

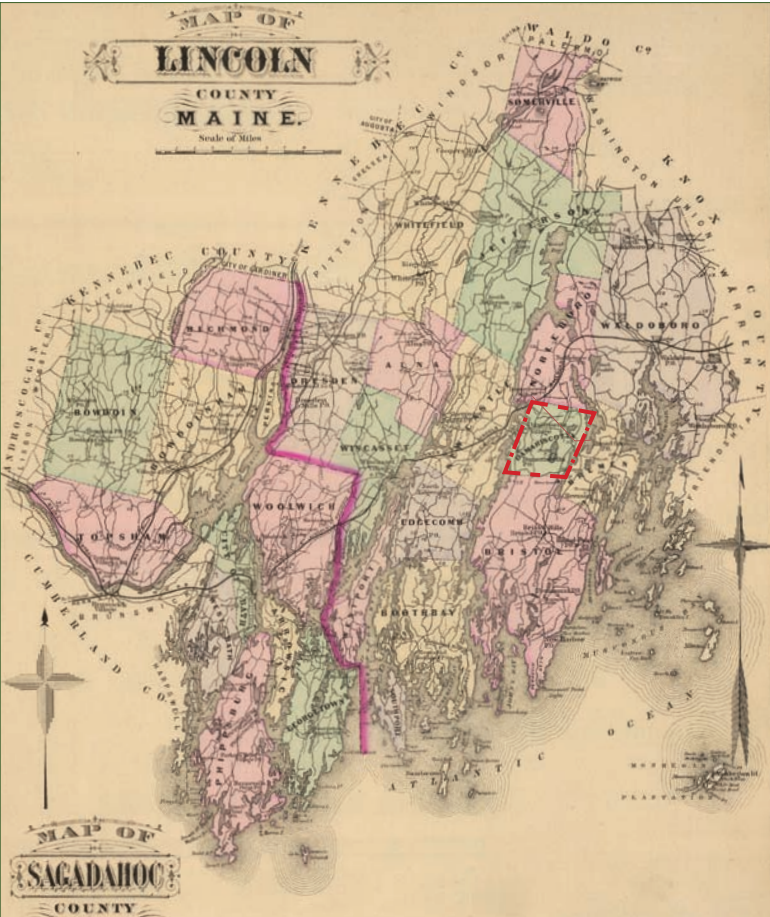
DAMARISCOTTA IN CONTEXT

Damariscotta is located near the center of Lincoln County just off Route 1 twelve miles from the ocean at the head of the Pemaquid Peninsula. It is situated at the lower falls and head of navigation on the eastern side of the Damariscotta River. Newcastle, across the River, forms the other half of the “twin villages”.

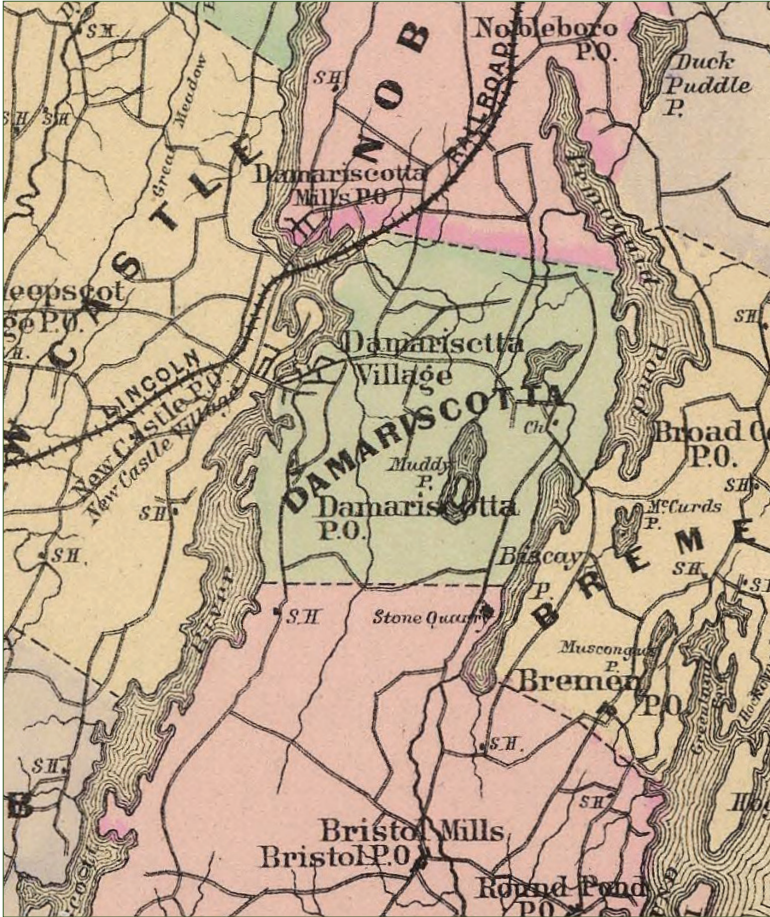
North of the bridge is the Great Salt Bay, the state’s first marine protected area. Damariscotta Lake and Nobleboro lie further north, with Bristol and Pemaquid to the south. Biscay and Pemaquid Ponds form a boundary with Bremen in the eastern part of Town. Paradise and Little Ponds are the principal water bodies in Town. Rocky Hill, about 150 feet tall, is the highest area in the community. The surface of the Town is rolling, with granite bedrock and clay loam soils that are fairly productive.

The Damariscotta region claims a wide diversity of natural attractions - pine-bordered lakes, shady forests, tidal rivers, protected harbors, sandy beaches, and a rock-bound coast. This natural beauty, together with one of Maine’s most beautiful light houses and a history dating to Weymouth’s first visit to the Maine coast in 1605, has drawn year round and seasonal residents and retirees to Damariscotta and its region since the early 1900’s.

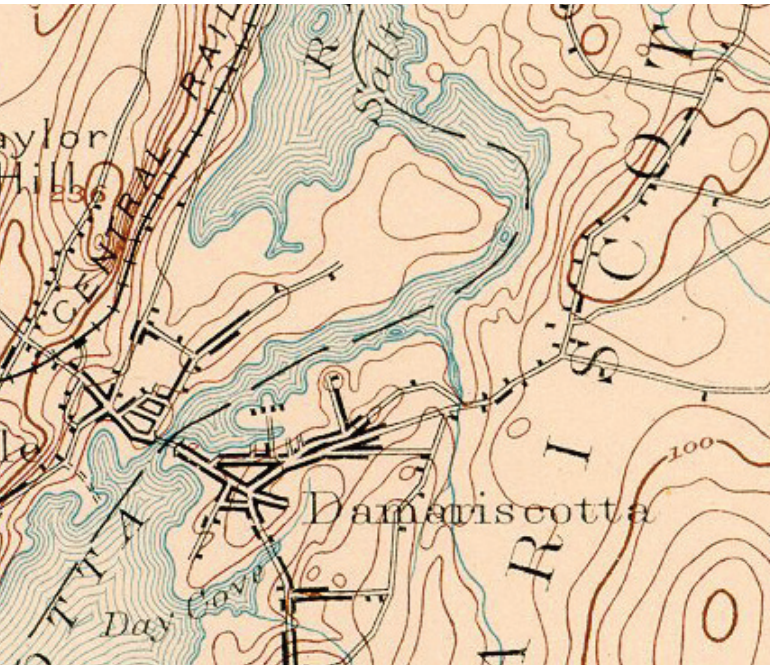
Today, Damariscotta is a retail and service center for Lincoln County, as well as a bustling seasonal center for tourists and summer residents. Its services, stores and specialty shops, culture and art venues, and numerous community festivals offer facilities and activities to meet most of the region’s needs.



Regional Map showing Lincoln County, 1885



Damariscotta Region 1885



1891 USGS Quad Map of Damariscotta



Main Street in late 1800's



Main Street in early 1900's



Painting of previous bridge over Damariscotta River



Fire Insurance Map (Sanborn Map) from 1938

Damariscotta is an historic village that grew as a trade center following the French and Indian wars. Early industries included two sawmills, a match factory, and tannery, but shipbuilding brought the Town wealth in the 1800's when clipper ships were launched from one of its five shipyards. The Town was incorporated in 1848, shortly after a major fire wiped out many of its buildings. They were replaced by the brick buildings that make up the current Downtown. By the 1880's, ship building was largely gone and Damariscotta's population started to decline until it reached a low of 771 in 1910. Formerly an industrial Town, Damariscotta became a retail and service center for nearby communities.

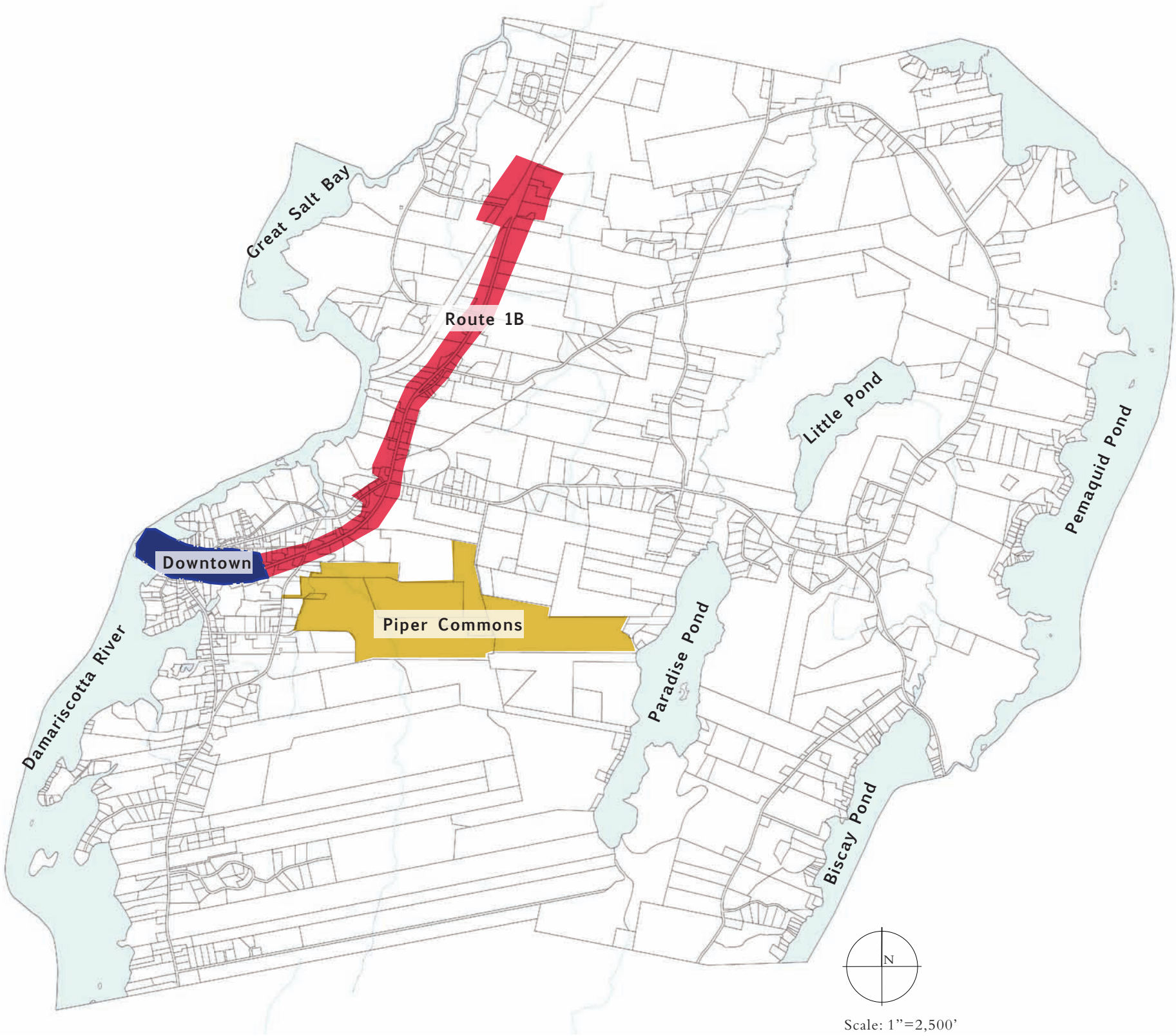
Damariscotta's population grew significantly from 1970 to slightly more than 2,000 residents by the year 2000 Census. Its population, and that of the surrounding area, supports its retail and service sectors, which have sprawled beyond the compact Downtown along Route 1B. Nevertheless, many fine examples of Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate architecture remain Downtown and give the community a distinct coastal charm which attracts throngs of tourists and summer residents year after year, generation after generation. All community members are committed to ensuring that Damariscotta continues to be a great place to work, live, and play.

