farm and forest land.

32 parcels are enrolled in the Farmland Tax Law, an increase of 77.8% since 2010.

9 parcels are enrolled in the Open Space Tax Law; an increase of 28.6% since 2010.

70-80 % of Readfield is covered by forestland.

79 parcels (3,350 acres) are enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law; an increase of 25.4% since 2010.

The town owns a 110-acre parcel, known as the Town Farm/Forest. It is conserved for natural and historic features, recreation, and timber production.



ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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# Rural Economic Resources Survey Responses



65% of respondents felt it was very important to preserve community-based agriculture.



85% of respondents felt agricultural uses should be encouraged; 57% felt local farms and farm stands should be encouraged over other businesses; both were the respondents' top choices.

70% of respondents chose farmlands when asked what natural resource areas should be protected.

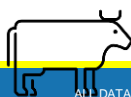


When asked what specific tracts of land should be targeted for conservation, large farms and open farmland were top priority.



Many respondents appreciate Readfield's rural qualities and character, and natural features, all within close proximity to larger service areas.

What respondents liked least pertaining to agricultural land uses was the conversion of old farmland into solar farms.



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## Land and Water Resources



4 'candidate deer wintering areas' –designated as such until a formal survey is conducted.

20+ inland waterfowl/wading bird habitats.

Home to multiple species of Special Concern including Bald Eagle, Stiff Arrowhead, and Broad Beech Fern, an endangered plant species known as Small Whorled Pogonia, and an exemplary natural community of northern hardwood forest.

Multiple unfragmented habitat blocks through conserved land and private land ownership.

Approximately 37 streams and brooks, totaling about 25 miles of moving water.

7 ponds and 2 lakes as well as multiple watersheds, including the Cobbossee Watershed District, of which Readfield is a member.

Home to multiple vernal pools and wetlands.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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## Land and Water Resources Survey Results

One of the most obvious, unanimous trends in both surveys was for the continued protection of natural and water resources, through the preservation of open space, development of parks, and acquisition of conservation areas. This was evident in both the open-ended questions and the multiple-choice questions.

When asked about the importance from a list of aspects for Readfield community life, preservation of natural and water resources ranked the highest at 65% and 70% respectively.

81% felt there were specific natural resource areas deserving of preservation.

Ranked as 'very important' to preserve: 86% lakes, 70% farmland, 63% wetlands, 58% streams, 57% woodlands, 43% ledges and ridges.

48% feel Readfield has enough open space, 34% feel more is needed, 11% had no opinion, and 10% had specific areas or uses in mind for open space, including less restrictions on hunting.

On using tax money to purchase and maintain open space: 48% felt the town should use tax money for this purpose, 40% felt the town should not, 11% had no opinion.

Rankings for importance of open space categories: 24% active (sports), 56% passive (trails), 55% habitat and wildlife protection, 49% protection of stream belts, 50% wetlands protection, 46% protection of town aesthetics, 38% protection of large, unfragmented tracts, 22% more boating and fishing access, 34% protection of ridges and hilltops.



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## Fiscal Capacity

- Readfield's Tax Base increased by 2% from 2010 to 2020 as a result of new construction (including renovations and additions, and appreciation in real estate values).
- Readfield's Tax Base consist mostly of residential and seasonal properties, with a relatively small percentage of commercial and industrial contribution, and a fairly large portion of rural, undeveloped land.
- At least 25% of Readfield's valuation comes from waterfront properties on Maranacook Lake. Seasonal homes provides a significant tax revenue for the town, particularly when occupied year-round.
- Studies have shown that degradation of water quality has a negative effect on property values (which shifts tax burden to non-lakefront properties).
- By far, the largest holdings are Kents Hill and Maranacook Community Schools.
- The largest taxpayer is Saunders Manufacturing Co., but this company only accounts for a small fraction of the total taxable assessed value.
- Single-family homes fail to provide sufficient revenue to offset public service costs, especially for education.
- Undeveloped land has made up for the drain of residential development because it requires fewer services.
- Tax exempt properties account for a large portion of the town's valuation (more than 10%). This increases taxes for taxable property owners, especially homeowners.
- Readfield's mill rate in was 2000 was 18.6 mills, in 2010 it was 15.4 mills, in 2020 it was 19.55 mills.
- In 2020, the cost of education paid for by the town was \$3,710,394 or 76% of total expenditures, with the remainder going to operate the town.
- The statutory debt limit for all borrowing combined is 7.5% of the state valuation for the town. Readfield's state valuation was \$282,500,000 in 2020.
- Readfield's combined long-term debt in 2020 of \$2,921,555 represents only 1% of state valuation.

