



## City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

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To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Eric J. Cousens, Director

Re: Workshop on proposed lot size changes to limit density in the Lake Auburn Watershed

Date: May 3, 2022

**PROPOSAL:** Options and request for feedback on proposed lot size changes to limit density in the Lake Auburn Watershed

During the discussion on updating subsurface wastewater systems in Division 4- Lake Auburn Watershed we discussed the Comprehensive Plan and Lake Auburn Study recommendations to limit residential density in the Watershed and to down zone the Rural Residential Areas (currently 1 acre per unit) to Rural Development District with a maximum density of 3 acres per unit. The Council added that recommendation to the adoption of the Comp Plan when it was approved in December of 2021 for areas in the watershed. The Comprehensive adoption text is below:

The Council order for adoption stated the following:

ORDERED, that the City Council approve the proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Plan Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, including the recommendation of the Planning Board and Staff to change proposed Rural Residential strips to be labeled as Rural Development District in the Lake Auburn Watershed as shown on the updated map and the added text to the FLU Chapter referencing the Lake Auburn Watershed Study.

The Comprehensive Plan text for RURAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (RD) is below:

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (RD) Objective** – Allow for the development of residential uses (primarily detached single family homes) at a density of up to 1 unit per 3 acres with one additional dwelling unit permitted for each home in areas where public/community sewerage and water are not available and not likely to be available in the foreseeable future. New development should be designed to minimize the number of vehicular access points to existing collector and other through roads. Shared driveways should be encouraged by providing for a 50-foot driveway frontage bonus. Setbacks within lots should be maintained.

**Allowed Uses** – The Rural Development district generally follows the boundaries of the Low Density Country Residential Zoning District, in effect at the time of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan update.

The following general types of uses should be allowed within the Rural Development District: ● Low Density Residential Dwellings ● Home occupations ● Community services and government uses ● Agriculture ● Small retail shops less than 3,000 square feet or 1.5 times the average size of the home within Village Overlay Neighborhoods. **Development Standards** – The residential density in the Rural District should be one unit per 3 acres. Lot frontage requirements should be around 200 feet but should be reduced for lots that share driveways. In general, the minimum front setback should be 25 feet. Side and rear setbacks should be 15-25 feet or 25% of the average depth of the lot to establish dimensional standards that relate to the size and width of the lot.

Staff suggests a planning board workshop this idea, provide feedback and direct staff to schedule a public hearing at an upcoming meeting. The goal of the Comp Plan Recommendation and the condition of the Planning Board related to the Lake Auburn Watershed Subsurface Wastewater Changes is to limit residential density in the Watershed. To do this the Board has some latitude in recommending options to the Council. There are a couple options that could accomplish this:

1. Change all areas of the Low Density Rural Residential zone in the watershed to Low Density Country Residential (LDCR).

The LDCR Dimensional Standards are as follows:

**Sec. 60-202. Dimensional requirements.**

All structures in this district except as noted shall be subject to the following dimensional regulations:

- (1) *Minimum lot area, width and depth.* No lot shall be created and/or no building shall be erected on a lot containing less than three acres and measuring less than 325 feet in width. No lot shall be less than 200 feet in depth. The keeping of horses, mules, cows, goats, sheep, hogs and similar size animals for domestic use of the residents of the lot is permitted provided that the land area required per animal unit forms to the definition of farm, livestock contained in section 60-2.
- (2) *Density.* The density of dwelling units shall not exceed an average of one dwelling per three acres.
- (3) *Yard requirements.*
  - a. *Rear.* There shall be behind every building a rear yard having a minimum depth of 50 feet or 25 percent of the average depth of the lot, whichever is less.
  - b. *Side.* There shall be a minimum distance of 15 feet between any building and the side property line plus the side yard setback shall be increased one foot for every five feet or part thereof increase in street frontage over 50 feet to a maximum of 25 feet for side yard setback.
  - c. *Front.* There shall be in front of every building a front yard having a minimum depth of 50 feet or 25 percent of the average depth of the lot whichever is less.
- (4) *Height.* The height of all dwelling structures shall be limited to 2½ stories or 35 feet in height. Accessory buildings and structures may have a maximum height of 65 feet from grade, provided that the front yard, rear yard, and each of the side yards shall be increased by one foot for each foot in height in excess of 35 feet.
- (5) *Off-street parking.* Off-street parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with the requirements for specific uses as set forth in article V of this chapter.

