



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

December 22, 2014

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Nick Livesay, Executive Director
Land Use Planning Commission
18 Elkins Lane
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RE: Proposal from the large landowner community for LUPC Regional Planning

Dear Nick and Jay,

To help move forward the process of regional planning in the Aroostook County region, the landowners of the community (Irving Woodlands, Prentiss and Carlisle, Seven Islands Land Company, Huber Resources) would like to propose discussion and action on several areas of mutual interest that would advance comprehensive regional planning.

We think our goal should be the creation of a report to LUPC with recommendations and action items for their consideration and adoption. The report, which should be delivered periodically, should analyze the region's changing needs, priorities and objectives. It should stimulate proactive planning that anticipates regional demands for new development (residential, commercial) and establishes the zones needed for that development.

1. Adoption of new zones:

- a. **Use existing zoning districts as much as possible, rather than new districts**
Based on experience gained from the Rangeley regional planning process, we believe several regional zones designations may be applicable for the Aroostook region and should be considered for adoption into the final planning report. Broadening the use of existing zones, where appropriate, is preferable to having a different set of zones for each planning region.
 - i. **Example 1:** D-GN2, Community Center. *Livable Community Center*. Focal points for community life characterized by a mix of compatible residential, commercial and civic uses that foster social interaction, provide access to local goods and services and are of a scale and type that reinforce the jurisdiction's rural character. Allows slightly larger commercial uses than D-GN (General Development) but does not open the door to uses incompatible with residential use. For sites where the D-GN is too restrictive, but the D-CI (Commercial Industrial) is too permissive.
 - ii. **Example 2:** D-GN3, Rural Settlement. *Small isolated settlements that work*. Focal points for community life in isolated areas. Small historical settlements with homes, home busi-

nesses and a few civic buildings and commercial businesses. D-GN3 allows more uses than an M-GN (General Management) zone – e.g. home businesses (up to 50 percent space rather than 25 percent), general store, commercial recreation, small-scale lodging and restaurants. Allows exempt divisions of property, but not subdivisions. Envisioned for plantations or townships that are some distance from regional centers, where undeveloped character is valued and public services are minimal. Promotes natural resource-based uses.

- iii. **Example 3:** D-RS2, Community Residential. *Limited mixed use.* – Primarily a residential zone where an appropriate range of home occupations, commercial uses (such as bed & breakfasts and golf courses), community living facilities and multi-family dwellings are allowed. Designed to better integrate a mix of home-based occupations, residential dwelling types and public uses that occur in a residential zone.
- iv. **Example 4:** D-ES, Extended Settlement. *Concentrations of high impact uses.* Appropriate locations for high-impact uses characterized by heavy traffic, hours of operation and unsightly appearance. It will separate such uses from residential uses, but limit their dispersal and sprawl. Specifies appropriate locations adjacent to or near existing settlement areas and transportation links, but not in a manner that will create strip development or sprawl.
 1. An important lesson learned in the Rangeley regional planning effort is a perception that all planning for the region is completed and deviations from the current plan are resisted. This is an unrealistic expectation and one we should clearly avoid in the Aroostook planning process. Development should be encouraged in certain, preferable areas but it should not be precluded in all others. There should be flexibility to consider proposals for zone changes and development. Planning needs to be an ongoing and responsive process. Therefore, regular review of regional plans should be encouraged and scheduled.

b. Zoning for new uses in the working forest

i. In-woods processing facilities

1. As part of our planning process we should discuss the concept of self-contained processing facilities. As landowners seek greater operational efficiencies and the technology to process wood advances, we can envision the establishment of satellite facilities in the interior of the jurisdiction.
2. Examples of this activity include permanently placed wood chipping facilities or wood refineries with closed loop water usage, or sawmills. Small scale biomass energy plants may be associated with these facilities to enable the energy required for processing.
3. On-site processing could dramatically reduce the number of trucks and subsequent road miles (carbon releases) required to move wood products, as well as lower transportation costs and enable processing within the State of Maine.
4. There are historic precedents for this activity within the jurisdiction.

ii. Utility corridors

1. There will be increasing discussions of routing utilities through Maine as we seek to lower our energy costs. It will be important for the planning group to reflect on this activity and establish preliminary ideas about zoning.
2. Rail line opportunities (Consider historic precedents).

2. Zoning for Level II subdivision

- a. Currently a subcommittee of LUPC is working on criteria for Level II subdivisions. The planning group should review the list of predetermined qualifying towns, and make sure it is consistent with projected regional demands.

3. Zoning for Tourism infrastructure:

- a. Review recreation assets in the area including service center zoning availability. Is there a need at this time to create expanded zones within adjacent UT areas to meet future demand for tourism?
- b. Can we anticipate future resort locations along public roads and guide development to these areas? Establishes an "Aroostook Is Open for Business" attitude.

4. Scope and Timing of process:

- a. Objective: We believe the region would benefit from a planning report that identifies planning recommendations and establishes action items for continued work. This would be a reasonable first step in our planning process and can set the stage for future work. We anticipate new zones could be developed and suggest trying to identify potential smaller development areas, however this process should not slow down completion of this recommended report. Further analysis by: sub-region within the County, development need, ownership objectives and other factors is necessary prior to drawing lines on the maps.
- b. We recommend that the report should be completed, including public comments, by Sept 1, 2015.

We will be glad to present this outline at the next meeting and suggest the discussion begin with an analysis of new activity zones.

Sincerely,



Patrick Strauch
Executive Director

cc: Mark Draper, Chairman, CGPZ Committee
Robert Clark, Executive director, Northern Maine Development Corporation