

## Existing Land Use

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### **Vision:**

**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.**

As a community grows, its character is defined by the use of its land area. The community's self-image as a small city, farm town, or suburb is molded by the actions of its residents in the development of their various enterprises.

Most people live in a certain area because they appreciate the character of the community. However, a community's character can shift over time. In order to prevent Readfield from becoming a community in which the residents do not wish to be part, the shift needs to be managed. This often means walking a fine line between letting residents develop land in their own best interest, and imposing limits to protect the community's interest.

Examples of trends that can change a community's character include loss of open space, loss of productive farmland, increasing cost of public services, or lack of vitality in the village center. For these types of trends, adjustments can be made to manage growth and avoid negative results.

The Town of Readfield fits the classic example of a small New England town. With its village centers, beautiful historic homes, and large tracts of undeveloped agricultural land, Readfield has successfully preserved its quintessential rural character. Leadership and thoughtful planning contribute to the town's well-preserved character, as do location. As a bedroom community for Augusta, there is limited demand for large-scale retail uses or big subdivisions. Yet, Readfield's proximity to larger cities means residents do not have far to travel to meet their needs or find employment.

Readfield does have challenges in its future, as do all towns. Growth and change are inevitable parts of life and if the town wants to continue to preserve its unique historic character and small-town feel, it will have to find a balance for a sustainable future.

### **Community Overview:**

Readfield is comprised of about 21,120 acres including approximately 1,280 acres or 5.8 percent surface water. The town's landscape is mostly open farmland, forest, and scenic views of lakes, which account for the rural character.

Like many towns in Maine, Readfield is the culmination of a historical growth pattern based on settlement over the course of some 250 years. Initial settlement came about in the form of homesteaders, intent on converting land from forest to farmland to sustain their families. Small industries followed after the farmers settled the land. The advent of

railroad and later automobile introduced competition and the industries capitulated; however, some of the small villages resulting from the industries survived and are still in existence today.

The Existing Land Use Chapter serves to review the current land use patterns and development in Readfield. Similar to many rural municipalities in central Maine, Readfield can be characterized as a rural residential community within commuting distance to regional hubs including Augusta, Lewiston and Auburn. Readfield remains committed to preserving this rural residential character while simultaneously allowing controlled, small-scale growth and development consistent with the community's vision. Smaller commercial developments are encouraged, especially within the mixed-use Village Districts and Rural Districts. Strip development, which is viewed as a step away from the rural residential character of the town, has been avoided.

### **Settlement Patterns:**

Readfield's current day land uses reflect a typical suburban and rural community. A sizeable portion has been developed along the town's highways and lake shores. A review of recent building permits indicates no particular pattern for overall development; much of it has been scattered throughout town rather evenly. Suburban style development has increased and forest land under active management has decreased.

Areas of urban development (contiguous developed parcels) are not widespread in Readfield; but they do form a distinct pattern of settlement. The villages of Kents Hill, Readfield Corner, and Readfield Depot are categorized as "urban" land cover. Maranacook Lake and the eastern shore of Torsey Pond are also areas of denser development.

Readfield's relatively small, but stable population over the past few decades has allowed the town to avoid the sprawl beyond what exists. The distance from I-95 has resulted in no commercial clusters that are often associated with interchanges in a town.

### **Residential Land Uses:**

Residential uses are most concentrated in the villages of Readfield Corner, Readfield Depot, and Kents Hill. While these villages remain the most densely settled areas in town, they are no longer the developmental powerhouses they once were. Residential development has largely shifted to lakefronts, along major travel corridors, and more rural areas, as a result of the abundant supply of land and the ease of access brought on by good road systems. There are currently no particular areas of dense development in rural areas that are a threat to natural resources.

Recently, the shores of both Maranacook and Torsey Lakes have seen high density residential development. While there does not seem to be a trend in conversion of seasonal to year-round homes, it does happen. These conversions often go unreported to the town and happen infrequently, so tracking is not efficient.

## **Subdivision Developments:**

New subdivisions typically reflect patterns in development throughout town and beyond. Subdivisions are regulated in Readfield by the town's Land Use Ordinance, which reflects the State Statutory Ordinance on subdivisions.

The analysis and statistics on the number of subdivisions in Readfield is based on the state definition of "subdivision". Maine defines subdivision as:

*The division of a tract or parcel of land into 3 or more lots within any 5-year period that begins on or after September 23, 1971. This definition applies whether the division is accomplished by sale, lease, development, buildings or otherwise. The term "subdivision" includes the division of a new structure or structures on a tract or parcel of land into 3 or more dwelling units within a 5-year period, the construction or replacement of 3 or more dwelling units on a single tract or parcel of land and the division of an existing structure or structures previously used for commercial or industrial use into 3 or more dwelling units within a 5-year period.*

For comparison, the state does not consider the following to be subdivisions:

1. Gifts to [of land] relatives,
2. Transfer to governmental entity,
3. Transfer to conservation organizations,
4. Transfer of lots for forest management, agricultural management, or conservation of natural resources,
5. Unauthorized subdivision lots in existence for at least 20 years.

As there are specific details relating to what constitutes a subdivision and what does not that are outside the scope of this plan, review of the enabling statutes is suggested (MRS Title 30-A §4401 et seq. Municipal Subdivision Law, and MRS Title 12, §682-B. Exemptions from Subdivision Definition).

In the 1960s, prior to Readfield's adoption of their Land Use Ordinance, large parcels along the shores of Maranacook and Torsey Lakes were subdivided and divided up with very small camp lots. Corresponding with the population increase in the 1970s (see Demographics Profile Chapter), subdivision activity at this time, both on the shoreland and upland, was at a peak. This trend continued with the ratio between total acreage of a subdivision and the number of approved lots gradually rising until 1977, whereupon minimum building lot size standards increased.

In the 20-year period between 1985 and 2004, the average number of lots resulting from subdivisions per year was approximately 6. The average rate of new home construction over that same time period was 15 homes per year. This means that only 40 percent of all new building lots were the result of subdivisions; more than half of the new homes in that 20-year period were not related to subdivisions.

**TABLE 1: APPROVED SUBDIVISIONS FROM 1914 TO 2023**

Subdivision Index--Town of Readfield	Location	# Of Lots	Total Acres	Date
Tibbetts Farm	No info available			1914
Campus Point	West Shore Maranacook	11	3	1949
Lazy Loon/Colony	East Shore Maranacook	48	unknown	1950
Lake Maranacook East Shore	East Maranacook			1952
Aldrich's Shore (Touisset Shores)	North Shore Maranacook	15	8	1961 - 65
Thorp Lakeshores	East Shore Maranacook	47	11	1963
Maranacook Lake Shore Phase I & II	West Shore Maranacook	140	unknown	1965
Nobus Point	West Shore Maranacook			1969
Risen Camp	No info available			1969
Bryant Heights Subdivision	Off Sturtevant Hill Road- Russell Road	19		1971
Pine Rest (Crest - Bliss)	East Shore Maranacook	10	5	1971
Chase on Torsey	East Shore Torsey	8	8	1972
Torsey Land (Rourke/Merrill)	West Shore Torsey	5	5	1972
William Berry Subdivision	Plains Road	2	3	1973
Country Vistas	Thundercastle Road	16	22	1973
Lake View	West Shore Maranacook	3	6	1973
Newland-Phase I	Mooer & Chase Road	3	15	1973
Quiet Harbor	West Shore Torsey	20	11	1973
Avalon Park	North Shore Maranacook	6	13	1974
Harmony Hills	Rt 17 SE of Kents Hill	16	52	1974
Newland-Phase II	Mooer & Chase Road	4	10	1974
Robert/Sachs	Sturtevant Hill Road	4	30	1974
Bryland Heights	Off Sturtevant Hill Road	19	25	1975
Howard Bates Subdivision	Rt 135	3	41	1976
William Berry Subdivision (revised)	Plains Road	2	3	1976
Cote, John	North Wayne Road	4	21	(a) 1976
Biagotti	Nickerson Hill Road	4	33	1977
Lawrence, James	Lane Road	3	5	1977
Pool, Pearle	West Torsey Shores	3	3	(b) 1977
Wilson, Robert	Sturtevant Hill Road	2	20	1977
Allison (Nickerson Hill)	Nickerson Hill Road	4	10	1978
Bates, Elizabeth	Rt 41	4	38	1978
Hilltop Acres	Nickerson Hill Road	4	9	1978
Nickerson Hill (Allison subdivision)	Nickerson Hill Road	4	10	1978
Old Fairgrounds Phase I	Rt 17 NE of RF Corner	7	14	1978
Perkins, Lawrence	Morer and Chase	4	9	1978
Schmidt, J&A	Rt 41	3		1978
Camp Menatoma	East Shore Lovejoy	16	90	(c) 1980
Mildred Lane	West Maranacook	6	30	1980
Millet Manor	Rt 17	3	3	1980
Packard Shores	East Maranacook Shore	4	10	1980
Ross Ridge	Gay Road Marden	8	19.3	1983

