

**BLUE HILL PENINSULA:  
A STATUS REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2003**

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# **Blue Hill Peninsula Tomorrow**

## **Introduction**

The Blue Hill Peninsula Tomorrow project is an outgrowth of several peninsula-wide meetings that started in 2002. Residents at these meetings identified several multi-town concerns such as the needs of youth, health, the cost of housing, economic development and land use. In order to continue this effort, the Hancock County Planning Commission was awarded funds from the Maine Community Foundation to prepare a status of the peninsula report.

The report that follows presents a summary of major trends that affect the Peninsula. It represents a collaboration of local officials, the Hancock office of University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Blue Hill Healthy Peninsula Project and various concerned citizens. The initial findings were presented at a community workshop on May 10, 2003 (see Appendix I).

While the report does not contain specific recommendations, it does serve as the basis for future collaboration among peninsula towns. There is clearly potential for further regional cooperation in the realms of housing, transportation, health and community facilities. While residents treasure the distinct identities of their towns, it is also clear that we all benefit from increased sharing with our neighbors.

## **MAJOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# **BLUE HILL PENINSULA: TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

## **Population, Economy & Housing Trends**

- ◆ The Peninsula saw a 50 percent increase in its year-round population between 1970 and 2000. The population is expected to increase by another 18 percent between 2000 and 2015.
- ◆ With the exception of Castine, the median age increased in all towns on the Peninsula between 1990 and 2000. Brooksville has the highest median age in Hancock County.
- ◆ The Peninsula has a higher rate of self-employment than does the county as a whole, which in turn has a higher rate than the state.
- ◆ The number of year-round homes increased by 40 percent between 1970 and 2000 and there was a 154 percent increase in the number of second homes. Much of this increase in second homes occurred in the earlier decades, some towns saw decreases in second homes between 1990 and 2000 as these homes were converted to year-round use.
- ◆ The Peninsula can expect an average of 100 additional year-round homes a year between 2000 and 2010.
- ◆ Median household incomes are 76 percent of the amount needed to purchase the median priced house. The average price paid by a first-time home-buyer is \$12,000 more than in the adjoining Bucksport area.
- ◆ Household incomes increased at a faster rate than inflation between 1990 and 2000 for all towns except Blue Hill.
- ◆ Average commuting times increased for all towns except Castine between 1990 and 2000.
- ◆ There is less seasonal fluctuation in employment on the Peninsula than there is in Hancock County as a whole.

## **Community Health Trends**

- ◆ About 20% Peninsula residents have 3 or more chronic diseases (hypertension, heart disease, lung disease, arthritis, diabetes, cancer or stroke)
- ◆ About 20% of Hancock County residents do not have health insurance. This is higher than the state average and does not account for the vast number who are under-insured.

- ◆ The leading causes of preventable death are: tobacco related—19%; diet/inactivity—14%; miscellaneous (toxins, firearms, auto accidents, drugs)—12%; alcohol related—5%.
- ◆ Overweight and obesity rates have more than doubled since the 1970s, with 56% of adults overweight or obese and 35% of youth are overweight.
- ◆ Alcohol use and binge drinking rise significantly between the ages of 18-34, with a peak of 80% binge drinking among young adults in Hancock County.
- ◆ 34% of Maine high school students and 43% of middle school students report being passengers in a car whose driver had been drinking—similar to US rates and relevant to the Peninsula.
- ◆ Tobacco use among Peninsula youth and adults is 23%. 56% of youth report weekly exposure to secondhand smoke in their homes or family cars. One in 7 people who die from tobacco-related diseases do not smoke.
- ◆ Peninsula residents have higher rates of depression (18%) and suicide attempts than state average.

### **Youth Trends**

- ◆ The use and abuse of alcohol and drugs. A survey conducted by GSA students revealed that most substance use originated between sophomore and junior year of high school.
- ◆ Kids involved in sports or other kinds of recreational activities used less alcohol and drugs.
- ◆ There is a lack of opportunity for recreation and socialization. There is a greater need for “safe and open” places for youth.
- ◆ Youth are particularly affected by the lack of public transportation. They need transportation to places with more recreational opportunities.
- ◆ They also need greater access to natural resources such as trails, biking, water sports and boating.
- ◆ Increase dialogue is needed between youths and adults. There is a lack of communication that results in an antagonistic relationship between the two age groups.

# POPULATION

## Purpose

An analysis of population is important in understanding how a region is changing. It is important to understand trends such as changes in age structure, income levels, net migration and poverty rates. These data help paint a picture of how the Blue Hill Peninsula area is changing.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

The Peninsula saw a 50 percent increase in its year-round population between 1970 and 2000. Another 18 percent increase is projected for the 2000 to 2015 period. While household incomes increased in all towns, this increase did not always exceed the rate of inflation. Some towns also saw an increase in their poverty rates. The median age increased in all towns except Castine between 1990 and 2000.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

Population trends are important in understanding all other trends addressed in this report. Perhaps the most important theme is disparity in growth. Some segments of the Peninsula are prospering and others are not. This is true even within towns. Towns with a high education rate may also have a high poverty rate.

### 3. Population Trends

#### a. Growth rates

Overall year-round population in the Blue Hill Peninsula increased by 50 percent between 1970 and 2000 (see Table 1). Surry had the fastest rate of population increase at 118 percent. Blue Hill had the largest numerical increase with 1,023 additional residents. Castine had the slowest percentage increase at 24 percent and Stonington actually had a 10 percent decrease in its year-round population.

Population change comes from two sources: Net increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths) and net migration (the number of persons moving into an area minus those moving out). According to the U.S. Census, natural increase accounted for 1/10<sup>th</sup> of one percent of the total population in Hancock County as a whole each year between 1990 and 1996. Net migration accounted for 9/10<sup>th</sup> of one percent of the population each year. This trend also applies to the Blue Hill Peninsula.

**Table 1**  
**Change in Population, Blue Hill Peninsula, 1970-2000**

Town	Change 1970-2000											
	1970	1980	Change	% Change	1990	Change	% Change	2000	Change	% Change	Number	Percent
Blue Hill	1,367	1,644	277	20.3%	1,941	297	18.1%	2,390	449	23.1%	1,023	74.8%
Brooklin	598	619	21	3.5%	785	166	26.8%	841	56	7.1%	243	40.6%
Brooksville	673	753	80	11.9%	760	7	0.9%	911	151	19.9%	238	35.4%
Castine	1,080	1,304	224	20.7%	1,161	-143	-11.0%	1,343	182	15.7%	263	24.4%
Deer Isle	1,211	1,492	281	23.2%	1,829	337	22.6%	1,876	47	2.6%	665	54.9%
Penobscot	786	1,104	318	40.5%	1,131	27	2.4%	1,344	213	18.8%	558	71.0%
Sedgwick	578	795	217	37.5%	905	110	13.8%	1,102	197	21.8%	524	90.7%
Stonington	1,291	1,273	-18	-1.4%	1,252	-21	-1.6%	1,152	-100	-8.0%	-139	-10.8%
Surry	623	894	271	43.5%	1,004	110	12.3%	1,361	357	35.6%	738	118.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,207</b>	<b>9,878</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>10,768</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>12,320</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>4,113</b>	<b>50.1%</b>

**SOURCE:** 1970-2000 U.S. CENSUS

**b. Age Breakdown**

Table 2 shows changes in the number of persons under age 18 between 1990 and 2000. Overall, there was a 6.5 percent increase in persons in this age group compared to a ten percent increase in the overall population. Brooksville, Deer Isle and Stonington all experienced decreases in their under 18 population and Brooklin gained only one person in this age group.

<b>Table 2</b>				
<b>POPULATION CHANGE AGE 18 AND UNDER</b>				
<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Blue Hill</b>	486	515	29	6%
<b>Brooklin</b>	180	181	1	1%
<b>Brooksville</b>	166	164	-2	-1%
<b>Castine</b>	131	138	7	5%
<b>Deer Isle</b>	434	423	-11	-3%
<b>Penobscot</b>	256	273	17	7%
<b>Sedgwick</b>	216	275	59	27%
<b>Stonington</b>	302	269	-33	-11%
<b>Surry</b>	242	333	91	38%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>2,571</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
<b>SOURCE: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census</b>				

The only towns to have faster rates of increase for their under 18 population than their overall population growth rate were the towns of Surry and Sedgwick. These numbers are indicative of the aging of the population. One consequence of this aging is a decrease in school enrollments. As seen in Table 3, elementary school enrollments are declining in many school districts on the Peninsula. This is particularly true for the elementary school grades. As the current school population ages, this decrease is likely to spread to the secondary grades.

**TABLE 3**  
**Blue Hill Peninsula School Enrollment Trends 1996 – 2001**

<b>Primary School Enrollment</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1996-2001</b>	<b>Percent</b>
BLUE HILL	265	264	234	213	217	198	-67	-25%
BROOKLIN	88	87	87	82	67	75	-13	-15%
BROOKSVILLE	84	79	80	74	75	73	-11	-13%
CASTINE	63	61	48	56	51	58	-5	-8%
DEER ISLE-STONINGTON CSD	422	404	388	354	327	338	-84	-20%
PENOBSCOT	134	128	104	114	105	88	-46	-34%
SEDGWICK	117	116	128	117	123	128	11	9%
SURRY	146	147	154	148	146	147	1	1%
<b>Secondary School Enrollment</b>								
BLUE HILL	153	146	156	160	148	142	-11	-7%
BROOKLIN	42	43	53	52	45	42	0	0%
BROOKSVILLE	36	47	43	40	40	45	9	25%
CASTINE	40	38	31	26	25	25	-15	-38%
DEER ISLE-STONINGTON CSD	133	145	164	174	185	169	36	27%
PENOBSCOT	81	79	84	77	70	61	-20	-25%
SEDGWICK	54	50	54	75	66	66	12	22%
SURRY	65	64	60	72	72	74	9	14%

**SOURCE:** Maine Department of Education

The median age in all Peninsula towns except Castine increased between 1990 and 2000. (see Table 4). The decrease in Castine is attributable to increased enrollment at the Maine Maritime Academy. With the exception of Sedgwick and Castine, all towns have a higher median age than Hancock County as a whole. In fact, Brooksville at 48.6 has the highest median age in Hancock County. The aging of the population is in large part due to the in-migration of retired persons.

