Historic and Archaeological Resources

Purpose

Historic and archaeological resources contribute significantly to a community's character and make each town distinctive and welcoming. These resources are important not only for their role in Old Orchard Beach's (OOB's) history, but also for their present-day value. Historic buildings and sites add to the town's quality of life and their presence helps maintain property values.

Specifically, this section presents a history of the community, describes OOB's historic and archaeological resources, assesses threats to these resources, and considers the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve these resources.

Data Highlights

- The Abenaki lived in what is now OOB, taking advantage of the land's proximity to the Saco River, which provided an important transportation connection between the region's interior resources and the coastal plain.
- OOB has been a popular "retreat" and vacation destination for many years, beginning in the early 1800's, but became especially more popular in 1873 when the Boston and Maine Railroad built a station located less than one hundred yards from the beach.
- Four properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The town's Design Review Committee helps conserve the cultural and architectural heritage of the Downtown Districts and Historic Overlay District.
- The OOB Historical Society maintains the Harmon Museum, which contains several comprehensive exhibits highlighting the community's rich history.

Historic and Archaeological Conditions

Historical Overview

Abenaki Subsistence Living

Native American presence in the southern coast region of Maine began as long as 12,000 years ago. According to Dr. Emerson Baker, about 1,000 years prior to European contact, this part of Maine was inhabited by the Abenaki, an Algonquin-speaking people. The Abenakis left their mark on the area in place names, calling the area "Saco," meaning "flowing out" or "outlet." The Abenaki practiced a subsistence lifestyle, living in small bands in seasonal residences. The Saco River provided an important transportation route, connecting the region's interior lakes, tidal estuaries, and coast. Traditionally, they used Old Orchard as a summer encampment, returning inland during the winter months. Circa 1616, the "great Pestilence" (measles, smallpox, or typhoid fever) decimated the Native American population all along the New England coast. Their cleared lands thereby became available to European settlers in the ensuing years. They continued to come to the area as late as the early 1900's, making baskets for sale to the tourists.

European Discovery

English, French, or Portuguese fisherman probably visited Old Orchard before 1600 but Martin Pring, an English explorer and commander of two small trading vessels, is credited with being the first white man to walk the beach. In 1603 Samuel de Champlain and in 1605 Sieur de Monts passed by Old Orchard to reportedly visit Wood Island. In 1614 Captain John Smith of Jamestown, Virginia, anchored near Googins' Rocks. He sent a sketch of the beach to Sir Ferdinando Gorges in England, claiming it to be the most beautiful beach he had seen. In 1616 Sir Ferdinando Gorges sent Richard Vines and thirty-two men to the area to explore the country and form a settlement. In 1623 King James I granted all the lands within the present limits of Biddeford, Saco, and Old Orchard to Richard Vines and four other men.

Early European Settlement

Thomas Rogers, originally from Salem, Massachusetts, and then employed on Stratton Island, visited Old Orchard for the first time in 1635. He received an original grant for twelve acres of land near Union Avenue and located there in 1636 or 1638. He planted a grapevine and a fruit tree orchard, the first in Maine, near the mouth of the Goosefare Brook. It is reported that he took the grapevines from Wood Island. The Town of Old Orchard was named for his fields, the first cleared and most extensively cultivated on the coast. They were known as Thomas Rogers' Garden-by-the-Sea. Many of his trees lasted more than 150 years. He married Esther Foxwell of Blue Point in 1659, and in 1662 the first white child of Old Orchard was born, Richard R. Rogers. Following the breakout of the Indian War in 1676, he and his family relocated to Kittery.

In 1675, the same year the King's Highway was opened from Wells to Saco along the approximate line of the present Route 1, Richard Cummings acquired land between Union

Avenue and Walnut Avenue and the famed battle of Googins' Rocks took place. Native American warfare resulted in the area remaining inactive as a settlement from 1680 to 1722. Patrick Googins, son-in-law of Richard Rogers and grandson of Thomas Rogers, became the first permanent settler in 1722 when he built a home at the corner of Somerset and Ocean Avenues. He migrated from Ireland at an early age and was in the service of Pepperell of Kittery when he married the daughter of Richard Rogers. Googins' Rocks was named for this early settler.

The first road from Portsmouth to Portland was built in 1750. The hard packed sands of Old Orchard formed that part of the road passing through the area. In 1762 Saco and Old Orchard split off from Biddeford to become Pepperellborough. Great forest fires ravaged York County in 1780, but Old Orchard remained untouched by this disaster. For many years, the area remained a sparsely populated seacoast settlement engaged in fishing. The surrounding land was used for farms, cow pastures, and lumbering of the giant pines bearing the King's mark for use as masts in the Royal Navy.

Old Orchard Beach's Resort Beginnings

The turn of the century marked the beginning of a period of economic change in southern Maine. Farming families left the poor soils of Maine for the richer lands of the west. The demand for bigger ships than York County harbors could handle led to a decline in shipbuilding. By 1825, aggressive timber harvesting depleted the best of the original timber stands. New industrial activities replaced those earlier economic activities. Textile mills were particularly influential in the area due to the abundance of water power, like in Saco, where the York Manufacturing Company was established in 1832.

In 1820, the year Maine became a state, William Scammon, grandson of Saco's first minister Reverend John Fairfield, opened the old Fairfield residence for the entertainment of "transients." The Scammon's Publick House, as it was called, was the first inn in the Town and began Old Orchard's reputation as a resort community. This resort image was enhanced in 1837 when Ebenezer C. Staples took in transient summer boarders. His endeavor outgrew his home, so in 1870 he erected the first Old Orchard Guest House which accommodated three hundred guests.

In the 1850's Edward B. Clemmens established the first structure on the beach near the base of Old Orchard Street. His "Old Orchard Retreat" was the only place of entertainment near the ocean for several summers. He also issued the first newspaper or guide to the area, "The Goose Fare Guide and Old Orchard Bellows," which apparently foretold of Old Orchard's future greatness. It predicted that the railroad would open Old Orchard to the world and that every summer pleasure seeker would flock to its beaches. His prophecies were unheeded, people laughed at his ideas, and he died in 1865 never living to see his dreams come true.

Railroads, Trolleys, and New Development

With the new industries, the railroads opened the area to residents of New England. The Portsmouth, Saco, and Portland Railroad, connecting Boston with Portland, was built to within four miles of the beach in 1842. However, it was not until after the Civil War in 1873 that the Boston and Maine Railroad built its line from North Berwick to Portland right on the Old Orchard coastline with the station less than a hundred yards from the shore. Thereafter Old Orchard expanded rapidly.

The Camp Ground Association was organized in 1873 to build campgrounds and the Tabernacle in the area between Saco and Washington Avenues, which brought thousands of visitors to the Methodist and Christian Missionary Alliance summer meetings. In subsequent years, the Salvation Army purchased the property. The Ocean Park Association was chartered in 1880 by the Free Will Baptists as a religious, educational, and recreational headquarters, not subject to the "rowdyism common at seaside resorts." More visitors were brought in for weekly meetings during the summer. They built "The Temple" for speakers and meetings.

Hotels, boarding houses, and restaurants sprung up along the beachfront and downtown district to accommodate the increasing number of tourists. Guests at the hotels diverted themselves with the various games, dances, concerts, and events sponsored by the hotels, as well as with amusements and the Casino at the pier. Horse races were held on the beach in the 1880's and 1890's. The first amusement ride in Old Orchard, in fact in the country, was a merry-go-round constructed on the shore near the Fiske House in 1892. That same year a harness racing track (Kite Race Track) was constructed north of Walnut Street. In 1891 there were 500 stores, hotels, and summer dwellings in the area.

The hotels built during this "plush and velvet" age were large and elegant with amenities such as heat, running water, and electricity. Each hotel boasted its own ballroom, orchestra, restaurant, baseball team, floats for carriage shows, and programs to entertain guests and their children. However, lacking building codes and modern-day technologies, the structures were fire-prone. In 1907, a fire starting in the Velvet Hotel destroyed the buildings east and west of the pier from Staples to Bristol Street. The area was rebuilt immediately, but the large hotels were replaced by smaller hotels, rooming houses, and cottages. A series of fires from that time to the present, as well as the desire to improve and modernize, have claimed nearly all of Old Orchard's elegant past.

During this age the railroads ran special trains to Old Orchard from Boston and Portland. The extension of the Boston and Maine Railroad from Portland to Montreal opened the way for Canadian residents to come to Old Orchard. The 1880's saw the development of the Electric Street Railway Era (trolleys) tying local communities to Old Orchard. The town constructed the Dummy Line, which connected to Ferry Beach in Saco, and built the Old Orchard Junction Railroad, which connected the Eastern Railroad (formerly the Portsmouth, Saco, and Portland) in Biddeford-Saco to the beach. The railroads and electric railways played a significant role in the formation of land use patterns, greatly

influencing the “vacation” or “recreation” industry by bringing crowds of people to resort centers like Old Orchard.

Becoming the Town of Old Orchard

During this period of expansion there was dissension between the residents of Old Orchard and Saco with claims that Saco failed to provide adequate fire apparatus or protection. The beach citizens purchased a fire bell and used it to stimulate separation from the Town of Saco. On February 20, 1883, the State legislature recognized and honored a petition to establish Old Orchard as an independent town with Ocean Park as a suburb. Ocean Park later made an unsuccessful attempt to annex itself back to Saco.

As early as 1878 the people of Old Orchard were interested in a pier for recreational purposes as well as to create a landing place for excursion boats. Herbert Hildreth, who owned the bathing pavilion at the site, built the original Old Orchard Pier, which opened to the public on July 2, 1898. The steel pier rose twenty feet above the tide and was 1,800 feet long with three pavilions located along the length of the fifty-foot-wide promenade. The first pavilion was located at the 500-foot point and housed cages of birds and monkeys, the second was at the 1,000-foot point, and the third was a casino and restaurant. The pier extended so far into the ocean that part of it lay within the boundary of Saco and taxes had to be paid to that City as well as to Old Orchard. The pier’s end also offered a landing pier for steamers, while mooring platforms ran along the entire length. Concerts, lectures, and dances were among the entertainment offered. Seats lined the pier and accommodated over 5,000 people.

In early winter of 1898, the most seaward pavilion was destroyed. A new Casino was built the following spring as a single building at the 1,800-foot point and a miniature railroad was added to the pier in the summer of 1899. The same year, Hildreth purchased the old Cleaves Hotel and moved it one block south from its original location, merged it with the Sears Bath Houses, which had been operating since 1888, and built the elegant Velvet Hotel around it. The five-story hotel was directly connected to the pier and claimed the latest in conveniences, such as the first elevator in town, the first circular staircase, the latest fire-alarm equipment and fire escape on each floor, electric lights generated from their own power plant, and the only hotel roof-top promenade in New England.

At the turn of the century Old Orchard was considered a progressive town. Although the resident population was less than 1,000, the “modern conveniences of a metropolitan character” impressed visitors to the Town. The construction of Town Hall in 1900 typified Old Orchard’s advancement.

The Twentieth Century

In 1902 a twenty-five-acre amusement park called Sea Side Park was located north of the upper end of Imperial Street. A trolley stop platform on Old Orchard Street led directly to its fifty foot by thirty foot-high entrance arch capped with electric lights. A fountain sat just inside the entrance, and entertainment included a merry-go-round, games, refreshment stands, open air summer theater, and a scenic railway. The Maine Investment Co. leased

the privileges to operate the facility. Sea Side Park added a maze, Ferris wheel, and miniature railway (relocated from the pier) in 1903.

In 1903, booths were constructed near the entrance to the pier, setting the precedence for the pier's abundance of shops and bazaars built in later years. This land use pattern persists today.

In 1907, the first 100 feet of the pier, including the entrance, were damaged by fire and quickly rebuilt. In 1909 a Northeaster storm destroyed 300 feet of pier and a pavilion. The Casino was relocated to the end of a now shortened 800-foot pier. In 1911 the entire understructure was rebuilt with oak. Following the rebuilding, stores, shops, bazaars, and arcades were built along the pier's length. The Casino's large dance floor at the end of the pier became the focal point for musical entertainment in the area. All the big bands of the era made their appearances at the Old Orchard Casino. It was later used as a movie theater, a miniature golf course, and an aquarium.

The Automobile Era

Neither the railroads nor the electric railways competed successfully with the automotive industry, which made all areas of York County accessible to vacationers and tourists. In 1910 the character of the beach changed further with the introduction of automobile racing on the beach. The races attracted large crowds who frequented the stores, restaurants, and souvenir shops that sprang up on the main streets of town.

The "Automobile Era" and shift from elegant hotels to motels and cabins brought more people to Old Orchard for shorter periods of time, The "transients" changed from summer residents to tourists. Further growth and development occurred along the main streets of Town. The flexibility and speed of commuting by automobile also led to the first "winterizing" of formerly seasonal residences. The introduction of paid vacations before World War I also encouraged a change in the vacationers frequenting Old Orchard. This factor allowed the wage earner to spend a few days to a week vacationing with family and friends.

In 1914, the first roller coaster in Old Orchard was built at the corner of Old Orchard Street and the beach. Following World War I, the amusement industry expanded as technology and personal preferences changed. In the 1920's visitors were drawn by the motion picture theaters, merry-go-round, roller coaster, bowling alleys, Ferris wheel, dancing, moonlight sails on the bay, and airplane rides that Old Orchard offered. New amusements at the foot of Old Orchard Street gradually took business away from Sea Side Park. Although there was no clear cut-off, the Maine Investment Co. and Sea Side Park ceased functioning by 1924. The makeup of amusements in the area near the beach has changed almost constantly from year to year because of fire, storm damage, and changing public interest.

Since the beach offered an excellent natural runway when the tide was out, it was commonly used for the takeoff and landing of airplanes. As a result, many famous aviators gathered at Old Orchard. A hangar was located near Grand Beach off Ladd Avenue where the Friendship Motel is presently situated. Charles A. Lindburgh in his "Spirit of St. Louis"

was one of the first noted aviators to visit the Old Orchard Airport in 1927. Flights on the beach were discontinued in the late 1930's and the hangar was destroyed in the hurricane of 1938.

On March 23, 1929, the Town name was officially changed to Old Orchard Beach (OOB) by an act of the Maine Legislature. The late 1920's and early 1930's ushered in the big band era with its own style and elegance. Performers like Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Rudy Vallee, and Guy Lombardo entertained thousands of marathon dancers at the Pier Casino each summer. During this period, the Town purchased the beach for a roadway that was never constructed, securing public access forever.

The Depression of the 1930's brought an era of suburbanization to OOB. With its less expensive rents and land values, the Town began to develop as a bedroom community for the mill workers of Saco and Biddeford. However, this trend ended with the advent of World War II because people were drawn back to cities to support the war effort.

Although OOB expanded rapidly between 1910 and 1950, the largest growth period occurred between 1930 and 1940, a 58 percent increase from 1,630 to 2,557 people, and in 1940 to 1950, an 84 percent increase from 2,557 to 4,707 people. Similar growth patterns were also recorded throughout New England and southwestern Maine during this period. During this time, OOB's reputation as a recreational resort of Maine and New England was firmly established.

Please note that the majority of this historical overview was provided by the OOB Historical Society, Dan Blainey from 2012.

OOB Today

When visiting OOB today, historic patterns of settlement remain visible. This is especially evident within the downtown core and the area within the Historic Overlay District along Portland Avenue. Specifically, the gridded street network surrounding the community's "main street," Old Orchard Street, remain an important historical design element in the downtown core. Additionally, Old Orchard Street still leads to the beginning of the Old Orchard Pier, one of the community's historic landmarks that has welcomed residents and tourists alike for many years. The location of the Old Orchard Pier has been unchanged as it remains to be one of the most recognizable local landmarks in the community.

Prehistoric Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources are those found below ground. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) refers to two types of archaeological resources: prehistoric and historic. Prehistoric archaeological places are better described as places of pre-European archaeology, namely places of Native American importance, and generally date prior to the 1600s and European settlement. Historic archaeological places are those associated with the earliest European settlers and later populations.

In Maine, most prehistoric archaeological sites are remnants of either Maine's earliest inhabitants, the Paleo-Americans, from the end of the last ice age, or the Abenaki and

Wabanaki nations. The remains are often found along water bodies and associated with dunes and sandy areas because these areas made suitable campsites.

The MHPC has not identified any prehistoric archaeological sites in OOB. MHPC has identified that limited professional archaeological surveying has been completed within the community's subdivisions and other developments. MHPC suggests further investigation in the areas surrounding Cascade Brook and Goosefare Brook. These areas are highlighted in the map below provided by MHPC in 2008. MHPC recommends these areas of known and potential archaeological significance be surveyed and a review mechanism established to provide a field check prior to any ground disturbance and/or construction activity.

Map 1: MHPC Map Depicting Areas Sensitive to Prehistoric Archaeology

Historic Archaeological Resources

The earliest historic archaeological resources are sites with evidence of early European habitation during the 1600s. The most important locations of the first or earliest settlers are undisturbed and retain a significant amount of integrity. Generally, these sites or areas are found within 100 feet of navigable water. To date, The MHPC has not identified any historic archaeological sites in OOB.

Historic Resources

This section describes historical districts, buildings, structures, and objects located above the ground. According to MHPC there are currently four properties in the community listed on the National Register of Historic Places; please refer to the map and Table 1 below.

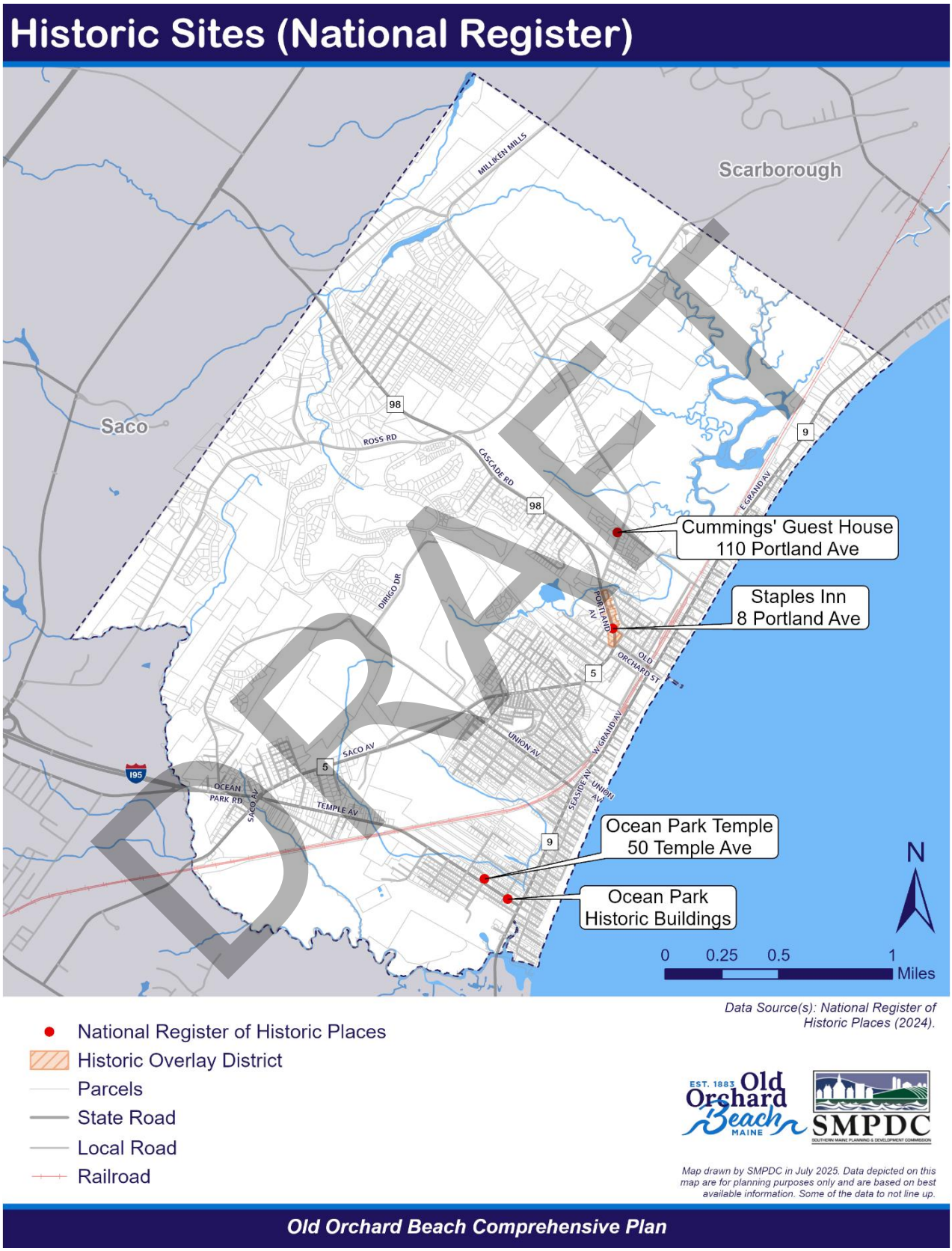
Figure 1: National Register of Historic Places

Historic Place	Location	Condition	Current Use
The Temple	50 Temple Avenue	Good	Assembly
Ocean Park Historic Buildings	Temple Avenue	Good	Assembly
Staples Inn	8 Portland Avenue	Good	Lodging
Cummings Guest House	110 Portland Street	Good	Residential

Source: MHPC, 2024

The National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service, is a listing of those buildings, districts, structures, objects, and sites deemed worthy of preservation for their historical, cultural, or archaeological significance. The main benefits to owning a site listed on the National Register are prestige and community recognition. Listing does not confer legal obligations on the property owner. Certain buildings may qualify for a twenty five percent investment tax credit; to qualify, a building must be income-producing, depreciable and a “certified” historic structure. Structures on the National Register are also given a limited amount of protection from alteration or demolition resulting from a federal project.

Map 2: National Register of Historic Places



In addition to the structures mentioned above, the map below depicts locally significant historic sites that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the Town's Planning Department, of the eleven local historic sites, only one has fallen into disrepair. To help limit additional properties from falling into disrepair, the town could consider implementing zoning-related incentives, such as a density bonus, for redevelopment with the requirement that the historic aesthetic remains intact.

Map 3: Local Historic Sites

Threats to Old Orchard Beach's Historic and Archaeological Resources

The most imminent threats facing these resources are development and poor maintenance. New development, such as a residential subdivision, commercial and industrial construction, or redevelopment of an existing building or area without regard to historical, archeological, and cultural resources threatens their existence. Simple neglect and inadequate maintenance have resulted in a greater loss of historic architecture than any other cause. The greatest concentration of historically significant structures is downtown, where economic stresses and high traffic make them vulnerable.

OOB is also not a Certified Local Government (CLG). Becoming a CLG through the MHPC would allow the community to access more resources and funding for the protection of historic resources.

Planning Implications

Historic Preservation Measures

The town of OOB designates three historic districts to help protect significant historic features in the community; however, they only cover a fraction of the town's historic resources. There is potential value in strengthening incentives for historic preservation as well as extending the districts to include a larger portion of the downtown area, as well as other areas of historical, architectural and archaeological importance.

OOB's Design Review Committee (DRC) is responsible for conserving the cultural and architectural heritage of the Downtown and Historical Preservation Districts. This committee plays an important role in downtown aesthetic improvements in the community. Meetings involve reviewing proposals with developers and architects to ensure that new construction and redevelopment in the Downtown and Historic Districts meet the Ordinance design standards in relation to: mass and scale, building height, roof lines, window placement, façade materials, architectural details, and fences/railings/steps). The DRB meets monthly or as needed based on submitted applications. All members and alternates are appointed for a term of two years.

Generally,

Historic Overlay District

Designated in 1996**,** the Historic Overlay District (HOD) encompasses a small area in the community rich with locally significant historic structures. The HOD is located along a portion of Portland Road between Foote Street and Adelaide Road and includes structures such as the Town Hall and St. Margaret's Catholic Church.

According to the Historic Preservation Districts' ordinance language, any structural modification, addition, or demolition of all or any exterior part of existing structures, site elements, objects, or any construction activity within the historic district shall first be required to obtain a certificate of appropriateness from the DRB. The ordinance language also includes performance standards related to alterations and new construction for all structures located within the HOD.

Downtown Districts

The community has also designated two downtown zoning districts, the Downtown District 1 (DD-1) and the Downtown District 2 (DD-2). The DD1 zoning district includes the heart of the downtown area and the OOB Pier. The DD2 zoning district is located directly to the north and south of the DD1 zoning district, including a significant portion of beach front adjacent to the downtown core of the community.

According to the Downtown Districts ordinance language, prior to the issuance of a building permit or prior to the issuance of a site plan review or conditional use permit, design review is required for the following activities:

- Any structural modification, addition, demolition of all or any exterior part of existing nonresidential, mixed use, or multifamily residential structure.
- Construction of a new principal or accessory nonresidential, mixed use, or multifamily residential building.
- Construction or alteration of new or existing decks, porches, stairs, patios, fences, walls, and any other structure within view of a public street or sidewalk.
- Installation, addition, or modification of signage.

The map on the next page depicts the community's Downtown Business Districts (DD-1 & DD-2) and Historic Overlay District.

Other Historic Preservation Measures

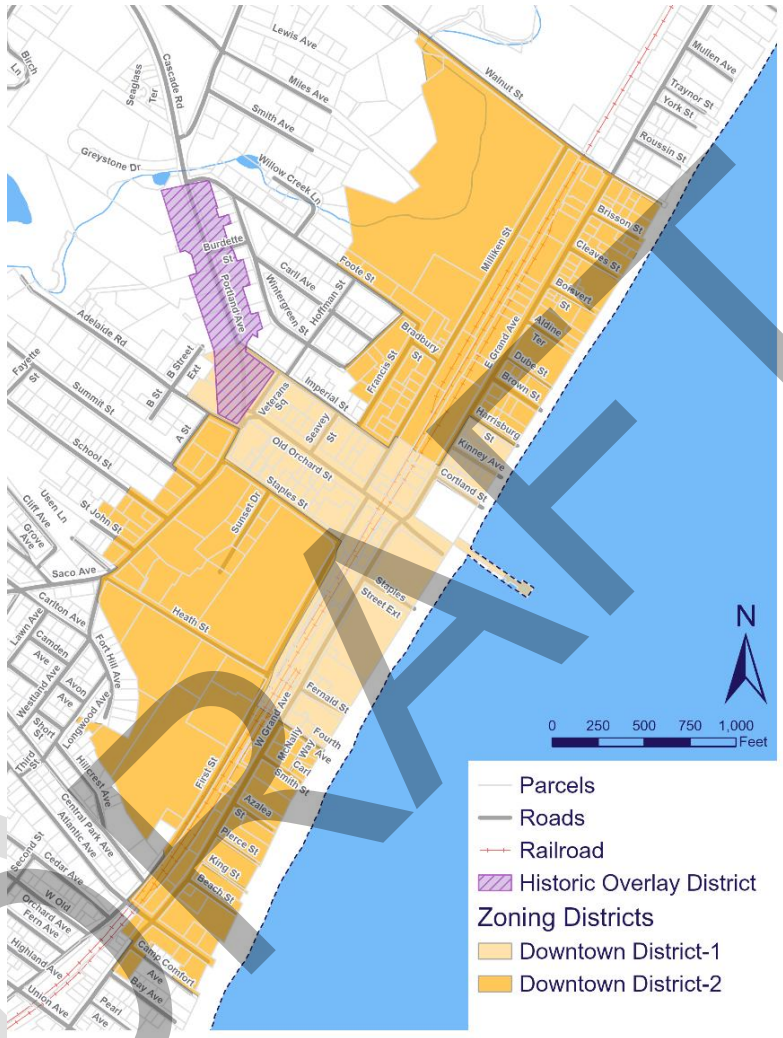
The Town's Subdivision Ordinance requires applicants to conduct a survey for historical and archaeological resources when proposing development in areas that may contain these resources. The Site Plan Review Ordinance requires a visual/cultural study instead of a full survey of historic and archaeological resources.

Impacts of Historic Preservation Measures

The effectiveness of the community's historic preservation measures appears to make a difference in the Downtown Districts (DD-1 and DD-2) regarding building aesthetics. This is apparent when visiting these neighborhoods in the downtown area. However, the community is split regarding whether the historic preservation measures could be improved. Some members of the community prefer to minimize regulations in general, while some prefer expanded historic preservation measures to cover more areas in town.

These regulations and design review process should be reviewed as part of the implementation portion of this planning effort.

Map 4: Local Historic Districts



Shoreland protection measures found in both state and local regulations provide limited protection of historical and archeological resources near the community's rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands and other freshwater resources. Continued documentation, raised awareness of OOB's historical resources, and policies directing their protection and maintenance can prevent unintentional destruction. Furthermore, providing for their protection benefits the community's residents, business owners, and visitors alike.

Summary

OOB's history is rich and dynamic. While OOB owns several locally and nationally significant historic sites, the town lacks a comprehensive, central inventory of all the significant resources. Three locally designated historic districts, and associated zoning ordinance language, provide some protection to historic resources. However, no regulations protect significant resources located outside of the designated historic districts. To date, the MHPC has not identified any prehistoric or historic archaeological sites in OOB, but they recommend further investigation and surveying in the areas surrounding Cascade Brook and Goosefare Brook, which may hold artefacts of the Abenaki and Wabanaki nations.

Transportation

Purpose

Old Orchard Beach's (OOB's) Transportation system is made up of a multimodal network of state and local roads, including direct access to the Interstate system via Interstate 195, bus services, a rail line and platform served by Amtrak's Downeaster, sidewalks, bicycles lanes, and multi-use paths such as the Eastern Trail for walking and biking. Maintaining, preserving, and enhancing these systems and their many components is vital for the economic prosperity of the town and to uphold the quality of life for the permanent, and many seasonal residents of OOB.

OOB's transportation network is directly linked to the land uses and is vital to the Town's character. This network allows the mobility of people and goods and provides access to the Town's natural features, the vibrant downtown core, and many other local attractions. Informed and thoughtful planning of the transportation network will help guide future development to enhance and preserve valued features of the community, while supporting longer term community goals.

This transportation chapter provides the information necessary to develop a plan of action for OOB's future transportation system. Sources include local knowledge and data, as well as data provided by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Data Highlights

- The Town is responsible for evaluating, maintaining, and preserving 42 miles of local roads and 9.9 miles of State Aid roads within the Urban Compact, at least 9.4 miles of sidewalk, and four municipal parking lots in addition to on street parking.
- OOB has twenty transit stops served by three year-round fixed route buses, three seasonal trolleys, and a seasonal Amtrak station.
- OOB's downtown area is critical to the town's economic vitality. Pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, transit, and parking should be prioritized while also reducing conflicts between bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles.
- The 2024 Interstate 195 & Ocean Park Road Feasibility Study recommends a partial two-lane roundabout, intersection realignment and signalization, as well as bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Transportation Conditions

Roadway Network and Classifications

OOB's transportation network consists of approximately 52 miles of public roadways, including the terminus of Interstate 195, State Routes 5 (Ocean Park Rd/Saco Ave), 9 (East and West Grand Ave), and 98 (Cascade Rd/Portland Ave). Routes 5, 9 and 98 converge in the downtown area, carrying a significant amount of traffic during the summer months. The majority of OOB's roadways are local roads, providing access to state highways and service roads for adjacent property owners that accommodate little or no through traffic.

This section provides detailed information on the Town's roadway network. It includes a description of the classification systems that determine maintenance and construction responsibilities, as well as funding eligibility.

State Classification

In the early 1980s, the Maine Legislature authorized and directed MaineDOT to classify all public roads throughout the State. The basis of this classification system was that primarily regional or statewide needs should be the State's responsibility and roads serving primarily local needs should be of local responsibility. The State has also designated "urban compact" areas in towns with populations greater than 7,500 inhabitants. Maintenance duties for State Aid Highways within urban compacts fall on the responsibility of the municipality.

This classification system is also used as part of the Local Road Assistance Program (LRAP) defined in State Law M.R.S.A. Section 1803, which provides formula funding to Maine municipalities based off State Aid and Townway lane miles. In Fiscal Year 2025 OOB received $ 67,192 as part of the LRAP. The funds must only be used for maintenance or improvement of public roads.

The State's classification system includes the following:

- State Highways form a system of connected routes throughout the state that primarily serve intra- and interstate traffic. The State is responsible for all construction/reconstruction and maintenance on these roads. In OOB, the terminus of I-95 accounts for the only State Highway mileage in town with less than 1/10 of a mile.
- State Aid Highways connect local roads to the State Highway system and generally serve intracounty rather than intrastate traffic movement. The State Aid Highway category generally corresponds with the federal 'collector' classification. State Aid Highways comprised of state numbered Routes 5, 9, and 98, as well as Temple Ave., Union Ave., and a portion of Old Orchard Rd. total 9.9 miles in the community. All OOBs State Aid Highways are designated within the urban compact and therefore are the responsibility of the town to be maintained in "good repair."

- Town Ways are all other highways not included in the State Highway or State Aid Highway classifications that are maintained by municipalities or counties. These roads are classified as federal 'local' roads. There are approximately 42 miles of local roads in OOB.

Federal Functional Classification

In addition to the State classification system, there is also the Federal Functional Classification system. The federal system complements the State's system and is based on the type of service that is intended to be provided by the roadway. The federal classifications relate to traffic capacity and volume attributed to the roads and are divided into rural and urban systems. While state classification designates maintenance jurisdiction, federal functional classification creates a hierarchy of roads and determines which roads are eligible for Federal highway funds.

All of OOB's State Aid Highways are Federally Classified as Major Collectors. Collectors serve traffic in a specific area, whereas arterials generally serve traffic moving through an area, collectors gather traffic from local roads and streets and distribute them to the arterials. Major Collectors are eligible for federal aid funding, as well as the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Systems (PACTS) collector road paving program.

Local Roads serve primarily to provide access to residential areas. They are designed for low-speed travel and to carry low volumes of traffic relatively short distances. Local roads are generally not eligible for federal aid funding for improvements or maintenance.

A road's functional classification is one factor in planning for possible growth into rural areas and for the future development of the town overall. Local streets are best suited for village/residential or very low-density rural development. While some commercial and other non-residential development might be an appropriate land use along collectors, it is important that such development be designed so that it minimally disrupts traffic flow.

Bridges

Bridges are a vital part and are the most expensive sections of roads, and a lack of adequate bridges can create transportation bottlenecks, which are often difficult to remedy. MaineDOT inspects all bridges and culverts with a clear span of greater than 10 feet on public ways, regardless of ownership, every two years. Inspection reports are available online and include detailed information on all aspects of the structure which can be used to plan for preservation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

Bridge conditions can be measured based on the National Bridge Inventory Federal Sufficiency Rating (SFR). Each FSR has a numeric indicator of the overall value of the sufficiency of the bridge. A rating will be from 0-100 (0 indicates the worst and 100 indicates the best). FSR is computed with a federally supplied formula using an array of condition and inventory data. The formula is used to identify bridges eligible for federal funding.

The following table depicts the two bridges and culverts (spanning more than 10 feet) inspected by MaineDOT in the town of OOB, both of which are owned and maintained by MaineDOT. Based on the inspection report, Seaside Avenue over Goose Fare Creek may require rehabilitation or replacement in the near future. Any improvements should also be sensitive to Goose Fare Creek's function as a tidal estuary. Map 1 at the end of the chapter depicts the bridges and large culverts in the community.

Figure 1: Bridges and Culverts in OOB

Location	FSR	Owner	AADT	Year Built/ Reconstructed	Span Type
Seaside Ave. over Goose Fare Creek	58.1	MaineDOT	3,540	1948	Bridge
Portland Ave. over Milliken Brook	96.8	MaineDOT	1,584	1998	Culvert

Source: MaineDOT, 2023

Traffic Volumes

MaineDOT monitors 71 permanent traffic recorder sites across the state. There are three permanent stations in OOB. The station located on Route 5 (Ocean Park Road) at the Saco town line has data going back to 2014 and shows a slight decline in Annual Average Traffic between 2014 and 2022. There are also traffic counters on I-195 in both directions that have been in place since 2021 near the town line with Saco. These permanent stations are valuable for assessing short- and long-term trends such as seasonal variations in vehicular traffic. All three locations in OOB collect speed data including average speeds at the terminus of I-195 being significantly higher than the posted speed limit of 30mph.

Maine DOT also monitors dozens of locations for short duration counts in OOB typically collected on a three-year rotating schedule. The data from the short duration counts is adjusted using the states permanent counter data to develop Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes. Looking at ten rotating count locations across the community, between 2013 and 2022, average annual traffic growth has declined 0.5% per year. Although some roads may have recorded unsubstantial traffic changes, other roads experienced more significant changes in traffic. The table on the next page depicts short duration count location data trends between 2010 and 2022. Map 3 at the end of the chapter depicts AADT in the community.

Figure 2: Average Annual Daily Traffic, 2010-2022

Location	2010	2013	2016	2019	2022	2010-2022 Percent Change	2013-2022 Percent Change
PORTLAND AVE NE/O SR 98 (PORTLAND AVE)	2,200	2,040	1,790	2,050	1,900	-14%	-5%
ROSS RD NE/O SR 98 (CASCADE RD)	1,110	1,200	1,220	1,420	1,440	30%	-18%
ROSS RD SW/O SR 98 (CASCADE RD)	2,520	3,130	3,110	3,680	3,830	52%	-23%
SR 5 (OLD ORCHARD ST) SE/O VETERANS SQ	6,650	6,470	5,710	5,330	5,320	-20%	6%
SR 9 (E GRAND AVE) NE/O WALNUT ST	6,320	4,680	4,770	4,900	4,420	-30%	7%
SR 9(W GRAND AVE) SW/O SR 5(OLD ORCHARD)	3,990	3,700	3,400	2,970	3,470	-13%	-2%
SR 98 (CASCADE RD) SE/O ROSS RD	5,870	5,960	5,240	5,750	5,510	-6%	-5%
SR 98 (PORTLAND AVE) SE/O BURDETTE ST	8,050	7,640	6,950	7,360	7,030	-13%	-1%

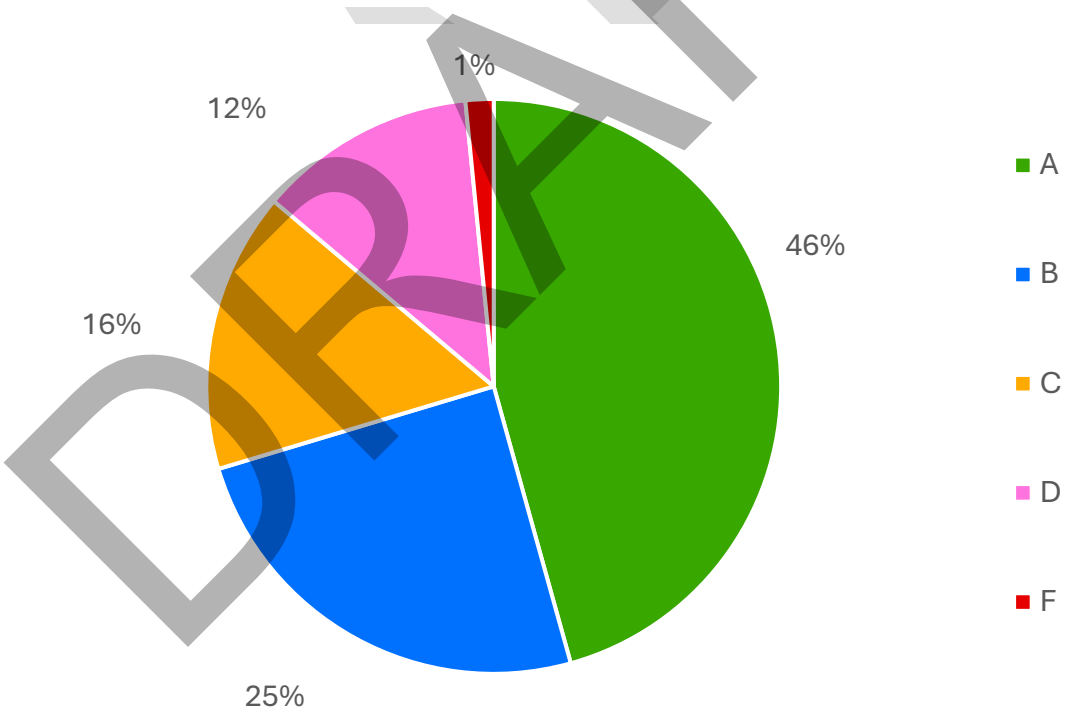
Source: MaineDOT, 2024

Pavement Condition

As part of MaineDOT's asset management methodology, pavement condition data is collected every two years on all State Highways and State Aid Highways. MaineDOT uses the Pavement Condition Rating (PCR), a 0-5 scale that is composed of International Roughness Index, rutting, and two basic types of cracking. The A-F scale (A being in great condition) varies by Highway Corridor Priority (HCP).

As of 2023, just under 30% of OOB's State maintained roads fall into the C, D and F categories. 71% of state roads are in good and great condition (A or B) which is in proximity to the statewide percentage. Although this data changes as sections of roads deteriorate and receive new pavement, it gives a general idea of the condition of state roads in the community and provides a benchmark for customer service levels. Maine Local Roads Center offers a Road Management Software (RSMS) that can be used to assess and prioritize local roads for improvements, including cost estimates used for developing a local road maintenance plan. Map 2 at the end of the chapter depicts pavement conditions in the community.

Figure 3: Pavement Condition



Source: MaineDOT, 2024

Safety

MaineDOT obtains crash reports from State and local police to develop Critical Rate Factors (CRF) on every road (link) and intersection (node) across the state. The CRF is a comparison of actual crash rate on a link or at a node to the expected accident rate based on road type, vehicle miles of travel, and the average statewide accident rate. A CRF greater than 1 on a link or at a node indicates a crash rate higher than should be expected at that location when based on statewide averages. Crash data is further analyzed to identify High Crash Locations (HCL). Road segments and intersections that have had at least eight crashes in a three-year period with an overall average CRF greater than 1 are considered HCLs. Data from the three-year period between 2021 and 2023 classifies the following three locations in OOB as an HCL:

Figure 4. High Crash Locations, 2024

Location	Total Crashes (2021-23)	CRF
Intersection of Cascade Rd and Ross Rd	10	2.91
Intersection of Ocean Park Rd and Saco Ave	37	5.36
Ocean Park Rd from Olympia Ave to Oregon Ave	9	2.52

Source: MaineDOT, 2024

In the 5-year period from 2019 to 2023, there were 170 crashes that resulted in injuries and only one crash that resulted in a fatality. During that same period there were ten crashes involving pedestrians and fifteen that involved bicycles. Six bicycle crashes were reported on Saco Ave, and four of the pedestrian crashes occurred on Old Orchard Street.

Commuting Patterns

American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2019-2023 indicates a mean travel time to work of 24 minutes for workers aged 16 and older from OOB. According to the ACS, 75.2% of them drove alone, 10.6% carpooled, 1.8% walked, and 11.2% worked from home.

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamic (LEHD) program, which is part of the US Census Bureau, also produces demographic data on employers and employees. LEHD data is displayed in the table below which identifies where OOB residents work.

Figure 5: Job Counts Where Workers are Employed

Geography	Count	Percentage
Old Orchard Beach	371	8.8%
Portland	922	21.9%
South Portland	427	9.0%
Scarborough	381	8.8%
Saco	310	7.4%
Biddeford	272	6.5%
Westbrook	248	5.9%
Kennebunk	94	2.2%
Augusta	77	1.8%
Auburn	67	1.6%
All other Locations	1,048	24.9%
All Towns and Cities	**4,217**	**100.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024

Public Transportation

The Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) currently operates three fixed route transit lines in Old Orchard Beach, as well as three season trolley services. OOB's three bus routes connect the community to Biddeford and Saco, as well as Scarborough, South Portland, and Portland via the Green line. BSOOB's services connect OOB to the broader regional transportation network, including Greater Portland Metro transit system, the Amtrak Downeaster Rail Line, and Portland Jetport. These three routes serve twenty bus stops in OOB including seven stops along Saco Ave and five stops along Temple Ave.

BSOOB's Seasonal Trolleys operate from Memorial Day Weekend to September 1st and connect points in Saco and Scarborough to OOB. The trolleys run seven days a week, including evenings, and serve nearby campgrounds and many other seasonal accommodations. BSOOBS's fixed route transit and seasonal trolley services are a vital part of OOB's transportation networks, helping to reduce congestion and maximize parking. These bus systems are also closely interconnected with the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and very important to the region's summertime economy.

The Northeast Passenger Rail Authority also operates Amtrak's Downeaster Rail line, which runs five daily round trip trains from Brunswick, Maine to North Station in Boston, Massachusetts. The Downeaster includes a seasonal stop in OOB at a platform located on 1st Street across from Veterans Memorial Park. In 2024 the Downeaster saw its highest ridership ever recorded. Recent upgrades to the rail line and a new passenger platform in

Wells, Maine will allow additional trains on the system as ridership is expected to continue to increase in the coming years.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Non-motorized transportation, including bicycling and walking, is a vital component to OOB's transportation system and to the overall health of the community. The infrastructure, the presence and behavior of motor vehicle traffic, and the surrounding land uses all contribute to how desirable an area is for walking or biking.

OOB's pedestrian infrastructure network is made up of 9.4 miles of sidewalks, according to MaineDOT's sidewalk inventory. Other critical components of the pedestrian infrastructure include crosswalks, curb ramps, rapid flashing beacons, and pedestrian signage. In many places throughout the community, sidewalks may not be feasible, cost effective, or suitable for roads and neighborhoods. In those circumstances, asphalt and/or dirt shoulders are typically used by pedestrians.

Bicycle infrastructure includes bicycle lanes, such as the ones along Cascade Road, multi-use paths like the Eastern Trail and bicycle racks for bike storage. In the warmer months, bicycles are common throughout town and bicycle rental businesses may also contribute to the high number of riders. In some cases, shoulders are present along roadways and offer some separation from vehicular traffic, while in other areas, such as West Grand Avenue near Ocean Park, no shoulders are present, and cyclists must share the lane with vehicles. In cases like this, painted sharrows may be a low-cost improvement to keep drivers aware of the presence of cyclists and to direct cyclists to follow the rules of the road.

The town's pedestrian and bicycle network also include an extensive recreational trail system. The Eastern Trail, which is envisioned to be a mostly off-road path between South Portland and Kittery, Maine, has over twenty miles of off-road path already built, including 1.7 miles of trail through OOB. This major arterial for the regional and statewide multi-use trail system is a major asset for the community. While there are multiple entrance points for users to park and access the Eastern Trail, there may be opportunities to develop connecting trails, paths, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes to improve non-motorized access to and from this multi-use path. Map 4 at the end of the chapter depicts sidewalks and trails in the community.

Planning Implications

Regional Transportation Planning

The Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for OOB, as well as other surrounding communities in the Greater Portland area. PACTS is responsible for planning and programming federally funded transportation projects within these municipalities. In addition to project-based planning, the MPO is required by federal law to develop a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for the region. The current LRTP, "Connecting 2050," was developed in 2025 and anticipates transportation needs and investments through 2050. It considers projected growth in population, employment, and residential and commercial development as the basis for new policies and projects to facilitate all modes of transportation, including roads and highways, rail, public transit, and biking and walking. The TIP is a short-term capital improvement program developed every two years in collaboration with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). Municipalities can submit candidate projects to be scored, ranked, and prioritized into the list of transportation projects that are submitted for federal, state, and local funding. Being a member of PACTS allows OOB to participate in regional transportation planning efforts and access to funds that are not accessible to rural communities.

Interstate 195 & Ocean Park Road Feasibility Study (2024)

In 2023, the Town of Old Orchard Beach & City of Saco in collaboration with MaineDOT, contracted with Gorrill Palmer and its subconsultant team to evaluate potential strategies to improve safety, mobility and traffic calming along the I-195 and Ocean Park Road corridor. This most recent study was intended to complement the 2005 "Halfway Rotary Improvement Plan," the 2021 "Intersection Safety & Mobility Study," as well as road safety audits conducted in the area in 2021. The 2024 study's recommendations consist of a partial two-lane roundabout at the intersection of Interstate 195 and Ocean Park Road, changes to local roads, a new multi-use path connecting from Ocean Park Road to the Smithwheel Road intersection, which is proposed to become a four legged signalized intersection.

New Commercial and Residential Development

New development is often phased over multiple years and the impacts of the final development, as well as the initial phase(s), on the transportation system should always be considered during the local review process. The magnitude of new development determines the traffic impacts, and potential remedies, that the development will have. Depending on existing traffic volumes, distribution patterns, roadway users, safety issues, and road conditions, small scale as well as large scale development can often have significant impacts on the surrounding roadway network. By requiring transportation impact studies for new developments of a certain size or for developments located in areas

where significant transportation problems are known to exist, the community's Planning Board can effectively evaluate the effects associated with any new development. Through this kind of scrutiny and review, recommendations for project phasing and developer participation in necessary improvements can be implemented, and potential issues of safety, congestion, and expensive upgrades to poorly planned roads can be avoided.

Access Management

Access management involves coordination and management of access to land development while simultaneously preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding roadways in terms of safety, capacity, and mobility. It is the practice of coordinating the location, number, spacing, and design of driveways, medians, median openings, and intersections to minimize conflicts and maximize the capacity for all users of the transportation system.

Opportunities for access management include possible connections between existing and future subdivisions, the consideration of shared driveways when possible, and coordination and communication between the Town and MaineDOT's Region 1 Office.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming on local roads can be a significant challenge. The primary approach to traffic calming involves reducing traffic speeds by altering the design, configuration, or appearance of the street. Traffic calming can involve road design techniques using active or physical controls (speedbumps/tables, barriers, curves, rumble strips, etc.) and passive controls, such as signs and traffic regulations, to reduce vehicle speeds. Typically, traffic calming is most appropriate on lower-volume collectors or local roadways, as well as minor arterials in downtown and urban environments, rather than on roadways such as principal arterials, whose purpose is to facilitate through traffic flow. Traffic calming measures foster safer and quieter streets that are more accommodating to pedestrians and cyclists and enhance neighborhoods and downtown environments. The potential benefits of traffic calming include reduced traffic speeds, reduced traffic volumes – by discouraging "cut-through" traffic on residential streets – and often improved aesthetic quality of streets.

Electric Vehicle Charging

MaineDOT, Maine Turnpike Authority, Maine Department of Environmental protection, as well as other agencies and organizations across Maine, have been preparing a number of initiatives relating to the deployment of all electric and plug-in-hybrid vehicles. State and local governments, as well as public utility companies and private businesses, have been working to expand the number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout the state. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, which tracks public charging stations, there is one station at in OOB at the Ocean Walk Hotel on East Grand Avenue. Several other public charging stations are located nearby in Biddeford, Saco, and Scarborough.

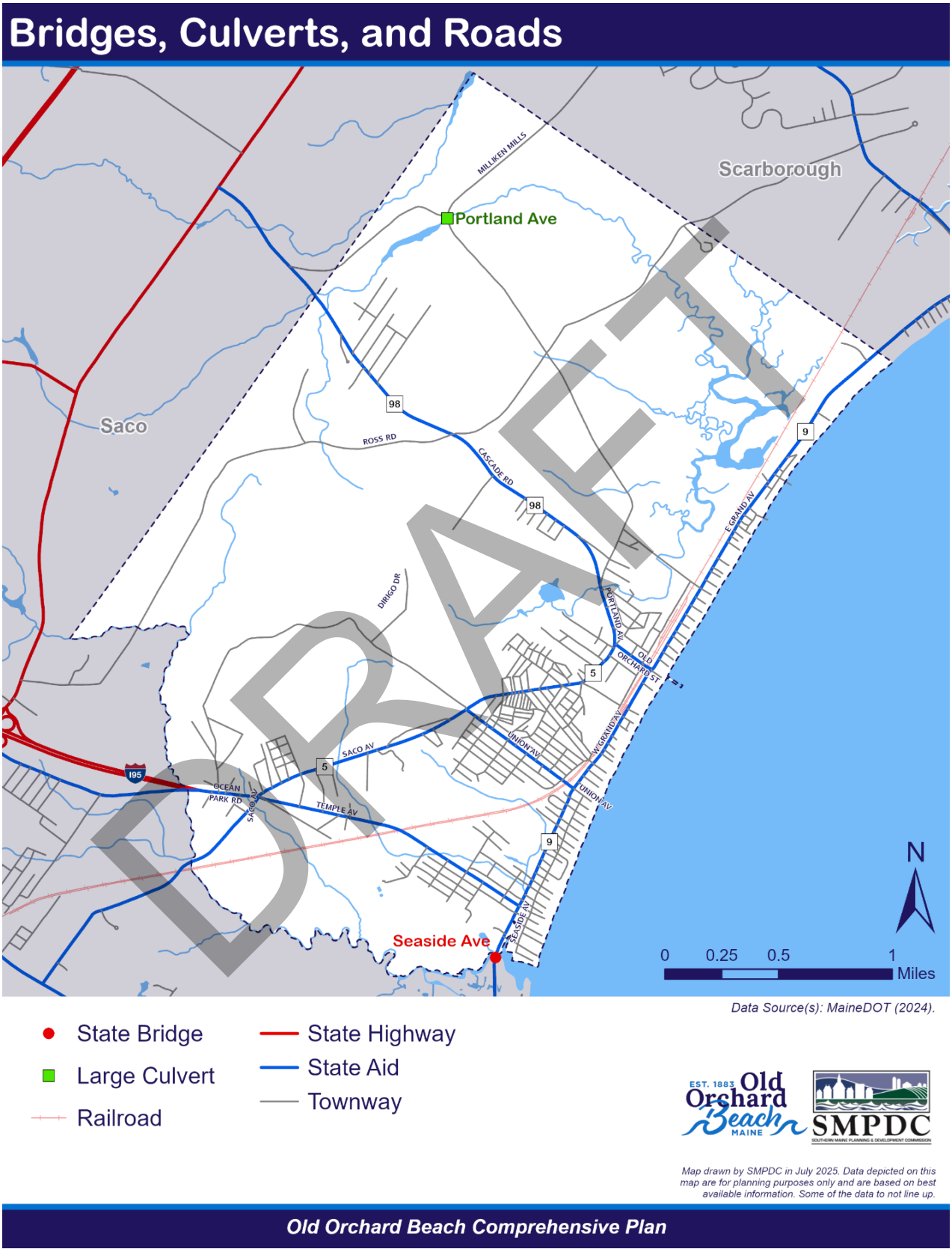
Efficiency Maine Trust, in partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation, is currently expanding the charging infrastructure in the state to fill in spatial gaps. They have identified and prioritized spatial gaps in southern Maine to be improved in Fiscal Year 2025. Maine municipalities play a crucial role in encouraging and directing EV infrastructure through zoning and other land use ordinances. The town may consider permitting EV infrastructure, and identifying areas best suited for installation, to ensure the Town is prepared for the modernization of the transportation system.

Summary

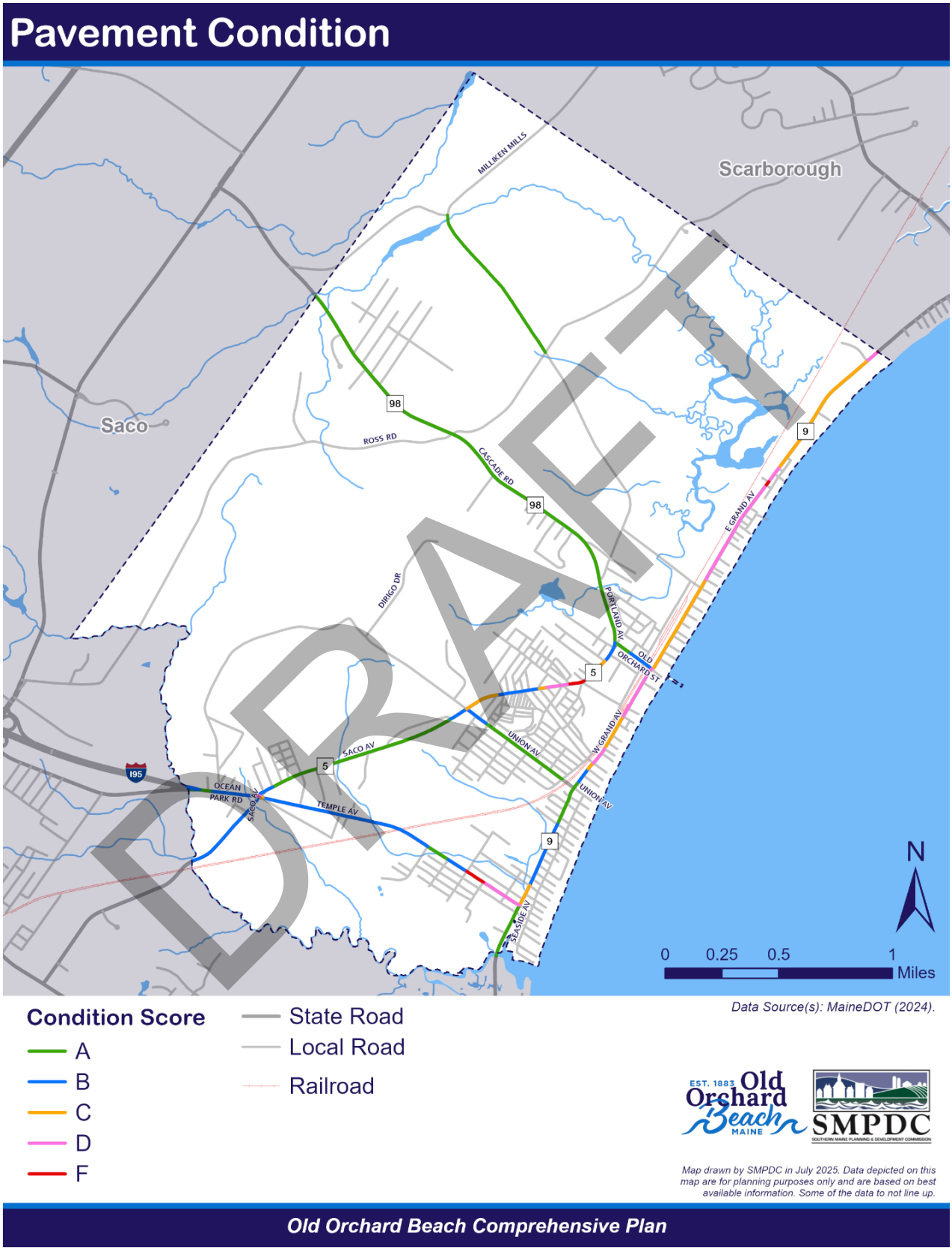
Transportation challenges had been an ongoing issue in OOB for decades, particularly during the busy summer months when many tourists enjoy all that the community has to offer. Looking forward, the town may work to use their existing planning work and recommendations to leverage state and federal funding opportunities for transportation infrastructure improvements, with a focus on the downtown area. Traffic calming measures, green pedestrian buffers, and crosswalk improvements all require capital investment. Off road, future connections to the Eastern Trail and encouraging connectivity between high traffic areas and recreation opportunities could improve local traffic conditions and allow for safer pedestrian conditions in the community.

