

ECONOMY

Analyses and Key Issues

(1) Where does the local population work and how does the community fit into the economic region (labor market area)?

Dresden is located 50 minutes from Portland, 30 minutes from Augusta, 30 minutes from Bath, 15 minutes from Wiscasset (Rt1), and 45 minutes from the Lewiston/Auburn area. Even though there are many local farms, two convenience stores, a small restaurant, and people working from home, commuting to each of these communities is feasible via major roadways, including Rt 27 (north & south), Rt 197 (west), and Rt 295 (north & south).

(2) Who are the major employers in the region and what is their outlook for the future?

Major employers would include, but not limited to, Maine State offices in Augusta, Bath Iron Works in Bath, as well as retail stores in surrounding communities.

(3) Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?

As in most of the State of Maine the economy has stabilized since 2008 but has not and is not expected to impact the local population. There is no manufacturing in Dresden and more pressure is placed upon the property tax percentage as the State wanes in its contribution via municipal tax revenue.

(4) What are the community's priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans?

Although the opinion survey clearly shows that even though the community is not opposed to light industry, it is in favor of preserving the traditional rural agricultural businesses and farms.

(5) If there is a traditional downtown in the community, is it deteriorating or thriving? How is this affecting the community?

Our "downtown" is Dresden Mills on Rt 27 and simply consists of a small restaurant, a convenience store, Town Office, and a seasonal antique shop. This has been the structure for many decades and there is no reason to believe it is going to change significantly any time in the near future.

(6) Are natural resource-based industries (including fishing, farming, or forestry) important in the community and, if so, are they growing or declining? What steps has the community taken to support these industries?

There is a light fishing industry of smelting in winter months, and alewives & elver harvest in the spring on the Eastern River. Some recreational fishing during spring and summer months.

Farming is VERY important to the community, (organic vegetables, beef, pigs, goats, blueberries, strawberries, cranberries, and elderberries, to mention a few,) and is doing well selling goods at the local farm-stands as well as supporting farmers markets in surrounding communities.

Some farms offer Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) to help in lean times and an annual summer-fest, and harvest supper (organized by recreational committee) in the fall that is open to the public.

There is occasional timber harvest on private land but no major forestland exists in Town for a large operation.

(7) Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, does the community want to foster this industry and what steps can it take to strengthen tourism?

Tourism is not an important part of the local economy but Dresden offers great opportunities for hiking local trails, fishing and boating/canoeing on the Eastern & Kennebec rivers, bird watching on Dresden Bog and Green Point Farm, and snowmobiling in winter.

(8) What role do/should home occupations play in the community, if any?

Having to commute to Augusta, Portland or other surrounding communities, inspires people to be creative in finding ways with which to generate an income as an “in home” business. Our Town Officials are sensitive to entrepreneurs and will encourage and support them through the Planning Board and the Code Enforcement Officer.

(9) Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?

Change and growth will occur, but we as residents can shape how new development will fit into the community in a way consistent with our vision for the Town. The tools we have available include a mix of voluntary measures and regulations. The strategies for development will be crafted and overseen by the Planning Board and the Code Enforcement Officer, and discussed at public hearings prior to implementation. Multiple opportunities will be provided for Townspeople to voice their opinions. Any ordinance changes will require a vote at a Town Meeting.

(10) What types of public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, are needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?

There is no public sewer district; all businesses and residents maintain their own septic systems.

The Town does supply water to about 12 homes located in the “Mills” on Rt27.

Time Warner Cable and Fairpoint (DSL) cover only about 70% of the Town for broadband availability. There is spotty coverage for cell phones as well. So many homes are secluded in wooded lots with long driveways, for privacy, that makes it very difficult for broadband or cell coverage.

There is 3 phase power coming into Dresden from the north on Rt27 but only spans a couple of miles. These are all factors taken into consideration prior to any major development.

Conditions and Trends

(1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Economic Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.

The Comprehensive Plan will be distributed and voted on at our annual Town meeting and copies will also be available at the Town Office.

(2) A brief historical perspective on how and why the current economy of the community and region developed.

In the early years there was a grist mill in “Dresden Mills” along with light shipping, (lumber, farm products, etc) via the, then, navigable Eastern River. Although farming is still an active industry, Dresden has become more of a “bed-room” community for aforementioned larger towns.

(3) A list of local and regional economic development plans developed over the past five years, which include the community.

None:

(4) A description of the major employers in the community and labor market area.

Bath Iron Works, Bath Maine

Maine State Offices, Augusta

(5) A description of retail stores by type and how the composition has changed over past five or ten years.

There are no major retail stores in Dresden. Richmond has a hardware store, a few restaurants, a farm/feed store, a new Family Dollar, and two convenience stores, a small grocery store, a florist, and a few other small businesses.

(6) A description of any economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts or Pine Tree Zones, in the community.

None: