



Pillar Five (continued)

will provide more opportunities for diverse types of housing in locations most suitable for development.

Diverse housing options are necessary to support the community's current needs and provide housing for those who work in Falmouth, including teachers and emergency responders, and current residents who may want to downsize. It is also critical to create a more resilient community by improving the Town's ability to adapt and accommodate a changing population and to support age diversity by creating places for people to live at all stages of life.

Understanding residents' concerns about growth and development, this planning process has provided an opportunity for the Town to reflect on past growth and its impact on the Town's existing neighborhoods. At the same time, the Town has considered the critical need for housing options and identified opportunities to encourage greater housing choice in a way that will respect existing neighborhoods and natural resources and support the Town's economic growth and fiscal capacity.

With an estimated demand of at least 300-400 additional housing units (based on projected population growth and demand for housing for the current and future workforce) the Town will look to accommodate growth in a way that will minimize impact on existing neighborhoods. Through this plan, housing development will be directed to mixed-

use growth areas that can accommodate higher density and more diverse housing types. Expanding opportunities for ADUs on existing lots will allow developed residential areas to absorb some demand without changing the physical character of the neighborhood.

*"As a single person
I don't need an expensive
home, but that's pretty much
all that's available in Falmouth.
There are not enough rental or
condo units available for
people like me."
- Community survey
respondent*

Foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.

POLICY 1

The Town is committed to improving connection to the waterfront and is actively looking for opportunities to increase physical and visual access. Several key parks, open spaces, and island trailways provide public access to the coast. Waterfront access has been expanded and enhanced over the years. Waterfront parcels are considered for resiliency, protection, and access strategies for open space acquisition by the Parks and Community Programs Department and FLT.

Opportunities for commercial and non-commercial fishing and harvesting are currently limited. By expanding waterfront access, the Town hopes to further support the local fishing and harvesting community and foster a stronger working waterfront.



ACTION A: Continue to support management of waterfront land and the efforts of the Parks and Community Programs Department and FLT with consideration for climate resiliency, habitat protection, and public access to the waterfront.



ACTION B: Support and strengthen the local fishing community and working waterfront and provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to access or support commercial fishing activities.

Maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.

POLICY 2

Town Landing is the largest recreational anchorage and mooring field north of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Falmouth's marine resources are overseen by the Harbor Master and Police Department's Marine Unit. The Harbor/Waterfront Committee provides oversight and guidance over the Town's harbor.

The Town has been committed to maintaining and enhancing facilities at Town Landing and has been

working to address capacity needs and resiliency. In 2022, the Town initiated a Falmouth Town Landing Resiliency Study to evaluate vulnerabilities and explore options for long-term resiliency. Since the study was completed, multiple storms have caused significant damage to Town Landing, bringing climate resiliency to the forefront of community discussions about the waterfront and harbor management. Moving forward with implementing climate resiliency measures is a priority for the Town.





ACTION A: Seek funding for and implement recommendations of the Town Landing Resiliency Study.







(Continued next page)

POLICY 2

continued

-  **ACTION B:** Continue to enforce the Coastal Waters Ordinance and support efforts of the Harbor/Waterfront Committee, Harbormaster, and Marine Unit to maintain a safe and accessible facility. 

-  **ACTION C:** Continue to monitor and address capacity issues of harbor facilities and freshwater public access facilities including use of commercial floats, small craft storage, mooring access, and vehicle parking. 

-  **ACTION D:** Monitor and address impacts to harbor facilities due to climate change or other adverse actions. 



Protect, maintain, and improve marine habitat, water quality, and access to the Town's marine resources for all appropriate uses, including fishing, recreation, and tourism.



POLICY 3



Residents have expressed the desire for improved access to Town Landing and additional opportunities for aquatic recreation. Outdoor recreation is an important part of community culture in Falmouth and residents would like to make best use of the Town's access to Casco Bay to support recreation and general enjoyment. In addition to swimming, fishing, boating, paddling, and other marine activities, the Town has trails and parks that offer scenic views of the ocean, including Mackworth Island and Gilsland Farm (Maine Audubon).



The Town will look to balance additional recreation and fishing opportunities with maintaining the health and quality of marine habitat. The Town has worked with the Maine DEP and Department of Marine

Resources (DMR) to evaluate and monitor marine water quality to benefit public use and to support the health of the Town's shellfish habitats.

-  **ACTION A:** Work with local property owners, Falmouth Land Trust, and others to maintain and expand major points of public water access, especially along public ways and in public parks. 

-  **ACTION B:** Continue to coordinate with Maine DEP and Maine DMR on water quality monitoring and assessing, protecting marine habitat, and monitoring and enforcing commercial and recreational fishing regulations. 

-  **ACTION C:** Support efforts of the Shellfish Conservation Committee to protect the Town's shellfish resources. 

-  **ACTION D:** Implement restoration and regenerative habitat projects to reestablish lost/impacted habitat in coordination with coastal resiliency efforts. 


Encourage a variety of housing types and increased density in designated growth areas.

POLICY 1


Thoughtfully increasing housing density in certain areas can have a variety of benefits to the community. This can look different in different areas. For example, ADUs create housing opportunities in existing neighborhoods without drastically altering the physical character of the community. ADUs help meet the changing needs as families age and transition. They also provide an opportunity for another source of income for homeowners, making it financially feasible to stay in their homes as housing needs and financial situations change.

Increased density in growth areas could include townhomes, triplexes, cottage courts, or many other variations of missing middle housing. This medium-density housing provides opportunities for those who do not want or need a large single-family home or who cannot afford a single-family home. This type of housing development in growth areas will be proximate to amenities and services, in areas currently served by public water and wastewater, minimizing future infrastructure expenses for the Town.




ACTION A: Provide guidance on creating ADUs to support homeowners through the process, including examples of plans that comply with Town requirements. 



ACTION B: Revise zoning to allow residential development in certain commercial districts, such as the Business and Professional Zone along Route 1, and to encourage a variety of housing types in growth areas, including low-rise apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, etc. 



ACTION C: Designate a location in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. Section 4358(2). 

City of South Portland, Maine – ADU Guidebook

In 2023, following updates to the ADU ordinance in 2022, the City of South Portland created a guidebook to share information about ADUs, the new ordinance updates, permit requirements and the process for developing an ADU, design and construction tips, and other resources. The guidebook summarizes ordinance requirements and explains the benefits of ADUs and potential challenges during the development process.



DATA HIGHLIGHT: HOUSING UNITS

- **81%** of housing units in Falmouth are detached single-family homes.
- **54%** of new housing units completed from 2014 to 2023 were detached single-family homes.

POLICY 3

continued

housing within their budget in Cumberland County and beyond.

