

Memorandum

To: Chris Paszyc, City of Gardiner
From: David Versel, Community Current, Inc.; Mitchell Rasor, MRLD, LLC
CC: City of Gardiner Housing Committee
Date: July 23, 2002
Re: Summary of Existing Data Research

The consulting team of Community Current and MRLD has completed its review of existing data for the Housing Assessment Plan. At this point in time, we have reviewed a great deal of information, and have come to a number of conclusions from our review. This memorandum describes our research, outlines some of our general conclusions, and lists items in need of further exploration during the next phase of the project.

DATA REVIEWED

The following is a list of data reviewed by Community Current and MRLD to date:

City of Gardiner Documents

- Draft Land Use Ordinance
- 1995 Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown Revitalization Plan
- Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP)

U.S. Census Data (1990 and 2000)

- Demographic profile of Gardiner
- Housing data for Gardiner
- Commuting patterns data
- Comparison of Gardiner with surrounding towns and cities

State of Maine Data

- Department of Labor Employment and Wage Data
- Department of Education School Enrollment and Performance Data
- Population and Employment Projections

Other Data/Reports

- Building Envelope Assessment for Downtown Gardiner Historic District
- "Assessing Attitudes and Abilities of Multi-Unit Housing Owners to Undertake Housing Rehabilitation and Development Projects," student research project
- Strategic Plan Housing Program

The information contained in the reports and documents on the above list will form the basis for our Housing Analysis. Additional information needed to complete the analysis will be identified at the end of this memorandum, and will be collected during subsequent phases of the project.

CITY OF GARDINER DOCUMENTS

A. Draft Land Use Ordinance

MRLD's review of the Draft Ordinance focuses on housing/land use related issues. The Draft Ordinance in general is an excellent document and well coordinated with the 1995 Comprehensive Plan Proposed Land Use Map. MRLD will conduct fieldwork later in the planning progress, further analyzing the Draft Ordinance, specifically in relation to the built environment and undeveloped lands.

Some of the MRLD comments are general in nature and some address apparent discrepancies between different sections, definitions and standards.

This review follows the order of the Ordinance with general comments at the end.

Section 2.E.3 Rural District

- Requiring subdivisions in the Rural District to meet "Planned Unit Development Standards" is proactive and wise.
- In Section 10 Definitions, there is a definition for Planned Residential Developments but not for Planned Unit Developments. In Section 3 Performance Standards the term Planned Unit Residential Development is used. Which term is correct?
- No detail is provided on the point system used to grade a proposed subdivision in regards to dimensional standards. A point system matrix for the Shoreland District is found at the end of Section G Dimensional Requirements, but not for the Rural District.
- The point system in general should encourage:
 1. Minimum allowable lot size and frontage
 2. Minimum required street length
 3. Minimum number of dead end streets
 4. Maximum open space
 5. Maximum buffering and visual screening widths
 6. Maximum lineal feet adjacency of lots to open space or trails
 7. Minimum disturbance of wetlands, steep slopes and natural features
 8. Minimum frontage lots on existing road
 9. Minimum curb cuts on existing road
 10. Maximum trail links and future road connections

Section 2.E.4 Residential Growth District

- Minimum lot size of 10,000 SF is noted but in Section G. Dimensional Requirements, the minimum lot size is noted as 15,000 SF. 10,000 SF is a good minimum with City Water and Sewer.

Section 2.E.5 High Density Residential District

- This could be an area where infill housing on non-conforming lots/grandfathered lots should be encouraged. This allows landowners to sell property, adds homes to the tax base and utilizes City Services. The minimum lot size of 10,000 SF may be reduced to surrounding average lot sizes to maintain the scale, massing and density of the neighborhood.

Section 2.F District Uses / Residential

- The uses appear reasonable, however as noted below, a distinction needs to be made between modular and manufactured according to law. Multi-family units may be encouraged if only CEO review is required instead of Planning Board approval, simplifying the permitting process.
- It should be noted that “modular” and “manufactured” are two different terms according to State and Federal Law. Once a modular home is placed on a foundation it has the same legal status as a stick built home. Some towns/cities limit the location of manufactured homes (once called mobile homes). Gardiner allows manufactured homes at least 20’ wide wherever a residential use is allowed. The location of manufactured homes may want to be restricted to certain districts. However, modular homes are allowed by law to be built in all districts where residential use is allowed. See State Statute 4358, Section 2.E. Modular homes of any width need to be allowed in the Residential Growth, High Density Residential and Central Business Districts.
- Manufactured homes are a viable option for affordable housing, however in terms of perception, they negatively impact the housing market, architectural character and the general image of a City. It is commonly understood that manufactured homes do not appreciate in value.
- Single family and multi-family units are allowed on the second floor in the Central Business District. Is the City missing any opportunity by not allowing a single family to occupy all floors of a downtown building? This would be more like a Brownstone unit found in a large city.

