

CHAPTER FIVE – THE DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS MAP

Definition/Purpose of Map

As part of the inventory process, the Comprehensive Plan Committee prepared a Development Constraints Overlay Map (see Figure 2 on the following page). The map summarizes the most critical features identified in the inventory and analysis stage and presents them, where possible, in relation to the physical layout of the Town. The Constraints Map includes features which are the basis for the development of the future land use plan.

Summary of Map Features

In the following, we briefly describe in summary fashion, the role that each constraint played in determining future land use patterns.

Historic Features

While not delineated on the development constraints map, the historic resources subcommittee has inventoried and identified over 190 structures worthy of protection that, aside from a few concentrated areas such as the Upper and Lower Villages, and Shaker Village, are spread throughout the Town. Historic structures have clearly been identified as a critical component of the cultural fabric and character of the Town. The conclusion of the committee was that a town wide approach to protecting these structures should be developed. These areas represent a constraint to the type of uses allowed and design of new structures and renovations.

Forest Resources

The forestry committee, in mapping the forest resource of New Gloucester, concluded that forested areas should be protected through continued harvesting and management, using varied forestry techniques where appropriate to individual parcels. In this way, new forest growth will be encouraged, wildlife will continue to have a varied and changing natural environment and the pressure to develop forest land will be lessened.

Agriculture

The overlay map noted that the prime farmland soils are generally outside of the aquifer area; however, prime agricultural soils are usually the better soils for development purposes. Further, the Agricultural Resources Committee found that generally, active farming activity has declined over the last ten years. However, like the forest resource, the agricultural resource (using both prime and non-prime soils) is seen as an important long-term commodity critical to both the character of the community and to a future, local food supply.

Road System

It was considered desirable for the Town's road system (existing and new roads) to be developed to support and encourage a centralized growth area. Existing land uses patterns show this area emanating out from the center of town (the Town Hall area, the intersections of Route 231, Gloucester Hill Road and Cobb's Bridge Road). In 1988, the town further encouraged a centralized pattern of land development by establishing three village areas at

Insert Development Constraints Map

Route 100/231 intersections, the Town Hall area and Route 100 and Gloucester Hill Road. The area connecting these centers, however, remains rural residential and of relatively low density. In developing a future land use plan, the Town will address how any other new roads or road improvements to existing arteries will help to further this centralized growth pattern.

Recreation Facilities

Present town-owned facilities, for the most part, remain scattered, although the recreation land next to the Memorial School is within the identified town center. The concept of locating recreational facilities to serve specific neighborhoods or geographic areas has not yet been implemented in New Gloucester. With the addition of active recreation facilities in mind, there will need to be a greater emphasis on obtaining permanent ownership of traditionally used, private lands especially those that lie within projected growth areas.

Greenbelt System

Concurrent with the need to centralize future recreation facilities, there should be a concerted effort to connect recreation areas with the greenbelt system, utilizing existing trail systems (in particular, the Intervale, rail lines and CMP systems). The goal of the greenbelt system is to also connect unique natural areas, critically identified open space areas, important viewsheds and other publicly owned land (i.e., Pineland Center). These categories are mapped on the constraints map and need to be included in future land use planning policies and strategies.

Very Low Soil Potential Areas

The Development Constraints Map shows the locations of very low potential soils, as identified by the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District in their manual "Soil Potential Ratings". The Town of New Gloucester is dominated by this soil group, when one overlays the medium intensity soils map across the Town. These soils begin in the southern quadrant of the town just north of the River and continue to the southern border. They also dominate the town north of Route 100, (several areas of good soil are available between Route 100 and the Maine Turnpike that are located in the aquifer areas). Unsurprisingly (given historical development patterns), the central village areas identified above are of reasonable soil quality, with large areas offering some development potential.

Aquifer and Aquifer Recharge Areas

The overlay map identifies areas of large sand and gravel deposits, as well as the recharge area. As planning for water resource protection, is a major focus of the Town, this area is vitally important. It should be noted that the area stretches its southern border to Route 100, which provides a natural barrier for planning purposes.

Visual and Scenic Parcel Resources

New Gloucester abounds in critically important visual accent points and in important open space and scenic parcels. These are mapped on the Constraints Overlay and should be included in the future land use plan as areas worthy of protection.

Transportation Facilities

Dougherty Road and Route 231 intersection has been identified as having a critical rate accident factor. In addition, two other intersections along Route 231 are considered suspect because of deficient design or site distances. These intersections need to be considered in the planning and implementation stages, particularly regarding their ability to accommodate future increases in traffic.

Natural Resource Preservation

The Constraints Overlay identifies a number of areas considered to be important from a natural resource perspective. Previous analysis calls for their protection through a combination of approaches such as intervention by the New Gloucester Land Trust, regulatory restrictions and Town assessing policies. Particular attention should continue to be paid to those areas that have been prone to development, for example wetland areas, deer yards, important fisheries and floodplain areas.

The present land use ordinance does, in fact, place significant restrictions upon use within the resource protection zone. How and where this zone might be expanded to include wetlands, deer yards, and important critical features areas will need to be considered.

Future Commercial and Light Industrial Development

The future land use plan, in identifying the potential location of such activities, must take into consideration the surrounding natural resources and their capacity to absorb development. Concurrently, the development plan must also take into consideration the availability of certain infrastructure features, such as 3-phase electrical power, sewer potential, water supply potential and modern communications.

Additionally, present zoning places a business zone in an area which has a significant number of natural resource constraints. Conversely, the area adjacent to the Auburn border has less critical restrictions and is somewhat developed already. Additionally, long term planning for infrastructure is, because of natural terrain and conditions, more appropriate for the location adjacent to Auburn.

Public Access

A significant deficiency in New Gloucester is the lack of formal access to a number of unique natural resources; for example, the trail system is primarily privately owned and public access to Sabbathday Lake is limited to a single boat launching point. Any land use plan and strategy should include requirements for public access to many of the areas mapped on the constraints map.