



# City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

Eric Cousens, Director

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Date: November 14, 2023

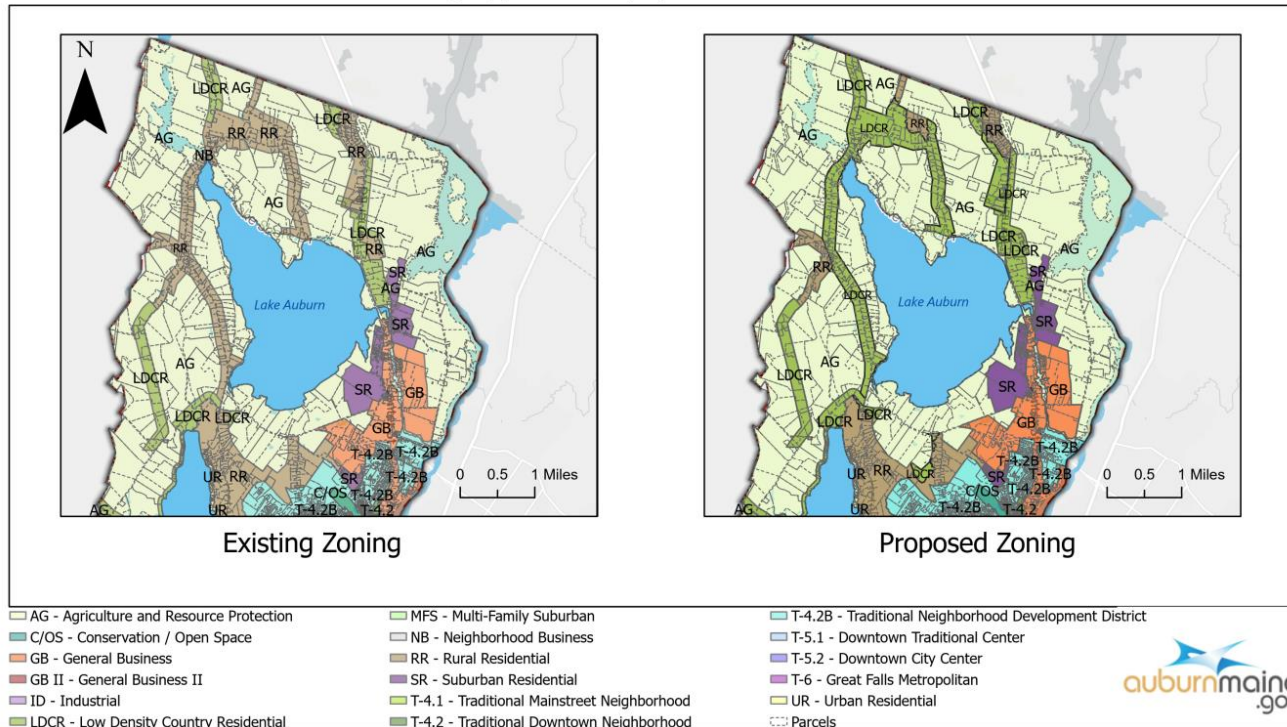
To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Katherine Cook, Planning Coordinator

**Subject: Staff Report on Proposed Map Change Converting Rural Residential Zoning District to Low Density Country Residence Zone within the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District.**

- I. Proposal: Public Hearing/ Map Amendment:** Consider amending the official zoning map of the City of Auburn entitled “City of Auburn, Zoning Map, dated May 16, 2016,” revised through its current date and revisions, as provided under Sec. 60-5 of the Zoning Ordinance changing all areas in the Low-Density Rural Residence or Rural Residence (RR) zoning district within the Lake Auburn watershed to the Low-Density Country Residence (LDCR) zoning district. This map change was initiated by the Planning Board and is pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVII, Division 2 - Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance or Zoning Map.