<b>Table 4 Change in Median Age, Blue Hill Peninsula 1990-2000</b>				
<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Blue Hill	38.6	40.6	2.0	5.2%
Brooklin	40.5	45.9	5.4	13.3%
Brooksville	41.8	48.6	6.8	16.3%
Castine	24.6	23.8	-0.8	-3.3%
Deer Isle	38.4	44.2	5.8	15.1%
Penobscot	40.5	44.6	4.1	10.1%
Sedgwick	38.0	39.9	1.9	5.0%
Stonington	36.9	41.6	4.7	12.7%
Surry	39.2	41.1	1.9	4.8%
<b>County</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
<b>SOURCE:</b> 1999-2000 U.S. Census				

**c. Income and Poverty Statistics**

Median household income is shown in Table 5. As seen, there is a disparity among the towns in the Peninsula. Stonington is well below the county median while Castine is significantly higher. This table also shows mean retirement income, which is useful in determining the impact of retired persons on the area economy. With the exception of Blue Hill, Penobscot and Stonington, all towns have a higher mean retirement income than the county as a whole. The towns with the highest retirement incomes can be assumed to have a higher proportion of prosperous retirement households.

<b>Table 5 Median Household Income and Retirement Income Blue Hill Peninsula 2000</b>		
<b>Town</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Mean Retirement Income</b>
Blue Hill	\$31,484	\$14,590
Brooklin	\$36,786	\$23,412
Brooksville	\$36,458	\$19,267
Castine	\$46,250	\$25,889
Deer Isle	\$32,826	\$18,654
Penobscot	\$37,232	\$8,974
Sedgwick	\$35,000	\$22,043
Stonington	\$28,894	\$15,222
Surry	\$36,932	\$23,884
<b>Hancock County</b>	<b>\$35,811</b>	<b>\$16,973</b>
<b>SOURCE:</b> Table DP-3, (page 3) 2000 U.S. Census		

Table 6 shows change in median household income between 1990 and 2000. While incomes in Hancock County increased by about 42 percent, incomes among the Peninsula towns saw increases of between 20 percent (Blue Hill) and 76 percent (Brooklin). This is another indicator of the uneven growth across the Peninsula. If incomes were to stay even with inflation, the ten-year increase would need to be 32 percent. This means that income levels in Blue Hill actually decreased and those in Castine and Surry stayed virtually even.

<b>Table 6</b>				
<b>Change in Median Household Income, Blue Hill Peninsula, 1990-2000</b>				
<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>
Blue Hill	\$26,134	\$31,484	\$5,350	20.5%
Brooklin	\$20,875	\$36,786	\$15,911	76.2%
Brooksville	\$21,154	\$36,458	\$15,304	72.3%
Castine	\$35,104	\$46,250	\$11,146	31.8%
Deer Isle	\$21,852	\$32,826	\$10,974	50.2%
Penobscot	\$25,391	\$37,232	\$11,841	46.6%
Sedgwick	\$20,074	\$35,000	\$14,926	74.4%
Stonington	\$19,038	\$28,894	\$9,856	51.8%
Surry	\$28,194	\$36,932	\$8,738	31.0%
<b>County</b>	<b>\$25,247</b>	<b>\$35,811</b>	<b>\$10,564</b>	<b>41.8%</b>
<b>SOURCE: 1990-2000 U.S. CENSUS</b>				

Table 7 shows change in poverty rates for individuals. As seen poverty rates in most towns have decreased. However, Blue Hill and Surry saw poverty rate increases well above the county average. It should also be noted that poverty rates do not necessarily correlate with household incomes. For example, Surry has a higher median household income than Hancock County but also a higher poverty rate. Deer Isle, however, has a lower household income and lower poverty rate.

<b>Table 7</b>			
<b>Change in Poverty Rate, Blue Hill Peninsula, 1990-2000</b>			
<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%Change</b>
Blue Hill	9.3%	13.5%	45.2%
Brooklin	13.9%	12.7%	-8.6%
Brooksville	17.0%	9.7%	-42.9%
Castine	9.6%	12.0%	25.0%
Deer Isle	8.7%	8.8%	1.1%
Penobscot	10.7%	8.0%	-25.2%
Sedgwick	18.1%	8.5%	-53.0%
Stonington	15.6%	12.7%	-18.6%
Surry	7.7%	14.6%	89.6%
<b>County</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>SOURCE: 1990-2000 U.S. CENSUS</b>			

**d. Educational Attainment**

Table 8 shows educational attainment levels for Peninsula towns. Castine had the highest percentage (98) of high school graduates and Stonington has the lowest percentage (76.7). These two towns also had the highest and lowest percentage of persons with bachelor's degrees. Four towns (Stonington, Deer Isle, Sedgwick and Surry) had a lower proportion of high school graduates than the county as a whole. Here again, there is no apparent correlation with poverty rates. For example, Blue Hill has the highest poverty rate yet also has a relatively high proportion of persons with bachelor's degrees.

<b>Table 8 Education Attainment Rates, Persons 25 years and older Blue Hill Peninsula 2000</b>		
<b>Town</b>	<b>Percent High School Graduates</b>	<b>Percent with Bachelor's Degrees</b>
Blue Hill	92.7	34.4
Brooklin	90.8	39.5
Brooksville	96.7	41.9
Castine	98.0	57.8
Deer Isle	83.0	22.4
Penobscot	88.8	25.8
Sedgwick	86.8	28.6
Stonington	76.7	15.6
Surry	87.1	30.7
<b>Hancock County</b>	87.8	27.1
<b>SOURCE:</b> Table DP-2,(page 2) U.S. Census 2000		

**e. Implications**

The demographic trends in the Peninsula are complex. While incomes are generally rising, poverty is still a problem. While the population is aging, two towns experienced increases in their under 18 population that were faster than their overall population growth rate.

**4. The Future**

While any effort to project future population is risky, the State Planning Office has developed projections for the years 2010 and 2015. These projections show that the year-round population is projected to increase by about 18 percent (or about 2,200 persons) between 2000 and 2015 (see Table 9). Blue Hill is expected to have the largest numerical increase (610 persons) and Surry the largest percentage increase. As with all projections, these numbers should be reviewed periodically.

**Table 9  
Projected Population, Blue Hill Peninsula  
2010-2015  
2015**

**Change 2000-**

<b>Town</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>
Blue Hill	2,390	2,868	478	20.0%	3,000	132	4.6%	610	25.5%
Brooklin	841	910	69	8.2%	949	39	4.3%	108	12.8%
Brooksville	911	1,071	160	17.6%	1,123	52	4.9%	212	23.3%
Castine	1,343	1,682	339	25.5%	1,700	18	1.1%	357	26.6%
Deer Isle	1,876	1,924	48	2.6%	1,994	70	3.6%	118	6.3%
Penobscot	1,344	1,511	167	12.4%	1,584	73	4.8%	240	17.9%
Sedgwick	1,102	1,249	147	13.3%	1,310	61	4.9%	208	18.9%
Stonington	1,152	1,078	-74	-6.4%	1,102	24	2.2%	-50	-4.3%
Surry	1,361	1,700	339	24.9%	1,790	90	5.3%	429	31.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,320</b>	<b>13,993</b>	<b>1,673</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>14,552</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>2,232</b>	<b>18.1%</b>

**SOURCE:** Estimates by the Hancock County Planning Commission

# HOUSING

## Purpose

An analysis of housing trends is important for several reasons. First, the increased rate of housing construction across the Peninsula is one of the major impacts of population growth. Second, the economy depends on large part on the availability of housing within the price range of the labor force. If few homes are available for purchase by persons within the income levels paid by area jobs, more workers will commute from outside the area and employers may have difficulty finding employees. Third, the high demand for second and retirement homes, leads to increased housing costs for everyone.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

The number of year-round homes in the Blue Hill Peninsula increased by 40 percent between 1970 and 2000. There was a 154 percent increase in the number of second homes. Much of this increase in second homes occurred in earlier decades, some towns saw a decrease in the number of second homes between 1990 and 2000. An average of 100 year-round homes a year are expected to be built in the Peninsula between 2000 and 2010.

While incomes increased faster than housing values for all towns except Blue Hill, affordable housing is still a problem. Median household incomes are 76 percent of the amount necessary to purchase the median priced house. The average price paid by a first time homebuyer is \$12,000 more than in the adjoining Bucksport area.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

The high cost of housing has a direct impact on land use, transportation and the economy. For example, more homes are being built away from the coast, creating more development in inland areas. This makes it harder for local employers to find employees. It also means that there is increased commuting into the area from regions where housing costs are less.

### 3. Housing Trends

#### a. Change in Year-Round Units

There was a 40 percent increase in the number of year-round housing units in the Peninsula between 1970 and 2000 (see Table 10). Surry had the largest percentage increase (112 percent) and Brooksville and Stonington had actual decreases due to the conversion of year-round homes to second homes. Blue Hill had the greatest numerical increase (432 units) followed by Surry (304 units).

**b. Year-round Versus Seasonal**

The rate of increase in second homes far exceeds that of year-round homes for the Peninsula as a whole. The total number of second homes increased by 154 percent. Sedgwick saw a 730 percent increase (146 units) and Stonington and Blue Hill had increases by 333 percent and 243 percent respectively (see Table 11).

The rate of increases of second homes between 1990 and 2000 were generally slower than those of the previous decade. One notable exception is the town of Castine, which had a 40 percent increase. Blue Hill and Brooksville experienced minor decreases during the 1990-2000 decade. These decreases are likely due to second homes being converted to year-round use. Many second home owners plan to use their homes year-round after retirement. This means that the Peninsula towns could experience additional population growth from such second home conversions.

<b>Table 10</b>												
<b>Change in Year-Round Housing, Blue Hill Peninsula, 1970-2000</b>												
											Change 1970-2000	
<b>Town</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Blue Hill	642	741	99	15.4%	911	170	22.9%	1,074	163	17.9%	432	67.3%
Brooklin	279	302	23	8.2%	375	73	24.2%	391	16	4.3%	112	40.1%
Brooksville	439	345	-94	-21.4%	344	-1	-0.3%	430	86	25.0%	-9	-2.1%
Castine	348	329	-19	-5.5%	371	42	12.8%	395	24	6.5%	47	13.5%
Deer Isle	642	729	87	13.6%	792	63	8.6%	860	68	8.6%	218	34.0%
Penobscot	293	414	121	41.3%	444	30	7.2%	568	124	27.9%	275	93.9%
Sedgwick	321	325	4	1.2%	415	90	27.7%	505	90	21.7%	184	57.3%
Stonington	591	557	-34	-5.8%	576	19	3.4%	571	-5	-0.9%	-20	-3.4%
Surry	271	349	78	28.8%	437	88	25.2%	575	138	31.6%	304	112.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,826</b>	<b>4,091</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>4,665</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>5,369</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>1,543</b>	<b>40.3%</b>

**SOURCE:** 1970-2000 U.S. CENSUS

<b>Table 11</b>												
<b>Change in Second Homes, Blue Hill Peninsula, 1970-2000</b>												
											Change 1970-2000	
<b>Town</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Blue Hill	120	232	112	93.3%	421	189	81.5%	412	-9	-2.1%	292	243.3%
Brooklin	175	243	68	38.9%	287	44	18.1%	306	19	6.6%	131	74.9%
Brooksville	115	269	154	133.9%	363	94	34.9%	361	-2	-0.6%	246	213.9%
Castine	101	158	57	56.4%	181	23	14.6%	254	73	40.3%	153	151.5%
Deer Isle	264	375	111	42.0%	681	306	81.6%	715	34	5.0%	451	170.8%
Penobscot	58	81	23	39.7%	134	53	65.4%	155	21	15.7%	97	167.2%
Sedgwick	20	115	95	475.0%	146	31	27.0%	166	20	13.7%	146	730.0%
Stonington	78	212	134	171.8%	282	70	33.0%	338	56	19.9%	260	333.3%
Surry	266	282	16	6.0%	325	43	15.2%	338	13	4.0%	72	27.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>1,967</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>2,820</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>3,045</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>1,848</b>	<b>154.4%</b>

**SOURCE:** 1970-2000 U.S. CENSUS

**c. Household Size**

Table 12 shows the change in average household size, which decreased in towns on the Peninsula. Household sizes are decreasing throughout Hancock County and the nation as a whole as a result of the aging of the population and the tendency toward smaller family size and higher divorce rates. Smaller household sizes mean that more homes are required to serve a given town population than was once the case.

The greatest percentage decrease in household size was in Blue Hill, followed by Brooksville. Sedgwick had the slowest decrease followed by Surry and Brooklin. Generally speaking, towns with a younger population would have a larger household size. This is the case with Sedgwick and Surry, but Brooklin gained only one person under age 18 between 1990 and 2000.

<b>Table 12</b>				
<b>Change in Household Size, Blue Hill Peninsula, 1990-2000</b>				
<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>
<b>Blue Hill</b>	2.43	2.23	-0.20	-8.2%
<b>Brooklin</b>	2.33	2.27	-0.06	-2.6%
<b>Brooksville</b>	2.36	2.21	-0.15	-6.4%
<b>Castine</b>	2.24	2.16	-0.08	-3.6%
<b>Deer Isle</b>	2.46	2.32	-0.14	-5.7%
<b>Penobscot</b>	2.56	2.36	-0.20	-7.8%
<b>Sedgwick</b>	2.38	2.34	-0.04	-1.7%
<b>Stonington</b>	2.40	2.29	-0.11	-4.6%
<b>Surry</b>	2.53	2.47	-0.06	-2.4%
<b>County</b>	2.48	2.31	-0.17	-6.9%
<b>SOURCE: 1990-2000 U.S. CENSUS</b>				

**d. Housing Prices and Affordability**

Table 13 shows increases in median housing value between 1990 and 2000. All towns except Penobscot, Surry and Stonington had higher median housing values in 2000 than Hancock County as a whole. Blue Hill had the fastest rate of increase followed by Stonington.

<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>%Change</b>
Blue Hill	\$101,000	\$153,900	\$52,900	52.4%
Brooklin	\$94,100	\$115,300	\$21,200	22.5%
Brooksville	\$86,500	\$109,200	\$22,700	26.2%
Castine	\$187,500	\$229,000	\$41,500	22.1%
Deer Isle	\$81,300	\$109,300	\$28,000	34.4%
Penobscot	\$67,500	\$90,400	\$22,900	33.9%
Sedgwick	\$78,100	\$105,100	\$27,000	34.6%
Stonington	\$67,900	\$96,300	\$28,400	41.8%
Surry	\$83,700	\$103,500	\$19,800	23.7%
<b>County</b>	<b>\$85,200</b>	<b>\$108,600</b>	<b>\$23,400</b>	<b>27.5%</b>

SOURCE: 1990-2000 U.S. CENSUS

Increases in housing values are most meaningful when compared to increases in median household incomes. Housing affordability is most likely to be a problem when incomes are increasing at a slower rate than housing values. For example, housing values in Blue Hill increased by 55 percent while incomes increased only by 21 percent. In other towns, however, incomes increased faster than housing values.

This does not mean that housing is affordable, particularly for the first time homebuyer. According to the Maine State Housing Authority, the Blue Hill-Stonington area housing market had a housing affordability index of 0.76 in 2001. This means that the median household income was 76 percent of what was necessary to purchase the median priced house.

The average sales price in 2001 was \$138,000, which was \$40,000 more than in the Bucksport area. The average price for the first-time home buyer was \$84,000, which was \$12,000 more than the Bucksport area and \$16,000 more than the Bangor area. About 23 percent of homeowners were “cost burdened.” This term refers to households that pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs. While housing costs are high, about 81 percent of all households are owner-occupied and 19 percent are rental occupied.

According to the Maine State Housing Authority, the Blue Hill Stonington area has a rental affordability index of 0.97. This means that incomes are 97 percent of the amount the average rent for a 2-bedroom unit. About 31 percent of the rental households are cost burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing.

#### **4. The Future**

A general estimate of future year-round home construction can be made by multiplying the projected household population by the projected household size. The household population does not include persons residing in group quarters such as

dormitories and nursing homes. Since the U.S. Census reports group facilities in Castine, Penobscot and Stonington, the household population differs from the total population.

The estimated number of occupied, year-round households is shown on Table 14. A twelve percent increase in the number of households is projected between 2000 and 2010 and sixteen percent between 2000 and 2015. Under these projections, the Peninsula can expect about 100 new units to build each year between 2000 and 2010. These figures do not include the number of second homes.

**Table 14**  
**Projected Year-Round Households, Blue Hill Peninsula**  
**2010-2015**

TOWN	Year-Round Households		Projected Households		Projected Households		Change 2000-2015		
	2000	2010	Change	%Change	2015	Change	%Change	Change	%Change
Blue Hill	1,072	1,286	214	20.0%	1,345	59	4.6%	274	25.5%
Brooklin	370	401	30	8.2%	418	17	4.3%	48	12.8%
Brooksville	412	485	72	17.6%	508	24	4.9%	96	23.3%
Castine	1,093	1,432	339	31.0%	1,450	18	1.3%	357	32.6%
Deer Isle	1,849	1,897	48	2.6%	1,967	70	3.7%	118	6.4%
Penobscot	1,307	1,474	167	12.8%	1,547	73	5.0%	240	18.4%
Sedgwick	471	534	63	13.3%	560	26	4.9%	89	18.9%
Stonington	1,150	1,076	-74	-6.4%	1,100	24	2.2%	-50	-4.3%
Surry	551	688	134	24.9%	725	36	5.3%	174	31.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,276</b>	<b>9,273</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>9,621</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>16.2%</b>
<b>SOURCE: HANCOCK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION</b>									

# ECONOMY

## Purpose

It is important to understand the economic base of a region in order to determine what economic development strategies are needed to address current and future needs. It is challenging to analyze the Blue Hill Peninsula economy since there is considerable in-commuting to the region. The Census data reflect the jobs held by residents of the respective towns, not the types of jobs within the towns that may be filled by people outside of the area.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

The Blue Hill Peninsula has a higher rate of self-employment than does Hancock County as a whole. This is indicative of the highly entrepreneurial character of the labor force. Only Deer Isle and Stonington saw a decrease in their rates of labor force participation. Commuting times increased in all towns except Castine. While no firm data are available, there is also increased commuting into the region.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

There are strong links among the economy, land use, housing, transportation and population. The amount of commuting into the area is due in part to housing costs. This commuting in turn increases traffic on area roads. Income levels and poverty rates are addressed in the population chapter.

### 3. Recent Trends

#### a. Types of Employment

Table 15 shows the breakdown of the labor force in 2000 by various categories. About 64 percent of the labor in the Peninsula communities consisted of private wage and salary workers. This was a lower percentage of the labor force than the county as a whole. The only town with a higher percentage than the county average was Penobscot, which is in easy commuting distance to the International Paper mill in Bucksport. Just under half of the Stonington labor force was employed by private wage and salary jobs.

The main reason for these relatively low rates of wage and salary workers is a high rate of self-employment (about 22 percent for the Peninsula compared to about 16 percent for the county as a whole). This high rate is attributable in part to independent contractors such as contractors and those that operate their own fishing operation.

This high rate of self-employment is indicative of a highly entrepreneurial population. However, it also poses several challenges for the region. First, it is difficult for self-employed people to obtain health insurance. Second, income earned from

**Table 15  
Employment by Type, Blue Hill Peninsula**

Town	Private wage/ Salary	Percent	Government Worker	Percent	Self-Employed	Percent	Unpaid Family	Percent	Total
Blue Hill	752	64.0%	151	13.0%	259	22.3%	8	0.7%	1,170
Brooklin	265	63.2%	53	12.6%	91	21.7%	10	2.4%	419
Brooksville	287	62.1%	48	10.4%	123	26.8%	4	0.9%	462
Castine	432	63.9%	186	27.5%	56	8.3%	2	0.3%	676
Deer Isle	526	64.8%	77	9.5%	211	25.9%	0	0.0%	814
Penobscot	428	71.7%	70	11.7%	99	16.9%	0	0.0%	597
Sedgwick	319	63.8%	54	10.8%	127	25.4%	0	0.0%	500
Stonington	224	49.3%	49	10.8%	177	39.0%	4	0.9%	454
Surry	466	67.9%	106	15.5%	114	16.6%	0	0.0%	686
Total	3,699	64.0%	794	13.7%	1,257	21.8%	28	0.5%	5,778
Hancock County	17,470	69.8%	3,511	14.0%	3,975	15.9%	78	0.3%	25,034
<b>SOURCE: U.S. Census</b>									

such work can be highly variable. This is particularly the case given recent swings in the fishing sector. Third, the lack of major employers means that a broad-based economic development strategy is needed. Rather than aim at one particular industry or sectors, there needs to be an assessment of how to build on the entrepreneurial talent that exists in the area.

The only towns where government employment accounted for a greater percentage of jobs than the county average were Castine and Surry. The high rate in Castine can be explained by the presence of the Maine Maritime Academy. The rate in Surry, which was only slightly higher than the county average, may be due to the town's proximity to the government agencies in Ellsworth and Acadia National Park.

**b. Labor Force Participation**

Table 16 shows changes in labor force participation between 1990 and 2000. This term refers to the percent of the population sixteen years and older that is in the labor force. As seen, Stonington and Deer Isle saw an actual decrease in labor force participation. This is due at least in part to the loss of fishing-related jobs. Brooksville and Castine, however, saw increases in labor force participation well above the county rate.

Labor force participation is significant for two reasons. First, long term unemployed people tend to drop out of the labor force and are thus not counted in the official unemployment rate. Second, a low rate of labor force participation may also be indicative of an aging population with higher rates of retirement.

<b>Table 16 Change in Labor Force Participation, Age 16 and Older</b>			
<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Blue Hill	61.3%	62.1%	1.3%
Brooklin	57.8%	62.9%	8.89%
Brooksville	52.3%	62.8%	20.1%
Castine	48.5%	56.3%	16.1%
Deer Isle	59.3%	57.5%	-3.0%
Penobscot	53.2%	57.6%	8.3%
Sedgwick	61.0%	61.8%	1.3%
Stonington	57.4%	47.6%	-17.1%
Surry	60.6%	66.7%	10.1%
County	62.7%	64.3%	2.6%
<b>SOURCE: 1990 and 2000 Census</b>			

**c. Commuting Times**

Table 17 shows changes in mean commuting times between 1990 and 2000. As seen, the mean times increased in all towns except Castine. The decrease in Castine may be explained by more on-campus housing for MMA staff. Blue Hill and Brooksville had the highest rate of increase. This means that people are spending more time to get to work.

<b>Town</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Blue Hill	16.8	22.9	6.1	36.3%
Brooklin	18.4	19.5	1.1	6.0%
Brooksville	19.6	28.2	8.6	43.9%
Castine	13.7	13.0	-0.7	-5.1%
Deer Isle	17.8	18.0	0.2	1.1%
Penobscot	20.5	23.4	2.9	14.1%
Sedgwick	21.3	24.5	3.2	15.0%
Stonington	13.7	14.5	0.8	5.8%
Surry	21.4	24.9	3.5	16.4%
County	18.0	22.4	4.4	24.4%

**SOURCE:** 1990 and 2000 Census

These data, however, show only one side of the commuting picture. There is also considerable commuting into the area. For example, anecdotal reports indicate that the overwhelming majority of workers at the various boat yards in Brooklin commute from out of town. This is also the case for many other employers on the Peninsula.

**d. Major Employers**

As mentioned above, there is a high rate of self-employment on the Peninsula. According to the Maine Department of Labor, the single largest employer on the Peninsula is the Maine Maritime Academy, which has between 250 and 500 employees. Boat building and the Blue Hill Hospital are also significant employers.

**e. Seasonal Fluctuations**

According to the Maine Department of Labor, the Stonington Labor Market area, which includes all towns in the study area except Surry, the average annual unemployment rate was 3.2 percent in 2000 and 3.1 percent in 2001. The seasonal fluctuations are not as dramatic as in some parts of eastern Maine. For example, the June 2001 unemployment rate was 2.3 percent. This compares to 3.6 percent in February 2001. By contrast, the greater Ellsworth Labor Market Area had a June 2001 rate of 3.1 percent compared to 7.6 percent in February 2001. The Blue Hill Peninsula economy is more immune to seasonal swings.

# TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC SERVICES AND FISCAL CONDITIONS

## Purpose

This section summarizes the major public facilities and services issues facing the Blue Hill Peninsula. It also discusses major transportation needs and conditions. The information on public services and facilities in this section is taken primarily from existing comprehensive plans. The information on transportation comes mainly from regional transportation studies.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

Municipal services on the Peninsula are limited. This is consistent what is usually found in small towns. Only three towns have major areas served by public water and sewer, so there is heavy dependence on private wells and septic systems. Fire departments depend largely on volunteers, which is proving more difficult as the potential pool of recruits declines. Many of the schools face a decline in enrollment, which increases the per pupil cost of education.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

The relative lack of vacant land with public water and sewer means that most development requires on-site water supply and sewage disposal. This increases the costs of site development for affordable housing and economic development projects. The demographic shift toward an older population makes it harder for the fire departments to attract volunteers. The land development pattern of people moving out of built up areas into more remote parts of town increases the costs of providing municipal services. School bus routes must be extended and there is greater wear and tear on the roads.

### 3. Infrastructure Trends

#### a. Water and Sewage Disposal

Apart from Castine, Stonington and Blue Hill, there are no public water and sewer systems that serve a village area. Outside of these three areas most residents depend on private wells and on-site sewage disposal systems such as septic tanks. There are, however, some small scale public water systems that serve developments such as a single subdivision, a campground or other facility catering to the public. There have been isolated cases of wells failing, particularly during times of drought. Continued development in areas of low groundwater yield could lead to the drawing down of the water table and further well failures. Unfortunately, data on groundwater conditions on the Peninsula are limited.

**b. Protective Services**

Protective services refer to police and fire protection and ambulance service. There are no full-time police departments on the Peninsula. The town of Blue Hill has limited contractual service with the Hancock County Sheriff's department. All towns receive some basic service from the Sheriff and the State Police. Given the cost of a full-time department, no immediate change is likely in police protection arrangements.

Fire protection is provided by the volunteer fire department in each town. Service is reinforced by mutual aid arrangements. It has become difficult for most departments to find an adequate number of volunteers. This is due to several factors. First, the aging of the population means that there are fewer people under 50 available to serve. Second, the trend toward greater commuting to jobs out of town and the increase in two-wage earner households means people have less time to serve. Third, the training requirements for fire fighter certification have become more complex.

**c. Other Services**

Most Peninsula towns have limited government services. While Castine and Stonington have full-time town managers and Surry has a full-time administrative assistant, the other towns depend largely on the select boards to run most town affairs. Other town staff is also limited.

Most public works (such as road repairs) are undertaken under the direction of road commissioners. Snow plowing and road maintenance is generally done on a contractual basis. Most towns own some road equipment, such as plow attachments and graders. The majority of equipment, however, is provided by the contractors. No change in current public works arrangements is foreseen.

**d. Education**

The Peninsula communities are served by several school unions. School Union 93 serves Blue Hill, Castine, Penobscot and Brooksville. Union 76 serves Brooklin, Deer Isle and Stonington. Surry is served by Union 92. As in the case with any school, there are on-going maintenance and equipment replacement needs. As mentioned in the Population chapter, the aging of the population is leading to some school enrollment declines. This has resulted in some schools being under capacity. The Brooklin k-8 school, for example, has a capacity of approximately 130 students and fall 2002 enrollment was around 70 students. This trend presents Peninsula communities with a challenge since local schools are important to maintaining a sense of community and avoiding the bussing of young children far from their homes. Yet, the per-pupil cost of maintaining schools is likely to increase if enrollment continues to decrease.

#### 4. Fiscal Conditions

The ability of a town to fund municipal services depends on large part on its tax base. Table 18 shows how state valuations have increased in the Peninsula towns between 1991 and 2001. Surry shows the greatest increase with a 69 percent rate, followed by Sedgwick and Blue Hill (44 percent).

<b>Table 18</b>					
<b>Change in State Valuation, 1991-2001</b>					
<b>TOWN</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change 1991-2001</b>	<b>% Change 1991-2001</b>
Blue Hill	\$233,450,000	\$268,450,000	\$336,700,000	\$103,250,000	44.2%
Brooklin	\$116,950,000	\$133,100,000	\$156,800,000	\$39,850,000	34.1%
Brooksville	\$129,650,000	\$151,400,000	\$173,600,000	\$43,950,000	33.9%
Castine	\$118,750,000	\$109,700,000	\$133,150,000	\$14,400,000	12.1%
Deer Isle	\$184,700,000	\$185,050,000	\$243,500,000	\$58,800,000	31.8%
Penobscot	\$62,250,000	\$62,250,000	\$68,350,000	\$6,100,000	9.8%
Sedgwick	\$61,100,000	\$70,700,000	\$88,250,000	\$27,150,000	44.4%
Stonington	\$105,800,000	\$117,950,000	\$135,550,000	\$29,750,000	28.1%
Surry	\$83,100,000	\$115,200,000	\$140,950,000	\$57,850,000	69.5%
<b>Hancock County</b>	<b>\$3,937,050,000</b>	<b>\$4,569,750,000</b>	<b>\$5,589,600,000</b>	<b>\$1,652,550,000</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
<b>SOURCE:</b> Maine Bureau of Taxation, Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary					

Valuations are most meaningful when compared to increases in property tax assessments. If assessments are increasing at a faster rate than valuations, this is one indicator that the individual property tax burden is increasing. Property tax assessments are shown on Table 19. Assessments increased at a faster rate than valuation in all towns except Brooksville. Property tax assessments roughly doubled in Surry and Stonington. This means that Peninsula towns are facing an increasing tax burden even though most of the recent population growth has been older residents without school children.

**Table 19**  
**Change in Property Tax Assessments, 1991-2001**

<b>TOWN</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change 1991-2001</b>	<b>% Change 1991-2001</b>
Blue Hill	\$2,094,107	\$2,694,437	\$3,687,531	\$1,593,424	76.1%
Brooklin	\$973,730	\$1,042,775	\$1,551,446	\$577,716	59.3%
Brooksville	\$945,428	\$1,049,405	\$1,254,691	\$309,263	32.7%
Castine	\$1,122,295	\$1,325,102	\$1,468,873	\$346,578	30.9%
Deer Isle	\$1,380,627	\$1,861,767	\$2,630,388	\$1,249,761	90.5%
Penobscot	\$549,381	\$845,595	\$878,560	\$329,179	59.9%
Sedgwick	\$637,957	\$929,113	\$1,106,061	\$468,104	73.4%
Stonington	\$1,064,045	\$1,635,664	\$2,107,240	\$1,043,195	98.0%
Surry	\$868,274	\$1,226,110	\$1,747,174	\$878,900	101.2%
<b>Hancock County</b>	\$43,288,24 7	\$53,552,500	\$74,250,499	\$30,962,252	71.5%

**SOURCE:** Maine Bureau of Taxation, Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

It is also useful to look at the types of property that are subject to taxation. Overall, there is very little industrial valuation on the Peninsula. In 1999, for example there was no industrial valuation in the towns of Blue Hill, Brooksville and Sedgwick and such land accounted for only 3.1 percent of the tax base in Brooklin. Similarly, personal property (items such as machinery or major pieces of office equipment) accounted for only 0.8 percent of the tax base in Brooklin and 0.1 percent in Blue Hill. This means that most of the tax burden falls on the individual property owner.

