

Public Facilities and Services

Municipal Services

Brighton Plantation, by itself or in collaboration with neighboring towns and other partners, offers minimal public facilities and services to residents. This chapter details Brighton Plantation's government and how it provides services.

Brighton Plantation's Municipal Government

Brighton Plantation runs on Maine's simplest form of local government: the Plantation system. Brighton holds an annual town meeting (the last Saturday of July at 10:00 AM). At this meeting, the residents choose a clerk, three assessors, treasurer, collector of taxes and a school committee. The three assessors are considered the members of the select board of the plantation. The board of assessors meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Monday at 6PM at the municipal office.

Treasurers, collectors and constables of plantations must give the same bond as similar officials of towns are required to give and to be approved in the same manner. The valuation of property for the assessment of taxes in plantations, as well as the assessment, collection and disposal of taxes, must be the same as in towns. Assignment to other committees (Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Smith Pond Committee, Comprehensive Plan Committee, and Village Church Committee) are appointed by the Board of Assessors.

The Municipal Office

The Brighton Plantation Municipal Office is located at 1 Stagecoach Road in Brighton Plantation near the historic and current center of the plantation. The Plantation office is opened for limited hours four days a month. The office was once one of several one-room schoolhouses located in the plantation. It now serves as the base of operations for the plantation's general government services. It includes offices for the Town Clerk and Tax Collector as well as meeting space for the Board of Assessors and other municipal boards and committees. There would also be an office for a Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), however, Brighton Plantation has had difficulty hiring and retaining this position.

The municipal office building has received several technology upgrades in recent years to support teleconferencing and meet modern internet needs. However, the building continues to experience chronic issues with freezing during the winter. This is largely due to the heating pipe not being buried deep enough underground and lacking proper insulation. Limited water flow during periods of low use, combined with regular plowing directly over the pipe, contributes to frequent freezing. Inside, a hole in the office floor presents a risk management concern that should be addressed. Additional improvements needed include upgrading the lighting to energy-efficient LEDs for cost savings and better visibility, assessing and potentially updating the building's overall electrical system, repairing or replacing the exterior accessibility ramp, and acquiring a new fireproof safe

to properly secure important municipal records. To the east of the office, there is a small “fire shed” between the building and Route 151 that is no longer in active use, as Brighton now contracts with the Town of Athens for fire protection services.

Public Safety

Police Protection

Police protection in Brighton Plantation is provided by the Somerset County Sheriff’s Department, which serves the entire county with a Patrol Division made up of 15 Deputies and three (3) Sergeants. In 2023, the department responded to 18,277 calls for service across Somerset County. However, only a very small percentage—likely less than 1%—originated from Brighton, reflecting the community’s small size and low call volume. County-wide, the Sheriff’s Criminal Division investigated a significant number of serious cases, including fentanyl-related drug activity, illegal cannabis grows, robberies, burglaries, scams, aggravated assaults, unattended deaths, and sexual abuse cases. These issues are representative of broader county trends and not specific to Brighton. The Somerset County Jail is located in Madison.

Fire Protection

Brighton Plantation has a partnership with the neighboring community of Athens to provide fire protection to its residents. In 2023, Brighton Plantation appropriated \$5,000 to pay Athens for fire protection. The Athens Fire Department is a volunteer force with their headquarters at 24 Brighton Road in Athens.

Ambulance Service

Ambulance services in Brighton Plantation are provided by neighboring towns, including Skowhegan and Harmony. Due to Brighton’s rural location and small population, the plantation does not operate its own emergency medical service but relies on regional partnerships for coverage. Response times can vary depending on availability and distance.

Health Care Facilities

Residents of Brighton Plantation travel for health care as they do for most services. The closest health services to Brighton Plantation include:

Name of Facility	Distance to Brighton Plantation	Open
Bingham Area Health Center	15 miles	M-F 7AM-4:30PM
Redington-Fairview General Hospital (Skowhegan)	22 miles	24 Hours
Madison Area Health Center	24 miles	M-F 7:30AM-5PM

Northern Light Mayo Hospital (Dover-Foxcroft)	30 miles	24 Hours
Maine General Health (Waterville)	36 miles	24 Hours
Maine General Medical Center (Augusta)	53 miles	24 Hours
Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center (Bangor)	63 miles	24 Hours

The closest facility to Brighton Plantation is the Bingham Area Health & Dental center which offers medical, behavioral, and dental health services. The closest 24 hour hospital is located in Skowhegan at Redington-Fairview General Hospital 22 miles away followed by Northern Light Mayo Hospital in Dover-Foxcroft at 30 miles away.

