

History of Land Use Planning in Damariscotta from 1961 to 2013

- **Land Use Ordinances**

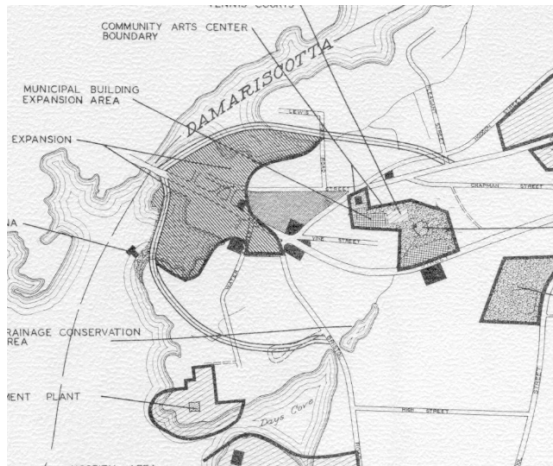
In 1972, the State developed a model ordinance requiring the Towns with fresh and/or salt water bodies of water to adopt Shoreland Use standards. At the same time it passed a law providing for a mechanism for towns to review and approve Subdivisions. A Planning Board was formed to administer the Shoreland Ordinance and Subdivision Law. The town has had a long history of being satisfied with as little land use controls as possible and no further land use controls were implemented until 1985.

In 1985, at the request of some citizens, the Selectmen formed a committee to develop a Land Use Ordinance. In order for that to occur, an updated Comprehensive plan needed to be accomplished to lend legal viability to any such ordinance subsequently adopted. In June of 1985, a Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The next year was spent developing a Land Use Ordinance, which was approved at the March 1986 Town Meeting by 2 votes. A citizen led group petitioned to have a revote with the hopes of reversing the previous decision. A vote in the fall 1986, defeated the ordinance by 3 votes.

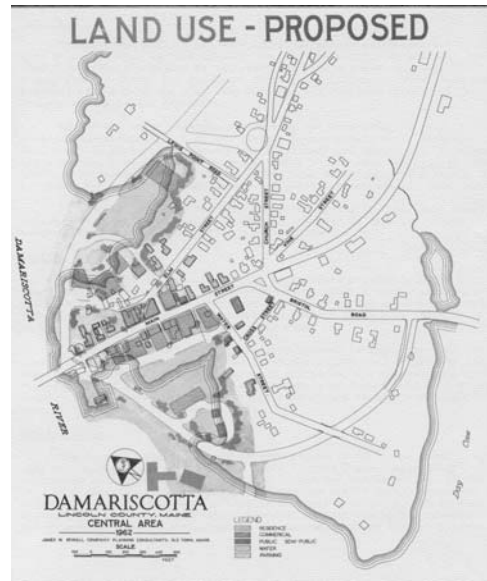
In 1997, another effort was undertaken to develop and pass a Land Use Ordinance. Based largely on the Ordinance defeated in 1986, it was passed this time with a minimal of opposition. It has been amended many times since. In 2002, a Wireless Communication District and associated standards were added 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 as a result of a petition drive to prevent Big Box stores in the area.

- **Comprehensive Plans**

In 1961-2, through monies provided from the Federal Government, the first Comprehensive Plan was developed and adopted by the Town. As an interesting note, the future Land Use Plan recommended (all prior to the DEP being formed), in order to expand the geographical limits to the downtown, provide for additional parking and commercial buildings, that the cove to the south of the current parking lot be filled Gay's Point as well as the cove to the north to Lewis Point. 2 ring roads were proposed that would connect from Main Street at the bridge through Belknap Point to Bristol road and to the north across Lewis Point connecting with Church Street. Coincidentally, the Route 1 bypass was being constructed at the same time and excavated material from that project was used to fill the section of the cove for our current parking lot. See drawings from the 1962 Plan on the following page.



Proposed Partial Land Use Plan 1962



Proposed Downtown Land use Plan 1962

In 1985 an abbreviated form of an updated Comprehensive Plan was adopted that would allow a development of a requested Land Use Ordinance to be voted on. See above for discussion. In 1990, the State of Maine formed a Department called the Growth Management (Agency???) and passed a law requiring all towns to develop a comprehensive plan around a common set of standards that would also require review and approval of each plan by the state as well as the towns. A consultant, George Smith, was hired to administer the effort for Damariscotta and a committee was formed. Maine Mapping Service was hired to develop the required Base and overlay maps. In the Spring of 1992??? The plan was approved by the town, but due to several inadequacies, did not receive State approval. At the same time the Growth Management Agency was disbanded and some of its duties were passed to other agencies.

In 1998, after realizing that some of their Land Use ordinances were in jeopardy of not being upheld in a court decision without an approved Comprehensive Plan, a consultant was hired to bring the Plan up to consistency with the State Standards. The effort almost completely rewrote the plan and was passed, both at the local level and State in 2000. In 2002, the Implementation Strategy was passed.

As part of the State requirements for the plan, a Commercial Growth Zone was included on the Future Land Use Map as a simple circle in the area east of Route 1B and to the south of Damariscotta Hardware. This would include the land of Chester Rice and the French Family and would provide for future commercial and or mixed use development with a single access point to Route 1B near Damariscotta Hardware. This is the area where the Piper Common development was proposed in 2009. Refer to the discussion of the project and its relation to other activities in the Section, Planning Efforts 2002-2012.

- 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. The updated ordinance expanded and added many new and improved standards to those already in existence in the existing Ordinance. In addition, as a result of the possibility of big box stores coming to the area, Bob Faunce, the County Planner, developed a set of standards for Large Scale Development that could be enacted as a stand alone ordinance or added to an existing ordinance. Damariscotta chose the latter and included it in the amended Site Plan Review Ordinance.

Planning efforts 2002-2012

2002 to 2006

- **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.