Subdivision Index--Town of Readfield	Location	# Of Lots	Total Acres	Date
Kennecook Farms Estate	Hawes Lewis Road	6	45	1984
Packard Shores East	Off South Road	4	20	1984
Broadview Heights I	Church Road	6	15	1986
Broadview Heights I (revised)	Church Road	6	15	1986
Packard Shores East (revised)	East Shore Maranacook	1	2	1986
Vivianian Wyman Heirs	North Road	3	3	(b) 1987
Maranacook Cove	Rt 41	6	17.3	1988
Readfield Plains	Gay Road	11	80	1988
Clark Lot	Luce Road	3	6	1989
Diplock, Robert	North Road	1	2	1989
Dowsett Lot A	Gordon Road	3	51	1989
Fogg Farm East I	Fogg Road	6	30	1989
Broadview Heights II	Church Road	1	2	1990
Broadview Heights II (revised)	Church Road	1	2	1990
Fogg Farm South	Fogg Road	7	42.5	1990
Fogg Farm West II (Homestead)	Fogg Road	4	46	1990
Kentwood Shores	Kentwood Dr off Wesleyan Road Lovejoy Pond	9	20	1990
Fogg Farm East II	Fogg Road	6	30	1993
North Road Terrace	North Road	5	18	1993
Adams, Joe and Beverly	Luce Road	2		1994
Old Fairgrounds Phase II	Old Fairgrounds Road	10	25	1994
The Barn	Main St	3	5	1995
Mace's on Maranacook	Maces Cottage Road	7	21	1996
Newland-Phase II 50-A Revised	Mooer & Chase Road	4	10	1996
Quarry Ridge	South Road	5	20	1997
Torsey View Estates	Chimney Road	3	15	1997
Lovejoy Heights	Main Street Kents Hill	3	9	1998
Mace's on Maranacook 40-A Phase II	Maces Cottage Road	7	21	1998
Purington Lots	Off North Road	4	9.33	1998
Wings Mills	Wings Mills Road	4	10	2001
Robert/Sachs (revised)	Sturtevant Hill Road			2002
Big Sky Acres	Sturtevant Hill Road	3	21	2003
Mace's on Maranacook (amended)	Maces Cottage Road	7	21	2003
Broadview Heights II (amended)	Church Road	6	15	2004
Maranacook Meadows	South Road	3	19	2004
Quarry Ridge	South Road	5	20	2004
Mace's on Maranacook (amended)	Maces Cottage Road	7	21	2005
Saunders Lots (Touissett Point)	North Shore Maranacook	50	8	2005
Scribner Hill Farm	Gorden Road /Scribner Hill Road	17	49	2006
Torsey View Estates	Chimney Road	3	15	2006
Trefethen	P Ridge Road	22	4	2006
Weymouth Way	Chase Road	18	6	2006
Country Vistas (amended)	Thundercastle Road	16	22	2007

Subdivision Index--Town of Readfield	Location	# Of Lots	Total Acres	Date
Poulin, Noella M. Loving Trust	No info available			2007
Quarry Ridge (amended)	South Road	5	20	2007
Weymouth Way (revised)	Chase Road	18	6	2007
Balsam Ridge	Rt 41	13	240	2008
Menatoma (revision to lot 12)	East Shore Lovejoy	4	10	2008
Weymouth Way (revised)	Chase Road	18	6	2008
Torsey Shores	East Shore Torsey	102	unknown	1963 - 65
Tallwood	Tallwood Road	14	4	1988, 2008,

*Source: Readfield Town Officials & Planning Board*

- (a) *Subdivision not recorded*
- (b) *After-the-fact approval and not recorded*
- (c) *Plus, subdivision of buildings*

It is worth noting that although Readfield's Land Use Ordinance allows for and encourages cluster subdivisions anywhere that a standard subdivision is permitted, none have ever been created to date.

### **Industrial and Commercial Development:**

Traditionally, most commercial development in Readfield has occurred along Route 17, which bisects the town, north and south, and at Readfield Corner. The Route 17 area is also home to two industrial facilities: By the Board Lumber located just east of Readfield Depot, and Saunders Manufacturing, located on Nickerson Hill Road, just off Route 17. Additionally, Readfield is host to many smaller enterprises, such as home occupation and single-person businesses throughout town.

There are also several recreation-based businesses in town. The Boy Scouts of America own an island in Maranacook Lake for recreational uses, and the Kennebec Valley YMCA runs Camp KV, a day camp that offers recreational opportunities. The Girl Scouts of Maine own Camp Kirkwood on Lovejoy Pond, which encompasses 100 acres and is open in May and again in September to mid-October for troop and group rentals. During the summer months of June, July, and August, The Summer Camp uses Camp Kirkwood to hold camp for disadvantaged girls only.

### **The Institutional and Service Sector:**

There are a range of businesses in Readfield that provide critical services to people throughout the town and the region. Many of Readfield's public facilities and services are located in the village areas or just outside of them. The Town Office, Library, and the volunteer fire and rescue department are located at Readfield Corner, and the Historic Society is at Readfield Depot. Readfield's municipal buildings have been well maintained and improved over the past decade with notable improvements to the Fire Station, Library, and Gile Hall. Readfield Elementary School is on South Road, just

south of Readfield Depot. Maranacook Community High School and Middle School are located off Route 17 between the villages of Readfield Corner and Readfield Depot. The Kents Hill School is in the historic village of Kents Hill. With student enrollment fluctuating little in recent decades the institutional capacity of the education system appears to be sufficient to address current and future use.

There is a small, privately owned water system in Readfield Corner that supplies water for approximately 20 homes. The Readfield Corner Water Association is managed by the Winthrop Utilities District. Maine Department of Environmental Protection holds an agreement which regulates and restricts the capacity of the system. It has limited potential for expansion.

### **Retail Development Patterns:**

As with many other rural towns in the region, Readfield has experienced a gradual but steady decline in its retail sector since the interstate was built. Retail chains, fast food establishments, and other highway-oriented businesses have chosen to locate in areas closer to highways for increased visibility and business. This has not affected Readfield, generally as the town is comprised of smaller businesses and fewer national chains in the retail sector.

