

Rumford 2035 Appendix

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Historic & Archaeological Resources

Rumford is rich in historic and archaeological resources reflecting its transformation from agricultural community to major industrial center. From a population of 900 (1890) to 10,230 (1940) in 50 years, the industrial boom created an architectural legacy that defines Rumford's character today. This section identifies and assesses Rumford's historic and archaeological resources, providing an updated record to guide future preservation and development.

Current Findings:

- Rumford contains 35 documented prehistoric sites. These areas provide rare stratified evidence of human activity in the River Valley dating back roughly 9,000 years.
- The geography of the Androscoggin and Ellis Rivers has dictated human settlement for millennia. Over 90% of Rumford's archaeological sites are located along these riverbanks, making shoreland protection the town's most critical preservation tool.
- Unlike many mill towns that grew haphazardly, Rumford's core was a planned industrial community. This "Magic Town" vision of Hugh J. Chisholm created a rare concentration of high-quality, architecturally cohesive masonry buildings that remain a primary economic asset today.
- Rumford contains 11 National Register listings, a high number for a community of its size. These listings are not just individual buildings but include two major districts - Strathglass Park (1974) and the Commercial Historic District (2017) - which anchor the town's residential and business centers.
- Several of Rumford's landmarks, such as the Town Hall and the Rumford Point Congregational Church, are listed as having State-level significance. This indicates they are considered architecturally or historically important to the entire State of Maine, not just the local region.
- While Rumford is rich in historical resources, there is a noted gap in local protective ordinances. Current protections are largely reliant on state environmental laws or voluntary owner participation in tax credit programs, leaving upland historic structures and unknown archaeological sites vulnerable to accidental destruction.

Town History

Are historic patterns of settlement still evident in the community?

For its first century, Rumford functioned as a rugged frontier outpost where settlement patterns were dictated by the fertile intervals of the Androscoggin and Ellis River valleys. Early residents established a decentralized network of self-sufficient farms and small-scale lumbering operations, utilizing the river primarily for transport rather than power. This agrarian era, which lasted until the late 19th century, left a legacy of rural farmsteads and open landscapes that still characterize the town's outer reaches today. However, the community's trajectory shifted permanently in the 1890s when industrialist Hugh J. Chisholm recognized the untapped kinetic energy of Rumford Falls - the largest drop in the Androscoggin River - as the catalyst for a world-class manufacturing hub.

The arrival of the Continental Bag Company in 1899 and the Oxford Paper Company in 1901 triggered a period of rapid growth. Chisholm's vision went beyond factory construction; he sought to create a model industrial city. This led to the intentional development of "The Island," a dense, walkable commercial center designed to serve a rapidly expanding workforce. During this time, Rumford's population underwent a staggering transformation, surging from just 898 residents in 1890 to nearly 7,000 by 1910. This era also saw the birth of Strathglass Park, a meticulously planned residential enclave of brick duplexes that provided high-quality housing for mill workers, setting a national standard for industrial community design.

By the time Rumford's population peaked at approximately 10,230 residents in 1940, the town had matured into the dominant economic and cultural anchor of the River Valley. The wealth generated by the paper industry financed the construction of grand civic buildings, ornate commercial blocks, and diverse neighborhoods that reflected the various ethnic groups, including French-Canadian, Italian, and Polish immigrants, who arrived to work in the mills. Today the town's character is defined by its unique historical architecture. While the industrial footprint has consolidated in the modern era, the physical layout of the town, from its urban commercial core to its outlying rural valleys, remains a testament to the fifty-year period of rapid innovation that turned a farming village into a regional powerhouse.

Historic Structures

Historic buildings are more than architectural landmarks; they are the physical record of Rumford's evolution and a cornerstone of its modern identity. By serving as functional spaces for housing, commerce, and civic life, maintained historic structures conserve resources and energy while fostering a strong sense of community. This section details Rumford's inventory of historic resources and the role they plan in preserving the town's unique character for future generations.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is a federal inventory of sites and structures significant to our national and local identity. While listing protects properties from adverse federal actions, its primary local benefit is financial. Registered buildings qualify for both Federal and Maine State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, providing a major incentive for the restoration of downtown landmarks. It is important to note that National Register status is honorary for private owners; it does not restrict how a property is used or modified unless the owner chooses to utilize these government tax incentives.

Rumford contains two historic districts, seven historic buildings, and three historic sites that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

Category	Property Name	Location	Date Listed	Level of Significance	Area of Significance	More Information
District	Rumford Commercial Historic District	49-150 Congress, 65-91 Canal, 60-94 River and 23 Hartford Sts.	2017	Local	Community Planning And Development; Commerce; Architecture	
District	Strathglass Park Historic District	Bounded by Virginia, Penobscot, Park, Knox Streets	1974	Local	Community Planning And Development; Landscape Architecture; Architecture; Social History	Item Record
Building	Deacon Hutchins House	NW of Rumford on ME 5	1979	Local	Art; Exploration/Settlement; Architecture	Item Record
Building	Mechanic Institute	44-56 Congress St.	1980	Local	Commerce; Architecture	Item Record
Building	Town Hall	Congress St.	1980	State	Commerce; Architecture	Item Record
Building	Rumford Falls Power Company Building	59 Congress St.	1980	Local	Commerce; Architecture	Item Record
Building	Rumford Point Congregational Church	ME 5 and US 2 jct.	1985	State	Art	Item Record
Building	Rumford Public Library	Rumford Ave.	1989	Local	Education; Architecture	Item Record
Building	Strathglass Building	33 Hartford St.	1980	Local	Commerce; Architecture	Item Record
Site	Town of Rumford Site	Address Restricted	1992	Local	Prehistoric	
Site	Rumford Falls I-IV Site	Address Restricted	1992	Local	Prehistoric	
Site	Rumford Falls V Site	Address Restricted	1992	Local	Prehistoric	

Historic Districts

Rumford contains two major historic districts:

- **Strathglass Park Historic District (Listed 1974):** Rumford's earliest listing, significant for its landscape architecture and social history as a premier example of planned industrial housing.
- **Rumford Commercial Historic District (Listed 2017):** The most recent addition, encompassing the core of the "Island" (Congress, Canal, River, and Hartford Streets), recognized for its role in community development and architecture.

Historic Structures

A cluster of listings designated in the 1980s include the Mechanic Institute, the Rumford Falls Power Company Building, and the Strathglass Building. Notably, the Town Hall and the Rumford Point Congregational Church are recognized for their State-level significance, indicating their importance to the broader history and artistic heritage of Maine beyond the local community. Other key local landmarks include the Rumford Public Library and the Deacon Hutchins House

Prehistoric Sites

In addition to its built environment, Rumford contains three protected archaeological sites that were listed in 1992 and are significant for their prehistoric value. To protect their integrity, the specific locations of these sites remain restricted, though they serve as critical records of human habitation in the River Valley long before the town's industrialization.

Bennett Inventory - Significant Historic Architecture

In addition to federally recognized sites, several other structures in Rumford are noted for their architectural importance. As documented by Randall H. Bennett in *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Historic Architecture*, these buildings represent key styles and periods of local history. This broader inventory highlights the depth of Rumford's historic fabric beyond those properties currently listed on the National Register.

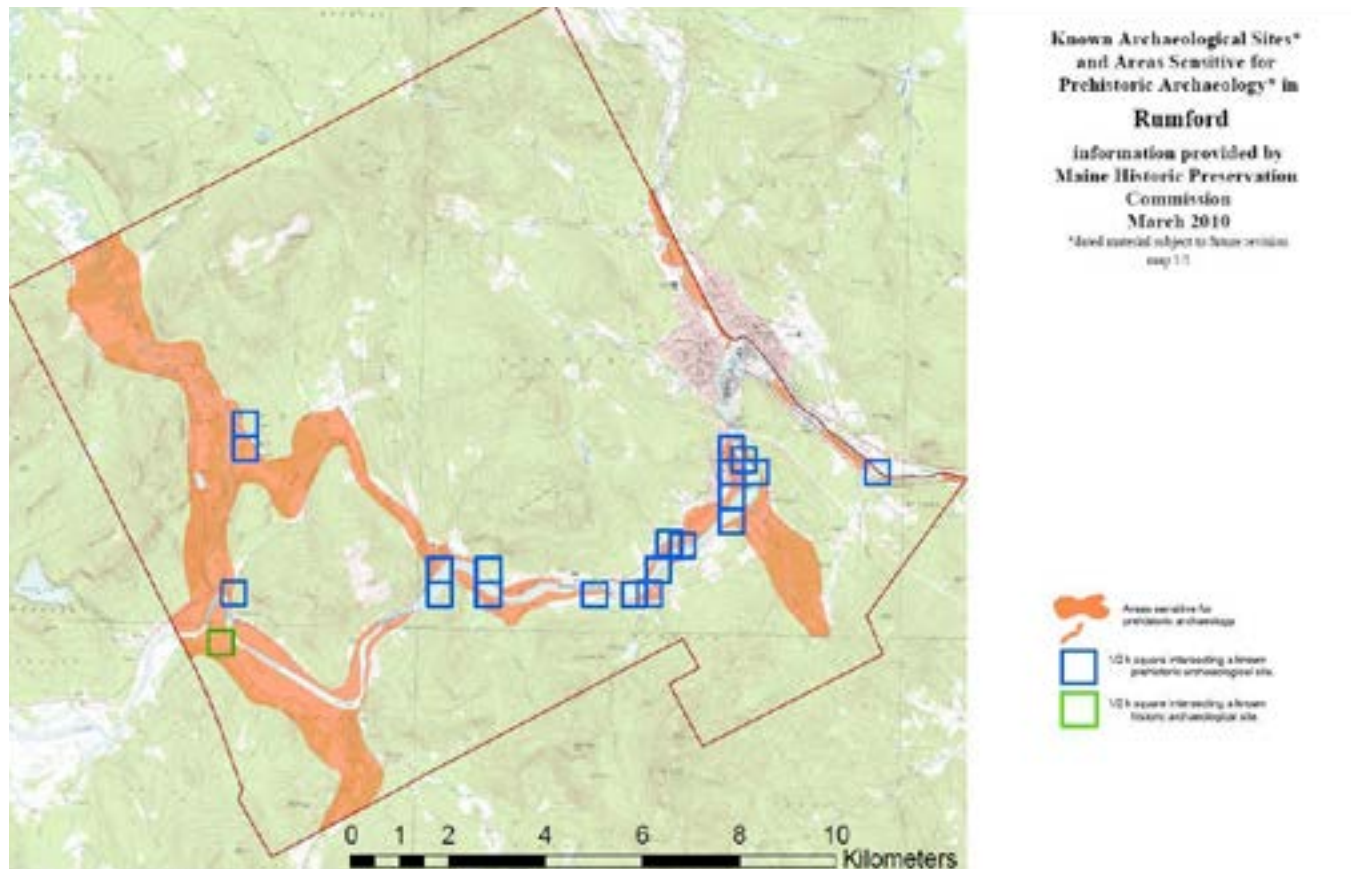
Structure Name	Location	Type/Period	Architectural Style
Calvin Howe Farmstead (Orchard Hill)	Route 5	Agricultural 19th century	Farmhouse/outbuildings
Samuel Lufkin Farmstead (Silver Farm)	East Andover Road	Agricultural 19th century	Farmhouse/barn complex
Phineas Wood House	East Andover Road	Residential 19th century	Farmhouse
Center Meeting House (Congregational Church)	Rumford Center Village	Religious Early 19th century	Greek Revival meeting house
Oliver Pettengill Farmstead	Route 2	Agricultural 19th century	Farmhouse/outbuildings
Alexander Kimball House	Rumford Point Village	Residential Early 19th century	Federal/Greek Revival
Lyman Rawson House	Rumford Point Village	Residential 19th century	Greek Revival
Kimball Store	Rumford Point Village	Commercial 19th century	Village store
1824 House	Rumford Point Village	Residential Circa 1824	Federal period
Moses F. Kimball House	Rumford Point Village	Residential 19th century	Greek Revival
Porter Kimball House	Rumford Point Village	Residential 19th century	Greek Revival
Monroe House	Rumford Point Village	Residential 19th century	Period architecture
Kimball School House	Rumford Point Village	Educational 19th century	One-room schoolhouse
Ebenezer Virgin House	Rumford Corner Village	Residential Early 19th century	Federal/Greek Revival
Peter C. Virgin House	Rumford Corner Village	Residential 19th century	Greek Revival
Jeremiah Wardwell House	Rumford Corner Village	Residential 19th century	Period architecture

Structure Name	Location	Type/Period	Architectural Style
Edward Small House	Route 232	Residential 19th century	Farmhouse
Moody House	Route 232	Residential 19th century	Period architecture
Jonathan A. Bartlett House	South Rumford Road	Residential 19th century	Farmhouse
Cotton Elliot Farmstead	South Rumford Road	Agricultural 19th century	Farmhouse/outbuildings
Odd Fellows Block	Congress Street	Commercial/Fraternal Late 19th/early 20th	Brick commercial block
Continental Paper Bag Co. Mill	Lowell Street	Industrial Early 20th century	Industrial mill complex
Prospect Avenue and Franklin Street Houses	Prospect Ave/ Franklin Street	Residential District 1890s-1920s	Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, fashionable wood and brick homes
Universalist Church	Franklin St at Plymouth Ave	Religious Late 19th century	Victorian church
St. Athanasius-St. John Church	Maine Ave at Knox Street	Religious Early 20th century	Catholic church
Baptist Church	Plymouth Ave at Washington St	Religious Late 19th/early 20th	Victorian church
St. Barnabus Episcopal Church	Rumford Ave at Penobscot St	Religious Early 20th century	Episcopal church
Nathan Knapp House	Washington Street	Residential Early 20th century	Period architecture
Chisholm School	Rumford Avenue	Educational Early 20th century	Brick school building
Hancock Apartments	Hancock Street	Residential/Multi-family Early 20th century	Apartment building

Source: Bennett inventory from Town of Rumford, Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Rumford_2013.pdf based on Randall H. Bennett, 'Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to its Historical Architecture'

Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources are the tangible, physical remains of our collective past, often existing as subsurface features that are not readily visible. These sites are categorized into prehistoric (before written records) and historic (after written records) periods, together providing a vital chronicle of human habitation in Rumford since the end of the last ice age.



Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission documentation via Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, October 2023 Data Package:
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/resource_packages/2023.2FallZipped/Rumford.zip;
Maine Historic Preservation Commission noted the map dated 2010 is still current.

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

Rumford is home to thirty-five identified prehistoric archaeological sites, the vast majority of which are situated on the banks of the Androscoggin River. An extensive archaeological survey of the riverbanks, stretching from the Rumford Falls dam to just downstream of Rumford Point, was recently completed as part of the hydroelectric relicensing process. Beyond the main river corridor, three additional sites have been documented within the Ellis River valley.

Need for Additional Survey

The Ellis River valley, Swift River valley, and Androscoggin River above Rumford Point need survey, as do large areas of the Androscoggin River floodplain away from the current river bank.

Historic Archaeological Sites

There are eight historic archaeological sites identified in Rumford:

Site Name	Site Number	Site Type	Periods of Significance	National Register Status
Rumford Industrial Features	ME 377-001	Historic mill site	circa 1870-1920	undetermined
Price Hotel	ME 377-002	Hotel and tavern	circa 1850-1900	undetermined
Kimball's Ferry	ME 377-003	Ferry crossing	circa 1819-1956	ineligible
Unidentified Cellar	ME 377-004	Domestic	late 19th-early 20th century	undetermined
Kimball's Store	ME 377-005	Store	circa 1820-2013	ineligible
Stevens-Mansur Homestead	ME 377-006	Domestic	circa 1830-2013	ineligible
Rumford Point Fire Department	ME 377-007	Fish house	circa 1929-2013	ineligible
Phinney's Blacksmith Shop	ME 377-008	Workshop, blacksmith	Possibly as early as 1815-2013	ineligible

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission documentation via Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, October 2023 Data Package:
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/resource_packages/2023.2FallZipped/Rumford.zip;

Need For Additional Survey

No professional town-wide surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Rumford. Future archaeological surveys should focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American Settlement of the town in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Threats to Historic and Archaeological Resources

Rumford's archaeological heritage is vulnerable to both natural and human-induced pressures. The primary threats include:

- **Physical Disturbance:** Land development, construction, and deep-soil cultivation can inadvertently destroy stratified archaeological layers.
- **Environmental Factors:** Ongoing erosion along river corridors, where 90% of Rumford's prehistoric sites are located, poses a constant risk of site loss.
- **Informational Hazards:** A general lack of awareness regarding site locations often leads to unintentional destruction during property improvements.
- **Human Impacts:** Unauthorized artifact collection and looting strip sites of their historical context.

Protection of Historic and Archaeological Resources

What protective measures currently exist for historic and archaeological resources and are they effective?

Do local site plan and/or subdivision regulations require applicants proposing development in areas that may contain historic or archaeological resources to conduct a survey for such resources?

Town Ordinances

Site Plan and Subdivision Ordinances

Current local site plan and subdivision regulations in Rumford do not explicitly mandate that all applicants conduct independent archaeological or historic surveys prior to development. Instead, the town relies on the state-level review process and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) to flag high-sensitivity areas.

- For larger projects that trigger the Maine Site Location of Development Act (Site Law), the state requires a formal review of existing resources, which includes a determination of potential impact on historic and prehistoric sites.
- During the local application process, the Planning Board typically directs applicants to consult with the MHPC if a project is located within known sensitive zones, such as the Androscoggin or Ellis River corridors, where 32 of the town's 35 prehistoric sites are located.
- While the town uses MHPC data to identify high probability areas, there is currently no local standard of proof requiring a developer to prove a site is not present through subsurface testing unless prompted by state agencies.

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

Rumford's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance provides specific protections for historic and archaeological resources located in the shoreland zone, primarily the Androscoggin and Ellis River corridors, where the town's most sensitive sites are located.

Unlike the general town code, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is legally mandated by the state to include these protections. The protections in the Shoreland Zone function through three primary mechanisms:

- **Permit Review Standards:** For any development requiring a permit within the shoreland zone, the Planning Board or Code Enforcement Officer must find that the project "will protect archaeological and historic resources as designated in the comprehensive plan."
- **Archaeological Excavation Standards:** The ordinance allows for archaeological research by mandating that any excavation be conducted by a professional listed on the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) Level 1 or Level 2 approved list. This ensures that even the protective digging is done scientifically and with adequate erosion controls to prevent site degradation.
- **Identification as a Purpose of the Law:** The ordinance explicitly lists the protection of archaeological and historic resources as one of its core legal purposes. This provides the Planning Board with the teeth to deny or condition a permit if a proposed project would disturb a known prehistoric site.

Historic Districts

Rumford Commercial Historic District

The Rumford Commercial Historic District serves as the architectural heart of the community and a physical record of the town's industrial golden age. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017, the district comprises a dense concentration of early 20th-century commercial architecture that reflects the immense wealth and ambition generated by the paper industry at the turn of the century.

Beyond its aesthetic value, the district is an economic asset for Rumford's future. Its National Register status provides property owners with access to State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, which have been instrumental in revitalizing underutilized upper floors into housing or modern office space. This built-in character offers a distinct competitive advantage, as the district provides a walkable sense of place environment that modern retail and service-sector workers increasingly seek.

While the district is recognized nationally, it faces ongoing challenges:

- **Incremental Change:** Without a local preservation ordinance, original architectural features, such as historic storefronts and window configurations, are at risk of being replaced with modern, non-compatible materials.
- **Maintenance of Large-Scale Masonry:** The cost of maintaining century-old brick and stone can be a burden for small business owners, making the promotion of preservation grants and tax credits a top priority.
- **Vacant Upper Floors:** While the ground levels are often active, the underutilization of upper floors represents an opportunity for addressing the town's current housing shortage.

Strathglass Park Historic District

The Strathglass Park Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, represents one of the most significant achievements in American industrial community design. Commissioned by Hugh J. Chisholm at the turn of the 20th, this neighborhood was envisioned as a model residential enclave for paper mill employees, intended to foster a high quality of life through superior architecture and thoughtful landscape planning.

The district is characterized by its uniform, high-quality brick duplexes set within a meticulously planned grid of tree-lined streets and green spaces. Unlike the utilitarian tenement housing common in other mill towns, Strathglass Park utilized Colonial Revival and Queen Anne stylistic elements to create a sense of permanent, dignified residency. Its significance is rooted in social history, marking

an era where industrial success was directly tied to the physical well-being and domestic stability of the workforce.

Despite its prestige and significance on the National Register, the district faces several vulnerabilities:

- **Federal vs. Local Protection:** While its listing on the National Register provides protection from adverse impacts by federally funded or licensed projects, it offers no regulatory oversight for alterations made by private property owners using private funds.
- **Architectural Integrity:** Because there is no local historic preservation ordinance in Rumford, the uniform “character” of the park, such as its original slate roofs, brickwork, and window configurations, is susceptible to incremental, uncoordinated changes that can erode the district’s collective value.
- **Incentives for Preservation:** Like the Commercial District, Strathglass Park properties that are utilized as income-producing rentals may be eligible for Federal and Maine State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. These credits serve as the primary incentive for historic preservation.

Historic Preservation Incentives

Have significant historic resources fallen into disrepair, and are there ways the community can provide incentives to preserve their value as an historical resource?

Rumford has recently introduced and participated in several specific incentive programs designed to lower the financial barrier for historic maintenance and downtown revitalization.

Local Incentives

- **Historic Building Facade Improvement Grants:** In January 2026, Rumford issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a dedicated Facade Improvement Grant program. These grants are designed to help property owners in the historic core repair and restore the exterior appearance of their buildings, which is often the most visible but expensive part of preservation.

State-Level Grants

- **REvitalizeME Downtown Grants:** Rumford has been a successful recipient of sub-grants from the Maine Development Foundation (MDF).
 - *Example:* The Bag Mill project in Rumford recently received \$200,000 for roof and energy efficiency improvements, plus additional funding for a window survey and architectural specifications.

- **Historic Community Buildings Grant Program:** A new \$10 million state bond program was approved by Maine voters in 2024 to provide grants for the restoration of historic buildings owned by municipalities and non-profits. This is a major new resource for anchor buildings like the Town Hall or the Public Library.
- **Belvedere Historic Preservation Grants:** Managed by the Maine Community Foundation, this program provides between \$10,000 and \$20,000 for the “preservation, restoration, and retrofitting” of historic buildings that serve as community hubs. The Rumford Center Village Improvement Society received a \$20,000 grant in 2023 to repair and renovate the historic Meeting House¹.

Historic Preservation Organizations

Rumford Historical Society

The Rumford Historical Society, established in 1970, serves as the primary repository for the community’s collective memory. The Society operates from two strategic locations: the Lufkin School Museum in Rumford Center, which showcases large-scale exhibits during the summer months, and a dedicated Research Center and Archive housed within the Rumford Town Hall. This allows the Society to maintain both a public face for tourism and a functional office for the preservation of vital records, including extensive photograph collections and genealogical materials.

Through its volunteer-led efforts, the Society provides essential community services, including:

- **Curatorial Excellence:** Maintaining and interpreting a diverse collection of artifacts that span from the town’s agrarian roots to its industrial heyday.
- **Educational Outreach:** Hosting presentations, publishing historical materials, and providing research assistance to genealogists and historians.
- **Preservation Advocacy:** Serving as a vocal proponent for the protection of Rumford’s non-renewable historic and archeological assets.

While the Society has successfully preserved Rumford’s history for over half a century, it remains a volunteers-dependent organization with limited financial resources.

Strathglass Park Preservation Society

The Strathglass Park Preservation Society (established 2008) has historically served as a lead advocate for the district. However, the group currently lacks the active membership and funding necessary to fulfill its mission.

¹ Source: [Belvedere Historic Preservation and Energy Efficiency 2023 Grants](#)

Population Characteristics

Population characteristics and trends provide the foundation for comprehensive planning across all sectors. Understanding who lives in Rumford, how the population has changed, and demographic trends enables planning for housing, services, infrastructure, economic development, and community facilities. This section provides a complete analysis of Rumford's population since the last comprehensive plan.

Current Findings:

- Rumford reached a demographic turning point between 2010 and 2020. After seven decades of contraction, the towns' population stabilized and grew by 0.3% (+17 residents), a trend that has since accelerated to 1.4% growth as of 2024.
- Rumford's recent population growth is driven by "in-migration" rather than a natural increase of the town's population. Deaths have outpaced births in the community for the past two decades, a common trend in many communities across Maine.
- Since 2010, non-family households have grown by 5.5%, and single-person households now make up nearly 40% of all households in Rumford.
- Rumford is aging faster than the surrounding region. The town's median age rose by 4.9 years since 2010 to 50.4, nearly double the aging rate of the state (2.1 years). This is driven by a 36% increase in the 65+ demographic and an 8% decline in the primary working-age population (25-64).
- Despite the high median age, recent data shows the population aged 5 to 24 has grown by approximately 125 people, contrasting with a loss of 173 young residents in the previous decade.
- Despite the recent small uptick in the 5-24 age group, school enrollment has trended downward over the last decade.
- Nearly half of Rumford's adults (47%) hold a high school diploma as their highest level of education, compared to 30% statewide. This reflects a workforce historically geared towards manufacturing; however, current growth sectors like healthcare and professional services require higher levels of specialized training or post-secondary degrees.
- While the town faces a structural skills gap, residents under 50 generally possess higher levels of educational attainment, providing a critical foundation for transitioning Rumford to a diverse, modern workforce.

Introduction

Rumford's population history reflects its economic evolution from agricultural village to industrial powerhouse to post-industrial transition. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan documented multi-decade population decline driven by manufacturing modernization, loss of employment opportunities, and aging demographics. The 2013-2025 period has seen fundamental demographic shifts: population decline stopped but aging accelerated, creating new planning challenges centered on serving elderly population while rebuilding the working-age cohort.

Historical Population

Rumford's population trajectory over 134 years tells the story of industrial rise and post-industrial adjustment. Like many industrial centers in Maine, Rumford has experienced steady population decline since the 1960s. While Rumford's population continued to decline at a rate of 17% from 1990 to 2010, Rumford's population has increased by 1.7%, or 101 people, since 2010.

Year	Population	Change	% Change
1890	898	—	—
1900	3,770	+2,872	+320%
1910	6,777	+3,007	+80%
1920	8,576	+1,799	+27%
1930	10,340	+1,764	+21%
1940	10,230	-110	-1.1%
1950	9,954	-276	-2.7%
1960	10,005	+51	+0.5%
1970	9,363	-642	-6.4%
1980	8,240	-1,123	-12%
1990	7,078	-1,162	-14%
2000	6,472	-606	-9%
2010	5,841	-631	-10%
2020	5,858	+17	+0.3%
2024	5,942	+84	+1.4%

Source: US Census Bureau decennial census population 1890-2000 from University of Maine Fogler Library, Census Population 1790-2000, accessed <https://library.umaine.edu/govdoc/Census/Census%20Population%201790%202000.pdf> (January 2026); U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census, Table P1, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026); 2024 estimate from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, Table DP05,

Service Center Population

Service Center communities are the traditional population and employment centers in Maine, but many Service Center communities have lost population and employment to outlying communities since 1960. For example, Rumford's population decreased by more than 4,000 people between 1960 and 2020 while Oxford County's population increased by more than 13,000 people.

In 1997 the 118th Legislature established the Task Force on Service Center Communities to study the decline of Service Centers and deliver recommendations for state and local policies that will [Revive Maine's Service Centers](#). As a result of this study, the Legislature amended Maine's [Growth Management Law](#) to prioritize state funding for growth related capital investments in Service Center Communities.

According to the [Municipal Planning Assistance Program](#) (MPAP), Rumford is a Secondary Service Center. As discussed in the economy chapter, Rumford is the third largest employment center in Oxford County, and more than 70% of the town's workforce commutes to Rumford from neighboring communities or from as far away as Lewiston or Portland. As a result, Rumford's population may increase during the day and the town may experience negative impacts from commuter traffic.

Seasonal Population

Seasonal population associated with second home development has not traditionally been a factor in Rumford's overall population characteristics. As discussed in the Housing chapter, the 2024 Census estimates show an increase of about 230 seasonal units since 2010. If these estimates are accurate, this amounts to a 575% increase in seasonal housing units in Rumford. When these units are occupied, this could increase Rumford's population by nearly 500 people, based on the average household size of 2.15 people in Rumford.

Age Structure

Rumford is aging at a faster rate than both Oxford County and Maine. Since 2010, the town's median age has climbed by nearly five years to 50.4, double the aging rate of the state. This trend is driven by a 36% increase in the 65+ population and a simultaneous 8% decline in the primary working-age group (25-64). However, recent data suggests a shift: after a decade of decline, the population of residents aged 5 to 24 grew by approximately 125 people between 2020 and 2024, signaling a potential stabilization in the town's younger demographics.

Age	2010 Count	2010 %	2020 Count	2020 %	2024 Count	2024 %	Change 2010-24	Change %
Under 5	293	4.3%	289	4.9%	248	4.2%	-45	-15.4%
5-19	882	13.5%	800	13.7%	825	13.9%	-57	-6.5%
20-24	467	8.0%	376	6.4%	476	8.0%	+9	+1.9%
25-44	1,227	21.1%	1,282	21.9%	1,121	18.9%	-106	-8.6%
45-64	1,791	31.3%	1,759	30.0%	1,657	27.9%	-134	-7.5%
65+	1,181	21.9%	1,352	23.1%	1,615	27.2%	+434	+36.7%
Total	5,841		5,858		5,942		+101	+1.7%
Rumford Median Age:	45.5		47.9		50.4		+4.9	+10.8%
Oxford County Median Age:	44.6		47.6		48.2		+3.6	+8.1%
Maine Median Age:	42.7		45.1		44.8		+2.1	+4.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, Table P12, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026); U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census, Table P12, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026); U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, Table DP05, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026)

Natural Population Change

Natural population change (births minus deaths) is an important component of population change. Both Oxford County and Rumford have experienced negative natural increase, meaning that deaths exceeded births every year from 2000-2020, contributing significantly to population loss. Therefore, Rumford's recent population growth is driven entirely by in-migration from other parts of Maine or other states, not from a natural increase of the existing population.

Year	Rumford Births	Rumford Deaths	Rumford Natural Increase	Oxford Co. Births	Oxford Co. Deaths	Oxford Co. Natural Inc.
2000	74	90	-16	517	550	-33
2001	61	114	-53	526	613	-87
2002	72	82	-10	530	558	-28
2003	54	83	-29	547	647	-100
2004	57	94	-37	581	622	-41
2005	66	98	-32	570	653	-83
2006	66	83	-17	591	598	-7
2007	75	93	-18	570	601	-31
2008	50	92	-42	541	617	-76
2009	53	96	-43	539	619	-80

2010	58	70	-12	528	556	-28
2011	52	89	-37	519	628	-109
2012	48	78	-30	511	620	-109
2013	61	80	-19	564	647	-83
2014	60	92	-32	491	638	-147
2015	55	89	-34	498	640	-142
2016	71	84	-13	511	670	-159
2017	45	89	-44	474	676	-202
2018	58	87	-29	473	708	-235
2019	67	92	-25	526	702	-176
2020	56	99	-43	504	722	-218
2021	NA	112	NA	452	849	-397
2022	NA	95	NA	531	809	-278
2023	NA	95	NA	489	818	-329
Total 2000-2010	686	995	-309	6,040	6,634	-594
Total 2011-2020	573	879	-306	5,071	6,651	-1,580
Total 2000-2020	1,259	1,874	-615	11,111	13,285	-2,174

Source: 2011-2023 births data from Maine CDC, accessed via <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/data-reports/population-health/life-events/births-abortions-marriage-divorce> (February 2026); 2011-2023 deaths data from Maine CDC, accessed via <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/data-reports/population-health/life-events/deaths> (February 2026); 2000-2011 data from Town of Rumford, Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Rumford_2013.pdf using Maine CDC vital statistics; 2009 and 2010 Oxford County births data from Maine CDC, [Resident Births by Minor Civil Divisions, Counties, and State Total, 2001-2010](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/sites/maine.gov.dhhs.mecdc/files/data/TabH3A_2001_2010.pdf), accessed via https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/sites/maine.gov.dhhs.mecdc/files/data/TabH3A_2001_2010.pdf (February 2026); 2009 and 2010 Oxford County death data from Maine CDC, [Resident Deaths by Minor Civil Divisions, Counties, and State Total, 2001-2010](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/sites/maine.gov.dhhs.mecdc/files/data/TabH3B_2001_2010.pdf), accessed via [Internet Archive Wayback Machine](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/sites/maine.gov.dhhs.mecdc/files/data/TabH3B_2001_2010.pdf) (February 2026)

While the data for 2021-2023 are not currently available for Rumford, the data for Oxford County show that deaths continued to exceed births, for a net natural population change of -1,004 since 2020.

Household Characteristics

Household composition affects housing needs, service demands, and community character. Rumford has been experiencing a shift toward smaller households and more non-family households.

Household Type	2010 Count	2010 %	2020 Count	2020 %	Change 2010-20
Total Households	2,674	100%	2,670	100%	-4 (-0.1%)
Family Households	1,524	57.0%	1,457	54.6%	-67 (-4.4%)
Married-couple	1,065	39.8%	955	35.8%	-110 (-10.3%)

Male householder	141	5.3%	157	5.9%	+16 (+11.3%)
Female householder	318	11.9%	345	12.9%	+27 (+8.5%)
Non-family Households	1,150	43.0%	1,213	45.4%	+63 (+5.5%)
Living alone	932	34.9%	1,001	37.5%	+69 (+7.4%)
65+ living alone	417	15.6%	433	16.2%	+16 (+3.8%)
Householder not living alone	218	8.2%	212	7.9%	-6 (-2.8%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026) and U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census, Table P1, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026) Table DP1; calculations by plan team

Family Households Declining: Family households declined by 4.4% between 2010 and 2020, driven by a decline in married-couple households (-110, -10.3%), while single-parent households increased.