Section 2.G Dimensional Requirements

- The multifamily density minimums for the Residential Growth and High Density Residential appear to be reversed.
- Maximum lot coverage in the High Density Residential and Central Business Districts might be increased to 50% and 80% respectively as long as other criteria are met.
- Note # 7 promotes multi-family housing by reducing the required SF to 5,000 SF after the first unit.

Section 3.V Planned Residential Development

- The term Planned Unit Development should be replaced with the revised Section name, Planned Residential Development throughout the Section.
- Dimensional requirements and allowable minimum should be explained in more detail.

Section 3.V .4

- Requiring a minimum percentage of open space might be considered in addition to lot size reduction.

Section 3.V .6.e

- Requiring all units to be on a common septic system may discourage development and restrict creative planning.

Section 3.V .6.h&i

- The minimum lot size of 8,500 SF for lots on City sewer encourages good developments, however, lots on common systems might also be reduced to below 20,000 SF as long as the reduced difference is placed in open space.

Section 3.V .7

The Density Bonus of 20% is reasonable and encourages better developments

- The Density Bonus might be tied in with the five point rating system used to obtain approval.

B. 1995 Comprehensive Plan

- Some key issues facing Gardiner in 1995 were:
 - Stable population base—no growth
 - Rising costs of municipal services
 - Public education
 - Need to add jobs and build commercial tax base
 - Recreational services
- Assets identified included:
 - Historic architecture
 - Historic landscapes—Kennebec River, Gardiner Common
 - Strong sense of community
 - Good services—library, rescue, water & sewer, recreation
 - Proximity to employment centers (Augusta, Bath, Lewiston, Portland)
- Rural housing growth in Gardiner and surrounding towns was identified as a key challenge. Demand for such growth is driven by three major factors:
 - Desire for rural character
 - Available land at relatively low cost
 - Low property taxes
- The following land use recommendations were made:
 - High density residential development restricted to established areas, specifically downtown and South Gardiner.
 - Moderate density residential replaced with Residential Growth district
 - Residential growth districts in selected strategic areas, including:
 - West of downtown, along Highland Avenue
 - Along Route 201, south of downtown
 - Along Route 201, between I-95 interchange and Marston Road.
 - Rural Residential area changed to Rural, with allowable densities based on performance zoning ratings.
 - Planned Development within specified Commercial Growth zones.

- Observations on City services and departments:
 - Recreation department offers limited variety of programs, but quality is good.
 - Two fire stations: one downtown, one in South Gardiner. The downtown station houses emergency rescue services for eight-town area.
 - Police station is located downtown, has eight officers, 15 reserves, three cruisers.
 - Library has 35,000 volumes, 85 periodicals, circulation of 132,711 volumes in 1992 (19.67 per capita). Residents of four neighboring towns without libraries can pay \$44 annually for access to library.
 - Majority of sewer and drainage system is combination—old standard. Public works department was aggressively pursuing development of new separate system.
 - Sidewalks are in poor condition—63 percent need replacement with 10 years.
 - Public roads are in below average condition—78 percent need replacement within ten years, and 16 percent already in poor condition.
- Comments on Housing Trends:
 - Sharp rise in applications for home-based businesses—30 from 1987 to 1994
 - 50 percent of recent housing starts were single-wide mobile homes, mostly in rural areas.
 - Multi-family stock was showing signs of deterioration.
 - Lack of infill development in intown areas
 - Few affordable rental units with two or more bedrooms.
 - From 1980-1994, 17 new subdivisions were approved, containing 278 lots. As of 1995, 178 were developed. Most of the undeveloped lots were in an approved but unbuilt, 90-unit mobile home park.
 - Most new subdivisions contained fewer than 10 lots, and most were for mobile homes.
 - No new multi-family units were built, and no new units were expected.
- Comments on Housing Affordability:
 - Using the standard of housing costs being no more than 28 percent of household income, affording the median housing value of \$73,487 would require an income of \$27,500.
 - From 1987-1994, about 30 existing units were sold per year in the affordable range for moderate income buyers. An average of 16 new units were built per year in the affordable range, meaning that a cumulative average of 46 affordable units were available in a typical year.
 - There were 116 households in Gardiner identified as looking for housing that were headed by persons aged 25-44 and in the moderate income range. This group represents the typical first-time home buyer. With 46 units available per year, it would take 2.5 years for all of these prospective buyers to find a property.
- From 1987-1994, there were 161 housing units added in Gardiner, of which 75 were permanent construction and 86 were mobile homes, a breakdown of 47/53. Just 34 of these homes were built in the city's urban area compared with 127 in the rural area, a breakdown of 21/79.
- Recreational programs and facilities are somewhat limited in Gardiner. While the city meets national standards for playgrounds, baseball fields, and ice skating, it is short of standards for soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, and general park acreage.

