

N. SUMMARY

This chapter summarizes the major issues raised in each chapter of the *Inventory and Analysis* section of the plan. This summary sets the foundation for the *Goals and Objectives* section. The first section discusses the most pressing concerns facing Orland and then specific issues for each segment of the *Inventory and Analysis* are discussed. These issues are taken verbatim from the *Key Findings and Issues* section of each chapter.

1. Priority Issues

One major challenge facing on Orland is continued increases in property tax assessments. The town, however, faces further capital expenses over the next few years. These include addressing the municipal building's needs, repairs to the school and further upgrading of the fire department's equipment.

Another issue is commercial development and traffic problems along Routes 1 and 3. Current town regulations have a limited ability to manage the traffic impacts of new commercial development. The town, however, has an opportunity to avoid some of the more serious traffic-related development problems seen elsewhere in Hancock County.

Orland is blessed with many lakes and other valuable natural features. The water quality in these lakes is generally good. Continued development in these lake watershed may lead to increased phosphorus loading, which could threaten water quality and reduce shorefront property values. Here again, the town has an opportunity to act before serious problems develop.

2. Population

Orland's year-round population increased by about 26 percent in the 1970s and at a 10 percent rate during the 1980s. Preliminary estimates for the 1990s indicate a 15 percent rate of growth. The estimated 1994 population is 1,909 and the town is projected to have a population of 2,224 by the year 2005.

While the town as a whole has been growing, the school-aged portion of population actually decreased between 1970 and 1990. The fastest growing age group was those 65 years and over. The next fastest were those between the ages of 45 and 64. The town thus appears to be attracting more persons of retirement and pre-retirement ages.

3. Economy

Orland's economy is strongly linked to the regional economy. More than 27 percent of Orland's labor force is employed in the manufacturing sector, and approximately 19 percent are employed in the retail sector. As seen in Orland's

commuting patterns, the majority of these manufacturing jobs are provided by the Champion International paper mill in Bucksport, while the majority of retail jobs are located in Ellsworth. While Orland's unemployment rate rises significantly during the winter months, it shows greater seasonal stability than the economy of Hancock County as a whole. Other major sources of employment for Orland residents include the Maine Maritime Academy, the Orland School District, Craig Brook Fish Hatchery, Robert Wardwell and Sons, Robert Wardwell Construction and Trucking, and seasonally, G.M. Allen and Sons. Although Orland has consistently maintained a higher median income and lower unemployment rate than Hancock County, economic conditions in Orland have moved closer to the Hancock County average since 1992.

4. Housing

The number of homes in Orland increased by about 50 percent between 1970 and 1990. While there was about a 33 percent increase in year-round homes, the number of second homes nearly doubled. As of 1990, there a total of 1,068 dwellings in Orland (732 year-round and 336 seasonal). Another 155 year-round homes are expected by the year 2005.

Most homes in 1990 (88 percent) were owner-occupied rather than rented. Rents in Orland are below the county average, 33 percent of renters were paying less than \$250 in 1990. Housing conditions in Orland have improved dramatically in the past fifteen years although there are still some units lacking basic amenities such as complete plumbing.

5. Transportation

While Orland still has a relatively low volume of traffic when compared to much of coastal Maine, traffic has been increasing over the past 20 years as the town and region have grown. The most hazardous intersections are along Route 1. These include Upper Falls Road, Leach's Point Road, Route 15, Back Ridge Rd. and Fish Hatchery Road.

One potential traffic-related problem facing the town is continued commercial development along major highways. This is already a minor problem on certain portions of Route 1 and it could spread to Route 46. While the town's bridges are generally in good condition, the state-owned bridge on Route 175 over the Orland River needs to be replaced.

6. Public Facilities and Services

Orland is a rural town with relatively few public facilities and services. The fire station needs some minor repairs and more substantial improvements are needed to the school building. The town office has several major deficiencies.

7. Recreation

Orland has limited recreational facilities in town and relatively few organized youth and adult recreational programs. Parking is a problem at the various boat launching facilities. Orland's wealth of natural resources provides many additional recreational opportunities to residents. The town also participates in Bucksport's recreation program.

The town's protected open space is also limited. The only known preserved open space is owned by the Nature Conservancy along Toddy Pond. It will be difficult for the town to address these deficiencies given the many other demands on the tax base.

8. Marine Resources

Orland has relatively limited marine resources when compared to many coastal Hancock County towns. This is due in part to its location on a tidal river rather than on the open ocean. While there are a limited number of commercial fishermen and marine worm diggers in town, there are no official records of shellfish harvesting for at least 20 years. Poor marine water quality is one factor that would limit any shellfish harvests.

Marine-related facilities are very limited. There are no public boat launching ramps on salt water. Since the Orland River channel is relatively shallow, navigation is limited to small craft.

9. Water Resources

One of the key fresh water resources within Orland are its many great ponds. Craig Pond has been rated by the DEP as having an outstanding water quality, which is the highest possible rating in the state. While there are no serious water quality problems in the town's other lakes, some have the potential for contamination from phosphorus build-up. There is, however, still time to prevent such problems from occurring.

Most residents depend on private wells for their drinking water supply. Overall, ground water supplies and quality are adequate. The installation of the sewer in the village area eliminated one major threat to water quality.

10. Natural Resources

Orland has one bald eagle nest site, according to state records, and one of the few known locations in Maine for the ram's-head lady slipper plant, a member of the orchid family. There are also several high value waterfowl and wading bird habitats in town. Game species such as deer, black bear, and moose can be found in upland areas. Orland's varied landscape of lakes, river valleys, and ridges means that there are many scenic views. While there are no immediate threats to Orland's natural resources, there are also few measures in place to protect these resources over the long run.

11. Agricultural and Forest Issues

While blueberries are an important source of income for some residents, there is relatively little farmland in Orland. Forest is the primary land use cover in town, but the amount of land held in tree growth taxation is decreasing. This is probably due to more restrictive state requirements for participation in this program than to land being developed for other uses. Orland's farm and forest resources, however, are presently largely unprotected from development.

12. Historical Resources

State records list 34 pre-historic sites in Orland. These include Indian burial grounds and shellfish middens. While permanent European settlement of the Orland area started in the 1760s, there are no official state records of any historic sites or buildings. The town may want to consider encouraging a survey to help establish such a record.

13. Existing Land Use

Orland has nearly 28,332 acres of vacant land, about 96 percent of its total land area. About half of the total land area has soils that either have a low potential or very low potential for low density development. There is still, however, ample vacant land with soils well suited for development. Orland thus has an opportunity to grow while still retaining its rural character.

Since a relatively slow growth rate is presently projected for the town over the next ten years, just under 400 additional acres is likely to be converted to developed uses by the year 2008. The challenge facing the town is thus not so much the volume of new development as how and where this development will occur. Specifically, the town will need to address how it wishes to deal with additional commercial development, conversion of farmland to other uses and the nature of new residential development.

14. Fiscal Capacity

Property tax assessments have increased rapidly in Orland. Between 1990 and 1995, tax spending increased at an after-inflation rate of 25 percent. The largest increases has been school spending (an after-inflation rate of 77 percent in ten years). State education subsidies have increased at about half the rate of town school spending.

The tax base is primarily residential and undeveloped land. State records show that Orland has no industrial valuation and just over one percent of the valuation is due to taxable personal property. Only 4 percent of the valuation is tax-exempt.

15. Key Regional Concerns

One regional concern is cooperative protection of lake watersheds. Erosion and sedimentation in one town may affect water quality in a lake in another. Given the number of multi-town watersheds in Orland, this is an important regional issue. A related regional issue is riparian rights, which could lead to the drawdown of certain lakes in Orland.

Another regional issue is shared public services. There is clearly the potential for more sharing of services between Orland and Bucksport. These could include police and fire protection and recreation.

Transportation is also a regional issue. The problems facing Route 15 and Routes 1 and 3 are best addressed on a regional basis. Similarly, alternative transportation modes such as bikeways and van pools are also best addressed on a regional basis.