

2013

City of Auburn, Maine

Integrated Planning
Solutions Team



DRAFT JOINT LAND USE STUDY

For Area Surrounding
Maine Army National Guard Training Facility &
Mount Apatite Park
Mount Apatite Road, Auburn, Maine

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Acknowledgements

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Participants

Policy Committee Members

Jeff Benson, Auburn Suburban Little League
John Blais, Maine Army National Guard
Eric Cousens, Director of Planning and Permitting
Mary Lafontaine, Ward 3 Council Member
Dana Little, Androscoggin Land Trust and
Taylor Pond Association
Kevin Norcross, Andy Valley Sno Gypsies
Frank Piffath, Mine Road Resident
Ann Martel, Cedarwood Lane Resident
Steve Bouchard, Pine Crest Road Resident
Michael Peters, Mac's Grill
Philip Savignano, Auburn Recreation
Advisory Committee
Carol Segal (Cookin' Carol), Mount Apatite Farm

Technical Committee Members

Representing City of Auburn

Denis D'Auteuil, Director of Public Works
Eric Cousens, Director of Planning and Permitting
Dan Goyette, City Engineer
Ravi Sharma, Director of Recreation

Representing Maine Army National Guard

LTC Jeffrey Squires, Training Sites,
Plans & Programming Manager
John Blais, Planner
Barry Turcotte, GIS Specialist
David Foss, Integrated Training Area
Management Coordinator
1LT Lane Wiggin, Facilities Operations Specialist

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Credits

Frog photo on cover by Karla Levesque
Winter Fun photo on page 7 by Adriann Tucker
Fluorapatite photo on Page 55 by Dan Levesque

Study Team

Kat Beaudoin, AICP, Integrated Planning Solutions – Study Lead
Elizabeth A. Della Valle AICP – Community Planner
Patricia Castonguay, PMC Services – Administrative Support
Normandeau Associates (James Cassida, Janelle Lavallee, Dennis Pelletier) – Mapping and Resource Assessments

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Chronology of Installation and Park Development

1868	Mining Operations begin at Mount Apatite
1902	Exploratory Mining continues
1926	US Government acquires 154 acres for use as training site for military personnel
1950, 1951 and 1972	US Government leases three unimproved parcels totaling 16 acres
1926 through 1960s	Firing ranges active at training site
1962	Facility Maintenance Shops built
1970s	City acquires 300 acres in several transactions creating Mount Apatite Park
1976	City receives grant to construct snowmobile trails, a snowmobile shelter, picnic grounds, and sanitary facilities
1976	Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) employees help with trail clearing
1977	City Council and Andy Valley Sno Gypsies enter into lease agreement to allow construction of clubhouse and snowmobile trails
1989	City and US Army agree to land exchange – 42.5 acres of Army National Guard land (where Auburn Suburban Little League Fields were built) for 104.5 acres of City land. (This exchange did not occur)
1989	MEARNG leases land on which ballfields were built to the City; lease expired In 1995 – check land survey
1989	City leased ballfields to Auburn Suburban Little League for 25 years with right to renew for additional 25 years
1991	City commissions a Master Plan for the Park funded by the Land and Water Conservation Act
1994	The 3.2m (5k) multi-use trail for hiking and cross country skiing is constructed
1997	Trails to the quarry were added and signs were posted
1997	State of Maine designates Mount Apatite quarries as a Critical Area under its Critical Areas Program (now called Maine Natural Areas Program)
2008	MEARNG Humidity Controlled Preservation shelters built
2009	MEARNG Firing range closed until upgrade or repair is funded
2012	Auburn JLUS funded by Office of Economic Adjustment, Department of Defense

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Introduction

In August 2010, the Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) approached the City of Auburn suggesting that it apply for a planning grant through the Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to ***“identify incompatible land uses, develop plans and identify solutions in order to maintain the operational and training utility of the [Army National Guard’s Auburn] training site”***. The MEARNG was particularly concerned about the existing and future impacts of adjacent land uses, including but not limited to Auburn recreation facilities including the ballfields and Mount Apatite Park access, on the training site. Based on increasing activity, at the ballfields, in the Park and on growth in the immediate vicinity, the City agreed to pursue this planning opportunity and submitted a preliminary grant request to the OEA.