All towns have some tax-exempt property. This includes federally and state-owned land, property owned by non-profit organizations and church land. Table 20 shows that all Peninsula towns except Castine, Penobscot and Sedgwick had an increase in tax-exempt property. Several towns had increases of over 100 percent. It should be stressed that some of these changes may be due to inconsistent reporting by personnel that completed the forms. Overall, however, towns are seeing an increase in tax-exempt property.

**Table 20**  
**Change in Value of Tax- Exempt Property, 1991-2001**

<b>TOWN</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change 1991-2001</b>	<b>% Change 1991-2001</b>
Blue Hill	\$15,563,650	\$25,346,100	\$9,782,450	62.9%
Brooklin	\$883,720	\$3,582,580	\$2,698,860	305.4%
Brooksville	\$2,608,200	\$5,953,400	\$3,345,200	128.3%
Castine	\$21,725,600	\$18,469,400	-\$3,256,200	-15.0%
Deer Isle	\$4,061,540	\$6,472,500	\$2,410,960	59.4%
Penobscot	\$2,539,800	\$355,000	-\$2,184,800	-86.0%
Sedgwick	\$5,893,000	\$1,534,130	-\$4,358,870	-74.0%
Stonington	\$4,676,200	\$8,134,900	\$3,458,700	74.0%
Surry	\$767,500	\$2,442,700	\$1,675,200	218.3%
<b>Hancock County</b>	\$427,335,920	\$541,640,227	\$114,304,307	26.7%
<b>SOURCE:</b> Maine Bureau of Taxation, Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary				

## 5. The Future

The Peninsula faces several challenges regarding the provision of public services and facilities. First, continued aging of the population may make it more difficult to find volunteers to staff fire departments. This would occur at a time when continued population growth and home building is expected.

Second, population growth is likely to place continued demands on other town services. For example, the town of Surry is exploring options to expand its town office. Other towns are discussing expanding the hours of the code enforcement officer and other staff. Towns are also discussing options to expand police protection, such as through increased contractual services with the Sheriff's office. Third, it may become more challenging to maintain some of the current elementary schools in towns where enrollment continues to increase.

# LAND USE

## Purpose

An understanding of land use trends is essential in planning for the future. The region's future growth will be affected by the ability of the land to accommodate new development. It is also important to understand how growth and development is currently managed and what this means for future development patterns.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

Peninsula towns have very limited land use controls. Only three towns have town-wide zoning. The area's villages have attracted limited residential development in the past 30 years. Most new development has been along the shoreline, major roads and in rural areas. If current trends continue, Peninsula towns may face increased sprawl.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

Development patterns are affected by the infrastructure. The limited areas with public water and sewer mean that more development is taking place in more rural areas. The high demand for second homes means that much new residential construction has taken place in high amenity areas such as the shoreline and in undeveloped parts of towns. The high cost of land affects the cost of housing.

### 3. Land Use Trends

Given the diversity of the Peninsula towns, land use trends are best summarized by identifying some common themes. This will be done by discussing specific parts of towns such as the shoreline, villages, highway areas and rural areas. More detailed information is available in the individual comprehensive plans of the respective towns.

#### a. Shorefront Areas

Overall, the shoreline areas have been subject to intense development pressure. The high demand for shoreline property has meant that sites once considered unsuitable for development are now being developed. Continued increases in property valuations has meant that many long-term residents find it difficult to afford the taxes on shoreline property and may have to move elsewhere.

One consequence of shoreline development trends is that access to the shore for fishing and other water-dependent uses has become more difficult. Many informal access points to the shore are now owned by people who may restrict access. Remaining public access points are becoming overcrowded. While several towns have attempted to acquire new parcels for shoreline access, the high cost of such properties limits opportunities.

The high cost of land in the Peninsula communities means that more fisher folk and others employed in water-dependent occupations (such as boat yards) must commute longer distances from areas where housing is less expensive. The many demands on the local tax base also mean that it is harder for towns to make the necessary investments in town piers and other facilities. Overall, it is a challenge to preserve the working waterfront.

**b. Villages**

The Peninsula has many villages that have a highly scenic character. The traditional New England village was once where the majority of development occurred. The advent of widespread automobile ownership and stricter standards for wells and septic systems meant that more development occurred away from villages.

While villages on the Peninsula have many attractive homes, churches and other facilities, there has been relatively little public investment in most villages. For example, further improvements are needed to most public water and sewer systems. Many village streets and sidewalks are in poor repair. Relatively few villages are pedestrian friendly and parking is frequently a problem.

The smaller villages that lack public water and sewer face particular challenges. Most homes were built before recent plumbing codes were enacted. Vacant lots are typically small and quite often on poor soils. This limits their future development potential.

The villages once contained the majority of commercial operations. The demand for easy vehicle access and greater floor space has pushed more commercial uses to the fringes of the villages. At the same time, however, there have been successful efforts to attract pedestrian-related uses such as smaller stores, art galleries and restaurants to some villages.

**c. Highway Corridors**

The region's highways have attracted more development in recent years. As mentioned above, commercial operations prefer places with easy highway access. There has also been considerable residential development along highways.

While residents have benefited from an increased variety of commercial services, this development pattern has also affected traffic congestion. More driveways and other access points means that there are more turning movements on and off highways. This slows traffic and often requires roadway improvements such as new traffic signals and turning lanes.

**d. Environmentally Valuable Areas**

The Peninsula has many areas of high environmental value. These include heaths, areas with great scenic values and farmland. The areas of farmland along Route 15 between Orland and Blue Hill are reported to be the most productive in Hancock County.

There are also many valuable coastal and inland wildlife habitats. For example, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) has rated areas of Northern Bay as a Class "A" Coastal Wildlife Concentration Area. This classification refers to areas that have a "very high" concentration of wildlife and are of state and national importance to rare species. Further information on wildlife habitats is available in the individual comprehensive plans.

One shared resource is lake watersheds. Many lake watersheds cross municipal boundaries. For example, the Toddy Pond watershed is shared by Blue Hill, Orland and Surry. The Upper Patten Pond watershed is shared by Orland, Surry and Ellsworth. Since development anywhere in a watershed may affect water quality in a lake, it is important that towns approach lake protection on a regional basis. Presently, there are no regional lake protection efforts underway on the Peninsula.

There have been several efforts recently to promote the regional protection of environmentally important areas on the Peninsula. For example, the Blue Hill Heritage Trust has acquired conservation easements on several farmland parcels along Route 15. Measures have also been taken to protect the scenic view from Caterpillar Hill. The Conservation Commission in Surry and groups focused on the Bagaduce Watershed have reviewed new habitat maps available from the MDIFW under the Beginning with Habitat program.

However, there has been no integrated effort to assess environmentally important areas on a regional basis and establish priorities for protection. Rather, most protection is provided through state regulations and, in certain cases, by land trusts. This means that many of these areas are vulnerable to damage as the region continues to grow.

**e. Remote Areas**

These are areas that are remote from town services. They often overlap with those areas that have high environmental value. They are characterized by having poor road access. It is difficult for school buses and emergency vehicles to reach such areas. In some cases, costly improvements to town roads may be necessary. This may lead to increased taxes since the property tax yield from new development may be insufficient to cover the cost of increased services.

One factor that may be increasing the rate of development in remote areas is the sale of recently cleared, large tracts of forest land. This means that there could be more such development in the future. Also, as the areas with the best soils are developed, there is likely to be more interest in developing marginal parcels in remote areas.

**f. Business Areas**

There is relatively little land reserved exclusively for business operations. At the same time, since most towns don't have town-wide zoning, there are few prohibitions against businesses. No business parks have been developed on the Peninsula. However, the town of Stonington is in the process of creating a business incubator in an old school building. Given the relative lack of areas with public water and sewer, it would be very costly to develop a large-scale business park.

The focus of future economic development efforts is most likely to be on small scale operations. An example might be something on the scale of the Trenton Business Park. Equally important, will be assuring that home-based businesses can be allowed to continue.

**4. Planning Capacity**

The only towns with town-wide zoning are Castine, Penobscot and Surry. Only Castine's land use ordinances have been deemed fully consistent with the State Planning Office guidelines. This means that ordinances in the other two towns may be subject to challenge. The other towns rely primarily on shoreland zoning to regulate development. This means that there is no zoning beyond the 250-foot buffer along the shore. Several towns have attempted to introduce zoning, only to have it voted down by a large margin at town meeting.

With the exception of Castine, none of the towns have full-time code enforcement officer. The rate of development means that part-time code enforcement is all that is usually needed. However, it is difficult to assure that all construction and other activities follow ordinance requirements.

Development proposals are reviewed either by the code enforcement officer or the planning board. However, building permits are not required for construction outside of the shoreland zone in Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Penobscot, Sedgwick and Stonington. This makes it very difficult to track development outside of the shoreland.

While planning boards are volunteer organizations, there are technical assistance resources available through the Hancock County Planning Commission and the Maine Municipal Association. Both organizations face funding restrictions, which limit the amount of assistance that can be provided. Communication among the planning boards is very limited, as is any effort to address regional development issues.

## **5. The Future**

As mentioned in the Housing chapter, an average of 100 new year-round homes is expected each year between 2000 and 2010. Some further second home development is also likely. There will also be more commercial construction. If current trends continue, most of this development will occur away from existing villages. The commercial development will most likely take place along major highways near existing commercial areas.

Residential development will probably consist primarily of single-family homes in scattered subdivisions. Some of these are likely to be in remote areas. This means sprawl could become a more significant problem over the years. One major challenge to managing sprawl is the reluctance of many towns to enact more restrictive land development standards. Another obstacle is the difficulty in making current village areas more attractive for development.