2005 to 2011

Timeline

2005–2006	Retail size cap passed by voters
2007	Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee created April
2008	Town-wide Pedestrian and Bicycle meeting held
July 2008	Damariscotta selected as Heart & Soul Community Planning Town
October 2008	Heart & Soul Community Planning Project launched at the Pumpkin Fest and Regatta
December 2008–	
May 2009	Neighbor to Neighbor Chats, Community Conversations
May to August 2009	Visioning activities and continuing conversations
Sept 2009	Pre-Charrette workshop
Oct 2009	Damariscotta Heart & Soul Planning Charrette
April 2010	Final Charrette Report released
May – Sept. 2010	Neighborhood Meetings, Public information distributed on planning, vision and Form Based Code
September 2010	Consultant retained to update zoning with Form Based Codes
October 2010 -2111	Review and update municipal codes, Comprehensive Plan, and budget priorities
2011	Town wide vote on code amendments for Piper Common and other commercial districts in Town
June 2011	Both Form Based Code and the Comprehensive plan amendments

June 2012	were defeated at the Town Meeting Amendment to expand C2 Zone to allow some development by Piper Commons was defeated.
2012 and Onward	Update Comprehensive Plan and other actions

- Walmart

From the Adoption of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and the 2002 Implementation Plan, and the Downtown Master Plan, planning efforts leveled off. In November 2005, Walmart obtained options on a piece of property near the intersection of Route 1 and 1B, and announced their desire to build a 180,000 square foot Supercenter. As an effort to stop this from happening, a petition was circulated to limit the size of retail stores to 35,000 square feet.

Thus started a large effort to discuss the presence of such a store and its potential impact on Damariscotta and also began a change in the level of public participation on planning issues. The history of that store in other areas and its impact on existing businesses, as well as the fact that the store area would exceed the area of all downtown businesses were major factors in ultimately deciding to limit the size of retail stores by passing the article at the 2006 Town meeting by a 2/3rds majority.

As written by Barnaby Porter, August 2013

“Then, more recently, the Walmart store chain took a very muscular approach to move into Damariscotta, using its time tested, well oiled corporate machinery to bomb our town and many of its businesses into submission. The widely recognized advantages to shoppers, very tempting, especially in our poor state, came face to face with a building sense of alarm at what really was at stake. This time the people rallied against a dire threat unlike any that had come to town before. The debate got heated at times, but below the surface it became clear there was a unity of comprehension. In a remarkable demonstration of grass roots democracy in action, Walmart was soundly trounced. Damariscotta would NOT become just another town who sold out its essential character for cheap goods. The blueberries and sweet peas for sale on the side of the road were safe.”

This resulted, as part of the upgrade to the Site Plan Review Ordinance, in the inclusion of the Large scale development section crafted by Bob Faunce, the Lincoln County Planner to provide more local tools to deal with potential impacts of such development.

2007-2011 AN ERA OF PROACTIVE PLANNING FOR GROWTH

The Walmart issue caused the townspeople to understand what the possibility of a development of this scale might have on the town and galvanize an effort to develop a solution to that subject. The potential damage a development of this scale could have for the Town was clearly illustrated and was a turning point in making the town realize that more thoughts and actions were needed to guide the town's growth in a direction that the townspeople wanted.

Gone were the days of Damariscotta's somewhat laize faire and one might say anti-planning and land use codes attitudes that had dominated the Town's efforts at planning until 2000. It should be mentioned that there has always been some angst with the dichotomy of a more conservative, home grown and business oriented citizenry with that of a more liberal part of the townspeople, some of which is made up of people moving into the area over the last 30 years. What is particularly important to realize that it is this group of people (the more liberal group) that can make up a disproportionate amount of the town's attendance at meetings, including town meetings, hearings, and participation in surveys as part of the Comprehensive Planning process. Traditionally, it takes a large issue, like Walmart, to engage the entire town. Also the older age and better educated part of the town's population are participating in this process, skewing the attitudes and decisions that are made for the town. This is a fact to be noted and is not meant to be a negative or positive judgment.

The following is a description of the specific efforts and issues in planning during this period:

- **DPAC**
 - **Inter-related Planning efforts**
 - Heart and Soul Community Planning Project
 - Piper Common Development
 - Charrette (part of the Heart and Soul project)
 - Form Based Codes
 - **Other Groups and Projects**
 - Shore and Harbor Plan
 - Damariscotta 2020
 - Sidewalk- Bicycle Plan
 - Gateway1 Planning Project

- **DPAC**

Historically the Selectmen have operated with very little specific input from the citizenry for issues that may need to be accomplished. Typically they were reacting to complaints or simply requirements for doing the business of the town. In 2007, the Selectmen, at the urging of the Town Manager, decided to start a new committee made up of area interest groups, in order to prepare, consider and recommend certain issues to the Selectmen for action instead of the Selectmen waiting for someone to come forward with an idea or complaint that would necessitate action. This group was named the Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee, or DPAC, as it became known.

The Board of Selectmen appointed DPAC to lead a community-driven visioning process to make the Damariscotta region a better place to live, work and play, do business and visit. Instead of including area town representatives with equal power to govern the group as was the case with

Damariscotta 2020, DPAC brings to the table appointees with interests representing the general public, local government, conservation, business, the arts, seniors and youth. DPAC was designed to reach out to all residents, businesses and community groups in Damariscotta and area communities to hear what is important to them in how the Town changes and grows in the future.

Mission statement

The Purpose of DPAC is to provide advice to the Damariscotta Board of Selectmen on planning issues facing the town. DPAC was created “to lead a community driven process to make the Damariscotta region a better place to live, work, play, do business and visit for all people by advancing policies and practices that foster sustainable land use and prosperity.”

DPAC is charged with “fostering a community visioning process, establishing and maintaining an on-going long range strategic planning process and monitoring implementation, incorporating and promoting public dialogue about community and regional planning and recommending implementation strategies, and providing community outreach and promoting, facilitating and incorporating public dialogue in on-going planning efforts.”

