

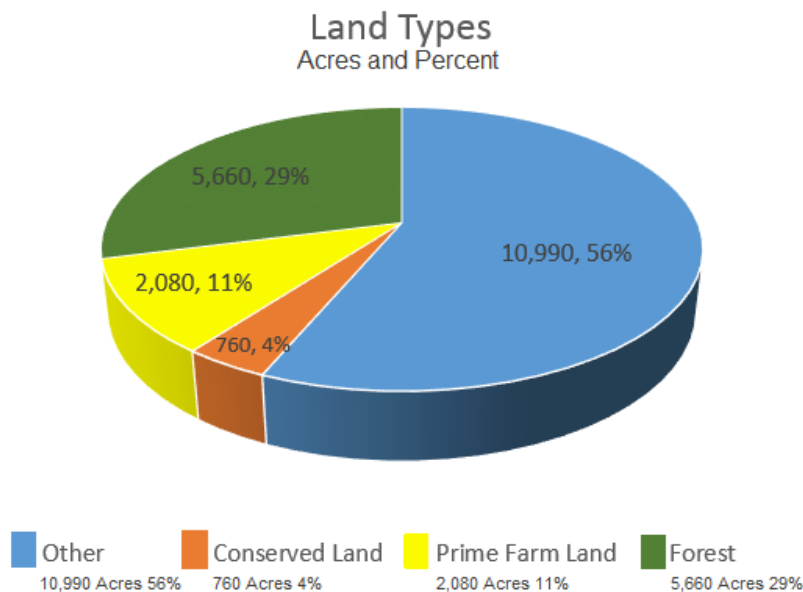
Future Land Use Plan

GOAL: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.

Analyses and Key Issues

(1) The Comprehensive Plan Committee, through a visioning exercise, opinion surveys, public forums, discussions and conversations with residents, heard that people wanted to protect the rural character of Dresden, including farm land, protection of both the Kennebec and Eastern Rivers, and ground water, while encouraging farming and other natural resource businesses. The overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a direction for how residents want the Town to grow and develop. It appears very clear what the people of Dresden wish to see for shaping the Town in the future. However our vision will require a plan, guide or road map to make sure Dresden, in ten or twenty years, will look the way we envision it today.

(3) The Future Land Use Plan is the guide or road map to help shape the Town and direct new development in a way Dresden citizens' want for the Town. Land use planning for the Town would not be a difficult issue if we were still overwhelmingly a farming/forestry rural Town with a small village as in past years. The overall scheme or plan for land development was previously driven by an unwritten set of rules that kept large tracts of land in production for crops or lumber. Today those previous ways of doing things are no longer applicable and we must create a fair and balanced set of rules and policies to direct how the Town will evolve.



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 of the Future Land Use Plan 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.

Anticipating the Future

No one can accurately predict the future but we can make educated guesses base upon past trends. Many strategies in the Land Use Plan are based upon how we anticipate change to occur in Dresden over the next ten to twenty years. It is important for the Town to monitor population and housing growth and be ready to discuss how the Comprehensive Plan may need to be modified based upon new trends and issues. Some of our assumptions about future trends include the following:

- Overall population growth will be low with a shrinking household size.
- Suburban roadside housing development will continue to be popular.
- Rural housing will continue to be popular.
- Some subdivision development will increase to provide new rural housing.

The following are also some trends which may discourage development in Dresden and will need to be monitored:

- The high cost of fuel may slow rural housing development.
- The housing market fluctuation may delay or encourage development.
- Some people may no longer select rural housing and switch to more urban areas to take advantage of public transportation and access to more services.

Objectives for the Future Land Use Plan

The following are the Future Land Use Plan objectives:

- To maintain the rural character of the Town.
- To establish strategies which are fair and balanced.
- To develop strategies which respect our natural resources.
- To offer citizens voluntary ideas and methods to preserve our rural character.
- To guide change and growth in a way selected by the Townspeople.
- To guide new housing development into growth areas most suited to accommodate higher densities.
- To preserve our natural resources.
- To guide subdivision design in accordance with established ordinances.
- To make sure that traditional rural activity such as farming and forestry can continue to flourish and grow.
- To identify strategies promoting affordable housing, especially for the elderly.
- To foster smart growth.
- To guide and enable Dresden's vision for the community.