The charrette focused on three primary areas¹: the historic Downtown, the Route 1B business district, and the Piper Commons property off Route 1B, Biscay Road, and Heater Road. Piper Commons is a private landholding that is being considered for development.

The charrette team also looked at the rest of the community to assess other issues and opportunities for linkages. The remainder of Damariscotta is largely residential or rural and was not the primary focus of the design effort, although some recommendations for these areas are included in Section D of the charrette report.

Images of the charrette focus areas are included on the following pages.

¹ Identified by the community in its solicitation for consulting services.



Town of Damariscotta Charrette Focus Areas



The photos on this page represent the range of conditions found in the Downtown. From the Damariscotta River and the waterfront to Main Street and its shops and activities, Downtown represents the center of daily life.

As changes are made in the future, using photographs of existing conditions can be useful in making decisions about scale, use, transportation, open space, and architectural details.





Houses in Damariscotta range from small to large, but all share similar forms, materials and a basic traditional architectural language. The architectural forms represent the virtue of simplicity and dignity and have stood the test of time.

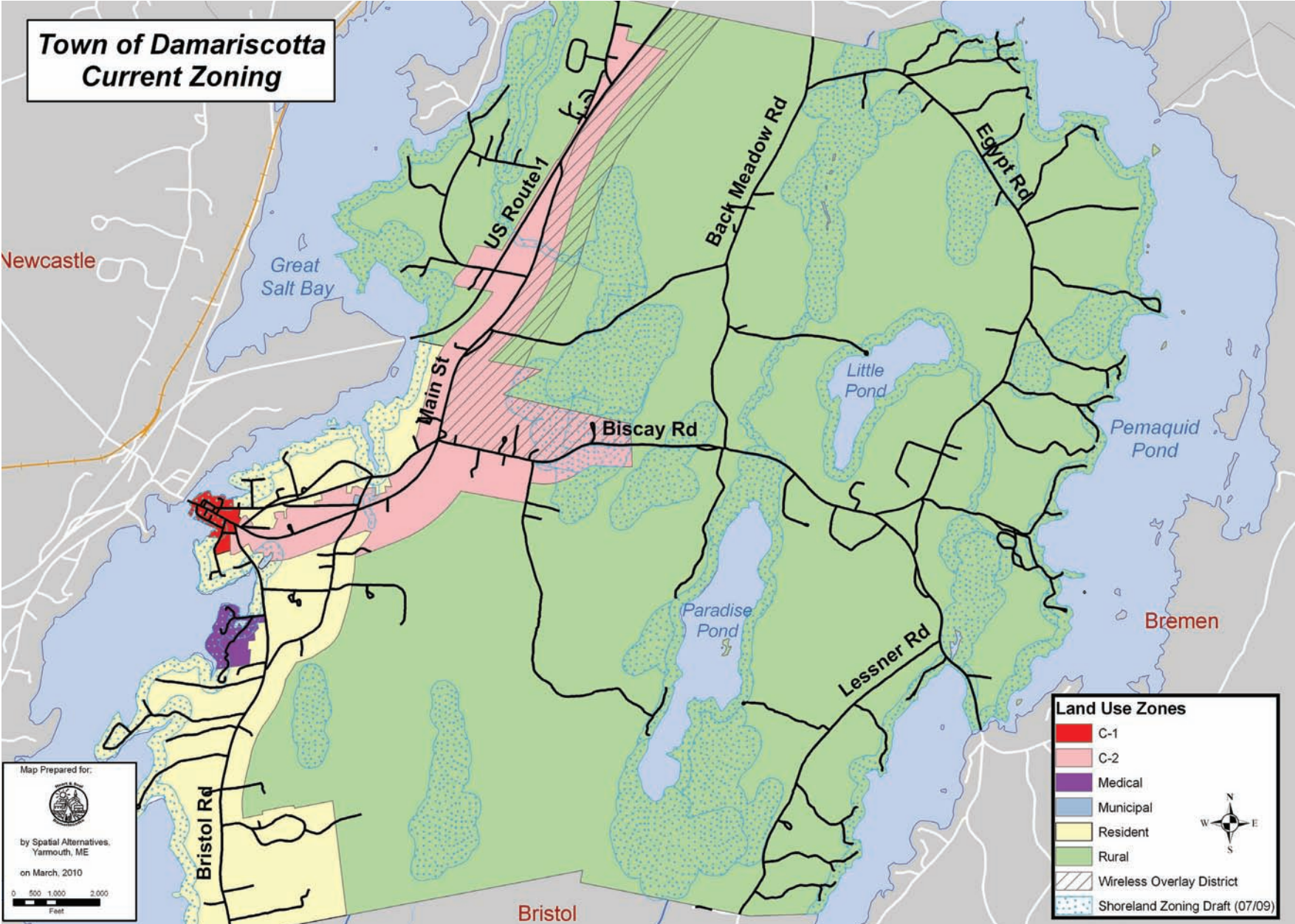
Any new structures should respect this heritage and the existing structures should continue to be protected because the community values this historical landscape and connects current generations to the Town's rich past.



Along Route 1B, photos of existing conditions show a less cohesive picture. Some retail development has occurred that looks more appropriate for suburban development and should be avoided in the future because of its negative impacts on community character.

Fortunately, there are many great examples of appropriate buildings and approaches to the land that exist and should be emulated. In particular, agricultural buildings, such as barns and sheds, can be adapted or built new for a variety of uses, from residential to retail.





Damariscotta does not have a long history of regulating land use. It adopted state-mandated Shoreland Zoning in 1972 and subdivision review around the same time, though it wasn't until 1989 that a subdivision ordinance based on state law was adopted. A land use ordinance was approved by two votes in 1986, but was recalled shortly thereafter, again by two votes, and it wasn't until 1997 that another land use ordinance was crafted and easily adopted. Site plan review was adopted in 1994 and amended in 2007 for a size cap and 2008 to add a large scale development section that included design standards.

With the adoption of land use regulations, the historic village development pattern was replaced with zoning that segregated uses, the evidence of which may be seen stringing out along Route 1B. In fact, the zoning made it illegal to build the kind of land use patterns seen in the traditional village center. Largely as a result of its conventional use-based zoning, Damariscotta's village has maintained its place as a historic village center, but has lost significant business and civic institutions to the Route 1B corridor².