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## Fiscal Capacity Survey Results

45% of respondents felt the current amount of residential development was 'about right', 7% too little, 14% too much, 34% no opinion.

34% of respondents support the expenditure of town funds to create affordable housing, 55% did not support this, 11% had no opinion.

48% of respondents felt the town should use taxpayer money to purchase and maintain open space, 40% felt the town should not use taxpayer money for this, 11% had no opinion.

The following ranked the highest as very important for capital investment categories: 21% recreational facilities, 16% purchase open space, 14% improve access at public properties/buildings, 13% develop/build community/youth center, 11% improve transfer station, 5% improve municipal buildings.

Respondents felt the level of spending on municipal infrastructure and services was 'just right'.

In open ended questions, respondents noted concern over high taxes.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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## Existing Land Use

Readfield is comprised of 21,120 acres; approximately 1,280 are surface waters (5.8%).

The villages of Readfield Corner, The Depot, and Kents Hill are the most densely settled residential areas, although density is increasing on the lake shores and most commercial development along Route 17.

Readfield has a complete and thorough Land Use Ordinance that is updated regularly. It includes Shoreland Zoning and subdivision regulations.

The town employs a part-time, fully certified Code Enforcement Officer to carry out and uphold the Land Use Ordinance. Readfield's Planning Board reviews major developments and zoning amendments.

Readfield's Land Use Ordinance divides the town up into ten zoning districts, each with its own set of standards:

Village	Shoreland Residential
Village Residential	Resource Protection
Academic	Stream Protection
Rural	Commercial/Industrial
Rural Residential	Mobile Home Overlay

Currently, the Village District, Village Residential District, and the Academic District make up the designated growth areas (see map on last slide).

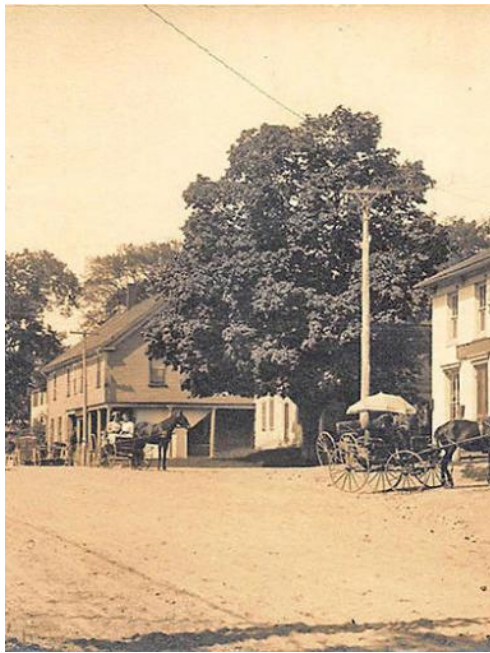
There is a noticeable upward trend in the number of permits issued since 2016.

The location of residential development, in recent years, is not in the growth areas; it has been occurring in more rural areas.



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# Existing Land Use Survey Results

Several survey respondents acknowledged Readfield's efforts at proactive land use planning.

Residents would like to see continued investment in shared community spaces.

45% of respondents feel the current amount of residential development was 'about right', 7% too little, 14% too much, 34% no opinion.

52% feel development has been in keeping with Readfield's character, 28% feel it is not, 21% have no opinion.

In response to what residents liked best about Readfield, a common theme was rural character, quiet, small town, and the community feeling, within driving distance to larger service areas.

When asked what they liked least (regarding land use): lack of places to socialize, lack of village area, few small businesses, properties with junk in their yards, restrictions on land use, cannabis establishments, run down parts of town, and solar farms, were the most common responses.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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# Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan will:

Evaluate currently designated Growth Areas to determine if they need to be changed.

Evaluate current land use trends and patterns to be sure they align with the community's vision.

Evaluate the town's effectiveness in protecting critical habitat and natural resources.

