

Existing Land Use

Our vision for Brighton Plantation is to protect and preserve the natural beauty and ecological integrity of our forests, waterways, and landscapes, while respecting the property rights of all landowners. We are committed to maintaining the unique rural character of our community by ensuring that development remains in harmony with the environment. Through careful stewardship, sustainable land practices, and a focus on organic growth, we strive to foster a resilient community that can provide basic municipal services to its citizens without compromising the area's natural resources. We believe in promoting thoughtful, gradual development that aligns with the values of the Plantation, its residents, and environmental character of the area. At the same time, we are dedicated to ensuring that Brighton Plantation remains a self-sustaining, independent community, preserving its status and autonomy. Ultimately, Brighton Plantation strives to create a future where the landscape is preserved, property rights are respected, municipal services are provided, and development is carefully managed to maintain the rural character for generations to come.

Introduction

Existing land use patterns and future land use considerations are key elements in a community's Comprehensive Plan. In fact, every chapter of the Comprehensive Plan can be tied into both the Existing and Future Land Use sections. As such, relating the community's Vision Statement to the Existing Land Use chapter and Future Land Use Plan is a fundamental practice in ensuring alignment throughout the plan.

A vision is only as good as a community's commitment to work toward it. This work is broken down into a series of strategies, ranging from recommendations for regulatory changes to ideas for better interlocal and public-private collaboration. In addition to ideas, there must be a plan for priorities and implementation to support a successful vision.

The Existing Land Use Chapter serves to review the land use patterns and development in Brighton. Like many municipalities in central Maine, Brighton Plantation can be characterized as a rural, residential community, where residents must commute to larger areas, such as Skowhegan, for work.

Brighton remains committed to protecting the community's abundant natural resources, natural beauty and ecological integrity; while maintaining the plantation's unique rural character with basic municipal services to preserve its independence.

Characteristics of Brighton's Land & Settlement Patterns

Brighton Plantation comprises about 25,600 acres, of which approximately 448 acres is water. Most of the land in Brighton is owned by private timber companies and is heavily forested. Brighton Plantation has an abundance of natural resources of both land and water, outlined further in the Natural Resources chapter. When considering land use

planning, it is imperative to plan with consideration of these fragile, natural resources, as they contribute to the inherent beauty of Brighton and are so valued by residents.

Brighton Plantation's settlement patterns, both current and historic, have been heavily influenced by the logging industry, as logging has been the primary industry in the plantation for over a century.

The village area at the intersection of Routes 151 and 154 was built around the logging industry and wood mills. Historic settlement patterns in this area are still evident today, as the village area remains the most built-up part of town.

Residential Land Uses

Brighton Plantation is primarily a residential community with minimal commercial or industrial land uses. Most of the residential land uses are scattered throughout the plantation, with a clustering near the village area and along Routes 151 and 154.

As there are no public utilities in Brighton, such as public water or sewer, there is minimal development density. Although Brighton does have a Land Use Zoning Ordinance complete with designated growth areas, it was developed necessarily to remain under their own land use authority instead of returning to the Land Use Planning Commission; not in response to an abundance of development.

The village area is predominantly zoned as General Development District (D-GN). This district designation allows for most land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial, either under a permit from the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) or a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board.

The General Development District in the village area is not at capacity and can accommodate additional development. Since this area is part of the designated growth area in both this plan and in the previous Comprehensive Plan, additional development in this area would align with the community's vision. Directing growth to an area that is already built up would reduce the expense of providing municipal services to rural parts of town and would also serve to protect natural resources.

Subdivision Developments

Subdivisions are regulated in Brighton by state statute, as referenced in the Land Use Zoning Ordinance, written and adopted in 1995. The Land Use Zoning Ordinance will be updated to reflect current standards after the completion of this Comprehensive Plan update.

Brighton's Land Use Zoning Ordinance allows for the subdivision of land as a Conditional Use Permit, approved by the Planning Board in the General Development District, Residential Development District, and the Shoreland Development District.