One of the first DPAC activities was a bicycle and pedestrian planning process. DPAC members, with the help of Friends of Midcoast Maine and the Damariscotta River Association, assisted in facilitating a process that engaged almost 100 people in designating bike and pedestrian origins, destinations and possible bicycle and pedestrian routes. These ideas were mapped and dot-voted on to identify top priorities, enabling the Town to pursue funding. See topic below for additional information.

Soon after, DPAC began working with Friends of Midcoast Maine to engage citizens in planning for the future. Its efforts included a successful application for a two-year partnership with the Orton Family Foundation to undertake a “Heart & Soul Community Planning” Project which wrapped up in January 2011. This report will be used to share what we've heard over the past two years and to engage residents and business owners in creating the future we want to see in Damariscotta.

INTER-RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

▪ **HEART AND SOUL COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECT**

In 2008, as DPAC was in its infancy, the town, along with Friends of Midcoast Maine, applied for and won a competitive grant from the Orton Family Foundation. We were one of 2 towns in the eastern United States to do so. They would provide \$100,000 in matching monies and in kind services for a 2 year period as an experiment in how a town may develop the knowledge to engage the public in a variety of issues and help the town discover their “Heart and Soul”.

The full explanation of this project and is contained as Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

▪ **PIPER COMMON DEVELOPMENT**

At the time DPAC was formed, a group of investors purchased an option to buy what was the French Family Trust properties south of Route 1B and east of School Street. It is a 240 acre area comprised of 7 lots. While there were no specific plans, it was hoped to build a mixed

use group of buildings in the area closest to Route 1B with the remainder more residential in nature. They definitely wanted to proceed slowly and work with the Town. The area for mixed use coincided with the area denoted on the last Comprehensive Plan Land Use map in 2002. It would require at the least an expanded C1 Zone to allow commercial use in what is now a Rural Zone.

As this development was occurring at the time the Heart and Soul project and Gateway 1 were ongoing, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to develop a strategy and standards that would work for all. In concert with the Heart and Souls and its attendant Charrette the overall thoughts and plans took shape, although still without any clear users. The economic client at that time was not conducive to new developments.

They were a participant through all aspects of the planning efforts, even providing some funds for the < > efforts. Eventually as the Charrette Report was done and its follow-on Form Based Code effort, there was a growing concern that :

- Nobody knew exactly what was going to be developed. Concern that somehow a small big box store or chain restaurants may come.
- It was appearing that a 2nd town center may be created, in competition with the downtown area.
- A feeling among some that the owners, once modifications to the various ordinances were achieved, somebody else would actually step in to build the development that may be distinctly different than what had been alluded to during the process.
- People wondered if the entire thing would be viable given the limited needs for more retail stores.

Certainly the size and scale of the proposed buildings would fit nicely with what the town seemed to want and the entrance and associated green space would provide a nice addition to the Route 1B corridor.

As the process unfolded , the poor economy and probably other factors continued to keep businesses from emerging to become part of this development. Thus it was difficult for the townspeople to keep from feeling more positive towards it. Ultimately, as part of the Charrette, Form Based Codes and inclusion as part of the Heart and Soul Community Planning Project its efforts were thwarted by the defeat of these issues by the Townspeople. A further effort to carry on a portion of it closest to Route 1B by attempting to modify the C1 zone boundary also failed.

▪ CHARRETTE

While actually part of the Heart and Soul Project, its breadth and significance would seem it should have its own section. As the full “Heart and Soul Planning Charrette Report” contains the entire effort, there will be no attempt to recap this in detail but will attempt to describe the broad outline of how that process worked and the important points that were offered as possible solutions to the myriad of desires of those townspeople that came out of the workshops that were attended by over 400 people both residents of Damariscotta and surrounding towns.

Needless to say this was a huge effort, on a scale seldom tried for a community of this size and certainly will serve as a huge milestone for planning in this community, although it was never accepted through a town vote.

The Charrette was done over a 5 day period and consisted of:

- Workshop group sessions where a huge amount of input was gathered from over 400 attendees. All of this input is contained in the Appendix to the report that can be seen on the Town's website. Pages x.18 through x.30 contain a complete and overwhelming list of concerns.
- Breaking the study area into 3 sections: 1) Downtown, 2) Business Route 1, and 3) Piper Common.

(More to Come)



▪ FORM BASED CODES

At the conclusion of the Charrette, a decision of what method for implementing many of the ideas contained in the “Heart and Soul Planning and Charrette Report” needed to be made. The choices were, 1) to simply amend our current ordinances to accommodate the conclusions and needed actions or 2) proceed with using a new type of Code called Form Based Code which was being heavily lobbied by some as the way we should proceed. Ultimately the latter won out.

The Code is quite a new concept, not yet tried in Maine, aiming to provide a set of visual guidelines for what the structures would need to comply with that would produce the form, or “look and feel” that the town felt it needed in a particular area of town. There are different density levels, called, Transects, going from the densest (urban core) to the least dense in the rural areas.

(More to come)

OTHER GROUPS AND EFFORTS

▪ 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.

- **DAMARISCOTTA 2020**

During the whole process of upgrading the Site Review Ordinance , and at the same time that Walmart was brewing, the concept of having a Charrette was suggested by Kara Wilbur, the daughter of one our Selectmen at the time, and a planner. She had formed for a brief time a group called Damariscotta 2020. This adhoc group with no official sanctions by the Selectmen/Town, formed with area representatives, sought to think about and introduce methods and thoughts of how to more actively plan for the inevitable growth that will happen. There was a one night workshop that introduced the area town's people to what might happen when the focus was on a particular subject and the power that a concentrated thought process could have.

Unfortunately, the concept of including area towns in the process of planning for solely Damariscotta's needs, and having no official standing, met with the obvious problems of representation and the attitudes that outsiders were planning for the Town. Over time less Damariscotta people became involved and thus were sown the seeds of failure for that group. A better solution may have been to place the decision making power in strictly Damariscotta citizen's hand, with area representatives in an advisory capacity only.

- **SIDEWALK - BICYCLE PLAN**

DPAC, FMM, the Lincoln County Planner, and the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), 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.

As part of a storm water upgrade on Church street, new sidewalks were built on portions of Church and Elm streets. A new sidewalk has been constructed along a portion of Route 1B and planning is underway for a sidewalk on Bristol Road from Maine street to the Hospital Drive. In 2009 the DOT upgraded Main Street from the Congregational church in Newcastle to the Bristol road /Main Street in Damariscotta. New sidewalks and a reconfigured intersection at Bristol with a new traffic light were part of the project.

- **GATEWAY 1 CORRIDOR COALITION AND THE RESULTANT CORRIDOR ACTION PLAN**

In 2005, through a State and Federal monies, a unique Planning concept was forged. For the first time, a project was undertaken to study what effect varying types of modifying land use patterns would have on future traffic patterns and loads for the Route one corridor from Brunswick to Northport. A Transportation consultant, < >, representing MDOT and Evan Richert representing Maine State Planning Office, were hired. For the next 4 years representatives from all the 20 towns on the corridor met and This plan was prepared by MDOT 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.

The Corridor Action Plan was ratified by the Steering Committee and was sent out to the various towns on the Corridor for acceptance. DPAC members, George Parker and Jack Spinner, served on the Gateway 1 Steering Committee. In 2010, the new MDOT Commissioner terminated all funding for the project and the official Gateway1 group was disbanded. In order to try and keep the effort going, an ad-hoc group composed of many of the past Gateway members is continuing to meet and keep the effort going. Recently Friends of Midcoast Maine has joined the effort to offer that organization help and a source for securing and administrating funding for work as it arises. Matt Lutkis, Town Manager has continued Damariscotta’s participation in this effort. Its future at this point is unclear.

In Appendix 2, a more detailed description of the Mission and Goals from the Gateway 1 website is presented.

Appendix 1

DPAC and the Damariscotta Heart & Soul Planning Project

Opportunities and Challenges Facing Damariscotta



The following is a verbatim account of the description of the DPAC and Heart and Soul Planning Project as contained in the Heart and Soul Final Report. While the culmination of that effort in conducting the Charrette and the development of the Form Based Code as a result of the Charrette was ultimately defeated for a variety of reasons, the entire planning effort and process will serve as a milestone for Damariscotta and surrounding towns in serving to galvanize local interest, participation and action.

Background

Damariscotta is a small town located along the shore of the Damariscotta River. Though it developed as a shipbuilding center, the community now thrives on tourism as well as providing daily goods and services for the region. Despite a population of only 2,000, Damariscotta is the retail and service center for inland and peninsula communities due to its location along Route 1. Damariscotta also has a robust offering of cultural organizations and activities, superb schools, as well as extraordinary natural amenities, including four lakes and the River.

Over the decades the Town grew beyond its historic downtown village center. Most new commercial development has occurred along Business Route 1 primarily because businesses want to be in the region's economic center, and also because it's easiest to locate there due to the Town's regulations. The pace of development has been slow enough that these changes occurred incrementally but, in 2005, Damariscotta faced the prospect of a big box store locating in the community. Residents galvanized on both sides of the issue and in a special election with record turnout (approximately 90 percent of registered voters) they approved a ballot item that limited the size of retail stores to no more than 35,000 square feet (a building foot print about the size of Damariscotta Hardware).

This experience, however, revealed both how ill-equipped the Town was to manage new development

pressures and the need to engage a cross-section of the community in future planning and development decisions. Town leaders realized that they needed to hear what citizens want for Damariscotta's future. In response, the Town hired a part-time planner and formed the Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC).

DPAC and a New Way of Doing Business

The Board of Selectmen appointed DPAC to lead a community-driven visioning process to make the Damariscotta region a better place to live, work and play, do business and visit. DPAC brings to the table appointees with interests representing the general public, local government, conservation, business, the arts, seniors and youth. DPAC was designed to reach out to all residents, businesses and community groups to hear what is important to them in how the Town changes and grows in the future. One of the first DPAC activities was a bicycle and pedestrian planning process. DPAC members, with the help of Friends of Midcoast Maine and the Damariscotta River Association, assisted in facilitating a process that engaged almost 100 people in designating bike and pedestrian origins, destinations and possible bicycle and pedestrian routes. These ideas were mapped and dot-voted on to identify top priorities, enabling the Town to pursue funding.

Soon after, DPAC began working with Friends of Midcoast Maine to engage citizens in planning for the future. Its efforts included a successful application for a two-year partnership with the Orton Family Foundation to undertake a "Heart & Soul Community Planning" Project which wraps up in January 2011. This report will be used to share what we've heard over the past two years and to engage residents and business owners in creating the future we want to see in Damariscotta.

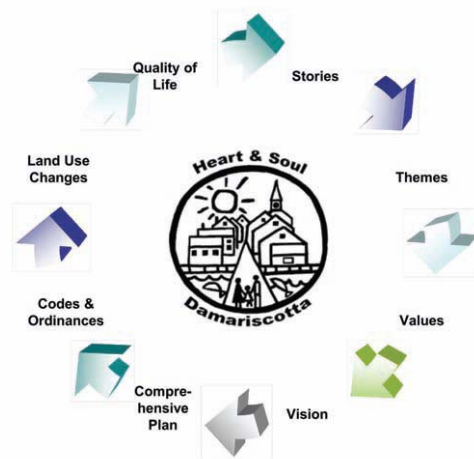
The Heart & Soul Community Planning Project

Damariscotta's Heart & Soul Community Planning Project engaged residents and business owners in developing a shared community vision and set a course for realizing it. The vision and the course of action are rooted in what people value most about Damariscotta and what makes the Town unique.