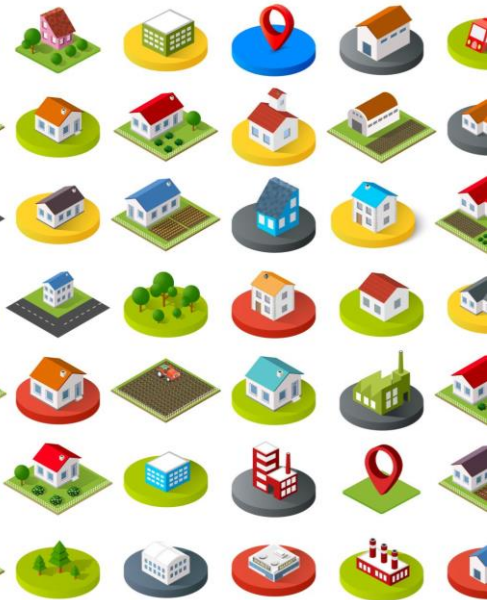
Consider the rate of residential and commercial development.

Be based on community input.

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## Future Land Use Survey Results



Types of affordable housing ranked 'very important': 24 % elderly housing, 11% accessory apartments, 10% residential life care, 6% apartments buildings, 5% condos.

43% of respondents supported limiting the size of residential structures in town; 46% did not, 11% had no opinion.

16% of respondents supported decreasing lot size to increase density, 17% supported larger lot sizes to decrease density, 55% felt lot size should be kept as it is, 13% had no opinion.

Type of establishment rated 'very important' to create: 31% restaurant, 30% grocery store, 29% café/bakery, 23% gas station.

Rezone existing residential areas to increase commercial: 64% no, 20% yes, 16% no opinion.

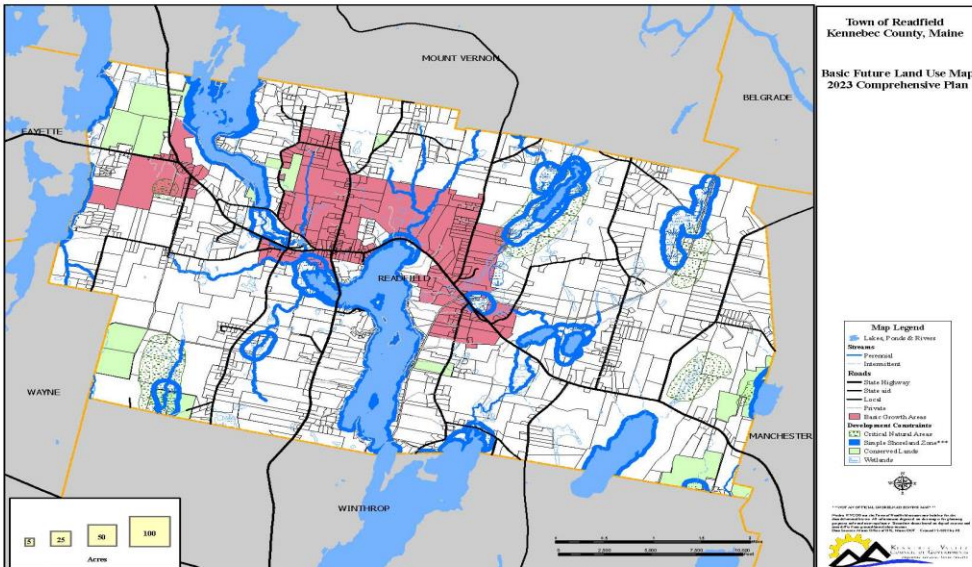
74% would not support large scale commercial or industrial facilities, 19% would support this, 7% had no opinion.

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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### Town of Readfield Kennebec County, Maine

#### Basic Future Land Use Map 2023 Comprehensive Plan



**Map Legend**

- Water, Ponds & Rivers
- Streams
- Perennial
- Intermittent
- Roads
- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private
- Basic Growth Area
- Developement Concentration
- Central Business Area
- Single Use Land Zone\*\*
- Conservation Land
- Wetlands

**Scale**

0 25 50 100  
Acres

0 100 200  
Feet

0 100 200  
Meters

ALL DATA IS FROM 2020 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

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