With a positive response from the OEA, the City issued a Request for Proposals in the summer of 2012 asking consultants to develop a scope of work and budget to undertake this study. After a competitive process, the City, in coordination with the MEARNG selected the Integrated Planning Solutions (IPS) Team to undertake this study. A final application was submitted to OEA in September 2012 and a notice to proceed was issued to the Study Team in October 2012.

The **goals of both the City of Auburn and the MEARNG** are to ensure the sustainability of the military mission, to accommodate competing interests in a mutually agreeable way, and to ensure that the public health, safety and welfare of the community is protected. The outcome of (this) study will ensure better future coordination of local community development with the activities of local military installations.

The City of Auburn is “experiencing increased rates of development” and intends to implement measures that will manage development impacts in this area before they unduly impact the effectiveness of the training center. The City recognizes that as more development occurs in this area, the greater the potential for conflicts. In addition, the Army National Guard’s peak training season roughly coincides with peak recreational usage of the Park and ballfields. Avoiding, minimizing and mitigating existing and potential future conflicts are of paramount importance.

The work started with Auburn Mayor Jonathan LaBonte appointing a Policy Committee made up of residents, business people and representatives of stakeholder organizations. In addition, the study team worked closely with a Technical Committee involving staff from both the City and Army National Guard who could provide information. The Policy Committee, charged with an advisory role, met monthly from December 2012 through completion of the study. A study website hosted by the City and a facebook page, managed by the Study Team, among other public outreach and input activities were used to provide and collect information.

The resulting report identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It makes recommendations for MEARNG and City of Auburn consideration including policy changes to the Auburn Comprehensive Plan.

The Study and its preliminary recommendations are being presented to the Auburn City Council and Planning Board on June 25, 2013. Additional public involvement efforts will occur over the summer and the recommendations are expected to be adopted in the fall of 2013.

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Executive Summary

Joint Land Use (JLUS) studies are cooperative planning activities involving military installations, the host municipality(ies) and affected stakeholders. A JLUS is intended to reduce potential conflicts between a military installation and its host community, while still accommodating the community's preferred growth pattern and adjacent land use activities, and protecting the general public's health and safety, without compromising the operational missions of the installation and its benefits to the City. The City of Auburn in conjunction with the Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) is conducting this JLUS with a focus on MEARNG's Auburn Training Site and the surrounding Mount Apatite areas in order to facilitate:

- **Common Ground:** Communication among the military, local jurisdictions and stakeholders is needed to promote an understanding of the economic and physical relationship between the installation and its neighbors.
- **Collaboration:** Collaborative planning among the military, local jurisdictions and stakeholders is needed in order to safeguard the mission of the installation from future incompatible development and to inform the municipality's policies regarding adjacent land use activities.
- **Strategic Actions:** Strategies for reducing the impacts of incompatible activities on the community and military operations are needed as well as tools to support compatibility in the future.

To accomplish these objectives, the collaborative approach has identified that strategies should:

1. Improve safety and welfare of all users (recreators and military);
2. Eliminate existing and avoid future conflicts between military operations and recreation activities;
3. Guide growth in immediate vicinity in support of these facilities through land use policies and regulations;
4. Guide decisions about the types and locations of recreational facilities and operational rules to help minimize conflict with MEARNG facilities and operations;
5. Manage public costs while optimizing public access to the City's resources and reducing conflicts with or impacts on MEARNG;
6. Enhance partnership opportunities;
7. Increase public awareness of how the MEARNG facility and adjacent recreational facilities are used and potential conflicts, concerns, and desired etiquette;
8. Enhance experiences of recreators provided that needs of installation are also met; and
9. Enhance economic opportunities for existing and future businesses that provide services to the installation when those opportunities coincide with the needs of MEARNG and the City.

The City of Auburn applied for and received a grant from the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment to explore ways to address conflicts between the MEARNG Training Facility and the City-owned Mount Apatite Recreation Area including the Auburn Suburban Little League complex that currently exists on Department of Defense land.