Only 1.8% of Falmouth's housing units are affordable (income-restricted rental apartments) and 64% of these units are designated for adults over age 62. There are 35 income-restricted housing units for working-aged people or families in Falmouth and 18 low-income families receive rental assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program; however the demand for this continues to grow. Less than 10% of employees who work in Falmouth also live in the Town. Approximately 27% of those employees commute more than 25 miles. Yet, living in the community in which one works is not only beneficial for that employee's commute. When people live in the town in which they work or own a business, they build community and have a stronger sense of purpose and connectedness. In addition, residents spend less time driving and have more time to volunteer and to participate in civic engagement. All of these benefits support core values of Falmouth residents. While the challenges to develop affordable housing are significant, the following actions provide a starting point for the Town to address this critical issue while also supporting values of social connectedness, civic involvement, and emissions reduction, that are important to the community.

Looking forward, the Town's role in creating housing that is more affordable will not be to directly fund affordable housing development but instead create, primarily through zoning regulation, opportunities for private developers to build a greater diversity of housing options.



ACTION A: Investigate opportunities to reduce development costs by using vacant and underused public land for affordable housing development. 5



ACTION B: Implement incentives for the development of housing that is more affordable, such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, reduced/waived fees, affordable housing development impact fee, use of Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing, and use of Town-owned land for development. 5



ACTION C: Create housing opportunities targeted to Town staff and community members. 4 5



ACTION D: Support regional efforts to address housing supply, including working toward the Metro Regional Coalition's goal to expand housing choices. 5



ACTION E: Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable. 5



DATA HIGHLIGHT: FALMOUTH HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- Median home price (2023): **\$925,000**
- Income needed to afford the median home price: **\$320,000**
- Median monthly rent: **\$1,973**
- **73.8%** of households cannot afford the median home price.
- **47.2%** of renter households spend more than **30%** of their income on housing.

Fiscal Capacity



The Town of Falmouth is currently in a stable financial position to continue to provide a high level of service to residents. The Town has experienced steady population growth and growth of the taxable base and tax increment finance (TIF) district values in the last decade. The Town maintains strong fiscal policies and engages in comprehensive long-term capital planning. Falmouth's AAA bond rating will help ensure the Town's ability to make necessary capital investments to support Town operations and meet the community's needs.

Despite Falmouth's strong financial position, the Town should continue to strategically identify opportunities to expand and diversify the commercial tax base. The Town currently provides a very high level of services and amenities to residents. As operational costs continue to rise and residents look to the Town to provide additional services and amenities, including open space, community programs, and services for older adults, a strong and diverse tax base is needed to help support Town operations without further burdening property owners.

The majority of the Comprehensive Plan community survey respondents indicated that they supported some new spending to implement the Town's vision, but support for new spending varied by policy, and respondents widely agreed that the Town should approach spending and new projects in a cost-effective manner.

The Town updates its 10-year CIP each year as part of the budget review and approval process. The CIP is updated based on funding availability and community needs. The CIP and details of capital expenditures can be found within the Town's FY 2025 budget document on the Town's website.

Major planned capital investments in the current 10-year CIP include replacement or renovated fire and public works facilities and regular road and sidewalk maintenance. In addition to these critical expenditures, other capital improvements that may be needed to accommodate anticipated growth include additional equipment to support increased demand and changing demographics (specifically more emergency service calls as the population grows and ages), additional road and sidewalk infrastructure to support connectivity within growth areas, and expanded recreation facilities to maintain a high level of service.

The Comprehensive Plan will guide the CIP process and help inform budgeting for future facility and service needs.



DATA HIGHLIGHT:


- Average assessed property value increased **67.3%** (2022 – 2023)
- FY24 annual budget: **\$18,933,379**

Promote development that is fiscally responsible.


POLICY 2

The Town will look at future and existing land uses to plan for development in areas that are already served by public utilities and restrict development in areas that would require infrastructure expansion, in coordination with the Future Land Use Map. The Town will also examine additional opportunities, like TIF districts and public-private partnerships, to implement Comprehensive Plan policies.




ACTION A: Incorporate fiscal impact analysis into the development review process to help the Town make fiscally responsible development decisions that align with the Town's goals. 




ACTION B: Consider a public/private partnership to develop a master plan for a village center to support the community's goals and benefit the Town's fiscal capacity. 



ACTION C: Evaluate the Town's current use of TIF districts to encourage development in commercial growth areas and finance infrastructure improvements that support walkability and the development of village centers. 



ACTION D: Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas. 

Smart Growth America – Rationale for Smart Growth Fiscal Impact Analysis and Model Fiscal Impact Assessment Ordinance

Fiscal impact analysis is a tool used to assess the costs and revenues associated with development. This report provides findings of fiscal impacts that may be associated with different growth patterns, including impacts on property values and long-term life cycle costs and maintenance obligations. The report also provides a framework for implementing fiscal impact analysis as part of the development review process to realize smart growth goals.

Future Land Use

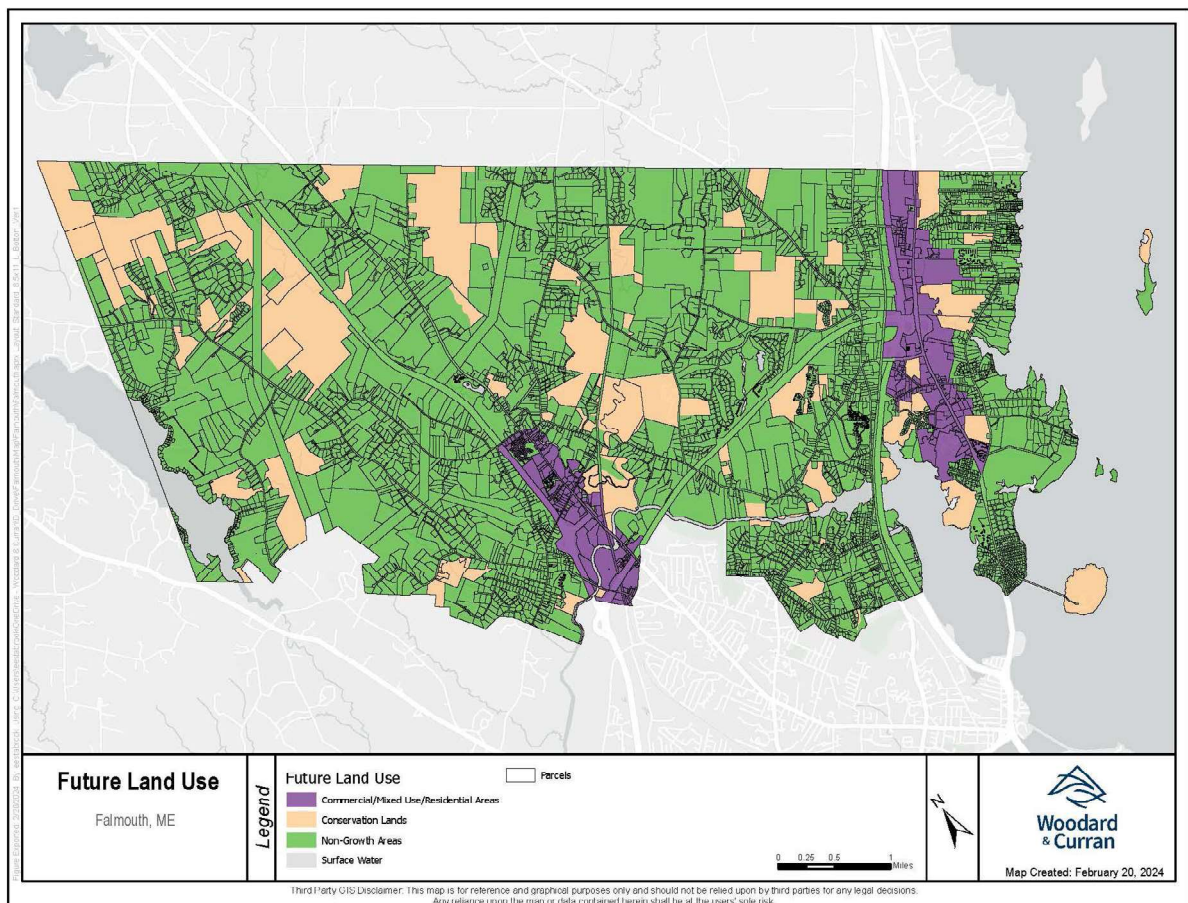
Throughout the Vision and Values and Comprehensive Plan processes, residents strongly expressed their desire to protect the physical character and small-town, rural aesthetic of Falmouth. In response to concerns about growth and development and changes to existing neighborhoods, the 2024 Future Land Use Plan significantly reduces the Town's designated growth areas.

Changes to the Future Land Use Plan are in direct response to community concerns about the protection of critical natural resources and open space from development. Plan recommendations for modifications to zoning, additional site development requirements, continued conservation efforts, and educational outreach will all contribute to protecting natural resources from future development impacts.

Still, ongoing development pressure in the region and projected population growth of 5.5% over the next decade (projected growth from 2025 to 2035), indicate a need for additional residential development and some additional commercial development to support this growth. This plan intends to direct the majority of new residential and commercial growth and capital investments to the Town's growth areas along the existing developed corridors.

GROWTH AREAS

This land use plan concentrates growth in and around the Town's existing commercial areas where there are existing infrastructure, transportation facilities, amenities, and commercial activity.











Marine Resources

[Web link](#)







Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Suggested Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Examples/ Additional Information
POLICY 1: Foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.								
A. Continue to support management of waterfront land and the efforts of the Parks and Community Programs and FLT with consideration for climate resiliency, habitat protection, and public access to the waterfront.	1	Open Space Plan	Resource Allocation	FTC, PCP, FLT	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
B. Support and strengthen the local fishing community and working waterfront and provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to access or support commercial fishing activities.			Resource Allocation	FTC, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
POLICY 2: Maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.								
A. Seek funding for and implement recommendations of the Town Landing Resiliency Study.	6		Resource Allocation, Capital Projects	FTC, TM	\$\$	Medium	Medium	Web link
B. Continue to enforce the Coastal Waters Ordinance and support efforts of the Harbor/ Waterfront Committee, Harbormaster, and Marine Unit to maintain a safe and accessible facility.	1		Regulation	FPD, HWC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
C. Continue to monitor and address capacity issues of harbor facilities and freshwater public access facilities including use of commercial floats, small craft storage, mooring access, and vehicle parking.	6		Resource Allocation	FPD, HWC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
D. Monitor and address impacts to harbor facilities due to climate change or other adverse actions.	6		Capital Projects	FPD, HWC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
POLICY 3: Protect, maintain and improve marine habitat, water quality, and access to the Town's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.								
A. Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to maintain and expand major points of public water access, especially along public ways and in public parks.	6		Partnership/ Coordination	FLT, PWD, FTC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
B. Continue to coordinate with Maine DEP and Maine DMR on water quality monitoring and assessing, protecting marine habitat, and monitoring and enforcing commercial and recreational fishing regulations.	1	CAP	Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, FPD, FWD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	

Housing

[Web link](#)










Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Suggested Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Examples/ Additional Information
POLICY 1: Encourage a variety of housing types and increased density in designated growth areas.								
A. Provide guidance on creating ADUs to support homeowners through the process, including examples of plans that comply with Town requirements.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	Web link
B. Revise zoning to allow residential development in certain commercial districts, such as the Business and Professional Zone along Route 1, and to encourage a variety of housing types in growth areas, including low-rise apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, etc.			Regulation	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	Web link
C. Designate a location in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. Section 4358(2).			Regulation	LRP, CDD, PB, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
POLICY 2: Encourage development that increases livability for people of all ages and abilities.								
A. Investigate initiatives and funding opportunities that support aging in place and enhance livability for people of all ages.	 		Partnership/ Coordination	FTC, TM, LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	Web link
B. Encourage the application of universal design practices and consider standards for accessible or adaptable design for new residential development to increase housing accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	Web link
C. Encourage housing development that is walkable to transit locations and amenities like parks, healthcare, and shopping options.	 		Program/ Policy	CDD, LRP, FTC	\$	Medium	Medium	

[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Suggested Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Examples/ Additional Information
POLICY 3: Allow and support the development of affordable and workforce housing within the Town's growth areas.								
A. Investigate opportunities to reduce development costs by using vacant and underused public land for affordable housing development.			Partnership/ Coordination	TM, FTC, LRP	\$\$\$	Medium	Short	
B. Implement incentives for the development of affordable or workforce housing units, such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, reduced/waived fees, affordable housing development impact fee, use of Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing, and use of Town-owned land for development.			Regulation	TM, FTC, LRP, CDD	\$	Medium	Medium	
C. Create housing opportunities targeted to Town staff and community members.	 		Program/ Policy	TM, FTC, LRP	\$	Medium	Medium	
D. Support regional efforts to address affordable and workforce housing, including working toward the Metro Regional Coalition's goal to expand housing choices.			Partnership/ Coordination	FTC, TM	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
E. Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.			Program/ Policy	FTC, LRP	\$	Medium	Ongoing	