Add a sentence about impacts to transportation system as a result of seasonal population increase.

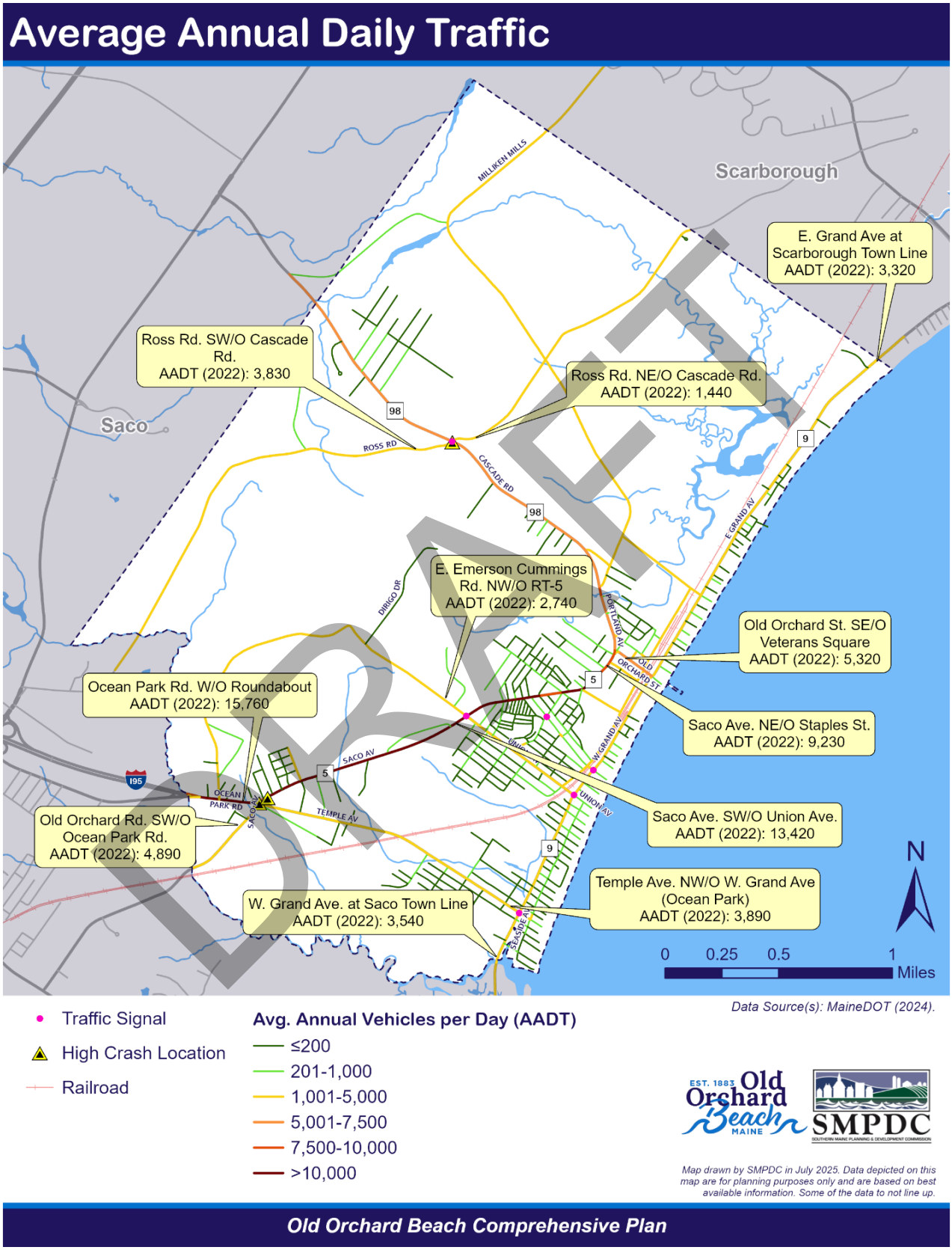
Map 1: Bridges and Large Culverts



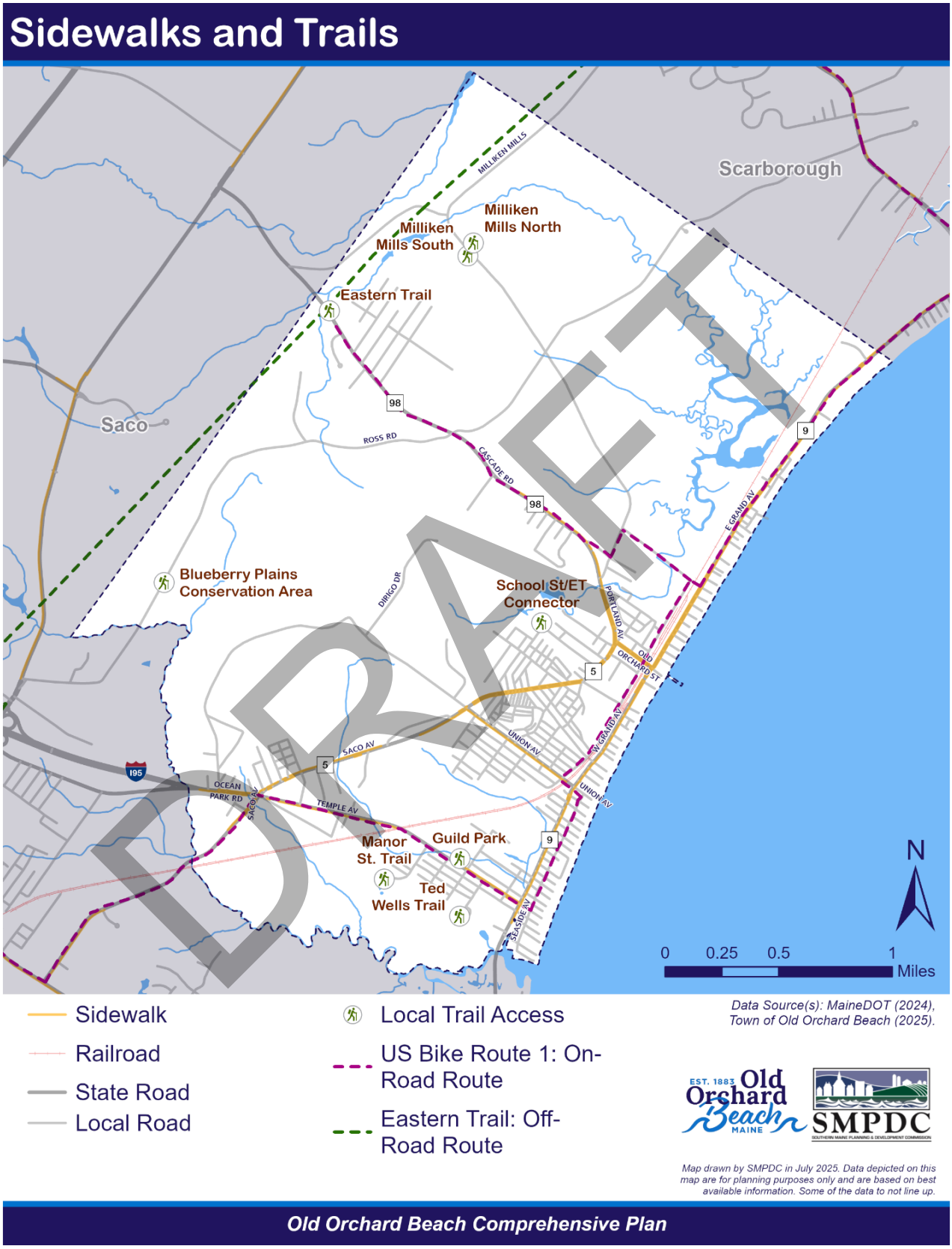
Map 2: Pavement Condition



Map 3: Average Annual Daily Traffic



Map 4: Sidewalks and Trails



Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Purpose

This chapter provides a summary of climate change hazards relevant to Old Orchard Beach and presents the anticipated impacts of those hazards. As a coastal community with a character and economy tied to its coastline, sea level rise is of particular significance for Old Orchard Beach. Therefore, this chapter focuses on sea level rise and associated vulnerabilities of the community. The chapter also outlines Old Orchard Beach's efforts to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and to mitigate the drivers of climate change.

Data Highlights

- Climate change will impact all facets of the community and compounding climate change vulnerabilities will impact all areas of life, including public health, natural areas, the local economy, municipal fiscal health, and community well-being.
- The impacts of climate change will not be felt evenly across the community and will not be uniformly distributed among population groups. Socially vulnerable and marginalized populations will be disproportionally affected by climate change as they generally have less capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-related hazards and effects.
- Coastal areas of Old Orchard Beach, particularly the neighborhood of Ocean Park, are extremely vulnerable to the increasing impacts of coastal flooding and sea level rise.
- Increasing air temperatures and occurrences of extreme heat events will likely intensify heat hazards for densely developed areas of town, including commercial and residential areas along East and West Grand Avenue, and will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, especially for the elderly, young, people with existing health conditions, and those with limited access to air conditioning.
- Drought is becoming a hazard of increasing concern and can negatively impact public and private drinking water supplies, natural resources, and agriculture, and could lead to increased wildfire risk.
- The electric grid is increasingly vulnerable to extreme storms and flooding, both of which will be exacerbated by climate change.
- Increasing rates of vector borne diseases and incidents of extreme heat will negatively impact public health.

Current Conditions

Climate change is the long-term shifting of temperatures and weather patterns driven by increased carbon dioxide (CO_2) and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Maine's climate continues to change in part because of human activity through the burning of fossil fuels, and Maine people are already feeling the impacts of extreme storms, hotter summers, shorter winters, and higher seas, all of which threaten ecosystems, infrastructure, and public health and safety.

Climate change is already impacting Old Orchard Beach and poses significant threats to the community, including its beaches, natural resources, historical and cultural resources, infrastructure, people, and economy. Warming air and ocean temperatures; shifting precipitation patterns; more frequent and intense storm events; sea level rise; increasing risk of drought; habitat loss; reduced biodiversity; and increasing prevalence of vector-borne diseases such as Lyme are just some of the climate hazards and impacts facing the town.

Climate change will not only exacerbate existing hazards and issues but will also cause new risks and challenges for Old Orchard Beach. Intense precipitation events could cause more stormwater runoff, amplifying existing water quality problems. Increasing storm intensity and frequency will likely cause more power outages that last longer, disrupting the community's normal activities, impairing public safety, and straining local resources. Shifting terrestrial habitat conditions and warming ocean temperatures could harbor the expansion of existing invasive species, like green crab and knotweed, and enable the arrival of new invasive species, jeopardizing traditional recreation and fishing activities. Extreme heat and drought will threaten public health and natural resources.

Old Orchard Beach is undertaking action to better understand local climate conditions, impacts, and vulnerabilities and to increase the community's resilience to climate change. It has participated in several regional efforts related to sea level rise and coastal adaptation planning, including the Sea Level Adaptation Working Group (SLAWG) and the Climate Ready Coast – Southern Maine regional coastal resilience planning project. Notably, the Town enrolled in the State's Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) in 2023, making the community eligible for certain climate-focused grant opportunities.

As part of its enrollment process, the Town completed a Community Resilience Self-Assessment and held a community workshop, during which Town staff, elected officials, and community members identified the following priority action areas:

- Improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions for municipal buildings and operations
- Supporting alternative transportation modes, including bike and walking infrastructure

- Protecting the environment, including the coastal sand dunes and promoting natural climate solutions
- Building a healthy and resilient community
- Reducing flood risk.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas releases heat-trapping gases that increase the temperature of Earth's atmosphere. Those increasing temperatures are rising sea levels and changing weather patterns. In Maine, 91% of GHG emissions come from energy consumption. The transportation sector is the greatest emitter of CO_2 followed by residential, commercial, industrial, and electricity production.

Old Orchard Beach is taking steps to reduce its GHG emissions. The town has a Net Energy Billing Credit Agreement to obtain electricity credits from an off-site solar farm, helping to offset municipal electricity costs and promote solar development in the state. Starting in 2022, the Town undertook efforts to enroll in the State's Community Resilience Partnership (CRP). As part of that process, the Town held a community workshop, during which the need to understand current energy usage of municipal buildings and take steps to improve energy efficiency of those buildings was identified as a priority for the Town by municipal staff, board and committee members, and community members. Additionally, pursuing energy efficiency improvements for municipal facilities and buildings was noted as an important measure that would not only reduce OOB's contributions to the drivers of climate change, but also save the community money on energy usage in the future. As a result, the Town applied for and received a Community Action Grant to conduct an energy audit of municipal buildings and develop a plan to improve energy efficiency of municipal buildings through energy upgrades and weatherization activities. In addition to reducing the Town's GHG emissions, the project will also provide opportunities for the Town to lower its energy costs.

In 2020 the Town amended its zoning ordinance to include Sec. 78-1278. - Solar energy systems, providing solar energy system regulations for small, medium, and large-scale solar arrays. Small scale solar arrays are permitted with a building permit in all zones except for the Resource Protection, Shoreland Residential Activity, and the Stream Protection subdistricts, where they are permitted through conditional use. Medium and large-scale solar arrays are permitted through conditional use in many of the business and rural districts. In particular, the Old Orchard Beach Chamber of Commerce has been a large proponent of rooftop solar for commercial buildings, and has supported outreach events to interested community members and business owners. A roof-top solar array was

installed on the Chamber of Commerce building itself in 2019[1]. There are currently no solar arrays on municipal properties.

Increasing Temperatures

Climate change is causing increased temperatures and more frequent extreme temperature occurrences in Maine. Statewide, the annual mean temperature increased by 3.5°F between 1895 and 2023[2]. Calendar year 2024 was Maine's warmest year on record, and scientists project that average Maine temperatures will rise 2–4°F by 2050 and up to 10°F by 2100. Southern Maine is projected to experience, on average, 13.5 to 15 'extreme heat' days (temperatures that are greater than or equal to 95°F) by the 2050s. Heatwaves, prolonged periods of abnormally hot weather, pose health risks to people, animals, and the environment. Heatwaves can lead to heat-related illness and often strain power grids due to increased demand for air conditioning. Heatwaves can also exacerbate drought conditions and contribute to wildfires.

In Maine, winter is the fastest warming season, resulting in fewer freezing days and reduced snow cover. Statewide, winter temperatures have warmed 5°F compared to a century ago. In York County, average annual winter temperatures have increased by 4.6°F since 1895[3]. Warming winters diminish snowpack and alter the timing of snowmelt, river flows, and lake ice-out dates. These changes have cascading impacts on biodiversity, agriculture, inland lakes and streams, the hydrological cycle, and winter-based recreational activities.

As temperatures increase, the severity and impacts of 'heat islands' will worsen. Heat islands occur when developed areas absorb and retain more heat than natural landscapes due to infrastructure, human activities, and reduced vegetation, leading to higher temperatures, extreme heat exposure, and increased energy use for cooling. Elevated temperatures in heat islands can pose a threat to public health, especially for the elderly, children, and outdoor workers. It can lead to increased respiratory difficulties, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke[4]. In Old Orchard Beach, developed areas around East and West Grand Avenues and developed area between Route 5/Saco Avenue and the beaches are mapped as having a relatively high heat island severity[5]. The heat island effect could be particularly impactful for Old Orchard Beach with beach-centric tourist activity and elevated daily populations in the summer months.

[1] Abigail Worthing, "Solar panels go up at Old Orchard Beach chamber", Journal Tribune, updated Nov. 19, 2019. https://www.pressherald.com/2019/02/24/solar-panels-go-up-at-old-orchard-beach-chamber/

[2] MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp.

[3] MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp.

[4] The Heat is On: A Trust for Public Land Special Report

[5] The Trust for Public Land. Urban heat island severity for U.S. cities web map. 2024.

In addition to warming air temperatures, climate change is also increasing the temperature of marine waters. The Gulf of Maine is warming faster than 97% of the world's ocean surface and is experiencing near-constant ocean heat waves. Increased ocean temperature has already impacted Maine's fisheries and decreased the size and quality of the food source that supports the marine food web[6]. Temperature changes are accompanied by other shifting marine conditions, such as ocean acidification, that together are projected to have significant impacts on marine biodiversity and communities and individuals rely on harvesting of marine resources.

Storms and Precipitation

Storms and heavy rainfall are becoming more frequent and intense with climate change. From 1895 to 2022 total annual precipitation in York County increased 6.9 inches, which is slightly higher than the statewide trend of about 6 inches[7]. Shifting weather patterns are causing more precipitation to fall as rain rather than snow, and extreme precipitation events (greater than 2 inches in a day) are becoming even more frequent. Coastal communities like Old Orchard Beach are experiencing even more frequent extreme storms and precipitation events because of the influence of Atlantic storm tracks[8]. Hurricanes and tropical storms are tracking further northward and there is a high increase in the probability of lower category storms impacting the East Coast. A recent national study found that the Northeast is expected to see the largest increases in the annual probability of at least tropical storm wind conditions or higher, as hurricanes are expected to move further up the Atlantic coast in the future. This may have a significant impact on buildings not built to a code that considers the wind speeds they will likely face over the next 30 years[9].

Nor'easter storm events, possible year-round but more common in the fall and winter months, bring strong on-shore winds and powerful storm surge, forcibly throwing water against the coast and causing coastal flooding, overtopping of dune crests and hardened shoreline structures (e.g., seawalls), intense erosion of the shoreline, and damage to coastal infrastructure such as roads and culverts. As storm events are projected to become more frequent and more intense in the future, larger storm surges, increased precipitation, and higher sea levels will compound and exacerbate coastal flood hazards. With higher sea level, storm events of the past, like 2018 Winter Storm Grayson, the Patriot's Day storm of 2007, and the January 2024 storms, will likely cause even greater impacts, damage, and destruction in communities Old Orchard Beach. Additionally, this has the potential to impair waterbodies through stormwater runoff, impact groundwater,

[6] MCC STS. 2024.
[7] ME Climate Council, Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine, 2020: http://climatecouncil.maine.gov/reports
[8] University of Maine, Maine's Climate Future, 2020: https://climatechange.umaine.edu/climate-matters/maines-climate-future/
[9] First Street Foundation. 2023. Embargoed: The 7th National Risk Assessment: Worsening Winds

damage riparian and estuarine habitat, erode beaches, dunes, and shoreland, and inundate coastal wetlands.

Since 1990, there have been 22 federally declared disasters in York County related to storm events[10]. Severe storms with heavy rains, strong winds, and coastal flooding have been the most common type of event and have occurred most frequently during the months of February and March followed by October. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) maintains a database of all reported storm events, including storms that did not qualify for a disaster declaration. From 1990 to 2024, there were a total of 103 flooding events in York County, causing more than $133.5 million in damage. Estimates from NOAA indicate that coastal flooding events alone have caused nearly $82 million in damage[11].

In March 2018, Old Orchard Beach was one of many York County towns that experienced a combined $3.96 million of damage from a coastal flooding event. In a similar event in December 2022, an additional $3.2 million of damage occurred in Old Orchard Beach alone. In January 2024, storms caused flooding to a significant portion of the downtown business district. Town staff had to close off full sections of town due to flooding and damage, causing disruptions to local businesses, emergency services, and residents' travel. As a municipality, Old Orchard Beach is already facing over $20 million in damage from the January 2024 storm[12]. Climate change is increasing the intensity of storm events, which will likely result in more frequent and costly storm disasters such as flooding events.

Sea Level Rise

Coastal flooding poses significant threats to people, property, and municipalities in southern Maine, where the region's identity, economy, and population are inextricably tied to, dependent on, and concentrated along its beautiful coastline. Increases in sea level will exacerbate those threats, resulting in more frequent and severe flooding, infrastructure damage, risks to people, and harm to natural resources. The oceanfront community of Old Orchard Beach is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise and related coastal hazards due to its low-lying, dense development along the coastline, popular beach areas, and vital municipal infrastructure serving coastal neighborhoods.

The impacts of sea level rise are far-reaching and include not only increased coastal flooding, but also more severe coastal erosion, changes to the composition and extent of coastal marsh, and stress on ecosystems and resources that provide recreation, protection from storms, and habitat for fish and wildlife, including commercially valuable fisheries. Additionally, as seas rise, saltwater intrusion not only contaminates groundwater, which

[10] FEMA Disaster Declarations Summary, as of 2025: https://www.fema.gov/disaster/declarations
[11] NOAA Storm Events Database, as of 2025: https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/
[12] York County Emergency Management Agency. 2024.

sustains municipal and private water supplies, but also raises groundwater, which can damage infrastructure like roads from below.

Sea level rise is a global phenomenon driven by two primary factors related to climate change: an increase in the volume of ocean water caused by the melting of land-based ice sheets and glaciers, and thermal expansion of seawater as it is warmed by increasing global temperatures. As global temperatures continue to increase, and do so at an accelerated rate, sea levels will continue to rise. The amount of rise depends primarily on the rate of future carbon dioxide emissions and future climate change, while the speed of rise depends mostly on the rate of land-based ice melting. Significant for Maine, sea level rise scenarios do not include the effects of freshwater runoff from rain events, projected to increase in frequency and strength, which may contribute additional flow to waters in the rivers, streams and marshes concurrent with ocean storms, compounding coastal flooding problems and increasing risk to people, property, and natural resources. They also do not account for wave action, which can cause severe coastal erosion and be extremely damaging to infrastructure and properties.

While sea level in Maine has been rising in the long-term, over the past few decades the rate of rise has accelerated. Nearly half of the documented sea level rise that has occurred locally over the past century has happened since 1993, representing a rapid increase in the rate of change. Sea level is 7.5 inches higher than in early 20th century Maine, and the rate of sea level rise has nearly doubled in the past 30 years. Over the past 30 years, the rate of sea level rise was 1.4 inches per decade, while the previous rate was 0.7 inches per decade[13]. The State of Maine recommends that communities plan for committing to manage 1.5 feet of sea level rise by 2050 and 4 feet by 2100 relative to 2000 average or "mean" sea level. The State also recommends communities "prepare to manage" higher risk, lower probability scenarios of 3 feet by 2070 and 8.8 feet in the 2120s. The State also notes that due to a possible large increase in the rate of sea level rise at the end of this century, communities should extend planning horizons beyond 2100[14].

One of the most noticeable impacts of sea level rise that coastal communities like Old Orchard Beach are already experiencing is 'high tide' or 'nuisance' flooding. High tide flooding is coastal flooding that occurs at high tide when water levels exceed heights associated with minor flooding impacts. It can cause inconveniences and disruptions to travel and access, as well as more serious impacts to municipal infrastructure as roadways, low-lying coastal areas, and stormwater infrastructure are temporarily inundated with ocean water. Southern Maine is already seeing four times as many nuisance flooding events over the last decade compared with the average of the past 100-

[13] MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp.
[14] MCC STS. 2024.

years. With that rate of sea level rise, not accounting for increased intensity and frequency of storms, Old Orchard Beach can expect to see a 15-fold increase in coastal flooding by 2050[15]. Those scenarios do not account for more intense rainfall that climate change is bringing to the region, which will exacerbate flooding.

In addition to more frequent occurrences of high tide flooding, as relative sea level increases, it will no longer take a strong storm to cause disruptive impacts to Old Orchard Beach. Higher background water levels mean that coastal storms can push water farther inland than they once did. Storm surge is the rise of water generated by a storm over and above the predicted astronomical tide and is caused primarily by wind pushing water onshore. When storm surge coincides with normal high tide, the rise in local ocean level can cause extreme flooding. In Maine, it is not abnormal to experience a storm surge of one to two feet even without the occurrence of a notable storm. If surge occurs at low tide, any associated problems could be minimal or non-existent. However, when surge happens at a high tide, or on top of elevated sea level, significant flooding and damage can and do occur. In 2023 and 2024, record-high sea levels were measured along the coast. This elevated level contributed to the extensive flooding and coastal erosion experienced in Old Orchard Beach and across the state's coastline during the storm events of January 2024[16].

The Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) identified Old Orchard Beach as one of the top 20 communities affected by sea level rise and Old Orchard Beach's vulnerability to coastal flooding has been well studied. Notable recent efforts to assess impacts of sea level rise include the 2023 *Climate Ready Coast – Southern Maine* regional coastal resilience planning project; a 2022 vulnerability assessment focused on impacts to properties and infrastructure led by Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission; a 2011 assessment focused on buildings and properties; and a 2014 analysis of impacts to road infrastructure for the Saco Bay communities, the last two completed as part of the Saco Bay Sea Level Adaptation Working Group (SLAWG).

Many of the characteristics and conditions that make the Town of Old Orchard Beach such a desirable beach community, also make it exceptionally vulnerable to coastal flood hazards. The low-lying, densely developed coastal neighborhoods, roads serving beachfront areas, and sandy beaches are susceptible to flooding and erosion. The neighborhood of Ocean Park is one of the most vulnerable areas in all of Maine and already experiences some of the worst inundation during coastal storms in the entire state. Future sea level rise will compound the existing flood hazard. Coastal flood vulnerability assessments completed for the Town show severe impacts under all sea level rise

[15] MCC STS. 2020. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine. A Report by the Scientific and Technical
Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 370 pp.
[16] MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp

scenarios, as well as normal high tide levels, within the Ocean Park community adjacent to Goosefare Brook. There is a tide gate for this portion of Town that is used to restrict flow into the area and can stop inundation up to about 12 to 12.5 feet mean lower low water (MLLW). Additional vulnerable areas of concern for coastal flood hazards include the area around Jones Creek, the pier and amusement park area, neighborhoods adjacent to Goosefare Brook where a dam structure near New Salt Road causes local flooding issues, and a marsh area surrounding a dam located near Bailey's Campground in Scarborough that also causes flooding. The Town currently has a Maine Coastal Communities Grant funded through the Maine Coastal Program aimed at enhancing tidal marsh resilience and reducing local flood vulnerability by assessing the function and operation of an existing tide gate and developing recommendations for operational changes. The project is assessing the optimal hydrology for local saltmarsh system for ensuring long-term marsh health and resilience in the context of sea level rise, storm surge, and stormwater runoff; and determine the tide gate settings that achieve that hydrology.

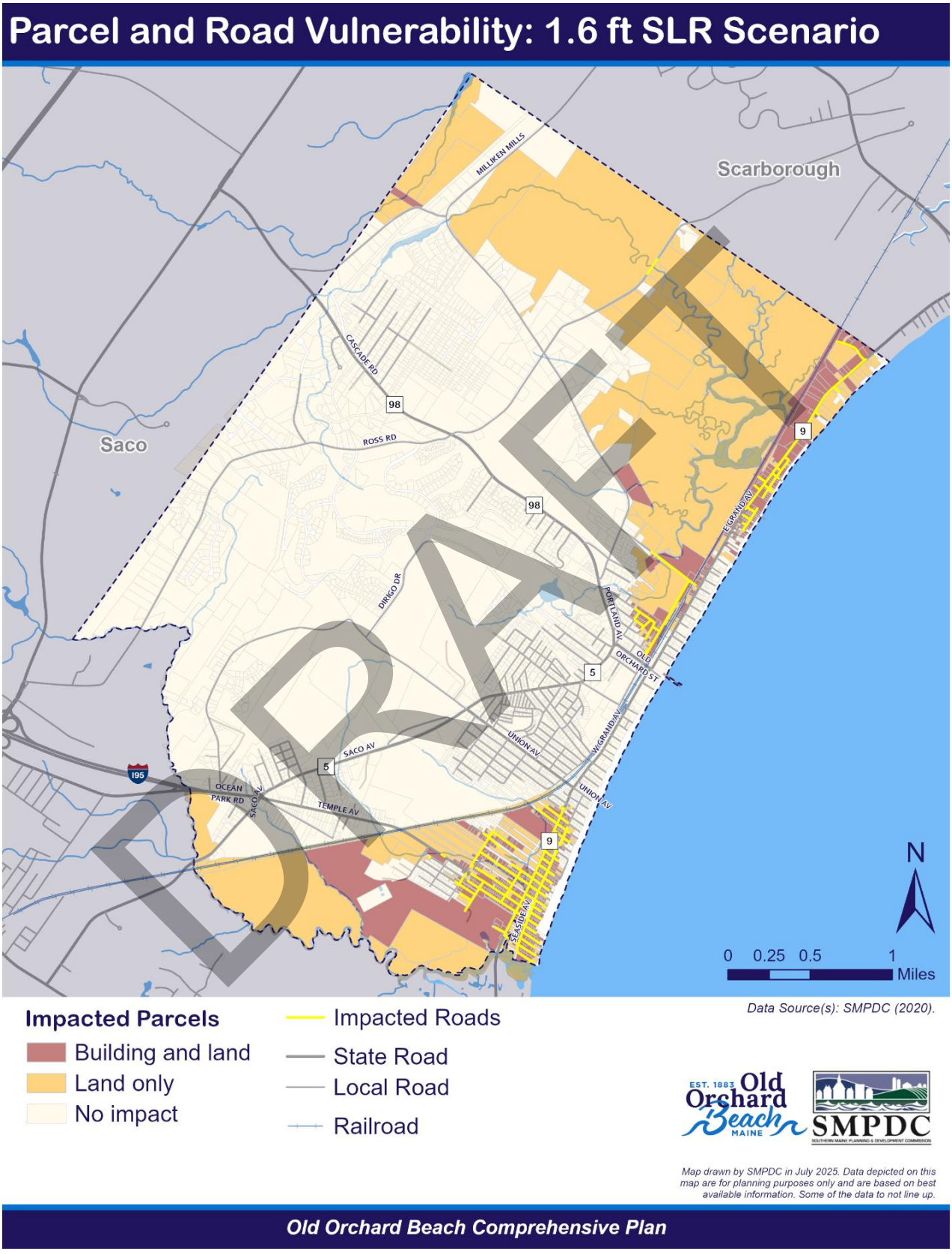
Like other coastal communities in Maine, Old Orchard Beach's municipal budget is highly dependent on revenue from local property taxes and coastal development provides a substantial portion of the municipal tax base, generating vital funds that sustain community operations, services, and programs. However, it is that same development that is most susceptible to coastal flooding, placing residents, visitors, and municipal tax revenue at greatest risk. Studies have shown that coastal hazards and climate change diminish the value of impacted properties[17]. A 2022 study by SMPDC found that while there are no parcels to which road access is cut off by lower values of sea level rise, 1,784 parcels totaling nearly $600 million in assessed value, representing almost 22% of town-wide assessed value, are exposed to flooding from 1.6 feet of sea level rise combined with storm surge (Map CC&SLR1). Those figures increase to 2,053 parcels totaling almost $750 million of assessed value with 3.0 feet of sea level rise combined with storm surge, representing slightly more than 27% of the town-wide assessed value (Map CC&SLR2). Municipal fiscal health could be affected as coastal properties, which generate a large portion of local tax revenue, are increasingly exposed to flooding and potentially decrease in value due to the increasing flood risk.

The 2022 SMPDC study found that Old Orchard Beach has roughly 8 miles of road vulnerable to 1.6 feet of sea level rise plus storm surge and almost 10 miles vulnerable to 3.0 feet plus storm surge. Road flooding poses risks to public health, safety, and wellbeing as it disrupts local travel, the provision of emergency services, and access to emergency evacuation routes in town. Additionally, flooding can cause costly damages to road infrastructure. Roads that are vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise are concentrated in the Ocean Park neighborhood and the inland side of East Grand Avenue as a result of

[17] Shi, L., Varuzzo, A. M. (2020). Surging seas, rising fiscal stress: Exploring municipal fiscal vulnerability to climate change. Cities 100 (2020) 102658.

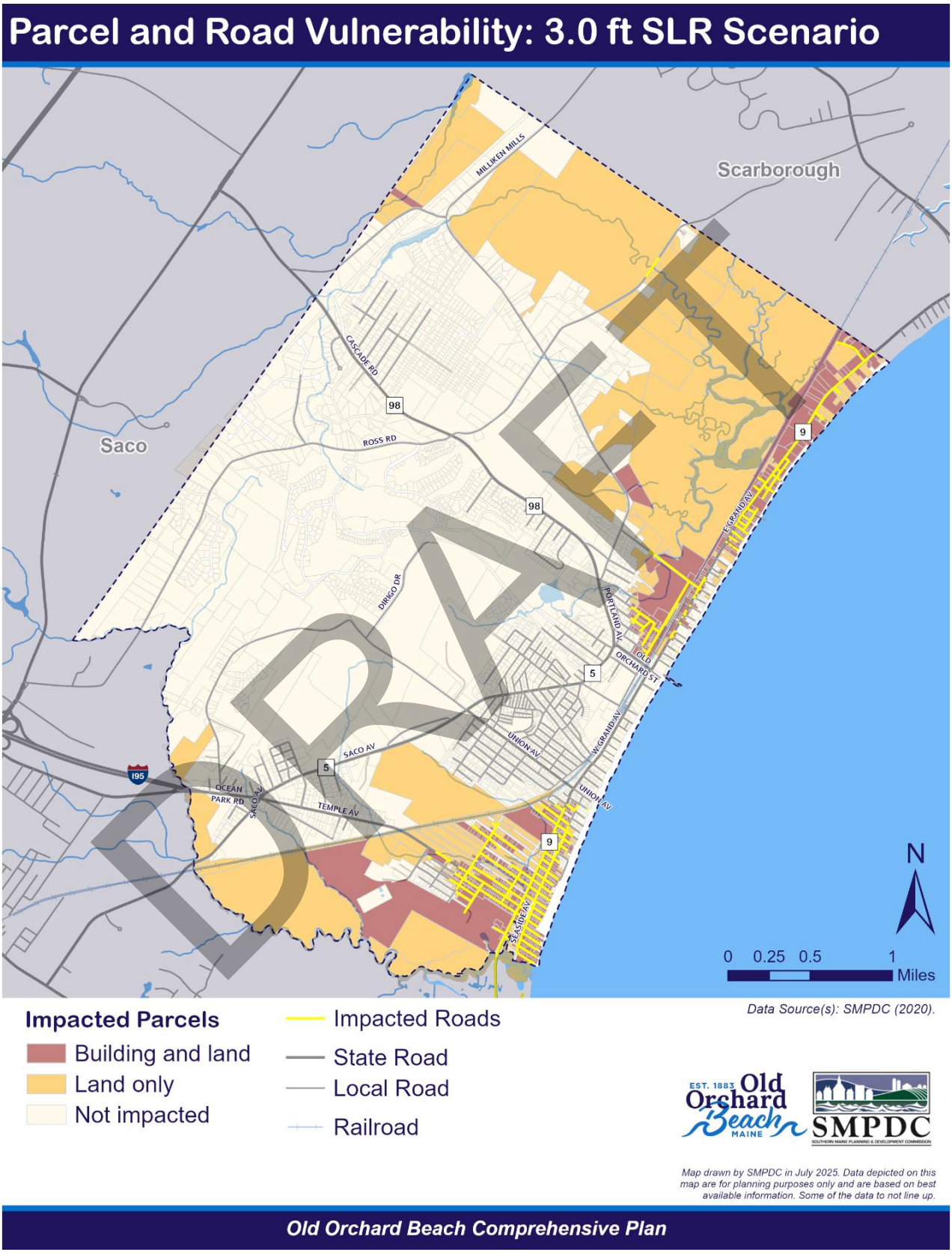
inundation from back side of the barrier beach around the Jones Creek area. Wastewater infrastructure located in areas vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise plus storm surge were also assessed and are shown below in Maps CC&SLR3 and CC&SLR4. Water and stormwater system impacts are shown below in Maps CC&SLR5 and CC&SLR6.

Map 1: Parcel and Road Impacts of 1.6ft Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Scenario

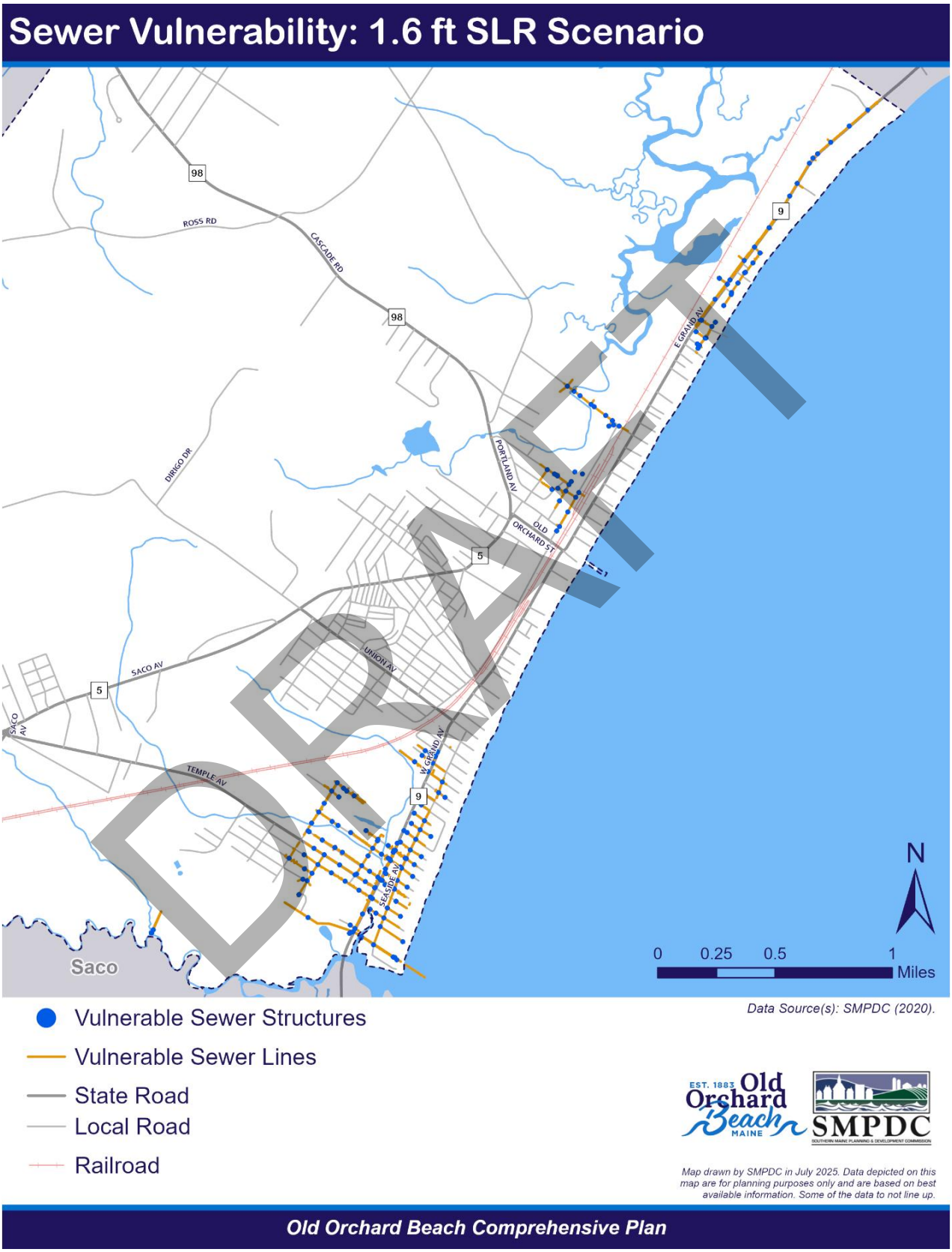


Old Orchard Beach Comprehensive Plan

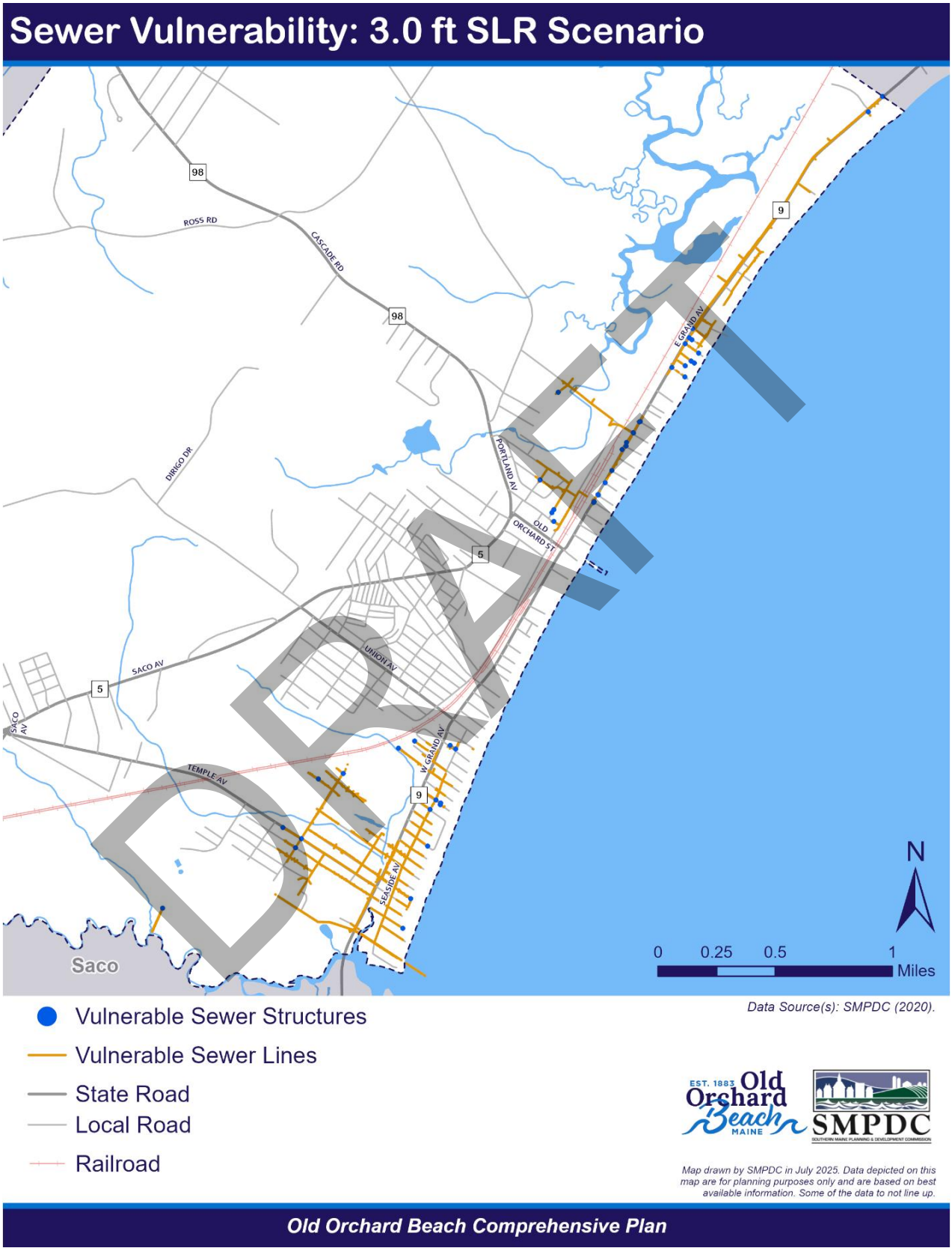
Map 2: Parcel and Road Impacts of 3.0ft Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Scenario



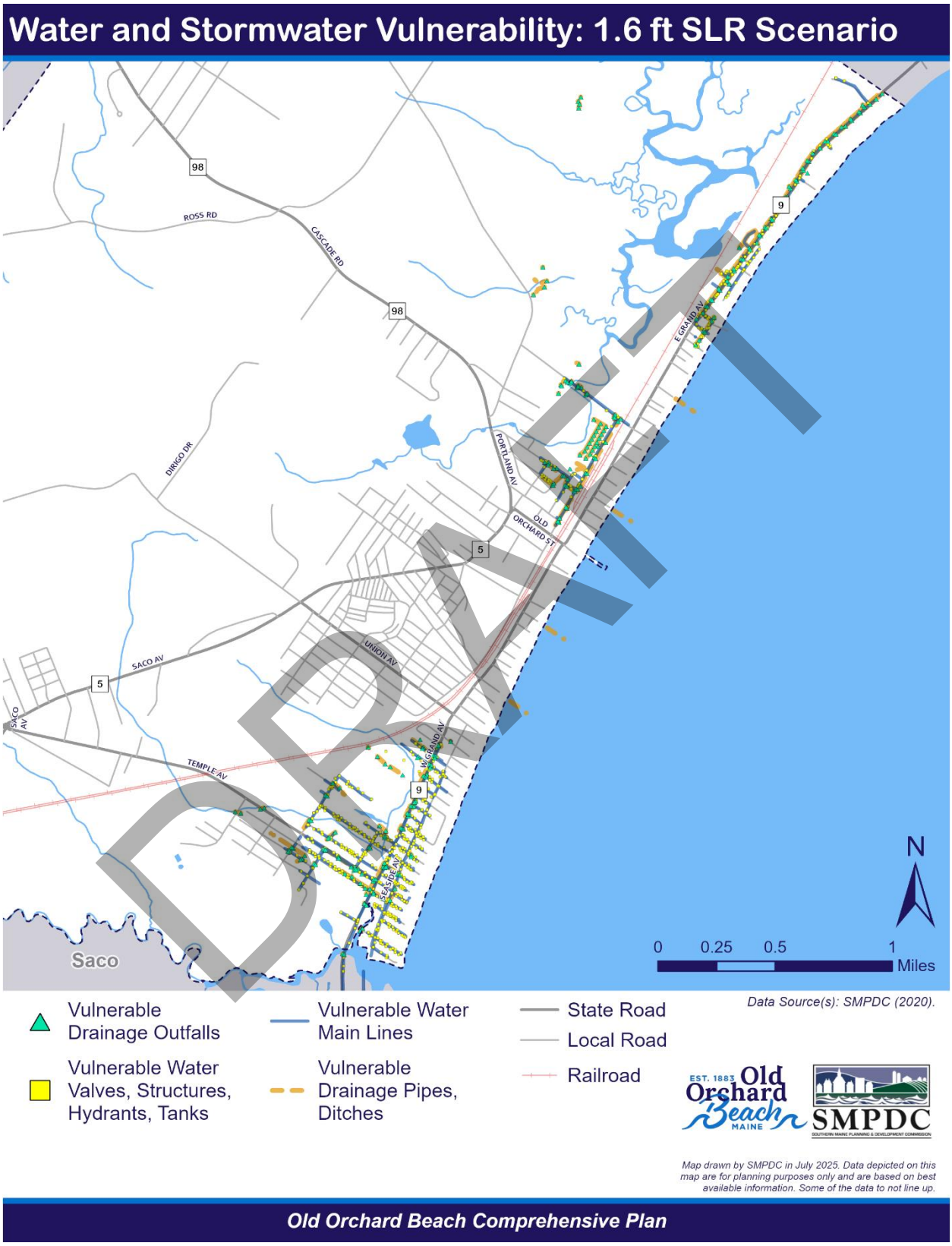
Map 3: Sewer Impacts of 1.6ft Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Scenario



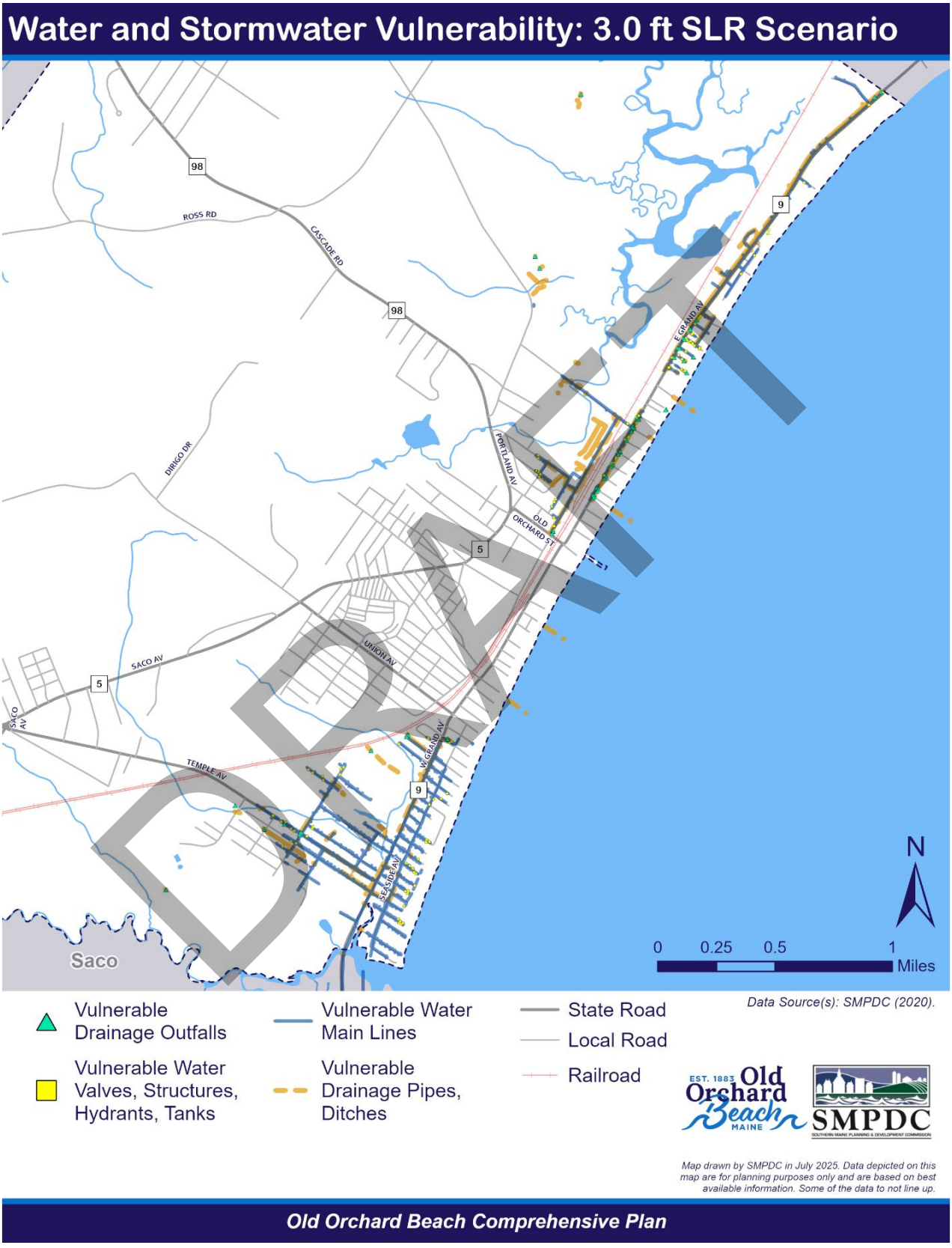
Map 4: Sewer Impacts of 3.0ft Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Scenario



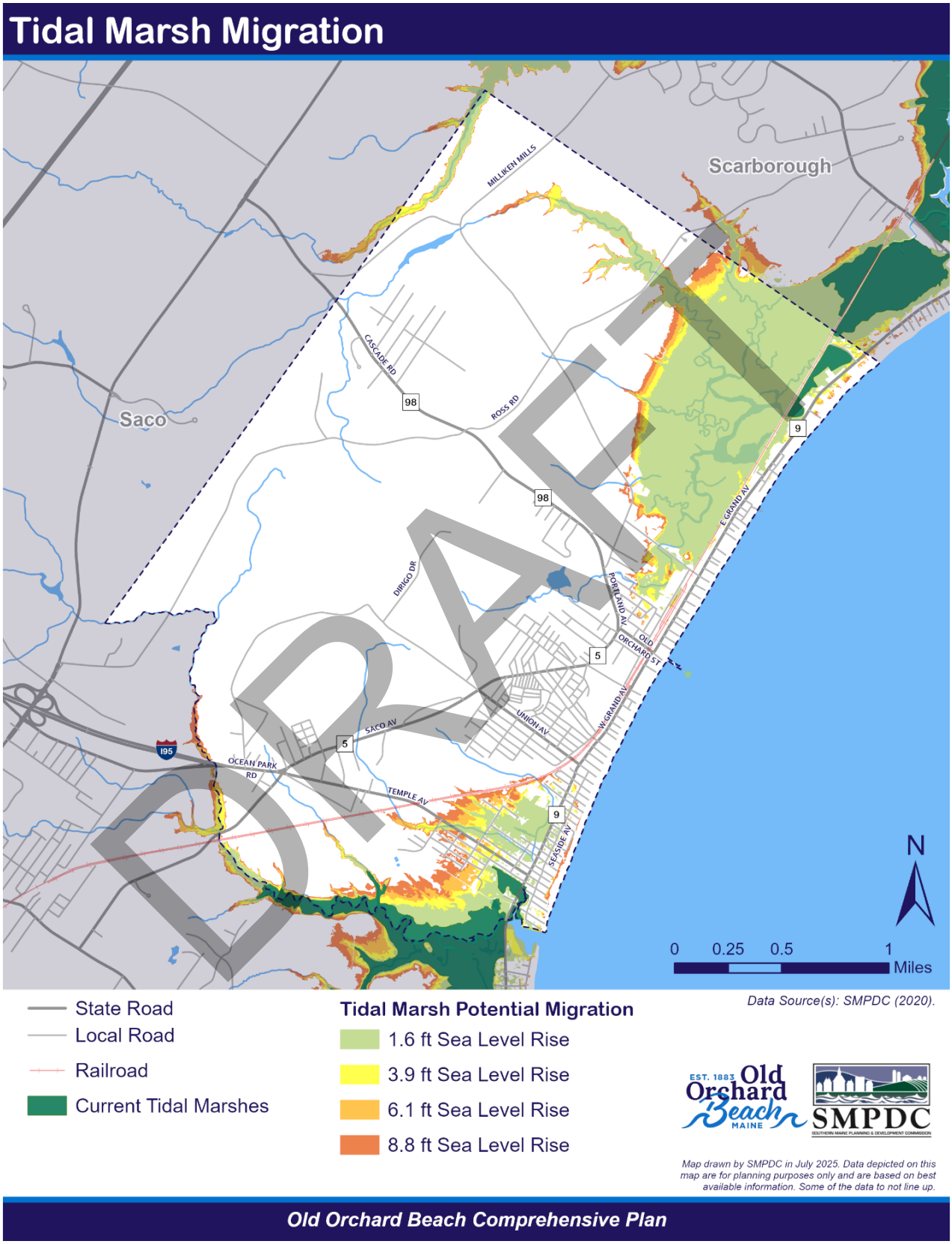
Map 5: Water & Stowmwater Impacts of 1.6ft Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Scenario



Map 6: Water & Stormwater Impacts of 3.0ft Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Scenario



Map 7: Tidal Marsh Migration at Various Sea Level Rise Scenarios



Dune and Beach Erosion

As noted above, increases in sea level are projected to cause more extreme erosion to Maine's beaches and dunes from more intense and direct wave action. Additionally, elevated base water levels will mean less sandy beach is exposed during the normal tidal cycle. While data from the Maine Beach Mapping Program demonstrates that from 2017 through 2024, the majority of the town's beaches and dunes have experienced accretion year-over-year, recent storm events, including the January 2024 storms, demonstrate that significant and damaging erosion can occur abruptly. Like many southern Maine coastal communities, Old Orchard Beach's dune and beach areas are a major economic driver and loss of or damage to the beach system would have significant economic impacts for the town.

Marsh Migration

Saltmarshes are critical habitats that provide a multitude of benefits, including storage of flood waters, water filtration, absorption of wave energy, and sequestration of climate-warming carbon emissions. However, they are particularly vulnerable to rising seas. In order for saltmarshes to survive with rising seas, they must grow vertically at a rate equal to the rate of sea level rise and horizontally above the low tide line. The marsh surface grows in height by accumulating vegetation root material in marsh soil and trapping sediment that is carried into the marsh during high tide. Marshes can migrate landward to keep pace with sea level if there are not physical barriers (e.g., steep slopes, rock walls, roads, etc.) hindering that migration. Statewide, tidal marshes are not increasing in elevation fast enough to keep up with the pace of sea level rise and need room to migrate upland or else they will be 'drowned' by permanent inundation. Coastal development restricts the ability of this migration to occur, especially in southern Maine[18].