Over the course of several months, working with a Policy Committee made up of

community residents and interest groups, the planners identified numerous concerns to both the MEARNG and the community.

The Challenges:

- The ballfields are on federal land; while past authorization allowed this use, no license currently exists.
- Parking at the ballfields is inadequate during certain activities and at times spills out onto Garfield Road.
- The City had once committed to a land swap (ratio of 2.45:1) when the ballfields were built but because of environmental monitoring needs associated with wetlands impacts and the loss of institutional memory the land swap never occurred.
- The City Park is made up of several parcels acquired over time. One parcel is deed restricted for recreation use only; another is restricted for public use only. These restrictions, along with physical improvements on them, affect which parcels could be considered in a land swap.
- Mount Apatite Road is the main access to the ballfields and to the Mount Apatite recreation trails; it is also the same access used by the MEARNG. This multi-use causes safety concerns.
- While the City's comprehensive plan recommends a consolidated athletic field complex, there is no room at Mount Apatite Park to add more athletic fields and the cost to relocate the 4 existing fields is likely to be cost prohibitive in the near term.
- Any land swap at the north of the complex will require the relocation some portions of the 5K trail.
- Recreators access the park trail network by crossing the engineer training area or the land navigation area of the MEARNG installation.
- Recreators are confused once in the park and have been known to cross onto Army National Guard training land.
- Recreators driving to the park have difficulty knowing which access point should be used.
- Recreators who walk to the park must do so at the roadway edge where little to shoulders, sidewalks and crosswalks do not exist.
- Mine Road has very poor sight distance and no turning area.
- Small Road access is very remote and underutilized making it vulnerable to vandalism.
- City Park land extends to Hatch Road but the location of that frontage is on a hill and curve making it unsafe to park there.
- Numerous unmarked access points exist and cross private property to get to City land.
- Vernal pools and wetlands have been located on the training site making the relocation of vehicular access and parking away from Mount Apatite Road a challenge.
- Relocated trail access across the MEARNG training site will need to cross wetlands – this will require permitting and additional cost but will provide a different experience for recreators.
- An inactive small arms range will be modernized and reactivated in the future; a communications protocol is needed to inform would be land owners of this eventuality.
- Relocating an access point for the MEARNG to eliminate conflict with the ballfields is challenging because of security considerations associated

with the controlled humidity preservation buildings and the small arms range.

- There is no communications or emergency protocol between the City and MEARNG today potentially exacerbating conflict when special events by either party are planned or in the event of an emergency.
- The comprehensive plan does not acknowledge the MEARNG facility nor include information about existing and future operations. Uses identified in the comprehensive plan for the future land use zone covering the study area are appropriate and should be maintained.

The Solutions:

- **The MEARNG should**

- transfer the ballfields to the City (if the City does not relocate the complex)
- relocate its access drive to a point north of the CHP buildings to meet security requirements
- clearly mark its boundary and clear zone.

- **The City should**

- acquire the ballfields or decide to relocate them by a date certain.
- if the ballfield complex is not relocated, transfer to the DoD unrestricted acreage from the City Park at an appropriate ratio to offset the loss of Army National Guard installation land that currently host the ballfields.
- acquire a swath of land from the DoD along the southern boundary beginning at the southeastern corner and extending all the way to City land; it should be wide enough to accommodate a trail

head and multi-use path from Garfield Road to City Park land.

- install a wayfinding system on nearby streets to guide recreators to the determined official access point(s).
- install a wayfinding system within the park to keep recreators from wandering into MEARNG training areas.
- work with willing abutters to formalize and improve access and increase buffers. Small parking areas and appropriate signage should be added as appropriate.
- improve the parking area and trail head on Small Road.
- install multi use shoulders for bicyclists and pedestrian on roads leading to official access points.
- plan to add sidewalks on the north side of Stevens Mill Road, the east side of Garfield Road from Minot Avenue to Stevens Mill Road and on the west side of Garfield Road from Minot Avenue to the proposed new trail access point at the southeastern corner of the DoD land. The City should also plan to add sidewalks along both sides of Minot Avenue.
- Install crosswalks across Stevens Mill Road and across Garfield Road at Stevens Mill Road and from one side of Garfield Road to the other at the proposed new trail head at the southeastern corner of DoD land.
- Pursue funding through Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center to improve the documented High Crash Location at Minot Avenue and Garfield Road.