Non-Family Households Increasing: Non-family households increased by 55 (5.5%). Now 45% of all households are non-family, due to an increase in people living alone.

Living Alone Increasing: Single-person households increased by 69 (7.4%), now more than one-third (37.5%) of all households in Rumford households are single person. This reflects demographic trends:

- An aging population (more widows/widowers)
- Higher rates of divorce
- Younger people delaying marriage
- Other economic challenges that delay family formation

Elderly Living Alone Increasing: 433 people age 65+ living alone (16.2% of all households). Up 16 (+3.8%) in 10 years. These elderly living alone face:

- Isolation and loneliness
- Safety concerns (falls, medical emergencies)
- Home maintenance challenges
- Limited social support networks
- Transportation difficulties

Senior housing with services would address many of these challenges.

School Enrollment

Rumford's elementary and high school enrollment have declined by 15.5% and 21.7% respectively over the past decade while middle school enrollment increased by 41.9%, or 111 students. Middle school enrollment peaked at 395 students in 2019 and has been declining since then. This trend is

similar to the enrollment trend for RSU 10 and many other rural school districts in Maine. Declining school enrollments may be explained by the aging population and declining birth rates.

	Mountain Valley High School	Mountain Valley Community School	Mountain Valley Middle School	Rumford Elementary	RSU 10
2016	414	NA	265	272	2,569
2017	385	NA	276	290	1,780
2018	404	NA	272	305	1,820
2019	367	NA	395	243	1,795
2020	387	NA	388	242	1,769
2021	416	NA	352	269	1,802
2022	388	NA	354	261	1,777
2023	425	NA	367	241	1,802
2024	369	NA	376	213	1,739
2025	350	827	NA	NA	1,686
10 Year Average	391	NA	338	260	1,854
Absolute Change	-64	NA	111	-59	-883
Percent Change	-15.5%	NA	41.9%	-21.7%	-34.4%

Source: Maine Department of Education School Enrollment Data, accessed via <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-warehouse/reporting/enrollment> (February 2026)

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment affects workforce quality, economic development potential, and earning capacity.

Educational Attainment	Rumford 2024	Maine 2024	Rumford vs Maine Gap
Population 25+ years	4,393	1,026,250	—
Less than 9th grade	2.2%	1.7%	+0.5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	7.7%	3.5%	+4.2%

High school graduate	46.6%	30.1%	+16.5%
Some college, no degree	17.8%	18.1%	-0.3%
Associate degree	7.6%	10.4%	-2.8%
Bachelor's degree	10.9%	22.5%	-11.6%
Graduate/professional	7.2%	13.7%	-6.5%
H.S. graduate or higher	90.1%	94.8%	-4.7%
Bachelor's or higher	18.1%	36.2%	-18.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, Table S1501 for Rumford and Maine, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026).

College Education Gap Growing: In Rumford, about 18 out of every 100 adults have finished college. Across the rest of the state, that number is twice as high, with about 36 out of 100 people finishing college.

In 2010, the college education gap between Rumford and the rest of Maine was -13.3 percentage points compared to -18.1 percentage points in 2024. Even though the number of people in Rumford with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased since 2010, the rest of the state is moving ahead even faster.

High School Completion: Rumford's high school graduation rate (90.1%) is close to the state average (94.8%), a gap of only -4.7 percentage points.

High School Concentration: In Rumford, nearly half of adults (46.6%) finished their education with a high school diploma. This is higher than the rest of Maine, where only about 30% of people stopped after high school. This gap likely exists because Rumford has an older population. Since more than half of the people in town are over the age of 50, many of them grew up and entered the workforce at a time when you did not need a college degree to earn a living wage.

Skills Mismatch: Rumford is experiencing a skills mismatch that complicates its economic transition. Currently, more than half of the population holds a high school diploma or less, while the region's fastest-growing sectors, such as healthcare and professional services, increasingly require post-secondary degrees or specialized certifications. This disparity highlights a need for targeted workforce development.

Population Projections

The Maine State Economist has produced population projections for all Maine towns and cities. These projections estimate that Rumford's population will decrease by 2.8% to about 5,820 people by 2032. This amounts to a decrease of 168 people between 2022 and 2032, compared to an increase of 17 people between 2010 and 2020. It is important to note that according to the 2024

Census estimates, Rumford’s population has already grown to 5,942, which means the town is already ahead of the state’s projection for 2027.

Town	2022	2027	2032	Total Change 2022-2032
Rumford	5,990	5,923	5,822	-168 (-2.8%)
Andover	895	1,073	1,245	+350 (+39.1%)
Bethel	2,618	2,632	2,643	+25 (+1.0%)
Dixfield	2,299	2,216	2,122	-177 (-7.7%)
Mexico	2,793	2,781	2,739	-54 (-1.9%)
Peru	1,501	1,464	1,411	-90 (-6.0%)
Roxbury	368	361	350	-18 (-4.9%)
Oxford County	59,458	59,736	59,578	+120 (+0.2%)
Maine	1,389,338	1,419,888	1,438,344	+49,006 (+3.5%)

Source: Maine State Economist Demographic Projections: [Maine City and Town Population Projections 2042](#)

Population projections are not an exact science, but projections can be used to inform discussions about planning the future of a community. The state’s population projections are based on historical trends, but these projections may not consider the impacts of ongoing local and state economic development projects in Rumford, which will be discussed in more detail in the Economy and Housing chapters.

Conclusion

Rumford stands at a demographic crossroads. The town’s population is grappling with an aging population, highlighted by a median age of 50.4, combined with a significant contraction of its working-age population. However, the recent stabilization and growth of the population in Rumford since 2010 suggests a long era of decline has ended, creating a baseline for potential renewal.

Economy

For more than a century, paper manufacturing has been the cornerstone of Rumford's identity. The legacy of the mill continues to shape everything from the town's infrastructure to its workforce dynamics. Building on the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, which first documented the structural shift from manufacturing toward the retail and service sectors, this analysis examines the town's current economic health. It provides a data-driven look at the challenges and opportunities that have emerged since the last plan.

Current Findings:

- Rumford is the dominant employment hub for the surrounding region, hosting 158 establishments and 2,168 jobs, with a total annual payroll exceeding \$126 million.
- Historically the county's industrial powerhouse, Rumford saw a 35% decrease in local jobs between 2002 and 2024, while southern neighbors like Paris and Norway grew as regional employment centers in Oxford County.
- Rumford's resident labor force has undergone a structural realignment, pivoting from a traditional dependence on natural resource-based manufacturing toward a service-oriented economy led by healthcare and education.
- Despite long-term declines since the turn of the millennium, the resident labor force has shown signs of recovery, growing by 5% (111 workers) between 2010 and 2024.
- Total taxable sales in Rumford grew from \$40.3 million in 2013 to a peak of \$54.8 million in 2022, suggesting a new, higher baseline for local consumer activity despite a slight cooling in 2024.
- The Restaurant and Lodging sector saw a 47% increase since 2013, while Building Supply sales nearly doubled, indicating sustained local investment in property and infrastructure.
- Recent record-low unemployment rates (reaching 3.4% in 2023) combined with a shrinking overall civilian labor force suggest that the town's primary challenge has shifted from a lack of jobs to a shortage of available workers.
- Rumford functions as a major labor exporter and importer; 77% of working residents leave Rumford for their jobs, while 73% of the jobs located in Rumford are filled by people commuting from other communities.
- The number of residents working within 10 miles of home has dropped by 45% since 2002, while the number of residents commuting more than 50 miles has increased by 71%.

- With over 1,000 workers commuting into Rumford from other locations daily for work, there is a significant opportunity to grow the local population if the town can provide attainable housing for its daily workforce.
- While local incomes have risen nominally since 2010, they have failed to keep pace with the state; Rumford's median household income has dropped from 68% to just 51% of the Maine average.
- The gap between local earnings and the state median has more than doubled since 2010, reaching a \$36,330 deficit that severely limits the buying power of Rumford residents in a competitive statewide housing market.

Introduction

Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?

Rumford's identity was forged in 1893 when Hugh J. Chisholm established the paper mill at Rumford Falls, transforming a quiet agricultural village of 900 into an industrial powerhouse of over 10,000 residents by 1940. For more than a century, the mill remained the town's economic engine, contributing up to 30% of the property tax base and supporting a regional economy of logging, trucking, and retail services.

Employment

Housing Type and Occupancy

Since 2002, Rumford has transitioned from being the county's top employer to experiencing an employment decline of 34.6%. Meanwhile, Paris and Norway have grown to become the two largest employment centers in Oxford County, with job increases of 29% and 23% respectively. This shift highlights a local struggle within a changing state: while Maine added nearly 10% more jobs by moving toward service-based industries, Oxford County lost nearly 5% of its total employment. For Rumford, the loss of over 1,100 jobs represents a significant challenge to the town's long-term economic stability and housing demand.

Geography	2002 Employment	2024 Employment	Change
Rumford	3,317	2,168	-1,149 (-34.6%)
Bethel	1,305	1,463	+158 (+12.1%)
Fryeburg	1,291	1,300	+9 (+0.7%)
Norway	1,906	2,335	+429 (+22.5%)
Oxford	2,733	2,074	-659 (-24.1%)
Paris	1,883	2,423	+540 (+28.7%)

Oxford County	17,826	16,997	-829 (-4.7%)
Maine	590,966	648,882	+57,916 (+9.8%)

Source: Maine DOL Center for Workplace Research and Information, 2024

Local Employment

ND Paper (the Rumford Mill) remains the largest employer in Rumford by a significant margin. While the mill has faced workforce contraction over the last two decades, it is still the town's economic anchor and Maine's fifth-largest industrial employer¹.

Employer	Sector	Estimated Workforce
ND Paper	Manufacturing	~540 employees
Rumford Hospital	Healthcare	~250-300 employees
Rumford Schools	Education	~200-250 employees
Hannaford Supermarket	Retail	~100-150 employees

Rumford and Surrounding Towns

Rumford remains the undisputed economic hub of its immediate region, hosting the largest concentration of businesses and employees. With 158 establishments and an average employment of 2,168 workers, Rumford's employment is nearly 50% larger than that of Bethel, the next largest regional employer.

Geography	Number of Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Rumford	158	2,168	\$126,213,765	\$1,120
Andover	24	107	\$5,603,095	\$1,008
Bethel	195	1,463	\$69,020,279	\$907
Dixfield	44	525	\$30,620,123	\$1,122
Mexico	75	795	\$33,012,926	\$799
Peru	23	156	\$7,013,691	\$862
Roxbury	12	25	\$629,066	\$494
Oxford County	1,842	16,997	\$864,531,628	\$978
Maine	65,292	648,882	\$41,021,747,363	\$1,216

¹ Source: [Top 10 Manufacturing Companies in Maine](#)

While Rumford provides the highest volume of jobs, it faces competition for high-wage workers from its immediate neighbors. Dixfield holds the highest average weekly wage in the region at \$1,122, slightly edging out Rumford's \$1,120. Both towns outperform the Oxford County average of \$978 but trail the statewide average of \$1,216.

Bethel serves as a secondary center with 195 establishments, actually more than Rumford, though with just 1,463 jobs. Its average weekly wage of \$907 suggests a higher concentration of tourism or seasonal service roles compared to the industrial and healthcare-heavy base in Rumford.

Rumford and Dixfield are the primary drivers of high-wage employment in Northern Oxford County. While Rumford provides the critical mass of jobs, the high wages in Dixfield and the high number of business entities in Bethel suggest that Rumford exists within a competitive regional corridor where workers likely commute across town lines for specialized roles.

Employment Sectors in Rumford

Rumford's local economy is anchored by nearly 160 business establishments that provide a wide range of employment opportunities. While the town has historically been defined by its industrial roots, the current data show a growing healthcare, retail, and professional service economy.

Industry	Number of Establishments	Total Employees	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Total	158	2168	\$126,213,765	\$1,120
Health Care & Social Assistance	22	532	\$26,683,831	\$965
Retail Trade	23	289	\$10,042,559	\$669
Accommodation & Food Services	10	121	\$2,655,555	\$423
Other Services	18	96	\$2,818,600	\$563
Construction	19	43	\$2,220,141	\$989
Finance and Insurance	5	39	\$2,254,812	\$1,119
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	13	39	\$2,897,031	\$1,441
Transportation & Warehousing	4	36	\$2,031,352	\$1,090
Utilities	4	32	\$3,785,503	\$2,305
Wholesale Trade	3	11	\$497,400	\$850
Administrative, Support, Waste Management, & Remediation	6	10	\$427,541	\$858
Information	4	8	\$461,819	\$1,134

Note: In order to protect personal information, the Maine DOL is legally required to suppress employment data when there are two or fewer employers in one industry in a town.

Primary Employment

Two sectors dominate the local job market in terms of sheer volume:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** This is Rumford's largest employer by establishment count (22) and average employment (532 workers). It generates over \$26.6 million in total annual wages.
- **Retail Trade:** With 23 establishments, the highest number in any single sector, retail provides jobs for 289 people. However, this sector has lower average weekly wage of \$669, roughly 40% lower than the town average.

Specialized Sectors

While they employ fewer people, certain sectors provide significantly higher earning potential for the local workforce.

- **Utilities:** Though there are only 4 establishments employing 32 people, this sector boasts the highest average weekly wage in town at \$2,305, more than double the town-wide average.
- **Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services:** These 13 establishments pay an average weekly wage of \$1,441, offering high-value professional roles within the community.
- **Information and Finance:** Both sectors provide average weekly wages exceeding \$1,100, contributing to the professional economic base of the town.

Service and Hospitality Challenges

The Accommodation & Food Service sector represents a notable portion of the service economy with 10 establishments. However, it faces significant wage challenges, offering the lowest average weekly pay in the data at just \$423. This creates a stark contrast with the town's overall weekly wage of \$1,120.

Implications

The data reveals a top-heavy wage structure. Rumford's total annual payroll of \$126,213,765 is heavily supported by a few high-paying specialized industries like Utilities and Professional Services, while a large segment of the workforce in Healthcare and Retail earns closer to or below the \$1,000 per week mark.

Taxable Sales in Rumford

Since 2013, Rumford has experienced a steady increase in taxable retail activity, with total annual sales growing from \$40.3 million to \$46.5 million. While the overall market has expanded by approximately 15%, the growth has been uneven across different sectors, reflecting shifts in local business operations and consumer behavior.

Year	Business Operating	Building Supply	Food Store	Restaurant & Lodging	Total
2013	\$12,594,812	\$1,897,930	\$7,258,848	\$6,359,771	\$40,295,892
2014	\$15,629,102	\$2,027,567	\$7,491,056	\$6,400,457	\$43,302,572
2015	\$7,323,764	\$2,172,037	\$7,673,045	\$6,637,819	\$35,554,936
2016	\$7,381,984	\$2,137,136	\$9,745,974	\$6,690,784	\$38,107,924
2017	\$7,536,725	\$2,131,281	\$9,714,302	\$7,159,210	\$38,924,488
2018	\$8,255,261	\$2,075,907	\$10,260,612	\$7,316,623	\$40,551,024
2019	\$8,552,119	\$2,133,898	\$10,688,549	\$8,169,757	\$41,641,140
2020	\$8,843,148	\$2,586,318		\$7,331,484	\$42,640,840
2021	\$11,664,079	\$2,834,170	\$12,320,917	\$8,221,123	\$48,302,852
2022	\$14,573,913	\$3,231,669	\$12,852,170	\$10,793,530	\$54,841,860
2023	\$13,074,564	\$3,334,366	\$10,831,127	\$10,260,713	\$48,032,616
2024	\$12,820,012	\$3,394,999		\$9,346,757	\$46,509,128

Source: Maine Office of Tax Policy, [Annual Taxable Sales by Town](#), 2025

Growth of Tourism and Hospitality

Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, what steps has the community taken to support this industry?

The Restaurant & Lodging category has been the most consistent driver of retail growth in Rumford.

- Sales in this sector grew from \$6.4 million in 2013 to a peak of \$10.8 million in 2022, before stabilizing at \$9.3 million in 2024.
- This represents a total increase of 47%, suggesting that Rumford is capturing more regional visitor spending and local dining activity than it did a decade ago.

Building Supply Stability

The Building Supply sector has shown remarkable resilience and steady upward momentum.

- Starting at \$1.9 million in 2013, sales in this category have nearly doubled, reaching \$3.4 million by 2024.
- This 79% increase is an indicator of ongoing local investment in home improvement and small-scale construction projects across the community.

Fluctuations in Other Sectors

Other sectors have experienced more volatility:

- Business Operating Sales saw a significant spike in 2014 (\$15.6 million) followed by a sharp drop in 2015 (\$7.3 million). In recent years, it has recovered and stabilized, ending 2024 at \$12.8 million.
- Taxable sales in food stores rose steadily from \$7.3 million in 2013 to a high of \$12.9 million in 2022. (Note: This figure only represents taxable items and does not include the bulk of non-taxable grocery sales.

Economic Resilience

The data highlights 2022 as a milestone year for the local economy, with total taxable sales reaching an all-time high of \$54.8 million. While 2023 and 2024 have seen a light cooling of this activity, the town remains well above its pre-2020 levels. This suggests that the post-pandemic rebound has created a new, higher baseline for Rumford's retail and service sectors.

Labor Force

Employment Trends

Rumford's Civilian Labor Force has seen an overall decline since 2016. The town began the period with 2,517 people in the workforce, reaching a peak of 2,521 in 2017. However, by 2024, that number fell to 2,440, representing a net loss of 77 participants (-3.1%). This mirrors the broader regional challenges of an aging population and a shrinking pool of available workers.

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2016	2,517	2,383	134	5.3%
2017	2,521	2,403	118	4.7%
2018	2,508	2,399	109	4.3%
2019	2,473	2,377	96	3.9%

2020	2,365	2,229	136	5.8%
2021	2,460	2,292	168	6.8%
2022	2,402	2,319	83	3.5%
2023	2,407	2,325	82	3.4%
2024	2,440	2,331	109	4.5%

Source:Maine DOL Center for Workplace Research and Information, 2024

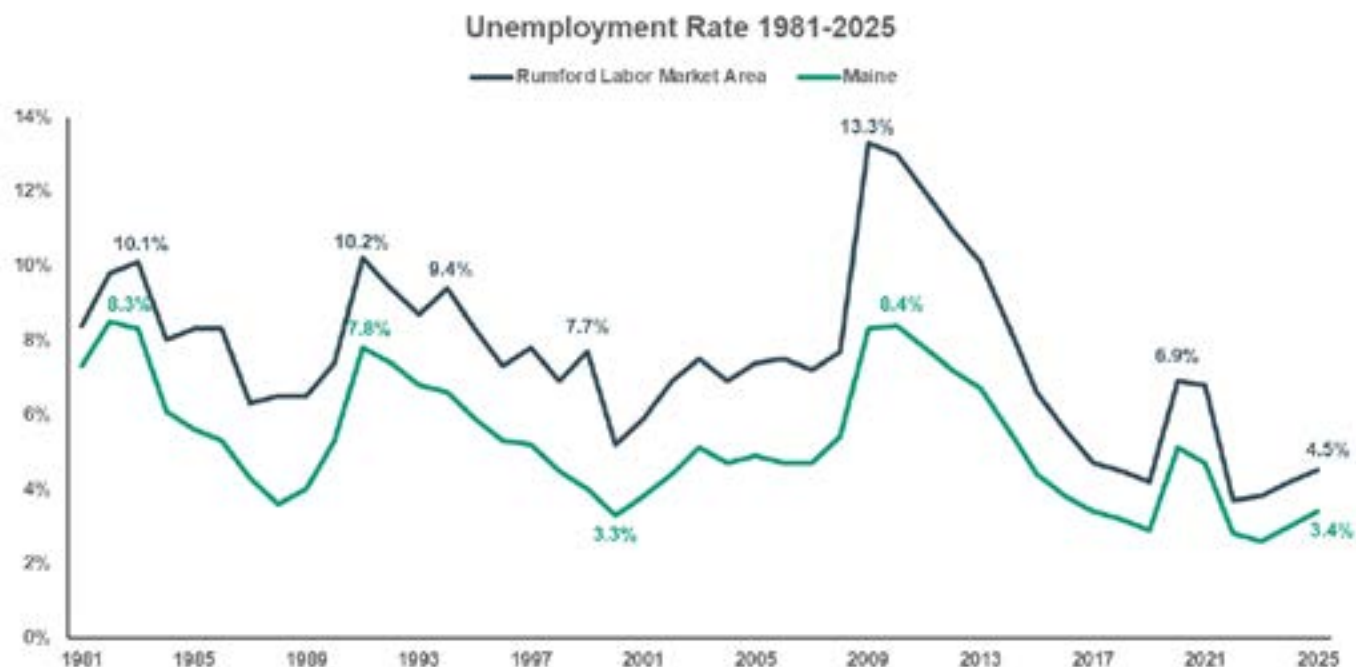
Pandemic Shock and Recovery

The data clearly illustrates the impact of the global pandemic on local employment:

- **The 2020 Dip:** Employment hit a period low of 2,229 in 2020, as the unemployment rate spiked to 5.8%.
- **The 2021 Lag:** While the labor force began to rebound in 2021, unemployment reached its highest point in the dataset at 6.8%, with 168 Rumford residents actively looking for work.
- **Stabilization:** By 2024, employment recovered to 2,331. While this is lower than the 2017 high of 2,403, it signals a stabilization of the local job market.

Record Low Unemployment

Despite the shrinking labor force, those remaining in the workforce have found a highly competitive job market in recent years. Between 2022 and 2023, Rumford experienced its lowest unemployment rates in a decade, dropping to 3.5% and 3.4% respectively. As of 2024, the rate sits at 4.5%, which, while higher than recent lows, remains lower than the 5.3% observed in 2016 and well below the average of 7.6% over the last 45 years.



Source: 1981-1989 data from Maine DOL Civilian Labor Force Estimates 1982-1996 for Maine and Substate Areas; 1990-2025 data from Maine DOL Center for Workplace Research and Information, 2026

Implication

- The data suggest that Rumford's primary economic challenge is no longer just unemployment, but rather labor availability.
 - With the unemployment rate remaining relatively low, the decrease in the total Civilian Labor Force indicates that the town must focus on workforce attraction and retention, ensuring that there is enough housing and infrastructure to support new workers as the older generation ages out of the market.

Labor Force by Industry

Since the turn of the millennium, the makeup of Rumford's resident labor force has undergone a profound transformation. While the town's total pool of workers decreased by 11% (294 individuals) between 2000 and 2024, the types of industries these residents work in have shifted dramatically. This signifies a move away from a population primarily employed in natural resource-based manufacturing toward a workforce increasingly specialized in the service and healthcare sectors, regardless of whether those jobs are located within Rumford or in nearby communities.

Industry Sector	2000 Count	2000 %	2010 Count	2010 %	2024 Count	2024 %	Change 2000-2024
Manufacturing	626	24.4%	451	20.8%	199	8.7%	-427 (-68%)

Retail Trade	269	10.5%	498	23.0%	304	13.4%	+35 (+13%)
Education, Healthcare, Social Assistance	513	20.0%	433	20.0%	657	28.9%	+144 (+28%)
Finance and Real Estate	111	4.3%	58	2.7%	179	7.9%	+68 (+61%)
Construction	130	5.1%	140	6.5%	205	9.0%	+75 (+58%)
Entertainment/Rec	378	14.7%	185	8.5%	266	11.7%	-112 (-30%)
Public Admin	112	4.4%	81	3.7%	77	3.4%	-35 (-31%)
Other Services	116	4.5%	77	3.6%	72	3.2%	-44 (-38%)
Prof/Business Svcs	116	4.5%	90	4.2%	116	5.1%	0 (0%)
All Other	198	7.7%	151	7.0%	200	8.8%	+2 (+1%)
Total	2,569		2,164		2,275		-294 (-11%)

Source: 2000 and 2010 from US Census Decennial Census, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); 2024 from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); calculations by comprehensive plan team

Industrial Retreat: The most defining change in Rumford’s economic landscape is the contraction of the manufacturing labor force.

- In 2000, manufacturing was the largest segment of the town’s workforce, accounting for 24% of Rumford’s labor force, or 626 workers.
- By 2024, the sector shed 427 workers, a staggering 68% decline, and now represents only 8.7% of the local labor force (199 workers).

The Rise of Healthcare and Education: As manufacturing receded, the Education, Healthcare, and Social Assistance sector emerged as the new pillar of the community.

- This sector of Rumford’s labor force grew by 28%, adding 144 workers since 2000.
- Healthcare and education has officially surpassed manufacturing as the largest segment of Rumford’s labor force, jumping from 20% in 2000 to nearly 29% in 2024.

Growth in Professional and Physical Services: While legacy industries struggled, specific professional sectors showed robust growth, indicating a shift toward a more modernized local service economy.

- The Finance and Real Estate workforce saw the highest percentage growth at 61%, adding 68 workers.
- The Construction workforce grew by 58%, adding 75 workers, likely reflecting ongoing infrastructure needs or residential modernization.

- Retail remains a steady secondary employer, with the retail workforce growing by 13% (+35 workers).

Sectors in Decline: The transition has not been universal across all service industries. Several sectors saw notable decreases alongside manufacturing.

- The Entertainment/Recreation workforce in Rumford has shrunk by 30%, or 112 workers, since 2000.
- The Public Administration sector has contracted by 31%, a loss of 35 workers.
- Other Services saw a 38% decline, shredding 44 workers over 24 years.

Economic Impact

Rumford's resident labor force has effectively traded high-intensity manufacturing roles for professional and service-oriented positions in healthcare and finance. While the gains in growth sectors, such as the addition of 144 healthcare workers, did not fully offset the loss of 427 manufacturing workers since the turn of the century, recent trends show a shift toward recovery. Although the town operates with a smaller overall labor force than it did in 2000, the number of working residents has actually grown by 5% since 2010. This indicates after a decade of sharp decline, Rumford's labor force is beginning to stabilize and expand within a more diversified economic framework.

Median Household Income

Data from the last 14 years reveal that while Rumford has seen nominal household income growth, it has fallen significantly behind the state's overall economic trajectory. The town is experiencing a widening gap, where local earnings are failing to keep pace with the rising cost of living across Maine.

Year	Rumford Median HH Income	Maine Median HH Income	Rumford as % of Maine	Gap (\$ below Maine)
2010	\$31,943	\$46,933	68.1%	-\$14,990
2015	\$30,200	\$49,331	61.2%	-\$19,131
2024	\$38,403	\$74,733	51.4%	-\$36,330
Change 2010-24	\$6,460	\$27,800	-16.7 points	-\$21,340 wider

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2006-2010, 2011-2015, and 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); gap calculations by plan team

Nominal Growth vs Relative Decline

At first glance, Rumford's Median Household Income (MHI) appears to be improving, rising from \$31,943 in 2010 to \$38,403 in 2024. However, this \$6,460 increase is modest when compared to the state's performance. During the same period, Maine's median household income increased by \$27,800, nearly four times the growth seen in Rumford.

Erosion of Purchasing Power

Rumford's income relative to the state average has entered a steady decline:

- 2010: Rumford's MHI was 68% of the state average
- 2015: Rumford's MHI dropped to 61% of the state average
- 2024: Rumford households earned just 51.4% of what the typical Maine household earned.

Growing Income Deficit

The "Income Gap" (the dollar amount by which Rumford falls below the state median) has expanded at an alarming rate. In 2010, the difference was \$14,990. By 2024, that deficit more than doubled to \$36,330. This \$21,340 widening of the gap suggests that Rumford residents are facing increasingly difficult hurdles in a statewide market for goods, services, and housing that is priced for higher income levels.

Implication

This trend highlights a growing affordability crisis for Rumford residents. While the town's incomes are technically rising, the 16.7 percentage point drop in state-relative income means that Rumford families have significantly less competitive buying power than they did in 2010. This disparity likely contributes to the housing attainability challenges discussed in other sections of this plan.

Commuting

Do/should home occupations play a role in the community?

The way Rumford residents travel to work is a vital indicator of the town's infrastructure needs, economic integration, and environmental footprint. In a rural landscape like Oxford County, commuting patterns are shaped by geographical distance between residential areas and employment hubs. This section analyzes how Rumford's workforce navigates these distances and how transportation habits compare to the broader regional trends of Oxford County.

Comparison of Worker’s Primary Mode of Transportation

Rumford’s workforce is heavily reliant on personal vehicles, with a significantly higher percentage of solo drivers than the county average. Approximately 82% of Rumford residents drive to work alone, compared to 74% across Oxford County.

	Rumford	Oxford County
Workers 16 years and over	2,208	26,561
Car, truck or van	88.0%	83.1%
Drove alone	81.8%	73.8%
Carpooled	6.2%	9.4%
Public Transportation	0.0%	0.0%
Taxi or ride-hailing services	0.5%	0.0%
Walked	4.9%	2.2%
Other means	0.0%	1.0%
Worked from home	6.6%	13.6%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, Table B08301 for Rumford and Oxford County, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026).

Rumford residents are more than twice as likely to walk to work (4.9%) than the typical Oxford County resident (2.2%). This may reflect Rumford’s unique layout, characterized by a walkable business district and dense residential neighborhoods.

The remote work revolution has had a smaller impact on Rumford than the rest of the region. Only 6.6% of Rumford residents work from home, which is less than half the Oxford County average of 13.6%. This may reflect Rumford’s high concentration of hands-on employment in sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, which cannot be performed remotely.

Travel time to Work for Rumford and Oxford County

The commute times for Rumford residents reflect the town’s role as a regional employment center, with a significant portion of the workforce enjoying the shorter commuters than their counterparts across Oxford County.

	Rumford	Oxford County
Less than 10 minutes	38.8%	17.0%

10 to 14 minutes	15.2%	11.2%
15 to 19 minutes	8.3%	11.7%
20 to 24 minutes	8.4%	11.8%
25 to 29 minutes	2.0%	5.7%
30 to 34 minutes	4.6%	12.0%
35 to 44 minutes	7.1%	8.9%
45 to 59 minutes	6.9%	9.7%
60 or more minutes	8.8%	12.1%
Mean travel time to work	21.2 minutes	28.9 minutes

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, Table B08303 for Rumford and Oxford County, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026).

Prevalence of Short Commutes

Rumford residents benefit from a high degree of proximity to their workplaces.

- More than one-third of Rumford’s workforce (39%) travels less than 10 minutes to work. This is more than double the Oxford County rate of 17%, highlighting Rumford’s dense residential and industrial core.
- Combined, 54% of Rumford workers reach their destination in under 15 minutes, compared to only 28% county-wide.

Long-Distance Commutes

As travel times increase, the disparity between the town and the county shifts.

- For commutes lasting between 20 and 59 minutes, Rumford consistently shows lower percentages than the county. For example, only 4.6% of Rumford residents travel 30-34 minutes, while 12% of county residents fall into this category.
- The percentage of residents traveling 60 minutes or more is relatively high in Rumford at 9%. While lower than the county average of 12%, it indicates that a small but significant portion of the local population is commuting to major hubs outside the immediate region, such as Lewiston-Auburn or Portland.

Average Commute Comparison

The overall efficiency of the Rumford commute is summarized by the mean travel time of 21.2 minutes for Rumford residents compared to 28.9 minutes for the average resident of Oxford County.

Implication

The data reinforce Rumford's identity as a live-work community. The high concentration of short commutes (less than 10 minutes) suggests that the town's infrastructure and residential areas are effectively integrated with its primary employers. This shorter-than-average travel time is a competitive advantage for resident retention, though the 8.8% of long-distance commuters suggests a segment of the population is still seeking higher wages or specialized roles outside the local area.

Jobs by Distance

The geographical distribution of where Rumford residents work has undergone a significant transformation over the last two decades. The data illustrates a steady transition from a workforce that primarily worked close to home to one that is increasingly traveling longer distances for employment.

	2002	2010	2020	2023
Less than 10 miles	1,686	1,095	895	918
10 to 24 miles	639	501	331	474
25 to 50 miles	335	500	502	577
Greater than 50 miles	420	566	643	718
Total Jobs	3,080	2,662	2,371	2,687

Source: Data from [US Census on the Map](#), 2002, 2010, 2020, 2023

Decline of Local Employment

Historically, the majority of Rumford residents worked within the immediate community.

- In 2002, 1,686 workers (representing 54.7% of the workforce) held jobs located within 10 miles of home.
- By 2023, that number dropped to 918 workers, a 45% decrease in local employment over 21 years. While there was a slight rebound from the 2020 low of 895, the long-term trend shows a substantial erosion of the “live-work” model that once defined the town.

Rise of Long Distance Commuter

As local job opportunities contracted, Rumford residents increasingly looked toward regional and statewide employment hubs.

- Mid-Range Commutes (25-50 miles) grew from 335 workers in 2002 to 577 workers in 2023, a 72% increase.
- The number of residents traveling more than 50 miles for work rose from 420 in 2002 to 718 in 2023, representing a 71% increase.

Commuting Distance Trends

The data confirms a hollowing out of local employment proximity. In 2002, workers were twice as likely to work within 10 miles than they were to work more than 24 miles away. By 2023, that ratio had inverted: more residents now work at distances greater than 24 miles (1,295 workers) than work within the 10-mile local radius (918 workers).

Commuting Destinations

The Rumford workforce is characterized by high regional mobility, with a majority of residents now commuting outside of town boundaries for work. While Rumford remains the single largest employment destination for its residents, the out-commuting trend highlights the town's integration into the broader Maine economy.

