



# City of Auburn, Maine

Planning, Permitting & Code

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## Executive Summary- Proposed Zoning Change

### Zoning Change

The proposed zoning change would rezone land on 299 parcels within the Lake Auburn Watershed from Rural Residential to Low-Density Country Residential with a goal to prevent a decline in water quality that would result in a filtration waiver violation. It is meant to coincide with the proposed septic standard change, which seeks to improve the efficiency of existing systems in the watershed. The proposed septic standard change would have the consequence of allowing residences to be built where they previously couldn't be, which would increase phosphorus loading into Lake Auburn through land cover changes, deforestation, and impervious surface cover. The proposed zoning change is meant to offset this effect as well as prevent future phosphorus loading. Implications of this zoning change include increasing the minimum lot size from 1 acre to 3 acres and required road frontage from 250 feet to 325 feet, thus decreasing the density of new development in this area.

### Water Quality

The FB Environmental (2021) report set a goal of 900 kg/year of phosphorus loading into Lake Auburn and cited 75% forest cover as an important water quality threshold—Lake Auburn currently has an estimated annual load of 1,114 kg/year and 75% forest cover. Measures to reduce the current load and prevent future loading will help attain water quality goals. Impervious surfaces, such as roads and driveways, are known to contribute large amounts of phosphorus to the lake because they are impenetrable. Preventing new impervious surface prevents more phosphorus. Agriculture is also a land use type that has been noted to cause a decline in water quality (China Lake). Modifying the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone within the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay District to prevent new agriculture would protect forested area and prevent additional phosphorus loading. This could be called the Resource Protection Zone.

### Buildout Analysis

This analysis refers exclusively to the area zoned as Rural Residential within the Lake Auburn Watershed. Different scenarios will be used to approximate the number of possible structures in the watershed. The 25 Year Buildout considers a 40% land reduction, deed restrictions, and position of existing buildings, and assumes no new roads. The 100 Year Buildout does not consider the position of existing buildings and anticipates new roads; if the parcel was completely bulldozed and redeveloped, this category represents how many additional structures could be put in. LAWPC land is not considered.

There are currently 41 possible structures under the current zoning and septic standard in the 25 Year Buildout; this number is 100 in the 100 Year Buildout. These numbers were partially based on rejected septic system applications and existing permits. Because not all applications and permits are on-file, these are overestimates of what is currently buildable. The following chart describes the number of potential structures that could be built after each change.

Buildout	No Change	Septic Change ONLY	Zoning Change ONLY	Both Changes
25 Year Buildout	41	70	20	38
100 Year Buildout	100	157	36	61

This differences between each proposed ordinance change are as follows:

Buildout	Septic Change ONLY	Zoning Change ONLY	Both Changes
25 Year Buildout	+29	-21	-3

\*The projections in this report are not of all new development, but of the possible new development caused by proposed changes.

100 Year Buildout	+57	-64	-39
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**Discussion**

Rezoning Rural Residential within the watershed to become Low-Density Country Residential reduces the number of potential residences greatly. While this zoning change is tied up with the proposed septic standard change, it would be effective at preventing future phosphorus loading independently. This proposed zoning change is not a solution on its own but would work with future proposals to limit phosphorus inputs into Lake Auburn. Increased phosphorus can cause water quality decline, leading to the need for a filtration plant that would cost millions of dollars and increase water bills within the city. When water quality improves, taste and odor complaints lessen and property values around the lake increase. Preserving the natural beauty of the lake is also important to Auburn residents.