- Appoint a committee and pursue grant opportunities to implement the plan.
- Amend its comprehensive plan to include an inventory of the MEARNG installation; the name of the future land use zone should be changed to reflect the existence of the operation.
- **The City and MEARNG should work together to**
 - develop kiosks, trail maps and web-based information about both facilities and make these available to the public.
 - coordinate activities and emergency response protocols.
 - host opportunities for the neighborhood and community to learn what is new at the Park and Training Site.
 - Develop and undertake an aggressive public awareness and outreach program

- The City of Auburn – Planning, Public Works, Engineering, Emergency Services
- The Maine Army National Guard
- The Andy-Valley Snow Gypsies
- The Taylor Pond Association
- The Androscoggin Land Trust
- The Auburn Suburban Little League
- Private property and business owners

The Timeline:

The formal public comment period on the preliminary report begins at a public forum on June 25th. The forum is hosted by the Auburn Planning Board and the City Council is invited to attend. Public comment will be accepted until July 26, 2013. Between June 25th and July 26th, anyone is invited to submit comments on the report either by US mail or by email to:

Eric Cousens, City Planner
 Director of Planning and Permitting
 Auburn Hall
 60 Court Street, Suite 104
 Auburn, Maine 04210 or
ecousens@auburnmaine.gov .

The Partners:

The following entities and interests provided guidance throughout the planning effort.



In August, the report will be refined in response to comments received and prepared for delivery to the Planning Board and City Council for hearings in September. The dates of the hearings will be announced in accordance with City requirements.

Chapter 1 – Purpose (*Why this / Why now*)

“An Investment in the National Guard is a great value for America, and we must sustain America’s Guard as a ready, reliable and accessible operational force.”
General McKinley, fmr Chief, National Guard Bureau

Army National Guard training areas are critical to the defense of the nation. They ensure that service members have the proper training in order to serve the roles they are called onto fulfill. For Auburn, this importance is heightened by the fact of its location as an abutter to a well regarded and well used recreation area and long standing residential neighborhood.

Finding ways to increase compatibility between two important and abutting public service functions with uniquely different missions can be challenging. While the Mount Apatite Recreation Area promotes the carefree enjoyment of nature, the Maine Army National Guard Training Facility is focused on protecting national security. These two uses cannot be more different and so the clear delineation of interaction between the two uses is a serious matter.

The purposes of this Joint Land Use Study are to:

- 1) Identify and evaluate the incompatible land use activities associated with the existing MEARNG Training Site, and Mount Apatite Recreation Area, including the Auburn Suburban Little League ballfields.
- 2) Assess the effectiveness of the existing comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to determine their effect on both facilities from future land development

- 3) Consider the operational needs and training utility of the MEARNG Training Site and plan for their maintenance at a minimum and their improvement as an optimum.
- 4) Develop policies, plans and strategies to address the existing and avoid or minimize potential future incompatibility
- 5) Ensure better future coordination between city community development interests and MEARNG operational needs.

The outcomes of this study are also designed to be implemented through a strengthened partnership between the City and MEARNG.

The MEARNG established a presence in Auburn in 1926 when the Federal Government purchased 154 acres. Additional lands were later added by lease and now the Auburn training site operates within roughly 170 acres. But the MEARNG’s ability to meet its mission at this location is strained.

In Maine, the Army National Guard training sites average 331 acres. In view of this, the Auburn site is more than 50% below the state average. Ideally, MEARNG’s Auburn site should be in the range of 650 acres; and so is missing nearly 480 acres for it operate optimally. However, while it is recognized that it is not feasible to meet this ideal given its current location and the abutting land ownership, the Army National Guard is intent on ensuring that service members have the facilities necessary to gain proper training.

As such, MEARNG is working with the City of Auburn through this Joint Land Use Study to improve the effectiveness of the Auburn training site. The City and MEARNG share the goals of ensuring the sustainability of the military mission, accommodating competing interests in a mutually agreeable way, and ensuring that the health, safety and welfare of the community is also protected.