Commuting Destination	Workers Living in Rumford	% of Workers Living in Rumford
Rumford	624	23.2%
Mexico	191	7.1%
Lewiston	183	6.8%
North Oxford UT	115	4.3%
Portland	109	4.1%
Auburn	96	3.6%
Bethel	92	3.4%
Dixfield	74	2.8%
Bangor	65	2.4%
Paris	63	2.3%
All Other Locations	1,075	40.0%
Total Workers	2,687	

Source: Data from [US Census on the Map](#), 2023

Local Area

A significant portion of the workforce remains rooted in the immediate River Valley area.

- Approximately 23% of the resident labor force (624 workers) live and work within the town.
- As the primary neighboring hub, Mexico employs 7% of Rumford's residents (191 workers).
- Nearby towns such as Bethel (3.4%), Dixfield (2.8%), and Paris (2.3%) continue to serve as important local employment centers.

Regional Service Centers

Rumford residents are increasingly traveling to Maine's larger service centers, suggesting a shift toward jobs in specialized healthcare, professional services, and larger-scale retail.

- The Lewiston-Auburn metro area is a major draw, collectively employing 10.4% of Rumford's workforce (183 workers in Lewiston and 96 in Auburn).
- Despite the significant distance, 109 residents (4.1%) commute to work in Portland.

Highly Mobile Workforce

The All Other Locations category accounts for 40% of Rumford's residents (1,075 workers). This high percentage indicates that nearly half of the town's workforce is highly dispersed across many smaller municipalities or remote work sites that fall outside the top primary employment destinations.

Implication

The data confirms that Rumford has transitioned from a self-contained mill town to a regional "labor exporter". With 76.8% of working residents now leaving town for their job, Rumford's economic health is increasingly tied to regional transportation infrastructure and the economic vitality of distant hubs like Lewiston and Portland.

Commuting Origins

While Rumford is a major regional employment center, it relies heavily on a workforce that travels from surrounding communities. The data reveals that Rumford serves as the central destination for workers across the River Valley and beyond.

Commuting Origin	Jobs in Rumford	% of Jobs in Rumford
Rumford	624	27.2%
Mexico	213	9.3%
Dixfield	111	4.8%
Jay	65	2.8%
Hartford	53	2.3%

Canton	51	2.2%
Lewiston	50	2.2%
Peru	49	2.1%
Auburn	41	1.8%
Wilton	40	1.7%
All Other Locations	1,001	43.6%
Total Employment	2,298	

Source: Data from [US Census on the Map](#), 2023

Local Workforce Core

The foundation of Rumford's economy is supported by residents who both live and work in town.

- Approximately 27% (624) of the jobs in Rumford are filled by Rumford residents.
- Immediate neighbors provide the next largest share of the labor pool, led by Mexico (9.3% or 213 workers) and Dixfield (4.8% or 111 workers).
- Collectively, these three towns account for over 41% of all local employment.

Regional Labor Draw

Rumford's reach as an employer extends deep into Oxford, Franklin, and Androscoggin Counties.

- Communities to the north and east in Franklin County contribute significantly, with workers traveling from Jay (2.8%), Wilton (1.7%), and Canton (2.2%).
- Despite being Service Centers in their own right, Lewiston (2.2%) and Auburn (1.8%) combined send 91 workers to Rumford daily, indicating that the town offers specialized industrial or healthcare roles that attract talent from urban areas.
- Neighboring towns like Hartford (2.3%) and Peru (2.1%) also serve as vital bedroom communities for Rumford's industry.

High Labor Dispersion

The All Other Locations category accounts for 44% of Rumford's total employment (1,001 jobs). This suggests that Rumford's specialized industries, such as the paper mill and regional hospital, pull skilled labor from an expansive geographic footprint that likely spans dozens of smaller municipalities across Western Maine.

Implication

The data highlights Rumford's role as a Regional Employment Engine. Because nearly 73% of the people working in Rumford commute from other towns, the community's economic stability is inextricably linked to regional road maintenance and the availability of housing in neighboring towns. This heavy in-commuting also presents an opportunity: if Rumford can capture more of these

workers as residents through new attainable housing, it could significantly boost its local retail and tax base.

Commuting Summary

The commuting data paints a picture of a highly mobile and interconnected regional economy where Rumford serves as the central hub. While the town remains a primary employment destination, the traditional live-work model has evolved into a dynamic regional exchange. Today, only 27% of jobs in Rumford are held by local residents, meaning the town's industries rely on the influx of nearly 1,700 workers from the surrounding area every day.

Simultaneously, 77% of Rumford's working residents now travel outside town lines for their primary employment, frequently heading to regional hubs like Lewiston, Auburn, and Portland. This high level of cross commuting underscores two critical needs for Rumford's future:

- **Infrastructure Resilience:** The reliance on solo driving and increasing commute distances, with 1,295 residents now traveling more than 24 miles, makes the community vulnerable to shifts in fuel costs and dependent on well-maintained regional corridors.
- **Housing as an Economic Tool:** The fact that over 1,000 people commute into Rumford from other locations suggests a significant opportunity to capture a portion of the regional workforce as new residents, provided the town can address its current housing inventory and affordability gaps.

Rumford's economic health is no longer contained within its municipal borders; it is fundamentally tied to its ability to function as an accessible, affordable, and well-connected anchor for the entire River Valley.

Economic Development

Does the community have defined priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans?

If there is a traditional downtown or village center(s) in the community? If so, are they deteriorating or thriving?

Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?

Are public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?

If there are local or regional economic development incentives such as TIF districting, do they encourage development in growth areas?

How can/does the community use its unique assets such as recreational opportunities, historic architecture, civic events, etc. for economic growth?

This section evaluates the programs, policies, and partnerships that drive Rumford's economic growth and resiliency.

Community Assets

The economic landscape of Rumford and its surrounding region is undergoing a fundamental shift. Historically dependent on the paper industry and its ancillary businesses, the town is now transitioning toward a diversified economy. This strategy leverages Rumford's unique geographic position, its industrial heritage, and its burgeoning reputation as a recreational hub.

To ensure long-term resiliency, the town is focusing on multi-sector growth, specifically targeting:

- **Residential Development:** Addressing the need for modern housing, exemplified by the 33-unit Rumford Senior Living facility (completed 2026), which provides high-quality downtown living.
- **Hospitality and Services:** Capitalizing on the region's tourism growth by converting underutilized industrial assets, such as the former Bag Mill, into modern hotel accommodations.
- **Small Business and Entrepreneurship:** Utilizing the town's business district and business parks to foster a diverse retail and service sector.

Public Infrastructure and Assets

Rumford possesses a superior infrastructure backbone capable of supporting significant new commercial and industrial growth:

- **Utilities:** Robust three-phase power and extensive broadband access are available town-wide. The municipal water and sewer systems maintain the excess capacity necessary for expansion.

- **Transportation:** The town is a regional hub, served by rail and high-volume vehicular traffic along Routes 2 and 108.
- **Historic Downtown:** Rumford's historic downtown is characterized by its walkable neighborhoods and significant historic architecture, providing a distinct sense of place that attracts both residents and investment.

Natural Resources and Recreation

Outdoor recreation is a primary driver of the local economy, with assets that carry both regional and international significance:

- **Winter Sports:** Black Mountain of Maine and the Chisholm Ski Club are internationally recognized. Recent \$1.2 million in grant-funded improvements have modernized these facilities, ensuring they remain premier venues for alpine and Nordic racing.
- **Water Resources:** The Androscoggin River remains an underutilized asset. Rumford Falls, dropping 180 feet within a single mile, represents the most significant vertical drop east of Niagara Falls.
- **Public Lands and Conservation:** The establishment of the Rumford Community Forest (2024) has secured 498 acres of working forest. This project balances rural conservation with public access, protecting the town's scenic views while providing new hiking and educational opportunities.

Institutional Capacity and Planning

Since 2008, the town has shifted from a purely volunteer-led effort to a more structured economic approach.

- **Funding:** In FY 2013, the town established a dedicated economic development appropriation of \$40,000, signaling a commitment to professional economic development strategies. That appropriation has since more than doubled, with \$103,857 budgeted for economic development in the town's FY 2027 budget.
- **Partnerships:** Successful development is coordinated through a network of regional and local organizations:
 - **Regional:** AVCOG, River Valley Growth Council, and Western Maine Economic Development Council.
 - **Local:** River Valley Chamber of Commerce, active in downtown revitalization and community promotion.

Future Outlook

Over the next decade, Rumford is poised for continued expansion in the retail and service sectors. The interconnection between a walkable, historic downtown and world-class recreational assets gives Rumford a unique competitive advantage in Western Maine. Realizing this potential will require continued aggressive coordination between municipal government, private developers, and regional economic partners.

Economic Development Plans and Initiatives

This section highlights the strategic frameworks and grassroots projects that have shaped Rumford's economy over the last five years.

Regional Collaboration

- **AVCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2023-2028:** Rumford remains a focal point of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments' regional strategy. The town aligns with the CEDs priorities of workforce attraction and broadband expansion.
- **Maine Lakes and Mountains Tourism Council:** Rumford actively collaborates with this regional council to market the River Valley as a year-round destination. Recent efforts focus on linking Rumford's downtown to the broader regional trail networks.

Local Initiatives

- **Rumford Community Forest Stewardship Plan:** Finalized in June 2024, this Stewardship Plan is a landmark tri-party collaboration between the Town of Rumford, Inland Woods + Trails, and the Northern Forest Center. The plan manages 498 acres of permanently conserved woodlands and wetlands, balancing ecological conservation, managed forestry, and recreational tourism.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** The Town has pursued grants for streetscape and facade improvements, ensuring that the downtown neighborhood remains a walkable, attractive destination for new residents and remote workers.
- **Community Resilience Partnership:** In February 2026, Rumford initiated the process to join the state-level partnership. By completing a self-assessment of the town's energy and infrastructure vulnerabilities, Rumford is now eligible for Community Action Grants to fund projects that lower municipal operating costs and improve energy efficiency for local businesses.

Economic Development Incentives

While in the past Rumford has utilized **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts** as a tool to catalyze investment, it is no longer the practice or position of the Select Board to engage in TIFs. The town has TIF districts assigned to locations identified in the past comprehensive plan for commercial and industrial expansion, including the **Puila Business Park**, the **Rumford Falls Entryway**, and the **Gateway Area**. These districts were meant to shelter the new property tax value generated within their boundaries, preventing a corresponding decrease in state education subsidies and revenue sharing while allowing the town to reinvest the captured tax revenue back into local infrastructure and economic programming. The abandonment of the practice of engaging in new TIF agreements came after certain outcomes were never realized. The Puila Business Park TIF district has expired, and the Rumford Falls Entryway and Gateway Area TIF districts remain unchanged.

The town continues to operate a revolving “UDAG” loan program to encourage investment through negotiated terms. In the period of 2021-2026, this loan program has helped to spur new construction and redevelopment of senior and market rate housing, and historic building rehabilitation.

Rumford has participated in regional and state-level incentive programs such as the **Pine Tree Development Zone (PTDZ)**, which offered significant state tax credits and reimbursements to businesses in targeted sectors that create quality jobs in Designated Growth Areas. Enrollment in the PTDZ program closed December 31, 2024. Businesses already enrolled continue to receive state tax credits and reimbursements in targeted sectors that create jobs.

Established by the **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017**, the federal **Opportunity Zone (OZ)** program was designed to stimulate long-term private investment in economically distressed communities. Investors who reinvest unrealized capital gains into “Qualified Opportunity Funds” can defer federal taxes on those gains and pay zero capital gains tax on any appreciation from the new investment if held for at least ten years. In 2018, **Governor LePage designated [32 Opportunity Zones in Maine](#)**, selecting census tracts based on their potential for high-impact industrial and commercial redevelopment. **Rumford was awarded two of these designations** (Census Tracts 9655 and 9656), covering the historic downtown and the industrial riverfront. These tracts were chosen specifically to catalyze projects like the adaptive reuse of the town’s vacant mill infrastructure, transforming them from liabilities into economic drivers.

By leveraging its status as a federally designated Opportunity Zone alongside local TIF districts, Rumford offers a unique triple-tax-advantage for developers. The 2025 federal **One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)** enhancements, specifically the reduced **50% substantial improvement threshold** for rural areas, position Rumford as a premier target for adaptive reuse projects over the next decade.

Regulatory Environment & Performance Standards

Development Review

The **Site Plan Review Ordinance (Chapter 306)** serves as the town's primary mechanism for evaluating non-residential and multi-family residential growth. Unlike traditional zoning, which dictates where a use can go, this ordinance focuses on how a project is built to ensure it is compatible with its surroundings.

- **Jurisdiction:** Applies to all new commercial, retail, industrial, institutional, and public developments, as well as “substantial enlargements” (defined as a 20% increase in floor area or impervious surface).
- **Performance Standards:** The ordinance requires the Planning Board to evaluate projects based on specific criteria, including:
 - **Traffic and Safety:** Adequate provision for loading, parking, and circulation. Projects on Routes 2 and 108 are scrutinized for safe driveway placement to maintain traffic flow.
 - **Environmental Impact:** Standards for noise levels, exterior lighting (to prevent glare on abutting properties), and the control of fumes or odors.
 - **Stormwater and Erosion:** Requirements for site stabilization and drainage to prevent runoff onto neighboring lots or into the municipal system.
 - **Technical and Financial Capacity:** Applicants must demonstrate the capability to complete the project as proposed.

Resource-Specific Districts

While town-wide zoning is absent, Rumford maintains several critical districts that impose specific standards based on location.

- **Shoreland Zoning (Chapter 304):** Regulates all land within 250 feet of the Androscoggin River and significant wetlands, and 75 feet of streams.
 - **General Development District:** Applied to the downtown and industrial areas to allow for continued economic use of the riverfront.
 - **Resource Protection District:** Applied to undeveloped floodplains and steep slopes (+20%) where structural development is largely prohibited to prevent erosion and water pollution.
- **Wellhead Protection (Chapter 307):** Imposes strict performance standards on the Ellis River and Scotties Brook Aquifers. This ordinance limits or prohibits certain high-risk

industrial activities (such as the chemical storage or large-scale groundwater extraction) to protect the municipal water supply.

- **Floodplain Management (Chapter 305):** Ensures all development within the 100-year floodplain meets National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards, requiring specialized construction techniques for any commercial or industrial improvements in these zones.

Supporting Regulations

Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 303): Governs the creation of new lots. In areas served by municipal sewer, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet; in rural areas without sewer, the minimum increases to 40,000 square feet to ensure adequate space for septic systems.

Specialized Ordinances: Rumford has adopted specific standards for modern industrial and commercial trends, including:

- Wind Energy Facilities (Chapter 308)
- Solar Energy Systems (Chapter 311)
- Large-Scale Groundwater Extraction (Chapter 310)

Conclusion

Rumford stands as a vital but evolving regional economic anchor, balancing a legacy of industrial strength with a modern shift toward service and hospitality. While the town maintains a dominant footprint and a resilient retail sector - peaking at over \$54 million in taxable sales - it faces a widening gap between local wages and the cost of new, attainable housing. The data reveals a highly mobile workforce, with nearly 77% of residents commuting out of town and over 1,600 workers commuting into town daily, highlighting a critical opportunity to capture regional talent. By aligning local land use and economic development strategies, Rumford can strengthen its position as a live-work community and ensure long-term economic sustainability for the entire River Valley.

Housing

Rumford's current housing landscape is defined by a misalignment between an aging building stock and the evolving needs of its residents. While household size has stabilized at 2.15 people per household, it remains significantly lower than both Oxford County (2.42) and Maine (2.26) averages. This trend is driven by a high concentration of seniors and single-person households living alone. Because 89% of the town's housing was built before 1980, with over a third predating 1940, there is an urgent need for local rehabilitation programs. Investing in these programs is essential to ensure two things occur: first, that Rumford's historic inventory remains safe, energy-efficient, and accessible for a population that increasingly requires specialized support to maintain independent living; and second, that rehabilitated or new single family housing is move-in ready for young families. All neighborhoods in Rumford have homes that can use rehabilitation, and all neighborhoods in Rumford's identified growth areas have gaps and vacant lots for targeted new infill development for housing of every kind and price point.

Current Findings:

- Total housing inventory has remained relatively stable over the last 15 years.
- While Rumford's average household size stabilized at 2.15 in 2024, it remains notably lower than both the Maine (2.26) and Oxford County (2.42) averages, reflecting a higher concentration of single-person households and seniors living alone.
- Rumford's housing stock is substantially older than the county average, with 89% of occupied units built before 1980 and 37% pre-dating 1940.
- Median rent has risen 53.5% since 2010 to \$803, while the median renter household - earning just \$23,030 - faces an annual \$9,090 deficit to afford median market rates.
- Federal HUD affordability metrics based on an \$85,000 Area Median Income (AMI) mask local poverty; Rumford's median income is only 45% of that regional benchmark, making Affordable housing out of reach for many.
- While there are 234 subsidized housing units in Rumford, 84% of those are restricted to seniors or the disabled, leaving a shortage of affordable housing for working-age families.

Regional Housing Comparison

According to the 2024 Census estimates, the total number of housing units in Rumford increased by 122, or 3.7%, since 2010, compared to 2.2% for Oxford County or 4.2% for Maine. Rumford's housing growth rate was higher than many surrounding communities, except for Bethel, which saw an 11% increase in housing since 2010.

Community	2000	2010	2024	Change 2000- 2010	% Change 2000- 2010	Change 2010- 2024	% Change 2010- 2024	Total Change 2000- 2024	% Change 2000- 2024
Rumford	3,280	3,288	3,410	+8	+0.2%	+122	+3.7%	+130	+4.0%
Andover	553	603	584	+50	+9.0%	-19	-3.2%	+31	+5.6%
Bethel	1,447	1,861	2,065	+414	+28.6%	+204	+11.0%	+618	+42.7%
Dixfield	1,118	1,180	1,013	+62	+5.5%	-167	-14.2%	-105	-9.4%
Mexico	1,448	1,404	1,351	-44	-3.0%	-53	-3.8%	-97	-6.7%
Peru	849	909	853	+60	+7.1%	-56	-6.2%	+4	+0.5%
Roxbury	457	430	432	-27	-5.9%	+2	+0.5%	-25	-5.5%
Androscoggin County	45,960	49,090	50,471	+3,130	+6.8%	+1,381	+2.8%	+4,511	+9.8%
Oxford County	32,295	36,055	36,855	+3,760	+11.6%	+800	+2.2%	+4,560	+14.1%
Maine	651,901	721,830	751,876	+69,929	+10.7%	+30,046	+4.2%	+99,975	+15.3%

Source: 2000 and 2010 from US Census Decennial Census, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); 2024 from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); calculations by comprehensive plan team

Housing Characteristics

Are seasonal homes being converted to year-round use or vice-versa? What impact does this have on the community?

Will additional low and moderate income family, senior, or assisted living housing be necessary to meet projected needs for the community? Will these needs be met locally or regionally?

Are there other major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing?

The following analysis details the structural and demographic makeup of Rumford’s residential landscape by analyzing housing types, occupancy rates, and tenure. It assesses the age of the town’s housing stock and average household sizes to identify how well the existing inventory aligns with the needs of residents. Together, these characteristics provide a baseline for understanding the quality, stability, and future requirements of the housing market.

Housing Type and Occupancy

The Census data reveal a transformation in how Rumford’s housing stock is being used. While the total number of housing units has remained relatively stable (increased by 130 units since 2000), the types of homes and their occupancy status have changed significantly.

Housing Type/Characteristic	2000 Number	2000 Percent	2010 Number	2010 Percent	2024 Number	2024 Percent
Total Housing Units	3,280	100%	3,288	100%	3,410	100%
Single-family	1,824	55.6%	1,777	54.0%	1,696	49.7%
Multi-family (2 or more units)	1,308	39.9%	1,392	42.3%	834	24.5%
Mobile homes	148	4.5%	119	3.6%	161	4.7%
Vacant Housing Units	404	12.3%	654	19.9%	719	21.1%
For seasonal/recreational	47	1.4%	40	1.2%	270	7.9%

Source: 2000 and 2010 from US Census Decennial Census, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); 2024 from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); calculations by comprehensive plan team

Multi-Family Housing Decline: Between 2010 and 2024, Rumford saw a significant reduction in multi-family units (2 or more units), dropping from 1,392 (42.3%) to just 834 (24.5%). This represents a loss of 558 units.

Single-Family Housing Decline: The number of single-family homes has also trended downward, decreasing from 1,824 in 2000 to 1,696 in 2024.

Increasing Vacancy Rates: Overall vacancy has climbed steadily over 24 years, moving from 12% in 2000 to 21% in 2024.

Rise of Seasonal and Recreational Use: The recent Census estimates show a surge in homes used for seasonal or recreational purposes. In 2010, only 40 units (1.2%) were seasonal; by 2024, that number increased to 270 units (7.9%). If the Census estimates are accurate, this represents a significant increase in seasonal housing in Rumford.

Impact

- **Shrinking Year-Round Inventory:** The combined loss of multi-family units and the rise in seasonal homes means there are fewer places for locals to live year-round.
- **Economic Impact of Vacancy:** Having 1 in 5 housing units sitting vacant (719 units total) can lead to neighborhood blight and a lower tax base for town services.
- **Shift in Community Character:** The move away from traditional apartments and single-family homes towards seasonal use suggests Rumford may be becoming more of a destination or “resort” town.

Housing Tenure

After an 8% decline in occupied housing units in Rumford between 2000 and 2010, mainly driven by a loss in rental units, there has been a 9.7% increase in renter occupied housing units since 2010, while owner occupied housing declined by an additional 2%.

Year	Owner Occupied Number	Owner Occupied Percent of Occupied	Renter Occupied Number	Renter Occupied Percent of Occupied	Total Occupied Units
2000	1,749	60.8%	1,127	39.2%	2,876
2010	1,728	65.6%	906	34.4%	2,634
2024	1,697	63.1%	994	36.9%	2,691

Change 2000-2010	-21	+4.8 points	-221	-4.8 points	-242
Change 2010-2024	-31	-2.5 points	88	+2.5 points	57
Change 2000-2024	-52	+2.2 points	-133	-2.2 points	-185

Source: 2000 and 2010 from US Census Decennial Census, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); 2024 from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); calculations by comprehensive plan team; owner/renter percentages calculated as percent of occupied units

Average Household Size

The average household size in Maine has undergone a steady decline since 1960, dropping from 3.4 to approximately 2.3 people today. This shift is a direct result of several demographic drivers: falling birth rates, an increase in single-person households, and a rising number of seniors aging in place.

Household Size Stabilized: Rumford has historically mirrored this statewide trend. Between 2000 and 2020, the town's average household size fell from 2.21 to 2.12. However, 2024 estimates indicate a slight reversal, with the size increasing to 2.15. While this suggests recent stabilization, Rumford remains below the Oxford County (2.42) and state (2.26) averages, largely due to a high concentration of single person households (37.5%).

Community	2000	2010	2020	2024
Rumford	2.21	2.17	2.12	2.15
Andover	2.14	2.13	2.11	2.27
Bethel	2.33	2.33	2.25	2.14
Dixfield	2.47	2.44	2.29	2.46
Mexico	2.27	2.26	2.26	2.61
Peru	2.59	2.45	2.33	2.41
Roxbury	2.33	2.04	1.97	2.15
Oxford County	2.42	2.35	2.30	2.42
Maine	2.39	2.32	2.28	2.26

Source: 2000 and 2010 from US Census Decennial Census, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); 2024 from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026); calculations by comprehensive plan team; calculations by plan team

Implications For Future Housing: The prevalence of smaller households reveals a significant housing mismatch in Rumford. The town’s inventory consists primarily of older, larger family homes, yet current demand is trending toward smaller, more manageable units.

- **Senior Needs:** There is a need for housing suited for individuals who are aging alone. Currently, 433 residents aged 65 or older live in single-person households. Many of these residents occupy oversized, older homes that present challenges in terms of maintenance, accessibility, and heating costs.
- **Unit Size Mismatch:** Future residential development and rehabilitation programs should prioritize 1- and 2-bedroom units. This would provide viable options for both the aging population and the growing number of young professionals or small families moving into the community.

Age of Housing Stock

Rumford’s housing stock is significantly older than the regional average, presenting unique challenges for maintenance and energy efficiency. Nearly 90% of the town’s housing was built before 1980, compared to just 55% in Oxford County. Notably, 37% of Rumford’s homes pre-date 1940, meaning more than one-third of the local housing stock is at least 85 years old.

Year Structure Built	Rumford 2024 Number	Rumford 2024 Percent	Oxford County 2024 Percent	Age in 2026 (years old)
2020 or later	30	1.1%	1.5%	0 to 6 years
2010-2019	55	2.0%	6.3%	7 to 16 years
2000-2009	20	0.7%	12.4%	17 to 26 years
1980-1999	181	6.7%	25.0%	27 to 46 years
1960-1979	639	23.7%	21.1%	47 to 66 years
1940-1959	764	28.4%	10.6%	67 to 86 years
1939 or earlier	1,002	37.2%	23.1%	87 plus years
Total 2024	2,691	100%	100%	
Post-1980 Total	286	10.6%	45.2%	Less than 47 years
Pre-1980 Total	2,405	89.4%	54.8%	47 plus years
Pre-1960 Total	1,766	65.6%	33.7%	67 plus years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, Table DP04

Affordability and Workforce Housing

Is housing, including rental housing, affordable to those earning the median income in the region? Is housing affordable to those earning 80% of the median income? If not, review local and regional efforts to address the issue.

Will additional low and moderate income family, senior, or assisted living housing be necessary to meet projected needs for the community? Will these needs be met locally or regionally?

This section evaluates the financial landscape of Rumford’s residential market by analyzing the relationship between home values, rents, and the Area Median Income (AMI). By examining the rental affordability gap and the current inventory of subsidized housing units, the plan identifies whether housing availability aligns with the economic reality of the local workforce. These metrics highlight the challenges residents face in achieving stable homeownership or finding attainable rentals in a tightening market.

Home Value

The median value of the 1,697 owner-occupied units in Rumford is \$127,700, and 36% of all owner-occupied units are valued at less than \$100,000. Another 32% of owner-occupied units are valued between \$150,000 and \$300,000, and 11% of owner-occupied units are valued at more than \$300,000. It is important to recognize that how units are valued does not necessarily correspond to their sales prices.

Value	Number of Owner-occupied units	Percent of Owner-occupied units
Less than \$50,000	337	19.9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	267	15.7%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	358	21.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	284	16.7%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	258	15.2%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	140	8.2%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	53	3.1%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0%

Median Value	\$127,700	
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (January 2026).

Homeownership Affordability

The gap between Rumford’s median household income and the cost of homeownership has widened over the last decade. In 2015, the market featured a significant “affordability cushion”: a median household earning \$32,000 could afford a \$116,000 home, well above the actual median sale price of \$54,500. By 2024, that surplus vanished as median sale prices increased 250% to \$190,000, far outstripping a modest 56% growth in income.

While 2025 data shows a 13% dip in home prices, this provided no relief for residents, as local incomes fell by an identical 13% during the same period. As a result, the average household still faces a significant financial burden, requiring a 14% increase in annual earnings just to afford a median-priced home in their own community.

Year	Rumford Affordability Index	Rumford Median Home Sale Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Rumford Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home
2015	2.13	\$54,500	\$116,008	\$32,367	\$15,137
2016	2.35	\$50,500	\$118,559	\$32,430	\$13,838
2017	1.97	\$58,500	\$115,257	\$32,660	\$16,587
2018	1.36	\$81,000	\$110,271	\$33,050	\$24,267
2019	1.31	\$84,900	\$111,356	\$32,294	\$24,525
2020	1.20	\$103,500	\$123,693	\$34,574	\$28,893
2021	1.14	\$130,000	\$148,340	\$40,352	\$35,648
2022	1.02	\$150,000	\$153,108	\$45,748	\$44,636
2023	0.99	\$151,200	\$149,393	\$48,482	\$48,804
2024	0.81	\$190,000	\$153,269	\$50,372	\$62,214
2025	0.87	\$165,000	\$143,580	\$44,077	\$50,200

Affordability Index = Median Income divided by Income Needed to Afford Median Home. Index greater than 1.0 = affordable, less than 1.0 = unaffordable.

Source: Maine State Housing Authority affordability metrics; last updated August 2025, accessed via <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/test-homeownership-program-metrics> (January 2026). Home price data are from the Multiple Listing Service database. Household income data are estimates provided by Claritas LLC.

Housing Availability

Beyond direct costs, housing affordability is heavily influenced by a tightening supply. Rumford's market demonstrates a clear supply-demand imbalance: between 2015 and 2025, the annual volume of home sales grew by 30% (from 47 to 60 units), yet the median sale price increased from \$54,500 to \$165,000, a more than 200% increase. This price increase was compounded by a lack of new inventory. Throughout the late 2010s, new construction was virtually non-existent, averaging fewer than three units per year.

Recent data shows a shift in momentum, with 46 permits issued between 2024 and 2025. However, a construction gap remains: despite a decline from the \$279,187 per-unit peak in 2022, the 2025 average value of \$198,227 remains substantially higher than the price of older housing stock. As a result, 62% of homes now sell for more than what is considered an affordable price for the average resident. This data confirms that while buyer interest is high, the inventory of attainable housing has failed to keep pace, driving prices out of reach for many residents.

Year	New Units	Value per New Unit	Houses Sold	Median Sale Price	Houses Sold for More Than Affordable Price
2015	3	\$233,333	47	\$54,500	19.1%
2016	4	\$233,333	64	\$50,500	14.1%
2017	1	\$248,119	61	\$58,500	16.4%
2018	2	\$162,500	65	\$81,000	27.7%
2019	4	\$150,000	61	\$84,900	24.6%
2020	4	\$248,176	75	\$103,500	36.0%
2021	10	\$259,249	78	\$130,000	42.3%
2022	7	\$279,187	92	\$150,000	47.8%
2023	8	\$276,695	66	\$151,200	51.5%
2024	20	\$226,266	69	\$190,000	62.3%
2025	26	\$198,227	60	\$165,000	61.7%

Source: US Census Building Permit Survey Data, annual building permit totals reported to the Census, accessed via <https://www2.census.gov/econ/bps/Place/Northeast%20Region/> (February 2026); Maine State Housing Authority home sales data; accessed via <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/test-homeownership-program-metrics> (February 2026). Home price data are from the Multiple Listing Service database. Household income data are estimates provided by Claritas LLC.

Rental Housing Affordability

The Census estimates show a growing affordability gap for renters in Rumford, illustrating that while the general population may find median rents manageable, those who actually rent are increasingly priced out of the local market.

Year	Rumford Median Monthly Rent	Income Needed to Afford Median Rent	Rumford Median Household Income	Rumford Median Renter Household Income	Affordable to Median Household?	Affordable to Median Renter Household?
2010	\$523	\$20,920	\$31,943	\$19,545	Yes	No
2015	\$562	\$22,480	\$30,200	\$13,523	Yes	No
2024	\$803	\$32,120	\$38,403	\$23,030	Yes	No

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2006-2010, 2011-2015, and 2020-2024, accessed via data.census.gov (February 2026).

Rising Costs of Housing: Between 2010 and 2024, Rumford’s median monthly rent climbed from \$523 to \$803, a significant 53.5% increase.

The Rent-to-Income Gap: To afford the median rent in 2024 without being rent-burdened, a household needs an annual income of \$32,120. However, the median income for actual renter households in Rumford is only \$23,030, leaving a deficit of nearly \$9,100.

The Renter-Owner Income Gap: There is a stark contrast in affordability based on household type. The median household overall earns enough to afford rent (\$38,403), but the typical renter household has consistently earned less than what is required to live comfortably in Rumford for over a decade.

Persistent Inaccessibility: Since at least 2010, the median rental unit in Rumford has never been affordable to the median renter household. This suggests that a majority of renters are likely spending significantly more than the recommended 30% of their income on housing.

Area Median Income

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses Area Median Income (AMI) as the standard for measuring housing affordability because it adjusts for regional economic circumstances. AMI reflects what people earn in a specific geographic area. It serves as a benchmark to determine who qualifies for housing assistance and whether current rents are attainable for the local workforce.

HUD breaks down AMI into tiers to identify different levels of need:

- **Extremely Low Income (0-20% AMI):** Households at this level, like those in Rumford earning \$17,000 or less, often face the highest risk of housing instability.
- **Very Low Income (50% AMI):** Households at this level (\$42,500 for a family of four) can typically afford median rents but may struggle with unexpected costs.
- **Low Income (80% AMI):** These households (\$68,000) are the target for many workforce housing programs.

AMI for a 4-Person Household	20% of AMI	50% of AMI	80% of AMI	120% of AMI
\$85,000	\$17,000	\$42,500	\$68,000	\$102,000

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development [FY 2025 Income Limits Summary for Oxford County, ME](#), 2025; \$85,000 Area Median Income for 4-person household is calculated based on HUD income limit of \$68,000 for a family of four at 80% of Area Median Income

Rumford is part of the Oxford County, ME HUD Non-metropolitan Area. This means HUD calculates AMI based on the combined economic data of Oxford County rather than just Rumford alone. Dividing communities into these areas provides a more accurate estimate of AMI because:

- **Commuting Patterns:** It reflects where people live versus where they work. Residents in Rumford might work in Bethel or South Paris, making the county-wide income a better reflection of the local economy.
- **Market Competition:** It acknowledges that someone looking for housing in Rumford is also looking for housing in nearby communities.

- **Statistical Reliability:** Small towns often have noisy data from one year to the next; grouping them into a larger market area provides a more stable and reliable number for setting Federal policy.

HUD sets an AMI of \$85,000 for the region. However, Rumford’s actual Median Renter Household Income is only \$23,030. While Rumford’s median monthly rent of \$803 looks affordable when compared to a \$85,000 regional AMI, it is unaffordable for the typical renter household living in Rumford, who earn just 27% of the regional AMI, placing them in the Extremely Low Income category by Federal standards. This demonstrates that regional HUD data can sometimes mask specific local housing needs present in a rural community like Rumford.