- There are 114 buildings in the city located in the 100-year floodplain, of which 84 are located downtown. As a result, flood insurance is a major cost for downtown property owners.
- As part of the plan, a public opinion survey was conducted, for which 3,800 copies were mailed to Gardiner's residents. Just 286 were returned though, for a response rate of seven percent. The following were key findings:
 - Gardiner's biggest draws for residents were that it was close to work, a small town, family nearby, desirable residential areas, and that they always lived there.
 - Areas in need of improvement include downtown, Johnson Hall, and the waterfront on both the Kennebec River and Cobbosseecontee Stream.
 - Recreation was deemed inadequate by 45 percent of respondents, particularly in the areas of youth facilities, swimming, community centers, and bicycle paths.
 - Among other city services, sidewalks, economic development, trash disposal, tax assessment, road maintenance, youth programs, and schools were rated poor by many people.
 - Residents were willing to pay more taxes to improve economic development, parks & recreation, sidewalks, schools, youth programs, and road maintenance.

C. Downtown Revitalization Plan

- Successful revitalization must have:
 - Sound physical improvement plan
 - Viable economic development agenda
 - Aggressive marketing strategy
 - Organization and can-do attitude
- Action steps relevant to housing
 - CDBG grant for sidewalk & streetscape improvements
 - More parking at east end of downtown and Mechanic Street
 - Waterfront park and trails
 - Street lighting improvements

D. Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP)

This technical document was reviewed and deemed to not have particular relevance to the housing assessment plan.

U.S. CENSUS DATA (1990 AND 2000)

A. City of Gardiner Demographic Profile

- Population and Household Growth
 - The City of Gardiner's 2000 population was 6,198, down more than eight percent from its 1990 total of 6,746
 - Despite the population loss, the number of households in Gardiner remained stable; there were 2,513 households in 1990 and 2,510 in 2000.
 - The average household size fell from 2.58 persons in 1990 to just 2.41 in 2000.
- Age and Education Profile

- The population of Gardiner is aging, as the percentage of people aged 45 and over increased from 32 percent in 1990 to 38 percent in 2000
- The 45-64 age group grew by more than 28 percent from 1990 to 2000 while every other major age group lost at least ten percent of its population.
- The largest numerical decline in population was in the 25-44 age group, which shrank by 341 people, a 16 percent loss. The largest percentage drop was in the 0-4 age range, which saw its population decrease by 30 percent.
- Educational attainment in Gardiner is poor, as only 53 percent of the city's residents over the age of 25 hold high school diplomas and just 24 percent have college degrees.
- Household and Income Data
 - Only 64 percent of Gardiner's households are family households, and just 33 percent have children.
 - Gardiner's median household income level is \$35,200.
 - There are few high-income households in Gardiner—only 15 percent earn more than \$75,000 per year.
 - The largest percentage of households—31 percent—falls into the \$15,000-35,000 income range. The next largest income category is \$50,000-75,000 with 20 percent.

B. Housing Data

- Housing Unit Growth
 - The overall net change in housing units in Gardiner has been very low, as the unit inventory of 2,705 in 1990 only changed to 2,702 units in 2000, according to the Census.
 - The Maine State Planning Office does report some housing growth, as its data states that Gardiner's housing inventory actually posted a net change of 116 units between 1990 and 2000. However, much of this growth was in the early part of the decade; the net change from 1995 to 2000 was just 31 units.
- Occupancy, Tenure, and Affordability
 - 93 percent of Gardiner's housing units are occupied, and only about eight percent of vacant units are reported as seasonal units.
 - The owner-to-renter ratio in Gardiner is 63/37.
 - 43 percent of Gardiner households have moved into their present units since 1995, and another 15 percent moved in between 1990 and 1995. Only 22 percent have lived in the same unit since 1980.
 - Only 10 percent of Gardiner homeowners have ownership costs of more than 35 percent of their household incomes. One third of homeowners pay less than 15 percent of their incomes.
 - The cost of renting is even lower, as 85 percent of renters pay less than 25 percent of their household incomes towards their living expenses. Only 9.0 percent pay more than 35 percent of their incomes.
- Housing Unit Characteristics
 - Gardiner has a high concentration of multi-family housing, as 34 percent of its housing units are contained in structures with two or more units. 58 percent of units are single-family homes, and eight percent are mobile homes.

- Most of Gardiner's multi-family buildings are small; over half are in buildings with less than five units, and another quarter are in buildings with 5-9 units.
- Gardiner's housing stock is very old; just 5.1 percent of existing housing units in Gardiner have been built since 1990, and only another 8.8 percent were built during the 1980s. Nearly 55 percent of all housing units in Gardiner were built prior to 1940.

C. Resident Employment and Commuting Patterns Data

- Among adults in Gardiner, 63 percent are employed, 34 percent are not in the labor force, and four percent are in the labor force but unemployed.
- Gardiner's average one-way commute time in 2000 was 24.3 minutes.
- Over 80 percent of Gardiner commuters drive alone to work, 12 percent are in carpools, and the remaining eight percent walk, bike, or use transit.
- Specific data on places of work and residence are not yet available from the 2000 Census—the points below summarize where Gardiner residents worked in 1990.
 - Only 30.8 percent of employed Gardiner residents worked in Gardiner.
 - The most likely place for Gardiner residents to work was Augusta: 33.6 percent of residents worked there—over 1,100 Gardiner residents were employed there.
 - Other cities and towns employing more than 50 Gardiner residents included Bath, Chelsea, Winthrop, Farmingdale, and Richmond. Lewiston, Brunswick, and Portland all employed exactly 49 residents of Gardiner.
- The following points regard where people employed in Gardiner in 1990 lived.
 - 31 percent of the 3,100 people (976 people) employed in Gardiner also lived in the city—the top place of residents for employees.
 - The next most common place of residence was Augusta, which accounted for 9.1 percent of all employed persons, or 286 people. Other places with more than 100 residents working in Gardiner included Pittston, West Gardiner, Farmingdale, Randolph, and Litchfield.

D. Comparison of Gardiner with Surrounding Towns and Cities

Using 1990 and 2000 Census data, we have compared Gardiner with two different groups of comparable locations. The first group consists of the seven towns that border Gardiner: Chelsea, Farmingdale, Litchfield, Pittston, Randolph, Richmond, and West Gardiner. The second group consists of the three other cities in Kennebec County: Augusta, Hallowell, and Waterville. The points below refer to these groups as “Neighboring Towns” and “Other Cities,” respectively.

- Population and Household Trends
 - The neighboring towns grew modestly during the 1990s, from about 18,000 to 19,100 people—a 5.9 percent growth rate. Household growth was stronger, as the number of households increased from 6,600 to 7,600, a 16 percent gain.
 - The other cities, like Gardiner, lost population, dropping 11 percent during the decade from a total of 41,000 to 36,600. The number of households declined, but at a slower rate than population. Households fell from 16,500 to 15,900—a loss of 3.6 percent.

- The neighboring towns have a slightly higher average household size than Gardiner: 2.50 persons. However, the other cities' average household size is much smaller, at just 2.11 persons.
- Age, Household Type, and Education Profile
 - The neighboring towns have a higher percentage of working adults (ages 25-64) than does Gardiner, as these ages account for 56 percent of the population of these towns, compared with 54 percent for Gardiner. However, these towns have lower shares for senior citizens (ages 65+) and young adults (ages 15-25)
 - The other cities have the highest percentages of seniors and young adults: 18 and 17 percent, respectively. Working adults comprise just 49 percent of the population in the other cities.
 - While the neighboring towns have a higher percentage of high school graduates than the other cities (56 to 54 percent), the other cities actually have a higher concentration of college graduates (28 to 25 percent).
- Household and Income Data
 - A high percentage of households in the neighboring towns are families—71 percent. However, only a slightly higher number of households have children compared to Gardiner: 34 to 33 percent. Only 54 percent of households in the other cities are family households, and just 25 percent of households have children.
 - The neighboring towns are the wealthiest, with a median income of \$41,500. However, their percentage of high-income households is actually lower than Gardiner's, as just 12 percent earn more than \$75,000 per year. The high median is a result of high concentrations in the \$50,000-75,000 income range, which describes 23 percent of all households in these towns.
 - Household income in the other cities is very low, with a median of just \$30,350. More than 25 percent of households in these cities earn less than \$15,000 per year, and another 32 percent earn between \$15,000 and \$35,000. Just 11 percent earn more than \$75,000.
- Housing Profile
 - Over 1,000 new housing units were added in the neighboring towns during the 1990s—a growth rate of 15 percent. However, the other cities' housing inventory declined, with a net loss of over 200 units, or -1.3 percent.
 - Although vacancy is higher in both the neighboring towns and the other cities (both about 10 percent), most of the vacant units in the neighboring towns are seasonal units, while most vacant units in the other cities are truly vacant.
 - Owner occupancy is very high in the neighboring towns (81 percent) and very low in the other cities (53 percent). Not surprisingly, the other cities have a much higher percentage of multi-family units than do the neighboring towns (50 to 13 percent). The neighboring towns have a very high percentage of mobile homes: 17 percent.
 - The housing stock in the neighboring towns is much younger than Gardiner's as 18 percent of it has been built since 1990, and just 24 percent dates from before 1940. The housing profile of the other cities is more like Gardiner's as it has few new units (5.1 percent since 1990) and many old ones (64 percent built before 1960). However, its percentage of units built before 1940 is much lower, at just 38 percent.

STATE OF MAINE DATA

A. Department of Labor Employment and Wage Data

- Augusta Labor Market Area (LMA)
 - As of 2000, there were 36,595 people employed in the Augusta LMA, up 6.1 percent from the 1998 employment level of 34,500. This LMA accounts for about six percent of Maine's total employment of 574,257. The overall average wage per job in the Augusta LMA is \$26,000.
 - The majority of the jobs in the LMA (70 percent) are in three major sectors: Services, Public Administration, and Retail Trade. Services, the largest sector, accounts for 28 percent of all jobs, Public Administration represents another 24 percent, and Retail Trade 19 percent. Among the other major industry groups, only Manufacturing (8.4 percent) has more than a 6.5 percent share.
 - Within Services, the three largest categories are Business Services, Health Services, and Social Services, and these three areas represent two-thirds of all service jobs in the area. Business Services and Social Services both are low-wage categories, with average salaries below \$20,000. Health Services wages are much higher, with an annual average of \$31,000.
 - Most of the Public Administration jobs in the LMA are in state government, as Augusta is the state capital. State jobs pay much higher than other jobs in the region, with an average salary of \$35,600. There are only 440 Federal government jobs in the area, but their average salary is a very high \$45,400.
 - Retail Trade, the third largest employment sector in the area, is also the lowest paying, with an average annual wage of just \$17,200. Somewhat alarmingly, nearly half of new jobs added in the area (937 of 2,095) from 1998 to 2000 were in this sector.
- Individual City and Town Data
 - The number of people employed in Gardiner fell substantially from over 3,000 in 1990 to just 2,371 in 2000—a drop of 21 percent.
 - Among the 10 other employment centers (more than 10,000 jobs) located within 50 miles of Gardiner, employment grew by more than 11 percent during the 1990s. Among this group, only Bath and Waterville, both of which are primarily manufacturing towns, lost employment during the decade. Cities and towns in the Portland area grew the most, with Portland, South Portland, Scarborough, and Westbrook all increasing employment by more than 15 percent. Employment in Augusta increased by just five percent during the 1990s.
 - The employment base in Gardiner's neighboring towns is very small, as there are just 3,400 total jobs in the seven towns. However, their employment bases have been growing, with nearly 700 new jobs added since 1990. Most of the growth occurred in Farmingdale, which added over 500 jobs during the 1990s, and in West Gardiner, which added about 150. Richmond and Chelsea both lost employment from 1990 to 2000.

B. Department of Education School Enrollment and Performance Data

- Enrollment in SAD 11 fell by seven percent from 1996 to 2001, with the number of students declining from 2,568 to 2,396. The district's elementary and middle

schools' enrollments declined by 175 students, and Gardiner Area High School's enrollment increased by three students.

- The three K-5 elementary schools in Gardiner (Pray Street, Richards, and River View) combined to have an enrollment decrease of eight students from 2000 to 2001. Richards and River View both lost enrollment, while Pray Street added students. The three other elementary schools in SAD 11 only added a cumulative total of three students from 2000 to 2001.
- Both the middle and high schools declined in size from 2000 to 2001, with each losing between 15 and 20 students.
- On the 2000-01 Maine Educational Assessment Test, SAD 11 schools consistently scored below the state average in all grades and subjects. Grade 11 students at Gardiner Area High School typically scored about five points lower than state averages for each of the seven subjects tested. Grade 8 students fared slightly better, only scoring one or two points lower than the averages. Grade 4 performance varied by elementary school. While Pray Street and River View students scores well below state averages, students and Richard Elementary actually scored above state averages in five of the seven categories.

C. Population Projections

- Projections through 2015 suggest that Gardiner will continue to lose population until 2010, but will then begin growing again. The rate of population loss from 2000 to 2005 is projected at four percent, or a numerical loss of 250 people. The overall rate of change from 2000 to 2015 is forecasted as -4.7 percent.
- Growth in neighboring towns is expected to be relatively modest, with a forecasted growth rate of 7.7 percent from 2000 to 2015, resulting in the addition of 2,500 residents to these seven towns. Litchfield and West Gardiner are expected to grow the most—more than 15 percent each. Limited growth is expected in Farmingdale and Randolph, however.
- The other cities in Kennebec County are also forecasted to lose population. Augusta, which already lost 13 percent of its population from 1990 to 2000, is expected to experience population losses of 8.5 percent from 2000 to 2015. Waterville's losses will be more modest: 3.9 percent. Hallowell is expected to grow somewhat (5.2 percent from 2000 to 2015), although it lost population during the 1990s.

OTHER DATA/REPORTS

A. Building Envelope Assessment for Historic District

- Many buildings have older roofs that have uneven surfaces and/or drainage problems. In addition, many buildings lack adequate gutter systems to remove water from their roofs. Few downtown buildings have adequate flashing. The pigeon population is also a problem on rooftops
- The existing process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness before undertaking renovations of historic buildings has been effective in protecting the historic integrity of the district's buildings.

- The study recommends further development of the city’s historic preservation zoning district, including the creation of more specific rules appropriate to Gardiner’s particular building stock.

B. “Assessing Attitudes and Abilities...” Report

- 1990 Census data showed demand for 188 low-income rental units in Gardiner, but just 124 available units—a shortfall of 64 such units.
- During the 1990s, 51 percent of new housing units in Gardiner were mobile homes, all of which were added to the city’s rural areas.
- The 305 multi-family properties in Gardiner are owned by 240 different owners; an average of 1.27 properties per owner. Nearly 75 percent of owners also live in the City of Gardiner.
- Most multi-family owners own small buildings, as 67 percent own five or fewer units, and 30 percent own between five and 50 units. Just three percent own more than 50 units.
- The majority of owners—58 percent—of small multi-family buildings (<5 units) live on their properties. Just 20 percent buy specifically for the income.
- Among medium-sized buildings (5-49 units), 47 percent of owners buy primarily for long-term capital gains and 31 percent for rental income—most own their buildings for the long term.
- Medium-sized properties are very likely to have Section 8 tenants—68 percent do. Just 31 percent of all units have Section 8 tenants.
- Over 80 percent of owners say they have made capital investments in the past five years, with the most common being bathroom, heating system, and kitchen improvements.
- Investments are planned by 45 percent of owners, most of which will be renovations. Some did indicate that they wanted to either combine or improve units to induce tenant turnover, and some said they would be converting their properties to either single-family or office uses.
- Among tenants, 46 percent are low-income and 53 percent are middle-income, although more middle-income tenants having been moving in the past two years.
- Only 17 percent of properties have any vacant units, and just eight percent of the small buildings do. Most landlords do not want tenant turnover, as they feel that the existing tenants are better than potential replacements.

C. Strategic Plan Housing Program

- Gardiner currently has:
 - A strong business development program
 - Progressive, technologically advanced schools
 - A history of keeping property taxes down
 - An aging population
 - A lack of a youth culture
- Notes regarding real estate market:
 - No interest from yuppies
 - Landlords invest with fairly good coordination with city
 - Housing subsidies in nearby towns put Gardiner at a disadvantage

- Mobile home limits in other towns put development pressure on Gardiner
- Threats to Gardiner:
 - Undesirable populations moving in
 - Lack of regulation in development zones
 - Too much responsibility for city staff
 - Burdensome regulations (land use, historic preservation, environmental, flood) deter development
- Policies can have unintended consequences:
 - Construction standards → more mobile homes
 - Alliances with developers → alienate others
 - More staff responsibility → underperformance
 - Building Codes → higher rents, tenant displacement
- More data needs to be collected by:
 - Economic and Community Development Department
 - Tax Assessor
 - Code Enforcement Officer
 - Landlords

KEY CONCLUSIONS FROM EXISTING DATA REVIEW

- The Draft Land Use Ordinance shows an effort by the City to integrate housing into different parts of the City at appropriate densities. Several areas will require further study, including:
 - Existing subdivisions and opportunities to retrofit the design for greater densities.
 - Infill housing and new construction on non-conforming lots meeting the dimensional standards of the general neighborhood.
 - Density bonuses in other districts beside the Rural District. This may encourage landlords to build new multi-family units, condos or renovate existing units.
- Housing growth in Gardiner has been restricted by a number of factors, including higher property taxes, availability of cheap land in nearby towns, development restrictions, and a perception of inadequate public schools.
- Gardiner has many assets, including its historic district, good municipal services, a very strong sense of community, a convenient location to employment centers, and attractive riverfront areas. The one exception to its good municipal services is the recreation department, which is fairly sparse.
- Nearly all housing growth has been mobile homes, and most new units are replacing old ones—the overall number of housing units is stagnant. There has not been any multi-family construction in the past several real estate market cycles.
- Housing in Gardiner is generally affordable, in terms of the relationships between income and housing costs. However, there have been needs identified for more units serving lower-income populations.
- Major infrastructure investments are needed, particularly in sewers and sidewalks. While the road system is in decent condition, further investment will be needed to maintain its health.
- Gardiner's population base is shrinking and aging, but its household base has remained stable due to declining household sizes. There are relatively few retirees

in the community, suggesting that many residents move away upon reaching retirement age.

- There are few high-income households in Gardiner, and the majority of households are low to middle-income (\$15,000-\$50,000). By comparison, Gardiner's surrounding towns have an overall higher median income, but a lower proportion of high-income households, suggesting a stronger middle class.
- Gardiner's housing stock is very old, as the majority of its units were built prior to 1940. Housing in nearby towns is much newer and likely in better condition.
- Gardiner has a large base of multi-family units, but most are contained in small buildings with fewer than five units. Since most buildings are so small, owners of multi-family buildings tend to live on-site and not use their properties primarily for income purposes.
- The typical Gardiner commuter in 1990 worked in either Augusta or Gardiner, and 80 percent drove alone to work. Although 2000 commuter data is not yet available, it is expected to show that Gardiner commuters now travel further to work than in 1990 and that more drive alone.
- The economy in the Augusta area is largely dependent on state government. There is not much of a manufacturing base in the region. Although state jobs tend to pay well, most of the jobs that support state employees are retail and service jobs that tend to have lower wages.
- Regionally, employment in manufacturing-economy locations like Gardiner, Bath, Lewiston, and Waterville has declined, while white-collar centers in the Portland area have boomed. As a result, there has been a shifting of employment to the core of the Portland region.
- Enrollment in SAD 11 has been declining, although Gardiner Area High School's enrollment has remained steady. Standardized test scores indicate that secondary schools in the district may be underperforming. Two of the three elementary schools in Gardiner also scored below state averages on standardized tests.
- Gardiner is expected to continue to lose population over the next decade, but to begin to rebound after 2010. While its neighbors are expected to grow as a group, much of the growth is expected to occur in Litchfield and West Gardiner. Other cities in Kennebec County like Augusta and Waterville are forecasted to continue losing population.
- The rental housing market in Gardiner is exclusively low and moderate-income, with virtually no upscale rental units. Although most landlords have either recently made capital investments or plan to in the near future, some fear pricing out existing tenants, as they are perceived to be better than the alternative.
- Conducting effective planning for housing in Gardiner has been limited by a lack of available data. In order to have housing initiatives be more successful, a number of public and private partners must team up to produce and maintain good data for trends that affect the housing situation.