# YOUTH

## Purpose

Knowledge of the youth population and the issues that face them is an important part of planning for the future. Youth will hopefully be the next generation of business owners and workers on the peninsula and understanding why they stay or leave the peninsula is important to all aspects of the future peninsula.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

Between 1990 and 2000 there has been a median increase in the age of the population of each town with the exception of Castine. Sedgwick and Surry are the only towns that have seen a population increase and potential for increase in school-age children. The ability of today's youth to someday own a home in the town where they were raised is significantly limited. The use of tobacco and alcohol products among students in Hancock County is greater than that of the rest of the state. Recent estimates show that 35% of local youth are overweight or obese.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

The high price of land and increasing property taxes limits the ability of families with children to move to the area. In addition to the high cost of living here, the decreasing enrollment in local schools is putting financial strain on schools, which may be affecting the quality of education, but certainly has an impact on municipal budgets. Furthermore, reasonable and affordable transportation combined with the harsh winter climate severely limits options for recreation. Outside of school-sponsored functions, few program alternatives exist on the peninsula for youth.

### 3. Youth Trends

Due to the variety of issues that face youth in the area and the lack of hard data the trends will be discussed in general terms. The three main topics discussed here are the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs, lack of opportunity for recreation and the divide between generations. Other issues are also mentioned in the context of these three main points.

#### a. Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Drugs

Both youth and adults see alcohol and substance abuse as the most urgent threats to youth in the area. Adults see this as a safety concern for teens and many teens feel that this is an important issue among peers. However, both groups admitted that drinking is one of very few socialization opportunities for teens. Furthermore, many felt that providing additional opportunities to socialize without alcohol would allow for other options, and possibly less drinking. Data collected on Hancock County shows that tobacco and alcohol use by youth is above the state average. The vast majority of

alcohol consumed by young people is for the purpose of intoxication. In Hancock County, 80% of 12 to 18 year olds confirm that they have been involved in binge drinking activity. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks. When youth binge drink, they are not having one or two drinks during a social activity; drinking *is* the activity. Not surprisingly, 34% of Maine high school students and 43% of middle school students report being passengers in a car whose driver has been drinking. The risks to the health and life of youth in this area become very clear when looking at the data. Alcohol use plays a substantial role in all three leading causes of death among youth-unintentional injuries (including motor vehicle fatalities and drownings), suicides and homicides. Children who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four more times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until the age of 21. Hancock County has documented “early initiation of substance use” as a significant risk factor. A rigorous assessment of the Blue Hill peninsula, which examined these issues, correlated several factors that increase the likelihood of substance abuse. The most prevalent risk factors were in the community domain; in general we found that community norms are favorable to underage drinking and tobacco use. Youth are not getting a clear message that alcohol and tobacco use can be detrimental.

**b. Lack of Recreational Opportunities**

Youth identify their greatest challenge as limited opportunities to “hang out” free from the pressure of adults. The solution that arose most frequently from both adults and teens was to provide a place in the area that is welcoming to youth. Moreover, this place should be open late and directed primarily by the youth. Movies were also recommended as a desired and viable alternative for youth. Other ideas included a system of transportation to malls and theaters, as well as greater access to outdoor activities.

The importance of this issue plays into several others. For instance, a recent survey by George Stevens Academy students documented that youth involved in sports or other kinds of recreational and extracurricular activities used less alcohol and drugs. This and other studies indicate that most frequently drinking and drugs are used because there is a lack of other things to do in the area. In addition, the lack of healthy recreational opportunities probably contributes to the fact that 35% of youth are overweight or obese.

**c. Generational Divide**

Youth feel disenfranchised from the community. Many teens report that they are not recognized as full members of the community, and many adults recognized this as a problem. Most people believe that this feeling was due to a lack of communication between adults and teens. In addition, both age groups felt that they were saddled with a stigma when interacting with each other and that they were ignored or misrepresented by each other. A general solution proposed for this problem was to provide more opportunities for kids and adults to come together as equals. One suggestion that has

been mentioned is a youth driven coffee shop/ teen center, where youth share responsibility for planning with adult mentors.

In part this issue arises from the “aging population” mentioned earlier in this report. As more older citizens move into the community, youth feel outnumbered less welcome in their own communities. This problem is magnified by the fact that the median income for a household on the peninsula is 76% of what is needed to purchase the median priced home. This, in turn, discourages working families with children to move to the area.

#### **4. Planning Capacity**

There are already several efforts on the peninsula that are addressing these issues, however further development and supporting activities are necessary. Perhaps the most successful venture for youth in the area has been that Blue Hill Library’s Teen Movie Night, where 25-45 youth go every Friday night to watch movies and socialize. The Liberty School is trying to develop a similar program during the summer. The Liberty school has also received a grant that, in part, will go toward building a café that will service the community, and be a place where adults and youth can come together for music and cultural events.

There are also several community groups on the peninsula that address some of the above issues. The Healthy Peninsula Project works with youth to develop leadership opportunities around preventive health. The Youth Coordinator has been actively working with youth to map local trails to increase awareness and use, which does provide a healthy activity for youth. He has also been instrumental in co-sponsoring the Youth Radio Project with WERU and George Stevens Academy. The Peninsula Area Team for Health (PATH) has a long history working for and with youth to decrease the prevalence of alcohol abuse on the peninsula. Recently, they were awarded a three year grant from the Office of Substance Abuse that will be geared towards decreasing alcohol and tobacco abuse by changing social norms. Young people draw conclusions about alcohol and tobacco use from what they see and hear in the homes and communities. These norms strongly influence their own attitudes and behavior. We hope to reinforce the message that underage drinking is illegal and potentially dangerous.

#### **5. The Future**

It is difficult to project the future for youth in the area. If the current trends continue, the population of youth will decrease, which could lead to the further limiting of resources for youth. In addition, their increased isolation will most likely increase their need for opportunities, services and programs. The current increase of substance abuse suggests a potential increase in crime. Risk factors for health and the high rate of chronic disease among adults on the peninsula suggest a focus on prevention, especially in opportunities to educate youth about their own health and creating environments in communities that support exercise and healthier eating.

From an overall community outlook the decreasing youth population means that the median age will also continue to increase leading to an overabundance of retired persons. Along with many other communities in Maine, the Blue Hill Peninsula should be concerned about the loss of youth to out-of-state school and work opportunities or relocation due to limited income. This “brain drain” could lead to a severe shortage of workers in the workforce or a shift in the basis of the local economy to that of services for the elderly and tourists.

# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## Purpose

With the high incidence of chronic disease, burgeoning health care costs, and an aging population on the Peninsula, monitoring the health status of the community is important. The Peninsula supports a critical care access hospital, a series of rural health clinics and a range of non-conventional health providers. Prevention efforts have begun but further work is necessary to insure “healthy communities”. The future health of the Peninsula rests with the existing health resources and the communities’ efforts to move a prevention agenda forward.

### 1. Key Findings and Issues

Twenty percent of Peninsula residents suffer from three or more chronic diseases. Most chronic diseases are preventable and can be addressed through healthy eating, regular physical activity and reducing the effects of smoking. Most towns on the Peninsula lack “environmental supports” such as sidewalks, community trails and safe, bikeable roadways, which would encourage healthier lifestyles for children and adults.

Twenty percent of Hancock County residents are uninsured for health care, higher than the 14% state average of uninsured. Because of the small business climate on the Peninsula, the uninsured and underinsured rates here may be even higher.

Through the Blue Hill Memorial Hospital (BHMH), the peninsula offers a comprehensive range of medical services, including access through rural clinics in four towns. Yet increased costs of healthcare threaten the financial viability of the current system. Moreover, the influx of the retired population and aging residents (with anticipated increase in elder care services) further threatens the community to adequately respond to the medical needs of all residents.

### 2. Common Themes with Other Sections

Health cuts across themes in all other sections. Health insurance is an economic issue. Cost of health insurance is a growing problem, as many small and owner-owned businesses can no longer afford coverage for themselves or their employees. Many owners have moved to catastrophic coverage, which deters them from securing routine primary care. Often in a two-worker family, one family member works just to provide health insurance.

Income and education are determinants of health. Discrepancies in income and education among Peninsula residents suggest a two-tiered system for access and quality to health care. Poorer and less-educated individuals may have less access to health care and, generally, poorer health.

Increase in overweight and obesity rates in the general public contribute to diabetes and heart disease. We see a trend in obesity among children, and school personnel and community members are at a loss as to how to reverse this trend. Unhealthy dietary trends and sedentary lifestyles among youth add to poor health outcomes.

In terms of community planning, infrastructure, and land use, few communities have sidewalks or safe roads for bicycling or walking. Local land trusts and municipalities have walking trails, but area residents are often unaware of these resources. No regular public transportation exists on the Peninsula and youth and elderly are often unable to access medical care or recreation activities because they simply cannot get to the services and programs.

Few public facilities are open and available to community members for exercise during the winter months, and many residents cannot afford to pay for private fitness club memberships. Only two towns have organized recreation committees to address the recreation needs of their residents. Finally, environmental issues, including poor air quality, second-hand smoke and lead paint in older homes present additional public health risks.

### **3. Trends in Community Health**

#### **Chronic disease rates and health risk behaviors**

The leading causes of preventable death are tobacco-related diseases (19%), diet/inactivity (14%), miscellaneous (toxins, firearms, auto accidents and substance abuse) (12%), and alcohol related diseases (5%). Substance abuse is considered a Peninsula-wide problem among all age groups, and accidents associated with drinking among teens have received attention in the press. Hancock County youth have a 2-3 times higher hospital admission rate for substance abuse than youth in peer counties.

A study by the Public Health Resource Group (1999) reports the following incidence of chronic disease and health risk behaviors among residents in the hospital service area:

#### *Chronic Diseases:*

- 10% cardiovascular disease—26% high cholesterol, 25% high blood pressure
- 9% diabetes
- 9% lung disease
- 12% asthma
- 3% stroke
- 18% clinical depression

*Risk Behaviors:*

- 24% smokers
- 29% former smokers
- 56% of youth exposed to second-hand smoke weekly
- 24% no leisure time physical activity
- 23% vigorous activity
- 80% binge drinking among 18-24 year olds (Hancock Co)
- 50-60% of Maine 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders report alcohol use in the past 30 days
- 34% of Maine high school students and 43% of middle school students report being passengers in a car whose driver has been drinking

According to the State's Bureau of Health, Offices of Health Data and Program Management (2002), overweight and obesity rates for adults and children has increased significantly in since the 1980s. Over half (56.3%) of adults in Maine are overweight or obese and 20% are obese—this is a 61% increase in the past decade alone. The percentage of children who are defined as overweight has more than doubled since 1970s. One in three (35%) of Maine youth 6-17 are overweight. These statistics are significant as overweight is a risk factor for many of the chronic diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and certain types of cancer.