Identifying Growth and Rural Areas

Growth areas are those areas of Town that are the most environmentally suitable and practical to accommodate future growth and development within the community. These areas can and will be

designated by the landowner through the guidance of the Land Use Ordinance and approved by the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer.

Rural areas are intended for rural residential, limited low-intensity commercial, agricultural, timber harvesting, recreational and other natural resource dependent uses that would be compatible with and not impair the existing uses and resources and like Growth areas, can be designated by the landowner.

General Recommendations

The rest of the Future Land Use Plan consists of recommendations, which are designed to achieve our objectives. A critical step in putting this Future Land Use Plan into action will be the involvement and participation of Dresden citizens. Each recommendation and idea proposed in this plan will need to be further developed by the Planning Board or other Town committees and reviewed by the Town, at Town Meeting, before it becomes an ordinance or is put into practice. The recommendations are offered as a guide to be discussed and put into a final form for consideration at Town Meeting. The outcome of these recommendations will be shaped through a public process, which should reflect the vision and wishes of Dresden's citizens.

General recommendations follow:

- Maintain Dresden's community vision when developing specific strategies to encourage or discourage development.
- Meet periodically with planning boards from adjoining towns, Pittston, Alna, Wiscasset, and Woolwich to discuss issues of development along mutual boundaries.
- Develop some basic traffic access provisions for all new development and include provisions for proper sight distance, minimum driveway or road opening widths, driveway and road drainage and turn-around areas so that traffic does not have to back-out into the roadway.
- Assist homeowners in how best to handle erosion control.
- Use existing State Shoreland Zoning ordinance.
- Continue to update the existing Land Use ordinance to guide both commercial and residential development on a as needed bases.
- Continue to use the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) and support as necessary to enforce land use regulation, and ensure that the CEO is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA Section 4451.

Recommendations to Discourage Inappropriate Growth In (and Encourage Protection of) Rural Areas

The following recommendations involve education and promotions that offer ways individuals may voluntarily choose to develop and use their land. A Conservation Commission, to be formed, would be responsible for implementation of the these recommendations.

- Develop a pamphlet, which describes ways to design and develop house sites in harmony with rural landscape, information about set-backs, buffer, privacy, living near farms, security, gravel roads, and other topics will be included.
- Promote interest in using land conservation easements to preserve farmland, forest, open spaces, scenic views and natural resources. Information about these programs will be made available to residents. Regional and State groups promoting conservation easements will be invited to speak with residents on a regular basis.

- Identify State and regional programs, which offer large landowner, farmers and forest landowner's advice on making wise land use decisions to meet short and long-term goals. This recommendation is designed to offer residents credible information about the best ways to develop their land to meet a short-term need and still maintain their land investments.
- Promote the use of Farmland and Timber Harvesting Tax Programs to encourage these traditional rural activities.
- Develop a farm friendly guide for homeowners to alert new residents to the sights, sound and smells of living in a rural community. The guide will help new homeowners adapt to a rural area. (I didn't know that my neighbor could have chickens AND a rooster!)
- Promote cooperation and discussion among owner of large blocks of land to enhance wildlife habitat especially travel corridors and open space. The Town will promote the use of sustainable forest practices to provide a long-term supply of wood and maintain the economic vitality of forestlands.
- Foster discussion with landowner and citizens to find way to preserve scenic vistas and other cherished views within the community.
- Permit only low-impact commercial uses in the rural areas.

Miscellaneous

The Future Land Use Plan aligns with the Vision Statement in keeping Dresden a rural community by promoting and guiding development and retaining open space for farmland, sustainable forests, water quality for drinking and fish habitat in the Kennebec and Eastern rivers.