



Comprehensive Plan 2020

**Future Land Use Plan
of The Comprehensive Plan
Town of Denmark, Maine**

Replace Prior Future Land Use Plan With The Following:

GOAL: Manage potential growth in order to protect natural resources and the rural character of the community.

GROWTH AREAS

Growth conditions in Denmark make the identification of specific areas for residential, institutional, commercial, and/or industrial growth inappropriate.

1. Residential

Denmark has experienced minimal residential development.

	2010	2020
Population	1148	1017
# Households	479	406
Avg Household Size	2.4	2.5

Source: American Community Survey

2. Commercial / Institutional

In the preceding 10-year period, there has been virtually no growth in the already limited institutional or commercial development in Denmark. Denmark actually lost one of the largest commercial enterprises in town, which had employed 34 people.

3. Industrial

In the preceding 10-year period, there has been no industrial development in Denmark and we do not expect this to change in the foreseeable future.

Severe physical limitations in Denmark further make identification of areas for growth inappropriate, due to the following conditions:

- Lack of public water or sewer services
- Lack of major roadways through town (Routes 160 /117 only)
- The existence of many protected natural areas within the town
- A significant portion of the surface area consists of waterbodies or wetlands

- Much of the remaining land has slopes not suitable for development

RURAL AREAS

The Rural District is outlined in the Denmark Zoning Ordinance.

Farms

Denmark currently has four tax lots in Farmland, totaling 33 acres. The town does not have any large tracts of prime agricultural soils.

Woodlots

Denmark currently has 178 tax lots in Tree Growth, totaling 14,106 acres.

Open Space

Denmark currently has 29 lots in Open Space, totaling 4351 acres.

Critical and Important Natural Resources

Denmark has many protected natural resources, some of which are protected through the Zoning Ordinance (Shoreland, Resource Protection, and Aquifer Protection districts.) Others are protected through conservation easements, public ownership, or ownership by conservation organizations.

The community does not actively encourage new residential, commercial, or institutional development in the rural areas.

Denmark's rural areas abut the rural areas of surrounding towns.

Critical and Important Natural Resources

See maps on pages 134, 136, 139, 142 of the Comprehensive Plan

Denmark protects its natural resource through the Zoning Ordinance and through the establishment of the Conservation Commission, which has an advisory role in protecting and improving public access to waterbodies and undeveloped land, to protect wildlife habitat, and to minimize the detrimental effects of suburban sprawl.

Denmark values its undeveloped land, as do a number of land trusts and other organizations which own or hold easements on properties in the town.

On the initiative of the town Conservation Commission, Loon Echo Land Trust purchased the Perley Mills Community Forest. Approximately 1250 acres are within Denmark. That, and a contiguous 300 acres in Bridgton, now belong to the town, with a conservation easement held by LELT. The land is open to the public for recreation, hiking, skiing, hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, and atving.

LELT also owns 1209 acres on Pleasant Mountain and holds an easement on an additional 1238 acres.

The 210-acre Black Brook Bog (in the Northwestern corner of town) is protected by an easement held by LELT. It is designated as a "Maine Natural Areas Program exemplary natural community."

LELT also holds an 8-acre easement on Beaver Pond.

Upper Saco Valley Land Trust owns 324 acres along the Saco River in the southwestern corner of town, and holds an easement on an adjoining 415 acres, known as the Bull Ring Annex.

USVLT also holds an easement on the 1,027-acre Denmark portion of the Moose Pond Brook parcel. This includes much of the undeveloped road frontage along Bull Ring Road.

Also, on the eastern side of Bull Ring Road, USVLT has an easement on another 211 acres, known as the Dragon Meadow Brook Forest.

The western two-thirds of Denmark are in the Upper Saco River Focus Area, described by the IF&W program, Beginning with Habitat, as "one of the most biodiverse areas in Maine." The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy assisted USVLT in purchasing these easements.

Additionally, the State of Maine owns 589 acres between Hancock Pond and the border with Sebago. The State has indicated they intend to, in combination with abutting land in Sebago, turn this into a State Park.