DPAC and the Board of Selectmen realized that the only way to meet this purpose was to pursue an open and inclusive process involving people who live, work and play in Damariscotta. DPAC made many efforts to hear from the community such as:

- Gathering stories that highlighted what people love about Damariscotta.
- Holding community forums about important planning and development challenges.
- Conducting surveys on what people want to see in future growth including a survey specific to local high school students.
- Holding a multi-day public planning and design charrette to explore options for guiding new growth in a manner consistent with what local people want to see in the future.
- Spreading the word about activities and progress through regular articles in the Lincoln County News, DPAC electronic newsletter, hosting a table at local events and festivals, and postcard and poster distribution around Town.

Through this project, DPAC anticipated articulating what is most important to Damariscottans in how the Town plans for the future, increasing citizen participation in planning and growth issues, creating ways to improve access to local leadership, and fostering greater citizen investment in the community's future.



Damariscotta Heart and Soul Project
Town of Damariscotta, Friends of Midcoast Maine, Orton Family Foundation

Damariscotta's Heart & Soul

Through the course of this project, six community values have risen to the top. These values emerged as Damariscotta's Heart & Soul and will guide future land use and community decisions:

- We value working locally
- We value living locally
- We value community involvement
- We value having culture and nature in close proximity We value an accessible community
- We value a strong sense of community

Financial Rewards

Concurrent with the Heart & Soul project, the Town has leveraged over \$1 million in grants and opportunities for community improvement. These range from funds for police officer equipment, to sidewalk funds, to business assistance funds, to planning grants and shore and harbor funding. Several of these projects originated with the Heart & Soul Planning process and community input.

Neighborhood Meetings

A new method of hearing from community members has been tried, and with very good results. Several neighborhoods have met at least once and developed lists of concerns and ideas about the future. These comments have been fed back to DPAC and Board of Selectmen members. It is expected that these neighborhood meetings will continue on their own as a method for sustained public input and two-way interactions.

- **Two-way street :** The Town Manager will “set up shop” once a week in a Downtown restaurant or coffee shop to provide information to merchants and property owners and to listen to their concerns and suggestions.
- **Shore and Harbor Planning:** The Town received funding to study the shore and harbor area. A consultant was hired who worked with downtown businesses, property owners and interested residents to design a plan for the enhancement of the parking lot, shorefront area and public space.
- **Youth Engagement:** Lincoln Academy high school students were brought into the discussions throughout the process. With additional grant funding to Friends of Midcoast Maine, a student intern was hired to work on specific projects including placing bike racks downtown, securing a youth after school meeting place in an area restaurant, and developing a movie night or other

event for youth.

- **Maine Downtown Center Designation:** Damariscotta received designation as a Maine Downtown Network Community by the Maine Downtown Center (www.mdf.org). The Network Community designation will improve the capacity and legitimacy of the Damariscotta Region Business Alliance, and increase commitment to the vitality and economic development of our downtown by a variety of stakeholders.
- **DPAC Membership:** The Town Manager and Board of Selectmen recruited new volunteers to serve on DPAC as existing terms expired. In September 2010, four new members were appointed.

A Values-Based Vision

DPAC identified the following common values based on its extensive efforts to listen to people in the community:

- We value working locally and growing locally owned businesses
- We value living locally, being able to afford to live and shop in Town
- We value community involvement where people participate in schools, organizations, churches and community events and festivals
- We value having culture and nature in close proximity, where we might see a seal or a moose but we also have restaurants, art galleries, local theater and a library, all within walking distance
- We value an accessible community where we have easy access to goods and services, to local government and information.
- We value a strong sense of community where people trust one another and feel safe.

DPAC used these values to guide a four-day planning and design Charrette (a participatory workshop) in October 2009 to craft a vision for future growth in Town. It focused on three areas: Downtown, Route 1B and Piper Common (a private landholding being considered for development). DPAC chose these areas because they are the primary places in Town that can most efficiently accommodate new growth and in the case of Piper Common, is the future growth area of the Town as identified in the Comprehensive Plan and the Gateway 1 Plan. In addition to specific recommendations for these three areas, the Charrette resulted in general recommendations for improvements to the Town as a whole such as the need for public restrooms downtown, and the interest in satellite and employee parking areas to name a few.

What Happens if We do nothing?

These maps illustrate how Damariscotta has grown since 1950, and where we're likely to grow through 2050 according to the Town's current land use ordinances (red dots represent existing buildings and blue dots represent future buildings). The maps illustrate that the likely future growth — without changing ordinances, will significantly change the character of our Town. Open spaces will be developed into cookie cutter lots, environmental quality will be degraded and people will be solely dependent on their automobiles to find common goods and services.

Realizing Our Values in Future Growth

There are four ways to implement the recommendations of the townspeople and the Heart & Soul process: 1) updating regulations, 2) investing in physical improvements, 3) recruiting volunteers to track progress and undertake special projects, and 4) working with landowners and developers to ensure support for Damariscotta's vision.

The recommendations highlighted here and on the next pages represent a mix of approaches and are intended to protect and enhance what people value most about Damariscotta. The Heart & Soul Charrette Report and DPAC's Annual Work Plan detail these recommendations (both are available at www.damariscottame.com). The following pages contain overall recommendations and ones specific to Damariscotta's values.

Overall Recommendations

- **Change the way We Grow:** People, from young families to older generations, need more opportunities to live and work locally. They also want to grow in a way that protects the Town's natural and cultural assets. For this to occur, we need to encourage a mix of housing types, allow for buildings that can have a mix of uses and provide a way to channel new growth into parts of Town that have the infra- structure in place to handle it.
- **Encourage Economic Opportunities:** Work can take many different forms these days and it's important for Damariscotta to encourage business and job creation that allows for flexibility while building on our local strengths. We need to pursue possibilities for water- dependent uses that can locate on our waterfront, encourage green industry, and make improvements in our existing retail areas to attract new customers and businesses.
- **Connect to Nature:** Damariscottans love our access to open lands, rivers and trails. The Town and local organizations can take action to increase opportunities for all people to enjoy these treasured landscapes by preserving critical lands, creating opportunities for community parks and gardens and encouraging better stewardship of these assets through environmental education and creating stronger connections among them and welcoming access points for them.
- **Design For People:** We want Damariscotta to be a place where people can more easily and safely move around on foot and on bicycle, resulting in less reliance on a car. This desire will require us to get creative about parking, develop new bike and walk ways and design our streets to become safe for all users.
- **Celebrate and Strengthen Our sense Of Community:** People in Damariscotta are involved in local organizations and events and care about the community. We can do more to coordinate volunteer opportunities, create great spaces for community celebrations, and provide opportunities for people to take part in decisions about the future of our Town.