The analysis and statistics on the number of subdivisions in Brighton is based on the state definition of “subdivision.” Maine defines subdivision as:

The division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more lots within any five-year period that begins on or after September 23, 1971. This definition applies whether the division is accomplished by sale, lease, development, buildings or otherwise. The term “subdivision” includes the division of a new structure or structures on a tract or parcel of land into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period, the construction or replacement of three or more dwelling units on a single tract or parcel of land and the division of an existing structure or structures previously used for commercial or industrial use into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period.

For comparison, the state does not consider the following to be subdivisions:

- Gifts to [of land] relatives,
- Transfer to governmental entity,
- Transfer to conservation organizations,
- Transfer of lots for forest management, agricultural management, or conservation of natural resources,
- Unauthorized subdivision lots in existence for at least 20 years.

The specific details relating to what constitutes subdivision and what does not are outside the scope of this plan. For a deeper understanding, review the enabling statutes (MRS Title 30-A §4401 et seq. Municipal Subdivision Law, and MRS Title 12, §682-B. Exemptions from Subdivision Definition).

There have been no subdivisions created in Brighton in the past forty years. There are many plausible reasons why subdivisions have not been created in Brighton in recent years:

- Most of the land in Brighton is owned by timber companies, thus unavailable for subdivision creation.
- There is little demand for this type of development.
- Most of the people who choose to live in Brighton are not the type that would seek to live in a subdivision.
- The cost of subdividing property, then constructing houses on it is too high.
- Brighton’s population is declining

Because there are no subdivisions in Brighton that are developed, most of the residential development has been occurring lot by lot. This aligns with Brighton’s community vision since the plantation prioritizes preservation and protection of natural resources rather than encouraging large amounts of development. Lot by lot development is more in line with preserving the town’s rural character through thoughtful, gradual development.

Industrial and Commercial Development

There has been no new industrial or commercial development in Brighton Plantation since the establishment of Farrin Brothers, and no significant commercial or industrial growth in recent memory. Existing economic activity is limited to small-scale home and cottage industries, reflecting the rural character of the community and the absence of supporting infrastructure such as public water, sewer, or three-phase electricity.

Historically, any commercial development in Brighton occurred along either the Route 151 corridor or the Route 154 corridor. Most of the businesses were related to logging, construction, or agriculture.

The Land Use Zoning Ordinance designates the General Development District (D-GN), situated in and around the village area, for commercial and industrial development. This district is not at capacity, since there are no commercial or industrial endeavors in Brighton. The lack of commercial and industrial land uses is not because there is no appropriately designated location for them; it is likely due to Brighton's rural nature.

As stated in the community vision, preservation of natural resources is paramount to the community, as is maintaining the rural character. Encouraging appropriate commercial or industrial development is not a priority of the municipality; although, neither is it discouraged.

As stated in the community vision, preservation of natural resources and the maintenance of rural character are paramount to Brighton Plantation. Encouraging commercial or industrial development is not a primary goal of the municipality; however, such development is not actively discouraged if it aligns with community values. The local economy is primarily tied to the wood products industry, with a significant portion of land owned by timber companies. Additionally, the Heart of Maine camp property, though currently unused, represents a potential opportunity for future economic or recreational development, should it be pursued in a way that complements the community's vision and scale.

Land Use Trends

Brighton Plantation remains a predominantly rural community, with development in recent years being limited and primarily residential in nature. Most of the newer development has occurred on a lot-by-lot basis, dispersed throughout the area. While growth in Brighton Plantation may fluctuate over time, as it has in the past, the community remains committed to preserving its rural character. The Brighton Future Land Use Plan will help guide future development, ensuring that growth is directed to appropriate locations while discouraging large-scale commercial or industrial development that could compromise the area's rural nature.

New residential development is more challenging to direct into growth areas than commercial development because there are fewer regulatory and nonregulatory

incentives. For example, most new commercial development would opt for a location with easy access to a main road; however, this is rarely a consideration for residential development. Additionally, most people moving to Brighton appreciate the plantation's rural atmosphere, resulting in housing construction in rural areas.