Rental Affordability Gap Analysis

While there may be a mathematical “surplus” of low-cost units in Rumford, the actual renter population is increasingly unable to afford them. This is driven by a widening gap between regional federal benchmarks and local market conditions. The Rental Affordability Gap Analysis presented in the following table reveals a structural mismatch in the units that are available and affordable to households in each income category.

Income Category	Maximum Affordable Monthly Rent	Number of Households	Number of Rental Units Available at that Price	Surplus/Deficit of Available Units
Less than 30% AMHI	\$173	69	102	33
30-50% AMHI	\$288	110	126	16
50-80% AMHI	\$461	245	65	-180
80-100% AMHI	\$576	97	195	98
100-125% AMHI	\$720	142	102	-40
>125% AMHI	> \$720	332	404	72

Source: Data from US Census American Community Survey 2024 5-year estimates (Tables: B25118, B25119, B25056), calculations by staff

While there is a technical surplus of 49 units for those earning less than 50% of the Area Median Household Income (AMHI), there is a deficit of 180 units for the workforce bracket (50-80% of AMHI) along with a 40 unit deficit for the moderate income bracket (100-125% AMHI). This suggests that higher-income earners are likely renting down into lower-cost units because middle-tier housing is unavailable, which in turn crowds out the

lowest-income workers.

Subsidized Housing Units

Subsidized and assisted housing programs provide critical support for low-income families, elderly, and special needs populations in Rumford. According to Maine Housing, there are eight subsidized housing developments with a total of 234 units.

Project Name	Population Served	Type of Assistance	Total Units
Concorde Apts.	62+; Disabled	Income Based Rent	27
Rumford Island Complex	62+; Disabled	Income Based Rent	88
Rumford Senior Living	55+	Affordable Rental	33
Swainbrook Apartments	62+; Disabled	Income Based Rent	24
Supportive Housing 4			4
The Somerset	62+; Disabled	Income Based Rent	24
986 Prospect Avenue	Family	Affordable Rental	18
The Linell, LLC	Family	Affordable Housing	16
Total Subsidized Units			234

Source: [Maine Housing Oxford County Affordable Housing Options](#), [Maine Housing 15 year Financed-Developments](#) in Rumford.

Senior and Disabled Populations: The vast majority of subsidized units, approximately 196 units (84%), are reserved for residents aged 62+ or those with disabilities. Major complexes include the Rumford Island Complex (88 units) and Concorde Apartments (27 units).

Family Housing: Dedicated family subsidized housing represents a smaller portion of the inventory, with 34 affordable units split between 986 Prospect Avenue and The Linell, LLC.

Income-Based vs. Affordable Housing: Most of these developments utilize Income-Based Rent, ensuring that residents pay a fixed percentage of their earnings toward housing. A smaller number of developments provide Affordable rental rates or purchase prices that are set below market value but are not necessarily tied to individual tenant income.

Implications

- While these 234 units are essential, they represent only a fraction of the total housing need in Rumford.
 - With 719 vacant units town-wide and a median renter income of just \$23,030, the gap between the subsidized inventory and the number of rent-burdened households remains significant.
- The heavy concentration of units for seniors (84% of the subsidized stock) aligns with the town's aging demographic but highlights a potential shortage of subsidized options for working-age families who are currently struggling to afford a median rent of \$803.

Future Housing Demand

How many additional housing units (if any), including rental units, will be necessary to accommodate projected population and demographic changes during the planning period?

Future housing demand depends on population projections, household size trends, and local and regional housing needs. As discussed in the Population and Demographics chapter, the state predicts that, based on historical trends, Rumford's population will decline over the next decade. However, more recent data show Rumford's population is growing again.

In addition to the local need for more affordable rental and owner housing in Rumford, there is also a statewide need for more housing. The [2023 State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study](#) found that Maine will need approximately 38,500 homes to remedy historic underproduction and an additional 37,900 to 45,800 homes to meet expected population growth and household changes by 2030.

The [2024 Maine Statewide and Regional Housing Production Goals Report](#) estimated that Oxford County needs 4,110 new housing units by 2030 to meet the state's housing goal. The following table shows a breakdown of the number of new units that are needed in Oxford County by year for 2024-2030. Rumford's share of the county housing goal has been estimated based on Rumford's current share of county employment, which was about 12.8% in 2024.

Year	State Goal for Oxford County	Rumford Share of County Goal
2024	340	43
2025	370	47
2026	430	55
2027	490	63
2028	490	63
2029	490	63
2030	490	63
Total 2024-2030	3,100	395

Source: [2024 Maine Statewide and Regional Housing Production Goals Report](#); Rumford's share of Oxford County's goal is based on Rumford's share of Oxford County's employment, which is 12.8% according to 2024 Maine DOL data.

Local Regulations

How do existing local regulations encourage or discourage the development of affordable/workforce housing?

The development of affordable and workforce housing in Rumford is primarily governed by a performance-based regulatory system rather than traditional town-wide zoning. This means that instead of strict district-based restrictions, housing projects are evaluated on their ability to meet specific environmental and infrastructure standards.

The following summary outlines the local regulations that impact housing production:

Density and Lot Size Requirements

Rumford's **Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 303)** establish the baseline for housing density. These standards are tiered based on infrastructure availability to encourage development where it is most cost-effective:

- **Areas with Municipal Sewer:** The minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet with 100 feet of frontage. This relatively small minimum lot size supports right-sized workforce housing and infill development in the downtown.

- **Rural Areas (Non-Sewered):** To ensure adequate space for subsurface wastewater disposal (septic), the minimum lot size increases to 40,000 square feet with 150 feet of frontage.

State-Mandates

LD 2003

As of 2024, Rumford has integrated the requirements of **Maine's LD 2003**, which significantly lowers barriers to affordable housing:

- **Affordable Housing Density Bonus:** Qualifying affordable housing developments located in designated growth areas or served by public water/sewer are eligible for a **2.5x density bonus** over the base allowable units.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** ADUs are now permitted by right on any lot where a single-family home is allowed. This provides a flexible path for creating smaller, lower-cost workforce housing options within existing neighborhoods.
- **Unit Allowance:** On lots where residential use is permitted, the town must allow between two and four units depending on whether the lot is vacant and its proximity to growth areas.

LD 1829

Signed into law in June 2025, **LD 1829** serves as a substantial update to LD 2003 that removes additional barriers to housing development.

Expanded Unit Allowances

LD 1829 increases the base density that must be allowed on residential lots. The new standards generally supersede local density caps:

- **Statewide Minimum:** Up to **3 dwelling units** must be allowed on any lot where residential housing is permitted.
- **Growth Area Bonus:** Up to **4 units** must be allowed on any lot located in a designated growth area or any lot served by public water and sewer.

- **Repeal of “Single Structure” Rule:** Unlike LD 2003, these units no longer have to be contained within a single building (e.g. a four-plex). They can be separate structures, allowing for cottage courts or small-scale infill developments.

Growth Caps Prohibited

LD 1829 prohibits municipalities from enacting or enforcing **Rate of Growth** ordinances within locally designated growth areas. This requirement ensures that state investment to support new housing or economic development in locally designated growth areas is not arbitrarily limited by local permit caps. Rumford does not have a **Rate of Growth** ordinance.

Dimensional Standards

Municipalities can no longer use dimensional requirements to make multi-unit buildings harder to build than single-family homes.

- **Uniform Standards:** Frontage, setbacks, lot depth, and lot area requirements for a 3- or 4-unit building must be the same as those applied to a single-family home.
- **Height Bonus:** Affordable housing developments are now granted a mandatory 14-foot height bonus (typically one extra story) over local height restrictions to ensure project viability.

Streamlined Review

To prevent projects from being delayed by long Planning Board cycles, LD 1829 mandates **administrative-only review** for any housing structure within **4 or fewer units**. This means if a project meets the objective standards in your code, it is approved by staff without requiring a public hearing or a full Planning Board vote.

ADU Modernization

LD 1829 further protects the development of Accessory Dwelling Units:

- **Fire sprinklers:** Municipalities **cannot** require fire sprinklers for an ADU unless the entire structure has 3 or more total units. This removes a significant cost barrier for homeowners.

- **Owner-Occupancy Requirements:** Towns can no longer require a property owner to live on-site to build or rent an ADU.
- **Nonconforming Lots:** ADUs must be allowed on legally nonconforming lots as long as they do not increase the existing nonconformity.

Compliance Timeline

- **Training Requirement:** All Planning Board and Board of Appeals members must complete state-approved land-use training within 180 days of their appointment (or 180 days from the bill's effective date for current members).
- **Ordinance Updates:** The compliance deadline for Rumford is July 1, 2027.

As of March 2026, the Maine Legislature is considering [LD 2173](#), an emergency measure intended to clarify the implementation of LD 1829. This bill maintains a compliance deadline of July 1, 2027, while offering potential grace periods for subdivision definitions until 2028. It also clarifies that industrial zones remain protected from residential mandates.

Site Plan Review

For multi-family projects (typically involving three or more units), the **Site Plan Review Ordinance (Chapter 306)** is the primary regulatory tool. It ensures that workforce housing is built responsibly:

- **Technical and Financial Capacity:** Developers must prove they have the resources to complete the project.
- **Impact Standards:** Standards for noise, lighting, and stormwater runoff ensure that new higher-density housing remains compatible with the historic character of Rumford's residential streets.

Specialized Resource Protection

Development is also restricted by overlay ordinances that protect vital natural resources:

- **Wellhead Protection (Chapter 307):** While housing is generally allowed, certain high-density projects may face stricter wastewater scrutiny if located within the protected zones for the **Ellis River or Scotties Brook Aquifers**.

- **Shoreland Zoning (Chapter 304):** Projects near the Androscoggin River or major wetlands must meet setbacks and clearing limits, which can affect the footprint and feasibility of riverfront housing developments.

Regional Partnerships and Coalitions

Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC)

The **Town of Rumford is a member organization** of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. MAHC is a non-partisan advocacy group representing over 140 public and private organizations. For Rumford, this membership provides:

- **Legislative Advocacy:** Direct representation in Augusta regarding bills like **LD 1829** and **LD 2173**.
- **Data and Research:** Access to comprehensive reports on housing production costs and workforce retention.
- **Networking:** Connections to modular manufacturers and architects who specialize in Maine's specific energy and building codes.

Maine Coalition for Housing and Quality Services

This coalition focuses on **supportive housing** for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. They are an essential resource for Rumford when planning for Continuum of Care projects, ensuring that new housing developments (such as the **Rumford Senior Living** project) meet the highest standards for person-centered design and dignity.

Maine Housing Opportunity Program

Housed within the newly established **Maine Office of Community Affairs**, this program provides the technical and financial assistance necessary for Rumford to implement state-mandated zoning changes. They offer:

- **Model Ordinances:** Pre-vetted language for LD 1829 compliance.

- **Grants:** Funding for municipal capacity to review and approve innovative housing projects, such as **manufactured housing**.

Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments

As the designated Economic Development District for Oxford County, the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG) is a critical regional partner for affordable and workforce housing development.

Municipal Pre-Approval Program

In December 2025, AVCOG launched a formal solicitation for architectural designs for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) specifically for its member communities. The program prioritizes energy-efficient, accessible, and low-cost units ranging from 350 to 1,000 square feet. Once these plans are finalized in 2026, Rumford can adopt them. This allows a resident to pick an AVCOG-approved plan, which significantly reduces their architectural costs and allows the local Planning Board to fast-track the approval since the structural and code-compliance review has already been done at the regional level.

Economic Development Strategy

AVCOG manages the 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which acts as the master plan for the region. Rumford's participation in the CEDS is what makes the town eligible for federal funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Conclusion

Rumford's housing characteristics reflect decades of industrial history and recent economic transition. While the town has successfully halted a 70-year population decline, the current inventory is dominated by aging structures that are increasingly being left vacant or converted to seasonal use. The increase in seasonal housing and loss of over 500 multi-family units since 2010 have tightened the year-round market, leaving the median renter household - earning just \$23,030 - unable to afford the median market rent of \$803. Furthermore, even though there are 234 subsidized housing units in Rumford, 84% of this stock is restricted to seniors and residents with disabilities, leaving a significant gap in attainable housing for working-age families.

Public Facilities, Infrastructure & Services

Understanding the current condition of Rumford's water, sewer, solid waste, schools, emergency services, telecommunications, and energy systems, is essential for sound planning decisions across every sector. This section presents an analysis of Rumford's public facilities and services, with updated data, capacity assessments, condition evaluations, and capital improvement priorities.

Water Systems - Rumford Water District

Are municipal services adequate to meeting changes in population and demographics?

Has the community partnered with neighboring communities to share services, reduce costs and/or improve services?

If the community has a public water system, are any expansions anticipated? Have suitable sources been identified and protected? Is the water district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?

If the town does not have a public sewer or water system, is this preventing accommodation of growth? N/A

Governance & Service Area: The Rumford Water District is a quasi-municipal district established by state statute and governed by a 3-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Town Select Board, serving staggered 3-year terms. The district was formally organized in 1911 from the assets of three private companies: the Rumford Falls Light and Water Company, Virginia Spring Company, and Union Construction. Properties outside the service area rely on private wells.

Historical Background: Around 1890, Hugh Chisholm established the Rumford Falls Power Company, spurring rapid growth in the Rumford Falls area — population rose from under 1,000 in 1890 to over 10,000 by 1930. Much of the original water infrastructure dates from this period. The original source of supply was the Androscoggin River and Virginia springs, later supplemented by the Mt. Zircon Reservoir (completed 1913). Following passage of the Safe Drinking Water Act in the 1980s, the district transitioned away from surface water; the Mt. Zircon Reservoir was decommissioned in 1991 and replaced by the Milligan's #1 well (replaced by Milligan's #2 in 1997). Scotties Brook Wells, originally drilled in 1952 and 1966, were upgraded in 2005 and are now in daily use.

Customer Base & Stability: Between 2007 and 2018, the RWD service base remained stable. Residential accounts held nearly flat (1,578 → 1,586), commercial accounts declined (140 → 126), industrial held nearly flat (13 → 12), and government accounts grew slightly (18 → 21). The district's two largest industrial customers — ND Paper and Rumford Power Associates — significantly

reduced usage over that period, with those two customers alone accounting for 25% of the total system-wide decline in water production.

Major Industrial Dependency: ND Paper Mill remains the dominant single customer, consuming 43% of total water sold while contributing approximately 19% of total revenue. In 2018, the mill used approximately 99.3 million gallons annually, down from 114.3 million gallons in 2008 — a trend attributed to industrial efficiency and process changes.

Water System Component	2024 Current Status	Capacity Assessment
Service population	Approximately 4,500 served by RWD (Town population 5,858 per 2020 Census; population has declined steadily since 1930 peak)	Adequate capacity
Distribution system	44 miles of transmission and distribution mains	Adequate coverage
Fire hydrants	224 hydrants; predominantly Eddy brand, annually pressure-checked and maintained	Adequate fire protection
Average daily use	632,000 gallons/day (2016-2017 avg.) Down 24% from 810,000 gpd in 2006-2007 Total 2017 production: 230.75 million gallons	Well below capacity (~41% of sustainable capacity of 1.55 MGD; system demand expected to remain flat through 2043)
Primary source: Ellis River / Milligan's Wells	Milligan's #2 (primary): safe yield >1,000 gpm; delivery capped at 900 gpm (1.3 MGD) by 10" pipe bottleneck between well & Virginia Reservoir Milligan's #1 (emergency backup only): ~600 gpm Aquifer safe yield reserve set at 1 MGD per Poland Spring agreement (signed 2016)	Excellent capacity Bottleneck is the primary system constraint. Long-term CIP includes a parallel 16" transmission main (8+ miles) to overcome this limitation.
Secondary source: Scotties Brook Wells	Well #1 (24", 60 ft deep, upgraded 2005): 440 gpm normal / 250 gpm drought Well #2 (8", 55 ft deep, upgraded 2005): 210 gpm normal / 130 gpm drought Combined station capacity: 600 gpm (0.86 MGD) Safe drought yield: ~380 gpm (0.55 MGD)	Good secondary source. Yield is hydraulically linked to Scotty Brook; subject to reduction under drought conditions. Supplies up to ~40% of system demand.
Storage capacity	2,000,000 gallons total: Blanchard Reservoir: 1,000,000 gal. (upper zone) Maple Street Reservoir: 1,000,000 gal. (lower zone)	Adequate storage. Can sustain 3,500 gpm fire flow for ~9 hours at full capacity.

Water System Component	2024 Current Status	Capacity Assessment
	Both replaced 1991; inspected 2017 — good condition ~2.5 days storage at average demand	
Source protection land	200+ acres protected under locally adopted Wellhead Protection Ordinance covering both Milligan's (Ellis River) and Scotties Brook wellfields. Town Planning Board cooperates on proposals in wellhead protection areas.	Excellent protection. Both wellfields are largely free of development. Minor oil spill history in Scotties Zone II; no confirmed well impact.

Unaccounted Water: Unaccounted water has ranged from a high of 36.4% in 1999 to a low of 3.7% in 2002. By 2016, it had dropped to just 4.57%. This improvement is attributed to ongoing main replacements, leak detection, and an active meter replacement program (transitioning to iPERL solid-state meters with bi-directional communication).

Water Supply Sources: The district draws from two separate aquifers:

- *Milligan's Wells (Ellis River Valley):* Milligan's #2 is the primary source, with a safe yield exceeding 1,000 gpm, though a 10-inch pipe bottleneck between the well and Virginia Reservoir limits delivery to 900 gpm (1.3 MGD). Milligan's #1 is retained for emergency backup at approximately 600 gpm. The total reserve capacity at the Milligan's aquifer has been set at a minimum of 1 MGD as part of the Poland Spring agreement.
- *Scotties Brook Wells (Swift River Valley):* Well #1 yields approximately 440 gpm under normal conditions (down to 250 gpm in drought); Well #2 yields approximately 210 gpm (down to 130 gpm in drought). Combined safe drought yield is approximately 380 gpm. The pump station can supply up to 600 gpm under normal or emergency conditions.
- Combined sustainable system yield: approximately 1.55 MGD (1,500 gpm). Under emergency power, the combined capacity reaches approximately 1.7 MGD.

Water Quality & Treatment: Water quality from both aquifers is excellent. Both stations use Lowry Bubbler aeration systems to strip CO₂, raise pH, and remove radon, resulting in non-corrosive finished water that consistently passes lead and copper standards. Sodium hypochlorite disinfection and sodium fluoride fluoridation are applied at both stations. Raw water radon levels (1,100–2,300 pCi/L) are effectively reduced to well below the proposed 300 pCi/L MCL through the aeration systems.

Poland Spring Partnership: In 2016, Poland Spring identified two spring water boreholes on RWD property at the Milligan's site. Under a 15-year agreement (with five additional 5-year renewal options), Poland Spring will extract up to 300 gpm (158 MGY maximum, 75 MGY minimum guaranteed). This arrangement is expected to generate \$279,000 to \$424,000 in additional annual

revenue for the district, a 24–38% increase over 2016 revenues. The agreement also sets aside up to \$160,000 toward the Falls Hill Booster Station project.

Distribution System & Infrastructure Condition: The system includes approximately 44 miles of transmission and distribution mains, 224 fire hydrants, and is divided into two pressure zones separated by the Falls Hill Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV) station (installed 1991). The pipe inventory is approximately 1/3 cement-lined ductile iron and 2/3 unlined cast iron, with minor amounts of copper, galvanized, and plastic. Hydraulic modeling indicates that much of the cast iron pipe has low C-values (50–70 range), consistent with internal tuberculation — reducing flow capacity and increasing chlorine demand. Critically, over 90,000 feet (approximately 17 miles) of water main installed before 1943 has limited remaining useful life and is a priority for replacement.

Storage: Two 1-million-gallon in-ground concrete reservoirs — Blanchard (upper zone) and Maple Street (lower zone) — were both replaced in 1991 and inspected in 2017, with both found to be in good condition with only minor sediment accumulation. Total storage is 2 million gallons, equating to approximately 2.5 days of average demand and the ability to sustain a 3,500 gpm fire flow for approximately 9 hours at full capacity.

Public Sewer System - Rumford-Mexico Sewer District

Has the community partnered with neighboring communities to share services, reduce costs and/or improve services?

If the community has a public sewer system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated? Is the sanitary district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?

The Rumford-Mexico Sewerage District (RMSD) owns, operates, and maintains a comprehensive wastewater collection and treatment system serving the communities of Rumford, Mexico, and Dixfield. The system serves 3,095 total users (2,855 residential, 197 commercial, 43 governmental) across the three communities, processing approximately 194.2 million gallons annually. The current rate is \$600 per year (\$150 per quarter for the first 1200 cubic feet) and \$0.125 per cubic foot thereafter.

Treatment Facilities:

1. **Main Wastewater Treatment Facility** - River Road, Mexico, Maine
2. **Rumford Point Wastewater Treatment Facility** - Off U.S. Route 2, Rumford Point area

Pumping Stations:

1. **Dix Avenue Pump Station** - Dix Avenue, Mexico (largest and most important)
2. **Falls Hill Pump Station** - Prospect Avenue, Rumford
3. **South Rumford Pump Station** - South Rumford Road, Rumford

Collection System:

- 6.5+ miles of gravity sewers and force mains
- Pipe sizes ranging from 6-inch to 30-inch diameter
- Materials include ductile iron, cast iron, asbestos cement, reinforced concrete, and vitrified clay

Densely developed areas are served by public sewer. Town collects sewerage, pumps to treatment plant operated by Rumford-Mexico Sewer District (includes Rumford, Mexico, and Dixfield):

Sewer System Component	2013 Baseline	2024 Current Status	Capacity/Condition
Collection system	46 miles sanitary sewer lines	46 miles maintained	Adequate coverage
Pumping stations	20 Rumford stations	20 maintained	Functional condition
Total billing units	approximately 3,000	3,009	Adequate capacity
Treatment plant capacity (Mexico)	2.65 million gpd average monthly	Same - 2.65 million gpd licensed	Adequate capacity
Combined sewer overflows	None	None	No CSO issues
Infiltration/inflow	Aging lines, roof drains issue	Ongoing I/I reduction program	Continues improvement
Rumford Point facility	19,000 gpd capacity 15 users	19,000 gpd licensed approx 15 users	Adequate small system

Source: 2013 baseline from Town of Rumford, Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Rumford_2013.pdf; 2024 status from town Public Works Department and Rumford-Mexico Sewer District. Residential/commercial connections estimated based on housing stock decline. Treatment plant relicensed 2010 per 2013 plan, current license status from Maine DEP

Main Wastewater Treatment Facility: River Road, Mexico

Capacity & Flow

Parameter	Value
Design capacity	2.65 MGD avg daily; 6.55 MGD peak hourly; design pop. 21,500
Actual avg daily flow	1.13 MGD (57% below design)

Parameter	Value
Peak hourly (100th pct)	7.52 MGD — EXCEEDS design capacity
Wastewater strength	HIGH STRENGTH (cause unknown; no industrial users); sample location relocated 2020 — 35% lower readings now
Permit	MEPDES #ME0100552; 1,105 lb/day max BOD & TSS — multiple BOD violations; TSS compliant

Composting Facility

Added in 1996. Converts dewatered sludge to Class A biosolids. Operating on 1-year waiver — Maine imposed biosolids land application moratorium March 2019 (PFAS/PFOS). The future of this disposal method is uncertain.

Rumford Point Wastewater Treatment Facility

Item	Detail
Built	1976–1977; activated sludge; discharges to Androscoggin River
Permitted capacity	19,000 GPD
Actual avg flow	1,200 GPD (6% of capacity); 98th pct max: 2,200 GPD (12%)
Status	Significantly oversized; outside scope of immediate funded upgrades

Pump Stations: All In 100-Year Floodplain

Station	Key Issues	Upgrade Cost
Dix Avenue (Mexico) Largest; accepts flow from Rumford & Mexico	Wet well beams cracking/corroding rebar; corroded pipe supports; exposed usernames on panels; pumps/piping/valves need full replacement	\$1,475,000
Falls Hill (Rumford)	Pumps leaking at seals; elevator broken; corroded valves/motors/piping; confined space access hazard	\$704,000
South Rumford	Pumps leaking at seals; coating failures; confined space access hazard	\$607,000

Falls Hill and South Rumford upgrades: convert to submersible pump stations (eliminates confined space entry requirement).

Collection System Asset Management

Priority	Linear Feet	Assessment Year	Est. Cost
High	11,405	2023	\$75,400
Moderate	19,386	2028	\$147,300

Priority	Linear Feet	Assessment Year	Est. Cost
Low	3,837	2037	\$42,100

Adequate Water Capacity: The treatment plant capacity treats 2.65 million gallons per day: it far exceeds current demand. There are no capacity constraints for the planning period. The system can accommodate any reasonable growth scenarios.

Aging Infrastructure Challenge: Rumford has 46 miles of sewer lines with varying ages. The 2013 plan documented infiltration/inflow from aging lines and roof drains. The town has a continuing program to replace/reline sewer lines when roads are reconstructed. This is an appropriate strategy but requires sustained capital investment. An estimated 20 to 30% of lines may be 50 plus years old and require replacement over the next 20 years. Annual investment 200,000 to 300,000 dollars needed for line replacement program.

The following equipment is currently experiencing failures or severe deterioration:

- **Fine screens:** Inoperable
- **Trickling filters:** Inoperable(will be demolished in upgrade)
- **Secondary clarifiers:** Failed in 2019, operational but aging, mechanism corrosion
- **RAS system:** Limited control capability
- **Most isolation valves and gates:** Poor condition
- **Belt filter press:** 33 years old (1988 installation)
- **Plant water system:** Inoperable
- **Disinfection system:** Aging, requires automation upgrades
- **Sludge pumps:** Beyond useful life
- **Multiple structural issues:** Spalling concrete, exposed rebar, coating failures, OSHA violations

The District has been drawing down its \$250,000 capital reserve to address emergency equipment failures, with no debt service payments in 2020.

Proposed Upgrades: Main Wastewater Treatment Facility (\$27,090,000 Total)

Selected approach: Upgrade existing facility

- Demolish comminutors & trickling filters; install new mechanically-cleaned bar rack & grit classifier
- Replace all 3 raw sewage pumps (vertical centrifugal); replace all piping & valves
- Convert to single-stage activated sludge (trickling filters eliminated); new coarse bubble aeration system
- Replace secondary clarifier mechanisms; replace FRP covers with aluminum; concrete rehabilitation

- Full RAS/WAS system replacement with separate wet wells and new submersible pumps
- Replace entire disinfection system (sodium hypochlorite/bisulfite); new automated PLC/SCADA
- Replace belt filter press (technology TBD: rotary press, screw press, or centrifuge — pilot testing required)
- Replace plant water system (options: plant effluent filtration OR manganese treatment of well water)
- Replace 800-amp electrical service, all MCCs, lighting, generator (450 kW diesel)
- New HVAC (NFPA 820 compliant), all plumbing, structural concrete rehabilitation
- Convert Maintenance Workshop to Headworks; construct new 30'x40' Maintenance Building

Project Costs & Financing

Facility	Total Cost
Main Wastewater Treatment Facility	\$27,090,000
Rumford Point Wastewater Treatment Facility	\$700,000
Dix Avenue Pump Station	\$1,475,000
Falls Hill Pump Station	\$704,000
South Rumford Pump Station	\$607,000
ALL ASSETS TOTAL	\$30,576,000

Secured Funding (as of March 2022)

Source	Amount
USDA RD Loan	\$10,770,000
USDA RUS Grant	\$8,805,000
American Rescue Plan Act Grant	\$1,000,000
Total Secured (68% of Main Wastewater Treatment Facility cost)	\$20,575,000

Additional Funding Pursued

Source	Max Amount	Status
Maine DEP CWSRF	\$2M principal forgiveness + loan	Apps: Apr 2021, Mar 2022
Maine DEP Wastewater Infrastructure Grant	~\$6M/yr	App: Feb 2022; no funds until 2025
CDBG	\$1,000,000	App: Mar 2022
NBRC	\$1,000,000	App: May/June 2022
EDA	TBD	App: Mar 2022

Source	Max Amount	Status
Efficiency Maine	Grants/rebates	VFD, HVAC, lighting rebates

Assumed financing: 40-yr USDA RD loan at 1.25%; annual debt service \$1,016,399.

Current User Rates

Community	Rate Structure
Rumford	\$244/unit (flat fee)
Mexico	\$245/user (flat fee)
Dixfield	Tiered: \$81.98 first 1,200 CF; \$4.86/100 CF next 13,800 CF; \$2.42/100 CF next 90,000 CF; \$1.46/100 CF next 105,000 CF

20-Year Capital Improvement Plan (Fiscal Sustainability Plan, March 2022)

Total improvements identified 2021–2040: \$10,594,000. Capital spending ranges from \$3,000 to \$1,682,000/yr; peak spending in 2025 for Main Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrades.

Facility	20-Year CIP Investment
Main Wastewater Treatment Facility	\$6,171,900
Dix Avenue Pump Station	\$1,473,100
Falls Hill Pump Station	\$704,000
South Rumford Pump Station	\$607,000
Rumford Point Wastewater Treatment Facility	\$1,363,300
Collection System Assessments	\$264,800
TOTAL	\$10,594,000

Asset Management

Risk Strategy Distribution

Strategy	Assets	Action
Critical R&R	10 (2%)	Replace within 1 year — High PoF, High CoF
Priority R&R	48 (8%)	5-year CIP — High PoF, High CoF
Predictive Maintenance	54 (9%)	Monitoring program — Mid PoF, High CoF
Opportunistic R&R	86 (15%)	Replace as fails — High PoF, Low CoF

Strategy	Assets	Action
Routine/Preventive Maint.	44 (7%)	Scheduled maintenance — Low PoF, High CoF
Run to Fail	348 (59%)	No preventive maintenance — Low PoF, Low CoF

Risk Scoring Methodology

Probability of Failure (PoF): scored on Physical Condition (1–10), Reliability (breakdown history), Current Performance, and Maintainability. Consequence of Failure (CoF): triple bottom line — Social/Community Impact (35%), Economic/Financial Impact (30%), Environmental Impact (35%); additional factors include replacement time and redundancy level.

Maintenance Program Types

Type	Description
Preventive	Routine scheduled tasks (lubrication, oil changes, filter changes, cleaning) per manufacturer recs
Predictive	Quarterly vibration analysis (pumps/motors >20 HP); oil analysis; annual thermography of MCCs; annual motor testing on critical equipment >20 HP
Corrective	Planned repair when preventive no longer sufficient; unplanned emergency response (costliest)
Run to Fail	Assets with very low CoF — no preventive/predictive maintenance

Annual reserve requirement for short-lived assets: \$27,437/yr — 5-yr assets (SCADA/computers/lab): \$3,080; 10-yr assets (chemical pumps/truck): \$9,850; 15-yr assets (controls/VFDs/instruments): \$14,507.

Annual Budget: 2020 Actual Vs. Post-Construction 2026

Budget Category	2020 Actual	2026 Projected	Change
INCOME			
Annual User Fees	\$835,246	\$2,080,228	+149%
Non-Operating Revenues	\$3,022	\$3,505	+16%
Septage/Compost/Other	\$201,808	\$234,035	+16%
Total Income	\$1,040,076	\$2,317,768	+123%
O&M COSTS			
Salaries	\$364,335	\$422,517	+16%
Benefits	\$120,935	\$140,248	+16%
Accounting/Auditing	\$31,563	\$36,603	+16%

Budget Category	2020 Actual	2026 Projected	Change
Legal	\$95,648	\$110,922	+16%
Utilities	\$110,214	\$181,596	+65%
Insurance	\$21,373	\$24,786	+16%
Misc. Office Expenses	\$25,360	\$29,410	+16%
Repairs/Maintenance	\$57,915	\$47,015	-19%
Chemicals	\$15,063	\$19,867	+32%
Supplies	\$23,551	\$27,312	+16%
Professional/Contract Services	\$98,837	\$132,016	+34%
Total O&M Costs	\$964,794	\$1,172,292	+27%
DEBT SERVICE & RESERVES			
Short-Lived Asset Reserves	\$0	\$27,437	New
Debt Service Reserve Account	\$0	\$101,640	New
Payment to USDA Loans	\$0	\$1,016,399	New
Total Debt/Reserves	\$0	\$1,145,476	New
TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET	\$964,794	\$2,317,768	+140%

O&M drivers: Utilities +65% (larger aerators, NFPA 820 ventilation); Chemicals +32% (higher polymer for new dewatering); Professional/Contract +34% (new CCTV inspection program); Repairs/Maintenance -19% (new equipment reduces breakdowns). 2.5% annual inflation assumed.

Member Community Sewer Budgets (Separate From RMSD)

Each community owns its own collection system. Note: RMSD bills member communities; each community distributes costs to individual users through their own billing systems.

Community	Annual O&M	Debt Service	Other	Operating Income
Town of Rumford (2021)	\$1,014,838	\$170,809	Equipment reserves: \$34,981 (GIS software, camera, iPads, sewer snake)	From sewer payments
Mexico Sewer District (2022)	\$310,000	\$0	Non-operating income (interest): \$20,000	\$290,000
Town of Dixfield (2021)	\$244,256	\$19,078	—	\$263,334

Energy & Water Conservation

Energy

Area	Strategy
Motors (~90% of electrical use)	Premium efficiency motors for all replacements; replace only if severely inefficient/oversized; 4–8% savings typical
VFDs (pumps ≤15 HP)	Keep across-the-line (ATL) starters — better torque prevents ragging with non-disposable wipes
VFDs (larger pumps)	Install VFDs; start at 100% speed for 30 sec then ramp down (prevents ragging); Efficiency Maine rebates available
HVAC	Replace aging units with high-efficiency models; electric heaters → heat pumps; gas → high-efficiency gas; Efficiency Maine rebates available
Lighting	Upgrade to LED when upgrading electrical systems; Efficiency Maine rebates available
Emergency power	Maine DEP requires independent emergency power at all facilities; Main Wastewater Treatment Facility: new 450-kW diesel; Dix Avenue: retain 2010 unit (125 kW); Falls Hill & Rumford Point: replace during upgrade

Water Conservation

Issue	Solution Under Evaluation
Plant water pump INOPERABLE; well water has high manganese causing pump seal damage; Town water currently used for seal water	Option 1: Replace plant water pump with new filtration/pumping system using plant effluent Option 2: Install chemical treatment to remove manganese from well water (Decision during preliminary design)
General conservation	Install low-flow fixtures (faucets, showerheads, toilets); reduce Town water use through process water substitution

Key Regulatory & Environmental Notes

- All three pump stations in 100-year floodplain; Main Wastewater Treatment Facility and Rumford Point Wastewater Treatment Facility in 500-year floodplain. Relocation rejected as cost-prohibitive; flood-proof construction and electrical room relocation used as mitigation.
- PFAS/PFOS moratorium (March 2019): biosolids land application banned in Maine. Composting facility operating on 1-year waiver. Dewatering technology selection delayed; pilot testing required during preliminary design.
- BOD permit violations ongoing (max effluent BOD 1,508 lb/day, 37% over 1,105 lb/day limit); TSS consistently compliant. Violations expected to continue until upgrades complete.

- Environmental Assessment (Sept 2021): no significant impacts to land resources, historic sites, endangered species, or wetlands.
- Permit requirements: NPDES Stormwater Permit; MPDES Construction Dewatering Permit (if needed); local planning/zoning, building, electrical, and plumbing permits.
- CDBG funding requires >51% of service area residents to qualify as low-to-moderate income (LMI) and 25% local match; user income survey conducted 2021.

Stormwater

Are existing stormwater management facilities adequately maintained? What improvements are needed?

Stormwater Separation: Rumford's stormwater system is separate from the sanitary sewer (no combined sewers). However, infiltration continues to be a challenge. Future development may require larger stormwater pipes per 2013 plan. Climate change increasing precipitation intensity may require stormwater system upgrades in coming decades.

Regulatory Framework:

- Subject to Maine Stormwater Management Law for projects greater than 1 acre disturbed area
- Subdivision and site plan review regulations require stormwater design
- No MS4 General Permit requirements. Rumford is not a regulated MS4 community.

Septage

How do residents dispose of septic tank waste? Are there issues or concerns?

Rumford's septage disposal system operates as part of the regional wastewater management infrastructure. Septage tank sludge was disposed of at the Rumford-Mexico Treatment Facility, which serves the Rumford-Mexico Sewer District (Rumford, Mexico, and Dixfield). The regulatory environment is primarily governed by state-level rules rather than local ordinances. The septage management system is adequate and operates effectively through regional partnership. State regulations provide a comprehensive framework, reducing the need for extensive local ordinances. The system has sufficient capacity for current and projected needs.

Solid Waste System

Is the solid waste management system meeting current needs? Is recycling increasing? Are improvements needed?

Rumford is a member of the Northern Oxford Regional Solid Waste Board (NORSWB), a quasi-municipal corporation serving six towns: Rumford, Mexico, Dixfield, Roxbury, Byron, and Peru. The system features a transfer station on Route 2 in Mexico with a stationary compactor for municipal solid waste and a comprehensive recycling center with horizontal baler. Curbside collection for both recyclables and trash is provided through contracted private vendors.

The solid waste management system operates effectively through the NORSWB partnership with enhanced recycling performance and upcoming state policy changes that will benefit municipal finances. The recycling program performs well financially with demonstrated net annual benefit of ~\$199,175. The system has adequate capacity for planning periods without major infrastructure investments. The upcoming EPR program will provide additional financial relief to municipalities starting 2027.

Collection System - Curbside Services: Recycling pickup: Monday-Wednesday weekly (every week). Trash collection has a separate schedule via contracted hauler. Yard waste excluded from regular curbside pickup. Spring cleanup events may include yard waste when scheduled

Transfer Station Operations (Route 2, Mexico): The NORSWB transfer station serves as the central facility for waste management:

Facility Capabilities: Large building with stationary compactor for MSW. Recycling center with horizontal baler for processing. Storage area for Universal Waste and electronics. Outdoor storage for baled recyclables when building reaches capacity. Processing areas for bulky waste, metals, white goods. Designated areas for construction/demolition debris, clean wood waste.

Materials Accepted:

- Municipal solid waste (compacted, transported to New Hampshire landfill)
- Recyclables: paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, metals (sorted, baled, marketed)
- Universal Waste: paint, chemicals, electronics, batteries, fluorescent bulbs
- Metals and white goods
- Tires
- Construction and demolition debris
- Clean wood waste (burned at wood-to-energy facilities)
- Yard waste (composted)

Special Programs: Hazardous Household Waste (HHW) collection events. Universal Waste managed through Maine's Product Stewardship Law. Electronics collection (vendor transitioned from EPI to EnviroServe January 2025). No charge for Universal Waste collection under current program.

Recycling Performance & Annual Economic Benefit:

- Revenue from recyclable material sales: ~\$125,515
- Cost avoidance vs. landfill disposal: ~\$73,660
- **Total net annual gain: ~\$199,175**
- Direct reduction in property tax burden

Five-Year Trends: Economic downturn of 2008 resulted in decreased waste streams overall. Waste volumes remain below pre-2008 levels. Transfer station capacity remains adequate with no expansion needed. System can handle increased volumes through more frequent trailer transport.

NORSWB Capacity Assessment: Can accommodate significantly more residential/commercial MSW through additional trailers. Recycling capacity adequate; increased volumes manageable through more frequent baling. Universal Waste can be removed more frequently if volumes increase. No major facility expansions or equipment purchases necessary for planning period.

Potential Future Considerations: Maine DEP concerns about outdoor storage of bulky waste may require concrete/asphalt pads. Contamination of "clean" wood waste (particularly pressure-treated wood) requires monitoring. Additional personnel might be needed for increased recycling volumes.

Municipal Ordinances:

Chapter 227 (Solid Waste) - Article III (Recycling): Prohibition on disposing recyclables in manner inconsistent with Selectpersons' rules. Board of Selectpersons authorized to establish/amend recycling rules. Rules coordinated with NORSWB approved programs. Educational requirements to maximize resident participation. Prohibition on unauthorized removal of recyclables. Yard waste must be composted on-site or transported to NORSWB facility. Prohibition on open burning except permitted wood waste. Prohibition on placing leaves in streets or public rights-of-way. Civil penalties up to \$100 per violation; each day constitutes a separate violation.

Upcoming Policy Changes:

Maine Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging Materials: Program expected to be fully operational in 2027. Requires producers to reimburse municipalities for recycling/waste management costs. Stewardship organization will invest in infrastructure and education. Rules adopted by Maine Board of Environmental Protection December 2024. Will reduce municipal financial burden for packaging material management. Goals: reduce municipal burden, improve packaging design/management.

Municipal Buildings

Will other public facilities, such as town offices, libraries, and cemeteries accommodate projected growth?

To what extent are investments in facility improvements directed to growth areas?

Rumford's municipal government operates from several facilities, with the historic Town Hall serving as the administrative center.

Municipal government facilities are adequate for administrative functions but inadequate for public safety operations. A brand-new fire station was completed in October 2025; however, the police department still needs to be relocated. Regional cooperation is increasing as a practical response to fiscal constraints. Administrative structure functions effectively with professional management.

Town Hall

Houses: Town offices, Police Department, Oxford County Sheriff's Office, Northern Oxford County District Court, Rumford Falls Auditorium, and Rumford Historical Society.

Capacity: At capacity for administrative needs. There is active ongoing discussion about the courts which may require more space that can be gained by the potential relocation of the Police Department. The auditorium is significantly underutilized; improvements to A/V, lighting, and climate control would encourage more utilization, as well as clearing out the spaces that are currently being used by the Police Department due to space constraints.

Age: 1916

Public Works Department

Facility: 145 Congress Street, Rumford, ME 04276. Highway garage located at 1022 Route 2

Staffing: 16 employees

- Superintendent of Public Works: Dale Roberts (since 2019)
- Garage clerk
- Drivers
- Mechanics

Responsibilities: The department handles road maintenance, snow and ice control, sewer systems, streetlight repairs, and seasonal road postings. The department's mission includes maintaining the town's roads, bridges, and sewer systems, and assisting other town agencies with personnel, materials, and equipment during emergencies. The department also participates in community initiatives, including a Sand for Seniors program, partnering with the Rumford Police Department to deliver sand buckets to elderly residents during winter months.

Police Department

Is the community's emergency response system adequate? Are improvements needed?

Location: Town Hall (basement)

The Rumford Police Department, under the command of Chief Tony L. Milligan, responded to 6,101 calls for service during FY25, averaging more than 16 calls per day. Operations were conducted under ongoing staffing constraints throughout the fiscal year.

The most frequently occurring call types were citizen assists, juvenile-related incidents, suspicious activity, agency assists, and animal complaints. Additional high-volume categories included E911 hang-up calls, traffic complaints, special details, civil problems, and trespassing. A significant portion of these incidents were non-criminal in nature, requiring officers to fulfill problem-solving, support, and community engagement functions. The top calls for service by volume were as follows:

Annual Calls

Fiscal Year	Total Calls for Service	Year-over-Year Change
FY2017–18	5,211	—
FY2018–19	5,322	+2.1%
FY2019–20	5,492	+3.2%
FY2020–21	5,528	+0.7%
FY2021–22	5,925	+7.2%
FY2022–23	6,468	+9.2%
FY2023–24	6,125	–5.3%
FY2024–25	6,101	–0.4%

Incident by Year (Ranked by Frequency, Highest to Lowest)

Incident Type	FY2020–21	FY2021–22	FY2022–23	FY2023–24	FY2024–25
Total Calls for Service	5,528	5,925	6,468	6,125	6,101
Summonses	565	528	—	—	—
E911 Hang-Up / Misdialed	397	447	551	—	340
Agency Assist	419	213	468	446	365
Citizen Assist / Disputes	386	348	201	—	519
Animal Problem	—	—	303	—	354
Suspicious Activity	210	270	346	368	371

Civil Problem	—	—	312	—	299
Drug Investigation	—	—	291	—	—
Mental Health / Mental Disorder	—	—	174	116	562*
Disturbances	241	348	—	—	216
Welfare Check	262	216	262	250	—
Juvenile Problems	125	92	344	—	381
Trespassing	—	—	178	—	220
Alcohol / Drug Problem	—	—	—	—	198
Traffic-Related Incidents / Crashes	178	160	128	1,050*	126
Domestic Violence / Problems	189	225	118	88	89
Arrests	147	189	—	—	76
Fraud / Theft	113	150	121	89	172
Harassment	157	147	116	84	—
Alarms	118	94	122	—	103
Controlled Substance Problems	55	45	140	147	—
Criminal Mischief	39	78	—	—	—
Suicide Calls (Attempted/Threatened)	44	70	—	—	—
Assaults (Simple)	37	33	—	31	—
Burglary (Residential and Business)	22	30	—	—	—
Alcohol Offenses	28	1	—	—	—
OUI / DUI	16	10	—	—	—
Child Abuse	9	11	—	—	—
Gross Sexual Assault	10	10	—	—	—
Motor Vehicle Theft	3	7	—	—	—
Assaults (Aggravated / Weapon)	4	2	—	—	—
Arson	2	0	—	—	—
Hate / Bias Crimes	2	0	—	—	—
Homicide / Manslaughter	2	0	—	—	—

Robbery	1	1	—	—	—
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Note: "—" indicates the category was not individually reported that year. Category names and groupings varied across annual reports.

*FY2024–25 mental health figure represents calls with a mental health component (crisis intervention, welfare checks, domestic disturbances, substance-related), not a standalone call type.

*FY24's figure of 1,050 is a clear outlier — that year's report grouped all traffic-related incidents together rather than just crashes

Grant Funding:

The Department maintains an active grant funding strategy to offset local taxpayer costs and supplement public safety services. Grant-funded initiatives during FY25 supported traffic safety enforcement, replacement of aging equipment including bullet-resistant vests and radar units, officer wellness programs, and specialized training. Two notable awards were received:

- A **\$250,000 DOJ COPS Mental Health & Wellness / Hiring Program Grant** to fund the addition of two police officers
- A **\$250,000 grant** to lead a county-wide effort toward accreditation under the Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (MLEAP)

Grant Funding Awarded to Rumford Police Department, FY2023–FY2025

Grant / Program	FY2022–23	FY2023–24	FY2024–25
Traffic Safety Enforcement (Bureau of Highway Safety)	\$46,829.20	\$43,205.80	Awarded
Distracted Driving Enforcement (Bureau of Highway Safety)	\$11,639.00	\$14,542.44	Awarded
Portable Radios (Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation)	\$17,201.25	—	—
DOJ COPS — Mental Health & Wellness / Hiring Program	—	\$163,462.00	\$250,000.00
Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (MLEAP)	—	—	\$250,000.00
Federal Byrne / Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)	\$3,050.00	\$5,053.00	—
Bullet-Resistant Vests (DOJ BPV)	\$3,510.50	\$1,753.65	Awarded
Body-Worn Cameras	—	\$2,139.88	—
D.A.R.E. Program (Cogentrix Energy)	—	\$2,000.00	—
Underage Drinking Patrols (River Valley Rising)	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	—
Homeland Security / Operation Stonegarden	\$11,275.20	\$4,426.49	—
FBI Safe Streets Task Force	—	\$20,707.50	—
Radar Units / Officer Wellness / Specialized Training	—	—	Awarded
Total Awarded (approximate)	~\$95,505	~\$260,291	\$500,000+

Two officers were hired during FY25 — Officer Justin Cummins and Officer Breagh Macaulay. Officer Macaulay's appointment also introduced K-9 Rocket to the patrol unit, expanding patrol capabilities and officer safety. One patrol vacancy remains unfilled as of the end of the fiscal year.

Staffing:

Position	Count	Position	Count
Chief of Police	1	School Resource / Utility Officer	1
Captain of Criminal Investigations (Second-in-Command)	1	Utility Patrol Officer / K9 Handler	1
Detective Sergeant	1	K9 – Patrol / Drug / Article-Search qualified	1
Detective	1	K9 – Drug / Article-Search qualified	1
Utility Detective / Patrol K9 Handler	1	Administrative Assistant (civilian)	1
Patrol Sergeants	4	Sworn part-time officer	1
Patrol Officers	3	Parking Enforcement Officer (part-time)	1
Patrol Officer – vacancy (conditional offer pending)	1	Animal Control Officer (part-time)	1
Contracted employee – Maine Drug Enforcement Agency	1		

5 Year Trends:

Calls for Service: Call volume increased steadily from 5,925 in FY22 to a peak of 6,468 in FY23 — a 9% year-over-year increase and 24% above FY18 levels. FY24 saw a modest decline to 6,125, and FY25 continued that downward trend to 6,101. While this represents a stabilization, total call volume in FY25 remains considerably higher than it was five years ago, and the Department continues to handle more than 16 calls per day on average.

Mental Health-Related Incidents: Mental health has been identified as a growing operational challenge across all reporting years. FY23 data listed 174 calls explicitly categorized as "Mental Health Problem," and FY24 recorded 116 under "Mental Disorder" — though these figures likely reflect only calls categorized under a single incident type. FY25 reported 562 calls with a mental health component when accounting for crisis intervention, welfare checks, domestic disturbances, and substance-related incidents, suggesting the Department adopted a broader methodology for

capturing mental health involvement. Regardless of methodology, mental health demand represents one of the most resource-intensive and consistently growing pressures on the Department.

Arrests: Arrests declined substantially over the period. FY22 recorded 189 arrests, which dropped to 76 local arrests in FY25. It should be noted that the FY25 figure excludes arrests transferred directly to Oxford County Jail, so direct year-over-year comparison is limited by inconsistent reporting methodology across years.

Staffing: Staffing constraints are referenced in every annual report across the period. The FY24 roster listed 13 full-time sworn officers, one Maine Drug Enforcement Agency embedded agent, one administrative assistant, and two reserve officers. FY25 added two officers — Officer Justin Cummins and Officer Breagh Macaulay — along with K-9 Rocket.

Grant Funding: Grant activity has grown substantially in both scale and scope:

- FY23: Approximately \$83,000 in grants, primarily for traffic enforcement overtime, portable radios, equipment, and border security patrols
- FY24: Over \$260,000, including a significant \$163,462 DOJ COPS grant for first responder mental health and wellness programs
- FY25: \$500,000 in two major awards — \$250,000 through the COPS Hiring Program for two additional officers, and \$250,000 to lead a county-wide MLEAP accreditation effort

The shift from FY23 to FY25 reflects a strategic transition from smaller operational grants toward larger structural investments in staffing, wellness, and institutional accountability.

The pursuit of Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (MLEAP) certification, funded in FY25, represents a new institutional development with no precedent in the prior reporting years. Accreditation is expected to be achieved in 2026.

Fire Department

Is the community's emergency response system adequate? Are improvements needed?

Facilities:

- Headquarters (Chase Station): 61 Falmouth St, Rumford, ME 04276 — opened October 2024, dedicated May 17, 2025
- Substation: Rumford Point, 1744 US-2 (volunteer-operated)

The new \$6 million facility replaced the original 1924 station on Congress Street, with \$1 million secured by U.S. Senator Susan Collins through federal appropriations. It features five truck bays with increased clearance, dedicated decontamination showers, turnout gear storage and washing facilities, a SCBA fill room, sleeping quarters for on-duty firefighters, and Maine's first safe haven

"baby box." The station was named Chase Station in honor of former Deputy Fire Chief and Select Board member Peter Chase, who passed away in 2022.

Staffing:

- Fire Chief
- 9 full-time firefighters
- 12 paid on-call firefighters
- 3 firefighters on duty 24/7
- Rumford Point: Volunteers

Operations:

- Dispatch: Oxford County Regional Communications Center
- Equipment includes rural firefighting apparatus for remote areas

The original 1924 Central Fire Station at 151 Congress Street has since been leased to Inland Woods + Trails as a recreational hub, serving as office space, a gear library, equipment storage, and overnight accommodations for trail crews.

Hosmer Field:

Hosmer Field Complex is maintained by the Town of Rumford's Parks and Recreation Department and serves as the primary public athletic and recreational hub for the community. It is used by both local residents and Regional School Unit 10 (RSU 10) for school sports, including ball teams and skating. The complex hosts football, soccer, baseball, and ice skating, and includes a half-mile walking trail along the Swift River that was part of a \$660,000 improvement project in 2018, which also added LED lighting to the football field.

On December 18, 2023, a storm dumped 5.1 inches of rain on the area, causing the Swift River to overflow and inflict about \$2 million in damage to the facilities office, equipment, and garage. Most of the Parks Department's equipment could not be salvaged, and the flood washed out portions of the walking trail.

New Developments:

Community Center: The Town of Rumford acquired the former Rumford Elementary School facility in February of 2026 after RES students relocated to the new Mountain Valley Community School in Mexico. Plans are underway to convert this facility to a community center with a focus on childcare, education, and future recreational facilities.

Parks Department Facilities Expansion: The Parks Department is building a new \$1.1 million, 6000 sf garage and office building between Hosmer Lane and Waldo Street, out of the flood plain, to replace facilities destroyed in the December 2023 flood. The town received \$474,000 from its insurer, and a FEMA damage assessment is in progress: FEMA covers 75%, the Maine Emergency

Management Agency 15%, and the town covers 10% of eligible costs. Additionally, voters approved \$275,000 for the Hosmer Lane building project at a special town meeting in December 2024.

Education - School Enrollment Trends

Is school construction or expansion anticipated? Are there opportunities to promote new residential development around schools?

Rumford is a member of the **Western Foothills Regional School Unit 10 (RSU 10)**, formed 2009 consolidating MSAD 21, 39, 43). Rumford schools: Mountain Valley High School (grades 9-12) and Mountain Valley Community School in Mexico (grades K-8).

Overall enrollment in RSU 10 has declined steadily over the past decade, dropping from 1,793 students in 2016 to 1,649 in 2025 — a loss of 144 students, or roughly 8 percent. The most visible structural change in the data is a significant school consolidation, with several elementary and middle schools replaced by a single Mountain Valley Community School serving 805 students as of 2025. At the high school level, Mountain Valley High School enrollment has similarly declined, falling from 412 students in 2016 to 344 in 2025.

Two demographic trends stand out against the backdrop of declining enrollment. The proportion of economically disadvantaged students has remained persistently high, representing approximately 70 percent of total enrollment in 2025. Meanwhile, special education enrollment has grown significantly — rising from 403 students in 2016 to 510 in 2025, a 27 percent increase — meaning that even as the overall student population has shrunk, the share of students requiring additional support has grown from 22.5 to nearly 31 percent of total enrollment. Together, these trends reflect a district navigating both population decline and an increasingly complex set of student needs.

At the same time, an aging population means over time homes currently occupied by older people will become available for the next generation. Combined with bringing a new school online, the district could see increased enrollment. See Population, Demographics chapter for more information about population statistics.

Enrollment as of October 1 2025	Attending Count	Economically Disadvantaged	Special Education	EL
Buckfield Jr/Sr High School	230	108	62	0
Hartford Sumner Elementary School	270	169	75	0

Mountain Valley Community School	805	619	266	6
Mountain Valley High School	344	255	107	2
Total 2025	1649	1151	510	8

EL: English Language is the secondary language spoken by the student.

Enrollment as of October 1 2024	Attending Count	Economically Disadvantaged	Special Education	EL
Buckfield Jr/Sr High School	224	120	63	0
Hartford Sumner Elementary School	290	182	71	0
Meroby Elementary School	249	199	78	1
Mountain Valley High School	361	257	104	2
Mountain Valley Middle School	366	282	130	3
Rumford Elementary School	208	168	69	3
Total 2024	1698	1208	515	9

Enrollment as of October 1 2016	Attending Count	Economically Disadvantaged	Special Education	EL
Buckfield Jr/Sr High School	225	124	43	0
Hartford Sumner Elementary School	316	173	65	0
Meroby Elementary School	305	235	69	1
Mountain Valley High School	412	261	103	2
Mountain Valley Middle School	263	183	65	0
Rumford Elementary School	272	221	58	1
Total 2016	1793	1197	403	4

Regional Healthcare Facilities & Services

Are local and regional health care facilities and public health and social service programs adequate?

Rumford Hospital is a critical access hospital serving Maine's River Valley region, operating as part of the Central Maine Healthcare (CMH) system alongside Bridgton Hospital and Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC). Over the last decade, the hospital navigated pandemic recovery, leadership stabilization, national quality recognition, a major service closure, new clinical programs, critical equipment upgrades, a mass casualty response of historic proportions, and the announced acquisition of the entire CMH system by Prime Healthcare Foundation.

Leadership

- 2022: Becky Hall, RN, retired after 37 years; Stephany Jacques, RN, MSN stepped into the VP of Nursing and Patient Care role.
- 2023: Stephany Jacques elevated to Interim President of both Rumford Hospital and Bridgton Hospital.
- 2024: Stephany Jacques confirmed as President — a permanent appointment. Jenifer Madore, RN named Vice President of Nursing and Patient Care Services at Rumford Hospital, having previously served in education and nursing roles at both Rumford and Bridgton.
- 2025: Stephany Jacques formally joined the Senior Executive Team. Her president's message highlighted expansion of primary and specialty care access, new providers, pulmonary function lab launch, and strengthening of swing bed programs.
- 2026: On February 16th, Rumford Hospital, along with the Central Maine Healthcare System (CMH) system, was acquired by the Prime Healthcare Foundation, a California-based non-profit public charity and affiliate of Prime Healthcare. The acquisition includes Rumford Hospital, Rumford Community Home, Central Maine Medical Center, Bridgton Hospital, and over 40 physician practices. Prime Healthcare plans to invest \$150 million over the next five years into the acquired system's facilities.

Quality & Recognition

2022

- Named a Leapfrog "Top Rural Hospital" — one of only 23 hospitals nationwide.
- Listed on Money magazine's "Best Hospitals in America" list.

2023

- Earned the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance Leadership Award for patient perspective, recognizing the top 25% of rural hospitals nationally.
- Cardiac and pulmonary rehab team earned their third consecutive three-year AACVPR certification.

2024

- Elsemore Dixfield Family Medicine received recognition from Anthem Quality Insight, Pathways to Excellence, and the National Committee for Quality Assurance.
- Rumford Hospital became the first in Maine to have a dietitian with the Nutrition Wound Care certification credential — Elizabeth Sarle, RD.

2025

- Rumford Hospital's Emergency Department received the American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines® Rural Stroke Silver Award, recognizing evidence-based stroke treatment protocols.

Obstetrics Closure

- 2023: Rumford Hospital's maternity unit closed after nearly 100 years of service, driven by declining birth rates, a nationwide obstetrician shortage, and the need to consolidate services. Obstetric volume was redirected to CMMC.
- By 2024, the number of babies born at CMMC had doubled since St. Mary's closed its maternity unit in July 2022, requiring recruitment of new obstetricians, midwives, and pediatricians.

Provider Growth & New Services

2024: New providers at or serving Rumford and affiliated practices

- Caitlin Bevvino-Ring, MD — family medicine, Swift River Family Medicine
- Jesse Leeds, MD — family medicine, Swift River Family Medicine
- Manuel Sanchez, MD — internal medicine, Swift River Family Medicine
- Lauren Mason, NP — Elsemore Dixfield Family Medicine
- CMHVI launched new virtual cardiology options for patients in the Rumford region. Rumford Hospital recruited four new providers with two more scheduled for fall 2024.

2025: New providers at or serving Rumford and affiliated practices

- Leah Gestov, MD — Swift River Family Medicine, Rumford Hospital campus
- Bethany Masse, NP — Swift River Family Medicine
- Dennis Sullivan, MD — orthopedics, serving both Bridgton and Rumford hospitals
- Violetta Wierzbicka, PA — Elsemore Dixfield Family Medicine

New services at Rumford Hospital (2025)

- Onsite pulmonary function lab launched, staffed by board-certified pulmonologists and respiratory therapists, offering spirometry, lung volume measurement, and cardiopulmonary stress testing — allowing River Valley patients to access pulmonary services locally.

- Orthopedic service availability expanded at Rumford Hospital.
- Swing bed programs strengthened to support patient recovery closer to home.

Equipment Upgrades

- 2025: Both Rumford Hospital and Bridgton Hospital received new C-arm medical imaging devices (real-time X-ray) via a federal grant supported by Senator Susan Collins, replacing older units.
- 2025: Rumford Hospital also secured a new mobile X-ray machine through the same grant.
- 2025: The Giving Tree fundraiser raised \$1,825 toward a sit-to-stand lift for improved patient care.

Community Fundraising & Philanthropy

- Rumford Hospital Ladies Auxiliary Poinsettia Sale — 35 consecutive years, raising over \$3,000 annually for medical equipment (2025 report).
- Rumford Hospital Auxiliary recognized for 95 years of service as the hospital's top fundraising group (2022).
- Rumford Eagles Legacy 8-Ball Tournament donated \$1,600 to the Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute (2025).
- Rumford Hospital Giving Tree raised \$1,825 for a new sit-to-stand patient lift (2025).
- Rumford Hospital team members participated in community events including Free Ski Night at Black Mountain of Maine and the Winter Recovery Rally hosted by River Valley Recovers Strong (2025).

System Development: Prime Healthcare Foundation Acquisition (2025)

In January 2025, the CMH Board announced an agreement for Prime Healthcare Foundation to become the sole corporate member and parent company of CMH, pending regulatory approval.

- Prime Healthcare Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit headquartered in Ontario, California, operating 14 not-for-profit hospitals in six states.
- The acquisition commits to a \$150 million investment over five years. President Stephany Jacques specifically cited renovation of the emergency rooms at both Rumford Hospital and Bridgton Hospital as included commitments.
- All current staff positions, service lines, hospital names, and local leadership are committed to continue.
- Acquisition expected to close by end of 2025.

Financial Overview

Rumford-specific financials are not broken out, but system trends directly bear on the hospital's operating environment. The complete five-year picture shows a consistent pattern of growing expenses outpacing revenue.

Metric	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Total Operating Revenue	\$544M	\$595.8M	\$617.2M	\$604.9M
Total Operating Expenses	\$562.1M	\$609.3M	\$622.4M	\$634.4M
Net Asset Change	+\$10.5M	-\$9.2M	+\$8.1M	-\$19.3M
Total Assets	\$577.9M	\$533.6M	\$525.1M	\$511.9M
Community Benefit Total	\$63.3M	\$91.4M	\$101.1M	\$78.0M

Labor expenses grew every year, from \$295M (FY2021) to \$364M (FY2024). Total assets declined by approximately \$66M over four years. The FY2024 net asset loss of \$19.3M was the largest in the series and was cited by the Healthcare Purchaser Alliance of Maine as evidence of a "particularly distressing" financial position — directly motivating the Prime acquisition. The CFO's 2025 message offered a more optimistic near-term signal: through 11 months of FY2025, admissions grew 3%, ED visits and total surgeries each grew 5%, and total income improved by \$36 million over the prior year.

Key Statistics Comparison

Metric	2022	2023	2024	2025
Babies delivered (system)	—	977	Doubled since 2022	797
Breast cancer screenings	10,263	11,962	—	—
New hires (system)	—	932	954	—
Team member retention	—	—	—	92.4%
LifeFlight transports	—	383 total	206 inbound to CMMC	185 out + 148 in
Mako robotic surgeries	—	1,012	100th milestone	—
CMHVI visits	—	—	—	35,000
Hips replaced	—	—	—	138
System outage duration	—	—	—	29 days
Community benefit total	\$63.3M	\$91.4M	\$101.1M	\$78.0M

Telecommunications Infrastructure

Are improvements needed in the telecommunications and energy infrastructure?

Rumford's telecommunications infrastructure has improved substantially since 2013, with multiple high-speed internet providers now serving the community and new public WiFi infrastructure enhancing downtown connectivity.

Coverage Status:

- 94% of Rumford covered by high-speed cable (Spectrum)
- Multiple fiber options available in developed areas
- Satellite backup for rural/remote locations
- 5G wireless expanding but limited coverage (23.20%)

Broadband/Internet Access Primary Providers:

Multiple providers serve Rumford with diverse technology options:

Primary Wired Services:

- **Spectrum (Cable):** Up to 1 Gbps, 94% coverage
- **EarthLink Fiber:** Up to 5 Gbps
- **Oxford Telephone and Telegraph:** Up to 100 Mbps fiber
- **FairPoint Communications:** Up to 25 Mbps (fiber, cable, DSL, copper, fixed wireless)
- **Fiber Optic Fidium:** Plans ranging from 100 Mbps up to 2 Gbps, 96.7% coverage.

Alternative Services:

- **T-Mobile 5G Home Internet:** Up to 100 Mbps, 23% coverage
- **Viasat (Satellite):** Up to 150 Mbps, 100% coverage
- **Starlink (LEO Satellite):** Available for remote locations

Public WiFi Infrastructure:

Six public WiFi hotspots operate throughout downtown, established through public-private partnership. Rumford initiated the project with Bangor Savings Bank funding for service and maintenance. The Town of Rumford expanded to six hotspots via Consolidated Communications, funded by Northern Border Regional Commission grant with matching funds from Maine West and Bangor Savings Bank.

State and Regional Broadband Initiatives

Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) leads statewide broadband expansion. Since 2021, MCA has improved or established connectivity for over 135,000 homes and businesses statewide, leveraging nearly \$300 million in state and federal funding, matched by more than \$200 million in private investment. The federal BEAD program — the largest broadband grant in state history — is being

deployed to connect Maine's remaining unserved locations, with the Working Internet ASAP (WIA) Program providing interim Starlink subsidies in the meantime

Maine West Regional Technology Plan:

- Developed with Axiom Technologies and ~100 residents, municipal officials, business leaders
- Digital Inclusion & Workforce Plan to guide regional high-speed internet improvements
- Regional coordination for broadband expansion

Energy Infrastructure

Rumford has emerged as a leader in Maine's clean energy transition, with significant operational renewable energy infrastructure and an economic development strategy that positions renewable energy as central to the town's future. Rumford's energy infrastructure has transformed from adequate baseline service (2013) to strategic renewable energy leadership. Operational battery storage (12.7 MW) represents substantial investment positioning the town advantageously in Maine's clean energy economy. The diversified strategy—integrating storage with planned solar development and potential wind projects—is explicitly incorporated into economic development planning. Regional grid improvements support technical capacity for additional renewable generation, while state and federal investments create a favorable policy and funding environment for continued expansion.

Rumford Power Plant

The Rumford Power Plant comprises two distinct facilities that together make the town one of the more significant power-generating locations in New England.

The primary facility, Rumford Power LLC, is a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) plant commissioned in July 2000 and currently owned by The Carlyle Group. It operates on natural gas as a high-efficiency baseload facility, meaning it generates power continuously rather than solely during peak demand periods. Natural gas is supplied through the Portland Natural Gas Transmission System (PNGTS), and electricity generated is sold to ISO New England under a power purchase agreement.

The plant is built around two GE turbines:

- A GE 7F.04 gas turbine with a 179.4 MW nameplate capacity
- A GE A10 steam turbine with a 95.1 MW nameplate capacity, bringing total plant capacity to approximately 274.5 MW

The plant operates two generators and produced 208.8 GWh during the September through December 2024 period, ranking it third out of 211 power plants in Maine by total annual net electricity generation.

The second facility, Rumford Cogeneration, operates as a biomass cogeneration plant. It runs primarily on black liquor — a byproduct of paper manufacturing — with biomass and coal serving as supplemental fuels. Operating a single generator, it produced 127.5 GWh between October 2024 and January 2025, ranking it 26th out of 85 black liquor plants nationally.

At the municipal level, Rumford hosts nine power plants in total and generates 637.7 GWh annually from natural gas alone, placing it fourth among Maine cities for natural gas generation based on data through November 2025. Collectively, the Rumford power complex represents a significant contribution to Maine's electricity grid and serves as a reliable baseload resource within the ISO New England system.

The DEP oversees air quality compliance for the natural gas-fired Rumford Power plant:

- Air Emission Licenses: The facility operates under a Part 70 Air Emission License (Title V), which requires periodic renewals to maintain compliance with state and federal air quality standards.
- Minor Revisions: Recent actions include the granting of a New Source Review (NSR) Minor Revision (A-724-77-4-M) that did not change licensed annual emission limits.

Battery Energy Storage Facilities (Operational):

The most significant development since 2013 has been the establishment of utility-scale battery energy storage facilities. Rumford now hosts two operational battery energy storage systems (BESS) providing a combined total of 12.7 MW of utility-scale storage. These facilities are part of Maine's 63 MW of operational utility-scale storage as of 2024, positioning Rumford among a select group of mill towns—including Madison and Millinocket—that have repurposed industrial infrastructure for clean energy applications.

- Rumford BESS: 4.7 MW capacity (operational)
- Rumford Renewable BESS: 8.0 MW capacity (operational)
- Total: 12.7 MW utility-scale battery storage in Rumford
- Part of Maine's 63 MW total operational utility-scale storage (as of 2024)

Renewable Energy Development:

Solar and wind projects are currently in development. This diversified portfolio approach reflects strategic economic development planning that leverages the clean energy transition for community benefit; however, residents have expressed some pushback for further renewable energy development.

- Solar Projects: In development (referenced by Town Manager)
- Wind Energy: Twin Energy, LLC is developing an 18.3 MW wind facility on South Twin Mountain, sited in the Towns of Rumford and Roxbury. The project includes three turbines with a total tip height of 643 feet, one access road, and associated infrastructure.
- The Rumford Falls Hydroelectric Project (44.5 MW, FERC Project No. 2333), located on the Androscoggin River, received a new 40-year FERC license in January 2026 (see Water Resources chapter for details).

Regional Grid Infrastructure Improvements

Maine received a \$65 million federal grant (October 2024) for grid improvements through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Partnership between Maine Governor's Energy Office, Central Maine Power, and Versant Power will upgrade software/hardware to improve grid stability, voltage regulation, transmission capacity, and lower interconnection costs for renewable projects.

Major regional storage projects include:

- **Lincoln:** World's largest multi-day battery (iron-air technology), \$147 million federal award (August 2024)
- **Gorham:** Cross Town Energy Storage, broke ground February 2024

Street Tree Program

Does the community have a street tree program?

Rumford currently has no formal street tree program. The town's extensive sidewalk system, ongoing downtown revitalization efforts, and scheduled infrastructure improvements provide an ideal framework for program development.

Transportation

Current Findings:

What are the transportation system concerns in the community and region? What plans exist to address them?

The Town of Rumford has experienced both successes and significant setbacks in transportation planning since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. While recreational bicycle infrastructure and bridge replacement projects demonstrate progress, the March 2025 elimination of fixed-route public transit service represents a challenge to transportation equity. Addressing this crisis, along with developing safe on-road bicycle infrastructure and continuing regional transportation collaboration, must be prioritized in the coming decade to ensure all Rumford residents have access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options.

- Martin Memorial Bridge replacement completed
- Red Bridge Replacement (Rumford-Mexico) completed in November 2025
- Mountain bike trails created (6 miles)
- Traffic volumes declined 2-10% on major routes (2011-2024)
- Sidewalk system aging (100+ years), ongoing maintenance but gaps persist
- Bicycle transportation infrastructure remains inadequate except recreational trails
- Regional transportation planning continues but implementation has been limited
- Route 2 'retrograde arterial' status continues - crash rates exceed state average
- Falls Hill safety improvements not completed despite 2013 priority
- Route 2 realignment not completed
- Fixed-route bus service terminated March 28, 2025 - major service regression
- Transit services remain minimal despite identified needs

Highway System and Traffic Volumes

Traffic volume data provides information for transportation planning, road maintenance budgeting, safety analysis, and economic development assessment. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts represent the total volume of vehicle traffic on a roadway for a year divided by 365 days. This section presents historical traffic data from the 2013 Comprehensive Plan (2011AADT) and provides updated data (2020AADT and 2023AADT).

5 Year Annual Average Daily Trips

Source: <https://www.maine.gov/dot/publications/traffic-engineering/yearly-traffic-counts>

Traffic Volume Analysis:

Long-Term Decline on US Route 2 Arterials: There was a substantial drop in traffic on the primary US 2 corridor. US 2 (Bridge St) near Prospect Ave fell from 10,350 to 7,180 vehicles per day — a 31% decline. US 2 (Lincoln Ave) near Waldo St dropped from 9,210 to 6,720 (-27%), and US 2 south of South Rumford Rd fell from 8,570 to 7,465 (-13%). SR 108 near the Industrial Park also dropped sharply, from 2,980 in 2011 to roughly 2,240 by 2020, holding flat through 2023. These long-term declines align with Rumford's population loss and contraction of industrial activity.

Recovery and Growth: Despite the long-term arterial decline, several corridors saw increases between 2020 and 2023, suggesting localized recovery or shifting travel patterns post-pandemic. SR 120 (Hancock St) grew notably on multiple segments — up 23–27% between 2020 and 2023 — pointing to increased use of that north-south corridor. Wyman Hill Rd near Burgess Hill Rd jumped 33% (870 to 1,160). Lowell St south of Congress St more than doubled (120 to 320). Canal St, multiple Congress St one-way segments, Falmouth St, Rumford Ave, and US 2 near Prospect Ave all posted increases of 10–20% in the same period.

Notable Anomaly: Railroad St SE of Canal St went from just 20 vehicles per day in 2020 to 1,206 in 2023.

Continued Declines: Not all corridors recovered. River St south of Portland St dropped 25% (1,030 to 770). Veterans St south of Railroad St fell 13% (5,530 to 4,820). Crescent Ave near Prospect Ave declined 24% (590 to 450). SR 108 (Bridge St) near Canal St and near US 2 both edged downward, suggesting through-traffic on the state route network continues to soften.

Overall Pattern: The data tells a two-part story: a sustained long-run decline in traffic on the primary US 2 arterial consistent with population and economic contraction, offset by localized 2020–2023 increases on secondary streets and the Hancock St/SR 120 corridor that may reflect new development activity, downtown investment, and shifting route preferences.

Road Use Conflicts

Are conflicts caused by multiple road uses, such as a major U.S. route that also serves as a local service road?

The following routes consist of shared-use conditions that create safety and speed-management challenges, though they do not result in major congestion.

U.S. Route 2: Functions as both a through-route and a local service road. Conflicts where regional traffic and local travel share the same corridors.

Route 108 & Route 232: Higher-speed regional travel intersects with local access points and school bus routes.

Highway System Classifications

What is the community's current and approximate future budget for road maintenance and improvement?

Does the community have local access management or traffic permitting measures in place?

Do local road design standards support the community's desired land use pattern?

Highway functional classifications determine road design standards, funding eligibility, and maintenance responsibilities. The classification system ranges from Interstate highways through arterials and collectors to local roads. Rumford's highway system includes state-maintained arterials and collectors, as well as town-maintained collectors and local roads.

2024/2025 Classification Status:

- **Arterial:** US Route 2, State Route 108 (retrograde arterial)
- **Major Collectors:** State Routes 5, 120, 232
- **Minor Collectors:** Intervale Road, South Rumford Road, Wyman Hill Road
- **Local Roads:** Approximately 45 miles of local roads
- **Total Public Roads:** Approximately 92 miles

US Route 2 Status: Continues to be classified as 'retrograde arterial' indicating crash rates exceed statewide average for similar roads. This critical safety designation requires continued attention and improvements

Access Management: Standards apply outside Urban Compact Area to control driveway and intersection locations

Town Maintenance: Approximately 59 miles maintained by town (summer and winter maintenance)
MaineDOT Maintenance: 37 miles maintained summer; 14 miles maintained winter only

Source: Current maintenance responsibilities from Maine Comprehensive Plan Data Portal and Mapping Services, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/334201c042d34964906500d823a354c8> (accessed December 2024) and town records (2024); retrograde arterial classification from Maine Department of Transportation, Traffic

Bridges

Bridge infrastructure represents a significant ongoing investment need for Rumford. The town's 30 publicly owned bridges (27 state-owned, 3 town-owned) require regular maintenance, periodic rehabilitation, and eventual replacement. This section provides comprehensive updates on completed, ongoing, and emerging bridge projects.

2024/2025 Bridge Status:

- 30 publicly owned bridges total in Rumford
- 27 state-owned bridges (MaineDOT responsibility)
- 3 town-owned bridges (municipal responsibility)
- Martin Memorial Bridge at Rumford Point
- Haverhill Bridge (mill access)

Bridge Infrastructure

Recently Completed Bridge Infrastructure Projects

Martin Memorial Bridge (Rumford Point)

Project Status: Completed in 2015-16

Project Scope: Complete replacement of historic bridge structure with modern design; old bridge demolished following new bridge opening

Red Bridge Replacement (Rumford-Mexico)

The most significant transportation infrastructure project currently affecting Rumford is the replacement of the Red Bridge carrying Route 2 over the Swift River between Rumford and Mexico.

Project Status: Completed in 2025.

Project Scope: Replace original bridge (built 1954, 165 feet long, 28 feet wide curb-to-curb) with a New Bridge (155 feet long, 36 feet wide curb-to-curb (8-foot width increase))

Haverhill Bridge (Mill Access)

2013 Plan Reference: The 2013 plan mentioned 'Haverhill Bridge improvements' being studied by MaineDOT. This bridge provides access to the ND Paper (formerly NewPage) Mill and Brookfield Power

facilities

Historical Context: The 2013 plan noted that while this bridge once spanned water, it no longer does due to changes in water flow patterns, and potentially could be replaced with a road rather than a bridge structure

MaineDOT Bridges

MaineDOT produces an annual three-year Work Plan each January identifying capital projects scheduled for construction. Rumford participates in this planning process, with projects ranked and prioritized based on MaineDOT's Highway Corridor Priorities (HCPs), Customer Service Levels (CSLs), and federally-required performance measures. The work plan can be found on the MDOT's web site.

Source: MaineDOT Work Plan 2026-2028 Edition documentation.

The MDOT's 2026-2028 Work Plan for Rumford includes total estimated project costs which may extend into neighboring towns. Included in the list is funding to address six bridges plus surfacing over a seventh. The following bridges will be addressed:

Bridge	Location	Year	Scope of Work
Martins Bridge	Route 2 over Ellis River	2026	Bridge Replacement
Upper Canal Bridge	Route 108 over Androscoggin River	2026	Joint Seal Replacement
Howe Bridge	Andover Road over Ellis River	2026	Curb and Rail Repair
Austin Bridge	Route 5 over Howe Valley Brook	2026	Wearing Surface Replacement
High Bridge	South Rumford Road over Androscoggin River	2027	Bridge Replacement
Chisholm Park Bridge	Portland Street over Androscoggin River West Channel	2027	Bridge Rehabilitation
Morse Bridge	Route 108 over Androscoggin River	2027	Bridge Rehabilitation
Logan Bridge	South Rumford Road over Logan Brook	2027	Bridge Replacement
MCRR Overpass Bridge	Railroad Street over MCRR Siding	2028	Bridge Deck Replacement

Rumford-Owned / Maintained Bridges

Bridge Inventory: Rumford maintains 30 publicly owned bridges total, representing significant infrastructure assets requiring ongoing attention

State Responsibility: 27 bridges are state-owned and maintained by MaineDOT, though local impacts from maintenance and replacement projects affect town

Town Responsibility: 3 bridges are town-owned and require municipal budget allocation for maintenance and eventual replacement

Condition Monitoring: All bridges require regular inspection (typically every 2 years) and condition assessment to identify maintenance needs and plan for rehabilitation or replacement

Future Projects: Additional bridge projects likely to emerge over the 2025-2035 planning period as structures age and reach end of design life

Sources: Bridge inventory from Town of Rumford, Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Rumford_2013.pdf; current bridge program information from Maine Department of Transportation, Bridge Program and Public Meeting Records, <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/bridges/> (November-December 2024); bridge inspection requirements from federal highway administration standards

Freight and Rail Transportation

If the community hosts a transportation terminal, how does it connect to other modes?

Freight rail service in Rumford is provided along a line that terminates at the ND Paper-Rumford Mill, the primary user of the railroad.

- Line is active and critical for the transportation of raw materials and finished products for the mill.
- Other local businesses also receive or ship goods by rail, but the rail yard lacks facilities for regular freight handling beyond the mill.
- No expansion of rail infrastructure or the rail yard in Rumford is currently planned.

While there has been discussion about reestablishing passenger rail service connecting Rumford with Bethel, northern New Hampshire, and Montreal, no official plans, funding, or commitments exist as of 2025 which would include Rumford as a stop. Passenger rail restoration remains a long-term aspiration promoted by local advocates but is not a current project.

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Infrastructure

To what extent do sidewalks connect residential areas with schools, shopping, and other daily destinations?

Rumford's sidewalk system is a significant community asset, enabling walkability primarily in the compact Rumford Falls area and providing safe pedestrian routes to schools, downtown, and residential neighborhoods. Rumford maintains roughly 11 miles of sidewalks. Pedestrian connections are generally strong in the older, walkable parts of town, and in the past 5-7 years, the Town completed a substantial reconstruction project of its streets, sidewalks and utilities on the Island. Outside the village areas, sidewalk coverage is limited, which reduces walkability between outlying residential areas and daily destinations. The system's age (much of it over 100 years old) requires ongoing maintenance investment.

Connections to regional trail systems: While mountain bike trails have been developed , sidewalk/trail connections from compact area to trails remain an opportunity for network expansion.

ADA accessibility improvements: This is an ongoing requirement as sidewalks are reconstructed. Progress has been made and continued ADA compliance and improvement across the entire system remains a long-term goal.

Bicycle Infrastructure

How are walking and bicycling integrated into the community's transportation network?

Mountain Bike Trail Development

The Town of Rumford has achieved significant success in developing recreational mountain bike infrastructure through the Pennacook Area Community Trails (PACT) project.

Project Completion: Summer 2022

Trail System Statistics:

- 4 miles of single-track mountain bike trails
- 2 miles of double-track trails
- Trailhead located at Mountain Valley High School

The PACT system, developed by Inland Woods + Trails, includes machine-built single-track with bench-cut features, optional rock features, and a large bridge connecting trail segments. Initial construction began in fall 2019 with the 'Take Off' trail segment.

Source: Inland Woods + Trails, Pennacook Area Community Trails project documentation, 2022. Maine Trail Finder, Trailforks.com.

On-Road Bicycle Infrastructure

Do local road design standards support bicycle and pedestrian transportation?

Despite the continued success of recreational mountain bike trails, on-road bicycle transportation infrastructure in Rumford remains underdeveloped, creating opportunities for improvement. Through community engagement efforts, residents have identified and mapped needs for the following:

- Dedicated bicycle lanes on some major streets providing connectivity for commuting;
- Bicycle-safe shoulders on Route 2, Route 108, Route 120, and other primary corridors;
- Protected bicycle or separated multi-modal infrastructure connecting residential areas to downtown;
- Bike racks at key destinations;
- Perceived dangerous intersections and segments of road, some correlating with MDOT crash data; and,
- Conversion of Congress Street to 2-way movement to support safe biking, walking, driving and strolling for all modes.

Parking Infrastructure

Are there parking issues in the community? If so, what are they?

If there are parking standards, do they discourage development in village or downtown areas?

Rumford maintains seven municipal parking lots that serve downtown and other compact areas of the community. These lots are generally in good condition and meet typical demand, though some areas experience occasional overflow during major events. Off-street and on-street parking help support residents, businesses, and visitors, while the Site Plan Review Ordinance establishes requirements for new developments to ensure adequate parking. As a whole, there is no shortage of parking in the Town of Rumford.

The Town of Rumford maintains parking facilities at the following locations:

Hosmer Field Athletic Complex and Event Parking: Multiple parking areas along Hosmer Lane and behind the tennis courts, serving athletic fields, nature trails, and the Swift River Walking Trail. On-street parking also supports the facility.

Three Fields: Located across from Aubuchon Hardware on Route 2, temporarily impacted by Red Bridge replacement project (2023-2025)

Downtown/Island area: Various town-owned lots serving the mixed-use district

- On-street parking is available on the island and most residential streets.

Park facilities: Veteran's Park, Morency Park, Virginia Ball Field, Strathglass Park

Parking Lots in Rumford Maine:

- Information Booth Lot – 40 spaces
- Library Lot – 22 spaces
- River Street/Congress Street Lot – 14 spaces
- River Street behind House of Pizza – 14 spaces
- River Street behind Fire Station – 21 spaces
- Lowell Street near Dunkin' Donuts – 16 spaces
- Old Agway Lot across the Hartford Bridge – 35 spaces

The Site Plan Review Ordinance allows flexibility in downtown areas through shared parking and public lot usage. Existing buildings are generally considered compliant, facilitating adaptive reuse and supporting the downtown economy.

Residential Area Parking:

Residential areas generally feature on-street parking and private driveways. Multi-family properties along Maine Avenue, Washington Street, Cumberland Street, and Waldo Street typically include off-street parking.

Public Transportation

Public transit options in Rumford are limited, and recent service changes have further reduced availability. Western Maine Transportation Services (WMTS) ended the River Valley/GreenLine Connection route in March 2025 due to low ridership, leaving the community without a fixed-route bus. WMTS still provides demand-response and paratransit services, including MaineCare transportation and curb-to-curb trips for eligible riders, but these options do not function as daily public transit for the general population.

The loss of the fixed-route service creates transportation gaps for residents who rely on alternatives to personal vehicles, particularly for access to jobs, medical appointments, and regional service centers. WMTS has expanded service on other corridors in the region, but no current plans indicate

a return of a Rumford route. As a result, Rumford will need to evaluate whether expanded demand-response options, a pilot shuttle, or regional coordination could help address unmet needs.

At this time, existing transit services do not fully meet current or foreseeable needs. Any improvement will require further assessment of local demand and collaboration with WMTS and regional partners.

WMTS Fixed-Route Service Cancellation

Service Termination Date: March 28, 2025

Route Eliminated: River Valley/GreenLine Connection

Coverage Area: Densely-populated areas of Rumford, Mexico, and Dixfield

Connection Point: Park & Ride at Brettun's Variety in Livermore (transfer point to Lewiston-Auburn/Farmington GreenLine commuter service)

Ridership Statistics: Daily ridership averaged only 3 riders per day, falling below sustainable operating levels despite initial public enthusiasm when service launched in November 2024. Peak activity never exceeded 4 riders per day.

Official Reason: Unsustainable operations due to low ridership

Source: WMTW News, 'Changes coming to bus service in western Maine,' February 28, 2025; Lewiston Sun Journal, 'River Valley bus service to end March 28,' February 12, 2025; Craig Zurhorst, WMTS Community Relations Manager.

Current Transit Services Available

Following the fixed-route cancellation, Rumford residents have limited public transportation options:

WMTS Demand-Response Service: Available by calling 1-800-393-9335 at least one business day in advance. Service operates Monday-Friday 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Wheelchair-accessible vehicles available.

MaineCare Transportation: For qualified individuals 60+ or disabled for medical appointments

Community Concepts Elder Rides: Limited service for non-MaineCare qualified seniors, income-based eligibility

United Way Community Rides: Limited availability through SeniorsPlus Elder Rides Program

Transit Reassessment: WMTS indicated willingness to reassess fixed-route service if demand returns, but no timeline or ridership threshold has been established.

Source: Western Maine Transportation Services website, Transit Options documentation; Community Concepts Inc.; Carrabassett Valley Network transportation resources.

Transportation Equity Implications

The elimination of fixed-route service creates significant hardships for Rumford residents who:

- Do not own vehicles or cannot drive due to age, disability, or economic constraints
- Rely on transit for commuting to work in Lewiston-Auburn or other regional employment centers
- Need regular access to shopping, medical services, or social activities
- Face scheduling challenges with demand-response service (24-hour advance notice required)

The median household income of \$38,867 (51% lower than Maine's state average of \$74,733) suggests significant affordability challenges that make vehicle ownership difficult for some residents.

Regional Transportation Planning

How do state and regional transportation plans relate to your community?

AVCOG Regional Transportation Support

The Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG) provides transportation-related technical support and planning assistance to non-metropolitan communities in Western Maine, including Rumford. AVCOG's Regional Transportation Program serves Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties through:

- AVCOG Transportation Committee coordination of elected officials, environmental representatives, business leaders, and alternative transportation advocates
- Partnership with MaineDOT in transportation planning efforts
- Identification of regional transportation needs, priorities, and opportunities

Source: Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Regional Transportation Planning program documentation.

Regional Strategic Transportation Investments

AVCOG adopted Regional Strategic Investments for transportation improvements in 2006, with annual reviews to ensure relevance. These investments focus on multi-modal transportation improvements of regional or statewide significance that cannot expect funding through traditional state sources such as MaineDOT's biennial Capital Work Program. Rumford participates in this regional planning process through AVCOG's Transportation Committee.

Source: AVCOG Regional Plans documentation, Regional Strategic Investments reports.

MaineDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Rumford projects are included in MaineDOT's STIP, a federally-required four-year transportation capital improvement program. The 2025-2028 STIP includes the following projects affecting Rumford:

Emergency Response (WIN 028688.00): Route 120 emergency work from Route 5 extending southeast 15.16 miles through Rumford, Andover, Mexico, and Roxbury - \$742,684 total with \$594,147 Federal STP funds.

Source: Maine Department of Transportation, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program 2025-2028, approved June 17, 2025.

Subdivision Roads

Do Planned or Recently Built Subdivision Roads Dead-End or Allow for Network Expansion?

New subdivision activity in Rumford has been minimal during the planning period, reflecting stable to declining population and limited development pressure. The compact, pre-automobile street grid of the Rumford Falls and Island areas already provides strong network connectivity where most activity occurs.

Rumford's Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 303) require streets to meet MaineDOT construction standards but do not contain explicit language requiring stub streets, future-connection easements, or network interconnectivity as conditions of approval. Where dead-end roads are approved, there is no formal mechanism ensuring extension to adjacent undeveloped land.

Given low development pressure, this is not an immediate concern, but adding a connectivity provision to the subdivision regulations — or requiring applicants to demonstrate why a dead-end configuration is unavoidable — would align Rumford's ordinances with current best practices and Maine's model subdivision guidance.

Source: Town of Rumford, Subdivision Regulations, Chapter 303, Land Use Ordinance of the Town of Rumford, Maine (originally adopted; amended 6-10-1986; 6-8-2004; 6-14-2005; 6-8-2010; 6-13-2017; 4-26-2021), <https://ecode360.com/35451286>

Water Resources

Water resources provide essential context for comprehensive planning across land use, public health, economic development, and conservation. Understanding Rumford's surface waters, groundwater supplies, and water quality conditions, enables planning for infrastructure investment, land use regulation, aquifer protection, and long-term water supply sustainability. This section provides a complete analysis of Rumford's water resources since the last comprehensive plan.

Current Findings:

- Continued Androscoggin River water quality challenges
- FERC relicensing of the Brookfield Dam ongoing; Board of Environmental Protection appeal denied July 2025
- Wellhead Protection Ordinance updated June 2017
- Point source discharges continue to be monitored and regulated
- Non-point source pollution management continues through shoreland zoning

Androscoggin River

Are there point sources (direct discharges) of pollution in the community? Is the community taking steps to eliminate them?

The Androscoggin River is Rumford's most significant water resource, flowing through the heart of the community and historically serving as both an economic asset (hydropower, industrial water supply) and an environmental challenge (receiving industrial and municipal discharges). The river extends roughly 15 miles across the southern area of town and serves as the municipal boundary between Rumford and Mexico. At its crossing with the Swift River, the Androscoggin drains a watershed of approximately 2,070 square miles. The river's water quality has improved substantially since the pollution conditions of the mid-twentieth century and continues to improve; however, water quality concerns remain.

FERC Relicensing of the Brookfield Dam

FERC Relicensing of the Brookfield Dam

Owner: Rumford Falls Hydro LLC, a Brookfield Renewable subsidiary.

Facility: Two-development hydroelectric facility on the Androscoggin River. The Upper Station was constructed in 1918 and the Lower Station in 1954. Operates as a run-of-river project with a total

installed capacity of 44.5 MW across both developments, generating an estimated average of 270,800 megawatt-hours annually.

Key Proposals in the New License: Brookfield proposed no new structures or generating capacity. Operational proposals included continuing run-of-river mode, maintaining a minimum flow of 1 cfs from the Upper Dam bypass reach, and increasing the Middle Dam bypass flow to 95 cfs (May–October) and 54 cfs (November–April), a meaningful increase from the prior 21 cfs minimum. Brookfield also proposed three scheduled whitewater boating releases (1,200–1,500 cfs) and three aesthetic flow releases over Rumford Falls each summer, in consultation with the Town of Rumford.

Relicensing Timeline:

- September 27, 2019: Pre-Application Document (PAD) filed with FERC
- September 29, 2022: Application for new license filed with FERC
- August 2023: Water Quality Certification (WQC) application submitted to Maine DEP
- February 22, 2024: FERC issued Draft Environmental Assessment
- August 13, 2024: FERC issued Final Environmental Assessment
- August 16, 2024: Maine DEP issued Water Quality Certification for continued operation
- October 1, 2024: FERC issued notice authorizing continued operation under existing license terms pending formal issuance of new license
- January 2026: FERC issued new license (Order H-4, Project No. P-2333-094) at the January 2026 Commission Meeting

Maine DEP Water Quality Certification: Waters within the project reach are designated as Class C and impaired for PCBs and dioxins caused by legacy pollutants, and mercury from atmospheric deposition. Maine DEP concluded that the project does not negatively impact river water quality.

Opposition and Appeal: Trout Unlimited, joined by American Whitewater, Maine Rivers, American Rivers, and the Conservation Law Foundation, appealed the DEP certification to the Board of Environmental Protection. They argued the certification was based on incomplete data — specifically that the dewatered bypass sections of the river were never properly studied, and that American eels have been documented above the dam for 35 years yet no fish passage was required. DEP maintained the bypass reaches could not support native aquatic life and that fish passage was not warranted. In July 2025, the Board of Environmental Protection denied the appeal. FERC formally issued a new license for the project in January 2026 (Order H-4, Project No. P-2333-094).

Relicensing & Recreation Impacts

The relicensing process included formal recreation studies conducted by Brookfield as part of the FERC-approved study plan, covering whitewater boating, angling, aesthetic flows, and facility conditions throughout the project area.

Whitewater Boating: In June 2022, Brookfield conducted the on-water portion of a formal Whitewater Boating Study as part of the relicensing record. Water was released at 800 cfs and

experienced Class III–IV kayakers evaluated a reach of the Androscoggin downstream of Morse Bridge. The study assessed the river's suitability for recreational paddling under controlled flows. As part of the relicensing process, FERC issued a new 40-year license for the project on January 22, 2026. The license requires Rumford Falls Hydro to provide whitewater boating flow releases of 1,200–1,500 cfs into the Middle Dam bypassed reach for a total of 10 weekend days between June and August (10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.), scheduled in consultation with the Town of Rumford and American Whitewater and posted in advance via the SafeWaters notification system (or a comparable platform).

Aesthetic Flow Releases: Separately from the whitewater releases, Brookfield proposed ten aesthetic flow releases over Rumford Falls per summer for public viewing. These were also to be coordinated with the Town and posted via SafeWaters. A formal Aesthetic Flow Study was conducted and included in the license application record.

Angling: A formal Angler Creel Survey was conducted with indexed sampling sites along the river reach and submitted as part of the relicensing record.

Project-Area Recreation Facilities: The FEA identifies the following recreation facilities within or adjacent to the project boundary: Veterans Park, the West Viewing Area, the MDACF Boat Launch in Rumford, the Rumford Information Center, and the Rumford Falls Trail. J. Eugene Boivin Park is located adjacent to the Middle Dam on the northwest bank of the Androscoggin and provides views of Rumford Falls and both the Upper and Middle Dams, as well as informal river access; it is maintained by the Town of Rumford, not a licensed project facility.

Proposed Facility Improvements Under the New License:

- **West Viewing Area:** Connect via the Powerhouse driveway to J. Eugene Boivin Park; relocate floodlights illuminating the falls from the top of the banister to below it to improve public safety and viewing; install a project/history kiosk, two picnic tables, and a bench
- **Rumford Falls Trail:** Provide year-round daytime access; firm the trail bed; add wood crib steps where appropriate; install a removable bollard or gate at the trailhead

Water Quality Classification

Water Classification: Designated Class C from the Ellis River confluence near Rumford to Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls, after which the river transitions to Class B from Worumbo Dam to Merrymeeting Bay. The river meets Class C criteria but cannot reliably meet Class B under critical low-flow, high-temperature summer conditions according to DEP modeling, which assumes worst-case scenarios including maximum industrial discharge loads. DEP has declined to upgrade despite advocacy from watershed groups including the Androscoggin River Watershed Council, Grow L+A, and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay who contend that monitoring data show the river regularly meeting Class B standards, with dissolved oxygen criteria met every year since 2004. DEP's position is rooted in a strict legal interpretation requiring Class B attainment 100% of the time. Multiple groups have formally proposed an upgrade to Class B for the Ellis River

confluence-to-Worumbo Dam segment through the current DEP Triennial Review process, initiated in March 2024 and expected to extend into 2026 for any required legislation.

Dissolved Oxygen and BOD: Class C requires a minimum of 5.0 mg/L dissolved oxygen or 60% saturation. The ND Paper mill at Rumford is a regulated BOD point source affecting downstream quality. The dam operates run-of-river and DEP found it does not negatively impact dissolved oxygen. The river has recovered from the industrial era when summer DO levels frequently reached very low levels, but remains vulnerable during low-flow summer conditions.

Legacy Contaminants: The reach is impaired for PCBs and dioxins from legacy mill discharges, and mercury from atmospheric deposition. Fish tissue sampling found combined dioxin and coplanar PCB levels consistently exceeding the 0.4 ppt action level at every sampling location below Rumford Point. The contamination predates current dam operations.

Fishery: A productive, lightly pressured smallmouth bass fishery exists from Rumford to Dixfield and beyond, averaging 12–18 inches with fish up to 22 inches documented. No migratory fish are present — salmon, shad, and alewife were extirpated by dams and historic pollution. American eel presence above the dam was disputed in the 2024 relicensing, but DEP declined to require fish passage. Stocked and some wild trout are present in spring and fall.

Fish Consumption Advisories: Subject to both the statewide mercury advisory and additional PCB/dioxin advisories. General public: limit all freshwater fish (except brook trout and landlocked salmon) to two meals per month. Sensitive populations (pregnant women, nursing mothers, children under 8): avoid all freshwater fish except brook trout and landlocked salmon, once per month maximum. No PFAS advisory exists for this mainstem reach.

Point Source Discharges: Point source discharges are specific, identifiable sources of water pollution such as pipes or channels. In Rumford, the two major point sources are the municipal wastewater treatment plant and the paper mill. Both operate under Maine Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MEPDES) permits issued by Maine DEP, which set limits on discharge quantities and pollutant concentrations.

Rumford Point Treatment Plant:

Continues to operate under MEPDES permit; 19,000 gpd capacity adequate for service area; compliance monitoring ongoing.

ND Paper Mill:

With the closure of the Jay Mill (2023), the ND Paper Rumford mill is now one of the remaining major industrial dischargers on the Androscoggin River. The ND Paper mill in Rumford operates under several environmental licenses from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), primarily covering air emissions and wastewater discharge.

- **Air Emission License:** The facility holds a Part 70 Air Emission License (No. A-214-70-G-R/A). Recent New Source Review (NSR) permits, such as NSR #17 (No. A-214-77-17-A), regulate modifications to equipment like power boilers, pulp dryers, and paper machines.
- **Wastewater Discharge Permit:** The mill is regulated under the Maine Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MEPDES) with permit number ME0002054. This permit limits the pollutants discharged into the Androscoggin River. The license authorizes the discharge of treated process wastewater from its 34 million gallon per day activated sludge treatment plant directly to the Androscoggin River. Primary regulated parameters include BOD, total suspended solids (TSS), nutrients, and toxics.
- The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) conducts unannounced inspections, audits the mill's lab data, and performs its own independent water quality modeling of the Androscoggin River. If the mill exceeds its licensed limits for pollutants like BOD or Total Suspended Solids (TSS), they can face significant fines or be forced to upgrade their equipment.
- There is an ongoing push by the Natural Resources Council of Maine to upgrade the river's classification from Class C to Class B. This would force the mill to reduce its organic discharge by another 54%, a target the mill has testified would be difficult to hit consistently with current technology.

Violations of Permit:

- Between April 2020 and September 2022, the Rumford mill recorded five permit violations of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit according to EPA's ECHO database. ND Paper attributed the violations to process variability and stated that incidents are investigated internally with corrective actions developed.
- Under previous ownership (Catalyst Paper), the mill accidentally dumped 15,600 gallons of cooling water contaminated with paper fiber into the Androscoggin River.

National Pollution Ranking: A 2025 study by the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) identified the Rumford mill as one of the nation's dirtiest industrial polluters.

Mercury and Toxics: The EIP analysis of 2023 EPA data ranked the Rumford plant as the second-largest emitter of mercury out of 185 surveyed facilities.

Fuel Sources: The mill is one of the last in the U.S. to burn coal and shredded tires for energy, a practice linked to hazardous air pollutants like nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide.

Swift River and Ellis River

The Swift River and Ellis River are important tributaries to the Androscoggin River within Rumford, both maintaining high water quality and providing significant ecological, scenic, and water supply values.

Swift River

The Swift River originates at Swift River Pond in Township E and drains a watershed of approximately 125 square miles before merging with the Androscoggin River at the Rumford–Mexico boundary. The river flows through the northeastern portion of the town. The lower portion of the Swift River through Rumford is classified as Class B, while upstream sections are Class A. The 1982 Maine Rivers Study identified the Swift River as an important natural resource due to its geological and hydrologic features, scenic character, and suitability for recreational activities.

2024/2025 Swift River Status:

- **Water Quality Classification:** Class A/B (high-quality classifications)
- **Designated values:** Significant geological, hydrological, scenic, and whitewater boating values
- **Drainage area:** 125 square miles
- **Fishery:** Important cold water fishery resource
- **Water quality:** No known degradation since 2013; remains high
- **Protection:** Shoreland zoning and limited development in watershed

Ellis River

The Ellis River begins at Ellis Pond in the Town of Roxbury and travels roughly 20 miles before entering the Androscoggin River at Rumford Point. Its watershed encompasses approximately 160 square miles. Under Maine statute (38 MRSA §467), the Ellis River is classified as Class A — the second highest freshwater classification in Maine. In the Maine Rivers Study, the Ellis River was recognized for recreational canoeing opportunities and its association with historic landmarks.

2024/2025 Ellis River Status:

- **Water Quality Classification:** Class A (second highest freshwater classification in Maine)
- **Designated values:** Canoe touring and historic landmark values
- **Drainage area:** 160 square miles
- **Ecological designation:** Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance (Maine IF&W)
- **Water supply:** Recharge area for Ellis River Aquifer, the primary water supply for the Rumford Water District
- **Protection:** Shoreland zoning, Focus Area designation, and Wellhead Protection Ordinance

Ponds, Reservoirs, and Lakes

Scotties Brook: Scotties Brook drains the northeastern area of Rumford and flows into the Swift River. The brook is classified as a losing stream, meaning a portion of its surface water infiltrates into the underlying groundwater system. This characteristic is significant because the Rumford

Water District operates supply wells within the connected aquifer. Maintaining water quality in Scotties Brook is therefore important to protect local drinking water supplies.

Davis Pond: Davis Pond is a small, shallow waterbody of approximately 15 acres located within the Ellis River floodplain. Its contributing watershed covers about 646 acres, the majority of which lies within Rumford and remains predominantly forested. The shorelands surrounding Davis Pond remain undeveloped.

Joes Pond: Joes Pond is a shallow, warm-water pond of approximately 15 acres, with a maximum depth of about four feet. Its entire 291-acre watershed is forested and located within Rumford. Situated at the eastern base of Glass Face Mountain, the pond's shoreline is undeveloped.

Mt. Zircon Reservoir: The Mt. Zircon Reservoir was constructed in 1913 through impoundment of Zircon Brook and served as Rumford's primary public drinking water source prior to the development of wells in the Ellis River Aquifer. The reservoir's watershed includes approximately 1,660 acres, with only 197 acres located within Rumford, and its shoreline remains undeveloped.

2024/2025 Status: All ponds remain small and undeveloped. Water quality is expected to be stable given undeveloped watersheds and limited human activity. No significant development pressure or management issues have been identified.

Invasive Species

The Town of Rumford has no comprehensive documentation of invasive species presence, but the region is likely affected by several species prevalent in western Maine:

Aquatic: Swollen bladderwort, Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed.

Terrestrial: Asiatic bittersweet, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, autumn olive, garlic mustard.

Forest/Tree: Emerald ash borer (confirmed in Oxford County, March 2021), browntail moth (primarily coastal, populations declining statewide as of 2024–2025), hemlock woolly adelgid (established in southern/coastal Maine; not yet confirmed in Rumford area).

Groundwater Resources

Are there non-point sources of pollution? Is the community taking steps to eliminate them?

How are groundwater and surface water supplies and their recharge areas protected?

Do public works crews and contractors use best management practices to protect water resources in their daily operations (e.g. salt/sand pile maintenance, culvert replacement, street sweeping, public works garage operations)?

Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection?

Rumford's public water supply depends on sand and gravel aquifers that are vulnerable to contamination. Protection of these aquifers is important for long-term water supply sustainability.

Municipal wells draw from local aquifers, including the Ellis River and Scotties Brook wellfields, which are sensitive to land use activities within their recharge areas. Development within aquifer recharge areas can introduce contaminants from septic systems, stormwater runoff, road salt, and hazardous material storage. Increased impervious surfaces may also reduce natural groundwater recharge, affecting long-term water availability.

Ellis River Aquifer

2024/2025 Status:

- Primary source for Rumford Water District public water supply
- Sand and gravel aquifer recharged by the Ellis River
- Wellhead Protection Ordinance in place with three protection zones
- Vulnerable to existing and potential land uses in recharge areas within Rumford and upstream communities

Scotties Brook/Swift River Aquifer

- Secondary water supply source for the Rumford Water District
- Protected by the Wellhead Protection Ordinance (same ordinance covering Ellis River Aquifer)

Threats to Aquifer Quality

Existing Land Uses: Development and land uses in Rumford and upstream communities (Mexico, Andover, Byron, Hanover, Newry, Roxbury) that could affect water quality.

Development Pressure: Future development in recharge areas could introduce new contamination sources.

Road Salt: Winter road salt application in recharge areas can affect groundwater quality over time.

Petroleum Storage: Underground and aboveground storage tanks pose a contamination risk.

Septic Systems: Residential septic systems in sensitive recharge areas, particularly older systems.

Agricultural Activities: Fertilizers, pesticides, and animal waste from farming operations.

Commercial and Industrial Uses: Various commercial and industrial activities involving the handling or storage of hazardous materials.

Water Quality Protection Measures

Wellhead Protection Ordinance — Ellis River and Scotties Brook Aquifers

Ellis River Aquifer Protection Zones:

- **Zone 1:** Land owned or controlled by the Water District within the 200-day groundwater travel time to wells
- **Zone 2:** Areas between 200-day and 2,500-day travel time boundaries
- **Zone 3:** Remaining portions of the Ellis River watershed

Scotties Brook Aquifer Protection Zones:

- **Zone 1:** Areas within 300 feet of each wellhead
- **Zone 2:** Land between 200-day and 2,500-day travel time areas; includes 250-foot buffer along Scotties Brook and tributaries
- **Zone 3:** Remainder of Scotties Brook watershed

Note: Existing land uses in Rumford and Mexico may affect groundwater quality if not carefully managed.

Comprehensive Wellhead Protection: The ordinance formalizes protection of the Ellis River and Scotties Brook aquifers, divides aquifer recharge areas into three protection zones, and specifies permitted and restricted land uses by zone to reduce contamination risk. Protection measures are codified in the Town's Land Use Code.

Land-Use Controls: Site plan review and subdivision regulations require erosion and sediment controls, stormwater management practices, and appropriate wastewater disposal methods. Higher-risk land uses are subject to review and approval, particularly within watersheds or aquifer protection areas.

Shoreland Zoning: Applies to great ponds, rivers, streams, and freshwater wetlands. Establishes setbacks and limits vegetation clearing and soil disturbance. Restricts certain activities to protect water quality, aquatic habitat, and shoreline functions.

Controls on Contamination Sources: Identifies high-risk activities including fuel storage, automotive services, and waste handling. Prohibits or limits such uses within designated protection zones and requires performance standards to minimize pollutant release.

Erosion, Sediment, and Stormwater Management: Mandatory erosion and sedimentation control measures and stormwater management practices reduce runoff and limit soil loss, preventing transport of sediments and nutrients to surface and groundwater.

Public Water Supply Management: The Rumford Water District operates and maintains the municipal water supply system, monitors water production and quality, publishes annual Consumer Confidence Reports, and protects well sites in high-yield portions of mapped aquifers.

Best Management Practices

Rumford is not a regulated MS4 community and therefore is not subject to the Maine DEP Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems General Permit, which would otherwise require formal stormwater management programs for public works operations. No documented formal BMP program currently governs day-to-day Public Works activities such as salt and sand pile storage, culvert replacement, street sweeping, or garage operations.

This represents a gap given the town's wellhead protection priorities. Road salt application in the Ellis River and Scotties Brook aquifer recharge areas is identified as a threat to drinking water quality, and the highway garage at 1022 Route 2 is located in proximity to sensitive areas. Maine DEP's Stormwater BMP Manual and MaineDOT's BMP for Erosion and Sedimentation Control provide applicable operational guidance.

Local or Regional Advocacy Group Partnerships

Rumford has strong existing and potential partnerships with organizations actively working to protect the Androscoggin watershed.

Androscoggin River Watershed Council (ARWC): Conducts volunteer water quality monitoring at sites on the Androscoggin and Ellis Rivers, advocates for reclassification of the river to Class B, and works to improve environmental quality across the watershed, making it the most directly relevant partner for Rumford's water resource goals.

Natural Resources Council of Maine: Monitors ND Paper's discharge permit compliance and has historically engaged in enforcement actions affecting Rumford's reach of the river.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay: Provides long-term water quality monitoring data on the lower river.

Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District: Offers technical assistance on erosion control and agricultural stormwater management relevant to the Ellis River recharge area.

Trout Unlimited: Maintains interest in coldwater fishery protection in the Ellis and Swift Rivers.

Sources

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Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Rumford_2013.pdf; Maine Revised

Statutes Title 38, §467: Classification of Major River Basins, <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec467.html> (accessed December 2024);

Maine DEP, 2025 Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards, <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/wqs/triennial-review.html>; Maine DEP Water Quality Certification,

Rumford Falls Hydroelectric Project, August 16, 2024; FERC Final Environmental Assessment, August 13, 2024; EPA ECHO database, NPDES compliance records; Maine Department of Inland

Fisheries & Wildlife, Beginning with Habitat Program, <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/> (accessed December 2024);

Maine Forest Service, 2025 Forest Health Highlights (for invasive species status); Maine Comprehensive Plan Data Portal and Mapping Services, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/334201c042d34964906500d823a354c8> (accessed December 2024).

Maine DEP, Stormwater Program, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4), <https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/stormwater/storm.html> (accessed December 2024)

Maine DEP, Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual, <https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/stormwater/stormwaterbmps/> (accessed December 2024)

MaineDOT, Best Management Practices for Erosion and Sedimentation Control, 2008, <https://www.maine.gov/dot/sites/maine.gov.dot/files/2023-08/BMP2008full.pdf>

Androscoggin River Watershed Council, <https://www.androscogginwatershedcouncil.org/> (accessed December 2024)

Natural Resources Council of Maine, Cleaning Up Androscoggin River Pollution, <https://www.nrcm.org/programs/waters/cleaning-up-the-androscoggin-river/> (accessed December 2024)

Natural Resources

Natural resources provide essential context for comprehensive planning across land use, conservation, economic development, and public health. Understanding what ecological resources exist in Rumford, how those resources have changed, and where emerging threats require attention enables planning for habitat protection, water quality, scenic preservation, and long-term community resilience. This section provides a complete analysis of Rumford's natural resources since the last comprehensive plan.

Current Findings:

- Rumford Community Forest — 498 acres permanently protected (February 2024)
- Whitecap Mountain Preserve expanded from 751 to 1,120 acres (369 acres added)
- Over 800 acres conserved through partnerships 2013–2024
- Ellis River and Whitecap Mountain Focus Areas protection maintained
- Rare species habitats protected (bat hibernaculum, alpine plants, turtles)
- Limited development pressure has reduced near-term threats to natural resources
- Wind energy development poses potential impacts to scenic viewsheds
- Climate change is an emerging threat to alpine species and cold water fisheries
- Beginning with Habitat not formally integrated into development review process

Natural Resource Protection Partnerships

Is there current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional groups?

What regulatory and non-regulatory measures has the community taken or can the community take to protect critical natural resources and important natural resources?

The Town of Rumford participates in and benefits from ongoing regional cooperation and planning efforts that support the protection of shared natural resources, particularly surface waters, forestlands, wildlife habitat, and recreational resources that extend beyond municipal boundaries.

Androscoggin River Watershed Council: Collaborates with municipalities and stakeholders to promote water quality protection, watershed stewardship, environmental education, and sustainable economic and recreational development.

Land Conservation Partners: Mahoosuc Land Trust and Inland Woods + Trails protect forestlands, river corridors, wetlands, and critical habitats while providing technical expertise, funding capacity, and long-term stewardship.

Demonstrated Success: The Rumford Community Forest exemplifies effective regional partnership outcomes, bringing together state, federal, nonprofit, and local resources to permanently protect conservation land.

Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance

Are local shoreland zone standards consistent with state guidelines and with the standards placed on adjacent shorelands in neighboring communities?

What regulatory and non-regulatory measures has the community taken or can the community take to protect critical natural resources and important natural resources?

Is there current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional groups?

Are any of the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?

Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance are areas identified by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife through the Beginning with Habitat program. These areas contain concentrations of rare plants, rare animals, exemplary natural communities, or significant wildlife habitats that have been documented and mapped by state biologists. Focus Areas represent Maine's most important ecological resources and warrant special conservation attention in land use planning and development review. Rumford has two designated Focus Areas that have remained priorities since 2013.

Ellis River Focus Area

The Ellis River Focus Area has maintained its ecological significance and continues to support the rare species and exemplary natural communities documented in 2013. Protection has been maintained and in some cases enhanced.

- Encompasses over 6 miles of Ellis River valley corridor
- Rare wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*) — species of special concern
- Rare creeper freshwater mussels (*Strophitus undulatus*) — species of special concern
- Bat hibernaculum — one of only 4 significant bat hibernation sites in the state of Maine
- Exemplary natural community: oak-ash woodland in floodplain setting (uncommon in Maine)
- High-quality coldwater fishery supporting brook trout

Regulatory Protection: Resource Protection District under the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (originally adopted 1991; subsequently amended 1993, 2002, 2009, 2010, and 2017; all amendments subject to Maine DEP Commissioner approval) provides regulatory protection for the Ellis River corridor, associated wetlands, and floodplains. These regulations limit development types, require setbacks, control vegetation removal, and protect water quality.

Natural Physical Protection: Much of the Ellis River Focus Area is located within the 100-year floodplain of the Ellis River. Periodic flooding and wetland conditions limit development suitability for much of the Focus Area. The Floodplain Management Ordinance further restricts development in these areas.

Oak-Ash Woodland Exemplary Community: This natural community type is uncommon in Maine and represents mature floodplain forest with dominant oaks and ashes in a river valley setting. The community provides wildlife habitat, carbon storage, and water quality protection, and represents an uncommon ecological condition.

Bat Hibernaculum: The Ellis River bat hibernaculum is one of only four significant bat hibernation sites in Maine. The hibernaculum supports multiple bat species including:

- Little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) — state endangered due to white-nose syndrome
- Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) — federally endangered
- Other hibernating bat species

White-nose syndrome has caused significant bat population declines across eastern North America since 2006, with some species declining over 90%. The exact location of the hibernaculum is not publicly disclosed to prevent human disturbance, but the general Ellis River Focus Area designation ensures protection consideration in land use planning.

Wood Turtles: Wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*), a state species of special concern, continue to inhabit the Ellis River. Wood turtles require complex habitat including rivers for hibernation, adjacent forests and fields for foraging, and sandy areas for nesting. The Ellis River Focus Area provides this habitat mosaic. Shoreland zoning protects riparian habitat critical for turtles. Ongoing threats include road mortality, collection, habitat degradation, and nest predation.

Creeper Freshwater Mussels: Creeper (*Strophitus undulatus*), a species of special concern, continues to be present in the Ellis River. Freshwater mussels are indicators of water quality; their continued presence suggests that habitat conditions remain suitable. Mussels are vulnerable to water quality degradation, flow alteration, and disruption of host fish populations required for larval development.

Threats from Upstream Development: The Ellis River flows through multiple towns upstream of Rumford (Andover, Byron, Roxbury). Development, land use changes, or water quality impacts in upstream communities could affect the Focus Area, connecting to broader concerns about the Ellis River Aquifer recharge area. Protection requires regional coordination.

Road Impacts on Wildlife: Route 5 (Ellis River Road) parallels the river through parts of the Focus Area. Road mortality of turtles, salamanders, and other wildlife crossing between habitats is an ongoing concern. Wildlife crossing structures or modified road design could reduce impacts but have not been implemented.

Whitecap Mountain Focus Area

Whitecap Mountain Preserve has expanded from 751 acres to 1,120 acres (a 49% increase) through conservation efforts protecting connecting lands between 2013 and 2025.

2024/2025 Status:

- 2,200-foot elevation mountain with extensive open summit area
- Red pine woodland — uncommon natural community type; the largest in Maine
- Mid-elevation bald (open grassy mountainside) — one of only 10 known in Maine
- Three rare plant species documented:
 - Silverling (*Paronychia argyrocoma*) — state threatened species
 - Smooth sandwort (*Minuartia glabra*) — uncommon alpine species
 - Mountain sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*) — state special concern species
- Alpine and subalpine habitats vulnerable to disturbance and climate change

Whitecap Mountain Preserve Expansion:

Original Protection (2007): Mahoosuc Land Trust initially protected 751 acres of Whitecap Mountain including the 2,200-foot summit and portions of the south and east slopes, establishing public access and protecting rare alpine and subalpine natural communities.

2015 Expansion — Ellis River Conservation Area: Mahoosuc Land Trust added the Ellis River Conservation Area through acquisition and conservation easements, protecting river frontage along the Ellis River at the base of Whitecap Mountain and connecting aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

2017 Expansion — Connecting Lands: Additional connecting parcels were acquired to create a continuous protected corridor from the Ellis River valley to the Whitecap summit, eliminating inholdings and creating more coherent preserve boundaries.

Current Total (2025): The Rumford Whitecap Mountain Preserve encompasses 1,120 acres of permanently protected conservation land managed by Mahoosuc Land Trust. The three acquisitions represent a 369-acre (49%) increase from the original preserve.

Strategic Significance: The expansion achieved multiple conservation goals — protecting the entire mountain from base to summit, connecting riparian and alpine ecosystems, securing long-term public recreation access, expanding habitat for wide-ranging species, and protecting scenic viewsheds visible from the valley and surrounding mountains.

Ecological Values Protected at Whitecap Mountain

55-Acre Mid-Elevation Bald: The mid-elevation bald on Whitecap Mountain is one of only ten known mid-elevation balds in Maine. These naturally occurring open, grassy areas on mountainsides (typically between 1,500 and 2,500 feet elevation) are maintained by shallow soils, wind and ice exposure, and periodic disturbance. They support specialized plant communities and provide unique habitat for grassland birds and other species. The Whitecap mid-elevation bald is permanently protected within the preserve.

Rare Plant Species:

Silverling (*Paronychia argyrocoma*): This small alpine plant grows on exposed mountain summits and rocky outcrops and is state-listed as threatened. In Maine, silverling is found in only 8 towns. It requires full sun, rocky substrate, and harsh alpine or subalpine conditions. Climate change threatens the species by allowing woody vegetation to encroach on exposed summits, altering snowpack, and changing moisture regimes.

Smooth Sandwort (*Minuartia glabra*): This alpine species grows on exposed rocky summits and ledges, is uncommon in Maine, and represents the southern extent of its range. Like silverling, it requires harsh alpine conditions and is vulnerable to climate change and habitat loss.

Mountain Sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*): Listed as a special concern species in Maine due to rarity and specialized habitat requirements. Grows on exposed mountain summits typically above 2,000 feet elevation. The Whitecap population represents an important occurrence of this uncommon species.

All three rare plant species are permanently protected within the preserve boundaries. Continued monitoring is recommended to track population trends and climate change impacts.

Red Pine Woodland: The preserve includes red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) woodland, an uncommon natural community type in Maine that provides habitat for species adapted to open forest conditions and represents natural heritage value.

Summit Views and Scenic Values: The 2,200-foot Whitecap Mountain summit provides panoramic views including the Mahoosuc Range, the White Mountains, the Androscoggin River Valley, and surrounding western Maine and New Hampshire terrain. The summit is accessible to the public via a maintained trail system. Scenic viewshed protection extends beyond preserve boundaries — the views from Whitecap are protected, and Whitecap itself is a landmark visible from the valley and surrounding areas.

Wildlife Habitat: The 1,120-acre preserve provides a large undeveloped habitat block supporting wide-ranging wildlife including black bear, moose, white-tailed deer, bobcat, fisher, numerous bird species, and small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. The preserve connects to larger forest

blocks extending into Andover and surrounding towns, providing landscape-scale habitat connectivity.

Trail System and Public Access: Mahoosuc Land Trust maintains a trail system on the preserve:

- Iles Trail (red and orange flags) — primary route to summit
- Starr Trail (yellow blazes) — alternative route
- River Loop — half-mile trail to Ellis River
- River to Ridge Trail — 1.4 miles connecting river to summit

Parking areas have been developed at trailheads. The trail system is designed to minimize environmental impact while providing recreation access.

Rumford Community Forest

The Rumford Community Forest (498 acres) is covered comprehensively in the Agriculture & Forestry Resources section. From a natural resources perspective, the Community Forest provides:

- Productive forestland contributing to large habitat blocks
- Wetlands and streams including beaver ponds and black ash swamp
- Wildlife habitat for deer, moose, bear, and numerous other species
- Trail connections linking Rumford to Whitecap Mountain Preserve and Black Mountain
- Water quality protection for Ellis River Aquifer recharge areas
- Carbon sequestration and climate mitigation value
- Permanent protection from residential subdivision development

Conservation Lands

The period from 2013 to 2025 represents significant conservation progress in Rumford. Over 800 acres of natural resources have been permanently protected through partnerships:

Conservation Achievement	Acres	Year	Organization/Funding
Whitecap Mountain expansion	369	2015–2017	Mahoosuc Land Trust
Rumford Community Forest	498	2024	Inland Woods + Trails, LMF, USFS, Town of Rumford
Glassface Mountain	34	2014	Donated by Maureen Sheldon to the Mahoosuc Land Trust

Total New Protection	901	2013–2025	Multiple Partners
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The 901 acres of new conservation land represents 2% of Rumford's total land area (approximately 43,000 acres municipal). Partner organizations and funding sources include:

- Inland Woods + Trails
- Maine Land for Maine's Future Program
- U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program
- Town of Rumford
- Private landowners
- Community fundraising and volunteers

The conserved lands provide multiple benefits: recreation access, wildlife habitat, water quality protection, scenic preservation, carbon storage, recreation economy value, and community character.

High Value Plant and Animal Species

Are any of the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?

Silverling: Habitat protected through Whitecap Mountain Preserve. Population likely stable but vulnerable to climate change as warming temperatures may allow woody vegetation encroachment on alpine areas. Monitoring is recommended to track population trends.

Sandbar Willow: Documented in Oxford County, but the most recent statewide Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) observations date to 2003, making all known occurrences effectively historical records under MNAP's 20-year data threshold. The species grows on sandbars, mudbars, and moist alluvial soil along major rivers and is among the earliest colonizers of open rivershore habitat following disturbance. Its rarity in Maine is attributed to the scarcity of open, undeveloped rivershore. The Androscoggin and Ellis Rivers contain potentially suitable habitat, particularly on gravel and sand bars subject to periodic scouring. MNAP conservation guidance calls for maintaining the hydrologic integrity of rivershore habitat. A targeted survey of rivershore habitats in the Focus Area is recommended; a confirmed population would represent a significant finding given the absence of verified Maine observations since 2003.

Bat Hibernaculum: Remains one of only 4 significant bat hibernation sites in Maine. Little brown bat and northern long-eared bat (both documented at the hibernaculum) are now state endangered and federally endangered respectively due to white-nose syndrome. Continued protection of the hibernaculum is the highest-priority bat conservation action in Rumford.

Wood Turtles: Continue to inhabit the Ellis River Focus Area. The population is likely stable under current protections from shoreland zoning and limited development. Threats persist from road mortality, collection, and habitat degradation. Continued monitoring is recommended.

Creeper Mussels: Continued presence in the Ellis River indicates water quality conditions remain suitable. Mussels are sensitive indicators; their persistence suggests the habitat has not been significantly degraded. Continued water quality protection is essential.

Bald Eagles: Bald eagles have recovered from historical population declines and were removed from Maine's species of special concern list. Eagles are now regularly observed along the Androscoggin River corridor in Rumford, and multiple nesting territories likely exist along the river.

Climate Change Threats to Natural Resources

Are any of the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?

Alpine and Subalpine Species: Silverling, smooth sandwort, and mountain sandwort on Whitecap Mountain are vulnerable to climate change. Warming temperatures may allow trees and shrubs to expand upslope onto currently open alpine areas, shading out sun-dependent plants. Changes in snowpack affect winter survival, and altered precipitation affects moisture regimes.

Cold Water Species: Brook trout and other cold water fish in the Ellis and Swift Rivers are vulnerable to warming stream temperatures. As climate warms, suitable cold water habitat may contract to headwater reaches and cold groundwater seeps. Protecting cold water refugia is a recognized climate adaptation strategy.

Bat Species: The relationship between climate change and white-nose syndrome is complex. Warmer winters may affect hibernation behavior and energy budgets. Changes in insect prey availability affect summer foraging success and reproductive success. Protecting hibernation sites remains a conservation priority.

Phenology Disruption: Climate change alters the timing of biological events including leaf-out, flowering, insect emergence, and migration. If ecologically dependent species shift their timing at different rates, established ecological relationships can be disrupted.

Sources

Town of Rumford Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program; based on Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Beginning with Habitat Program, Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance, <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/> (accessed December 2024);

rare species occurrence data from Maine Natural Areas Program; natural community descriptions from Maine Natural Areas Program natural community classification system.

Focus Area status from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Beginning with Habitat Program, <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/> (accessed December 2024); bat species and white-nose syndrome information from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife bat conservation program and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service white-nose syndrome reports; wood turtle ecology and threats from Maine Audubon and herpetology literature; mussel information from Maine DIFW Beginning with Habitat and freshwater mussel conservation research; shoreland zoning protection from town ordinances; upstream threat analysis from watershed planning assessments.

Preserve history and expansions from Mahoosuc Land Trust, <https://www.mahoosuc.org/> (accessed December 2024); 2015 and 2017 expansion news coverage from Bangor Daily News (November 2015 and June 2017); acreage and timeline from Mahoosuc Land Trust documentation; mid-elevation bald rarity from Maine Natural Areas Program natural community classification; rare plant species from Maine Natural Areas Program rare plant database; silverling threatened status from Maine Endangered Species Act list; plant ecology and climate threats from botanical literature and Maine Climate Council reports; wildlife species from Maine DIFW Beginning with Habitat and wildlife habitat assessment; trail information from Mahoosuc Land Trust trail guides.

See Agriculture & Forestry Resources section for complete citations. Natural resource values from Inland Woods + Trails, Rumford Community Forest Stewardship Plan, June 2024, and Maine Land for Maine's Future Program, <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf/> (2024).

Compiled from Mahoosuc Land Trust, <https://www.mahoosuc.org/> (accessed December 2024); Maine Land for Maine's Future Program, <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf/> (2024); Inland Woods + Trails, Rumford Community Forest Stewardship Plan, June 2024; Maine Public Radio regional news coverage (2015–2024); Lewiston Sun Journal (2024); Bangor Daily News coverage of Mahoosuc Land Trust conservation projects (2015–2017).

Rare species status from Maine DIFW Beginning with Habitat Program, <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/> (accessed December 2024); bat status from Maine DIFW bat conservation program; white-nose syndrome impacts from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; bald eagle recovery from Maine Audubon and Maine DIFW eagle monitoring; turtle and mussel status from Focus Area assessments; silverling climate vulnerability from botanical research and Maine Climate Council reports.

Climate change impacts on alpine species from Maine Climate Council reports and botanical research; cold water fisheries vulnerability from Maine DIFW climate adaptation planning; bat and climate interactions from bat research literature; phenology disruption from climate change ecological research.

Agriculture & Forestry Resources

Agricultural and forestry resources provide important context for comprehensive planning across land use, economic development, and conservation. Understanding what farmland and forestland exists in Rumford, how those resources have changed, and where regulatory and market conditions create opportunities or constraints enables planning for land protection, economic sustainability, and natural resource stewardship. This section provides a complete analysis of Rumford's agricultural and forestry resources since the last comprehensive plan.

Current Findings:

How important is agriculture and/or forestry and are these activities growing, stable, or declining?

- Sunday River Farms continues major commercial operation (850 acres regionally)
- Rumford Community Forest created, 498 acres with 437 acres productive forest (2024)
- Tree Growth enrollment currently totals approximately 28,872 acres on 330 parcels
- Farmland Program enrollment now totals 898 acres on 18 parcels; Open Space Program enrollment totals 1,478 acres on 30 parcels (both programs increased from zero in 2013).
- River Valley Agricultural Commission appears inactive or at reduced capacity
- ND Paper mill employment has declined since 2013
- Small-scale agriculture continues to decline, with Sunday River Farms remaining the dominant operation

Agricultural Resources

Oxford County Agriculture Overview

Agriculture in Rumford has historically been limited by terrain, soils, and climate, but the Rumford Point area and Ellis River floodplain contain some of the best agricultural soils in Oxford County. The current agricultural situation reflects both continuity and change from 2013. Sunday River Farms continues as a commercial operation, while small-scale agriculture has continued a gradual decline.

Farm Trends (Oxford County, 2017–2022):

- Farms decreased 15% (545 to 463)
- Average farm size increased 26% (141 to 178 acres)
- Total farmland increased 7%
- Overall agricultural activity remains relatively stable

Rumford Agricultural Areas: Primary agricultural concentration near Rumford Point along Routes 2 and 232 and South Rumford Road (rich floodplain soils); secondary area along Ellis River floodplains.

Market Value (Oxford County, 2022): \$26.1 million total (\$56,443 average per farm, up 28% since 2017); crops 84%, livestock/poultry 16%; net cash farm income increased 111%.

Farm Diversity: 38% generate under \$2,500 annually; 6% generate \$100,000+; 2% of farmland irrigated (1,574 acres).

Land Use: 16,827 acres cropland, 3,724 acres pasture, 56,530 acres woodland.

Top Commodities: Forage, corn, vegetables, potatoes, apples, poultry, cattle, and milk; Oxford County ranks highly in Maine for vegetables, corn, and poultry production.

Operations: 97% family-operated, 301 new/beginning farmers, 28% sell directly to consumers, 88% have internet access, 21% hire farm labor.

Sunday River Farms

Sunday River Farms LLC operates as the largest agricultural enterprise in Rumford and is part of a vertically integrated agricultural and food processing company with regional scope.

Regional Operation Scale: Sunday River Farms operates across multiple towns in the region, including Rumford, Bethel, Andover, and Gilead.

Rumford Acreage: Sunday River Farms operates approximately 800 acres in Rumford.

Primary Crops:

- **Potatoes:** Major crop rotated with corn and hay; grown under contract for chip manufacturers including Frito-Lay (Lay's), Cape Cod Chips, and Utz Quality Foods
- **Corn:** Field corn grown primarily for cattle feed, sold regionally
- **Hay:** Included in crop rotation to maintain soil health and fertility

Ownership and Management: Sunday River Farms LLC is managed by the McCrum family (Jon McCrum) and is part of the County Super Spuds and Penobscot McCrum family of companies. The operation is headquartered at the former Arthur Ladd farm property at Rumford Point, purchased in 2004.

Vertical Integration: The farm is part of Penobscot McCrum, a vertically integrated company that controls production, processing, and distribution across Maine.

Economic Significance:

- Major agricultural employer in the region
- Significant property tax base at Rumford Point
- Purchaser of agricultural inputs, fuel, equipment repair, and trucking services from the regional economy
- Producer of high-value specialty potato crops under contract with national chip manufacturers

Agricultural Infrastructure: The operation maintains farm buildings, equipment storage, irrigation systems, potato storage facilities, and field equipment, representing substantial capital investment

at Rumford Point.

Small-Scale Agriculture

Does the community support community forestry or agriculture (i.e. community forests, community gardens, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture)?

Community Gardens: There is currently no formal, town-sponsored community garden in Rumford.

Community Forest: The Rumford Community Forest was established in February 2024 (see Forest Resources section above for details).

Hay Farming: Small-scale hay production continues on a limited basis, primarily serving horse owners and hobby farmers. The 1,770 acres of pasture/hay documented in 2013 has likely decreased as farmers age and land reverts to forest.

Hobby Farms: A small number of hobby farms persist, typically operations under 10 acres producing for personal consumption or local sale. These operations generate limited farm income and function primarily as residential properties with agricultural activity.

Farmers Markets: While Rumford has no traditional farmers' market, several direct-sale farm operations fill a similar role in providing local food access, including Western Maine Farmers Coop, No View Farm & Bakery Coop, and Jade's Homegrown at Thurston Farm.

Overall Trend: Small-scale agriculture continues to decline. Contributing factors include an aging farmer population with limited succession, low profitability of small-scale operations, competition from regional and national suppliers, limited local processing and distribution infrastructure, and property tax burdens that make small-scale farming economically challenging without preferential tax programs.

Farm and Open Space Tax Program

Are farm and forest land owners taking advantage of the state's current use tax laws?

The Farm and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36 MRSA §1101-1121) provides reduced property tax assessment for farmland, open space, and conservation land. The program is intended to preserve these land uses by reducing property tax burdens that might otherwise encourage conversion to development.

- **Farmland Program:** Enrollment currently totals approximately 898 acres on 18 parcels, an increase from the 2013 baseline of zero enrolled parcels.
- **Open Space Program:** Enrollment currently totals approximately 1478 acres on 30 parcels, an increase from the 2013 baseline of zero enrolled parcels.

Property Tax Burden: Agricultural land generates relatively low income compared to development

uses but is assessed at market value without enrollment. This dynamic can make farming economically difficult for smaller operations.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation: Enrollment in both programs has increased meaningfully since 2013, when neither program had any enrolled parcels in Rumford. The current 18 Farmland and 30 Open Space parcels indicate growing landowner participation.

Protection of Agricultural Soils

Is the community currently taking regulatory and/or non-regulatory steps to protect productive farming and forestry lands? Are there local or regional land trusts actively working to protect farms or forest lands?

Has proximity of new homes or other incompatible uses affected the normal farming and logging operations?

Rumford's best agricultural soils are located at Rumford Point and along the Ellis River. These soils are largely protected from development pressure by their floodplain location.

- **Floodplain Location:** Most prime agricultural soils are in the 100-year floodplain of the Androscoggin and Ellis Rivers. Floodplain regulations restrict development in these areas, providing effective land use protection.
- **Development Pressure:** Economic conditions and limited population growth have reduced development pressure on agricultural land at this time.
- **Sunday River Farms Protection:** The ~800 acres at Rumford Point are effectively protected by floodplain location and active agricultural use.
- **Long-Term Tools:** Options for formalizing long-term protection include agricultural conservation easements, Farm and Open Space Tax enrollment, Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs, and right-to-farm provisions in land use ordinances.

Agricultural and forestry operations are largely insulated from residential encroachment conflicts. The town's primary agricultural lands at Rumford Point and along the Ellis River floodplain are naturally buffered by their floodplain location, which restricts residential development independently of any land use regulation. No documented conflicts between new residential development and active farming or logging operations have been identified.

Forest Resources

Forestry is a significant component of Rumford's economy and land use, with approximately 85% of the town (about 42,000 acres out of 50,000 total) covered in forest. The forests provide timber for the ND Paper mill and nearby sawmills, firewood and forest products for residents, wildlife habitat, water quality protection, recreation opportunities, and carbon sequestration. The Tree Growth Tax

Program plays a significant role in keeping forestland in productive use.

Tree Growth Tax Law

Current Enrollment: Tree Growth enrollment currently totals approximately 28,872 acres on 330 parcels, an increase from the 2013 baseline of approximately 27,900 acres on 260 parcels.

Program Operation: Maine's Tree Growth Tax Law has provided property tax relief to forest landowners managing land for commercial timber production since 1972. The program reduces property tax assessment to reflect current use value rather than development value.

Enrollment Stability: Increased enrollment indicates that the program continues to function effectively, that landowners value the tax relief, that forestry remains economically viable, and that development pressure on forestland remains low.

Program Requirements: To qualify for Tree Growth, landowners must have a minimum of 10 acres of forestland, maintain a management plan prepared by a licensed forester, manage land primarily for timber production, file an application with the municipality, and pay a penalty if land is withdrawn from the program for development.

Rumford Community Forest

Does the community have town or public woodlands under management, or that would benefit from forest management?

Are there large tracts of agricultural or industrial forest land that have been or may be sold for development in the foreseeable future? If so, what impact would this have?

The establishment of the Rumford Community Forest in February 2024 represents a significant conservation gain for the community. The 498-acre property is owned by Inland Woods + Trails on behalf of the community.

Forest Composition:

- 437 acres of productive forestland (9 acres roads/openings; 22 acres wetlands/streams within the forested area)
- Forest types include mature northern hardwoods, mixed wood stands, softwood stands, black ash swamp, and early successional forest from past management

Management: Managed by Inland Woods + Trails under a Forest Stewardship Plan completed June 2024. The plan addresses sustainable timber harvesting, wildlife habitat management, recreation trail development and maintenance, water quality protection, and climate change adaptation.

Revenue Generation: Sustainable timber harvesting will generate revenue from sawtimber sales, pulpwood sales, and firewood sales, which can support forest management costs.

Multiple-Use Benefits: The Community Forest provides simultaneous benefits including working forest production, recreation access (hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, hunting), wildlife habitat, water quality protection, carbon sequestration, and an educational resource for sustainable

forestry.

Additional Town Forests

- **Poor Farm Property:** Town owns forestland on the former poor farm property.
- **Franklin Annex:** Town owns forestland at Franklin Annex.

Forestry Industry Assessment

ND Paper Mill: The ND Paper mill (formerly NewPage, then Catalyst Paper; acquired by ND Paper in 2018) continues to operate in Rumford and remains a market for pulpwood and wood chips from regional forests. The mill had approximately 540 full-time employees as of early 2024. In March 2024, the mill converted one paper machine from packaging paper to bleached linerboard and pulp production, resulting in approximately 35 layoffs affecting up to 100 positions. In 2026, the mill announced plans to restore white paper production, adding an estimated 40–50 positions.

Wood Products Market Conditions: Forest landowners operate in a challenging market environment that includes variability in pulpwood prices, increased harvesting and transportation costs, competition from Canadian wood imports, and market shifts affecting harvest decisions.

Commercial Harvesting: Commercial timber harvesting continues throughout the town. Logging contractors, truckers, and foresters remain active. Tree Growth enrollment stability indicates landowners continue forestry operations.

Future Considerations: Further changes to mill operations or production capacity would affect local forestry by altering demand for wood products. This would have downstream effects on timber prices, harvest activity, and forest management decisions.

Forest Health & Emerging Threats

Maine's forests face multiple threats from invasive species, climate change, and weather events. These affect forest health, timber quality, wildlife habitat, and management decisions:

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB): This invasive beetle was confirmed in Oxford County in March 2021 and is spreading rapidly throughout most of southern Maine and into central Maine. All native ash species are susceptible. Emerald ash borer was discovered in the Rumford Community Forest in summer 2026. The Rumford Community Forest contains black ash swamp habitat that is particularly vulnerable. Tree mortality from EAB is expected to increase across the region over the coming decade as populations expand.

Browntail Moth: This invasive caterpillar causes health issues for people (skin rashes and respiratory irritation from toxic hairs) and defoliates oak and other hardwood trees. It is primarily established in southern and coastal Maine; populations statewide declined in 2024 and continued declining in 2025 according to Maine Forest Service aerial survey data. The pest is less directly relevant to inland communities such as Rumford, though continued monitoring is appropriate.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA): This invasive insect causes needle loss, crown thinning, and eventual tree mortality in hemlock. It is currently established in portions of southern and coastal Maine from Kittery to Mount Desert Island, with more scattered occurrences in inland and eastern

areas. It has not been confirmed as established in the Rumford area but represents a future threat to hemlock stands as populations spread northward.

Spruce Budworm: Maine Forest Service data indicates spruce budworm damage has been increasing statewide with an outbreak anticipated. This pest targets spruce and fir — tree species present throughout Rumford's forests — and should be monitored.

Climate Change Impacts: Warming temperatures and changing precipitation patterns affect forest composition over time, including potential range shifts for cold-adapted species (spruce, fir, paper birch), altered growing season dynamics, and increased stress events.

Severe Weather Events: Ice storms, wind events, and flooding cause periodic forest damage, creating salvage harvest opportunities and ongoing management challenges.

Changing Forest Products Markets: Reduced demand for traditional forest products such as newsprint and commodity lumber requires landowners and managers to consider alternative markets, value-added products, and emerging uses such as recreation and conservation values.

Sources

Town of Rumford Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program; USDA Census of Agriculture; Maine DACF; Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District; local assessment records.

Penobscot McCrum company information and operations data; regional acreage and crop information from agricultural census data and company documentation; ownership and management from business records and Maine Seed Potato Board records; chip manufacturer contracts from agricultural trade publications.

Farmers market information from Maine Comprehensive Plan Data Portal and Mapping Services, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program; small farm status inferred from 2013 Comprehensive Plan baseline and documented trends in rural Maine communities; agricultural trend analysis from Maine DACF agricultural statistics and USDA census patterns.

Farm and Open Space Tax Law from Maine Revenue Services, Title 36 MRSA §1101-1121; zero enrollment status from Town of Rumford Comprehensive Plan 2013 and Maine Comprehensive Plan Data Portal and Mapping Services, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program; program purpose and structure from Maine Revenue Services documentation.

Soil information from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service soil surveys; floodplain data from FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps; development pressure assessment from Maine Comprehensive Plan Data Portal and Mapping Services, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program; farmland protection tools from Maine DACF and American Farmland Trust.

Town of Rumford Comprehensive Plan 2013, Maine DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program; Maine Forest Service data; Tree Growth Tax Law enrollment records from Maine Revenue Services;

timber harvest notification data; town forestland records.

Tree Growth program information from Maine Forest Service, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy/tree_growth/; enrollment data from Maine Revenue Services (2013 baseline from Town of Rumford Comprehensive Plan 2013; current data verified by town tax records); program requirements from Title 36 MRSA §571-584-A.

Inland Woods + Trails, Rumford Community Forest Stewardship Plan, June 2024; Maine Public Radio and Lewiston Sun Journal coverage (February 2024); USDA Forest Service Community Forest Program guidance.

Mill employment data from Maine Public Radio and Bangor Daily News (March 2024); Maine AFL-CIO reporting; ND Paper company information; Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019–2023.

Maine Forest Service, 2025 Forest Health Highlights; Maine Forest Service forest health monitoring; Maine Woodland Owners, forest pest and disease resources; Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, invasive species program; University of Maine Cooperative Extension; Maine Climate Council; forest products industry reports.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation assets and infrastructure provide important context for comprehensive planning across multiple sectors. Understanding what facilities exist in Rumford, how the recreation network has evolved, and where gaps and opportunities remain enables planning for economic development, land conservation, trail connectivity, community investment, and public health. This section provides a complete analysis of Rumford's outdoor recreation resources since the last comprehensive plan.

Current Findings:

Will existing recreational facilities and programs accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups?

- Black Mountain continues as a nationally recognized Nordic skiing venue
- Rumford Community Forest (2024) expands low-impact, year-round recreation suited to an aging population, families, and youth
- Mountain biking infrastructure created (3+ miles of trails)
- Trail system expanded through conservation and volunteer efforts
- Androscoggin River recreation use expanded substantially
- Land conservation (901 acres) expanded recreation access significantly
- Ownership change: Maine Winter Sports Center divested 2013, now nonprofit
- Hosmer Field Complex is undergoing major recovery investment following the December 2023 flood
- Current Capacity: Existing recreational facilities and programs are adequate to meet projected population trends and age structure changes
- Facility Range: Town provides diverse opportunities serving all ages through community facilities, trails, and regional recreation access.

Land Acquisition & Conservation Strategy

Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?

Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites?

Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?

No Dedicated Fund: The town does not maintain a municipal land acquisition fund, but relies on partnerships, grants, and regulatory tools for conservation.

Rumford Community Forest: 498 acres permanently protected through collaboration with Trust for Public Land, Inland Woods + Trails, and Northern Forest Center; funded by Land for Maine's Future and U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program.

Glassface Trail: A hiking trail on the Glassface Ledges property, 34 acres donated to Mahoosuc Land Trust in 2014, offering views over the river valley.

Hastings Landing Boat Launch: A new put-in providing in-town public access to the Androscoggin River in Rumford Center.

Mystery Mountain Trail: A hiking trail expanding recreation access in Rumford Point.

Regulatory Tools: Open-space subdivision provisions encourage conservation of farmland, forestland, water resources, wildlife habitat, and scenic areas through easements or land dedication.

Partner Organizations: Inland Woods + Trails and Mahoosuc Land Trust provide practical means to protect natural resources and maintain public access. Winter recreation is supported by the Rumford Polar Bears Snowmobile Club, which maintains nearly 90 miles of trails with landowner permission. ATV trails in the region are managed by the River Valley Riders ATV Club.

Facility Range: Town provides diverse opportunities serving all ages through community facilities, trails, and regional recreation access

Trail Access & Private Land Agreements

- **Private Property Dependence:** Many recreational trails cross private property under landowner agreements.
- **Snowmobile System:** Rumford Polar Bears Snowmobile Club maintains ~90 miles of trails; secured by landowner permission.
- **User Responsibility:** Recreational users must follow landowner guidelines and posted regulations.
- **Stewardship Partnership:** Trail club-landowner collaboration ensures continued access while respecting property rights.

Is there a need to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to add capacity or make them more usable?

Hosmer Field Complex

Following the December 2023 flood, the town is investing in recovery and improvements at the complex, including a new Parks & Recreation office and garage sited out of the floodplain (see Public Facilities and Services chapter for funding and construction details).

Black Mountain of Maine

Black Mountain of Maine is Rumford's primary outdoor recreation facility and one of Maine's established ski areas. The mountain has operated continuously since 1935 and represents both an economic asset and community amenity.

Ownership Transition & Governance: Black Mountain operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit governed by a volunteer board of directors. Maine Winter Sports Center divested ownership in July 2013, determining ski area operation was not aligned with its core mission of developing elite Nordic athletes and that financial and operational demands were unsustainable. Community fundraising raised \$125,000+ in three weeks to ensure continuity. The nonprofit model allows a focus on affordable recreation and community service rather than profit generation.

Financial Sustainability Challenges: Small ski areas face high fixed costs (insurance, lift maintenance, snowmaking, grooming equipment), weather-dependent revenue, competition from larger resorts, limited season (typically December–March), and aging infrastructure requiring capital investment.

Alpine Skiing: 46 trails and 17 glades covering 600 acres of boundary-to-boundary terrain. Vertical drop of 1,150 feet; Maine's 4th tallest skiing area. Two chairlifts (one triple, one double), one T-bar, and surface lifts. Terrain park with jumps, rails, and other features. Extensive glade network developed by the volunteer "Angry Beavers" group. All ability levels served (16% beginner, 22% intermediate, 62% advanced).

Nordic Skiing: 17 kilometers of professionally groomed trails maintained to elite competition standards with skating lanes and classic tracks. Hosts the Eastern High School Nordic Championships, a prominent high school Nordic competition in the eastern United States. Continues to host other national-level USSA-sanctioned competitions. Nordic heritage dates to the 1930s; the program has produced Olympic and World Championship competitors. Despite the MWSC ownership change, the facility remains a destination training venue for regional and national teams.

Recent Infrastructure Upgrades: Approximately \$1.26 million in grants secured October 2024:

- \$483,000 (Northern Border Regional Commission) for 15 new stationary snowmaking guns
- \$775,000 (Congressionally Directed Spending) to double snowmaking pond capacity and install new pumps and pumphouse

These improvements enable faster snowmaking, earlier opening, and extended seasons. Board Chairman Roger Arsenault stated the improvements "will change our financial picture. We'll be more stable."

Main Lodge: Built between 2004–2005 during the Maine Winter Sports Center expansion. Houses ticket sales, ski/snowboard rentals, ski school, café, The Last Run Pub (upstairs, full bar, 12 taps, 11 from Maine breweries), two fireplaces, warming areas, and ski history/museum displays. The designated uphill trail is the Osekare, connecting to all trails, glades, and a backcountry gate to Rumford Whitecap.

Old Base Lodge — Nordic & Alpine Competition Center: A separate, older structure used for race-day overflow: waxing, team staging, and equipment storage. Conversion to a dedicated competition center has been identified as a long-term goal by board chair Roger Arsenault. In summer 2025, bathrooms were added to address overcrowding in the main lodge. No dedicated funding for a full competition center conversion has been publicly announced. The organization's recent capital grants are focused on snowmaking capacity; Arsenault has linked competition center improvements to first establishing greater snow reliability, then pursuing larger events.

Additional Amenities: The Edge Tubing Park (added post-2013) attracts families and non-skiers and provides an additional revenue stream. Summer Adventure Camps for youth diversify revenue beyond the winter season. Night skiing is available. A backcountry gate connects to the Rumford Whitecap preserve via an 8-mile touring route.

Real Estate Development: 40-unit condominium development at the base area by Red Hill Road LLC. First phase (8 units) construction began June 2025 with planned January 2026 occupancy. Total 20 modular buildings (2 units each) with an in-ground heated pool and commercial space. Three developer partners all grew up in Rumford.

Affordable Pricing Model: Black Mountain's pricing strategy is positioned as the "best value in Maine":

- \$20 Fridays, \$37 weekends (compared to \$150+ at major resorts such as Sunday River and Sugarloaf)
- Free season passes for Maine K–2nd grade students
- \$150 season passes with no blackout dates

This model is credited with increases in new skier visits, lessons, and rentals.

Chisholm Ski Club Partnership: Active partnership (club founded 1917, 109 years) continues. The club provides volunteer event officials, maintains cross-country trails, hosts competitions, and organizes community events including the annual Hallie's Hustle 5K Run/Walk.

Regional Integration: Indy Pass member (since summer 2022), providing reciprocal access to independent ski areas nationwide. Long-term plans to create trail connections to the Rumford Community Forest and Whitecap Mountain to create an integrated regional recreation network.

Competition Venue: Hosts championship events at all levels. The 2025 season included the Eastern High School Championships, MPA State Nordic Championships, Maine Alpine Racing

Association qualifiers, and multiple college competitions. Few ski areas in the eastern U.S. maintain the infrastructure required to host championship Nordic events.

Economic Impact: Despite established skiing operations and a competition history, broader economic impact on the community appears limited:

- **Direct Employment:** 50–150 seasonal positions (mostly part-time)—ski instructors, lift operators, rental shop, food service, maintenance, and grooming.
- **Day-Trip Visitor Pattern:** Most visitors are day-trippers who do not stay overnight or dine in Rumford; economic impact is not fully captured locally as visitors return home.
- **Lodging Gap:** Rumford is underserved by destination lodging. Aside from the Best Western Plus, options such as B&Bs and vacation rentals are limited, and many skiers stay in Bethel, Farmington, or elsewhere.
- **Limited Downtown Amenities:** Insufficient restaurant and retail options mean visitor spending stays at the mountain or leaves the community; opportunities exist for restaurants, a brewpub, and gear shops to capture skier spending.
- **Underutilized Event Tourism:** Major championships bring competitors, families, and spectators, but Rumford has not consistently leveraged these events for broader tourism promotion or downtown activation.
- **Summer Recreation:** Summer operations and events could be expanded and better integrated with trail systems and conservation lands.

Challenges & Future Goals: The mountain adapts to climate change through enhanced snowmaking. A goal exists to restore cross-country trails to World Cup competition standards. Community fundraising remains ongoing.

Mountain Biking Infrastructure

The development of purpose-built mountain bike trail infrastructure represents a notable addition to Rumford's outdoor recreation network:

6+ Miles of Purpose-Built Trails: Over 6 miles of purpose-built mountain bike trails have been developed in Rumford through partnerships between Inland Woods + Trails, landowners, and volunteers. These trails are professionally designed and constructed specifically for mountain biking, as opposed to multi-use hiking trails that permit bikes.

Inland Woods + Trails Partnership: Inland Woods + Trails (formerly known as Mahoosuc Pathways), a regional trail development organization, provided technical expertise, project management, volunteer coordination, and funding for trail construction. This partnership demonstrates a replicable model for recreation infrastructure development using nonprofit expertise and volunteer labor.

PACT Committee: Promoting Active Communities Together (PACT) Committee was established to coordinate trail development, build community support, and plan future expansion. PACT brings together town officials, land trusts, recreation groups, and community members in a collaborative planning process.

Trail Locations: Mountain bike trails have been developed on:

- Rumford Community Forest (trails through the 498-acre property)
- Volunteer-built trails linking trail systems
- Additional trail segments on conservation lands and willing private landowner properties

Trail Quality: Purpose-built mountain bike trails are constructed using modern trail-building techniques including:

- Sustainable design minimizing erosion and environmental impact
- Flow trails with berms, rollers, and features for speed and control
- Technical features (rock gardens, drops, skinnies) for skill development
- Progressive difficulty allowing riders to advance skills
- Proper drainage to prevent trail damage

Volunteer Construction: Much of the trail building was accomplished through volunteer work parties organized by Inland Woods + Trails and PACT. Volunteer trail building reduces costs and builds community engagement. Hundreds of volunteer hours have been invested in Rumford trail development.

Economic Potential: Mountain biking is a growing sport with economic impact potential. Mountain bike visitors seek destination trail systems and spend money on lodging, food, bike services, and other local businesses. Rumford's economic benefit from mountain biking remains limited due to the absence of supporting services such as bike shops, lodging, and marketing.

Connection to Regional Systems: Connections to larger networks on Black Mountain, Whitecap Mountain, and surrounding communities are envisioned as a long term goal for the future.

Year-Round Recreation: Mountain bike trails provide summer recreation when skiing is not available, diversifying the outdoor economy beyond winter-focused skiing and snowmobiling.

Trail Systems

Will existing recreational facilities and programs accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups?

Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?

Whitecap Mountain Trails: The trail system on Whitecap Mountain Preserve has expanded with land acquisitions (751 to 1,120 acres). Multiple trails now access the summit:

- Iles Trail (red/orange flags) — primary summit route
- Starr Trail (yellow blazes) — alternative route
- River Loop — half mile to Ellis River
- River to Ridge Trail — 1.4 miles connecting river to summit

Trail Connection — Whitecap to Black Mountain: A volunteer-built trail connection links Whitecap Mountain Preserve to Black Mountain via the Rumford Community Forest. This connection creates longer hiking and biking loop options and integrates conservation lands into a cohesive trail system. The total connected trail network spans several miles across multiple properties.

Rumford Community Forest Trails: Trail development on the 498-acre Rumford Community Forest provides accessible recreation close to downtown Rumford. The Forest Stewardship Plan (June 2024) includes a trail system plan for hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

Trail Maintenance and Sustainability: Long-term trail sustainability requires dedicated maintenance programs, funding, and volunteer coordination. Trail systems require ongoing maintenance including:

- Brush clearing and corridor maintenance
- Drainage maintenance to prevent erosion
- Bridge and boardwalk repairs
- Trail marking and signage updates
- Sustainable use management

Androscoggin River Recreation

Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies?

The Rumford Boat Launch off Route 2 serves as the downstream terminus of the Androscoggin paddling corridor from New Hampshire and is one of eight access points along the river through the Bethel region. Completed in 2020, the launch includes a trailer parking area and picnic area. A second put-in at Hastings Landing in Rumford Center provides an in-town starting point for floats to the Route 2 launch.

- **Fishing:** Primary recreational appeal; river sections support smallmouth bass, trout (brook, rainbow, brown), perch, and landlocked salmon. Legacy PCB/dioxin fish consumption advisories apply.
- **Paddling:** The reach from Rumford/Mexico downstream to Canton is the most accessible float trip. Paddling above Rumford Falls requires a portage. No commercial outfitter is based in Rumford; the nearest is Bethel Outdoor Adventure.
- **Events:** The Chisholm Ski Club's paddle sports program hosts the annual Androscoggin Adventure race and community float.
- **Infrastructure:** As a condition of Rumford Hydro's new FERC license (issued January 2026), the West Viewing Area, Rumford Falls Trail, and river access at the Middle Dam bypassed reach are slated for upgrades over the license term, including reopened public access, parking, signage, and trail improvements

Snowmobile & ATV Trails

The Rumford Polar Bears Snowmobile Club (founded 1970) maintains approximately 90 miles of groomed trails on private land spanning Rumford, Rumford Center, Rumford Point, Milton Plantation, Hanover, and connector routes to Bethel and Buckfield. ITS 82 is the primary interconnecting trail, linking to the statewide system and onward to New Hampshire and Canada.

- **Operations:** Club runs on volunteer labor and annual state grants (~\$26,500/year).
- **Infrastructure:** Trail system includes 60+ bridges; 5–6 require repair annually. Two park-and-ride trailer staging lots are maintained off Route 2.
- **Regional Connections:** Trail network connects to adjacent clubs in Roxbury/Byron (north and west) and the Bethel corridor (east).
- **ATV Access:** Riders have access to 1,000+ miles of trails in the Rumford and Androscoggin River Valley area, connecting to the broader Oxford County network via ITS 80, 82, 84, and 89.

Challenges: The aging volunteer base is a documented, ongoing concern without an announced succession plan. Recurring flood events pose a threat to trail bridges. ATV trails rely in part on the snowmobile network, and shares the same landowner-permission dependency. Infrastructure funding beyond annual state grants has not been identified.

Sources

Black Mountain of Maine operational data (skiblackmountain.org); Sun Journal articles (October–December 2024); Chisholm Ski Club records; Mainebiz real estate reporting (January 2025); Press Herald reporting (2013–2025); Northern Forest Center documentation; Indy Pass

information; Maine Winter Sports Center divestment records; AVCOG regional planning documents; nonprofit financial filings; USSA competition calendars; ski industry literature.

Inland Woods + Trails, mountain bike trail development partnership reports and news releases (2019–2024); WMTW News 8 coverage of mountain bike trail development and recreation initiatives in Rumford (2019–2024); Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments regional planning documents and community meeting records; International Mountain Bicycling Association standards; Inland Woods + Trails, Rumford Community Forest Stewardship Plan, June 2024; land trust trail maps.

Mahoosuc Land Trust, Whitecap Mountain Preserve and Ellis River Conservation Area trail guides and preserve information, <https://www.mahoosuc.org/> (accessed December 2024); Mahoosuc Pathways partnership reports and news releases (2019–2024); volunteer trail building reports; land trust management standards and trail stewardship literature.

Brookfield FERC relicensing documentation; Bethel Outdoor Adventure outfitter information.

Maine Department of Conservation snowmobile trail grant records; Rumford Polar Bears Snowmobile Club trail documentation; River Valley Riders ATV Club trail information; Oxford County ATV trail network maps.

Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investment Plan

Fiscal capacity refers to the community's ability to pay for normal municipal operations and finance capital expenditures compared with property tax base and revenue sources. Municipal operation investments include public works, public safety, administration, and education. Finance capital expenditures include buildings, equipment, and infrastructure.

In 2013, Rumford's Comprehensive Plan documented a few key challenges with its fiscal capacity and capital investment: high dependence on mill property taxes (27% of total valuation), declining population, eroding residential tax base, and aging infrastructure requiring capital investment.

Now, in 2026, Rumford has seen notable growth: ND Paper represents 12% of Rumford's municipal tax base, population is no longer declining, assessed values have increased, the residential housing market has surged since the pandemic, a new elementary school has opened, and infrastructure investments continue. Over the last 10 years, Rumford has seen almost \$400M in new public and private investments. Rumford continues to plan for and address capital improvement needs while allocating resources to economic and community development initiatives to further build fiscal strength.

Current Findings:

- Town's fiscal management continues to be sound due to 30 years of decision-making and the diversification of the industrial tax base
- Cash on hand position is strong
- Capital plans are well-funded

Capital Investments & Neighboring Communities:

Have efforts been made by the community to participate in or explore sharing capital investments with neighboring communities? If so, what efforts have been made?

There are ongoing efforts to share services and capital investments with Rumford's neighboring communities. All capital investments made by these organizations are shared across municipal budgets.

- Northern Oxford Regional Solid Waste Board (NORSWB),
- Med-Care Ambulance
- Rumford-Mexico Sewerage District (RMSD)
- Regional School Unit #10 (RSU #10)

Recent projects:

- **RMSD** is about to start construction on a multi-year project which is estimated to cost \$30M for a major upgrade of its existing wastewater treatment facility.

- **RSU #10** just completed a \$90M+ construction project at Mountain Valley Community School which replaced three aging facilities and consolidated two school sites into one.
- **Rumford Fire Department** has participated with the Town of Mexico in the joint ownership of a ladder truck for their Fire Departments since 2008. The Town of Roxbury also pays for ladder truck maintenance costs based on a proportion of population and calls for mutual aid. To save on costs, the Town of Mexico will no longer share this resource, but instead rely on mutual aid from the Rumford Fire Department. Due to this change, Rumford taxpayers will fully fund the capital expense of a replacement ladder truck which, under the mandatory terms of the Northern Oxford Mutual Aid compact, will then respond at no cost to fire calls in Mexico.
- **Other community discussions include:**
 - A joint community recreation facility
 - Contracted services for Police coverage (which includes allocated expenses to cover capital)

Community Revenues & Expenditures

Primary revenue sources for the Town of Rumford:

- State revenue sharing
- State aid to public education
- Property taxes
- Sewer revenues
- Excise taxes

All of these revenue sources are either stable or growing. Municipal property taxes and sewer revenues are increasing due to a higher mil rate and higher assessed values. Moreover, the implementation of a metered sewer tariff has substantially improved revenues for the sewer system. This allowed the Town to shift costs back to the sewer system which had been previously covered by property tax payers.

General government expenses have been stable. The Police Department budget has increased significantly (more than 60%) due to wage adjustments in the new collective bargaining agreement. The Fire Department budget is increasing significantly due to a wage adjustment (more than 30%). Increased wages have stabilized overtime costs, improved staffing, and reduced turnover significantly. Due to increased valuations, increased BETE revenues, and other improvements to the tax and revenue base, the impact of wage increases to taxpayers has not been notable. Other departments have seen a 2-6% annual increase (with variable frequency patterns).

The most notable trends are the relative stability of revenue growth and the Town's strategic planning to grow the taxbase and fund present and future needs.

Funding Capital and Outside Funding Sources

How will future capital investments identified in the plan be funded?

The Town's primary approach to funding capital expenses is through a standard "sinking fund" whereby small amounts are set aside each year into designated capital accounts for anticipated expenses over the next five years.

Most equipment replacement can be accomplished in this manner and purchased on a cash basis. For exceptional cases, equipment may be acquired through the use of lease-purchase agreements which typically have 7 year terms and flexible financing. The use of lease purchase agreements has allowed the Town to cover long term shortfalls in equipment acquisition as a result of clustered needs. The Town's excellent credit status, sound long term fiscal management, and low level of debt have made these lease-purchase acquisitions feasible and enabled stabilization of fleet management.

Facility improvements are also handled through capital reserve accounts using the "sinking fund" method. With the exception of whole facility replacements, all capital expenses for facilities are paid for through the capital reserve accounts.

Facility replacement projects typically require the use of long term bond financing (20 years or more). Sources of bond funding or project financing include:

- Maine Municipal Bond Bank
- General Obligation bonds
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund
- USDA-RD Communities Facilities loans

Example of project funding: A streetlight replacement project completed in 2020 utilized a private lease-purchase arrangement with the final lease payment occurring in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Local & State Valuations & Local Mil Rates (5 years)

Year	Local Valuation	State Valuation	Local Mil Rate
FY2026	\$729,585,561	\$790,600,000	18.73
FY2025	\$711,779,009	\$752,700,000	16.62
FY2024	\$619,381,012	\$671,450,000	22.18
FY2023	\$617,043,615	\$630,300,000	22.18
FY2022	\$615,669,718	\$596,300,000	22.45

Total Municipal Debt

According to the Town Manager, the Town's combined debt is well within the recommended statutory limits.

Funding Capital Investment Needs 2025-2035

Capital needs identified from all comprehensive plan sections, with cost estimates and priority timelines:

Capital Need	Cost Estimate	Priority/ Timeline	Financing Options
Police Station	\$8-12 million (if new construction; \$750K if adaptive reuse)	HIGH 2025-2029	• Municipal bond (20 years) • USDA Rural Development • CDBG grants
Sewer Line Replacement Program (20-year systemic)	\$2-300,000 annually (\$2-3 million over 10 years)	LOW Ongoing 2025-2035	• Annual budget allocation • Bonds for major projects • USDA grants/loans
Sewer Pumping Stations Replacement (2 in 10 years)	\$1-200,000 per station	LOW Ongoing 2025-2035	• Annual budget allocation • Equipment reserve fund • USDA grants/loans
Town Hall (Assessment and Repairs)	\$25-35,000 assessment \$500,000-\$1.5 million repairs (phased)	MEDIUM 2026-2027 assessment 2027-2035 repairs	• Assessment: operating budget • Repairs: phased over years from capital reserve, bonds if major • Community Resilience Partnership Grant • Efficiency Maine Rebates
Library Facility Upgrades (Energy/Efficiency Systems, Roof)	\$200,000	MEDIUM	• Efficiency Maine Rebates • Community Resilience Partnership Grant • Capital Appropriations
Mountain Valley High School (Generators)	\$100,000	HIGH	• Capital Appropriations
Recreation Facilities & Parks (General Maintenance/Improvements)	\$100-150,000 annually	MEDIUM Ongoing	• Annual budget allocation • Recreation fees • FEMA • Grants (LWCF)

Road Reconstruction Program	\$3-500,000 annually (\$3-5 million over 10 years)	HIGH Ongoing 2025-2035	• Annual budget allocation • Maine DOT URIP grants • Bonds for major projects
Old Central Fire Station	\$300,000	MEDIUM 2026	• Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Pilot Grant Program • Community Resilience Partnership Grant
Community Center (Conversion of Rumford Elementary School)	\$7-8 million over 3 years Phase 2 TBD	HIGH 2026-2028	• Congressionally Directed Spending • Private fundraising • Efficiency Maine Rebates • Bond • Lease payments
Public Works Garage (Salt Shed, Generators, Roof, Sprinklers, Energy/Efficiency Systems - Solar)	\$1.5 - 1.7M	HIGH	• Efficiency Maine Rebates • Capital Appropriations • In-kind • Grants • Section 179D Tax Credits

Borrowing Capacity

If the community plans to borrow to pay for capital investments, does the community have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds?

The Town has sufficient borrowing capacity to pay for capital investments. In addition, the Town continue to pursue grant opportunities including:

- USDA Rural Development: Community Facilities loans/grants for public buildings (including public safety)
- CDBG Public Facilities: Up to \$500,000 for public buildings
- CDBG Housing Rehabilitation: \$500,000 - \$1 million every 2-3 years for housing improvements
- Maine DOT URIP: Road improvements cost-share (town needs 50% match typically)
- Maine State Library: Technology grants for libraries
- Land and Water Conservation Fund: Recreation facility improvements (50% match)
- Community Resilience Partnership (\$75,000 annually for climate resilience/energy efficiency projects)