We Live Locally

- **Lot Sizes & Frontage requirements:** Reduce minimum lot sizes and frontage requirements to encourage compact, walkable development.
- **Housing Options:**
 - Encourage a mix of housing types to encour- age workforce housing and mixed income/intergenerational buildings and neighborhoods.
 - Encourage Traditional Neighborhoods in Piper Common
- **Piper Commons (If Developed)**
 - a. With narrow, interconnected, public streets, sidewalks, shade trees, shallow building setbacks, mixed uses, and orientation of buildings with their narrow ends parallel to the street.
 - b. Protect streams, wetlands, and Paradise Pond from compact nodes of development.
 - c. Provide civic and other gathering places and privacy for future residents.
 - d. Provide multiple entry points to the neighborhood from existing roads.
 - e. Encourage commercial and mixed uses near Route 1B and decrease intensity of use toward the interior and Paradise Pond.
- **Land use regulations:** Consider a Form Based Code for Downtown, Route 1B, and Piper Common. Adjust zoning code accordingly.
- **Develop a business Philosophy:** Consider developing a town business philosophy to have a uniform and coherent message to recruit new businesses to town and develop a strategy and program to support existing businesses..

We Work Locally

- **Marketing:** Encourage merchants to coordinate marketing activities.
- **Ongoing Improvements:** Make small changes at key locations Downtown to improve design and

address parking and circulation.

- **Parking:** Develop a strategy for parking and development, including improvements to the Back Parking Lot south of Main Street and the Damariscotta Bank & Trust/Griffin property.
- **New Blocks & Streets:** Extend and connect side streets Downtown to create blocks that provide opportunities for new structures and on-street parking. Keep new buildings close to the street in most areas of Town.
- **Sidewalk Enhancement:** Maintain or create a pattern of sidewalks, shade trees, shallow building setbacks from the street, and mixed uses.
- **Working waterfront:** Locate and encourage water dependent uses close to the shore.
- **Temporary Retail:** Allow temporary stores during festivals and special events.
- **Green by Water:** Expand access to waterfronts and provide resting spots and gathering places.
- **Mixed Use Centers:** Create nodes of development on Route 1B, focused on different purposes.
- **Better Define Streets:** Infill large parking lots and undeveloped properties with small buildings to create a continuous street front within nodes of development.
- **Streets in Parking Lots:** Create new roads to break up parking fields, provide on-street parking, and guide pedestrians.
- **Encourage:** some new buildings with a residential appearance to vary the commercial character of Route 1B.
- **View to Countryside:** Provide open spaces between nodes of development to offer green breaks between developed areas and to provide places for people to gather or rest.
- **Green Jobs:** Encourage green industries/jobs in part of Piper Common.

Where Culture & Nature Meet

- **Conservation:** Adopt a guiding philosophy of preservation, stewardship, and connection.
- **Connect to nature:** Respect environmental resources and encourage access to them.
- **View nature:** Preserve scenic views of the River, ponds, streams, and key properties.
- **Working Landscape:** Continue and expand working water fronts and landscapes.
- **Learn about the land:** Create a campus for environmental and agricultural education.
- **Variety Of Green areas:** Create community playgrounds, playing fields, and gardens close to neighborhoods.

We Are an Involved Community

- **Community Central:** Coordinate volunteers to pursue community initiatives and encourage intergenerational opportunities.
- **Local Talent:** Involve different community groups where they have expertise and/or interest.
- **Heart & Soul:** Continue to encourage everyone to be involved.
- **Community Meeting Space:** Find and develop new public meeting space for large groups and events.
- **Seniors and youth:** Find new opportunities to foster senior and youth connections to the community and to each other. Find local meeting space for youth to be downtown and involved in town events.

Town Is Accessible

- **Pedestrian First / Park Once:** Adopt a guiding philosophy of pedestrian first/park once and plan for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians.
- **Parking to Support Business:** Create a parking management plan and strategy and investigate locations for potential parking structures.
- **Corral Trucks:** Work with nearby communities to manage through-truck traffic and post the

southern entrance to Route 1B as “no through trucks”.

- **Regional/Local Deliveries:** Designate loading zones and coordinate deliveries.
- **Remote Parking & Shuttle:** Create a shuttle bus system to circulate among remote parking areas and key locations in Damariscotta and nearby communities. Manage employee parking.
- **WayFinding:** Create a map and add signage to aid in wayfinding.
- **Walk Everywhere:** Link Downtown and other parts of community via sidewalks and trails.
- **Bike Everywhere:** Post on-street bike routes, mark shared use lane (sharrows), provide bike parking, create a bicycle boulevard, and shared use paths, trails, and lanes.
- **Town Greens:** Modify intersections and use community greens to calm traffic at key intersections and create community gathering spaces and focal points.
- **Skinny streets:** Narrow Route 1B and other high speed streets with sidewalks, landscaping, and on street parking. In some places, provide a center turning lane or landscaped median to calm traffic.
- **Hide The Cars:** Require parking lots to be located to the side or rear of buildings. Break up large parking fields with new roads that create blocks for smaller buildings and on-street parking.
- **Communication, Public Relations and Education:** Promote ways for the community to communicate with town leaders, learn about key planning and growth issues and provide feedback to local decision makers.