There are three primary land use districts in the focus areas – Downtown Commercial (C1), Other Commercial (C2), and Rural.

The C1 District covers the Downtown area. Any uses other than single family dwellings, two family dwellings, and mobile homes, require additional approval by the Planning Board. A minimum land area of 10,000 square feet is required with no

street frontage standards (other than those required by Shoreland Zoning). The lot size and frontage requirements appear reasonable.

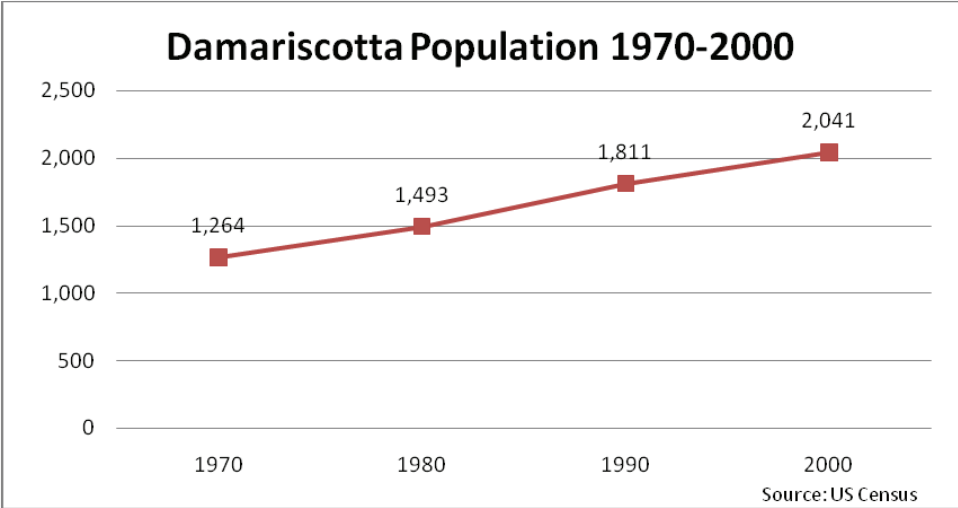
Most of Route 1B is in the C2 District, where 10,000 square feet is required for the first principal building or dwelling unit on a sewered lot and 6,000 square feet for each unit thereafter. Non-sewered lots are required to be a minimum of 40,000 square feet.

The Piper Commons area is partially in the C2 District and partially in the Rural District. Allowed uses in the Rural District are fairly limited and require a minimum of 10,000 square feet for each principal building or dwelling unit on sewered lots and 80,000 square feet on non-sewered lots.

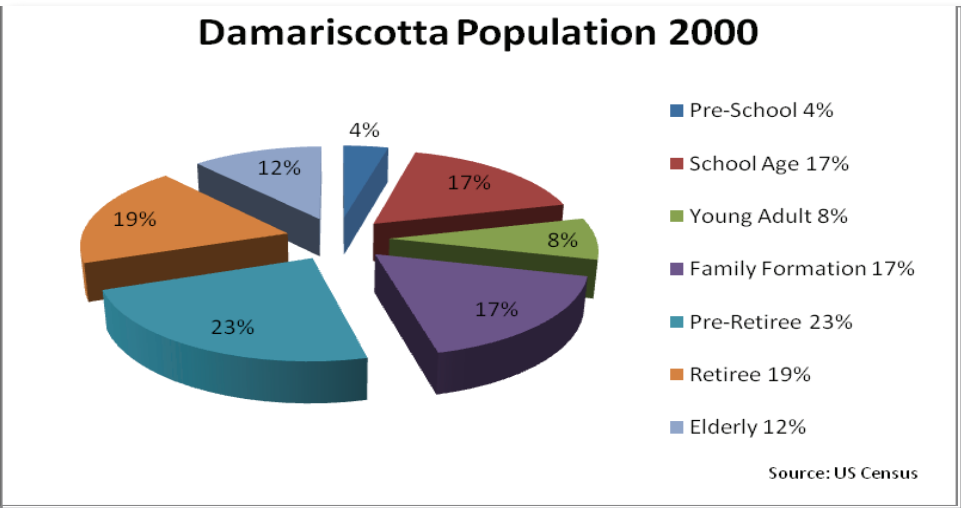
Recent amendment of the site review provisions were intended to address the size, design, and layout of businesses on Route 1B.

See the Appendix for a more complete description of the Town's history of land use regulations.

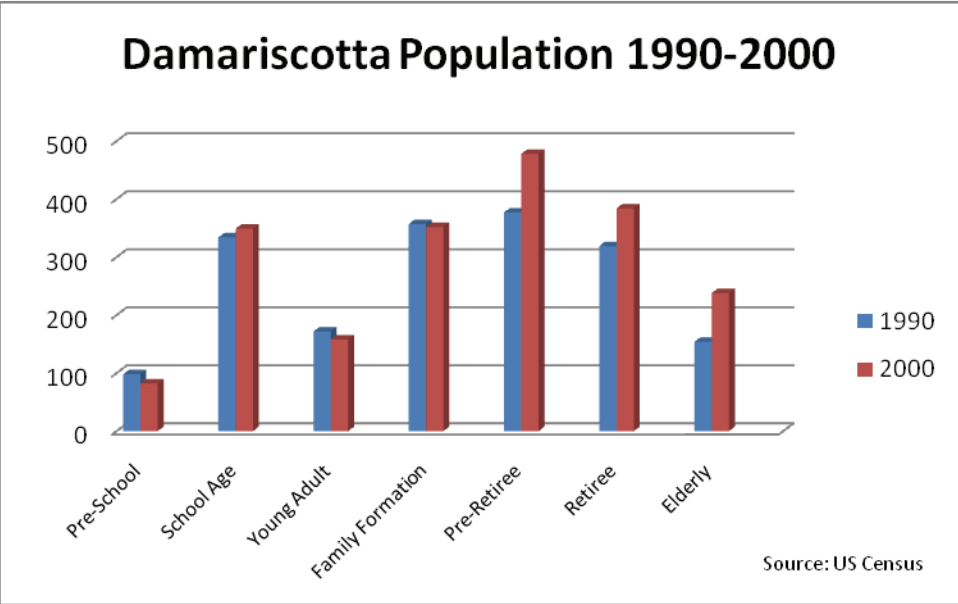
² Including Damariscotta Hardware, Yellowfront (a downtown grocery store), and Town Hall.