The small businesses in Readfield's retail sector contribute to its unique character by providing shopping with the appeal of buying locally. Readfield's village centers are the critical contributors to the retail sector. Fewer large chains and commercial businesses give the town the opportunity to concisely form the character and shape the direction of the village areas by regulating design criteria and other aspects of future development patterns.

The challenge of growing the retail sector is an opportunity for the town to focus on revitalizing its village areas while taking advantage of the link between needed goods and services and the number of consumers within Readfield's market area, particularly those passing through or coming to visit the lakes and ponds in town.

### **Existing Land Uses:**

Readfield's variety of land uses and patterns are worth describing in more detail. The Existing Land Use Map showing locations of districts and land uses. Below are descriptions of the general land use types in town, which are about the built form and context as much as the land use category.

### **The Village Areas:**

The allowable land uses of Readfield's villages are discussed in the Current Regulations section of this chapter. The village areas are typical of other traditional New England towns in that they were the first locations settled and as such contain many historic buildings which have been well preserved.

*Readfield Corner*, located at the crossroads of Sandy River Road (Route 17) towards Hallowell, and north to south from Mount Vernon to Winthrop along Route 41, is more likely to remain the active town center for the community with the Library and Town Office. This village offers a small, private water supply system, though its expansion is limited. The Maranacook Community School, town beach, several historic landmarks, and a village trail are also located here.

*Readfield Depot*, at the junction of Route 17 and South Road and North Road, is more of a small rural center that is less likely to grow naturally. This village flourished with the construction of the railway in 1849 and boasted many prominent destination resorts. With the passing of the destination resort era, the decline of railroad travel, and relocation of businesses out of the village, Readfield Depot faltered and began to fade. More recently, several new businesses have opened here, revitalizing this village.

*Kents Hill*, this village was initially settled with a church and school, not as a business district as the others were. The Readfield Religious and Charitable Society was initiated in 1824, then it became the Maine Wesleyan Seminary in 1825. Today, this building is a private college preparatory school called Kents Hill School. Kents Hill is located along State Route 17 in the northwest part of town, heading towards Fayette.

Each of Readfield's villages are characterized by a mixture of cultural, commercial, educational, and residential uses. There is plentiful opportunity for expansion of commercial, retail, light industrial, and residential land uses in the villages. Since the construction of I-95 and the resulting ease of access to larger shopping centers, Readfield's villages have been on the decline. Before I-95, visitors were more apt to travel through Readfield's villages and patronize the local shops.

To promote and revitalize these villages, the town could create more green spaces and open space land corridors. Encouraging walkability would also increase the appeal in village areas.

Moving out from the core villages areas, the land uses change and the density of development decrease. Kents Hill is surrounded by the largest portions of the *Academic District* and provides student housing and other academic-related uses. Surrounding all of the villages is the *Village Residential District*, intended for a higher density of residential development than in more rural areas. Both districts boast historic buildings still used as residences. These districts are more wooded and often have larger lots than in the village areas, though not required by regulations. Sidewalks are less common, but on many streets the traffic volumes are lower. Residents in these areas are more likely to drive to retail and service centers due to distance from those locations.

Outside of the Village Residential and Academic Districts are the more rural, natural areas of Readfield. Readfield is predominantly a rural community including agriculture and natural landscapes. Residents embrace their farming heritage and have worked to structure the town in such a way as to protect and encourage it.

These *rural areas* include both protected and unprotected open space, agricultural fields, and conservation areas. Land that is not protected and privately owned is theoretically developable should the need arise. Zoning requires nearly two acres per residence in all rural areas, although the Land Use Ordinance has provisions that allow for cluster subdivisions in all districts where a traditional subdivision would be permitted. The purpose of allowing cluster subdivisions is to allow for flexibility of design with reduced lot sizes.

*Open spaces and conserved land* are an essential part of Readfield’s landscape, community character, and land use. As mentioned earlier, some of this land is protected through public ownership or other limitations. This land includes those in a wild or natural state and used for either passive or active recreation, all of which contribute to the feel of the town and the reputation as a regional recreational hub. Readfield has a solid base of open space and conserved land that is owned outright:

**TABLE 2: CONSERVED LAND OWNERSHIP AND ACREAGE**

Entity	Acres Owned	Notes
<b>Town of Readfield</b>	199.1	Mostly in conservation, excl. cemeteries
<b>State of Maine</b>	2.1	Two boat launches and a picnic area
<b>Kennebec Land Trust</b>	809.8	Multiple parcels around the Town
<b>New England Forestry Foundation</b>	326	In process, abuts Town Forest
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,337	

*Source: Readfield Town Officials*

In addition to outright ownership, Readfield partners with several entities in collaboration toward conserving open space through easements and other agreements. Regional and statewide partners include Kennebec Land Trust, Maine Farmland Trust, and the New England Forest Foundation.

Agriculture and forestry were the original engines of Readfield’s economy. Though its importance has decreased over time, the preservation of farm and forest land is hugely important and beneficial to a thriving community. Readfield has approximately 2,509 acres of prime farmland and 812 acres of statewide significant farmland, which equals about 16 percent of total land area. The extent of Readfield’s prime farmland can be best seen on the *Agricultural and Forestry Resources Map*. The amount of acreage in Readfield enrolled in the Farm Tax Law, Open Space Tax Law, and the Tree Growth Tax Law adds up to 5,414 acres or 26 percent of the land base.