#### **4. Public Policy Trends**

##### **Public Health Initiatives**

Recent public policy initiatives are impacting community health. In 2000, Maine's Legislature decided to set aside a significant portion of the state Tobacco Settlement Funds to create the Fund for Healthy Maine. Funds from this fund were authorized to the State Bureau of Health to set up 31 community partnerships (the Healthy Maine Partnerships) with the goal to reduce chronic disease. These Partnerships, along with a network of "Healthy Community Coalitions" have been established to address health promotion and prevention initiatives at the community level. Each hospital district in the state is covered by one of these Partnerships, whose primary objectives are to increase opportunities for physical activity, improve nutrition and reduce the effects of tobacco use. On the Peninsula, the Healthy Peninsula Project is working toward these goals by engage local businesses, schools and municipalities around a public health agenda.

## **Substance Abuse Policy and Resources**

Maine's Office of Substance recently awarded three-year grants to communities to address underage drinking. The Peninsula Area Team for Health (PATH) was awarded one of these grants (\$40,000/ annually for three years) and will be working with local schools, community organizations and law enforcement to develop a social marketing strategy to address substance abuse among youth on the Peninsula. Significantly, though much has begun to address substance abuse prevention, few treatment resources exist on the Peninsula or in Hancock County. This lack of treatment resources is vitally important now because of the documented trend toward increased opiate use among youth and young adults (four heroine related deaths in Hancock County in the past few months).

## **Policy and Environmental Changes**

In recent years, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued standards and guidelines for public health and community health prevention programs. In addition to education and promotional strategies, they recommend environmental and policy initiatives at multiple levels to address long-term positive change in health status. Recommendations include creating walkable/bikeable communities, access to low-cost/no-cost recreation opportunities, municipal and business policies that discourage tobacco use in public places and encourage physical activity and healthier diets, access to fresh fruits and vegetables in communities.

## **Access to Health Care—Dirigo Health Plan**

In January 2003, Governor Baldacci proposed the Dirigo Health Plan—an effort to expand comprehensive health care insurance coverage to all Maine's citizens. The legislature recently approved the plan, and work will begin this fall to plan expansion of universal health care coverage for Maine residents over the next four years.

## **5. The Future**

The future of Community Health on the Peninsula is difficult to predict. Several resources exist on the Peninsula for primary and emergency care. The Blue Hill Memorial Hospital and its affiliate rural health clinics are a tremendous resource. Several ambulance services and local volunteer departments provide a network for emergency care, and the number and range of non-conventional providers offer an array of "alternative" health care options for area residents. Ongoing funding and ongoing source of volunteers is necessary to sustain many of these local services. The recent addition of the state-funded Healthy Peninsula Project offers opportunity to build a community or public health infrastructure in the area. The extent to which local citizens join with

municipalities, schools, businesses and local organizations around creating “healthy communities” will be a determining factor on health in the years ahead.

State on local policy will have a significant impact on the local health status of the community. The Dirigo Health Plan, if fully implemented, should extend health insurance coverage to all area residents, thus insuring better primary preventive care; however, the impact of this Plan on the BMMH, a critical care access hospital is unknown. With current financial challenges of many rural hospitals, the viability of BMMH is essential to the health of Peninsula residents.

**APPENDIX 1:**  
**SUMMARY OF MAY 10, 2003 MEETING**

# Peninsula Tomorrow-- Next Steps

Spring, 2003

The local steering committee for Peninsula Tomorrow outlined the “State of the Peninsula” at a community conference on Saturday, May 10 at Blue Hill Consolidated School. The summary report came after a year of determining issues and summarizing census and other information describing the current status of population, employment, health, education, land use, transportation, health and housing in the region.

Modeled after similar collaborative projects in the Schoodic region of Hancock County and on Mount Desert Island, Peninsula Tomorrow is a community development process supported by a number of local organizations, including the Blue Hill Chamber of Commerce, the Healthy Peninsula Project of Blue Hill Memorial Hospital, Blue Hill Heritage Trust, Coastal Area Development Corporation, Hancock County Planning Commission and University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Approximately 35 area citizens attended the May 10 conference. Participants heard opening remarks from Jim Schatz, a selectman from Blue Hill and a member of the Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, and from Tom Martin, of the Hancock County Planning Commission and Barbara Peppey, of the Healthy Peninsula Project of Blue Hill Memorial Hospital.

Randomly chosen groups talked about their reactions to the “state of the peninsula” and generated lists of possible projects to address priority issues. The combined list of projects suggested included:

- Housing—making year-round housing available to people who work and volunteer in our local towns
- Economic Development—expanding the number of year-round jobs that pay a living wage
- Cooperative projects by towns—exploring ways for towns to improve services and reduce costs by working with other towns (though it may not be practical or desirable, several participants noted that more than one peninsula town needed to purchase a road grader this year)
- Engaging more youth in recreational activities and community service opportunities-- current projects like the Brooklin Youth Corps and the Friday night Teen Movie Night at Blue Hill Library were cited as great examples and the group wanted to expand those opportunities to more of the Peninsula’s youth
- Recycling Average citizens would like to do more recycling and cannot, Either because they live in a town that does not offer recycling or In Blue Hill and Surry, the list of items that can be recycled has been restricted by market prices for materials

Litter Clean-up Citing the recent efforts by Friends of Acadia (MDI, Trenton and Schoodic Peninsula) participants felt that a coordinated litter pick-up project would add to a sense of pride in the region... and noted the connection to the recycling issue

Future of Peninsula Tomorrow Participants and steering committee members noted the importance of assuring continuation of efforts to focus on voluntary, peninsula-wide planning and project implementation. Without an ongoing steering group, various community efforts get splintered and lose momentum. (one of the reasons that MDI Tomorrow has been successful over more than a decade is the role of staff members of non-profits, and to a lesser extent, local businesses, who are able to spend a portion of their paid time to help steer the process and get projects done)

After lunch, participants were given the choice of working on project of their choice, voting with their feet to go to areas of the room labeled by project.. When the dust settled, participants settled into in three project groups. They used the following criteria to further define projects:

- Focus on a specific issue
- Involve the whole peninsula
- Low cost and easily begun
- Seeks to involve a wider group of participants
- Low risk with high pay-off
- Brings early success
- Intergenerational
- Widely supported, relatively non-controversial

Two of the three project groups are meeting this week:

**Peninsula Pride** will focus on coordinating roadside clean up and related projects throughout the several towns of the peninsula. They will determine the current level of efforts and activities, including calendars of current town spring or fall "roadside pick-up of bulky household waste". They desire to form a committee with membership from each peninsula town and local schools. As project planning goes forward, the committee will work with fire departments, churches, the hospital to seek cooperation. They will explore various "adopt-a-road" programs, and the successful Friends of Acadia effort to learn about how to organize a clean-up day (or series of days). They will explore other education and promotion opportunities, including a tee-shirt design contest. The group is meeting on Thursday, May 22, at 4 pm at St. Francis Church.

Contact Information for Peninsula Pride--

Maggie Davis	Judy Jenkins
Margery Forbes	Susan Olds
David and Althea VanDusen	Carol Beaven

**Youth Activities “Commission”**: The group interested in researching and expanding youth activities will also meet on Thursday, May 22, at 7 pm in the Brownlow Conference Room at Blue Hill Memorial Hospital.

Contact Information for Youth Activities Commission  
Kevin Berry, Healthy Peninsula Project 374 2836 ext 1009

The third group is looking at ways to **expand recycling options** for the peninsula, in order to extend the life of local landfills. The Hancock County Planning Commission will take the initial lead to provide an overview of the current situation and some strategies that might be considered to reduce the rate at which town expenditures are increasing to handle solid waste, including an expanded recycling program. No date was set for this project group to meet, but will be contacted when the planning commission staff have material to present as a starting point. The recycling effort might look to the following groups for support and technical assistance:

- Composting- through Cooperative Extension
- Conservation commissions
- Land trusts
- Downeast Audubon
- Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation
- League of Women Voters
- Surry Improvement group

Contact Information for recycling-  
Tom Martin, Hancock County Planning Commission 667 7131

Contact information for Peninsula Tomorrow

- Jim Schatz., Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, 374 2281
- Jim Dow, Blue Hill Heritage Trust, 374 5118
- Barbara Peppey, Healthy Peninsula Project 374 2836 ext 1010
- Tom Martin, Hancock County Planning Commission 667 7131
- Ron Beard, University of Maine Cooperative Extension 667 8212

**An Overview of Peninsula Tomorrow, May, 2003:** In March of 2002, a group of people living and working on the Blue Hill Peninsula were inspired by other efforts in Hancock County to bring a diverse group of neighbors together for dinner and conversation at the South Blue Hill Grange Hall. The organizers asked people what they valued about life here, and what they were concerned about. They heard lots of stories and views, but again and again what people seemed to be saying was that they appreciated the natural beauty of the region and the goodness of the people and community life. What they worried about was being able to protect what is good and at the same time creating a healthy economy.

Out of that meeting, Peninsula Tomorrow was created. Peninsula Tomorrow is a citizen's forum, where people can get together to discuss issues, concerns and hopes. Peninsula Tomorrow is also a process to learn what people want for the future of the Blue Hill Peninsula. If it is successful in these two things, maybe Peninsula Tomorrow will also help people pursue various strategies to bring us closer to that "preferred future".

The ideas behind Peninsula Tomorrow are simple; they might be the same as the motivation of a family or a business to look at its future. We know the future will happen. We probably know what we would like for the future, and knowing that, we can follow strategies that bring us ever closer. But the first step is seeing if we can describe what we want.