Fiscal Capacity

[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Suggested Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Examples/ Additional Information
POLICY 1: Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner that supports growth and development in identified growth areas.								
A. Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.		CIP	Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
B. Provide for adequate public facilities primarily in existing growth areas in proximity to existing infrastructure, transportation systems, housing, and other amenities.		CIP	Capital Projects	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$\$\$	Hard	Medium	
C. Direct development to growth areas with existing utilities and infrastructure.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, PB	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
D. Continue to evaluate sewer connection charges to ensure that fees are scaled consistent with the cost of system maintenance and improvements.			Program/ Policy	FWD, PWD, FTC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
E. Limit extensions of sewer and water service and coordinate any extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.			Program/ Policy	FWD, PWD, LRP	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
F. Continue to seek alternate funding sources to supplement Town revenues and reduce dependence on property tax revenue for annual operating and capital expenses, such as impact fees and public/private partnerships.			Resource Allocation	TM, FTC, FD	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
POLICY 2: Promote development that is fiscally responsible.								
A. Incorporate fiscal impact analysis into the development review process to help the Town make fiscally responsible development decisions that align with the Town's goals.			Guideline	CDD, FD	\$	Medium	Short	
B. Consider a public/private partnership to develop a master plan for a village center to support the community's goals and benefit the Town's fiscal capacity.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, PCP, TM, FTC	\$	Hard	Medium	
C. Evaluate the Town's current use of TIF districts to encourage development in commercial growth areas and finance infrastructure improvements that support walkability and the development of village centers.			Resource Allocation	FD, LRP, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
D. Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas			Resource Allocation	FTC, LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	



little to no data in the smaller tributaries. The Presumpscot River is a substantial community feature and drains into Casco Bay. Recommendations of the Plan include preparing a Presumpscot Watershed Management Plan, which will require coordination with neighboring municipalities.

Highland Lake

The 623-acre Highland Lake spans Falmouth, Westbrook, and Windham. Due to serious water quality concerns following ongoing picocyanobacterial (Cyanobium) blooms, the Highland Lake Watershed-Based Management Plan (2020-2030) was adopted in 2020. The Highland Lake Leadership Team (HLLT) is responsible for monitoring, planning, educating, and implementing strategies to improve the water quality. HLLT is a partnership among the Town of Windham, the Town of Falmouth, the Highland Lake Association, and other interested communities and organizations. The team was created to improve the overall health of Highland Lake. Falmouth appoints up to three, but not less than one member to the HLLT.

Webes Creek

Webes Creek has been identified by DEP as a threatened stream that, despite still meeting DEP water quality standards, is at risk of being classified in the near future as an Urban Impaired Stream. Webes Creek is located in Falmouth's growth area. In 2013, the Route 1 South Commercial District Stormwater Management Plan focused on the Webes Creek Watershed. It is still identified as having high chloride, habitat concerns, stormwater runoff issues, and the natural flow was disrupted in the 1950s and 60s when the Town was developing. Webes Creek would be included in the Casco Bay Frontal Drainage Area Watershed Management Plan recommended by the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan.

Norton Brook

Norton Brook has been identified by DEP as a threatened stream that, despite still meeting DEP water quality standards, is at risk of being classified in the near future as an Urban Impaired Stream. Webes Creek is also located in Falmouth's growth area. It is identified as having stormwater runoff issues that disturb the sandy bottom of the brook, resulting in habitat loss. There are toxicity issues with chloride, and Route 1 limits migration of fish. Norton Brook would be included in the Casco Bay Frontal Drainage Area Watershed Management Plan recommended by the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan. Norton Brook also possesses a population of wild brook trout, increasing the urgency to provide the necessary protections and enhance water quality.

STREAM CROSSINGS

Stream crossings are intended to maintain the continuity of streams to help ensure volume control, accommodate wildlife and protect stream health. Stream continuity is critical to



stream health and the creatures that depend on streams, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.

According to MDIFW surveys, numerous road maintenance and construction projects in the region unintentionally obstruct stream crossings. The Town has identified several known and potential barriers and should consistently implement stream-crossing practices, such as proper culvert installation and maintenance, to help ensure fish passage is not hindered, in compliance with the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). Additionally, the Army Corps of Engineers has established regulations for municipal road maintenance programs and stream crossings that benefit wildlife and stream health. Maine Audubon, in collaboration with various local and federal partners, has developed the “Stream Smart” design methodology for road crossings, which adheres to high standards for aquatic organism passage which could be beneficial for the Town in future development projects. Maine Department of Transportation administers funding sources for municipal stream crossings and infrastructure enhancements.

Typical stream crossing problems include undersized crossings, and shallow crossings or perched crossings that are easily blocked by debris, create scouring, erosion, high flow velocities, and limit habitat and migration. There are currently 65 culverts that convey streams across roads and other structures in Falmouth¹. These culverts and their conditions have been mapped by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Falmouth has a variety of road stream crossings that have barriers, potential barriers, and no barriers. There are also four dams in Falmouth which disrupt stream continuity.

SURFACE WATERS

Healthy surface waters (lakes, rivers, estuaries, and ocean) are a crucial resource because of the ecological, social, scenic, and recreational uses. The State has developed classification systems for lakes, rivers, and salt waters. These systems are based on standards for use, such as drinking water supply, fishery habitat, and recreational use. Falmouth has numerous ponds, rivers, and Highland Lake that make up its surface water network. Mild Pond and Quarry Pond are the Town’s two ponds. Mild Pond is a seven-acre pond sandwiched between I-295 and the Presumpscot River. Quarry Pond is a three-acre pond located off Ledgewood Drive.

CRITICAL AND IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCES

The availability of high-quality habitats for plants, animals, and fish is essential to maintaining abundant and diverse populations for ecological, economic, and recreational purposes. Falmouth is home to multiple significant wildlife habitat types, rare plant and animal species, and vulnerable natural communities. Within the Falmouth boundary there are three known rare,

¹ US Fish & Wildlife Service, *Gulf of Maine Coastal Program*. Accessed March 16, 2023.
<https://www.fws.gov/office/gulf-maine-coastal-program>

threatened, or endangered species occurrences based on sightings, the Least Bittern, Spotted Turtle, and Wood Turtle. The Least Bittern, a threatened species, has been seen close to Tidewater Farm Preserve and the Scitterygusset Creek. The Spotted Turtle is an endangered species. Endangered and threatened inland and wildlife species in Maine receive state protection. The Wood Turtle is a species of special concern, which despite not meeting the criteria for an endangered species, is particularly vulnerable and could easily become an endangered, threatened, or extirpated species due to restricted distribution, low or declining numbers, specialized habitat needs or limits, or other factors. The Federal Endangered Species Act requires actions authorized, funded, or carried out by federal agencies be reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Maine Natural Areas Program has classified and distinguished 104 different natural community types that collectively cover the State's landscape. In Falmouth four natural communities have been inventoried including enriched northern hardwoods forest, pocket swamp, salt-hay salt marsh, and upper floodplain hardwood forests. Enriched northern hardwood forests, also known as cove forests, are closed-canopy forests typically with a canopy dominated by trees such as sugar maples, and with beech and yellow birch as subordinate species. Northern hardwood forests in Maine are home to a variety of wildlife, including moose, bobcat, black bear, fisher, short-tailed weasel, chipmunks, masked shrew, eastern red-backed salamander, spotted salamander, eastern newt, and others. In Falmouth, there is an enriched northern hardwoods forest west of the Piscataqua River, near the Blackstrap neighborhood. There is an inventoried pocket swamp at the Falmouth/Cumberland border near Hobbs Brook. Pocket swamps are deciduous or mixed forested wetlands that typically occur as small depressions within an upland landscape. They are important breeding habitats for a variety of amphibians including wood frogs, spotted salamanders, and blue spotted salamanders. Salt-hay salt marshes are tidal marshes in Maine that are characterized by large areas of saltmeadow cordgrass, smooth cordgrass, and black-grass with a robust herbaceous cover. Located off the Presumpscot River near the Gilsland Farm Audubon Center, salt marshes are important ecosystems that are home to a variety of wildlife, including birds, otters, mink, and muskrats. Upper floodplain hardwood forests are a mostly complete canopy of sugar maple, red oak, or yellow birch with occasional flooding. Located in Falmouth around the East Branch Piscataqua River, these communities are associated with northern waterthrush, barred owl, belted kingfisher, bank swallow, scarlet tanager, and green heron. Across Maine, virtually all these forests have been harvested, and many have been converted to agriculture.