Brighton's current land use trends and patterns align with the community's vision in that the minimal amount of growth certainly protects natural resources; however, if development was proposed, the plantation's Land Use Ordinance restricts where development can occur and the Land Use Ordinance will be updated with up-to-date language and standards after the Comprehensive Plan is complete, which would provide further protection.

Permitting in Brighton Plantation is overseen by the Planning Board and tracked manually, with applications and approvals filed by year in a physical filing cabinet. Due to the community's small size and the very limited number of permits issued each year, the Plantation does not currently employ a Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) or Local Plumbing Inspector (LPI). However, the town recognizes the value of having these positions and would prefer to have them if it were financially and logistically feasible. In the meantime, the assessors and plantation administrator are actively working to update and better organize the permitting system. The long-term goal is to scan existing records and transition to a digital system for improved access and long-term preservation.

Land Use Regulation

Brighton Plantation has a position for a fully certified Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to assist and advise the Planning Board, and this role is intended to serve as the Chair of the Planning Board. However, due to the town's rural nature and declining population, maintaining a full-time CEO has been a challenge. In addition, staffing other essential municipal positions, such as the Local Health Officer (LHO), assessors, and Planning Board members, has become increasingly difficult. The Planning Board consists of three members appointed by the assessors and holds at least one regular meeting per quarter, requiring a quorum of two members to conduct business. Despite these challenges, the plantation remains committed to ensuring proper code enforcement and planning oversight.

Since plantations, regardless of whether they retain land use authority at the town level or if land use authority is delegated to the state, are under the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC), their structure and operation are different from that of larger towns and cities.

For example, plantations are comprised of zoning subdistricts, which act as umbrellas and include more explicit districts. These subdistricts have the specific purpose of protecting important resources and preventing conflicts between incompatible uses. They are grouped into three broad categories: management, protection, and development. Each subdistrict has its own specific activities, disallowed, or allowed, but regulated through permitting and/or conditions.

The subdistricts are as follows:

- **Development districts:** Areas discernible as having patterns of intensive residential, recreational, commercial or industrial use or commercial removal of metallic minerals, and areas appropriate for designation as development districts when measured against the purpose, intent and provisions of this chapter.” 12 M.R.S. § 685-A(1); and,
- **Management districts:** Areas that are appropriate for commercial forest products or agricultural uses or for the extraction of nonmetallic minerals and for which plans for additional development are not presently formulated nor development anticipated; and,
- **Protection districts:** Areas where development would jeopardize significant natural, recreational and historic resources, including, but not limited to, flood plains, precipitous slopes, wildlife habitat and other areas critical to the ecology of the region or State.

Brighton’s Land Use Zoning Ordinance was written and adopted in 1995. It has not been updated since that time. This Ordinance divides the plantation into five separate zoning districts which fall under the umbrella of the subdistricts detailed above, each with its own intended purpose. Because the Ordinance has not been updated recently, not all districts are still acknowledged by the most recent version of the statutes and rules that govern land use for the Land Use Planning Commission.

While the Ordinance needs updating to reflect the most up to date standards and districts, it was written in a way that provided thorough protection of the community’s natural resources for its time. Three of the five districts have limitations due to these protective measures. The Land Use Zoning Ordinance includes the state-required Shoreland Zoning language, as well.

Brighton’s Zoning Ordinance includes:

- Article 1- General Provisions
- Article 2- Establishment of Land Use Districts
- Article 3- Land Use Districts and Applicable Standards
- Article 4- Performance Standards
- Article 5- Definitions
- Article 6- Administration and Enforcement

These umbrella districts (Development, Management, Protection) are broken down further into five subdistricts (see **Existing Zoning Map** in Appendix):

1. General Development District (under Development)
2. Residential Development District (under Development)
3. Shoreland Development District (under Development)
4. General Management District (under Management)
5. Protection Districts (under Protection)

The Ordinance specifies the designated growth areas as the General Development District, the Residential Development District, and the Shoreland Development District by making them the most permissive for land uses. The other two districts detailed in the Land Use Zoning Ordinance, the General Management District and the Protection Districts include several subdistricts and are intended to protect natural resources. Growth is directed away from these areas and into locations that can accommodate further development. The town will update the Land Use Zoning Ordinance upon the completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Each district and related subdistricts are detailed below.