Brighton Plantation does not have a Local Health Officer (LHO). As with many local municipal official positions, this position is hard to fill and retain within the community due to the size of the population, remoteness, and pay.

The Plantation provides General Assistance (GA) to eligible residents. Applicants can apply in person at the local municipal office, instructions are on the website, or if they are in need of emergency assistance, they can contact Somerset Communications to ready the GA Administrator during regular business hours. Assistance is provided in the form of a voucher payment to the vendor.

Utilities

Brighton Plantation does not have any available utilities and there are no plans to provide them in the foreseeable future. Most residents have water supplied through private wells. There is no public sewer. Most residents use septic. There is some concern, especially with the lack of a CEO and LHO, about whether or not residents are following proper regulations around wastewater disposal. There is no available 3-phase power or cable and there does not seem to be a desire for it. There is internet in portions of the Plantation but no broadband and like with most other utilities, no call for it.

Brighton Plantation’s Public Utilities Analysis

Solid Waste Disposal

Brighton Plantation operates a municipal transfer station located off Wellington Road (Route 154), which is also used by Kingsbury Plantation under a paid agreement. In 2023, Brighton appropriated \$24,000 for the operation of the transfer station and received \$21,000 in revenue from Kingsbury's usage contract. Having a centrally located transfer station is a benefit to Brighton residents; however, summer months can be challenging due to increased usage by Kingsbury residents. The facility currently does not offer recycling services and lacks a permanent building—an earlier attempt using a trailer was unsuccessful. In the future, the Plantation may benefit from constructing a more permanent structure to improve operations.

Septic Waste Disposal:

Brighton Plantation has no public sewer system and is served entirely by private septic systems. When pumping is needed, property owners must hire a third-party licensed contractor, and the town is not involved in the disposal process. However, concerns have been raised about improper or illegal disposal of septic waste by some residents. Enforcement of disposal regulations is difficult due to the Plantation's lack of a full-time Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) and Local Plumbing Inspector (LPI), which limits the town's ability to monitor compliance and respond to potential violations effectively.

Public Works

The plantation appoints a Road Commissioner. The Road Commissioner's responsibilities include overseeing the maintenance of all town roads not maintained by the state, coordinating snow removal and grading, replacing and repairing culverts, managing roadside mowing and ditching, and responding to storm damage or other road-related issues. The Road Commissioner also works with contractors as needed to ensure the safe and passable condition of the plantation's road infrastructure throughout the year.

Stormwater Management

Existing stormwater management facilities are adequately maintained, though improvements could be made in the frequency with which stormwater catch basins are cleaned. The town's existing stormwater management system can sufficiently handle the expected future development in this planning period.

Cemeteries

Brighton Plantation is responsible for the care of 3 cemeteries:

Brighton Plantation Cemeteries	
Name	Location
Brighton Village Cemetery	East side of Rt 151 and north side of Rt 154
Old Cemetery	North side of Back Rd
York Cemetery	North of Solon Rd

The town's current cemeteries are expected to adequately handle the projected growth, as the rate of growth is not expected to be rapid or significant. The plantation budgeted \$4,500 in 2023 for sexton services and has an account for \$11,000 for stone repair.

Town-Owned Lands

Within the Plantation's Annual Report, there is an account dedicated to the Village Church, a local historic landmark located at the intersection of Routes 151 and 151. It is part of what once was the historic village center of Brighton Plantation. The account as of 2023 had \$7,945.72 for the maintenance of the building.

The town also maintains an account for the maintenance and upkeep of the Smith Pond Picnic Area, which is leased by the town for \$159.22 per year. This account is supported entirely through donations. In addition to the picnic area, the town is responsible for maintaining other municipal properties, including the town dump (transfer station), the municipal office, and the salt and sand shed. These facilities are essential to the operation of the Plantation and require ongoing upkeep and funding for repairs and improvements.

Education

Brighton Plantation has its own school department. It was once part of RSU 59/MSAD 59 but left that district in 2013 to form its own. Brighton Plantation runs as a School Administrative Unit (SAU) with a Board of Directors that meets on the first Saturday of each month. The Plantation also has a Superintendent to oversee administration. The Plantation partners with Athens to provide transportation to students at a cost of \$14,602.50 in 2023.