The Maine Natural Areas Program has identified areas that could support migration of tidal marsh based on site conditions and characteristics. Those marsh migration areas are non-tidal lands within existing tidal estuaries that could be inundated and facilitate the development of new areas of tidal marsh if sea level rises different scenarios of sea level rise (e.g., 1.5 feet, 3 feet, etc.) above the current highest astronomical tide (HAT). Land around Goosefare Brook and the Ocean Park neighborhood, as well as areas around Jones Creek, are identified as marsh migration areas. Managing those areas to facilitate the natural landward migration of marsh habitat with sea level rise will be important for the continuation of Old Orchard Beach's saltmarshes.

[18] MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp

Social Vulnerability

The impacts of climate change will not be felt evenly across the community and will not be uniformly distributed among population groups. The ability to adapt and respond to climate change varies widely based on individual and household resources and characteristics, as well as existing social inequities. Individuals who already have increased social vulnerability are at greatest risk of climate change and will be disproportionately affected by climate hazards, as they generally have lower capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazard events and disruptions. Socially vulnerable groups include children; older adults; people with existing health conditions; disabled individuals; households with lower or moderate incomes; those with less formal education; people of color; and those who have limited connectivity, either physically and/or digitally, to others and resources.

Demographic information can help illustrate a local populations' adaptive capacity, or the ability to adapt and respond to a disaster. Age can be correlated with decreased adaptive capacity, in the case of the very young, or older populations. Generally, families with children require more time and space to evacuate, and people who are 17 or younger are more dependent on family or other networks than other age brackets. Some people who are 65 and older may also be dependent on family, friends, or organizations, and may face challenges anticipating the event or finding information on how and when to evacuate or adapt. The unique physical and psychosocial challenges of the population ages 65 and over may impact their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from storms events[19]. The relatively high, and increasing, median age of Old Orchard Beach residents suggests the community has higher social vulnerability to climate change. Old Orchard Beach's poverty rate, which is higher than neighboring communities, the county, and state, also suggests that the community has elevated social vulnerability, especially compared with surrounding communities. Social vulnerability is an important consideration when evaluating climate change vulnerabilities and potential adaptation and mitigation actions.

[19] EPA. 2021. Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 430-R-21-003. www.epa.gov/cira/social-vulnerability-report

Planning Implications

Climate change has far-reaching implications and will affect almost every facet of Old Orchard Beach. Like other coastal communities in Maine, the impacts of climate change threaten infrastructure; public health and safety; natural resources; and the economy. Property loss and devaluation, beach erosion, marsh degradation, declining water quality, infrastructure damage, and loss of tourism activity are just some of the anticipated impacts facing the community. While the challenges posed by climate change may seem overwhelming, there are ample opportunities for Old Orchard Beach to take incremental actions to mitigate the drivers of climate change (*i.e.*, reduce greenhouse gas emissions) and adapt to the impacts of climate change in order to increase the community's climate resilience. Many of the threats posed by a changing climate can be addressed through planning, policy, and regulatory actions.

Building climate resilience is essential for municipalities' long-term economic, fiscal, social, and environmental well-being, and local action is critical for addressing impacts of climate change. Local land use planning and regulations are indispensable tools for enhancing resilience. Where and how the community accommodates growth, development, and redevelopment profoundly affects the community's vulnerability as well as the quality and health of the natural environment. For example, development that is directed away from high-risk areas, uses land efficiently, minimizes detrimental impacts to the environment, and protects natural lands will allow the community to grow while still protecting people, property, and natural resources.

Locally and at the state level, most land use laws and tools in place today were designed for conditions of the past and do not adequately account for climate change. Floodplain management regulations, for example, were explicitly intended to reduce flood risk to structures but do not account for future sea level rise or increasing precipitation trends. Maine's home rule status offers opportunities for municipalities like Old Orchard Beach to adopt creative, innovative, and flexible land use solutions that address the impacts of climate change and are tailored to local needs and conditions. As emphasized in the State's Climate Action Plan, *Maine Won't Wait,* 'home rule' governance structure in a climate context means that municipal governments have the authority and responsibility for planning and implementing most activities for community resilience for a changing climate. Many of the land use tools that communities can utilize to address climate hazards are delegated to municipalities through State statute. These tools include comprehensive planning, zoning, development standards, and land use planning. Further, State law establishes a set of State goals for municipal planning and regulatory action that includes planning for the effects of sea level rise on municipal or privately held infrastructure, property, or resources (30-A M.R.S.A. §4312 (3)(N)). Reconsidering municipal planning in the context of climate change affords an opportunity to update local decision-making, policies, and regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and better

account for increased risk and changing environmental conditions to protect property, people, public expenditures, and natural resources.

Coastal portions of the Town contain residential, commercial, and mixed-use development. Zoning districts include Beachfront Resort District, Residential 3 District, Residential Beachfront District, and Amusement Overlay District, with minimum lot sizes of 10,000 ft^2, 9,000 ft^2, 10,000 ft^2, and 1 acre, respectively. The area also includes Downtown Development Districts 1 and 2, each with a minimum lot size of 10,000 ft^2 for residential uses and 4,000 ft^2 for nonresidential and mixed uses. These relatively small minimum lot sizes allow for dense development along the coast. Such dense development patterns can increase the community's vulnerability to flooding as a greater number of properties, structures, and people are located in areas at-risk of flooding.

Although towns and cities can take precautions and plan for the impacts of climate change on their services and residents, the only way to reduce the intensity of these changes is to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Municipalities can do their part by evaluating how they are contributing to emissions through facilities operations and the provision of services. Overall community planning changes, such as creating infrastructure for electric vehicles, public transit and active transportation (biking and walking) can reduce overall emissions generated by the community. Towns can also make improvements to their zoning and permitting practices to promote or allow for more sustainable development and redevelopment. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories are a good first step for a community to evaluate what is generating the most emissions in the community and municipal operations and help prioritize actions to work towards reduction.

Economy

Purpose

A Comprehensive Plan helps develop a community's policies and priorities related to future economic development while aiming to preserve its local character, the natural and built environment, and its workforce composition. The economic development element within a comprehensive plan provides an in-depth snapshot of the local and regional economy; identifies strategies, programs and projects to improve the economy; and establishes policy direction for economic growth suitable to the local context. The various elements of a comprehensive plan support and complement the economic development plans developed for the wider region and state. Maine's businesses, communities, and regions rely on supporting land uses, transportation, and infrastructure to sustain existing companies and industries and to further economic development programs and initiatives at all levels. Together, the comprehensive plan and its economic development component should serve as a "strategy for tomorrow" and reflect a given jurisdiction's desired physical, economic, and social growth.

Understanding the local and regional economy will help assess the community's current and future needs. The number of local jobs, the sectors in which those jobs are located, characteristics of the labor market, as well as access to employment within the wider region will impact the community and has implications for Old Orchard Beach's (OOB's) future growth. Specifically, this section aims to:

- Describe employment trends;
- Describe the local and regional economy; and
- Discuss likely future economic activity in OOB

Data Highlights

- Accommodations and Food Services dominates the local economy, accounting for nearly 60% of total employment across 110 establishments in the community. This industry sector also accounted for nearly 47% of total wages in the community as well.
- OOB's labor force grew 17.3% between 2010 to 2023, from 4,610 to 5,408 total workers.
- The OOB School District stands out as the community's single largest employer.
- OOB represents a smaller scale of economic activity (346 total establishments) when compared to surrounding communities such as Saco, Biddeford and Scarborough. OOB also employes an average of 4.5 people per establishment, which is notably lower than in surrounding communities where businesses

typically employ between 8.4 and 11.2 workers. This is illustrative of the prevalence of small businesses and microenterprises in OOB's economy.

- OOB's unemployment patterns over the past fifteen years reflect both the community's economic resilience and its seasonal tourism-based economy. From 2008 to 2023, the town experienced significant fluctuations in unemployment rates that generally followed broader county and state trends.
- Nearly 2,500 transient accommodation rooms (i.e., motels, hotels, inns, short term rentals, etc.) are sited within 106 structures in the community. Seasonal short-term rentals represent the largest type at 1,063 rooms, or 43% of the total.
- OOB has a traditional downtown area located adjacent to the Old Orchard Beach Pier and along Old Orchard Street and East & West Grand Avenues. This area includes most of the community's commercial and economic activity and is typically busy during the summer months, but tends to be much quieter during the off-season months.

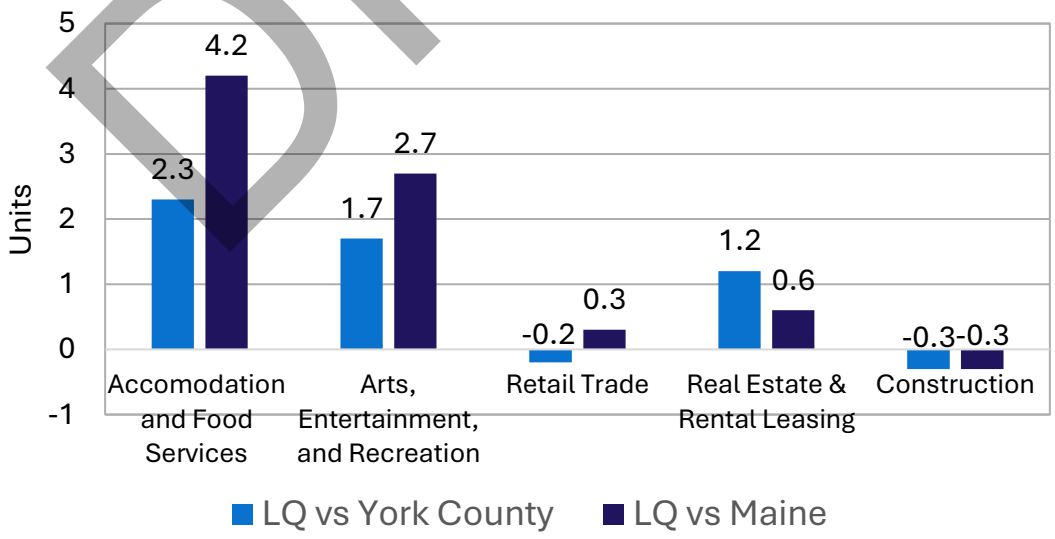
Old Orchard Beach's Economic Context

Each year, the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) releases the Maine Beaches report, providing a wealth of data underscoring the vast economic impact of the beaches for the coastal region that stretches from Kittery to OOB. In the most recent year for which data is available (2023), MOT's metrics make clear the role that access to the water's edge plays in the region and state's economic prosperity; that year, 3.8 million unique visitors generated $3.9 billion of statewide economic activity, with $2.6 billion of that as direct spending by consumers. Of the 3.8 million visitors, 42% originate in New England outside of Maine, another 25% via the rest of the northeast, and 5% via Canada. Within York County alone, coastal tourism supports 27,000 jobs and generates $1.6 million in economic activity.

While these numbers are aggregated to include larger geographies beyond OOB they are illustrative of the economic impact of the community's beaches, which extend more than 3.2 miles from end to end, with each square meter of sand in the town supporting a share of hospitality and retail businesses, many of which are microenterprises (five employees or fewer), that make up the bulk of the town's economy.

In the field of economic analysis, the term *location quotient* (LQ) is used to describe the degree to which a particular community, region, or state specializes in a given sector, with values above 1.0 indicating a concentration of that industry, and less than 1 meaning that a given occupation is less concentrated. Figure 1 is a chart that uses US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data to provide location quotient data comparing OOB with York County and with the State of Maine.

Figure 1: OOB Location Quotients for Key Sectors



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024

The data depicted in Figure 1 shows that the Accommodation and Food Services sector has an LQ of +4.2 as compared to Maine – nearly four times greater than the >1.0 threshold that indicates specialization, with Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation at +2.7. The level of specialization for these two sectors is less extreme when compared to York County (+2.3 and +1.7, respectively), but is still evident.

Hospitality Sector Focus: Transient Accommodations Data

The role of seasonal tourism within the town's economy is made clear by the number and breakdown of transient accommodations units. Nearly 2,500 rooms are sited within 106 structures located throughout the community. Of the total, seasonal short-term rentals represent the largest subtype, at 1,063 rooms (43% of the total), followed by year-round hotel rooms at 1,019 rooms (43% of total). For the sake of comparison, the town includes a total of 7,105 housing units; some of these units may include multiple rooms for rent in various capacities. Figure 2 is a table that uses Town transient accommodations data to show the mix of typologies that comprise the hospitality sector within OOB.

Figure 2: Transient Accommodations

Accommodation Type	Rooms	% of Total
Hotel/Inn Year-Round	1,019	41%
Hotel/Inn Seasonal	325	13%
Short Term Rental Year-Round	83	3%
Short Term Rental Seasonal	1,063	43%
All Accommodations	2,490	100%

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach (2024)

Old Orchard Beach Labor Force Trends (2010-2023)

OOB has experienced notable shifts in its labor market over the past decade, with significant changes in workforce participation, employment levels, and the town's position relative to regional labor markets.

Labor Force Growth and Employment

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics defines *labor force* as all individuals within a jurisdiction that are employed or unemployed; in other words, individuals who could potentially be working, or are working currently. Per Census data, between 2010 and 2023, OOB's labor force grew from 4,610 to 5,408 workers, representing a 17.3% increase. This growth occurred in two distinct phases, with a robust 13.1%

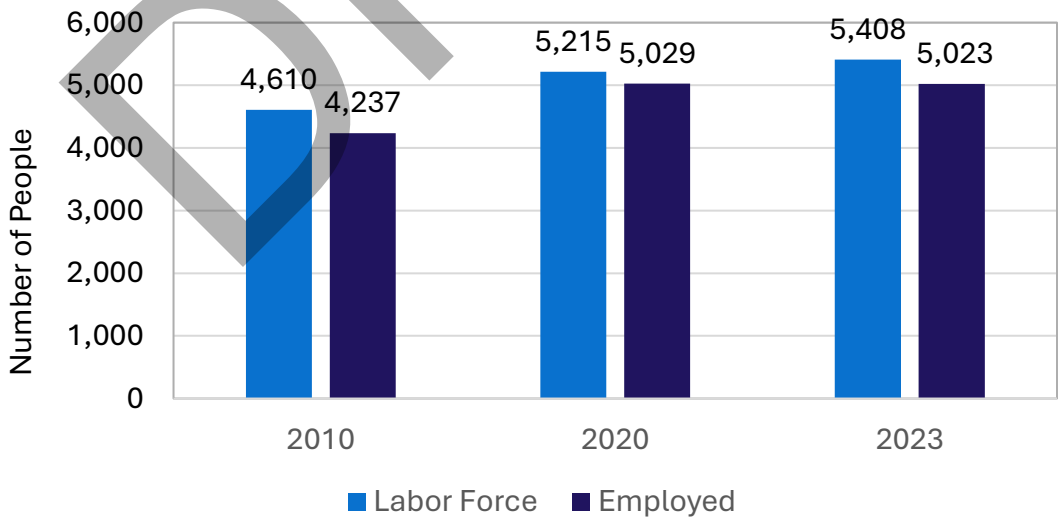
expansion from 2010 to 2020, and a more modest 3.57% growth from 2020 to 2023. The employed population increased significantly by 18.7% between 2010 and 2020, reaching 5,029 workers. However, employment levels have remained essentially unchanged since 2020, with a slight decline of 0.12% by 2023. A labor force that has increased in size while employment has remained flat could be the result of a potential mismatch between worker skillsets and available employment opportunities, or a prevalence of part-time or seasonal employment; given the orientation of OOB's economy toward tourism, the latter scenario may be the most likely.

Regional Context and Market Position

OOB's relative position within the regional labor market, the Portland-South Portland Labor Market Area, has evolved over time: the community represented 5.5% of the market's labor force in 2010, but only 2.6% by 2023. The town's share of the employed workforce similarly declined from 5.2% to 2.45%. As the Portland-South Portland Labor Market includes all of Cumberland County as well as York County as far south as Kennebunk, this change is likely the result of high growth rates within Greater Portland communities such as Scarborough and Westbrook relative to the rest of the southern portion of the state.

Relative to York County, OOB's portion of the labor force increased slightly from 4.23% to 4.73%, with the town's share of employed county workers also growing from 2.3% to 2.45%. Notably, unemployment rates have become less favorable relative to county figures, increasing from 2.68% above county average to 6.56% above county average.

Figure 3: OOB Year-Round Labor Force, 2010-2023



Source: US Census Bureau

Census data reveals a growing workforce with improving employment metrics when viewed over the full 13-year period. The most recent time series (2020-2023), shown in the chart above, suggests challenges in post-pandemic recovery, with elevated unemployment rates compared to the county and labor market. Despite these challenges, OOB continues to maintain a growing share of York County's labor force, indicating the town's sustained economic importance within the region

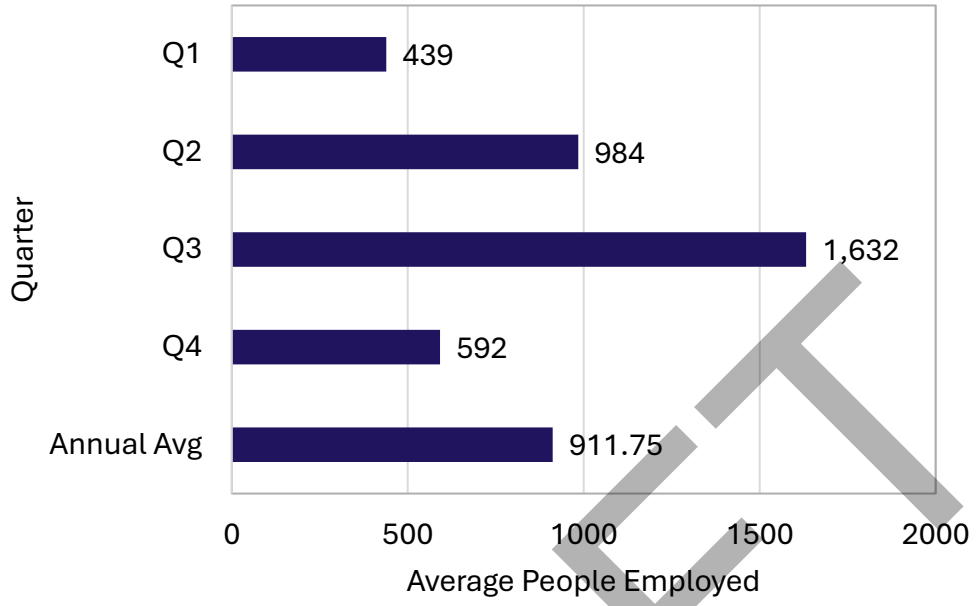
Employment by Industry Sector

An analysis of industry sectors within the town using the US Census Bureau's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) dataset shows that the economic landscape of OOB is characterized by a diverse yet tourism-centric employment base, with $65 million in wages generated by 346 business establishments employing 1,543 workers across various sectors in 2023.

Key NAICS Industry Sectors

- **Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation** employs 91 workers (5.9% of total) across 8 establishments, further emphasizing the town's tourism-based economy. This sector's average weekly wage of $787 is slightly below the town-wide average.
- **Retail Trade** represents the second-largest employment sector with 185 workers (12% of total employment) across 39 establishments, generating $6.5 million in wages with an average weekly wage of $679, second lowest of all sectors.
- **Accommodation and Food Services** dominates the local economy, accounting for nearly 60% of total employment (913 workers) across 110 establishments. This sector generates $30.5 million in total wages, though it offers the lowest average weekly wage ($643) among all industries in the town, reflecting the seasonal, service-oriented nature of tourism employment. Figure 4 is illustrative of the seasonal variance in employment typical of this sector.

Figure 4: Accommodation and Food Services Sector – Employment by Quarter (2023)



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

Higher-Wage Sectors

Despite their smaller employment footprints, several sectors offer significantly higher wages:

- **Management of Companies and Enterprises** offers the highest weekly wage at $4,178 but employs just 9 workers.
- **Wholesale Trade** provides the second highest average weekly wage at $2,759, though it employs only 14 workers across 16 establishments.
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** provides well-compensated employment ($2,546 weekly) for 48 workers across 54 establishments.
- **Information** sector jobs pay an average of $1,053 weekly but represent only 11 positions split among five establishments.

In summary, exploration of the NAICS data reveals a town economy heavily reliant on tourism-related industries, which typically offer lower wages but provide substantial employment opportunities given the community's positioning as one of the premier drive-to tourism coastal destinations in New England.

Figure 5: Industries, Employment and Wages (2023)

Industry Sector per NAICS	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Total, All Industries	346	1,543	$64,961,632	$810
Construction	24	41	$1,929,520	$914
Wholesale Trade	16	14	$2,020,355	$2,759
Retail Trade	39	185	$6,538,843	$679
Information	5	11	$593,344	$1,053
Finance and Insurance	10	20	$1,798,223	$1,773
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	17	49	$2,496,164	$980
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	54	48	$6,558,828	$2,646
Management of Companies and Enterprises	10	9	$1,955,066	$4,178
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	9	23	$1,096,618	$910
Health Care and Social Assistance	17	86	$3,287,819	$738
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	91	$3,733,460	$787
Accommodation and Food Services	110	913	$30,515,086	$643
Other Services, Except Public Administration	22	32	$1,230,532	$741

Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2023

Figure 6 illustrates that while OOB's overall consumer sales increased by 7.9% from 2010 to 2020 - the most recent year for which decennial Census population data is available – a substantially larger increase of 82.4% took place between 2020 and 2023. Given the suppressive effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Accommodation and Food Services sector in 2020, this result is to be expected, and the 2020 figure represents a more than $30 million decrease from the 2019 figure of $120,990,992 (not shown below). The all-time 2023 high of $162,463,360 indicates that not only has the town recovered from the effects of the pandemic, but consumer economic activity in the subsequent years has far exceeded that of the preceding years.

Figure 6: Consumer Sales in OOB (2010, 2020 & 2023)

Year	Total Consumer Sales	Population	Sales Per Capita	Square Miles	Sales / Square Mile
2010	$82,532,928	8,624	$9,570.14	7.43	$11,108,065.68
2020	$89,038,928	8,960	$9,937.38	7.43	$11,983,704.98
2023	$162,463,360	9,040	$17,971.61	7.43	$21,865,862.72

Source: Maine Revenue Service

Employment Profile: Key Employers and Workforce Distribution

OOB's employer landscape is characterized by a diverse mix of public and private sector businesses that form the backbone of the local economy, belying the perception of the town's economy as fully beholden to seasonal tourism. The OOB School District (RSU-23) stands out as the community's single largest employer.

The remaining major employers maintain workforces in the 50-99 employee range, representing a mix of sectors that contribute to the community's economic resilience. These include educational institutions (Jameson School, Loranger School, and OOB Adult Ed), public safety services (OOB Fire Department), hospitality businesses (Galley Ballroom-Fireside Room and Joseph's by the Sea), and real estate development/property management (King Realty Brokerage Development). The construction industry is represented by HVAC firm Blow Brothers Inc., rounding out the list of top employers. The remaining share of employers within the community consists of more than 300 smaller employers, including dozens of microenterprises with less than five employees.

Figure 7: Top Employers, 2023

Business	Employees
Old Orchard Beach Superintendent of School	100-249
Blow Brothers Inc	50-99
Galley Ballroom-Fireside Room	50-99
Jameson School	50-99
Joseph's by the Sea	50-99
King Realty Brokerage Development	50-99
Loranger School	50-99
Old Orchard Beach Adult Ed	50-99
Old Orchard Beach Fire Department	50-99

Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2023

Places of Employment and Commute to Work

Figure X. shows the places of employment for OOB commuters. The most common place for OOB residents to work is in OOB (30.2%), totaling 413 residents, followed by Saco at 12.6%. This data does not collect data regarding remote work or hybrid work situations.

Figure 8: OOB Commuting Locations (2022)

Geography	Count	Share
Old Orchard Beach	413	30.2%
Saco	172	12.6%
Biddeford	127	9.3%
Portland	76	5.6%
South Portland	40	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Home Occupations

Home occupations can be done by right and are not required to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Board or Code Enforcement Office. Although the Town does have some standards that home occupations must adhere to, generally speaking, they are accessory to a residential use and clearly incidental and secondary to the residential use of a dwelling unit.

Old Orchard Beach's Economic Position in Coastal Southern Maine

A comparative analysis of OOB's employment landscape relative to surrounding communities reveals important insights about its economic scale and characteristics. OOB represents a smaller share of economic activity compared to its neighboring municipalities yet maintains distinctive economic traits worth noting.

Figure 9: Employers Compared to Surrounding Towns, 2023

Geography	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Old Orchard Beach	346	1,543	$64,961,632	$810
Biddeford	899	10,551	$611,594,781	$1,115
Saco	842	7,912	$446,224,100	$709
Scarborough	1,353	15,115	$1,029,902,000	$1,310

Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2023

The town's employment base generates approximately $65 million in total wages annually, with workers earning an average weekly wage of $810. This wage level positions the community competitively within the region, exceeding Saco's average of $709 while falling below the higher averages seen in Biddeford ($1,115) and Scarborough ($1,310).

The employment density in OOB, which averages 4.5 employees per establishment, is notably lower than in surrounding communities, where businesses typically employ between 8.4 and 11.2 workers. This is illustrative of the prevalence of small businesses and microenterprises in OOB's economy.

Scarborough emerges as the dominant economic center among abutting jurisdictions, with the Cumberland County community containing more than 1,350 establishments supporting more than 15,000 jobs and generating over $1 billion in aggregate wages. Meanwhile, Biddeford, an economic service center community in this part of York County, maintains higher average wages despite having fewer establishments than neighboring Saco; the presence of major employers such as MaineHealth and FMI/Spirit Aerosystems likely contributes to this.

This regional comparison highlights OOB's position as one characterized by smaller, homegrown businesses and moderate wages. While the community's economic output may not match the volume of its larger neighbors, its competitive wage levels suggest quality employment opportunities within its business base.

Unemployment Trends

OOB's unemployment patterns over the past fifteen years reflect both the community's economic resilience and its seasonal tourism-based economy. From 2008 to 2023, the town experienced significant fluctuations in unemployment rates that generally followed broader county and state trends, though with some notable distinctions.

During the early days of the Great Recession, unemployment in OOB rose sharply from 4.9% in 2008 to 7.9% in 2009, similar to increases experienced throughout York County and Maine. The town's unemployment rate continued climbing to its peak of 9.6% in 2010, exceeding both the county (8.3%) and state (8.4%) rates during this period, suggesting the town may have been more vulnerable to economic downturns as the ability of consumers to discretionarily spend on travel and hospitality was curtailed during this period.

The recovery period between 2011 and 2019 showed steady improvement, with unemployment falling from 8.6% to 3.2%, representing a dramatic 63% decrease over eight years as households loosened their belts on discretionary spending. By 2019, OOB had achieved unemployment rates comparable to York County (2.6%) and the state of Maine (2.9%), indicating successful economic recovery.

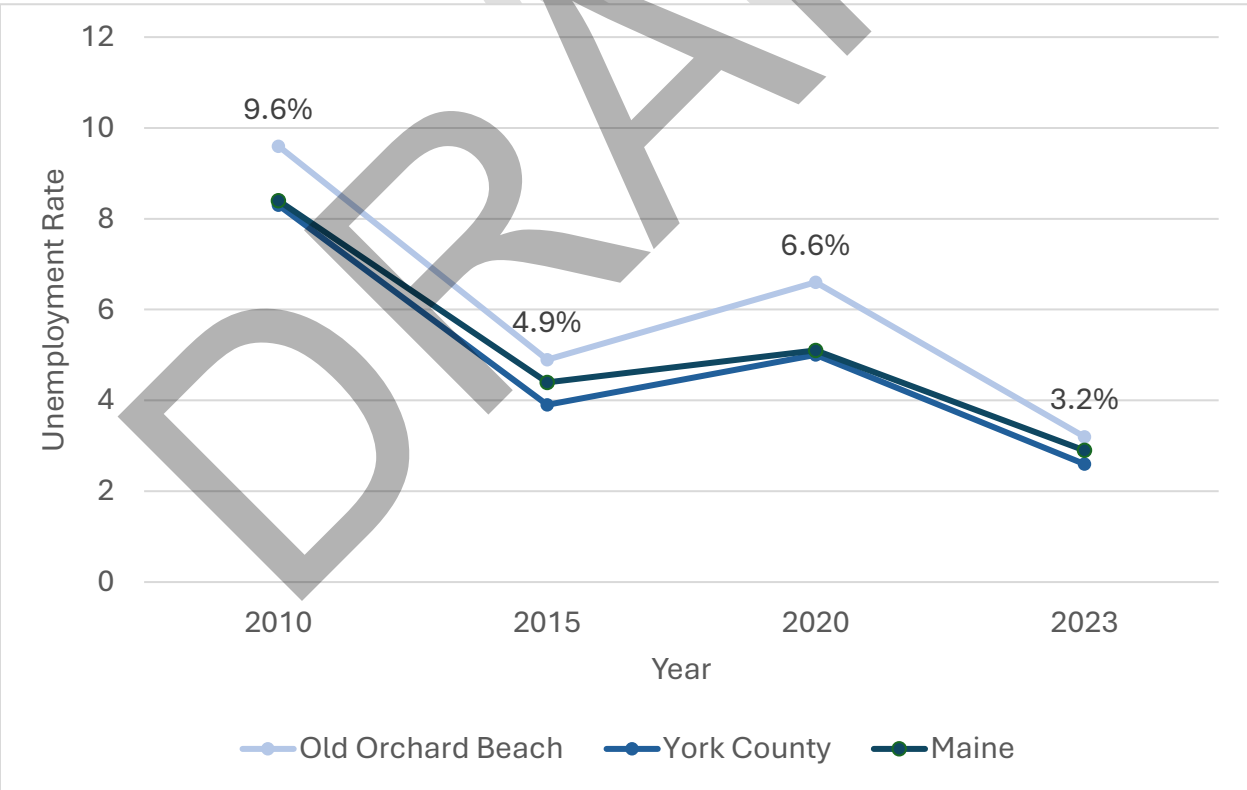
The COVID-19 pandemic created another significant economic disruption in 2020, with unemployment rising to 6.6% in OOB during the short, sharp recession that

took place as a result of lockdown, though notably this increase was proportionally smaller than the state's jump to 8.1%. This relative stability during the pandemic may reflect the resilience of the town's economic base, pandemic-era state and Federal business stabilization interventions such as the Maine Economic Recovery Grants (MERG) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), or a combination.

The post-pandemic recovery has been robust, with unemployment falling to just 3.2% by 2023, slightly higher than county figures (2.6%) but comparable to the state average (2.9%). This represents a return to pre-pandemic employment levels and suggests strong economic health overall.

Throughout the fifteen-year period, OOB's unemployment rate has typically been slightly higher than York County's, likely reflecting the seasonal nature of tourism-dependent employment. However, the town has frequently outperformed state-level unemployment figures, particularly in recent years.

Figure 10: Unemployment Rate (2010, 2015, 2020 & 2023)



Source: US Census Bureau

Land Use and Economic Development

Regional Economic Development Plans

OOB lies within the federal Economic Development District (EDD) administered by the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC). Every five years, SMPDC drafts a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) setting forth policies and action items intended to help grow the region's economy and ensure its economic competitiveness. The most recent CEDS, drafted in 2022, includes several actions relevant to OOB's local economy, including Action 4.1, Support Efforts by Municipalities to Revitalize Downtowns and Commercial Districts, Action 5.3, Improve the Region's Public Transit and Alternative Transit System, and Action 10.2, Support Local Regulatory Efforts to Address Resilience.

The State Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) has adopted a ten-year economic strategy that includes several relevant strategies, such as Action E3, Expand production of workforce housing in Maine, and Action F4, Control healthcare costs.

Tax Increment Financing

There is one Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in OOB. Located at 38 Portland Avenue, the Milliken Heights Affordable Housing Development and TIF District includes a 55-unit residential rental housing project for seniors. The District also requires 42 of the units to be occupied by households with an income not exceeding 60% of the area median income. The TIF District was established in April 2021 and will run through April 2038.

Industrial Development

OOB has one designated Industrial District, which is located within the southwestern portion of town. It is served by Vallee Lane and is largely underdeveloped. According to the Zoning Ordinance, "the principal use of the land is for manufacturing, processing, treatment, research, warehousing, storage and distribution, excluding those uses where there is danger of explosions; chemical radioactive, or biological contamination; or other hazards to public health or safety. Specific performance standards are necessary to ensure that industrial development remains compatible with the surrounding land uses and development patterns.

Infrastructure Capacity

The availability and adequacy of public utilities, including water, sewer, electricity and communications/internet are important factors in attracting and retaining economic activity in the town. Central Maine Power (CMP) provides electricity services in OOB. According to CMP's 3-Phase Circuit map, the town has access to 3-Phase Power along most of the major roadways, including Routes 98, 5 and 9. Public water services is available throughout the community and is provided by the Saco River Drinking Water

Resource Center. Public sewer services are also available throughout the community from the municipal Wastewater Department.

In general terms, the most desirable locations for economic development opportunities are adequately served by public utilities in the community and additional capacity remains at the Town's wastewater treatment facility.

Economic Planning Implications

The economic health of the town is largely reliant on providing access to the 3.2 miles of beaches; protection of this asset has implications for climate resilience and shoreline protection efforts in order to ensure that it can retain this capability in perpetuity. Domestic and international visitors to the beaches rely heavily on the Accommodation and Food Services sector, including a plethora of small businesses and microbusinesses that comprise this economic ecosystem as well as the hotel and short-term rentals that make up the nearly 2,500 transient accommodation rooms.

The Town's unemployment rate has generally exceeded that of the region and state during economic downtowns by several points, exposing the community's vulnerability to the decline in discretionary spending that these periods engender; however, other sectors, including public administration, manufacturing, and retail trade provide employment alternatives to sectors oriented toward seasonal tourism. The Industrial (ID) Zoning District mapped between Ross Road and Smithwheel Road could provide an opportunity for additional manufacturing-sector growth, especially as macroeconomic incentives by the US Federal government encourage the reshoring of industry back to the United States from points overseas.

Housing

Purpose

Housing is fundamental to quality of life. Residential uses are the most common land use in Old Orchard Beach (OOB) and play an important role in housing residents and visitors alike. Today, concerns about the housing supply, type, location, and cost effect much of Maine, including OOB. This chapter describes OOB's housing occupancy, unit types, tenure, unit sizes, householder characteristics, median costs, monthly expenses, value, and affordability. Analyzing OOB's housing stock and housing affordability characteristics reveals housing challenges and opportunities; decisionmakers can leverage this information to develop land use ordinances, funding policies, and housing regulations that address OOB's specific housing challenges and capitalize on its housing opportunities.

Data Highlights

- As a coastal resort destination, OOB's housing stock unsurprisingly contains a significant number of seasonal units: 27 percent, in fact.
- The most common housing type offered in OOB is a single-family, detached home; they comprise 46 percent of the housing stock.
- OOB's housing supply has not kept up with housing demand since 2010. 196 additional units are needed to support OOB's predicted population in 2035.
- OOB's household size averages 1.72 persons, more households are single-person households than not, and 41 percent of households include a person 65 years old or older. Simultaneously, studio or one-bedroom units house only half of single-person households. These statistics indicate a need for smaller, accessible units.
- 56 percent of renters and one-third of homeowners are housing cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing.
- OOB's housing affordability sits at an all-time low, with an Affordability Index value of 0.34. The median household income is 65,842 dollars; such households could afford a home of 176,068 dollars. However, today's households would need an income of 183,411 dollars to afford the median home price of 525,000 dollars.

Current (and Past) Conditions

Housing Stock

Today's Housing Stock

To house OOB's 8,960-person population, OOB has 7,105 housing units (Figure 1). A significant majority of all units are detached single-family homes (46 percent) and owner-occupied (68 percent). Only 67 percent (4,743) of the total units are occupied year-round. Most of OOB's 2,362 vacant units serve seasonal housing purposes, including second homes, short-term rentals, or seasonal workforce rentals; few units—only 161—are indefinitely vacant. While seasonality is a critical part of OOB's housing stock, the Town cannot easily track conversions from summer homes to year-round homes or vice-versa.

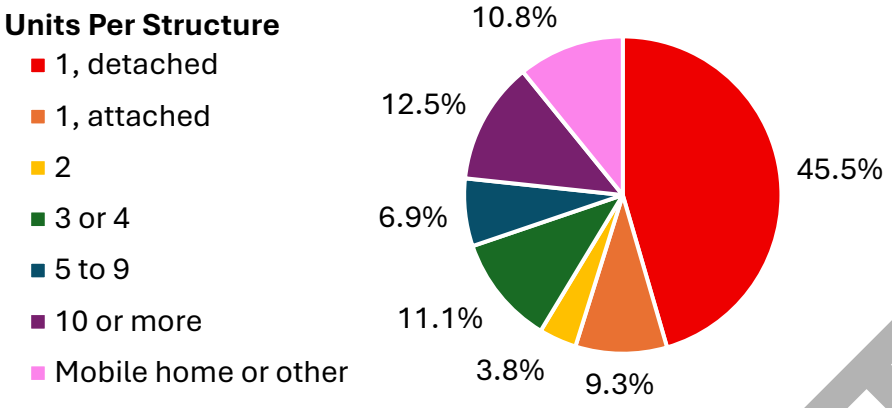
Figure 1: Old Orchard Beach Housing Occupancy, 2020

Unit Occupancy	Total	Percent
Total housing units	7,105	100.0%
Occupied housing units	4,743	66.8%
Vacant housing units	2,362	33.2%
For rent	168	2.4%
Rented, not occupied	36	0.5%
For sale only	60	0.8%
Sold, not occupied	19	0.3%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	1,918	27.0%
All other vacant units	161	2.3%

Source: 2020 US Decennial Census

According to the American Community Survey, almost half of all units, occupied or vacant, are detached, single-family homes (Figure 2). Apartment or condo complexes with ten or more units are the second-most common housing type, consisting of about 13 percent of all units.

Figure 2: Old Orchard Beach Housing Type Distribution, 2023



That pattern persists when looking at occupied housing only. Among occupied residences, detached single-family homes number 2,375, attached single-family homes number 487 units, and mobile homes constitute 566 units (Figure 3: N = owner plus renter). Multi-family structures of two or more units total 1,875, and 651 of those multi-family structures have ten or more units.

Figure 3: Old Orchard Beach Housing Types by Occupancy, 2023

	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied	
Units per Structure	**Number**	**Percent of total**	**Number**	**Percent of total**
1, detached	2,209	62%	166	10%
1, attached	325	9%	162	10%
2	35	1%	165	10%
3 or 4	144	4%	437	26%
5 to 9	127	4%	233	14%
10 or more	227	6%	424	25%
Mobile home or other	483	14%	83	5%
Total occupied housing units:	3,550	100%	1,670	100%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Looking at housing types by occupancy reveals differences in housing preferences or possibilities based on occupancy status. For renters specifically, the most common housing types are structures with three or four units (26 percent of renter-occupied units) and ten or more units (25 percent of renter-occupied units). The least common rented housing type in OOB is mobile homes at five percent. Contrastingly, many owner-occupied units—62 percent—are detached single-family units, and mobile homes make up 14 percent of owner-occupied units.

Spatial Distribution of Housing

OOB's housing supply is concentrated in a few areas (Map 1, page 84):

- Downtown
- Pine Park neighborhood
- Dunes Grass neighborhood and "tree" streets neighborhood
- Along the coast and Route 9

The vast majority of OOB's multi-family housing falls within the Downtown and along the coast and Route 9. Some multi-family units can be found within the Pine Park neighborhood. Fewer than ten multi-family structures exist outside those three areas, although condos and mobile homes occur in small numbers throughout the community. Interestingly, most of the community's remaining parcels that are smaller in size (more accessible to the average buyer) and vacant occur near single-family homes within the Rural District (Map 2, page 85).

Within town, there are two mobile home parks, Old Orchard Village/Atlantic Village and Pine Grove Village. Old Orchard Village/Atlantic Village offers 371 spaces, while Pine Grove Village offers 22 spaces. Records indicate all spaces are occupied, thus resulting in a vacancy rate of zero percent, and market conditions suggest that the high demand for mobile home spaces will likely persist.

Housing Conditions

Housing conditions in OOB are generally habitable. Among all occupied units, six lack complete plumbing facilities and six lack complete kitchen facilities, but all units access heating fuel. However, some households are overcrowded, as shown by averaging over one occupant per room. In OOB, 19 units average 1.01 to 1.50 persons per room, and 42 average 1.51 or more persons per room. The 42 units averaging over 1.51 or more persons per room implies that multiple families are sharing spaces meant for one family as a cost-savings measure. This indicates a lack of available, affordable housing.

Subsidized Housing

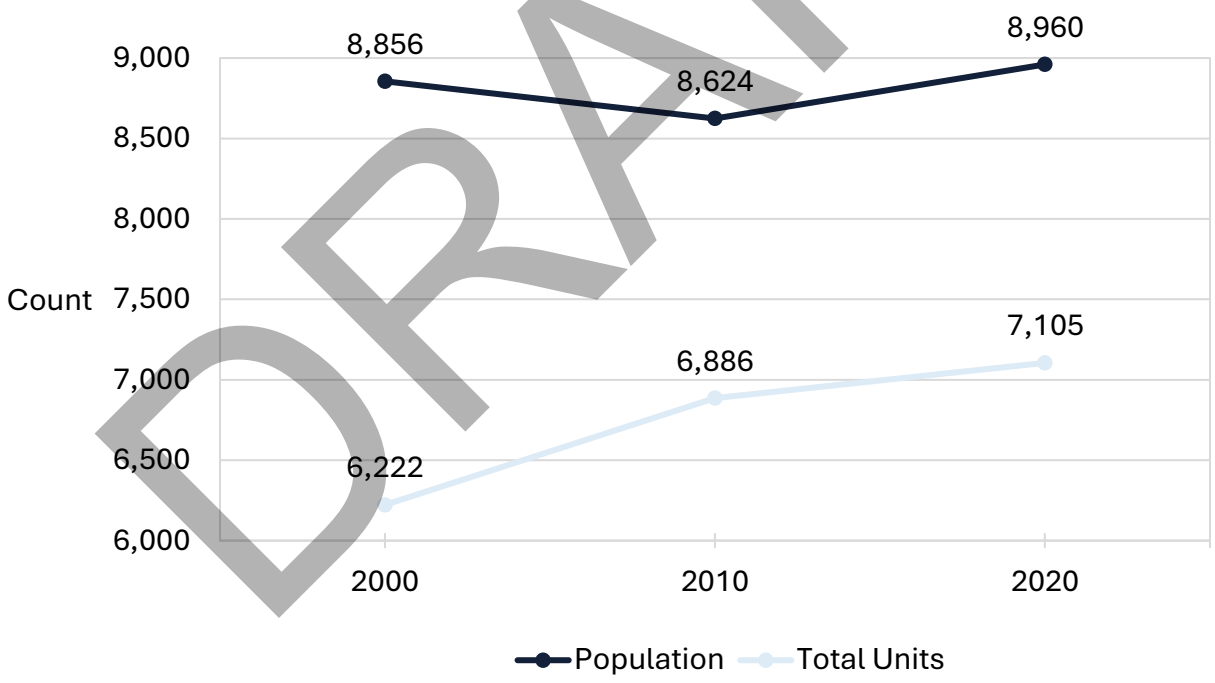
According to MaineHousing, OOB has eight subsidized housing developments with a total of 382 units. Five of the eight developments limit occupancy to persons aged 62 years and older or with disabilities and utilize income-based rent. Two developments restrict occupancy to persons aged 55 years and older and are rent-restricted units. Only one development, with 30 two- and three-bedroom units, is available for people of any age. This development utilizes income-based rent.

Housing Stock Changes Since 2000

The number of housing units in OOB grew by about 900 from 2000 to 2020 (Figure 4) (US Decennial Census, 2000, 2010, 2020). Despite the population decreasing by 232 people between 2000 and 2010, the number of units increased by 664. Shifting household characteristics like smaller household sizes and OOB's increasing popularity for seasonal residences likely account for the consistent increase in housing supply. In fact, average household size declined from 2.06 in 2000 to 1.97 in 2010, and the percentage of all units that were occupied decreased from 69 percent in 2000 to 65 percent in 2010.

However, the next decade shows contrasting trends. Between 2010 and 2020, the population increased by 326 yet the number of units only increased by 219. The surplus in the previous decade combined with the slow recovery of the housing market following the Great Recession of 2008 may explain the slowed housing growth over the latest decade. However, between 2006 and 2025, OOB approved 511 units through subdivision approvals (Map 3, page 86); 388 of those units have been built, some remain to be built, and some approvals will never turn into construction (Town of Old Orchard Beach).

Figure 4: Old Orchard Beach Housing Type Distribution, 2023



While the total number of units has varied since 2000, the characteristics of OOB's housing stock have not changed significantly. Estimates suggest a slight increase in the percentage of owner-occupied units between 2010 and 2023 (Figure 5), despite the simultaneous and significant rising costs of home ownership. York County and Maine showed this same slight increase, while nearby Saco, Biddeford, and Cumberland County experienced increases in the percentage of renter-occupied units instead.

Figure 5: Housing Tenure from 2010 to 2023

Geography	2010		2020		2023	
	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
Old Orchard Beach	65.2%	34.8%	67.9%	32.1%	68.0%	32.0%
Saco	71.5%	28.5%	67.7%	32.3%	69.9%	30.1%
Biddeford	52.9%	47.1%	47.8%	52.2%	48.8%	51.2%
Cumberland County	68.5%	31.5%	70.0%	30.0%	70.4%	29.6%
York County	75.2%	24.8%	74.4%	25.6%	76.1%	23.9%
Maine	73.1%	26.9%	72.9%	27.1%	74.0%	26.0%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2020, 2023

The distribution of housing types in OOB since 2010 has remained relatively similar. Single-family detached units decreased by 0.6, from 46.1 to 45.5 percent, but dominated the housing supply across the 13-years (Figure 6). Two-unit structures were the least common in both 2010 and 2023 at 3.6 and 3.8 percent respectively, and they increased by just 0.2 percent over the 13 years. The biggest changes between 2010 and 2023 were a decrease of 2.8 percent in five-to-nine-unit structures and an increase of 3.2 percent in mobile homes.

Interestingly, while the distribution of types in 2023 and 2010 are similar, the 2020 distribution shows some marked differences. Most notably are 2020's lower percentage of detached single-family homes (38.9 percent) and higher percentage of mobile homes (14.1 percent). Differences could be due to the sampling challenges caused by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, or its disruptive effects on the national housing market.

Figure 6: Share of Housing Types in Old Orchard Beach over Time

Units per Structure	2010	2020	2023
1, detached	46.1%	38.9%	45.5%
1, attached	9.0%	10.8%	9.3%
2	3.6%	4.8%	3.8%
3 or 4	11.3%	12.7%	11.1%
5 to 9	9.7%	6.1%	6.9%
10 or more	12.6%	12.6%	12.5%
Mobile home or other	7.6%	14.1%	10.8%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2020, 2023

Projected Housing Stock

Continued new housing developments and/or modifications to the existing housing supply are needed to house new residents as well as existing residents with changed life circumstances. Although population growth in OOB has remained slower than many nearby communities and even dipped in the recent past, the Maine State Economist Projections anticipate that OOB grows to 7,298 people in 2035. SMPDC produced a linear housing unit projection based on the population growth rate between 2010 and 2020 (3.9 percent), the housing unit growth rate between 2010 and 2020 (3.2 percent) and 2020's average household size (1.72). When reaching its peak projected population in 2035, OOB will need approximately 7,298 housing units (Figure 7). This marks 193 units more than today. Greater or fewer units may be needed depending upon changes to average household size and the number of existing and new units used for seasonal rather than year-round purposes. To align with OOB's household incomes and aging demographic, most units should be small in size and rental options.

Figure 7: Projected Housing Demand in Old Orchard Beach

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	8,960	9,042	9,212	9,296	9,268
New Households	64	48	99	49	-16
Total Units Needed	7,105	7,152	7,250	7,298	7,282

Source: Maine State Economist

Householder Characteristics

Today's Households

The indicated physical and geographical housing needs of a population change depending upon that population's householder characteristics. In OOB, the average household size of 1.74 indicates that there are more single-person households than two, three, four, or more person households. In fact, more householders live alone (2,570) than in married-couple or cohabitating couple households (2,107) (Figure 8). Far more women live alone than do men: 1,594 compared to 976. Reflective of the aging population and declining school enrollment, households with one or more people 65 years and over number 2,137 while households with one or more children number just 437.

OOB, like other coastal resort destinations in Maine, also becomes home to seasonal residents and workers from approximately Memorial Day to Labor Day. Seasonal workers, especially J1 visa workers, have particular housing needs. They require rental options generally below market rate to be affordable relative to their incomes. Additionally, J1 visa workers typically depend on public transportation, employer shuttles, walking, or biking for

transportation, making it important for housing and seasonal employment to be accessible via these means.

Figure 8: Old Orchard Beach Household Types, 2023

Type of Households	Number	Percentage of Total
Married-couple household	1,837	35%
With children of the householder under 18 years	300	6%
Cohabiting couple household	270	5%
With children of the householder under 18 years	18	0%
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	1,257	24%
With children of the householder under 18 years	14	0%
Householder living alone	976	19%
65 years+	252	5%
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	1,856	36%
With children of the householder under 18 years	55	1%
Householder living alone	1,594	31%
65 years+	927	18%
Households with one or more people under 18 years	437	8%
Households with one or more people 65 years+	2,137	41%
Householder Living Alone	2,570	49%
Average household size	1.74	N/A
Average family size	2.38	N/A
Households with more than 1 occupant per room	61	1%
Total Households	5,220	100%

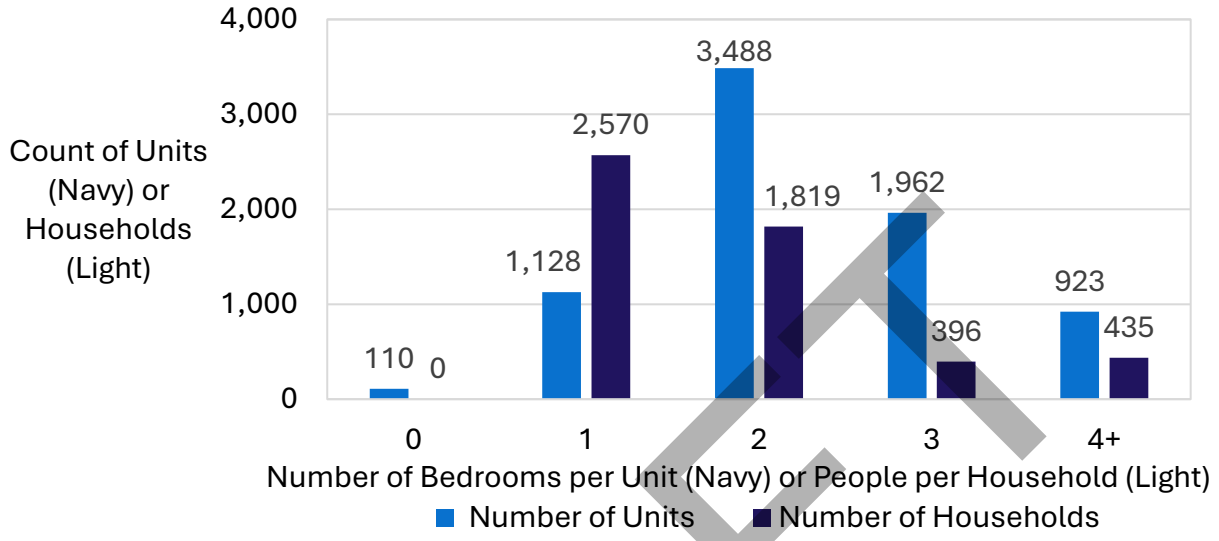
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Comparing household sizes (people per household) to bedrooms per unit reveals where gaps in desired or needed housing types may exist. In OOB, the existing housing stock offers units with more bedrooms than is needed (Figure 9). In fact, the only household size that is underserved by the housing supply is the most common household size: one-person households. While one-person households number 2,570, only 1,238 units are studios or one-bedrooms. Contrastingly, there are more two-, three- or four-plus-bedroom units than there are correspondingly sized households. The most common housing unit is a two-bedroom unit. At 3,488 units, two-bedroom units almost double that of the next most common type, three-bedroom units, at 1,962.

Both two- and three-bedroom units far surpass two- and three-person households. While many residents live in larger homes and prefer to do so, it seems likely that at least some small households end up paying more for housing by renting or buying a place that is larger than they require or want in the community. Other small households may wish to downsize and have limited choices to do so. This household size and bedrooms per unit comparison,

as well as the large number of older adults living alone, indicates a need for additional one- and two-bedroom units and units with smaller square footage.

Figure 9: Distribution of Bedrooms and Household Sizes, 2023



Householder Changes Since 2010

Consistent with OOB's population changes over the last fifteen years, OOB's households have aged significantly since 2010. The share of households with children in 2023 accounts for almost one-third that of 2010 (Figure 10). Meanwhile, households with folks over 60 years old jumped from 38 to 59 percent. Householders living alone leapt from 16 to 23 percent.

Figure 10: Old Orchard Beach Household Types over Time

	Percent of Households		
Types of Households	**2010**	**2020**	**2023**
Households with one or more people under 18 years	21.7%	9.6%	8.4%
Households with one or more people 60 years+	37.6%	57.0%	58.7%
Households with one or more people 65 years+	Unknown	Unknown	40.9%
Householder living alone	41.8%	50.7%	49.2%
65 years+	15.5%	21.4%	22.6%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2020, 2023

Housing Affordability

Housing Costs

Like most of the region, state, and country, OOB faces high housing costs for renters and owners as well as high home values and sales prices. As expected, homeowners with mortgages typically experience higher housing costs than do renters, but once

homeowners pay off their mortgages, their costs are significantly lower than that of renters. For renters, the median housing cost is 1,120 dollars per month, while for homeowners with mortgages, that cost jumps to 1,885 dollars (Figure11). However, homeowners without mortgages only pay a median of 743 dollars. In fact, 78 percent of homeowners without mortgages pay less than 1,000 dollars per month, while 41 percent of renters and seven percent of homeowners with mortgages do. The most common monthly rental cost is 1,000 to 1,500 dollars; the most common homeowner cost is 1,500 to 2,000 dollars. These differences in cost show the importance of offering both rental and ownership options in a community.

Figure 11: Housing Costs, 2023

	Renters		Homeowners with Mortgage	
Monthly Cost	**Number**	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Less than $500	191	13%	0	0%
$500 to $999	415	28%	124	7%
$1,000 to $1,499	494	34%	359	19%
$1,500 to $1,999	300	20%	600	32%
$2,000 to $2,499	52	4%	352	19%
$2,500 to $2,999	0	0%	302	16%
$3,000 or more	19	1%	157	8%
Median cost (dollars)	1,120	(X)	1,885	(X)

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Renters' housing costs are much higher in 2023 than in previous years. As recently as 2010, 67 percent of renters paid between 500 and 1,000 dollars per month, and only one percent paid 1,500 dollars or more (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010). In fact, median monthly rent was 749 dollars in 2010, and remained below 1,000 dollars, at 973 dollars, in 2020.

The median value of the 3,550 owner-occupied units in OOB is 317,000 dollars, and 37 percent of all owner-occupied units cost between 300,000 and 500,000 dollars (Figure 12). Another 25 percent of owner-occupied units value between 200,000 and 300,000 dollars. It is important to recognize that how units are valued does not necessarily correspond to their sales prices.

Figure 12 : Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2023

Value	Number of Units
Less than $50,000	356
$50,000 to $99,999	66
$100,000 to $149,999	224
$150,000 to $199,999	107
$200,000 to $299,999	871
$300,000 to $499,999	1,297
$500,000 to $999,999	531
$1,000,000 or more	98
Median value (dollars)	317,800

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Since 2000, home prices skyrocketed in the community (Figure13). OOB and all its neighbors experienced large increases in their median home prices. OOB's median home price soared to 437,000 dollars, from 88,000 in 2000 to 525,000 in 2023 – an increase of 597 percent. While OOB's median home price in 2000 fell significantly below those of its neighbors and both York and Cumberland Counties, now it surpasses the price in Biddeford, York County, and Maine.

Figure 13: Comparison of Median Home Price, 2000-2023

Geography	2000	2010	2020	2023	Change
Old Orchard Beach	$88,000	$175,000	$325,500	$525,000	$437,000
Ogunquit	$235,500	$390,000	$726,250	$1,005,000	$769,500
Scarborough	$181,000	$301,575	$465,000	$685,000	$504,000
Saco	$120,000	$217,500	$336,000	$545,000	$425,000
Biddeford	$110,000	$190,000	$301,500	$450,000	$340,000
Cumberland County	$135,000	$219,900	$361,500	$530,000	$395,000
York County	$124,500	$205,900	$330,000	$465,000	$340,500
Maine	$109,900	$165,000	$255,000	$360,000	$250,100

Source: MaineHousing Affordability Indices

Housing costs are typically a household's largest expense. When looking at housing costs as a proportion of household income, concerns arise when households pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Such households are considered "housing cost-burdened;" paying that much for housing indicates a tighter budget for other necessities like transportation, food, healthcare, and education.

In OOB, cost-burdened households are distributed in a "u" curve, meaning that households tend to pay less than 20 percent or more than 30 percent of their income on housing, but few households pay the middle amounts (Figure 14). Alarmingly, about 56 percent of renters, or more than one in two, are cost-burdened with their housing costs.