Districts intended to accommodate growth:

The Development subdistricts include:

Commercial Industrial District (D-CI)

General Development District (D-GN)- detailed below

Residential Development District (D-RS)- detailed below

The primary zoning districts in Brighton are detailed more thoroughly in Table 1, below, but their purpose is described here.

The **General Development District** (D-GN on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map) comprises the area where present and future residential, commercial, industrial and other significant development are the most desirable in terms of road access, economic viability, concentration of present development and retention of natural character in the remainder of the community.

In the General Development District, certain common land uses only require a permit issued by the Code Enforcement Officer, such as one- and two-family dwellings; however, for more potentially impactful land use activities, such as multi-family dwelling units, a Conditional Use permit is required through the Planning Board.

The purpose of the **Residential Development District** (D-RS on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map) is to set aside certain areas for single family residential uses so as to provide residential activities apart from areas of commercial and industrial development. The intention is to encourage the concentration of residential type development in areas which are appropriate for that use and prevent development in such areas which are incompatible with residential uses.

The permitting process and requirements in the Residential Development District are the same as those detailed above in the General Development District.

The purpose of the **Shoreland Development District** (D-SL on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map) is to regulate residential and recreational development and other uses so that the development or use will not degrade the waters, recreational potential, fishery habitat, or scenic character in the shoreland areas suitable for development.

The D-SL district extends 250 feet from the normal highwater line of waterbodies. Permits for campsites and non-permanent docking or mooring facilities can be obtained from the Code Enforcement Officer; other allowed land uses require a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board. All Conditional Use Permits must conform to Article 4- Performance Standards.

The Shoreland Development District is a land use designation that is defunct in terms of the Land Use Planning Commission. The Future Land Use Plan will propose a new district designation for what this district previously encompassed.

Districts Intended to Remain Rural:

The rural areas include the umbrella districts of the Management Districts and the Protection Districts.

The Management subdistricts include:

General (M-GN)

Highly Productive (M-HP)

Natural Character (M-NC)

All land use zoning districts in Brighton are detailed more thoroughly in Table 1, below, but their purpose is described here.

The purpose of the **General Management District** (M-GN on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map) is to permit forestry and agricultural management activities to occur with minimal interference from unrelated development. In addition, it provides protection of the food supply for wildlife that inhabit the forested areas of the plantation.

Included in the **General Management District** are areas which do not qualify for inclusion in any other district.

A permit from the Code Enforcement Officer is required for the erection of buildings used primarily for agricultural or forestry management purposes, or accessory structures and uses. All other allowed uses require a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board.

Protection districts include the following:

Aquifer Recharge (P-AR)

Fish & Wildlife (P-FW)

Mountain Area (P-MA)

Resource Plan (P-RP)

Unusual Area (P-UA)

Accessible Lake (P-AL)

Shorelands (P-SL1 with a 250' buffer & P-SL2 with a 75' buffer)

Flood Prone (P-FP)

Great Pond (P-GP)

Recreation (P-RR)

Soils & Geology (P-SG)

Wetlands (P-WL)

River Transition (P-RT)

The purpose of the **Protection Districts** (denoted as P- on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map- P-WL for example) are to regulate land uses, to protect the public health, safety and welfare, and to protect sensitive and significant resources such as water bodies, flowing streams, wetlands, floodplains and shoreland. This protection is intended to maintain water quality; and scenic and recreational values; to protect plants, fish, and wildlife habitats; to minimize the economic and human costs of floods; and to maintain the groundwater table and ground water recharge and discharge areas.