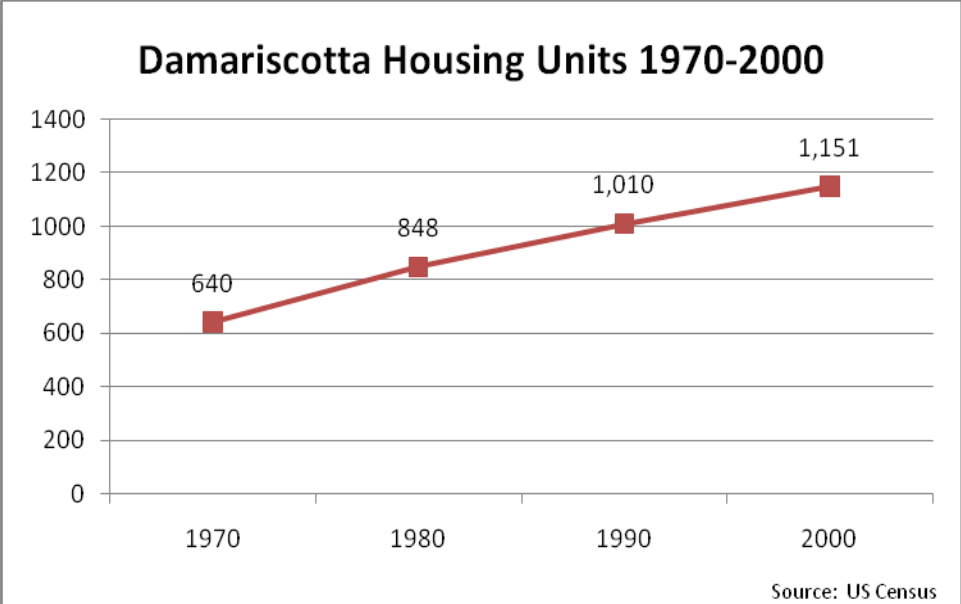
Damariscotta’s population grew from 1,264 people in 1970 to 2,041 people in 2000.



More than half of Damariscotta’s residents were 45 years old or older in 2000.



The proportion of older Damariscotta residents grew from 1990 to 2000.



The number of Damariscotta’s housing units grew from 640 in 1970 to 1,151 in 2000.

Since 1970, the Town’s population has grown significantly – over 18% in the 1970’s, more than 21% in the 1980’s, and another 13% in the 1990’s. By 2000, the US Census indicated Damariscotta’s population had expanded to 2,041. About 40% of Damariscotta’s population in 2000 was between the ages of 30 and 64, with nearly one-quarter between 45 and 64.

In 2000, there were 942 households in Damariscotta, a 14% increase since 1990. Two-thirds of Damariscotta’s dwelling units are owner-occupied and one-third is rental units.

Both population and housing in Damariscotta is likely to continue to grow over the coming years.

The median household income in Damariscotta was \$36,287 in 2000, slightly below the county median of \$38,686.

The majority of Damariscotta residents work in management, professional, and service industry jobs, rather than traditional rural occupations, such as forestry, fishing, and mineral extraction.

Damariscotta provides jobs, shopping, entertainment, and professional services for the regional population of upwards of 9,000 in the neighboring towns of Alna, Bremen, Bristol, Edgecomb, Jefferson, Newcastle, Nobleboro, Pemaquid, and South Bristol.

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.

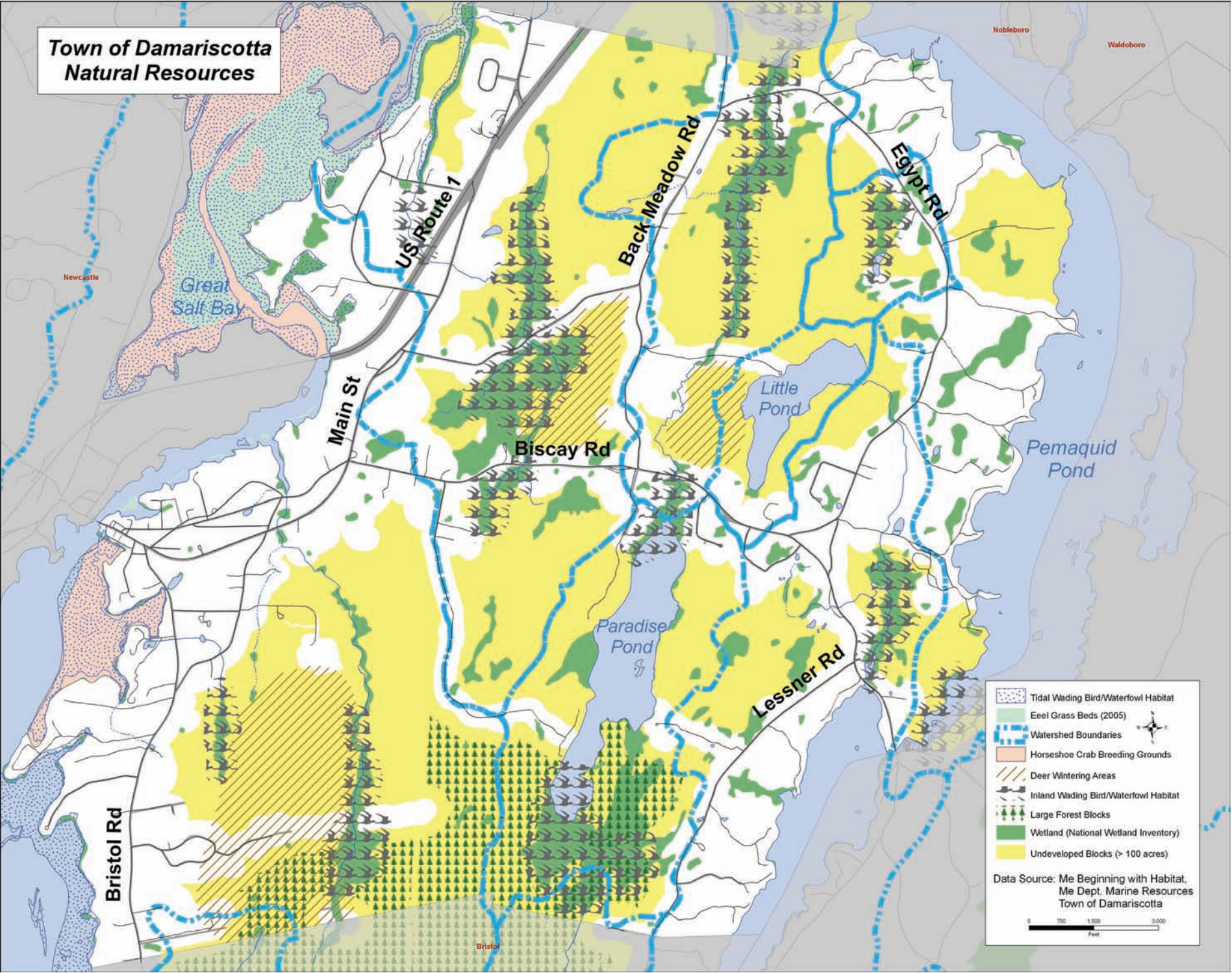
Zoning Ordinance

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.

NATURAL RESOURCES



Damariscotta is blessed with an abundance of natural resources that support a high quality of life. The Town is surrounded on the west and east by large water bodies – on the west is the Damariscotta River which extends about twelve miles out to the Atlantic Ocean; on the east are Pemaquid and Biscay Ponds, which form the Town boundary with Bremen. Little Pond, the source of the Town’s drinking water, and Paradise Pond are also located in the community.

Eel grass beds are primarily located in Great Salt Bay, though there are some beds that can be found in other parts of the Damariscotta River. Tidal wading bird and waterfowl habitat is also located in Great Salt Bay and along much of the shoreline and coves of the Damariscotta River. Inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat is located amidst wetlands that are found alongside and in the upper reaches of streams and south of Paradise Pond. Horseshoe crab habitat is found in Great Salt Bay and along the Damariscotta River.

Large blocks of forested land are located in the southern part of the community and large blocks of unfragmented habitat remain in interior areas east of Main Street, Route 1, and Bristol Road, and west of Egypt and Lessner Roads.

PRESERVED AND RESERVED LANDS

This diagram shows the lands that are already protected in perpetuity, as well as those that either should be considered for protection or are under the ownership of the Town.

The Town requires setbacks from most of its shoreline through locally interpreted, state-mandated Shoreland Zoning. In addition, the Water District controls most of the watershed of Little Pond. While these areas are protected from development, the quality of connectivity of the shorelands could be improved. The Damariscotta River Association has preserved many shorelines through acquisition of properties and is in the process of creating a continuous trail system along the River.

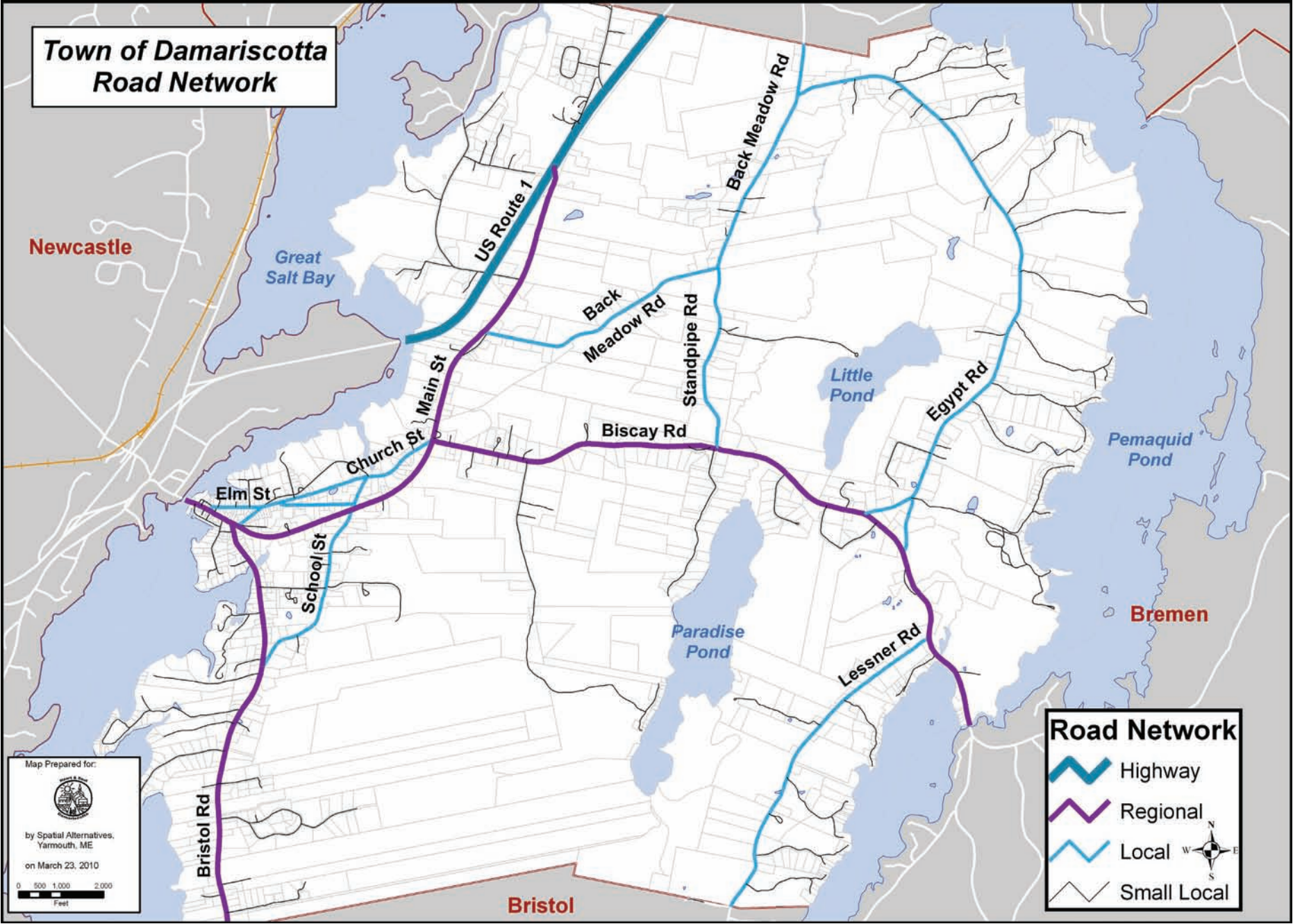
Larger preserved lands in Damariscotta include Salt Bay Farm, Salt Bay Trail, Round Top Farm, the Shell Middens, and the public water supply around Little Pond.