Figure 1.1 Study area (red) showing city (aqua dash) and federal lands (gold)

For purposes of this effort, the community is considered to be the users of both the ballfields and the Mount Apatite trail system as well as an area surrounding the lands held by the City of Auburn and the Federal Government as depicted on the study area map. See Figure 1.1.

In addition to the land area deficit, roughly 28 acres of installation land are currently in recreational use as ballfields and associated parking. See Figure 1.2. The Auburn Suburban Little League ballfields and parking area were built for the City by the Army National Guard in the late 1980s on installation land. In exchange for this, the City



Figure 1.2 Auburn Suburban Little League Field with controlled humidity preservation building in background

committed to a land swap, but that transfer was stalled due to environmental mitigation and monitoring needs that were only completed in 2001.

This land is not only unavailable for MEARNG use, but its main vehicular drive (Mount Apatite Road) for the military personnel is one and the same as that used by recreators to access the ballfields and parking area. The peak use of the ballfields, while a shorter season, is coincident with some of the peak use of the training site further heightening the risk.

Visitors who use the city-owned Mount Apatite Park trails have several options for accessing the trails and former mine sites. However, the historically preferred access is through Mount Apatite Road. Hikers, bicyclists, birders, joggers, gem collectors, cross country skiers and numerous others who wish to enter Mount Apatite Park must pass through installation land for some 2000' through heavy equipment maneuvering training areas (Figure 1.3) to reach the main gate of the Park. This conflict poses a safety risk to all concerned, impedes the effectiveness of training and limits the enjoyment of users entering the park for recreational purposes.

Further exacerbating the risk, park and training land boundaries are not well marked. Users of Mount Apatite Park have a history of utilizing land surrounding and within the training site which has limited the training utility of the site as unsuspecting recreators



Figure 1.3 Recreator passing through training area

find themselves in an active training location not only hampering their enjoyment of the Park, but also decreasing the effectiveness of MEARNG training. This conflict, along with recent and potential residential development of abutting lands, is particularly important when considering MEARNG's plan to upgrade and repair the non-standard small arms range in a future fiscal year. See Figure 1.4. The City

and MEARNG are intent on minimizing the conflicts inherent in this and other training activities.



Figure 1.4 MEARNG Baffled Range

Additional encroachments to the MEARNG facility have been occurring for decades. Snowmobile trails and worn but unmarked walking paths from abutting neighborhoods often unwittingly cross unmarked MEARNG boundaries to join other well established trails on city property never considering the potential risk.

Economic Impacts:

The training facility and its adjoining uses are important to Auburn's economy. While no economic benefit analysis was conducted as part of this study the following information strongly suggests that Auburn benefits substantially from these activities.

Training Facility:

MEARNG hosts roughly 800 personnel at this facility for training purposes every year. Based on a report published by the MEARNG, the MEARNG generated more than \$195M in economic impact for the state in fiscal year 2012¹. That sum included almost \$44M in personnel, another nearly \$39M in military construction and just over \$112.5M in operations and maintenance. Of the \$44M

¹ Economic Impact of the Auburn Training Site

attributed to personnel, it is estimated that just over \$3M (or 7.4%) can be attributed to the Auburn facility and includes drill pay for training, active Army National Guard Reserve pay and other programs. In terms of Auburn Facility operations and maintenance, it is estimated that almost \$4.9M (or 4.3% of statewide total) is generated in civilian pay and facility upkeep. There were no construction dollars spend in Auburn in FY 2012; the last military construction project executed at the Auburn training site was in FY 2008 in the amount of \$6.8M. In the future, the MEARNG intends to upgrade its Auburn firing range at an estimated cost of \$1.5M.



Figure 1.5 Controlled humidity preservation buildings

Sports Facilities:

According to the National Association of Sports Commissions, American families spent \$7 billion traveling to youth sports tournaments during 2010. That amounts to about 10 percent of national leisure travel industry expenditures and spending on attending such tournaments is growing at a rate of 4 percent annually.²

Also, during 2010, according to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), 280 million children between 7-18 years of age participated at least twice in one or more of 17 sports activities. The NSGA survey reports

² Terry John, "Youth Sports Score Big as Economic Boost," Smiley Pete Publications



Figure 1.6 Sports team ready for play

that over 26.9 million children participated in baseball and 10.8 million participated in softball.³

No readily available economic impact data specific to Maine was found.

Recreation:

According to research conducted by David Weinstein for the Outdoor Industry Association⁴, mountain biking is a strong component of the recreation economy. Nationally, mountain biking provides:

- 6.1 million American jobs
- \$646 billion yearly spending in outdoor recreation
- \$39.9 billion in federal tax revenue
- \$39.7 billion in state / local tax revenue

Though economic impact data specific to Maine is not readily available, in nearby East Burke, Vermont, the Kingdom Trails in Northeast Vermont undertook an economic assessment of its facility on the local economy. While Kingdom Trails charges \$15 for a day pass or \$75 for a season pass, the facility generates far more revenue in the region through meals and lodging by trail riders. Tim Tierney, Kingdom Trails Executive

³ National Sporting Goods Association (www.nsga.org)

⁴ International Mountain Biking Association (www.imba.com)

Director indicates “It’s about a hundred dollars a visitor a day, conservatively, and last year with 49,000 biker visits, we figure it brings in about five million dollars to the local economy.”⁵ A link to area information about lodging; camping; restaurants and groceries; bike shops, rentals, and gear; local attractions and activities; and real estate agencies on the Kingdom Trails’ website helps cement the linkage between the mountain bike trails facility and the surrounding communities. Kingdom Trails was voted the Best Mountain Bike Trail Network in North America recently by Bike Magazine, named Best of New England by Boston Magazine Travel & Life, and also won the Editors’ Choice in 2011 by Yankee Magazine Travel Guide to New England.

Bob Meyers, Executive Director of the Maine Snowmobile Association, says “It will be several more months before registration totals for the (2013) season are fully accounted for, but as of early February, resident registrations were at 44,897 - that’s



Figure 1.7 Andy Valley Sno Gypsies Snowmobilers

65% ahead of where we were at the same time last year. Non-resident season registrations were at 11,108; that’s a whopping 115% increase over the same time

⁵ http://www.vpr.net/news_detail/94796/mountain-bikers-fuel-northeast-kingdom-economy/

last year. Non-resident 3-day registrations were at 999, 271% ahead of last year.”⁶

In an article published in January 2013, Deidre Fleming of the Portland Press Herald cites that snowmobiling is a \$325 million dollar industry for Maine providing 2300 full time jobs. She further notes that Maine attracts somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000 riders onto 14,000 miles of snowmobile trails. “Before last winter’s mild season, Maine’s snowmobile registration topped 90,000 three of the previous four years, hitting an all time high of 101,000 in 2008.”

In the late ‘90s, Professor Stephen D. Reiling and Graduate Assistants Matthew Kotchen and Rod L. Bennett from the Department of Resource Economics and Policy at the University of Maine at Orono compiled data on The Economic Impact of Snowmobiling in Maine⁷. The study involving two surveys was designed to measure the economic impact of snowmobiling in Maine during the 1995-96 season. They report that at that time, the total economic impact was \$225,973,240 in expenditures and 2,700 full-time equivalent jobs.⁸

In 2012, the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) released an economic impact assessment of Maine’s Land for Maine’s Future program.⁹ It concluded that snowmobiling supports 3,600 jobs and generates \$273 million in snowmobile-related expenditures and over \$400 million in total economic impact in Maine. These figures are somewhat different



Figure 1.8 Unauthorized Trail through Land Navigation Area at Auburn training site

from those cited in the Portland Press Herald article, one estimating more jobs and the other generating higher expenditures, but both sources note the significant economic effect of the industry in the State. The TPL study also found that wildlife watching supports more than 15,000 jobs and generates \$575 million in retail sales and \$286 million in salaries and wages. It also notes that the “entire outdoor recreation industry is an integral component to a vibrant Maine economy ...generat[ing] \$210 million in annual state tax revenue, and produc[ing] nearly \$2.95 billion annually in retail sales and services across the state” and totaling 7.4% of all retail sales in the state.¹⁰