These following areas are included in the Protection District designation:

- All shoreland of major standing waters designated on the Brighton Plantation Zoning map as P-GP with a width of 250 feet from the normal high-water mark.
- All shoreland of minor flowing water designated on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map as P-SL2 with a width of 75 feet from the normal high-water mark.
- Deer wintering areas designated on the Brighton Plantation Zoning Map as P-FW.
- Wetlands designated on the Zoning Map as P-WL, including beds or rivers, streams, and lakes.
- Floodplains designated on the Zoning Map as P-FP.

The only type of permit that can be issued from the Code Enforcement Officer is for a non-permanent dock or mooring facility. All other allowed land uses require a Conditional Use Permit issued after review by the Planning Board.

All structures permitted in the Protection District require a setback of at least 75 feet from the normal high-water mark (not included structures that require direct access to the water for operational necessities).

All Conditional Use Permits must conform to Article 4- Performance Standards.

Table 1: Current Zoning Districts

Growth Areas	General Development District	This area is the most desirable location for all future and present residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of development. This district is ideal due to road access, economic viability, current development trends, and density. Directing current and future growth into this district will protect more environmentally sensitive areas and the character of the community.	Minimum Lot Size: No less than 1 acre- larger minimum lot size may be required depending on soil type. Road Frontage: at least 200 feet
	Residential Development District	Supports higher density residential uses while restricting commercial and industrial development.	Minimum Lot Size: No less than 1 acre- larger minimum lot size may be required depending on soil type. Road Frontage: At least 100 feet Setback Requirements: Minimum of 50 feet from front lot line, and 25 feet from side and rear lot lines.
	Shoreland Development District	Designated for high-impact commercial uses not compatible with residential or recreational land uses.	Minimum Lot Size: No less than 1 acre- larger minimum lot size may be required depending on soil type. Road Frontage: At least 100 feet. Commercial lots require 200 feet. Setback Requirements: 100 feet from high water mark and 25 feet from side and rear lot lines.
Rural Areas	General Management District	Allows low-intensity residential and recreational development within Shoreland Zone.	Minimum Lot Size: No less than 1 acre- larger minimum lot size may be required depending on soil type. Road Frontage: At least 100 feet. Setback Requirements: 75 feet from the front lot line, 25 feet from side and rear lot lines.
	Protection Districts	Surrounds ponds, lakes, streams, wetlands, floodplains, shoreland areas, sensitive areas, and significant resources.	All structures permitted in a protection district must be setback 75 feet from the normal high-water mark (except for water dependent structures).

Source: Brighton's Land Use Zoning Ordinance, 1995

Growth Areas Explained: The Maine Growth Management Act requires municipalities to prepare Comprehensive Plans to designate areas preferred for new development, called “growth areas,” and areas where new development is not encouraged, termed “rural areas.” This approach directs new development to parts of municipalities with amenities and capacity for growth and away from areas with environmental or other constraints. The purpose of the Growth Management Act is to prevent sprawl. Sprawl in rural areas increases the town’s expense in road maintenance and other municipal services. It also has a negative environmental impact on natural resources, such as habitat, biodiversity, water quality, and loss of farmland.

Brighton Plantation’s designation of growth areas serves as a tool to protect natural resources and uphold the community’s vision of preserving its rural character. By encouraging development in already developed or designated areas, the town helps safeguard more sensitive lands, including forests, wildlife habitat, and recreational areas. While the Plantation currently has basic zoning in place, there is interest in updating and expanding local land use regulations—for example, by limiting the number of building permits issued annually or refining standards to guide appropriate development. The community supports slow, thoughtful growth and encourages small-scale, locally rooted businesses such as farmstands, Airbnb rentals, or event spaces for small destination weddings. Brighton is increasingly recognized as a low-impact recreation destination, with trails and woodlands that attract hunters, hikers, and nature enthusiasts. Any future development should reflect and support this identity, ensuring that growth remains compatible with both the landscape and the values of residents.