There Is a Sense of Community

- **Waterfront Festivals:** Redevelop the Back Parking Lot south of Main Street to allow greater public gathering opportunities.
- **Go to the Water:** Explore opportunities for rain gardens, increased plantings, and reduced pavement. Add pedestrian amenities. Provide a boardwalk.
- **Parking to Park:** Create a park-like atmosphere near the Damariscotta Bank & Trust/Griffin property.
- **Welcome to Damariscotta!:** Provide a tasteful gateway/ welcome sign.
- **People Gotta Go:** Provide public rest rooms in Downtown.
- **New Commons:** Create a commons at the entrance to PiperCommon off Route 1B.
- **Kids and Nature:** Link the Great Salt Bay School and YMCA with walking paths and nature trails. Create community gardens and a skating rink.

What's Better for Damariscotta?

The Charrette team created indicators based on the Town values to compare current regulations to the Charrette Report recommendations and to evaluate how well each set of recommendations protects and enhances our core community values.

- The “build out” scenario shows how well the Town would meet its values for Route 1B and the Piper Common property if these areas were developed to the extent allowed under current regulations.
- The “charrette” scenario graphic shows how well the Town would support its values for these areas if the Town adopted the Charrette Report recommendations.

Moving Forward

Damariscotta's Heart & Soul Community Planning Project has involved close to 1,000 people in discussing the issues that will shape our quality of life for years to come. New voices were brought into the process. Young people were and continue to be involved. New community affiliations and neighborhood groups developed and existing ones solidified. People who were previously uninterested in planning or community matters gave their two cents. The Town leaders and DPAC members listened to their community. The gates have been opened for community involvement, but what will happen now?

Continuing the Heart & Soul approach to the Public Process

DPAC has been successful in articulating what is most important to Damariscottans in how the Town plans for the future, increasing citizen participation in planning and growth issues, creating ways to improve access to local leadership, and fostering greater citizen investment in the community's future." The actions called for in this report require ongoing strong leadership and an open process. We know we reach better solutions by involving more people in the discussions about our quality of life and our future. So looking forward, how will we best meet the ongoing demands for public engagement and public information? How do we get new volunteers involved? How can we build consensus and discuss tough issues publicly? How will we guide future growth and hold developers accountable to the community's Heart & Soul values? How can we continue to stay engaged in this process to ensure our values are upheld?

A committed citizenry and local leadership are needed to determine the shape of the future. Does Damariscotta want to leave the future to chance or to choice? Join us!

How to Get Involved

- We need you to get involved in shaping the future of our Town. Here are ways you can participate:
- Attend informational workshops and presentations and bring a neighbor
- Host or attend a Neighborhood Meeting
- Participate in discussions about code changes for Piper Common, Rte 1B, and Downtown
- Volunteer to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Sign up to receive the DPAC list serve electronic newsletter
- Volunteer to serve on DPAC, DPAC subcommittees, the Planning Board or other Town committees
- Meet with your Board of Selectmen members or your Town Manager about any issues, questions or ideas you have
- Insist on continued openness and transparency and on-going communications with the public on the behalf of the Town officials and committees
- Find out the facts, ask questions, stay informed and inform your neighbors!
- Visit www.damariscottame.com for more information or to see up- coming events.
- Contact DPAC at dpac@damariscottame.com to give us ideas you would like to share about how to make Damariscotta a great place to live, work, do business and play. We want to hear them!

Engagement Tools

DPAC used many tools to spread the word about Damariscotta's Heart & Soul Community Planning Project, engage people and listen to what they value, and translate those values into a vision for future growth.

- **Sharing Stories:** DPAC created different outlets for people to share their stories about Damariscotta. These stories illustrated what's most important to locals and were used to identify the core values used to guide future growth.
- **Neighbor-to-Neighbor Chats:** Tape recorded interviews conducted around Town to capture stories of people and to hear their ideas about the future. Some are available at www.communityalmanac.org.
- **Community Conversations:** Potluck dinners held where people brought a dish and stories to share. Participants shared stories in small groups and identified common themes which were instantly displayed using a "word cloud" www.wordle.net.
- **Getting Feedback:** DPAC used surveys and community work- shops to verify information and gather new ideas.
- **Town Growth Survey:** Distributed in Lincoln County News and online to gather information and

desires on future growth.

- **Youth survey:** Over 300 Lincoln Academy high school students participated in a survey about what young people would like to see in Damariscotta in the future.
- **Charrette:** A charrette is an intensive, participatory, design workshop consisting of a series of meetings, presentations, and interactive sessions where a community shapes the vision for its future. A multi-day design charrette was held October 2009 to engage hundreds of stakeholders' opinions and contributions into the discussions about downtown, Route 1B and the proposed Piper Common development.
- **Analyzing Information:** DPAC members, project staff and consultants used a variety of analyses to increase citizen participation and evaluate how future changes could affect the Town's core values.
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** DPAC conducted an analysis of all Damariscotta stakeholder groups, their current level of engagement in land use issues, the individuals who represent those groups and the best methods to share information between DPAC and these individuals.
- **Values Mapping:** Project staff worked with consultants to develop a "values map" that showed the relationship among the Town's core values and how trends and future actions might affect those values. A community workshop in September 2009 refined the results of this map.
- **Values-based indicators:** Consultants developed measures to compare the recommendations made by the charrette team to the Town's current regulations.
- **Participating in Events:** DPAC created additional face-to-face opportunities for input, participated in other community-wide events and attended the events of community organizations.
- **Pumpkinfest Booth:** DPAC members and the Heart & Soul coordinator staffed a booth at the 2008 and 2009 PumpkinFest. They used candy corn to vote on what makes Damariscotta special and to affirm what the community values.
- **Chalk on the Walk:** In 2009, a student intern tried a Chalk on the Walk event to involve young people in identifying what they love about Damariscotta.
- **Local Presentations:** Heart & Soul Coordinator and DPAC members attended local committee meetings and organizational meetings to keep people informed.
- **Neighborhood Meetings:** After the charrette, DPAC members took the Charrette Report to newly organized neighborhood meetings, to gather feedback on the Charrette report, to learn about new concerns and to set up a new method of sharing information between the Town and its citizens.
- **Getting the Word Out:** DPAC used traditional and online ways to spread the word about the project. Members found that it's most effective to use multiple channels to share information and that word of mouth and personal invitations are very important.
- **Posters:** Posters hung around Town to ask people to "Give us Your Two Cents" at up-coming events.
- **Banners:** Banners hung at prominent intersections and at visible locations in town.
- **Media releases and letters to the editor:** DPAC members and the Heart & Soul Coordinator submitted press releases and letters to keep people informed and solicit input.
- **Announcements:** Placed on the local access cable TV station and posted at town office and library bulletin boards.
- **Bi-weekly e-newsletter:** Using Constant Contact, e-newsletters sent every two weeks.
- **Postcards:** Distributed to advertise charrette and DPAC members delivered them door to door. Later used to invite people to neighborhood meetings.
- **Lincoln County news insert:** Eight page tabloid insert informed people about charrette, discussed community values and to informed people about their opportunities to get involved.
- **Frequently asked Questions Brochure:** Brochure highlighting important questions and answers as the Town moves forward with new codes and ordinance posted on-line and at various locations