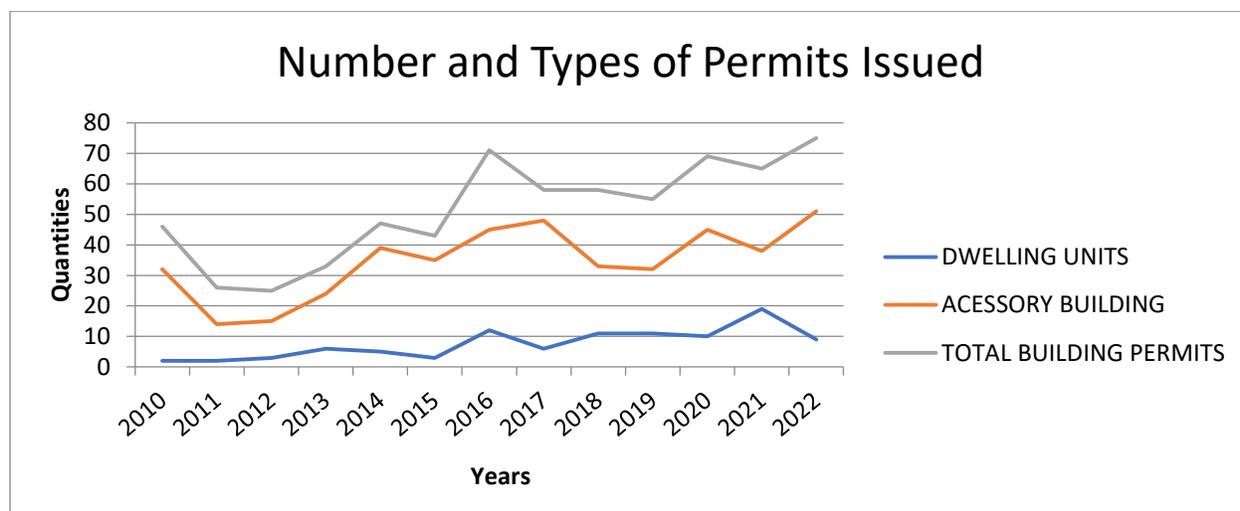
The Town of Readfield owns a parcel of land that is roughly 100-acre; this is the Town Farm/Forest. It is presently under a 10-year timber management plan which began in 1986. There are recreational trails available on the lot, but due to its remote location difficulty with accessing it, these trails have not been emphasized.

Readfield is also the process of acquiring a 326-acre parcel of land adjacent to the existing Town Forest and contiguous with other conserved properties. In the southwest corner of Readfield, this acquisition will serve to create a significant green corridor of open space.

**Land Use Trends:**

Currently, most of the development in Readfield has been spread throughout the town and on a lot-by-lot basis. Residential development far outweighs commercial or industrial development in the past decade. Few subdivisions have been created in the past 10 years. Recently, there has been a significant uptick in permits issued. While many were for renovations or reinvestment in existing buildings, there has been an increase in new home construction, too. There have been no permits issued this year for new houses in the Shoreland Zone, but many of these houses have been permitted for renovation. Figure 1 below shows the quantities and types of permits issued since 2010.

**FIGURE 1: NUMBER AND TYPES OF PERMITS ISSUED 2010 – 2022\***



Source: Readfield Town Officials  
 \*Through October 31, 2022

Table 3 below shows the same data as Figure 1, but in table form. Based on the total building permits issued, 2022 has the highest overall quantity, most of which were accessory buildings. While 2022 has been a slower year for new housing starts, that can be attributed to the considerable increase in the cost of construction materials.

There is a noticeable upward trend in the number permits issued beginning in 2016. Between 2015 and 2016 the number of permits issued for new homes jumped up a staggering 300 percent. While this number shrank by half in 2017, it increased again from 2018 on. Between 2021 and 2022 the number of permits issued for accessory buildings increased by 34 percent as of the end of October 2022, so there is still a

chance for issuance of additional accessory building permits. Between 2010 and 2022, the total number of building permits issued increased by 63 percent.

**TABLE 3: PERMIT QUANTITIES 2010 THROUGH 2022**

<u>Years</u>	<u>DWELLING UNITS</u>	<u>ACESSORY BUILDING</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>TOTAL BUILDING PERMITS</u>
2010	2	32	12	46
2011	2	14	10	26
2012	3	15	7	25
2013	6	24	3	33
2014	5	39	3	47
2015	3	35	5	43
2016	12	45	14	71
2017	6	48	4	58
2018	11	33	14	58
2019	11	32	12	55
2020	10	45	14	69
2021	19	38	8	65
2022*	9	21	15	75

Source: Readfield Town Officials

\* Through October 31, 2022

**KEY:**

Dwelling Units= New houses, double wide trailers, mobile homes

Accessory Buildings= Garages, barns, sheds, major renovations

Other= minor renovations, driveways, demos, car junk yards, solar, miscellaneous

Total Building Permits= Total for all year

While Readfield has tracked the construction for dwellings sufficiently, the other counts are somewhat more subjective. That said, this data shows undeniable trends, outside of the anomaly of 2022.