Zoning Map Amendment for Public Hearing November 14, 2023:  
Rezoning Approximately 1,030 Acres of RR to LDCR



Source: City of Auburn, Zoning Map, dated May 16, 2016

- II. Background:** The City of Auburn is proposing several amendments to Chapter 60, Article XII, Division 4 Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District including amending subsurface wastewater (SSWW) disposal, or septic system standards requiring a limiting soil horizon of at least 36 inches and that the bottom the disposal field be at least 24 inches above the limiting soil horizon limiting factor. This current standard does not allow for the most effective treatment of effluent because it forces effluent to travel below the organic duff layer, where the best treatment would occur. Under this existing standard, the treatment occurs in sandy, well-drained soils, which are not able to capture and treat onsite waste

nutrients. The proposed system decreases the limiting soil horizon to 12” but requires the disposal field to be treated through the existing natural duff layer and the required suitable natural soil or specified soil media must provide a minimum separation of 36-inch separation between the bottom of the disposal field and limiting factor. The proposed update is intended to improve the treatment efficiency of approximately 251 existing systems within the Lake Auburn watershed thereby reducing the potential accumulation of non-point source pollution to Lake Auburn.

Several lots in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District are not currently buildable because they do not have suitable soil to host a septic system under the current standard. While offering better effluent treatment to the SSWW disposal systems in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District, changing this design standard by allowing mounded systems would likely also have the effect of rendering more lots in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District buildable with the allowance of mounded systems. More buildable lots may mean creating more potential SSWD systems, more land-based runoff, and less forested or vegetated areas to collect nutrients before they enter lake Auburn.

The purpose of this map amendment is to offset the building potential created by modernizing the SSWW disposal standards. The planning board recommended to the city council that changing the septic standards should coincide with changing the zoning in the Lake Auburn Watershed to allow fewer houses to offset the possible unwanted development in the watershed of Auburn’s drinking water supply.

This map amendment proposes changing all land in the Low-Density Rural Residence or Rural Residence (RR) zoning district, shown in brown, to the Low-Density Country Residence (LDCR) zoning district, shown in green, within the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District. This change reduces the density from one dwelling unit per acre and minimum 250 feet road frontage to one dwelling unit per three acres and minimum 325 feet road frontage. For reference, the relevant meetings to this point have been listed below. This change considered with the Overlay District amendments will reduce total potential for development and ensure that any development that does occur will meet a higher standard for the protection of Lake Auburn.

#### **Previous Meetings and Actions:**

- **Apr. 12, 2022**— Planning Board forwarded a favorable recommendation contingent upon the change coinciding with a zone change reducing housing density in Lake Auburn watershed from one dwelling unit per acre to one dwelling units per three acres in the currently existing Rural Residence district in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District.
- **May 2, 2022**—City Council orders the Planning Board to consider a zone change reducing housing density in the Lake Auburn Watershed from one dwelling per acre to one dwelling per three acres in the Rural Residence zoning district in the Lake Auburn Watershed.
- **May 3, 2022**—Special Planning Board workshop to consider reducing the housing density in all parts of the Lake Auburn Watershed from one unit per acre to one-unit per three acres by changing RR zone to the LDCR zone.
- **Aug. 15, 2022**—City Council workshop on reducing housing density in Lake Auburn Watershed from one dwelling unit per acre to one dwelling unit per three acres in the Rural Residential District in the Lake Auburn Watershed.
- **October 11, 2022**—Planning Board Public Hearing to change RR to LDCR in all portions of the Lake Auburn watershed. Motion to recommend change to Council.
- **October 10, 2023**—Planning Board workshop on map amendment changing land in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District zoned RR to LDCR
- **October 16, 2023**—City Council workshop on map amendment changing land in the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District zoned RR to LDCR

**III. Planning Board Action:** Hold a Public Hearing and recommend approval of the zoning map change to the City Council.

**IV. Suggested Motion:** I make a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to City Council to amend the official zoning map of the City of Auburn entitled “City of Auburn, Zoning Map, dated May 16, 2016,” revised through its current date and revisions, as provided under Sec. 60-5 of the Zoning Ordinance changing all areas (1030+/-acres) in the Low-Density Rural Residence or Rural Residence (RR) zoning district within the Lake Auburn Watershed to the Low-Density Country Residence (LDCR) zoning district.