in town.

- **Student video:** Student intern developed video “What Makes Damariscotta Damariscotta” by asking people to write their answer to that question during the 2009 PumpkinFest, taking photos of their answers and creating a DVD from the images.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the commitment of the following people and organizations:

- The Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee members who gave hundreds of hours of volunteer time to this two year process
- The Board of Selectmen and the Town of Damariscotta staff especially Town Manager Greg Zinser and Town Planner Tony Dater
- The staff of the Orton Family Foundation, especially Ariana McBride, Betsy Rosenbluth and Rebecca Sanborn Stone
- Friends of Midcoast Maine, especially Executive Director Jane Lafleur who served as project coordinator
- The Bill Dennis Town Design charrette team and many volunteers
- Judy Colby George of Spatial Alternatives and Doug Walker of Placeways
- The many business owners who donated time, refreshments, and supplies to this project
- The hundreds of citizens of Damariscotta and surrounding communities who participated over the past two years.
- Photos provided by the Orton Family Foundation, Laurie Green, Robin Mayer and Friends of Midcoast Maine.

GATEWAY 1

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Gateway 1 Corridor Coalition is to maintain and improve the movement of people and goods efficiently and safely along the Route 1 Corridor by multiple modes; to grow jobs and participating municipalities' tax bases; and to preserve the scenic, small town, and rural qualities of the Corridor.

Goals

To advance the Mission, the Coalition shall work to achieve the following Goals of the Coalition, among others that are consistent with the Plan:

- A. Preserve and improve the safety and mobility of Routes 1 and 90 in Midcoast Maine;
- B. Preserve and improve the walkability and livability of downtown and residential neighborhoods that are bisected by Route 1 in Midcoast Maine
- C. Preserve and improve a favorable jobs, services, and housing balance that makes employment opportunities and retail, financial, and other services accessible by residents via alternative transportation modes, and that reduces vehicle trips;
- D. Preserve and improve a range of transportation options for businesses, residents, and visitors in the Corridor;
- E. Conserve the rural, visual, and community character of the Corridor;
- F. Assist municipalities in implementing the Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan; and
- G. Promote and support regional collaboration on transportation and land use issues.

A Brief History

The 100-mile stretch of U.S. Route in mid-coast Maine varies in function from a downtown main street to a heavy truck haul route to a nationally known visitor attraction. It serves popular coastal destinations and a number of major workplaces. Route 1 is a critical link in Maine's multi-modal network, connecting in the mid-coast from Brunswick to Stockton Springs. Increasingly, the capacity of U.S. Route 1 to handle the mix of local and longer distance travel is eroding. Past efforts by MaineDOT to widen shoulders, remove trees, and plan bypasses has divided communities, stirred opposition and instilled distrust.

In 2005, 20 mid-coast communities, MaineDOT and the Maine State Planning Office banded together for the first time to look at corridor-wide land use and transportation challenges; the overarching goal being to preserve the desirable rural character of Route 1. The project, still evolving, is called Gateway 1. Four years after its inception, the award-winning Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan (Action Plan) was completed in July 2009 and was unanimously adopted by the 20-Town Steering Committee (SC) that had guided its evolution.

Gateway 1 is unique - the first of its kind in Maine. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with MaineDOT, has showcased the benefits of this unique mid-coast Maine collaboration in

other states. By working with member communities, the Gateway 1 program has entered the second phase of a multi-year effort, Plan Implementation. This phase will lead to the creation of an organized entity, the Gateway 1 Corridor Coalition, allowing member communities to regionally coordinate land use development and strategically invest Route 1 transportation improvements. The transportation investment selection process and power-sharing with MaineDOT is unprecedented.

Gateway 1 analyses show that within 25 years much of the corridor and some feeder routes will reach serious congestion stress points that will affect the region's quality of life. But neither MaineDOT, with demands statewide, nor the mid-coast communities by themselves are likely to have the resources to remedy these problems without assistance. The only viable long-term plan for this Corridor is a combination of prevention and strategic investment, with local and State collaboration.

The goal of Gateway 1 is to minimize the impact of future development on Route 1 while sustainably supporting and connecting new jobs, affordable housing and transit opportunities. The Action Plan proposes strategic transportation investments along the corridor, and asks municipalities to make adjustments to their local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to support more densely built core growth areas, protect specific view sheds and wildlife habitats, and create a more defined level of roadway access management. In exchange, through an interlocal agreement communities will share unprecedented decision-making authority with each other and MaineDOT through an interlocal agreement to set transportation investment priorities in the region.