Comparatively, one-third of homeowners with a mortgage and one-third of homeowners without a mortgage are cost-burdened.

Figure 14: Cost-Burdened Households by Household Type, 2023

Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	Renters		Homeowners with Mortgage		Homeowners without Mortgage	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than 20.0 percent	413	28.5%	619	32.7%	920	56.6%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	134	9.3%	386	20.4%	90	5.5%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	91	6.3%	272	14.4%	80	4.9%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	167	11.5%	101	5.3%	22	1.4%
35.0 percent or more	643	44.4%	516	27.2%	515	31.7%
Not computed	222	(X)	0	(X)	29	(X)

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Housing Availability

In addition to housing costs, availability also impacts the affordability of housing. Fewer homes have sold in OOB every decade since 2000 (Figure 15). In fact, the 90 houses sold in 2023 marks half of those sold in 2000. OOB is not alone in this: every adjacent municipality and both Cumberland and York Counties sold fewer homes too. OOB experienced the biggest decrease among its neighbors. Despite southern Maine's experience of a low housing supply these last two decades, Maine saw a net gain of homes sold since 2000.

Figure 15: Comparison of Number of Homes Sold, 2000-2023

Geography	2000	2010	2020	2023	Change from 2000
Old Orchard Beach	181	138	127	90	-91
Ogunquit	44	39	39	28	-16
Scarborough	242	226	331	213	-29
Saco	194	164	260	167	-27
Biddeford	190	147	218	122	-68
Cumberland County	3,457	3,201	4,197	2,778	-679
York County	2,555	2,065	3,265	2,089	-466
Maine	12,266	11,914	20,162	13,750	1,484

Source: MaineHousing Affordability Indices

Housing Affordability

OOB could long consider itself one of the most affordable coastal destinations in southern Maine, as reflected in its Affordability Index scores in 2000. The Affordability Index measures housing affordability in Maine. It is the ratio of Median Home Price to the Home Price Affordable to the Median Income. The affordable home price is one where a household making the median income pays no more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

- An index of 1 indicates that the home price is affordable to the median income.
- An index of less than 1 indicates that the home price is generally unaffordable.
- An index of greater than 1 indicates that the home price is generally affordable.

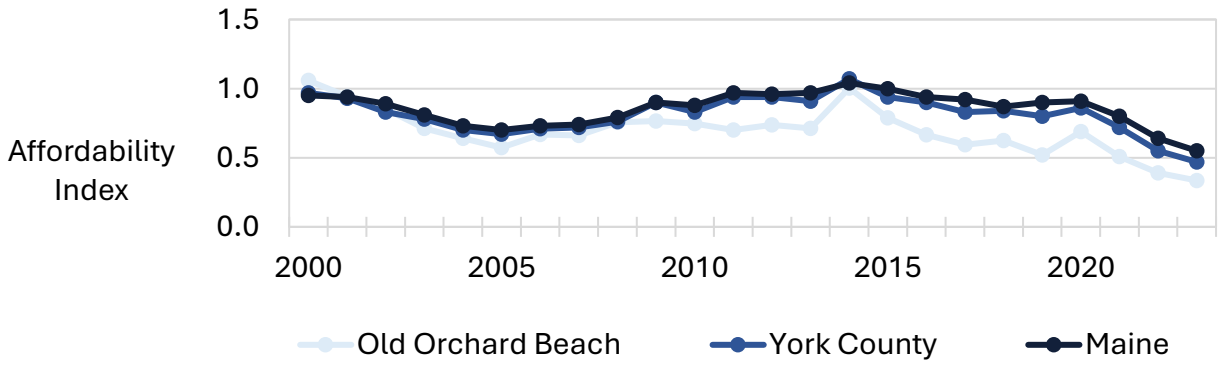
In 2000, OOB had an affordability index value of 1.06, indicating that the home price was affordable to the median income, but the values of all the bordering municipalities, Cumberland County, York County, and Maine landed below one (Figures 16 and17). However, OOB's affordability transformed quickly throughout the early 2000s. By 2010, OOB's value dropped to 0.75. In 2023, that value sank even lower, to 0.34, a 0.72 decrease since 2000. And, a whopping 93 percent of households cannot afford the median home price in 2023. Additionally, 70 percent of rental households could not afford the median two-bedroom rental unit in 2020 (MaineHousing).

Figure 16: Comparison of Affordability Index, 2000-2023

Geography	2000	2010	2020	2023	Change
Old Orchard Beach	1.06	0.75	0.69	0.34	-0.72
Ogunquit	0.57	0.51	0.47	0.26	-0.31
Scarborough	0.83	0.73	0.82	0.46	-0.37
Saco	0.98	0.79	0.81	0.37	-0.61
Biddeford	0.85	0.65	0.7	0.38	-0.47
Cumberland County	0.90	0.80	0.81	0.47	-0.43
York County	0.97	0.83	0.86	0.47	-0.50
Maine	0.95	0.88	0.91	0.55	-0.40

Source: MaineHousing Affordability Indices

Figure 17: Affordability Index Values Over Time



Two comparisons of income and home price reveal the affordability context in OOB: comparing the income needed to afford the median home price, and comparing the home price affordable to the median home income. To afford the median home price in OOB in 2000, a household needed an income of 34,54 dollars (Figure 18). In 2023, the necessary household income became 183,411 dollars, a 531 percent change, but the median household income is 65,842 dollars. The discrepancy between the actual median household income and the income necessary to afford the median home price is huge: the average OOB household would need 2.7 times its current income to afford home ownership in the community. Additionally, to keep up with 2023 prices, OOB requires a larger change in income than any of its neighbors. However, at 183,411 dollars, the income necessary for OOB households to afford the median home price is significantly lower than that needed in Ogunquit, Scarborough, or Saco.

To be affordable to the median OOB household in 2023, a house should cost 176,068 dollars (Figure 19). The median home price in OOB is actually 525,000 dollars, which surpasses the affordable price by $341,589, or 286 percent.

Figure 18: Comparison of Income Needed to Afford the Median Home Price

Geography	2000	2010	2020	2023	Change
Old Orchard Beach	$34,547	$61,152	$88,520	$183,411	$148,864
Ogunquit	$83,181	$121,257	$176,404	$327,985	$244,804
Scarborough	$68,431	$101,235	$127,744	$245,741	$177,310
Saco	$45,883	$71,120	$95,773	$201,239	$155,356
Biddeford	$41,389	$64,790	$86,827	$163,896	$122,507
Cumberland County	$50,268	$73,360	$99,110	$186,804	$136,536
York County	$45,173	$66,685	$88,076	$161,934	$116,761
Maine	$40,098	$55,282	$69,691	$128,390	$88,292

Source: MaineHousing Affordability Indices

Figure 19: Comparison of Home Price Affordable to Median Income, 2000-2023

Geography	2000	2010	2020	2023	Change
Old Orchard Beach	$93,147	$130,628	$224,074	$176,068	$82,921
Ogunquit	$135,123	$197,845	$337,963	$264,468	$129,345
Scarborough	$149,420	$218,746	$381,806	$315,722	$166,302
Saco	$117,966	$171,400	$273,636	$203,049	$85,083
Biddeford	$92,957	$124,257	$211,800	$169,280	$76,323
Cumberland County	$121,978	$175,647	$292,432	$251,345	$129,367
York County	$121,279	$171,289	$283,301	$217,839	$96,560
Maine	$104,064	$144,474	$231,742	$198,106	$94,042

Source: MaineHousing Affordability Indices

Housing Regulations

OOB's regulations that impact housing most directly include Chapter 78 Zoning, Chapter 78 Section 1272 Housing Opportunity Program, Chapter 74 Subdivisions, Chapter 34 Housing, and Supplement 69 Mobile Home Rent Stabilization. Chapter 34 establishes what qualifies as safe, habitable dwellings. Chapter 78 establishes zoning, which greatly influences how much housing can exist and what types of housing are allowed where. Section 1272 of the Zoning Chapter creates new regulations that expand the possibilities of the housing stock for one-to-four-unit dwellings. A summary of Chapter 78 as it relates to housing is analyzed below, and more information on zoning can be found in Chapter X: Land Use.

Housing Code (Chapter 34)

OOB enforces standards to ensure all dwellings are habitable and safe. To do so, this ordinance details the responsibilities of property owners and occupants, administration, enforcement, space and occupancy, structural requirements, equipment, fire safety, and property maintenance. The ordinance also details how a seasonal structure should be properly converted to a year-round dwelling. The ordinance establishes a minimum dwelling size of 200 square feet. It also sets standards for the number of sinks, toilets, and showers per occupant for seasonal workers. Most of the onus of responsibility lies on property owners and rooming house operators, rather than the occupants. Detailing these standards and responsibilities is important given the prevalence of seasonal dwellings because it establishes protections for both the inhabitants and owners.

Zoning (Chapter 78)

OOB offers twelve zones that allow residential uses, six of which make residential uses their primary purpose. Zones range from residential-only districts offering large-lot single-family homes to mixed-use districts offering a variety of unit types in a walkable, town center environment. Required density varies from 2,500 square feet per unit in the two Downtown Districts to 75,000 square feet per unit for lots in the Rural District that are not on public water and sewer utilities. Despite the variety of lot sizes, many of the residential zones limit permitted residential uses to detached single-family units, or detached single-family and two-family. Structures with three or more residential units must produce Site Plans and undergo the Site Plan Review Process with the Planning Board, which adds time and expense to development. Major and minor subdivisions must meet additional requirements, including a sketch plan (major and minor), preliminary plan (major only), and final plan (major and minor). A Design Review is required for the Historic Preservation District overlay zone as well as the Downtown Districts. Much of the remaining undeveloped land in OOB is in zones with a single-family residential focus.

Housing Opportunity Program (Chapter 78, Section 1272)

In 2024, OOB created a regulation called the Housing Opportunity Program to comply with Maine-state legislation LD2003. The Housing Opportunity Program provides a density bonus of 2.5 times the underlying base density to developments with a majority long-term affordable units. This regulation also exempts Accessory Dwelling Units from density calculations and allows more than one unit per lot in all zones where housing is allowed. For example, up to four units may be constructed on a vacant lot in the designated growth areas, up to two units may be constructed on a vacant lot outside of the growth areas, and up to two additional units may be constructed on a lot with one existing unit.

Mobile Home Rent Stabilization (Supplement 69)

OOB adopted an ordinance in November 2024 to protect mobile home renters with rent stabilization. Mobile homes are one of the only naturally occurring, non-subsidized, affordable housing options that the market provides. The newly adopted ordinance aims to protect mobile home owners, who occupy the unique position of owning their mobile home, indicating a significant investment, yet renting the land on which their mobile home rests. The ordinance limits the annual increase in the lease of the land to five percent of the base rent or ten percent of the base rent if the mobile park owner can justify the raise with unexpected and unavoidable expenses. This not only slows cost increases, but also provides predictability to rent, which proves especially helpful for folks on fixed incomes.

Planning Implications

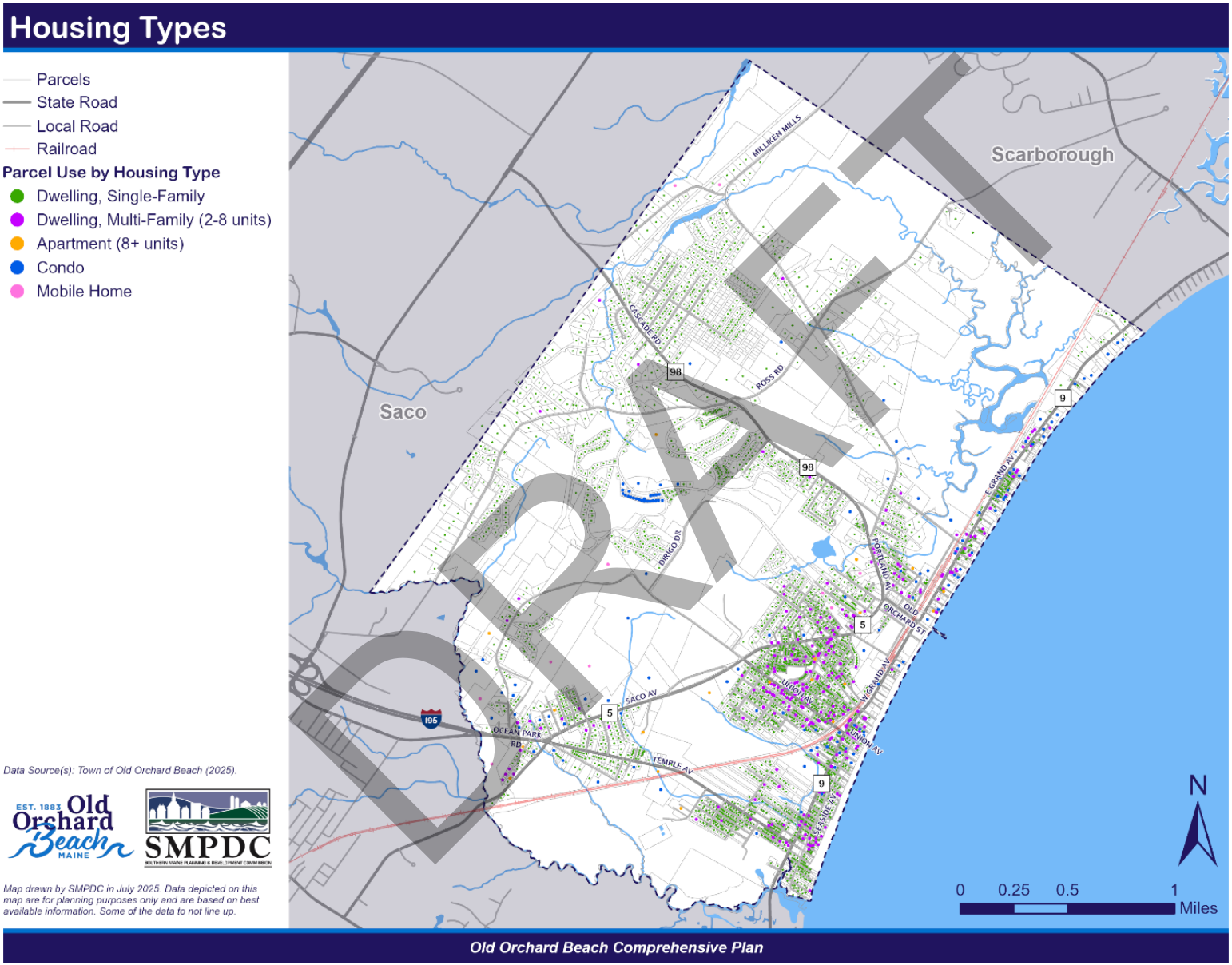
As shown in this chapter via data from the U.S. Census Bureau, MaineHousing, the Town of Old Orchard Beach, and the Maine State Economist, housing in OOB is generally unaffordable and unavailable. Vacancy rates for non-seasonal purposes are low, as are home sales. Simultaneously, prices are high, especially compared to income, and have risen sharply over the last two decades. The limited attainability of housing in OOB has several implications for community development:

- Older adults, a growing and the largest demographic in OOB, may be priced out as incomes remain fixed and costs rise. While most subsidized housing in OOB is for older adults, there will be a need for more units as the community ages and housing prices continue to rise.
- Without regulatory intervention, units may continue to be built that are larger (and thus more expensive) than what OOB's demographics indicate are needed. This is because developers profit more from fewer, more expensive unit—even if some are vacant—than they do from filled, less expensive units.
- Seasonal homes, while important to OOB's destination economy, contribute to higher housing costs, as second-home owners generally have a higher median

income than residents looking to move from renting to homeownership or to move from another town to OOB year-round. Regulations may help achieve a balance between supporting the destination economy and protecting against year-round housing supply constraints. Additionally, low-cost housing options near seasonal employment are needed to support seasonal workers. Given the estimated occupancy and crowding rates in OOB, there is likely a deficit in units available that are affordable to seasonal workers.

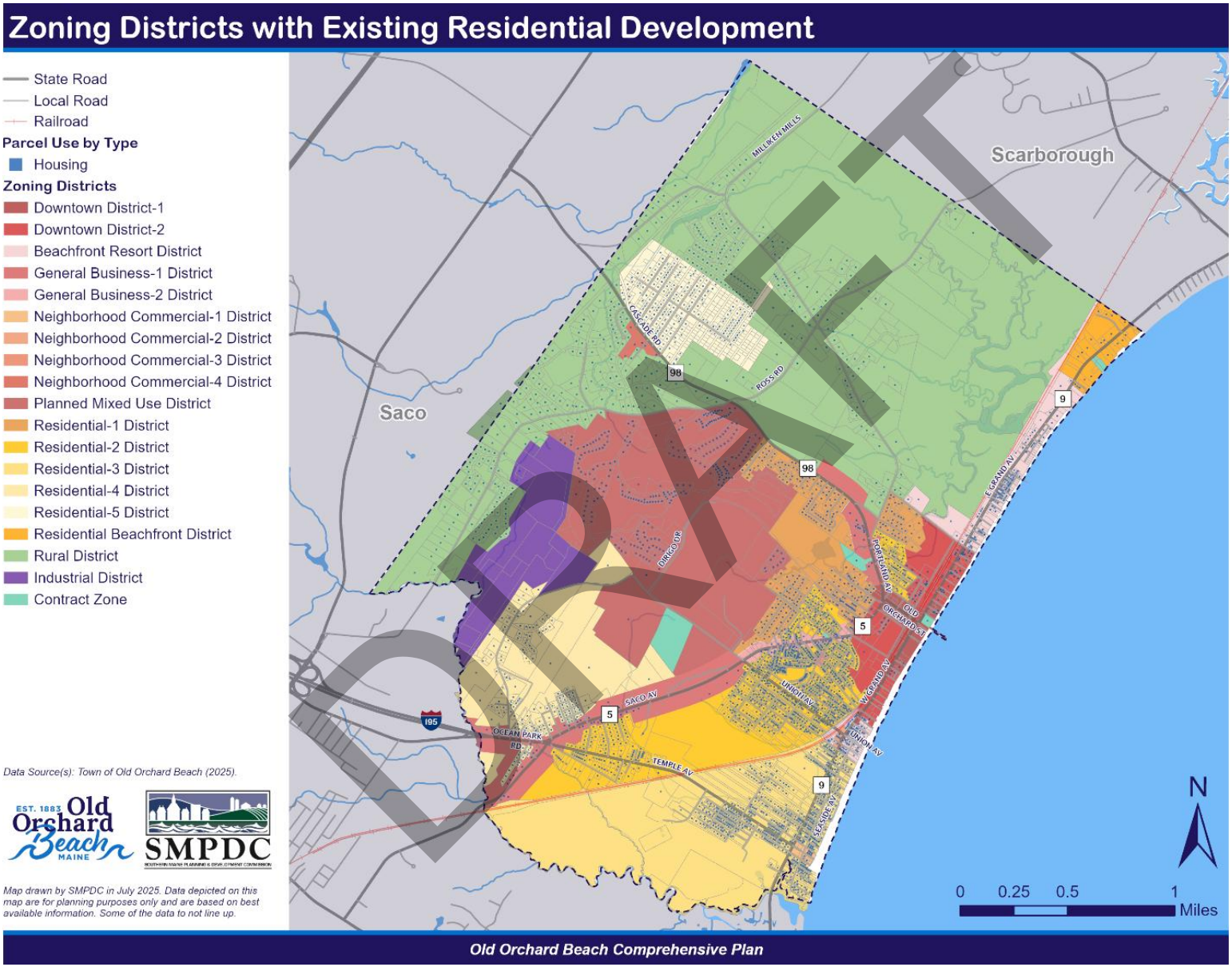
- As housing cost-burden persists, households have less expendable income and less ability to invest in the community by supporting local businesses. Since nearby towns experience low affordability as well, concerns about the ability to retain workforce like teachers, firefighters, waitstaff, and others arise. Households with such jobs—and resulting incomes—are forced to live further and further away. This strains the workforce and contributes to traffic congestion.
- Policies like OOB's Housing Opportunity Program and Mobile Home Rent Stabilization ordinances bolster housing options and affordability. At the same time, opportunities exist within OOB's zoning to facilitate the provision of smaller housing units and/or more housing units per square feet, both of which support housing affordability and availability.
- To help meet some of OOB's housing needs, OOB could explore partnering with housing non-profits, housing developers, and workforce housing coalitions to create new housing stock affordable at various income levels. The supplies of workforce housing and subsidized housing that is not age-restricted could be increased via such partnerships.

Map 1: Distribution of Housing Types

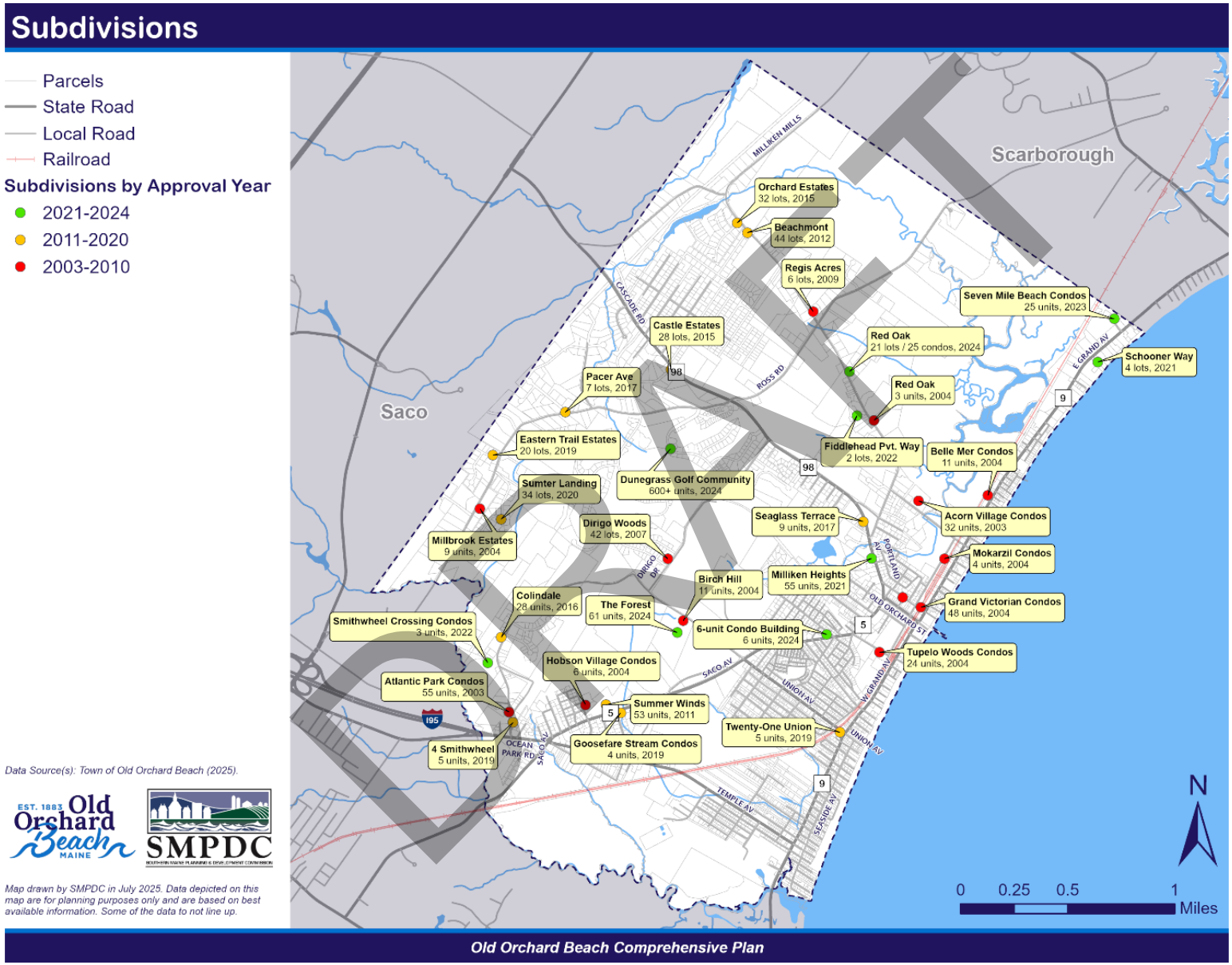


Old Orchard Beach Comprehensive Plan

Map 2: Distribution of Housing by Zoning District



Map 3: Approval Year of Subdivisions



Data Source(s): Town of Old Orchard Beach (2025).

Map drawn by SMPDC in July 2025. Data depicted on this map are for planning purposes only and are based on best available information. Some of the data to not line up.

Old Orchard Beach Comprehensive Plan

Marine Resources

Purpose

The Old Orchard Beach (OOB) coastline extends from Goosefare Brook North to the Scarborough Town Boundary. It is an approximately three mile stretch of uninterrupted sand beach. The landward side of the beach in OOB is characterized by fairly dense development that includes seasonal cottages, motels, hotels, a beach side amusement park, and most recently, mid-rise condominium developments. The beach is especially notable as the Town's primary economic resource.

Physiologically, OOB is part of the larger regional system of Saco Bay, which extends 7.5 miles from the Saco River to the Scarborough River. Within the Town of OOB, the shoreline can be divided into three distinct coastal sub-areas based on the wave action and sand accretion and depletion: Ocean Park, Old Orchard Beach, and Grand Beach.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of OOB's marine resources, focusing on current conditions and trends, challenges, and planning efforts that affect them. It provides a summary of coastal water quality, commercial and recreational fishing conditions, coastal access, scenic shoreline resources, and water-dependent uses. Additionally, the chapter highlights ongoing planning and regulatory efforts, such as zoning and stormwater management, which influence the town's coastal development and ecological health. This chapter seeks to inform future decision-making, ensuring the sustainable management and protection of OOB's waterfront areas for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Data Highlights

Water Quality:

- Shellfish flats between Old Orchard Pier and Camp Ellis jetty closed to shellfish harvesting due to bacterial contamination since 1987.
- Contamination is influenced by factors such as inadequate sewer treatment and stormwater discharges.
- Recent improvements to the sewer treatment plant may help, but contamination levels might not be low enough for harvesting to resume.
- The Maine Healthy Beaches program began monitoring water quality at three sites in OOB in 2024:
    - **OOB-Central:** No beach advisories posted.
    - **OOB-Ocean Park:** 2 elevated bacteria advisories posted since monitoring began.
    - **OOB-North End:** No beach advisories posted.

Recreational and Commercial Fishing:

- There are 10 seafood dealer licenses in OOB:
    - 1 Enhanced Retail (RE)
    - 1 Lobster Meat Permit (LMP)
    - 8 Retail Seafood (R) licenses.
- 11 vessels are registered in OOB, ranging in size from 20 feet to 40 feet.
- No water-dependent uses (activities that must have direct access to water) currently in OOB.
- Only eight licensed commercial fishermen in the town.

Public Access:

- 52 public access points between Scarborough town line and the Goosefare Brook.
- Controversy exists over actual ownership of some access ways.
- Shoreline accessways are sometimes narrow and encroached upon by private development, making them less inviting to the public.
- The Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge provides public access to the shore at Goosefare Brook.

Stormwater Management:

- OOB's Stormwater Management Plan, submitted in 2021, addresses six minimum control measures for pollution prevention and stormwater management.
- The town is committed to tracking enforcement of its Illicit Discharge Ordinance.

Current Conditions

OOB is York County's northernmost coastal community bordered by Saco to the south and Scarborough to the north. Starting at Goosefare Brook on the Saco border and extending in a northeasterly direction, OOB's coastline is a roughly 3-mile stretch of uninterrupted sand beach. OOB is part of the larger regional system of Saco Bay. Saco Bay's shoreline makes up the largest sand beach and salt marsh system in Maine, and has also been designated as an "essential fish habitat" by the U.S National Marine Fisheries Service for fish species including Atlantic salmon, hake, halibut, herring, and scallops. This unique ecosystem plays a crucial role in regional conservation efforts and in the town's long-term planning efforts.

Water Dependent Uses

The State defines water dependent uses as those which must have direct access to the water in order to function. To add to that definition, according to Section 78.1 of OOB's ordinances, "*Functionally water-dependent uses* means those uses that require, for their primary purpose, location on submerged lands or that require direct access to, or location in, coastal or inland waters and that cannot be located away from these waters. The uses include, but are not limited to, commercial and recreational fishing and boating facilities (excluding recreational boat storage buildings); finfish and shellfish processing; fish storage and retail and wholesale fish marketing facilities; waterfront dock and retail and wholesale fish marketing facilities; waterfront dock and port facilities; shipyards and boatbuilding facilities; marinas; navigation sides, basins and channels; retaining walls; industrial uses dependent upon waterborne transportation or requiring large volumes of cooling or processing water that cannot reasonably be located or operated at an inland site; and uses that primarily provide general public access to coastal or inland waters."

Commercial and Recreational Fishing

The Maine Department of Marine Resources reports that eight licensed commercial fishermen currently reside in OOB (see Figure 1). There are no licensed marine worm diggers, wholesale seafood dealers, seafood transporters, or marine worm diggers. Recreational saltwater fishing is popular from the beach area in town, but no specific data related to this activity exists.

The coast of OOB is home to a number of shellfish species which can be eligible for harvesting in the state of Maine. The shoreline has populations of Atlantic surf clams, razor clams, hard clams, and blue mussels. Map 1 depicts the distribution of the shellfish population near the OOB shore.

Shellfish flats and the possibility of harvesting shellfish in OOB are vulnerable to nearby sources of pollution. The beach area from Biddeford Pool to Prouts Neck in Scarborough and some of the Goosefare Brook area are closed for shellfishing due to the wastewater

treatment plants in Saco, Biddeford, OOB, and Scarborough. The current prohibition has been in effect since March 2021.

Recent sewer treatment plant improvements may help improve water quality; however, contamination may not be reduced enough to reopen the flats and waters for harvesting. Contamination could be a result of several factors including, but not limited to, inadequate treatment of sewer waste from the treatment plant, stormwater runoff and discharges, malfunctioning septic systems, and undetected direct discharge of septage. Identification and isolation of contributing factors require water quality testing and analysis.

Water Quality

Maine Healthy Beaches, a program run by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), began monitoring the water quality of multiple locations at OOB in 2024. The three sites that are being monitored are 'OOB – Central,' 'OOB – North End,' and 'OOB-Ocean Park.'

The 'OOB-Central' site refers to monitoring sites OOB-3, OOB-4, and OOB-5. These sites, respectively, are Walnut Street, the North side of the Pier and Cortland Street, and the Brunswick Condos near Fourth Street. Since beginning monitoring, there have been no beach advisory statuses posted for this site.

'OOB-Ocean Park' refers to monitoring sites OOB-7, which is Regio Avenue, and OOB-8, which is the area between Goosefare Brook and Porter Avenue. Since beginning monitoring, there have been two beach advisory notices posted for this site. On both 05/31/2024 and 07/26/2024 an Elevated Bacteria Advisory was posted because of enterococci bacteria results measuring about Maine's safety threshold of 104 MPN/100 ml.

The 'OOB-North End' site refers to monitoring site OOB-1, which is the area directly in front of the Friendship Motel. Since beginning monitoring, there have been no beach advisory statuses posted for this site.

There are ten seafood dealer licenses in OOB. There are three kinds of licenses held in OOB: Enhanced Retail, Lobster Meat Permit, and Retail Seafood. The Enhanced license is for an establishment that sells at a retail level only and does not include wholesale sales. A retail business that wants to buy shellfish from a certified dealer would need to hold a Retail Seafood license. A retail business that wants to buy shellfish directly from a harvester needs to hold an Enhanced Retail license. One enhanced retail (RE), one Lobster Meat Permit (LMP), and eight Retail Seafood (R) (see Figure 2). According to the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), State law requires harvesters to sell shellfish (clams, mussels, oysters, and mahogany quahogs) only to certified shellfish dealers. This does not include restaurants or convenience stores. The exception to that law is when a Retail Seafood license holder wants to buy shellfish directly from a harvester then they must have an Enhanced Retail license.

Figure 1: Harvester Licenses

License Name	Licenses in Old Orchard Beach
Commercial Fishing Crew (CFC)	1
Elver Dip Net (E0)	1
Green Crab (GC)	1
Lobster/Crab Class 1 (LC1)	1
Lobster/Crab Class 2 (LC2)	1
Lobster/Crab Non-Commercial	1
Menhaden Non-Commercial (MENR	2

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2022

Figure 2: Dealer Licenses

License Name	Licenses in Old Orchard Beach
Enhanced Retail	1
Lobster Meat Permit (LMP)	1
Retail Seafood (R)	1
Total	3

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2022

Public Access and Facilities

In 1935, the Town of OOB purchased the beach along its entire shoreline for the purpose of building a beachfront road at some time in the future. This roadway was never built, but because of the purchase, the Town owns its entire beach area; a unique situation in not only southern Maine, but the entire state.

In addition to the beach area, the town also owns the town pier, which was first opened in the summer of 1898. Old Orchard Pier to this day provides a lot of economic stimulation to the local economy. Today, the pier is home to bars, restaurants, and souvenir shops and is an important and notable gathering place for residents and visitors.

There are fifty-two public ways between Goosefare Brook and Scarborough, providing public access to the beach for a variety of users (see Map 1). Occasionally there is controversy about actual ownership of public ways. See Figure 3 for a full list of public access points to the shore. In addition to the public rights of way, the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge provides public access to the shore at Goosefare Brook. Public preserve areas include the Ted Wells Memorial Trail, the Atlantic Way trail parking area, and the Goosefare Brook overlook.

Although access opportunities are excellent, accessways are often less than inviting to the public. The narrowness of roadways, absence and condition of sidewalks, and encroachment of private development onto the rights-of-way provide uninviting, and sometimes, exclusive accessways.

Parking impacts much of what happens in the community from Memorial Day to Labor Day, given its popularity during the busy summer months. Many of the public parking areas are located along the inland side of the railroad tracks in town, which results in limited access points to legally cross the tracks and access the shore. There are few options available in the town to mitigate this, so this will most likely continue to be an issue during the planning period.

There are no harbors in OOB and there are no areas or facilities suitable for permanent mooring of recreational or commercial vessels. Instead, residents moor or dock their vessels at Pine Point in Scarborough, Camp Ellis in Saco, or somewhere outside Saco Bay. All boats powered in any way and ranging in size from the smallest of dinghies to vessels as large as five tons must be registered with the Maine Bureau of Watercraft Registration and Safety. Vessels larger than five tons must be documented with the Coast Guard. According to the DMR, there are currently 11 vessels registered in OOB (see Figure 4).

Map 1: Shoreline Uses

Figure 3: Public Access Points to the Shore

Schooner Way, between 207 East Grand Ave. and 1 Schooner Way	Morrison St.
Parcher Ave.	Mullen St.
Sand Dollar St.	Traynor St.
Rosewood St.	York St.
Island View Ave.	Roussin St.
Between 24 and 26 Puffin St.	Walnut St.
Seabreeze Ave.	Brisson St.
Durocher Ave.	Cleaves St.
Saunders Ave.	Boisvert St.
Scollard Rd.	Aldine Terrace
Dube St.	Staples St. Ext.
Brown St.	Fernald St.
Harrisburg St.	Fourth Ave.
Kinney Ave.	Carl Smith St.
Cortland Ave.	Azalea St.
Old Orchard St.	Pierce St.
King St.	Ocean Ave.
Beach St.	Seacliff Ave.
Atlantic Ave.	Odena Ave. Ext.
Camp Comfort Ave.	Odessa Ave.
Bay Ave.	Reggio Ave.
Pearl Ave.	Pavia Ave.
Union Ave.	Tripoli Ave.
Tunis Ave.	Oceana Ave.
Dune St.	Winona Ave.
Casco Ave.	Ancona Ave.
Colby Ave.	Weymouth Ave.
Temple Ave.	Sandpiper Rd.
Randall Ave.	Blaine Rd.
New Salt Rd.	Porter Rd.

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach (2024)

Figure 4: Registered Vessels by Length

Vessel Length (ft)	Number Registered in Old Orchard Beach
20	4
23	2
24	1
26	2
35	1
40	1
Total	11

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2022

Ecological Value

Coastal ecosystems, particularly sandy beach areas like OOB, play a critical role in maintaining environmental health and biodiversity. The unique dynamics of these coastal zones create habitats for a variety of species and offer valuable ecosystem services.

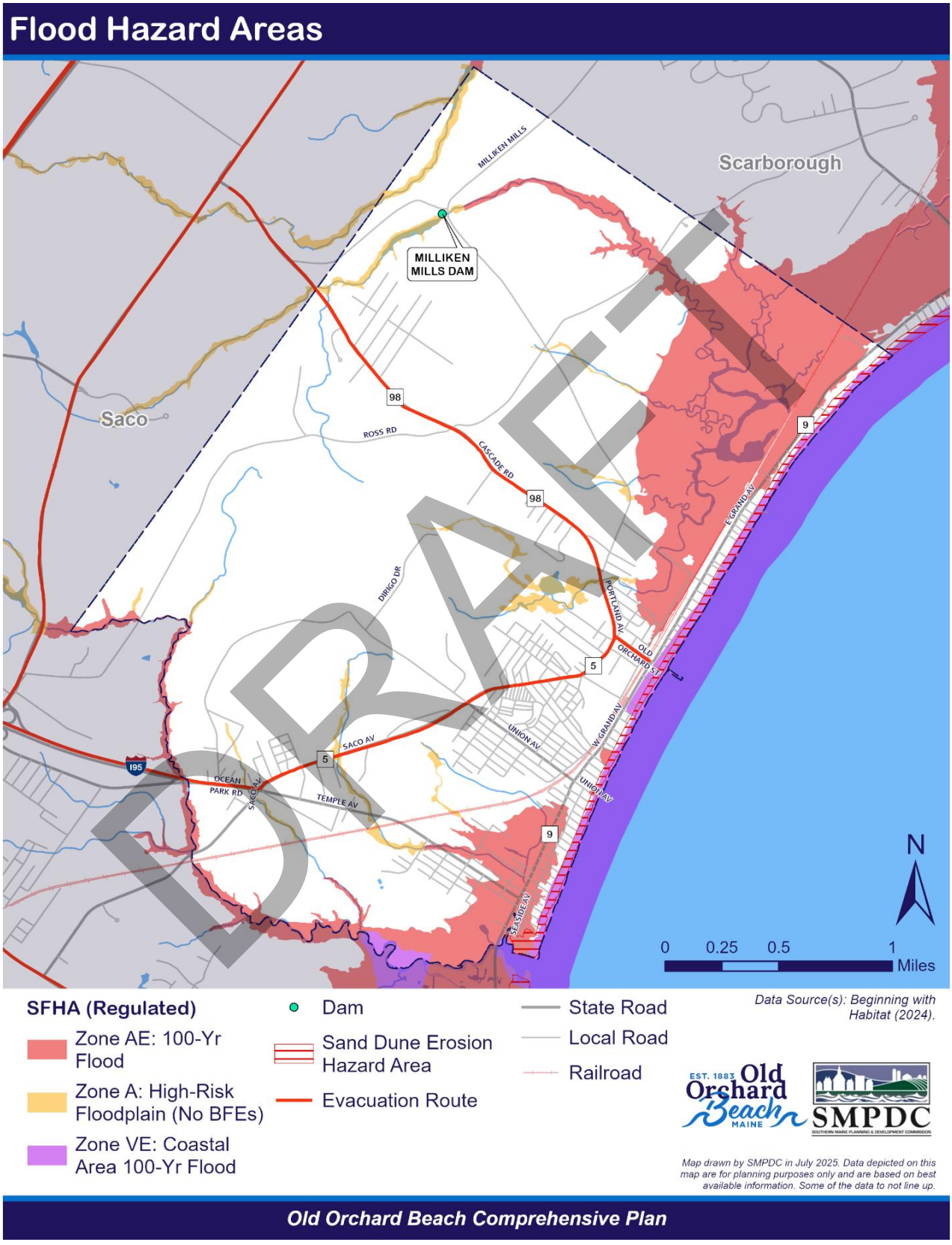
OOB has minimal need for dredging, as it does not have any harbors or Federal navigation channels. However, marine vessel owners rely on harbor and launch facilities of surrounding communities, which do have dredging needs. Further, the beneficial reuse of dredged material for beach and dune nourishment and enhancement projects could assist with increasing the resilience of OOB's coastline to erosion and storms. In 2022, York County purchased a dredge to address regional dredging needs and assist with beach nourishment projects to combat coastal erosion. York County Emergency Management Agency (YCEMA) is leading efforts to operationalize the dredge and is working with coastal communities in the region to secure necessary permits for dredging and placement of dredged materials.

Between 2017 and 2018, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) partnered with the Maine Coastal Program and the Woods Hole Group to develop a feasibility study of purchasing and operating a hydraulic dredge in southern Maine. OOB was a part of this effort, which showed that given the scope of the initial dredge purchase feasibility study there is sufficient need for dredging and a sufficient quantity of material to continue to evaluate the benefits of a regional dredge operation. As a result of this study, the municipalities of OOB, Saco, Biddeford, Kennebunkport, Kennebunk, Wells, and Ogunquit have all been involved in the dredge planning with YCEMA since at least 2021, when York County received $40.3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support Maine in recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, York County

commissioners voted to use $1.54 million of ARPA funds to purchase a dredge, with plans to use it to mitigate coastal erosion.

OOB has a number of Flood Hazard Areas according to the data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The beach area that runs the length of the coastline is within Zone VE, which indicates it is a coastal area vulnerable to a 100-year flood (see map 2). This indicates that the area has a high risk of flooding from storm surge and that the area is prone to fast-moving water. Other high-risk areas in OOB include the neighborhoods surrounding Goosefare Brook and Jones Creek. Both of these areas, especially near Jones Creek, are part of FEMA Zone AE: 100-year flood. This zone indicates that these areas are considered high risk for flooding and are prone to water damage. Homeowners in these areas are often encouraged to consider purchasing flood insurance due to their increased risk. Understanding the possible impacts of flooding in OOB can help inform planning processes and enable the town to protect its residents and resources.

Map 2: Flood Hazard Areas



Current Regulations

The town has an Illicit Discharge Ordinance, Article V Sec. 58-306 – 58-317. This ordinance was originally adopted on 12/05/2006. This ordinance prohibits the discharge of non-stormwater items into the storm drainage system. The objectives of this ordinance are listed as regulating the contribution of pollutants to the municipal separate storm sewer system by stormwater discharge, prohibiting illicit discharges, and establishing the legal authority and procedures to carry out monitoring and enforcement of the ordinance. In the 2022 Stormwater Management Plan, the town committed to tracking enforcement of this ordinance moving forward.

Other regulations related to marine resources include the following:

- Chapter 70, article II. Floodplain Management Ordinance.
    - Sec. 70-26 reads "Certain areas of the Town of Old Orchard Beach, Maine are subject to periodic flooding, causing serious damages to properties within these areas. Relief is available in the form of flood insurance as authorized by the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. Therefore, the Town of Old Orchard Beach, Maine has chosen to become a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as delineated in this Floodplain Management Ordinance."
- Chapter 71, Post-Construction Stormwater Management.
    - Sec. 71-1 reads "The purpose of this chapter is to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the Town of Old Orchard Beach through review and approval of post-construction stormwater management plans and monitoring and enforcement of compliance with such plans as required by federal and state law. This chapter establishes methods for post-construction stormwater management in order to comply with minimum control measure requirements of the federal Clean Water Act, of federal regulations and of Maine's Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems General Permit."
- Chapter 41, Parks and Recreation, article IV. Town Beach.
    - Sec. 41-142 reads "The purpose of this division is to regulate certain uses of the town beach and adjacent ocean tidewaters, specifically, the use or operation of certain water toys and nonmotorized watercraft which may create a hazard to the public health, safety and welfare by endangering swimmers, distracting lifeguards from the performance of their duties, contributing to noise and water pollution, and otherwise interfering with the public's use and enjoyment of the town beach and adjacent tidewaters,

particularly during the summer months when the town beach is most congested."

- Chapter 78, Zoning.
    - Article VI, Districts. Division 17, Shoreland Zone. Sec. 78-1178 reads "The shoreland zone is hereby divided into the following subdistricts, as shown on the official shoreland zoning map which is made a part of this chapter: Resource protection subdistrict (RP), Shoreland residential activity subdistrict (RA), Limited commercial subdistrict (LC), General development subdistrict (GD), Stream protection subdistrict (SP), and the Public beach subdistrict (PB)."
    - Article VIII, Performance Standards. Division 12, Marinas. Sec. 78-2122 reads "The purpose of this section is to establish minimum requirements for the siting, design, construction and operation of marinas to serve the needs of boaters, to protect the natural resources affected by marinas, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Old Orchard Beach. In order to meet these purposes, a marina proposal shall be subject to this section and to all applicable standards within this zoning ordinance. This section does not address the question of whether marinas are an allowed use. Whether or not a proposed marina is an allowed use must be determined by the zoning district regulations applicable to the location of the proposed marina."

Recent Local and Regional Planning Efforts

OOB is designated as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP). This designation means that the town has a permit which allows for the direct discharge of stormwater from or associated with a regulated MS4 to waters other than groundwater. These permits renew every five years, and OOB's permit is due to expire in 2025 and will need to be renewed. OOB also engages with stormwater regulation through their participation in the Interlocal Stormwater Working Group (ISWG). ISWG is the stormwater working ground for the fourteen MS4 communities in the Greater Portland and Saco areas, and it supports some regional coordination and collaboration on municipal stormwater regulations. This group is coordinated by the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, who also provide regional support and implementation of many of the MS4 permit's required minimum control measures.

Old Orchard Beach recently completed a Stormwater Management Plan, which was submitted to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on 03/30/2021. This plan describes how the town will implement best management practices to meet the six identified MS4 minimum control measures. These measures are an education and

outreach program, public involvement and participation, the illicit discharge detection and elimination program, construction site stormwater runoff control, post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment, and pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations.

One past regional planning effort involving OOB was the Sea Level Adaptation Working Group (SLAWG). The SLAWG served the Saco Bay communities of Biddeford, Saco, Scarborough, and OOB. The latest SLAWG action plan was revised in 2011 with the assistance of the Maine Geological Survey. The SLAWG was incorporated to review information from the Coastal Hazard Resiliency Tools Project, to create a Vulnerability Assessment for Saco Bat, and to develop and implement an action plan of implementable strategies for regional solutions. More recently, the Town was involved in Climate Ready Coast – Southern Maine project that resulted in a regional coastal resilience plan that included a regional sea level rise vulnerability assessment and recommendations for enhancing resilience with an emphasis on the use of nature-based strategies.

Another regional planning effort with direct impacts to OOB is the recent agreement between the Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Saco for the Saco River and Camp Ellis Beach Section 111 shore damage mitigation project. This agreement, which was entered into on 01/30/2024, is for a federally funded project to construct a 750-foot jetty and add an estimated 300,000 cubic yard of beach sand fill to the area. Even though this agreement is with the City of Saco, the addition of that sand fill will directly impact neighboring OOB and the way that sediment forms along the coastline.

OOB was one of the ten communities engaged in the planning project *Climate Ready Coast – Southern Maine*. This was a 2.5-year project focused on enhancing coastal resilience planning, fostering collaboration, and advancing adaptation action within the state's ten southernmost coastal communities. The project developed a regional coastal resilience plan and also sought to identify top priority vulnerable sites. Sites in OOB that were identified as priority vulnerable areas include Goosefare Brook and Ocean Park and the East Grant Avenue area. In addition to these priority areas, the project also identified hot spots that, while less high in priority, still face high exposure to coastal flood hazards. The Milliken Street neighborhood by Mill Brook was the only hot spot identified in OOB. The *Climate Ready Coast* plan is designed to serve as a resource and a roadmap to guide future coastal resilience and adaptation action in the participating municipalities.

OOB is one of the thirty-nine member communities of Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC). SMPDC is a non-partisan council of governments serving municipalities in York, southern Oxford, and Cumberland counties. SMPDC offers services including land use, smart municipal growth, resource management, transportation planning, and sustainability and resilience project support.

Planning Implications

Old Orchard's three miles of uninterrupted sand beach is the Town's primary economic resource. Public access to the beach is ample but often hindered by poor infrastructure and encroachment of private development. With no harbors, coves, inlets, or areas naturally suitable for port facilities along the coastline, there are no commercial or permanent recreational moorings or related facilities. OOB's coastline is closed to harvesting shellfish, with parts of the shore closed since 1987, due to bacterial contamination and the presence of wastewater treatment plants in Old Orchard and neighboring Saco Bay communities. Ecological monitoring through the Maine Healthy Beaches program highlights some concerns over elevated bacteria levels in certain areas. The Town has been involved in regional management and planning efforts to protect water quality, enhance coastal resilience to storms and climate change, mitigate coastal erosion, and improve environmental conditions. Examples include the Sea Level Adaptation Working Group (SLAWG), Interlocal Stormwater Working Group (ISWG), and Climate Ready Coast – Southern Maine.

Improving public access is crucial, particularly by enhancing pathways and resolving questions of ownership of public rights of way to make the waterfront more inviting. The town could consider continuing involvement in regional efforts, like the shore damage mitigation project, to tackle coastal erosion and bolster resilience against future environmental risks. Ensuring ongoing compliance with the Stormwater Management Plan and Illicit Discharge Ordinance could both potentially help to maintain water quality and reduce pollution. Finally, participating in regional adaptation efforts, such as the continuing Climate Ready Coast- Southern Maine Regional Coastal Working Group, will allow the town to plan proactively for coastal hazards and long-term environmental changes.

Recreation

Purpose

This chapter presents an inventory of the recreational activities and resources available to residents of and visitors to Old Orchard Beach (OOB). By understanding the location, attributes, and uses of parkland, including community events that take place in these spaces, the town can prioritize future programming, maintenance, and improvements.

Data Highlights

- About 13 percent of the town's total land area is conserved land (621 acres), including municipal, state, and federally owned parcels.
- The town's trail network is comprised of 7 local trails, and includes a 1.6-mile section of the regional Eastern Trail.
- The OOB Recreation Department provides programming for all ages, including youth recreation programs, a "50 +/- Club" for older adults with over 100 members, and a variety of recreational events each year.

Current (and Past) Conditions

Passive Recreational Areas

Outdoor recreation is a key element of local quality of life within a community, as well as a source of economic development and a major component of the state's tourism sector. In this chapter, "passive" recreational areas are those that occur on undisturbed and/or undeveloped land, such as conservation land, preserved open spaces, and trails.

Existing Conservation Lands

The Town owns 320 acres of conserved land, as well as the beach along the town's entire 3-plus mile shoreline. In total, there are 621 acres of conserved land within the town boundary, including state and federally owned parcels, making up about 13 percent of the town's total land area. These parcels are mapped in Map 1 at the conclusion of this chapter.

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

The Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge is located along 50 miles of coastline in York and Cumberland counties, with 11 divisions between Kittery and Cape Elizabeth. The section in OOB is located in the southernmost area of town and comprises 30 acres of salt marsh adjacent to Goosefare Brook. This area provides public access to the shore at Goosefare Brook and also includes the Ted Wells Trail, which is described in Figure 1.

Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area

Covering more than 3,000 acres, Scarborough Marsh is the largest contiguous salt marsh system in Maine, spanning the towns of Scarborough, Cape Elizabeth, and OOB. There are 270 acres of the Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area in OOB, comprised of two sections: one in the Northwest corner of town along Cascade Brook, and one in the Northeast corner of town along Jones Creek. While not accessible by trail, these parcels are an important part of the Town's conserved lands for wildlife habitat and ecosystem health.

Beach

As a summer vacation destination, the town's 3 miles of uninterrupted sand beach is a vital recreational and economic resource, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Town lifeguards are on duty during the summer months. The town owns the beach along its entire shoreline, including the town pier. There are 3 main beach areas along the shore, as shown in Map 1: Surfside Beach, Old Orchard Beach, and Ocean Park.

Beach access is ample, with 52 public access points to the shoreline. There is some controversy over the ownership of certain access points, as well as some access ways that are less inviting to the public due to narrow walkways, encroachment by private

development and the location of public parking areas. A full list of public access points to the shore is available in the Marine Resources chapter.

Jordan Park Marsh

Jordan Park Marsh is a wildlife sanctuary on West Grand Avenue. The ten-acre property was donated to the Ocean Park Association in 1984 by Adelbert "Del" M. Jakeman, Jr., and offers roadside access for birding and viewing of the marsh.

Trails

Local and Regional Trails

There are a number of trails spread throughout OOB, described in Figure 1 and shown in Map 1 at the end of this chapter. The primary use conflicts on town trails are residential subdivisions, and are minor in nature.

Figure 1: Town of Old Orchard Beach Trails

Trail	Recommended Activities	Trail Length	Parking
Milliken Mills Woods South	Nature walks, tree identification, birdwatching, snowshoeing	About 1 mile	192 Portland Ave.
Milliken Mills Woods North	Hiking, snowshoeing	Loops of 1-2 miles	192 Portland Ave. Follow the path to cross the road.
Eastern Trail (ET)	Walking, running, biking, snowshoeing, skiing, birdwatching, fishing; strollers and training wheels can roll on the ET	The ET goes north to Scarborough and south to Saco; the OOB section is 1.62 miles	Milliken Mills Rd. or Cascade Rd. or Old Cascade Rd. or end of Pond View Rd.
OOB Connector Trail (School St./ET Connector)	Walking, jogging, biking, snowshoeing, viewing wildlife, seeing invasive species	⅓ mile	End of School St. or Dirigo Drive near Wild Dunes Way. Bike riders can start at the end of Pond View Road.
Blueberry Plains	Walking, birdwatching, berrypicking, snowshoeing, skiing	½ to 1 mile or more	163 Ross Road

Guild Park	Walking, research, photography and painting, snowshoeing	About 1 mile	83 Temple Ave. or 30 Free St.
Ted Wells Trail	Nature walks, birding	½ mile, with trails branching off	End of Royal St. The trail begins behind the dining hall
Manor Street Trail	Walking, running, birdwatching, painting nature, snowshoeing	½ to marsh, 1.5 miles woods trail	End of Manor St. The trail begins to the right of the water treatment plant

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach (2024)

Trail Management & Conservation Organizations

The Town's Conservation Commission is responsible for the care of public parks and is composed of five members and two alternates who are appointed by the Town Council. The Commission, composed of volunteers, adequately maintains the local trails and coordinates periodic volunteer events such as trail cleanups. The Commission also collaborated with Saco Bay Trails, who maintains and promotes the use of trails in the Saco area, to produce a brochure of Old Orchard Beach's trail system, including descriptions and a trail map.

Figure 2: Milliken Mill Woods Trailhead and Kiosk

Boating & Fishing

While there are currently 11 boats registered in OOB according to the Maine Department of Marine Resources, there are no permanent mooring areas available for boats in town. Residents dock their vessels at Pine Point in Scarborough, Camp Ellis in Saco, or elsewhere. Boating and canoeing is permitted in the Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The WMA also permits saltwater fishing, inland fishing for warm water species, and hunting for game and waterfowl.

Additional fishing opportunities can be found at Milliken Mills Pond, located on Mill Brook in the Northwest section of town. The 10-acre pond is stocked with Brook Trout by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. A town-owned access site for local anglers is available at the dam located off Milliken Mills Road. Most anglers fish this water from the shore, but a canoe or small boat could be carried in from the access site.

Active Recreational Areas

"Active" recreational areas refer to Town-owned and operated parkland on sites designed and laid out for the specific purpose of serving as a recreational amenity, rather than conservation areas or other undeveloped lands that are used for hiking or other low-disturbance activities. The Town owns and maintains multiple parks and recreational areas throughout the community.

The Ballpark

The Ballpark is a landmark in the community. Constructed in 1984 with a seating capacity of 6,000, it served as the home field of two baseball teams of the Triple-A International League until 1988, the Maine Guides and the Maine Phillies. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the Ballpark was leased to the Seashore Performing Arts Center (SEAPAC) and hosted several concerts by big-name artists. After concerts ceased, the Ballpark sat unused for several years. In 2008, the Ballpark Group, a local volunteer organization, organized to repair the Ballpark and return it to its former condition.

Since then, the Ballpark has hosted a variety of baseball teams and town events. It was home to professional baseball team the Old Orchard Beach Surge from 2015 to 2018, as well as collegiate baseball and exhibition games. The Ballpark has hosted Rock the Park since 2021, a family-friendly summer concert series organized by the Town's Recreation Department. The 49-acre Ballpark Complex provides ample parking, restrooms, and concessions stand, and is also home to a skate park and community garden.

Figure 3: Recreation Department Sign at the Ballpark

Veterans Memorial Park

Located at 4 Heath Street in community's the downtown area, Veterans Memorial Park houses monuments to veterans of World Wars I and II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the Gulf War. The 7.3-acre park hosts community events year-round, including an annual tree lighting as part of the Celebration by the Sea holiday event. The park also includes a fenced-in dog park, tennis court, basketball court, pétanque court, gazebo, and playground. Parking is available on surrounding streets and across the street at Cap'n Mike's Parking, a privately-owned parking area.

Renovations to Veterans Memorial Park are scheduled for 2025, including improvements to the park entrance, paths, and irrigation. Renovations will also include the addition of electrical outlets and additional lighting to better support community events.

Figure 4: Veterans Memorial Park

Pat Brown Community Park

Located at 88 Atlantic Avenue, Pat Brown Community Park underwent significant renovations in 2021 due to a community volunteer effort of the Old Orchard Beach Community Friendly Connection (OOB CFC). Formerly consisting solely of a concrete basketball court and fence, the park now houses a refurbished court, tables and seating, a handicapped accessible walkway, and an adult exercise circuit, all sitting on just over one-third of an acre. Pat Brown, former facilitator with OOB CFC, spearheaded the effort and arranged the installation of a sign thanking all who contributed to the renovation.