Non-Regulatory Measures

In addition to the Land Use Zoning Ordinance with a full suite of regulatory measures aimed at encouraging and promoting development in designated growth areas, Brighton could introduce non-regulatory means to encourage development in growth areas, as well. Public sewer and water, the most influential non-regulatory measure for directing growth, is not viable in Brighton, so the plantation must consider more non-traditional options.

Perhaps the biggest non-regulatory measure in directing growth to certain areas is that most of the rural land outside the village area is working forest and privately owned. This is an unintentional non-regulatory measure that will prevent sprawl and development in the rural areas unless Weyerhaeuser sells portions of its holdings. Essentially, the historical development pattern of Brighton acts to direct growth to the already developed areas within town.

These non-regulatory measures, intentional or unintentional, work to direct future growth and development into the designated growth areas, while protecting the town’s rural areas, preserving natural resources, reducing the impact of sprawl, and reducing the cost of supplying municipal services to areas outside of the town’s center. Directing growth into areas that are already developed and preserving the rural character of the town are in keeping with the community’s vision statement.

Forestry, Agriculture and Open Space

As forestry, and to a lesser extent, farming were the historical economic cornerstones of the community, these resource-based practices should be supported and afforded protection. Particularly because Brighton still relies heavily on the forest industry even today.

Enrollment in the Open Space, Farmland, and Tree Growth Tax Law are encouraged for property owners to reduce property tax valuations. The amount of acreage in Brighton enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law alone adds up to ##### acres (## percent) out of the 25,152 acres which make up the land area of the town.

To underscore the importance of forestry in Brighton, the timber company giant Weyerhaeuser, currently holds approximately ##### acres of working forest land in Bingham. They are the largest landowners in town. For further information on agriculture and forestry in Brighton, see the Agriculture and Forestry Chapter of this Plan.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

The plantation participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as outlined in the Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted in 2011. Maps are updated with federal data releases.

Projections

Population and Housing Projections

Referring to the population projections in the Community Profile and Housing chapter, it is difficult to anticipate significant future demand for housing.

- The **State Economist's Office** predicts a population of 54 people by 2040- a decrease of 8 people since 2020 (13 percent decrease).

It is important to note that this population projection is just that: a prediction based on past trends. As such, it cannot possibly factor in outside conditions that could increase the inflow or outflow of people into Brighton.

It is also important to note that this projection does not consider changes to household size: declining household size requires additional housing to accommodate individuals living alone, whereas increasing household size means less houses are required to accommodate a larger population of individuals sharing living quarters.

Brighton's average household size has been fluctuating and increasing since 2000. In fact, Brighton's average household size increased nearly 18 percent between 2000 and 2023. But it has also declined since 2020. With such a small population and small sample

size, the statistical data for Brighton Plantation is less reliable than it is for larger communities. When considering data such as average household size, this must be taken into account.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE FLUCTUATIONS

Year	2000	2010	2015	2020	2023
Average Household Size	2.61	2.53	2.17	3.33	3.07

Source: 2000, 2010, 2015, 2020, & 2023 Census and ACS

Regardless of the validity of the data, this is the data available with which to make estimation about the minimum land needed to accommodate the projected needs.

Highlighted in Green: With Brighton’s current population of 86 people and the current average household size of 3.07, the existing, year-round housing stock of 28 housing units is adequate for accommodating this population.

Highlighted in Gold: Based on the State Economist’s population project of a decreased population to 54 people, combined with the current average household size of 3.07, Brighton’s current housing stock would be at a surplus. This population decrease would require approximately 18 housing units and Brighton’s existing housing stock is 28 housing units, leaving 10 housing units unoccupied.

Highlighted in Orange: Based on the State Economist’s population project of a decreased population to 54 people, combined with a (hypothetical) decreased average household size of 2.92 people per household, Brighton’s current housing stock would still have a surplus of 10 housing units.

TABLE 3: POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND HOUSING NEEDS, BASED ON HOUSEHOLD SIZE

	Population Projection	Total Current Housing Units (minus seasonal)	Average Household Size	Amount of Housing Needed	Deficit?
Current	86	28	3.07	28	N/A
State Economist’s Population Projection (at current average household size)	54	28	3.07	18	No
State Economist’s Population Projection (at a 5% decrease in average household size)	54	28	2.92	18.5	No

Based on Table 3 and the State Economist's population projection, there is no immediate need for additional housing in Brighton, even if the average household declines by five percent.