Reserved lands, which refer to those lands that should be considered for long-term preservation, include the extensive property behind Great Salt Bay School, other open lands along the River, and interior lands east of the Bristol Road. The conceptual map to the left was developed based on conversations with community members during the charrette. It should act only as a general guide and requires further refinement by groups involved in open space preservation.

It is also critical to take steps to preserve the many view corridors throughout the Town. These views contribute to the spirit of the community as well as influence the strength of the tourism economy.



VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS



The main vehicular travel routes in Damariscotta include highways, regional roads, and local roads.

Route 1 is a major state highway that carries traffic to, within, and through Damariscotta and the Midcoast region.

Regional roads carry travelers to nearby communities. They include Route 1B, also known as Main Street or Business Route 1; the Bristol Road, which travels south to Bristol and Pemaquid; and the Biscay Road, which travels to Bremen.

Local roads primarily carry travelers from one destination in Damariscotta to another. Major local roads include Church Street, Elm Street, and Chapman Street north of Route 1B. South of Route 1B near Downtown is School Street. Further out on Route 1B and north of Biscay Road is Back Meadow Road, which intersects with Standpipe Road at Knowlton Corner. North of Knowlton is Meadow Road and Egypt Road, which loops back to Biscay Road. Lessner Road also branches off Biscay Road heading south between Paradise Pond and Biscay Pond.

NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING CIRCLES

This diagram shows the existing “pedestrian sheds” in the focus area. A pedestrian shed is an area that is centered on a common destination, such as a civic space or commercial area. Its size is related to a five minute walk from the center to the edge. Five minutes is proven to be about as much as the average person is willing to walk to a common destination, like a store or service without resorting to a motorized vehicle.

In addition to a common destination, the area should have a pleasant walking environment – sidewalks with shade trees and rest areas, buildings close to the street for interest and sense of enclosure, etc.

The pedestrian sheds on this diagram are located based on these criteria, assuming the goals of the Illustrative Plan, including sidewalk improvements, are met.

The two Pedestrian Sheds to the east represent potential sheds that could be centered on a destination, from something as simple as a green or park, or small retail like a corner store.



LEGEND

-  Pedestrian Sheds



Downtown Damariscotta



Civic Center area at Route 1B and School St.



Piper Commons area



Biscay Road & Route 1B



Farm Campus Area, including Round Top Farm, Rec Center and Great Salt Bay School



Farm Business area at Route 1 & Route 1B

To the left is a series of scale comparisons showing a five minute walking circle superimposed onto nodes of development along the Route 1B corridor. This exercise is helpful for the charrette team and the public to get a sense of the relative scale of the area being studied.

These aerial photos are centered on sections of the focus areas that are already walkable, like the Downtown, as well as potential neighborhoods, like Piper Commons.

By using a common scale, it is easy to imagine the range of uses that can fit within any given area, as well as what would be required to make an area mixed use and walkable. That does not mean every area should be as dense as Downtown, but that all areas would need a mix of uses, a center, and an interconnected network of streets, sidewalks, and paths to function as a walkable neighborhood.

LEGEND

--- Five Minute Walking Circle

SCALE COMPARISONS WITH MAINE TOWNS



Downtown Damariscotta



Camden



Rockland



Biscay Road & Route 1B



Wiscasset



Brunswick

LEGEND

--- 5-Minute Walking Circle

To the left is a series of scale comparisons showing Downtown Damariscotta at the same scale as several well known towns in the region. The exercise is useful for the charrette team and the public to help understand what kinds of places people like on the ground and how that compares to Damariscotta’s density. It is apparent from these scale comparisons that towns like Rockland and Brunswick have a much greater number of streets and buildings and a more gridded pattern of development. This can be compared to Wiscasset which has a grid system, though greater space between buildings. Damariscotta and Camden, on the other hand, have a radial pattern of streets and Damariscotta is less intensely developed.

All of these images can be compared to the intersection of Biscay Road and Route 1B, which has a grocery store, convenience store, fire station, recreation center, hair salon, and service stations. All of these businesses currently have separate entrances and parking lots. Additional buildings and street connections could help this area take better advantage of the five minute walk.

A Level 1 Retail Market Study¹ was prepared by the Gibbs Planning Group (GPG) as part of the charrette report. This preliminary study included:

- review of demographic and consumer economic data from ESRI, a private geographic data company, for the study and trade areas;
- conversations with some local business and property owners, citizens, and community groups in their establishments or during the charrette;
- preliminary field evaluation of the Damariscotta / Newcastle area during the daytime and evening, as well as some shopping centers and retail concentrations; and
- projection of net consumer expenditure capture potential, based on potential consumer retail category expenditures and existing sales.

The study defines the primary trade area for Damariscotta/Newcastle as including Boothbay, Bristol, Wiscasset, and Jefferson. Damariscotta/Newcastle has a significant competitive advantage in its primary trade area because of access, design, lack of competition, traffic and travel patterns, and close proximity to its consumers. This competitive advantage equates to a domination of the capture of consumer expenditure by the retailers in the Downtown area.

The secondary trade area² is an extension of the primary trade area. Consumer expenditure attracted to Downtown Damariscotta/Newcastle from the secondary trade area is not dependent on convenience or accessibility, but is drawn to Damariscotta/Newcastle because of its mix of tenants, design, consumer prefer-

ences for particular retailers, uniqueness of products, and a favorable shopping experience for the consumer.

About half of the region's residents have average annual household incomes below \$50,000. These families do not have many viable shopping or dining venues that they can afford in Damariscotta. The region's moderate income families conduct a large amount of their shopping and dining outside of Damariscotta and drive 30 to 40 minutes to Augusta, Brunswick, and Rockland.³

The study concludes that statistically, 76,900 square feet of new (additional) retail and restaurant development is likely to be supportable today in the Damariscotta / Newcastle area, producing enough sales to pay living wages and cover market rate business expenses. The retail study also finds that statistically, 91,600 square feet of new retail and restaurant development is likely to be supportable in 2014. These figures were developed by GPG as part of the Level 1 Market Study.

The study suggests that the existing unmet demand, and that which is projected from household growth through 2014, will be enough to support a new neighborhood retail center⁴. The result of this unmet demand is that many local residents travel far outside of the Damariscotta area for much of their primary retail goods and services needs. On the other hand, the Downtown captures seasonal visitors who enjoy fine dining, unique specialty shops, and entertainment.