Ocean Park

The Ocean Park neighborhood of OOB is located along West Grand Avenue, from Casco Avenue to Randall Avenue. Ocean Park houses recreational facilities including shuffleboard and tennis courts, which are available to use with membership, as well as access to the beach.

Schools

OOB's schools offer recreational facilities for youth, including playgrounds at Loranger Middle School and Jameson Elementary School. Loranger Middle School and Old Orchard Beach High School are also home to sports fields used for school sports as well as programs coordinated by the town Recreation Department.

Old Orchard Beach Recreation Department

The Recreation Department coordinates programming across several areas. The Recreation office recently relocated to the Ballpark Complex. While this facility meets their current needs, the Town could consider future needs for continued operation of the Department in the Ballpark Complex.

The Department is comprised of four divisions: the Recreation Division, the Senior Division, the Community Events Division, and the Child Care Division.

The Recreation Division offers youth recreation programs including football, soccer, cheering, and basketball, in collaboration with neighboring communities. The Division also hosts youth enrichment programs, year-round youth trips, and seasonal camps.

The Senior Division hosts Old Orchard Beach's "50 +/- Club," with programming geared toward adults over 50. The Club has over 100 members and offers multiple programs weekly, including group meals, games, arts and crafts, museum visits, movies, and more. The Recreation Department purchased a 14-passenger minibus in 2009, which has enhanced town programming for older adults.

The Community Events Division coordinates a wide variety of programming year-round, from summer concerts to holiday events. These events are described in the following section. The Child Care Division offers multiple childcare programs for residents, including the Gull Care After School Program, School Vacation Camps, and Summer Day Camps.

In addition to providing a wide variety of programming, the town Recreation Department was instrumental in the creation of the community group OOB365, who coordinates multiple events per year.

OOB365

The community group OOB365 was formed in collaboration with the town Recreation Department and hosts a variety of events year-round. The group coordinates events such as free community dinners, bingo nights, an annual New Years' bonfire, an annual Scottish Festival, and more. The group also coordinates with local businesses to host events, including Aquaboggan Water Park in neighboring Saco, and the Saco Drive-In movie theater.

Town Recreational Events

The Town of Old Orchard Beach sponsors several family-friendly events each year, drawing year-round residents, seasonal visitors, and residents of neighboring communities. These events are funded via the Town Recreation Department's annual budget as well as by the Chamber of Commerce and other local business sponsors.

Rock in the Park

A family-friendly summer concert series organized by the Town's Recreation Department, this event has taken place annually in the Ballpark since 2021 and features a variety of musical acts and concessions for attendees to enjoy.

Eggstravaganza

The annual Eggstravaganza occurs in April each year and features an egg hunt with over 6,000 eggs, music, photo opportunities, and a visit from the Easter Bunny.

The Celebration by the Sea

The Celebration by the Sea occurs annually in December at the Old Orchard Beach Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the holiday season. The event features a tree lighting in Veterans Memorial Park, as well as performances from local musical groups, arts and crafts, and photos with Santa.

Jimmy the Greek's "Frozen 4 Miler" Race

The Frozen 4 Miler has occurred annually since 2009 on Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend, coordinated by local restaurant Jimmy the Greek's and staffed by the Town's Recreation Department. Proceeds from the race are donated to the Recreation Department as part of the "Send a Kid to Camp" program.

"Last Blast" New Years Party

Organized by OOB365, this annual New Years' Eve event includes a beach bonfire and fireworks. Attendees are encouraged to bring their discarded Christmas trees to add to the bonfire.

Scottish Festival

The annual Scottish Festival is organized by OOB365 and takes place in Veterans Memorial Park. The festival features Scottish music, traditional foods, games, and more.

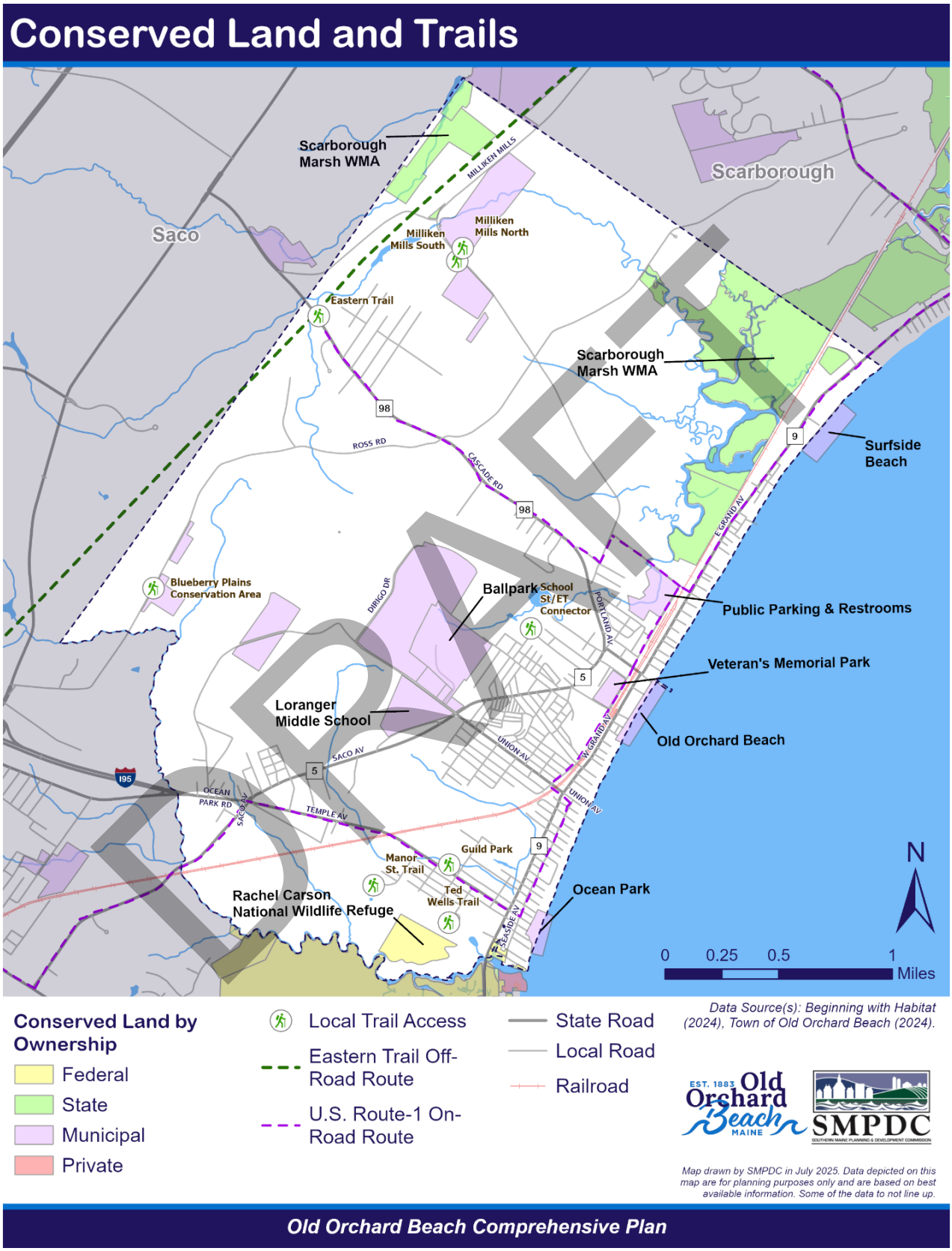
Planning Implications

OOB offers a multitude of recreational opportunities year-round for residents of all ages. As the town's population continues the trend of increasing in age, continued programming through the "50 +/- Club," and consideration of ways to expand programming, will ensure that the town is meeting the needs of older residents. The town currently does not have any unmet needs that have been identified regarding recreation; however, the town should continue to consider this going forward.

The town's shoreline is a primary recreational and economic resource for the community. Public access opportunities are ample, with 52 public rights-of-way; however, some access points have controversy over ownership and others have narrow walkways, making them less inviting to the public. Regarding access to private lands in the community, while traditional access of private lands has not been restricted, there are fewer uses for traditional access in OOB than there may have been in the past. Improved accessibility and maintenance of shoreline rights-of-way could enhance recreational opportunities.

Currently, the town does not have a mechanism to acquire additional open space, such as an open space fund or a partnership with a land trust. These mechanisms could be considered for the purposes of conserving additional tracts of land in town for recreational purposes as well as ecosystem health and wildlife habitat.

Map 1: Town of Old Orchard Beach Conserved Land & Trails



Public Facilities

Purpose

A thorough understanding of a town's public services is necessary to determine current constraints to growth and identify any infrastructure-related challenges the town may face in the future. This chapter will also identify the likely capital improvements and investments needed to maintain high-quality services. Specifically, this section will:

- Identify and describe Old Orchard Beach's public facilities and services; and
- Assess the adequacy of these services in meeting current and projected community needs.

Town expenditures are discussed in detail in the Fiscal Analysis Chapter. The complete Capital Investment Plan (CIP) is included in the Fiscal Capacity Section.

Key Findings and Issues

- Old Orchard Beach offers a broad range of public services that generally meet the current needs of the community. Departments such as police, fire, public works, and recreation have adapted to seasonal fluctuations in population, but continued growth and tourism pressure are expected to increase demands on these services.
- Public works staffing and road maintenance capacity may need to expand as the town continues to maintain and improve infrastructure, especially in light of seasonal impacts and coastal weather events.
- Public water and sewer systems are currently adequate but aging and will require strategic upgrades to support long-term growth and aging infrastructure.
- According to a 2024 town-wide survey, the following were identified as resident priorities and concerns related to town services and municipal facilities:
    - 71% strongly agree (38.8%) and agreed (32.7%) that the town should increase the amount of public land for additional parks, trails, and open space.
    - 64% do not believe minimal investment in public infrastructure will satisfy the needs of OOB over the next 10 years.
    - Sidewalks, stormwater, and roads are the infrastructure most neglected and should secure the most funding during the next 10 years.
    - The town should engage in coastal management efforts to protect its natural resources with protection of the ocean, public beach, dunes being the most important.

Public Facilities Inventory

Municipal Services

Municipal Staff

The town employs 102 full-time administrative and management personnel, listed below. In general, the town is well staffed.

- Animal Control/Patrol Officer
- Deputy Assessor
- Assessing Admin. Assistant
- Director of Code Enforcement
- Code Enforcement Admin. Assistant (2) (shared with Planning)
- Code Enforcement Officer (3)
- Director of Human Resources and Communications
- Director of Finance
- Staff Accountant
- Finance Disbursement Specialist
- Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director
- Deputy Fire Chief
- Fire Dept. Office Manager
- Police Chief
- Deputy Police Chief
- Police Captain
- Police Administrative Asst
- J-1 Coordinator
- Town Planner
- Assistant Town Planner
- Director of Public Works
- Public Works Operations Manager
- Public Works Administrative Operations Manager
- Tax Collector/Deputy Treasurer
- Tax Clerk (2)
- Town Clerk/Registrar of Voters
- Deputy Town Clerk/ Deputy Registrar of Voters (2)
- Town Manager
- Executive Assistant to Town Manager
- Wastewater Superintendent
- Wastewater Operations Manager
- Recreation Director
- Deputy Recreation Director

Municipal services are generally well staffed, though some departments have noted a need for additional support as demands grow—especially in areas such as Public Works, Police, and Fire.

Planning and Code Enforcement

Old Orchard Beach employs a Director of Code Enforcement, three Code Enforcement Officers, and two Code Enforcement Administrative Assistants. The town's Planning Department staff includes a Town Planner and Assistant Town Planner. The town also contracts with the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) for planning assistance. The town's Planning Board includes 5 voting members and 2 alternates; the town's Design Review Committee includes 5 members.

Police Department

The Old Orchard Beach Police Department (OOBPD) provides 24-hour law enforcement coverage for the community, with operations supported by dispatch services, patrol officers, investigators, and administrative staff. The department plays a critical role in public safety during both the off-season and the summer months, when the population increases significantly due to tourism. The department is headquartered on E. Emerson Cummings Boulevard in a modern facility equipped to support patrol and administrative operations.

The Police Department currently employs 23 full-time officers including the Chief of Police. The command structure includes a Deputy Chief, Captain, Sergeants, Corporals, and 14 officers. Over the past 15 years, the Department has provided one officer to serve as a liaison with RSU23, the Loranger Middle School, and Old Orchard Beach High School. This School Resource Officer (SRO) is primarily assigned to the high school while school is in session. The SRO also assists the primary duty officers during emergency situations or when priority calls for service are pending. Each full-time officer is tasked with the responsibility of being the primary investigator in all criminal matters. The Department also maintains a part-time staff of 10-15 officers and an Animal Control Officer, who augment and assist the full-time staff.

The following table depicts the average Police-to-Citizen ratio. These figures exclude part-time personnel, who contribute a significant portion of the department's total staff hours. These recommended ratios are solely based on the number of police officers per resident and do not consider the low crime statistics for this area. The current staffing ratio is 2.23 officers per 1000 people. This count excludes social services, admin staff, court officer, parking enforcement, and clerks.

The Department currently has 9 fully marked patrol cruisers. There are currently 6 unmarked vehicles which are primarily assigned for administrative and detective work. The unmarked vehicles can be used for investigations, surveillance, or during special events such as parades or summer concerts.

The Police Department currently uses Tyler Technologies for records management, a system that was implemented less than a year ago. Despite being relatively new, it has proven sufficient in meeting the Department's day-to-day operational needs. Dispatch services are contracted through Scarborough Public Safety, ensuring reliable communication support. At present, the systems in place are considered adequate for both routine operations and emergency situations, including natural disasters or extended power outages.

Figure 1. Old Orchard Beach Police-to-Citizen Ratio

Population Group	Population (2022)	# of Officers (2024)	Officers per 1,000
OOB Year-Round Population	8,960	23	2.57
OOB Summer Population	~27,000	23	0.85
State of Maine	1,372,247	~2,921	2.13
United States	332,403,650	~665,380	2.0

Figure 2. Old Orchard Beach Police Response Call Statistics, 2024

Call Type	Number of Calls
Animal Complaints	482
Assaults	74
Burglary	22 Residence, 38 Vehicle
Domestic Disturbance	71
Motor Vehicle Crashes	290
Motor Vehicle Assists	729 citizen assists
Motor Vehicle Stops	4,752
Citations Issued	487
Parking Tickets Issued	6,921
Theft/ Forgery/ Fraud	287
Total Calls for Service	**14,153**

Fire and Rescue

The Old Orchard Beach Fire-Rescue Department (OOBFD) is dedicated to safeguarding the lives and property of residents and visitors through comprehensive fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), rescue operations, and proactive fire prevention programs. The department operates 24/7 from its central station located at 136 Saco Avenue, ensuring rapid response across the community.

The Old Orchard Beach Fire Department employs 20 full time firefighter/paramedics and has just one vacancy. As well, like other area fire and rescue agencies, the department employs per diem personnel, about eight per week, filling shifts from a roster of about 18 people. There are three on-call company firefighters, and ten fire police.

This blend of full-time and on-call staff allows OOBFD to efficiently address emergencies, particularly during the summer months when the town's population is more than triple.

Services Provided

- Fire Suppression: Handling residential, commercial, and wildland fires.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS): Providing Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) care.
- Rescue Operations: Conducting vehicle extrications, water rescues, and technical rescues.
- Fire Prevention and Education: Offering inspections, code enforcement, and public education programs.

In the last ten years, the fire department has gotten busier, both in emergency responses, but also due to the administrative and training requirements of modern fire departments. Increased training requirements lead to increased time commitments for firefighters and staff. Fire and Rescue call volume has also increased over eight percent from 2023 to 2024 with EMS and rescue calls making up a larger percentage of these calls over time. In that time, the roster of firefighters has remained consistent in the16 to 20 member range. 2024, an average of two to seven members responded to every call. The busiest time for calls is between 7am and 9pm, Monday through Friday.

Equipment and Facilities

The department maintains a fleet of modern apparatus, including fire engines, aerial ladder trucks, ambulances, rescue boats, and support vehicles. The central station is equipped with advanced communication and dispatch systems, facilitating coordination with regional emergency services.

The firefighting fleet consists of the following vehicles:

- Ambulance 74, a 2022 Braun on a Dodge 5500 chassis.
- Ambulance 75, a 2020 Braun on a Ford F-550 chassis.
- Ambulance 76, a 2017 Braun on a Ford F450 chassis.
- ATV 2011 Polaris 500 Sportsman.
- Car 1, 2019 Ford F-150.
- Car-2, 2023 Chevrolet Silverado 1500.
- Engine 72, a 2016 Sutphen with a Cummins ISL-9 6 cylinder, an Alison transmission, with 1250 GPM Hale pump carrying 750 gal.
- Engine 73, a 2007 Seagrave with a Detroit engine and Allison transmission, has a 1500 GMP Seagrave pump carrying 800 gal.
- Truck 71. A 2016 Sutphen Quint with a Cummins ISX-12 6 cylinder, an Allison transmission, a 100' aerial and a 2000 GPM Hale pump carrying 300 gallons of water, and double master streams.
- Service 77, a 2015 Chevy 3500, used for a quick response, forestry and utility vehicle.
- Service 79, a 2018 Chevrolet 1500 used for Lifeguards.
- Traffic 1, a 2023 GMC Cargo Van for Fire Police.
- Traffic 2, a 2013 Ford Interceptor for Fire Police.
- Car-10, a 2015 Ford Explorer for Fire Inspector and Fire Officer.
- John Deere UTV for beach and off-road rescues.

This diverse fleet allows OOBFD to handle structural fires, brush fires, water rescues, vehicle accidents, and medical emergencies across the town's various terrains, including the beach, residential neighborhoods, and the Route 1 corridor.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends fire apparatus serve 15 years of frontline duty, then five as reserve apparatus. This schedule is cost prohibitive for most communities the size of Old Orchard Beach. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends fire apparatus serve 15 years of frontline duty, then five as reserve apparatus. This schedule is cost prohibitive for most communities the size of Old Orchard Beach. The OOBFD has been operating on a 20-year replacement plan for apparatus for 30 years. A challenge with this approach is the department needs to pre-order apparatus before they are due to be replaced due to the three-to-four-year build time. The

department generally uses 20 years as the life span of apparatus. The apparatuses run front line for a period of time then move to the backline when they are due to be replaced.

Equipment and tools are replaced when they reach the end of their service (time in service varies). Also, the Department plans for equipment and tools that perform better such as battery power tools.

Challenges and Considerations

- Seasonal Population Increase: The significant influx of visitors during summer places additional demands on emergency services, necessitating strategic staffing and resource allocation.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention: Sustaining a robust roster of paid per call firefighters is essential to meet service demands.
- Infrastructure and Equipment Maintenance: Ongoing assessment and investment are required to ensure facilities and equipment meet current standards and future needs.
- Facility Maintenance: Fire Station requires yearly upkeep, repairs, and maintenance.

The OOBFD remains committed to enhancing its capabilities and fostering community partnerships to effectively serve Old Orchard Beach's evolving needs.

New firefighters must complete over 120 hours of initial training to become fully functional firefighters. All firefighters are also required to complete more than 60 hours of training per year.

The Department recruits new firefighters and EMS by advertising in local social media posts along with EMS postings along with Indeed. The challenge is the limited availability of people entering the Fire/EMS field. The Department adopted a process that identifies good people and assists with their education and training to become full-time employees in the future.

There has not been a significant increase in a specific call type; although the Department has seen an increase in calls related to early discharge of hospital patients undergoing treatments at home that 10 years ago would require them to stay in the hospital.

Staffing consists of 20 Full-time FF/EMT-FF/Advanced and FF-Paramedics. Shifts when fully staffed are 5 FT and 2 per diem. There are four shifts A, B, C, D who work 24 shifts that work out to a 42-hour work week based on an 8-day cycle. Current staffing levels are not sufficient.

The fire department’s role in providing EMS services in town continues to expand. This mission may continue to evolve and expand in the next decade.

Figure 3. Fire and Rescue Statistics, 2023

Call Type	# of Calls		
Fires	37	Rescue Calls	1,899
Hazardous Condition (no fire)	122	Good Intent Call	121
Fire Alarms & False Alarms	279	Severe Weather	6
Service Call	200		
Total Calls for 2023:			2,664

Library

The Libby Memorial Library is Old Orchard Beach's public library, serving as a vital educational, cultural, and social resource for the community. Located at 27 Staples Street, the library provides access to books, media, technology, programming, and public gathering space for residents of all ages.

The facility includes:

- A dedicated children's room
- A teen space
- Adult reading area with fireplace
- Public meeting room and quiet study room
- Archives Room with Old Orchard Beach historical material such as Oceana Yearbooks, Town Reports, historical newspapers, postcards and scrapbooks
- Rotating OOB historical artifacts exhibits
- Saltwater Aquarium
- Free Wi-Fi accessible 24/7 and public computer access
- Outdoor adult reading garden with seating
- Outdoor children's courtyard with tables
- Accessible entrances and restrooms
- Generator-connected emergency shelter space
- Seasonal Book Shed, operated by the Friends of Libby Library

The library is a member of the Maine InfoNet Statewide Consortium, allowing patrons to borrow materials from libraries across Maine through inter-library loan or the in-person reciprocal borrowing program. It also offers access to digital services like eBooks, e-audiobooks, newspapers, magazines, and streaming media through platforms such as CloudLibrary, Kanopy and Newsstand.

In addition to lending services, Libby Memorial Library provides:

- Children's programming, including weekly story time, littles, Lego club, monthly STEAM Saturdays, as well as home-school and year-round family programming.
- Periodic adult programming of all types including health and wellness, such as Chair Yoga and Matter of Balance.
- Weekly adult programming including Book Bunch, Mah Jong and Fiber Craft Club
- Movie (and popcorn!) matinees.
- Summer Reading Program and ReadME for all ages.
- Book clubs and author talks.
- Outreach, which includes off-site programs and door-to-door materials delivery for house-bound individuals.
- Arts & crafts workshops.
- Public access computers, printing, faxing and scanning.
- Seasonal Book Shed and events.

With an increasingly diverse and aging population, the library is an essential space for lifelong learning, community and social connection, digital access and support, as well as entertainment. It supports early literacy, workforce development, and aging in place—helping to meet the needs of families with young children, working adults, and seniors alike.

The most significant challenge facing the library is a lack of space, particularly for storage, programming, and meetings. Town-wide, Old Orchard Beach lacks sufficient available and appropriate meeting space, as demonstrated by the high demand for use of the Library's Community Room. Although the Community Room is frequently utilized, it is often undersized for many programs and meetings.

Despite the expansion and renovation in 2015, the library has less storage capacity than the original 1956 building, which was half the size. While the 2015 design includes several large closets that could otherwise serve as storage, they are occupied by heat pumps for the geothermal HVAC system.

As Old Orchard Beach continues to grow, the library will continually evaluate evolving needs reflecting community changes, in order to best serve residents of all ages and abilities.

Parks and Recreation (No Response)

The Old Orchard Beach Recreation Department is structured into four key divisions, each catering to specific community needs:

1. Recreation Division: Offers a variety of programs for youth and adults, including sports leagues (e.g., football, soccer, cheerleading, basketball), enrichment classes, and seasonal camps.

2. Senior Division: Manages the "50 +/- Club," providing over 100 members with diverse weekly programs, social events, and travel opportunities. The addition of a 14-passenger minibus in 2009 enhanced program flexibility and accessibility.
3. Community Events Division: Coordinates and supports various special events throughout the year, such as Summer Concerts at the Ballpark, Eggstravaganza, Seaside Art Festival, and Christmas by the Sea.
4. Child Care Division: Provides programs like the Gull Care After School Program, School Vacation Camps, and Summer Day Camps, adhering to high standards to ensure quality care for children. [Average enrollment #s?]

[How many full-time and part-time staff currently support the Recreation Department?]

[Are current staffing levels adequate to maintain program quality and meet demand?]

[Are there any ongoing facility issues (e.g., maintenance, space, accessibility)?]

[What volunteer roles are needed or difficult to fill?]

[Are there any program types the community requests that can't currently be offered?]

Public Works (No Response)

The Public Works department is primarily responsible for road maintenance, parks maintenance, and municipal facilities. Bond payments are approximately [~$] a year. The Capital Improvements Program includes [~$] for road maintenance annually.

The department manages roadways, sidewalks, stormwater systems, snow removal, solid waste handling, municipal facilities, and support for town events. The Public Works facility is located at 103 Smithwheel Road.

Public Works maintains more than 50 miles of town roads and sidewalks. Seasonal demands, such as beach cleanup and winter storm response, require highly flexible staff and coordination with contractors. The department also provides support services for recreational areas, including Memorial Park and The Ballpark.

Challenges and Future Needs

- Aging Infrastructure: Road surfaces, sidewalks, and drainage infrastructure in some areas require rehabilitation or full replacement.
- Storm Resilience: Sea-level rise and coastal storms are increasing the frequency and severity of flood events, emphasizing the need for upgraded culverts and stormwater systems.
- Seasonal Strain: The summer surge in population places high demands on waste management, traffic flow, and beach maintenance efforts.

- Fleet Maintenance and Facility Needs: Public Works relies on aging vehicles and equipment, with long-term planning needed for replacements and potential facility upgrades.

The department plays a vital role in keeping the town operational and safe throughout the year. Investment in infrastructure maintenance and strategic upgrades will be critical in supporting future growth and resilience.

Water and sewer services in Old Orchard Beach are essential to supporting both year-round residents and the influx of seasonal visitors. The town manages its own Wastewater Department, while public water service is provided by Maine Water Company – Biddeford & Saco Division.

OOB's public sewer system services the majority of homes and businesses in the downtown area and along the Route 9 corridor. Some outer areas of town continue to rely on private septic systems. The sewer system may need to be upgraded or expanded in order to accommodate long-term growth and to address aging septic systems in denser areas.

According to Maine Water, existing water supplies and storage are sufficient for current demand, though periodic upgrades and main replacements are ongoing. Coordination with the town ensures fire protection capacity and service reliability.

Solid Waste (No Response)

The town contracts with Casella Waste Systems for trash pickup and delivery to the transfer station. Waste is compacted and hauled, recycled, or otherwise disposed of by the town. In [__Year__], the town disposed of [#] tons of municipal solid waste. The town has a mandatory separation and recycling program for paper, aluminum, plastics, and other metals. Recycling was particularly strong in the early 2000's, but due to market changes it is not always cost effective. The transfer station no longer recycles glass for this reason. Leaves, wood chips and other composting waste are ground and made available, with a delivery fee, as mulch. Items that may need consideration in the next ten years include improved lighting, traffic patterns and volume, increasing population, site modifications that would allow a vehicle capable of hauling larger compacted loads and the limited size of the current site.

Figure 4. Solid Waste Amounts, [YYYY to YYYY]

Waste Type	Tons per Year 2019	2020	2021	Facility
General				
MSW (Municipal Solid Waste)	#	#	#	Casella
CDD (Construction Demolition Debris)	#	#	#	Casella
OBW (Oversized Bulky Waste) C&D	#	#	#	Casella
Wood waste (no CDD)	#	#	#	Casella
Recycled				
Paper	#	#	#	_____
OCC (Old Corrugated cardboard)	#	#	#	_____
Metal cans and aluminum foil	#	#	#	_____
Plastics (#1-#7, rigid plastics and plastic films	#	#	#	_____
Appliances & other scrap metal	#	#	#	_____
Tires	#	#	#	_____
Asphalt shingles	#	#	#	_____

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach

Stormwater (No Response)

The Public Works Department is responsible for operating and maintaining the town's stormwater system.

[Does the Department have a system for tracking maintenance needs and repair schedules?]

[How often are stormwater outfalls inspected for illicit discharge and for maintenance?]

[How often are catch basins inspected for illicit discharge and for maintenance?]

[How are inspections performed (i.e. superficial from the road, televising with cameras)?]

[What is the system's current capacity? Is it adequate for future residential and/or commercial development?]

Maine Water Company (No Response)

The Biddeford & Saco Division of the Maine Water Company (BSD) provides drinking water to Old Orchard Beach. The Saco River Drinking Water Resource Center serves approximately 40,000 customers in the towns of Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, and Pine Point.

The Resource Center was commissioned by the Maine Water Company in 2022, a state-of-the-art facility designed to replace the original Biddeford Water Treatment Plant, which had been operational since 1884. The $60 million investment enhances the reliability and quality of water services for the region. The center is notable for its sustainable design, including an on-site solar array to generate 100% of its electricity needs and the preservation of over 250 acres of land for public access.

Annual Water Quality Reports are made available to the public, providing transparency for residents and neighboring communities.

Water Supply

The Old Orchard Beach system presently has adequate capacity to meet projected demands within the system under current conditions. The Maine Water Company has developed all the cost-effective aquifer sites closest to the water distribution system. However, the population growth pressures in the community and surrounding area will continue to stress the water supply in Old Orchard Beach into the future. In general, a water system is considered to have an adequate supply if it can meet the following system standards:

- The safe yield of the source of supply should exceed the average-day demand over the projected planning period.
- The safe pumping capacity of the system, with the largest unit out of service, should be greater than or equal to the maximum daily demand.

The ***safe yield*** of the local MWC division meets the current average-day demands in the system. Though the recent droughts and increased demand in the summer continue to stress the water supplies. The Division continues to explore for more water to have an adequate supply to meet projected demands that may occur.

The ***safe pumping capacity*** is defined as the pumped capacity with the largest pump out of service. In addition, the hydraulic capacity of the well system should not exceed an average pumping rate of 16-18 hours per day. This operating scheme allows for a 6 – 8-hour recovery period every 24 hours.

The total pumping capacity of the Old Orchard Beach water supply is about [##] gpm. ([##] gallons per day (gpd), if pumped for a 24-hour period, in the case of an emergency. This is short term in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring large volumes of water.

Distribution Storage

The BSD is projected to have adequate distribution storage volume to meet fire suppression needs in the service area, to provide peak flows and to provide for the emergency needs of the Division. The [Name of reservoir/source] provides adequate storage volume to meet peak-hour and fire flow needs. The need for additional storage in the [list any areas if applicable] has been identified in the most recent system master plan.

System Reliability

Does the Saco River Drinking Water Resource Station have back up power? What are the pumping capabilities of the generators? Is this flow rate sufficient to meet projected conditions in event of a power outage/emergency situation?

Fire Protection

Available fire flows meet or exceed all ISO requirements at specific locations in the distribution system, as determined using the computer simulation model developed for this study. Hydrant spacing also meets ISO requirements.

Distribution System Improvements

Various distribution system improvements have been identified to replace aging pipes, to improve pipe looping, to reduce peak-hour velocities and to remove restrictions in the distribution system. Similarly, these piping improvements have been scheduled and prioritized to take maximum advantage of the Division's annual capital improvement budget.

Regulatory Compliance

The Biddeford & Saco Division of MWC is a fully regulated water utility in the State of Maine. The BSD is required to meet the regulatory requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services regarding public health matters and the Maine Public Utilities Commission regarding water rates and other financial and managerial matters. The Division is also required to be in compliance with all regulations administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A review of the Division's standing indicates that the BSD complies with all regulatory requirements of these agencies and with other applicable state and federal laws governing water utilities.

Wastewater Treatment

The Old Orchard Beach wastewater system is owned and operated by the Town of Old Orchard Beach. The wastewater system consists of eight pump stations and approximately fifty-two miles of gravity sewer and force main pipe. The wastewater treatment facility is located at 24 Manor Road. It is designed to treat 3.5 million gallons per day (gpd). The

treated wastewater is discharged from the facility to the Atlantic Ocean. The system currently serves approximately 95% percent of the population. The collection system runs throughout the urban portion of the community.

The Town has proposed an upgrade project to be completed in 2025, involving extensive upgrades and repairs to the wastewater treatment facility and a number of pump stations. The total cost of the project is estimated at approximately $25,700,000. It will be funded by Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF).

The Town has 9 full-time employees at the treatment plant, including the Superintendent, Operations Manager, and other operators, foremen, and mechanics.

Residential and commercial units are not billed for sewer use, as the town does not have sewer user fees. The Department and its facilities are funded by property taxes. The Division's annual budget was $1,500,000 for 2024.

The plant is designed and licensed to handle an average daily flow of 1.5 million gpd. Peak flow can be over 8.0 million gallons per day. With the current upgrade, the capacity of the plant is sufficient to meet the town's needs as the plant is not operating at its full capacity. To properly address growth over the next 10 years, the full system, including the condition and sizing of pump stations and pipe size as well as what upgrades, should be evaluated.

Education – RSU 23

Public education in Old Orchard Beach is provided by Regional School Unit (RSU) 23, which operates three schools that serve students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. As a small and community-centered district, RSU 23 prioritizes personalized learning, strong community engagement, and safe, inclusive school environments.

Jameson Elementary School, located at 28 Jameson Hill Road, serves students in Pre-K through grade 2. The school focuses on early childhood education, including literacy, math foundations, and social-emotional development. Students then attend Loranger Memorial School, which serves grades 3 through 8 at 148 Saco Avenue. Loranger offers a robust upper-elementary and middle school curriculum, including athletics, extracurricular activities, and academic support services.

High school students attend Old Orchard Beach High School (OOBHS), located at 40 E. Emerson Cummings Boulevard. OOBHS enrolls approximately 195 students and is known for its small class sizes and strong student-to-teacher ratios, which allow for individualized instruction and academic support. The school provides a wide array of academic options including core subjects, Advanced Placement courses, and career readiness programming, as well as arts, athletics, and dual-enrollment opportunities with nearby institutions.

RSU 23 schools provide a broad range of student services including special education, school counseling, social-emotional learning programs, school meals, and transportation.

Enrollment across the district has declined during the past 10 years, though slight declines are projected in line with broader demographic trends in York County. While seasonal population changes do not directly impact enrollment numbers, they can affect the provision of support services to families who relocate temporarily during the summer months or those experiencing housing transitions.

Planned Upgrades/Expansions

RSU 23 has submitted applications to the Maine Department of Education Major Capital School Construction Program Office of School Facilities for all three schools in the district. Statewide rankings for the construction cycle will be communicated by the DOE during 2025.

The district recognizes that consolidation is part of their strategic plan to create more efficient operations and provide modern educational environments while reducing the ongoing costs of maintaining multiple aging facilities.

The district is considering two options associated with consolidation:

> Option 1: Consolidate Jameson and Loranger into a single Pre-K through 8 school (up to 500 students), with high school remaining but renovated and expanded.
>
> Option 2: Consolidate all three schools into a single Pre-K through 12 facility (up to 700 students)

Facility Maintenance and Infrastructure Needs

While the district continues to invest significant funds in maintaining these facilities, the aging infrastructure presents ongoing challenges that require substantial modernization:

Jameson Elementary School

- Age: Built during 1954 with subsequent additions
- Ongoing Challenges:
  *Heating systems from various installation periods require regular maintenance
  *Steam heating system requires more frequent upkeep
  *Window replacement needed for energy efficiency
  *Water infiltration issues during heavy rain require ongoing attention
  *Toilet facilities need ADA compliant upgrades

Loranger Middle School

- Age: built in 1936 with additions from 1964-1999
- Infrastructure Challenges:
  *Heating system from 1967- approaching end of useful life
  *HVAC systems need upgrades- some areas lack adequate ventilation

*Electrical panels require updates for safety
*Some asbestos materials remain from original construction
*Ongoing roof maintenance needed, exterior masonry requires attention
*ADA accessibility improvements needed throughout
*Technology infrastructure limited and does not accommodate modern needs

High School

- Age: Built in 1978
- Maintenance needs:
  *Heating equipment from original 1980 installation nearing replacement time
  *Building requires sprinkler system installation
  *Electrical system updates for safety
  *Ventilation Improvements required in several areas
  *Science labs need modernization and equipment updates
  *ADA compliance improvements needed throughout

A number of challenges present themselves when looking at the future of RSU 23 schools. Some of those challenges are:

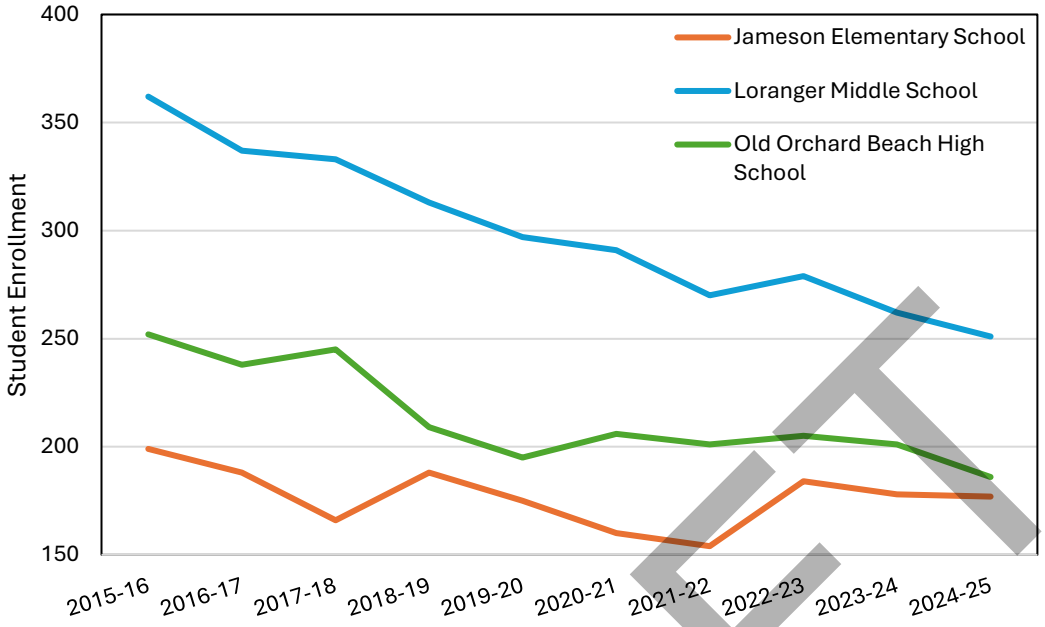
- Finding and retaining professional staff. There are several areas in which we are currently struggling with staffing that can potentially impact the learning experience of our students. Most noticeable are the hiring of Bus Drivers and Educational Technicians to work with the Special Needs population.
- Balancing the needs of students, the impact of taxes on the community, and the current rate of inflation.
- Increasing student enrollment.
- Investment in facilities and programming will be necessary to maintain the quality of education and respond to future community needs.

Figure 5. RSU 23 (Old Orchard Beach) Facilities, 2024

School	Grades	Capacity	Current Enrollment	Current Enrollment % of Capacity	10-Year Average Enrollment
Jameson Elementary School	PreK-2	[##]	188	[##]	176.9
Loranger Middle School	3-8	[##]	266	[##]	299.5
Old Orchard Beach High School	9-12	[##]	201	[##]	213.8

Source: RSU 23 & Maine Department of Education

Figure 6. RSU 23 Student Enrollment Trends by School, 2015-2024



Source: Maine Dept. of Education

Municipal Facilities

Old Orchard Beach maintains several municipal buildings that house core town services, including administrative functions, emergency services, public works, and community programming. These facilities support the delivery of government services to both year-round residents and a significant seasonal population.

Town Hall

Town Hall is located at 1 Portland Avenue, and houses the Town Manager's office, Town Clerk, Finance, Tax Collection, Assessing, Planning, Code Enforcement, and other essential administrative services. The facility is centrally located and accessible. As town operations expand there may be a future need for additional space or modernization of internal systems. Also, the building is aging and needs continual maintenance and upgrades. When planning capital improvements during the next 10 years, Town Hall needs should be considered.

Town Public Works

The town garage is located on Smithwheel Road. The building is heavily used and supports a wide range of operations including snow removal, stormwater management, and road maintenance. Due to the heavy usage, the structure's age, and needs of the department upgrades and possibly a new facility should be considered during the next 10 years.

In addition to the town garage, Public Works is responsible for operating the transfer station. The transfer station accepts brush and leaves only from Old Orchard Beach Residents. Commercial entities may dispose of leaves, grass and yard clippings that originate from Old Orchard Beach locations only. Facility conditions are acceptable.

Wastewater Facility

The wastewater facility is located at 24 Manor Street in Ocean Park, and supports sewer operations for the town. While it is not located within a designated flood zone, portions of the facility are in close proximity of the AE zone – within 100 feet in some areas. This close proximity may present increased vulnerability to future flood risk, particularly in the event of sea level rise or extreme storm events.

The facility is undergoing significant upgrades that should accommodate the town's needs during the next 10 years. Infrastructure beyond the facility (e.g., pipes, pump stations) should be evaluated to ensure systems will continue to run efficiently and can accommodate future growth.

Fire Department

The Old Orchard Beach Fire Department station is located at 136 Saco Avenue. The station supports full-time and per diem staff and houses a growing fleet of rescue and fire apparatuses. Facility improvements or expansion may be needed in the future to address increasing call volume, training requirements, and storage needs.

Police Station

The town's Police Department operates from 16 Emerson Cummings Boulevard. The police station is relatively new, built in 2011, and supports all operations. One need is an annex type building located in the downtown area to provide support for police services during the busy summer months.

Community Food Pantry and Resource Center

The town's Community Pantry and Resource Center is a community-based non-profit located on 155 Saco Avenue and is open to residents three days a week. The Pantry works closely with other community organizations to assist its patrons with a variety of needs. The Pantry also offers many volunteer opportunities.

Other Public Needs

Healthcare

Old Orchard Beach does not host a hospital within its boundaries, but residents and visitors have access to a network of healthcare facilities in the surrounding region. The

town is served by several nearby hospitals, urgent care centers, private practices, and mental health providers located in Biddeford, Saco, Scarborough, and Portland.

The nearest full-service hospital is Southern Maine Health Care (SMHC) in Biddeford, located approximately 15 minutes away. SMHC provides emergency care, inpatient and outpatient services, diagnostic imaging, surgery, and specialty care. Residents may also seek care at Maine Medical Center in Portland—part of the MaineHealth system and the state's largest hospital—which offers comprehensive medical services including trauma care, advanced surgical procedures, and specialized clinics.

In addition to hospital-based care, urgent care clinics, such as those operated by ConvenientMD or InterMed in Saco and Scarborough, offer walk-in treatment for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses. Local primary care providers, dental offices, eye care, and physical therapy services are also accessible within a short drive from town.

Mental and behavioral health services are available through agencies such as Sweetser and Maine Behavioral Healthcare, with regional offices and telehealth options helping to bridge gaps in access. As the local population ages, the demand for geriatric care, home health services, and support for aging in place is expected to increase.

Emergency medical services are provided locally by the Old Orchard Beach Fire-Rescue Department, which offers basic and advanced life support and transports patients to nearby hospitals as needed. The town's central location and proximity to the Maine Turnpike allow for timely ambulance access to regional healthcare facilities.

While core services are accessible, some residents—especially those without personal vehicles, stable housing, or insurance—may face barriers to consistent healthcare access. Addressing healthcare equity, transportation, and coordination with regional providers will be important in planning for the town's future public health needs.

Internet and Broadband

Reliable internet access is increasingly recognized as a vital public utility, essential for education, business, public safety, healthcare, and civic engagement. In Old Orchard Beach, most homes and businesses have access to high-speed internet through private providers, but service quality and affordability may vary by location and provider.

The town is primarily served by major broadband providers such as Spectrum (Charter Communications) and Consolidated Communications, which offer cable and DSL internet service, respectively. While fiber-optic technology is expanding in other regions of Maine, Old Orchard Beach is unlikely to receive federally funded fiber upgrades due to the higher prioritization of rural and underserved areas elsewhere in the state. Private Internet Service Providers (ISPs) do not publicly disclose which locations are scheduled for infrastructure upgrades. However, Spectrum is gradually transitioning parts of its network to DOCSIS 4.0,

a cable standard that will significantly improve broadband speeds and capacity where implemented. The timeline for these upgrades in Old Orchard Beach is currently unknown.

Public Wi-Fi is available at key locations including the Libby Memorial Library and Town Hall. Addressing digital equity, expanding public access points, and advocating for high-speed connectivity upgrades will be critical to supporting remote work, education, and aging in place.

Telecommunications and Energy

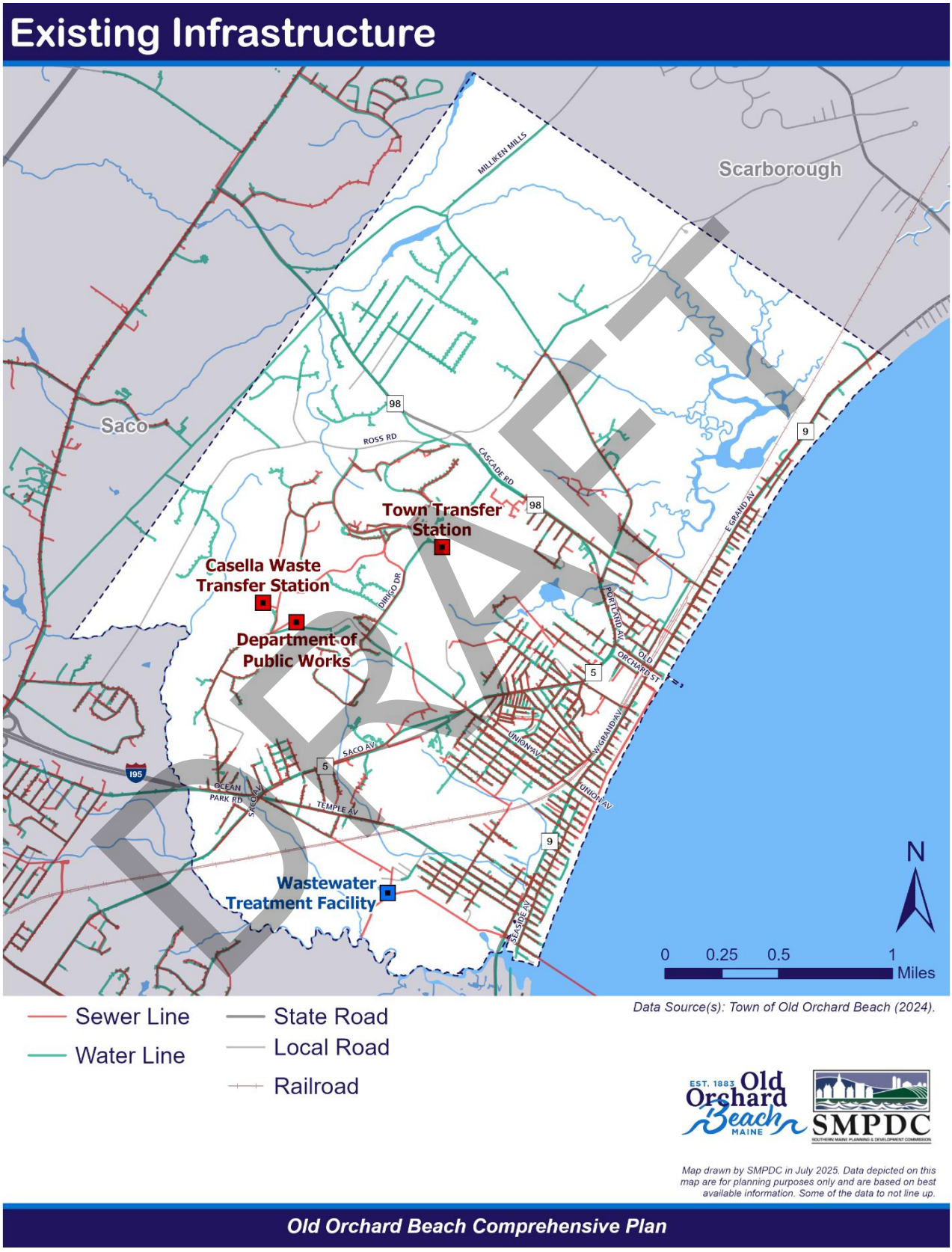
Telecommunications infrastructure is adequate and normal for Maine. During the winter months, and increasing in heavier spring and summer storms, power outages are common. This is normal for most of Maine, but as storm severity increases it may become a larger issue. Three-phase power is available in town.

The popularity and usage of solar energy has increased during the past 10 years. A 4.7-megawatt solar farm was constructed in OOB during 2022. Individual solar units for residential and businesses are also becoming more common.

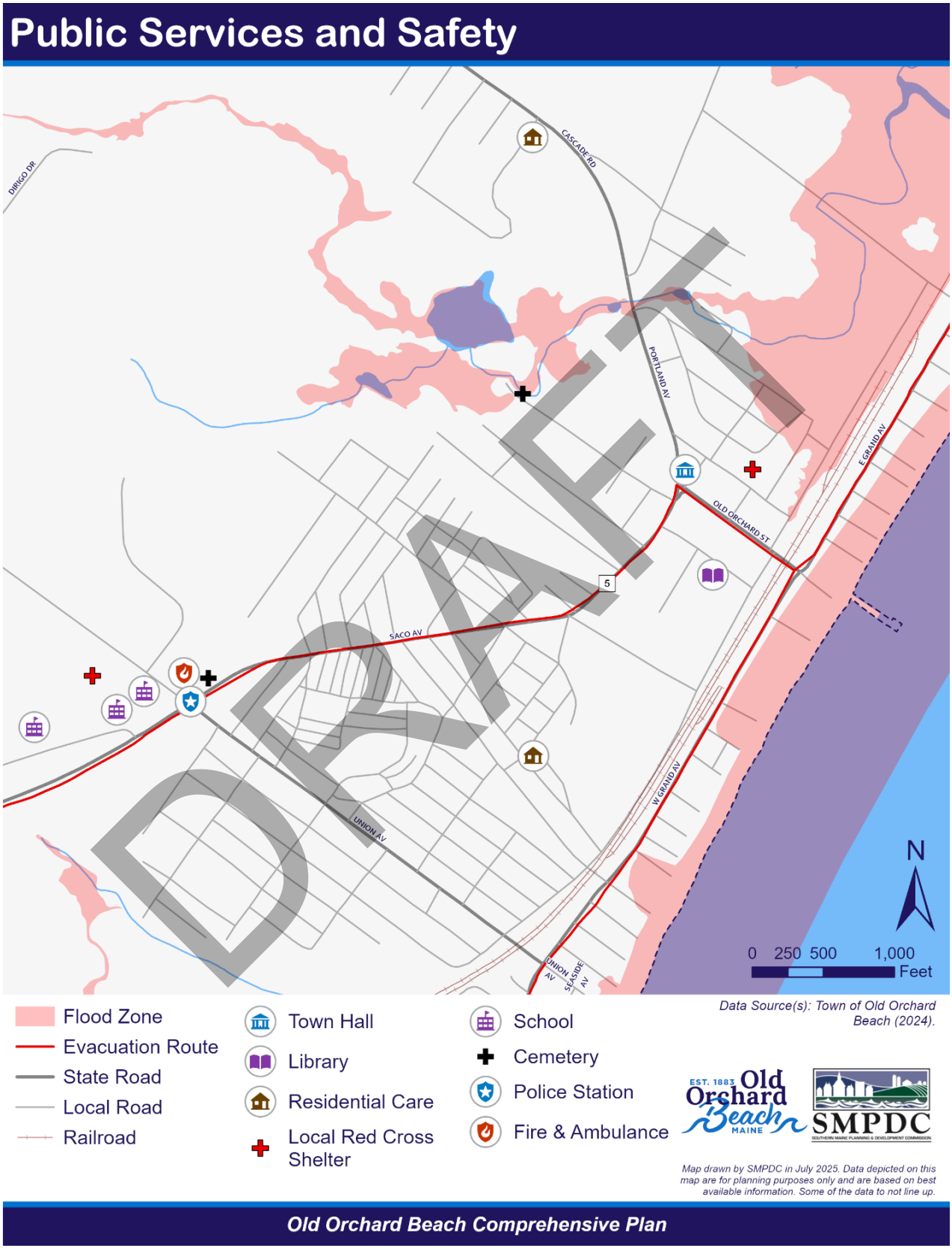
Planning Implications

Municipal facilities and services in Old Orchard Beach are adequate and have been well received by citizens. Capacity issues identified for certain facilities should be a focus of Capital Improvements Planning over the next 10-20 years. Overall, municipal services have been generally responsive to town needs and continue to be executed well. Better coordination between the municipalities and the public infrastructure districts may allow the town to be more involved in potential expansion of the water and sewer system as growth continues.

Map 1: Town of Old Orchard Beach, Existing Infrastructure



Map 2: Town of Old Orchard Beach, Public Services and Safety



Natural Resources, Agriculture & Forestry

Purpose

The town's natural resources provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic values that are critical drivers behind Old Orchard Beach's (OOB's) economy. They are an essential part of OOB's character and historical land use patterns which are still evident today. This chapter describes OOB's critical natural & water, agriculture and forestry resources, assesses whether these resources could be threatened by the impacts of future growth and development, and evaluates the effectiveness of existing efforts to protect and preserve these resources.

Data Highlights

- OOB has a wealth of significant natural resources, ranging from several miles of sandy beaches, coastal sand dunes, and extensive marine and freshwater wetlands.
- Approximately 650 acres of the town's land area are in conservation. These parcels are held under several different agencies and public entities, including the Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge.
- The State of Maine owns 271 acres of the Scarborough Marsh in OOB, which is part of the largest continuous wetland complex in the State.
- OOB's Shoreland Zoning ordinance meets state standards, and in some cases exceeds them - which reflects the value of these resources to the town.
- OOB's natural resources, particularly its beaches, are a critical resource to the town's tourism economy, drawing visitors from as far away as southern New England and Quebec, Canada. While the town's village and pier are notable highlights of the tourists' experience in the community, these economic assets would not be successful without the wide, uninterrupted stretches of sand and open sea for beachgoing enjoyment.
- Approximately 230 acres of land in OOB are enrolled in the tree growth tax program.
- Since 2009, 14 acres of farmland and 130 acres of tree growth parcels have been withdrawn from the current use tax program.

Natural Resource Conditions

Topography

Topographical features have a strong influence on the way a town develops. Steep slopes impact the feasibility of development, water drainage, and scenic views.

Like most of New England, OOB's topography is a result of events that occurred during the last ice age at a time when ancient oceans extended over parts of southern Maine and glaciers scraped, scoured, and coated other areas with glacial tills, sands, and clays.

The overall topographical patterns can be seen in the *Soil & Topography* map following this section.

Land Cover

Much of OOB is developed at suburban densities, though several larger tracts of forest remain intact around Goosefare Brook and the other streams in town. The northern portion of OOB includes 534 acres of the Scarborough Marsh Focus area, an area of statewide ecological significance.

Scenic Views and Areas

The community consists of many scenic views, but they are not aware of any specifically designated scenic areas and views of local importance. Additionally, there are no specifically designated scenic areas and views of regional or statewide importance, however, the State does manage about 270 acres of the Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management area within the northern portion of Town, which is considered to be scenic by many people locally and regionally.

Soils

Since soil can have an impact on most land use activities, it is important to understand their characteristics, capacity, and limitations. Many soils have limitations for development, particularly due to poor drainage. Often these limitations can be overcome through special planning, design, construction and/or maintenance. In other cases, the soil is entirely unsuitable for particular uses.

Soil survey information is useful for town-wide planning. However, a higher intensity soil survey is necessary for site specific planning and development.

Soil Suitability

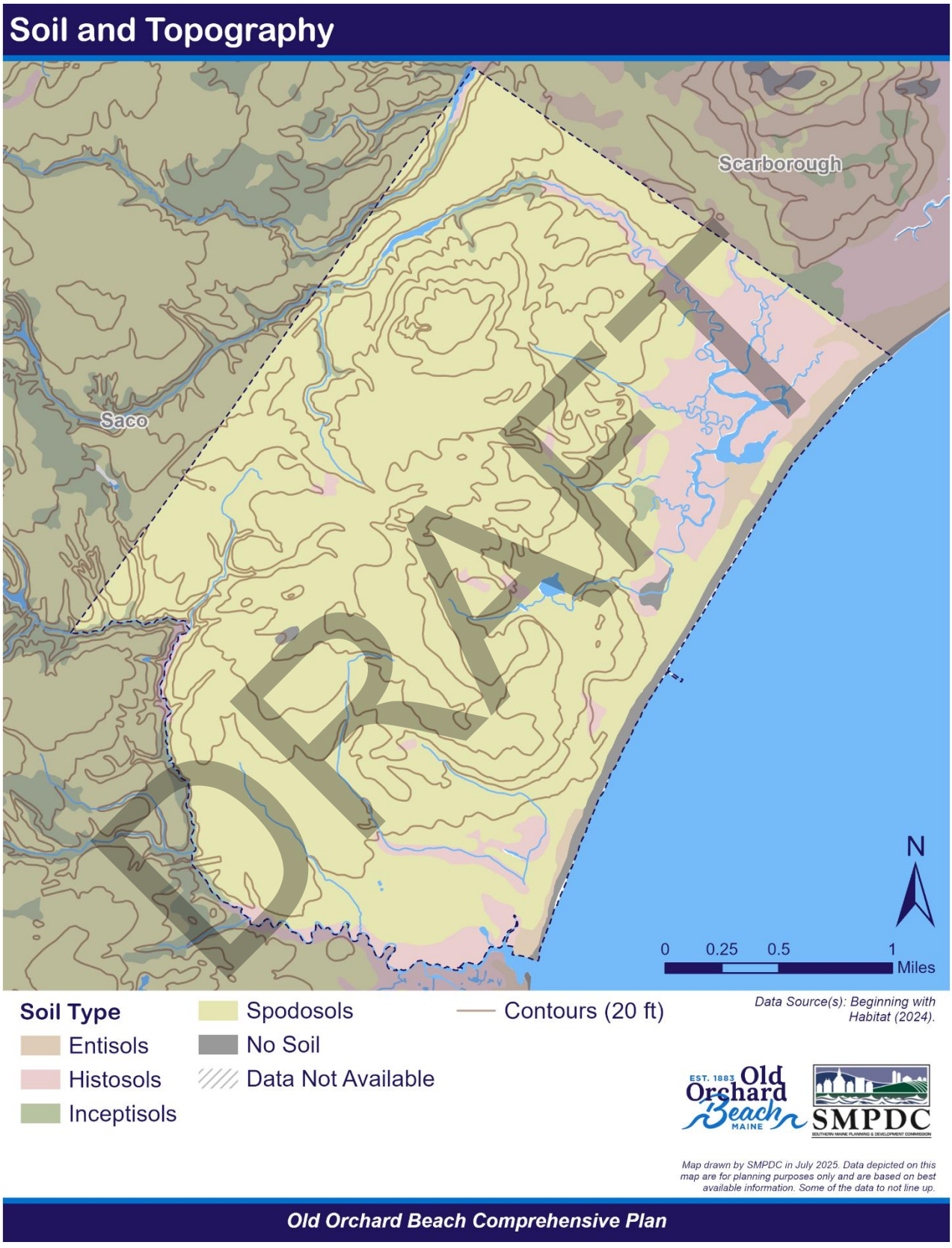
Various soil characteristics, such as depth to water table, depth to bedrock, flooding potential and erosion potential can present serious limitations to development. For example, roads, utilities, and cellar foundations are difficult and expensive to build when bedrock is present.