It is essential to bear in mind that these population projections are based on past trends, not current circumstances. Brighton's recent population trends are a steadily increasing population; an influx of new residents moving to Brighton from elsewhere.

It is also essential to understand that even with slow population growth, the components of the population will most assuredly change. The aging population and the trend of fluctuating average household size will undoubtedly impacts the need for certain housing types.

The aging population is a necessary consideration. This demographic has a specific set of requirements, such as handicapped accessible homes so residents can age in place, the construction of more one-story homes, appropriately sized homes, and elderly housing facilities. Additionally, with the increase in residents, both younger and seniors living alone, the demand for smaller homes will increase. In short, the population may not be growing drastically or at all, but the changes in the demographics of the population will result in the need for more homes or different types of homes.

Regardless of population projections, population fluctuation, and existing housing stock, it is unreasonable to assume no new houses will be built in Brighton Plantation. The construction of new houses will consume more land for development. Brighton's minimum lot sizes and lot standard requirements will affect how much land is required for any new housing construction.

Hypothetically, if five new houses were constructed in the next planning period, the minimum amount of land required would be at the very least five acres. All zoning districts in Brighton require a minimum lot size of at least an acre; however, that is dependent on soil characteristics. If the soil is evaluated and determined to be lacking, the minimum lot size requirement could be increased. And this hypothetical scenario does not include other necessities such as driveways, roads, or utilities which would take up more land.

Currently, under the State Economist's population projection and even with a hypothetical decreased household size to 2.92 people per household, there is no need for additional housing to accommodate this population.

Ideally, any new homes would be built within Brighton's designated growth area, which is consistent with the town's vision, as well as with comprehensive planning guidelines.

Institutional, Industrial, and Commercial Projections

New commercial and industrial development in the last 10 years has been minimal in Brighton. That is not to say there has not been new businesses coming to Brighton; there are likely small, home-based businesses that have not been documented. But there has not been any large- or even medium-scale new businesses in Brighton in several years.

If any new businesses came to Brighton, they would most likely be in the General Development District, which has a 1-acre minimum lot size, depending on soil. If the soil is found inadequate, the Land Use Zoning Ordinance reserves the right to require additional lot area.

Hypothetically, if two new businesses came to Brighton in the next ten years and required the construction of new buildings, they would require, at the very minimum, two acres. This is not taking into account land needed for driveways utilities or any other necessities; those would increase the amount of land needed.

Due to Brighton's rural nature, location, low population density, and lack of infrastructure, it is unlikely that there will be any new, major development of any kind in the next ten years period.

While new businesses in town would mean job opportunities and increased population, Brighton residents prefer a more organic approach to growth rather than forced. The community has no desire to expand; rather, residents prefer to maintain a status quo of their current conditions. This aligns with their high priority of protecting natural resources and maintaining the rural character of the town.

Analysis

- Brighton's Land Use Zoning Ordinance, although outdated, serves the community well and provides the necessary protection of natural resources and rural community character.
- Brighton's historic settlement patterns, heavily influenced by logging, are still evident today. The village area, at the crossroads of Route 151 and 154, was once one of the Plantation's hubs and remains the most densely settled area.
- Brighton is primarily a residential community with no commercial or industrial land uses.
- There has been no subdivisions in the last five to ten years and minimal residential, commercial, industrial, or retail development in the past ten years.
- The Land Use Zoning Ordinance delineates five primary districts in town; three of which are intended for growth.
- There are minimal non-regulatory measures for directing growth in Brighton, aside from the fact that most of the land is privately owned by timber companies.
- The State Economist projects a population decline down to 54 residents by 2040.
- This population decline and increasing average household size negate the need for any new housing development.
- No institutional, industrial, or commercial development is anticipated in the planning period.