- There has been an increase in home starts in the past decade from an average of approximately 3.5 per year in the first half of the decade to an average of about 10 per year in the second half of the decade.
- Additions, garages, and major renovations are always more than, and loosely inverse to, new home starts, which makes economic sense.
- The relative increase in total permits issued could be related to more active code enforcement, better tracking, or awareness of the need for permits, but is definitely impacted by the issuance of more permit types (examples being permits for things like cannabis enterprises and solar project).

The location of residential development, in recent years, is not in line with the community’s vision as most has occurred in more rural areas, not in designated growth

areas. The community's vision states the desire to protect the rural areas from sprawl and development.

New residential development is more challenging to direct than commercial development, especially without public sewer or water supply. Generally, people are moving to Readfield for the peaceful, rural atmosphere which prompts new housing construction in more rural settings. Unfortunately, without incentives to encourage development in predetermined locations, there is little the town can do to curtail this trend.

### **Current Land Use Ordinance:**

Readfield has a complete Land Use Ordinance that includes:

- Article 1- General Provisions
- Article 2- Administration, Enforcement and Penalties
- Article 3- Non-Conformance
- Article 4- Permit Requirements
- Article 5- Permit Review Requirements
- Article 6- Permit Review, Application Procedures and Standards
- Article 7- Land Use Districts and Regulations
- Article 8- Performance Requirements and Standards
- Article 9- Commercial and Industrial District Adoption Procedure
- Article 10- Road Standards
- Article 11- Definitions

Readfield's Land Use Ordinance is complete, thorough, and received periodic updates. The intent of the Ordinance is to set standards for how the town should develop and evolve in the future. To accomplish this, it establishes zoning districts and land uses, lot dimensions, performance standards, and protects natural resources. It also regulates subdivisions, shoreland zoning, subsurface waste disposal, and sets phosphorous control measures. The town has a separate Floodplain Management Ordinance outlined below.

The Planning Board is responsible for reviewing major developments through the site plan review and subdivision processes. They are also responsible for reviewing any request for zoning amendments, such as implementing the Commercial and Industrial floating zone.

Readfield employs a part-time Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to carry out and uphold the Land Use Regulations. The town has an active and involved Planning Board, for which the CEO is staff, as the town does not have the workload to employ a designated Planner. The town's current administrative capacity, including both the CEO and Planning Board, is sufficient for managing its land use regulations.

The Existing Land Use Map shows the way the land is developed in a general sense and the Zoning Map shows the town's 9 zoning districts. The zoning districts and their

specific parameters are outlined in Table 4 below. The districts are summarized as follows:

*Three Designated Growth Areas and their purposes:*

*Village District:* is comprised of areas that can support a range of land uses including higher density residential uses, commercial, community and governmental facilities and light industry. The Village District designation is intended to promote a compact (rather than sprawling) pattern of development in the district areas, and to encourage the preservation, revitalization and expansion of Readfield's two village areas (Readfield Corner and Readfield Depot: while Kents Hill is a village, it does not have this zoning district designation). The Village District designation strives to accommodate the denser, mixed land use patterns described above while seeking to maintain the character and historical integrity of the village areas, and to ensure that proposed development and land uses are compatible with existing land uses in the village.

*Village Residential District:* includes areas where the primary use is for higher density residential neighborhoods. Non-residential uses are strictly limited in this district. The designation encourages a more compact pattern of residential development and seeks to ensure that the existing residential character and visual quality of the village residential areas are maintained.

*Academic District:* is comprised of land areas that support development of educational institutions and effective delivery of their programs and activities including housing, health care, and food services. The purpose of this designation is to ensure a homogeneous pattern of development on land now occupied by educational institutions focused exclusively on accommodation of the institution's development needs and excluding unrelated residential, commercial and industrial uses. In the Academic District, only uses which directly support or relate to the principal permitted academic use shall be operated and unrelated residential, commercial and industrial uses will be excluded.

This zoning district is new as of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. The Academic District includes lands now owned or occupied by:

- Maranacook Community School
- Kents Hill School
- Readfield Elementary School

*Two classifications of Rural Areas and their purposes:*

*Rural District:* includes areas which contain a large acreage of open space, farmland and forest land. Lands within this district are especially important for the recreational, scenic, and other natural resource-based opportunities which they offer. The purpose of the rural district designation is to ensure that proposed development and land uses are compatible with the preservation of Readfield's open, rural character and are protective of sensitive natural resources and visual/scenic quality. The rural district also accommodates certain commercial and light industry uses and strives to maintain a development pattern of mixed, low density use while protecting critical natural and scenic resources.

*Rural Residential District:* is comprised of land areas similar in nature to those in the rural district, in terms of their composition (substantial areas of open space, farmland and forest land) and their value with respect to recreational, scenic and other resource-based opportunities. This district, however, is more restrictive in terms of allowable uses, and primarily seeks to accommodate low density residential use, agriculture and forestry operation which are compatible with the preservation of Readfield's rural character, and which are protective of sensitive natural resources and scenic/visual quality.