The TPL also commissioned a study in the late ‘90s titled the Economic Benefits of Park and Open Space’. One section in the report cites the benefits of land conservation. Instead of costing money, conserving open space as a smart growth strategy can save communities money. The study further cites:

⁶ <http://www.mesnow.com/TheMSA.html>

⁷

www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr_ne241/gtr_ne241_073.pdf

⁸ www.tpl.org/publications/books-reports/park-benefits/the-economic-benefits-of-parks.html

⁹ <http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/local-maine-conseconomics-2012.pdf>

¹⁰ Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2007. State-Level Economic Contributions of Active Outdoor Recreation – Technical Report on Methods and Findings. Prepared by Southwick Associates, Inc. 8 types of activities were considered in this study: bicycle-based recreation, camp-based recreation, paddle-based recreation, fishing, hunting, snow-based recreation, trail-based recreation, and wildlife viewing.

- Parks and Open Space create a high quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents to communities.
- Open Space boosts local economies by attracting tourists and supporting outdoor recreation.
- Open Space conservation is often the cheapest way to safeguard drinking water, clean the air and achieve other environmental goals.

It is clear that the training and recreation activities, among the many other uses of the area surrounding the Maine Army National Guard Training Facility and Mount Apatite Park, add value to Auburn's economy. For these reasons and others, the City of Auburn's opportunity to realize greater benefit may be improved by working with MEARNG to eliminate existing conflicts, investing in Mount Apatite Park as a valuable recreation resource and

collaborate with MEARNG to assure a long term compatible relationship between the two adjacent facilities.



Figure 1.9 Winter fun at Mount Apatite Trails – photo by Adriann Tucker

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Chapter 2 – Public Process

The Auburn JLUS undertook a robust public involvement process. The approach of the process was to create ways in which information pertaining to the Study could both be obtained and shared. The following avenues were pursued:

- Auburn Joint Land Use Study web and Facebook page
- Press Releases and new stories (TV, Newspapers)
- Establishment of a Policy Committee
- Development of a Study Fact Sheet
- Recreation Area User Survey
- Community Open House including Photo Contest, User Quiz
- Public Forum via a Joint meeting of City Council and Planning Board
- Public Presentations on the preliminary plan and recommendations
- Open comment period from date of Public Forum to August 1, 2013
- Formal Planning Board public hearing in Fall 2013 – Actual date to be determined
- Formal City Council public hearing in Fall 2013 – Actual date to be determined

The first task was to create a study web page hosted by the City. This webpage posted the purpose of the JLUS and the study area. It also included the schedule, agendas and minutes of the Policy Committee meetings as well as presentation materials and reports or memos developed by the Study Team. A study Facebook page was also created inviting interested parties to participate in the conversation about existing and potential future conflicts between the MEARNG Training Facility and the Mount Apatite Recreation Area and how they could

be solved. The Facebook page also invited “friends” to post photos or Sign a Guest Book regarding their experiences in the Study area.

Within the first several weeks of study initiation, the Study Team worked with city Staff to identify individuals and organizations that should be represented on a study Policy Committee. See member list on page i. Appointed by the Mayor of Auburn in late 2012, the Policy Committee included representatives of the Auburn City Council, the Auburn Recreation Advisory Committee, Taylor Pond Association, Andy Valley Sno Gypsies, the Auburn Suburban Little League, the Androscoggin Land Trust, area neighborhoods, as well as City and MEARNG staff.

The Policy Committee met monthly from December 2012 through September 2013 providing guidance to the Study Team regarding the study scope, the public involvement process, and study schedule. For example, at their January meeting, the Policy Committee suggested that a user survey be devised in order to arrive at some sense of recreation area user demographics. As such, a User Survey was developed and posted on the City’s Study Website. It was promoted through the study Facebook page as well as through traditional City information sharing vehicles. Within a month of posting the survey, nearly 200 citizens responded to it. Highlights of the survey results demonstrate that while most visitors to Mount Apatite are from Auburn, Lewiston residents and Maine residents from as far away as Biddeford visit the site; the most common access point used is through Mount Apatite Road and the most common use is for hiking and walking the dog. A fair amount of people from nearby neighborhoods walk to the area. A more detailed discussion of the survey results is outlined in Chapter 4.

