

Previous Planning Studies Comprehensive Plan

The Town first adopted a comprehensive plan in 1961 as part of a statewide effort funded by the federal government and again in 1984-85 when it attempted to adopt a land use ordinance for the first time. The Town adopted the current comprehensive plan in 2000 and adopted an implementation strategy in 2002. Damariscotta is discussing the need to update its current comprehensive plan in the coming months.

Downtown Plan

Damariscotta prepared a 2003 Downtown Plan as a follow up to the 2002 comprehensive plan to recommend ways to preserve and enhance the Downtown. It provides guidance on design, sidewalks and connections to/from Downtown, parking, pedestrian safety, village scale and character, traffic and congestion, open space and landscaping; and connection with the riverfront. Design principles include maintaining the human scale of streets, providing sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, and green open spaces to enhance the community. A workshop was held that identified the needs of pedestrians and pass-through traffic, more parking, landscaping improvements for the Back Parking Lot south of Main Street, transit, park and ride options, satellite parking, signage, and gateways. The study also recommended that the Town acquire the Damariscotta Bank & Trust/Griffin property for an additional riverside park; integrate the East Coast Greenway into the Town's trail system connecting to Downtown and a loop around Great Salt Bay. Implementation was prioritized into three phases, with responsible parties to carry out specific actions.

Sidewalk - Bicycle Plan

DPAC, FMM, the Lincoln County Planner, and the Maine Department of Transportation (MeDOT), worked with Damariscotta in the spring of 2008 to prepare a Sidewalk-Bicycle Plan. The plan was produced after reviewing existing plans and holding a community workshop to establish general goals for improving walking and biking, demonstrate sidewalk needs, identify priority trails and off-road connections, propose new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities, and propose revision to local ordinances. Funding has been secured by the Town to construct sidewalks along a portion of Route 1B.

Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan

This plan was prepared by MeDOT and 20 Midcoast communities that rely on Route 1 as their primary transportation corridor. At the heart of the plan is a marriage of land use and transportation, which recommends strategic investments and a regional approach to reduce stress on Route 1. An alternative to low density development that will make it difficult to maintain a well-functioning transportation system and quality of life, the plan proposes eight to ten community centered growth areas that reflect the village heritage of the Midcoast. These areas are proposed to provide for a minimum mix of jobs and homes that will support transportation opportunities to move people and goods. Damariscotta is one of the "pearls" on this "necklace" of downtowns, shopping districts, villages, in-town neighborhoods, ports, and other industrial areas. When this report was released, Midcoast communities were asked to commit to a basic package of actions – amending local comprehensive plans to reflect recommendations, limiting the number of driveways, allowing for increased residential and commercial densities in growth cores, adopting a rural conservation plan, planning for alternative ways to move freight, and

more advanced actions to help prevent problems before they occur. Damariscotta signed onto this agreement, which provides time to finalize details to implement the plan and makes the Town eligible for competitive grant funds. DPAC members, George Parker and Jack Spinner, serve on the Gateway 1 Steering Committee.

Shore and Harbor Plan

The Town secured a grant from the Maine Coastal Program to make improvements to the Back Parking Lot south of Main Street in Downtown. Mitchell Rasor Land Design has been working with DPAC to engage the community in guiding proposed improvements. These improvements include optimizing parking, improving aesthetics, and increasing access to the shore. The final report was presented to the Select Board in March 2010.

Zoning Ordinance

The Damariscotta Land Use Ordinance was adopted in 1997, and has been amended several times. In 2002, a Wireless Communication District and associated standards were added as an overlay district. The Municipal District was added in 2003. In 2007, the Town amended the ordinance to limit the size of retail stores to 35,000 square feet.

Site Plan review Ordinance

The Damariscotta Site Plan Review Ordinance was adopted in 1994 to minimize the impacts caused by development, establish a fair and reasonable set of standards, balance the right of landowners with those of abutting and neighboring landowners, provide protection from nuisances, and protect property values. The ordinance was amended in 2007 and 2008 to manage the design and layout of new, nonresidential development.