*Three Classifications of Shoreland Areas and their purposes:*

*Shoreland Residential District:* includes all shoreland areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water mark of a great pond or the upland edge of a wetland consisting of ten (10) or more contiguous acres or as otherwise defined, other than those areas included in the Resource Protection District or the Stream Protection District. It includes areas that are appropriate for residential, recreational, and other non-intensive development activities.

*Resource Protection District:* includes areas having current moderate or high habitat value and in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive fish or wildlife habitat, biotic systems, or scenic and natural values. However, areas which are currently developed, and which would meet the criteria of this district shall be placed in another suitable land use district. This district shall include:

- Wetlands and the areas 250 feet horizontally of the upland edge of the following wetlands: a wetland that is 10 acres or greater; wetlands associated with great ponds; and wetlands which are rated "moderate" or "high" value by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.
- Wetlands and the areas within 25 feet horizontally of the upland edge of wetlands that are greater than 2 acres and less than 10 acres.
- Areas within 1,000 feet horizontally of the normal high-water line of Carlton Pond.
- Areas within 1,000 feet horizontally of the normal high-water line of Mill Pond, Shedd Pond and Brainard Pond.
- Areas of 1 or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater.
- The following areas when they are located within 250 feet horizontally from the normal high-water line of a great pond; within 250 feet of the upland edge of a wetland; and within 75 feet horizontally of a stream:
  1. Important wildlife habitat
  2. Natural sites of significant scenic or aesthetic value.
  3. Areas designated by federal, state and local government as natural areas of significance to be protected from development.
  4. Existing areas of public access and certain significant archeological and historic sites.

*Stream Protection District:* includes all land area within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream as defined in Article 11 and other streams of local significance designated on the Official Land Use Map, exclusive of those areas within

250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or within 250 feet, horizontal distance of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland. Where a stream and its 75-foot shoreland area is located within the 250-foot shoreland area of a great pond or a freshwater wetland, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the district in which the great pond or wetland are located.

*Commercial and Industrial Floating Zone and Mobile Home Overlay District:*

*Commercial and Industrial District:* established for the purpose of allowing the opportunity for large scale commercial or industrial uses to locate or expand in the community if this can be accomplished with minimal negative impact, although large scale commercial operations are generally not in keeping with the town's character. This district is the only district which may accommodate commercial and industrial uses with structure in excess of 5,000 square feet. The purpose of this designation seeks to ensure that proposed uses are compatible with existing uses and the rural character of the town and are protective of natural resources and visual quality. Land proposed for designation as commercial/industrial shall follow the adoption procedures in Article 9.

*Mobile Home Park Overlay District:* may accommodate mobile home parks and developments where designated on the Town of Readfield Land Use Map, subject to the requirements of the underlying district.

**TABLE 4: CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS**

<b>Growth Areas</b>	<b>Village</b> (Readfield Corner + Readfield Depot)	Requires preservation, revitalization, and expansion to support higher density, mixed-use developments	Minimum Lot Size: 20,000 Square Feet
	<b>Village Residential</b> (Kents Hill, areas surrounding Readfield Corner and Readfield Depot)	Supports higher density residential developments near distances from the village areas	Minimum Lot Size: 40,000 Square Feet
	<b>Academic</b> (Maranacook Community School, Kents Hill School, and Readfield Elementary School)	Supports development of educational institutions and effective delivery of their programs and activities including housing, health care, and food services	Minimum Lot Size: 40,000 Square Feet
<b>Rural Areas</b>	<b>Rural</b>	Large open lots allowing mixed low density use while protecting critical natural and scenic resources.	Minimum Lot Size: 80,000 Square Feet
	<b>Rural Residential</b>	Residential low-density development in rural areas with severely limited commercial development	Minimum Lot Size: 80,000 Square Feet
<b>Shoreland Districts</b>	<b>Shoreland Residential</b>	Allows low-intensity residential and recreational development within Shoreland Zone	Minimum Lot Size: 80,000 Square Feet
	<b>Resource Protection</b>	Preserve water quality, productive fish + wildlife habitat, and scenic + natural values	Minimum Lot Size: 80,000 Square Feet
	<b>Stream Protection</b>		Minimum Lot Size: 80,000 Square Feet
<b>Other Districts</b>	<b>Commercial/Industrial District (Floating Zone)</b>	Allows community to assess larger commercial developments in Readfield	Minimum Lot Size: 80,000 Square Feet
	<b>Mobile Home Park Overlay</b>	Only where designated on Land Use Map	Must meet underlying district requirements

Source: Readfield's Land Use Ordinance

## **Projections:**

Referring to the population projections in the Demographic Profile, it is difficult to anticipate any future demand at all for housing – projected population estimates by two outside sources have Readfield’s population between 2,611 in 2038 (State Economist’s projection)- a 0.5 percent increase, and between 2,842 to 3,100, which is a 9 to a 19 percent increase (KVCOG’s projection). Obviously, these are very different scenarios and underscore the undependable nature of population projections.