Within Falmouth there are various identified Natural Communities, Rare Plants, Rare Animals, Significant Wildlife Habitats, and Essential Wildlife Habitats: These are listed below in Tables 2.1 through 2.4 and mapped in Figure 2.3: Natural Resources Map.

Table 2.1: Natural Communities

Common Name	Technical Name	Global Rank	State Rank	State Status	Survey Site
Enriched Northern Hardwoods Forest	Maple - basswood - ash forest	GNR	S3	-	Blackstrap Hill
Pocket Swamp	Hemlock - hardwood pocket swamp	G5	S2	-	Hobbs Brook Wetlands
Salt-hay Saltmarsh	Spartina saltmarsh	G5	S3	-	Gilsland Farm
Upper Floodplain Hardwood Forest	Hardwood river terrace forest	GNR	S3	-	East Branch Piscataqua River

Source: State of Maine, Beginning with Habitat, MDIFW

Table 2.2: Rare Plants

Common Name	Technical Name	Global Rank	State Rank	State Status	Survey Site
Broad Beech Fern	Phegopteris hexagonoptera	G5	S2	Special Concern	Blackstrap Hill
Foxtail Bog-clubmoss	Lycopodiella alopecuroides	G5	S1	Endangered	Sedgewood Commons
Hollow Joe-pye Weed	Eutrochium fistulosum	G5	S2	Special Concern	River Point Conservation Area
MacGregor's Rye	Elymus macgregorii	G5	S2	Special Concern	River Point Conservation Area
Mountain Honeysuckle	Lonicera dioica	G5	S2	Endangered	Mackworth Island
Mountain Honeysuckle	Lonicera dioica	G5	S2	Endangered	West Side Leighton Hill
Mountain Honeysuckle	Lonicera dioica	G5	S2	Endangered	River Point Conservation Area
Smooth Winterberry Holly	Ilex laevigata	G5	S3	Special Concern	Sedgewood Commons
Smooth Winterberry Holly	Ilex laevigata	G5	S3	Special Concern	Hobbs Brook Wetlands

Spotted Pondweed	Potamogeton pulcher	G5	S1	Threatened	Highland Lake
Upright Bindweed	Calystegia spithamea	G4G5	S2	Threatened	Leighton Road
Variable Sedge	Carex polymorpha	G3	S1	Endangered	Interchange 9 Triangle
Variable Sedge	Carex polymorpha	G3	S1	Endangered	Chestnut Slope to Gyger Homestead
Variable Sedge	Carex polymorpha	G3	S1	Endangered	Falmouth Foreside Sand Barren and Sedgewood Commons
Wild Leek	Allium tricoccum	G5T5	S3	Special Concern	River Point Conservation Area

Source: State of Maine, Beginning with Habitat, MDIFW

Table 2.3: Rare Animals

Common Name	Technical Name	Global Rank	State Rank	State Status
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	G4G5	S2B	Threatened
Spotted Turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	G4	S2	Endangered
Wood Turtle	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	G3	S4	Special Concern

Source: State of Maine, Beginning with Habitat, MDIFW

Table 2.4: Wildlife Habitats

Habitats	State Classification
Significant Vernal Pools	Significant
Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat	Significant
Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat	Significant
Shorebird Feeding and Roosting Area	Significant
Seabird Nesting Islands	Significant
Roseate Tern Essential Habitat	Essential

Source: State of Maine, Beginning with Habitat, MDIFW

To effectively protect critical and important natural resources, these assets must be regularly inventoried and considered in planning and development decisions. Key resources, such as the