Also, thanks to fund raising by the Lions Club, the Town owns Bicentennial Park, approximately 2 acres in the village, with frontage on Moose Pond. While not strictly "undeveloped," it is open for public use.

Analysis

The FLUP aligns with the general vision of the Comprehensive Plan; that is, to preserve the natural resources and rural character of the town, while allowing for orderly development that allows Denmark to remain a viable and attractive place to live, while promoting the health and safety of its residents.

Current development trends indicate that Denmark is unlikely to experience growth in commercial, institutional, or industrial development in the planning period.

There has been an increase in home business registries. In addition, while there is no hard data to rely on, there is reason to believe that Denmark is seeing an increase in the number of people working from home. This seems to be due to employers' changes in work structure instituted in response to the pandemic, which may continue after the pandemic. Furthermore, it appears many of Denmark's seasonal residents are spending more time in Denmark, or even converting to full-time residency. It is not clear whether that trend will continue as the pandemic resolves. It is recommended that the town develop a way to monitor this type of growth, as it may affect the future demand for infrastructure, services, and schools.

This type of growth, however, would not be expected to affect critical and important natural resources, as it would not require significant increases in land use. It could, however, affect the nature of land use, increase

demand for residential lots over commercial space, and could prompt improvements in internet access throughout town.

Neighboring towns have experienced an increase in short-term rental activity due to sites like AirBNB and VRBO, and it's reasonable to assume Denmark may experience a similar increase. Other towns have reported that this activity has sometimes become a nuisance to neighbors and has had environmental impacts. This has not been reported in Denmark, but it should be considered in the development of future ordinance amendments.

Components

See maps on pages 134, 136, 139, 142 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policies and Strategies

Policy: Protect Denmark from incompatible land uses and protect its natural resources.

Strategy: Continue developing regulation concerning mining, which the Ordinance does not currently address (Planning Board, Select Board – in progress)

Strategy: Develop “light touch” regulations regarding short-term rentals, to prevent septic overuse, nuisance activity, and other detrimental impacts. (Planning Board, Select Board; Consider establishing a committee to research and make recommendations.)

Strategy: Continue the thorough review procedures and standards for commercial development in each district. (Planning Board)

Strategy: Continue enforcement of Ordinance and Zoning Districts. (CEO, Planning Board)

Strategy: Encourage local non-profit organizations and community groups with knowledge of Denmark's ecology to provide workshops to educate landowners, the Select Board, Planning Board, and Board of Appeals and other town committees about the special features in Denmark which need further protections. (Planning Board, Select Board)

Policy: Protect groundwater quality and quantity.

Strategy: Maintain and enforce current Groundwater Extraction Ordinance and conduct regular reviews of groundwater extraction activities.

Strategy: Develop regulations addressing potential activities that could affect groundwater; e.g. extraction, mining and short-term rentals, and climate change.

Policy: Allow for adequate space and infrastructure for commercial uses compatible with the community.

Strategy: Continue to develop and institute plans to improve access to high-speed internet in town. (Broadband Committee)

Policy: Optimize use of existing municipal properties

Strategy: Investigate the feasibility of a solar farm on the landfill location to help defray the town's electricity expenses.

ARTICLE 69. Shall the Town enact the proposed “**Future Land Use Plan**” to the Town of Denmark Comprehensive Plan 2020 and replace the current Future Land Use Plan? Synopsis is below.

A full copy of the proposed Future Land Use Plan is available online and at the Clerk’s Office.

- *The Future Land Use Plan identifies the natural resources within the community.*
- *It provides strategies to protect Denmark’s natural resources and groundwater.*
- *The Future Land Use Plan comments on the preservation of the rural character of the community.*

Attest: A true copy of an amendment to Denmark Comprehensive Plan 2020 entitled “Future Land” Use Plan as certified to me by the municipal officers of Denmark on the 25th day of April 2023.

Signature _____
Town Clerk, Denmark