Perhaps one of the most limiting characteristics is depth to water table. Wet, very poorly drained soils where the water table is at or within nine inches of the surface for some parts of the year are inherently unusable for septic system use and house building. Poorly drained soils (9-18 inches depth to water table) also place severe limits on the use of the land. Frequent fluctuations in water level as well as frost heaving can be damaging to buildings, roads, and the proper functioning of septic systems. These limitations can sometimes be overcome through special design and maintenance.

Moderately well drained soils (18-30 inches to water table) have less severe limitations on land uses, and deep, well drained soils present few problems. The latter have a depth greater than 30 inches to the water table.

Areas with poorly drained and very poorly drained soil, which are typically rich in organic matter, can be found throughout OOB. The largest concentration of poorly drained soils is in the northeast corner of town, most likely associated with the Nonesuch River/Scarborough Marsh complex.

Map 1: Soil and Topography



Water Resource Conditions

Surface Water

The town's surface water resources include two small ponds, numerous brooks, streams and wetlands, and its Gulf of Maine shoreline. OOB's drinking water is sourced from the Saco River and is provided by the Biddeford-Saco Division of the Maine Water Company. The *Watersheds and Waterbodies* map following this section depicts locations and extents of the significant surface water resources and wetlands in the community.

Most of OOB lies within the Goosefare Brook and Scarborough River watersheds. As its name suggests, the latter drains into Saco Bay through the Scarborough River Estuary, whereas Goosefare Brook drains directly into the bay. Most of the town lies within the Goosefare Brook watershed, while a smaller section of town to the North lies within the Scarborough River watershed. Both watersheds are considered Priority Impaired by Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The Goosefare Brook Watershed is on the Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List as "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Priority Water," although Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), Bacteria TMDL, and Highway Access-related Development Threat are also attributed as reasons for its listing. This list identifies watersheds that are important to public and ecological health. The *Watersheds and Waterbodies* map following this section shows the divides between drainage areas throughout town. Additionally, a large segment of the tidal reach of Goosefare Brook is protected by the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, which was established in 1966 by the United States Congress to preserve migratory bird habitat and waterfowl migration routes associated with southern Maine's coastal estuaries.

OOB is committed to preserving safe water quality conditions in its waterways and Saco Bay. The town has developed and laid out strategies for reducing surface water pollutants in its 2022-2026 Stormwater Management Plan. As an MS4 Community, OOB is required to follow certain policies and enact specific stormwater regulations. The town's Public Works Department has taken actions to enact those strategies which include the regular cleaning and improvement of catch basins and other drainage infrastructure, street sweeping, and offering free services for household hazardous waste disposal. The town has also implemented ordinances and infrastructure to reduce the accumulation of pet waste on its beaches, streets and sidewalks, as well as ordinances and storm drain messages to prevent the dumping of non-stormwater products into storm drains.

In its mission to promote water resource protection, OOB is a partner of the Interlocal Stormwater Working Group, a coalition of municipalities and MS4 communities in the Greater Portland and Saco areas who work together to address stormwater pollutants. The town has also partnered with Maine Healthy Beaches to monitor and identify sources of

enterococci in Goosefare Brook estuary and beaches over time as part of its implementation of the Goosefare Brook Watershed-based Management Plan (WMP).

Rivers, Streams & Ponds

OOB has two ponds, Milliken Mills Pond and Milliken Pond, both of which fall within the Mills Brook watershed. The table below contains information on the physical characteristics of these water bodies. The Goosefare Brook drains directly into the Gulf of Maine, while the Cascade Brook and Jones Creek join the Scarborough River Estuary before reaching the ocean. Sections of Mill Brook also drain into Milliken Mill Pond and a southern branch of Jones Creek drains into Milliken Pond.

Figure 1: Ponds in OOB

Name	Area (acres)	Perimeter (miles)	Mean/Max Depth	Fishery Type	% 500-m buffer in developed land cover
Milliken Mills Pond	5	0.7	4	10	Coldwater
Milliken Pond			*No data*	*No data*	*No data*

Source: Lakes of Maine, Lake Stewards of Maine, 2024

The State of Maine has had a water classification system since the 1950's, which helps to designate potential uses and regulations of waterbodies, and therefore the corresponding water quality that should be maintained for each body based on those uses. An overview of the surface water classifications is below.

Maine DEP Surface Water Classification

Class A: Water at the highest quality potentially acceptable for water supply after filtration.

Class B: Water of the second highest quality acceptable for swimming and other recreational uses and is potentially a water supply after treatment.

Class C: Water of the third highest quality potentially acceptable for boating or industrial water supply following treatment.

Most rivers and streams in OOB are classified as Class B for water quality. The tidal waters of Goosefare Brook and its tidal tributaries are classified as Class SC, the 3rd highest classification for estuarine and marine waters. For more information on the classification system, visit the Maine Department of Environmental Protection website.

Unfortunately, there are no biomonitoring sites in OOB's waterbodies, so there is limited data on this subject available. The town may consider partnering with Maine DEP or Lakes

of Maine to establish monitoring sites in its waters. There is a nearby monitoring site along the Goosefare brook in Saco upstream of where the brook meets the town boundary. This site was last sampled in 2015 and was determined to meet standards for Class C water quality, which signifies relatively low but good water quality and few limitations on activities. Updated biomonitoring data is periodically made available online by the Maine DEP Biological Monitoring Program.

Threats to Surface Water Resources

Streams and ponds are not bound by town boundaries, so land use planning along these waterbodies is impacted by upstream communities.

There are two types of pollution that threaten surface water: point source and non-point source. Point source pollution is from a known single source, such as a pipe discharging into a stream, which impacts air or water quality. One known source of point pollution in OOB is the town wastewater treatment facility, which discharges treated wastewater directly into the Gulf of Maine. The town's Wastewater Treatment Facility is considered a major wastewater outfall by Maine DEP. The town developed its Wastewater Treatment Facility & Pump Stations Upgrade Project to upgrade existing wastewater infrastructure that has served its useful life and is in poor condition and in need of immediate upgrade as part of efforts to ensure the effective operation of this infrastructure. Additionally, the Town's Public Works Department has an active catch basin cleaning program which helps to prevent point source pollution as well.

Non-point source pollution comes from a general source that impacts air or water quality. This form of pollution is difficult to trace to a single identifiable location. Non-point source water pollution is caused by rainfall, snowmelt or tidal flooding moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, such as fertilizers and other agricultural additives, pet waste, or soil erosion, and eventually deposits them into a receiving waterbody.

Non-point sources of pollution are difficult to study and monitor. They are likely to occur where there are large areas of impervious surfaces and development, or where land use is being converted from undeveloped or open space to developed areas. These effects can be minimized with thoughtful planning of development with use of best management practices (BMPs) before, during and after construction throughout the watershed and shoreline vicinity. OOB is required to follow certain policies and enact stormwater regulations because of its status as a MS4 community. These stormwater regulations help to mitigate sources of water pollution in the community.

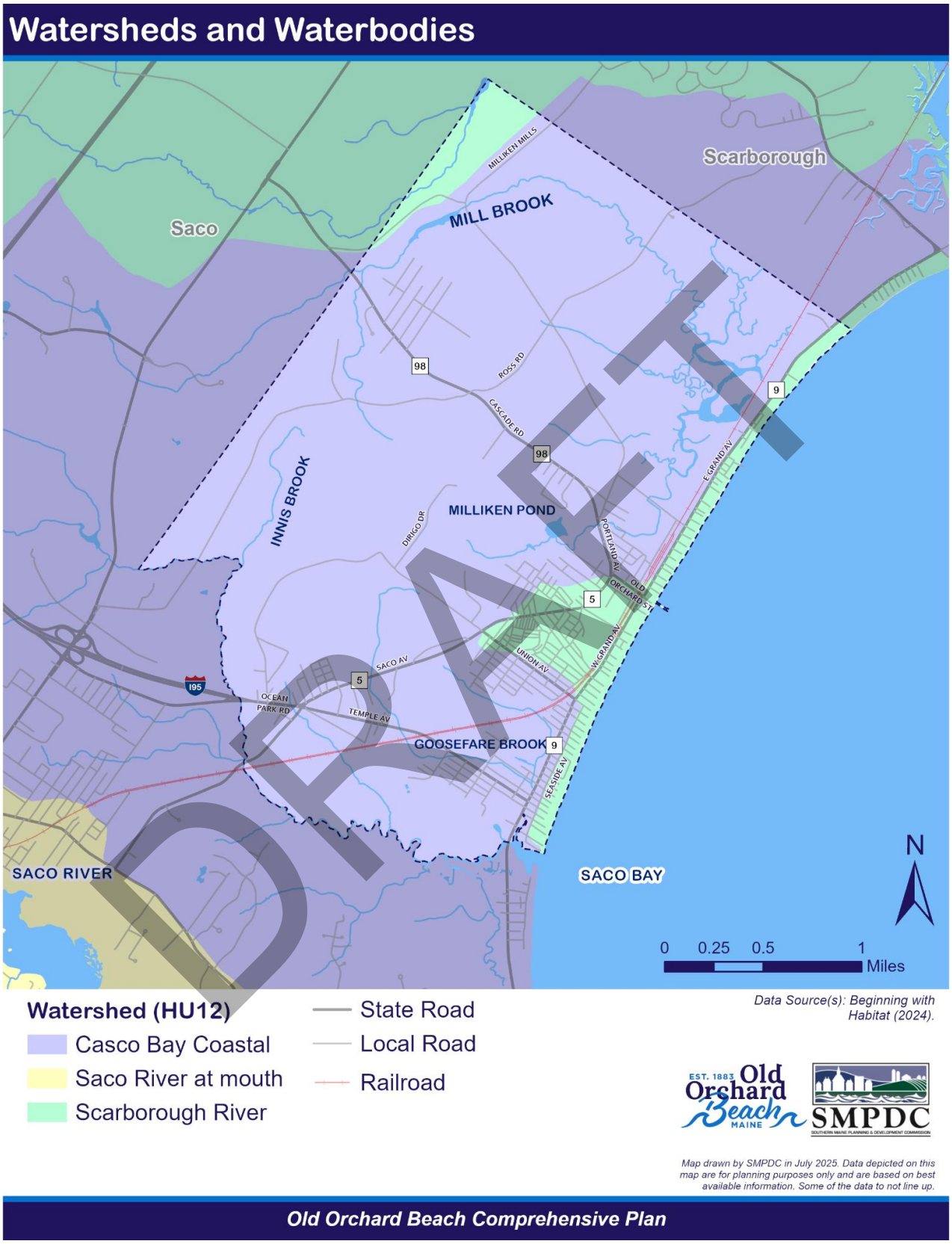
The major non-point source threat to water quality for most freshwater and marine waterbodies is increased nutrient levels, namely phosphorus and nitrogen, respectively. Phosphorus and other nutrients can be picked up in OOB from lawn fertilizers, pet waste, and soil erosion. Excess nutrient levels can cause eutrophication, or the overgrowth of

plants and algae which decreases oxygen, degrading water quality and killing off other wildlife. The Maine DEP utilizes a per acre phosphorus allocation to help track and regulate how much phosphorus each acre of land in a watershed is tolerated to discharge by stormwater runoff when the vicinity of a waterbody is developed. Phosphorus allocations range from about 0.02 lb./acre/year for very sensitive lakes in high growth areas to 0.15 lb./acre/year for less sensitive lakes in very low growth areas. The total phosphorus exported by a development can be limited by limiting impervious surfaces in areas near lakes and ponds and implementing Low Impact Development (LID) Practices.

Maine DEP actively monitors and assesses the water quality of the town's beaches as part of the Maine Healthy Beaches Program. This program uses a Beach Action Value (BAV) as a safety threshold for Enterococcus bacteria in marine waters of 104 MPN/100mL. MHB recommends posting an Elevated Bacteria Advisory when results are ≥ BAV. Land use regulations and policies such as Low Impact Development (LID) Practices can impact the amount and source of pollution entering local waterbodies. Additionally, local regulations/ordinances adopted related to waterbody protection include Shoreland Zoning Regulations, the Post Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance, and the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance. Another common threat posed to waterbody health is the spread of invasive species, although there are no documented invasive species in the town's waterbodies.

Another common threat posed to waterbody health is the spread of invasive species. Fortunately, as of January 2025, Maine DEP's map of Invasive Aquatic Plants shows no known invasive species in OOB. Before the release of this map, the Town collaborated with MaineDEP to help prevent the spread of invasive vegetation species, such as Phragmites, in the many wetland systems in the community.

Map 2: Watersheds & Waterbodies



Wetlands

Wetlands are an important natural resource, often identified by non-permeable soils, water table at or near the surface, and the presence of certain vegetation. Wetlands are very difficult areas to develop, given the need for expensive infill and engineering. At the same time, it is important to keep these areas undisturbed due to their many important environmental functions.

Key Environmental Functions of Wetlands:

- Act as groundwater recharge and cleansing areas
- Provide habitats for rare and endangered plants and animals
- Maintain lake and river quality by controlling runoff of nutrients
- Store and slowly discharge high water, thus reducing the potential for floods
- Sediment retention areas controlling agricultural runoff
- Provide visual and open-space value

Several laws regulate the activities that take place in or around wetlands. On the national level, the United States Clean Water Act gives authority to the Army Corps of Engineers to regulate the dredging and filling of wetlands. Maine has two laws that provide protection for wetlands. The first is regulated by The Maine DEP, and monitors the dredging, filling, draining, and construction in or over, or within 100 feet of any wetland. There is also a requirement under the Maine State Subdivision Law that states that all wetlands are to be depicted on subdivision plans.

The Maine Beginning with Habitat Program recommends referring to the National Wetlands Inventory, available on the online map viewer. These maps are not a replacement for individual wetland surveys but can direct resource management efforts to areas of highest probability for occurrences.

The location and expanse of wetlands present a key impact on the town's options for growth and future development. Land use regulation and policy can have an impact on mitigating flood risk to new and existing development and on the health and functionality of wetlands. The wetlands located within town can be seen on the ***Wetlands*** map following this section. As depicted in this map, there are a variety of wetland types in the community, including estuarine and marine deepwater, estuarine and marine wetland, freshwater emergent wetland, and freshwater forested/shrub wetland.

Wetlands and Floodplains

The town has identified its floodplains and established floodplain management ordinances in accordance with state and federal standards. Fortunately, OOB does not have areas identified as "A" flood zones or special hazard flood areas. Natural wetlands are key to floodplain management. The Nature Conservancy's *Land Conservation Priorities for the Protection of Coastal Water Resources* (2016) identified areas across the watershed with

high flood storage capacities that reduce flood risks to downstream infrastructure. OOB has a substantial area identified as providing this flood storage function, a large portion of which are wetlands, as depicted in the map below.

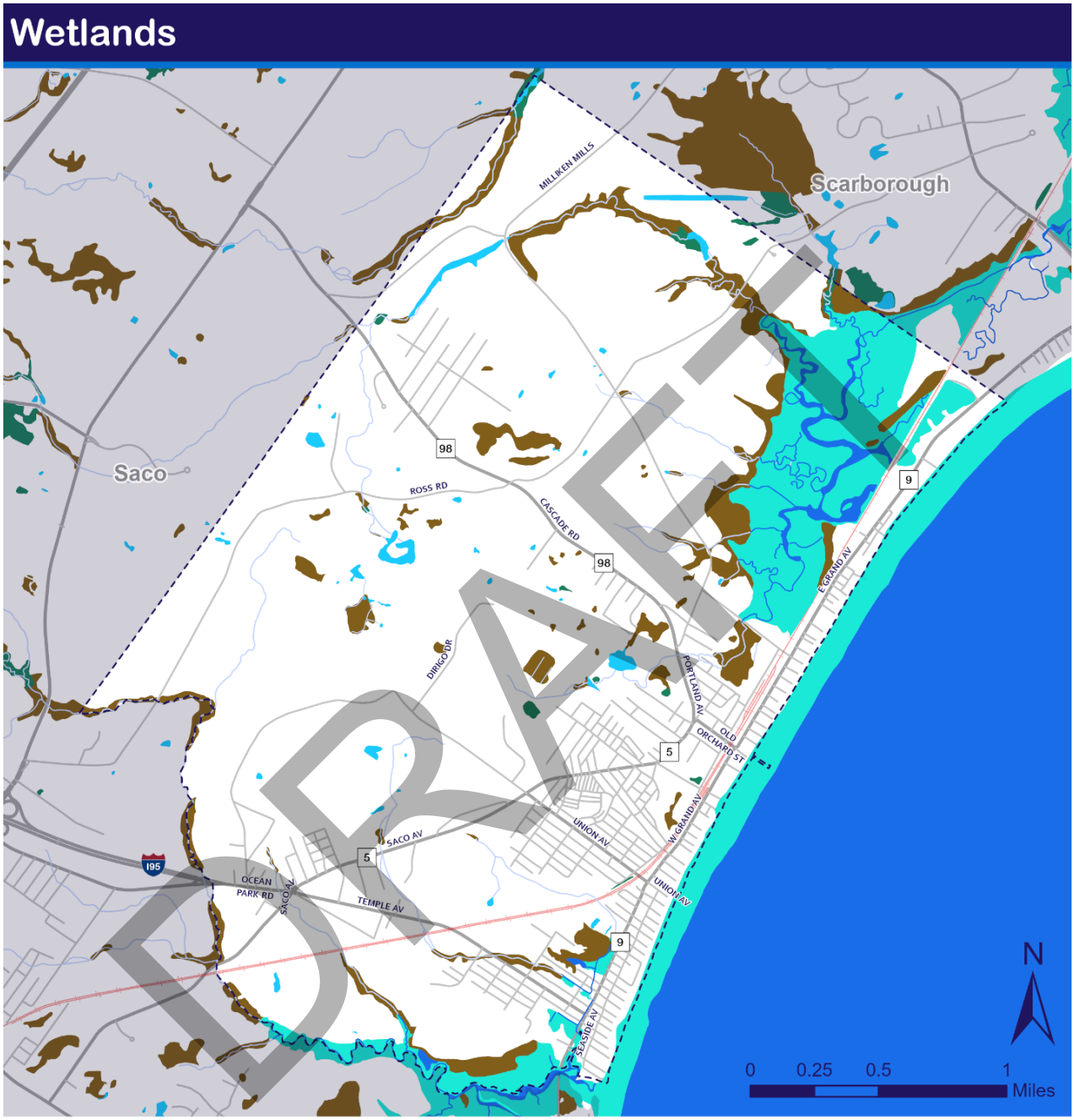
There is a large wetland complex fed by the Jones Creek and Mill Brook systems in the northern area of OOB. This area includes the Surfside neighborhood and the vicinity of the Scarborough town line. It is believed that this wetland was created as a result of human activities years ago that caused an obstruction at the old Snows canning facility, and more recently with a dam approved by the United States Army Corps of Engineers on the back side of the Bayley's Campground Resort. This wetland is now part of the Scarborough Marsh Focus area of statewide ecological significance, the largest continuous wetland complex in the State. 534 acres of this complex are in the community, with about 270 acres owned by the State of Maine as conservation land.

Wetland Regulations

The Mandatory State Shoreland Zoning Act, Title 38 MRSA Sections 435-448, requires that municipalities regulate the area of land around wetlands. Currently, only high value wetlands of 10 or more acres are offered Resource Protection Zoning. This requires a 250-foot setback for dwellings and septic systems. Other land uses, such as parking areas and clearing of vegetation are reviewed at time of subdivision within a buffer of 250 feet. Wetlands under two acres require a 25-foot setback. Currently, the Maine DEP allows up to 10,000 feet to be filled in wetlands with a Permit-By-Rule application process. They do not recognize town data or rules in their permit system. Wetlands of 10 acres or more, which are not part of a great pond or river, are protected by the state's Natural Resource Protection Act, Title 38 MRSA Sections 490-A through 480-S.

OOB's Resource Protection (RP) overlay district applies protections to areas within the shoreland zone where development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This overlay district includes areas within 250 feet of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, salt marshes and salt meadows which are rated "moderate" or "high" value waterfowl and wading bird habitat by the Maine IF&W.

Map 3: Wetlands



Ground Water

The Maine Water Company provides public water to many residents of OOB, while some homes are served by private wells. Continued assurance of plentiful, clean water is dependent on wise management of the resource. Aquifers (underground geologic formations which contain usable amounts of water) can be contaminated by many types of land uses that discharge pollutants into or onto the ground. The primary sources of ground water contamination in Maine are malfunctioning septic tanks, leaking underground fuel storage tanks, salt leachate from salt/sand stockpiles, and leachate from landfill refuse. Certain land uses such as automobile graveyards/ junkyards, agricultural use of pesticides and herbicides and certain industrial activities also have potential for contaminating ground water. There are no aquifers present in OOB, therefore there are no particular threats to aquifer drinking water supplies.

Ground Water Quality

As noted above in this chapter, OOB is an MS4 community and is required to follow certain policies and enact specific stormwater regulations. These regulations help to protect groundwater quality throughout the community.

Threats to Ground Water

Groundwater can be contaminated by many types of land uses that discharge pollutants into or onto the ground. The primary sources of ground water contamination in Maine are malfunctioning septic tanks, leaking underground fuel storage tanks, salt leachate from salt/sand stockpiles, and leachate from landfill refuse. Certain land uses such as automobile graveyards/ junkyards, agricultural use of pesticides and herbicides and certain industrial activities also have potential for contaminating ground water.

Future residential, commercial, and industrial development can impact ground water through onsite wastewater treatment, improper storage of hazardous materials and improper ground surface treatments.

In Maine, PFAS is an emerging issue and threat to ground water. “PFAS” refer to a group of man-made chemicals known as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. PFAS has been widely used in household products and industrial settings for decades. PFAS have been found in Maine in a number of places including agricultural sites, drinking water supplies, surface waters, landfills, wastewater, sludge and septage spreading sites, and remediation and cleanup sites. In general, PFAS can enter the environment through direct releases from specific PFAS-containing products (e.g., certain firefighting foams), from various waste streams (sludge and septage when land applied, leachate from unlined landfills), and other pathways still being researched. In Maine, sludge and septage that may contain PFAS were applied to various places for nutrient value. This activity was licensed because at the time little was known about PFAS as an emerging contaminant. Research at the state level

continues, as several laws have been passed in recent years to investigate the extent of the issue.

Coastal Resources

Coastline

The Atlantic Ocean, specifically Saco Bay within the Gulf of Maine, forms the eastern border of OOB. The town's shoreline consists of three of the seven miles of sandy beach shared with neighboring towns, which is the longest continuous stretch in Maine's otherwise rocky coastline. Of the nine beaches made up by this area, the town's shoreline includes parts of Surfside Beach, Ocean Park, and most famously, Old Orchard Beach. All three represent a critical resource for the town's tourism-based economy. While the town's village and pier are notable highlights of the tourists' experience in OOB, these economic assets would not be successful without the wide, uninterrupted stretches of sand and open sea for beachgoing enjoyment. More on this topic is discussed in the "Marine Resources" chapter of this plan.

Dunes & Beaches

OOB is famous for its dune-backed beaches, which serve critical ecological, economic, and protective functions for the town. By providing suitable nesting sites, sand dunes serve as essential habitat for endangered bird species such as piping plovers and least terns. Coastal sand dunes provide valuable protection during storms by disrupting tidal action and reducing flooding and erosion risks, which helps protect coastal infrastructure and property values. Development pressure, sea-level rise and recreational overuse all pose serious threats to the stability of dune ecosystems. Extreme storm events like those seen in the winter of 2023-2024 contribute to dune deterioration through erosion.

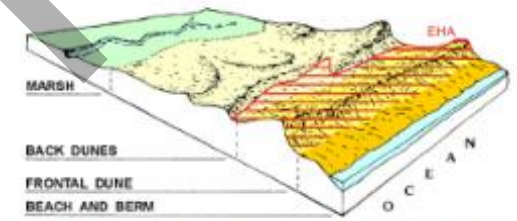
Map 4: Dune Geology (Maine Geological Survey)

Erosion hazard area (EHA). Any portion of the coastal sand dune system that can reasonably be expected to become part of a coastal wetland in the next 100 years due to cumulative and collective changes in the shoreline from: (1) historical long-term erosion; (2) short-term erosion resulting from a 100-year storm; or (3) flooding in a 100-year storm after a two-foot rise in sea level, or any portion of the coastal sand dune system that is mapped as an AO flood zone by the effective FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map, which is presumed to be located in an Erosion Hazard Area unless the applicant demonstrates based upon site-specific information, as determined by the department, that a coastal wetland will not result from either (1), (2), or (3) occurring on an applicant's lot given the expectation that an AO-Zone, particularly if located immediately behind a frontal dune, is likely to become a V-Zone after 2 feet of sea level rise in 100 years (Ch. 355,

D1 Frontal dune. The frontal dune is the area consisting of the most seaward ridge of sand and gravel and includes former frontal dune areas modified by development. Where the dune has been altered from a natural condition, the dune position may be inferred from the present beach profile, dune positions along the shore, and regional trends in dune width. The frontal dune may or may not be vegetated with dune vegetation and may consist in part or in whole of artificial fill. In areas where smaller ridges of sand are forming in front of an established dune ridge, the frontal dune may include more than one ridge. The frontal dune includes former frontal dune areas modified by development. Where the dune has been modified by structures, the dune position may be inferred from the present beach profile, dune positions along the shore, and regional trends in dune width.

D2 Back dunes. Back dunes consist of sand dunes and eolian sand flats that lie landward of the frontal dune or a low energy beach. Back dunes include those areas containing artificial fill over back dune sands or over wetlands adjacent to the coastal sand dune system.

EXPLANATION OF MAP UNITS



Maine Geological Survey
Address: 93 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333
Telephone: 207-287-2801 E-mail: mgs@maine.gov
Home page: www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/

Coastal Sand Dune Geology
Old Orchard Beach, East Grand Avenue, Old Orchard Beach, Maine
by Peter A. Slovinsky and Stephen N. Dickson
Open-File Map No. 23-96
2023
This map supersedes Open-File Map No. 11-115

Maine Geological Survey
Address: 93 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333
Telephone: 207-287-2801 E-mail: mgs@maine.gov
Home page: www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/

Coastal Sand Dune Geology
Surfside Beach, Old Orchard Beach, Maine
by Peter A. Slovinsky and Stephen N. Dickson
Open-File Map No. 23-97
2023
This map supersedes Open-File Map No. 11-116

Maine Geological Survey
Address: 93 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333
Telephone: 207-287-2801 E-mail: mgs@maine.gov
Home page: www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/

Coastal Sand Dune Geology
Grand Beach, Surfside Beach, Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough, Maine
by Peter A. Slovinsky and Stephen N. Dickson
Open-File Map No. 23-98
2023
This map supersedes Open-File Map No. 11-117

Agricultural and Forestry Resource Conditions

Maine has a long history of small-scale farming and agriculture. Landowners in the vicinity of OOB have had a tradition of part-time subsistence operations and sale of surplus goods, along with small-scale commercial farms who sell to local markets. In addition to economic benefits, farmland and forested areas provide scenic value, wildlife habitat, and passive recreational opportunities for area residents. Forests can harbor wetlands and include riparian zones, which are critical for maintaining the health of aquifers and groundwater. Forests can also stabilize soils by preventing erosion and are a source of lumber, a critical natural resource in Maine. This section will provide an overview of land within the town dedicated to agricultural and forestry purposes, including conserved lands, as well as details on how such land is regulated on both a local and state level.

Agricultural Resources

The USDA Census of Agriculture shows that, through a period of relatively rapid growth, the amount of land in farms and the value of farms stayed relatively consistent in York County. The 5-year difference between 2017 and 2022 is stark though, with total land in farms less than 2002 levels.

Figure 2: York Country Agricultural Statistics

Year	Number of Farms	Land in Farms (Acres)	Average Size of Farm (Acres)	Market Value of Production	Average Value of Production per Farm
2002	685	57,219	84	$18,750,000	$27,372
2012	779	64,512	83	$27,451,000	$35,239
2017	735	61,039	83	$28,551,000	$38,846
2022	689	50,741	74	$31,620,000	$45,892

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Farmland Soils

While there is no significant agricultural industry in the community, understanding the general soil composition of the town is important for the continued preservation of agricultural uses. Factors that predict prime farmland are related to the landscape (*e.g.* slope and associated water drainage) and soil health, including physical structure, moisture content, percent organic matter, and nutrient availability. Farmland of statewide importance produces high yields of crops when treated and managed according to optimal farming methods. Prime farmland is defined as land that has the best combination of

physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for cropland, pastureland, rangeland, and forest land.

Figure 3: Farmland Soils in OOB

Type	Prime Farmland	Farmland of Statewide Importance
Total Acres	99	1,997
Percent of Town Area	2%	41%

Source: Maine Beginning with Habitat Data

According to Beginning with Habitat data, approximately 99 acres (2% of town area) of the town consist of Prime Farmland, while 1,997 acres (42% of town area) are considered Farmland of Statewide Importance. As depicted in the *Farmland Soils* map, most prime farmland in OOB is clustered in the center of town, adjacent to the Old Orchard Beach Ballpark with another small section located along Route 98 just north of Ross Road. There are areas of farmland of state importance scattered throughout the community as well.

One way to estimate the total agricultural land in use is through the acreage in town held under the Farmland and Open Space Act. This act allows owners of farmland property tax relief for parcels over five contiguous acres if they meet certain conditions such as a minimum farm-derived income. According to the State of Maine Revenue Services, OOB has zero parcels enrolled in the Farmland or Open Space current use programs. As the graph on page 19 shows, OOB had 205 acres enrolled in the Farmland program as of 2014, but those lands have since been withdrawn.

Community Agriculture Programs

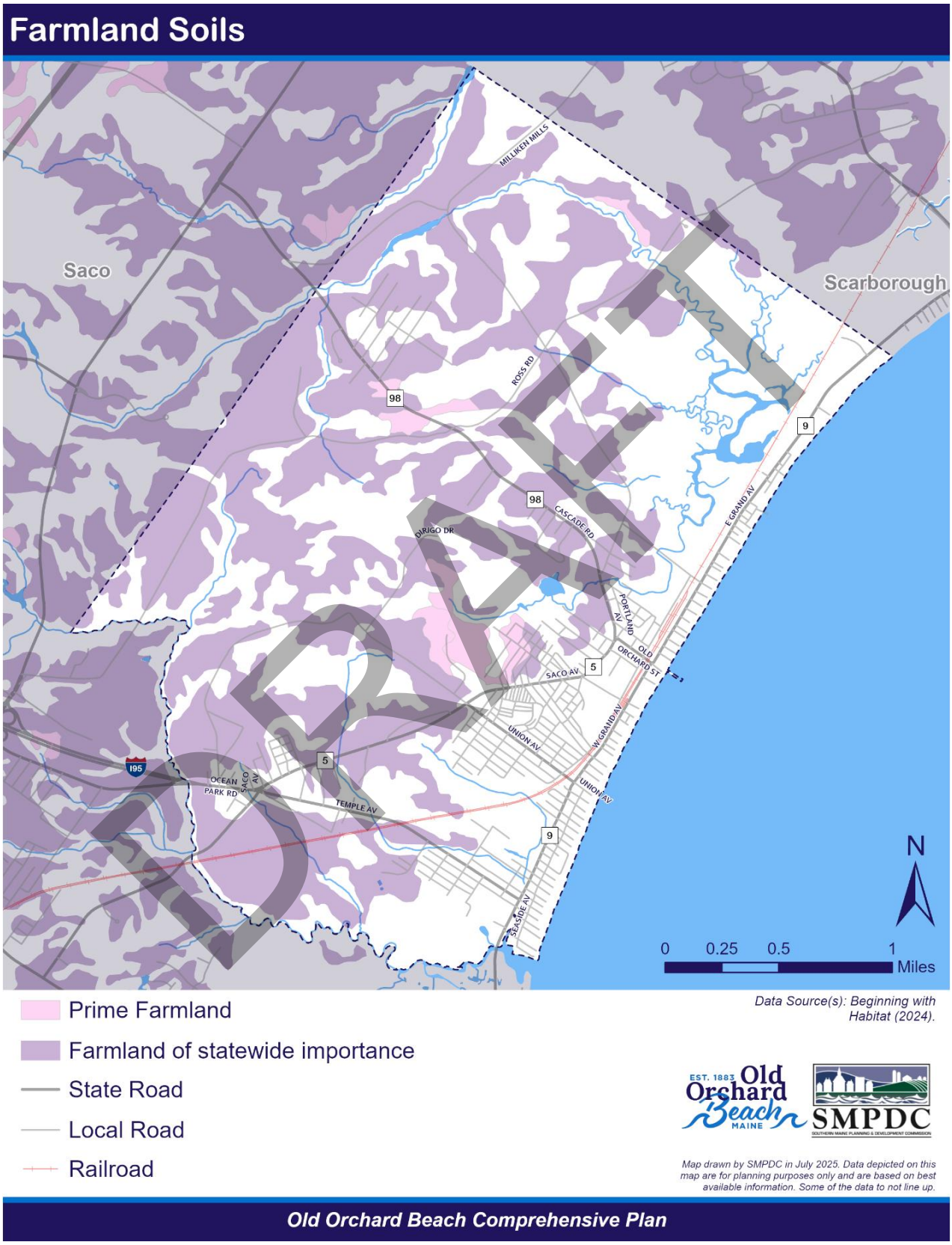
Farmers' Markets

The Ballpark Entertainment Stadium hosts a Farmers' Market every Sunday from 8 am to 1 pm. There's also a seasonal Farmers' Market in Saco on Saturdays from 8 am to noon at the Saco Valley Shopping Center.

Community Gardens

The Town's Recreation Department manages the OOB Community Garden, located at The Ballpark. The garden consists of 51 plots, each approximately 10-feet by 10-feet. More information can be found on the Recreation Department's website.

Map 5: Farmland Soils



Forest Resources

Most open lands in OOB are forested, with the largest tracts found around Guild Park in the southeast and in the northwest section of the town. While tree growth and forestry are not as public-facing agriculture as local farms, they are valued as a traditional industry statewide. While there is no significant forestry industry in the community, the community does have a few isolated areas of Prime Forestry Soils located at the Ball Park and Camelot Circle which total roughly 24 acres, or about 0.5% of the town area.

Map 6: Forest Soils & Land Cover

Timber Harvesting

The Maine Forest Practices Act requires that landowners notify the Maine Bureau of Forestry of any commercial timber harvests and requires that harvests meet specific standards for activities adjacent to water bodies, clearcutting, and forest regeneration. Data collected in accordance with the Maine Forest Practices Act can be helpful in identifying overall trends but should be used with caution due to differences in reporting by individuals.

The following table depicts the annual timber harvesting activity in OOB and provides a breakdown of the types of harvesting strategies— selection harvesting, shelterwood harvesting, clear-cut harvesting and change of land use. The total acreage harvested between 2012 and 2021 was 278 acres, 56 acres less than the 334 acres harvested between 2002 and 2011. Additionally, there were 69 acres harvested for changes in land use between the five years between 2017 and 2021, compared to 73 acres harvested in the 10 years between 2002 and 2011. Timber harvesting may have declined in OOB because 148 acres of forest have been cleared for a change of land use in the last 20 years, and as forests become fragmented by development it can be more difficult to harvest timber economically.

Figure 4: Timber Harvesting in OOB

Time Period	Selection Harvest (Acres)	Shelter-wood Harvest (Acres)	Clear-cut Harvest (Acres)	Change of Land Use (Acres)	Total (Acres)	Number of Reports
1991-2001	160	0	0	0	160	7
2002-2011	241	20	0	73	334	10
2012-2016	61	25	0	6	92	6
2017-2021	107	10	0	69	186	9
Total	569	55	0	148	772	32

Source: Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry - Maine Forest Service

Community Forestry

OOB does not currently have any community forestry programs. Additionally, the community does not have any town or public woodlands under management, however, there are areas that may be eligible, so it could be worth exploring in the future.

Threats to Farm and Forest Land

The primary threat to farm and forest land is extensive development. Both the Farmland and Open Space tax relief and the Tree Growth taxation law provide a financial incentive for landowners to keep their land in its current use, rather than developing it, and the town may consider continued education and awareness of these opportunities. As of 2023, OOB had 6 properties with a total of 231 acres enrolled in the Tree Growth tax program, and 0 enrolled in the Farmland or Open Space programs.

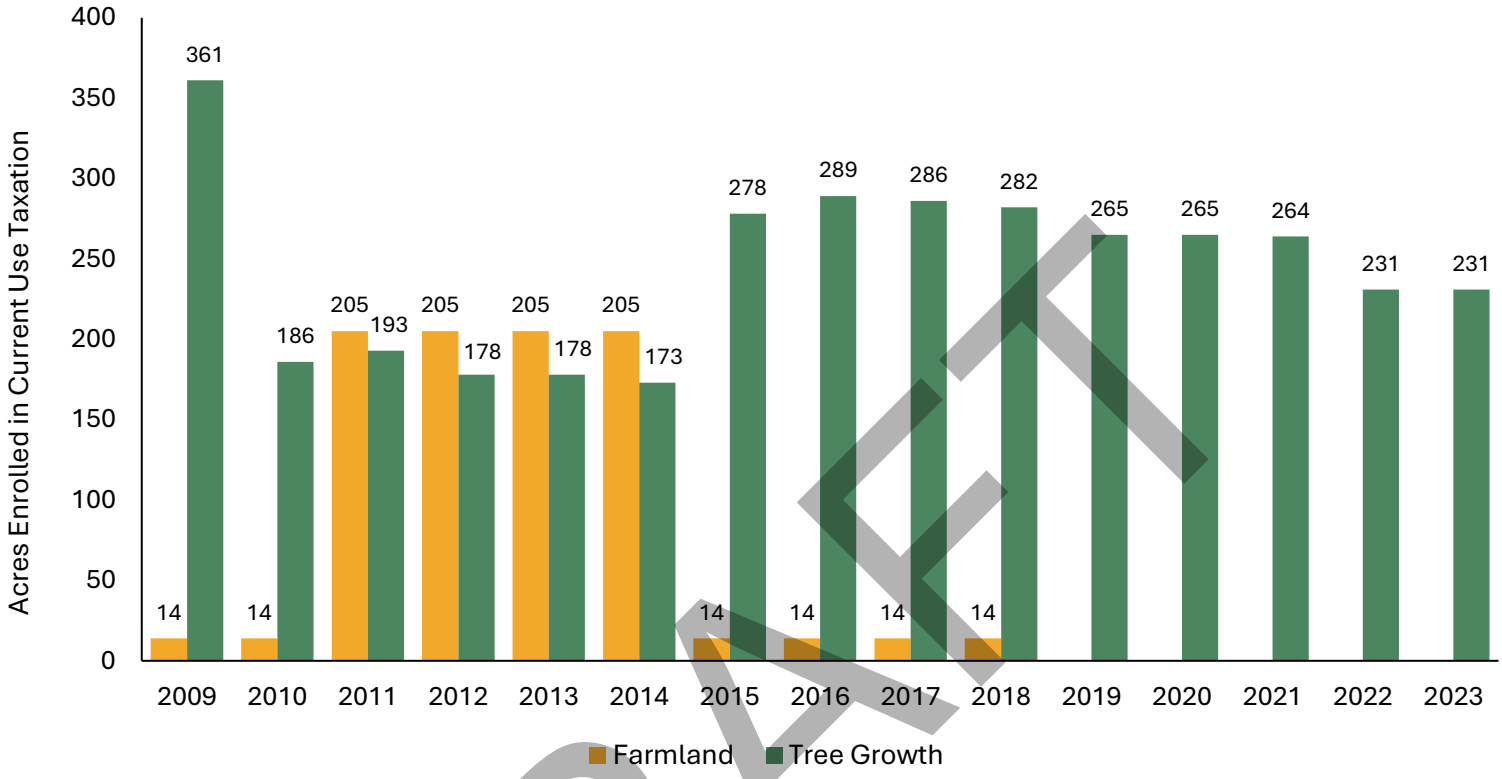
Figure 5: 2023 Current Use Parcels

Use Type	Number of Parcels	Total Acres	Total Value
Farmland	0	0	$0
Open Space	0	0	$0
Tree Growth	6	231	$95,141
Total	6	231	$95,141

Source: Maine Revenue Services - Property Tax Division

While the current use tax program is an important tool to keep rural lands in their current use, it is important to consider that the land enrolled in these programs is not permanently protected. Even though landowners must pay a penalty for withdrawing lands from those programs, this financial penalty may be relatively small compared to the value of land for development. For example, as the following graph shows, all the Farmland parcels in OOB have been withdrawn from the Farmland program and 130 acres of Tree Growth parcels have been withdrawn from the Tree Growth program over the past 15 years.

Figure 6: Acres Enrolled in Current Use Taxation (2023)



This does not necessarily mean that the land was withdrawn for development. In some cases, land may have been moved from the Farmland tax program to the Tree Growth tax program. In other cases, the landowner may no longer be eligible for the current use programs, or they may have decided the benefit of remaining in the current use program was not worth the administrative costs.

Given the lack of agricultural and forestry industry in the community, there has been little-to-no impact on these lands due to new residential, commercial, and industrial development and there are no anticipated impacts in the foreseeable future.

Given that the tree growth properties in OOB are owned by just a few landowners, the Town may want to consider developing a future vision for those parcels so the town will have a plan if those parcels are sold or if the current owners propose a change of use.

As mentioned in the groundwater section, the discovery of PFAS is a new and evolving threat to soil and water resources. One of the major sources of PFAS contamination is the spreading of sludge on farmlands for fertilizer, which was unknown at the time to cause contamination. Further study at the state level may determine whether this is a threat for OOB farmlands or not.

Conservation Lands

There are pockets of land scattered throughout OOB. Conservation land is owned and managed by several different entities. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns about 270 acres of the Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area in the northern part of town. The US Fish and Wildlife Service owns about 30 acres of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge adjacent to the Saco River. The National Audubon Society owns Bluff Island and Stratton Island off the coast of OOB. The Town owns about 350 acres of conserved land, including Ocean Park, Surfside Beach, and Old Orchard Beach. Given the minimal agricultural and forestry practices in the community, the Town is not currently taking any additional regulatory steps to protect productive farming and forestry lands. Additionally, conservation-oriented organizations, such as land trusts, are not actively working to protect farms and forest lands in OOB, due to the lack of industry in the community.

Open Space Plan

Open space plans are intended to inventory natural resources which are significant for wildlife and biodiversity as well as cultural and scenic reasons. These plans consist of a GIS analysis which layer several priorities for conservation to identify areas for conservation in the future, incorporate regional priorities and guide future conservation work. Goals for the planning of open spaces are identified as part of Open Space Plans, which are also paired with several actions and parties responsible for implementation.

OOB does not currently have an open space plan but may benefit from one if developed in the future.

Wildlife & Other Natural Resource Conditions

Critical and Important Natural Resources

OOB's ponds, waterways and wetlands are all home to significant wildlife habitats and a variety of important plant and animal species. The town has few undeveloped areas, most of which are wetlands. Scarborough Marsh, a focus area of statewide ecological significance, covers much of the northern end of OOB. The town's natural community includes many species that are at risk of degradation or endangered, making their conservation a priority on a statewide and national level.

Data and maps developed through the Beginning with Habitat program (BwH), which is sponsored by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) and the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP), summarize natural areas, high-value plant and animal habitat, and critical resources that are significant for ecological and community health. The BwH maps and data on the following pages serve as excellent planning tools for land use planning, conservation, and reviewing development proposals.

The tables below list the rare animals, plants, habitats and natural communities present in OOB, known as Critical Natural Resources. It also includes information on the state rarity rank, and state species status. According to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, OOB does not have any Significant vernal pools identified by surveys, though it does have one Possibly Significant vernal pool and more than 50 pools that have been surveyed and found to be Not Significant. These vernal pools are not regulated under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) due to being considered low- to moderate-value habitats.

Figure 7: State Conservation Status Reference

Designation	Description
Endangered (E)	Rare and may be lost from the state in the foreseeable future or federally listed as Endangered.
Threatened (T)	Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
Species of Special Concern (SC)	A species that does not meet the criteria for E or T, but is particularly vulnerable and could easily become a Threatened, Endangered, or Extirpated species.

Source: MPAP Beginning with Habitat Program, 2024

Figure 8: Rare Animals Known to Occur in OOB

Rare Animals	Maine Status	State Rank	Global Rank
Arctic Tern	Threatened	S2B - Imperiled	G5 – Secure Globally
Harlequin Duck	Threatened	S2S3N – Imperiled or Vulnerable	G4 – Apparently Secure Globally
Black-crowned Night-heron	Endangered	S2B - Imperiled	G5 – Secure Globally
Least Bittern	Endangered	S2B - Imperiled	G4G5 – Apparently Secure or Secure Globally
Piping Plover	Endangered	S2B - Imperiled	G3 – Vulnerable Globally
Salt Marsh Tiger Beetle	Special Concern	SNR – Not Ranked	G5 – Secure Globally
Saltmarsh Sparrow	Special Concern	S3B - Vulnerable	G2 – Globally Imperiled

Source: MPAP Beginning with Habitat Program, 2024

Figure 9: Rare Plants Known to Occur in OOB

Rare Plants	Maine Status	STATE RANK	GLOBAL RANK
Beach Wormwood	Special Concern	S1S2 – Critically Imperiled or Imperiled	G5T5 – Subspecies Secure Globally
Hollow Joe-pye Weed	Special Concern	S2 - Imperiled	G5? – Secure Globally; Inexact Numeric Rank
Smooth Winterberry Holly	Special Concern	S3 - Vulnerable	G5 – Secure Globally
Creeping Spike-moss	Endangered	S2 - Imperiled	G5 – Secure Globally

Source: MPAP Beginning with Habitat Program, 2024

Figure 10: Rare & Exemplary Natural Communities in OOB

Rare & Exemplary Natural Communities	Maine Status	STATE RANK	GLOBAL RANK
Salt-hay Saltmarsh	Vulnerable	S3 - Vulnerable	G5 – Secure Globally
Tidal Marsh Estuary Ecosystem	Vulnerable	S3 - Vulnerable	GNR – Globally Not Ranked

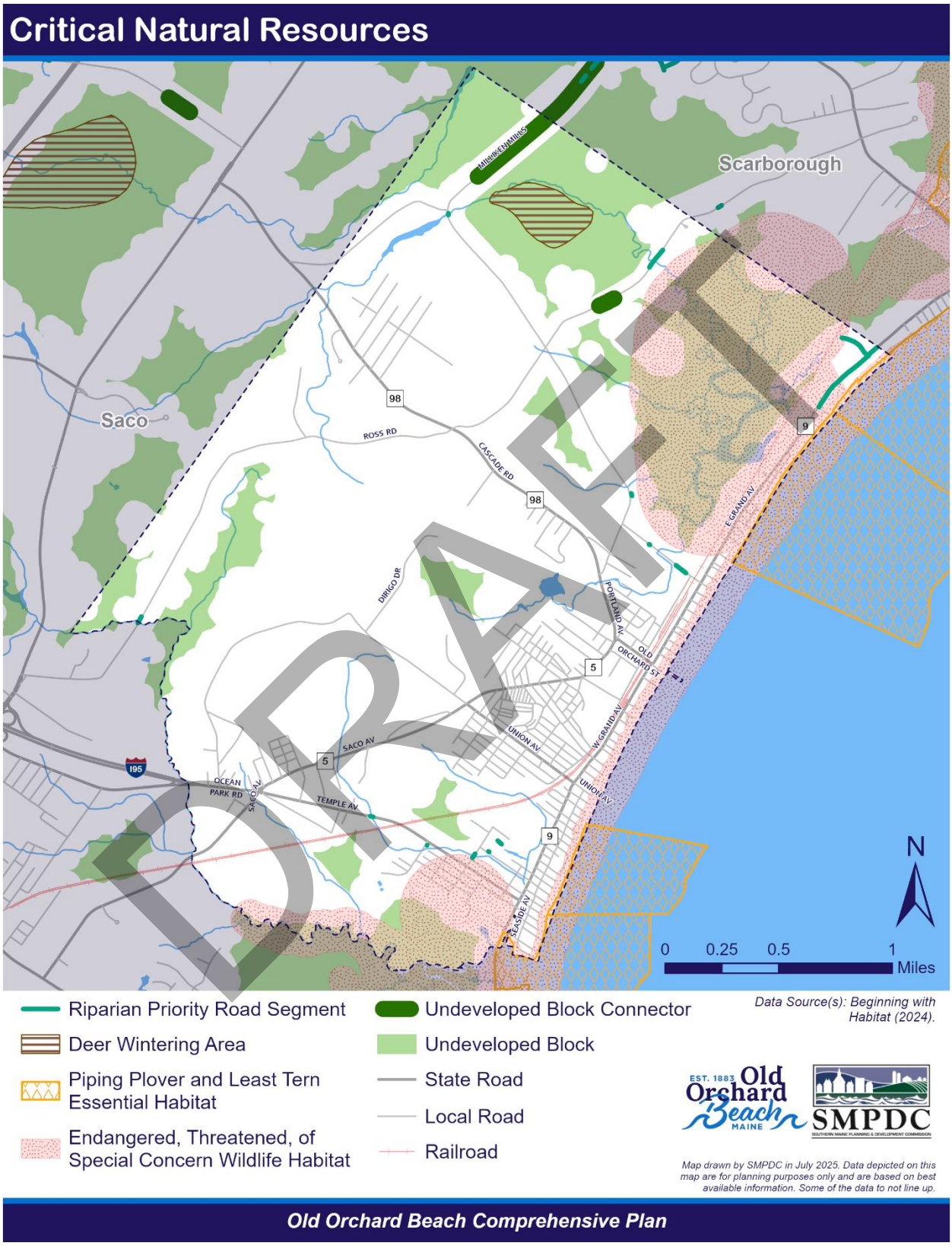
Source: MPAP Beginning with Habitat Program, 2024

Figure 10: Significant Wildlife Habitats in OOB

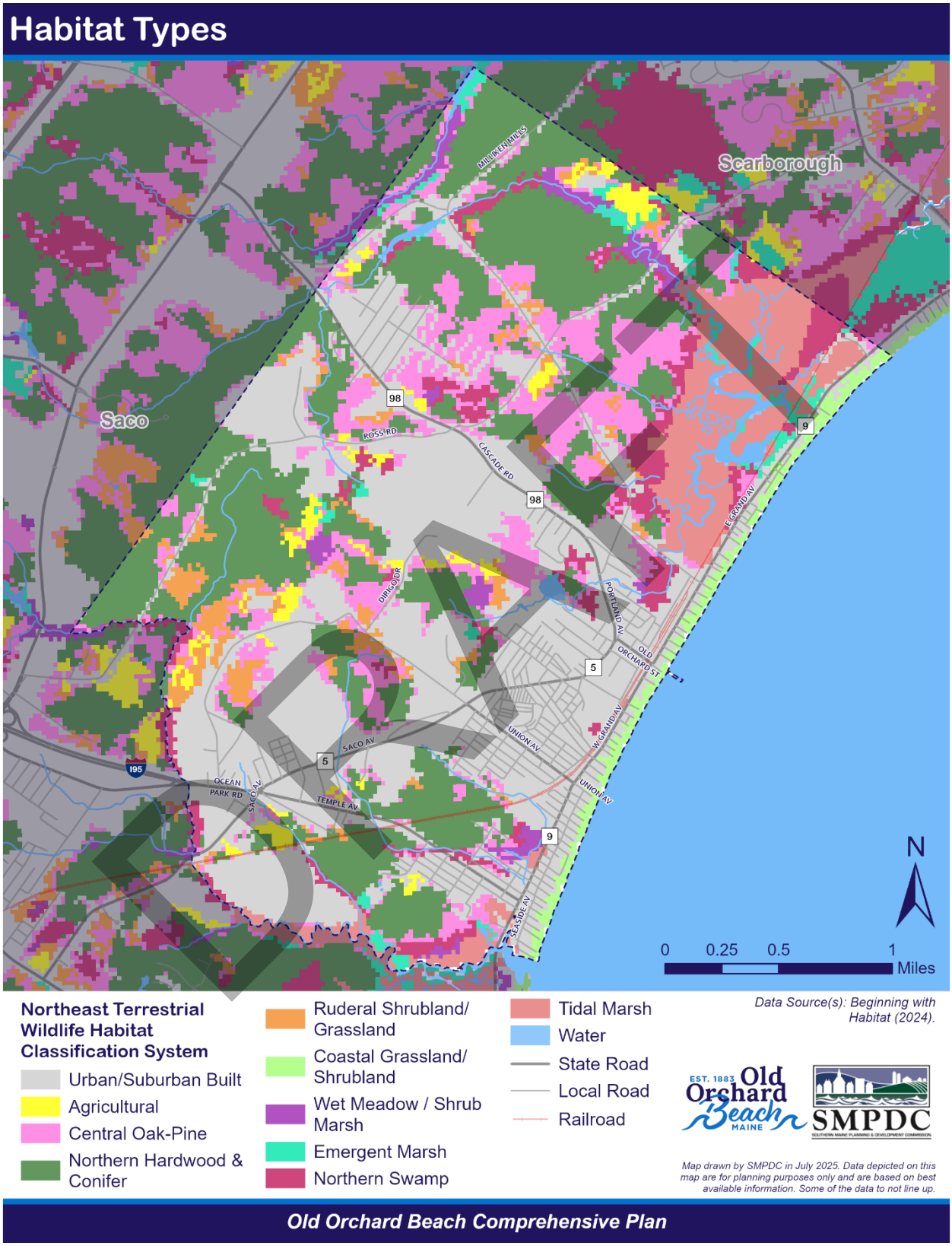
Significant Wildlife Habitats
Tidal Waterfowl/Wading Bird Habitat
Piping Plover & Least Tern Essential Habitat

Source: MPAP Beginning with Habitat Program, 2024

Map 7: Critical Natural Resources



Map 8: Habitat Types



Threats to Wildlife

Coastal habitats are among the most vulnerable ecosystems in Maine, which puts a precarious stressor on the wildlife that depend on them. Tourism in particular poses threats to wildlife due to the damage, trampling, noise and contamination caused by the frequent passing of transient people and dogs. Shorebirds like Arctic terns and piping plovers rely on sand dunes for their nest sites, but human-caused disturbances can cause damage to nests, eggs and young, or abandonment by the breeding parents. Low-cost investments such as clearly marked walking paths, fencing and signage can go a long way toward protecting this habitat and the wildlife that needs it.

The changing climate poses another threat to OOB's wildlife. Sea level rise and tidal surges from increasingly severe storm events erode sand dunes and marine wetlands. In many places, these fringe habitats bordering land and sea do not have space to retreat inland as the shoreline changes due to the physical barriers of human development. Where there is no opportunity for backfill, these barrier habitats can become at risk of disappearing altogether – as well as the services they provide for humans and wildlife.

Inadequate stream crossings and culvert design is a common threat to all species that rely on stream continuity for survival, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Properly designed crossings include bridges, open-bottom arches, and culverts that span and are sunk into the streambed. Often, crossings that are better for wildlife can also handle a wider range of water flows, which means they are more resilient to flooding and extreme weather.

It is important to maintain connections between tracts of conserved land, open space, and habitat areas to support the long-term health and sustainability of wildlife populations. This is especially critical in the densely fragmented landscapes of urbanized areas. Many species require access to multiple habitat types for different purposes, such as breeding habitat or overwintering sites. Some species naturally travel long distances while other species maintain large home ranges for hunting, foraging, or breeding which may not be possible in one tract of habitat. This is where fragmenting features, mainly roads, become threating to nearby wildlife.