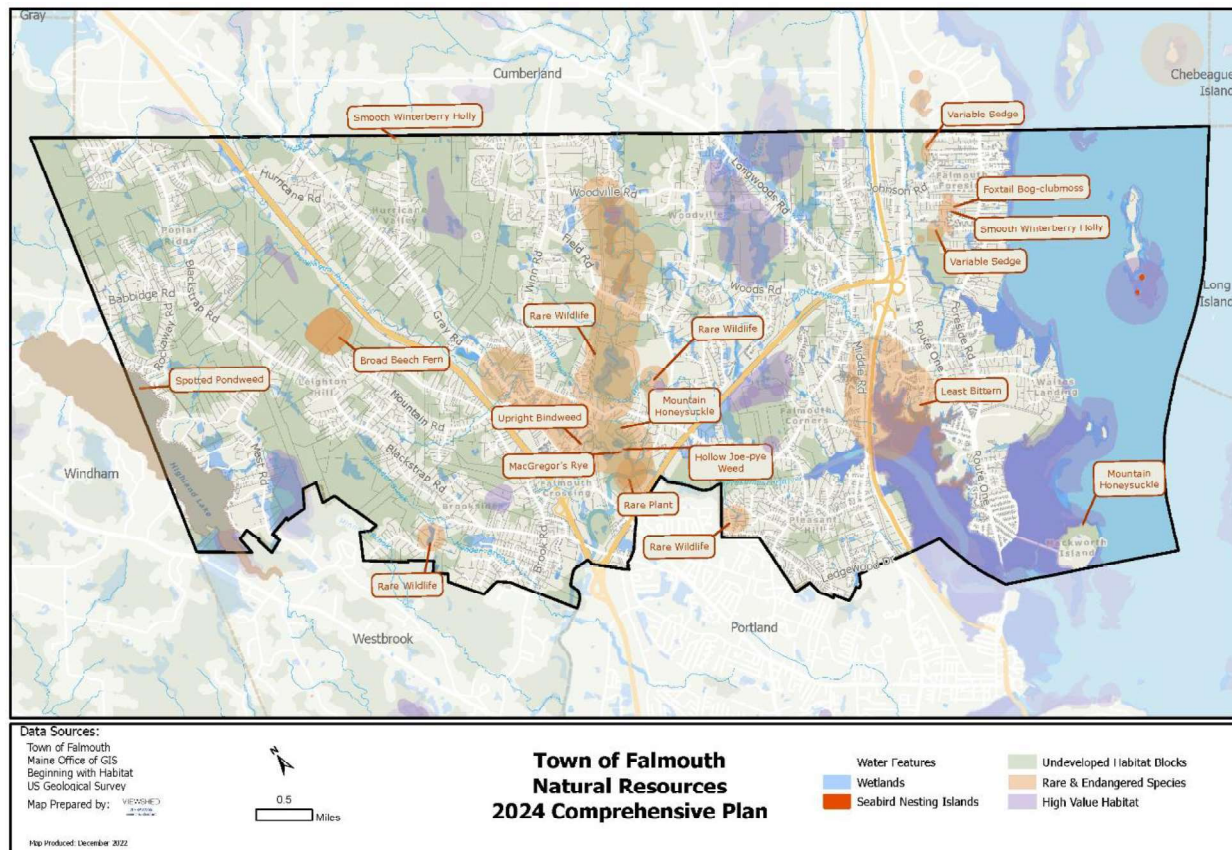


Beginning with Habitat maps, can be incorporated into planning and board reviews. These critical natural resources have been used when determining appropriate areas for future growth and conservation lands.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are identified by the presence of hydraulic soils, hydrophilic (i.e., water loving) plants, and high-water table for a portion of the year. Wetlands are important for cleansing water, providing flood control, protecting shorelines from erosion, maintaining stream flows, or supporting wildlife habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency tasked with providing information on the extent and status of the nation's wetland and deepwater habitats as well as changes to these habitats over time. As part of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maps the country's wetlands and conducts decadal national wetlands status and trends studies and report the findings to Congress. Wetlands are located and mapped throughout Falmouth. While most wetlands are located along the coastline and streams there are many types of wetlands in Falmouth. These include Estuarine and Marine Deepwater, Estuarine and Marine Wetland, Freshwater Emergent Wetland, Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland, Freshwater Pond, Riverine and Lake. Terrestrial invasive plants, such as Common Reed, Japanese Knotweed, Goutweed, and others, threaten wetland and upland habitats and have been identified in Falmouth. Invasive plants are non-native plants that can harm ecosystems and require proper removal and management.

Figure 2.3: Natural Resources Map



Source: Town of Falmouth

Vernal pools are a specific type of naturally occurring temporary wetland that are seasonal depressional inland bodies of water that occur in glaciated areas and usually occur from winter to spring. They are particularly important because they provide critical breeding habitat for several native amphibian species that, in turn, sustain many other forms of woodland wildlife. As summer comes and dries up the pools, baby frogs, salamanders, and turtles are ready to crawl onto nearby dry land to their fall and winter homes. Vernal pools are an important water feature and can be found throughout Falmouth. Vernal pools are a protected resource in Falmouth and according to MDIFW there are eight mapped significant vernal pools (SVPs) in Falmouth, and it is likely that additional unmapped occurrences are present. SVPs are a significant wildlife habitat defined under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. Urbanization and new development continue to threaten these areas.

Maine's wetlands are resources of great value to Maine communities, the State, and the nation. All three levels of government have a stake in their continued health and availability. Congress established federal regulatory power concerning wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In Maine, the 1988 Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) established state regulatory authority over wetlands. Falmouth's shoreland zoning and floodplain management regulations are intended to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, archaeological and historic



WI, which includes most of Falmouth's growing flats, it is unlawful to dig, take, or possess any clams, quahogs, oysters, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops from the shores, flats, and waters due to pollution and water quality. Currently only CA5 within Falmouth provides some level of harvesting when it is seasonally open. These limitations typically lead to harvesting being focused on deeper water opportunities outside of the DEP restrictions.

Coastal property is dominated by single-family housing; therefore, there is little infrastructure to support large scale commercial and non-commercial fishing and harvesting. Traditionally, harvesting had been a local industry passed on generationally through families. That trend has been declining and is now further hindered by closures and environmental concerns. This characteristic is also reflected in the number of licenses issued by the Department of Marine Resources. In 2021, only 26 commercial harvesting licenses and 64 non-commercial harvesting licenses were issued.

Similarly fishing licenses are also limited and reflect the predominate suburban make up of Falmouth. MDMR reports that there were only 10 Commercial Fishing Crew licenses and 36 Commercial Fishing Single licenses issued in 2021.

There are marine resource habitats to support fishing and harvesting in Falmouth. The extensive tidal flats in Falmouth are soft shell clam habitats and are located in near-shore waters. Soft shell clams are harvested during low tide and provide a critical food source for crabs, marine birds, wading birds and other animals. Blue mussel habitats are found off the coast of Falmouth and are most productive between Casco Bay and Jonesport. Blue mussels are found just above and below the mean low water. They are an abundant, bivalve mollusks and are commercially harvested. There are also eelgrass beds along the mainland coast, Presumpscot Estuary, Mackworth Island, and Clapboard Island. Invasive marine species impact marine habitats and threaten the maritime economy that rely on them. Green crabs threaten clam flats and eelgrass beds and must be properly monitored and managed. These form underwater habitats, are an important food source, and provide protection and coastal resilience. There are some patches of marine worm habitats along the coast. Marine worms are typically a sign of a healthy ecosystem and are often used as bait by recreational fishers. Diggers harvest the worms from intertidal mud flats during low tide. There are also significant wading bird habitats along the coast of Falmouth and its islands. Off the coast deeper waters (100 – 300 feet) have scallop habitats, which are harvested commercially. Sea scallops are bivalves like clams and oysters but are more mobile because they can snap their shells open and shut to propel themselves through the water.

WATERFRONT LAND USES

Falmouth's coastline is almost exclusively residential. In addition to housing there is also the Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm, Portland Country Club, Handy Boat Marina and The Dockside Grill, Portland Yacht Club, and Falmouth Town Landing. Per local and State regulations, all properties along the coast are subject to the Town's Shoreland Zoning Overlay regulations. Much of the shoreline and land uses are vulnerable to sea level rise, increased storm events, and climate change. In 2022, the Town initiated a Falmouth Town Landing Resiliency Study to help ensure safe public access, long-term sustainability of the facilities, and neighborhood protection.