It is important to note that these projections do not take into account the decline in household size, which requires additional housing to accommodate individuals living alone. While the population has been relatively steady since the 2010 census (decrease of 0.04 percent between 2010 to 2020), 71 new housing units were added in the last decade (information from town officials), likely to accommodate the shrinking household size. Between 1980 and 1990, the population increase from 1,943 to 2,033 (90 people or 4.6 percent); this minor population increase resulted in the construction of 133 new homes in that ten-year period (Census information).

Household size cannot continue to shrink indefinitely. If it shrinks another five percent over the next 15 years, the average household size will be about 2.45 persons per household. In order to house the projected population of approximately 2,971 or so residents, the town would need to contain 1,213 housing units, which it already exceeds, negating the need for additional housing.

Another important factor is the aging population, which will likely require the construction of more one story or handicapped accessible homes to aid in aging in place. With the increase in popularity of residents, young and elderly alike, living alone, smaller homes will become in much higher demand. In short, the population may not be increasing but the changes in the demographics of the population may result in the need for more homes or a different type of home.

Depending on the growth/change scenario the town chooses to adopt, the number of new houses and land that goes with them will change. It is unreasonable to assume that no new houses will be built, regardless of existing housing stock. The construction of new houses will consume more land for development. For example, if 20 new houses are constructed over the next 10-year period, in the Rural Residential District (approximately 2 acre lots per house) that would add up to at least 40 acres; in the Village Residential District (approximately 1 acre lots per house), that would be at least 20 acres.

In either scenario, Readfield will undoubtedly experience new development within its existing residential districts. Ideally, those new homes would be in the designated growth areas, which is consistent with comprehensive planning guidelines. But based on past trends, this is unlikely without incentives to make it happen. Any residential growth in the rural area, while significant, is usually limited by available road frontage and diminished by the sheer size of the town itself.

Commercial and industrial development in Readfield in the past 10 years has been minimal. Most notably, two self-storage unit businesses have opened, two medical marijuana establishments with a third on the way, and several light industrial marijuana growing operations. Based on these trends, no significant commercial or industrial development is projected in the planning period.

### **Floodplain Management Ordinance:**

The town has chosen to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as outlined in the Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted in 2011. Maps are updates with federal data releases.

It is the intent of the Town of Readfield, Maine to require the recognition and evaluation of flood hazards in all official actions relating to land use in the floodplain areas having special flood hazards.

The Town of Readfield has the legal authority to adopt land use and control measures to reduce future flood losses pursuant to Title 30-A M.R.S.A., Section 3001-3007, 4352 and 4401-4407 and Title 38 M.R.S.A., Section 440.

The National Flood Insurance Program, established in the aforesaid Act, provides that areas of the Town having a special flood hazard be identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and that floodplain management measure be applied in such flood hazard areas. This Division B Ordinance establishes a Flood Hazard Development Permit system and review procedure for development activities in the designated flood hazard areas of the Town of Readfield, Maine.

The areas of special flood hazard, Zones A and AE for the Town of Readfield, Kennebec County, Maine identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in a report entitled "Flood Insurance Study- Kennebec County" dated June 16, 2011 with accompanying "Flood Insurance Rate Map" dated June 16, 2011 with panels: 292, 294, 311, 313, 314, 316, 317, 318, 319, 338, 457, 476, 477, 481, 482, 484, 501 derived from the county wide flood insurance rate map entitled "Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map, Kennebec County," are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this Ordinance.

### **Analysis:**

It is undeniable that Readfield is growing and changing based on the review of number of permits issued each year and the analysis in this chapter. The town will need to find ways to protect its rural areas and abundant open space to prevent negative impacts related to growth.

The town may need to examine the type of available housing stock to continue to provide adequate housing for existing residents as they age in place. This may mean

encouraging the construction of specific types of homes, such as one-story, handicapped accessible, or elderly housing.

The town's Land Use Ordinance will need to be reviewed for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan update and for future consistency with new legislative requirements from 2022. The Land Use Ordinance should also be reviewed as it relates to directing growth to prevent sprawl. This will be analyzed in the Future Land Use section.

### **Issues for Further Study and Discussion:**

- ❖ Does the existing Land Use Ordinance provide for the land use patterns that Readfield wants for the future? Does it provide a balance between agricultural, residential, and commercial uses to accommodate Readfield's residents? Are there the right number of zoning districts?
- ❖ Are all existing zoning districts relevant? In particular, does the Commercial and Industrial District floating zone serve a useful purpose or should this regulatory tool be revisited?
- ❖ How can Readfield's villages be kept sustainable and viable? Are there any areas that need special attention? Is there any where that should be expanded?
- ❖ What measures can Readfield take to be prepared for increased development? How can the town better direct the location of residential development?
- ❖ How can the town promote the Village Districts as an inviting area for future development? For example, can walkability be increased? Are there enough parks or green spaces for the public to gather?
- ❖ What utilities should be considered if offering density bonuses? Should broadband be included?
- ❖ How effective is current zoning at protecting water quality and open space?