The future of the Blue Hill Peninsula is really the future of all of the parts of the peninsula: individual families, businesses, organizations and towns. While there are certain functions assumed by town government, there are also concerns and opportunities that exist across town boundaries. No one town takes care of all of its own economic needs. And people live in one town and work in another. Promoting good health and providing health care and disease prevention services reach beyond town boundaries. While there is and will continue to be some concerns best addressed by a single town, there are other issues that are more easily managed through town to town cooperation or by organizations that serve the whole region.

The process of Blue Hill Peninsula Tomorrow includes several parts:

- Engaging people and framing issues and opportunities  
March 2002- October 2003
- Describing what exists and on what assets we might build our future in a "***state of the peninsula,***" report including demographic information, trends and other data October 2002 to May 2003 (The May 10 conference presents a summary, prepared with support from the Maine Community Foundation)

- Discovering what elements of a ‘preferred’ future are broadly shared by diverse parts of the community (this is sometimes called **creating “a shared vision.”**) May 2003- June 2003
- Creating strategies and projects that engage people, organizations and town government in bringing about the preferred future. These strategies are different than recommendations... if the people and organizations within the Blue Hill Peninsula process don’t take up the work, it probably won’t happen! (this work starts at today’s conference and continues, with a follow-up session in autumn, 2003.)

Much as we might like, these “steps” probably won’t happen in order! As long as the process continues, we’ll probably always be trying to engage people, we’ll always be learning about issues and opportunities, and good ideas and projects don’t have to wait until “the final analysis”.

Since March 2002, the organizers held two other meetings of interested people from Castine, Surry, Blue Hill, Brooksville, Brooklin, Sedgewick and Penobscot. Based on interest, people worked on six inter-related issues: Economic prosperity, environmental issues, youth issues, community health, community “infrastructure” and housing. Each of these working groups was self-organizing, including a step that asked *“do we have the right people involved? Is the group representative enough of diverse interests? If the people in our group eventually agree on outcomes and strategies, will something really happen?”* At the same time the groups gathered information about their issues, listed “sub-issues” in some priority order and began to find out what people in the community wanted as outcomes.

To help keep the working groups coordinated, the organizers formed a steering committee. The steering committee assists with communications, serves as a point of contact for the media, and helps develop financial resources to support the work. Since its inception, the steering committee is made up of representatives of each working group who also represent Coastal Acadia Development Corporation, Hancock County Planning Commission, Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Blue Hill Heritage Trust, University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Healthy Peninsula Coalition. The members of the steering committee, for the most part, have justified devoting some of their organizational resources to the work of Peninsula Tomorrow.

### **What beliefs guide how Peninsula Tomorrow works?**

We believe it is important for diverse views to be represented.

We think citizen voices should help shape local decisions

We think the process should be open and inclusive

We believe that our work is to make our communities healthy for the long run—

Healthy economy, natural systems and people

The Peninsula Tomorrow process will go as far as people in the area want it to go—

There is no pre-set agenda or rigid process

## **What have we heard so far about the Peninsula and living here?**

This is a special region, worth our time.

We must preserve our sense of place, encourage businesses to contribute to it, work to maintain the historical significance of our towns and support local ownership.

The beauty and natural resources of the area are our greatest assets. Planning for a sustainable economy must take this into account.

The integrity of local town planning (home rule) should be maintained.

Regional planning/collaborative efforts should be pursued where and when they make sense, are efficient, and will bring in resources for the region as a whole.

We should draw on our considerable human resources/expertise to address issues.

Housing is a basic need and instrumental to economic stability and prosperity.

Land and marine use are the bedrock of the economy and must be expertly and sensitively managed so that they continue to provide for future generations.

We must build infrastructure to realize an economically stable region for the future.

**APPENDIX II:**

**SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 21, 2002 MEETING**

**Peninsula Tomorrow Community Meeting  
Blue Hill Consolidated School - 10/21/02**

- I. Introductions  
Ron Beard, Art Blank, Rick Decker, Dennis Damon, Rob Vaughn, Bill McWeeny, Jim Littlefield, Sally Littlefield, Tom Martin, Maureen Rawding, Tim Garrity, Keith Pearson, Annie DeFrancesco, Dave Doolittle, Kevin Berry, Jan Thomas, Joe Slocum, Pam Pearson, Bob Ivano
  
- II. Tom Martin - Overview
  - A) Population - growing and aging
  - B) Housing - increasing, but less than population
    - 1) Prices increasing
    - 2) Seasonal homes increase in coastal areas
    - 3) Median housing - cost increasing significantly
    - 4) Affordability - Median income is 76% of what is needed to purchase the median home.
  - C) Town responses
    - 1) Three towns have zoning - Castine, Penobscot and Surry
    - 2) Castine has a consistent plan, Brooklin and Surry are working on plans.
    - 3) planning problems cross town boundaries
  - D) HCPC has some initiatives underway
    - 1) Planning for prosperity
    - 2) Regional housing needs assessment (housing shortages are an impediment to employment growth)
    - 3) Regional transportation needs analysis
  - E) Tom will email out a copy of his report.
  
- III. Ron Reviewed Objectives and Process
  - A) Grange Hall Meeting
  - B) Working Groups - prosperity, health, infrastructure, land use, housing, marine resources, youth
  - C) Values and beliefs - reviewed list of values produced at the Grange Hall meeting
  - D) Time line
    - 1) September - working groups
    - 2) October - meeting
    - 3) November - survey work
    - 4) March - preliminary findings
    - 5) April - state of the peninsula report
    - 6) July - Large public presentation
  
- IV. What works - Presentations on community initiatives
  - A) MDI Community Health Plan - Presentation by Art Blank
    - 1) MDI Tomorrow - initiated a number of initiatives
    - 2) Health working group - reacting to concerns about managed care companies. Group met every two weeks at 7:00 am.
      - (a) Developed a vision statement (in Handout) - emphasizes the balance between community commitment and individual behavior. Focus on wellness. Adopted World Health Organization definition of health - physical, mental, emotional and social well being.

- (b) Goal was to create a community owned and run managed care program. Had a broader focus than commercial managed care companies.
  - (c) Not many insurance companies were interested in working with this group. Only NylCare was willing to do the work. Aetna took over NylCare and called it off.
  - 3) State regulatory system works against small, start up and community-based programs.
  - 4) Jill Goldthwait helped craft legislation for a trial of community-based programs. Currently in the rule making process. Process has slowed. \$50k fund was established as a subsidy, but those funds are vulnerable to the current budget cuts. Hiring freeze has blocked staffing.
  - 5) Committee has continued to plan the infrastructure
  - 6) funding behavioral medicine network
  - 7) direct referral process
  - 8) peer review
  - 9) planning for behavior medicine center
  - 10) Provide member services
  - 11) Questions:
    - (a) Connection to Paul Volenick 's commission?
      - No close connection.
    - (b) Who will be covered?
      - Care will be limited to services provided locally, but are looking to partnership opportunities.
      - Farmington and Franklin County illustrate the importance of long-term behavioral change.
      - A single payer system can reduce some structural inefficiency. A lot of cost containment is really cost shifting with large losses in the litigation process.
- B) Youth Initiatives - Presentation by Kevin Berry
- 1) Teen Friday night movie - a new program
  - 2) Ed Schnieder and Rich Boulet put the project together
  - 3) Supported by friends of the library
  - 4) Purchased a DVD projector
  - 5) Formed a committee with students to select movies, plan evenings
  - 6) Library is open 6 - 11 on Friday nights.
    - (a) Ninth to 12th grade
    - (b) Week 1 - 20 teens
    - (c) Week 2 - 33 teens
- C) Bio-diesel - Presentation by Andrea Diffrancesco and Keith Pearson
- 1) Frazer - concern about long-term harm done to kids by diesel buses
  - 2) Manufacturing - strip glycerin from oil or fat using ethanol
    - (a) alternative fuel approved by US Government
    - (b) being picked up by fleet vehicles
    - (c) To produce the fuel locally they have to get through a costly regulatory process.
    - (d) this fuel produces fewer harmful emissions (80% reduction in risks of cancer?) and is better for the engines.
    - (e) costs more (+ \$.50/gallon) than fossil fuel, though costs may come down with mass production.

- (f) Bio-diesel dissolves natural rubber. Need to change over some pumps and diaphragms (?) if pure bio-diesel is too be burned.
  - 3) Penobscot is a buying coop through Cambridge, MA
    - (a) The coop works with a local oil distributor that does the delivery.
  - 4) Pam noted that Chewonki just won an award for work with bio-diesel.
- D) Affordable Housing - Presentation by Joe Slocum , Castine Town Manager
- 1) Situation Analysis
    - (a) Noticed that is was increasingly difficult to recruit committee volunteers, coaches, volunteer firemen, etc.
    - (b) 25% of properties changed hands since 1996.
    - (c) Housing costs have appreciated by 15% or more per year.
    - (d) Have the highest median housing cost in Maine
    - (e) Housing is 10% more seasonal than 1990.
  - 2) Looking for solutions
    - (a) Applied for a DECD \$10,000 grant for planning with HCPC help.
    - (b) 51% of projects should benefit low and moderate income households
    - (c) looking at whether to acquire land now to hold for future projects
    - (d) visited a program in Searsport that impressed people
    - (e) Section 8 program will be working with single family housing
  - 3) Conducted a survey with HCPC assistance- have a 40% response rate.
    - (a) Seeing interest in single family, assisted living, even the summer residents want a sense of community with children, activities, etc.
    - (b) There are multiple answers and strategies for resolving concerns.
    - (c) land trusts - people own land and house but not appreciation (help to reduce speculation)
  - 4) Next steps: Community needs to write a business plan
  - 5) Questions:
    - (a) Pam - PUC is looking into funding energy program for low income.
- V. Prospective projects for Peninsula Tomorrow
- A) Health
    - 1) latched onto bio-diesel
    - 2) sent around a handout
  - B) Infrastructure
    - 1) Looking at solid waste,
    - 2) transportation - byways, trails, alternative energy - bio-diesel, anti-idling, alternative energy
  - C) Marine Resources - people have been too busy to get involved. Need to ramp up publicity.
  - D) Land Use - want to coordinate land use and marine resources,
  - E) Prosperity - met and discussed priorities including jobs ....?
  - F) Ron - suggest that the working groups need to meet again, expand membership, get the word out.
    - 1) Will be working on a survey process
  - G) Sedgwick - sponsoring "beginning with habitat" presentation.
    - 1) Hint - Avoid Monday night meetings - Bagaduce Chorale night.