The Working Waterfront Access Protection Program is an initiative through MDMR that provides matching funds to help fishing and aquaculture businesses, co-ops, municipalities, and other groups protect working waterfront properties for commercial and aquaculture use. The program protects commercial working waterfront properties by restricting future development so properties cannot be developed in ways that are incompatible with commercial fishing or aquaculture activities. This maintains accessible and affordable waterfronts now and in the future. Properties with waterfront wharves, piers, small boat access, or walk-in access are eligible. These properties can be fully commercial or have mixed uses. Priority is given to projects that focus on protecting and securing existing facilities and access sites, rather than those with speculative plans for new developments. Upon acceptance of an application and completion of program requirements, the property becomes a Working Waterfront Covenant. This designation grants MDMR the authority to maintain the property as a working waterfront, while property owners retain their legal ownership rights. Additionally, the covenant includes a Right of First Refusal, allowing MDMR to review any future sales of the property and restrict its resale value to its worth as a working waterfront.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Despite the prominence of private residential uses of waterfront land, Falmouth is committed to connecting the community to the waterfront and is actively looking for opportunities to increase physical and visual access. There are several key parks, open spaces, and island trailways that provide public access to the coast. Waterfront access have been expanded and enhanced over the years. Waterfront parcels are considered for resiliency, protection, and access strategies for open space acquisition by the Land Management & Acquisitions Committee (LMAC). Currently, there is a need to increase safe angler access to Town waters and public access to all users, based on a variety of factors including existing access, fisheries present, water size, proximity to population centers, land availability and cost, existing waterfront development, and other related factors.

Table 3.1: Boat Access Sites

Name	Location	Amenities
East Branch Hand-Carry Boat Launch	East Branch Piscataqua River, East Branch Conservation Area	3 parking spaces on Falmouth Road, hand-carry kayak, and canoe launch
Highland Lake Boat Launch Area	Northeast corner of Highland Lake	State-owned, 28 parking spaces, carry in boat launch, seasonal porta-potties
Presumpscot River Boat Launch	Walton Park	All-tide ramp, carry kayak and canoe ramp, 10 parking spaces
Falmouth Town Landing	Casco Bay	Harbormaster, public beach, sitting areas, 12 vehicle parking by permit (additional 35 spaces located at Foreside/Johnson), drive in all tide boat launch, pier, seasonal porta-potties
Handy Boat Marina	Casco Bay	Private marina, drive-in boat ramp, full-service launch, restaurant, mooring, 70 parking spaces, fueling, electric, water, restrooms, showers, laundry, internet, dockside provisions, boat storage
Portland Yacht Club	Casco Bay	Private pier, floats, dock house, full-service launch, mooring, 55 parking spaces, boat storage

Falmouth Town Landing

Town Landing is the largest recreational anchorage and mooring field north of Marblehead, Massachusetts. It is the primary public boating facility in the Town and is also the premier public access point to Casco Bay. The site includes the Harbor Master building, boat ramp, and pier. There is a public beach and sitting areas, which offers swimming, fishing, kayaking, and sunbathing. Recent storm events have led to damaged facilities and the site being inundated and eroded. As the Town's most critical waterfront asset, the long-term success of Falmouth Town Landing is necessary. In 2022, the Town initiated a Falmouth Town Landing Resiliency Study to evaluate vulnerabilities, explore options for long-term solutions, and help ensure the protection of the surrounding community. The study recommends raising the grade of the landing with a seawall and fill and relocating facilities to higher ground.

Highland Lake

The Highland Lake Boat Launch Area is State-owned by DACF. This area of the lake is very shallow and weedy. The boat launch here is restricted to hand-carry access largely because of community advocacy. Recently MDIFW discontinued the fish stocking program at Highland Lake because the hand-carry launch does not offer the same level of access as the motorboats used by lake residents. This disparity in access is inconsistent with both State and MDIFW

public access goals. Falmouth community members have indicated that expanded access to Highland Lake is desired and further partnerships with DACF and MDIFW should be explored. The facility also includes approximately 28 vehicular and trailer parking spaces. Seasonal porta-potties are also available as well as a small waterfront recreation area. Boats and equipment should be cleaned before placed in the water to remove all plant fragments and help prevent invasive plant species from entering the lake.

Gilsland Farm Audubon Center

Gilsland Farm Audubon Center, a Maine Audubon site, is free and open to the public year-round, dawn to dusk. Situated along the Presumpscot River estuary, this is Maine Audubon's headquarters facility. It features an environmental education center and 59-acre sanctuary with more than two miles of trails. The site offers scenic views and waterfront access. Much of the Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm property is protected by a conservation easement held by the Falmouth Land Trust.

Mackworth Island

Mackworth Island is a state park and is accessible from Andrews Avenue causeway off Route 1. There is a public 1.5-mile-long walking and biking trail through wooded areas around the island with access to sandy and rocky beaches. Mackworth Island is the former home of James Phinney Baxter and of his son, Governor Percival Baxter. Currently, it is the site of the Baxter School for the Deaf.

Clapboard East Preserve

Clapboard East Preserve is located on the north end of Clapboard Island and shares the island with multiple private properties. The preserve is open from dawn to dusk. There is no designated public transportation or infrastructure to the preserve, but there are two landing sites for personal watercraft. There is a half mile network of hiking trails connecting four beaches, picnicking area, birding, and scenic vistas.