Vernal pools are an excellent example of the need to preserve habitat connectivity, as the amphibians who utilize them only do so once a year in the spring rainy season before returning to nearby upland forests up to a mile away to live out their lives. While none of the surveyed vernal pools have been categorized as "Significant," there are approximately 50 "not significant" or "potentially significant" pools in OOB. While frogs, turtles and salamanders are all capable of crossing roads and lawns, the more times they must do so in their travels means the more risk of exposure they face dangers from road salts and lawn fertilizers to housecats and cars. The same goes for any other wildlife that needs to cross a

road to travel between habitats. Habitat fragmentation is primarily created by these "mortality barriers" rather than physical barrier.

Planning Implications

Adequacy of Existing Protection Measures for Natural Resources, Water Resources, and Farm, Forest & Wildlife Lands

OOB is a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Community. As an MS4 Community, the Town is subject to an MS4 Clean Water Act Permit. The Permit applies to the "Urbanized Area" of the town and is designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the town's regulated, separated storm drain system, to protect water quality, and satisfy appropriate requirements of the Clean Water Act. Urbanized areas are determined by the US Census Department, based on population density and impervious surface cover. The Permit requires that the towns conduct public education and outreach activities related to stormwater pollution prevention, inspect the storm drain system regularly for pollutants, and maintain the storm drain system and municipal properties. As a designated MS4 Community, this also requires regional cooperation to help protect shared critical natural resources. To this end, the Town also teams with 14 other MS4 communities in York and Cumberland Counties, in a group called the Interlocal Stormwater Working Group (ISWG). s

The Town originally filed for coverage under the MS4 General Permit in 2020 and as part of that process developed its 2022-2027 Stormwater Management Plan. The six goals of the plan are to (1) implement public awareness of stormwater pollution, (2) implement behavior change to reduce pet waste and cigarette waste littering, (3) identify and eliminate illicit discharges to the storm drain system, (4) ensure private development implement erosion and sedimentation controls during construction activity, (5) ensure private development maintains their stormwater collection and treatment systems post construction, and (6) implement pollution prevention and good housekeeping practices during municipal operations.

OOB's other measures to protect water resources consist of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Zoning Ordinance with site plan review standards, including standards for maximum impervious surface and drainage provisions. OOB is one of the only communities in Maine to adopt Shoreland Zoning regulations for areas based on highest annual tide elevations, which helps to protect critical natural resources adjacent to waterbodies. Continued conservation and protection of open space also serves as a protection against stormwater and non-point source pollution concerns. Additionally, the Town has entered into a beach management agreement with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to help protect the community's critical coastline ecosystem.

OOB has been involved with Climate Ready Coast – Southern Maine, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) National Coastal Resilience Fund. The goal of this 2-year project is to develop a regional coastal resilience plan for a ten-municipality

region in Southern Maine through collaborative engagement of municipalities, local land trusts, regional conservation organizations, and the state and federal natural resource agencies. Additionally, OOB participated in the Sea Level Action Work Group (SLAWG), led by the Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission in 2015. The purpose of SLAWG was to review information from the Coastal Hazard Resiliency Tools Project that analyzed the problem with sea level rise, to create a Vulnerability Assessment for Saco Bay, and to develop and implement an Action Plan of implementation strategies for regional solutions.

Climate Change Considerations

With OOB's large and diverse collection of natural resources, and the community's overall value of these resources, it is important to consider future threats of climate change. Currently, the coastal areas of Maine are the most impacted by climate change are coastal communities, as towns like OOB have already begun to see the impacts of sea level rise.

Climate change is the long-term shifting of temperatures and weather patterns driven by increased carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Southern Maine is undergoing changes driven by rising temperatures, altering precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and shifting ecosystems. Communities like OOB are already experiencing these climate change impacts, which will have far-reaching effects on the people, places, and culture of the community. Municipalities across the state are taking action to address climate change causing emissions and to understand and prepare for local climate impacts. The following summary of climate hazards and implications is based on scientific data and analysis from the Maine Climate Council's Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and its Effects in Maine.

Regional Issues

All natural resource issues are inherently regional issues. Ecosystems do not follow jurisdiction boundaries, making it essential for regional collaboration and communication when it comes to protecting our valuable natural resources. Regional approaches to natural resource priority issues will have a greater positive impact on protecting water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities for the future of the region.

The Goosefare Brook and Scarborough River Estuary are two areas where regional efforts will remain critical for protecting natural resources. OOB will be continuing to undergo restoration projects outlined in the Goosefare Brook Watershed Management Plan in partnership with the Town of Saco and other stakeholders.

Existing Land Use

Purpose

The land use analysis looks at every use type, from residential and open space to industrial and commercial. Using spatial and regulatory lenses, it considers the location, distribution, intensity (level of impact of uses), and density of uses (number of structures per acre). It also identifies future land use trends. This information, along with the location and capacity of water, sewer, and transportation services and facilities, soil suitability, environmental factors, and community desires, provides the basis for land use planning. Land use planning can improve the efficiency of land use, improve people's access to opportunities like jobs or education, minimize conflicts between incompatible uses, reduce or eliminate environmental hazards, and minimize degradation of the environment.

Looking at land use holistically helps paint an overall picture of Old Orchard Beach, showing us how residents and visitors can live, work, and play in the community. Assessing land use today can reveal gaps, such as an oversupply of one use or an undersupply of another, and opportunities, such as changes to existing land use regulations to better promote OOB's desired future. The information conveyed in the existing land use analysis, along with community feedback, forms the backbone of OOB's plan to provide for growth via the Future Land Use map and the implementation strategies.

Data Highlights

- The influence of tourism on OOB's land use patterns is evident: despite OOB's small geographic and population sizes, OOB offers a full range of zoning districts, land use densities, and land use intensities.
- Over the last two decades, growth has spread outward along the Town's major roads and occurred as infill development within the Downtown area. Undeveloped and vacant lands are few in the community, and competing interests exist for those lands.
- Generally, the zones with the highest capacity for new growth, like the Rural District, allow the lowest density of uses, lowest intensity of uses, and largest lot sizes. Since the equivalent housing unit on a larger lot costs more than it does on a smaller lot, the Rural District's large minimum lot size per unit increases the baseline pricing for new housing. Despite having land available for development, housing created here may be larger and more expensive than what residents need.
- Two-family structures are allowed in four of the six residentially-focused zones. Multi-family structures are a permitted use in one residentially-focused zone and a conditional use in three residentially-focused zones. However, no zones distinguish between small-scale multi-family (generally three to eight units per building), medium-scale multi-family (about nine to thirty-six units per building) and large-

scale multi-family (more than thirty-six units building) in terms of regulatory standards. The permitting and approval process costs time and money, so having undifferentiated regulatory standards may reduce the likelihood for small-scale units to be built.

- While both Downtown Districts designate multi-family as a permitted use, they establish minimum floor areas per unit, which effectively prohibits studio apartments. This prohibition may hurt OOB's ability to provide housing for seasonal workers, who are often young adults with limited economic means and the exact demographic that most desires studio apartments.
- Pine Park, Downtown, and the Saco Avenue corridor are largely built out, and new commercial construction has been minimal over the past two decades. However, the Industrial zone includes undeveloped lands. If additional industrial uses are not viable, commercial uses may be appropriate on that land.

Current (and Past) Conditions

Land Use Context

Both OOB's relative location and its physical landscape have long influenced its land use patterns: they converge to make OOB well-suited for tourism and to instigate tourism-friendly land uses. Additionally, they situate the Town for suburban living for workers of Portland and Biddeford.

Location Drives Growth and Tourism

OOB occupies about 7.5 square miles, in a roughly rectangular shape, along the Atlantic coast of southern Maine. OOB lies within the northeastern corner of York County, which connects central and northern Maine and southeastern Canada to the rest of the United States. OOB borders the City of Saco to the south and west and the Town of Scarborough to the north. OOB sits 12 miles from Portland, 35 miles from the Maine/New Hampshire border, and 98 miles from Boston. Historically, the Town has provided suburban living for Portland employees, enabling more affordable housing within an easy commuting distance. The Town's location just east of U.S. Route 1 and proximity to I-95 have consistently produced passive visitors and pass-through travelers, while its coastal location and extensive beachfront have attracted beach goers and seasonal tourists. For these reasons, among others, rapid growth and development have characterized much of southern Maine, including OOB, since the mid-1900s.

Tourism Drives Land Use

OOB's land uses have adapted to its seasonal resort character and economy. Over the years, tourism fueled the development of the Old Orchard Pier into an activity, entertainment, and retail hub. Hotels, campgrounds, cabins, boarding houses, and restaurants sprung up along the beachfront and downtown district to accommodate tourist interests. Despite the small year-round population, OOB became one of few Maine towns to offer an amusement park. The seasonal nature of the economy even led to a mix of uses in residential areas that persists today.

Current Land Uses

OOB offers a full range of land uses within the Town's boundaries, as indicated by data from the Assessor's office. The Assessor's parcel data includes a code for each parcel that corresponds to the parcel's primary land use. Looking at OOB's land uses reveals spatial patterns. The Downtown and coastal areas offer the greatest diversity of uses, while the outskirts tend to offer fewer uses (Map 1, page 16). More intense uses are concentrated in the Downtown and in the industrial neighborhood of western OOB. Commercial and single-family residential uses take up the most land area in Town at 26 and 24 percent, or 1,269 and 1,160 acres, respectively (Figure X.1). Of the residential land use types, condos

are the second most prominent at 22 percent or 518 acres. Parcels with small-scale multi-family of two to four units take up only one percent or 48 acres, the least of any land use type. About three percent of the community's land is classified as farms, forests, or open space, while five percent is industrial.

Interestingly, OOB's land use types reveal parcel size distribution patterns as well. The largest parcels tend to run through the center of OOB from the northeast to southwest. The smallest parcels occur in the Downtown area and along major routes. Commercial uses, industrial uses, and community facilities and utilities occur in both large and small parcels. Contrastingly, residential uses of all types tend to occur in small parcels under one acre. Additionally, only 132 acres are classified as farms, forests, or open space uses.

Figure 1 Distribution of Land Uses in Old Orchard Beach

Land Use Type	Area (acres)	Area (percentage of total)
Commercial	1,269	26%
Condo	518	22%
Farms, Forests, and Open Space	132	3%
Industrial	234	5%
Community Facilities and Utilities	595	12%
Residential, Single-Family	1,160	24%
Residential, 2 to 4 Family	48	1%
Residential, 4+ Family	115	2%
Mobile Home	174	4%
Other	587	12%

Land Use Regulations

Currently, OOB utilizes base zoning, zoning overlays, Shoreland zoning, floodplain management, subdivision, and site plan review to regulate the Town's land use. The Town has 18 base zones, three overlay zones, and six shoreland zones (Figure X.3, page 11; Map 2, page 17; and Map 3, page 18). Overall, OOB's zones support a variety of uses, lot sizes, and built environment conditions. Generally, these regulations promote growth in areas served by public water and sewer, closer to transportation facilities, and in and around existing development.

Residential Zoning Districts

Six zones focus exclusively on residential uses and accompanying accessory uses: R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, and Residential Beachfront (RBD). All these zones enable a developer to be granted the Affordable Housing Bonus Density of 2.5 times the underlying zone's density if the majority of the units are guaranteed affordable for 30 years or more. Four of these zones focus on low density residential development, with minimum lot sizes of 20,000 square feet (about half an acre). These four zones differ mostly in their permitted and conditional uses (Figure X.2). Zones R-1 through R-4 are geographically concentrated in the southeastern quarter of OOB. R-5 occupies a pocket of land surrounded by the Rural District in the northwestern part of town. RBD sits in the very northwestern corner of OOB along the coast.

Figure 2: Residential Uses in Residential Zones

Zone	Area (acres)	Detached Single-Family	Two-Family	Multi-Family (3+ Units)	Affordable Bonus Density
Residential 1	192	Permitted	Not allowed	Not allowed	Conditional
Residential 2	369	Permitted	Permitted	Conditional	Conditional
Residential 3	519	Permitted	Permitted	Conditional	Conditional
Residential 4	295	Permitted	Permitted	Conditional	Conditional
Residential 5	153	Permitted	Not allowed	Not allowed	Conditional
Residential Beachfront	47	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Conditional

R-1, R-2, R-4, and R-5: Two zones, R-1 and R-5, limit the potential land uses the most. R-5 designates only detached single-family dwellings, accessory dwelling units, municipal uses, community living arrangements, and temporary anemometer towers as permitted uses. R-1 allows the same plus churches and enables several conditional uses. R-2 and R-4 additionally designate two-family dwellings as permitted uses and include more conditional uses, like multi-family dwellings.

R-3 and RBD: Two zones, R-3 and RBD, focus on small-lot residential development, with minimum lot sizes of 9,000 square feet (about 1/5 of an acre) and 10,000 square feet (about 1/4 of an acre), respectively. R-3 and RBD also permit two-family dwellings, while R-3 allows multi-family dwellings as a conditional use.

Industrial Zoning Districts

OOB designates one district for industrial uses, including manufacturing, processing, treatment, warehousing, storage, and distribution, but excluding uses that endanger public health or safety. This Industrial District (ID) also allows business office parks and municipal uses. The minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet (about one acre). The ID allows significant impervious surface, with a maximum coverage of 85 percent. It includes 180 acres in the southwestern part of town, between Ross Road and Smithwheel Road.

Mixed Use Zoning Districts

The majority of zones can be called mixed use zoning districts. Two Downtown Districts, two General Business Districts, four Neighborhood Commercial Districts, the Rural District, the Beachfront Resort District, and the Planned Mixed Use Development all allow a combination of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. These 11 districts differ greatly in the allowed intensity of their uses.

Downtown Districts (DD-1, DD-2): The densest (number of structures per acre) and most intense (level of impact of uses) mixed use districts are the two Downtown Districts: DD-1 and DD-2. They include 33 and 106 acres, respectively. The Downtown Districts support the traditional recreational, lodging, commercial, and service areas within proximity to the waterfront and serve the needs of both seasonal residents and tourists.

Minimum lot sizes, the Site Plan Review process, development requirements, and parking requirements all greatly influence the look, feel, and function of places. In Downtowns, these standards can make or break the vitality of the area. All zoning standards governing OOB's Downtown Districts are intended to:

- Reinforce the traditional recreational, lodging, retail, and service commercial activities of the areas.
- Promote the expansion of a balanced and broad mix of uses within the districts.
- Encourage business development and infrastructure improvements that expand the tourist season and offer goods and services to the year-round residents; and,
- Promote compatible design in building infill and rehabilitation that is compatible with public investment in the area and meets the changing expectations of the tourism market.

The regulations of the Downtown Districts appear to support a well-balanced area. The minimum lot sizes are 4,000 square feet (about 1/10 of an acre) for non-residential uses and 10,000 square feet (about 1/4 of an acre) for residential uses. The Districts do require Design Review for all structures built within their zones. New non-residential development and multi-family development must improve the streetscape via sidewalk construction. This requirement enhances walkability, which supports foot-traffic to local businesses and

long-term business longevity; however, it may exclude entrepreneurs with less capital from building and launching in the Downtown.

The DD-1 allows buildings up to 50 feet while the DD-2 enables 45 feet tall buildings. Both Districts establish minimum square footage standards for different unit sizes: 550 square feet for one-bedroom units, 750 for two-bedroom units, and 900 for three-bedroom units. Parking requirements are two spaces per single-family or two-family dwelling and one space per bedroom (up to a maximum of two) per multi-family dwelling. Generally, these regulations promote a mixture of housing types, access to opportunities, and walkability. However, size restrictions may unnecessarily contribute to the deficit of one-bedroom units in OOB as discussed in the Housing chapter.

General Business Districts (GB): There are two GB Districts. The GB-1 District aims to accommodate commercial activities that are inappropriate to the downtown due to the compact settlement pattern. While the GB-1 district is slowly evolving into a highway commercial area, regulations encourage the expansion of commercial uses while preserving the existing building line and mixed uses. In addition to commercial uses like retail, daycares, clinics, offices, and restaurants, residential and municipal uses are both allowed. The Town incentivizes mixed use developments over purely commercial districts in this area by allowing a smaller minimum lot size (10,000 acres) for mixed use and residential compared to commercial-only developments (20,000 acres). It occupies 168 acres along the outer sections of OOB's main roads.

Comparatively, the GB-2 District supports denser but less intense development: allowed commercial uses are narrow but minimum lot size is only 5,000 square feet. This District is primarily designed to encourage conversion of existing residential structures to small office and retail operations that generate relatively lighter trip generation and parking demand. Only 18 acres along Saco Avenue near the Downtown are zoned as GB-2.

Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NC): The four NCs provide for the continuation and/or establishment of businesses and services that support and complement the character of surrounding residential neighborhoods. These four Districts similarly allow residential uses and limited commercial uses; they differ mostly in their allowed conditional uses and their space and bulk requirements. They occupy very small pockets in different parts of OOB but generally sit in the middle of a Residential District. Altogether, the NCs take up 18 acres.

Rural District (RD): The RD allows the land to be used for a wide variety of purposes at low density. The RD prioritizes the preservation of rural character to the greatest extent possible, and conducting any land uses in the RD requires ample land area, as the minimum lot size is 75,000 square feet (about 1¾ acres). More land in OOB falls within RD than in any other single zone. In fact, 1,952 acres, or 41 percent of the land area, is zoned RD.

Beachfront Resort District (BRD): The BRD includes 105 acres on either side of the DDs, along the coast. It includes a mix of residential uses and seasonal resort accommodations. Low-rise developments characterize this District, and regulations intend to maintain the lower profile of this section of the Town's beachfront. The mix of commercial and residential uses require the establishment of "good neighbor" performance standards where commercial uses and seasonal accommodations abut residential uses.

Planned Mixed Use Development District (PMUD): The PMUD aims to encourage creative, flexible, and efficient land use design that maximizes the use of developable land yet promotes the integration of new commercial development with a mixture of residential and recreational uses. The desired result is to create a quality community environment. Lots of record after January 1994 must be 19 acres or more to qualify as PMUD, while earlier lots can be two or five acres, depending upon access to sewer. 608 acres are zoned PMUD. The Old Orchard Beach High School, Loranger Middle School, and Jameson Elementary School sit within a PMUD.

Overlay Zoning Districts

OOB's three overlay districts are Historic Overlay, Amusement Overlay, and Campground Overlay. These Districts enable OOB to provide regulations suited to unique situations.

Historic Overlay (HO): The Portland Avenue corridor from Foote Street to Old Orchard Street offers a distinctive historic character and creates a visually important gateway into the Downtown. With its architecturally significant structures, uniform setbacks, tree-lined sidewalks, and focal view of the Town Hall bell towers, this corridor retains the Town's historic grand resort character. The HO hopes to encourage the preservation of the existing historic structures and the streetscape character that is critical to the identity and cultural welfare of the community, while promoting the appropriate reuse of existing structures. It also hopes to encourage new construction that is architecturally and visually compatible with the District's existing character.

Amusement Overlay (AO): The existing beachfront amusement parks and the pier have long served as a prime attraction to the summertime visitors and one of the historical signatures distinctive of the town. Both the pier and the amusement parks are unique mixed-use areas that have different design configurations and land use requirements from the linear built fabric and land use patterns elsewhere in the Downtown. By nature, amusement parks are flexible land uses that must shift the internal layout and complement of rides and amusements to meet market demand, the same way that a retailer changes stock with the season or with emerging fashion trends. The AO provides flexibility of site design criteria and use requirements that support continued operation of the amusement parks and pier. They enable operators to adjust the mix of uses and rearrange site elements in rapid response to shifting market demands.

Campground Overlay (CO): Changes in the camping and recreational vehicle industry transformed the traditional summertime tent and trailer campgrounds into high density small villages with permanent facilities and resident occupancy for as long as seven months of the year. Before this CO, many campgrounds in OOB were legally non-conforming uses, hamstrung in their abilities to expand and change with market demands. The CO helps establish all existing campgrounds as conforming uses and provides performance and design standards that permit the expansion of existing campgrounds, allow the creation of new campgrounds, and mitigate any on and off-site impacts.

Figure 3: Old Orchard Beach Zoning Districts Overview

Broad Type	Zone Name	Zone Label	Primary Purpose(s)	Minimum Lot Size (sq ft)
Residential	Residential 1	R-1	Single-family	20,000
	Residential 2	R-2	Single-family and two-family	20,000
	Residential 3	R-3	Single-family on small lots	9,000
	Residential 4	R-4	Single-family to multi-family	20,000
	Residential 5	R-5	Single-family detached	20,000
	Residential Beachfront	RBD	Residential and resorts	10,000
Industrial	Industrial	ID	Manufacturing, warehousing	40,000
Mixed Use	Downtown 1	DD-1	Historical downtown: year-round and seasonal businesses, vertical mixed use	4,000* 10,000^
	Downtown 2	DD-2	Mixed commercial, institutional, and residential infill	4,000* 10,000^
	General Business 1	GB-1	Commercial activities not compact enough for the downtown	20,000* 10,000^'
	General Business 2	GB-2	Lighter trip generating commercial activities converted from residential uses	5,000
	Ocean Park Neighborhood Commercial	NC-1	Small-scale commercial activities that support residential neighborhoods	9,000
	Union Avenue/West Grand Avenue Neighborhood Commercial	NC-2	Small-scale commercial activities that support residential neighborhoods	9,000
	Washington Avenue/Campground Neighborhood Commercial	NC-3	Small-scale commercial activities that support residential neighborhoods	10,000
	Cascade Road Neighborhood Commercial	NC-4	Small-scale commercial activities that support residential neighborhoods	75,000
	Rural	RD	Low density development	75,000
	Beachfront Resort	BRD	Residential and resorts	10,000
	Planned Mixed Use	PMUD	Mixed commercial, institutional, and residential uses	Varies

**This minimum lot size applies to non-residential uses.*
^This minimum lot size applies to residential uses only.
' This minimum lot size applies to mixed uses.
Source: Old Orchard Beach Code of Ordinances: Chapter 78 – Zoning, Article VI – Districts

Shoreland Zoning Districts

Some of OOB's land falls within the Shoreland Zone (Map 4, page 19). The Shoreland Zone includes 250 feet of the normal high water line of any river, saltwater body or the nontidal portion of Goosefare Brook downstream of the Boston and Maine Railroad bridge. It includes 250 feet of the upland edge of a coastal or freshwater wetland. It also encompasses 100 feet of the normal high water line of the nontidal portion of Goosefare Brook upstream of the Boston and Maine Railroad bridge and 100 feet of the normal high water line of a stream. Because of OOB's coastal location, the Shoreland Zone also extends seaward to the municipal boundary. OOB took Maine's Shoreland Zoning Law a step further, adding areas that fall within the Highest Annual Tide of 6.3 feet. This approach aims to prepare the Town for sea level rise. The six shoreland zones in OOB are:

1. Resource protection subdistrict (RP);
2. Shoreland residential activity subdistrict (RA);
3. Limited commercial subdistrict (LC);
4. General development subdistrict (GD);
5. Stream protection subdistrict (SP); and,
6. Public beach subdistrict (PB).

The RP, SP, and PB Districts restrict land use the most, as they include the most significant environmental features: great ponds, lakes, rivers, major wetlands, and public beaches. The other Districts utilize the underlying base zones for some regulatory measures but add measures to better protect the environment and sensitive natural resources.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) works on the development of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), which dictate a Town's flood management ordinance. Since the floodplain management ordinance's last update, FEMA recognized new advancements in technology and knowledge, allowing FEMA to better understand flooding impacts. In response, they created new FIRMs during the late 2000's. In 2018, OOB appealed FEMA's new FIRMs. OOB's appeal was partially successful: the extent of some regulated flood zones was reduced and the base flood elevation in some areas was reduced. These changes helped OOB because reducing the flood zone's extent meant fewer properties were considered within the flood zone, so fewer properties had to pay for flood insurance. FEMA revised the FIRMs to reflect the results of the successful appeal. With appeals concluded and FEMA fulfilling their legal adoption process, FEMA provided notice to OOB by letter in January 2024 of finalized flood hazard determinations. This enabled OOB to draft the floodplain management map and ordinance in response (Map 5, page 20). To continue OOB's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Town was required to adopt the new FIRMs and floodplain management ordinance no

later than July 17, 2024, which they did on June 18, 2024. About 953 acres fall into a FEMA designation. The current ordinance meets State and Federal laws.

Development Trends

OOB's built environment footprint grew over the last two decades. Development spread outward from the Downtown and along the major transportation routes. Undeveloped lands furthest from the Downtown began developing as well. The coast experienced some infill development and redevelopment but otherwise remained much as it was since the 1990s.

Residential

Residential development over the past two decades was most commonly single-family subdivisions and condo units, with single-family subdivisions occurring mostly in the Rural District and condos occurring the Downtown Districts, Rural District, and R-4 District.

In fact, since 2003, 33 residential subdivision applications containing over 1,240 units have been approved within Town limits (Map 6, page 21). Many of these applications were for condominium developments. The most recent applications, from 2021 through 2024, are generally for infill condo projects of three to six units; however, there is one major exception to this trend. The Town's largest development was on previously undeveloped lands. Approved in 2024, the "Dunegrass Golf Community" includes over 600 units and was treated as a Planned Unit Development. This subdivision contains single-family homes.

Commercial and Industrial

Over the last two decades, compared to residential development, commercial development has been minimal: the Downtown Districts and coastal areas became largely built out by the early 2000s. While new businesses came to town since then, often these businesses replaced other businesses in existing commercial units. New commercial development over the last 10 years has primarily been service related. Commercial growth is primarily infill and concentrated along high traffic roads (such as Saco, Cascade, E Grand, W Grand, Old Orchard St) and Downtown. Infill development will likely continue during the next 10 years.

The largest employer in OOB is the school district, which has been located off Emerson Cummings Boulevard, halfway between the Downtown and Pine Park, for decades. Industrial development has not changed significantly in recent years and is limited to parts of the Industrial Zone. However, industrial activity takes up a fraction of the Industrial Zone; the rest of the zone's area remains vacant.

Farms, Forests, and Open Space

Wetlands and environmental constraints limit development most significantly in the northern parts of the Town. Only 132 acres are coded as farms, forests, or open space within the Assessor's land use database.

The Town's 621 acres of conserved lands are concentrated in the Town's northeast, northwest, and southwest corners as well as near the schools. Because of the sensitive nature of the conserved wetlands and marshes, not all parts of the conserved areas are suited for recreational activities. The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends about 10 acres of open space per 1,000 people. While 621 acres should adequately support the open space needs of the year-round population of 8,960 people, existing open spaces likely feel crowded when the Town's population soars to 27,000 in the summer. Additional land may need to be conserved to retain existing crowd levels and comfortability in the future.

Land Use Administration and Review Processes

Staffing and Boards

To develop, enact, and enforce land use policies, OOB utilizes a Planning Department, Code Enforcement Department, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Committee, and Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Staffing: The Planning Department employs a full-time town planner and an assistant town planner, while the Code Enforcement Department has a director and three officers. The two departments share two administrative assistants. The number of land use staff is adequate to meet the Town's current needs, but if more complex state and federal regulations are enacted, more specialized staff may be required.

Planning Board: The Planning Board reviews proposed development plans, Subdivisions, Conditional Use applications and Zoning Ordinance amendments. The Board works closely with zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure all development in OOB complies with the comprehensive plan and local land-use regulations. The Planning Board holds one workshop and one regular meeting each month as well as hosts site walks and public hearings as needed. The Planning Board has five members and two alternates. All members and alternates serve two-year terms.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA): The ZBA meets once per month throughout the year. The ZBA is authorized to hear and decide Administrative Appeals, Interpretation Appeals, Miscellaneous Appeals, and Requests for Variances filed in connection with decisions made under a Zoning or Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Each ZBA member serves staggered three-year terms.

Design Review Committee (DRC): The DRC is responsible for conserving the cultural and architectural heritage of the Downtown and Historical Preservation Districts. This committee plays an important role in downtown aesthetic improvements in Old Orchard Beach. Meetings involve reviewing proposals with developers and architects to ensure that new construction and redevelopment in the Downtown and Historic Districts meet the ordinance design standards in relation to: Mass and Scale, Building Height, Roof Lines, Window Placement, Façade Materials, Architectural Details, and Fences/Railings/Steps. The DRC meets on a monthly basis or as needed based on submitted applications. All members and alternates are appointed for two-year terms.

Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC): The CPC is a volunteer group of residents, property owners, and business owners in OOB who help guide an update to a Comprehensive Plan. They work closely with the town planners, acting as a sounding board throughout the planning process by reviewing materials, sharing insights, and helping interpret public feedback.

Subdivision Ordinance and Review

OOB's subdivision standard meets State law. OOB distinguishes between major and minor subdivisions. Major subdivisions contain more than four lots, require a new public street extension, or need municipal facilities to be extended. Subdivisions with four or fewer lots that do not require an extension of a public street or municipal facilities are considered minor subdivisions. Applicants for major subdivisions follow a lengthier—and thus more expensive—process and must provide more information. They must submit a sketch plan, preliminary plan, and final plan, while applicants for minor subdivisions only need to submit a sketch plan and a final plan.

OOB enables different kinds of subdivisions as well. Specifically, the Town allows cluster subdivisions and planned unit developments. However, OOB does not provide extra development incentives to promote these development types over standard subdivisions. One provision gives the Planning Board the authority to ask for 10 percent of a subdivision's land area to become recreation space for the residents, but this provision is optional and not linked to development incentives.

Site Plan Review

OOB uses site plan review to promote the proper design and construction of nonresidential and multifamily residential uses. The ordinance offers two levels of site plan review: administrative and plenary. Most land use applications subject to site plan review are subject to plenary review; for example, quadplexes, conversions of single-family homes to three or more-unit apartment conversions, or commercial buildings. For plenary review, the planning board reviews and may approve, approve with conditions, or deny, the applications. With administrative review, the town planner and code enforcement officer have the authority to review and approve, approve with conditions, or deny, the

applications. Only six activities can utilize administrative review, which is cheaper and quicker than plenary review. Those activities include the establishment of a home occupation, in a single-family or two-family dwelling unit, as well as minor expansions or changes in use under specific conditions. Submissions falling under administrative review must meet fewer requirements than those subject to plenary review.

Planning Implications and Summary

Implications

Land Uses and Future Development

Most daily needs of residents can be met in Old Orchard Beach through the existing land uses. Some year-round residents desire more non-seasonal service-related businesses; however, these businesses do exist in Old Orchard Beach as well as in nearby Saco and Scarborough. There are four major land use needs over the next ten years: medical services (including mental health), career centers, year-round employers for unskilled and non-college educated employees, and residential options. Additional housing at various price points, sizes, and types is needed, especially smaller units that are age-friendly. It is likely that these needs will be met through infill and not greenfield development. Some land conversion could occur, namely through parking lots in the Downtown being converted to residential uses or hotels being converted to residential uses. Overall, only minor land use changes are expected over the next ten years.

Zoning Districts

OOB offers zones with various standards for housing units and commercial developments. However, generally the zones with the highest capacity for new growth offer the lowest density and intensity of uses. Since the equivalent housing unit on a larger lot costs more than it does on a smaller lot, the Rural District's large minimum lot size per unit increases the baseline pricing for new housing. Despite having land available for development, housing created here may be more expensive and larger than the small, one-bedroom units indicated as needed by OOB's sociodemographics (such as single-person households, young adult seasonal workers, and older adults living alone).

All six primarily residential zones (R 1-6 and RBD) limit permitted single-family dwellings to detached dwellings only. Two zones (R-1 and R-5) do not allow two or more-unit dwellings, and only one residential zone (RBD) includes multi-family as a permitted use. While both Downtown Districts designate multi-family as a permitted use, they establish minimum floor areas per unit, which effectively prohibits studio apartments. Overall, this method of regulating residential uses can unnecessarily hinder two-family and multi-family dwellings.

For example, in determining permitted or conditional uses, the zoning ordinance considers the broad land use category but does not consider the use's building footprint. In R-2 through R-4, this means that a 7,000 square foot mansion could be built without any site plan review, despite its substantial impact on a lot, whereas a 2,500 square foot three-unit dwelling would need to comply with the site plan review process. Therefore, a naturally more affordable, "starter home" type development faces extra regulatory burdens compared to a mansion or large-lot single-family home.

Although the potential impacts of multi-unit dwellings vary dramatically depending on size and scale, no zones distinguish between small-scale multi-family (generally three to eight units per building), medium-scale multi-family (about nine to thirty-six units per building) and large-scale multi-family (more than thirty-six units building) in terms of regulatory standards. To encourage more housing diversity, some communities use scaled regulatory standards and differentiate between types of multi-family dwellings. That alternative approach enables the addition of small-scale (house-scale) multi-family uses to zones where multi-family is currently prohibited or makes small-scale multi-family uses permitted instead of conditional in select zones to reduce the regulatory burden.

OOB offers 621 acres of conserved lands, and 132 acres are coded as farms, forests, or open space within the Assessor's land use database. Limited undeveloped lands remain. As the Town grows, maintaining access to open space and recreation opportunities may be important for retaining quality of life.

OOB has a robust local business community, with many businesses catered to seasonal visitors. There is minimal room for new commercial development, but infill opportunities do exist. One opportunity for additional commercial development may be within the Industrial Zone, an area that is currently underutilized for industrial development. Because industrial activity takes up a fraction of the Industrial Zone, the rest of the zone's area is vacant and may support additional commercial activities.

Staffing and Boards

OOB's staffing and volunteer boards generally meet the needs of the community to carry out land use policies. The Design Review Committee (DRC) is an extra board to which developments in the Historic and Downtown areas must report and receive approval. Since the DRC helps ensure new developments match the look and feel of existing development in these areas through additional space and bulk requirements, design standards, and meetings, the DRC adds time and expense to the review process for projects. Regularly evaluating the DRC's functionality can ensure it produces quality projects in the least onerous way possible.

Subdivision Ordinance and Review

Most of OOB's vacant land sits within the Rural District (RD) and is prone to subdivision development because of the large minimum lot size, parcel sizes, and distance from the Downtown and neighboring urban centers. If regulations persist as-is, then the forests remaining in the RD will likely convert to large-lot subdivisions and fragmented natural landscapes. There is room in the subdivision ordinance to better facilitate subdivisions that contain a mix of unit types, prioritize habitat connectivity, minimize sprawl, and minimize impervious surfaces.

Site Plan Review

Administrative Site Plan Review offers a cheaper and quick review process, which helps lower development costs, but very few applications can utilize this less intensive process. Requiring full Plenary Site Plan Review for low intensity developments, such as four-unit residential dwellings or small mixed-use buildings with an apartment above a business, adds development costs that directly impact the consumer. Broadening Administrative Site Plan Review to include more low intensity developments could better facilitate naturally affordable housing and local business opportunities.

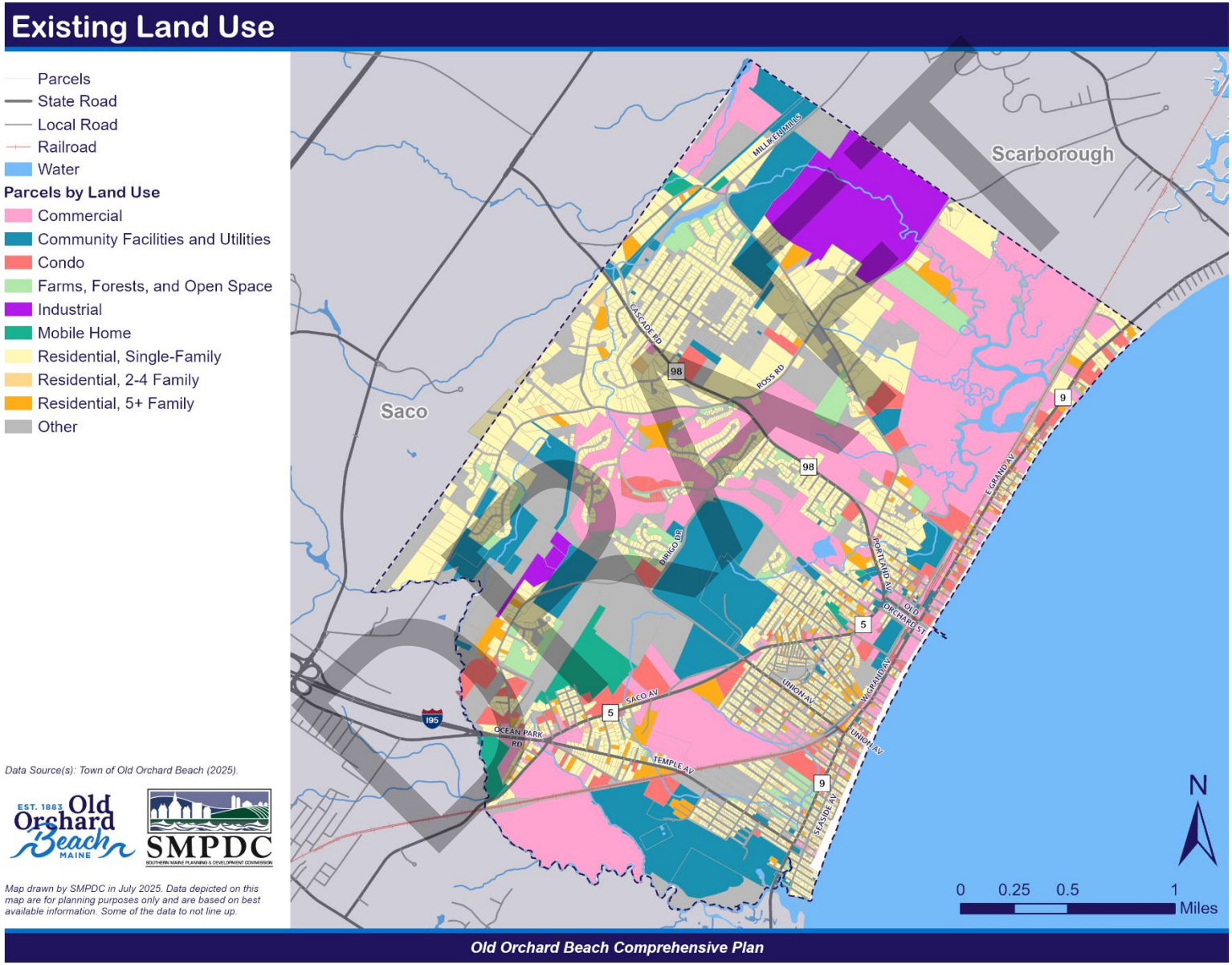
Other Regulatory Measures

OOB utilizes the Affordable Housing Density Bonus required by State legislation LD2003. Density Bonuses can be created and granted to developers for providing other positive assets within their projects, such as publicly accessible open space, walking paths, or other extra amenities and services. The Town could explore granting density bonuses for additional development choices, or for workforce housing developments in addition to traditionally subsidized affordable housing developments.

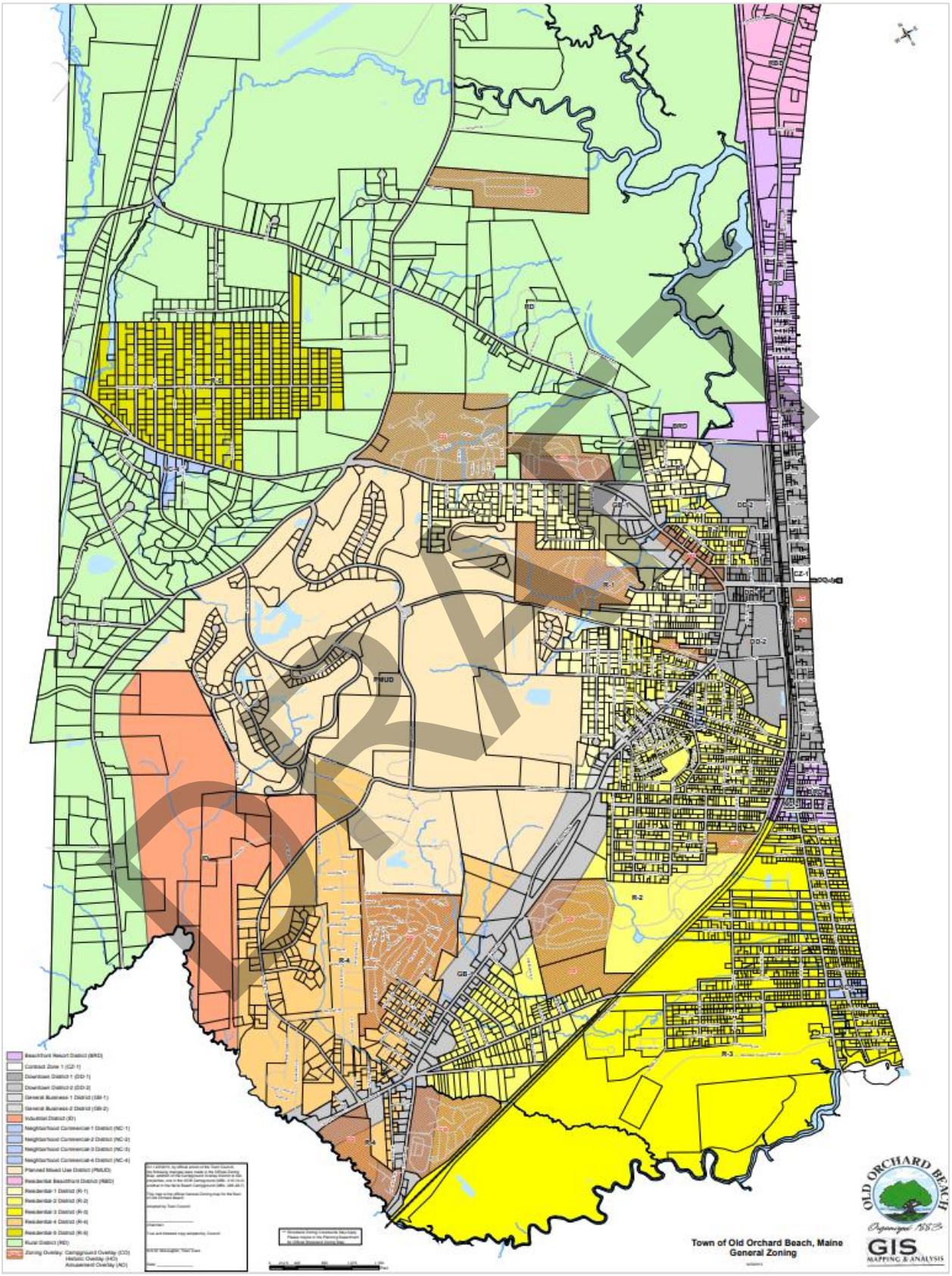
Summary

Overall, OOB's land use regulations support a mixed-use development pattern of various lot sizes, with density concentrated close to the coast in the Downtown. However, opportunities to improve the land use regulations and thus the built environment exist. Making such improvements can ensure that future development aligns with desired development patterns. In particular, some regulatory barriers to housing within the ordinance could be improved to encourage different types of housing throughout the community. and their implications became apparent through this land use analysis.

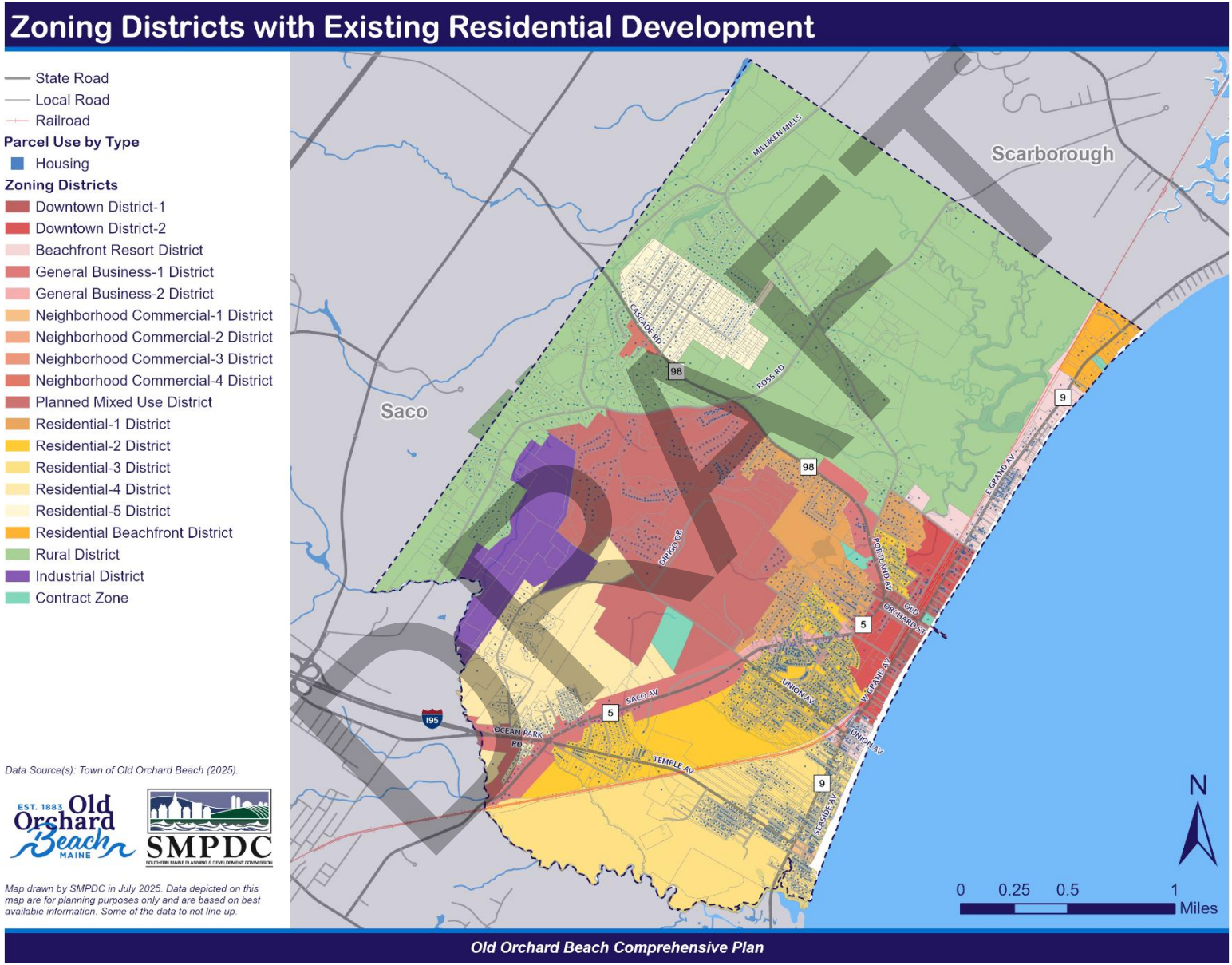
Map 1: Land Uses of Parcels in Old Orchard Beach



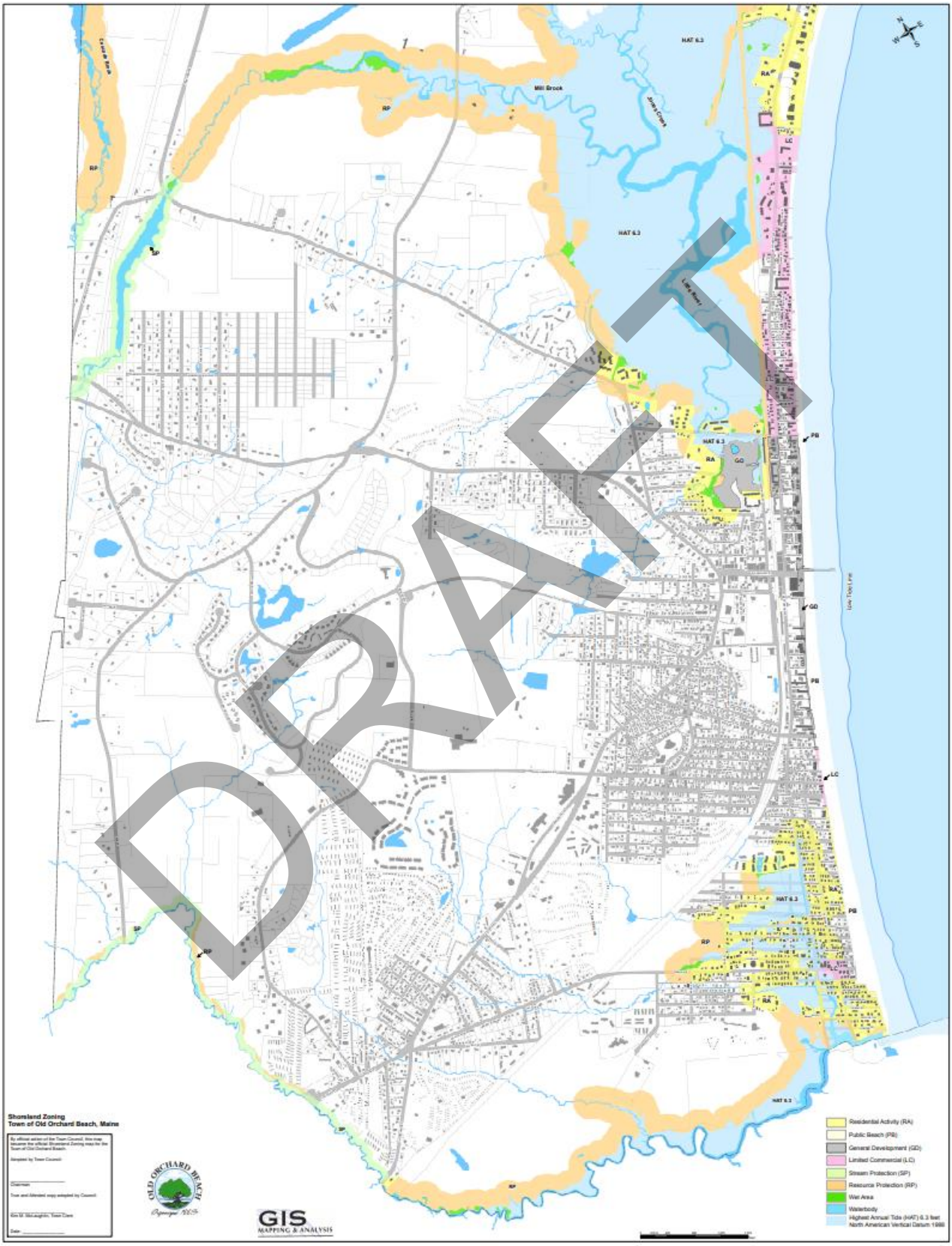
Map 2: Old Orchard Beach Official Zoning Map



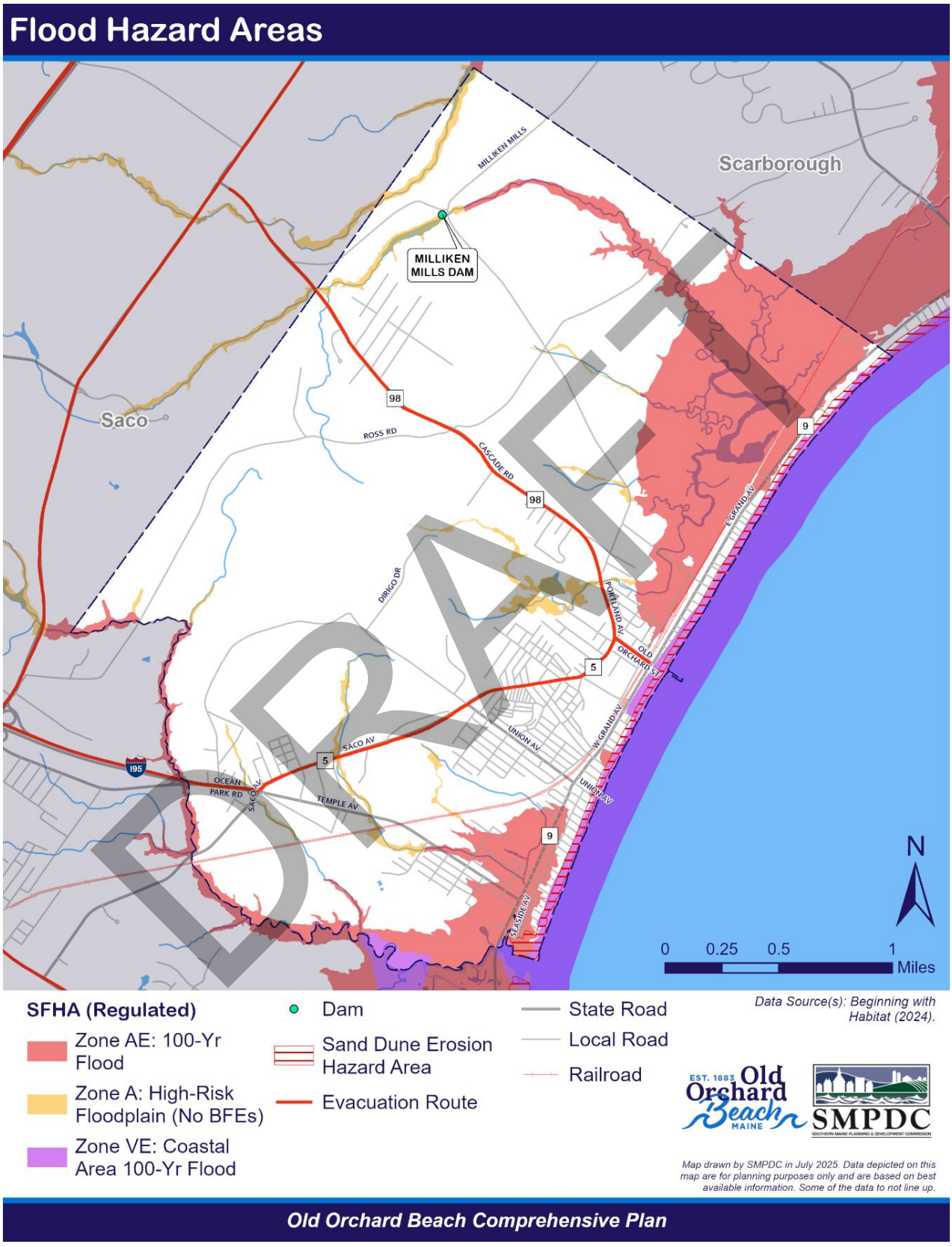
Map 3: Old Orchard Beach Housing and Zoning Map



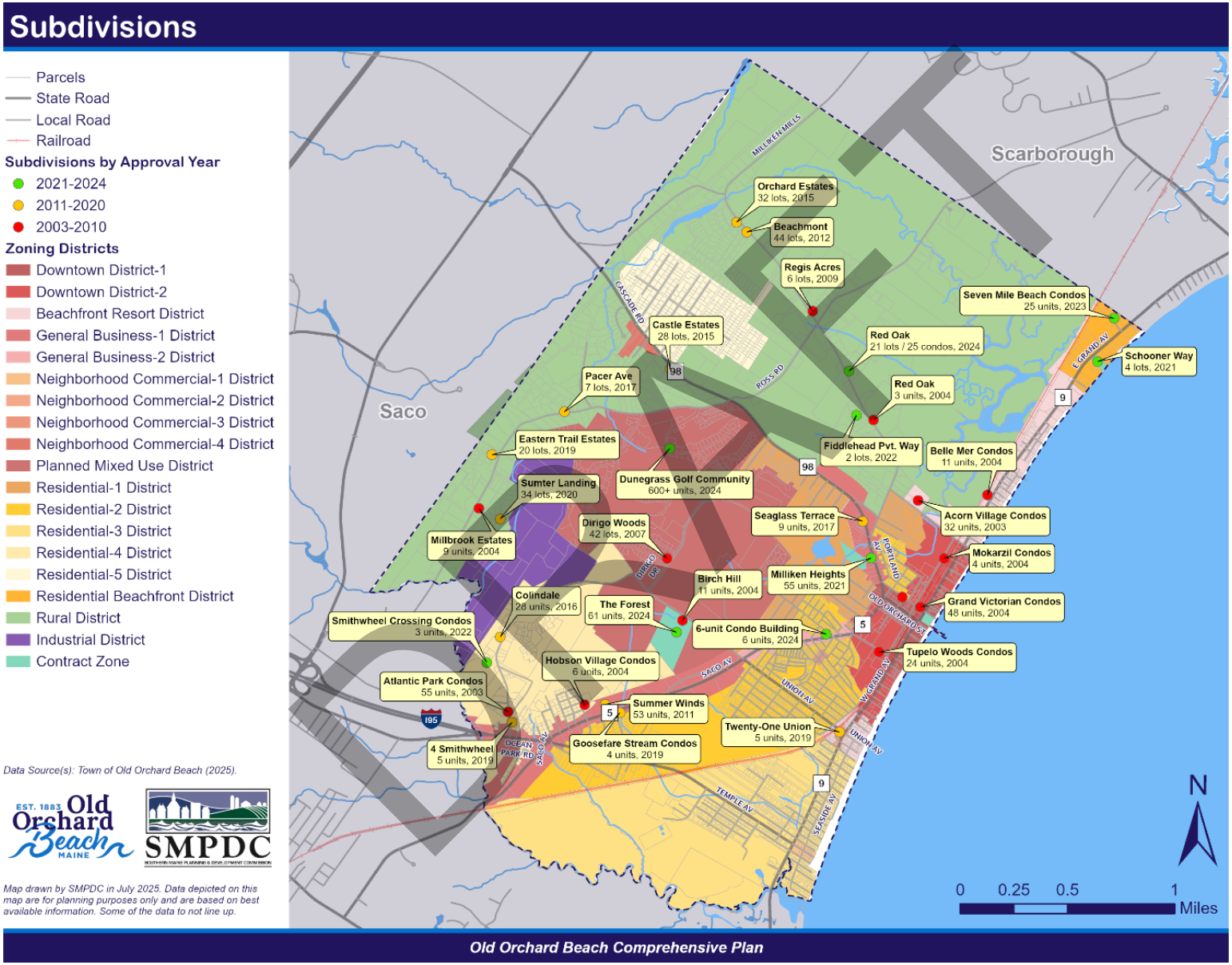
Map 4: Old Orchard Beach Shoreland Zoning Map



Map 5: Old Orchard Beach Flood Hazard Map



Map 6: Old Orchard Beach Subdivision Development by Zone Map



Fiscal Capacity & Capital Improvement Plan

Purpose

A comprehensive plan should examine fiscal trends in the town to strive for a stable tax rate to provide services to the citizens of Old Orchard Beach (OOB).