Along with receiving presentations from interest groups, the Policy Committee provided guidance on ways to organize, publicize and deliver the Open House scheduled for late May. See Figure 2.1. In April, the Policy Committee began working with the information collected to date and actively participated in framing the preliminary recommendations which were then refined by the Study Team and Technical Committee. In late May, members of the Policy Committee co-hosted the Open House with the Study Team and assisted with presentations.

Figure 2.1 Organizations & Individuals Presenting at Policy Committee Meetings

- Maine Army National Guard
- Auburn Recreation Advisory Committee
- Andy Valley Sno Gypsies
- Taylor Pond Association
- Auburn Suburban Little League
- Androscoggin Land Trust
- John Ackerman, LA
- Frank Perham, Geologist
- Woodrow Thompson, Maine State Geologist
- Oxford County Gem & Mineral Club by letter

The Open House was advertised widely including notices on the study web and facebook pages. The format for the Open House included a several stations where area organizations including those represented on the Policy Committee could highlight their efforts and preferences for solving the conflicts.

In addition, several stations were dedicated to highlighting study recommendations in narrative and graphic form. Within these stations, opportunities were provided for participants to express preferences. A short presentation was made by Mayor LaBonte and LTC Drummond, MEARNG, and attendees were invited to use 'post it' notes to provide comments. More than 50 citizens attended.

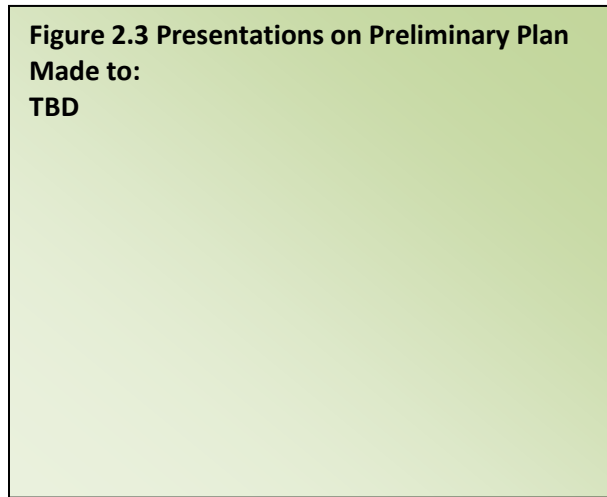
Of those, most left comments with consultant team or on map displays and flip charts. Some highlights of the feedback include: mixed feelings about obtaining or relocating ballfields; and if the ballfields are transferred to the City, most of those who left comments were torn about the need to transfer land from the Park to the training site. A summary of the feedback is included in the Appendix.



Figure 2.2 Community members at Open House

The draft preliminary report and recommendations were published and posted on the City of Auburn's JLUS website in late June 2013. On June 25, 2013, the City Council and Planning Board will host a public forum. This was the first formal opportunity for the public to respond to the draft recommendations as outlined in this report. The public forum was advertised through notices sent to all property owners in the study area, by email to those interested citizens whose emails were provided as part of a user survey and or by participation in the open house. Following this forum, the preliminary plan is being made available for public review and comment until July 26, 2013. Public comment will be accepted in writing through regular mail, email or via the Study Facebook page. Between the public forum on June 25 and July 26, the City Staff and Study Team will make presentations on the JLUS's proposed recommendations to

interest groups on request. See Figure 2.2. A summary of the comments and the manner in which they are to be addressed will be included in Appendix E of the Final Report.



At their July meeting, the Policy Committee will discuss implications of comments to date on the JLUS and review cost estimates for implementing some of the recommendations. At their August meeting, the proposed revisions to the JLUS will be discussed with the Policy Committee and the final documents are expected to be delivered to the Planning Board and City Council on early September barring unforeseen delays. Those dates will be published when known.

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