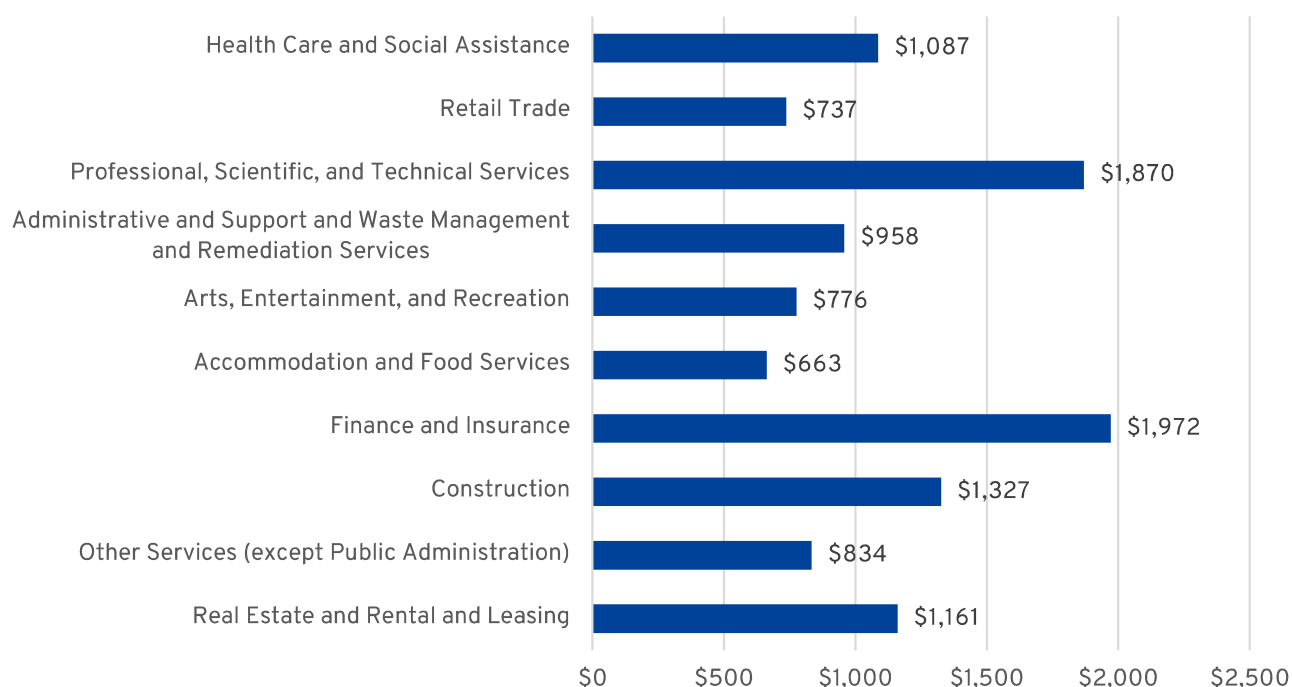
Tidewater Farm

In 2005, as part of the Tidewater Master Planned Development District, 69 acres of land was set aside as public open space. It was managed by the non-profit Tidewater Conservation Foundation and protected by a conservation easement held by the Town. The Town purchased the property in 2017. The property is located between Lunt Road and Clearwater Drive with extensive shoreline access and views of the Presumpscot Estuary and Scitterygusset Creek. There is a network of approximately 1.5 miles of trails throughout Tidewater Farm with access to a carry-in canoe or kayak launch. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension operates and maintains the UMaine Gardens at Tidewater Farm, on a leased five-acre space to provide agricultural and horticultural education opportunities to the community. The gardens are open to the public from sunrise to sunset.

While Falmouth is commonly thought of as a bedroom community to Portland, the Town is an employment center, with 6,551 jobs (2021). Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail Trade are the largest employment sectors, together accounting for about one quarter of all jobs in Falmouth. These two industries have lower average weekly wages than the average for all jobs which has resulted employees having an even more challenging time finding adequate housing near employment. More than 90% of people who work in Falmouth live outside of the Town, with 56% commuting more than 10 miles to work.

With expected population growth of more than 5% from 2025 to 2035, additional commercial growth is expected within and near the Town's existing commercial corridors. Job growth is especially likely in service industries and health care, to support the growing and aging population. Additional housing will be needed, specifically targeted to the Town's workforce, as well as better transportation options to serve employees commuting to Falmouth. Recent changes to Greater Portland Metro bus Route 7 will help to make transit service to Falmouth more convenient and flexible for riders by increasing service frequency and extending hours of operation.

Figure 7.3: Falmouth Average Weekly Wage (Top Employment Industries, 2022)



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Falmouth is largely a residential community with a concentration of commercial activity along the Route 1 corridor and, to a lesser extent, the Route 100 corridor. While the Town is characterized by suburban single-family residential development, conservation areas, and



Goal one of the Strategy is to improve Falmouth's economic development climate. Noted in the Strategy is the dichotomy of values related to Falmouth's future and the need for balanced policy that allows for economic growth that is appropriate for the Town. The Strategy recommends initiating conversations on economic development policy and including residents, business owners, and business associations in those discussions.

Availability of a diversity of housing options and affordable housing has become an increasingly critical issue for employers in attracting employees. There are very few rental units, apartments, and condos within the Town, and the housing that is available is too expensive for most people, especially younger workers and seniors.

Falmouth is a highly desirable community with many assets that influence the Town's ability to build a more sustainable economic future. First, the Town's commitment to investing in infrastructure, recreational and open space amenities, public schools, and other amenities and services provides an exceptional quality of life in Falmouth. With the implementation of proposed projects and maintenance of existing facilities and services, the Town will continue to be a desirable place to live.

Both the Route 1 and Route 100 commercial corridors have development potential within the designated growth areas. Development of additional commercial and mixed-use building could support the Town's vision of a more vibrant and intimate village areas with amenities and services that meet the needs of nearby residents.

Town residents have higher educational attainment and a higher net income than the region, providing a market that could support a variety of retail and service businesses. Additionally, the Town's proximity to Portland and growth of surrounding communities contribute to the broader regional market for certain types of businesses. Recent business growth along the Route 1 corridor, including new restaurants and a fitness center, are responding to demands of the community. Additional commercial growth and redevelopment can be expected over the next several years to meet the demands of a growing population.

Finally, the community's commitment to education and life-long learning is a value that is demonstrated through the Town's excellent public schools and high educational attainment and is a fundamental value established by the community during the Vision and Values initiative. The Town has an opportunity to build upon the existing educational resources and leverage creativity and talent in the community to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.



HOUSING DEMAND

Changing demographics, including slightly smaller household and family size and an aging population are impacting demand for housing. Across the region, there has been a significant increase in demand for housing resulting from several factors. Regionally, there has been a slow-down in housing development in recent years. The increase in domestic in-migration to Maine, especially since 2020, combined with the increase in the number of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, coming to southern Maine has put added pressure on the region's housing market.

The Town experienced an increase in residential construction permit applications in 2021, with development pressure increasing post-pandemic. While demand in the regional market has reduced slightly, housing prices remain high in southern Maine, and the average number of days on the market for a single-family home remains significantly lower than in 2019⁵. These numbers are indicative of the latent demand for housing throughout the region, as people continue to be attracted to the quality of life and amenities in the region, and in Falmouth in particular.

The approach to growth and housing development throughout the region has varied. Some municipalities have opted to control growth through rate of growth ordinances similar to Falmouth. Other communities have been more proactive in allowing for and encouraging new residential development, especially affordable multi-family housing. Still, demand for housing throughout the region remains high, with home sales prices remaining high and low inventory. Population growth in the region has contributed to demand for housing in the region.

Housing demand is expected to remain strong as housing continues to be a challenge throughout the region and State. With an expected population growth of 5.4% over the next decade, the Town can expect demand for more than 250 additional housing units. The trend of declining household size is adding to the demand for units and also shifting demand toward smaller units and different housing types. In addition to the demand based on expected population growth, it can be assumed that there is existing demand for housing within the Town by current and potential workers who are traveling a significant distance to work in Falmouth. Only 9.5% of all workers (primary jobs) also in the Town. This is a lower percentage than any comparable community in the surrounding area, with percentages of workers who live in a community ranging from 11% (South Portland) to 27% (Cape Elizabeth). At least an additional 50 to 100 housing units would be needed to meet this assumed demand from current and future employees.

⁵ Maine Real Estate & Development Association, Southern Maine Residential Forecast Presentation, January 26, 2023, Accessed March 1, 2023, <https://mereda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/07-Dava-Davin-2023-Residential-Forecast.pdf>.