Specifically, this section will:

- Summarize OOB's current fiscal conditions;
- Discuss recent revenue and expenditure patterns;
- Predict likely future revenue and expenditure trends; and
- Assess OOB's capacity to finance capital expenditures for the next ten years.

Data Highlights

- OOB has successfully planned for capital expenses in the past and has an active capital improvements program through 2034.
- Record breaking rates of inflation in recent years complicate fiscal trends, such as OOB's valuation and tax commitment change over the last five years. What appears to be moderate nominal increases in actual valuation change work out to be minimal increases in value when accounting for inflation.
- Education continues to be the town's largest expense, consistent with all Maine communities.
- Large nominal increases in town expenditure appear to be strongly tied to inflation. Over the period of 2015-2024, town expenditure increased by nine percent when the numbers are adjusted for inflation.

Current (and Past) Conditions

Fiscal Conditions

Valuations and Tax Assessment

OOB's ability to raise tax revenue is dependent largely on its tax base or valuation. OOB's valuation increased from approximately $1.5 billion in 2010 to approximately $1.9 billion in 2020. This is an increase of about 21 percent over ten years. When these figures are adjusted for inflation, the total change shows an increase of 3 percent.

Figure 1: State Valuation Historical, 2010 to 2020

Geography	State Valuation		2010 to 2020 Change	10-Year Change Inflation Adjusted
	2010	2020		
Old Orchard Beach	$1,533,750,000	$1,856,850,000	21%	3%
Ogunquit	$1,327,550,000	$1,529,150,000	15%	-2%
Scarborough	$3,620,450,000	$4,778,350,000	32%	12%
Saco	$2,128,450,000	$2,653,400,000	25%	6%
Biddeford	$2,513,900,000	$2,639,350,000	5%	-11%
Cumberland County	$41,772,500,000	$50,417,650,000	21%	3%
York County	$31,457,900,000	$35,851,250,000	14%	-3%
Maine	$166,579,700,000	$185,896,400,000	12%	-5%

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Figure 2: Local Valuation and Property Tax Assessment Trends

Year	Local Valuation	State Valuation	Property Tax Assessment	Mill Rate
2020	$1,793,384,250	$1,856,850,000	$27,797,456	0.01550
2021	$1,821,169,340	$1,985,350,000	$28,082,431	0.01542
2022	$2,053,419,300	$2,120,900,000	$29,076,417	0.01416
2023	$2,574,609,280	$2,428,200,000	$31,513,218	0.01224
2024	$2,960,387,975	$2,859,450,000	$33,748,423	0.01140

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

It is useful to compare valuation trends in OOB to those of neighboring towns. The table below compares OOB's 2024 valuation and tax commitment to neighboring towns. OOB's per capital valuation and tax commitment was among the highest of surrounding towns, lower than Ogunquit only. The per capita valuation is about 21 percent higher than the York County equivalent. The per capita tax commitment values follow a similar trend, with OOB higher than Scarborough, Saco, and Biddeford. Overall, OOB is similar to neighboring coastal communities in Southern Maine.

Figure 3: 2024 Valuation and Tax Commitment Comparison Across Geographies

Geography	2024 Population	2024 Valuation Per Capita	2024 Tax Commitment Per Capita
Old Orchard Beach	9,438	$302,972	$3,576
Ogunquit	1,601	$1,351,843	$8,226
Scarborough	24,010	$272,759	$3,421
Saco	21,064	$179,083	$2,704
Biddeford	22,370	$194,352	$2,471
Cumberland County	313,809	$244,088	$2,949
York County	220,143	$249,566	$2,526
Maine	1,405,012	$195,854	$2,253

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, 2024 Census Population Estimates from Maine State Economist

OOB has also seen the highest nominal 5-year change in tax commitment, comparing 2024 values to 2020. However, after adjusting for inflation, the percentage change looks very different. Record breaking inflation in recent years contributes to this difference. Even though the OOB commitment has increased by more than 20 percent since 2020, after adjusting for inflation, it has experienced a 2 percent increase in value of the total tax commitment over the 5-year period. Saco has a similar trend, while many other neighboring municipalities have seen their tax commitment fall as inflation has reduced the purchasing power of the dollar.

Figure 4: 2020-2024 Tax Commitment Comparison Across Geographies

Geography	Tax Commitment			
	2020	2024	5-Year Change	5-Year Change Inflation Adjusted
Old Orchard Beach	$27,797,456	$33,748,423	21%	2.1%
Ogunquit	$11,662,286	$13,169,655	13%	-5.0%
Scarborough	$69,037,982	$82,127,053	19%	0.1%
Saco	$46,510,331	$56,957,346	22%	3.0%
Biddeford	$48,307,062	$55,266,947	14%	-3.8%
Cumberland County	$772,280,689	$925,434,072	20%	0.8%
York County	$470,470,117	$556,111,562	18%	-0.6%
Maine	$2,738,276,430	$3,165,770,288	16%	-2.7%

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Total municipal valuation is made up of several factors, land valuation, building valuation and personal property valuation, which vary slightly for each community. OOB has the highest percentage of total valuation attributed to building values at 62 percent, which is closer to the average for Cumberland County than the other York County communities. OOB's taxable personal property is in line with other neighboring communities.

Figure 5: Comparison of the Percent of Taxable Valuation, 2024

Geography	Percent of Taxable Valuation		
	Land	Buildings	Personal Property
Old Orchard Beach	36%	62%	2%
Ogunquit	55%	45%	1%
Scarborough	42%	56%	2%
Saco	41%	58%	1%
Biddeford	48%	50%	2%
Cumberland County	37%	61%	2%
York County	44%	55%	1%
Maine	40%	57%	2%

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Figure 6: Geographic Comparison of Taxable Valuation, 2024

Geography	Taxable Valuation			
	Total Taxable Municipal Valuation	Lands	Building	Personal Property
Old Orchard Beach	2,960,387,975	1,067,247,425	1,845,896,200	47,244,350
Ogunquit	2,038,646,270	1,112,673,600	915,590,400	10,382,270
Scarborough	5,142,583,176	2,149,797,400	2,882,326,576	110,459,200
Saco	3,861,514,991	1,590,579,096	2,220,833,195	50,102,700
Biddeford	4,212,419,733	2,040,669,245	2,101,057,888	70,692,600
Cumberland County	61,779,599,012	22,611,762,687	37,807,724,647	1,360,111,678
York County	50,987,024,114	22,414,720,988	27,927,234,024	645,069,102
Maine	222,601,414,516	89,831,882,943	127,297,464,335	5,472,067,238

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Personal property, including business equipment, production machinery and equipment as well as other property, accounts for 1.6 percent of OOB's total valuation. This is similar to surrounding communities but is slightly lower than the statewide average (2.5 percent). Industrial and commercial growth adds to this value and can reduce demand on taxing only real property.

Figure 7: Geographic Comparison of Personal Property Valuation, 2024

Geography	Personal Property Valuation by Type			
	Total Taxable Personal Property	Total Machinery & Equipment	Taxable Business Equipment	Other Taxable Personal Property
Old Orchard Beach	$47,244,350	$8,885,170	$6,298,644	$32,060,536
Ogunquit	$10,382,270	$4,308,310	$4,871,950	$1,202,010
Scarborough	$110,459,200	$107,913,600	$0	$2,545,600
Saco	$50,102,700	$37,146,601	$7,900,516	$5,055,583
Biddeford	$70,692,600	$52,803,100	$12,079,500	$5,810,000
Cumberland County	$1,360,111,678	$794,803,707	$341,588,973	$223,718,998
York County	$645,069,102	$370,377,977	$84,599,372	$190,091,753
Maine	$5,472,067,238	$2,923,585,503	$862,596,679	$1,708,336,934

Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Current and Future Revenue Trends

The following table shows OOB's revenues from 2020 to 2024. The town collects revenue from several varying sources outside of property taxes. Intergovernmental revenues increased by 95 percent, while Licenses and Permits revenues increased by 76 percent. As other revenue sources have increased, the proportion of the municipal budget funded by property tax has declined from 84 percent in 2020 to 80.6 percent in 2024.

Figure 8: Town Revenue 2020 to 2024

Revenue Sources	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Property Taxes	$27,828,840	$28,954,786	$29,060,170	$31,427,343	$33,390,668
Other Taxes	$2,141,729	$2,474,768	$2,334,555	$2,418,878	$2,525,361
Licenses and Permits	$1,266,588	$1,336,387	$1,944,190	$2,236,637	$2,234,690
Intergovernmental Revenues	$1,315,658	$1,806,937	$2,025,913	$2,397,075	$2,567,630
Investment Income	$276,559	$112,038	$61,631	$185,539	$419,762
Other Revenues	$290,085	$126,391	$83,414	$35,757	$312,319
Total Revenues	$33,119,459	$34,811,307	$35,509,873	$38,701,229	$41,450,430

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach Federal Compliance Audit, June 20, 2024

Trends show that over the last 10 years, the town's overall revenues have increased 60 percent nominally. After adjusting for inflation, the budget's true value has only increased by 21 percent. The largest revenue source besides property taxes is intergovernmental revenues, such as state revenue sharing, and reimbursements received by the town. Intergovernmental revenue has increased by more than 200 percent after adjusting for inflation. Licenses and Permits revenue has increased by 90 percent since 2015, and the two largest funding sources in this category are parking meters (38 percent) and business licenses (30 percent).

Figure 9: Town Revenue Comparison 2015 to 2024

Select Revenue Sources	2015	2024	Percent Change	Percent Change (Inflation Adjusted)
Property Taxes	$22,407,751	$33,390,668	49%	12.6%
Other Taxes	$1,885,245	$2,525,361	34%	1.2%
Licenses and Permits	$888,279	$2,234,690	152%	90.1%
Intergovernmental Revenues	$581,289	$2,567,630	342%	233.7%
Investment Income	$41,675	$419,762	907%	661.0%
Other Revenues	$143,022	$312,319	118%	65.0%
Total Revenues	$25,947,261	$41,450,430	60%	20.7%

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach Federal Compliance Audit, June 20, 2024

Current and Future Expenditure Trends

The following table shows OOB's expenditures from 2020 to 2024. Recreational expenditure increased by 61 percent, while Public Works and Public Safety spending increased by 45 percent 32 percent respectively.

Figure 10: Town Expenditure Comparison 2020 to 2024

Expenditure Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
General Government	$4,823,145	$5,190,230	$5,505,281	$6,286,153	$6,490,768
Public Works	$1,566,947	$1,584,264	$2,021,908	$2,060,161	$2,264,021
Sanitation	$1,747,646	$1,722,747	$1,935,479	$2,069,356	$2,229,193
Public Safety	$5,498,518	$5,732,745	$6,292,883	$6,428,884	$7,249,708
Recreation, Culture and Agencies	$781,711	$792,836	$946,239	$1,179,589	$1,258,186
Health and Welfare	$113,222	$122,193	$113,316	$608,450	$627,279
Education	$12,821,471	$12,947,900	$13,116,575	$13,360,617	$13,898,978
Debt Service (Excluding Education)	$1,177,018	$1,170,944	$1,243,545	$1,151,278	$1,122,374
Capital Outlay	$596,903	$601,391	$659,214	$596,805	$586,319
Other	$943,890	$969,441	$956,982	$964,057	$1,058,285
Total Expenditures	$30,070,471	$30,834,691	$32,791,422	$34,705,350	$36,785,111

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach Federal Compliance Audit, June 20, 2024

The following table compares selected expenditures between 2015 and 2024 in current dollars, along with percent change in current dollars compared to inflation adjusted percent change. The most rapid spending increases were in health and welfare, capital outlays, and recreation, culture and agencies. Two bonds received in 2017 and 2020 are likely reflected in the 2024 costs and not 2015. General government, public works, and public safety spending have grown faster than the rate of inflation. Education and Other spending have decreased, and Debt Service has decreased significantly, nearly 30 percent.

Figure 11: Town Expenditure Comparison 2015 to 2024

Expenditure Type	2015	2024	Percent Change	Percent Change (Inflation Adjusted)
General Government	$3,992,765	$6,490,768	63%	22.8%
Public Works	$1,451,379	$2,264,021	56%	17.9%
Sanitation	$1,584,908	$2,229,193	41%	6.3%
Public Safety	$4,362,626	$7,249,708	66%	25.6%
Recreation, Culture and Agencies	$655,844	$1,258,186	92%	44.9%
Health and Welfare	$71,013	$627,279	783%	567.4%
Education	$11,162,780	$13,898,978	25%	-5.9%
Debt Service (Excluding Education)	$1,205,829	$1,122,374	-7%	-29.7%
Capital Outlay	$202,349	$586,319	190%	118.9%
Other	$914,674	$1,058,285	16%	-12.6%
Total Expenditures	$25,604,167	$36,785,111	44%	8.5%

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach Federal Compliance Audit, June 20, 2024

Education is the single largest expenditure in OOB, regularly accounting for more than a third of the town's total expenses. The following table shows overall town spending compared to OOB's annual education costs.

Figure 12: Education Expenditure Trends 2015 to 2024

Expenditure Type	Old Orchard Beach Education Cost	Percent of Total Town Expenditures
2015	$11,162,780	44%
2016	$12,170,868	41%
2017	$11,871,271	44%
2018	$12,170,868	43%
2019	$12,244,147	43%
2020	$12,821,471	43%
2021	$12,947,900	42%
2022	$13,116,575	40%
2023	$13,360,617	38%
2024	$13,898,978	38%

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach Federal Compliance Audit, June 20, 2024

Municipal Debt and Capital Financing

OOB presently has a relatively low volume of debt when compared to the maximum debt allowed by state law. Towns may borrow up to 7.5 percent of their total state valuation, which in OOB's case would be more than $214 million in 2024. As of June 30, 2024, the amount of outstanding long-term debt was equal to 0.155 percent of property valuation for the year then ended.

Figure 13: Municipal Long-Term Debt

Description	Origination Year	Bond Principal	Interest Rate	Outstanding Balance as of 6/30/24	Maturity Date
General Obligation Bond	2009	$4,100,000	2.165% to 5.575%	$760,000	11/28
Sewer Revolving Loan Fund	2009	$1,200,000	1.32%	$300,000	11/28
General Obligation Bond	2010	$1,625,000	4.47% to 5.75%	$875,000	11/30
General Obligation Bond	2014	$2,000,000	2.0% to 3.5%	$650,000	09/27
General Obligation Bond	2016	$1,200,000	0.250% to 2.754%	$500,000	05/29
General Obligation Bond	2016	$400,000	1.16% to 2.13%	$120,000	11/26
General Obligation Bond	2017	$857,000	1.34% to 3.59%	$514,202	11/32
General Obligation Bond	2020	$1,000,000	1.19% to 1.74%	$700,000	11/30

Source: Town of Old Orchard Beach Federal Compliance Audit, June 20, 2024

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a tool to generate funds within a community to support community development, infrastructure improvements, and economic development. A TIF district works by capturing the increased tax revenue of an area of the community as it develops. The town currently has one tax increment financing districts which supports Affordable Housing development in the town.

In 2021, the Maine State Housing Authority approved the Milliken Heights Affordable Housing Development and Tax Increment Financing District, which encompasses 4.76 acres of land. The taxable Original Assessed Value of the District is $23,800 as of March 31, 2020.

The TIF District will remain in place for a period of 15 years from adoption. The allocation of tax increment revenues, through a credit enhancement agreement, to be paid to

owners/developers of specified property, will commence by agreement between the Town and the owner/developer and will continue for a period not to exceed 15 years or the remainder of the term of the District designation, whichever is less. No more than 20 percent of the property taxes to be generated on the construction within the District will be returned to the developer for 15 years. The remaining amount will be retained by the Town and used to fund the development plan of the District.

Regional Coordination of Capital Investments

Question for Town: Have efforts been made by the community to participate in or explore sharing capital investments with neighboring communities?

Capital Improvement Program

OOB must make capital investments to meet the needs of the community in a cost-effective manner. Possible capital investments include such things as road reconstruction, fire engines, trucks for snow plowing, building repairs, road upgrades and improvements to public property. Capital investments can have a large impact on the budget, becoming obvious targets when it comes to trimming the budget.

The tables on pages 12-16 show OOB's Capital Improvement Program for 2024 to 2034. The table headings identify if the capital investments will be funded through taxation, bonds, or lease-purchase agreements. These capital investments have town wide benefits and are not enabling growth in any specific location in town.

Figure 14: Capital Improvement Program

Funding: Taxation			
Department	**Priority**	**Description**	**Total FY 24 to FY 34**
Town Hall		W. Grand Bathroom Upgrades	$343,000
		Public Bathrooms at Beach Entrances	$445,000
		Solid Waste Automated Curbside Collection	-
		Hyundai EV Vehicle Purchase 4 EV	-
		Town Hall Surveillance System	$24,500
	6	IT Workstation Replacement Plan	$165,000
	7	Town Building CIP Reserve Fund	$550,000
	3	Town Hall Tower Rubber Roof Replacement	$50,000
	5	IT Network / Firewall Infrastructure Upgrades	$65,000
	1	Town Hall Heating System/Chimney Removal	$250,000
Historical Society		Historical Society Driveway / Paving	$73,000
	4	Replace Siding	$62,054
Total Town Hall			$1,892,500
Recreation	1	Ballpark Parking Lot Paving and Lighting	$100,000
	4	Ballpark Stadium LED Retrofit Lights	$300,000
	3	Rec Community Building - Plumbing Improvements	$120,000
		Rec Community Building - Security System	$28,374
		New Camera at Skate Park	$8,597
	6	Ballpark Stadium Repairs	$300,000
		John Deere Gator	$20,000
		Pickleball Courts	$65,000
		Skatepark Landscaping and Retention Wall	$15,000
	5	Removal of Skyboxes	$10,000
	2	Toro Sandpro 3040	$35,680
		Concession & Bathroom Upgrades	$150,000
Total Recreation Dept.			**$1,287,705**

Figure 14: Capital Improvement Program (continued)

Funding: Taxation			
Department	**Priority**	**Description**	**Total FY 24 to FY 34**
Fire Department	4	Protective Equipment (Turn Out Gear) 4 Sets	$275,000
	1	Fire Station Roof	$121,806
	7	Hoses/Nozzles	$53,140
	5	Replace SCBA (air-packs) - front line 10 units	$56,720
		Radio System Upgrade FIRE/PD/PW	$500,000
		Lucas Device	$22,475
		2 Storage Containers	$13,000
		Portacount for fitting Masks	$17,000
		Thermal Imaging Camera	$24,000
		Replace 2015 4X4 Pick Up Truck	$85,000
		Jet Ski	$15,000
	6	Gear Dryer	$12,879
	2	Apparatus Drain repair, refinish floor and kitchen	$192,000
	9	Command Cabinet- Deputy Chiefs Vehicle	$8,000
	3	SCBA Filling Station	-
		Remount 2020 Ambulance	$189,715
		New Fire Truck Pumper (replace 2009 Seagrave)	$850,000
		Remount 2022 Ambulance	$210,340
Total Fire Dept.			**$2,371,075**
Police Department	1	One Police cruiser and associated equipment	$667,942
		Pay and Display Parking Kiosks	$60,100
		Side by Side ATV	$39,000
		PD Building Siding Repairs	$90,000
		Restructure Patrol Room	$20,000
		25 Portable Radios	-
		27 Glock 9MM Firearms	$27,000
	2	Axon Police Tasers (26)	-
	4	Setronics CCTV System Upgrade	$43,324
	3	Motorola Solutions-Watchguard Migration	$37,455
		Parking Enforcement Golf Cart	$10,000
Total Police Dept.			**$994,821**

Figure 14: Capital Improvement Program (continued)

Funding: Taxation			
Department	**Priority**	**Description**	**Total FY 24 to FY 34**
Waste Water Facility		Replace West Grand PS Grinder	$60,000
		Replace Halfway PS Grinder and Pump	$80,000
		Stock Channel Grinder for West Grand Pump Station	$195,000
		Replace 2006 F-250 with F 350 Diesel Plow Truck	-
		Purchase Spare Compressor	$40,000
	1	Replace 3 Flappers on Tide Gate	$70,000
		Replace Portable Generator with a used unit	$100,000
		Replace 2017 Ford F-350	$70,000
		Replace Blowers	$250,000
		Replace 2018 front end loader	$150,000
		Replace portable generator with used unit	$50,000
		Replace 2021 crane truck	$150,000
		Replace two (2) Huber screw presses	$1,000,000
		West Grand PS pumps	$90,000
Total Waste Water Facility			$2,305,000
PW Stormwater		Outfall Cleaning	$50,000
		Miscellaneous Various	$650,000
Total Public Works - Stormwater			**$700,000**
PW Sidewalks		Miles Rd - Cascade to Portland	$50,000
		Various	$1,075,000
Total Public Works - Sidewalk			**$1,125,000**
PW Sewer		Saco Ave / Goodwin Ave Sewer	$200,000
		Westland, Lawn, Walden, Short, Carlton	$300,000
		Brisson Sewer (260 lf)	$250,000
		15th Street	$210,000
		Connecticut	$105,000
		Reggio Ave (W. Grand - Beach)	$105,000
			$400,000
Total Public Works Sewer			**$1,170,000**

Figure 14: Capital Improvement Program (continued)

Funding: Taxation			
Department	**Priority**	**Description**	**Total FY 24 to FY 34**
PW - Road Maint.		New Salt Road Rehab (due to 12/23/22 storm)	$85,000
		Various	$770,000
Total Public Works - Roads Maintenance			**$855,000**
Public Works Equipment		Double Axle Main Line Truck	-
		Two F-550 Diesel Trucks with plow, sander, wing	-
		Two wetpacks Hydraulic conversion	$25,000
		Trailer Mounted Wood Chipper	$50,000
		Paint 2010 John Deere Loader	$20,000
	2	Vac Truck	-
	3	2 2025 Ford F600 w/Body, plow, wing, sander	-
	4	Small Wheel Loader with Attachments	-
Total Public Works Equipment			**$95,000**
PW Bldg. Impr.	1	PW Ventilation and Building Addition	$80,000
Total Public Works - Building Improvements			**$80,000**
Memorial Park		Memorial Park Improvement - Cont	$420,000
Total Veterans Memorial Park			**$420,000**
Total Projects - Taxation			**$16,451,101**

Figure 14: Capital Improvement Program (continued)

Funding: Projected Bond Issue			
Department	**Priority**	**Description**	**Total FY 24 to FY 34**
		Downtown Improvements- Sidewalks/Curbing Includes: E. W. Grand Ave, Old Orchard Street, Downtown Sq, First St. Staples St., Staples St Extension	$1,652,328
		Bond in 3 Phases: FY 24 $2,075,000 FY 25 $1,945,000 FY 26 $2,850,000	$1,614,246
			$2,328,314
Total Projects - Bond Issue			**$5,594,888**
Funding: Projected Lease Purchase			
Department	**Priority**	**Description**	**Total FY 22 to FY 32**
Police		Axon Taser	$119,716
Fire		Scba Filling Station	$101,230
Public Works		Double Axle Main Line Truck	-
		2 Ford F-600's plow, wing, body, sander	$337,440
		Vac Truck	$883,296
		Small Wheel Loader with Attachments	-
		Rubber Tire Excavator	-
Total Projects - Bond Issue			**$1,441,682**

Planning Implications

Overall, OOB is in good fiscal health. The town has long prepared for large capital expenses and continues to have a forward-looking capital improvement plan. Recent extreme inflation rates complicate looking at past valuation and tax trends. Since the town has seen moderate changes to valuation and tax commitment in recent years, revenues and expenditures have kept pace with inflation.

Town revenues and expenses have both increased, as expected. When adjusted for inflation, revenues have grown by more than 20 percent while expenditure has grown by only 8.5 percent. As other revenue sources have grown, the percentage of the municipal budget funded through property taxes has declined from 84 percent in 2020 to 80.6 percent in 2024. Education continues to be the largest town expense; however, state education allocations have increased in recent years. No major changes in what and how the town allocates funds are expected. Currently, there is no mechanism, such as impact fee assessments, to offset the costs of growth.

- While the Town has seen significant increases in Intergovernmental revenue and License and Permits revenue in recent years, the town may see reductions in these revenues if there are reductions in Federal or State spending for local governments or if international visits to OOB decline in the coming years.
- The largest increases in town expenditure have been for recreation, public safety, and public works projects that will improve the overall quality of life and public safety for residents while also helping the Town comply with Federal laws, recover from recent storm damage, and maintain and upgrade infrastructure.
- They Town may want to consider exploring grants that are available to assist in the funding of capital investments or explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.

Population and Demographics

Purpose

An analysis of population and demographics is fundamental to a comprehensive plan. To understand the Town's current and future needs, a detailed examination of community characteristics will help decisionmakers understand the impacts of population patterns on public facilities and services. Specifically, this chapter describes Old Orchard Beach's population trends, discusses how these trends relate to and contrast with neighboring communities and the region, describes key characteristics of the current Old Orchard Beach population, and considers the implications of these trends and characteristics.

Data Highlights

- Old Orchard Beach's population is projected to increase 3.4 percent between 2020 and 2040, consistent with the projected growth rate for the state overall.
- The Town's seasonal nighttime population nearly triples during the summer months, growing from a year-round population of 8,960 to about 27,000.
- Old Orchard Beach's median age, 56.8 years, is more than 10 years older than the median age of both the county and the state. Old Orchard Beach has consistently had the highest median age among communities in the area.
- Old Orchard Beach has seen larger decreases in school enrollment compared with surrounding communities. Between 2015 and 2023, the Town's school enrollment fell by 15.7 percent, nearly three times more than the county and state.

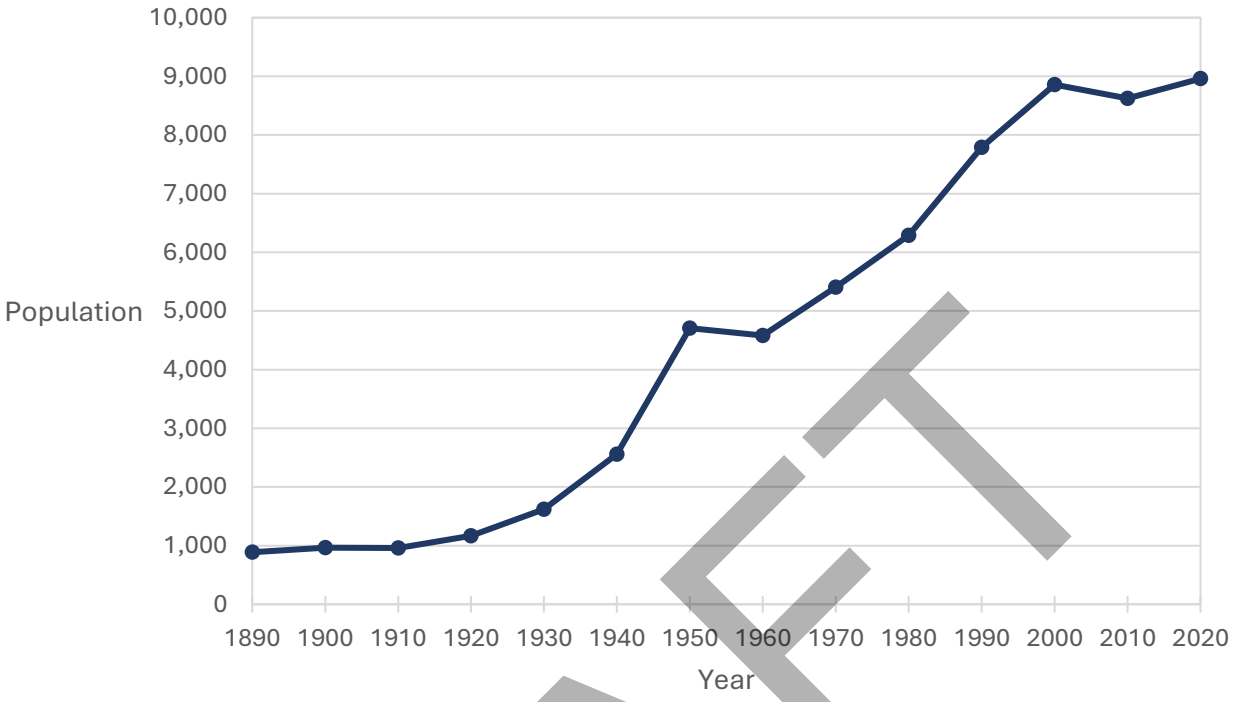
Current (and Past) Conditions

Population

Overview

The Old Orchard Beach population grew all but two decades from the 1890s onward. The Town experienced a sharp population increase in the 1940s, with many residents employed in the manufacturing centers of Biddeford, Saco, and Portland. After this decade of growth, the Town's population dropped in the 1950s. The populations of neighboring Saco and Scarborough increased during that decade, as seen in Figure 2, suggesting that some residents relocated to neighboring areas. The Town's population continued to grow in line with regional trends between 1960 and 2000.

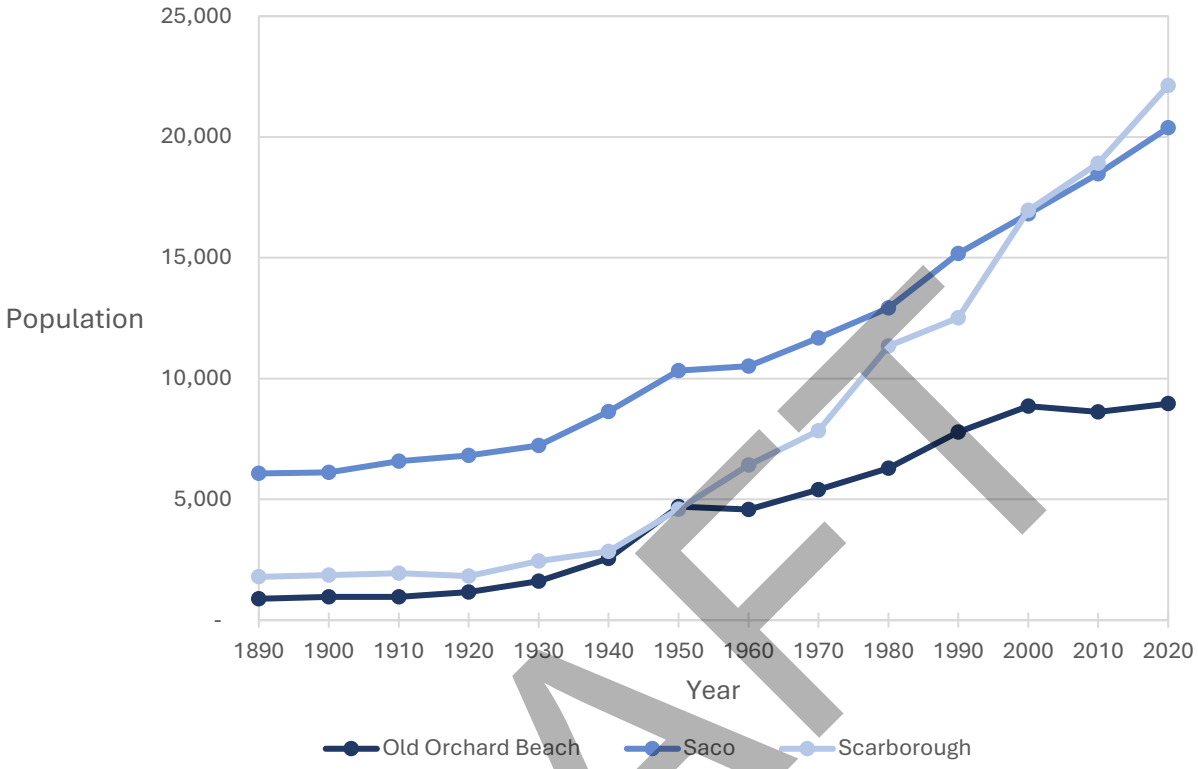
Figure 1: Town of Old Orchard Beach Historic Population



Source: Decennial Census

A second population decline occurred between 2000 and 2010. Similarly to the 1950s, the populations of neighboring municipalities grew during this time, suggesting that residents relocated to surrounding areas. Since 2010, the population has grown.

Figure 2: Old Orchard Beach and Neighboring Municipalities Historic Population

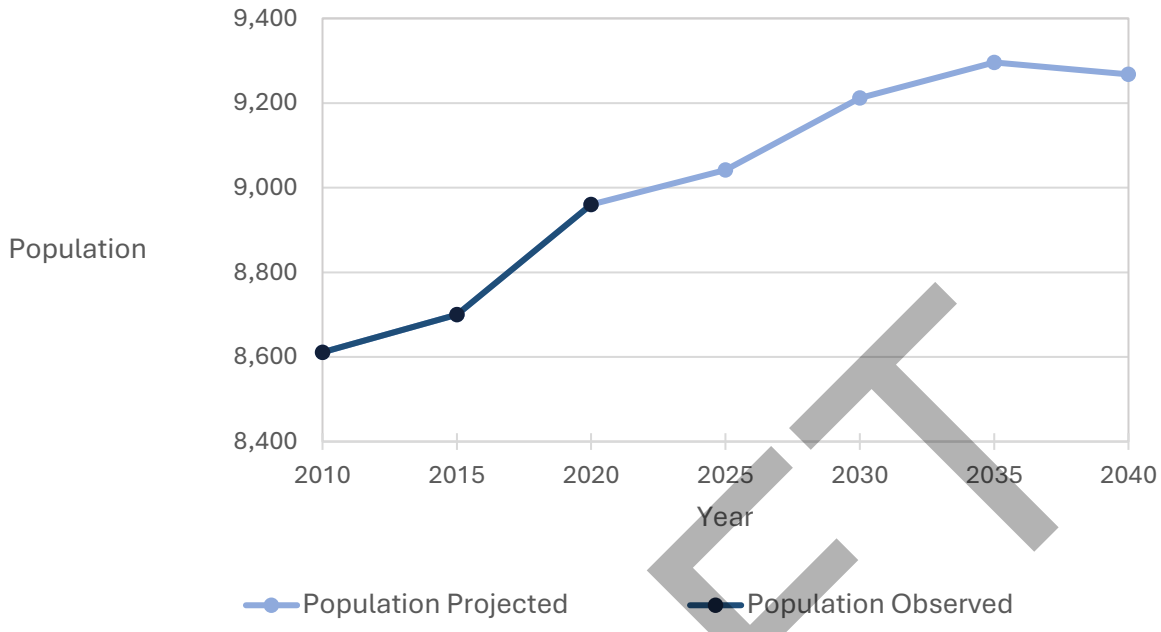


Source: Decennial Census

Population Projections

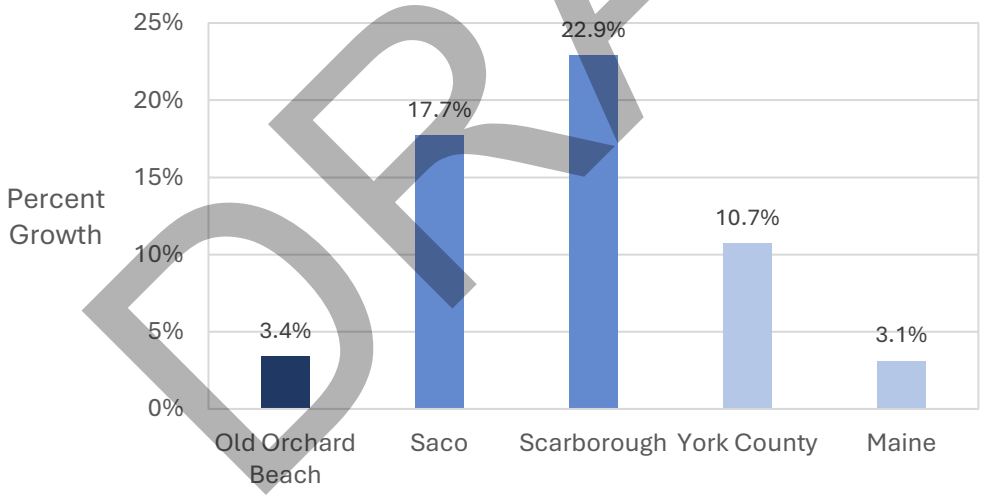
The Maine State Economist produces population projections for all Maine towns and cities based on historical population growth and migration rates. These projections estimate that Old Orchard Beach's population will continue to increase before experiencing a slight decrease after 2035, resulting in a cumulative increase of 3.4 percent between 2020 and 2040. This projected growth rate is lower than that of Saco, Scarborough, and York County, but consistent with that of the state. The 2040 population of Old Orchard Beach is projected to be 9,268, an addition of 308 residents from the 2020 figure of 8,960.

Figure 3: Old Orchard Beach Projected Population, 2020 to 2040



Source: Maine State Economist Demographic Projections

Figure 4: Projected Population Growth, 2020 to 2040



Source: Maine State Economist Demographic Projections

Seasonal Population

Old Orchard Beach has a significant seasonal population due to its role as a summer coastal vacation destination. The Town's seasonal nighttime population nearly triples during the summer months, growing from a year-round population of 8,960 to over 27,000. This is comparable to other seasonal population increases in the region; Kennebunkport's population also triples in the summer months, while Wells' nearly quadruples. About 27

percent of the housing units in Old Orchard Beach are for seasonal use, according to the 2020 Decennial Census. This is a lower proportion than other communities in the region with significant seasonal populations: in Kennebunkport, 40 percent of housing units are for seasonal use; in Wells, 43 percent; and in Ogunquit, 55 percent.

The Town depends on seasonal visitors to support businesses and create employment opportunities. The seasonal population puts less demand on some public services because seasonal residents do not require services year-round, while increasing pressure on infrastructure services during peak visitation. Additionally, the high seasonal population can contribute to increasing rental housing costs, reduce the availability of opportunities for homeownership, and cause seasonal traffic.

In recent years, short-term rentals in Old Orchard Beach have increased occupancy in areas of town that have not historically had seasonal visitors. The Town is also experiencing an increase in multi-day seasonal visitors rather than day trips or single-night overnight visits. Visitors from Canada, historically a significant portion of the Town's seasonal tourism, have decreased in recent years.

As a service center, Old Orchard Beach requires additional efforts to serve a large daytime population in the summer months. Important considerations include workforce housing needs, infrastructure costs, and transportation. In particular, the town must consider parking needs, alternative transportation options, and first/last mile connections as part of the public transportation system. These considerations are essential to continue supporting the tourism services provided by the Town.

Demographics

Every ten years from the 1700s through the present day, the U.S. Census Bureau has conducted a Decennial Census. Each dataset is considered highly accurate but is available in 10-year increments only.

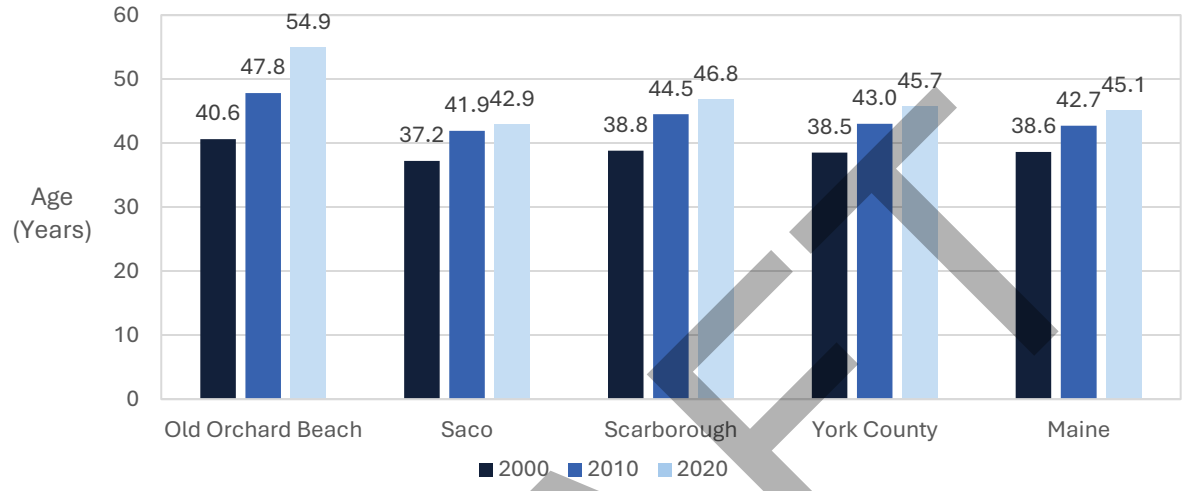
Starting in 2005, the Census Bureau collected a smaller, annual sample of the national population in the American Community Survey (ACS). Datasets from this survey are combined into one, three, or five-year compilations. For small communities, only the five-year compilations are considered accurate enough to use. Often the ACS offers the only data for specific topics or demographics, and the data is estimated and published annually. For planning purposes, the drawbacks of the potential margin of error are typically outweighed by the ability to get data for any year and topic.

Age

Comparing data from the 2000 and 2020 Decennial Censuses shows how the ages of Old Orchard Beach residents have changed over time. Most Maine communities, including Old Orchard Beach, have experienced aging populations during this period. At 56.8 years, Old Orchard Beach's median age is older than that of both the county at 45.3 years and the

state at 44.8 years (2023 ACS). Old Orchard Beach has consistently had the highest median age among communities in the area, and its increase in median age has been greater than surrounding communities, the county, and the state.

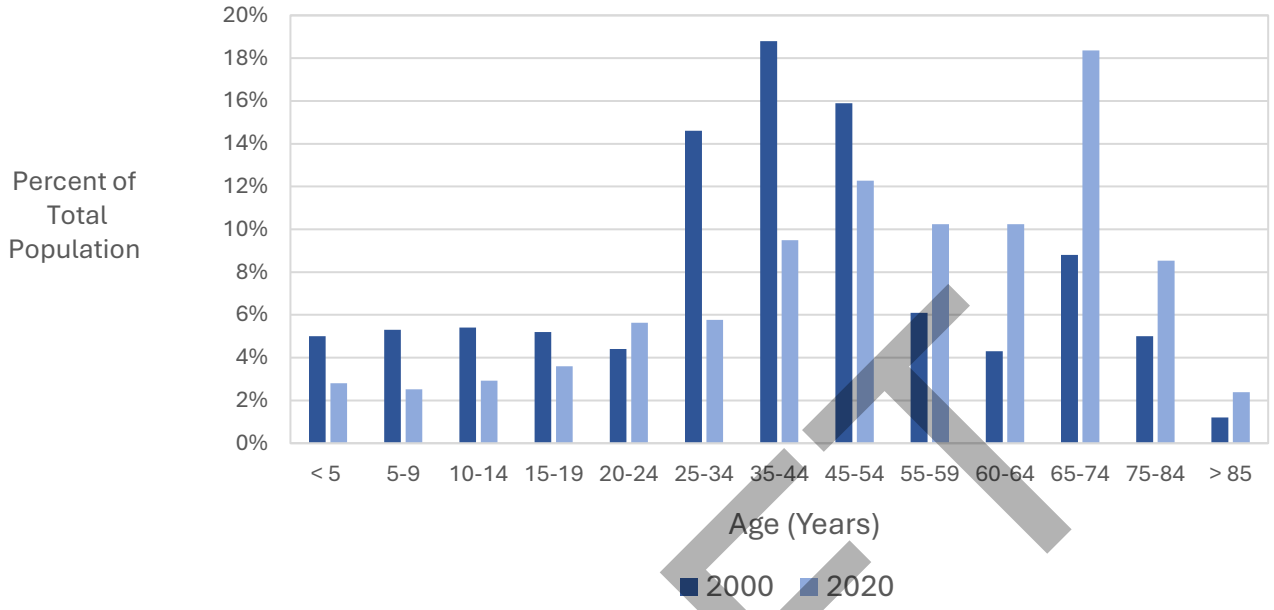
Figure 5: Comparison of Median Age Over Time



Source: Decennial Census

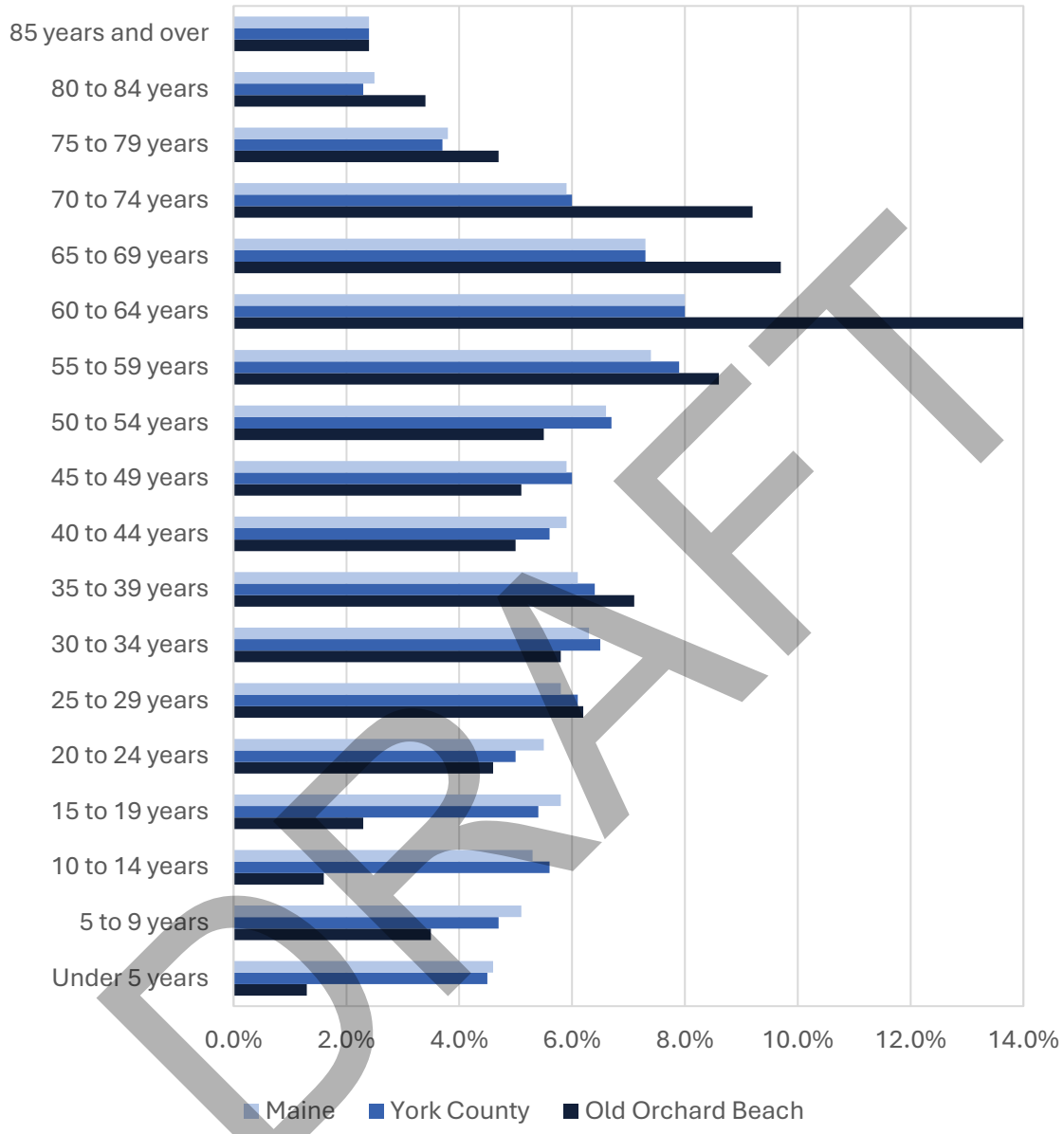
Assessing individual age groups of Old Orchard Beach residents shows decreases in the proportion of residents under 19 years old and large decreases in the age groups between 25 and 54 years old. The largest decrease was in the group of 25 to 34 year olds, which fell by over 60 percent. Conversely, the age groups between 55 and 84 years old all increased, the largest increase being the 65 to 74 year old group by nearly 143 percent. This suggests that the Town's age distribution arises from residents aging in place rather than in-migration of older adults. This age distribution pattern, which skews older and contains fewer school-aged children, will likely persist barring any significant future changes to the Town's development patterns.

Figure 6: Percent of Population by Age Over Time



Source: Decennial Census

Figure 7: Geographic Comparison of Percent of Population by Age



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2023

Race

Maine is historically one of the least racially diverse states in the country. However, over the last decade the percentage of the Maine population that identifies as white only has decreased slightly, from 95.2 percent in 2010 to 90.2 percent in 2020 (Decennial Census).

Old Orchard Beach's racial and ethnic breakdown reflects that of the county and state. Almost 92 percent of residents identify as white alone, 1.4 percent identify as Asian alone, and all other racial identifiers are each 1 percent or lower. Old Orchard Beach has a slightly lower proportion of its population identifying as two or more races than the state and county.

Figure 8: Population by Race, 2020

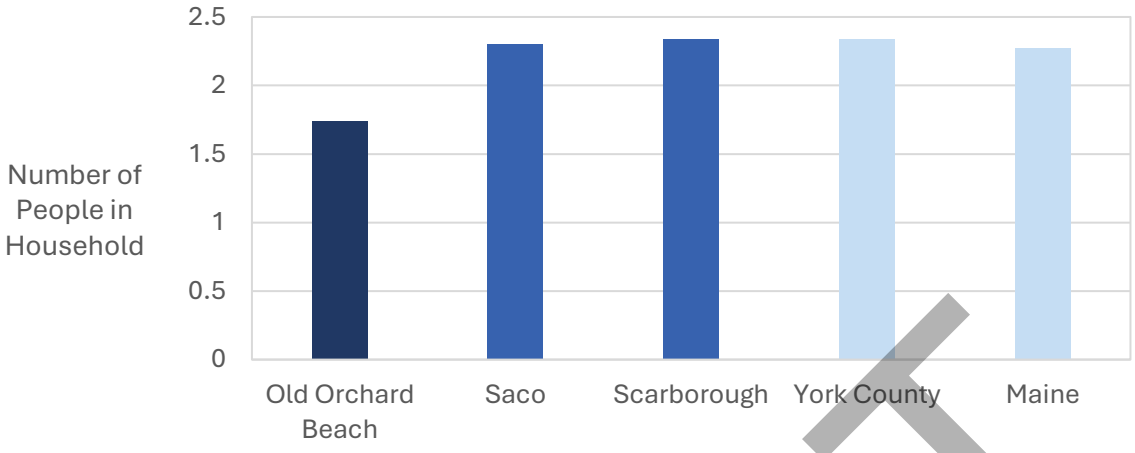
	Old Orchard Beach	York County	Maine
Total Population	8,960	211,972	1,362,359
Population of one race:	94.6%	94.3%	94.1%
White alone	91.7%	91.5%	90.2%
Black or African American alone	0.7%	0.9%	1.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
Asian alone	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Population of two races:	3.1%	3.8%	3.9%

Source: Decennial Census

Household Size

Maine's average household size has decreased from 2.9 persons per household in 2000 to 2.3 in 2020 (Decennial Census). Old Orchard Beach has a smaller average household size compared to surrounding communities, the county, and the state. This trend likely reflects a larger population of older adults living alone.

Figure 9: Average Household Size, 2023



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2023

Household Income

The decade between 2013 and 2023 saw several economic changes, from the period of economic expansion following the Great Recession to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the following recession. For ease of comparison across these periods, the 2013 figures shown in the following table are inflation adjusted to 2023 dollars.

The median household incomes in Old Orchard Beach and neighboring communities increased between 2013 and 2023. Old Orchard Beach's median household income increased by eight percent over the ten-year period, comparable to York County's increase of 8.5 percent. However, neighboring communities Saco and Scarborough and the state overall experienced larger increases in median household income, increasing 12, 21.8, and 11 percent, respectively. Old Orchard Beach also has a much higher poverty rate (14.1 percent) than neighboring communities, the county, and state.

Figure 10: Change in Median Household Income Over Time

Geography	2013	2023
Old Orchard Beach	$60,976	$65,842
Saco	$73,961	$84,328
Scarborough	$100,552	$122,435
York County	$76,391	$82,904
Maine	$64,542	$71,773

Figure 11: Percent of Population Below Poverty Level

Geography	2023
Old Orchard Beach	14.1%
Saco	6.8%
Scarborough	0.3%

York County	7.8%
Maine	10.8%

School Enrollment

School enrollment in York County and the state overall has dropped in recent years, reflecting the trend of aging populations. Old Orchard Beach has seen even larger decreases; between 2015 and 2023, the Town's school enrollment fell by 15.7 percent, nearly three times more than the county and state. This trend aligns with Old Orchard Beach's decrease in the population of school-aged children discussed earlier in the chapter.

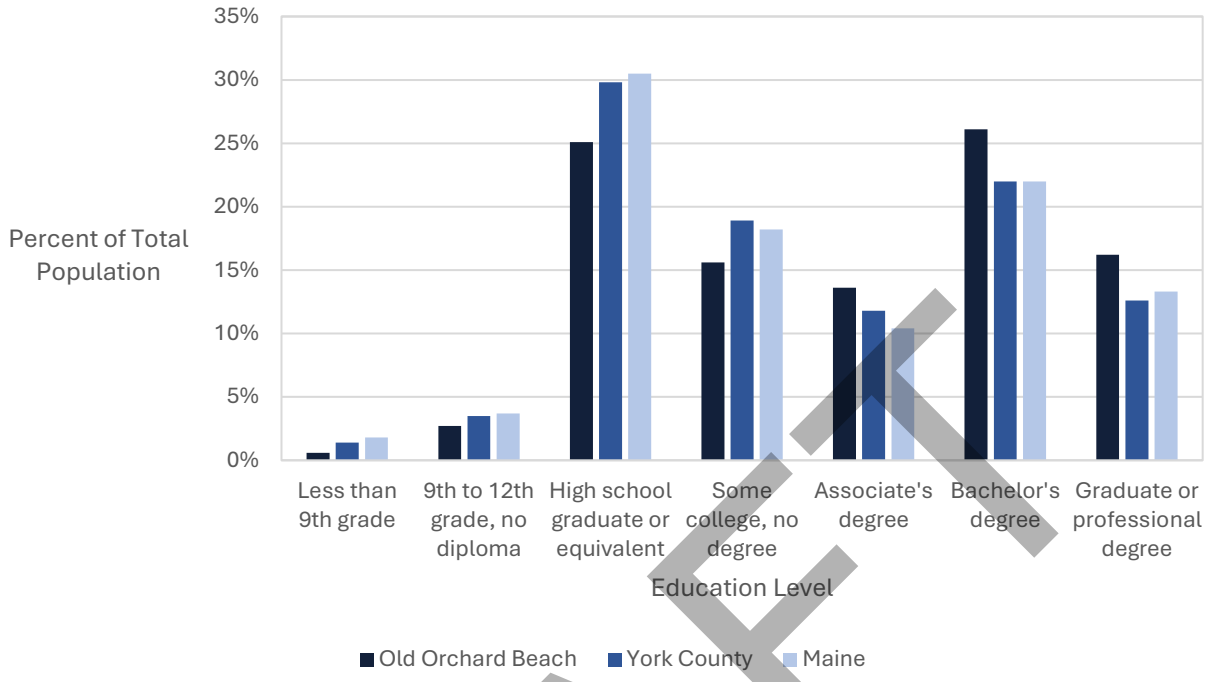
Figure 12: Change in School Enrollment Over Time

Geography	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023	Percent Change 2015 to 2023
Old Orchard Beach	758	752	692	637	639	-15.7%
Saco	2,772	2,749	2,747	2,781	2,798	0.9%
Scarborough	3,132	3,015	3,007	2,922	2,933	-6.4%
York County	27,859	27,457	27,424	26,358	26,442	-5.1%
Maine	182,831	180,918	180,817	172,474	173,908	-4.9%

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment effects household incomes, workforce diversity, and employment needs. Old Orchard Beach has a higher level of educational attainment than the county and state overall. Less than one percent of residents have not completed high school and over 35 percent of residents have a Bachelor's degree or greater.

Figure 13: Educational Attainment, 2023



Planning Implications

As shown in this chapter via data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Maine Department of Education, and the Maine State Economist, the population of Old Orchard Beach is older and more highly educated than that of the county and state, with a lower household income and lower school enrollment. With the population of school-age children decreasing, school enrollment will likely continue to decline, reducing demand for school services. Old Orchard Beach's population will likely continue to age, which has several implications for community development:

- The community should ensure the availability of a range of housing options to support a growing population. Housing options should consider the needs of older adults, from those who are fully independent to those requiring more assistance in their daily lives. Policies should consider affordability, accessibility, and proximity to essential services, allowing residents of all ages to easily participate in community life.
- The town should ensure a range of transportation options, including public transit and demand-response services such as volunteer driver programs. Ensuring accessibility and walkability of essential locations can help older residents maintain independence and mobility.
- Older adults have skills, connections, and time to put toward engagement in their community, e.g. through volunteer organizations. Incorporating opportunities and

services for older adults in planning processes will allow older adults to engage more fully in community and economic activities.

- Lastly, effective planning for the needs of older adults will require ongoing engagement and involvement of older residents in planning processes.