The study indicates that there is unmet demand for retail development to meet today's existing consumer expenditure in the Damariscotta/Newcastle study area. It also predicts that there is demand for retail development to meet the projected consumer expenditure driven by population growth through 2014.

The Downtown has approximately 135,000 – 150,000 square feet of commercial space located between the River and Church Street and approximately 330 parking stalls, roughly equaling 2.3 cars per 1,000 gross square feet of commercial, which is less than a recommended 2.5 spaces per 1,000 gross square feet. The Town can implement both management and capi-

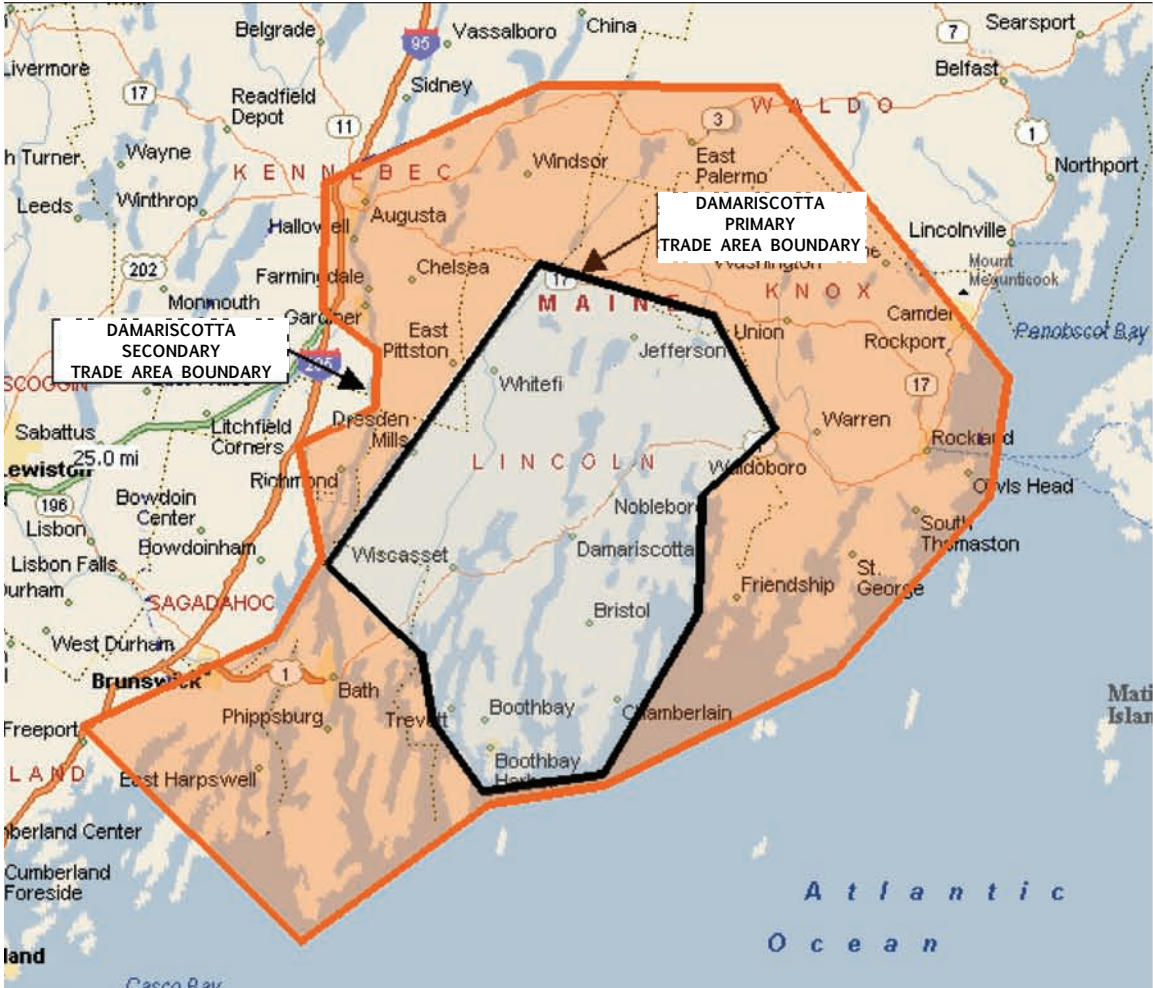
tal improvement projects to improve the economic sustainability of businesses. Potential management actions include:

- A marketing program to promote the Town;
- A parking program to direct employee parking away from prime locations;
- A progressive parking ticket program to offer a warning for the first violation, then increased fines with each five additional tickets. Renew the fines at the beginning of each season or year, and
- Business assistance for retailers and restaurants to enhance business practices.

Capital improvement that could provide additional trade in the Town include:

- Seeking new professional office space in the town center (30,000-50,000 square feet);
- Attracting a hotel to the town center;
- Developing a waterfront street lined with retail, office, and/or a hotel.

See the Appendix for the complete Retail Market Study.



Above is a map showing the primary trade area boundary in black and the secondary trade area boundary in red.

¹ This Level 1 Retail Market Study was prepared using generally accepted market research and business standards. The preliminary analysis provided in a Level 1 Retail Market Study is usually considered adequate for community scale planning efforts, but is not intended to be used as the sole basis for designing, financing, planning, or programming any particular business, real estate development, or public planning policy. The charrette team recommends that the Town undertake a more comprehensive market study as part of preparing a community-wide economic development strategy.

² Damariscotta / Newcastle's secondary trade area includes all or portions of Augusta, Bath, Camden, Chelsea, Dresden, Farmingdale, Gardner, Hallowell, Harpswell, Owl's Head, Palermo, Phippsburg, Pittston, Richmond, Rockland, Rockport, Thomaston, Union, Warren, Washington, and Windsor.

³ Based on GPG's conversations with individuals and Town officials who participated in focus groups during the charrette as well as individuals GPG talked with during random meetings in restaurants, coffee shops, and on the street during the charrette and observations about the current mix of businesses in the community.

⁴ A neighborhood retail center is one of several classes of shopping centers recognized by the Urban Land Institute (ULI), including super regional, regional, community, neighborhood, and convenience retail centers. A neighborhood retail center provides for the sale of goods and services that primarily meet the daily needs of an immediate neighborhood trade area. A supermarket is usually the principal tenant. ULI indicates that a neighborhood retail center typically is made up of between 30,000 to 100,000 square feet of store area.