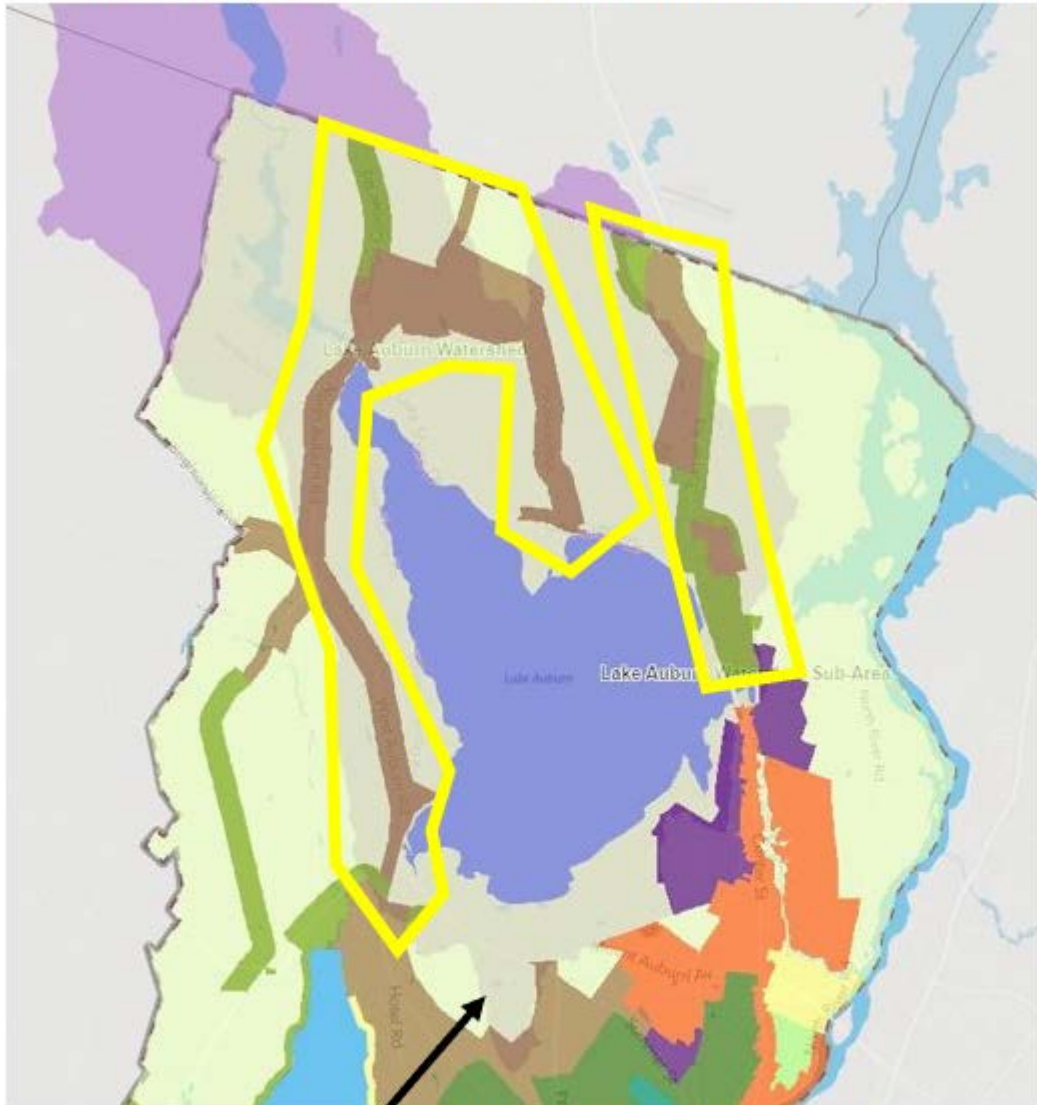
(Ord. of 9-21-2009, § 3.32C; Ord. No. 11-03012021, §§ 10, 11, 3-15-2021)

The Comprehensive plan has a City-wide Rural Development Standard recommendation of also reducing frontage Requirements. That change, in the watershed, would also add some potential buildable lots and may be counter to the goals of limiting density. The Planning Board should provide feedback on whether to also change frontage requirements of the LDCR in the watershed to less than 325 feet. Staff recommends not changing frontage as part of this change to help limit density and allow time to evaluate the group of changes before making additional changes.

2. Add standards to the Lake Auburn Watershed Overlay ordinance that mandate a 3 acre minimum lot size. The second option may be confusing for people looking at the zoning that may not know to look at the Overlay Ordinance.

Staff believes that option 1 provides a higher level of protection to the Lake by limiting density and recommends it. We are working with FB Environmental to estimate the number of potential buildable lots with all proposed ordinance changes that affect septic system siting, minimum lot size, and low impact development standards in the Auburn portion of the Lake Auburn watershed and to model anticipated water quality changes as a result. The proposed areas are shown as brown (Low Density Rural Residence) on the map below. Staff will review lot characteristics and conformity at the meeting.

**— 1 Unit per 3 Acres (minimum lot size: 3 Acres)**



Watershed Boundary

Proposed Map Amendment

